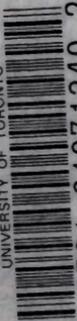


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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THE BATTLES  
OF THE  
BRITISH ARMY



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# THE BATTLES OF THE BRITISH ARMY



BEING  
A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF ALL THE PRINCIPAL  
ENGAGEMENTS DURING THE LAST  
HUNDRED YEARS

BY  
ROBERT MELVIN BLACKWOOD, M.A.

AUTHOR OF  
"The British Army at Home and Abroad,"  
"Some Great Commanders,"  
&c., &c.

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THE BATTLE

OF THE

BRITISH



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# PREFACE.

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ALL phases of life and incident relating to the building up and consolidation of our Empire, ought to be of supreme interest to those who regard themselves as Britain's sons. Fortunately the arts of peace, and the respect for justice and individual right, have had much to do with the growth of the greatest empire in the world's history.

At the same time, unfortunate though the case may be, the ordinance of battle has had no small share in the extension of the country's interests. In acknowledging this unfortunate fact, it is so far consoling to realise that many of these conflicts have been thrust upon us, and were not sought on our part, in the interests of self-aggrandisement. It likewise is a matter for congratulation, that this battle feature in the future history of our country, is likely to prove much less than in the past. All wise and good men will strive towards this end. Even those who look on the appeal to arms as unavoidable in international controversies, concur in thinking it a deplorable necessity, only to be resorted to when all peaceful modes of arrangement have been vainly tried. And also, when the law of self-defence or of the defence of national interest justifies a state, like an individual, in using force to protect itself from imminent and serious injury.

The battles, however, form a large and integral part of our past national history. And, so far as they are in the cause of right, we may well be proud of them. Our soldiers and

generals may compare favourably with those of any other nationality. For bravery, indomitable pluck, and perseverance they never have been surpassed in the whole annals of history. A fearful and wonderful interest is attached to these scenes of bloodshed. The intense love of country and honour, and the undeniable greatness of disciplined courage, which make soldiers confront death and destruction, excite our profound admiration. The powers also of the human intellect are rarely more strongly displayed than they are in the capable commander who regulates, arranges, and wields at his will the armed masses under him, and who, cool in the midst of fearful peril, is ready with fresh resources as the varying vicissitudes of battle require. Seeing that these splendid feats of arms and acts of patriotism, are the performances of our own fathers and brothers, intense interest in, and knowledge of their details, ought to be universal throughout the land.

In the present volume will be found separate and popularly written narratives of all the principal engagements that have been fought by our soldiers during the last hundred years. They are arranged in chronological order, so that, in a sense, the volume comprises a popular military history for that lengthened period. Giving the battles by themselves, apart from the intervening transactions of lesser interest, and also the omission of political affairs, will no doubt prove a convenience to many.

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# THE BATTLES

OF THE

# BRITISH ARMY

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BATTLE OF ALEXANDRIA.

1801.

IN 1800, an attempt on Cadiz was planned and abandoned; and an army, the *corps élite* of Britain, was kept idly afloat in transports at an enormous expense, suffering from tempestuous weather, and losing their energies and discipline, while one scheme was proposed after another, only to be considered and rejected. By turns Italy and South America were named as countries where they might be successfully employed—but to both designs, on mature deliberation, strong objections were found; and on the 25th of October final orders were received from England, directing the fleet and army forthwith to rendezvous at Malta, and thence proceed to Egypt.

The troops on reaching the island were partially disembarked while the ships were refitting; and the fresh provisions and salubrious air of Valetta soon restored many who had suffered from long confinement and salt rations. Five hundred Maltese were enlisted to serve as pioneers. Water-casks were replenished, stores laid in, the troops re-embarked; and on the 20th of December, the first division got under weigh, followed by the second on the succeeding day.

Instead of sailing direct for their destination, the fleet proceeded to the Bay of Macri. Finding that roadstead too open, the admiral shaped his course for the coast of Caramania. There he was overtaken by a gale of wind—and though close to the magnificent harbour of Marmorice, its existence appears to have been known, out of a fleet of two hundred vessels, only to the captain of a brig of war. As the fleet were caught in a heavy gale on a lee shore, the result might have been most disastrous to the transports, who could not carry sufficient canvas to work off the land. Fortunately, Marmorice proved a haven of refuge; and the surprise and pleasure of the soldiers can scarcely

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be described, when they found themselves in smooth water, and surrounded by the grandest scenery imaginable, "though, the instant before, the fleet was labouring in a heavy gale, and rolling in a tremendous sea."

Another landing of the troops took place, and no advantages resulted from it to compensate the loss of time which allowed the French to obtain strong reinforcements. Goat's flesh was abundant, and poultry plentiful; but the Turks had probably been apprised beforehand of the munificence of the British, as every article was advanced on the arrival of the fleet four hundred per cent. in price.

The remount of the cavalry formed an ostensible, almost an only reason, for the expedition visiting Asia Minor, and consuming time that might have been so successfully employed. The horses arrived, but from their wretched quality and condition they proved a sorry equivalent for the expense and trouble their acquisition cost.

While the expedition was in the harbour of Marmorice, an awful tempest came suddenly on, and raged with unintermitting fury for two days. It thundered violently—hailstones fell as large as walnuts—deluges of water rushed from the mountains, sweeping everything away. The horses broke loose—the ships drove from their anchors—the *Swiftsure*, a seventy-four, was struck with lightning—and many others lost masts, spars, and were otherwise disabled. Amid this elemental war, signal-guns fired from vessels in distress, and the howling of wolves and other wild animals in the woods, added to the uproar.

After a protracted delay in waiting for the Turkish armament, which was expected to have been in perfect readiness, the expedition left the harbour without it on the 23rd of February. The sight, when the fleet got under weigh, was most imposing; the men-of-war, transports, and store-ships amounting to one hundred and seventy-five sail.

The British army was composed of the whole or portions of twenty-seven regiments, exclusive of artillery and pioneers.\* Its total strength in rank and file, including one thousand sick and

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### \* EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF THE EGYPTIAN ARMY.

Guards—Major-General Ludlow.

1st, or Royals, 2nd battalions 54th and 92nd—Major-General Coote.

8th, 13th, 90th—Major-General Craddock.

2nd, or Queen's, 50th, 79th—Major-General Lord Craven.

18th, 30th, 44th, 89th—Brigadier-General Doyle.

Minorca, De Rolde's, Dillon's—Major-General Stuart.

### RESERVE.

40th, Flank Company, 23rd, 28th, 42nd, 58th, Corsican Rangers—Major-General Moore.

Detachment 11th Dragoons, 12th Dragoons, 26th Dragoons—Brigadier-General Finch.

Artillery and Prince's—Brigadier-General Lawson.

five hundred Maltese, was fifteen thousand three hundred and thirty men. In this number all the *attachés* of the army were reckoned—and consequently the entire force that could have been combatant in the field would not exceed twelve thousand bayonets and sabres. This was certainly a small army with which to attack an enemy in possession of the country, holding fortified posts, with a powerful artillery, a numerous cavalry, and having a perfect acquaintance with the only places on the coast where it was practicable to disembark in safety.

On the 1st of March the Arab's tower was in sight, and next morning the whole fleet entered Aboukir Bay.\* On the following morning a French frigate was seen running into Alexandria, having entered the bay in company with the British fleet.

The weather was unfavourable for attempting a landing of the troops. This was a serious disappointment, and an accidental occurrence added to the inconvenience it would have otherwise caused. Two engineer officers, engaged in reconnoitring the coast, advanced too far into the bay through an over-zealous anxiety to mark out a landing-place. They were seen and overtaken by a French gunboat, who fired into the cutter, killing one of the engineers and making the other prisoner. The survivor was brought ashore, and forwarded to Cairo to General Menou; and thus, had the British descent been before doubtful, this unfortunate discovery would have confirmed the certainty of an intended landing, and allowed ample time for preparations being made to oppose it.

The weather moderated in the morning of the 7th, and the signal was made by the flag-ship "to prepare for landing." But the sea was still so much up that the attempt was postponed, and with the exception of an affair between the boats of the *Foudroyant* and a party of the enemy, whom they drove from a block-house, that day passed quietly over.

The 8th was more moderate—the swell had abated—and preparations for the landing commenced. At two o'clock the first division were in the boats, amounting to five thousand five hundred men, under General Coote; while the ships, on board of which the remainder of the army still remained, were anchored as near the shore as possible, to allow the landing brigades their immediate support. The right and left flanks of the boats were protected by launches and gun-brigs; three sloops of war, with springs from their cables, had laid their broadsides towards the beach; and the *Fury* and *Tartarus* had taken a position to cover the troops with the fire of their mortars.

The French were drawn up on a ridge of sandhills, with an

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\* The men-of-war brought up exactly in the place where the Battle of the Nile was fought, the *Foudroyant* chafing her cables on the wreck of the French Admiral's ship. The anchor of the *L'Orient* was crept for and recovered.

elevated hillock in their centre, and twelve pieces of artillery in position along their line. The moment was one of absorbing interest—and many a heart beat fast as, in half-companies, the soldiers stood under arms in the launches, impatiently waiting for the signal to advance.

A gun was fired; off sprang the boats, while the men-of-war opened their batteries, and the bomb-vessels commenced throwing shells. The cannonade from the shipping was promptly returned by the French lines and Castle of Aboukir; while on swept the regiments towards the beach, under a furious discharge of shot and shells, and a torrent of grape and musketry, that ploughed the surface of the water, or carried death into the dense masses of men crowded in the launches. But nothing could exceed the glorious rivalry displayed by both services in advancing; while shot was hailing on the water, the sailors as the spray flashed from their oar-blades, nobly emulated each other in trying who should first beach his boat. Each cheered the other forward, while the soldiers caught the enthusiastic spirit and answered them with loud huzzas. The beach was gained, the 23rd and 40th jumped into the surf, reached the shore, formed as they cleared the water, and rushed boldly up the sandhills, never attempting to draw a trigger, but leaving all to be decided by the bayonet. The French regiments that confronted them were driven from the heights; while pressing on, the Nile hills in the rear, with three pieces of artillery, were captured.

The 42nd were equally successful; they formed with beautiful regularity in the face of a French battalion protected by two guns, and after defeating a charge of two hundred cavalry, stormed and occupied the heights.

While these brilliant attacks had been in progress, the Guards were charged by the French dragoons in the very act of landing, and a temporary disorder ensued. The 58th had formed on the right, and, by a well-directed fire, repulsed the cavalry with loss. The Guards corrected their line, and instantly showed front, while the French, unable to shake the formation of the British, retired behind the sandhills.

The transport boats had been outstripped by those of the men-of-war—and consequently, the Royals and 54th only touched the shore as the dragoons rode off. Their landing was, however, admirably timed; for a French column, under cover of the sandhills, was advancing with fixed bayonets on the left flank of the Guards. On perceiving these newly-landed regiments, its courage failed; it halted, delivered a volley, and then hastily retreated.

The British had now possession of the heights; the brigade of Guards was formed and advancing, and the boats returning to the ships for the remainder of the army. Observing this, the

enemy abandoned their position on the ridge, and, retiring behind the sandhills in the rear, for some time kept up a scattered fire. But on the British moving forward they deserted the ground entirely, leaving three hundred killed and wounded, eight pieces of cannon, and a number of horses to the victors. The remainder of the brigades were safely disembarked, Sir Ralph Abercrombie landed, and a position taken up, the right upon the sea, and the left on Lake Maadie.

A landing in the face of an enemy, prepared and in position like the French, under a heavy cannonade, and effected on a dangerous beach, would naturally occasion a severe loss of life; and several promising officers, and nearly five hundred men, were killed, wounded, and missing. The only surprise is, that the casualties were not greater. The mode in which an army is debarked exposes it unavoidably to fire, and troops, packed by fifties in a launch, afford a striking mark for an artillerist. Guns, already in position on the shore, enable those who work them to obtain the range of an approaching object with great precision; and the effect of a well-directed shot upon a boat crowded with troops is necessarily most destructive.

After the army had been united, it advanced by slow marches, some trifling skirmishing daily occurring between the advanced posts. The British bivouac was at the town of Mandora, and Sir Ralph moved forward to attack the enemy, who were posted on a ridge of heights.

The French, reinforced by two half brigades of infantry, a regiment of cavalry from Cairo, and a corps from Rosetta, mustered about five thousand five hundred of that arm, with five hundred horse, and five-and-twenty pieces of artillery. Their position was well chosen, as it stood on a bold eminence having an extensive glacis in its front, which would allow full sweep for the fire of its numerous and well-appointed artillery. The British attack was directed against the right wing, and in two lines the brigades advanced in columns of regiments, the reserve covering the movements, and marching parallel with the first.

Immediately on debouching from a date-wood, the enemy descended from the heights, and the 92nd—the leading regiment on the left—was attacked by a furious discharge of grape and musketry; while the French cavalry charged down the hill, and threw themselves upon the 90th, which led the right column. Though the charge was most gallantly made, Latour Maubourg leading the dragoons at a gallop, a close and shattering volley from the 90th obliged them to turn along the front of the regiment, and retreat with a heavy loss. A few of the leading files, however, had actually reached the line, and were bayoneted in a desperate effort to break it. The attempt failed, and in executing his duty gloriously, their gallant leader was desperately

wounded. The British pushed the reserve into action on the right; the Guards, in the rear, to support the centre, and Doyle's brigade, in column, behind the left. The French were on every point forced from their position—but, covered by the fire of their numerous guns and the fusilade of their voltigeurs, they retreated across the plain, and occupied their own lines on the heights of Alexandria.

Dillon's regiment during this movement made a brilliant bayonet charge, captured two guns, and turned them instantly on the enemy. Wishing to follow up this success, Sir Ralph attempted to carry the position by a *coup de main*; and advancing across the plain, he directed the brigades of Moore and Hutchinson to assault the flanks of the French position simultaneously. To attempt dislodging a force posted as the enemy were, could only end in certain discomfiture. The troops could make no way—a murderous fire of artillery mowed them down; "the French, no longer in danger, had only to load and fire: aim was unnecessary, the bullets could not but do their office and plunge into the lines." For several hours the British remained, suffering this exterminating fire patiently; and at sunset, the order being given to fall back, the army retired and took up a position for the night.

The British loss, its strength considered, was immense. Eleven hundred men were killed and wounded; while that of the enemy amounted barely to a third, with four field-pieces, which they were obliged to abandon.

A strong position was now taken by Sir Ralph; the right reached the sea, resting on the ruins of a Roman palace, and projecting a quarter of a mile over heights in front. This promontory of sandhills and ruins was some three hundred yards across, sloping gradually to a valley, which divided it from the hills which formed the rest of the lines. The extreme left appuied on two batteries, and Lake Maadie protected the rear—and the whole, from sea to lake, extended about a mile. In front of the right, the ground was uneven; but that before the centre would admit cavalry to act. The whole space had once been a Roman colony—and, on its ruined site, a hard-fought day was now about to be decided.

The French position was still stronger than the British lines, as it stretched along a ridge of lofty hills, extending from the sea on one side to the canal of Alexandria on the other. A tongue of land in the advance of their right, ran nearly for a mile parallel with the canal, and had obliged the British posts to be thrown considerably back, and thus obliques their line. In a classic and military view, nothing could be more imposing than the ground on which Menou's army were encamped. In the centre stood Fort Cretin; on the left, Fort Caffarelli; Pompey's

Pillar showed boldly on the right; Cleopatra's Needle on the left; while Alexandria appeared in the background, with its walls extending to the sea; and at the extremity of a long low neck of land, the ancient Pharos was visible. Wherever the eye ranged, objects of no common interest met it; some of the "wonders of the world" were contiguous; and "the very ruins under foot were sacred from their antiquity."

The British army had little leisure, and probably as little inclination, to indulge in classic recollections. The men were busily engaged in fortifying the position, bringing up guns for the batteries, and collecting ammunition and stores. The magazines were inconveniently situated; and to roll weighty spirit-casks through the deep sands was a most laborious task, and it principally devolved upon the seamen. The fuel was particularly bad, the billets being obtained from the date-tree, which it is almost impossible to ignite, and whose smoke, when kindling, pains, by its pungency, the eyes of all within its influence. Water was abundant, but of indifferent quality; and as Menou, with a most unjustifiable severity, inflicted death upon the Arabs who should be found bringing sheep to the camp, the price of fresh provisions was high, and the supply precarious.

On the 10th, an affair took place between an enemy's patrol and a detachment of British cavalry, under Colonel Archdale. It was a very gallant, but very imprudent, encounter—a third of the men, and half the officers, being killed or taken. Another casualty occurred also, to the great regret of all. Colonel Brice, of the Guards, in going his rounds, was deceived by a mirage; and coming unexpectedly on an enemy's post, received a wound of which he died the third day, a prisoner.

Menou was reported to be advancing; and an Arab chief apprised Sir Sydney Smith, that the French intended an attack upon the British camp next morning. The information was discredited; but the result proved that it was authentic.

On the 21st of March, the army, at three o'clock, as usual, stood to their arms, and for half an hour all was undisturbed. Suddenly, a solitary musket was fired, a cannon-shot succeeded it, and a spattering fusilade, broken momentarily with the heavier booming of a gun, announced that an attack was being made. The feebleness of the fire rendered it doubtful against what point the real effort of the French would be directed. All looked impatiently for daybreak, which, though faintly visible in the east, seemed to break more tardily the more its assistance was desired.

On the right, a noise was heard; all listened in breathless expectation; shouts and a discharge of musketry succeeded; the roar increased; momentarily it became louder—there indeed the enemy were in force—and there the British line was seriously assailed.

Favoured by broken ground, and covered by the haze of morning, the French had partially surprised the videts, attacked the pickets, and following them quickly, drove them back upon the line. One column advanced upon the ruin held by the 58th, their drums beating the *pas de charge*, and the officers cheering the men forward. Colonel Houston, who commanded the regiment, fearing lest his own pickets might have been retiring in front of the enemy's column, reserved his fire until the glazed hats of the French were distinguishable in the doubtful light. The 58th lined a wall partly dilapidated, but which in some places afforded them an excellent breastwork; and the twilight allowed the French column to be only distinctly seen when within thirty yards of the post. As the regiment occupied detached portions of the wall, where its greater ruin exposed it to attack, an irregular but well-sustained fusilade was kept up, until the enemy's column, unable to bear the quick and well-directed musketry of the British, retired into a hollow for shelter. There they reformed, and wheeling to the right endeavoured to turn the left of the redoubt, while another column marched against the battery occupied by the 28th. On the front attack the regiment opened a heavy fire, but part of the enemy had gained the rear, and another body penetrated through the ruined wall. Thus assailed on every side, the 58th wheeled back two companies, who, after delivering three effective volleys, rushed forward with the bayonet. The 23rd now came to support the 58th, while the 42nd moved round the exterior of the ruins, cutting off the French retreat; and of the enemy, all who entered the redoubt were killed or taken.

The situation of the 28th and 58th was, for a time, as extraordinary as it was dangerous, for at the same moment they were actually repelling three separate attacks, and were assailed simultaneously on their front, flanks, and rear.

The 42nd, in relieving the 28th, was exposed to a serious charge of French cavalry. Nearly unperceived, the dragoons wheeled suddenly round the left of the redoubt, and though the ground was full of holes, rode furiously over tents and baggage, and, charging *en masse*, completely overthrew the Highlanders. In this desperate emergency, the 42nd, with broken ranks, and in that unavoidable confusion which, when it occurs, renders cavalry so irresistible, fought furiously hand to hand, and opposed their bayonets fearlessly to the sabres of the French. The flank companies of the 40th, immediately beside them, dared not, for a time, deliver their fire, the combatants were so intermingled in the *mêlée*. At this moment General Stuart brought up the foreign brigade in beautiful order, and their heavy and well-sustained fusilade decided the fate of the day. "Nothing could withstand it, and the enemy fled or perished."

During this charge of cavalry, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, who had ridden to the right on finding it seriously engaged, advanced to the ruins where the contest was raging, after having despatched his aide-de-camp\* with orders to the more distant brigades. He was quite alone, and some French dragoons having penetrated to the spot, one, remarking that he was a superior officer, charged and overthrew the veteran commander. In an attempt to cut him down, the old man, nerved with a momentary strength, seized the uplifted sword, and wrested it from his assailant, while a Highland soldier transfixed the Frenchman with his bayonet. Unconscious that he was wounded in the thigh, Sir Ralph complained only of a pain in his breast, occasioned, as he supposed, by a blow from the pommel of the sword during his recent struggle with the dragoon. The first officer that came up was Sir Sydney Smith, who, having broken the blade of his sabre, received from Sir Ralph the weapon of which he had despoiled the French hussar.

The cavalry being completely repulsed, Sir Ralph walked firmly to the redoubt on the right of the Guards, from which a commanding view of the entire battlefield could be obtained. The French, though driven from the camp, still maintained the battle on the right, and charging with their reserve cavalry, attacked the foreign brigade. Here, too, they were resolutely repulsed; and their infantry finding their efforts everywhere unsuccessful, changed their formation and acted *en tirailleur* with the exception of one battalion, which still held a *flèche* in front of the redoubt, on either flank of which the Republican colours were planted.

At this time the ammunition of the British was totally exhausted; some regiments, particularly the reserve, had not a single cartridge; and in the battery the supply for the guns was reduced to a single round. In consequence, the British fire on the right had nearly ceased, but in the centre the engagement still continued.

There the attack had commenced at daybreak; a column of grenadiers, supported by a heavy line of infantry, furiously assailing the Guards, and driving in the flankers which had been thrown out to check their advance. Observing the echelon formation of the British, the French general instantly attempted to turn their left; but the officer commanding on that flank as promptly prevented it, by throwing some companies sharply back, while Coote's brigade having come up, and opening its

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\* A curious incident occurred immediately afterwards. An aide-de-camp of General Craddock, in carrying orders, had his horse killed, and begged permission of Sir Sydney Smith to mount a horse belonging to his orderly dragoon. As Sir Sydney was turning round to give the order to dismount, a cannon-shot took off the poor fellow's head. "This," said the Admiral, "settles the question; Major, the horse is at your service."

musketry, obliged the enemy to give way and retire. Finding the attack in column fail, the French broke into extended order and opened a scattered fusilade, while every gun that could be brought to bear by their artillery was turned on the British position. But all was vain; though suffering heavily from this murderous fire, the formation of the Guards was coolly corrected when disturbed by the cannonade, while the fine and imposing attitude of these regiments removed all hope that they could be shaken, and prevented any renewal of attack.

The British left had never been seriously attempted, consequently its casualties were very few, and occasioned by a distant fire from the French guns, and a trifling interchange of musketry.

While the British right was, from want of ammunition, nearly *hors de combat*, the French approached the redoubt once more. They, too, had expended their cartridges, and both the assailants and assailed actually pelted the other with stones, of which missiles there was a very abundant supply upon the ground. A sergeant of the 28th had his skull beaten in by a blow, and died upon the spot. The grenadiers of the 40th, however, not relishing this novel mode of attack and defence, moved out to end the business with the bayonet. Instantly the assailants ran, the sharpshooters abandoned the hollows, and the battalion, following their example, evacuated the *fêche*, leaving the battle ground in front unoccupied by any save the dead and dying.

Menou's attempts had all been signally defeated. He perceived that the British lines had sustained no impression that would justify a continuation of the attack, and he determined to retreat. His brigades accordingly moved off under the heights of their position in excellent order; and though, for a considerable distance, they were forced to retire within an easy range of cannon shot, the total want of ammunition obliged the British batteries to remain silent, and permit the French march to be effected with trifling molestation. The cannon on the British left, and the guns of some men-of-war cutters, which had anchored close in with the land upon the right, kept up a galling fire, their shots plunging frequently into the French ranks, and particularly into those of a corps of cavalry posted on a bridge over the canal of Alexandria to observe any movement the British left might threaten.

At ten o'clock the action had ended. Sir Ralph Abercrombie previously refused to quit the field, and remained exposed to the heavy cannonade directed on the battery where he stood, until perfectly assured that the French defeat had been decisive. From what proved a fatal wound he appeared at first to feel but little inconvenience, complaining only of the contusion on his breast. When, however, the day was won, and exertion no longer necessary, nature yielded, and in an exhausted state he was

carried in a hammock off the field, accompanied by the tears and blessings of the soldiery. In the evening he was removed, for better care, on board the flag-ship, where he continued until his death.

Immediate attention was bestowed upon the wounded, who, from the confined nature of the ground on which the grand struggles of the day had occurred, were lying in fearful numbers all around. Many of the sufferers had been wounded by grape-shot, others mangled by the sabres, or trodden down by the horses of the cavalry. Death had been busily employed. Of the British, two hundred and forty were dead, including six officers; eleven hundred and ninety men and sixty officers wounded; and thirty privates and three officers missing. Other casualties had occurred. The tents had been shred to pieces by the French guns, and many of the wounded and sick, who were lying there, were killed. No wonder could be expressed that the loss of life had been so terrible, for thousands of brass cannon-balls were lying loosely about, and glistening on the sands.

The French loss had been most severe. One thousand and fifty bodies were buried on the field of battle, and nearly seven hundred wounded were found mingled with the dead. The total loss sustained by Menou's army could not have been much under four thousand; and in this the greater portion of his principal officers must be included. General Roiz was found dead in the rear of the redoubt, and the French order of battle discovered in his pocket. Near the same place two guns had been abandoned, and these, with a stand of colours, fell, as trophies of their victory, to the conquerors.

No army could have behaved more gallantly than the British. Surrounded, partially broken, and even without a cartridge left, the contest was continued and a victory won. That the French fought bravely, that their attacks were vigorously made, and, after discomfiture, as boldly repeated, must be admitted; and that, in becoming the assailant, Menou conferred an immense advantage on the British, is equally true. There Menou betrayed want of judgment; for had he but waited forty-eight hours the British must have attacked him. Indeed, the assault was already planned; and, as it was to have been made in the night, considering the strength of their position, and the fine *matériel* of the Republican troops, a more precarious trial could never have been hazarded. But the case was desperate; the successes of the 8th and 13th—and dearly bought, though gloriously achieved, they were—must have been rendered nugatory, unless forward operations could have been continued. In short, Menou fought Abercrombie's battle, and he who must have been assailed, became himself the assailant.

Military criticism, like political disquisitions, comes not

within the design of a work merely intended to describe the action of the battle, or the immediate events that preceded or resulted; but, if the truth were told, during these brief operations, from the landing to the evening of the 21st, mistakes were made on both sides. The military character of Britain had been sadly lowered by mismanagement at home, and still more ridiculously undervalued abroad, and it remained for future fields and a future conqueror to re-establish for Britain a reputation in arms, and prove that the island-spirit wanted only a field for its display.

After lingering a few days, the French Generals Lannuse and Bodet died of their wounds; and on the evening of the 23rd March the British army had to lament the decease of their gallant and beloved commander. An attempt to extract the ball, attended with great pain, was unsuccessful. Mortification ensued, Sir Ralph sank rapidly, and while his country and his army engrossed his every thought, he expired, full of years and honour, universally and most justly lamented.

The eulogy of his successor in command thus concludes:—  
 “Were it permitted for a soldier to regret any one who has fallen in the service of his country, I might be excused for lamenting him more than any other person; but it is some consolation to those who tenderly loved him, that as his life was honourable so was his death glorious. His memory will be recorded in the annals of his country, will be sacred to every British soldier, and embalmed in the recollection of a grateful posterity.”

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## CHAPTER II.

### THE BATTLE OF ASSAYE.

1803.

THE death of Tippoo Saib, and the fall of Seringapatam, were astounding tidings for the native chiefs. Their delusory notions regarding their individual importance were ended, and a striking proof had been given of what little reliance could be placed on Indian mercenaries and places of strength, when Britain went forth in wrath and sent her armies to the field.

As the fear of Britain became confirmed, so did the hatred of the native princes to everything connected with her name. A power that had proved herself so formidable was to be dreaded, fixed as she was in the very heart of India; and, as the difficulty increased, so did the desire of freeing themselves from that thrall, which daily appeared to press upon them more heavily.

Affairs again began to assume a threatening look. The Mahratta chiefs exhibited an unfriendly attitude; and to cement

an alliance with the Peishwah, and thus tranquillize the country, a portion of Tippoo's territory was offered and rejected. Scindia, with his army, was at Poona, and his influence directed every act of that dependent court.

A misunderstanding between Scindia and Holkar brought on a war between those chiefs. Holkar advanced on Poona, compelling Scindia to accept battle, in which he was defeated, the Peishwah deserting his ally in the hour of need, and concluding a treaty with the British. To effectuate this, Wellesley, now a major-general, took the field, with orders to drive Holkar from Poona, and secure the Peishwah's return to his capital; and learning that the Mahrattas intended to plunder Poona, the general saved it by an extraordinary forced march, accomplishing sixty miles in thirty hours—a marvellous exertion indeed to be made under an Indian sun.

All for a short time was quiet; but those restless chiefs again assumed a hostile position. Scindia and the Rajah of Berar moved towards the Nizam's frontier; while the former was negotiating with Holkar, his late enemy, to arrange their differences, and make common cause against the British.

To prepare for the threatened attack, the Marquis Wellesley invested the officers commanding the armies of Hindoostan and the Deccan with full powers; and to General Wellesley a special authority was given to make peace, or commence hostilities, as his own judgment should determine. In accordance with this power, a demand was made on Scindia that he should separate from the Rajah of Berar, and re-cross the Nerbuddah. To this demand an evasive reply was returned, and Eastern cunning was employed to obtain such delay as should permit the chieftains' plans to be matured, and enable them to take the field in force. This shuffling policy was, however, quite apparent; and on the first information that his political agent had quitted Scindia's camp, Wellesley suddenly broke up his cantonments, and marched directly on Ahmednuggur.

This ancient town was defended in the Eastern fashion with a high wall, flanked at its bends and angles by a tower, and garrisoned by some of Scindia's infantry and an auxiliary force of Arabs, while a body of the chieftain's cavalry occupied the space between the pettah and the fort. Wellesley, without delay, assaulted the town, and carried it by escalade. On the 10th September, the British cannon opened on the fort, the keeladar in command proposed terms, and the British general expressed a readiness to listen to his propositions, but the guns continued working. Indian diplomacy has no chance when batteries are open; and, on the 12th, a garrison of fourteen hundred marched out, and the place was delivered up. This fortress, from its locality, was valuable; it secured the communications with Poona,

made a safe depot for military stores, and was centrally placed in a district whose revenue was above 600,000 rupees.

With a short delay, Wellesley moved on Aurungabad, and entered that splendid city on the 29th. The enemy moved in a south-easterly direction, threatening Hyderabad, while the British, marching by the left bank of the Godaverey, secured their convoys from Moodgul, and obliged Scindia to retire northwards. As yet the Mahratta chiefs were moving a cavalry force north, with but a few matchlock men; but they were joined now by their whole artillery and sixteen battalions of infantry, officered chiefly by Frenchmen.

On the 21st September, at a conference at Budnapoor, General Wellesley and Colonel Stevenson arranged a combined attack for the 24th. They were to move east and west, pass the defiles on the same day, and thus prevent any movement of the enemy southward. A mistake, in distance, brought General Wellesley much sooner to his halting-place than had been calculated; and learning that the Mahratta army were already breaking up to retire, he sent orders to Colonel Stevenson to advance; and announcing his immediate march on Scindia, begged his colleague to hurry forward to his assistance.

The cavalry consisted of the 19th Light Dragoons, and three native regiments, under the command of Colonel Maxwell, a bold and skilful officer. General Wellesley accompanied the horse, the infantry following in light marching order. After passing a league and half of ground, the advance reached an eminence; and on the right, and covering an immense extent of country, the Mahratta army appeared.

In brilliant sunshine, nothing could be more picturesque than Scindia's encampment. The varied colours of the tents, each disposed around its own chieftain's banner without order or regularity, with "streets crossing and winding in every direction, displayed a variety of merchandise, as in a great fair. Jewellers, smiths, and mechanics were all attending as minutely to their occupations, and all as busily employed, as if they were at Poona and in peace."

In this enormous camp, fifty thousand men were collected—the river Kaitna running in their front, the Suah in their rear. These rivers united their waters at some distance beyond the left of the camp, forming a flat peninsula of considerable extent. The native infantry and all the guns were in position on the left, retired upon the Suah, and appuied on the village of Assaye—the cavalry were entirely on the right. The position was naturally strong; for the banks of the Kaitna are steep and broken, and the front very difficult to attack.

As the British cavalry formed line on the heights, it presented a strange but glorious contrast to the countless multitude

of Mahratta horsemen, who were seen in endless array below. The British brigade, scarcely numbering three thousand sabres, took its position with all the boldness of a body having an equal force opposed. In number Scindia's cavalry were fully ten to one; as it was ascertained that, with his allies, the horsemen actually on the field exceeded thirty thousand. Having made a careful reconnoissance, General Wellesley determined to attack, and when the infantry came up it was instantly executed.

While examining the position, immense masses of Scindia's cavalry moved forward, and threw out skirmishers, which were directly driven in. Wellesley having discovered a neglected ford, decided on crossing over, and, by attacking the infantry and guns, embarrass the immense cavalry force of Scindia, and oblige it to manœuvre to disadvantage, and act on the confined space the ill-selected ground afforded.

The infantry had now come up, and, in column, they were directed on the river. A fire from the Mahratta guns immediately opened, but the range was far too distant to permit the cannonade to be effective, or check the forward movement of the columns. The whole were now across the river; the infantry formed into two brigades, and the cavalry in reserve behind them, ready to rush on any part of the battle-ground where advantage could be gained, or support should be required. The Mysore horse and the contingent of the Peishwah were merely left in observation of the enemy's right.

This flank attack obliged Scindia to change his front. He did so with less confusion than was expected; and by his new disposition rested his right upon the Kaitna, and his left upon the Suah and Assaye. His whole front bristled with cannon, and the ground immediately around the village seemed, from the number of guns, like one great battery.

The fire from this powerful artillery was of course destructive, and the British guns were completely overpowered, and in a very few minutes silenced entirely. This was the crisis; and on the determination of a moment hung the fortune of a very doubtful day. Without hesitation Wellesley abandoned his guns, and advanced with the bayonet. The charge was gallantly made, the enemy's right forced back, and his guns captured.

While this movement was being executed, the 74th and light infantry pickets in front of Assaye, were severely cut up by the fire from that place. Perceiving the murderous effect of the fusilade, a strong body of the Mahratta horse moved swiftly round the village, and made a furious onset on the 74th. Maxwell had watched the progress of the battle, and now was his moment of action. The word was given, the British cavalry charged home, down went the Mahrattas in hundreds beneath the fiery assault of the brave 19th, and their gallant supporters the sepoy's,

while, unchecked by a tremendous storm of grape and musketry, Maxwell pressed his advantage, and cut through Scindia's left. The 74th and the light infantry reformed, and, pushing boldly on, completed the disorder of the enemy, preventing any effective attempt to renew a battle, the doubtful result of which was thus in a few minutes decided by the promptitude of the general.

Some of Scindia's troops fought bravely, and the desperate obstinacy with which his gunners stood to the cannon, was almost incredible. They remained to the last—and were bayoneted around the guns, which they refused, even in certain defeat, to abandon.

The British charge was, indeed, resistless; but in the enthusiasm of success, at times there is a lack of prudence. The sepoys rushed wildly on—their elated ardour was uncontrollable; while a mass of the Mahratta horse arrayed upon the hill were ready to rush upon ranks disordered by their own success.

But Wellesley foresaw, and guarded against the evil consequences that a too excited courage might produce. The 78th were kept in hand; and cool, steady, and with a perfect formation, they offered an imposing front, that the Mahratta cavalry perceived was unassailable.

A strong column of the enemy, however, that had been only partially engaged, now rallied and renewed the battle, joined by a number of Scindia's gunners and infantry, who had flung themselves as dead upon the ground, and thus escaped the sabres of the British cavalry. Maxwell's brigade, who had re-formed their ranks and breathed their horses, dashed into the still disordered ranks of these half-rallied troops—a desperate slaughter ensued, and the Mahrattas were totally routed; but the British lost their chivalrous leader, and in the moment of victory, Maxwell died in front of the battle, "and, fighting foremost, fell."

The last effort of the day was made by a part of the artillery who were in position near the village of Assaye—and in person Wellesley led on the 78th Highlanders and the 7th native cavalry. In the attack the general's horse was killed under him; but the enemy declined the charge, broke, fled, and left a field cumbered with their dead, and crowded with cannon, bullocks, caissons, and all the *matériel* of an Eastern army, to the conquerors.

The evening had fallen before the last struggle at Assaye was over, but the British victory was complete. Twelve hundred of Scindia's dead were found upon the field; while, of his wounded, scarcely an estimate could be hazarded, for all the villages and adjacent country were crowded with his disabled soldiery. The British loss was of necessity severe, and it might be estimated that one-third of the entire army was *hors de combat*.

In comparison with Assaye, all fighting that had hitherto taken place in India was child's play. To call it a brilliant

victory is only using a term simply descriptive of what it was. It was a magnificent display of skill, moral courage, and perfect discipline, against native bravery and an immense numerical superiority. But it was not a mass of men, rudely collected, ignorant of military tactics, and unused to combinations, that Wellesley overthrew. Scindia's army was respectable in every arm, his cavalry excellent of their kind, and his artillery well served. His infantry were for a long time under the training of French officers; and the ease and precision with which he changed his front when the British crossed the Kaitna to assail his flank, showed that the lessons of the French disciplinarians had not been given in vain.

The total *déroute* of Assaye was followed by a tide of conquest. Fortress after fortress was reduced, and Scindia sought and obtained a truce. The British arms were next turned against the Rajah of Berar—General Wellesley marched against him—for the truce was ended suddenly, and Scindia joined his colleague with all his disposable force.

On the plains of Argaum, Wellesley found the confederated chiefs drawn up in order of battle. Scindia's immense cavalry formed the right, on the left were the Berar infantry and guns, flanked by the Rajah's cavalry, while a cloud of Pindaries were observed on the extreme right of the whole array.

The British moved down and formed line, the infantry in front, and the cavalry in reserve. The battle was short and decisive. The Berar's Persian infantry attacked the 74th and 78th regiments, and were literally annihilated; while Scindia's cavalry charge failed totally, the 26th native regiment repulsing it most gloriously. The British now rushed forward, and the Mahrattas broke and fled in every direction, abandoning their entire park of over one hundred pieces of artillery, and thirty-eight were captured at Argaum; while the cavalry pursued by moonlight the scattered host, and captured an immense number of elephants and beasts of burden, the entire baggage, and stores and arms of every description.

The fall of some places of strength, and the total defeat of their armies in the field, humbled Scindia and his ally, the Rajah, and obliged them to sue and obtain a peace. The brilliant career of General Wellesley had gained him a name in arms which future victories were to immortalise. To commemorate the battle of Assaye, a monument was erected in Calcutta, a sword presented to the victor by the citizens, and a gold vase by the officers he commanded. He was also made a Knight Companion of the Bath, and honoured by the thanks of Parliament. Even from the inhabitants of Seringapatam he received an address, remarkable for its simplicity and affection, committing him to the care of "the God of all castes," and invoking for

him "health, glory, and happiness." In 1805 he returned to his native land, "with war's red honours on his crest," bearing with him from the scene of glory the high estimation and affectionate wishes of every caste and colour.

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### CHAPTER III.

## CAPTURE OF THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

1806

IN 1805, the British Government, having ascertained that the Cape of Good Hope had only a force under two thousand regular troops for its protection, and that the militia and inhabitants were well inclined to assist a British army, in case a landing should be made, determined to attempt the reduction of that colony, by the employment of a body of troops cantoned in the neighbourhood of Cork, assisted by some regiments already on board the India ships at Falmouth.

The expedition was to be a secret one, and the troops embarked at Cork were ostensibly intended for service in the Mediterranean. It was supposed that this report would prevent suspicion, particularly as the Company's fleet sailed alone, as if its destination was really Madras direct. Sealed orders were, however, given to the commanders to be opened in a certain latitude, and in these they were ordered to rendezvous at Madeira.

The troops composing the expedition were placed under the command of General Baird. They comprised the 24th, 38th, 59th, 71st, 72nd, 83rd, and 98th, part of the 20th light dragoons, with artillery, artificers, and recruits, making a total force of six thousand six hundred and fifty rank and file.

It was at first suspected that some troops which had left Rochfort in two line-of-battle ships and escaped the vigilance of our cruisers, might have been intended to reinforce the garrison at the Cape, and General Baird conceived the corps intrusted to him not sufficiently strong to achieve the objects of the expedition. He asked, under this impression, for an additional force, and stated the grounds on which the request was made; but, in the meantime, it was ascertained that the French troops had proceeded to the West Indies; and that, therefore, the Cape of Good Hope had received no increase to its military establishment.

After another application to obtain an increase to the corps already under his orders, by having the 8th regiment added to the force, the expedition sailed, stopping at Madeira and St. Salvador to obtain water and provisions. Nothing of moment occurred in the voyage to South America; the passage was tedious, and an Indianman and transport ran on a low sandy

island, called the Roccas, and were totally lost. Fortunately, the men on board and twelve chests of dollars were saved from the wreck. Only three individuals perished; of these, General Yorke, in command of the artillery, was one, and Major Spicer, the next in seniority, succeeded him. While staying at St. Salvador, the regiments were landed and inspected, a remount of fifty horses obtained for the cavalry, and, all arrangements being completed, the expedition sailed for its final destination on the 28th of November, and made the African coast, a little to the northward of the Cape, on the 4th of January, 1806.

Table Bay, on the shore, and almost in the centre of which Cape Town stands, receives its name from that extraordinary eminence called Table Mountain, which rises about three thousand six hundred and eighty-seven feet above the level of the sea, and which terminates in a perfectly flat surface at that height, where the face of the rock on the side of Cape Town descends almost perpendicularly. To the eastward of the mountain, separated from it by a chasm, is Charles's Mount, more generally called the Devil's Tower; and on the westward, a round hill rises on the right hand of the bay, called the Lion's Head, from which a ridge of high land, terminating in another smaller hill, called the Lion's Rump, stretches towards the sea.

The town itself is handsome and extensive; and the streets, intersecting each other at right angles, are broad and airy, generally built with stone, and with terraces in front. The Company's gardens, walks, parade, and castle, all add to the beauty of the place, and render it superior to any colonial city in the possession of Great Britain.

The coast is everywhere dangerous—landing, excepting in the bays, and that, too, in favourable weather, almost impracticable—and hence, a very inferior force on shore, if the surf were at all up, might successfully resist any attempt at the disembarkation of an army.

The troops in garrison consisted of a detachment of Batavian artillery, the 22nd Dutch regiment of the line, a German regiment of Waldecks, and a native corps, which acted as light infantry. To these, an auxiliary battalion, formed from the seamen and marines of a frigate and corvette which had been wrecked upon the coast, were added; while a number of irregulars, mounted and dismounted, comprised of the boors, and armed with guns of enormous length of barrel, completed the force of General Janssens, who was then commandant at the Cape.

The governor had a high reputation, both as a soldier and a civilian, and from the excellence of his measures since his arrival at the Cape, was held most deservedly in great estimation by the colonists. On the appearance of the British fleet, although his

numerical superiority was greater than that of his enemy, he wisely considered that the *matériel* of the invaders was far more efficient than his own; and leaving a garrison in Cape Town, he determined to fall back on the interior with the remainder of his troops, and carry on a desultory war, until the arrival of a French or Dutch fleet from Europe should enable him to resort to active measures and save the colony. This plan, though ruinous to the inhabitants, if carried out, would have rendered the subjugation of the Cape a very difficult and tedious undertaking for the British, and in this posture of affairs the expedition made the coast, and came to anchor just out of range of the batteries in Table Bay.

The weather was fortunately calm, but the day was too far advanced to admit a landing of the troops, but all was prepared for effecting it on the morrow. The coast was sounded, the approaches to the town reconnoitred, and a small inlet, sixteen miles north-east of the town, called Leopard's Bay, was selected as the point on which the troops should be disembarked. The transports accordingly weighed and took their stations, while the men-of-war got into a position to cover the landing, in case of opposition, with their guns.

During the night the surf had risen so prodigiously, that at daylight it was declared unsafe for boats to attempt the beach, and a landing at Saldana Bay was proposed. There it could be easily effected, but it would carry the army a distance from the town, separate it on its march from the fleet, oblige it to depend for its supplies on what provisions it could carry, or any which by accidental circumstances it could obtain on its route; it would also entail a harassing march of seventy miles on soldiers so long cooped up on shipboard; and that, too, in the hot season of the year, over a heavy sand, where water was not procurable. Still, the uncertainty of the weather, and the necessity of an immediate attack, overcame all other objections; and on the evening of the 5th, General Beresford, with the 38th regiment and the 20th light dragoons, sailed for Saldana, with an understanding that the remainder of the army should proceed thither on the following morning.

But daylight on the 6th January broke with happier promise; the surf had gone down considerably; and it was at once decided that the troops should be landed without farther loss of time. The Highland brigade was instantly transferred from the transports to the boats, and the 71st, 72nd, and 93rd, effected a landing with but a single casualty, and that arising from the swamping of a launch, by which five-and-thirty Highlanders were drowned.

No other loss attended the operation—the light company of the 93rd cleared the brushwood of a few skirmishers that had

been thrown out by the enemy, and the remainder of the troops debarked without any opposition.

The artillery, consisting of four six-pounders and a couple of howitzers, were landed on the 7th; and the whole of the force being now safely on shore, the British general commenced his march direct on Cape Town, the guns being dragged through the sands by fatigue parties furnished from the fleet.

The advance was unopposed until the British army had approached a line of heights, some four miles distant from the landing place. The Blawberg, as one of these eminences is called, was occupied by burgher cavalry, and the videts announced that General Janssens was in position on the other side of the high grounds, and his whole disposable force drawn up in order of battle. The march was steadily continued, and when the Blawberg was crowned by the advance guard, the Batavian army, formed in two lines, with twenty-five pieces of artillery and a large corps of irregular cavalry, was discovered.

General Baird formed his corps into two columns of brigades; the right, comprising the 24th, 59th, and 83rd, under Lieutenant-Colonel Baird, commanding in the absence of General Beresford; and the left, consisting of the Highland regiments, under General Fergusson. While deploying into line, the Batavian guns opened, and their cavalry, by a left extension, threatened the right of the British. Baird's brigade refused its right, checking the burgher horse with its musketry; and the Highland regiments on the left made a rapid movement under a heavy cannonade, and advanced to the charge. The right wing of the Batavian army broke without waiting an assault, the left followed the example, and the field was totally abandoned by the enemy, with a considerable loss in killed and wounded.

Without cavalry it was impossible to complete the *déroute*. The guns were, therefore, carried off; and quitting the road to Cape Town, Janssens, in pursuance of his previous plan, marched eastward, and moved towards Hottentot Holland, with a hope of protracting a war in the interior. Of course the capital was the object of the conqueror. The fleet was in an exposed anchorage, and to equip his army for ulterior operations, and secure his communication with the sea, it was necessary to possess Cape Town.

The advance was very distressing, and the troops suffered much. The badness of the roads, the heat of the weather, and worse still, the scarcity of water, was severely felt before the brigades, at a late hour, reached their bivouacs in Reit Valley, a farming establishment belonging to the Dutch Government. Here some salt provisions, which had been floated through the surf, were brought up by the marines and partitioned among the soldiers; while the few and scanty springs attached to the farm

afforded them an indifferent supply of water. An immediate movement on the capital was imperative; and the next day the British reached a position beside the Salt River—an inlet some short distance from the strong lines which cover Cape Town.

These defences are formed of a chain of redoubts, with a connecting parapet, furnished with banquettes and a dry ditch. They extend about eight hundred yards, and unite the Devil's Berg with the sea. These lines were very formidable, as they had been considerably strengthened by the British during their possession of the colony. One hundred and fifty guns and howitzers were mounted on the works; and several batteries had been erected on the escarpe of the mountain, that would have exposed assailing troops to a flanking fire, and, in storming the lines, occasioned a severe loss of life. One battery and block-house were placed on a shoulder of the hill, thirteen hundred feet above the level of the plain. But this was probably the least effective of the defences; as, in modern warfare, a plunging fire is not regarded much. A mile behind the lines the castle of Good Hope is situated at the entrance of the town. It is a pentagon, with outworks strong enough to require a regular approach; and that side of the city which overlooks the bay is secured alike by the fire of the castle, and a number of batteries mounted with guns of heavy calibre.

To carry works so extensive, and so formidable in their defences, with a small corps like Baird's, unprovided with any artillery but the light field-pieces they had brought through the sands, was not to be attempted; and it was determined to obtain some heavy guns, and a reinforcement of seamen and marines from the fleet. But these were not required; the enemy sent out a flag of truce, and an armistice was agreed upon, which terminated ultimately in a capitulation. The town and its defences were given up to the British army, and without a shot, works were surrendered to a force of not four thousand men, on which were mounted four hundred and fifty-six guns and mortars, most of them of the heaviest calibre.

Janssens, after his defeat, retired towards the interior; and having disbanded the militia and burgher cavalry, which had accompanied him, he took a position at Kloof, with twelve hundred regular troops, and some five-and-twenty guns. General Baird, anxious to effect the tranquillity of the colony and terminate hostilities at once, despatched General Beresford to make overtures to the Dutch governor, and induce him to capitulate. A long and doubtful negotiation took place between the British and Batavian commanders, which eventually ended in the whole of the colony of the Cape of Good Hope and its dependencies, with all the rights and privileges held and exercised by the Dutch Government, being formally transferred to his Britannic Majesty.

Although the capture of the Cape was effected with trifling loss, and the opposition given to the British troops was far less formidable than might have been anticipated, still the operations which were so deservedly crowned with success, were boldly planned and bravely executed. Janssens exhibited no military talent, and in a country abounding in strong positions, to offer battle in an open plain, and oppose an irregular force to a well-disciplined army, was a strange decision of the Batavian commander, and could only terminate in defeat. In an engagement in which the Dutch army was so easily routed, and the ulterior operations which followed, there was nothing of that brilliancy which marked other victories achieved by British bravery, but no conquest was attended with more advantages and permanent results. A noble colony was obtained for Great Britain with little loss of life, and the only portion of Africa worth her occupation was secured to the "Mistress of the Seas."

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## CHAPTER IV.

## THE BATTLE OF MAIDA.

1806.

It has been remarked with great justice, that until the Peninsular war had been for some time in progress, the military enterprises of Great Britain invariably failed from the blind policy of those who planned them. Instead of condensing the power of the empire into one grand and sustained effort, its strength was frittered away in paltry and unprofitable expeditions. An army, imposing in its full integrity, if subdivided into corps, and employed on detached services, and in different countries, can achieve nothing beyond a partial success, for soon after its divided brigades are landed on their scenes of action, their weakness produces their discomfiture, and they retire necessarily before a superior force. In the first moment of disembarkation it may create a temporary alarm; but beyond this no object can be gained, and the result ends in an idle demonstration.

Political details are generally unconnected with the actual occurrences on the battle-field; and it will be enough to remark, that Sicily should have at this period commanded more attention from Britain than she did. Naturally defensible, with a well-affected population of nearly a million and a half, she had been taught to place but little reliance on her allies. One British corps held Messina, but a French force was moving to the extremity of Calabria, avowedly to drive it from the island. Though well-affected, the Sicilians were distrustful; they feared

that they should be abandoned to the vengeance of those troops who had already overrun Naples, and they believed that the British regiment waited only until the French army should make its descent, when they would embark for Malta, and leave the Sicilians to their fate.

At this time, Sir John Stuart succeeded Sir James Craig, a man best described by terming him an "old-school commander." Under him the army had been totally inactive; and eight thousand excellent troops were permitted to occupy their quarters idly, when so much depended upon a bold, even though not a very fortunate, display of energy in the British. Stuart at once perceived the mischievous consequences this indolence of his predecessor had occasioned; and he determined by active operations to redeem the British army from the apathetic character it had too justly obtained among the Sicilian people.

The British corps, amounting to eight thousand men, was concentrated at Messina. In Calabria the French were considerably detached; and though numerically stronger, with three thousand in the South, four thousand in Upper Calabria, and the remainder occupying numerous posts, it was quite practicable to take them in detail, effect a landing between the two corps, engage them separately, and clear the country from St. Euphemia to the Castle of Scylla. To insure success, despatch and secrecy were required. The first rested with Stuart, and every arrangement necessary on his part was effected; the latter depended on the Sicilian court, and by it the secrecy of the intended expedition was undoubtedly betrayed.

On the 28th of June, at Melazzo, the embarkation of five thousand men was quietly accomplished, and on the third morning they landed on the beach of St. Euphemia. During the 2nd and 3rd stores and supplies were disembarked; and moving forward, on that evening the pickets of the rival armies confronted each other. The enemy's force was at first supposed to be merely the division of Upper Calabria; but that of the South had formed a junction; and Reynier had now seven thousand infantry, and a few troops of cavalry amounting to three hundred and fifty sabres.

The British in numbers were greatly inferior. Five thousand infantry, six six-pounders and eight mountain guns formed their whole strength. Reynier was also in position—his army being posted on some heights which overlooked the march of the British as they moved through a low country, at first partially wooded, but opening into a spacious plain, and of course permitting their numbers and dispositions to be correctly ascertained by their enemy during the advance.

This, as the result proved, was an unfortunate advantage for the French General. Whether reckoning too much on his

opponent's inferiority of force, or undervaluing the character of his soldiers, Reynier, supposing that Stuart, having advanced in error, would retire on discovering his mistake, abandoned the heights, passed a river in his front, and offered battle on the plain. As his columns approached, General Stuart at once perceived, from the ground they covered, that Reynier's force was much larger than he had expected, and that he had united his detached brigades; but, with the just confidence of a British leader he trusted to the bravery of his troops; and in that safe reliance boldly stood "the hazard of the die."

The battle commenced (6th July) about nine o'clock, and there was no manœuvring on either side. The ground was level, and both armies, under cover of their light troops, advanced steadily and deployed into line. The enemy's left was composed of voltigeurs, and the right of the British that opposed them (Kempt's brigade) was formed of a light infantry battalion and the Corsican Rangers. After an interchange of three volleys, the French were ordered to advance; at the same time the British lowered their bayonets, and both pressed boldly forward. The front ranks were now within six paces of each other—the French advancing, cheered by the "*En avant, mes enfans!*" of their officers. The British needed no encouragement; on they came, with that imposing steadiness which told what the result must be, when bayonets crossed, and "steel met steel." The voltigeurs had not firmness to abide the shock; they broke and turned, but too late for flight to save them. Their front rank was bayoneted and trodden down, while the rear endeavoured to escape by a disorderly rush from the field, exposed to severe loss from the British artillery.

Kempt's gallant and successful charge was ably seconded by Ackland's brigade, which held the right centre. They advanced against the demi-brigade opposed to them, forced it back across the Amato, and never allowed the routed wing one moment to rally. The pursuit was so ardently continued that for a mile the French were followed by the victors, suffering heavily in killed and wounded, and losing a number of prisoners.

This success, though brilliant, was far from being decisive. The ardour of the right wing had carried it away, leaving the left totally unsupported, and open to Reynier's undivided efforts. From the superiority of his force, he showed a larger front, and availing himself of this advantage, endeavoured to turn the British left, and in this attempt his cavalry had nearly succeeded. After a feint upon the centre, they wheeled sharply to the right, making a flank movement, while their infantry threatened the British line with a charge. This was the crisis of the action. The French advanced, Stuart refusing his flank, and obliquing his line from the centre. Reynier's cavalry were about to charge,

when, fortunately, the 20th regiment, under Colonel Ross, which had landed after the march of the army, came up.

The attack was already made, the cavalry advancing, when Ross, under cover of some underwood, deployed in double-quick. Within a short distance, a close and murderous volley was thrown in, and the cavalry completely broken. The British line cheered and moved forward, the French gave way, and a complete *déroute* succeeded. No victory, considering the numbers opposed, could have been more decisive. Seven hundred killed, a thousand prisoners, and a large proportion of wounded, were the estimated loss of the enemy, while this was achieved by an amount of casualties greatly disproportioned, the victors having but one officer and forty-four men killed, and eleven officers and two hundred and seventy-one men wounded.

For that night the British army bivouacked on the battleground, and having received supplies from the shipping, advanced on the 6th to overtake the enemy's rear; while a brigade under Colonel Oswald marched on the French depot at Montelione, of which it took possession, making six hundred prisoners. The whole of the commissariat stores, with the entire baggage, and the military chest, were captured; and the remnant of the French army was saved only by abandoning arms and accoutrements, and retiring with all the confusion attendant upon a signal defeat.

Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which the victors were received. The defended places along the coast, turned on the land side by the army, of course surrendered unconditionally. The whole of the Peninsula was rapidly crossed, and on the 11th of July, the leading British brigade invested the Castle of Scylla.

This place, so deeply associated with ancient recollections, stands on a sheer rock, commanding the eastern point of the entrance of the Straits of Messina. The difficulties experienced by navigators occasionally in this confined channel, almost realise the old-world legends of its dangers. Once caught in the currents, when passing Cape Pelorus with light or contrary winds, a vessel must run for the anchorage, which lies directly beneath the batteries of the castle; and hence the possession of the place, especially to a maritime nation, was an object of paramount importance.

For some days the efforts of the English were confined to firing on the castle with the field guns. Of course, artillery of a light calibre could effect nothing but annoyance; until, on the 19th, when some heavy cannon were obtained from Messina. On the 21st they were placed in battery and opened with great effect; and on the same evening, as the guns were breaching rapidly, the commandant accepted terms, and surrendered the castle to the besiegers.

Although military achievements, on a minor scale, have been

eclipsed by the more brilliant conquests obtained by British armies in subsequent campaigns, still Maida was not only a glorious, but, in its results, a most important victory. Independently of humbling a presumptuous enemy, raising the depressed reputation of the British army, and converting the distrusting population of Sicily into grateful admirers, the positive results of Sir John Stuart's expedition were the destruction of all the military and naval resources of Calabria, and the occupation of a post which for eighteen months secured the navigation of the Straits of Messina, and, in a great degree, occasioned the meditated descent on Sicily to fail.

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## CHAPTER V.

## THE BATTLE OF ROLICA.

1808.

SPAIN and Portugal having been overrun by the French armies, Britain determined to make an effort in the cause of freedom, and come to the assistance of the oppressed.

The force destined for the relief of Portugal was sent partly from Ireland, and partly from Gibraltar. Nine thousand men from Cork, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, landed in Mondego bay on the 6th of August, and these were joined, two days afterwards, by Spencer's division of five thousand, making thus a total force of about fourteen thousand, in which two hundred of the 20th light dragoons and eighteen pieces of artillery were included.

A combined movement with a Portuguese corps under Bernardino Friere having been arranged, it was determined to move at once upon the capital; and on the morning of the 9th the British advanced guard, consisting of a part of the 60th and 95th rifles, commenced the march, supported by the brigades of Generals Hill and Ferguson. On the next day the remainder of the army followed—the men provided with sixty rounds of cartridges, provisions for three days, and attended by a number of mules, loaded with stores of various descriptions. "No troops ever took the field in higher spirits, or in a state of more perfect discipline. Confident in their leader likewise, and no less confident in themselves, they desired nothing more ardently than to behold their enemy."

On the 12th, Friere's corps joined at Leiria, but, under different pretexts, the Portuguese commander declined co-operating as he had promised, and limited his assistance to one weak brigade of infantry and two hundred and fifty horse. Undaunted by this early disclosure of imbecility and bad faith, Sir Arthur deter-

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mined to push on, and endeavour to engage the Duke of Abrantes before he could unite himself with Loison.

On receiving intelligence of the descent of the British, Junot, adding the brigade of Thomieres to that of Delaborde, despatched the latter towards Mondego, to observe the enemy closely, and use every means to retard their advance. Delaborde, accordingly moving to the coast, found himself on the eve of an affair with the British, and he fell back leisurely as they advanced. His rear-guard quitted Caldas the evening before Sir Arthur entered it; and on the following morning, and for the first time on the Peninsula, the rival armies of France and Britain found themselves in each other's presence.

On the 15th, a trifling affair of outposts produced a few casualties, and on the 16th, Delaborde's position was reconnoitred and dispositions made to attack it.

This, in a European command, was to be Wellington's maiden field. In the numbers engaged, Rolica bore no proportion to the masses combatant in future battles, but it was a well-contested and sanguinary encounter, and worthy to be the name first engraven on the long scroll of victories of which it gave such glorious promise.

The French position, in natural strength and romantic beauty, was unequalled; and when Delaborde had made up his mind to risk a battle, he displayed consummate judgment in selecting the ground on which the trial of strength should be decided.

The villages of Rolica and Caldas stand at either extremity of an extensive valley, opening to the west. In the centre, Obidos, with its ruined castle and splendid aqueduct, recalls the days of Moorish glory. The village of Rolica stands on a bold height, surrounded by vineyards and olive groves, and a sandy plain extends in front, thickly studded with shrubs and dwarf wood. The eminence on which the village is placed, and where the French general formed his line of battle, had one flank resting on a rugged height, and the other on a mountain impassable to any but a goatherd. Behind, lay a number of passes through the ridges in his rear, affording Delaborde a means of retreat; or, if he chose to contest them, a formidable succession of mountain posts.

All the arrangements for attack having been completed on the preceding evening, at dawn the British got under arms. A sweeter morning never broke—the mountain mists dispersed, the sun shone gloriously out, a thousand birds were singing, and myriads of wild flowers shed their fragrance around. Nature seemed everywhere in quiet and repose, presenting a strange contrast to the roar of battle which immediately succeeded, and the booming of artillery, as, repeated by a thousand echoes, it reverberated among the lately peaceful hills.

In three columns, the allied brigades left their bivouacs. The right (Portuguese), consisting of twelve hundred infantry and fifty dragoons, were directed to make a considerable detour, turn the enemy's left flank, and bear down upon his rear. The left, two brigades of infantry, three companies of rifles, a brigade of light artillery, and forty horse, were to ascend the hills of Obidos, drive in Delaborde's posts, and turn his right at Rolica. Ferguson, who commanded, was also to watch lest Loison should move from Rio Mayor, and, if he came up, engage him, and prevent a junction with Delaborde. The centre, composed of four brigades—those of Hill, Crawford, Nightingale, and Fane—two brigades of guns, the remainder of the cavalry, and four hundred Portuguese light infantry, were directed to advance up the heights and attack the enemy in front.

To traverse the distance between the British bivouac and French outposts (three leagues), consumed a good portion of the morning; and the march to the battle-ground, whether viewed with relevance to the beauty of its scenery, or the order of its execution, was most imposing.

When sudden irregularities of the surface disturbed the order of a column, it halted until the distances were corrected, and then marched silently on with the coolness of a review. Presently the light troops became engaged, the centre broke into columns of regiments, while the left pressed forward rapidly, and the rifles, on the right, bore down on the tirailleurs. Delaborde's position was now critical, for Ferguson, topping the heights, threatened his rear. But the French general acted promptly—he abandoned the plain, and falling back upon the passes of the Sierra, took up a new position less assailable than the former one; and, from the difficult nature of the mountain surface, requiring, on Sir Arthur's part, a new disposition of attack.

Five separate columns were now formed, and to each a different pass was allotted. The openings in the heights were so narrow and difficult, that only a portion of the columns could come into fire. The pass on the extreme right was attacked by the Portuguese; the light troops of Hill's brigade and the 5th regiment advanced against the second; the centre was to be carried by the 9th and 29th, the fourth by the 45th, and the fifth by the 82nd.

Unfortunately the front attack was made either too soon, or difficulties had delayed the flanking corps—and, in consequence, the passes were all stormed, before Delaborde had been even aware that he was endangered on his flank and rear. Regardless of the ground, than which nothing could be more formidable, the assailants mounted the ravines. Serious obstacles met them at every step—rocks and groves overhung the gorges in the hills—and where the ground was tolerably open for a space from rocks,

it was covered thickly with brushwood and wild myrtle. Thus the order of the column was deranged; while a broken surface concealed the enemy, and suffered the French to keep up a withering fusilade on troops who had not leisure to return it.

The centre pass, on which the 29th and 9th were directed to advance, was particularly difficult. The 29th led, and the 9th supported it. Entering the gorge undauntedly, the leading companies were permitted to approach a ravine, with precipitous rocks on one side and a thick myrtle wood on the other. From both a tremendous fire was unexpectedly opened. In front and on the flanks, the men fell by dozens; and, as the leading company was annihilated, the column, cumbered by its own dead and wounded, was completely arrested in its movement. But the check was only momentary. Colonel Lake, who led the regiment on horseback, waved his hat and called on the men to follow. A wild cheer was returned, and a rush made up the pass. Notwithstanding the sustained fusilade on every side, the forward movement was successful—and after overcoming every attempt to repel their daring charge, with diminished numbers the 29th crowned the plateau.

But the enemy were not to be easily beaten. Before the 9th could clear the pass, or the 29th form their line, a French battalion advanced and charged. They were most gallantly received; a severe contest ensued; and, after a mutual slaughter, the enemy were repulsed. With increased numbers, again and again the charges were repeated and repelled. At last the 9th got into action; and the head of the 5th regiment began to show itself as it topped the summit of the second pass. On every point the attacks had been successful, and to save himself from being cut off, Delaborde retired in perfect order; and from the difficulty of the ground and his superiority in cavalry, although pressed by the light troops, effected his retreat with little molestation.

This brilliant affair, from the strength of their position, and the obstinacy with which the French contested every inch of ground, cost the British a heavy loss. Even, when forced from the heights, Delaborde attempted to take a new position, and hold the village of Zambugeira. But he was driven back with the loss of three guns—and retreating through the pass of Runa, by a long night march, he gained Montecheque next day.

The French casualties in killed, wounded, and prisoners amounted to a thousand men, and the British to about half that number. Delaborde was among the wounded, and Colonel Lake in the return of the killed.

Delaborde's defeat having left the road to Torres Vedras open, Sir Arthur pursued the French to Villa Verde, where the British halted for the night, and, cheered by his opening success,

the British leader seemed determined to improve it. Orders were accordingly issued to prepare for a rapid march next day, and "it seemed as if no check would be given to the ardour of the troops till they should have won a second victory." But despatches were received that night, announcing the arrival of General Anstruther with a reinforcement of troops and stores. The fleet were reported to be at anchor off Peniche; and, to cover the disembarkation, and unite himself with the corps on board the transports, Sir Arthur's march was directed on Lourinho. There the British bivouacked that night, and on the next morning took a position beside the village of Vimiero.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BATTLE OF VIMIERO.

1808.

VIMIERO stands at the bottom of a valley, and at the eastern extremity of a ridge of hills extending westward towards the sea. The river Maceira flows through it, and on the opposite side, heights rise eastward, over which winds the mountain road of Lourinho. In front of the village a plateau of some extent is slightly elevated above the surrounding surface; but it, in turn, is completely overlooked by the heights on either side. The British, never anticipating an attack, had merely taken up ground for the night, and with more attention to convenience than security. Six brigades occupied the high ground westward of Vimiero—one battalion, the 50th, with some rifle companies, were bivouacked on the plateau, having a half brigade of nines, and a half brigade of six pounders. The eastern heights were occupied by pickets only, as water could not be procured in the vicinity—and in the valley, the cavalry and reserve artillery had taken their ground for the night.

The communication immediately made by Sir Arthur Wellesley to his senior officer, Sir Harry Burrard, both of the past and the intended operations, had been unfavourably received—and Sir Harry declined the daring but judicious step of an immediate advance on Mafra, by which the position taken by the French on the heights of Torres Vedras must have been necessarily turned. In fact, to every suggestion of Sir Arthur he raised continuous objections, and seemed totally opposed to any forward movement. He pleaded, in apology for inaction, that the cavalry was weak, the artillery badly horsed; that a march, which should remove the British from their shipping, would interrupt their supplies and endanger the army; and the best of the bad reasons which he gave was the expected arrival of Sir John Moore with a strong

reinforcement. It was useless in Sir Arthur Wellesley to point out, as he did, the advantages of an advance, with an assurance, which proved true, that if they did not, the French would become assailants. Sir Harry appeared to have formed a stubborn resolution of remaining quiet that no argument or remonstrance could disturb, and Sir Arthur Wellesley returned to his camp, convinced that the military incapacity of his superior officer would, when it paralysed early success as it did that of Rolica, entail upon the expedition ulterior disaster and disgrace. It was otherwise decreed, and the decision of an enemy wreathed the laurel on Wellesley's brow, of which the timidity of a feeble-minded colleague would have robbed him.

Delaborde had executed his orders to check the advance of the British with a zeal and ability that added greatly to his military reputation. Junot, in the interim, was actively engaged in concentrating his brigades, and drawing every disposable man from his garrisons, to enable him to bring a force to bear against the British, that, from its superior formation, must ensure success. His whole corps was formed into two divisions; Delaborde commanding one, and Loison the other, while the reserve, composed entirely of grenadiers, was entrusted to Kellerman. All his dispositions having been completed, the Duke of Abrantes advanced to Vimiero, where he had ascertained that his enemy was halted.

Sir Arthur was awakened at midnight by a German officer in charge of the outlying picket, with the intelligence of Junot's movements, and an assurance that an attack was certain, as the French advance was not above a league distant. Patrols were immediately sent out; and while every care was taken against surprise, the line was not alarmed, nor the men permitted to be disturbed.

Junot quitted his position on the evening of the 20th, and marched all night by roads bad in themselves, and interrupted by numerous defiles; consequently great delay occurred, and it was seven o'clock next morning, when he arrived within four miles of the British outposts. The formation of his columns was effected unseen, as the broken ground behind which he made his dispositions, entirely concealed his movements. The first intimation of a serious attack was only given when a mass of Junot's cavalry deployed in front of the picket that was observing the Lourinho road. Perceiving instantly the point on which the French were about to direct their column, Sir Arthur crossed the ravine with the brigades of Ferguson, Nightingale, Aucland, and Bowes, thus securing his weakest point—the left—before Junot had made a demonstration against it.

Presently the enemy's columns came on; the right by the Lourinho road, and left marching on the plateau, occupied by the 50th and rifles. The onset of both divisions was made with the

usual impetuosity of Frenchmen, and in both the British skirmishers were driven in.

The British right was furiously attacked. Unchecked by the light troops covering the line, the French came boldly forward, until it found itself directly in front of the 36th, 40th, and 71st. It deployed instantly, and several volleys of musketry were mutually returned, and at a distance so close as to render the effect murderous. But the fusillade was ended quickly; the 82nd and 29th pushed forward, and joined their comrades when pressed by an enormous superiority. "Charge!" was the order; and a cheer, "loud, regular, and appalling," announced that Britain was coming on.

The French stood manfully; but though they waited the onset, they could not withstand it. They were driven from the field—a vain attempt to rally, when the 71st and 82nd had flung themselves on the ground to recover breath, failed—and six guns were taken. The front rank of the French division was literally annihilated; it lay as it had fallen, and told with what determination it had stood, and the desperation with which it had been assaulted.

On the left, the French column having pushed the rifles before it, advanced upon the 50th formed in line. The regiment was strong, numbering about nine hundred bayonets, and supported by a half brigade of guns; and though the French had seven pieces with their column, it suffered heavily from the British cannonade. The enemy's advance was made in close order of half battalions. Sheltered from the fire of the artillery, the French halted behind a broken hillock, closed up their ranks, and advanced to the attack. The 50th remained until this moment with "ordered arms." With excellent judgment, the colonel, leaving the left wing of his regiment in line, threw his right into echelons of companies, and ordered it to form line upon the left. But there was not time to complete the formation, as the enemy came on, opening a hot but inefficient fire from its flanks. Part of the right wing of the 50th bore directly on the angle of the advancing column—and when within twenty paces, the order was given to fire, and that to "Charge!" succeeded. Broken totally by the close discharge, the angle of the column forced itself on the centre; all was instantly disorganised, and the artillery cutting their traces, added to the confusion. The British pressed on, the French got mobbed, and assisted by part of the 20th light dragoons, a column five times numerically superior were for two miles fairly driven from their ground by one regiment, until they were relieved by the French cavalry reserve, which came up in a force not to be resisted.

While these more important operations were repulsed, the town of Vimiero was attacked by a lesser column (Kellerman's

reserve), that had flanked the larger, and the 43rd regiment was furiously assailed. One company occupied the churchyard, another held some houses that covered the road by which the French attack was made; and the fire of both was so destructive, that the column was repelled with immense slaughter. On the extreme left, the 97th and 52nd repulsed Delaborde with considerable loss; on every point the attack failed, and the field was won.

No troops fought better than the French, and no battle could have been more determinately contested. The enemy's reserve "performed prodigies of valour, advancing under a cross fire of musketry and cannon, and never giving way until the bayonets of the British troops drove them down the descent. But they were routed on every side; and, with relation to the numbers engaged, the slaughter was terrific. Upwards of three thousand Frenchmen were killed and wounded, and a number of prisoners made, while the British loss was computed, in killed, wounded, and missing, at seven hundred and eighty-three.

One casualty was sincerely deplored. In leading a squadron of the 20th, Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor was killed. He had charged the broken infantry of Kellerman, and committed sad havoc among the *élite* of the reserve, when, surrounded by a whole brigade of French cavalry, he fell in the *mêlée*, shot through the heart.

Sir Harry Burrard landed after the battle commenced, but very prudently left the termination of the contest in his hands by whom the first disposition had been made. Sir Harry was not in time to assist in the victory—but he had ample leisure to mar its results. Wellesley urged that this was the moment to advance, push on to Torres Vedras, place Junot between two fires, and oblige him to begin a retreat of immense difficulty by Alenquer and Villa Franca. All was admirably prepared for the movement. The supply of ammunition was sufficient, provisions were abundant, and the troops in high courage and superb discipline. The French, on the contrary, were depressed by an unexpected defeat; and, greatly disorganised and wearied by long marches, were certain of being materially inconvenienced by an immediate advance of the British.

But Sir Harry was immovable. He had made his mind up to await the arrival of Sir John Moore before he should advance a step from Vimiero. A victory had been gained—a complete and brilliant victory. But what was that to him? "The cavalry," he said, "were certainly not strengthened, nor the artillery horses improved, by the exertions they had undergone." Stop he would—and Junot was permitted to return without annoyance; and the British, who should have never halted until they had reached Lisbon, rested on the ground they won.

Is it not inconceivable, that Britain should have consigned her armies to the leading of antiquated tacticians, bigoted in old-world notions, and who would scarcely venture beyond a second bridge without spending half the day in reconnoitring? But such things were—and the energies of the first military people in the world were paralysed for half a century, by commands being entrusted to men, who, in cases of ordinary embarrassment, would have been found incompetent to extricate a regiment from a difficulty. But such things were!

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## CHAPTER VII.

## THE BATTLE OF CORUNNA.

1809.

A PERIOD of inaction succeeded the victory at Vimiero. Burrard was superseded in his command by Sir Hew Dalrymple, and the convention of Cintra perfected, by which an army was restored to France, that, had Sir Arthur Wellesley's advice been attended to, must have been eventually destroyed or driven into such extremity as should have produced an unconditional surrender. Other articles in this disgraceful treaty recognised a full exercise of rights of conquest to the French, secured to them the enormous plunder their rapacity had accumulated, and granted an amnesty to every traitor who had abandoned his country, and aided the invaders in effecting its subjugation. No wonder that this precious convention occasioned in Britain a universal feeling of disgust. No wonder that blood spilled in vain, and treasure uselessly wasted, roused popular indignation to a pitch of excitement which no occurrence in modern history can parallel.

Within twelve months from the commencement of the war Britain had sent over to the Spanish armies (besides £2,000,000) 150 pieces of field artillery, 42 thousand rounds of ammunition, 200 thousand muskets, 61 thousand swords, 79 thousand pikes, 23 million ball cartridges, 6 million leaden balls, 15 thousand barrels of gunpowder, 92 thousand suits of clothing, 356 thousand sets of accoutrements and pouches, 310 thousand pairs of shoes, 37 thousand pairs of boots, 40 thousand tents, 250 thousand yards of cloth, 10 thousand sets of camp equipage, 118 thousand yards of linen, 50 thousand great coats, 50 thousand canteens, 54 thousand haversacks, with a variety of other stores, far too numerous to be recapitulated.

The particulars of the treaty of Cintra, immediately on being known in Britain, occasioned the recall of Sir Hew

Dalrymple; while under the plea of ill health, his colleague, Sir Harry Burrard, resigned and returned home. What a different result the Portuguese campaign would have exhibited had these two old gentlemen been left in a district command, and not been allowed to check a career of victory which opened with such glorious promise!

Sir Arthur Wellesley had already returned to Britain, and many officers of all ranks followed his example. The command of the army devolved on Sir John Moore, a man most deservedly respected by the country, and popular with his soldiers.

Meanwhile, the general indication of national resistance to French oppression on the part of the Spaniards, encouraged hopes that if assisted by Britain, the independence of the Peninsula might be restored. This was a consideration worthy of a statesman's serious regard in both France and Britain—for the thralldom or independence of Spain was an object of vital importance. As to what might be expected from the Spaniards themselves in any attempt made for their own liberation, their invaders and their allies seemed to have formed an erroneous estimate—the British over-rating the importance of their exertions in the field, as much as the French undervalued that patriotic impulse, which had wakened up the slumbering spirit of the people. The British cabinet, however, determined to foster this national feeling, and by munificent supplies and the presence of a British army, stimulate the Spanish people to assert their lost liberty, and fling off a yoke no longer tolerable. For this purpose, a force of twenty thousand men was directed to be assembled at Valladolid, and a reinforcement of thirteen thousand, under Sir David Baird, was despatched from Britain to join them; the whole were to be placed under the orders of Sir John Moore.

Although Sir David's corps was landed by the middle of October, the army of Lisbon was not in a condition to move until the end of the month; and then, under a false belief that the direct route to Salamanca was impracticable for the passage of artillery, the batteries and cavalry, with a protecting brigade of three thousand infantry, were moved by Badajoz and the Escurial, entailing on them an additional march of upwards of one hundred and fifty miles. Worse still, a delay in commencing operations was unavoidable, and that was attended with the worst results.

The whole of Sir John Hope's corps having been at last collected, and the cavalry assembled at Villa Vicosa, the order to move forward was given.

On the 5th of November, Sir John Moore was at Atalia, on the 8th he reached Almeida, and on the 11th his advanced guard crossed the rivulet that divides Spain from Portugal, and entered Ciudad Rodrigo. At San Martin he slept in the house of the curé, and occupied the same bed that had the former year been

assigned to Junot and Loison on their respective marches, and on the 13th he entered Salamanca.

There, disastrous news awaited him—for one of his supporting armies was already *hors de combat*. Count Belvidere, having made an absurd movement on Burgos, was attacked by a superior force, and his raw levies completely routed; while previously, Blake's army had been utterly dispersed, and the magazines at Reynosa taken. To add to this mass of evil tidings, intelligence arrived that the fall of Madrid might be confidently expected, while, instead of his advance into Spain being covered with an army of seventy thousand men, Moore found himself in an open town without a gun, without a Spanish picket, with only three infantry brigades, and the French outposts but three marches distant.

Madrid fell—the news could not be credited—and it was asserted that, though the Retiro was taken, the town held obstinately out. The inaction of the British was generally censured; the envoy had remonstrated on the subject; and the army did not conceal their impatience. Influenced by these considerations, Moore determined to make a diversion on the capital, and attack Soult, who was at Saldanha, on the Carion. A forward movement followed—Baird was directed to march from Astorga, and Romana was informed of the intended operation, and requested to assist.

The decision of attacking Soult was known to the army and gave general satisfaction. On the 16th, headquarters were at Toro, and passing Villapondo and Valderosa, on the 20th Sir John reached Majorga, and was joined by Baird's division, making an united force of twenty-three thousand five hundred infantry, two thousand four hundred cavalry, and, including a brigade of three-pounders—from its small calibre perfectly useless—an artillery of nearly fifty guns. Soult's corps amounted to sixteen thousand infantry and twelve hundred dragoons. The great portion of the former were at Saldanha, and Debelle's cavalry at Sahagun.

While thus advancing, the brilliant affair between Lord Paget and the French cavalry shed a passing glory on a series of operations, whose results were generally so calamitous. We shall give the affair in the words of the noble colonel of the 10th Hussars, than whom, on that occasion, no one "by daring deed" more effectually contributed to victory.

The Monastero Melgar Abaxo is distant about three leagues from Sahagun, in which place a corps of seven hundred French cavalry were reported to be lodged. As they were at some distance from the main body of the French army, it was deemed practicable to cut them off, and Lord Paget determined, at all events, to make the attempt. He accordingly put himself at the head of the 10th and 15th Hussars, and in the middle of a cold

wintery night, when the direct route to Salamanca was impracticable, for the ground was covered with snow, set off for that purpose.

When they had ridden about two-thirds of the way, Lord Paget divided his force, and desiring General Slade, with the 10th, to pursue the course of the Cea, and to enter the town by that side, he himself, followed by the 15th, wheeled off to approach it by a different route. It was not long before his lordship's party fell in with a picket of the enemy; and all, except one man, were either cut down or made prisoners. But the escape of one was as injurious, under existing circumstances, as the escape of the whole; for the alarm was given, and before the 15th could reach the place the enemy were ready to receive them. It was now broad daylight, and as our troops drew near, the French were soon formed in what appeared to be an open plain, at no great distance from the town. The 15th were wheeled into line in a moment, and as there was no time to be lost, they followed their leader at a brisk trot, with the intention of charging; but when they were yet fifty yards from the enemy, they found that a wide ditch divided them, and that the French had availed themselves of other inequalities in the ground, of which, when some way off, they had not been aware.

A pause was now necessarily made, but one instant served to put the whole again in motion. The regiment, wheeling to its left, soon found a convenient place for crossing; and though the enemy manœuvred actively to hinder the formation, they were again in line, and advancing to the charge, within five minutes from the commencement of the check. A few changes of ground now took place, as each corps strove to gain the flank of the other, but they were only a few. The British cavalry effected its object, and then coming down at full speed upon their opponents, who stood to receive the shock, they overthrew them in an instant. Many were killed upon the spot, many more unhorsed, and one hundred and fifty-seven were made prisoners, including two lieutenant-colonels. On this occasion the British cavalry amounted only to four hundred men, whilst that of the French fell not short of seven hundred.

The weather continued bad; the troops were a good deal knocked up by forced marching, and Sir John halted on the 22nd and 23rd for supplies, intending by a night march to reach the Carion, and attack Soult on the morrow. Every account made the British numerically greater than the enemy, and though the French had been reinforced, still Moore's army was stronger by fully five thousand men.

All dispositions were made for the intended attack. At eight at night, the army were to move in two columns, and the right, which was to force the bridge and penetrate to Saldanha,

was actually getting under arms, when couriers arrived "loaded with heavy tidings." The French were moving in all directions to cut the British off; the corps which had been marching south, was suddenly halted at Talavera; two strong divisions were moving from Placentia; the Badajoz army was in full march on Salamanca—and Napoleon himself in the field, determined, as it was reported, to "sweep the British before him to the ocean."

This was, in truth, disastrous intelligence. The orders to advance were countermanded instantly, the troops, who had already been mustering, were retired to their quarters, and the object of the expedition seemed virtually ended. The campaign was indeed a tissue of mistakes—operating with feeble allies, acting on false information, advancing to-day, retiring to-morrow, with everything to harass and nothing to excite the soldier, until at last, the ill-fated and ill-planned expedition terminated in a ruinous retreat.

In making preparations for a rapid march before an enemy, that from report was overwhelming if not avoided, the 23rd of December was consumed, and the general plan for regressive operations was arranged by instantly retreating on Galicia.

All arrangements being completed, Moore commenced retreating on the 24th. Hope's division fell back on Castro Gonzalo, and Baird's on Valencia; while cavalry patrols were pushed forward on the Carion, with orders to retire at nightfall of the 25th, giving the reserve and light infantry, which formed the rear-guard, a start of some three or four hours in advance. All was admirably executed—and the columns, unmolested, reached their respective destinations.

The retreat continued, marked by some occasional affairs between the cavalry of the advanced and rear guard, which terminated invariably in favour of the latter. The hussar regiments behaved most nobly, and on every occasion, regardless of numbers, or the more discouraging movements of a retreat, they sought the combat, and always came off the conquerors.

The infantry already began to experience the annoyance of long marches, severe weather, and a very indifferent commissariate. To march over cut-up roads, and through an exhausted country, where no friendly place of strength protects, no well-supplied magazine refreshes, soon harasses the overloaded soldier. But that, when accomplished in the dead of winter—in cold and darkness, sleet and rain—was enough to have subdued the spirit of any army but a British one, retiring under every privation, and with seventy thousand veteran troops marching on their flanks and rear.

The army reached Benevente on the 27th—and the crossing of the Esla, though exceedingly troublesome, was effected with inconsiderable loss. The roads were wretched, the weather bad,

and the French pursuit marked by the fiery character of their emperor. He crossed the Carpenteras, regardless of obstacles that would have discouraged the boldest—and, in a hurricane of sleet and hail, passed his army over the Guadarama, by a route declared impracticable even to a mountain peasant.

This bold operation, worthy of the conqueror of Italy, was followed up by an immediate advance. On the 26th the main body of the British continued retreating on Astorga—the bridge across the Esla was destroyed—and the night of the 27th passed over in tolerable quiet. In the morning, however, the French were seen actively employed. Five hundred cavalry of the guard tried for the ford above the ruined bridge, found it, and passed over. The pickets forming the rear-guard at once confronted them, and, led on by Colonel Otway, charged repeatedly, and checked the leading squadron. General Stuart put himself at the head of the pickets, while Lord Anglesea rode back to bring up the 10th. Charges were made on both sides; the pickets gave ground, the French advanced, but the 10th were speedily at hand, and came forward. The pickets rallied, they cheered and cut boldly in at speed, the French were overthrown and driven across the river, with the loss of their Colonel (Le Fevre), and seventy officers and men.

This brilliant encounter had the results that boldness wins. The French kept a respectful distance, and thus, the column was enabled to gain Astorga without further molestation.

But the danger was momentarily increasing. From prisoners taken in the cavalry affair on the Esla, it was ascertained that, on the preceding evening, the headquarters of Napoleon's own corps were but sixteen miles from the bivouacs of the British, and to reach Villa Franca before the French was imperatively necessary. On that event how much depended—for on the possession of that road, in a great degree, would rest the safety or destruction of the British, as it opens through a defile into a country that for miles renders cavalry movements impracticable, and entirely protects the flanks of a retiring army.

It is astonishing how quickly a retreat in bad weather destroys the *morale* of the best army. The British divisions had marched from Sabugal on the 24th in the highest order; on the 30th, on reaching Astorga, their disorganisation had commenced; they seemed a mob flying from a victorious enemy, and General Moore himself exhibited a despondency that was apparent to all around him.

That he was an officer of great distinction everyone acknowledged during his life, and posterity will never deny it; but it was too manifest that a fear of responsibility, a dread of doing that which was wrong, of running himself and his troops into difficulties from which they might not be able to extricate themselves,

were a great deal too active to permit either his talents or his judgment properly to exert their influence. Sir John Moore had earned the highest reputation as a general of division; he was aware of this, and perhaps felt no inclination to risk it; at all events he was clearly incapable of despising partial obstacles in the pursuit of some great ultimate advantage; in one word, he was not a Wellington. Of this no more convincing proof need be given than the fact that, even at the moment when the preparations for the brief advance were going on, his whole heart and soul seemed turned towards the Portuguese frontier.

Romana had unfortunately given up the Leon route, and marching on Astorga, encumbering the roads with the ruins of his baggage, and worse still, filling the villages he passed through with crowds of ragged followers unable to get on—some from absolute decrepitude and want, and more from being attacked by fever of the worst type.

The retreat was renewed next morning, and the marching continued with such constancy that, by abandoning the sick and wounded, wasting the ammunition, and destroying the stores, the British outstripped pursuit, and on the 3rd of January found themselves in comparative safety. The cavalry, as usual, distinguished themselves; and at Cacabelos, where the rear-guard was overtaken, behaving with their customary *esprit*, they repelled the advance of the French hussars, and prevented the light troops from being surrounded and cut off. Indeed the escape of the rifles was wonderful. They were retreating through the town, and part of the rear-guard had already crossed the bridge, when the French cavalry came suddenly on in overwhelming force, and galloping into the rear companies of the 95th, succeeded in making some prisoners.

The rifles instantly broke into skirmishing order, and commenced retiring up the hill, when a body of voltigeurs rushed to the support of the cavalry, and the affair became serious. The 95th, however, had now thrown themselves into the vineyards behind the town, and kept up a rapid and well-directed fire. The French attempted to get in their rear, and charged boldly up the road, led on by General Colbert. But the fusilade from the vineyard was maintained with such precision that the French were driven back, leaving a number of dead on the field, among whom their brave and daring leader was included.

Sir John was also threatened with attack at Villa Franca. A strong column of infantry appeared on the heights, in full march on that division which was in position on the opposite hill. The artillery opened, and an engagement appeared inevitable. But checked by the cannonade, the forward movement of the French was arrested; and Sir John, anxious to reach the better position of Lugo, continued his retreat, and prudently avoided coming to

a general action, where the ground had no military advantage to induce him to risk a combat. The main body marched to Herrieras, the reserve to Villa Franca, and the rear-guard moved at ten o'clock, and reached its bivouac at midnight.

The cavalry, no longer serviceable in a country rough, hilly, and wooded, with numerous enclosures around vineyards and plantations of mulberry trees, were sent on to Lugo; the infantry and artillery marching for the same place. During the whole day and night that distressing movement was executed, and forty miles were passed over roads on every side broken up, and in places, knee-deep. The men dropped down by whole sections on the wayside and died—some with curses, some with the voice of prayer in their mouths—while women and children, of whom an immense number had injudiciously been allowed to accompany the army, shared a similar fate.

Horrible scenes momentarily occurred—children frozen in their mothers' arms, women taken in labour, and, of course, perishing with their ill-fated progeny. Some were trying by the madness of intoxication to stimulate their worn-out frames to fresh exertion—or, when totally exhausted, to stupify the agonies of the slow but certain death that cold and hunger must inevitably produce before another sun dawned. It was awful to observe the different modes, when abandoned to die, in which the miserable wretches met their fate. Some lay down in sullen composure—others vented their despair in oaths, and groans, and curses—and not a few in heart-rending prayers to heaven that the duration of their sufferings might be abridged.

From an early period of the retreat, the discipline of the troops was shaken by rapid movements and an absence of regular supplies. Hence, the men were obliged to shift as they best could, and this laxity in discipline gradually increasing, ended in frequent scenes of drunkenness, rioting, and robbery. Every town and village was sacked in search of food, the wine stores plundered, and the casks, in mere wantonness, broken and spilled. Nothing could check the licentious spirit of the troops; and when a man was hanged at Benivedre, even that sad example had not the least effect, for many of the marauders were detected in the act of plundering within sight of the fatal tree.

During this distressing movement, the French had pressed the British rear-guard closely, and a constant scene of skirmishing ensued. Though invariably checked by the light troops, still the army was hourly becoming less effective, every league reducing it both in numbers and resources. Quantities of arms and necessaries were abandoned or destroyed, and two bullock carts loaded with dollars were thrown over a precipice into the bed of a mountain torrent. All these things proved how desperately reduced that once fine and well-appointed army had become.

Indeed its appearance was rather that of a procession of maimed invalids with a caravan of sick soldiers, than an army operating in front of a determined enemy, and expecting momentarily to come to action.

It was a matter of surprise to all, that the French leader did not force on an engagement; but, on the contrary, Soult followed this half-ruined army with a caution that appeared unaccountable and unnecessary. Still the moment of attack could not be distant; and it was certain that the Marshal only waited for some embarrassment in the march, to throw his leading divisions on the retreating brigades of Britain, and force on a decisive battle.

This event was particularly to be dreaded while passing the bridge and village of Constantino. A long and difficult mountain road leads to the summit of a bold height, down which it winds again by a gradual descent till it meets the bridge. The occupation of this height, before the columns had passed the river, would expose them to a heavy fire. Sir John Moore determined to check the French pursuit, and hold the hill, until the rear of the main division had cleared the bridge and village. His dispositions were quickly made; the 28th regiment with the rifle corps were drawn up beside the river, and the 20th, 52nd, and 91st on a hill immediately in their rear, flanked by the horse artillery.

The French attacked with their usual spirit. The cavalry and tirailleurs advanced against the bridge; but the fire from the British riflemen, assisted by the guns on the height, drove them back with loss. A second and a third attack, made with equal boldness, ended in a similar result, and darkness put a stop to the fighting. The French withdrew their light troops, the British continued their retreat, and before morning broke the rear-guard joined the army, now bivouacked in position, or cantoned in and around the town of Lugo.

The concentration of so many troops at this wretched place produced a scene of hurry and confusion with which the distant cannonade at the bridge of Constantino seemed in perfect keeping.

On one side was to be seen the soldier of every rank who had secured a habitation to shelter him, but whom duty or inclination occasioned to wander through the crowds of people, and deeply mudded streets of the town; on the other, the disconsolate person that made his appearance after the Alcalde's ingenuity had been stretched to the uttermost in procuring quarters for the troops already arrived, and whose *personal friends* had been subjected to the unusual order for admitting strangers. The pitiableness of his case was either to be discovered by a resigned and woeful visage, or by certain ebullitions of temper, destined to waste

themselves in the desert air. Next were to be seen the conductors of baggage, toiling through the streets, their laden mules almost sinking under the weight of ill-arranged burdens swinging from side to side, while the persons in whose charge they had followed the divisions appeared undecided which to execrate most, the roads, the mules, the Spaniards, or the weather. These were succeeded by the dull, heavy sound of the passing artillery; then came the Spanish fugitives from the desolating line of the armies. Detachments with sick or lamed horses scrambled through the mud, while, at intervals, the report of a horse-pistol knelled the termination to the sufferings of an animal that a few days previously, full of life and high in blood, had borne its rider not against, but over, the ranks of Gallic chivalry. The effect of this scene was rendered more striking by the distant report of cannon and musketry, and more gloomy by torrents of rain, and a degree of cold worthy of a Polish winter.

Preparations were made for a battle, and Sir John Moore seemed determined to retreat no further. Notwithstanding the British were suffering from cold, and wet, and hunger, they fell into their position with alacrity. The Minho protected their right, and a ravine separated them from the French, who, already in force, occupied the heights, and were evidently preparing for an immediate effort.

On the 6th January the French deployed upon the heights, and the British stood to their arms. Some hours passed; each line looked at the other, as if waiting for its opening movement. The day passed, and at night the hostile armies occupied the same bivouacs on which their brigades had rested the preceding evening.

The 7th came; with the first dawn, as if to make up for its previous inactivity, the French guns opened. Their battery was but weak, and the fire of the British artillery silenced it. A pause ensued, the day wore on, the evening was closing, when a column of considerable strength, covered by a cloud of tirailleurs, steadily mounted the hill, driving in the pickets and a wing of the 76th. The 51st was instantly moved to its assistance, musketry was interchanged, a bayonet rush succeeded, the French were driven down the hill, and operations terminated.

Darkness came on, a wild and stormy night, a lonely hill, no fire, no food—such was the bivouac of Lugo; such the wretched and cheerless situation of the harassed but unconquerable islanders.

As the morning of the 8th dawned, the British formed line, and prepared coolly for the expected encounter; but it passed over, and the enemy made no hostile movement. The troops had been ordered to bivouac as they best could, and in a short time a number of rude huts were erected to defend them from

the inclemency of the coming night. But it was not intended to remain longer before Lugo. When darkness hid their retreat, the British filed off silently by the rear. Through a frightful storm of hail and wind, their march was bravely executed; and leaving Lugo and Valmela behind them, they halted at Betanzos on the 10th.

Here the exhausted soldiery were halted from sheer necessity. They were literally marched to a stand still, and, although the rain fell in torrents, they lay down upon the soaked earth, and in that comfortless situation remained until at evening the ranks were again formed, and the retreat continued on Corunna, where Sir John had now decided on embarking the ruins of his army.

Fortunately for the wearied troops, the French, deceived by the fires left burning when the British commenced their night march from Lugo, did not discover the movement until daylight, and thus twelve hours were gained on the pursuers. This lost time could not be recovered; and although the whole of the 10th January was passed in Betanzos, to allow stragglers to rejoin their regiments, no serious attempt was made to embarrass the remainder of the march, and the leading division reached Corunna at noon of the 11th, while the reserve occupied the adjoining villages, and the remaining brigades took up their quarters in the suburbs.

Corunna afforded a very indifferent position to offer battle on. There was one, but its extent made it untenable by an army so weak in number as the British. After a close examination, the rising ground above the village of Elvina, a mile in front of the town, was the place selected by the general; the position was accordingly marked out, and the brigades moved to their allotted posts.

A ridge commanded the Betanzos road and formed the left of the line, and on this General Hope's division was placed. Sir David Baird's was next in station, and occupied a succession of knolls that swept inwards, and inclined to a valley beyond the Vigo road. Over the low grounds the rifle corps were extended, appuied upon Frazer's division, which, placed in echelon, covered the principal approach to Corunna. Paget's division was in reserve behind Hope's, and occupied a village half a mile in the rear.

The enemy appeared beyond the Mero while these dispositions were being made; but, with the exception of a partial cannonade, no hostile demonstration occurred. On the 14th, the artillery had ceased on both sides, an unusual quiet ensued, and nothing seemed likely to produce any immediate excitement, when the explosion of four thousand barrels of gunpowder burst upon the astonished ear. It is impossible to describe the effect. The unexpected and tremendous crash seemed for the moment to have

deprived every person of reason and recollection; "the soldiers flew to their arms, nor was it until a tremendous column of smoke, ascending from the heights in front, marked from whence the astounding shock proceeded, that reason resumed its sway. It is impossible ever to forget the sublime appearance of the dark dense cloud of smoke that ascended, shooting up gradually like a gigantic tower into the clear blue sky. It appeared fettered in one enormous mass; nor did a particle of dust or vapour, obscuring its form, seem to escape as it rolled upwards in majestic circles."

On the 15th the fleet hove in sight, and immediate preparations were made to effect an embarkation of the army. The women and children, with the sick and wounded, were directly carried on board; a large portion of the artillery and stores was sent afterwards; and the cavalry, after destroying the few horses that still remained, were embarked. None but the infantry, and of these such only as were effective, were now left; and the belief was general, that they too, would be permitted to retire from their position unmolested.

Everything on the 16th continued quiet. The boats pulled from the shipping to the beach, and orders were issued for the divisions to move down, and prepare for immediate embarkation; Sir John Moore was on horseback to visit the outposts, for the last time, before they should be withdrawn, when an officer came up hastily, and announced that the French were under arms. The intelligence was correct; for an instant fusilade commenced between their tirailleurs and the British pickets, as their light troops pushed forward, covering the advance of four compact columns. Two directed their march upon the right, one moved upon the centre, while the fourth threatened the left of the British line.

The right, consisting of the 4th, 42nd, and 50th, supported by the guards, were fiercely attacked, and the reserve ordered to sustain it. The French threw out a cloud of skirmishers, supported by the fire of eleven pieces of artillery, and, driving the advanced posts before them, came forward with their customary boldness. On deploying partially, their line extended considerably beyond the extreme right of the British, but this was disregarded, and instead of waiting the attack, the regiments gallantly advanced to meet it. The 4th suddenly refusing its right wing, showed a double front, and unawed by a superior enemy, undaunted by a heavy and well-directed cannonade, the manœuvre of this splendid regiment was executed with all the coolness and precision of a parade.

For a time the irregularity of ground intersected by numerous enclosures, kept the combatants apart; but these were speedily surmounted, and the French assault was made and repelled, and

the village of Elvina, which had for a few minutes been in possession of the enemy, was recovered by the 50th with the bayonet.

The action was now general along the line. The 42nd, and a battalion of the Guards, by a brilliant charge, drove back the French; and, failing to force, Soult endeavoured to turn the British right, and accordingly marched a column in its rear. That the reserve attacked, and repulsed it with heavy loss. In every point Soult's attacks failed—and, altering his dispositions, he took ground considerably to the right.

While the 42nd were lowering their bayonets, and Sir John Moore was encouraging the charge, a round shot knocked him from his horse, shattering his left arm at the shoulder—while immediately before, Sir David Baird had been wounded and removed. But the fall of their generals produced no serious results. Corunna was not a battle of manœuvre, but a field of determined resistance. The officers commanding the different battalions fought their regiments gallantly; the dispositions for the engagement were simple and understood; the attempts upon the left and centre were repulsed; and the French, beaten on every point, fell back as night came on.

Thus ended the conflict of Corunna; and when every disadvantage is taken into consideration under which the British fought, its results were glorious, and the courage and coolness displayed throughout most honourable to the troops employed. The numbers engaged were certainly in favour of the French. Without its light brigade, which had retreated and embarked at Vigo, the British divisions scarcely reached to fifteen thousand; while Soult was reinforced in the morning, and mustered from eighteen to twenty thousand men. The loss on both sides was severe; that of the British amounting to eight hundred killed and wounded, while the French admitted theirs to be at least double that number.

Yet it was but a melancholy triumph. The sad reverses of the retreat, the abandonment of the country, and the death of a brave and beloved commander, clouded the hour of conquest, and threw a depressing gloom around, that seemed fitter to mark a defeat than attend a well-won victory. No further attempt was made by the enemy; the brigades were removed after dark, the embarkation continued, and on the afternoon of the 17th, the whole fleet was under weigh, steering for Britain with a leading wind.

The severity of a wound like Sir John Moore's precluded, from the first moment it was received, all hope of his surviving beyond an hour or two. The arm was torn nearly from the shoulder, and the collar-bone partially carried away; but notwithstanding the desperate hemorrhage that ensued, the sufferer preserved

his recollection, and remained in mental possession to the last.

He was carried from the field in a blanket by six soldiers, who evinced their sympathy by tears; and when a spring waggon came up, and it was proposed that Sir John should be transferred to it, the poor fellows respectfully objected, "as they would keep step, and carry him more easily." Their wishes were attended to, and the dying general was conveyed slowly to his quarters in the town, occasionally stopping the bearers to look back upon the field, whenever an increasing fire arrested his attention. All hope was over; he lingered for a little, talking feebly, but collectedly, to those around, and dividing his last thoughts apparently, between his country and his kindred. The kindness of his disposition was in death remarkable. Turning to an aide-de-camp, he desired to be remembered to his sister, and, feebly pressing Colonel Anderson's hand, his head dropped back, and he died without a struggle.

As a wish had been expressed by the departed, that he should be laid in the field on which he fell, the rampart of the citadel was happily chosen for his "resting place." A working party of the 9th turned up the earth—and at midnight, wrapped in a cloak and blanket, his uncoffined remains were interred by the officers of his staff; the burial-service was read by torch-light, earth fell on kindred clay, the grave was filled, and, in the poet's words, "They left him alone with his glory."

In every private relation, Sir John Moore's character was perfect, and his professional career had always been distinguished. Of no man had higher hopes been formed, and hence, probably, more was expected by his country than either his means or his talents could effect. By one party he was unjustly censured, by another injudiciously praised; and in this ferment of opinion it is difficult to say whether his military reputation was most endangered by the obloquy of his enemies or the over-praise of his friends.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BATTLE OF TALAVERA.

1809.

THE immediate consequence of the embarkation, was the surrender of Corunna on the second day from that on which the once proud army of Britain quitted the coast of Spain. Ferrol soon followed the example, and in both these places an immense supply of stores and ammunition was obtained. All effective resistance was apparently at an end, and French dominion seemed established in Gallicia more strongly than it had ever been before.

In every part of Spain the cause of freedom appeared hopeless. One campaign was closed, and never did one end more hopelessly; an unvarying sense of misfortune from the commencement, it seemed to have withered every national feeling that might have existed in Spanish breasts. Fortresses that should have held out, provisioned, garrisoned, and open to receive supplies from Britain, surrendered to a weak army, who could not command "a battering gun or siege store within four hundred miles." In fact, Spanish resistance seemed a mockery. Their military force was now the ruins of Romana's army, and some half-starved fugitives who occasionally appeared in Estremadura and La Mancha, while the French had nearly two hundred thousand veteran troops covering the whole country, and these too in masses, that set any hostile demonstration at defiance.

Portugal, in its military footing, was nearly on a par with Spain. A British corps, under Sir John Craddock, garrisoned Lisbon, and, that place excepted, there were no troops in the kingdom on which the slightest dependence could be placed. The appointment of Marshal Beresford to a chief command produced in time a wonderful reformation. The British system of drill was successfully introduced, and, before the war ended, the Portuguese, when brigaded with the British, were always respectable in the field, and sometimes absolutely brilliant. At this period, there was but one national force in the least degree formidable to the invaders, and that was the Spanish Guerillas.

The Spanish armies in the course of the Peninsular campaign had met so many and discouraging defeats, that their military reputation sunk below the standard of mediocrity. They were despised by their enemies, and distrusted by their allies, and whether from the imbecility of the government, the ignorance of their leaders, or some national peculiarity, their inefficiency became so notorious, that no important operation could be entrusted to them with any certainty of its being successful. As an organised force, the Spanish army was contemptible; while, in desultory warfare, the peasantry were invaluable. With few exceptions, the history of Spanish service would be a mere detail of presumption and defeat; while their neighbours, the Portuguese, merited the perfect approbation of their officers, and proved worthy of standing in the battlefield by the side of British soldiers.

Under such unpromising circumstances as we have described, intelligence was received that three French armies were about to move on Portugal; Soult from Galicia, Lapisse from Salamanca, and Victor from the Tagus. In fact, Portugal would have been soon at the mercy of the enemy, and Spain could have offered but a feeble resistance, when Sir Arthur Wellesley arrived to take the chief command.

He instantly proceeded to adopt measures that should enable him to take the field, and the army was concentrated, with the exception of Mackenzie's brigade, at Coimbra, and reviewed. The entire numbered twenty-six thousand men, of which six thousand formed the separate corps under Marshal Beresford. With the Germans, the British brigades mustered about seventeen thousand; the detached corps under Mackenzie, amounting to nearly three thousand, of which one-half was cavalry; and a farther augmentation was effected by brigading one Portuguese, with every two of the British battalions.

In the meantime Soult's position became extremely dangerous. A British army in his front, bands of guerillas in his rear; one flank hemmed in by Silveira at Amarante; and the ocean on the other. But that able marshal perceived the difficulties of his situation, and deciding at once to secure an open road in his rear, he despatched Delaborde and Loison to recover Amarante. The task was a tedious and doubtful operation; and for twelve days the place was assaulted and maintained. At last, Soult in person came forward in strength, and Silveira was driven from the bridge over the Tamaga, with the loss of his cannon, and the French retreat was for the present secured.

From the moment Sir Arthur Wellesley landed in Portugal, the character of the war had changed; and, notwithstanding the numerous and discouraging drawbacks upon a bold career which the obstinacy of the Spaniards and the deficiency of his own means were continually presenting, before the masterly decision of the British general, all obstacles ultimately gave way; and victory, which had hovered doubtfully over many a hard-contested field, at last rested on his banners, and wreathed her laurels round his brows.

The crossing of the Douro was, in military estimation, as bold and well-arranged an operation as any that marked Wellesley's Peninsular career. The passage of a river in the face of an enemy with every assistance from pontoons and ferryage, is considered a hazardous undertaking; but, circumstanced as the British commander was, the thing was generally set down as impracticable, and Soult was unprepared for the attempt. When the news was brought that the enemy was crossing at Villa Nova, the marshal ridiculed the notion, and remained in his quarters until two in the afternoon. He was then obliged precipitately to quit the city; and so suddenly were Wellesley's measures executed, that the dinner prepared for the duke of Dalmatia, was served up to the British general and his staff. War is, certes, a game of chances; and little did the French marshal suppose, when at noon he regulated the *carte* presented by his *maître d'hôtel*, that he was then civilly arranging an excellent repast for his opponent. Yet such was the case. Wellesley succeeded

Soult—and within a few hours the same roof covered the victor and the vanquished.

Nothing could exceed the irregularity of the French retreat. Before they could be persuaded that the passage of the Douro was seriously designed, the British were charging through the suburbs; and instead of retiring with an orderly formation on the advance of the enemy, the French rear-guard got mobbed together on the road, and allowed an opportunity to the cavalry of their pursuers to act with an audacity and success that the weakness of their squadrons could never have warranted, had not a considerable panic been previously occasioned, by the precipitation with which Soult's divisions were hurried from the city. Night came most opportunely, and ended the pursuit, enabling the French marshal to unite himself with Loison, from whom he received the unwelcome intelligence that the bridge of Amarante was destroyed. Soult's situation was almost desperate; his only line of retreat was by a mountain track; and, by taking it, he was obliged to cross the pass of Ruivans, a long narrow bridge, without a parapet on either side, spanning a frightful precipice. Should this be occupied, and no doubt Beresford was marching thither, nothing could save his army. With excellent judgment, he abandoned his artillery and baggage, pushed rapidly forward, and, having forced the Portuguese pickets which here and there occupied the mountain passes, he out-marched Silveira by several hours, and halted his rear-guard at Salamonde, to cover the bridges of Saltador and Porto Nova, while his columns were defiling.

Here, however, he was overtaken and brought to action, on the 16th June, by Sir Arthur. Although the position was strong, and the brigade of Guards were the only infantry come up, the British general instantly made his dispositions for attack. The left was turned by the rifle corps, the Guards advancing boldly in front. After delivering a volley at the head of the column when it showed itself, the French precipitately fled—and, hurrying through the village in their rear, succeeded, under cover of darkness, in escaping. Some delay in clearing a defile allowed the horse artillery to come up, and their rapid fire did considerable execution before the crowd of fugitives could get beyond its range.

The next morning's dawn renewed the pursuit; and every turn of the road, cumbered with broken vehicles and deserted baggage, showed how severely the French army had been pressed. The bridge was nearly impassable from dead men and slain horses laid there in heaps by the grape and canister of the British guns. Arms, accoutrements, ham-strung mules, guns, tumbrils, knapsacks filled with silver plate, tapestry, and other valuable plunder were strewn indiscriminately along the line. To add to this scene of waste and suffering, the villages the advancing army

entered were either in a blaze, or already reduced to ashes; for between the French troops and peasantry a deadly war of extermination was being carried on, and on both sides deeds of cruelty were every day perpetrated that can hardly be credited or described. Indeed, the French retreat through the Gallician mountains was only paralleled by the British on Corunna; with this exception, that many a straggler from the British columns was saved by the humanity of the Spaniards, while the unhappy Frenchman who lagged but a few hundred yards behind the rear-guard, was butchered by the infuriated peasantry, bent on the work of slaughter and burning for vengeance on an enemy, who, in his day of conquest, and dominion, had taught the lesson of cruelty now practised so unrelentingly on himself.

Soult turning from Montalegre towards Orense, and a French corps from Estremadura having moved on Alcantara, induced Sir Arthur Wellesley to discontinue the pursuit. The French marshal crossed the frontier on the 18th with barely nineteen thousand men, his guns, stores, and baggage abandoned to the conquerors. Ten weeks, perfect in every arm, that army had passed through Orense on its march to Oporto, mustering twenty-six thousand veteran soldiers. A short period had wrought a fearful change, and even the debris of that once splendid corps was only extricated from total destruction by the admirable tact and unbending *hardiesse* of their brave and gifted leader.

On reaching Abrantes on the 7th July, it was correctly ascertained that, instead of retiring on Madrid, Victor was concentrating at Merida, intending, probably, to cross the Guadiana, and attack Cuesta before the British could come to his assistance. Propositions therefore for a combined movement were made by Sir Arthur Wellesley to the "Spanish general," and willingly acceded to, and the British moved forward to the Teitar, to unite, as it was believed, in an operation upon Madrid.

A most able plan for marching at once for the recovery of the capital was arranged at a conference between the allied commanders. The British and Spanish armies, taking the right bank of the Tagus, were to advance directly forward. Venegas, with fourteen thousand Spaniards, was to threaten Aranjuez, and, if possible, take possession of Toledo; while two other Spanish divisions should hold the passes of Banos and Perales; and five thousand Portuguese, under Sir Robert Wilson, were to act independently, and annoy the French flanks and rear as they best could.

The British consequently moved by Salvatiera and Placentia, effecting a junction with Cuesta at Oropesa on the 20th of July. On the 22nd Victor had retired and taken a position on the Alberche. The opportunity was at once given for attacking him, but Cuesta obstinately declined; and Victor, hearing that Wilson

was already in his rear at Escalona, made a night march on Torrijos.

Cuesta was a singular medley of opposite qualities. He was exceedingly brave, had some daring, overweening pride, and a most asinine obstinacy. Finding it desirable for the prosperity of the common cause to submit to the old man's folly, Sir Arthur Wellesley acted with singular forbearance. It had been arranged that Victor should be attacked on the 23rd, and when the British general reached his confederate's quarters to arrange the necessary details on the evening of the 22nd, Cuesta was asleep, and no one dared to waken him. At dawn, the British divisions were under arms, but Cuesta could not be disturbed till seven! At last an interview did take place, and then the weak old man positively declined to fight, because the day was *Sunday*. Victor had but twenty thousand men with him at the moment. The Alberche was fordable—the right and centre assailable; Cuesta's army numbered forty-seven thousand, and Wellesley's about twenty-one. Was ever such an opportunity lost? and all, too, through the stupid bigotry of a sleepy-headed Spaniard.

While Sir Arthur halted at Talavera, having two divisions across the river at Casa Leguas, Cuesta followed the French, who as he persuaded himself were retreating, but Sebastiani had marched from Toledo and joined Victor, while Joseph Buonaparte, having united his corps to Jourdan's, was hastening to a common centre. The whole united at Torrijos, forming a corps *d'armée* of nearly fifty thousand men.

Cuesta, with all his Spanish obstinacy, would still insist that the French were not concentrating, but retreating, but the delusion was short. Victor suddenly attacked him, and as his retreat was most disorderly, nothing but prompt assistance from Sherbrooke's division could have saved the stupid old man from destruction. When this was effected, the Guards crossed the river, leaving Mackenzie's division in possession of the wood and convent on the right bank of the Alberche.

A recent deliverance seemed to have had no effect upon Spanish obstinacy. Though certain of being attacked, Cuesta lay loosely on the Alberche, into which, had his army been defeated, it must have been driven pell-mell. Happily, Sir Arthur, in reconnoitring the ground in the neighbourhood, discovered an extensive line on which both armies might be placed to their mutual disadvantage. He took his measures with such promptitude, and issued his orders with such coolness and perspicuity, that every battalion, Spanish as well as British, stepped into the very spot which his admirable foresight had marked out for it.

The position was about two miles in length, extending perpendicularly from the Tagus, on which the right rested in the

town of Talavera. It was partially retrenched, having an intersected and most difficult country in its front. The centre was more open; but the left terminated favourably on a bold and commanding height, overlooking a considerable valley, which separated the left of the position from a range of rocky mountains. To the Spaniards the right was allotted, it being considered nearly unattackable, while the British defended the more accessible ground upon the left.

Talavera stands on the northern bank of the Tagus, the houses reaching down to the water's edge. The two armies were drawn up in line; the British on the left, extending from the town nearly to the Sierra de Gata, its extreme flank occupying a bold height near Alatuza de Segusella, and having in its front a difficult ravine, and on its flank a deep valley. To the Spaniards the right was assigned. Their battalions were stationed among olive groves, with walls and fences interspersed, and an embankment running along the road, that formed an excellent breastwork, and rendered their position nearly unassailable. It was necessary to secure the point of junction where the British right touched Cuesta's left, and to effect this, ten guns were placed in battery on the summit of a bold knoll, with a British division to protect them, and a strong cavalry corps in reserve. In the general disposition of the troops Campbell's division was on the right of the British, Sherbrooke's division adjoining; Mackenzie occupied the next portion of the battle-ground, while the height upon the left, the key of the position, was intrusted to General Hill.

During the morning of the 27th July, the troops had been marching on the different points marked for their occupation, and had taken ground hitherto unmolested by the enemy; but at noon Mackenzie's division was suddenly and furiously assailed by two heavy columns, which attacked the wood and convent. Partially surprised, the 87th and 88th regiments were thrown into a momentary confusion; and the French penetrated between the two brigades which formed the division. Immediately, by the exertions of their officers, the 31st, 45th, and 60th rifles were brought forward, and these regiments covered their companions, while they retired from the wood into the plain, retreating in beautiful order along the heights on the left of the position which they were directed to occupy.

The enemy continued their attack, and it had now extended partially along the whole line, growing more animated as the evening began to fall. The left, where the British stood, at once appeared the grand object of the marshals. They directed a strong force against it, forming their infantry into columns of battalions, which advanced in double quick, supported by a furious cannonade.

Mackenzie's division having retired a little, and, at the moment, forming a second line, the brunt of the assault fell upon a smaller brigade under General Donkin, then in possession of the height. The French, though they came on with imposing bravery, were checked in front; but from the weakness of his brigade, Donkin's flank was turned on the left, and the hill behind crowned by the enemy.

But that success was momentary. Hill instantly led up the 48th, 29th, and 1st battalion of detachments. A close and murderous volley from the British was followed by a charge. The French were forced from the position with great loss; and the ridge was again carried by a wing of the 29th with the bayonet.

There was a brief space of quiet; but determined to win the key of the position, though darkness had now set in, the French in great force once more rushed forward to wrest the height from its defenders, and in the gloom the assailants and the assailed nearly touched each other. The red flash of a well-delivered volley disclosed to the British the dark array that threatened them. The order was given to advance, and again the British bayonet drove the columns down the hill.

No fighting could have been more desperate than that which marked this night attack. A feint had been made by Lapisse upon the Germans in the centre, while, with the *élite* of their infantry, Ruffin and Vilatte ascended the heights, which, at every loss, they seemed more resolute in winning. A terrific slaughter ensued. Could it be otherwise? So desperately was this night fighting maintained, and the regiments were so closely engaged, that in the *mêlée*, some of the men fought with clubbed muskets.

These signal repulses of a powerful and gallant enemy could not but cost a heavy expenditure of blood. Many brave officers had fallen, and at this period of the conflict the killed and wounded amounted to upwards of eight hundred men.

The troops rested upon their arms, and each battalion on the ground it had occupied the preceding day. The cavalry were stretched beside their horses; all were ready for an attack; but the night passed with some slight alarms, and no serious disturbance.

The morning was ushered in by a tremendous cannonade, while the grenadiers of Lapisse's division, in two columns, advanced again to attack the height upon the left. They were bravely led forward by their officers, and made many desperate but unavailing efforts to win the summit of the hill, but nothing could shake the firmness of the British. They allowed the columns to mount the rugged ascent, until they had nearly touched the ridge, then a close volley, a loud huzza, followed by a rapid charge, broke the formation of the French, and sent them

precipitously down the hill. Again and again the attempt was made with equal ill fortune; until, totally disheartened by repeated repulses and leaving the ground heaped with dead, the enemy abandoned all hope of carrying this well-defended position, and retreated out of fire.

It was now half-past eight, and the fighting had never intermitted from five that morning. The loss on both sides was frightful; the French infinitely greater than the British. Their repeated attacks on the height occasioned immense loss; and their troops, dispirited by want of success, and wearied by constant but unavailing exertion, showed little inclination to renew the battle.

The heat of the sun had become intolerable, and the movements, on the French part, were stayed. Indeed, the firing had ceased over the field, and the work of slaughter, by a sort of mutual consent, was for a time suspended. The French commenced cooking their dinners, and the British and their allies produced their scantier rations. During this temporary cessation of hostilities, it was a matter of some deliberation with the British commander, whether in turn he should become the assailant, or remain quietly and await the result of the enemy's decision; and it was a fortunate circumstance that the latter was his determination.

At this time a curious incident occurred, that for a brief space changed the character of the war, and, even on a battlefield covered with the dead and dying, produced a display of kindly feeling between two brave and noble-minded enemies.

A small stream, tributary to the Tagus, flowed through a part of the battle-ground, and separated the combatants. During the pause that the heat of the weather and the weariness of the troops had produced, both armies went to the banks of the rivulet for water. The men approached each other fearlessly, threw down their caps and muskets, chatted to each other like old acquaintances, and exchanged their brandy-flasks and wine-skins. All asperity of feeling seemed forgotten. To a stranger they would have appeared more like an allied force, than men hot from a ferocious conflict, and only gathering strength and energy to recommence it anew. But a still nobler rivalry for the time existed; the interval was employed in carrying off the wounded, who lay intermixed upon the hard-contested field; and, to the honour of both be it told, that each endeavoured to extricate the common sufferers, and remove their unfortunate friends and enemies without distinction. Suddenly, the bugles sounded, the drums beat to arms, many of the rival soldiery shook hands, and parted with expressions of mutual esteem, and in ten minutes after they were again at the bayonet's point.

Having ascertained the part of the position, and the extent of

it that was occupied by the British brigades, the marshals determined to direct their undivided energies against that portion of the line, and, if possible, crush the British divisions by bearing on them with an overwhelming force. They formed in four columns of attack; the first was destined against that part of the ground where the British and Spaniards united; the second against Sherbrooke and Cameron's brigades; the third was directed against Mackenzie's and the Germans; and the fourth, in great strength, and accompanied by a mass of cavalry, moved up the valley to the left.

A fire from eighty pieces of artillery announced the forward movement of the columns, which soon presented themselves, covered by a cloud of light infantry. A destructive cannonade was borne by the British brigades patiently; in vain the tirailleurs kept up a biting fire, but not a shot was returned by the British. Their orders to reserve their fire were strictly obeyed, and the files steadily and quietly closed up, for the men were falling by dozens. Their assailants approached, their officers called "*En avant!*" and the drums beat the *pas de charge*. Nothing could be more imposing than the advance, nothing more complete than their discomfiture. Within twenty paces a shattering volley was delivered from the British line, the word "*Charge!*" was given, and the bayonet did the rest.

Campbell's division, on the right, totally defeated the attack, and charging boldly in return, drove the French back, and captured a battery of ten guns. The enemy endeavoured to retake them, but the Spanish cavalry charged home, the cannon remained with the captors, and the right of the British was victorious everywhere.

The left attack failed totally. The British cavalry were posted in the valley where the hostile movement was being made; and Anson's brigade, consisting of the 23rd light dragoons, and the 1st King's German hussars, were ordered to charge and check the advance. It was gallantly attempted, and though in point of fact the charge failed, and the 23rd were nearly cut to pieces, the daring courage exhibited under circumstances perfectly desperate, so completely astounded the enemy, that their attack on the height was abandoned. If there was an error in the mode that charge was made, it arose from its fearless gallantry; and under common circumstances, its result would have been most glorious. Colonel Napier thus describes the affair:—

The ground upon which this brigade was in line is perfectly level, nor did any visible obstruction appear between it and the columns opposed. The grass was long, dry, and waving, concealing the fatal chasm that intervened. One of General Villatte's columns stood at some distance to the right of the

building occupied by the light troops. These were directly in front of the 23rd dragoons. Another was formed rather to the rear, and more in front of the German hussars, on the left of the line. Such were the immediate objects of the charge.

For some time the brigade advanced at a rapid pace, without receiving any obstruction from the enemy's fire. The line cheered. It was answered from the hill with the greatest enthusiasm; never was anything more exhilarating or beautiful than the commencement of this advance. Several lengths in front, mounted on a grey horse, consequently very conspicuous, rode Colonel Elley. Thus placed he, of course, first arrived at the brink of a ravine, which, varying in width, extended along the whole front of the line. Going half-speed at the time, no alternative was left him. To have checked his horse, and given timely warning, would have been impossible. With some difficulty he cleared it at a bound, and on gaining the opposite bank, endeavoured by gesture to warn the 23rd of the dangerous ground they had to pass; but advancing with such velocity, the line was on the verge of the stream before his signs could be either understood or attended to. Under any circumstances this must have been a serious occurrence in a cavalry charge; but when it is considered that four or five hundred dragoons were assailing two divisions of infantry, unbroken, and fully prepared for the onset, to have persevered at all was highly honourable to the regiment.

At this moment the enemy, formed in squares, opened his tremendous fire. A change immediately took place. Horses rolled on the earth; others were seen flying back dragging their unhorsed riders with them; the German hussars coolly reined up; the line of the 23rd was broken. Still the regiment galloped forward. The confusion was increased; but no hesitation took place in the individuals of this gallant corps. The survivors rushed forward with, if possible, accelerated pace, passing between the flank of the square, now one general blaze of fire, and the building on its left.

Still the remainder of the 23rd, led on by Major Ponsonby, passing under this withering fire, assailed and overthrew a regiment of chasseurs; and, though attacked in turn by a squadron of Westphalian horse and some Polish lancers, it cut its way through these, and riding past the intervals of the infantry, reached the base of the mountain, where the Spanish corps of observation secured it. Its loss was awful. In an affair that lasted but a few minutes, nine officers, twelve sergeants, two hundred rank and file, and two hundred and twenty-four horses, were rendered *hors de combat*.

On the centre, the attack was made with great steadiness and determination. The French columns deployed before they

attempted to ascend the heights, and, regardless of broken ground, advanced to the charge with imposing gallantry. General Sherbrooke, having fully prepared his men, received them with a volley of musketry, which staggered their resolution, and the whole division rushing forward with the bayonet, the French were driven back with prodigious loss. But the Guards came loosely on. The French observed it; perceived an opening in the line, and threw in a tremendous fire on the Germans, that caused a momentary confusion. The affair is thus narrated by an officer of the 48th. The celerity with which a mistake, that to other troops might have proved fatal, was remedied by the coolness of the commander and the heroism of his army, could never be better exemplified.

At this period of the battle, and in nearly their last attempt, the enemy had been repulsed and followed. The Guards, carried onwards by victorious excitement, advanced too far, and found themselves assailed by the French reserve, and mowed down by an overwhelming fire. They fell back, but as whole sections were swept away their ranks became disordered, and nothing but their stubborn gallantry prevented a total *déroute*. Their situation was most critical; had the French cavalry charged home nothing could have saved them. Lord Wellington saw the danger, and speedily despatched support. A brigade of horse was ordered up, and our regiment moved from the heights we occupied to assist our hard-pressed comrades. We came on at double-quick, and formed in the rear by companies, and through the intervals in our line the broken ranks of the Guards retreated. A close and well-directed volley from us arrested the progress of the victorious French, while with amazing celerity and coolness the Guards rallied and reformed, and in a few minutes advanced in turn to support us. As they came on, the men gave a loud huzza. An Irish regiment to the right answered it with a thrilling cheer. It was taken up from regiment to regiment, and passed along the British line, and that wild shout told the advancing enemy that British valour was indomitable. The leading files of the French halted, turned, fell back, and never made another effort.

In every place the British were victorious, and had one forward movement of the Spaniards been made, Talavera would have proved the most decisive defeat that ever the French armies on the Peninsula had sustained, for a rapid flanking march from Cuesta's right upon the Alberche must have compromised half the French army. But with troops so wretchedly disciplined, it was impossible to change any previous formation in face of an enemy; and thus the French marshals were enabled to retreat in perfect order, with the greater portion of their baggage, the whole of their wounded, and all their artillery, with the exception of ten

guns taken by Campbell's brigade, and seven abandoned in the woods, and afterwards secured.

As victory is ever damped by individual suffering, an event well calculated to increase the horrors of a battle-field occurred, that cannot be recollected without the liveliest sorrow for those who suffered.

From the heat of the weather, the fallen leaves were parched like tinder, and the grass was rank and dry. Near the end of the engagement both were ignited by the blaze of some cartridge-papers, and the whole surface of the ground was presently covered with a sheet of fire. Those of the disabled who lay on the outskirts of the field managed to crawl away, or were carried off by their more fortunate companions who had escaped unhurt; but, unhappily, many gallant sufferers, with "medicable wounds," perished in the flames before it was possible to extricate them.

The battle was ended at about six o'clock, and after that hour scarcely a shot was heard. Both armies occupied the positions of the morning, and the British bivouacked on the field, with little food and no shelter; while the dead lay silently around, and the moans of the wounded broke sadly on the ear, as they were conveyed all through the night to the hospitals in Salamanca.

The French were evidently about to retire, but, from a great inferiority in cavalry, pursuit was impossible. On the next morning, two of their divisions only were seen beyond the river, and these retreated on the night of the 31st, and followed the remainder of the beaten *corps d'armée*.

The British loss was extremely severe, and from the heavy cannonade regiments not otherwise exposed, suffered much. The whole force, exclusive of the Spaniards, did not exceed nineteen thousand, and of these fully four thousand men were killed and wounded. The Spanish loss was inconsiderable, as they were never seriously engaged, not reaching altogether to a thousand *hors de combat*.

The casualties of Joseph Buonaparte's army it would be difficult to ascertain with anything like correctness. It has been stated at six, eight, and even ten thousand. The intermediate estimate would probably be the truest, and certainly the French loss exceeded the allied by a third if not a half.

On the morning after the battle, the light brigade were reinforced by three splendid regiments, the 43rd, 52nd, and 95th, under General Craufurd, who reached the army accompanied by a troop of horse artillery. Its march was remarkable—sixty-three English miles were accomplished in twenty-seven hours. Advancing under a burning sun, over a sandy country, badly supplied with water, with bad rations and scarcely any bread, the movement was extraordinary. When the weight a soldier in

heavy marching order carries is considered, the distance these splendid regiments achieved was certainly a surprising effort.

Aware that the armies were in presence of each other, and apprised that a battle was inevitable, an ardent wish to share the glory of the field stimulated these soldiers to exertions that hunger, fatigue, and thirst could not abate; and though efforts almost beyond belief failed to bring them to the battleground before the struggle terminated, the rapidity of their march, and the fine condition in which they joined the army, justly obtained for them the admiration of the victors of Talavera.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### THE BATTLE OF BUSACO.

1810.

SOULT, who had collected thirty-five thousand men, on learning the defeat of Talavera, made a flank movement to assist Joseph Buonaparte, and reached Placentia by the pass of Banos. Lord Wellington, on being apprised of the French marshal's advance, instantly determined to march forward and engage him; while Cuesta observed the line of the Tagus, and protected the stores and hospitals at Talavera. Accordingly, on the 3rd of August, the British moved to Orapesa; but on that evening information was received that Soult had cut off Lord Wellington's communication with the bridge of Almarez, and that Cuesta was about to evacuate Talavera. This intelligence made an immediate change in Lord Wellington's plans indispensable, and it became necessary to cross the Tagus instantly. A passage was effected by the bridge of Arzabispo, and the whole artillery and stores were safely brought off, over horrible roads, which hitherto had been deemed impracticable for anything but mules and the rude carriages of the country. After a short stay, the British fell back on Badajoz, early in September.

Cuesta's sudden retreat from Talavera had not only endangered Lord Wellington, but nearly caused the total destruction of the Portuguese corps commanded by Sir Robert Wilson. In obedience to orders, Sir Robert had advanced within twelve miles of the capital before he was recalled, and after narrowly escaping the French armies, by the ill-judged retirement of the Spanish general from Talavera, he found himself completely cut off from the Tagus. With considerable difficulty, the Portuguese general crossed the Sierra de Llana, and seized the pass of Banos, whither Soult, on falling back from Placentia to Leon, was rapidly advancing, nothing remaining for him but to defend the pass, and risk a battle with numbers immensely superior to his

own. This determination was gallantly carried into effect. After a desperate resistance of nine hours, Wilson was at last forced from the position, with a loss of eight hundred men; while the remainder of his corps dispersed, and succeeded in reaching *Castello Branco*.

Following up this success, *Soult*, with fifty thousand men, was despatched by *Joseph* against the southern provinces, and succeeded in crossing the *Sierra Morena*, though the whole range had been strongly fortified, and thirty thousand men under *Ariezaga*, intrusted with its defence. So quickly, and with such trifling loss was this dangerous operation achieved, that it was a question whether the marshal was more indebted for his success to treachery or cowardice. *Cadiz* was preserved by the prompt decision of the duke of *Albuquerque*, the gates closed against the French, and the city secured against bombardment, except from one point occupied by *Fort Matagorda*.

All else had gone favourably for the French. *Sebastiani* defeated *Ariezaga* on his retreat to *Grenada*, and that city and *Malaga*, after a faint effort at defence, fell. *Gerona* surrendered after a brave and protracted resistance. *Hostalrich* was also taken; and *Astorga* capitulated in the middle of April. In fact, the French were everywhere victorious, and Spain once more lay nearly at their feet. This, as *Colonel Jones* observes, was "the second crisis in the affairs of the Peninsula, as, by a succession of desultory and ill-planned enterprises on the part of the Spaniards, all their armies had been annihilated, their fortresses reduced, and three-fourths of the kingdom subdued." Affairs certainly wore a gloomy aspect. *Napoleon* had openly announced his determination to drive the British into the sea; and his means, relieved as he was by an alliance with *Austria*, seemed amply sufficient to realise the threat. Circumstances had increased his resources, and left him a large disposable force to direct on *Portugal*.

But still, notwithstanding the gloomy prospects of the British, it was surprising what a number of desertions took place from the enemy's corps. Between the commencement of 1810 and the month of May, nearly five hundred men, chiefly Germans and Italians, arrived, time after time, at the British outposts; while desertions from the British regiments were extremely rare.

Early in May, *Massena* prepared for active operations, and invested the fortress of *Rodrigo*, the inferiority of *Lord Wellington's* force rendering any attempt on his part to prevent it impossible. All that could be done was to observe the enemy closely; and for this purpose, headquarters were transferred to *Almeida*, which, after a few days, were farther retired to *Alverca*, six leagues in the rear.

The investment of *Rodrigo*, which occasional advances of the British had partially relaxed, became now more serious, for *Ney*

determined that the place should fall, and taking post on a range of high grounds with thirty thousand men, he covered effectually the operations carried on by Junot, whose separate force amounted to forty thousand more.

It was now ascertained that Matagorda had fallen, that Cadiz, of course, must yield, that divisions of the guards had entered Madrid, and that Napoleon was absolutely across the Pyrenees.

The siege of Rodrigo continued; a gallant resistance was made, for the garrison disputed every inch of ground, rallying frequently, and maintaining a well-directed fire that occasioned the besiegers considerable loss. The old governor, Hervasti, did wonders, and with a garrison of four thousand men, and fortifications in bad condition, many parts of the wall having its breaches only stopped loosely with rubbish, he kept seventy thousand men at bay, provided with siege stores in abundance, and a numerous corps of active and scientific engineers to direct the labours of the thousands who composed their working parties. On the 30th of June the breach was practicable, and stormed, but the French were repulsed, after suffering an enormous loss in killed and wounded.

Though the British army looked on, they could not save the fortress. The siege was pressed, and the outposts of the two armies came occasionally in contact with each other.

On the 4th of July the French made a strong reconnaissance with five regiments of cavalry, a corps of infantry, and some guns. A spirited affair ensued, and Gallegos and Almeida were given up, and a position taken by the British in rear of Fort Conception.

Time passed without any affair of moment occurring, until Ciudad Rodrigo capitulated, after a noble defence of a full month with open trenches. Julian Sanchez, finding the place must fall, quitted the city at midnight with his lancers, and cut his way through the enemy's posts.

Ney, it is said, annoyed at the obstinacy with which the fortress held out, until the breach was found by Hervasti indefensible, and the troops for the assault were actually formed in the trenches, declined all terms but unconditional surrender. Massena, however, with more generosity, conceded the honours of war to the brave and resolute commandant.

Consequent on the fall of Rodrigo, numerous movements took place. It was impossible to guess in what way Massena would follow up his success, and the last arrangements were made by Lord Wellington to meet every probable contingency.

When the fall of Almeida was known, Lord Wellington, who had advanced when Massena broke ground, fell back to the position on which he had previously retired; and anxious to get into closer communication with General Hill, he retreated leisurely on Gouvea. By this movement he checked any attempt

that might have been intended from Sabugal by Covilhos, and effectually secured the fortified position of Zezere from being turned.

Yet the situation of the allies was truly critical. The fall of Almeida permitted Massena to advance with confidence, while in numbers, the French marshal was immensely superior; and of the allied force, a great portion of the Portuguese had never been under fire. The news of Romana's defeat by Mortier, made matters still more alarming; as the latter might come up in sufficient time to threaten the right of the allies by Alcantara or Abrantes.

But Massena's movements ended this suspense, and Wellington was about to achieve one of his most splendid victories.

It was impossible to avoid a battle. Wellington crossed the Mondego, while the French were concentrated at Viseu. The first division had been placed in observation of the Oporto road, the light on the road of Viseu; but the French having passed the Criz, Lord Wellington changed his position, and fell back upon the heights of Busaco.

The mountain range, upon which the British retired, was about eight miles long; its right touching the Mondego, and the left stretching over very difficult ground to the Sierra de Caramula. There was a road cresting the Busaco ridge, and a ford at Pena Cova, communicating with the Murcella ridge, and the face of the position was steep, rugged, and well defended by the allied artillery. Along the front a sweeping fire could be maintained, and on a part of the summit cavalry might act if necessary.

To an assailing enemy, a position like that of Busaco must present most serious difficulties; and, therefore, it was generally believed that Massena would not risk a battle. But Lord Wellington thought differently, and coolly added, "If he does, I shall beat him."

Pack's division had fallen back on the 22nd September, and on the 23rd Massena drove in the British cavalry. The third division took a position at Antonio de Contara, and the fourth at the convent; while the light division bivouacked in a pine wood. On the 24th it fell back four miles, and some skirmishing of no particular importance took place.

The 25th had nearly brought on a second affair between Craufurd and the enemy. Immense masses of the French were moving rapidly forward, and the cavalry had interchanged a pistol fire, when Lord Wellington arrived, and instantly retired the division. Not a moment could be lost; the enemy came on with amazing rapidity, but the British rearguard behaved with its usual determination; and after a series of quick and beautifully-executed manœuvres, secured their retreat on the position. Both

armies that evening bivouacked in each other's presence, and sixty-five thousand French infantry, covered by a mass of voltigeurs, formed in the British front, while scarcely fifty thousand of the allies were in line on the Sierra de Busaco, and these, of necessity, were extended over a surface which their numbers were quite incompetent to defend.

Ney and Reynier agreed that the moment of their arrival afforded the best chance for attacking Wellington successfully, and Massena was informed that the allied troops were only getting into their ground, and that their dispositions were accordingly imperfect. But the marshal came up too late; for all the arrangements of Wellington had been coolly and admirably effectuated.

The British brigades were continuously posted. On the right, General Hill's division was stationed. Leith, on his left, prolonged the line, with the Lusitanian legion in reserve. Picton joined Leith, and was supported by a brigade of Portuguese. The brigades of Spencer crested the ridge, and held the ground between the third division and the convent; and the fourth division closed the extreme left, covering the mountain path of Milheada, with part of the cavalry on a flat, and a regiment of dragoons in reserve on the summit of the Sierra. Pack's division formed the advanced guard to the right, and extended half-way down the hill; while in a hollow below the convent, the light brigade and Germans were thrown out. The whole front was covered with skirmishers, and on every point from which the artillery could effectively range, the guns were placed in battery.

While these dispositions were being completed, evening had come on, both armies establishing themselves for the night, and the French lighting fires. Some attempts of the enemy to introduce their tirailleurs, in broken numbers, among the wooded hollows in front of the light division, indicated an intention of a night attack, and the rifles and cacadores drove them back. But no attempt was made, and a mild and warm atmosphere allowed the troops to bivouac without inconvenience on the battleground. A few hours of comparative stillness passed, one hundred thousand men slept under the canopy of heaven; and before the first faint glimmering of light, all stood quietly to arms, and prepared for a bloody day.

Shrouded by the grey mist that still was lingering on the Sierra, the enemy advanced. Ney, with three columns, moved forward in front of the convent, where Craufurd's division was posted; while Reynier, with two divisions, approached by less difficult ground the pickets of the third division, before the feeble light permitted his movements to be discovered. With their usual impetuosity the French pushed forward, and the British as determinately opposed them. Under a heavy fire of grape and

musketry, the enemy topped the heights; and on the left of the third division, gained the summit of the mountain, their leading battalions securing themselves among the rocks, and threatening the ridge of the Sierra. The disorder of a Portuguese regiment, the 8th, afforded them also a partial advantage. But the fire of two guns with grape opened on their flank; in front, a heavy fusilade was maintained; while, advancing over the crown of the height, the 88th and four companies of the 45th charged furiously with the bayonet, and with an ardour that could not be resisted. Both French and British were intermixed in a desperate *mêlée*, both fought hand to hand, both went struggling down the mountain, the head of the French column annihilated, and covering the descent, from the crown to the valley, with heaps of its dead and dying.

At this time the 45th were engaged with numbers out of proportion, but they gallantly maintained their ground. The 5th, 74th, and 83rd, were likewise attacked; but the 88th, from the nature of their situation, came in contact with the full body of the enemy, and, while opposed to three times their own number in front, were assailed on their left by a couple of hundred riflemen stationed in the rocks. Colonel Wallace changed his front, but had scarcely reached the rocks, when a fire, destructive as it was animated, assailed him. The moment was a critical one, but he never lost his presence of mind. He ordered his two first companies to attack the rocks, while he pressed forward with the remainder of his regiment against the main body. The 8th Portuguese were close on the enemy, and opened a well-directed fire, while the 45th were performing prodigies of valour. At this moment the 88th came up to the assistance of their comrades, and the three regiments pressed on; a terrific contest took place; the French fought well, but they had no chance with our men when we grappled close with them; and they were overthrown, leaving half of their column on the heath with which the hill was covered.

The French, ranged, amphitheatrically one above another, took a murderous aim at our soldiers in their advance to dislodge; officers as well as privates became personally engaged in a hand-to-hand fight.

Although they combated with a desperation suited to the situation in which they were placed, the heroes of Austerlitz, Ealing, and Wagram, were hurled from the rocks by the Rangers of Connaught.

The 88th arriving to the assistance of their comrades, instantly charged, and the enemy were borne over the cliffs and crags with fearful rapidity, many of them being literally picked out of the holes in the rocks by the bayonets of our soldiers.

Referring to their conduct on this occasion, the Duke of

Wellington observes in his despatch that he never witnessed a more gallant attack than that made by these two regiments on the division of the enemy which had then reached the ridge of the Sierra. In addition to this flattering testimony of his Grace, and in further evidence of the gallantry they displayed, it will be sufficient to state that the loss sustained by these two corps on the occasion amounted to sixteen officers, seven sergeants, and two hundred and sixty-one men, being nearly one-half of the whole British loss in the battle.

When a part of the Sierra had been gained, Leith perceiving that the French had occupied it, moved the 38th on their right flank, with the Royals in reserve. The 9th formed line under a heavy fire, and, without returning a shot, fairly deforced the French grenadiers from the rocks with the bayonet. The mountain crest was now secure, Reynier completely repulsed, and Hill, closing up to support, prevented any attempt being made to recover it.

The greater difficulty of the ground rendered Ney's attacks still less successful, even for a time, than Reynier's had proved. Craufurd's disposition of the light division was masterly. Under a dipping of the ground between the convent and plateau, the 43rd and 52nd were formed in line; while higher up the hill, and closer to the convent, the Germans were drawn up. The rocks in front formed a natural battery for the guns; and the whole face of the Sierra was crowded with riflemen and cacadores. Morning had scarcely dawned, when a sharp and scattered musketry was heard among the broken hollows of the valley that separated the rival armies, and presently the French appeared in three divisions, Loisson's mounting the face of the Sierra, Marchand's inclining leftwards, as if it intended to turn the right flank of the light division, and the third held in reserve.

The brigade of General Simon led the attack, and reckless of the constant fusilade of the British light troops, and the sweeping fire of the artillery, which literally ploughed through the advancing column, from its leading to its last section, the enemy came steadily and quickly on. The horse artillery worked their guns with amazing rapidity, delivering round after round with such beautiful precision that the wonder was how any body of men could advance under such a withering and incessant cannonade. But nothing could surpass the gallantry of the assailants. On they came, and in a few moments, their skirmishers, "breathless, and begrimed with powder," topped the ridge of the Sierra. The British guns were instantly retired, the French cheers arose, and, in another second, their column topped the height.

General Craufurd, who had coolly watched the progress of the advance, called on the 43rd and 52nd to "Charge!" A cheer that pealed for miles over the Sierra answered the order, and

eighteen hundred British bayonets went sparkling over the brow of the hill. The head of the French column was overwhelmed in an instant; both its flanks were lapped over by the British wings, while volley after volley, at a few yards' distance, completed its destruction, and marked with hundreds of its dead and dying, prostrate on the face of the Sierra, the course of its murderous discomfiture. Some of the light troops continued slaughtering the broken columns nearly to the bottom of the hill, until Ney's guns opened from the opposite side, and covered the escape of relics of Simon's division.

And yet the bravery of the French merited a better result. No troops advanced more gallantly; and when the British steel was glittering in their faces, as with resistless force the fatal rush was made over the crest of the Sierra, every man of the first section of the French raised and discharged his musket, although before his finger parted from the trigger he knew that a British bayonet would be quivering in his heart. Simon was wounded and left upon the field, and his division so totally shattered as to be unable to make any second attempt.

On the right, Marchand's brigades having gained the cover of a pine wood, threw out their skirmishers and endeavoured to surmount the broken surface that the hill everywhere presented. Pack held them in check, while the Guards, formed on the brow of the Sierra, were seen in such imposing force as to render any attempt on the position useless. Craufurd's artillery flanked the pine wood, and maintained a rapid fire; when, finding his troops sinking under an unprofitable slaughter, Ney, after the effort of an hour, retired behind the rocks.

The roar of battle was stilled. Each side removed their wounded men; and the moment the firing ceased both parties amicably intermingled, and sought and brought off their disabled comrades. When this labour of humanity was over, a French company having taken possession of a village within pistol-shot of General Craufurd, stoutly refused to retire when directed. The commander of the light division turned his artillery on the post, overwhelmed it in an instant with his cannonade, and when the guns ceased firing, sent down a few companies of the 43rd to clear the ruins of any whom his grape might have left alive, the obstinacy of the French officer having drawn upon him most justly the anger of the fiery leader of the light division.

The loss sustained by Massena in his attempt upon the British position at Busaco was immense. A general of brigade, Grand'orge, and above a thousand men, were killed; Foy, Merle, and Simon, with four thousand five hundred, were wounded; and nearly three hundred taken prisoners. The allied casualties did not exceed twelve hundred and fifty men, of which nearly one-half were Portuguese.

No battle witnessed more gallant efforts on the part of the enemy than Busaco; and that the British loss should be so disproportionate to that suffered by the French, can readily be conceived from the superior fire, particularly of cannon, which the position of Busaco enabled Lord Wellington to employ. The Portuguese troops behaved admirably, their steadiness and bravery were as creditable to the British officers who disciplined and led them on, as it was satisfactory to the Commander of the Allies.

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## CHAPTER X.

## THE BATTLE OF BAROSA.

1811.

MASSENA had suffered too heavily in his attempt on the British position, to think of attacking the Sierra de Busaco a second time. Early on the 28th September he commenced quietly retiring his advanced brigades, and in the evening, was reported to be marching with all his divisions on the Malhada road, after having set fire to the woods to conceal his movements, which was evidently intended to turn the British left. Orders were instantly given by Lord Wellington to abandon the Sierra; and at nightfall Hill's division was again thrown across the river, the remainder of the brigades, defiling to their left, moved by the shorter road on Coimbra, and resumed the line of the Mondego on the 30th.

The celebrated proclamation to the Portuguese nation was issued by Lord Wellington previous to the commencement of his retreat. Determined to destroy any hope the French might have entertained of subsisting their armies on the resources of the country, the people were emphatically desired, on the approach of the enemy, to abandon their dwellings, drive off their cattle, destroy provisions and forage, and leave the villages and towns deserted of inhabitants and devastated of everything which could be serviceable to the invaders. Generally, these orders were obeyed with a devotion that seems remarkable. Property was wasted or concealed, and the shrine and cottage alike abandoned by their occupants, the peasant deserting the hearth where he had been nursed, and the monk the altar where he had worshipped from his boyhood. The fugitives accompanied the army on its march, and when it halted in the lines, one portion of the wanderers proceeded to Lisbon, while the greater number crossed the Tagus to seek on its southern shores a temporary retreat from those who had obliged them to sacrifice their possessions, and fly from the dwellings of their fathers.

Nothing could surpass the fine attitude maintained by the British in their retreat on Torres Vedras, and every march was leisurely executed, as if no enemy were in the rear. By the great roads of Leiria and Espinal the receding movement was effected; and, with the exception of some affairs of cavalry, and a temporary embarrassment in passing through Condeixa, occasioned by a false alarm and narrow streets, a retreat of nearly two hundred miles was effected with as little confusion as attends an ordinary march. No portion of the field equipage, no baggage whatever was captured, and still more strange, a greater number of prisoners were taken from the pursuers than lost by the pursued—a fact in the history of retreats without a parallel.

Massena, after a three days' reconnoissance, and under the advice of his chief engineers, abandoned all hope of forcing this singular position. Nothing could surpass the chagrin and surprise that the French commander exhibited to his staff, when, by personal observation, he had ascertained the full extent of the defences with which British skill had perfected what nature had already done so much for. To attempt forcing Torres Vedras must have ensured destruction; and nothing remained, but to take a position in its front, and observe that immense chain of posts, which it was found impossible to carry.

Though by cavalry patrols on the right bank of the Tagus and the detachment of a division to Thomar, the French commander had enlarged the scope of country over which his foragers could operate, supplies failed fast; and even French ingenuity failed in discovering concealed magazines. Nothing remained but to retire from cantonments where provisions were no longer procurable; on the morning of the 15th the French army broke up, and, favoured by thick weather, retired in beautiful order on Santarem and Torres Novas.

Both armies went into cantonments; the allies with headquarters at Cartaxo, the French having chosen Torres Novas for theirs.

Little of military interest occurred for some time, excepting that the Portuguese militias, under their British officers, were incessant in harassing the French.

Time passed on, nothing of moment occurred, the British remaining quiet, in expectation of a reinforcement of troops from home.

The first movements that took place were an advance on Punhete by the allies, and the sudden retirement from Santarem by the French. Massena chose the left bank of the Mondego as his line of retreat, falling back on Guarda and Almeida. Wellington followed promptly; and on the 9th, Massena having halted in front of Pombal, the allies hastened forward to attack him. But the French marshal declined an action, and fell

back pressed closely by the British light troops, and covered by a splendid rear-guard which he had formed from his choicest battalions, and intrusted to the command of Marshal Ney.

On the 5th of April Massena crossed the frontier. Portugal was now without the presence of a Frenchman, except the garrison of Almeida, and those who had been taken prisoners in the numerous affairs between the British light troops and the enemy's rear-guard. Nothing could be bolder or more scientific than the whole course of Wellington's operations, from the time he left the lines until Massena "changed his position from the Zezere to the Agueda." Yet it must be admitted that the French retreat all through was conducted with consummate ability. Ney commanded the rear-guard with excellent judgment; his positions were admirably selected; and when assailed, they were defended as might have been expected from one who had already obtained the highest professional reputation.

In a military view, Massena's retreat was admirable, and reflected infinite credit on the generals who directed it; but, in a moral one, nothing could be more disgraceful. The country over which the retreating columns of the French army passed, was marked by bloodshed and devastation. Villages were everywhere destroyed, property wasted or carried off, the men shot in sheer wantonness, the women villainously abused, while thousands were driven for shelter to the mountains, where many perished from actual want. With gothic barbarity the fine old city of Leria, and the church and convent of Alcabaca, with its library and relics, were ordered by Massena to be burned. The order was too faithfully executed; and places, for centuries objects of Portuguese veneration, were given to the flames; and those hallowed roofs, beneath which "the sage had studied and the saint had prayed," were reduced to ashes, to gratify a ruthless and vindictive spirit of revenge.

The French soldiers had been so long accustomed to plunder, that they proceeded in their researches for booty of every kind upon a regular system. They were provided with tools for the work of pillage, and every piece of furniture in which places of concealment could be constructed they broke open from behind, so that no valuables could be hidden from them by any contrivance of that kind. Having satisfied themselves that nothing was secreted above ground, they proceeded to examine whether there was any new masonry, or if any part of the cellar or ground floor had been disturbed; if it appeared uneven, they dug there; where there was no such indication they poured water, and if it were absorbed in one place faster than another, there they broke the earth. There were men who at the first glance could pronounce whether anything had been buried beneath the soil, and when they probed with an iron rod, or, in default of it,

with sword or bayonet, it was found that they were seldom mistaken in their judgment. The habit of living by prey called forth, as in beasts, a faculty of discovering it; there was one soldier whose scent became so acute that if he approached the place where wine had been concealed, he would go unerringly to the spot.

Wherever the French bivouacked the scene was such as might rather have been looked for in a camp of predatory Tartars than in that of a civilised people. Food and forage, and skins of wine, and clothes and church vestments, books and guitars, and all the bulkier articles of wasteful spoil were heaped together in their huts with the planks and doors of the habitations which they had demolished. Some of the men, retaining amid this brutal service the characteristic activity and cleverness of their nation, fitted up their huts with hangings from their last scene of pillage, with a regard to comfort hardly to have been expected in their situation, and a love of gaiety only to be found in Frenchmen.

Such was the condition of things with the main army when the famous battle of Barose was fought by a different section of the British army at some distance.

An Anglo-Spanish army was attempting to raise the siege of Cadiz. All bade fair for success, as the French had scarcely ten thousand men in their lines, while in the city the Spanish force was more than twenty thousand. On this occasion, Graham acted under the command of La Pena, and eleven thousand allied troops were despatched from Cadiz to Tarifa, to operate against the enemy's rear at Chiclana; while it was arranged that Zayas, who commanded in the Isle de Leon, should pass his troops over San Petri near the sea, and unite in a combined attack.

After much delay, occasioned by tempestuous weather, the troops and artillery were safely assembled at Tarifa on the 27th; and when joined by the 28th regiment and the flank companies of the 9th and 82nd, they numbered about four thousand five hundred effective men.

General La Pena arrived the same day with seven thousand Spaniards; and on the next, the united force moved through the passes of the Ronda hills, and halted within four leagues of the French outposts. The commands of the allies were thus distributed—the vanguard to Lardizable, the centre to the Prince of Anglona, the reserve to General Graham, and the cavalry to Colonel Whittingham.

Victor, the French commander, though apprised of the activity of the Spaniards, and the march of General Graham, could not correctly ascertain the point upon which their intended operations would be directed; and therefore, with eleven thousand

choice troops, he took post in observation between the roads of Conil and Medina.

On the 2nd April, the capture of Casa Viejas, increased La Pena's force by sixteen hundred infantry, and a number of guerilla horse. Until the 5th, he continued his movements, and, after his advanced guard had been roughly handled by a squadron of French dragoons, he halted on the Cerro de Puerco, more generally and gloriously known as the heights of Barosa.

Barosa, though not a high hill, rises considerably above the rugged plain it overlooks, and stands four miles inland from the debouchement of the Santi Petri. The plain is bounded on the right by the forest of Chiclana, on the left by cliffs on the sea-beach, and on the centre by a pine wood, beyond which the hill of Bermeja rises.

The irregularity and tardiness of the Spanish movements gave a portentous warning of what might be expected from them in the field. They occupied fifteen hours in executing a moderate march, passing over the ground in a rambling and disorderly manner, that seemed rather like peasants wandering from a fair, than troops moving in the presence of an enemy. La Pena, without waiting to correct his broken ranks, sent on a vanguard to Zayas; while his rear, entirely separated from the centre, was still straggling over the country, and contrary to the expressed wishes of Graham, who implored him to hold Barosa, he declined his advice, and ordered the British to march through the pine wood on Bermeja.

Graham, supposing that Anglona's division and the cavalry would continue to occupy the hill, leaving the flank companies of the 9th and 82nd to protect his baggage, obeyed the order, and commenced his march. But the astonishment of the British general was unbounded, when, on entering the wood, he saw La Pena moving his entire corps from the heights of Barosa, with the exception of three or four battalions and as many pieces of artillery.

Unfortunately, the British general was not the only person who had observed that Barosa was abandoned. Victor, concealed in the forest of Chiclana, anxiously watched the movements of the allies. He saw the fatal error committed by the Spanish leader, and instantly made dispositions to profit from the ignorance and obstinacy of his antagonist.

The French marshal, having selected three grenadier battalions as reserves, strengthened his left wing with two, and three squadrons of cavalry, while the other was attached to his centre. Ruffin commanded the left, Laval the centre; while Villatte, with two thousand five hundred infantry, covered the camp, and watched the Spaniards at Santa Petri and Bermeja. The cavalry stationed at Medina and Arcos were ordered by Victor to move

on Vejer and cut off the allies, for on their certain defeat the French general entertained no doubt.

The time was admirably chosen for a decisive movement. The British corps were defiling through the wood, the strength of the Spaniards posted on the Bermeja, another division pursued a straggling march on Vejer, and a fourth, in great confusion, was at Barosa, as a protection to the baggage. Making Villatte's division a pivot, Victor pushed Laval at once against the British, and ascending the back of the hill with Ruffin's brigade, he threw himself between the Spaniards and Medina, dispersed the camp followers in an instant, and captured the guns and baggage.

Graham, when apprised of this sudden and unexpected movement, countermarched directly on the plain, to co-operate, as he believed, with La Pena, whom he calculated on finding on the heights, but never was reliance placed by a brave soldier on a more worthless ally. The Spaniard had deceived him; himself was gone, his mob-soldiery were fugitives, Ruffin on the heights, the French cavalry between him and the sea, and Laval close on the left flank of the British.

It was indeed a most perilous situation, and in that extremity the brave old man to whom the British had been fortunately confided, proved himself worthy of the trust. He saw the ruin of retreat; safety lay in daring, and though the enemy held the key of the position with fresh troops, Graham boldly determined to attack them with his wearied ones.

The battle was instantly commenced. Duncan's artillery opened a furious cannonade on the column of Laval; and Colonel Barnard, with the rifles and Portuguese cacadores extended to the left and began firing. The rest of the British troops formed two masses, without regard to regiments or brigades; one, under General Dilkes, marched direct against Ruffin, and the other under Colonel Whately, boldly attacked Laval. On both sides the guns poured a torrent of grape and canister over the field; the infantry kept up a withering fire; and both sides advanced, for both seemed anxious to bring the contest to an issue. Whately, when the lines approached, came forward to the charge; he drove the first line on the second, and routed both with slaughter.

Brown had marched at once on Ruffin, and though half his small number had been annihilated by an overwhelming fire, he held his ground till Dilkes came to his assistance. Never pausing to correct their formation, which the ragged hill had considerably disorganised, on came the British desperately; they were still struggling to attain the summit, and approaching the ridge, breathless and disordered, their opponents advanced to meet them. A furious combat, hand to hand, ensued; for a moment victory seemed doubtful, but the British fought with a ferocity

that nothing could oppose. Whole sections went down, but still the others pressed forward. Ruffin and Rousseau, who commanded the *élite* of the grenadiers, fell mortally wounded. The British never paused, on they went, delivering volley after volley, forcing the French over the heights, and defeating them with the loss of their guns.

The divisions of the French commander, though dreadfully cut up, fell back on each other for mutual support, and endeavoured to rally; but Duncan's guns were moved forward, and opened a close and murderous fire that prevented a possibility of reforming. Nothing could have the shattered battalions from that exterminating cannonade but an instant retreat, and Victor retired, leaving the British in undisputed possession of the field, from which want of food and continued fatigue, while under arms for four-and-twenty hours, of course prevented them from moving in pursuit.

Never was there a shorter, and never a bloodier conflict. Though it lasted scarcely an hour and a quarter, out of the handful of British troops engaged, a loss was sustained of fifty officers, sixty sergeants, and eleven hundred rank and file. The French, besides two thousand killed and wounded, lost six guns, an eagle, and two generals, with nearly five hundred prisoners.

Nothing could exceed the dastardly duplicity with which the Spanish general abandoned his gallant ally. La Pena never made a movement towards the succour of the British, and although the French cavalry scarcely exceeded two hundred men, and the Spanish, under Whittingham, amounted to more than six, the latter never drew a sabre. Never was there a finer field for cavalry to act upon with effect; Ruffin's left was perfectly open, and even a demonstration of attack must have turned defeat to ruin. Three troops of German hussars, under Ponsonby, reached the field at the close of the battle, just as the beaten divisions were attempting to unite. They charged through the French squadrons, overthrew them, captured two guns, and sabred many of Ruffin's grenadiers, while endeavouring to regain their ranks.

To paint the character of Barosa in a few words, Napier's will best describe it. "The contemptible feebleness of La Pena furnished a surprising contrast to the heroic vigour of Graham, whose attack was an inspiration rather than a resolution—so wise, so sudden was the decision, so swift, so conclusive was the execution."

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE BATTLE OF FUENTES D'ONORO.

1811.

MASSENA having taken the field again, with the object of raising the blockade of Almeida, then closely invested by Lord Wellington, the British commander, determined that this important fortress should not be relieved, resolved, even on unfavourable ground and with an inferior force, to risk a battle.

The river Coa flows past Almeida, its banks are dangerous and steep, and its points of passage few. Beside the bridge of the city, there is a second, seven miles up the stream, at Castello Bom; and a third, twenty miles farther still, at Sabugal. To fight with the river in his rear was hazardous; but Wellington had decided on his course of action, and accordingly he selected the best position which a district of no great military strength would afford.

The Duas Casas runs in a northerly course and nearly parallel with the Coa, having on its left bank the village of Fuentes d'Onoro. It is a sweet hamlet, and prettily situated in front of a sloping hill of easy access, here and there intersprinkled with woods of cork and ilex. The village was a feature of considerable military importance, the channel of the Duas Casas being rocky and broken, and its banks generally steep. Fuentes was occupied by the light troops, the third division were posted on a ridge crossing the road to Villa Formosa, the brigades of Craufurd and Campbell had formed behind the village of Alameda, to observe the bridge over the Duas Casas; Pack's division observed Almeida closely, and shut in the garrison; Erskine held the great road that crosses the Duas Casas by a ford, while the guerilla cavalry were placed in observation, two miles on the right, at the village of Nava-de-Aver. The position was very extensive, covering, from flank to flank, a surface of nearly six miles.

The military attitude which the allied commander held, compared with that of the preceding year, was singularly changed. Then, his being able to maintain himself in the country was more than questionable; now, and in the face of those corps who had driven him on Torres Vedras, he stood with a most effective force.

On the 1st and 2nd of May, Massena, with an immense convoy, passed the rivers Agueda and Azava, with the intention of relieving Almeida, and providing it with every means for insuring a protracted defence. On the 3rd, in the evening, the French sixth corps appeared on the heights above Fuentes d'Onoro, and commenced a lively cannonade, followed up by a furious assault upon the village. The light companies, who held Fuentes, sustained the attack bravely, until they were supported

by the 71st, and, as the affair grew warmer, by the 79th and 24th also. Colonel Williams was wounded, and the command devolving on Colonel Cameron, he remedied a temporary disorder that had been occasioned by the fall of several officers, and again restored the battle. The ground for a time gained by the French was inch by inch recovered; and, probably, during the Peninsular conflicts, a closer combat was never maintained, as, in the main street particularly, the rival troops fought fairly hand to hand.

The French were finally expelled from the village. Night was closing; undismayed by a heavy loss, and unwearied by a hardly-contested action, a cannon—as it appeared to be—being seen on the adjacent heights, the 71st dashed across the rivulet, and bearing down all resistance, reached and won the object of their enterprise. On reaching it, however, the Highlanders discovered that in the haze of evening they had mistaken a tumbrel for a gun; but they bore it off, a trophy of their gallantry.

The British regiments held the village. The next day passed quietly over, while Massena carefully reconnoitred the position of his opponent. It was suspected that he intended to change his plan of attack, and manœuvre on the right; and to secure that flank, Houston's division was moved to Posa Velha, the ground there being weak, and the river fordable. As had been anticipated, favoured by the darkness, Massena marched his troops bodily to the left, placing his whole cavalry, with Junot's corps, right in front of Houston's division. A correspondent movement was consequently made; Spencer's and Picton's divisions moved to the right, and Craufurd, with the cavalry, marched to support Houston.

At daybreak the attack was made. Junot carried the village of Posa Velha, and the French cavalry drove in that of the allies. But the infantry, supported by the horse artillery, repulsed the enemy and drove them back with loss.

A difficult and a daring change of position was now required; and Lord Wellington, abandoning his communication with the bridge at Sabugal, retired his right, and formed line at right angles with his first formation, extending from the Duas Casas, towards Frenada on the Coa.

This necessary operation obliged the seventh and light divisions, in the face of a bold and powerful cavalry, to retire nearly two miles; and it required all the steadiness and rapidity of British light infantry to effect the movement safely. Few as the British cavalry were, they charged the enemy frequently, and always with success; while the horse artillery sustained their well-earned reputation, acting with a boldness that at times almost exposed them to certain capture.

At one place, however, the fury of the fight seemed for a time

to centre. A great commotion was observed among the French squadrons; men and officers closed in confusion towards one point where a thick dust was rising, and where loud cries and the sparkling of blades and flashing of pistols indicated some extraordinary occurrence. Suddenly the multitude was violently agitated, a British shout arose, the mass was rent asunder, and Norman Ramsay burst forth at the head of his battery, his horses breathing fire, and stretching like greyhounds along the plain, his guns bounding like things of no weight, and the mounted gunners in close and compact order protecting the rear.

The infantry, in squares of battalions, repelled every charge; while the *Chasseurs Britannique* kept up a flanking fire, that, while the retrogression of the British was being effected, entailed a considerable loss on the assailants who were pressing them closely.

The new position of the British was most formidable. The right appuied upon a hill, topped by an ancient tower, and the alignment was so judiciously taken up that Massena did not venture to assail it.

While these operations were going on, a furious attack was repeated on Fuentes d'Onoro. Infantry, cavalry, and artillery, all were brought to bear, a tremendous cannonade opened on the devoted village, and the assault was made at the same moment on flanks and front together. Desperate fighting in the streets and churchyard took place. The French feeding the attacking troops with fresh numbers, pressed the three regiments that held the upper village severely, but after one of the closest and most desperate combats that has ever been maintained, a bayonet charge of the 88th decided the contest; and the assailants, notwithstanding their vastly superior force, were driven with prodigious slaughter from Fuentes, the upper village remaining in possession of its gallant defenders, and the lower in the silent occupation of the dead.

Evening closed the combat. Massena's columns on the right were halted, and his sixth division, with which he had endeavoured to storm Fuentes d'Onoro, withdrawn, the whole French army bivouacking in the order in which they had stood when the engagement closed. The British lighted their fires, posted their pickets, and occupied the field they had so bravely held; and both parties lay down to rest, with a confident assurance on their minds, that the battle was only intermitted till the return of daylight.

A brigade of the light division relieved the brave defenders of Fuentes, and preparatory to the expected renewal of attack, they threw up some works to defend the upper village and the ground behind it. But these precautions were unnecessary; Massena remained for the next day in front of his antagonist,

exhibiting no anxiety to renew the combat. The 7th found the British, as usual, under arms at dawn, but the day passed as quietly as the preceding one had done. On the 8th, however, the French columns were observed in full retreat, marching on the road to Ciudad Rodrigo. Massena, with an army reinforced by every battalion and squadron he could collect from Galicia and Castile, had been completely beaten by a wing of the British army, consisting of three divisions only.

With that unblushing assurance, for which the French marshals have been remarkable, of changing defeat into conquest, Massena did not hesitate to call Fuentes d'Onoro a victory. But the object for which the battle was fought was unattained—he failed in succouring the beleaguered city, and Almeida was left to its fate.

In a close and sanguinary contest, like that of Fuentes d'Onoro, the loss on both sides must necessarily be immense. The British had two hundred killed, one thousand and twenty-eight wounded, and two hundred and ninety-four missing. The French suffered much more heavily; and it was computed that nearly five thousand of Massena's army were rendered *hors de combat*. In the lower village of Fuentes alone, two hundred dead bodies were reckoned.

In the conduct of an affair which terminated so gloriously for the divisions engaged, the system of defence adopted by Lord Wellington was very masterly. Every arm of his force was happily employed, and all were well combined for mutual protection. Massena had every advantage for arranging his attack, for thick woods in front enabled him to form his columns unseen, and until the moment of their debouchement, none could tell their strength, or even guess the place on which they were about to be directed. Hence, the French marshal had the means of pouring a mass of infantry on any point he pleased, and of making a serious impression before troops could be moved forward to meet and repel the assault.

His superiority in cavalry and artillery was great. He might, under a cannonade that the British guns could not have answered, have brought forward his cavalry *en masse*, supported by columns of infantry, and the allied line, under a masked movement of this kind, would in all probability have been penetrated. Or, by bringing his cavalry round the right of the British flank, and crossing the Coa, he might have obliged Lord Wellington to pass the river under the greatest disadvantages. Indeed, this was apprehended on the 5th, and there was but one alternative, either to raise the blockade of Almeida, or relinquish the Sabugal road. The latter was done. It was a bold measure, but it was not adopted without due consideration; and it received an ample reward in the successful termination of this hard-fought battle.

## CHAPTER XII.

## THE BATTLE OF ALBUERA.

1811.

WHILE Marshal Beresford was endeavouring to reduce Badajoz, intelligence reached him that Soult was marching from Larena. Beresford, of course, at once abandoned the siege, removed the artillery and stores, and having united himself with Blake, Castanos, and Ballasteros, the combined armies took position behind the Albuera, where the Seville and Olivenca roads separate.

On the westward of the ground where the allies determined to abide a battle, the surface undulated gently, and on the summit, and parallel with the river, their divisions were drawn up. The village of Albuera was in front of the left, and the right was formed on a succession of knolls, none of them of any strength, and having no particular appui. On the eastern side of the river, an open country extends for a considerable distance, terminating in thick woods; and in these Soult bivouacked on the night of the 15th, and there made his dispositions for attack.

The French army, though numerically weaker, was composed of veteran troops, and amounted to twenty thousand infantry, three thousand cavalry, and forty pieces of cannon. The allies numbered twenty-seven thousand infantry, two thousand cavalry, and thirty-two guns; but of this force, fourteen thousand were Spanish.

These last were formed in a double line upon the right, Stewart's division was in the centre, a Portuguese division on the left. The light infantry, under Alten, held the village, and the dragoons, under Lumley, were placed on the right flank of the Spaniards. Cole's division (the fusileers) and a Portuguese brigade, which came up after the action had commenced, were formed in rear of the centre.

Beresford's was a medley of three nations. He had thirty thousand men in position, but not a fourth was British; while nearly one-half was composed of that worst of military mobs—the Spaniards; nor were these even brought up in time to admit of their being properly posted. Blake had promised that his corps should be on the hill of Albuera before noon on the 15th May, and, with but a few miles to march, with excellent roads to traverse, the head of his columns reached the ground near midnight, and the rear at three on the morning of the 16th. Bad as Beresford's army was, had it been in hand, more might have been done with it. It was three o'clock on the 16th before Blake was fairly up, and six before the fourth division reached the ground; while three fine British regiments under Kemmis,

and Madden's Portuguese cavalry, never appeared. As the event showed, a few British soldiers would have proved invaluable, and these troops, though immediately contiguous during the long and doubtful struggle that ensued, remained *non-combattant*.

Beresford's position had been carefully reconnoitred by Soult on the evening of the 15th, and aware that the fourth British division was still before Badajoz, and Blake not yet come up, he determined to attack the marshal without delay. A height, commanding the Valverde road, if a front attack were made, appeared on his examination of the ground to be the key of the position; and as Beresford had overlooked its occupation, Soult ably selected it as the point by which his principal effort should be made.

A wooded hill behind the Albuera, and within cannon-shot of the allied right, afforded the French marshal the means of forming a strong column for attack, without his design being noticed by his opponent. Covered by the darkness, he brought forward the artillery of Ruty, the fifth corps under Girard, with the cavalry of Latour Maubourg, and formed them for his intended assault; thus concentrating fifteen thousand men and forty guns within ten minutes' march of Beresford's right wing, and yet that general could neither see a man, nor draw a sound conclusion as to the real plan of attack. The remainder of his corps was placed in the wood on the banks of the Feria, to bear against Beresford's left, and by carrying the bridge and village sever the wings of the allied army.

The engagement commenced by Godinot debouching from the wood, and making a feint on the left, while the main body of the French ascended the heights on the right of the Spaniards. On perceiving the true object of Soult's attack, Beresford, who had vainly endeavoured, through an aide-de-camp, to persuade Blake to change his front, rode to the Spanish post, pointed out the heads of the advancing columns, and induced his ally to take up a new alignment. It was scarcely done until the French bore down upon the Spanish infantry; and though at first they were stoutly opposed, the battalions gradually began to yield ground; and, being farther forced back, Soult commenced deploying on the most commanding point of the position. A serious attack was to be dreaded; the French cavalry sweeping round the allies, threatened their rear, and Godinot's column made fresh demonstrations of vigorously assailing the left.

All this was most alarming; the Spanish line confusedly endeavouring to effect the difficult manœuvre of changing its front, while two-thirds of the French, in compact order of battle, were preparing to burst upon the disordered ranks, and insure their total destruction. The French guns had opened a furious cannonade, the infantry were firing volley after volley, the

cavalry charging where the Spanish battalions seemed most disordered. Already their ranks were wavering, and Soult determined to complete the ruin he had begun, ordered up the reserve, and advanced all his batteries.

At this perilous moment, when the day seemed lost, General Stewart pushed the leading brigade of the fourth division up the hill under Colonel Colborne, and it mounted by columns of companies. To form line on gaining the top, under a withering fire, was difficult; and while in the act of its being effected, a mist, accompanied by a heavy fall of rain, shut every object out from view, and enabled the whole of the light cavalry of Godinot's division to sweep round the right flank, and gallop on the rear of the companies at the time they were in loose deployment. Half the brigade was cut to pieces—the 31st, who were still fortunately in column, alone escaping the lancers, who, with little resistance, were spearing right and left a body of men surprised on an open flat, and wanting the necessary formation which can alone enable infantry to resist a charge of horse.

This scene of slaughter, by a partial dispersion of the smoke and fog that had hitherto concealed the battleground, was fortunately observed by General Lumley, and he ordered the British cavalry to gallop to the relief of the remnant of Colborne's brigade. They charged boldly; and, in turn, the lancers were taken in rear, and many fell beneath the sabres of the British.

The weather, that had caused the destruction of the British regiments, obscured the field of battle, and prevented Soult from taking an immediate advantage by exterminating that half-ruined brigade. Stewart brought up Houghton's corps; the artillery had come forward, and opened a furious cannonade on the dense masses of the French; and the 31st resolutely maintained its position on the height. Two Spanish brigades were advanced, and the action became hotter than ever. For a moment the French battalions recoiled, but it was only to rally instantly, and come on with greater fury. A raging fire of artillery on both sides, sustained at little more than pistol range, with reiterated volleys of musketry, heaped the field with dead, while the French were vainly endeavouring to gain ground, and the British would not yield an inch.

But the ranks of the island soldiery were thinning fast, their ammunition was nearly exhausted, their fire slackened, and notwithstanding the cannonade checked the French movement for a time, Soult formed a column on the right flank of the British, and the French lancers charging furiously again, drove off the artillerymen and captured six guns. All now seemed lost, and a retreat appeared inevitable. The Portuguese were preparing to cover it, and the marshal was about to give the order, when Colonel Hardinge suggested that another effort should be made,

and boldly ordered General Cole to advance, and then riding to Colonel Abercrombie, who commanded the remaining brigade of the second division, directed him also to push forward into the fight.

The order was instantly obeyed; General Harvey, with the Portuguese regiments of the fourth division, moved on between the British cavalry and the hill; and though charged home by the French dragoons, he checked them by a heavy fire and pushed forward steadily; while General Cole led on the 7th and 23rd fusileers in person.

In a few minutes more the remnant of the British must have abandoned the hill or perished. The French reserve was on its march to assist the front column of the enemy, while, with the allies all was in confusion; and as if the slaughter required an increase, a Spanish and a British regiment were firing in mutual mistake upon each other. Six guns were in possession of the French, and their lancers, riding furiously over the field, threatened the feeble remnant of the British still in line, and speared the wounded without mercy.

At this fearful moment the boundless gallantry of British officers displayed itself; Colonel Arbuthnot, under the double musketry, rushed between the mistaken regiments, and stopped the firing; Cole pushed up the hill, scattered the lancers, recovered the guns, and passed the right of the skeleton of Houghton's brigade, at the same instant that Abercrombie appeared upon its left. Leaving the broken regiments in its rear, the fusileer brigade came forward with imposing gallantry, and boldly confronted the French, now reinforced by a part of its reserve, and who were, as they believed, coming forward to annihilate the "feeble few" that had still survived the murderous contest.

From the daring attitude of the fresh regiments, Soult perceived, too late, that the battle was not yet won; and, under a tremendous fire of artillery, he endeavoured to break up his close formation and extend his front. For a moment the storm of grape poured from Ruty's well-served artillery, staggered the fusileers; but it was only for a moment. Though Soult rushed into the thickest of the fire, and encouraged and animated his men, though the cavalry gathered on their flank and threatened it with destruction, on went these noble regiments; volley after volley falling into the crowded ranks of their enemy, and cheer after cheer pealing to Heaven in answer to the clamorous outcry of the French, as the boldest urged the others forward.

Nothing could check the fusileers; they kept gradually advancing, while the incessant rolling of their musketry slaughtered the crowded sections of the French, and each moment embarrassed more and more Soult's efforts to open out

his encumbered line. The reserve, coming to support their comrades—now forced to the very edge of the plateau—increased the crowd without remedying the disorder. The British volleys rolled on faster and more deadly than ever; a horrid carnage made all attempts to hold the hill vain, and uselessly increased an unavailing slaughter. Unable to bear the withering fire, the shattered columns of the French were no longer able to sustain themselves, the mass were driven over the ridge, and trampling each other down, the shattered column sought refuge at the bottom of the hill.

On that bloody height stood the conquerors. From fifteen hundred muskets a parting volley fell upon the routed column as it hurried down the Sierra. Where was the remainder of the proud army of Britain, that on the morning had exceeded six thousand combatants? Stretched coldly in the sleep of death, or bleeding on the battleground!

During the time this desperate effort of the fusileer brigade had been in progress, Beresford, to assist Hardinge, moved Blake's first line on Albuera, and with the German light troops, and two Portuguese divisions, advanced to support the 7th and 23rd, while Lautour Maubourg's flank attack was repelled by the fire of Lefebre's guns, and a threatened charge by Lumley. But the fusileers had driven the French over the heights before any assistance reached them, and Beresford was enabled to form a fresh line upon the hill, parallel to that by which Soult had made his attack in the morning. For a short time the battle continued at Albuera, but the French finally withdrew from the village, and at three o'clock in the evening the firing had totally ceased.

There is not on record a bloodier struggle. In four hours' fighting fifteen thousand men were *hors de combat*. The allied loss was frightful; it amounted to nearly seven thousand in killed, wounded, and missing. Almost all its general officers were included in the melancholy list; Houghton, Myers, and Duckworth in the killed; and Cole, Stewart, Ellis, Blakeney, and Hawkshaw among the wounded. The loss of some regiments was terrible; the 57th came into action with five hundred and seventy bayonets, and at the close it had lost its colonel (Inglis), twenty-two officers, and four hundred rank and file. The proportion of the allied casualties told how fatal Albuera had proved to the British; two thousand Spaniards, and six hundred German and Portuguese, were returned as their killed and wounded, leaving the remainder to be completed from the British regiments. Hence, the unexampled loss of more than four thousand men, out of a corps little exceeding six, was sustained in this sanguinary battle by the British.

Never was more heroism displayed than by the British regi-

ments engaged in the murderous conflict of Albuera. The soldiers dropped by whole ranks, but never thought of turning. When a too ardent wish to succour those pressed upon the hill induced Stewart to hurry Colborne's brigade into action, without allowing it a momentary pause to halt and form, and in the mist that unluckily favoured the lancer charge the companies were unexpectedly assailed, though fighting at dreadful disadvantage, the men resisted to the last. Numbers perished by the lance-blade; but still the dead Poles that were found intermingled with the fallen British, showed that the gallant islanders had not died without exacting blood for blood.

The French exceeded the British by at least a thousand. Of their worst wounded, eight hundred were left upon the field. Their loss in superior officers, like that of the British, had been most severe—two generals having been killed, and three severely wounded.

To a victory both sides laid claim—the French resting theirs on the capture of some colours, the taking of a howitzer, with some five hundred prisoners whom they had secured unwounded. But the British kept the battleground, and though neither cannon nor eagle remained with them, a field covered with carcases, and heaped with bleeding enemies, was the best trophy of their valour, and clearly established to whom conquest in reality belonged.

Much military controversy has arisen from the fight of Albuera, and Marshal Beresford has received some praise and more censure. Probably the battle should not have been fought at all; or, if it were unavoidable, greater care might have been bestowed in taking the position.

If Beresford's judgment be open to censure, his personal intrepidity must be admitted and admired. No man could make greater exertions to retrieve the day when defeat appeared all but certain. When Stewart's imprudence, in loosely bringing Colborne's brigade into action, had occasioned it a loss only short of annihilation, and the Spaniards, though they could not be induced to advance, fired without ceasing, with a British regiment in their front, Beresford actually seized an ensign and dragged him forward with the colours, hoping that these worthless troops would be inspirited to follow. Not a man stirred, and the standard-bearer, when the marshal's grasp relaxed, instantly flew back to herd with his cold-blooded associates. In every charge of the fight, and on every part of the field, Beresford was seen conspicuously; and whatever might have been his failing as a general, his bravery as a man should have commanded the respect of many who treated his arrangements with unsparing severity.

A painful night succeeded that sanguinary day. The moaning of the wounded and the groans of the dying were heard on every side; and it was to be dreaded that Soult, who had still

fifteen thousand troops fit for action, would renew the battle. On the next day, however, three fresh British regiments joined the marshal by a forced march; and on the 18th, Soult retreated on the road of Solano, covered by the heavy cavalry of Lautour Maubourg. He had previously despatched such of his wounded as could bear removal towards Seville, leaving the remainder to the generous protection of the British commander.

Soult continued retreating, and Beresford followed him, by order of the allied commander.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SIEGE OF RODRIGO.

1812.

A CAMPAIGN highly honourable to the British arms had ended, and the rival armies had taken up cantonments for the winter months, each covering an extensive range of country, for the better obtaining of forage and supplies. Active operations for a season were suspended, and officers whose private concerns or bad health required a temporary leave of absence, had asked and received permission to revisit Britain. The restoration of the works of Almeida, which the French had half destroyed, occupied the leisure time of the British and Portuguese artificers, while, for the ostensible purpose of arming that fortress, siege stores and a battering train were conveyed thither by water carriage—the Douro having been rendered navigable by the British engineers for an extended distance of forty miles.

But the arming of Almeida was but a feint—the reduction of Ciudad Rodrigo was the real object of Lord Wellington, and with indefatigable zeal he applied himself to obtain the means. A waggon train was organised—six hundred carts, on an improved construction, were built; and while the French marshal, supposing that the weakness of Lord Wellington was a security against any act of aggression upon his part, detached Montbrun to Valencia, and Dorsenne to the Asturias and Montana, the British general was quietly preparing to strike a sudden and unexpected blow, and completed his necessary arrangements for investing Rodrigo the 6th of January.

Considering the season of the year, and the nakedness of the country for many miles around the threatened fortress, the intended operation was bold to a degree. The horses had scarcely any forage, and the men were literally destitute of bread or shelter. The new year came in inclemently, rain fell in torrents, and though the investment was delayed two days, the brigade (Mackinnon's) that marched from Aldea de Ponte, left

nearly four hundred men behind, in a route of only four-and-twenty miles, numbers of whom perished on the line of march, or died subsequently from the fatigue they had endured.

Ciudad Rodrigo stands on high ground, in the centre of an extensive plain it domineers. The city is erected on the right bank of the Agueda, which there branches into numerous channels, and forms a number of small islands. The citadel commands the town, and standing on an elevated mound is difficult of access on every side. Since their late occupation, the French had added considerably to the strength of the place. The suburbs were secured against a *coup de main*, by fortifying two convents on their flanks, and another nearly in the centre. On the north side the ground rises in two places; that furthest from the works is thirteen feet above the level of the ramparts, from which it is distant six hundred yards. The other, of lesser altitude, is scarcely two hundred paces. On the former the enemy had erected a redoubt; it was protected by a fortified convent called San Francisco, as well as the artillery of the place, which commanded the approaches from the hill.

The Agueda is fordable in several places, the best passage being within pistol-shot of the walls. In winter, from the sudden floodings of the river, these fords cannot be relied upon, and a bridge of eighteen trestles, with a platform four hundred feet long, was secretly constructed in the citadel of Almeida and conveyed to Salices.

Four divisions were entrusted with the duties of the siege. They took their turns in course, each for twenty-four hours furnishing the requisite guards and working parties.

On the night of the 8th of January, the investment was regularly commenced, and the redoubt on the upper Teson stormed by three companies of the 52nd with trifling loss. Ground was broken on its flank, and by the morning the trench was four feet wide and three in depth. On the following night the first parallel was opened; and the outlines of three batteries for eleven guns each were traced.

The weather continued dreadfully inclement, and as it was believed that Marmont would endeavour to raise the siege, Wellington decided on rapid operations, and resolved to attempt a storm even with the counterscarps entire. Both the besiegers and the besieged were active in their operations. On the night of the 13th, the convent of Santa Cruz was taken; and on the 14th, while the division was coming to relieve the working parties, the garrison made a sortie, overturned the gabions in advance of the parallel, and would have succeeded in spiking the guns, but for the spirited opposition of a few workmen and engineers, who checked the attempt, until the head of the division closing up obliged the French to retire.

On the morning of the 14th, the batteries were nearly ready for breaching, mounted with twenty-three 24-pounders and two eighteens. At four o'clock in the afternoon their fire commenced, and a spectacle more strikingly magnificent, it has rarely been the good fortune even of a British soldier to witness.

The evening chanced to be remarkably beautiful and still; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a breath of wind astir, when suddenly the roar of artillery broke in upon its calmness, and volumes of smoke rose slowly from the batteries. These floating gently towards the town, soon enveloped the lower part of the hill, and even the ramparts and bastions in a dense veil, while the towers and summits lifting their heads over the haze, showed like fairy buildings, or those substantial castles which are sometimes seen in the clouds on a summer's day. The flashes from the British guns, answered as they were from the artillery in the front, and the roar of their thunder reverberating among the remote mountains of the Sierra de Francisca; these, with the rattle of the balls against the walls, proved altogether a scene which, to be rightly understood, must be experienced.

That night the convent of San Francisco was escaladed by a wing of the 40th, and the French having abandoned the suburbs, they were occupied by the besiegers.

At daybreak on the 15th the batteries resumed their fire, and at sunset the walls of the main scarp and *fausse braye* were visibly shaken. Under cover of a fog on the 16th, the second parallel was prolonged; but the front of the works was so limited, and the fire of the enemy so concentrated and correct, that it required immense time to throw up a battery. The difficulty may be readily imagined, from the fact of the French having discharged at the approaches, upwards of twenty thousand shot and shells. Another battery of seven guns was opened on the 18th. On the 19th, two breaches were distinctly visible from the trenches, and on being carefully reconnoitred, they were declared practicable. Lord Wellington examined them in person, decided on storming them that evening, and from behind the reverse of one of the approaches, issued written orders for the assault.

The French were not inactive. The larger breach, exposing a shattered front of more than one hundred feet, had been carefully mined—the base of the wall strewn with shells and grenades, and the top, where troops might escalate, similarly defended. Behind, a deep retrenchment was cut, to insulate the broken rampart, in the event of its being carried by storm. The lesser breach was narrow at the top, exceedingly steep, with a four-and-twenty pounder turned sideways, that blocked the passage up, except an opening between the muzzle and the wall, by which two files might enter.

Early in the evening, the third and light divisions were moved from their cantonments. At six, the third moved to the rear of the first parallel, two gun-shots from the main breach, while the light formed behind a convent, three hundred yards in front of the smaller one. Darkness came on, and with it came the order to "Stand to arms." With calm determination, the soldiers of the third division heard their commanding officer announce the main breach as the object of attack; and every man prepared himself promptly for the desperate struggle. Off went the packs, the stocks were unbuckled, the cartouch box arranged to meet the hand more readily, flints were screwed home, every one after his individual fancy fitting himself for action. The companies were carefully told off, the sergeants called the rolls, and not a man was missing.

The town clock struck seven, and its sonorous bell knelled the fate of hundreds. Presently the forlorn hope formed under the leading of the senior subaltern of the 88th, William Mackie; and Picton and Mackinnon rode up and joined the division. The former's address to the Connaught Rangers was brief, it was to "Spare powder, and trust entirely to cold iron." The word was given, "Forward!" was repeated in under tones, the forlorn hope led the way, the storming party, carrying bags filled with dry grass, followed the division in column succeeded, all moved on in desperate silence, and of the third division not a file hung back.

The fifth regiment joined from the right, and all pressed forward to the breach. The bags, thrown into the ditch by the sappers, reduced the depth one half; ladders were instantly raised, the storming party mounted, and after a short but severe struggle, the breach was won.

Before the storming party had entered the ditch, the shells and combustibles had been prematurely exploded, occasioning but trifling loss to the assailants. The French instantly abandoned the breach, sprang the mines, and fell back behind the retrenchment, from which, and from the neighbouring houses, they maintained a murderous fire.

In the meantime the light division had stormed the lesser breach. It was most gallantly carried; and the loss would not have been severe, but for the accidental explosion of a service magazine behind the traverse, by which several officers and a number of men were destroyed. Directed by the heavy fire at the main breach, part of the 43rd and 95th rushed along the ramparts to assist their comrades of the third division; and Pack's brigade, having converted their feint upon the southern face of the works into a real attack, entered the "fausse braye," and drove the French before them with the bayonet. Thus threatened in their rear, the enemy abandoned the retrenchment; and, still resisting, were driven from street to street, until they

flung down their arms and asked and received that quarter which the laws of war denied and the fury of an excited soldiery left them but little hope of obtaining.

The first men that surmounted the difficulties the breach presented were a sergeant and two privates of the 88th. The French, who still remained beside the gun, whose sweeping fire had hitherto been so fatal to those who led the storm, attacked these brave men furiously; a desperate hand-to-hand encounter succeeded. The Irishmen, undaunted by the superior number of their assailants, laid five or six of the gunners at their feet. The struggle was observed, and some soldiers of the 5th regiment scrambled up to the assistance of their gallant comrades, and the remnant of the French gunners perished by their bayonets.

Lieutenant Mackie, who led the forlorn hope, had miraculously escaped without a wound, and pressing "over the dying and the dead," he reached the further bank of the retrenchment, and found himself in solitary possession of the street beyond the breach, while the battle still raged behind him.

The town was won; but alas! many of the best and bravest had fallen. General Craufurd was mortally wounded in leading the light division to the lesser breach, and General Mackinnon was killed after having gained the ramparts of the greater breach.

During the siege, the allies lost three officers and seventy-seven killed; twenty-four officers and five hundred men wounded; while in the storm six officers and one hundred and forty men fell, and sixty officers and nearly five hundred men were wounded. The French loss was severe; and the commandant, General Barrie, with eighty officers and seventeen hundred men, were taken prisoners. There were found upon the works one hundred and nine pieces of artillery, a battering train of forty-four guns, and an armoury and arsenal filled with military stores.

Thus fell Rodrigo. On the evening of the 8th the first ground was broken—on that of the 19th the British colours were flying on the ramparts. Massena, after a tedious bombardment, took a full month to reduce it; Wellington carried it by assault in eleven days. No wonder that Marmont, in his despatch to Berthier, was puzzled to account for the rapid reduction of a place, respecting whose present safety and ultimate relief, he had previously forwarded the most encouraging assurances.

After all resistance had ceased, the usual scene of riot, plunder, and confusion, which by prescriptive right the stormers of a town enjoy, occurred. Every house was entered and despoiled; the spirit stores were forced open; the soldiery got desperately excited, and in the madness of their intoxication committed many acts of silly and wanton violence. All plundered what they could, and in turn they were robbed by

their own companions. Brawls and bloodshed resulted, and the same men who, shoulder to shoulder, had won their way over the "imminent deadly breach," fought with demoniac ferocity for some disputed article of plunder. At last, worn out by fatigue, and stupefied with brandy, they sank into brutal insensibility; and on the second day, with few exceptions, rejoined their regiments; the assault and sacking of Rodrigo appearing in their confused imaginations, rather like some troubled dream than a desperate and bloodstained reality.

On the second day, order was tolerably restored; stragglers had returned to their regiments; the breaches were repaired, the trenches filled in, and the place being once more perfectly defensible, was given up by Lord Wellington to Castanos, the captain-general of the province, who had been present at the siege. Additional honours were deservedly conferred upon the conqueror of Rodrigo. Wellington was created a British earl and a Spanish duke, and a farther annuity of £2000 a year was voted by a grateful country, to support the dignities she had so deservedly conferred.

But another and a bolder blow was yet to be struck. Again the troops were put in motion, and the order was obeyed with pleasure, all being too happy to quit a place where every supply had been exhausted, and every object recalled the loss of relatives and friends. Leaving a division of infantry on the Agueda, the remainder of the army moved rapidly back upon the Tagus, and, crossing the river, headquarters were established at Elvas, on the 11th. There every preparation was completed for one of the boldest of Lord Wellington's attempts, for on the 16th, a pontoon bridge across the Guadiana was traversed by the light, third, and fourth divisions, and Badajoz regularly invested.

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#### CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SIEGE OF BADAJOZ.

1812.

THE town of Badajoz contained a population of about 16,000, and, within the space of thirteen months, experienced the miseries attendant upon a state of siege three several times. The first was undertaken by Lord Beresford, towards the end of April, 1811, who was obliged to abandon operations by Soult advancing to its relief, and which led to the battle of Albuera on the 16th of May.

The second siege was by Lord Wellington in person, who, after the battle of Fuentes d'Onoro, directed his steps towards

the south with a portion of the allied army. Operations commenced on the 30th of May, and continued till the 10th of June, when the siege was again abandoned, Soult having a second time advanced in combined operation with the army of Marmont from the north. The allies continued the blockade of the town till the 17th, when they recrossed the Guadiana, and took up a position on the Caya.

The secrecy and despatch with which Lord Wellington had formed or collected all necessary *matériel* for besieging this formidable place on whose reduction he had determined, was astonishing. The heavy guns had been brought by sea from Lisbon, transhipped into craft of easy draught of water, and thus conveyed up the river until they reached the banks of the Guadiana. Gabions and fascines\* were prepared in the surrounding woods, intrenching tools provided, the pontoon bridge brought up from Abrantez, and the battering train, comprising sixteen 24 and twenty 18-pounders, with sixteen 24-pound howitzers, were forwarded from Almeida, and parked upon the glacis of Elvas, in readiness for the opening of the siege.

Though not entirely aware of the extent of these hostile preparations, Philippon, the governor of Badajoz, had apprised Marshal Soult that the fortress was threatened, and demanded a supply of shells and gunpowder. This requisition, though immediately complied with, was not obtained, for Sir Rowland Hill, with his characteristic activity, prevented the convoy from reaching its destination.

Indeed, nothing which could secure the place had been forgotten or neglected by its governor. The forts of San Christoval and Pardelaras had been considerably strengthened and enlarged, the former by a lunette,† magazine and bomb-proof, and the latter by a general repair. Badajoz was provisioned for five weeks, the garrison was numerous and well appointed, and, confident in his own resources and skill, Philippon, after two successful defences, resolutely prepared himself for a third, and with a perfect conviction that, like the others, it, too, would prove successful.

Badajoz is easily described. Round one portion of the town, the rivulets Calamon and Rivellas sweep, and unite with the Guadiana, which flows in the face of the works, and in front of the heights of San Christoval. The castle stands above the union of these rivers. The fortifications are exceedingly strong, the bastions and curtains regular, while formidable outworks, the forts of Pardelaras, Picarina, and San Christoval, complete the exterior defences.

\* *Fascines* are small branches of trees bound together. They are used for filling ditches, masking batteries, &c., &c.

† A work on either side of a ravelin, with one perpendicular face. They are also sometimes thrown up beyond the second ditch, opposite the places of arms.

A close reconnoissance at once convinced Lord Wellington that the defences had been amazingly improved—and, as time pressed, and the means of regular investment were but indifferent, he determined that the bastion of La Trinidad, from its unfinished counterguard,\* should be battered. To effect this, the Picarina redoubt, forming nearly an angle with the bastion, and the lunette of San Rocque, must necessarily be carried.

The night of the 16th March was bad enough to mask any daring essay, and rain, darkness, and storm favoured the bold attempt. Ground was accordingly broken, and though but one hundred and seventy yards from the covered way, the working parties were neither heard nor molested. The 17th and 18th were similarly employed, but under a heavy fire from the Picarina fort, and such of the guns upon the works as could be turned by the garrison on the approaches.

The evening of the 18th, however, produced a very different scene, for the enemy became assailant, and a sortie was made with fifteen hundred men, accompanied by some forty cavalry. To the works, this sudden assault occasioned but little mischief. The gabions† were overturned, some intrenching tools captured, and great confusion caused among the working parties; but the French were speedily driven back, after causing much alarm, and a loss of one hundred and fifty in killed and wounded. Colonel Fletcher, the chief of the engineers, was unfortunately among the latter.

The weather was in every way unfavourable for prosecuting the siege, and elemental influences seemed to have united with Philippon against the allied commander. The rain fell in torrents, the river rose far beyond its customary height, the pontoons swamped at their moorings, and all were swept away. From the violence of the current, the flying bridges worked but slowly, and serious apprehensions were entertained lest the communications should be interrupted with the other side, and, of necessity, that the siege must be raised. To forward the works required incredible fatigue; the ground was soaked with moisture, the trenches more than knee-deep with mud and rain, the revêtements‡ of the batteries crumbled away under any pressure, and it was almost impossible to lay platforms for the guns. Indeed, had the works been ready for their reception, the task of transporting heavy artillery across a surface, rendered a perfect swamp by the incessant torrents which had fallen for days without any intermission, would have been a most laborious duty.

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\* *Counterguards* are small ramparts, with parapets and ditches, erected in front of a bastion or ravelin, to secure the opposite flanks from being open to the covert-way.

† *Gabions* are large circular baskets, filled with earth or sand, and used for forming parapets, covering working parties, &c., &c.

‡ *Revêtement* of a battery is the exterior front, formed of masonry or fascines, which keeps the bank of the work from falling.

Fortunately, the weather changed, the ground dried partially, and the works were carried on with additional spirit. By employing teams of oxen, assisted by numerous fatigue parties, the guns were brought forward, and the batteries armed, and on the 25th they opened on the Picarina and the place itself, with excellent effect, while Philippon returned the fire from every gun upon the ramparts that could be brought to bear.

Perceiving the true object of the besiegers, and certain that the Picarina would be assailed, ample measures were taken for its defence. The ditch was deepened, the gorge secured by an additional palisade; under the angles of the glacis fougasses\* were placed, and shells and grenades laid along the parapet, to roll down upon the storming party at the moment of attack. The ditch was exposed to a flanking fire, and two hundred spare muskets were ranged along the banquet. Every means, in short, were adopted that could insure a vigorous and successful resistance.

That night, at ten o'clock, the fort was attacked and carried by five hundred men of the third division, under Major-general Kempt. One party was directed to attempt the gorge, another prevented the place from being succoured from the city, and at the same time cut off the garrison from retreat; and a third were to distract the attention of the French, and assist their comrades by making a front attack.

The first detachment reached the gorge undiscovered, but failed in forcing the palisades, from the heavy fire of musketry poured on them by the garrison. Retiring from a place where success was hopeless, the storming party moved round the left flank, and escalated and won the parapet; while another forced the salient angle simultaneously. The French retreated to a guardhouse, which they barricaded and defended most obstinately.

Alarmed by a false report that a large body of the besieged had sallied from the town to relieve the fort, the troops were about to abandon these advantages, and quit a place their bravery had already won; but General Kempt dispelled the panic, led them forward, and attacked the garrison again, who fought to the very last; and, with the exception of some seventy, perished while desperately resisting. The taking of Picarina was gallantly effected, but it cost the British dear, the casualties in killed and wounded, being nineteen officers and upwards of three hundred men.

The capture of the fort enabled the second parallel to be pushed on, and breaching batteries to be completed. The guns

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\* *The glacis* is the part beyond the covert-way to which it forms the parapet.  
*Fougasse* is a small mine, six or seven feet under ground, generally formed in the glacis or dry ditch.

maintained a heavy fire on the bastion of La Trinidad; and the sappers directed their efforts against the lunette of San Rocque. The progress of the siege was slow; and though two breaches were made, the certainty that both were retrenched\* and secured by interior defences, rendered an assault too hazardous an experiment to be ventured.

Lord Wellington was critically circumstanced, as Marmont had made some forward movements in front of Beira, and Soult was advancing, determined to relieve the place. His light troops were already at Larena; the covering army under Hill had been obliged to retreat; and after blowing up two arches of the bridge of Merida, had taken post in front of Talavera.

In consequence, the fifth division was ordered to advance, leaving the observation of San Christoval to the Portuguese cavalry; the British general having decided on leaving a corps of ten thousand men to protect the trenches, and with the remainder of his force bring Soult to action.

At noon, on the 5th April, the breaches were reconnoitred and declared practicable; but the assault was deferred for another day to allow the artillery time to batter down the curtain, connecting the bastion with an unfinished ravelin. The concentrated fire of the British batteries fell upon the old wall with irresistible force; it was breached in a single day, and thus three points for assault were thrown open. The report of the engineers was encouraging; the main breach was sufficiently wide, and the ascent to all three easy enough for troops to mount.

Ten o'clock on the night of the 6th was appointed for the assault to be attempted, and the necessary orders were issued accordingly. The castle was to be attacked by the third division, the bastion of La Trinidad by the fourth, that of Santa Maria by the light division, the lunette of San Rocque by a party from the trenches; while the fifth should distract the garrison by a false attack on the Pardelaras, and the works contiguous to San Vicente.

Philippon, well aware that an assault might be expected, had employed every resource that skill and ingenuity could devise to render the attempt a failure. As Lord Wellington had neither time nor means to destroy the counterscarps, the French were enabled to raise the most formidable obstructions at their foot, and insulate the breaches effectually. At night, the rubbish was removed, retrenchments formed, and the battered parapets repaired by sand-bags, casks, and woolpacks. Powder-barrels and grenades were laid along the trenches, and at the foot of the breach sixty fourteen-inch shells, communicating with hoses and

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\* *Retrench*, in fortification, means the isolating of a breach by forming inner defences.

bedded in earth, were placed ready for explosion. A *chevaux-de-frieze*\* was stretched across the rampart, and planks studded with spikes covered the slopes of the breaches. Every species of combustible was employed, and a cartridge specially prepared for the musketry, formed of buck-shot and slugs; and when the distance was so close, nothing would prove more mischievous.

The day was remarkably fine, and the troops, in high spirits, heard the orders for the assault, and proceeded to clean their appointments, as if a dress parade only was intended. Evening came, darkness shut distant objects out, the regiments formed, the roll was called in an under voice, the forlorn hope stepped out, the storming party was told off, all were in readiness and eager for the fray.

Shortly before ten, a beautiful firework rose from the town, and showed the outline of Badajoz and every object that lay within several hundred yards of the works. The flame of the carcase died gradually away, and darkness, apparently more dense, succeeded this short and brilliant illumination.

The word was given, the forlorn hope moved forward, the storming parties succeeded, and the divisions, in columns, closed the whole. Of these splendid troops, now all life and daring, how many were living in an hour?

At that moment the deep bell of the cathedral of St. John struck ten; the most perfect silence reigned around, and except the softened footsteps of the storming parties, as they fell upon the turf with military precision, not a movement was audible. A terrible suspense, a horrible stillness, darkness, a compression of the breathing, the dull and ill-defined outline of the town, the knowledge that similar and simultaneous movements were making on other points, the certainty that two or three minutes would probably involve the forlorn hope in ruin, or make it the beacon-light to conquest—all these made the heart throb quicker and long for the bursting of the storm, when victory should crown daring with success, or hope and life should end together.

On went the storming parties; one solitary musket was discharged beside the breach, but none answered it. The light division moved forward, rapidly closing up in columns at quarter distance. The ditch was gained, the ladders were lowered, on rushed the forlorn hope, with the storming party close behind them. The divisions were now on the brink of the sheer descent, when a gun boomed from the parapet. The earth trembled, a mine was fired, an explosion, and an infernal hissing from lighted fuses succeeded, and, like the rising of a curtain on the stage, in the hellish glare that suddenly burst out around the breaches,

\* *Chevaux-de-frieze* are wooden spars, spiked at one end, and set into a piece of timber. They were originally used as a defence against cavalry, but are now commonly employed in strengthening outworks and stopping breaches.

the French lining the ramparts in crowds, and the British descending the ditch, were placed as distinctly visible to each other as if the hour were noontide!

A tremendous fire from the guns, a number of which had been laid upon the approaches to the breach, followed the explosion; but, all undaunted, the storming party cheered, and undauntedly the French answered it. A murderous scene ensued, for the breach was utterly impassable. Notwithstanding the withering fire of musketry from the parapets, with light artillery directed immediately on the breach, and grape from every gun upon the works that could play upon the assailants and the supporting columns, the British mounted. Hundreds were thrown back, and hundreds as promptly succeeded them.

Almost unharmed themselves, the French dealt death around; and secure within defences, that even in daylight and to a force unopposed, proved afterwards nearly insurmountable, they ridiculed the mad attempt; and while they viewed from the parapets a thousand victims writhing in the ditch, they called in derision to the broken columns, and invited them to come on.

While the assaults upon the breaches were thus fatally unsuccessful, the third and fifth divisions had moved to their respective points of attack. Picton's, to whom the citadel was assigned, found difficulties nearly equal to those encountered at the breaches. Thither Philippon had determined to retire, if the assault upon the other defences should succeed, and, in that event, hold the castle and San Christoval to the last. To render the place more secure, he had caused the gates to be built up, and the ramparts were lined with shells, cart-wheels, stones, and every destructive missile.

Fireballs betrayed the movements of the assailants; and, for a time, every attempt at escalade failed with prodigious loss. At last one ladder was planted, a few daring spirits gained the ramparts, crowds followed them, and in an incredibly short time the castle was won. Philippon heard of the disaster too late to redeem its loss. The troops despatched from the breaches and elsewhere were unable to recover it, a British jacket waved from the flag-staff, and in the first dawn of morning announced the downfall of Badajoz.

The fifth division were equally successful; though General Leith had to delay his attack till eleven o'clock, from the party who had charge of the ladders losing their way.

The attempt on San Vicente succeeded, notwithstanding every preparation had been made for its defence; Major-general Walker overcame all opposition, and established himself securely in the place.

And yet it is astonishing, even in the spring-tide of success, how the most trivial circumstances will damp the courage of the

bravest, and check the most desperate in their career. The storming party of the fifth had escalated a wall of thirty feet with wretched ladders, forced an uninjured palisade, descended a deep counterscarp, crossed the lunette behind it, and this was effected under a converging fire from the bastions, and a well-sustained fusilade, while but a few of the assailants could force their way together, and form on the rampart when they got up. But the leading sections persevered until the brigade was completely lodged within the parapet; and now united, and supported by the division who followed fast, what could withstand their advance?

They were sweeping forward with the bayonet, the French were broken and dispersed, when at this moment of brilliant success, a port-fire, which a retreating gunner had flung upon the rampart was casually discovered. A vague alarm seized the leading files, they fancied some mischief was intended, and imagined the success, which their own desperate gallantry had achieved, was but a ruse of the enemy to lure them to destruction.

"It is a mine, and they are springing it!" shouted a soldier.

Instantly the leaders of the storming party turned, and it was impossible for their officers to undeceive them. The French perceived the panic, rallied and pursued, and friends and foes came rushing back tumultuously upon a supporting regiment (the 38th) that was fortunately formed in reserve upon the ramparts. This momentary success of the besieged was dearly purchased; a volley was thrown closely in, a bayonet rush succeeded, and the French were scattered before the fresh assailants, never to form again.

The fifth division rushed on; everything gave way that opposed it, the cheering rose above the firing, the bugles sounded an advance, the enemy became distracted and disheartened, and again the light and fourth divisions, or, alas! their skeletons, assisted by Hay's brigade, advanced to the breaches. No opposition was made; they entered, and Badajoz was their own! Philippon, finding that all was lost, retired across the river to San Christoval; and early next day, surrendered unconditionally.

The loss sustained by the allies in the reduction of this well-defended fortress was awful. In the assault alone, the British casualties were fifty-nine officers and seven hundred and forty-four men killed. Two hundred and fifty-eight officers, and two thousand six hundred men wounded!

Lord Wellington had stationed himself on the high ground behind San Christoval, to view the progress of the assault. During a contest so doubtful and protracted, his anxiety was painfully acute. What a period of dreadful suspense must have ensued, from the time the striking of the town clock announced the marching of the divisions, until the thunder of artillery told

the British leader that the conflict had begun! For a minute the fireworks thrown from the place showed the columns at the breaches. Darkness followed, stillness more horrible yet, and then the sudden burst of light, as shells and mines exploded. The main breach was literally in a blaze—sheets of fire mounted to the sky, accompanied by a continued roaring of hellish noises, as every villainous combustible was ignited to discover or destroy the assailants.

The wounded came fast to the rear, but they could tell little how matters were progressing. At last a mounted officer rode up. He was the bearer of evil tidings; the attack upon the breaches had failed, the majority of the officers had fallen, the men, left without leaders to direct them, were straggling about the ditch, and unless instant assistance was sent, the assault must fail entirely. Pale but collected, the British general heard the disastrous communication, and issued orders to send forward a fresh brigade (Hay's) to the breaches. Half an hour passed, and another officer appeared. He came from Picton to say the castle had been escaladed, and that the third division was actually in the town.

Instantly staff officers were despatched to the castle with orders that it should be retained, and that the divisions, or rather their relics, should be withdrawn from the breaches.

Though the regular assaults had been sanguinary failures, the detached attacks upon the castle and San Vincente were brilliantly successful, and either of them must have next day produced the fall of Badajoz. In fact, the city was doubly won; and had Leith's division obtained their ladders in proper order, the place would have fallen in half the time, and a frightful loss of life have been consequently avoided.

It may be readily imagined that such a fierce resistance as that made by the French would provoke a desperate retaliation from the victors. For a day and two nights the city presented a fearful scene of rapine and riot. The streets were heaped with the drunken and the dead, and very many of the conquerors, who had escaped uninjured in the storm, fell by the bayonets of their comrades.

No language can depict the horrors which succeed a storm. A few hours made a frightful change in the condition and temper of the soldiery. In the morning they were obedient to their officers, and preserved the semblance of subordination; now they were in a state of furious intoxication—discipline was forgotten, and the splendid troops of yesterday had become a fierce and sanguinary rabble, dead to every touch of human feeling, and filled with every demoniac passion that can brutalise the man. The town was in terrible confusion, and on every side frightful tokens of military license met the eye.

Streets were almost choked up with broken furniture, for the houses had been gutted from the cellar to the garret, the partitions torn down, and even the beds ripped and scattered to the winds, in the hope that gold might be found concealed. Brandy and wine casks were rolled out before the stores; some were full, some half drunk, but more staved in mere wantonness, and the liquors running through the kennel. All within that devoted city was at the disposal of an infuriated army, over whom for the time control was lost, aided by an infamous collection of camp followers, who were, if possible, more sanguinary and pitiless even than those who had survived the storm! It is useless to dwell upon a scene from which the heart revolts.

Strict measures were taken on the second day by Lord Wellington to repress these desperate excesses and save the infuriated soldiery from the fatal consequences their own debauchery produced. A Portuguese brigade was brought from the rear, and sent into the town, accompanied by the provost marshal and the gallows. This demonstration had its due effect, and one rope carried terror to rioters whom the bayonets of a whole regiment could not appal.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BATTLE OF SALAMANCA.

1812.

EARLY in June, the British divisions began to concentrate; and on the 13th the cantonments on the Agueda were broken up, and Lord Wellington crossed the frontier.

The condition of the army was excellent, and the most exact discipline was preserved, while all unnecessary parades were dispensed with. The march ended, the soldier enjoyed all the comforts he could command; if foot-sore, he had rest to recruit; if untired, he had permission to amuse himself. His arms and appointments were rigidly inspected, his supper cooked, his bivouac formed, and at sunrise he rose at the *reveille*, to resume, with light heart and "gallant hope," the march that was to lead to victory.

The weather was fine, and as the route lay principally through forest lands, nothing could be more picturesque and beautiful than the country which the line of march presented. The wooded landscape displayed its verdure under the sunny influence of a cloudless sky, and singularly contrasted its summer green with the snow-topped pinnacles of the Sierra de Gata. No enemy appeared; for days the march was leisurely continued, until, on clearing the forest at Valmasa, the German Hussars in

advance, had a slight skirmish with a French picket in front of Salamanca.

This city, celebrated for its antiquity, and noted in the middle ages as foremost among the most celebrated schools of learning, was destined to witness a fresh triumph of British bravery. The situation of Salamanca is bold and imposing, standing on high ground on the right bank of the Tormes, and surrounded by a fine champaign country, divested of wood, but interspersed with numerous clay-built villages. A Roman road can still be traced without the town, while a portion of the bridge across the Tormes, consisting of twenty-seven arches, is supposed to have been constructed when the Eternal City was mistress of the world.

Ultimately it was generally believed that a battle on the plains of Valesa was inevitable; and the troops bivouacked in two lines, and before daybreak were under arms. But with the first light, Marmont was seen extending by his left, and the allies moved consequently in a parallel direction. Either commander might provoke an action, but neither seemed inclined to risk one. The French marshal's design was very apparent. He kept the high ground, manœuvred to out-flank his opponent, and, should opportunity permit, attack him at advantage.

His able antagonist, however, never gave the chance. Some time passed in manœuvring, and the French held Babila, Fuente, and Villamesa; the allies, Cabesa and Aldea Lingua.

The 21st July was also spent in flank marching, during which both commanders crossed the Tormes; the French by the fords of Alba and Huerta, and the allies by Santa Martha and the bridge of Salamanca. The hostile armies bivouacked again that night, and such a night can scarcely be imagined.

The evening was calm and sultry, but the extreme verge of the horizon became heavily overcast, and persons conversant with "skyey influences" might have easily foretold a coming storm. Suddenly a torrent fell, the wind rose and swept across the open hills with amazing violence, the thunder-clouds burst, and, by the glare of lightning, the sparkling arms of infantry masses were visible over the whole extent of the position, as the last brigades pressed through the tempest to occupy their ground. No shelter the allied army could obtain could have averted a summer shower, and all in a few minutes were drenched to the skin; while the cavalry horses, scared by the lightning, broke from their picketings, and trampling upon their riders rushed madly to and fro, occasioning indescribable confusion.

Nothing could be more imposing than the parallel movements of the rival armies during the last three days. Far as the eye could range, masses, apparently interminable, pursued their march with beautiful regularity, now displayed in brilliant sunshine as they swept over a contiguous height, now lost where an

accidental dipping of the ground for a time concealed the column. Generally both armies abstained from hostile collision, by a sort of mutual consent; and excepting where the line of march brought the light troops into immediate proximity, or the occupation of a village produced a trifling fusilade, the grand movements of the rival hosts exhibited a "ceaseless march," the leading columns pressing forward toward the Tormes, and the rear hidden from view "by dust and distance."

The whole system of manœuvres which marked the operations of the French marshal since Bonnet's division had joined him on the Douro, showed clearly that he only waited for a fitting moment to attack. The French army were in high spirits; while in numerical force they were formidable indeed, numbering forty-five thousand men, of whom four thousand were cavalry. Other circumstances were favourable to the commencement of active aggression by the French. The communications with the capital were open, reinforcements constantly arriving, while a powerful accession of strength had approached the immediate neighbourhood of the scene of operations from the army of the North; a part of its cavalry and horse-artillery having already reached Pollos.

If Marmont was anxious to offer battle, the British general, for obvious reasons, was as willing to accept it. Aware of his opponent's abilities in tactics, and apprised of the fine *matériel* of the army he commanded, Lord Wellington was as confident in his own resources as in the indomitable courage of that soldiery which, under his leading, had been frequently assailed and never beaten. His own position was daily becoming more unsafe. For security, the stores deposited at Salamanca had been removed to the rear, consequently the maintenance of his army was endangered, as supplies from the depots were tardily obtained.

No difficulty, however, was experienced by the French in provisioning their army; every procurable necessary was exacted from the wretched inhabitants, who might curse, while they durst not oppose those who despoiled them of their property.

Both commanders were anxious to try the issue of a contest. Vanity, in the one, urged Marmont to offer battle upon ground favourable for the movements of a force superior in number and perfect in every arm. Prudence, in Lord Wellington, aimed at results only to be effected by a victory. No wonder, then, that with such dispositions a conflict was inevitable. The decree had gone forth; a fiery trial of skill and valour must ensue, and well did a fearful night harbinger "a bloody morrow."

The morning was cloudy and threatening, and the dawn was ushered in by a sharp fusilade, in the direction of Calvarasa de Arriba. The enemy's *tirailleurs* had occupied the heights of Senora de la Pena in considerable force, and part of the seventh

division, with the light cavalry of Victor Alten, were opposing their farther advance.

The British right was appuied upon the nearest of the Arapiles, and united itself with the extremity of a ridge, on which the divisions had taken their position on the preceding evening. Another hill, similarly named, rose from the plain at a distance of five hundred yards, and as it commanded the right of the alignment, it was deemed advisable to possess it.

The French marshal, however, had entertained a similar design; and a wood favouring the unobserved advance of part of Bonnet's division, the summit was occupied by the French with their 122nd regiment, and a brigade of guns.

Meanwhile the enemy commenced extending to the left, in the rear of the Arapiles, and formed on the skirts of a wood. As the movement of the columns brought them within cannon range, General Leith advanced a battery to a height in front of his position, and it opened with considerable effect. The French, obliged to retire, brought up a brigade of artillery to check the British guns. Their diagonal fire silenced the British battery, and it was necessary, without delay, to retire the guns, and withdraw a troop of the 16th light dragoons, which, for their protection, had been drawn up under shelter of the hill. This perilous evolution was executed with complete success, the ravine was passed at speed, and with little loss, the artillery and light cavalry regained the position.

The day wore on; the late tempest apparently had cleared the atmosphere, all was bright and unclouded sunshine, and over a wide expanse of undulating landscape, nothing obscured the range of sight but dust from the arid roads, or wreathing smoke occasioned by the spattering fire of the light troops. Marmont was busily manœuvring, and Lord Wellington coolly noticing from a height the dispositions of his opponent, which as he correctly calculated would lead to a general engagement.

At noon, a combination of at least eight thousand men, moved from the rear of the Arapiles, and formed in front of the fifth division. Lord Wellington rode to the ground, and there found the division in perfect readiness for the anticipated attack. Perceiving at once that this movement was only a demonstration of the French marshal to mask his real designs, his lordship returned to the right, which was now the interesting point of the position.

Finding his feint upon the fifth division unsuccessful, Marmont put his columns into motion, and marching rapidly by his left, endeavoured to turn the right of the allies, and thus interpose between them and Ciudad Rodrigo. Under a heavy cannonade, his front and flank, covered by a cloud of skirmishers, and supported by a cavalry force that drove in the British

dragoons and light troops, pressed forward to gain the Rodrigo road. But that hurried movement was badly executed by Marmont's generals of division. Their extension was made with careless haste, the line consequently weakened, and this false manœuvre brought on the crisis of the day. The moment for action had come, and Lord Wellington seized the opportunity and struck the blow.

At two o'clock, when the French commenced extending by their left, the allied army was thus disposed. On the right, the fifth division (Leith's) had moved behind the village of Arapiles, and had taken ground on the right of the fourth (Cole's); the sixth and seventh, under Generals Clinton and Hope, formed a reserve; the third division (Pakenham's), D'Urban's cavalry, two squadrons of the 14th light dragoons, and a corps of Spanish infantry, were in position near Aldea Tejada. Bradford's brigade, with Le Marchant's heavy cavalry, were formed on the right, and in the rear of the fifth. The light division (Barnard's) and the first (the Guards and Germans) were drawn up between the Arapiles and the Tormes, in reserve. Cotton's cavalry were formed in the rear of the third and fifth divisions; an artillery reserve, posted behind the dragoons, and in the rear of all the Spaniards, under Don Carlos D'España, appeared in the extreme distance, but entirely out of fire.

Marmont had remarked, and rode forward to correct the irregularity of his flank movement, and personally direct the debouchement of his third and fourth divisions from the wood that had partially concealed them. At that moment, Lord Wellington was seated on the hill-side, eating his hurried meal, while an aide-de-camp in attendance watched the enemy's movements with a glass. The bustle then perceptible in the French line attracted his lordship's notice, and he quickly inquired the cause.

"They are evidently in motion," was the reply.

"Indeed! what are they doing?"

"Extending rapidly to the left," was answered.

Lord Wellington sprang upon his feet, and seized the telescope; then muttering that Marmont's good genius had deserted him, he mounted his horse, and issued the orders to attack.

All was instantly on the alert. The staff went off at speed to bring up the fifth and sixth divisions. The infantry stood to arms, primed and loaded, fixed bayonets, uncased the colours, and abandoning the defensive system, hitherto so admirably employed, prepared for an immediate attack.

Pakenham commenced the action by advancing in four columns along the valley, assailing the left flank of the enemy, and driving it before him in great confusion. D'Urban's Portuguese dragoons, and Harvey's light cavalry (the 14th), protected

the flank during the movement, and, when the French became disordered, charged boldly in and sabred the broken infantry. Nothing could be more brilliant than Pakenham's advance. A level plateau of nearly eight hundred yards was to be crossed before the assailants could reach the heights, whither Fox's division were marching hastily to occupy the ground.

A heavy fire from the French guns was showered on the advancing columns, while the British batteries, under Captain Douglass, replied by a furious cannonade. Wallace's brigade—the 45th, 74th, and 88th—formed the first line, and moved forward in open column. The face of the height was covered with tirailleurs, who kept up an incessant fusilade, while grape and canister ploughed the ground, occasioning a heavy loss, and more particularly to the centre. They suffered, but they could not be checked; not waiting to deploy, the companies brought forward their right shoulders in a run, forming line from open column without halting, while the wings of the brigade, having moved up the hill with less impediments than the centre, were more advanced, and the line thus assumed rather the figure of a crescent. All the mounted officers, regardless of a withering fusilade, were riding in front of the battalions, and the men following with their muskets at the rest.

At last they reached the brow. Foy's division, beating the *pas de charge*, advanced, and threw in a murderous volley. Half the British front rank went down. Staggered by that deadly fire, the brigade recoiled a step or two, but, instantly recovering, the rear rank filled the places of the fallen. On it went with imposing steadiness, regardless of the irregular fusilade, for the French continued to pour in their fire with more rapidity than effect.

Foy's division, alarmed by this movement, became unsteady. The daring advance of an enemy, whom the concentrated fire of five thousand muskets could not arrest, was indeed astounding. All that brave men could do was done by the French officers. They strove to confirm the courage of their troops, and persuade them to withstand an assault that threatened their wavering ranks. The colonel of the 22nd *légère*, seizing a musket from a grenadier, rushed forward, and mortally wounded Major Murphy of the 88th. Speedily his death was avenged; a Ranger shot the Frenchman through the head, who tossing his arms wildly up, fell forward and expired. The brigade betrayed impatience; the 88th, excited to madness by the fall of a favourite officer, who passed dead along the front, as his charger galloped off with his rider's foot sticking in the stirrup, could scarcely be kept back.

Pakenham marked the feeling, and ordered Wallace "to let them loose." The word was given, down came the bayonets to

the charge, the pace quickened, a wild cheer, mingled with the Irish slogan, rent the skies, and unable to stand the shock, the French gave ground. The Rangers, and the supporting regiments, broke the dense mass of infantry, bayoneting all whom they could overtake, until, run to a regular standstill, they halted to recover breath and stayed the slaughter.

Nor were the operations of the fifth division less marked and brilliant. For an hour they had been exposed to a heavy cannonade, sheltering occasionally on the ground from the shot and shells, which fell in showers upon the height they occupied, and ricocheted through their ranks. At last the order to advance was given. They moved in two lines, the first entirely British, the second composed of the Portuguese infantry of General Spry. Bradford's brigade, having united itself for the attack, formed on the right of the fifth.

In mounting the height where the French division was posted, the assailing columns were annoyed by a sharp discharge of artillery, and the fire of a swarm of sharpshooters, who in extended order occupied the face of the hill. The British light infantry pushed on to clear the line of march, and, if practicable, make a dash at the enemy's artillery. The tirailleurs were speedily driven back, the cannon removed from the crest of the height to the rear, and unimpeded, the division moved up the hill with a perfect regularity in its formation, and the imposing steadiness of men who marched to victory. In the front of the centre of that beautiful line rode General Leith, directing its movements, and regulating its advance.

The enemy were preparing for the struggle. He retired his columns from the ridge, and formed continuous squares, fifty paces from the crest of the heights, which the assailants must crown previous to attacking. The artillery from the French rear cannonaded the advancing columns, but nothing could check the progressive movement of the British. The men marched with the same orderly steadiness as at first; no advance in line at a review was ever more correctly executed; the dressing was admirable; and spaces were no sooner formed by casualties than closed up with the most perfect regularity, and without the slightest deviation from the order of march.

When General Leith reached the summit of the hill, the enemy were observed formed in supporting squares, with their front rank kneeling. Their formation was complete, their fire reserved, and till the drum rolled, not a musket was discharged. Nearly at the same moment, the French squares and the British delivered their volleys. A dense smoke hid all for a time from view. A loud and sustained cheer pealed from the British ranks; no shout of defiance answered it; while, rushing forward, the British broke the squares, and pressing on with dauntless

impetuosity, every attempt at opposition ceased, and what just now had appeared a disciplined body, almost too formidable to be assailed, became a disorganised mass, flying at headlong speed from the fury of its conquerors. To increase the confusion, a portion of Foy's division crossed the *déroute*, and mingled with it, while the rush of advancing cavalry was heard, and that sound, so ominous to broken infantry, confirmed the panic.

Presently the heavy brigade—the 3rd and 4th dragoons, and 5th dragoon guards—galloped across the interval of ground, between the heights where the third division had made its flank attack, and the fifth its more direct one. Sweeping through a mob of half-armed fugitives, the brigade rode boldly at the three battalions of the French 66th, which had formed in six supporting lines to check the advance of the conquerors, and afford time for the broken divisions to have their organisation restored.

Heedless of its searching fire, the British dragoons penetrated and broke the columns; numbers of the French were sabred; while the remainder were driven back upon the third division and made prisoners. Still pressing on, another regiment, in close order, presented itself; this, too, was charged, broken, and cut down. Nothing arrested the victorious career until the ground became gradually obstructed with trees, embarrassing the movements of the cavalry, while it afforded a broken infantry ample time to rally, and engage horsemen at evident advantage.

Although the regiments of the heavy brigade in the course of these brilliant charges had of necessity become intermixed, and their line crowded, without intervals between the squadrons, they still pushed forward without confusion to charge a brigade that had formed under cover of the trees. The French steadily awaited the attack, within twenty yards their reserved fire was thrown in, and on a concentrated body of horse and at this short distance, its effect was fatal. General Marchant was killed, Colonel Elley badly wounded, while one-third of the brigade were brought to the ground by that close and murderous volley. Still, those of the heavy dragoons who could keep their saddles sustained nobly the reputation they had earned that day, and charging the French column home, penetrated and dispersed it. A furious *mêlée* succeeded, the scattered infantry fighting desperately to the last, while the long straight sword of the trooper proved in British hands irresistible.

While the remnant of the cavalry brigade continued their pursuit, a small battery of five guns was seen upon the left. Lord Edward Somerset instantly galloped down, charged, and brought them off. The brigade was then retired, after a continued succession of brilliant charges that had lasted nearly an hour.

Of course the loss sustained was great. From three splendid regiments that had ridden into action, at least one thousand strong, with difficulty three squadrons were formed in the evening, such being the number of men and horses rendered *hors de combat* during its late scene of brilliant but dear-bought success.

With such decided advantages, the battle might have been considered gained, and the French defeat inevitable. But the splendid successes attendant on the third and fifth divisions, with Bradford's Portuguese brigade, and the light and heavy cavalry, were nearly counterbalanced by the total failure of Pack's attack on the Arapiles, and the repulse of Cole's division by that of Bonnet.

The 1st and 16th Portuguese advanced to carry the height; it was occupied by a French battalion, and protected by a battery of guns. A force of nearly two thousand men, led on in person by a "fighting general," should have wrested the hill from such inferior force, no matter how strong the ground might naturally have been. On this occasion, however, the attack proved totally unsuccessful; the Portuguese regiments recoiled from the fire, and their officers endeavoured to rally them in vain. The attack on the Arapiles was consequently abandoned, the French left in undisturbed possession, and, unassailed themselves, they turned their musketry and cannon upon the flank and rear of Cole's division, who, under the impression that Pack's assault must have succeeded, had fearlessly advanced across the plain, driving Bonnet's corps before it, with the promise of as glorious results as had attended the gallant operations of the third and fifth.

At that moment, even when the fourth division believed itself victorious, its position was most dangerous—its very existence more than doubtful. Bonnet perceiving Pack's failure, reformed his division, still numerically superior to his opponent's, advanced boldly against the fourth, and furiously attacked it, while from the crest of the Arapiles, the French troops poured upon the now retreating columns a withering fire of grape and musketry. General Cole was carried off the field; Beresford, who had come to his relief, with a Portuguese brigade of the fifth, was also badly wounded. The British were falling fast; while the French heavy cavalry, under Boyer, moved rapidly to support Bonnet, who was momentarily gathering strength from the junction of the scattered soldiers who had escaped the slaughter of the fourth and seventh French divisions already *déroulé* on the left.

Wellington marked the emergency, and ordered Clinton's division to advance. This fine and unbroken corps, numbering six thousand bayonets, pushed rapidly forward, confronted the

victorious enemy, who, with loud cheers, were gaining ground on every point, as the hard-pressed fourth division was driven back by overwhelming numbers. Bonnet, determined to follow up his temporary success, met Clinton's division manfully, and for a time neither would give ground, and a close and furious conflict resulted. The ceaseless roll of musketry, and the thunder of fifty guns told how furiously the battleground was disputed. Both fought desperately, and though night was closing, the withered grass, blazing on the surface of the hill, threw an unearthly glare upon the combatants, and displayed the alternations that attended the "heady fight."

But the British bayonet at last opened the path to victory. Such a desperate encounter could not endure. The French began to waver, the sixth division cheered, pushed forward, gained ground, while, no longer able to withstand an enemy who seemed determined to sweep everything before it, the French retired in confusion, leaving the hard-contested field in undisputed possession of the island conquerors.

Darkness fell. The remains of Bonnet's division found shelter in the woods, or crossed the Tormes at the ford of Alba, which, from its natural strength, the Spaniards could have easily defended. The conflict, at different points, had raged six hours with unabated fury; and those of the divisions which had been engaged, exhausted with fatigue and suffering dreadfully from heat and thirst, rested on the battleground.

The guards, Germans, and light brigade, who had been in reserve during the day, however, pushed forward in pursuit. Distant musketry was heard occasionally, gradually this spattering fire ceased, and the groans of dying men and wounded horses succeeded the headlong rush of cavalry, the thunder of a hundred guns, the shout of proud defiance, and, wilder still, the maddening cry of victory!

Salamanca, whether considered with regard to its merits as a battle, or its results as a victory, probably stands foremost among the Peninsular contests, and many and peculiar traits distinguish it from every precious encounter. It was coolly and advisedly fought, by commanders confident in themselves, satisfied with the strength and *matériel* of their armies, jealous of each other's reputation, and stimulated by every longing after military glory, to exhaust the resources of their genius and experience to secure a successful issue. Nothing could surpass Marmont's beautiful manœuvring for consecutive days while moving round the British flank, except the countervailing rapidity with which his talented opponent defeated every effort to outflank him, and held the marshal constantly in check.

At two on the 22nd, the French marshal threatened an attack; at four, he was himself the assailed, and the same

mistake that lost Marengo, involved ruin and defeat at Salamanca. One false movement that might have been easily corrected before a slower leader could see and seize the momentary advantage, brought on a crisis that clouded the French destinies in Spain by removing the delusory belief that their arms should eventually prove invincible.

A conflict, close and desperate, like that of Salamanca, conferred a sanguinary victory, while it involved a still bloodier defeat. The allied loss, in killed and wounded, exceeded five thousand men, and this, of course, fell chiefly on the British. The Portuguese, comparatively suffered little, and the Spaniards, being entirely non-combatant, had very few casualties to record. The only post intrusted—and that most unhappily—to their charge, was the castle of Alba; and this was abandoned without a shot, leaving Clausel a safe retreat, while its vigorous occupation must have involved its total ruin.

The French loss was never correctly ascertained. Two eagles, eleven pieces of cannon, seven thousand prisoners, and as many dead soldiers left upon the field, were the admitted trophies of British victory. Among the commanding officers of both armies the casualties were immense; of the British, Le Marchant was killed; Beresford, Cole, Leith, Cotton, and Alten wounded. The French were equally unfortunate—the generals of brigade, Thomières, Ferrey, and Desgravières were killed; Marmont, early in the day, mutilated by a howitzer shell; Bonnet severely, and Clausel slightly wounded.

Clausel, who commanded *en chef* after Marmont was disabled, retreated with great rapidity. Viewed from the summit of La Serna, the French exhibited a countless mass of all arms, confusedly intermingled. While the range permitted it, the horse-artillery annoyed them with round shot, but by rapid marching they gradually disappeared, while, opportunely, a strong corps of cavalry and a brigade of guns joined from the army of the North, and covered the retreat until they fell back upon their reserves.

Although Salamanca was in every respect a decisive battle, how much more fatal must it not have proved, had darkness not shut in, and robbed the conquerors of half the fruits of victory? The total demolition of the French left was effected by six o'clock, and why should the right attack have not been equally successful? Had such been the case, in what a hopeless situation the broken army must have found itself!

Salamanca was a great and influential victory. Accidental circumstances permitted Clausel to withdraw a beaten army from the field, and a fortunate junction of those arms which alone could cover his retreat enabled him, with little loss, to out-march his pursuers, preserve his communications, and fall back

upon his reserves. But at Salamanca the delusory notion of French superiority was destroyed. The enemy discovered that they must measure strength with opponents in every point their equals. The confidence of wavering allies was confirmed; while the evacuation of Madrid, the abandonment of the siege of Cadiz, the deliverance of Andalusia and Castile from military occupation, and the impossibility of reinforcing Napoleon during his northern campaign, by sparing any troops from the corps in the Peninsula—all these great results were among the important consequences that arose from Marmont's defeat upon the Tormes.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE SIEGE OF BURGOS.

1812.

THE occupation of Madrid was among the most brilliant epochs of Peninsular history, and, from circumstances, it was also among the briefest. The conquest of the capital was certainly a splendid exploit. It told that Wellington held a position and possessed a power that in Britain many doubted and more denied; and those, whose evil auguries had predicted a retreat upon the shipping, and finally an abandonment of the country, were astounded to find the allied leader victorious in the centre of Seville, and dating his general orders from the palace of the Spanish kings. The desertion of his capital by the usurper, proclaimed the extent of Wellington's success; and proved that his victories were not, as had been falsely asserted at home, "conquests only in name."

Without entering into military history too extensively, it will be necessary to observe, that on many expected events which should have strengthened his means, and weakened those of his opponents, Lord Wellington was miserably disappointed. Maitland's diversion on Catalonia had proved a failure. Balasteros exhibited the impotent assumption of free action, and refused obedience to the orders of the British general, and Hill was therefore obliged to leave Estremadura, to cover the three roads to Madrid. The Cortes, instead of straining their energies to meet the exigencies of the moment, wasted time in framing new constitutions, and in desultory and idle debates.

While Wellington, removed from his supplies, his military chest totally exhausted, and his communications menaced, was imperatively obliged to open others, and secure assistance from the only place on which reliance could be reposed—the mother country. To quote Lord Wellington's own words aptly illustrates the real case:—"I likewise request your lordship not to

forget horses for the cavalry and artillery, and money. *We are absolutely bankrupt.* The troops are now five months in arrears, instead of being one month in advance. The staff have not been paid since February; the muleteers not since June, 1811; and we are in debt in all parts of the country. I am obliged to take the money sent to me by my brother for the Spaniards, in order to give my own troops a fortnight's pay, who are really suffering for want of money."

It was, indeed, full time to move. The Spanish army were driven from Galicia, and Clausel threatened to interrupt the communications of the allies with Portugal. Lord Wellington, therefore, decided on marching against the army he had beaten at Salamanca; and leaving Hill's division to cover the capital, he left Madrid on the 1st of September, and crossing the Douro on the 6th, moved on Burgos by Valencia.

That night Clausel abandoned Valladolid, and after crossing the Pisuerga, destroyed the bridge of Bercal. Anxious to unite with Castanos, Wellington waited for the Gallician army to come up, while Clausel leisurely retreated through the valleys of Arlanzan and Pisuerga, as remarkable for beauty and fertility as for the endless succession of strong posts which they afforded to a retiring army.

Clausel, after an able retreat, took a position at Cellada del Camino, and to cover Burgos, offered battle to the allied commander. The challenge was promptly accepted; but the French general, discovering that a junction of twelve thousand Spaniards had strongly reinforced his antagonist, prudently declined a combat, retired, and united his own to Souham's corps, which numbered above eight thousand men. This reserve had been organised by Napoleon's special orders—and was intended to remedy any discomfiture which might befall Marmont in the event of his being defeated by the allies.

The British entered the city of Burgos, from which the French had previously retired, after garrisoning the castle with two thousand five hundred men, under the command of General Dubreton. Twelve thousand allied troops, comprising the first and sixth British divisions, with two Portuguese brigades, sat down before the place; while the remainder of Lord Wellington's army, amounting to twenty-five thousand effective troops, formed the covering army of the siege.

The castle of Burgos was a weak fortress, on which French ingenuity had done wonders in rendering it defensible at all. It stood on a bold and rocky height, and was surrounded by three distinct lines, each placed within the other, and variously defended.

The lower and exterior line consisted of the ancient wall that embraced the bottom of the hill, and which Caffarelli had

strengthened by the addition of a modern parapet, with salient\* and re-entering flanks. The second was a field retrenchment, strongly palisaded. The third, a work of like construction, having two elevated points, on one of which the ancient keep of the castle stood, and on the other, a well-intrenched building called the White Church; and that being the most commanding point, it was provided with a casemated work, and named in honour of Napoleon. This battery domineered all around, excepting on its northern face, where the hill of St. Michael rising nearly to a level with the fortress, was defended by an extensive hornwork,† having a sloping scarp and counterscarp, the former twenty-five feet in height, the latter, ten.

Although in an unfinished state, and merely palisaded, it was under the fire of the castle and the Napoleon battery. The guns, already mounted, comprised nine heavy cannon, eleven fieldpieces, and six mortars and howitzers; and, as the reserve artillery and stores of the army of Portugal were deposited in the castle of Burgos, General Dubreton had the power of increasing his armament to any extent he thought fit.

Two days passed before the allies could cross the river. On the 19th August the passage was effected, and the French outposts on St. Michael were driven in. That night, the hornwork itself was carried after a sanguinary assault, the British losing in this short and murderous affair upwards of four hundred men.

From the hill, now in possession of the allies, it was decided that the future operations should be carried on, and the engineers arranged that each line in succession should be taken by assault. The place, on a close examination, was ascertained to be in no respect formidable; but the means to effect its reduction, by comparison, were feebler still. Nothing, indeed, could be less efficient; three long 18-pounders, and five 24-pound howitzers, formed the entire siege artillery that Lord Wellington could obtain.

The headquarters were fixed at Villa Toro. The engineering department intrusted to Colonel Burgoyne, and the charge of the artillery to Colonels Robe and Dickson.

The second assault, that upon the exterior wall, was made on the night of the 22nd by escalade. Major Laurie of the 79th, with detachments from the different regiments before the place, formed the storming party. The Portuguese, who led the attack, were quickly repulsed, and though the British entered the ditch, they never could mount a ladder. Those who attempted it were bayoneted from above, while shells, com-

\* In fortification, the *salient* angle is that which turns from the centre of a place; while the *re-entering* points directly towards it.

† A *horn-work* is a work having a front and two branches. The front comprises a curtain and two half-bastions. It is smaller than a *crown-work*, and generally employed for effecting similar purposes.

bustibles, and cold shot were hurled on the assailants, who, after a most determined effort for a quarter of an hour, were driven from the ditch, leaving their leader, and half the number who composed the storming party, killed and wounded.

After this disastrous failure, an unsuccessful attempt to breach the wall was tried, in effecting which, of the few guns in battery, two were totally disabled by the commanding fire of the castle, and the engineers resorted, from sheer necessity, to sap and mine. The former, from the plunging fire kept up from the enemy's defences, and which occasioned a fearful loss, was speedily abandoned; but the latter was carried vigorously on, and the outward wall mined, charged, and, on the 29th, exploded.

At twelve o'clock at night the hose was fired, the storming party having previously formed in a hollow way some fifty paces from the gallery. When the mine was sprung, a portion of the wall came down, and a sergeant and four privates, who formed the forlorn hope, rushed through the smoke, mounted the ruins, and bravely crowned the breach. But in the darkness, which was intense, the storming party and their supporting companies missed their way, and the French recovering from their surprise, rushed to the breach, and drove the few brave men who held it back to the trenches. The attack consequently failed, and from a scarcity of shot no fire could be turned on the ruins. Dubreton availed himself of this accidental advantage, and by daylight the breach was rendered impracticable again.

Still determined to gain the place, Lord Wellington continued operations, although twelve days had elapsed since he had sat down before it. A singular despondency, particularly among the Portuguese, had arisen from those two failures; while insubordination was creeping into the British regiments, which produced a relaxed discipline that could not be overlooked, and which, in general orders, was consequently strongly censured.

The siege continued; and, on the 4th of October, a battery opened from Saint Michael's against the old breach, while the engineers announced that a powerful mine was prepared for springing. At five o'clock that evening the fusee was fired. The effect was grand and destructive; one hundred feet of the wall was entirely demolished, and a number of the French, who happened to be near it, were annihilated by the explosion. The 24th regiment, already in readiness to storm, instantly rushed forward, and both breaches were carried, but, unfortunately, with heavy loss.

A lodgment was immediately effected, and preparations made for breaching the second line of defence where it joined the first.

On the 5th October, early in the evening, the French sallied

with three hundred men. The attack was too successful; one hundred and fifty of the guard and working party were killed or wounded, the gabions overturned, the works at the lodgment injured, and the intrenching tools carried off.

That night, however, the damage was repaired; the sap was rapidly carried forward, and at last the British had got so close to the wall that their own howitzers ceased firing lest the workmen should be endangered by their shot. The guns on Saint Michael's battery had also breached with good effect, and fifty feet of the parapet of the second line was completely laid in ruins. But, in effecting these successes, a heavy loss was inflicted on the besiegers, and of their originally small means for carrying on a siege, the few pieces of artillery they possessed at first, were now reduced to one serviceable gun.

The weather had also changed, and rain fell in quantities and filled the trenches. A spirit of discontent and indifference pervaded the army. The labour was unwillingly performed, the guards loosely kept, and Dubreton again sallied furiously, drove off the working party, destroyed the new parallel, carried away the tools, and occasioned a loss of more than two hundred men. Among the killed, none was lamented more than Colonel Cocks, who having obtained promotion most deservedly for previous gallantry, died at the head of his men, while rallying the fugitives and repelling the sally.

Three assaults had failed; but still the allied commander did not quit the place in despair. Preparations for another attempt were continued, and the exertions of the engineers, of whom one-half had fallen, were redoubled. Heated shot was tried against the White Church unsuccessfully; while that of San Roman was marked as the more vulnerable point, and a gallery commenced against it.

On the 17th, the great breach was again exposed by the fire of the British guns, and the ramparts on either side extensively damaged. A mine beneath the lower parallel was successfully exploded, and a lodgment effected in a cavalier,\* from whence the French had kept up a destructive fire on the trenches. It was held but for a short time, as the enemy came down in force, and drove the besiegers from it. On the 18th, the breach was reported practicable, and an assault decided on, the signal arranged being the springing of the mine beneath the church of San Roman. That building was also to be assailed, while the old breach was to be attempted by escalade, and thus, and at the same moment, three distinct attacks would occupy the enemy's attention.

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\* A Cavalier is a work in the body of a place, domineering the others by ten or twelve feet.

At half-past four the explosion of the mine gave the signal. A countermine was immediately sprung by the French, and between both, the church was partially destroyed, and Colonel Browne, with some Portuguese and Spanish troops, seized upon the ruined building. The Guards, who had volunteered a detachment, rushed through the old breach, escalated the second line, and, in front of the third, encountered the French in considerable force, while two hundred of the German Legion, under Major Wurmb, carried the new breach, pushing up the hill, and fairly gaining the third line of the defences. Unfortunately, however, these daring and successful efforts were not supported with the promptness that was needed. The French reserves were instantly advanced; they came on in overwhelming force, cleared the breaches of the assailants, and drove them beyond the outer line, with the loss of two hundred officers and men.

San Roman was taken the following night by the French, and recovered again by the British. But with this affair the siege virtually terminated, and Lord Wellington, by an imperious necessity, was obliged to retire from a place of scarcely third-rate character, after four attacks by assault, and a loss of two thousand men.

In war, the bravest and the most prudent measures are frequently marred or made by fortune. Lord Wellington, with very insufficient means, attempted the reduction of Burgos; and although skill and gallantry were displayed in every essay, obstacles arose which checked the most daring efforts; and all that science and determination could effect were vainly tried to overcome difficulties physically insurmountable. Had Wellington possessed the requisite *matériel* for the conduct of a siege, Burgos must have been taken in a week.

But let justice be done to its defenders. Much was expected from them, and assuredly, the governor and garrison of the castle of Burgos realised the high reliance placed upon their skill and heroism by their countrymen.

On the 18th, the British corps united. On the 20th some trifling affairs occurred between the outposts, and on the 21st the siege of Burgos was regularly raised, and Lord Wellington issued orders for retiring from before the place.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE BATTLE OF VITORIA.

1813.

WINTER passed away, the army recovered from its hardships, and Lord Wellington was indefatigable in perfecting the equipment of every department, to enable him to take the field

efficiently when the season should come round, and active operations could be again renewed. In its minuter details, the interior economy of the regiments underwent a useful reformation. The large and cumbrous camp-kettles hitherto in use were discarded, and small ones substituted in their place; while three tents were served to each company, affording, particularly to the sick and disabled, a means of shelter in the field which hitherto had been wanting.

Nothing could surpass the splendid state of discipline that this period of inactivity had produced, while the allied army was reposing in winter quarters. Its *matériel* was now truly magnificent; powerful reinforcements having arrived from the mother country. The Life and Horse Guards had joined the cavalry; and that arm, hitherto the weakest, was increased to nineteen efficient regiments. The infantry had been recruited from the militias at home, the artillery was complete in every requisite for the field, while a well-arranged commissariat, with ample means of transport, facilitated the operations of the most serviceable force which had ever taken the field under the leading of a British general.

Previous to the opening of the campaign in May, 1813, the Anglo-Portuguese army numbered close upon seventy thousand men of all arms, and were cantoned in the neighbourhood of the Douro. Morillo's corps occupied Estremadura; Giron held the frontier of Galicia; O'Donel was stationed in Andalusia; Elio on the frontiers of Murcia and Valencia; and the Duc del Parque, with a strong corps, held possession of La Mancha.

The French, at that time, might have probably mustered one hundred and fifty thousand men in Spain. Madrid and Toledo were in the occupation of the armies of the centre and the south, whose corps were spread over the central provinces. Valladolid had the headquarters of the army of Portugal; the line of the Douro was carefully observed, while Suchet occupied Valencia and Catalonia; and a part of the army of the north was quartered in Aragon and Biscay.

Never did a leader take the field under more promising auspices than those with which the allied commander opened the campaign of 1813. The Spanish troops were strong in numbers, and considerably improved in discipline; while the guerilla leaders were in great force, and ready for daring enterprise. Summer was coming fast, a rich and luxurious country was before him, every requisite prepared for his march, his troops flushed with victory, and his opponents dispirited by constant discomfiture. Even the opening movements tended to increase these feelings, for the British were preparing to advance, and the French already retrograding. No wonder, then, that the brilliant hopes of a country were fully realised;

that the career of British conquest continued almost without a check; and the fields of France saw her banners float in victory until the last struggles at Orthes and Toulouse, attested the invincibility of Wellington and his island soldiery!

While the allies were preparing to march, Joseph Buonaparte put the army of the centre into motion, and, followed by those of the south and Portugal, retired slowly on the Ebro. As they were not pressed by the British light troops, the enemy's corps moved leisurely towards the frontier, accompanied by enormous trains of equipage and baggage.

The appearance of the French army was more picturesque than military. It was crowded in its march, and too fanciful both in the character of its equipment and the variety of its costume. The line and light infantry excepted, few of the regiments were similarly dressed. The horse artillery wore uniforms of light blue, braided with black lace. The heavy cavalry were arrayed in green coats with brass helmets. The chasseurs and hussars, mounted on slight and active horses, were showily and variously equipped. The "gendarmérie à cheval," a picked body chosen from the cavalry at large, had long blue frocks, with cocked hats and buff belts; while the *élite* of the dragoons, selected for superior size and general appearance, were distinguished by bearskin caps, and wore a look of martial determination, that their past and future bearing in the battle-field did not belie. Each regiment of the line had its company of grenadiers and voltigeurs, even the light regiments having a company of the former. The appearance of the whole force was soldiery and imposing; the cavalry was indeed superb, and the artillery, as to guns, caissons, and appointments, most complete; and, better still, their horses were in excellent condition.

Both armies were in the highest state of efficiency, for to both the undivided attention of their commanding officers had been directed, and yet in their respective equipments a practised eye would detect a marked dissimilarity. With the British everything was simple, compact, and limited, as far as its being serviceable would admit, while the French were sadly incumbered with useless equipages and accumulated plunder. Those of the Spanish noblesse who had acknowledged the usurper, now accompanied his retreat; state functionaries, in court dresses and rich embroidery were mingled with the troops; calashes, carrying wives or mistresses, moved between brigades of guns; while nuns from Castile and ladies from Andalusia, attired *en militaire* and mounted on horseback, deserted castle and convent, to follow the fortunes of some soldier or employé. Excepting that of his great brother while retreating from Moscow, no army since the days of Xerxes, was so overloaded with spoil and baggage as that of Joseph Buonaparte.

Although this abuse had not escaped the observation of many of the best officers in the army of the usurper, the facility with which these enormous ambulances were transported encouraged rather than repressed the evil. Looking on Spain as a conquered country, the means necessary to forward their convoys were unscrupulously seized, and every horse and mule was considered the property of the finder. The roads were good, the retreat unmolested; on the 10th no enemy had appeared, and the allies were remaining quietly in their quarters. The fancied apathy of the British general was extraordinary, and prisoners were asked by their French escort, "Was Lord Wellington asleep?"

But nothing could exceed the astonishment of Joseph, when, on the evening of the 18th May, he was informed that the allies in considerable force, were actually on the left bank of the Ebro! The French dispositions were rendered useless, and an immediate night march became unavoidable. The drums beat to arms, the baggage was put in motion, and the entire of the French corps which had occupied Pancorbo or bivouacked in its vicinity, were hastily collected, and moved rapidly towards Vitoria.

That city on the evening of 19th May, displayed a singular spectacle of hurry and alarm, confusion and magnificence. Joseph Buonaparte, with his staff and guards, the entire of his court, and the headquarters of the army of the centre, accompanied by an endless collection of equipages, intermingled with cavalry, artillery, and their numerous ambulances, occupied the buildings and crowded the streets, while an unmanageable mass of soldiers and civilians were every moment increased by fresh arrivals, all vainly seeking for accommodation in a town unequal to afford shelter to half their number.

While the city was brilliantly illuminated in honour of the pseudo-king—and a gayer sight could not be fancied than its sparkling interior presented—beyond the walls, an army was taking a position, and a multitude of the peasants, forced by the French engineers, were employed in throwing up field defences, and assisting those who had ruled them with an iron hand to place their guns in battery, and make other military dispositions to repel the army of the allies, who were advancing to effect their deliverance.

Vitoria is a city of great antiquity, and the capital of the province of Alava. It stands in a valley surrounded on every side by high grounds, while in the distance a lesser range of the Pyrenees is visible. Its name is derived from some forgotten victory, or, as some assert, from one achieved by its founder, Sancho VII. In front of this city Joseph Buonaparte concentrated his *corps d'armée* on the night of the 19th, to cover

the town and hold the three great roads leading from Lagrona, Madrid, and Bilboa, to Bayonne.

The day of the 20th May was occupied by Lord Wellington in bringing forward his detached brigades, and making a careful reconnoissance of the enemy. Although, generally, the position selected by Marshal Jourdan was strong, and certainly well chosen to effect the objects for which he risked a battle, still it had one material defect. Its great extent would permit many simultaneous efforts to be made by an attacking army; and accordingly on the following day, the allied leader, with admirable skill, availed himself of this advantage, and a most decisive victory was the result.

In point of strength, the contending armies were nearly equal, each numbering from seventy to seventy-five thousand men, the allies exceeding the French, probably by five thousand. Perfect in every arm, more splendid troops were never ranged upon a battlefield. Both armies were ably commanded; nominally, Joseph was *général-en-chef*, but Jourdan chose the ground, and directed every disposition.

The morning of the 21st broke in glorious sunshine. The atmosphere was cloudless, and from the adjacent heights the progress of the battle could be distinctly viewed, except when smoke-wreaths for a time hid the combatants from many an anxious looker-on.

The French corps occupied a line of nearly eight miles—the extreme left placed upon the heights of La Puebla, and the right resting on an eminence above the villages of Abechuco and Gamarra Mayor. The centre was posted along a range of hills on the left bank of the river; while a strong corps, resting its right flank upon the left centre, was formed on the bold high grounds which rise behind the village of Sabijana. The reserve was placed at the village of Gomecha; and the banks of the Zadorra, and a small wood between the centre and the right, were thickly lined with *tirailleurs*. The first line consisted of the armies of the south; and the army of the centre, with the greater portion of the cavalry, formed the reserve. That part of the position near the village of Gomecha, having been considered by Jourdan his most vulnerable point, was defended by a numerous artillery. The bridges were fortified, the communications from one part of the position to the other were direct, a deep river ran in front, the great roads to Bayonne and Pamplona in the rear, while, to arrest Wellington's career and preserve the immense convoys within the city or on the road to France, loaded with the plunder of a despoiled capital and a denuded country, the pseudo-king determined to accept the battle, which the British leader was now prepared to deliver.

During the Peninsular campaigns, there was no battle fought

that required nicer combinations, and a more correct calculation in time and movement, than that of Vitoria. It was impossible for Lord Wellington to bring up, to an immediate proximity for attack, every portion of his numerous army, and hence many of his brigades had bivouacked on the preceding night a considerable distance from the Zadorra. Part of the country before Vitoria was difficult and rocky; and hamlets, enclosures, and ravines, separated the columns from each other; hence some of them were obliged to move by narrow and broken roads, and arrangements, perfect in themselves, were liable to embarrassment from numerous contingencies. But the genius that directed these extended operations, could remedy fortuitous events, should such occur.

At daybreak, on the 21st, Wellington's dispositions were complete, and the allied army in motion. Sir Rowland Hill, with the second British, Amarante's Portuguese, and Morillo's Spanish divisions, was ordered to storm the heights of La Puebla, occupied by the enemy's left. The first and fifth divisions, with Pack's and Bradford's brigades, Bock's and Anson's cavalry, and Longa's Spanish corps, were directed to turn the French right, cross the Zadorra, and seize on the Bayonne road. The third, fourth, seventh, and light divisions were to advance in two columns and attack Vitoria in front and flank, and thus oblige Jourdan either to come to a general engagement, or abandon the city and sacrifice his valuable convoys.

At dawn of day, Joseph placed himself upon a height that overlooked his right and centre. He was attended by a numerous staff, and protected by his own bodyguard. Wellington chose an eminence in front of the village of Arinez, commanding the right bank of the Zadorra, and continued there, observing through a glass the progress of the fight, and directing the movements of his divisions, as calmly as he would have inspected their movements at a review.

The attack commenced by Hill's division moving soon after daylight by the Miranda road, and the detaching of Morillo's Spanish corps to carry the heights of La Puebla, and drive in the left flank of the enemy. The latter task was a difficult one, as the ground rose abruptly from the valley, and towering to a considerable height, presented a sheer ascent, that at first sight appeared almost impracticable.

The Spaniards, with great difficulty, although unopposed, reached the summit; and there, among rocks and broken ground, became sharply engaged with the French left. Perceiving that they were unable to force the enemy from the heights, Sir Rowland Hill advanced a British brigade to Morillo's assistance, while, alarmed for the safety of his flank, Jourdan detached troops from his centre to support the division that held La

Puebla. A fierce and protracted combat ensued; the loss on both sides was severe, and Colonel Cadogan fell at the head of his brigade. But gradually and steadily the British gained ground; and while the eyes of both armies were turned upon the combatants and the possession of the heights seemed doubtful still, the eagle glance of Wellington discovered the forward movement of the Highland tartans, and he announced to his staff that La Puebla was carried.

The village of Sabijana was the next object of attack, and a brigade of the second division stormed it after a short but determined resistance. As that village covered the left of their line, the French made many efforts to recover its possession; but it was most gallantly retained until the left and centre of the allies moved up, and the attack on the enemy's line became general.

While Sabijana was repeatedly assaulted, the light division was formed in close columns under cover of some broken ground, and at a short distance from the river. The hussar brigade, dismounted, were on the left; and the fourth division in position on the right, waiting the signal for advancing. The heavy cavalry formed a reserve to the centre, in event of its requiring support before the third and seventh divisions had come up; and the first and fifth, with a Spanish and Portuguese corps, were detached to occupy the road to San Sebastian, and thus intercept the enemy's retreat.

Presently, an opening cannonade upon the left announced that Sir Thomas Graham was engaged, and Lord Dalhousie notified his arrival with the third and seventh divisions at Mendonza. The moment for a grand movement had come; Lord Wellington saw and seized the crisis of the day, and ordered a general attack on the whole extent of the French position.

The light division moved forward under cover of a thicket, and placed itself opposite the enemy's right centre, about two hundred paces from the bridge of Villoses, and on the arrival of Lord Dalhousie, the signal was given to advance. At this critical moment an intelligent Spaniard opportunely came up, and announced that one of the bridges was undefended. The mistake was quickly seized upon. A brigade, led by the first rifles, crossed it at a run, and, without any loss, established itself in a deep ravine, where it was completely protected from the enemy's cannonade.

Nothing could be more beautiful than the operations which followed. The light division carried the bridge of Nanclaus, and the fourth that of Tres Puentes; the divisions of Picton and Dalhousie followed, and the battle became general. The passage of the river, the movement of glittering masses from right to left, far as the eye could range, the deafening roar of

cannon, the sustained fusilade of infantry, all was grand and imposing; while the English cavalry, displayed in glorious sunshine and formed in line to support the columns, completed a spectacle, grand and magnificent beyond description.

Immediately after crossing the Zadorra, Colville's brigade became seriously engaged with a strong French corps, and gallantly defeated it. Pressing on with characteristic impetuosity, and without halting to correct the irregularity a recent and successful struggle had occasioned, the brigade encountered on the brow of the hill, two lines of French infantry regularly drawn up, and prepared to receive their assailants. For a moment the result was regarded with considerable apprehension, and means actually adopted for sustaining the brigade when—as that event seemed inevitable—it should be repulsed by the enemy. But valour overcame every disadvantage, and the perfect formation of the French could not withstand the dashing onset of the assailants. Their rush was irresistible; on went these daring soldiers, “sweeping before them the formidable array that, circumstanced, as they were, appeared calculated to produce annihilation.”

While the combined movements of the different divisions were thus in every place successful, the attack on the village of Arinez failed, and the 88th were repulsed in an attempt to storm it. Here, the French fought desperately, and here alone the fortune of the day wavered for a moment. Nothing could exceed the obstinacy with which the village was defended; but, under a severe fire, Lord Wellington in person directed a fresh assault. The 45th and 74th ascended the height; the French were fairly forced out at the point of the bayonet, and Arinez, after a sanguinary struggle, was won.

Meanwhile the flank movements on Gamarra Mayor and Abechuco were effected with splendid success. Both villages, having bridges across the river, were filled with troops and vigorously defended. Gamarra Mayor was stormed with the bayonet by Oswald's division without firing a shot; and, under cover of the artillery, Halket's German light infantry, and Bradford's Portuguese cacadores, advanced against Abechuco. Nothing could be more gallant than their assault; the French were dislodged from the village with heavy loss, and the bridges left in the undisputed possession of the victors.

The whole of the enemy's first line were now driven back, but they retired in perfect order, and reforming close to Vitoria, presented an imposing front, protected by nearly one hundred pieces of artillery. A tremendous fire checked the advance of the left centre; and the storm of the guns on both sides raged with unabated fury for an hour. Vitoria, although so near the combatants, was hidden from view by the dense smoke, while

volley after volley from the French infantry thinned, though it could not shake, Picton's "fighting third."

It was a desperate and final effort. The allies were advancing in beautiful order; while confusion was already visible in the enemy's ranks, as their left attempted to retire by eschelons of divisions—a dangerous movement when badly executed. Presently the cannon were abandoned, and the whole mass of French troops commenced a most disorderly retreat by the road to Pamplona.

The sun was setting, and his last rays fell upon a magnificent spectacle. Red masses of infantry were seen advancing steadily across the plain—the horse artillery at a gallop to the front, to open its fire on the fugitives—the hussar brigade charging by the Camino Real—while the second division, having overcome every obstacle, and driven the enemy from its front, was extending over the heights upon the right in line, its arms and appointments flashing gloriously, in the fading sunshine of "departing day."

Never had an action been more general, nor the attacks on every part of an extended position more simultaneous and successful. In the line of operations six bridges over the Zadorra were crossed or stormed—that on the road to Burgos enabled Lord Hill to pass; the fourth division crossed that of Nanclares; the light, at Tres Puentes; Picton and Dalhousie passed the river lower down; while Lord Lynedoch carried Abechuco and Gamarra Mayor, though both were strongly fortified, and both obstinately defended.

Driven completely through Vitoria, the French never made an attempt to rally. The formation of their army was totally destroyed, and its disorganisation completed. Indeed, no defeat could have been more decisive—the *déroute* was general; and an army, at sunrise perfect in every arm, had become at evening a mixed and helpless mob. Even at Ocana and Medellin, the raw, undisciplined, and ill-commanded Spaniards had never been more completely routed. Very few of the infantry retained their muskets, and many threw away their whole accoutrements in order to expedite their flight. All were abandoned to the conquerors, and the travelling carriage of the pseudo-king, with his wardrobe, plate, wines, and private correspondence, were found among the spoils. Indeed, Joseph himself narrowly escaped from being added to the list; for Captain Wyndham made a bold dash at "The Intruder," with a squadron of the 10th hussars, and firing into the coach, obliged him to leave it, and ride off at speed under the protection of a strong escort of cavalry.

Night closed upon the victors and the vanquished, and darkness and broken ground favoured the escape of battalions flying

from the field in mob-like disorder, and incapable of any resistance, had they been overtaken and attacked. Two leagues from Vitoria, however, the pursuit was reluctantly given up, but the horse artillery, while a shot could reach the fugitives, continued to harass the retreat.

The whole baggage and field equipage of three distinct armies fell on this occasion into the hands of the conquerors. One hundred and fifty pieces of cannon, four hundred caissons, twelve thousand rounds of ammunition, and two millions of musket-cartridges, with a thousand prisoners, were taken. The casualties on both sides were heavy. The British lost five hundred killed, two thousand eight hundred wounded; the Portuguese one hundred and fifty killed, nine hundred wounded; and the Spaniards eighty-nine of the former, and four hundred and sixty of the latter. The French loss, of course, was infinitely greater, and even by their own returns it was admitted to amount to eight thousand; but, prisoners included, it must have exceeded that number considerably.

On the morning of the 22nd, the field of battle, and the roads for some miles in the rear, exhibited an appearance it seldom falls within human fortune to witness. There lay the wreck of a mighty army; while plunder, accumulated during the French successes, and wrung from every part of Spain with unsparing rapacity, was recklessly abandoned to any who chose to seize it. Cannon and caissons, carriages and tumbrels, waggons of every description, were overturned or deserted—and a stranger *mélange* could not be imagined, than that which these enormous convoys presented to the eye. Here, was the personal baggage of a king; there, the scenery and decorations of a theatre. Munitions of war were mixed with articles of *virtù*, and scattered arms and packs, silks, embroidery, plate, and jewels, mingled together in wild disorder.

One waggon would be loaded with money, another with cartridges, while wounded soldiers, deserted women, and children of every age, everywhere implored assistance, or threw themselves for protection on the humanity of the victors. Here, a lady was overtaken in her carriage—in the next calash was an actress or *fille-de-chambre*—while droves of oxen were roaming over the plain, intermingled with an endless quantity of sheep and goats, mules and horses, asses and cows.

That much valuable plunder came into the hands of the soldiery is certain; but the better portion fell to the peasantry and camp-followers. Two valuable captures were secured—a full military chest, and the baton of Marshal Jourdan.

Were not the indiscriminating system of spoliation pursued by the French armies recollected, the enormous collection of plunder abandoned at Vitoria would appear incredible. From

the highest to the lowest, all were bearing off some valuables from the country they had overrun; and even the king himself had not proved an exception, for, rolled in the imperials of his own coach, some of the finest pictures from the royal galleries were discovered. To secure or facilitate their transport, they had been removed from their frames, and deposited in the royal carriage, no doubt, destined to add to the unrivalled collection, that by similar means had been abstracted from the Continent, and presented to the Louvre. Wellington, however, interrupted the Spanish paintings in their transit, and thus saved the trouble and formality of a restoration.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

THE BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

PART FIRST.

1813.

WELLINGTON was now in possession of the passes of the Pyrenees; and in the short space of two months had moved his victorious army across the kingdom of Spain, and changed his cantonments from the frontier of Portugal to a position in the Pyrenees, from which he looked down upon the southern provinces of France.

Napoleon received intelligence of Lord Wellington's success with feelings of undissembled anger and surprise. To recover the line of the Ebro was his instant determination, for he knew the dangerous effect the presence of a British army on the frontier of "beautiful France" must of necessity produce.

Like the tidings of Marmont's disaster at Salamanca, the news of Joseph's defeat reached Napoleon at a crisis, when a lost battle was a calamity indeed. With him, every previous armistice had obtained concessions; and, had Vitoria terminated differently, battles, in no way decisive, might from a fortunate success in Spain, have produced results similar to those of Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena. With ominous rapidity, the intelligence reached every European court that Joseph had been driven from his throne, and Wellington overlooked the fields of France—and none could gainsay it—a conqueror. With what astonishment these tidings were received, those immediately round the person of Napoleon have since narrated. Nothing could be more humiliating—nothing, the time considered, more ruinous. His brother no longer prosecuted the war in Spain, but, defeated and shaken in confidence, had sought shelter in the plains of Gascony.

Accustomed as he had been to receive reports from the Peninsula little calculated to give satisfaction, or to confirm his impression of the invincible qualities of those troops which he had personally ever led to certain victory, so extensive and alarming a reverse as that now made must have been as unexpected as it was disastrous; but with all the promptitude of a person born to command, instead of yielding to gloomy circumstances, he issued orders for a bold effort to counteract the tide of war, to recover the ground lost by Vitoria, and to awaken to energy, as he conceived, the dormant spirit of his soldiers.

Marshal Soult was, therefore, specially despatched from Germany to assume the chief command of the beaten army, and, if possible, restore its fallen fortunes.

Wellington foresaw the coming storm, and turned his immediate attention to the reduction of Pamplona and San Sebastian. From the strength of the former, and the excellent condition of its defences, the allied commander decided on a blockade; and it was accordingly closely invested by General Hill. Redoubts were thrown up within fifteen hundred yards of the place, armed with the cannon taken at Vitoria, and to the Spanish army under O'Donel the conduct of the blockade was entrusted.

Graham, with his corps augmented to ten thousand men, was directed to besiege San Sebastian; and on the 11th of July he sat down before the place.

San Sebastian is built on a peninsula, its western defences washed by the sea, and its eastern by the river Urumea, which at high water rises several feet above the base of the escarp wall. A bold and rocky height, called Monte Orgullo, rises at the extreme point of a narrow neck of land, and on its summit stands the citadel of La Mota.

Eight hundred yards distant from the land-front, the convent of San Bartolemeo, with a redoubt and circular fieldwork, were garrisoned. These advanced posts were strongly fortified, and, as it was determined to breach the eastern wall and storm it afterwards at low water, when the receding tide should permit an advance by the left of the Urumea, it became necessary, as a preliminary step, to dislodge the enemy from the convent.

On the 14th of July, the guns in battery opened a heavy fire on San Bartolemeo; and by the next day the walls of the building were injured considerably. Another battery, erected beyond the Urumea, fired with equal success upon the bastion; and on the 17th both works were carried by assault. Batteries, armed with thirty-two siege guns and howitzers, opened on the town wall from the sandhills; and on the 25th two breaches were effected, one of thirty yards extent, and the other of ten. A mine was also driven under the glacis, and at its explosion was the appointed signal for an assault upon the breaches.

At first the astounding noise distracted the garrison, and enabled the advance of both storming parties to gain the breaches; but the French recovered from their panic, and poured such a fire of grape and musketry on the assailants, that the breach was heaped with dead and dying, and the allies were driven back to the trenches with a loss of above six hundred men. The loss of the British, from the 7th to the 27th of July, amounted to two hundred and four killed, seven hundred and seventy-four wounded, and three hundred missing.

This severe repulse, added to the certain intelligence that Soult was preparing to strike a grand blow, induced Lord Wellington to issue immediate orders to raise the siege.

Circumstances, indeed, rendered that step unavoidable. The French were already in motion; Soult had forced the passes on the right, penetrated the valleys of the Pyrenees, and was marching to relieve Pamplona.

Lord Wellington had a most extensive, and, consequently, a very difficult position to defend, his *corps d'armée* covering an extent of country extending, from flank to flank, over sixty miles of mountains, without lateral communications, or the means of holding a disposable reserve in the rear of the passes, all of which must be defended, as the loss of one would render the defence of the others unavailing.

After issuing a spirited proclamation to his army, Soult lost no time in commencing operations. His corps had been organised anew, strongly reinforced, and strengthened in every arm, and more particularly in artillery. To relieve Pamplona, it would be necessary to carry the passes of Maya and Roncesvalles; and accordingly, the French marshal suddenly assembled the wings of his army and a division of the centre, at St. Jean Pied de Port; while D'Erlon, with the remainder of the corps, concentrated at Espaletta.

By feints upon the smaller passes of Espagne and Lereta, D'Erlon masked his real attempt, which was to be made upon that of Maya, by a mountain path from Espaletta. From several suspicious appearances an attack was dreaded by the allies, and some light companies had been ordered up, and, with the pickets, they were assailed at noon in such force that, though supported by the 34th, 50th, and 92nd, they were driven back on a height communicating with Echalar when, reinforced by Barnes's brigade of the seventh division, they succeeded in repulsing the attack and holding their ground again.

The affair was very sanguinary. One wing of the 92nd was nearly cut to pieces. All the regiments engaged highly distinguished themselves, and the 32nd in particular. The allies lost nearly two thousand men, and four pieces of artillery.

Soult's advance on Roncesvalles was made in imposing force,

but his movements were foreseen, and necessary dispositions had been made for defeating them. General Byng, who commanded, sent Morillo's Spanish division to observe the road of Arbaicete, by which the pass of Maya might have been turned on the right; and descending the heights, placed his own brigade in a position by which that important road might be covered more effectually. Soult, however, directed his true attack upon the left. Cole was overpowered and driven back; but the fusilier brigade sustained him, and the attack throughout being met with steady gallantry, was eventually defeated.

On Byng's division the French marshal directed his next effort; and with a force so superior, that, though obstinately resisted, it proved successful, so far as it obliged the weak brigades of the British general to fall back upon the mountains, and abandon the Arbaicete road, while Morillo's Spaniards were driven on the fourth division. Necessarily the whole fell back at nightfall, and took a position in front of Zubiri.

Picton's division united with the fourth next morning, and both fell leisurely back as the Duke of Dalmatia advanced. Picton continued retiring on the 27th July, and that evening took a position in front of Pamplona to cover the blockade, General Hill having already fallen back on Irurita.

Nearly at this time Lord Wellington had come up; putting in motion the several corps which lay in his route to the scene of action, and at one end of a mountain village he pencilled a despatch, as a French detachment had entered by the other.

Riding at full speed, he reached the village of Sorauren, and his eagle glance detected Clausel's column in march along the ridge of Zabaldica. Convinced that the troops in the valley of the Lanz must be intercepted by this movement, he sprang from his saddle, and pencilled a note on the parapet of the bridge, directing the troops to take the road to Oricain, and gain the rear of Cole's position. The scene that followed was highly interesting. Lord Fitzroy Somerset, the only staff-officer who had kept up with him, galloped with these orders out of Sorauren by one road, the French light cavalry dashed in by another, and the British general rode alone up the mountain to reach his troops. One of Campbell's Portuguese battalions first descried him, and raised a cry of joy, and the shrill clamour caught up by the next regiments swelled as it run along the line into that stern and appalling shout which the British soldier is wont to give upon the edge of battle, and which no enemy ever heard unmoved. Lord Wellington suddenly stopped in a conspicuous place; he desired that both armies should know he was there; and a double spy who was present pointed out Soult, then so near that his features could be plainly distinguished.

The British general, it is said, fixed his eyes attentively upon

this formidable man, and speaking as if to himself, said, "Yonder is a great commander, but he is a cautious one, and will delay his attack to ascertain the cause of these cheers; that will give time for the 6th division to arrive, and I shall beat him." And certain it is that the French general made no serious attack that day.

Twelve British regiments were embattled on the Pyrenees who had fought at Talavera; and there were present not a few who might recall an incident to memory, that would present a striking but amusing contrast. Cuesta, examining his battleground four years before in lumbering state, seated in an unwieldy coach, and drawn by eight pampered mules; Wellington, on an English hunter, dashing from post to post at headlong speed, and at a pace that distanced the best mounted of his staff.

Having despatched the order, he galloped to the place where Picton's divisions were drawn up—the third, on the right, in front of Huarte, and extending to the heights of Olaz, and the fourth, with Byng's and Campbell's brigades, formed on the left; their right on the road from Roncesvalles to Zubiri, and the left commanding that from Ostiz to Pamplona. The reserve was formed of the corps of Morillo and O'Donel, while, on the only ground on which cavalry could act, the British dragoons were formed under Sir Stapleton Cotton.

Soult had occupied the high grounds in the front of those held by the allies, and in the evening he made an effort to possess a hill occupied by a Portuguese and Spanish brigade on the right of the fourth division. These troops steadily resisted the attack, and, supported by a British and Spanish regiment, repulsed the French, until darkness ended the firing on both sides.

Pack's division came up on the 28th, and took a position in the rear of the fourth division, covering the valley of the Lanz. The village of Sorauren in their front was held by the French; from which, in considerable force, they moved forward, and attacked the sixth division. But this movement was exposed to a flanking fire, that obliged the enemy to retire after suffering a serious loss. On the left of the division, a regiment of Portuguese cacadores was driven back by a simultaneous attack, but Ross's brigade came rapidly forward, and completely repulsed the French. On the right, a renewed effort partially succeeded, as the Spanish regiments were deforced; but the 40th came to the charge, and cleared the hill of the enemy.

The French marshal's efforts had been directed against the whole of the height held by the fourth division. In almost all he was repelled; but on the right of the brigade of Ross, Soult was for a time successful, and Campbell's Portuguese regiments, unable to bear the furious and sustained attack, lost ground, and

allowed the enemy to establish a strong body of troops within the allied position. Of necessity, General Ross, having his flank turned, immediately fell back. Wellington saw the crisis, and the 27th and 48th were directed to recover the ground with the bayonet. Ross moved forward in support, a brilliant and bloody struggle terminated in the total repulse of the French division, which with severe loss, was precipitately driven from the height it had with such difficulty gained. At this period of the fight, Pack's brigade advanced up the hill. The French gave up further efforts on the position, and a long, sanguinary, and determined contest terminated.

The fourth division in this affair had been most gloriously distinguished. The bayonet, in every trying exigency, was resorted to; the charges were frequent, and some regiments, the fusiliers (7th and 23rd), with the 20th and 40th, repeatedly checked an advance, or recovered lost ground, by "steel alone."

Hill's division had marched by Lanz, and Lord Dalhousie from San Estevan on Lizasso, and reached it on the 28th, while the seventh division moved to Marcelain, and covered the Pamplona road. Soult, failing in his efforts on the front of the position, determined to attack Hill's corps, turn the left of the allies, and thus relieve Pamplona.

D'Erlon had reached Ostiz on the 29th, and Soult detached a division from his own position to strengthen him. During the night of the 29th, he crossed the Lanz, and occupied the heights in front of the sixth and seventh divisions, and withdrawing the corps hitherto posted opposite the third British division, his left wing closed in on the main position of the mountain, directly in front of the fourth division. D'Erlon's corps, now considerably strengthened, communicated by the right of the Lanz with the heights occupied by their left.

These dispositions of the French marshal were at once penetrated by Lord Wellington, and he decided on driving the enemy from the main position, which, from its importance, was very strongly occupied.

Picton, crossing the heights from which the French corps had been recently withdrawn, turned the left of their position on the road to Roncesvalles, while Lord Dalhousie advanced against the heights in front of the seventh division, and gained their right flank. Packenham, with the sixth division, turned the village of Sorauren, and, assisted by Byng's brigade, carried that of Ostiz. These flank movements were executed with admirable rapidity, and enabled Cole, with part of the fourth division, to assault the front of the enemy's position. His attack succeeded. The French gave way, a noble chain of posts was forced on every side, as well by the dashing gallantry of the troops as the excellent dispositions of their leader.

The French had endeavoured to outflank General Hill; but Pringle's brigade manœuvred on the heights above the La Zarza road, and as the enemy extended by the right, they observed a parallel direction. During these movements front attacks were frequently and furiously made, and always repulsed by the bayonet. Sir Rowland steadily maintained his position behind Lizasso, until a strong corps, detached by D'Erlon, succeeded in filing round the left flank of the British brigades. No result of any importance ensued, for Hill leisurely retired on a mountain position at Eguarras, a mile in the rear, and every attempt made by D'Erlon to dislodge him proved a failure.

That night, Soult, discomfited in his numerous and well-sustained attacks on every position of the allied lines, fell back, and was vigorously pursued by his opponent. Two divisions were overtaken at the pass of Donna Maria, and brought to action. Although most formidably posted, they were driven from their ground by the second and seventh divisions, while at another point, Barnes's brigade made a daring and successful attack on a corps of much superior strength, formed in a difficult position.

Wellington continued the pursuit to Irurita, the French retiring rapidly towards the frontier, from whence they had so confidently advanced, and on which they were as promptly obliged to recede. In their retreat through the valley of the Bidassao, the enemy's loss in prisoners and baggage was considerable. A large convoy was taken at Elizondo, and on the night of the 1st of August, the entire of the French corps were driven from the Spanish territory, and the British bivouacs once more established on the same ground which they had occupied previous to the advance of the Duke of Dalmatia.

During the continued series of bold operations, and constant and sustained attacks, the loss on both sides could not but be immense. Soult's amounted to at least eight thousand, and Wellington's to eight hundred and eighty-one killed, five thousand five hundred and ten wounded, and seven hundred and five missing. That the French marshal was perfectly confident of succeeding, could be inferred from the tone of his address to the army, and the mass of cavalry and immense parc of guns, with which he had provided himself, and which, as they could not be employed in mountain combats, were evidently designed to assist in future operations that should succeed his deforcement of the allies from the Pyrenees, and the raising of the blockade of Pamplona.

Nothing could have been more annoying to the French marshal, than that he should have actually reached within one league of the blockaded fortress, and never be permitted afterwards to open the slightest communication with its garrison.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE SIEGE OF SAN SEBASTIAN.

1813.

AFTER the retreat of Soult, the British and their allies resumed the positions from which they had been dislodged by the advance of the French marshal, and re-established headquarters at Lezecca. A short period of comparative inactivity succeeded; immediate operations could not be commenced on either side—the enemy had been too severely repulsed to permit their becoming assailants again; while, on the other hand, Wellington would not be justified in crossing the frontier and entering a hostile country, with Pamplona and San Sebastian in his rear, and garrisoned by the French.

Nothing could be more magnificent than the position of the British brigades. For many a mile along the extended line of occupation, huts crowning the heights or studding the deep valleys below them, showed the rude dwellings of the mighty mass of human beings collected in that Alpine country. At night the scene was still more picturesque. The irregular surface of the sierras sparkled with a thousand watch-fires, and the bivouacs of the allies exhibited all the varieties of light and shadow which an artist loves to copy. To the occupants themselves the views obtained from their elevated abodes were grand and imposing. One while obscured in fog, the hum of voices alone announced that their comrades were beside them, while at another, the sun bursting forth in cloudless beauty, displayed a varied scene, glorious beyond imagination. At their feet the fertile plains of France presented themselves; above, ranges of magnificent heights towered in majestic grandeur to the skies, and stretched into distance beyond the range of sight.

Although no military movements were made, this inactive interval of a vigorous campaign was usefully employed by the allied commander, in organising anew the regiments that had suffered most, concentrating the divisions, replacing exhausted stores, and perfecting the whole *matériel* of the army. Those of the British near the coast, compared with the corps that were blockading Pamplona, lived comfortably in their mountain bivouacs; indeed, the task of covering a blockade is the most disagreeable that falls to the soldier's lot. Exposed to cold and rain, continually on the alert, and yet engaged in a duty devoid of enterprise and interest, nothing could be more wearying to the troops employed; and desertions, which during active service were infrequent, now became numerous, and especially among the Spaniards and Irish.

The siege of San Sebastian was renewed. Guns, formerly employed, were re-landed, the trenches occupied again, and a large supply of heavy ordnance and mortars, received opportunely from the home country, were placed in battery. Lord Wellington was reinforced by a company of sappers and miners, and the navy, under Sir George Collier, assisted him with both men and guns. The batteries were consequently enlarged, and a furious sortie by the garrison on the night of the 24th August producing little effect, on the 26th a crushing fire opened from fifty-seven pieces of siege artillery.

On the same night the island of Santa Clara, situated at the entrance of the harbour, and partially enfilading the defences of the castle, was surprised and stormed by a mixed party of sailors and soldiers, and its garrison made prisoners. On the 27th, a second sortie on the whole front of the isthmus failed entirely, and the assailants were instantly driven back. The siege and working artillery had been now augmented to eighty pieces, and on the 30th the breaches were so extensively battered down, that Lord Wellington issued orders that they should be assaulted, and the next morning was named for the attempt.

In the annals of modern warfare, perhaps there is no conflict recorded which was so sanguinary and so desperate as the storming of that well-defended breach. During the blockade, every resource of military ingenuity was tried by the French governor, and the failure of the first assault, with the subsequent raising of the siege, emboldened the garrison, and rendered them the more confident of holding out until Soult could advance and succour them. The time from which the battering guns had been withdrawn, until they had been again placed in battery, was assiduously employed in constructing new defences and strengthening the old ones. But though the place when reinvested was more formidable than before, the besiegers appeared only the more determined to reduce it.

Morning broke gloomily, an intense mist obscured every object, and the work of slaughter was for a time delayed. At nine the sea-breeze cleared away the fog; the sun shone gloriously out, and in two hours the forlorn hope issued from the trenches. The columns succeeded, and every gun from the fortress that could bear, opened on them with shot and shells. The appearance of the breach was perfectly delusive; nothing living could reach the summit; no courage, however desperate, could overcome the difficulties, for they were alike unexpected and insurmountable. In vain the officers rushed forward, and devotedly were they followed by their men. From intrenched houses behind the breach, the traverses, and the ramparts of the curtain, a withering discharge of musketry was poured on the assailants, while the *Mirador* and *Prince* batteries swept the

approaches with their guns. To survive this concentrated fire was impossible; the forlorn hope were cut off to a man, and the heads of the columns annihilated. At last the debouches were choked with the dead and wounded, and a further passage to the breach rendered impracticable from the heap of corpses that were piled upon each other.

Then, in that desperate moment, when hope might have been supposed to be over, an expedient unparalleled in the records of war was resorted to. The British batteries opened on the curtain, and the storming parties heard with surprise the roar of cannon in the rear, while, but a few feet above their heads, their iron shower hissed horribly, and swept away the enemy and their defences.

This was the moment for a fresh effort. Another brigade was moved forward, and, favoured by an accidental explosion upon the curtain, which confused the enemy while it encouraged the assailants, the *terre-plain* was mounted, and the French driven from the works. A long and obstinate resistance was continued in the streets, which were in many places barricaded, but by five in the evening opposition had ceased, and the town was in the possession of the British. Seven hundred of the garrison were prisoners, and the remainder were either disabled in the assault or shut up in the castle.

The town presented a dreadful spectacle, both of the work of war and of the wickedness which in war is let loose.

It had caught fire during the assault, owing to the quantity of combustibles of all kinds which were scattered about. The French rolled their shells into it from the castle, and while it was in flames the troops were plundering, and the people of the surrounding country flocking to profit by the spoils of their countrymen. The few inhabitants who were to be seen seemed stupified with horror; they had suffered so much that they looked with apathy at all around them, and when the crash of a falling house made the captors run, they scarcely moved. Heaps of dead were lying everywhere—British, Portuguese, and French, one upon another; with such determination had the one side attacked and the other maintained its ground.

Very many of the assailants lay dead on the roofs of the houses which adjoined the breach. The bodies were thrown into the mines and other excavations, and there covered over so as to be out of sight, but so hastily and so slightly, that the air far and near was tainted, and fires were kindled in the breaches to consume those which could not be otherwise disposed of.

The hospital presented a more dreadful scene, for it was a scene of human suffering; friend and enemy had been indiscriminately carried thither, and were there alike neglected. On the third day after the assault, many of them had received

neither surgical assistance nor food of any kind, and it became necessary to remove them on the fifth, as the flames approached the building. Much of this neglect would have been unavoidable, even if that humane and conscientious diligence which can be hoped for from so few, had been found in every individual belonging to the medical department, the number of the wounded being so great; and little help could be received from the other part of the army, because it had been engaged in action on the same day.

The unfortunate town seemed alike devoted by friends and enemies to destruction. The conquerors were roaming through the streets, the castle firing on the houses beneath its guns, in many places fire had broken out, and a storm of thunder, rain, and lightning added to the confusion of a scene which even in warfare finds no parallel.

The assault of San Sebastian cost a large expense of life, there being seven hundred and sixty-one killed, one thousand six hundred and ninety-seven wounded, and forty-five missing, and in that number many valuable officers were included. The head of the engineer department, Sir Richard Fletcher, was killed, and Generals Leith, Oswald, and Robinson were returned in the list of wounded.

Vigorous measures were in preparation for the reduction of the castle of San Sebastian. From the height of its escarp, and the solidity of the masonry, La Mota could not be assaulted with any certainty of success, and a regular investment was requisite to obtain the place.

On the 1st of September, the mortar-batteries commenced throwing shells; and as the castle was indifferently provided with bomb-proof casemates, a considerable loss induced the governor to offer a capitulation, but the terms were not such as could be granted. Batteries with heavy ordnance were erected on the works of the town, and on the 8th opened with such terrible effect, that in two hours the place was unconditionally surrendered. The garrison amounted to eighteen hundred men, of whom nearly a third were disabled.

At noon, the French garrison marched out of the castle gate with the customary honours of war. At its head, with sword drawn, and firm step, appeared General Rey, accompanied by Colonel Songeon, and the officers of his staff; as a token of respect he was saluted as he passed. The old general dropped his sword in return to the civilities of the British officers, and leading the remains of his brave battalions to the glacis, there deposited their arms, with a well-founded confidence of having nobly done his duty, and persevered to the utmost in an energetic and brilliant defence.

On the 10th, the Portuguese were formed in the streets of the

ruined city, the British on the ramparts. The day was fine, after a night of heavy rain. About noon the garrison marched out at the Mirador gate. The bands of two or three Portuguese regiments played occasionally, but altogether it was a dismal scene, amid ruins and vestiges of fire and slaughter; a few inhabitants were present, and only a few.

San Sebastian was held to the last with excellent judgment and dauntless gallantry. Indeed, the loss of the besiegers bore melancholy confirmation of the fact, for the reduction of that fortress cost the allies nearly four thousand men.

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CHAPTER XX.

THE BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

PART SECOND.

1813.

WINTER had now set in, and a season of unusual severity commenced. The allies were sadly exposed to the weather, and an increasing difficulty was felt every day in procuring necessary supplies. Forage became so scarce, that part of the cavalry had nothing for their horses but grass; while the cattle for the soldiers' rations, driven sometimes from the interior of Spain, perished in immense numbers by the way, or reached the camp so wretchedly reduced in condition as to be little better than carrion. Resources from the sea could not be trusted to; for in blowing weather the coast was scarcely approachable, and even in the sheltered harbour of Passages, the transports could with difficulty ride to their moorings, in consequence of the heavy swell that tumbled in from the Atlantic. The cold became intense, sentries were frozen at their posts, and a picket at Roncesvalles, regularly snowed up, was saved with great difficulty. All this plainly showed that the present position of the allies was not tenable much longer, and that a forward movement into France was unavoidable.

But great difficulties in advancing presented themselves; and, all things considered, success was a matter of uncertainty. Soult's army had been powerfully reinforced by the last conscription; and for three months the French marshal had been indefatigable in fortifying the whole line of his position, and strengthening his defences, wherever the ground would admit an enemy to approach. The field-works extended from the sea to the river, as the right rested on St. Jean-de-Luz, and the left on the Nivelle. The centre was at Mont La Rhune and the heights of Sarré. The whole position passed in a half-circle through

Irogne, Ascain, Sarré, Ainhoue, and Espelette. Though the centre was commanded by a higher ridge, a narrow valley interposed between them. The entire front was covered with works, and the sierras defended by a chain of redoubts. The centre was particularly strong—in fact, it was a work regularly ditched and palisaded.

To turn the position, by advancing Hill's corps through St. Jean Pied-de-Port, was first determined on; but, on consideration, this plan of operations was abandoned, and, strong as the centre was, the allied leader resolved that on it his attack should be directed, while the heights of Ainhoue, which formed its support, should, if possible, be simultaneously carried.

A commander less nerved than Lord Wellington, would have lacked resolution for this bold and masterly operation. Everything was against him, and every chance favoured the enemy. The weather was dreadful, the rain fell in torrents, and while no army could move, the French had the advantage of the delay to complete the defences of a position which was already deemed perfect as art and nature could render it. Nor did their powerful works produce in the enemy a false security. Aware of the man and the troops which threatened them, they were always ready for an attack, and their outpost duty was rigidly attended to. Before day their corps were under arms, and the whole line of defence continued fully garrisoned until night permitted the troops to be withdrawn.

At last the weather moderated. Ainhoue was reconnoitred by Wellington in person, and the plan of the attack arranged. No operation could be more plain or straightforward. The centre was to be carried by columns of divisions, and the right centre turned. To all the corps their respective points of attack were assigned, while to the light division and Longa's Spaniards the storming of La Petite Rhune was confided. The latter were to be supported by Alten's cavalry, three brigades of British artillery, and three mountain guns.

The successful result of the battle was owing in no inconsiderable degree to the able direction of the artillery under Colonel Dickson. Guns were brought to bear on the French fortifications from situations which they considered totally inaccessible to that arm. Mountain guns on swivel carriages, harnessed on the backs of mules purposely trained for that service, ascended the rugged ridges of the mountains, and showered destruction on the intrenchments below. The foot and horse-artillery displayed a facility of movement which must have astonished the French, the artillerymen dragging the guns with ropes up steep precipices, or lowering them down to positions from whence they could with more certain aim pour forth their fatal volleys against the enemy.

The 8th December had been named for the attack, but the roads were so dreadfully cut up, that neither the artillery nor Hill's brigade could get into position, and it was postponed for two days longer, when the 10th dawned, a clear and moonlight morning. Long before day, Lord Wellington, and several of the generals of division and brigade with their respective staffs, had assembled in a small wood, five hundred yards from the redoubt above the village of Sarré, waiting for sufficient light to commence the arranged attack.

Nothing could exceed the courage and rapidity with which the troops rushed on, and overcame every artificial and natural obstacle. The 3rd and 7th advanced in front of the village, Downie's Spanish brigade attacked the right, while the left was turned by Cole's, and the whole of the first line of defences remained in possession of the allies.

On this glorious occasion, the light division was pre-eminently distinguished. By moonlight it moved from the greater La Rhune, and formed in a ravine which separates the bolder from the lesser height. This latter was occupied in force by the enemy, and covered on every assailable point with intrenchments. As morning broke, the British light troops rushed from the hollow which had concealed them. To withstand their assault was impossible; work after work was stormed; forward they went with irresistible bravery, and on the summit of the hill united themselves with Cole's division, and then pushed on against the intrenched heights behind, which formed the strongest part of the position. Here, a momentary check arrested their progress; the supporting force (Spanish) were too slow, and the ground too rugged for the horse artillery to get over it at speed. The rifles were attacked in turn, and for a moment driven back by a mass of the enemy. But the reserve came up; and again the light troops rushed forward, the French gave way, and the whole of the lower ridge was left in possession of the assailants.

For four hours the combat had raged, and on every point the British were victorious. A more formidable position still remained behind, and Wellington combined his efforts for a vigorous and general attack.

This mountain position extended from Mondarin to Ascain, and a long valley, through which the Nivelle flows, traversed it; where the surface was unequal, the higher points were crowned with redoubts, and the spaces of level surface occupied by the French in line or column, as the nature of the ground best admitted. Men inclined to fight never had a field that offered so many advantages; and there were none, save the British leader and the splendid army he commanded, who would have ventured to assault equal numbers posted as the enemy were.

The dispositions were soon complete, the word was given, and in six columns, with a chain of skirmishers in front, the allies advanced to the attack.

To carry a strong work, or assail a body of infantry in close column, placed on the crest of an acclivity that requires the attacking force to halt frequently for breathing-time, requires a desperate and enduring valour which few armies can boast—but such bravery on that occasion characterised the allied divisions. Masses posted on a steep height were forced from it by the bayonet, though hand and foot were often required to enable the assaulting party to reach them. Redoubts were carried at a run, or so rapidly turned by the different brigades that the defenders had scarcely time to escape by the rear. Nothing could resist the dash and intrepidity of the British; and over the whole extent of that formidable position, on no point did the attack fail.

The French were driven from their works, and forced in great confusion on the bridge of the Nivelle. One redoubt, from its superior strength, had been obstinately maintained, but the regiment that occupied it was completely cut off from retreating, and the whole were made prisoners.

In every other point the British attack succeeded. Hill's division carried the heights of Ainhoue, the whole of the redoubts falling to the British and Portuguese under Hamilton; while Stewart drove the enemy from a parallel ridge in the rear, and the divisions, by an united attack, forcing the enemy from their works at Espelette, obliged them to retire towards Cambo, thus gaining the rear of the position originally occupied, and forcing Soult's centre on his right.

The French marshal formed in great force on the high grounds over Ascain and St. Pe, and Lord Wellington made instant dispositions to attack him. Three divisions, the third, sixth, and seventh, advanced against the heights—two by the left of the Nivelle, and one, the sixth, by the right bank. As the position was exceedingly strong, the enemy determined to hold it to the last, and maintained a furious cannonade, supported by a heavy fire of musketry. But the steady and imposing advance of the allies could not be repelled, and the French retired hastily. The right of the position was thus entirely cut through, and though for months the Duke of Dalmatia had been arming every vulnerable point, and his engineers had used their utmost skill in perfecting its defences, the British commander's dispositions were so admirably made and so gallantly carried out, that his numerous and most difficult attacks were crowned with brilliant success, unalloyed by a single failure.

Night ended the battle, the firing ceased, Soult retreated,

and, covered by the darkness, withdrew a beaten army, that had numbered fully seventy thousand men. His killed and wounded exceeded three thousand, besides a loss of fifty guns, and twelve hundred prisoners. The allies reckoned their casualties at two thousand four hundred killed and wounded; which, the nature of the ground, the strength of its defences, and the *corps d'armée* that held it, considered, was indeed a loss comparatively light.

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CHAPTER XXI.

THE BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

PART THIRD.

1813.

SOULT halted his different corps in the intrenched camp of Bayonne, and Wellington cantoned his troops two miles in front of his opponent, in lines extending from the sea to the Nivelle, his right stretching to Cambo and his left resting on the coast. This change in his cantonments was productive of serious advantages. His wearied soldiery obtained rest and many comforts which in their mountain bivouacs were unattainable; and though the enemy possessed unlimited command of a well-supplied district for their foraging parties, and the surface over which Lord Wellington might obtain supplies was necessarily circumscribed, his direct communication with the sea, and a month's rest in tolerable quarters, recruited his exhausted army and produced the best results.

But Wellington merely waited to mature his preparations; and, to extend his line of supply, he determined to seize the strong ground between the Nive and the Adour, and confine Soult to the immediate vicinity of his own camp. Accordingly, on the 9th of December, the left wing of the allies, advancing by the road of St. Jean de Luz, gained the heights domineering the intrenchments of the French. The right forded the Nive above Cambo, while, by a bridge of boats, Clinton crossed at Nostariz, and obliged the enemy, to avoid being cut off, to fall back on Bayonne. At night, the French having retired to their posts within the fortified position they had occupied, Hope, with the left of the allies, recrossed the river to his former cantonments, having a direct communication open with Sir Rowland Hill, who had taken a position with his division, his right on the Adour, his centre in the village of St. Pierre, and his left appuied on the heights of Ville Franque. Morillo's division was in observation at Urcuray, and a cavalry corps at Hasparren.

The relative positions of the rival armies were greatly different. Soult possessed immense advantages; his *corps d'armée* were completely bivouacked, with easy communications, every facility for rapid concentration, and the citadel of Bayonne to protect him if he found it necessary to fall back. The allies extended over an irregular line intersected by the Nive, with bad roads, that rendered any rapid reinforcement of a threatened point altogether impracticable. Hence, Wellington was everywhere open to attack, and Soult could fall on him with overwhelming numbers and force an unequal combat, while but a part of the allies should be opposed to the combined efforts of the enemy. The French marshal was aware of this, and it was not long before he endeavoured to profit by his advantage.

The left of the allies, under Sir John Hope, had the fifth division (Hay's) posted on the heights of Barouillet, with Campbell's Portuguese brigade on a narrow ridge immediately in their front. At Arranges, the light division was formed on a strong height, at a distance of two miles from the fifth.

The positions were separated by the low grounds between the hills, and the corps were consequently unconnected. Although both were strongly posted, still, in case of an attack, each must trust entirely to his own resources, and repulse the enemy without counting on support from the other.

Early on the 10th of December, Soult appeared on the road of St. Jean de Luz, and in great force marched directly against the allied left. The light and fifth divisions were simultaneously assailed, the former driven back into its intrenchments, and Campbell's brigade forced back upon Hay's at Barouillet. The intermediate ground between the allied positions was now in the possession of the enemy, and thus Soult was enabled to attack the right of the fifth with vigour. Although assailed in front and flank, the allied division gallantly withstood the assault; and when the position was completely penetrated, and the orchard on the right forced and occupied by the French with overwhelming numbers, still the British and Portuguese held the heights, and, while whole sections fell, not an inch of ground was yielded.

Another and a more determined effort was now made by the French marshal, and made in vain, for by a bold and well-timed movement of the 9th British and a Portuguese battalion, wheeling round suddenly and charging the French rear, the enemy were driven back with the loss of a number of prisoners. Fresh troops were fast arriving, the guards came into action, and Lord Wellington reached the battleground from the right. But the French had been repulsed in their last attempt so decisively that they did not venture to repeat it; evening closed, the firing gradually died away, and the allied divisions held the same

positions from which Soult, with an immense numerical superiority in men and guns, had vainly striven to force them.

The slaughter was great on both sides; and, wearied by long sustained exertion, and weakened by its heavy loss, the fifth division was relieved by the first, who occupied the post their comrades had maintained so gloriously. The fourth and seventh were placed in reserve, and enabled, in case of attack, to assist on either point, should Soult, on the following morning, as was expected, again attempt to make himself master of Barouillet.

Nothing could surpass the reckless gallantry displayed by the British officers throughout this long and sanguinary struggle. Sir John Hope, with his staff, was always seen where the contest was most furious; and the only wonder was that in a combat so close and murderous, one remarkable alike in personal appearance and "daring deed," should have outlived that desperate day. His escapes indeed were many. He was wounded in the leg, contused in the shoulder, four musket-bullets passed through his hat, and he lost two horses. General Robinson, in command of the second brigade, was badly wounded, and Wellington himself was constantly exposed to fire. Unable to determine where the grand effort of his adversary would be directed, he passed repeatedly from one point of the position to the other, and that life, so valuable to all beside, seemed "of light estimation" to himself alone.

The next sun rose to witness a renewal of the contest. In their attack upon the light divisions at Arrangues, the French, driven from the defended posts the chateau and churchyard afforded, retired to the plateau of Bassarry, and there established themselves for the night. During the forenoon some slight affairs between the pickets occurred; but at noon, the fusilade having ceased, the allies collected wood, lighted fires, and cooked their dinners. At two, a considerable stir was visible in the enemy's line, and their pioneers were seen cutting down the fence for the passage of artillery. Soult's first demonstration of attack was made against Arrangues; but that was only to mask his real object. Presently his tirailleurs swarmed out in front of Barouillet, attacked the British outposts, drove the pickets back, and moving in strong columns by the Bayonne road, furiously assailed the heights of the position. The wood-cutters, surprised by the sudden onset of the French, hurried back to resume their arms and join their regiments; while the enemy, mistaking the cause of this rush to their alarm posts, supposed a panic had seized the troops, and pressed forward with increased impetuosity. But the same results attended their attempt upon the first as on the fifth division; and the French were driven back with heavy loss. In the contests of two days not an inch of ground was yielded, and the

left wing of the allies remained firm in its position, when night brought the combat to a close.

During the 12th, Soult still continued in front of the heights of Barouillet, and preserved throughout the day a threatening attitude. No serious attack, however, was made; some sharp skirmishing occurred between the pickets, and darkness ended these occasional affairs.

The grand object of the French marshal in his sustained attacks upon the allied left, was to force the position and penetrate to St. Jean de Luz. Although so severely handled in his attempts upon the 10th and 11th, the bustle visible along his line, and the activity of the officers of his staff during the morning of the 12th, showed that he still meditated a fresh effort. The imposing appearance of the allied troops on the heights of Barouillet induced him to change his intention; and he made arrangements to throw his whole disposable force suddenly upon the right wing of the British, and attack Sir Rowland Hill with overwhelming numbers.

This probable attack had been foreseen by Lord Wellington, and, with his accustomed caution, means had been adopted to render it unsuccessful. In the event of assistance being required, the sixth division was placed at Hill's disposal; and early on the morning of the 13th, the third and fourth divisions moved towards the right of the allied lines, and were held in readiness to pass the river should circumstances demand it. As Lord Wellington had anticipated, Soult marched his main body through Bayonne during the night of the 12th, and at daylight, pushing forward thirty thousand men in columns of great strength, attacked furiously the right wing of the allies.

Hill had only fourteen thousand British and Portuguese to repel the French marshal's assault, but the ground he occupied was capable of being vigorously defended. On the right, General Byng's brigade was formed in front of the Vieux Monguerre, occupying a ridge, with the Adour upon the right, and the left flanked by several mill dams. The brigades of Generals Barnes and Ashworth were posted on a range of heights opposite the village of St. Pierre, while two Portuguese brigades were formed in reserve immediately behind Ville Franque. The general form of the line nearly described a crescent, and against its concave side the efforts of the French marshal were principally directed. The position extended from the Adour to the Nive, occupying a space, from right to left, of four miles.

The outposts stationed on the road from Bayonne to St. Jean Pied de Port were driven back by the enemy's tirailleurs, followed by the main body of the French, who mounted the sloping ground in front of the British position, and supported by another division, which moved by a hollow way between the left

centre and Pringle's brigade, they came forward in massive columns. Sir Rowland Hill, at once perceived that Soult's design was to force his centre, and carry the heights of St. Pierre. To strengthen that part of the position, the brigade of General Byng was promptly moved to the right of the centre, leaving the third (Bufs) regiment and some light companies at Vieux Monguerre, while a Portuguese brigade was marched from behind Ville Franque to support the left. The sixth division was apprised of the threatened attack, and an aide-de-camp was despatched to order its immediate march upon the centre.

The French came on with all the confidence of superior strength, and a full determination to break through the British position, and thus achieve upon the right that object which they had essayed upon the left, and twice in vain. Exposed to a tremendous fire of grape from the British guns, and a withering fusilade from the light infantry, they pressed steadily on, and, by strength of numbers, succeeded in gaining ground in front of the heights. But further they never could attain, as the supporting brigades joined on either flank, and every continued essay to force the centre was repulsed. A long and bloody combat, when renewed, produced no happier result, for the allies obstinately held their position. The Bufs and light companies, who had been forced by an overwhelming superiority to retire for a time from Vieux Monguerre, re-formed, charged into the village, and won it back at the point of the bayonet, when, after exhausting his whole strength in hopeless efforts to break the British line, Soult abandoned the attack, and reluctantly gave the order to fall back.

Not satisfied with repelling the enemy's attack, Hill in turn became the assailant, and boldly pursued the broken columns as they retired from the front of the position. On a high ground in advance of his intrenched lines, Soult drew up in force, and determined to fall back no further. The hill was instantly assaulted by Byng's brigade, led on by the general in person. Unchecked by a storm of grape and a heavy fire of musketry, the British, reinforced by a Portuguese brigade, carried the height, and the French were beaten from a strong position with a serious loss in men, and the capture of two pieces of cannon.

The third and sixth divisions came up as quickly as distance and difficult roads would permit, but the contest was ended; and Hill, unassisted by any supporting troops, had, with his own corps, achieved a complete and glorious victory.

This glorious battle was fought and won by Sir Rowland Hill with his own corps, alone and unassisted. Lord Wellington could not reach the field till the victory was achieved, and as he rode up to his successful general, he shook him heartily by the hand, with the frank remark, "Hill, the day's your own." He

was exceedingly delighted with Sir Rowland's calm and beautiful conduct of this action, and with the intrepid and resolute behaviour of the troops.

Every effort, continued with unabated vigour for five hours, and with decided advantages on his side, had signally failed, and the French commander was forced again to retire within his fortified lines between the Nive and the Adour, while the allies pushed their advanced posts to the verge of the valley immediately in front of St. Pierre.

In these continued actions the loss on both sides was immense. In the casualties of the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th of December, the total, including four generals, amounted to five thousand and sixty-one *hors de combat*.

The French loss was infinitely greater; it is but a moderate estimate to place it at six thousand men. Indeed, no contests, sanguinary as most of them had been during the Peninsular campaigns, were attended with greater loss of life, and those well accustomed to view a battlefield expressed astonishment at the slaughter the limited spaces on which the repeated struggles had occurred exhibited at the close of every succeeding engagement.

Soult, defeated in the presence of thousands of his countrymen, and with every advantage locality could confer, had no apology to offer for the failure of his attacks, and if any additional mortification were necessary, the defection of the regiments of Nassau-Usingen and Frankfort would have completed it.

A Frankfort officer now made his way to the outposts of our fourth division in the centre of the allies, and announced the intended defection, requiring a general officer's word of honour that they should be well received and sent to Germany. No general being on the spot, Colonel Bradford gave his word; means were immediately taken to apprise the battalions, and they came over in a body, thirteen hundred men, the French not discovering their intention till just when it was too late to frustrate it.

The winter had now set in with severity, and ended all military movements for a season.

"During this period of mutual repose," says Batty, "the French officers and ours soon became intimate; we used to meet at a narrow part of the river, and talk over the campaign. They would never believe, or pretended not to believe, the reverse of Napoleon in Germany; and when we received the news of the Orange Boven affair in Holland, they said that it was impossible to convince them. One of our officers took 'The Star' newspaper, rolled a stone up in it, and attempted to throw it across the river; unfortunately the stone went through it, and it fell

into the water; the French officer very quietly said, in tolerably good English, 'Your good news is very soon damped.'

During the campaign we had often experienced the most gentlemanly conduct from the French officers. A day or two before the battle, when we were upon our alarm-post, at break of day, a fine hare was seen playing in a cornfield between the outposts; a brace of greyhounds were very soon unslipped, when, after an exciting course, poor puss was killed within the French lines. The officer to which the dogs belonged, bowing to the French officer, called off the dogs, but the Frenchman politely sent the hare, with a message and his compliments, saying that we required it more than they did."

The roads were impassable from constant rain, and the low grounds heavily flooded. The French took up cantonments on the right bank of the Adour; while the allies occupied the country between the left of that river and the sea. Every means were employed to render the troops comfortable in their winter quarters, and, to guard against surprises, telegraphs were erected in communication with every post, which, by a simple combination of flags, transmitted intelligence along the line of the cantonments, and apprised the detached officers of the earliest movement of the enemy. Abundant supplies, and the advantage of an open communication with Britain, enabled the army to recruit its strength; and, with occasional interruptions of its quiet, the year 1813 passed away, and another, "big with the fate of empires," was ushered in.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE BATTLES OF THE PYRENEES.

#### PART FOURTH.

1814.

THE intrenchments into which Soult, on the failure of his attempts upon the allied positions had withdrawn his troops, covered the approach to Bayonne on the side opposite to Anglet.

Six weeks passed on. The weather was too inclement to allow movements to be made on either side, and the French marshal was occupied in defending his extensive lines, and the allied general in preparing secretly for passing the Adour.

In February the weather changed, the cross roads became practicable, and Lord Wellington with his characteristic promptness, commenced preparatory movements for the execution of his grand conception.

To distract the attention of Soult from the defence of the Adour, Wellington threatened the French left on the Bidouse.

The road, however, communicating with the bridge of St. Palais was uncovered, and though evening had come on, and the second division, with a Spanish corps under Morillo, were alone in hand, Lord Wellington determined to force the position. The Spaniards were desired to march rapidly on St. Palais, while, with Stewart's division, the heights should be carried. The attack was gallantly made, the enemy offered a brave resistance, but the position was stormed in fine style, and held against every effort the French could make for its recovery. The contest continued until darkness had shrouded distant objects, while the battalions still fought with such furious obstinacy, that volleys were interchanged within pistol range, and the bayonet frequently resorted to. Finding it impossible to force those enduring troops from the ground they seemed determined upon keeping, Harispe, before Morillo could seize the bridge, succeeded in retiring his beaten corps. Falling back upon the Gave de Mauleon, he destroyed the bridge of Navarette, but the river was forded by the British, Harispe's position forced, and his division driven behind Gave d'Oleron.

Soult instantly destroyed the communications, and rendered the bridges over the Adour impassable. The centre of the allies being now in force on the Bidouse, and concentrating on Sauverre, the French marshal retired from Bayonne, leaving a powerful garrison behind him for the protection of that important city.

The citadel of Bayonne is a truly formidable work, standing on a commanding hill upon the right bank of the Adour, and greatly elevated above all the other defences of the city, nearly fronting the mouth of the Nive. It is almost a perfect square, with strongly-built oreillon bastions at the four angles. A double range of barracks and magazines inclose a quadrangular space in the centre called the *place d'armes*, the sides of which are parallel with the curtains of the citadel. The north-east, north-west, and south-west bastions are surmounted by cavaliers which appear to be well armed with cannon mounted *en barbette*.

All necessary preparations for the passage of the Adour had been completed, and from the co-operation of the British navy much assistance was expected. That hope was fully realised; and the noble exertions of the British sailors on the eastern coast of Spain, at St. Sebastian, and at Passages, were crowned by the intrepidity with which the bar of the Adour was crossed. Undaunted by the failure of the leading vessels, which perished in the surf, with death before their eyes, and their comrades swamping in the waters, on came the succeeding *chasse-marées*. At last the true channel was discovered. Vessel succeeded vessel, and before night a perfect bridge was established over the Adour, able from its solidity to resist a river current, and

protected from any effort of the enemy by a line of booms and spars, which stretched across the river as a security against fire ships, or any other means which the French might employ for its destruction.

Before the flotilla had entered the Adour, or the pontoons had arrived from Bedart, the guards attempted a passage of the river by means of the small boats and a temporary raft formed of a few pontoons, and worked as a flying bridge, by means of a hawser extended from the opposite bank. As the strength of the tide interrupted this precarious mode of passage, when only six companies, with two of the 60th rifles, and a party of the rocket corps, had crossed, the position of this small body, isolated as it was, and open to the attack of overwhelming numbers, was dangerous in the extreme. Colonel Stopford, however, made the best dispositions in his power for defence, and formed with one flank upon the river, and the other appuied upon a morass, while the heavy guns that had been placed in battery on the other shore, swept the ground in front of the position with their fire.

As had been truly apprehended, an attack was made. The French advanced with fifteen hundred men, and the guards and rifles received them steadily, the rocket corps, on either flank, opening with this novel and destructive projectile. A few discharges completely arrested the enemy's advance, and they hastily retired from the attack; while at the turning of the tide, reinforcements were ferried over, and the position secured until the following evening, when the whole of the first division, with two guns and a few troops of dragoons, succeeded in effecting a passage.

Bayonne, in the meantime, was closely invested, and the garrison forced back from the villages in front of their lines, by Sir John Hope. Lord Wellington, having secured the attention of Soult by a formidable demonstration on his front, enabled Sir Rowland Hill to pass the Gave d'Oleron unopposed, and thus turn the left flank of the French marshal. Soult instantly retired and took a position behind the Pau, establishing his headquarters at Orthez. Picton, with the third and light divisions, had followed Hill; Clinton, with the sixth, had crossed between Laas and Montford; and Beresford observed the enemy at Peyrehorade closely, and kept them within their intrenchments.

Lord Wellington had decided on an immediate attack. The French were very strongly posted; their left wing, commanded by Clausel, rested on the Gave, and occupied the town of Orthez; the centre, under d'Erlon, was formed on the heights in the rear; while the right wing extended behind St. Boes, and held that village. Harispe's division was placed as a reserve in the rear, and crossed the great roads leading to Bordeaux and Toulouse.

On the 27th February, Wellington commenced his operations. The allied left wing, composed of the fourth and seventh divisions and Vivian's brigade, under Marshal Beresford, attacked the enemy's right at St. Boes; while the third and sixth divisions, under Sir Rowland Hill, with Lord Edward Somerset's light cavalry, were directed against Soult's left and centre. The British movements were ably executed. Hill crossed the river in front of the French left, and turned their flank—the enemy holding their ground with great obstinacy, while the allied attack was as remarkable for its impetuosity. A final and protracted struggle ensued, but the French unable to sustain the combined assault of the allies, commenced retreating by divisions, and contesting every inch of ground as they abandoned it. Hill's parallel march was speedily discovered, and as that movement threatened their rear, the order of the retreat was accelerated, and gradually assumed the character of a flight. The British pressed rapidly forward, the French as quickly fell back; both strove to gain Sault de Navailles, and though charged by the British cavalry, the enemy crossed the Luy de Bearne before Hill could succeed in coming up.

The defeat of the 27th was decisive. The French loss in killed and wounded was immense. Six guns and a number of prisoners were taken; the troops threw away their arms, many deserted altogether, and few defeats were marked by more injurious results to the vanquished, than those attendant upon that of Orthez.

The allied loss amounted to two hundred and seventy-seven killed, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three wounded, and seventy missing.

One circumstance occurred during this obstinate contest that displayed the readiness of Lord Wellington's decisions, and the rapidity with which he adopted measures to meet any incidental exigency.

A Portuguese battalion in advancing had been so roughly received that it broke and fell back upon a brigade of the light division, who succeeded in covering its retreat. The nature of the ground on which the right of the enemy was posted, from its narrow front, confining the attack to a line of but two battalions; while a heavy battery of guns and a converging fire of musketry swept its approach and rendered the boldest efforts of the assailants unavailing in carrying the height. Wellington perceived the difficulty, and in a moment changed his method of attack. Walker, with the seventh division, and Barnard, with a light brigade, were pushed up the left of the height to attack the right of the French at its point of junction with the centre; and Picton and Clinton were directed to advance at once, and not as they had been originally ordered, await the result of Beres-

ford's attempt upon the hill. The whole face of the battle was thus suddenly changed, the heights were speedily won, and the enemy, after a fierce resistance, driven fairly from their ground, and forced from a most formidable position.

That night the French retired to Hagetman, and, joined by the garrison of Dax, fell back on St. Sever, and afterwards on Agen—Beresford advancing by Mont de Marsan, and Hill in the direction of Aire. Heavy rains favoured the French retreat, by impeding the advance of the allies, and it was the 2nd of March before Hill overtook them in front of Aire.

Although posted on formidable ground, Sir Rowland instantly and successfully brought them to action. The second division, with De Costa's Portuguese, advanced to the attack; the former by the road to Aire, and the latter by the heights upon the left of the enemy. The movement of Stewart's division was most brilliant; and though the Portuguese behaved gallantly and won the ridge, they were attacked furiously, and unable to hold the ground, deforced, and driven in great confusion from the height. The French followed with a strong column, and the consequences threatened to be disastrous, but the success of the second division permitted Sir Rowland to detach Byng's brigade to the assistance of De Costa; and in place of assailing a broken corps, the enemy's columns were confronted by one in equal order, and already buoyant with success. The result was what might have been expected; the French were charged and beaten from the field, the town and the position abandoned, the Adour hastily crossed, a number of prisoners made, and a regiment cut off and obliged to retire to Pau.

Soult pursued the line of the right bank of the Adour, and concentrated at Plaisance and Maubourget, to await Lord Wellington's attack; but finding the road to Bordeaux uncovered, the allied general marched his left wing directly on that city. On Beresford's approach, the garrison evacuated the place, crossing over to the right bank of the Garonne; and the authorities and inhabitants generally assumed the white cockade, and declared themselves in favour of the Bourbons.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE BATTLE OF TOULOUSE.

1814.

THE celebrated conference at Chatillon terminated on the 19th of March, and the allied Sovereigns determined to march direct upon the capital, of which they obtained possession on the 31st. The intelligence of this momentous event had not

reached the south of France, and Lord Wellington was busy making immense preparations to enable him to invest and reduce Bayonne. Fascines and gabions were obtained in abundance; a large supply of siege artillery, with shot and shells, was landed at Passages from the home country; scaling-ladders were constructed in the woods, the site of the batteries marked out, and all was ready for an investment.

Meanwhile, to guard against a menaced attack on his rear, the French marshal retired under cover of night, and fell back upon Toulouse, destroying the bridges as he passed them, where the British followed him.

The unavoidable difficulty in crossing flooded rivers, and moving pontoons over roads nearly impassable from heavy rains, however greatly delayed the allied march. Soult reached Toulouse in four days, while Wellington, by great exertion, was only enabled to arrive before it in seven.

Toulouse stands on the right bank of the Garonne, which separates it from a large suburb called Saint Cyprien. The eastern and northern sides of the city are inclosed by the canal of Languedoc, which joins the Garonne a mile below the town. On the east of the city is the suburb of Saint Etienne; on the south that of Saint Michael, and on that side the great road from Carcassone and Montpellier enters the town. The population was estimated at fifty thousand souls, and it was generally understood that the inhabitants of Toulouse were secretly attached to the Bourbons.

The city is walled and connected by ancient towers—but these antiquated defences would avail little against the means employed in modern warfare. Soult, therefore, intrenched the fauxbourg of Saint Cyprien, constructed *têtes du pont* at all the bridges of the canal, threw up redoubts and breastworks, and destroyed the bridges across the Ers. The southern side he considered so secure as to require no additional defences, trusting for its protection to the width and rapidity of the Garonne.

The first attempt of the allied leader to throw a pontoon bridge across the river, was rendered impracticable by the sudden rising of its waters. Higher up, however, the passage was effected, but the roads were quite impassable, and Lord Wellington determined to lay the pontoons below the city, which was accordingly done, and Beresford with the fourth and sixth divisions, was safely placed upon the right bank.

This temporary success might have been followed by disastrous consequences. The Garonne suddenly increased; a flood came pouring down; the swollen river momentarily rose higher, and to save the pontoons from being swept away, the bridge was removed, and the divisions left unsupported, with an overpowering force in front, and an angry river in their rear. Soult

neglected this admirable opportunity of attacking them; and on the second day the flood had sufficiently abated to allow the pontoons to be laid down again, when Frere's Spanish corps passed over, and reinforced the isolated divisions. The bridge was now removed above the city, to facilitate Hill's communications, who, with the second division, was posted in front of the fauxbourg of Saint Cyprien. The passage of the third and light divisions was effected safely, and Picton and Baron Alten took up ground with their respective corps in front of the canal, and invested the northern face of Toulouse.

Early on the morning of the 10th March, the fortified heights on the eastern front of the city were attacked. Soult had placed all his disposable troops in this position, and thus defended, nothing but determined gallantry on the part of the assailants could expect success.

The bridge of Croix d'Orade, previously secured by a bold attack of the 18th hussars, enabled Beresford and Frere to move up the left bank of the Garonne, and occupy ground in front of the heights preparatory to the grand attack. The sixth division was in the centre, with the Spaniards on the right, and the fourth British on the left. The cavalry of Sir Stapleton Cotton and Lord Edward Somerset were formed in support of the left and centre; and Arentchild, now in command of Vivian's brigade, was attached to the left flank, while Ponsonby protected the right. The light division occupied the vacant ground between the river Garonne and the road to Croix d'Orade; its left abutting on the division under Frere; and the third, its right resting on the river, communicated with Hill's corps upon the left by means of the pontoon bridge. These divisions—those of Hill, Picton, and Alten—were ordered to attack the enemy's intrenchments in front of their respective corps, simultaneously with the grand assault upon the heights.

The fourth and sixth divisions moved obliquely against the enemy's right, carried the heights, and seized a redoubt on the flank of the position; while the fourth Spanish corps, directed against the ridge above the road to Croix d'Orade, advanced with confidence, and succeeded in mounting the brow of the hill. But the heavy fire of the French batteries arrested their onward movement. They recoiled, became confused, and sought shelter from the fury of the cannonade in a hollow way in front of the enemy's position. The French, perceiving their disorder, advanced and vigorously charged. Frere vainly endeavoured to rally his broken troops and lead them on again; they were driven back confusedly on the Ers, and their *déroute* appeared inevitable.

Lord Wellington saw and remedied this reverse. Personally, he rallied a Spanish regiment, and bringing up a part of the

light division, arrested the French pursuit, and allowed the broken regiments time to be re-organised. The bridge across the Ers was saved; Frere reformed his battalions, and the fugitives rejoined their colours.

Beresford immediately resumed the attack, two redoubts were carried, and the sixth division dislodged the enemy, and occupied the centre of their position. The contest here was exceedingly severe; Pack, in leading the attack, was wounded, and in an attempt to recover the heights by the French, Taupin, who commanded the division, was killed. Every succeeding effort failed, and the British held the ground their gallantry had won.

Picton had most imprudently changed a false into a real attack upon the bridge over the canal of Languedoc nearest its entrance into the Garonne, but the *tête du pont* was too strong to be forced, and he fell back with considerable loss. On the left, Sir Rowland Hill menaced the fauxbourg of Saint Cyprien, and succeeded in fully occupying the attention of its garrison, thus preventing them from rendering any assistance when Soult was most severely pressed.

In the meantime, Beresford, having obtained his artillery, resumed offensive movements, and advanced along the ridge with the divisions of Cole and Clinton. Soult anticipated the attack, and threw himself in front and flank in great force upon the sixth division; but the effort failed. The French marshal was driven from the hill, the redoubts abandoned, the canal passed, and, beaten on every point, he sought refuge within the walls of Toulouse.

Few victories cost more blood than this long and hard-contested battle. The allied casualties, including two thousand Spaniards, nearly extended to seven thousand men. Several regiments lost half their number, and two, the 45th and 61st, their colonels. It was impossible to ascertain the extent to which the French suffered. Their loss was no doubt commensurate with that of the victors. Of their superior officers alone, two generals were killed, and three wounded and made prisoners.

On the night of the succeeding day, Soult, alarmed by Wellington's movements on the road to Carcassone, retired from the city, which next morning was taken possession of by the allies, although the French unblushingly assert that they gained a victory.

There was seldom a bloodier, and never a more useless, battle fought than that of the 10th of March, for on the evening of the 12th a British and French field officer, Colonels Cooke and St. Simon, arrived at the allied headquarters, with intelligence that, on the 3rd, hostilities had ceased, and the war was virtually terminated. A courier, despatched from the capital with this important communication, had been unfortunately interrupted

in his journey; and in ignorance of passing events, the contending armies wasted their best energies, and lost many of their bravest on both sides, in a bootless and unnecessary encounter.

Soult, on having the abdication of Napoleon formally notified to him on the night of the 13th, refused to send in his adherence to the Bourbons, merely offering a suspension of hostilities, to which Lord Wellington most properly objecting, instantly recommenced his pursuit of the French marshal's beaten divisions.

The bold and decisive measures of the allied leader doubtless hastened the Duke of Dalmatia in making his decision, and, on the arrival of a second official communication, Soult notified his adherence, and hostilities ceased. Suchet had already shewn him the example, and Toulouse displayed the white flag. A line of demarcation was made by commissioners between the rival armies, and a regular convention signed by the respective commanders.

On the 27th, Thouvenot was instructed by Soult to surcease hostilities, and acknowledged the Bourbons—the lilies floated over the citadel—and saluted by three hundred rounds of artillery, Napoleon's abdication, and the restoration of the Bourbons, were formally announced.

With political events we have no business, and it is sufficient to cursorily observe, that arrangements were effected for Napoleon's retirement from public life to the "lonely isle," where he might still, in fancy, "call himself a king." To this secluded spot, many of his old and devoted followers accompanied him. Peace was generally proclaimed over Europe; tranquillity restored in France; the "Grand Nation," to all appearance, contented itself with the change of government; the allied sovereigns retired with their respective corps, each to his own dominions; and the victorious army of Wellington quitted the French soil, on which it had consummated its glory; and received, on landing on the shores of Britain, that enthusiastic welcome which its "high deeds" and boundless gallantry deserved from a grateful country.

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#### CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE BATTLE OF QUATRE BRAS.

1815.

A FEW months passed away; Europe was apparently at rest; its military attitude was gradually softening down, and all the belligerent Powers, weary of a state of warfare that, with slight intermission, had lasted for a quarter of a century, enjoyed the

repose which the overthrow of Napoleon's power had produced. But this state of quietude was delusory; it was the treacherous calm that precedes a tempest. Untamed by adversity, that ambitious spirit was gathering strength for another effort; France was ready to receive him; past victories would thus be rendered useless, Europe convulsed again, and none could foresee what strange events the descent of Napoleon might produce.

No recorded career parallels that of Napoleon Buonaparte; and in the history of kings and conquerors, the strangest story was his own. He seemed the shuttlecock of Fortune—and she placed him “on a pinnacle of pride merely to mark her own mutability.” Hurlled from the sovereignty of half the world, his star had lost its ascendancy, apparently to rise no more, when, by the happiest accident, his voyage from Elba was uninterrupted, his landing unopposed, an enthusiastic welcome everywhere was given to the intruder, legions congregated at his bidding, the empire was offered and accepted, and the first intelligence of his descent was closely followed by a formal acknowledgment of his restoration to the sovereignty of France.

Napoleon landed in the Var on the 1st of March, and on the 19th he slept in the palace of Fontainebleau. Louis had abandoned the capital, and in a few hours the dynasty of the Bourbons seemed forgotten. None opposed the return of the exil; his decrees were absolute, his wishes were anticipated. The splendour of military parade delighted the soldiery, while the theatric glitter of a *champ de Mai* was admirably adapted to catch the fancies, and win the momentary attachment of a gay and thoughtless people. The whole pageant, in scenic effect, was suited for those whom it was designed to lure, and on the 17th of April, Napoleon was formally restored to that empire, from which the same “sweet voices” had, but a few months before, so formally deposed him.

Parisian adulation, and the military devotion he received from the moment his foot touched the shore at Cannes, did not blind him to “coming events.” A vain effort to make terms with the allied Powers was scornfully rejected. At Vienna, his overtures were treated with disdain, and his letter to the British regent was returned with the seal unbroken. He saw from all these premonitory occurrences, that a storm was about to burst, and lost no time in preparing for a determined resistance. A powerful army alone could avert the danger; and, with his customary tact, Napoleon made prodigious efforts to restore the military strength of the empire, which the Russian, German, and Peninsular campaigns had during the last years so miserably weakened.

French vanity was successfully appealed to, the memory of past victories recalled, and martial glory, that powerful touch-

stone of national feeling, successfully employed to win the people to his standard. The younger of the male population were called out by *ordonnances*, and the retired veterans collected once more around those eagles, which, in prouder days, had entered half the European capitals in triumph.

The military power of France was organised anew. Commissioners, specially employed, enforced the operations of Napoleon's decrees in every department of the kingdom. The Imperial Guard was re-established, the cavalry increased and remounted, that powerful arm, the artillery, by which half the victories of the French army had been achieved, was enlarged and improved, and, in a time inconceivably short, a most splendid *corps d'armée* perfect in every department, was ready for the field.

While Napoleon was thus engaged, Wellington arrived at Brussels on the 5th of April, to take command of the British army. There, the troops of the Prince of the Netherlands, with those of Nassau and Brunswick, were placed under his orders, the whole forming the Anglo-Belgic army.

The Prussian *corps d'armée* were cantoned in and about Namur and Charleroi—while Ostend, Antwerp, Tournay, Ypres, Mons, and Ghent, were occupied by the allies. The position of the Anglo-Belgic army was extended and detached, for the preceding harvest in the Low Countries had been unusually deficient, and, of course, the British and Belgic cantonments covered an additional surface to obtain the requisite supplies.

The allied corps in June were thus disposed. Lord Hill, with the right wing, occupied Ath. The left, under the Prince of Orange, was posted at Braine-le-Comte and Nivelles. The cavalry under the Marquis of Anglesea, were established round Grammont; and the reserve and headquarters, under the duke, were quartered in Brussels.

Belgium, for centuries, had been the seat of war, and every plain, every fortress, had its tale of martial achievement to narrate. Within its iron frontier there were few places which had not witnessed some affair of arms; the whole country was rife with military reminiscences, and it was destined to prove the scene where the greatest event in modern warfare should be transacted. As a country, Belgium was admirably adapted for martial operations—the plains, in many places extensive, terminated in undulated ridges or bolder heights; while the surface generally admitted the movements of masses of infantry. Canals, rivers, morasses, and villages, presented favourable positions to abide a battle, and difficult ones for an advancing army to force, while the fortresses everywhere afforded facilities for retiring upon, and presented serious obstacles to those who must mask or carry them when advancing.

To a commander circumstanced like Wellington, great perplexity as to the distribution of his army must arise, for the mode and point of Napoleon's attack were alike involved in mystery. He might decide on adopting a defensive war, and permit the allies to become the assailants. This course, however, was not a probable one; but where he would precipitate himself was the difficulty.

The dangerous proximity of Brussels to the point where Napoleon's *corps d'armée* were concentrating, naturally produced an anxious inquietude among the inhabitants and visitants. The city was filled every hour with idle rumours, but time alone could developé Napoleon's plans.

The first intelligence of a threatening movement on the part of the French emperor was forwarded to the Duke of Wellington, when Blucher learned that Zeithen's corps was attacked. The despatch reached Brussels at half-past four, but, as it merely intimated that the Prussian outposts had been driven back, the information was not of sufficient importance to induce the British commander to make any change in the cantonments of the allied army.

A second despatch reached the duke at midnight, and its intelligence was more decisive than the former. Napoleon was across the Sambro, and in full march on Charleroi and Fleurus. Orders were instantly issued for the more detached corps to break up from their cantonments and advance upon Nivelles, while the troops in Brussels should march direct by the forest of Soignies, on Charleroi. Thus there would be a simultaneous reunion of the brigades as they approached the scene of action, while their communication with the Prussian right should be carefully secured.

Blucher's second despatch was delivered to the British general in the ballroom of the Duchess of Richmond. That circumstance most probably gave rise to the groundless report that Wellington and the Prussian marshal were surprised; but nothing could be more absurd than this supposition. Both commanders were in close and constant communication, and their plans for mutual co-operation were amply matured.

Where the intended attack—if Napoleon would indeed venture to become aggressor—should be made, was an uncertainty, and it had been arranged that if Blucher were assailed, Wellington should move to his assistance, or, in the event of the British being the first object with Napoleon, then the Prussian marshal should sustain the duke with a corps, or with his whole army, were that found necessary. Nothing could be more perfect than the cordial understanding between the allied commanders, and the result proved how faithfully these mutual promises of support were realised.

Two hours after midnight the gaiety of "fair Brussels" closed, the drums beat to arms, and all was hurry and preparation. Momentarily the din increased, "and louder yet the clamour grew" as the Highland pibroch answered the bugle-call of the light infantry. The soldiery, startled from their sleep, poured out from the now deserted dwellings; and the once peaceful city exhibited a general alarm.

The sun rose on a scene of confusion and excitement. The military assembled in the Place Royale; and the difference of individual character might be traced in the respective bearings of the various soldiery. Some were taking a tender, many a last, leave of wives and children; others, stretched upon the pavement, were listlessly waiting for their comrades to come up, while not a few strove to snatch a few moments of repose, and appeared half insensible to the din of war around them. Waggons were loading and artillery harnessing; orderlies and aides-de-camp rode rapidly through the streets; and in the gloom of early morning the pavement sparkled beneath the iron feet of the cavalry, as they hurried along the causeway to join their respective squadrons, which were now collecting in the Park.

The appearance of the British brigades as they filed from the Park and took the road to Soignies, was most imposing. The martial air of the Highland regiments, the bagpipes playing at their head, their tartans fluttering in the breeze, and the early sunbeams flashing from their glittering arms, excited the admiration of the burghers who had assembled to see them march. During the winter and spring, while they had garrisoned Brussels, their excellent conduct and gentle demeanour had endeared them to the inhabitants; and "they were so domesticated in the houses where they were quartered, that it was no uncommon thing to see the Highland soldier taking care of the children, or keeping the shop of his host."

Regiment after regiment marched—the organisation of all most perfect; the Rifles, Royals, 28th, each exhibiting some martial peculiarity, on which the eye of Picton appeared to dwell with pride and pleasure as they filed off before him. To an intelligent spectator a national distinction was clearly marked. The bearing of the Scotch bespoke a grave and firm determination, while the light step and merry glance of the Irish militia-man told that war was the game he loved, and a first field had no terrors for him.

Eight o'clock pealed from the steeple clocks; all was quiet—the brigades, with their artillery and equipages, were gone—the crash of music was heard no longer—the bustle of preparation had ceased—and an ominous and heart-sinking silence succeeded the noise and hurry that ever attends a departure for the field of battle.

Napoleon's plan of penetrating into Belgium was now so clearly ascertained, that Wellington determined to concentrate on the extreme point of his line of occupation. His march was accordingly directed on Quatre Bras, a small hamlet situated at the intersection of the road to Charleroi, by that leading from Namur to Nivelles.

This village, which was fated to obtain a glorious but sanguinary celebrity, consists of a few mean houses, having a thick and extensive wood immediately on the right called *Le Bois de Bossu*. All around the wood and hamlet, rye-fields of enormous growth, and quite ready for the sickle, were extended.

After a distressing march of twenty miles in sultry weather, and over a country destitute of water, the British brigades reached the scene of action at two o'clock. They found the Prince of Orange with a division of his army endeavouring to hold the French in check, and maintain a position of whose great importance he was so well aware. The prince, unable to withstand the physical superiority of Ney's corps, had gradually lost ground, the Hanoverians had been driven back, and the *Bois de Bossu* was won and occupied by the enemy.

To recover this most important wood, from which the French could debouche upon the road to Brussels, was the duke's first object. The 95th were ordered to attack the *tirailleurs* who held it; the order was gallantly executed, and after a bloody and sustained resistance, the French were forced to retire.

On the left, the Royals and 28th were hotly engaged, and on the right the 44th and Highland regiments were simultaneously assailed. The battle now became general. Before the British could deploy, the French cavalry charged furiously, the tall rye masking their advance and favouring the attack. Generally these charges were unsuccessful, and the perfect discipline and steady courage of the British enabled them to repel the enemy. Lancers and cuirassiers were driven back with desperate slaughter—while whole squadrons, shattered in their retreat, and leaving the ground covered with their dead and dying, proved with what fatal precision the British squares sustained their fusillade.

The efforts of the French to break the squares, however, were fierce and frequent. Their batteries poured upon these unflinching soldiers a storm of grape, and when an opening was made by the cannon, the lancers were ready to rush upon the devoted infantry. But nothing could daunt the lion-hearted British—nothing could shake their steadiness. The dead were coolly removed, and the living occupied their places. Though numbers fell, and the square momentarily diminished, it still presented a serried line of glittering bayonets, through which lancer and cuirassier endeavoured to penetrate, but in vain.

One regiment, after sustaining a furious cannonade, was

suddenly, and on three different sides, assailed by cavalry. Two faces of the square were charged by the lancers, while the cuirassiers galloped down upon another. It was a trying moment. There was a death-like silence; and one voice alone, clear and calm, was heard. It was their colonel's, who called upon them to be "Steady!" On came the enemy; the earth shook beneath the horsemen's feet, while on every side of the devoted band, the corn bending beneath the rush of cavalry disclosed their numerous assailants. The lance blades nearly met the bayonets of the kneeling front rank, the cuirassiers were within a few paces, yet not a trigger was drawn. But, when the word "Fire!" thundered from the colonel's lips, each side poured out its deadly volley, and in a moment the leading files of the French lay before the square, as if hurled by a thunderbolt to the earth. The assailants, broken and dispersed, galloped off for shelter to the tall rye, while a constant stream of musketry from the British square, carried death into their retreating squadrons.

But, unhappily, these furious and continued charges were not always inefficient. On the right, and in the act of forming square, the 42nd were attacked by the lancers. The sudden rush, and the difficulty of forming in corn reaching to the shoulder, gave a temporary success to the assailants. Two companies, excluded from the square, were ridden over and cut down. The colonel was killed, half the regiment disabled, but the remainder formed and repulsed the charge, while those detached in the *mêlée* fought back to back with desperate coolness, until the withering fusilade of their companions dispersed the cavalry, and enabled them to rejoin their ranks.

The remaining regiments of the Highland brigade were hotly pressed by the enemy; they had not a moment's respite; for no sooner were the lancers and cuirassiers driven back, than the French batteries opened with a torrent of grape upon the harassed squares, which threatened to overwhelm them. Numbers of officers and men were already stretched upon the field, while the French, reinforced by fresh columns, redoubled their exertions, while the brave and devoted handful of British troops seemed destined to cover with their bodies that ground their gallantry scorned to surrender. Wellington, as he witnessed the slaughter of his best troops, is said to have been deeply affected; and repeated references to his watch, showed how anxiously he waited for reinforcements.

The Bois de Bossu had continued to be the scene of a severe and fluctuating combat. The 95th had driven the French out, but under a heavy cannonade, and supported by a cavalry movement, the rifles were overpowered by numbers and forced to retire, fighting inch by inch, and contesting every tree. Ney

established himself at last within the wood, and ordered up a considerable addition to the light troops, who had already occupied this important point of the position.

The contest was at its height. The incessant assaults of the enemy were wasting the British regiments, but, with the exception of the Bois de Bossu, not an inch of ground was lost. The men were falling in hundreds, death was busy everywhere, but not a cheek blanched, and not a foot receded! The courage of these undaunted soldiers needed no incitement, but, on the contrary, the efforts of their officers were constantly required to restrain the burning ardour that would, if unrepressed, have led to ruinous results. Maddened to see their ranks thinned by renewed assaults which they were merely suffered to repel, they panted for the hour of action. The hot blood of Erin was boiling for revenge, and even the cool endurance of the Scotch began to yield, and a murmur was sometimes heard of, "Why are we not led forward?"

And yet, though forward movements were denied them, the assailants paid dearly for this waste of British blood. For a long hour the 92nd had been exposed to a destructive fire from the French artillery that occasioned a fearful loss. A regiment of Brunswick cavalry had attempted to repel a charge of cuirassiers, and repulsed with loss, were driven back upon the Highlanders in great disorder. The hussars galloped down a road on which part of the regiment was obliqued—the remainder lining the ditch in front. The rear of the Brunswickers intermingled with the headmost of the French horsemen, and for a while the 92nd could not relieve them with their musketry. At last the pursuers and pursued rode rapidly past the right flank of the Highlanders, and permitted them to deliver their volley. The word "Fire!" was scarcely given, when the close and converged discharge of both wings fell with terrible effect upon the advanced squadron. The cuirassiers were literally cut down by that withering discharge, and the road choked up with men and horses rolling in dying agony, while the shattered remnant of what but a few moments before had been a splendid regiment, retreated in desperate confusion to avoid a repetition of that murderous fusillade.

At this period of the battle, the guards, after a march of seven-and-twenty miles, arrived from Enghein, from whence they had moved at three in the morning. Exhausted by heat and fatigue, they halted at Nivelles, lighted fires, and prepared to cook their dinners. But the increasing roar of cannon announced that the duke was seriously engaged, and a staff officer brought orders to hurry on. The bivouac was instantly broken up, the kettles packed, the rations abandoned, and the wearied troops cheerfully resumed their march.

The path to the field of battle could not be mistaken; the roar of cannon was succeeded by the roll of musketry, which at every step became more clearly audible; and waggons, heaped with wounded British and Brunswickers interspersed, told that the work of death was going on.

The Guards, indeed, came up at a fortunate crisis. The Bois de Bossu was won, and the tirailleurs of the enemy, debouching from its cover, were about to deploy upon the roads that it commanded, and would thus intercept the duke's communication with the Prussians. The fifth division, sadly reduced, could hardly hold their ground, any offensive movement was impracticable, and the French tirailleurs were actually issuing from the wood, but on perceiving the advancing columns, they halted. The first brigade of Guards, having loaded and fixed bayonets, were ordered to advance, and, wearied as they were with a fifteen hours' march, they cheered, and pushed forward. In vain the thick trees impeded them, and although every bush and coppice was held and disputed by the enemy, the tirailleurs were driven in on every side. Taking advantage of a rivulet which crossed the wood, the enemy attempted to form and arrest the progress of the Guards. That stand was momentary; they were forced from their position, and the wood once more was carried by the British.

Their success was, however, limited to its occupation; the broken ground and close timber prevented the battalion from forming; and when it emerged, and of course in considerable disorder, from its cover, the masses of cavalry drawn up in the open ground charged and forced it back. At last, after many daring attempts to debouch and form, the first brigade fell back upon the third battalion, which, by flanking the wood, had been enabled to form square, and repulse the cavalry, and there the brigade halted. Evening was now closing in, the attacks of the enemy became fewer and feebler, a brigade of heavy cavalry with horse artillery came up, and, worn out by the sanguinary struggle of six long hours, the assailants ceased their attack, and the fifth and third divisions took a position for the night upon the ground their unbounded heroism had held through this long and bloody day.

Thus terminated the fight of Quatre Bras, and a more glorious victory was never won by British bravery. Night closed the battle, and when the limited number of the allied troops actually engaged is considered, this sanguinary conflict will stand almost without a parallel. At the opening of the action at half-past two, the Duke's force could not have exceeded sixteen thousand, his whole army consisting of some Brunswick hussars, supported by a few Belgian and Hanoverian guns, and the great distance of their cantonments from the field of battle prevented the British

cavalry and horse artillery arriving until late in the evening. Vivian's brigade (1st Hanoverian, and 10th and 18th hussars) came up at seven o'clock, but the rest only reached Quatre Bras at the close of the action, having made a forced march from behind the Dender, over bad roads for more than forty miles. Ney, by his own account, commenced the battle with the second corps and Excelman's cavalry, the former numbering thirty thousand strong in artillery, and its cavalry, that of the second corps included, amounting to three thousand six hundred.

The French marshal complains that the first corps, originally assigned to him, and which he had left at Frasnes in reserve, had been withdrawn by Napoleon without any intimation, and never employed during the entire day, and thus, as Ney writes to Fouché, "twenty-five or thirty thousand men were, I may say, paralysed, and idly paraded during the battle, from the right to the left, and the left to the right, without firing a shot." All this admitted, surely his means were amply sufficient to have warranted a certain victory. In numbers his cavalry were infinitely superior, his artillery was equally powerful, while in those important arms, Wellington was miserably weak, and all he had to oppose to his stronger antagonist were the splendid discipline and indomitable courage of British infantry.

The loss sustained by the British and their allies in this glorious and hard-contested battle amounted to three thousand seven hundred and fifty, *hors de combat*. Of course, the British suffered most severely, having three hundred and twenty men killed, and two thousand one hundred and fifty-five wounded. The Duke of Brunswick fell in the act of rallying his troops, and an immense number of British officers were found among the slain and wounded. During an advanced movement, the 92nd, while repulsing an attack of both cavalry and infantry, met a French column, retreating to the wood, which halted and turned its fire on the Highlanders, already assailed by a superior force. Notwithstanding, the regiment bravely held its ground until relieved by a regiment of the Guards, when it retired to its original position. In this brief and sanguinary conflict, its loss amounted to twenty-eight officers, and nearly three hundred men.

The casualties, when compared with the number of the combatants, will appear enormous. Most of the battalions lost their commanding officers, and the rapid succession of subordinate officers on whom the command devolved, told how fast the work of death went on. Trifling wounds were disregarded, and men severely hurt refused to retire to the rear, or rejoined their colours after a temporary dressing. Picton's was a remarkable instance of this disregard of suffering; he was severely wounded

at Quatre Bras, and the fact was only ascertained after his glorious fall at Waterloo.

The French loss, according to their own returns, was "very considerable, amounting to four thousand two hundred killed or wounded"; and Ney in his report says, "I was obliged to renounce my hopes of victory; and in spite of all my efforts, in spite of the intrepidity and devotion of my troops, my utmost efforts could only maintain me in my position till the close of the day."

Ney fell back upon the road to Frasnes. The moon rose angrily, still a few cannon-shot were heard after the day had departed; but gradually they ceased. The fires were lighted, and such miserable provisions as could be procured were furnished to the harassed soldiery; and while strong pickets were posted in the front and flanks, the remnant of the British, with their brave allies, piled their arms and stretched themselves on the field.

While the British held their battleground, the Prussians had been obliged to retire in the night from Ligny. This, however, was not ascertained until morning, as the aide-de-camp despatched with the intelligence to Quatre Bras had unfortunately been killed on the road. Corps after corps arrived during the night, placing the Duke of Wellington in a position to have become assailant next morning had Blucher succeeded in maintaining his position, and repulsed Napoleon's attack.

The night passed, the wounded were removed, the dead partially buried; disabled guns were repaired, ammunition served out, and all was ready for "a contest on the morrow."

The intelligence of the Prussian retreat, of course, produced a correspondent movement, and the Duke of Wellington, to maintain his communications with Marshal Blucher, decided on falling back upon a position in front of the village of Waterloo, which had been already surveyed, and selected by the allied leader as the spot on which he should make a stand.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

1815.

NAPOLEON had reached Frasnes at nine o'clock on the morning of the 17th, and determined on attacking the allied commander. Still uncertain as to the route by which Blucher was retiring, he detached Grouchy in pursuit with the third and fourth corps, and the cavalry of Excelmans and Pajol, with

directions to overtake the Prussian marshal, if possible, and in that case bring him to action.

While Buonaparte delayed his attack until his reserve and the sixth corps came up, his abler antagonist was preparing to retire. This operation in open day was difficult, as the Dyle was in the rear of the allies, and the long and narrow bridge at the village of Genappe the only means by which the *corps d'armée* could effect its passage. Wellington disposed some horse-artillery and dismounted dragoons upon the heights, and leaving a strong rearguard in front of Quatre Bras, he succeeded in making his retreat, until, when discovered, it was too late to offer any serious interruption to the regressive movement of the allies.

While the rear of the columns were still defiling through the narrow streets of Genappe, Napoleon's advanced cavalry overtook and attacked the rearguard, and a sharp affair ensued. The 7th Hussars, assisted by some squadrons of the 11th and 23rd Light Dragoons, charged the French horsemen boldly, but they were repulsed; and a second effort was bravely but ineffectually attempted. The Life Guards were instantly ordered up, and led in person to the charge by Lord Anglesea, who was in command of the British rearguard. Their attack was decisive; the enemy were severely checked, and driven in great disorder back upon their supports. No other attempt was made by the French cavalry to embarrass the retreat of the allied columns, and except by an occasional cannonade, too distant to produce any serious effect, the remainder of the march on Waterloo was undisturbed by the French advance.

The allies reached the position early in the evening, and orders were issued for the divisions to halt and prepare their bivouacs. The ground for each brigade had been already marked out; the troops piled their arms, the cavalry picketed their horses, the guns were parked, fires were lighted along the lines, and all prepared the best mode of sheltering themselves from the inclemency of the weather, which scanty means could afford them in an exposed position like that of Waterloo.

All through the day rain had occasionally fallen, but as night came on the weather became more tempestuous. The wind rose, and torrents of rain, with peals of thunder and frequent lightning, rendered the dreary night before the battle anything but a season of repose.

While the troops bivouacked on the field, the Duke of Wellington with the general officers and their respective staffs occupied the village of Waterloo. On the doors of the several cottages the names of the principal officers were chalked—"and frail and perishing as was the record, it was found there long after many of those whom it designated had ceased to exist!"

The ground on which the allied commander had decided to accept battle was chosen with excellent judgment. In front of the position, the surface declined for nearly a quarter of a mile, and rose again for an equal distance, until it terminated in a ridge of easy access, along which the French had posted a number of their brigades, the intermediate space between the armies being covered by a rich crop of rye nearly ready for the sickle. In the rear, the forest of Soignies, intersected by the great roads from Charleroi to Brussels, extended; and nearly at the entrance to the wood, the little village of Waterloo was situated. The right of the British was stretched over to Merke Braine, and the left appuied upon a height above Ter le Haye. The whole line was formed on a gentle acclivity, the flanks partially defended by a small ravine with broken ground. The farmhouse of La Haye Sainte, in front of the left centre, was defended by a Hanoverian battalion, and the chateau of Hougomont, in advance of the right centre, held by a part of the Guards and a few companies of Nassau riflemen. This was the strongest point of the whole position; and the Duke had strengthened it considerably, by erecting barricades and perforating the walls with loopholes, to permit the musketry of its defenders to be effectively employed.

Wellington's first line, comprising some of his best regiments, was drawn up behind these posts; the second was still further in the rear, and, from occupying a hollow, was sheltered from the fire of the French artillery. The third was formed of the cavalry; and they were more retired still, extending to Ter le Haye. The extreme right of the British obliqued to Merke Braine, and covered the road to Nivelles, while the left kept the communication with the Prussians open by the Ohain road, which runs through the passes of Saint Lambert. As it was not improbable that Napoleon might endeavour to reach Brussels by marching circuitously round the British right, a corps of observation, composed of the greater portion of the fourth division, under Sir Charles Colville, was detached to Halle; and consequently those troops, during the long and bloody contest of the 18th, were at a distance from the field, and remained *non combattant*.

The allied dispositions were completed soon after daylight, although it was nearly noon before the engagement seriously commenced. The division of Guards, under General Cooke, was posted on a rise immediately adjoining the chateau of Hougomont, its right leaning on the road to Nivelles; the division of Baron Alten had its left flank on the road of Charleroi, and was drawn up behind the house of La Haye Sainte. The Brunswick troops were partly in line with the Guards and partly held in reserve; and the Nassau troops were generally

attached to Alten's division. Some of the corps in line, and a battalion acting *en tirailleur*, occupied the wood of Hougomont. This *corps d'armée* was commanded by the Prince of Orange.

The British divisions of Clinton and Colville, two Hanoverian brigades, and a Dutch corps under the command of Lord Hill, were placed *en potence*, in front of the right.

On the left, the division of Picton, a British brigade under Sir John Lambert, a Hanoverian corps, and some troops of the Netherlands, extended along the hedge and lane which traverses the rising ground between the road to Charleroi and Ter le Haye. This village, with the farm of Papilotte, contiguous to the wood of Frichefont, was garrisoned by a post of the Nassau contingent, commanded by the hereditary Prince of Weimar. The cavalry were under the direction of the Earl of Uxbridge, and the artillery were commanded by Sir George Wood.

No part of the allied position was remarkable for natural strength; but where the ground displayed any advantages, they had been carefully made available for defence. The whole surface of the field of Waterloo was perfectly open, and the acclivities of easy ascent. Infantry movements could be easily effected, artillery might advance and retire, and cavalry could charge. On every point the British position was assailable; and the island soldier had no reliance but in "God and his Grace"—for all else depended on his own stout heart and vigorous arm.

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## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

(continued).

1815.

NAPOLEON passed the night of the 17th in a farmhouse which was abandoned by the owner, named Bouquean, an old man of eighty, who had retired to Planchenoit. It is situated on the high road from Charleroi to Brussels. It is half a league from the château of Hougomont and La Haye Sainte, and a quarter of a league from La Belle Alliance and Planchenoit. Supper was hastily served up in part of the utensils of the farmer that remained. Buonaparte slept in the first chamber of this house; a bed with blue silk hangings and gold fringe was put up for him in the middle of this room. His brother Jerome, the Duke of Bassano, and several generals, lodged in the other chambers. All the adjacent buildings, gardens, meadows, and enclosures, were crowded with military and horses.

Morning broke; the rain still continued, but with less severity than during the preceding night; the wind fell, but the day

lowered, and the dawn of the 18th was gloomy and foreboding. The British soldiers recovered from the chill cast over them by the inclemency of the weather, and, from the ridge of their position, calmly observed the enemy's masses coming up in long succession, and forming their numerous columns on the heights in front of La Belle Alliance.

The bearing of the French was very opposite to the steady and cool determination of the British soldiery. With the former, all was exultation and arrogant display; while, with characteristic vanity, they boasted of an imaginary success at Quatre Bras, and claimed a decisive victory at Ligny!

Although in point of fact beaten by the British on the 16th, Napoleon tortured the retrograde movement of the Duke on Waterloo into a defeat, and the winning a field from Blucher, attended with no advantage beyond the capture of a few disabled guns, afforded a pretext to declare in his dispatches that the Prussian army was routed and disorganised, without a prospect of being rallied.

The morning passed in mutual dispositions for battle, and the French attack commenced soon after eleven o'clock. The first corps, under Count D'Erlon, was in position opposite La Haye Sainte, its right extending towards Frichefont, and its left leaning on the road to Brussels. The second corps, uniting its right with D'Erlon's left, extended to Hougomont, with the wood in its front.

The cavalry reserve (the cuirassiers) were immediately in the rear of these corps; and the Imperial Guard, forming the grand reserve, were posted on the heights of La Belle Alliance. Count Lobau, with the sixth corps, and D'Aumont's cavalry, were placed in the rear of the extreme right, to check the Prussians, should they advance from Wavre, and approach by the defiles of Saint Lambert. Napoleon's arrangements were completed about half-past eleven, and immediately the order to attack was given.

The place from which Buonaparte viewed the field, was a gentle rising ground beside the farmhouse of La Belle Alliance. There he remained for a considerable part of the day, dismounted, pacing to and fro with his hands behind him, receiving communications from his aides-de-camp, and issuing orders to his officers. As the battle became more doubtful, he approached nearer the scene of action, and betrayed increased impatience to his staff by violent gesticulation, and using immense quantities of snuff. At three o'clock he was on horseback in front of La Belle Alliance; and in the evening, just before he made his last attempt with the Guard, he had reached a hollow close to La Haye Sainte.

Wellington, at the opening of the engagement, stood upon a

ridge immediately behind La Haye, but as the conflict thickened, where difficulties arose and danger threatened, there the duke was found. He traversed the field exposed to a storm of balls, and passed from point to point uninjured; and on more than one occasion, when the French cavalry charged the British squares, the duke was there for shelter.

A slight skirmishing between the French tirailleurs and British light troops had continued throughout the morning, but the advance of a division of the second corps, under Jerome Buonaparte, against the post of Hougomont, was the signal for the British artillery to open, and was, in fact, the commencement of the battle of Waterloo. The first gun fired on the 18th was directed by Sir George Wood upon Jerome's advancing column; the last was a French howitzer, at eight o'clock in the evening, turned by a British officer against the routed remains of that splendid army with which Napoleon had begun the battle.

Hougomont was the key of the duke's position, a post naturally of considerable strength, and care had been taken to increase it. It was garrisoned by the light companies of the Coldstream and 1st and 3rd Guards; while a detachment from General Byng's brigade was formed on an eminence behind, to support the troops defending the house and the wood on its left. Three hundred Nassau riflemen were stationed in the wood and garden; but the first attack of the enemy dispersed them.

To carry Hougomont, the efforts of the second corps were principally directed throughout the day. This fine corps, thirty thousand strong, comprised three divisions, and each of these, in quick succession, attacked the well-defended farmhouse. The advance of the assailants was covered by a tremendous cross-fire of nearly one hundred pieces, while the British guns in battery on the heights above, returned the cannonade, and made fearful havoc in the dense columns of the enemy as they advanced or retired from the attack. Although the French frequently occupied the wood, it afforded them indifferent shelter from the musketry of the troops defending the house and garden; for the trees were but slight, and planted far asunder. Foy's division passed entirely through and gained the heights in the rear; but it was driven back with immense loss by part of the Coldstream and 3rd Guards.

At last, despairing of success, the French artillery opened with shells upon the house; the old tower of Hougomont was quickly in a blaze; the fire reached the chapel, and many of the wounded, both assailants and defenders, perished miserably there. But still, though the flames raged above, shells burst around, and shot ploughed through the shattered walls and windows, the Guards nobly held the place, and Hougomont remained untaken.

The attack against the position of Hougomont lasted, on the whole, from twenty-five minutes before twelve until a little past seven at night. Within half an hour one thousand five hundred men were killed in the small orchard at Hougomont, not exceeding four acres. The loss of the enemy was enormous. The division of General Foy alone lost about three thousand; and the total loss of the enemy in the attack of this position is estimated at ten thousand in killed and wounded. Above six thousand men of both armies perished in the farm of Hougomont; six hundred British were killed in the wood; twenty-five in the garden; one thousand one hundred in the orchard and meadow; four hundred men near the farmer's garden; two thousand of both parties behind the great orchard. The bodies of three hundred British were buried opposite the gate of the chateau; and those of six hundred French were buried at the same place.

The advance of Jerome on the right was followed by a general onset upon the British line, three hundred pieces of artillery opening their cannonade, and the French columns in different points advancing to the attack. Charges of cavalry and infantry, sometimes separately and sometimes with united force, were made in vain. The British regiments were disposed individually in squares, with triple files, each placed sufficiently apart to allow it to deploy when requisite. The squares were mostly parallel, but a few were judiciously thrown back; and this disposition, when the French cavalry had passed the advanced regiments, exposed them to a flanking fire from the squares behind. The British cavalry were in the rear of the infantry, and the artillery in battery over the line. The fight of Waterloo may be easily comprehended by simply stating, that for ten hours it was a continued succession of attacks of the French columns on the squares; the British artillery playing upon them as they advanced, and the cavalry charging when they receded.

But no situation could be more trying to the unyielding courage of the British army than this disposition in squares at Waterloo. There is an excited feeling in an attacking body that stimulates the coldest and blunts the thoughts of danger. The tumultuous enthusiasm of the assault spreads from man to man, and duller spirits catch a gallant frenzy from the brave around them. But the enduring and devoted courage which pervaded the British squares when, hour after hour, mowed down by a murderous artillery, and wearied by furious and frequent onsets of lancers and cuirassiers; when the constant order, "Close up! close up!" marked the quick succession of slaughter that thinned their diminished ranks; and when the day wore later, when the remnants of two and even three regiments were

necessary to complete the square which one of them had formed in the morning—to support this with firmness, and “feed death,” inactive and unmoved, exhibited that calm and desperate bravery which elicited the admiration of Napoleon himself.

At times the temper of the troops had nearly failed; and, particularly among the Irish regiments, the reiterated question of—“When shall we get at them?” showed how ardent the wish was to avoid inactive slaughter, and, plunging into the columns of the assailants, to avenge the death of their companions. But the “Be cool, my boys!” from their officers was sufficient to restrain their impatience, and, cumbering the ground with their dead, they waited with desperate intrepidity for the hour to arrive when victory and vengeance should be their own!

While the second corps was engaged at Hougomont, the first was directed by Napoleon to penetrate the left centre. Had this attempt succeeded, the British must have been defeated, as it would have been severed and surrounded. Picton's division was now severely engaged. Its position stretched from La Haye Sainte to Ter la Haye; in front there was an irregular hedge; but being broken and pervious to cavalry, it afforded but partial protection. The Belgian infantry, who were extended in front of the fifth division, gave way as the leading columns of D'Erlon's corps approached, the French came boldly to the fence, and Picton, with Kempt's brigade, as gallantly advanced to meet them.

A tremendous combat ensued. The French and British closed; for the cuirassiers had been already received in square, and repulsed with immense loss. Instantly Picton deployed the division into line; and pressing forward to the hedge, received and returned the volley of D'Erlon's infantry, and then crossing the fence, drove back the enemy at the point of the bayonet. The French retreated in close column, while the fifth mowed them down with musketry, and slaughtered them in heaps with their bayonets. Lord Anglesea seized on the moment, and charging with the Royals, Greys, and Enniskilleners, burst through everything that opposed him. Vainly the mailed cuirassier and formidable lancer attempted to withstand this splendid body of heavy cavalry; they were overwhelmed, and the French infantry, already broken and disorganised by the gallant fifth, fell in hundreds beneath the swords of the British dragoons. The eagles of the 45th and 105th regiments, and upwards of two thousand prisoners, were the trophies of this brilliant charge.

But, alas! like most military triumphs, this had its misfortune to alloy it. Picton fell! But where could the famed commander of the old “Fighting Third” meet with death so gloriously? He was at the head of the division as it pressed

forward with the bayonet; he saw the best troops of Napoleon repulsed; the ball struck him, and he fell from his horse; he heard the Highland lament answered by the deep execration of Erin; and while the Scotch slogan was returned by the Irish hurrah, his fading sight saw his excited division rush on with irresistible fury. The French column was annihilated, and two thousand dead enemies told how desperately he had been avenged. This was, probably, the bloodiest struggle of the day. When the attack commenced—and it lasted not an hour—the fifth division exceeded five thousand men; and when it ended it scarcely reckoned eighteen hundred bayonets!

While Picton's division and the heavy cavalry had repulsed D'Erlon's effort against the left, the battle was raging at La Haye Sainte, a post in front of the left centre. This was a rude farmhouse and farm, defended by five hundred German riflemen; and here the attack was fierce and constant, and the defence gallant and protracted. While a number of guns played on it with shot and shells, it was assailed by a strong column of infantry. Thrice they were repulsed; but the barn caught fire, and the number of the garrison decreasing, it was found impossible, from its exposed situation, to supply the loss and throw in reinforcements. Still worse, the ammunition of the rifle corps failed, and, reduced to a few cartridges, their fire had almost ceased.

Encouraged by this casualty, the French, at the fourth attempt, turned the position. Though the doors were burst in, still the gallant Germans held the house with their bayonets; but, having ascended the walls and roof, the French fired on them from above, and, now reduced to a handful, the post was carried. No quarter was given, and the remnant of the brave riflemen were bayoneted on the spot.

This was, however, the only point where, during this long and sanguinary conflict, Buonaparte succeeded. He became master of a dilapidated dwelling, its roof destroyed by shells, and its walls perforated by a thousand shot-holes; and when obtained, an incessant torrent of grape and shrapnels from the British artillery on the heights above, rendered its acquisition useless for future operations, and made his persistence in maintaining it, a wanton and unnecessary sacrifice of human life.

There was a terrible sameness in the battle of the 18th of June, which distinguished it in the history of modern slaughter. Although designated by Napoleon "a day of false manœuvres," in reality there was less display of military tactics at Waterloo than in any general action we have on record. Buonaparte's favourite plan, to turn a wing, or separate a corps, was the constant effort of the French leader. Both were tried at Hougomont to turn the right, and at La Haye Sainte to break

through the left centre. Hence, the French operations were confined to fierce and incessant onsets with masses of cavalry and infantry, generally supported by a numerous and destructive artillery. Knowing that to repel these desperate and sustained attacks a tremendous sacrifice of human life must occur, Napoleon, in defiance of their acknowledged bravery, calculated on wearying the British into defeat. But when he saw his columns driven back in confusion, when his cavalry receded from the squares they could not penetrate, when battalions were reduced to companies by the fire of his cannon, and still that "feeble few" shewed a perfect front, and held the ground they had originally taken—no wonder his admiration was expressed to Soult:

"How beautifully these British fight! but they must give way!"

And well did British bravery merit that proud encomium which their enduring courage elicited from Napoleon. For hours, with uniform and unflinching gallantry, they repulsed the attacks of troops who had already proved their superiority over the soldiers of every other nation in Europe. When the artillery united its fire, and poured exterminating volleys on some devoted regiment, the square, prostrate on the earth, allowed the storm to pass over them. When the battery ceased—to permit their cavalry to charge and complete the work of destruction—the square was again upon their feet, no face unformed, no chasm to allow the horsemen entrance, but a serried line of impassable bayonets was before them, while the rear ranks threw in a reserved fire with murderous precision. The cuirass was too near the musket then to avert death from the wearer; men and horses went down in heaps; each attempt ended in defeat, and the cavalry at last retired, leaving their best and boldest before a square which, to them, had proved impenetrable.

When the close column of infantry came on, the square had deployed into line. The French were received with a destructive volley, and next moment the wild cheer which accompanies the bayonet charge, announced that Britain advanced with the weapon she had always found irresistible. The French never crossed bayonets fairly with the British, for when an attempt was made to stand, a terrible slaughter attested Britain's superiority.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

## THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

*(continued).*

1815.

BUT the situation of Wellington momentarily became more critical. Masses of the enemy had fallen, but thousands came on anew. With desperate attachment, the French army passed forward at Napoleon's command, and although each advance terminated in defeat and slaughter, fresh battalions crossed the valley and mounting the ridge with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" exhibited a devotion which never had been surpassed.

Wellington's reserves had been gradually brought into action—and the left, though but partially engaged, could not be weakened to send assistance to the right and centre. Many battalions were miserably reduced; and the fifth division, already cut up at Quatre Bras on the evening of the 16th, presented but a skeleton of what these beautiful brigades had been when they left Brussels two days before. The loss of individual regiments was prodigious. The 27th had four hundred men mowed down in square without drawing a trigger; it lost all its superior officers; and a solitary subaltern who remained, commanded it for half the day. Another, the 92nd regiment, when not two hundred were left, rushed at a French column and routed it with the bayonet; and a third, the 33rd, when nearly annihilated, sent to require support—none could be given; and the commanding officer was told that he must "stand or fall where he was!"

Any other save Wellington would have despaired; but he calculated, and justly, that he had an army which would perish where it stood. But when he saw the devastation caused by the incessant attacks of an enemy who appeared determined to succeed, is it surprising that his watch was frequently consulted, and that he prayed for night or Blucher?

When evening came on, no doubt Buonaparte began to question the accuracy of his "military arithmetic"—a phrase happily applied to this meting out death by the hour. Half the day had been consumed in a sanguinary and indecisive conflict; all his disposable troops but the Guard had been employed, and still his efforts were foiled; and the British, with diminished numbers, shewed the same bold front they had presented at the commencement of the battle. He determined, therefore, on another desperate attempt upon the whole British line; and while issuing orders to effect it, a distant cannonade announced that a fresh force was approaching to share the

action. Napoleon, concluding that Grouchy was coming up, conveyed the glad tidings to his disheartened columns. But an aide-de-camp quickly removed the mistake, and the Emperor received the unwelcome intelligence that the strange force now distinctly observed debouching from the woods of Saint Lambert, was the advanced guard of a Prussian corps.

Buonaparte appeared, or affected to appear, incredulous; but the fatal truth was ascertained too soon.

While the delusive hope of immediate relief was industriously circulated among his troops, Napoleon despatched Count Lobau, with the sixth corps, to employ the Prussians, while in person he should direct a general attack upon the British line.

Meanwhile the Prussian advance had debouched from the wood of Frichermont, and the operations of the old marshal, in the rear of Napoleon's right flank became alarming. If Blucher established himself there in force, unless success against the British in his front was rapid and decisive, or that Grouchy came promptly to his relief, Buonaparte knew well that his situation must be hopeless. Accordingly, he directed the first and second corps and all his cavalry reserves against the duke; the French mounted the heights once more, and the British were attacked from right to left.

A dreadful and protracted encounter followed; for an hour the contest was sustained, and, like the preceding ones, it was a sanguinary succession of determined attack and obstinate resistance. The impetuosity of the French onset at first obtained a temporary success. The British light cavalry were driven back, and for a time a number of the guns were in the enemy's possession; but the British rallied again—the French, forced across the ridge, retired to their original ground, without effecting any permanent impression.

It was now five o'clock; the Prussian reserve cavalry under Prince William was warmly engaged with Count Lobau; Bulow's corps, with the second, under Pirch, were approaching rapidly through the passes of Saint Lambert; and the first Prussian corps, advancing by Ohain, had already begun to operate on Napoleon's right. Bulow pushed forward towards Aywire, and, opening his fire on the French, succeeded in driving them from the opposite heights.

The Prussian left, acting separately, advanced upon the village of Planchenoit, and attacked Napoleon's rear. The French maintaining their position with great gallantry, and the Prussians, being equally obstinate in their attempts to force the village, produced a bloody and prolonged combat. Napoleon's right had begun to recede before the first Prussian corps, and his officers, generally, anticipated a disastrous issue, that

nothing but immediate success against the British, or instant relief from Grouchy, could remedy.

The Imperial Guard, his last and best resource, were consequently ordered up. Formed in close column, Buonaparte in person advanced to lead them on; but dissuaded by his staff, he paused near the bottom of the hill, and to Ney, that "spoiled child of victory," the conduct of this redoubted body was intrusted.

In the interim, as the French right fell back, the British moved gradually forward; and converging from the extreme points of Merke Braine and Braine la Leud, compressed their extent of line, and nearly assumed the form of a crescent. The British Guards were considerably advanced, and having deployed behind the crest of the hill, lay down to avoid the cannonade with which Napoleon covered the onset of his best troops. Ney, with his proverbial gallantry, led on the Middle Guard; and Wellington, putting himself at the head of some wavering regiments, in person brought them forward, and restored their confidence.

As the Imperial Guard approached the crest where the household troops were couching, the British artillery, which had gradually converged upon the *chaussée*, opened with canister shot. The distance was so short, and the range so accurate, that each discharge fell with deadly precision into the column as it breasted the hill. Ney, with his customary heroism, directed the attack; and when his horse was killed, on foot, and sword in hand, he headed the veterans whom he had so often led to victory. Although the leading files of the Guard were swept off by the exterminating fire of the British batteries, still their undaunted intrepidity carried them forward, and they gallantly crossed the ridge.

Then came the hour of British triumph. The magic word was spoken—"Up, Guards, and at them!" In a moment the household brigade were on their feet; then waiting till the French closed, they delivered a murderous volley, cheered, and rushed forward with the bayonet, Wellington in person directing the attack.

With the 42nd and 95th, the British leader threw himself on Ney's flank, and rout and destruction succeeded. In vain their gallant chief attempted to rally the recoiling Guard; but driven down the hill, the Middle were intermingled with the Old Guard, who had formed at the bottom in reserve.

In this unfortunate *mêlée*, the British cavalry seized on the moment of confusion, and plunging into the mass, cut down and disorganised the regiments which had hitherto been unbroken. The British artillery ceased firing, and those who had escaped the iron shower of the guns, fell beneath sabre and bayonet.

The unremediable disorder consequent on this decisive repulse, and the confusion in the French rear, where Bulow had fiercely attacked them, did not escape the eagle glance of Wellington.

"The hour is come!" he is said to have exclaimed, as, closing his telescope, he commanded the whole line to advance. The order was exultingly obeyed; and, forming four deep, on came the British. Wounds, and fatigue, and hunger, were all forgotten as with their customary steadiness they crossed the ridge; but when they saw the French, and began to move down the hill, a cheer that seemed to rend the heavens pealed from their proud array, as with levelled bayonets they pressed on to meet the enemy.

But, panic-struck and disorganised, the French resistance was short and feeble. The Prussian cannon thundered in their rear, the British bayonet was flashing in their front, and unable to stand the terror of the charge, they broke and fled. A dreadful and indiscriminate carnage ensued. The great road was choked with equipages, and cumbered with the dead and dying; while the fields, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with a host of helpless fugitives. Courage and discipline were forgotten; and Napoleon's army of yesterday was now a splendid wreck—a terror-stricken multitude! His own words best describe it—"It was a total rout!"

On a surface of two square miles, it was ascertained that fifty thousand men and horses were lying! The luxurious crop of ripe grain which had covered the field of battle was reduced to litter, and beaten into the earth; and the surface, trodden down by the cavalry, and furrowed deeply by the cannon wheels, strewn with many a relict of the fight. Helmets and cuirasses, shattered firearms and broken swords; all the variety of military ornaments; lancer caps and Highland bonnets; uniforms of every colour, plume and pennon; musical instruments, the apparatus of artillery, drums, bugles;—but good God! why dwell on the harrowing picture of "a foughten field"?—each and every ruinous display bore mute testimony to the misery of such a battle.

Could the melancholy appearance of this scene of death be heightened, it would be by witnessing the researches of the living, amid its desolation, for the objects of their love. Mothers and wives and children for days were occupied in that mournful duty; and the confusion of the corpses, friend and foe intermingled as they were, often rendered the attempt at recognising individuals difficult, and, in some cases, impossible.

In many places the dead lay four deep upon each other, marking the spot some British square had occupied, when exposed for hours to the murderous fire of a French battery.

Outside, lancer and cuirassier were scattered thickly on the earth. Madly attempting to force the serried bayonets of the British, they had fallen in the bootless essay, by the musketry of the inner files. Farther on, you traced the spot where the cavalry of France and Britain had encountered. Chasseur and hussar were intermingled; and the heavy Norman horse of the Imperial Guard were interspersed with the grey chargers which had carried Albion's chivalry. Here the Highlander and tirailleur lay, side by side together; and the heavy dragoon, with "green Erin's" badge upon his helmet, was grappling in death with the Polish lancer.

Never had France sent a finer army to the field—and never had any been so signally defeated. Complete as the *déroute* at Vittoria had appeared, it fell infinitely short of that sustained at Waterloo. Tired of slaughtering unresisting foes, the British, early in the night, abandoned the pursuit of the broken battalions and halted. But the Prussians, untamed by previous exertion, continued to follow the fugitives with increased activity, and nothing could surpass the unrelenting animosity of their pursuit. Plunder was sacrificed to revenge, and the memory of former defeat and past oppression produced a dreadful retaliation, and deadened every impulse of humanity. The *væ victis* was pronounced, and thousands besides those who perished in the field fell that night by Prussian lance and sabre.

What Napoleon's feelings were when he witnessed the overthrow of his guard, the failure of his last hope, the death-blow to his political existence, cannot be described, but may be easily imagined. Turning to an aide-de-camp, with a face livid with rage and despair, he muttered in a tremulous voice—"A present c'est fini! sauvons nous"; and turning his horse, he rode hastily off towards Charleroi, attended by his guide and staff.

In whatever point of view Waterloo is considered, whether as a battle, a victory, or an event, in all these, every occurrence of the last century yields, and more particularly in the magnitude of results. No doubt the successes of Wellington in Spain were, in a great degree, primary causes of Napoleon's downfall; but still, the victory of Waterloo consummated efforts made for years before in vain to achieve the freedom of the Continent, and wrought the final ruin of him, through whose unhallowed ambition a world had been so long convulsed.

As a battle, the merits of the field of Waterloo have been freely examined, and very indifferently adjudicated. Those who were best competent to decide, have pronounced this battle as that upon which Wellington might securely rest his fame, while others, admitting the extent of the victory, ascribe the result rather to fortunate accident than military skill.

Never was a falsè statement hazarded. The success attendant on the day of Waterloo can be referred only to the admirable system of resistance in the general, and an enduring valour, rarely equalled and never surpassed, in the soldiers whom he commanded. Chance, at Waterloo, had no effect upon results; Wellington's surest game was to act only on the defensive; his arrangements with Blucher for mutual support being thoroughly matured, he knew that before night the Prussians must be upon the field. Bad weather and bad roads, with the conflagration of a town in the line of march, which, to save the Prussian tumbrils from explosion, required a circuitous movement—all these, while they protracted the struggle for several hours beyond what might have been reasonably computed, only go to prove that Wellington, in accepting battle, under a well-founded belief that he should be supported in *four hours*, when single-handed he maintained the combat and resolutely held his ground during a space of *eight*, had left nothing dependent upon accident, but, providing for the worst contingencies, had formed his calculations with admirable skill.

The allied loss\* was enormous, but it fell infinitely short of that sustained by Napoleon's army. Of the latter nothing like an accurate return was ever made; but from the most correct estimates by French and British officers, upwards of five-and-twenty thousand men were rendered *hors de combat*; while multitudes were sabred in the flight, or perished on the roads from sheer fatigue, and in deserted villages for want of sustenance and surgical relief.

On the evening of the 29th, Napoleon quitted the capital, never to enter it again. Hostilities ceased immediately, the Bourbons were recalled, and placed upon the throne, and Europe, after years of anarchy and bloodshed, at last obtained repose, while he, "alike its wonder and its scourge," was removed to a scene far distant from that which had witnessed his triumphs and his reverses, and within the narrow limits of

\* Return of killed and wounded from the War-office, July, 1815.

Killed on the spot, non-commissioned and privates, .. ..	1715
Died of wounds, .. ..	856
Missing, supposed killed, .. ..	353
Total, .. ..	2924
Wounded, .. ..	6831
Total killed and wounded, .. ..	9755

French Artillery captured at Waterloo:—

12-pounder guns, .. ..	35	12-pounder waggons, .. ..	74
6-pounder guns, .. ..	57	6-pounder waggons, .. ..	71
6-inch howitzers, .. ..	13	Howitzer waggons, .. ..	50
24-pounder howitzers, .. ..	17		
Total cannons, .. ..	122	Total, .. ..	195

a paltry island that haughty spirit, for whom half Europe was too small, dragged out a gloomy existence, until death loosened the chain and the grave closed upon the Captive of Saint Helena.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## THE BATTLE OF KEMMENDINE.

1824.

IN 1824 the British were forced into a war with the kingdom of Burmah. The war, however, was not of our seeking; we were forced into it. The Burmese a few years previously had taken forcible possession of the province of Assam, which was soon followed by parties of these people committing serious devastations within British territory, burning a number of villages, plundering and murdering the inhabitants, or carrying them off as slaves. At the same time an island in the Brahmaputra, on which the British flag had been erected, was invaded, the flag was thrown down, and an armed force collected to maintain the insult.

To meet these difficulties, and to strengthen their eastern frontier, the British Government resolved upon occupying Kachar, with the more important province of Manipur, which had long ago requested the protection of the British against the tyranny of the Burmahs. Active hostilities had by this time broken out at the boundaries.

The British asked for a commission of inquiry and settlement to be appointed. This request was answered by an attack upon, and the capture of, the British post of Shahpuri, an affair that was attended with considerable loss of life; and which was followed by a menacing letter from the Rajah of Arracan, to the effect that unless the British Government submitted quietly it would be followed by the like forcible seizure of the cities of Dacca and Moorshedabad. The British now called upon the court of Ava to disavow the proceedings of its officers in Arracan. This last act of mistaken and temporising policy had no other effect than that of confirming the court of Ava in their confident expectation of annexing the eastern provinces of Bengal—if not of expelling the British from India altogether.

There followed several minor engagements, and in May of 1824 the British forces got possession of Rangoon after a trifling resistance. The troops were posted in the immense pagoda of the town, where many unfortunate prisoners were discovered, forgotten by the Burmahs in the confusion of their retreat.

Rumours of the arrival of Bandoola with the main body of his grand army, reached Rangoon early in November, 1824, and

towards the end of the month an intercepted dispatch from Bandoola to the ex-governor of Martaban, announced his having left Prome, at the head of an invincible army, with horses and elephants, and every kind of stores, to capture or expel the British from Rangoon. Every arrangement was then made to give him a warm reception.

The post at Kemmendine was strongly occupied and supported on the river, by His Majesty's sloop *Sophie*, commanded by Captain Ryves, and a strong division of gunboats; this post was of great importance in preventing the enemy from attacking Rangoon by water, or launching from a convenient distance the many fire rafts he had prepared for effecting the destruction of our shipping.

On the 30th of November the Burmese army was assembled in the extensive forest in front of the pagoda, and his line extending from the river above Kemmendine in a semi-circular direction towards Puzendown, might be distinguished by a curved line of smoke rising above the trees from the bivouacs of the different corps. During the following night, the low continued murmur and hum of voices proceeding from the Burmese encampment, suddenly ceased, and was succeeded by the distant, but gradually approaching sounds of a multitude in slow and silent movement through the woods. The enemy's masses had approached to the very edge of the jungle, within musket shot of the pagoda, apparently in readiness to rush from their cover to the assault at break of day. Towards morning, however, the woods resounded with the blows of the felling axe and hammer, and with the crash of falling trees, leaving the British for some time in doubt whether or not the noise was intended as a ruse to draw attention from the front, or whether the Burmese commanders had resolved to proceed with their usual slow and systematic measures of attack.

Day had scarcely dawned on the 1st of December, when hostilities commenced with a heavy fire of musketry and cannon at Kemmendine, the reduction of that place being a preliminary to any general attack on our line. The fire continued long and animated, and from the commanding situation of the great pagoda, though nearly two miles distant from the scene of action, we could distinctly hear the yells and shouts of the infuriated assailants, occasionally answered by the hearty cheers of the British seamen as they poured in their heavy broadsides upon the resolute and persevering masses.

In the course of the forenoon Burmese columns were perceived on the west side of the river, marching across the plain of Dalla, towards Rangoon. They were formed in five or six different divisions, and moved with great regularity, led by numerous chiefs on horseback, their gilt umbrellas glittering in

the rays of the sun, with a sufficiently formidable and imposing effect, at a distance that prevented our perceiving anything motley or mobbish, which might have been found in a closer inspection of these warlike legions.

On reaching the bank of the river opposite to Rangoon, the men of the leading Burmese division, laying aside their arms, commenced entrenching and throwing up batteries for the destruction of the shipping, while the main body disappeared in a jungle in the rear, where they began stockading and establishing their camp, gradually reinforcing the front line as the increasing extent of the batteries and intrenchments permitted. Later in the day, several heavy columns were observed issuing from the forest, about a mile in front of the east face of the great pagoda, with flags and banners flying in profusion. Their march was directed along a gently sloping woody ridge towards Rangoon; the different corps successively taking up their ground along the ridge, soon assumed the appearance of a complete line, extending from the forest in front of the pagoda to within long gunshot distance of the town, and resting on the river at Puzendown, which was strongly occupied by cavalry and infantry; these formed the left wing of the Burmese army. The centre, or the continuation of the line from the great pagoda up to Kemmendine, where it again rested on the river, was posted in so thick a forest as to defy all conjecture as to its strength or situation; but we were well aware that the principal force occupied the jungle in the immediate vicinity of the pagoda, which was naturally considered as the key to our position, and upon which the great effort would accordingly be made.

When this singular and presumptuous formation was completed, the soldiers of the left columns also laying aside their spears and muskets, commenced operations with their intrenching tools, with such goodwill and activity that in the course of a couple of hours their line had wholly disappeared, and could only be traced by a parapet of new earth gradually increasing in height, and assuming such forms as the skill and science of the engineer suggested.

The moving masses which had so lately attracted our anxious attention, had sunk into the ground; and to anyone who had not witnessed the whole scene, the existence of these subterraneous legions would not have been credited; the occasional movement of a chief with his gilt chattah (umbrella) from place to place superintending the progress of their labour, was the only thing that now attracted notice. By a distant observer, the hills, covered with mounds of earth would have been taken for anything rather than the approaches of an attacking army.

In the afternoon, His Majesty's thirteenth regiment, and the eighteenth Madras native infantry, under Major Sale, were

ordered to move rapidly forward upon the busily employed and too confident enemy.

As was expected, they were quite unprepared for a sudden visit, not expecting that we would venture to act on the offensive against so numerous a body.

They had scarcely noticed the advance of our troops when they were upon them, nor could the fire which they opened upon their assailants check their advance. Having forced a passage through the intrenchments and taken the enemy in flank, the British detachment drove the whole line from their cover with considerable loss; and having destroyed as many of their arms and tools as they could find, retired unmolested before the numerous bodies which were now forming on every side around them.

The trenches were found to be a succession of holes, capable of containing two men each, and excavated so as to afford shelter both from the fire of their opponents and from the weather; even a shell falling into the trench could only prove fatal to two men. As it is not the Burmese custom to relieve their troops in making these approaches, each hole had in it a sufficient supply of rice, water, and even fuel for its inmates; under the excavated bank a bed of straw or brushwood was placed in which one man could sleep whilst his comrade watched.

The Burmese in the course of the evening, re-occupied their trenches, recommencing their labours as if nothing untoward had occurred. Their commander, however, took the precaution of bringing forward a strong corps of reserve to the verge of the forest, from which his left wing had issued, to protect it from any future interruptions in its operations.

During the day repeated attacks on Kemmendine had been made and repulsed; but it was not until darkness set in that the last desperate effort of the day was made, to obtain possession of that post. Already had the fatigued soldiers laid down to rest, when all of a sudden the heavens and country round became brilliantly illuminated, caused by the flames of several immense fire-rafts, floating down the river towards Rangoon. Scarcely had the blaze of light appeared when incessant rolls of musketry and peals of cannon were heard from Kemmendine. The Burmese had launched the fire-rafts into the stream with the first of the ebb tide, in the hope of forcing the vessels from their stations off the place, and they were followed by war-boats ready to take advantage of the confusion likely to ensue, should any of the vessels have caught fire. The skill and intrepidity, however, of British seamen proved more than a match for the numbers and arts of the enemy; they grappled the blazing rafts, and conducted them past the shipping or ran them ashore upon the bank.

On the land side the enemy was equally unsuccessful, being again repulsed with great loss in the most resolute attempt they had yet made to reach the interior of the fort.

These fire-rafts, upon examination, were found to be of ingenious construction, as well as formidable; they were made of bamboos firmly wrought together, between every two or three rows of which a line of earthen jars of considerable size, filled with petroleum, or earth-oil and cotton, were securely fixed.

With the possession of Kemmendine, the enemy would have launched these destructive rafts into the stream from a point which would have caused them to reach our shipping in the crowded harbour; but so long as we retained possession of that post, they were obliged to launch them higher up, and the setting of the current carried them, after passing the shipping on the station, upon a projecting point of land where they almost invariably grounded; this circumstance doubtless greatly increased Bandoola's anxiety to drive the British from such an important position.

On the morning of the second, at daylight, the enemy were seen still actively at work on every part of their line, and to have completely entrenched themselves upon some high and open ground, within musket shot distance of the north face of the great pagoda, from which it was also separated by a considerable tank, named by the Rangoon settlers, the Scotch tank, probably on account of the sulphureous qualities of its water.

In the spirited encounters which the enemy's near approach gave rise to, it was highly gratifying to observe the undaunted bearing of the British soldier, in the midst of countless numbers of the enemy who were not to be driven from their ground by the united fire of musketry and cannon. In the imagined security of their cover they firmly maintained themselves, and returned our fire; and it was only at the intrepid and decisive charge that they quailed to the courage of the European, and declined meeting him hand to hand. During the third and fourth, the enemy continued their approaches upon every part of our position with indefatigable assiduity. At the great pagoda they had now reached the margin of the tank, and kept up a constant fire upon our barracks, saluting with a dozen muskets everyone who showed his head above the ramparts, and when nothing better could be done, expending both round and grape shot in vain attempts to strike the British ensign which proudly waved high upon their sacred temple.

On the side of Rangoon they had approached near enough to fire an occasional gun upon the town, while they maintained incessant warfare with two small posts in its front to which they were now so near as to keep their garrisons constantly on the alert, in the expectation of being attacked.

From the intrenchments on the opposite side of the river an incessant fire was kept up day and night upon our shipping, which were all anchored as near as possible to the Rangoon side, with the exception of one or two armed vessels which still kept the middle of the stream, and returned the fire of the enemy.

At Kemmendine peace was seldom maintained above two hours at any time; but the little garrison (composed of the 26th Madras native infantry, and an European detachment), though worn out with fatigue and want of rest, undauntedly received, and successfully repulsed, every successive attack of the fresh troops brought to bear upon them.

The Sepoys, with unwearied constancy and the noblest feeling, even declined leaving their post, or laying aside their muskets for the purpose of cooking, lest the enemy should obtain any advantage, and for several days felt contented with little else than dry rice for food.

The material and warlike stores of the enemy's left wing being now brought forward from the jungle to the intrenchments, and completely within our reach, and their threatening vicinity to the town creating some uneasiness for the safety of our military stores, which were all lodged in that ill-protected and highly-combustible assemblage of huts and wooden houses, the British general, Sir Archibald Campbell, determined upon attacking decisively that portion of the opposing army.

On the morning of the 5th, two columns of attack, consisting of detachments from different regiments, were formed for the purpose. One column consisting of eight hundred men, under Major Sale of the 13th regiment, and the other of five hundred men under Major Walker of the Madras army. Major Sale was directed to attack the centre of the enemy's line, and Major Walker to advance from the post in front of the town, and to attack vigorously on that side; and a troop of dragoons, which had only been landed on the previous day was added to the first column, ready to take advantage of the retreat of the enemy across the open ground to the jungle.

According to the arrangement, early on that morning, Captain Chads, the naval commander, proceeded up to Puzedown Creek, within gun-shot of the rear of the enemy's line, with the man-of-war boats and part of the flotilla, and commenced a heavy cannonade upon the nearest intrenchments, attracting the enemy's chief attention to that point, until the preconcerted signal for attack was made, when both columns moved off together; but from some obstacle in the ground Major Walker's party first reached its destined point, and made a spirited assault on the lines.

The enemy made a stout resistance, and Major Walker and

many of his brave and gallant comrades fell in the advance to the first intrenchment, which was finally carried at the point of the bayonet, and the enemy driven from trench to trench, till this part of the field presented the appearance of a total rout.

The other column now commencing its attack in front, quickly forced the centre, and the whole Burmese left wing, intrenched upon the plain was broken and dispersed, flying in hundreds, or assembled in confused and detached parties, or else maintaining a useless and disjointed resistance at different parts of the works, to which our troops had not yet penetrated.

The two British columns now forming a junction, pursued, and drove the defendants from every part of their works into the jungle, leaving the ground behind them covered with the dead and wounded, with all their guns and intrenching tools, and a great number of small arms; while the judgment, celerity, and spirit with which the attack was made had taken the enemy so completely by surprise, that our troops suffered comparatively but little loss.

The 6th was spent by Bandoola in rallying his defeated left; but it appeared to be still far from his intention to give up the contest on account of the failures and defeats he had already sustained. In front of the great pagoda his troops still laboured with the greatest zeal in their approaches upon our position, and this part of his line had been strongly reinforced by the troops which had been driven from the plain on the preceding day.

The morning of the 7th was fixed upon for bringing matters to a crisis at this point, and four columns of attack, composed of detachments, were early formed under the superintendence of the commander of the forces, in readiness to move from the pagoda and assail the intrenchments on both flanks and in the centre. Before the troops advanced, a severe cannonade was opened from many pieces of heavy ordnance, brought up from the river, and placed in battery for defending this important post. This the enemy stood with much firmness, and returned it with a constant, though unequal, fire of musketry, jingals, and light artillery.

While the firing continued, the columns of attack were already in motion towards their several points; and when it ceased, the left corps, under Colonel Mallet, was seen debouching from the jungle upon the enemy's right; the right column, under Colonel Brodie, Madras army, in like manner advancing on the left; and the two central columns, one under Colonel Parlby of the Madras army, and the other commanded by Captain Wilson, of the 38th regiment, descending the stairs from the north gate of the pagoda, and filing up towards the

centre of the position, by either side of the tank before alluded to, as partly covering the intrenchments on this side.

The appearance of our troops at the same moment upon so many different points seemed to paralyse the Burmese army, but they were not long in recovering from their momentary panic, when they opened a heavy and well-sustained fire upon our troops; and it was not until a decided charge was made, and our troops actually in the trenches, that the enemy finally gave way, and they were precipitately driven from their numerous works, curiously shaped, and strengthened by many strange contrivances, into the thick forest in their rear.

There, all pursuit was necessarily given up; our limited numbers, exhausted by seven days of watching and hard service, were unequal to the fatigue; though even when our men were fresh, the enemy could always baffle their pursuit in a country which afforded them so many facilities for escaping. Upon the ground the enemy left a great number of dead, who seemed generally from their stout and athletic forms, to have been their best troops. Their bodies had each a charm of some description, in which the brave deceased had no doubt trusted for protection, but in this case, they seemed to have lost any virtue ever possessed by them. In the intrenchments were found scaling-ladders, and every preparation for carrying the pagoda by storm.

No time was lost in completing the rout of the Burmese army, and on the evening of the 7th, a body of troops from His Majesty's eighty-ninth regiment, and the forty-third Madras native infantry, under Colonel Parlbly, were in readiness to embark from Rangoon as soon as the tide served, for the purpose of crossing the river and driving the enemy from their intrenchments at Dalla. The night, fortunately, was dark, and the troops were got over unperceived by the enemy. No shot was fired, nor alarm given, until the British troops had actually entered the Burmese intrenchments, and commenced firing at random among the noisy groups which they now heard all around them, but the risk of injuring each other in the dark made it advisable to desist. Parties were sent to occupy various parts of the works, which a previous acquaintance with the ground enabled them to accomplish with but little opposition or loss. On the approach of daylight next morning they found themselves in full and undisturbed possession of the whole position, with all the guns and stores of this portion of the Burmese army, the remains of which were perceived during the whole day, retracing their steps across the plain of Dalla, with more expedition and less pomp than they had exhibited but seven days before, when they traversed the same plain "in all the pomp and circumstance of glorious war."

Every gun they had, and the whole *matériel* of the army, fell into the hands of the conquerors. Desertions and the dispersion of entire corps, followed the defeat, so that in the course of a few days the haughty Bandoola, who so boasted of driving the rebel strangers into the sea, found himself completely foiled in all his plans, humbled, and surrounded by a beaten army, which he proudly called "invincible," alike afraid of the consequences of a final retreat, and of another meeting with an adversary who had taught him such a severe lesson!

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## CHAPTER XXIX.

## THE BATTLE OF MELLOONE.

1825.

AFTER various successes, Sir Archibald Campbell was enabled to make his arrangements for an advance upon the Burmese capital. The distance from Prome to Ava may be estimated at three hundred miles, and although the roads and country upwards are generally more advantageous for military operations than those in the lower provinces, we had still much toil and labour to anticipate before the army could arrive in the open plains of Upper Ava.

The commissariat was conducted by natives, who even volunteered their services as drivers to the foot artillery, and on various occasions did not flinch from exposing themselves to the fire of their countrymen, expressing much pleasure at the precision with which the guns to which they were attached were directed by their new allies.

The officers, instead of walking, had now the luxury of being mounted on Pegu ponies, and they commenced the second campaign in good health, and in comparative comfort.

On the 9th of December, the first division began its march through very bad roads for guns and carriages. On the 10th, marched to Wattygoon, and found the ten stockades which had formerly been attacked, unoccupied by the enemy. The position had been chosen with wonted judgment of the Burmhan engineers, having two sides protected by a deep morass; a jungle covered the approach on the third side, the rear alone was open ground, and the only point from which the works could be successfully assailed.

Next day the army marched five miles over a thickly-enclosed country, without any appearance of houses or population. The following day other five miles were done over almost impassable roads through recent rains, and with very bad camping ground, where cholera made its appearance. After two weeks of most

trying and difficult marching, the army, on the 25th, reached Longhee, and on the 26th moved onward ten miles, when a flag of truce arrived from Melloone, announcing the appearance of a commissioner, named Kolein Mengie, with full powers from the king to conclude a treaty of peace.

On the 27th an answer was returned, stating the concurrence of the British commissioners, and the division continued its advance, encamping on the banks of the Irrawaddy, about four miles below Melloone, where we were joined by the flotilla, and from whence could be seen the intrenched camp of the enemy.

The army had now marched one hundred and forty miles from Prome, and had not met with one inhabitant; and so completely had the enemy laid the line of our advance waste, that we were not able to obtain a single day's supply in a country but lately abounding in cattle. A fruitless negotiation was entered into at Melloone; our two officers then declared that on their departure from the place the British commander would commence offensive operations.

On the 29th the division again moved forward, and in two hours reached Patanagoh, a town upon the river, directly opposite to Melloone. The river Irrawaddy at this place is 600 yards broad, and the fortifications of Melloone, built upon the face of a sloping hill, lay fully exposed to view, within good practice distance of our artillery. The principal stockade appeared to be a square of about a mile, filled with men, and mounting a considerable number of guns, especially on the water-face; and the whole position, consisting of a succession of stockades, might extend nearly two miles along the beach.

In the centre of the great stockade, a handsome new gilt pagoda was observed, which had been raised to the memory of Maha Bandoola, to stimulate the present leaders to imitate his example at Donoobew, when he preferred death to quitting his post. On our arrival before the place, the Burmese discontinued their labours at their defences, and stood in groups gazing at us as we formed on the opposite bank. Under the stockade, a large fleet of war-boats, commissariat boats, and other craft, lay at anchor.

The army had not long reached our ground, when the loud clash of gongs, drums, and other warlike instruments drew our attention to the works of the enemy; crowds of boatmen were seen with their short oars across their shoulders, running to the beach, and every boat was speedily manned, and in motion up the river. The steam vessel and flotilla had been detained below the enemy's position, by the intricacy of the channel, and until protecting batteries could be formed to keep down the fire of the works along the beach, it became necessary to adopt other measures to prevent the escape of the boats; accordingly,

the artillery was ordered to fire upon them, which soon checked their progress, the boatmen either jumping into the river, or returning in the utmost haste to their former situation.

In the meantime the flotilla, led by the *Diana* steam vessel, had got under way, when the firing commenced, and was now seen passing close under the enemy's works, without a shot being fired on either side. On reaching the principal stockade, two gilt war-boats pushing off from the shore, received the *Diana* with every honour, and escorted the squadron at some distance above the place, cutting off all retreat from it by water. Such unequivocal marks of a desire to prevent further hostility were immediately favourably accepted, and during the forenoon a truce was concluded and arrangements made for entering upon negotiations on the following day.

The Burmese chiefs, at their own request, were allowed to moor a large accommodation boat in the middle of the river, between the two armies, as the place of conference; and two o'clock on the 1st of January was fixed for the first meeting with the new delegate from Ava. Accordingly the commissioners of both nations entered the conference nearly at the same time, the *Kee Wongee*, as joint Commissioner, and most of the chiefs we had met at *Neoun-benzeik*, with several others, accompanied His Majesty's deputy, *Kolein Menghi*. The countenance of this personage, apparently withered and shrivelled up by age, was strongly expressive of low cunning and dissimulation; at a first glance he might have passed for a man of seventy, but the vivacity and keenness of a pair of sharp grey eyes reduced it some dozen years. Though splendidly dressed, he presented a vulgar contrast to the easy and dignified demeanour of *Kee Wongee*, who had a frank and open countenance.

When seated in the boat, the business was opened with much solemnity. In answer to the demand of one crore of rupees (which, valuing the rupee at two shillings, the then rate of exchange, amounted to one million sterling), *Kolein Menghi* pleaded the expense they had been put to, by raising so many armies, which had drained their treasury, saying it was cruel to exact such a sum, which they could not pay, offering to allow the British to cut down their fine trees, adding, "we could, perhaps, in one year, by economy, give you a million baskets of rice, but we do not grow rupees, and have no way of procuring such a sum as you require." The cession of *Arracan*, and the restoration of *Cassay* to its legitimate owner, *Gumbheer Sing*, was disputed by *Kolein Menghi*. After four meetings, and prolonged discussions, in which the Burmese commissioners displayed great meanness, having had recourse to downright begging, after cunning and art had failed, the treaty was at

last signed, fifteen days (to the 18th) being allowed for obtaining the ratification of the King of Ava and the performance of all preliminaries, viz., the delivery of all prisoners, and the payment of the first money instalment.

During this interval the two camps carried on a friendly intercourse, and which was occasionally interrupted by the enemy working at, and strengthening his defences, especially during the night. Remonstrances were of course made, but the Burmese chiefs, with a dexterous cunning, parried the accusation of insincerity, at the same time expatiating on the blessings of peace between the "two great nations." At length, on the 17th, a deputation of three officers of state (two Attawoons and a Woondock) visited the British commissioners, pretending to account for the non-arrival of the ratified treaty, prisoners, etc., by some unforeseen accident, declaring that they had not heard from Ava since the treaty was sent there.

The commissioners, however, well knew that boats were in daily communication with Ava, and this glaring falsehood put them on their guard against suspected treachery. Having in the meantime made other offers to the British commissioners, which were all refused most decidedly, they at last entreated a delay of five or six days. This was also refused, and at the same time they were told to communicate to the prince and the two Wongees, the final resolution of the British commissioners; that if they evacuated Melloone in thirty-six hours, and continued retiring with their forces before the British army upon Ava, hostilities would not be re-commenced, and the march would be suspended, as soon as the ratified treaty should be received from Ava.

This proposition being peremptorily rejected, and the armistice being ended on the 18th, three officers were sent over to Melloone, who gave formal information that no farther forbearance or concession could be made, that having acted such a deceitful part, ample satisfaction should be demanded and enforced. The hour of twelve at night was named as the last hour of peace, and no satisfaction having been offered by these treacherous chiefs, the British at the specified hour began with alacrity to prepare for the attack by throwing up batteries opposite to the chosen points of attack in the stockade, which was within gunshot range of our bank of the river; the heavy ordnance was landed from the flotilla during the night, and by ten o'clock next morning, twenty-eight pieces of artillery were in battery, and prepared to open upon the defences of the enemy.

Shortly after eleven o'clock, the fire from our batteries began, and continued incessant and with much effect for nearly two hours, by which time the troops intended for the assault

were embarked in the boats, under the superintendence of Captain Chads, as senior naval officer, at some distance above the place, in order to ensure their not being carried past it by the force of the stream. The first Bengal brigade, consisting of His Majesty's 13th and 38th regiments, under Lieutenant-Colonel Slade, was directed to land below the stockade, and attack it by the south-west angle, while three brigades were ordered to land above the place, and after carrying some out-works, to attack it by the northern face.

Notwithstanding every previous arrangement, and the utmost exertion of every one employed, the current, together with a strong northerly wind, carried the first brigade under all the fire of the place, to its destined point of attack, before the other brigades could reach the opposite shore, and being soon formed under the partial cover of a shelving bank, without waiting for the co-operation of the other troops, led by Lieutenant-Colonel Frith (Lieutenant-Colonel Slade having been wounded in the boats), moved forward to the assault with a steadiness and regularity that must have struck awe into the minds of their opponents, and in a very short time entered the place by escalade, and established themselves in the interior of the works.

A prouder or more gratifying sight has seldom, perhaps, been witnessed, than this mere handful of gallant fellows driving a dense multitude of from ten to fifteen thousand armed men before them, from works of such strength that even Memiaboo, contrary to all custom, did not think it necessary to leave them until the troops were in the act of carrying them. The other brigades cutting in upon the enemy's retreat, completed their defeat, and they were driven with severe loss from all their stockades, leaving the whole of their artillery and military stores in possession of the British.

In the house of Prince Memiaboo, was found cash to the amount of from thirty to forty thousand rupees; the whole of his stud was also made a prize of. The perfidy of the prince, the Wongees, and the government was now clearly demonstrated, as both the Burmese and British copies of the treaty were found in the house, in the same condition as when signed and sealed on the 3rd instant, along with all the other documents that were executed at Neoun-benzeik; besides several other papers written by a priest styled the Raja Goroo, a spiritual friend and the counsellor of the King of Ava, who had been for some time in the British lines, and had been employed to convey a pacific message to his Burmhan Majesty.

Memiaboo and his discomfited army retired with all possible haste from the scene of his disaster; while the British commander made instant preparation to follow him. Before, however, commencing his march, he despatched a messenger with

the unratified treaty to the Kee Wongee, as well to show the Burmese chiefs that their perfidy was exposed, as to give them the opportunity of still ratifying their engagements, merely stating in a note to the Wongee that in the hurry of his departure from Melloone, he had forgotten a document which he might now find more useful and acceptable to his government than they had considered it a few days previously.

The Wongee and his colleague politely returned their best thanks for the paper, but observed that the same hurry, which caused the loss of the treaty, had compelled them to leave behind also a large sum of money, which they likewise much regretted, and which they felt confident the British general only waited the opportunity of returning!

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE BATTLE OF PAGAHM-MEW.

1825.

ON the 25th of January, the British army again moved forward, the roads still worse; and on the 31st, the headquarters were at Zaynan-gheoun, or Earth-oil-Creek.

The capture of Melloone, as was expected, alarmed the King of Ava, who in order to avert greater calamity, sent Dr. Price, an American missionary, and Assistant-Surgeon Sandford, of the royal regiment, who had been taken prisoner some months before, on his parole of honour to return to Ava, accompanied by four prisoners returned by the king as a compliment. The poor fellows made a miserable appearance, never having been shaved, or had their hair cut since taken. They were sent to state the king's wish for peace, and to learn the most favourable terms. The answer varied but little from those formerly offered at Melloone; but the British General acceded to the request not to pass Pagahm-mew for twelve days, to allow time for transmitting the money from Ava.

On the next morning, the two delegates set off for Ava, Surgeon Price full of hope that he would return in a few days to conclude the peace. From the returned prisoners information was obtained which very clearly showed the hostile intentions of the King of Ava twelve months before hostilities commenced, when he was making arrangements for the conquest of Bengal.

Maha Bandoola was the grand projector, who told His Majesty that with 100,000 men he would pledge himself to succeed. So confident was this boaster, that when he marched

into Arracan, he was provided with golden fetters, in which the Governor-General of India was to be led into Ava as a captive.

On coming near to Pagahm-mew, rumours were afloat that the Court of Ava were levying fresh troops; forty thousand had been induced by large promises to come forward, under the patriotic title of Gong-to-doo, or Retrievers of the King's Glory! This army was placed under the command of a savage warrior, styled Nee-Woon-Breen, which has been variously translated as Prince of Darkness, King of Hell, and Prince of the Setting Sun. On the 8th, when within a day's march of Pagahm-mew, certain intelligence was obtained that the Nee-Woon-Breen was prepared to meet the British force under the walls of that city.

On the 9th of February, the British column moved forward in order of attack, reduced considerably under two thousand men by the absence of two brigades. The advance guard was met in the jungle by strong bodies of skirmishers, and after maintaining a running fight for several miles, the column debouching into the open country, discovered the Burmese army nearly 20,000 strong, drawn up in an inverted crescent, the wings of which threatened the little body of assailants on either flank. Undismayed, however, by the strong position of this formidable body, the British commander boldly pushed forward for their centre. The attack was so vigorous that the enemy gave way, being completely divided into two; the divided wings had much to do to reach a second line of redoubts under the walls of Pagahm-mew, which had been prepared in anticipation of such an untoward event.

The British column lost no time, but followed the retreating enemy so rapidly that they had not time for rallying in their works, into which they were closely followed and again routed with great loss; hundreds jumped into the river, and there perished. The whole of this remaining force, with the exception of two or three thousand men, dispersed, leaving the conquerors in quiet possession of their well-merited conquest.

The unfortunate commander, Nee-Woon-Breen, on reaching Ava, was very cruelly put to death, by the king's command.

On the evening of the 13th, Mr. Price and Mr. Sandford, now liberated, arrived in camp, when Mr. Price announced that the king and court had consented to yield to the formerly proposed terms, as they now saw that further opposition was of no avail. Yet the prisoners were not returned, nor was the first instalment, being twenty-five lacs of rupees, forthcoming. However, they said that everything was ready to be delivered, only the king hesitated letting the cash go out of his possession, apprehending that we should, notwithstanding, still hold his country, which he would assuredly do in like circumstances. He was anxious, therefore, to learn if we could be persuaded to

accept of six lacs of rupees now, and the remaining nineteen lacs on the arrival of the army at Prome. To all this was added an earnest request that in any case the army might not come nearer to the capital.

A positive refusal to all this was returned, and on the following morning Mr. Price returned to Ava, assuring us of his return in a few days with some of the Burmhan ministers, in order to make a final settlement.

The army continuing to advance, was met at Yandaboo, only forty-five miles from Ava, by Mr. Price, and two ministers of state; accompanied by the prisoners, and the stipulated sum of twenty-five lacs of rupees. These ambassadors were empowered to state the unreserved acquiescence of their master, who had authorised them by his royal sign manuel, to accept of and sign such terms as we might propose.

On the 24th of February the treaty was, for the second time, settled, and finally signed; the Burmese government, at the same time, engaging to furnish boats for the conveyance of a great part of the force to Rangoon.

Here this war may be considered as ended; a war into which the government of India had been compelled to enter; and it was of a more protracted and serious character than any in which our eastern government had been engaged for many years. It was further distinguished from all others by the persevering obstinacy of the enemy, and the many difficulties, obstacles, and privations with which the British force had to contend for such a length of time.

Men and officers felt proud in having at last compelled our stubborn foe to sign a peace, honourable and advantageous to the British, as it was humiliating and inglorious to the Court of Ava; proud that the utmost wishes of our government had been realised, and the service they had been employed on, completed to the fullest extent.

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## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE AFGHANISTAN DISASTERS.

1838-39.

In 1836, the aggressive acts of Persia, influenced by Russian gold, were sufficiently alarming, but all doubt was removed when the Shah invaded Afghanistan, and laid siege to Herat.

At this moment the united influence of Persia and Russia would seem to have been established in all the Afghan dominions with the single exception of Herat, and the existence of that influence in those countries, viewed in conjunction with the

course which those powers had recently been pursuing, and the measures that had resulted from their joint diplomatic exertions, was so obviously incompatible with the tranquillity of India, and even with its security, that no measures could be more unequivocally measures of self-defence than those which the British Government were called upon to adopt for the purpose of counteracting the evils with which India was threatened; Persia had no provocation to complain of. The course pursued by the British Government towards this Government had been one of uniform friendship and forbearance; and it appeared a hazardous and costly line of policy to adopt were the British Government any longer to permit Persia, under shelter of her treaty with Britain, to open the way to India for another and far more formidable power.

Although that city of Herat held strongly out, and finally repulsed the Persians, the country generally was anxious for their alliance, and to check an influence that might prove truly dangerous hereafter, the Indian government decided on an armed intervention, and the restoration of Shah Shoojah was made the apology for a hostile demonstration.

The entrance of an invading army into Afghanistan was heralded by the Simla declaration, and a strong force, termed "the army of the Indus," in due time penetrated this mountain country by the route of the terrible Bolan Pass, a huge chasm, running between precipitous rocks to the length of seventy miles, and rising in that distance to the height of 5,637 feet above the plains below, which are here about 750 feet in height above the level of the sea. The dangerous defiles which abound in these mountains are infested by the poorest and wildest tribes of the country, who live entirely by plunder; but they fortunately refrained from molesting the troops to the extent which they might have done.

The occupation of Afghanistan was disastrous from the first. The troops were severely harassed and half-starved, and the blunders of the political agents, want of cordiality in the commanders, dissension between the contingents of Bengal and Bombay, all gave little promise of ultimate success. Early in April, Sir John Keane joined, and took the chief command, and on the 7th he advanced on Candahar. The march was extremely oppressive. Intense heat, want of water, desultory attacks, all made the movement a distressing one, but Candahar was at last reached, and Shah Shoojah restored to the Musnad.

Sir John's next operation was the reduction of Ghuznee, and it would appear rather unaccountable that with this strong fortress before him, he should have left his siege-train at Candahar.

Ghuznee, instead of being, as had been represented, almost

defenceless, was a place of remarkable strength, and was found by the engineers to possess a high rampart in good repair, built on a scarped mound, about thirty-five feet high, flanked by numerous towers, and surrounded by a *fausse-braye* and wet ditch. The irregular figure of the "enceinte" gave a good flanking fire, whilst the height of the citadel covered the interior from the commanding fire of the hills to the north, rendering it nugatory. In addition to this, the towers at the angles had been enlarged, screen-walls had been built before the gates, the ditch cleared out and filled with water, stated to be unfordable, and an outwork built upon the right bank, so as to command its bed.

Sir John, however, seemed to hold Peninsular practice in fortunate recollection, for he repeated at Ghuznee what Brochard, a French engineer, had tried so successfully at Amarante, blew down a barricade, and carried the place by storm. Khelat was subsequently taken by assault, and the army of the Indus soon after broken up—the Bombay contingent retiring to cantonments, and the Bengal retaining military occupation of Cabul.

The next epoch in Indian history is painfully unfortunate, and the military occupation of Afghanistan forms a fearful experience in Monson's retreat. Monson was as brave as any officer in the British army; second to none in undaunted valour at storming a breach, but he wanted the rarer quality of moral intrepidity, and the power of adopting great designs on his own responsibility. On the 6th of July, Holkar was engaged in crossing the Chumbul; the fortunate moment of attack, never to be recalled was allowed to escape; and two days afterwards the British general commenced his retreat. He did what ordinary officers would have done at Assaye, when it was ascertained Stevenson's division could not come up; and what was the result? In a few hours the subsidiary horse, now four thousand strong, which was left to observe the enemy, was enveloped by clouds of the Mahratta cavalry, and after a bloody struggle, cut to pieces with their gallant commander.

Painful as the sequel proved, it may yet be briefly told. Colonel Monson gained the Makundra pass, and afterwards retreated to Kotah and Rampoora, after abandoning his artillery. Reinforced by two battalions and three thousand irregular horse, he quitted the fort and marched directly for the British frontier. Heavy rains fell; and on reaching the banks of the Bannas, he found the stream impassable. The position of this ill-fated corps was truly desperate. In their front was a raging torrent, in their rear twenty thousand horsemen, continually receiving fresh accessions of strength in infantry and guns, as they successively came up. The river having at length become fordable, four battalions crossed over; and the enemy,

seeing his advantage, immediately commenced a furious attack on the single battalion and pickets, which now remained alone on the other side. With such heroic constancy, however, was this unequal contest maintained by these brave men, that they not only repulsed the whole attacks made upon them, but, pursuing their success, captured several of the enemy's guns—an event which clearly demonstrated what results might have followed the adoption of a vigorous offensive in the outset, when the troops were undiminished in strength and unbroken in spirit.

Disasters followed fast upon each other. The sepoy guard who accompanied the military chests was attacked by the cavalry of Scindiah, their own ally; and when the Mahrattas were defeated, they treacherously deserted to Holkar. The whole of the irregular horse, which had reinforced Monson at Rampoora, followed the example; and a few companies of Sepoys—a rare occurrence among those faithful people—quitted their ranks, and joined this enemy. Formed in oblong square, the greater portion of the latter part of the retreat was executed—fifteen thousand horse incessantly harassing in front, flank, and rear, the retiring column, and only kept at bay by the indomitable courage and unbroken formation of the remnant of this glorious division. At last, worn down by fatigue, and reduced by casualties and desertion of twelve thousand men, scarcely a thousand entered Agra, without cannon, baggage, or ammunition, and only fit for the hospitals, and afterwards to be invalided.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE DEFEAT OF THE BILUCHIS.

1842.

For a time, affairs in Scinde, after the Afghanistan disasters, looked peaceable; but the conditions proposed by new treaties to the Amirs, in the infringements upon their game preserves, and the abolition of transit duties, occasioned some discontent. Gradually this jealousy of the Scinde chieftains ripened into hatred; and while evasive policy was resorted to by the Amirs, a corps, under Sir Charles Napier, advanced to support the British representative, Major Outram.

The agency had been attacked, gallantly defended, and Outram effected an honourable retreat; while the Amirs, collecting in great force at Fulali, Sir Charles, with his small force, determined to attack them. An extract from his own despatch will best describe this daring and most brilliant affair:

“On the 16th I marched to Muttaree, having there ascertained that the Amirs were in position at Miani (ten miles’

distance), to the number of 22,000 men, and well knowing that a delay for reinforcements would both strengthen their confidence and add to their numbers, already seven times that which I commanded, I resolved to attack them, and we marched at 4 a.m. on the morning of the 17th; at eight o'clock the advanced guard discovered their camp; at nine o'clock we formed in order of battle, about 2,800 men of all arms, and twelve pieces of artillery.

We were now within range of the enemy's guns, and fifteen pieces of artillery opened upon us, and were answered by our cannon. The enemy were very strongly posted, woods were on their flanks, which I did not think could be turned. These two woods were joined by the dry bed of the river Fallali, which had a high bank. The bed of the river was nearly straight, and about 1,200 yards in length. Behind this and in both woods were the enemy posted. In front of their extreme right, and on the edge of the wood, was a village. Having made the best examination of their position which so short a time permitted, the artillery was posted on the right of the line, and some skirmishers of infantry, with the Scinde irregular horse, were sent in front to try and make the enemy show his force more distinctly; we then advanced from the right in echelon of battalions, refusing the left to save it from the fire of the village.

The 9th Bengal light cavalry formed the reserve in rear of the left wing; and the Poona horse, together with four companies of infantry, guarded the baggage. In this order of battle we advanced as at a review across a fine plain swept by the cannon of the enemy. The artillery and H. M.'s 22nd regiment in line, formed the leading echelon, the 25th N.I. the second, the 12th N.I. the third, and the 1st grenadier N.I. the fourth.

The enemy was 1100 yards from our line, which soon traversed the intervening space. Our fire of musketry opened at about 100 yards from the bank in reply to that of the enemy; and in a few minutes the engagement became general along the bank of the river, on which the combatants fought for about three hours or more with great fury, man to man. Then was seen the superiority of the musket and bayonet over the sword and shield and matchlock. The brave Biluchis first discharging their matchlocks and pistols, dashed over the bank with desperate resolution; but down went these bold and skilful swordsmen under the superior power of the musket and bayonet. At one time the courage and numbers of the enemy against the 22nd, the 25th, and the 12th regiments bore heavily in that part of the battle. There was no time to be lost, and I sent orders to the cavalry to force the right of the enemy's line. This

order was very gallantly executed by the 9th Bengal cavalry and the Scinde horse; the struggle on our right and centre was at that moment so fierce that I could not go to the left.

In this charge the 9th light cavalry took a standard and several pieces of artillery, and the Scinde horse took the enemy's camp, from which a vast body of their cavalry slowly retired fighting. Lieutenant Fitzgerald gallantly pursued them for two miles, and, I understand, slew three of the enemy in single combat. The brilliant conduct of these two cavalry regiments decided in my opinion the crisis of the action, for from the moment the cavalry were seen in rear of their right flank, the resistance of our opponents slackened; the 22nd regiment forced the bank, the 25th and 12th did the same, the latter regiment capturing several guns, and the victory was decided. The artillery made great havoc among the dense masses of the enemy, and dismounted several of their guns. The whole of the enemy's artillery, ammunition, standards, and camp, with considerable stores and some treasure, were taken."

War was now regularly proclaimed, and on the 22nd of March the Sikhs recommenced hostilities at Mattari, Sir Charles Napier, in the meanwhile, having effected a junction with his reinforcements. Halting at the village of Duppa, on the 23rd, he decided on attacking the Biluchis on the 24th. The enemy were in a strong position, numbering 20,000 men. The Anglo-Indian army might amount in round numbers to 5000, all arms included. Thus runs the despatch:—

"The forces under my command marched from Hyderabad this morning at daybreak. About half-past 8 o'clock we discovered and attacked the army under the personal command of the Meer Shere Mahomed, consisting of twenty thousand men of all arms, strongly posted behind one of those large nullahs by which this country is intersected in all directions. After a combat of about three hours, the enemy was wholly defeated with considerable slaughter, and the loss of all his standards and cannon.

His position was nearly a straight line; the nullah was formed by two deep parallel ditches, one 20 feet wide and 8 feet deep, the other 42 feet wide and 17 deep, which had been for a long distance freshly scarped, and a banquet made behind the bank expressly for the occasion.

To ascertain the strength of his line was extremely difficult, as his left did not appear to be satisfactorily defined; but he began by moving to his right when he perceived that the British force outflanked him in that direction. Believing that this movement had drawn him from that part of the nullah which had been prepared for defence, I hoped to attack his right with less difficulty, and Major Leslie's troop of horse artillery was

ordered to move forward and endeavour to rake the nullah. The 9th light cavalry and Poona horse advancing in line, on the left of the artillery, which was supported on the right by Her Majesty's 22nd regiment, the latter being, however, at first considerably retired to admit of the oblique fire of Leslie's troop. The whole of the artillery now opened upon the enemy's position, and the British line advanced in echellons from the left, H.M.'s 22nd regiment leading the attack.

The enemy was now perceived to move from his centre in considerable bodies to his left, apparently retreating, unable to sustain the cross-fire of the British artillery; on seeing which Major Stack, at the head of the 3rd cavalry, under command of Captain Delamain, and the Sindh horse, under command of Captain Jacob, made a brilliant charge upon the enemy's left flank, crossing the nullah and cutting down the retreating enemy for several miles.

While this was passing on the right, H.M.'s 22nd regiment, gallantly led by Major Poole, who commanded the brigade, and Captain George, who commanded the corps, attacked the nullah on the left with great gallantry, and I regret to add, with considerable loss. This brave battalion marched up to the nullah under a heavy fire of matchlocks, without returning a shot till within forty paces of the intrenchment, and then stormed it like British soldiers. The intrepid Lieutenant Coote first mounted the rampart, seized one of the enemy's standards, and was severely wounded while waving it and cheering on his men.

Meanwhile the Poona horse, under Captain Tait, and the 9th cavalry, under Major Story, turned the enemy's right flank pursuing and cutting down the fugitives for several miles. H.M.'s 22nd regiment was well supported by the batteries commanded by Captains Willoughby and Hutt, which crossed their fire with that of Major Leslie. Then came the 2nd brigade under command of Major Woodburn, bearing down into action with excellent coolness. It consisted of the 25th, 21st, and 12th regiments, under the command of Captains Jackson, Stevens, and Fisher, respectively; these regiments were strongly sustained by the fire of Captain Whitley's battery, on the right of which were the 8th and 1st regiments, under Majors Browne and Clibborne; these two corps advanced with the regularity of a review up to the intrenchments, their commanders, with considerable exertion, stopping their fire, on seeing that a portion of the Sindh horse and 3rd cavalry in charging the enemy had got in front of the brigade.

The battle was decided by the troop of horse artillery and H.M.'s 22nd regiment."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## THE BATTLE OF MOODKEE.

1845.

THE fatal *dénouement* of the retreat from Cabul was still in vivid colouring before the British public, when tidings from the East announced that it might be considered only as the forerunner of still more alarming demonstrations, and these from a power fully as unfriendly, and far more formidable to British interests than the Ghiljies and fanatic tribes of Afghanistan. The Punjaub for years had been internally convulsed. The musnud in turn was occupied by women whose debaucheries were disgusting, and men who had reached it by the foulest murders. The country was frightfully disorganised; one bond of union alone existed among the Sikhs, and that was the most deadly hostility to the British.

The region of North-Western India, known in modern times under the name of the Punjaub, is remarkably well defined by geographical limits. On the north, it is bounded by one of the Himalaya ranges. On the west by the Khybur and Soliman mountains and the Indus. On the south and east the Sutlej divides it from British India. Its area is computed to inclose 85,000 square miles. The arteries of the Indus, namely the Jelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej, traverse the whole country, and form its local divisions into what are termed doabs. The Punjaub, being translated, hence means "the country of five rivers."

The state of things beyond the Sutlej alarmed the Indian government, and Lord Ellenborough acted with energy and good judgment; Scinde and Gwalior must be deprived of the power of being mischievous, and while the former was annexed in form to the possessions of the Company, Gwalior was being prepared for undergoing a similar change. To give effect to these important measures, an army of observation marched upon the Sutlej, but long before any results from his policy could be developed, Lord Ellenborough was recalled, and Sir Henry Hardinge appointed to succeed him. In the spring of 1844 the new governor reached Calcutta.

The Cabul disasters had rendered the very thought of Eastern war most unpopular at home, and Sir Henry assumed the chief command, with a full determination to avoid a rupture with the Sikhs—could such be avoidable; but that, as events proved, was impossible, and pacific policy was tried and found wanting.

The summer of 1845 was marked by frightful excesses in Lahore. Murder and debauchery went hand-in-hand together;

and the Ranee herself, as well as her chief adviser, Jowar Singh, no longer disguised their purpose of coming to blows with the British. On the part of Jowar Singh, this was but the prosecution of a policy which had long been in favour with him; and as he was heartily detested by the rest of the sirdars, they made it a pretext for conspiring against him and putting him to death. But the Ranee was swayed by different motives. From day to day her army became more unmanageable; and she desired, above all things, to get rid of the nuisance, even if her deliverance should come with a victorious British force to Lahore. Accordingly, after having long withstood the clamours of her officers, she gave a hearty, yet a reluctant, consent to the proposed invasion of the protected states; and a plan of operations was drawn up, which indicated no slight knowledge of the art of war on the part of those from whom it emanated.

As yet, Sir Henry had avoided every appearance of angry demonstration. Loodiana and Ferozepore were well garrisoned. The former place was weak—the latter better calculated for resistance. A magazine to supply both places had been judiciously established where the Umballa road touches that of Kurnaul—for Busseean was equally accessible to the garrisons which were threatened.

Coming events had not been disregarded by the chief in command, and in June, Sir Henry in person proceeded to the western provinces. Approaching hostilities had in the autumn become too evident; the Sikhs were advancing to the Sutlej, and instead of having, as formerly reported, 15,000 men in and about Lahore, they had actually seven divisions, which might fairly average, each with the other, 8000 men. One of these was to remain to garrison the capital, the remainder were disposable, and, as it was believed, destined to attack Loodiana, Kurrachee, Ferozepore, Scinde, and Attock.

Before the subsequent transactions are described, a detail of the strength, organisation, and *matériel* of the Sikh army, as given at the time by Lieutenant-Colonel Steinbach, formerly in the service of the Maharajah, will be interesting.

“This force, consisting of about 110,000 men, is divided into regulars and irregulars; the former of whom, about 70,000 strong, are drilled and appointed according to the European system. The cavalry branch of the disciplined force amounts to nearly 13,000, and the infantry and artillery to 60,000 more. The irregulars, variously armed and equipped, are nearly 40,000 strong, of which number upwards of 20,000 are cavalry, the remainder consisting of infantry and matchlock-men, while the contingents, which the sirdars or chiefs are obliged to parade on the requisition of the sovereign, amount to considerably above 30,000 men. The artillery consisted in Runject’s time

of 376 guns, and 370 swivels mounted on camels or on light carriages adapted to their size. There is no distinct corps of artillery as in other services, but there are 4000 or 5000 men, under a daroga, trained to the duty of gunners, and these are distributed with the ordnance throughout the regular army.

The costume of the regular infantry is scarlet, with different coloured facings, to distinguish regiments, as in the British service. The trousers are of blue linen; the head-dress is a blue turban, with one end loose, and spread so as to entirely cover the head, back of the neck, and shoulders; the belts are of black leather; the arms a musket and bayonet, the manufacture of Lahore. The cavalry wear helmets or steel caps, round which shawls or scarfs are folded. The *irregulars*, in their dress and appointments, fully justify the appellation which their habits and mode of making war obtained for them. Cotton, silk, or broad cloth tunics of various colours, with the addition of shawls, cloaks, breastplates, or coats of mail, with turban or helmets, *ad libitum*, impart to them a motley but picturesque appearance. They are all badly mounted, and, indeed, little can be said even of the regular cavalry in this respect. The Punjaub breed of horses is far from good, and they do not import stock from other countries to improve their own cattle.

The pay of the sepoys of the regular army of the Punjaub is higher than that of the same class in the army of the East India Company, each common soldier receiving ten rupees per mensem. The troops of the *irregulars* receive twenty-five rupees each, out of which they provide their arms and clothing, and feed their horse, putting the government to no other expense whatever for their services.

Enlistment in the regular army of the Punjaub is quite voluntary, and the service is so popular that the army could upon an emergency be increased to almost any amount. The soldiery are exceedingly apt in acquiring a knowledge of their military duties; but they are so averse to control that instances of insubordination are common; latterly, indeed, open mutiny has frequently characterised the relations of officer and soldier. Insubordination is punished—when punishment is practicable—with confinement, loss of pay, or extra duty. But in the present state of military disorganisation no means of chastising rebellion are available.

No pensions were, or are, assigned to the soldiery for long service, nor is there any provision for the widows and families of those who die, or are killed in the service of the state. Promotions, instead of being the right of the good soldier in order of seniority, or the reward of merit in the various grades, is frequently effected by bribery. In the higher ranks, advance-

ment is obtained by the judicious application of *douceurs* to the palm of the favourites at court, or the military chieftains about the person of the sovereign.

In the event of the government of the Punjaub falling into the hands of the British, some time would probably elapse before the dissolute rabble which now composes the army could be brought under a state of as perfect discipline as that which exists in the Anglo-Indian army; but there is no doubt that ultimately the result of a system, strict and severe from the commencement, when supported by a stern and absolute monarchy, would display itself, and render the Sikh troops as devoted a body as the regular native army of Hindostan.

Only twenty-three years have elapsed since the military force in the Punjaub consisted of a large and undisciplined horde. In 1822, the first European officers presented themselves (according to Prinsep) at Runjeet Singh's durbar, seeking military service and entertainment. These were Messrs. Allard and Ventura, who had served in the French army until the annihilation of Napoleon Buonaparte deprived them of employment. At first, Runjeet Singh, with the suspicion common to a native Indian prince, received them coldly; and his distrust of their purposes was heightened by the Punjaubee chieftains, who were naturally jealous of the introduction of Europeans into the military service; but a submissive and judicious letter from these officers removed the apprehensions of the Maharajah, and he, with the spirit and originality of a man of genius, admitted them into his service; appointing them instructors of his troops in the European system of drill and warfare. The good conduct and wise management of these gentlemen speedily removed Runjeet Singh's prejudices against Europeans; and the door to employment being thrown open, several military men entered the service of the Maharajah, and at the close of his reign there were not less than a dozen receiving his pay, and, to use an Indian expression, 'eating his salt.'

The successors of Runjeet Singh, however, did not look with an eye of favour upon men who were not to be bought, and whose sense of personal dignity revolted at the treatment to which the unbridled Sikh chieftains were inclined to subject them. The greater part accordingly resigned their commissions; some of them retiring with ample fortunes, and others seeking honourable employment elsewhere.

The Sikh army, until lately, was considered by many British officers, who had the opportunity of seeing it, to have been in a fair state of discipline. They form very correct lines, but in manœuvring their movements are too slow, and they would, in consequence, be in danger, from a body of British cavalry, of being successfully charged during a change of position. They

would also run the risk of having their flanks turned by their inability to follow the motion of an European enemy with equal rapidity.

The arms, that is to say, the muskets, are of very inferior stamp, incapable of throwing a ball to any distance, and on quick and repeated discharges liable to burst. Their firing is bad, owing to the very small quantity of practice ammunition allowed by the government; not more than ten balls out of a hundred, at the distance of as many paces, would probably tell upon an enemy's ranks. They still preserve the old system of three ranks, the front one kneeling when firing and then rising to load—a method in action liable to create confusion.

In person, the infantry soldiers are tall and thin, with good features and full beards; their superior height is owing to the extraordinary length of their lower limbs. They are capable of enduring the fatigue of long marches for several days in succession (the author having on one occasion marched with his regiment a distance of 300 miles within twelve days), and are, generally speaking, so hardy that exposure to oppressive heats or heavy rains has little effect upon them. In a great measure this is the result of custom. Excepting in the vicinity of Lahore and Peshawur, there are few regular quarters or cantonments; the men occupy small tents or caravanserais.

The drum and fife and bugle are in general use in the Sikh infantry regiments, and in some of the favourite royal corps of Runjeet Singh an attempt was made to introduce a band of music, but a graft of European melody upon Punjaubee discord did not produce, as may be imagined, a very harmonious result.

The cavalry of the Sikh army is very inferior in every respect to the infantry. While the latter are carefully picked from large bodies of candidates for service, the former are composed of men of all sorts and sizes and ages, who get appointed solely through the interests of the different sirdars. They are mean-looking, ill-dressed, and, as already stated, wretchedly mounted. Their horse trappings are of leather of the worst quality, and their saddles are of the same miserable material, and badly constructed. When the horse is in motion, the legs and arms of the rider wave backwards and forwards, right and left, by way, as it were, of keeping time with the pace of the animal bestridden. The horses are small, meagre, and ill-shaped, with the aquiline nose which so peculiarly proclaims inferiority of breed. In the field, the conduct of the Sikh cavalry has generally corresponded with their appearance and efficiency. They are totally deficient of firmness in the hour of struggle, and only charge the foe when a vast superiority of numerical force gives them a sort of warranty of success."

Undeceived touching the supposed weakness of the Sikh

army, Sir Henry Hardinge, in conjunction with his gallant superior in command, Sir Hugh Gough, concentrated his troops, called for reinforcements from the interior, added largely to his commissariate—and what in Eastern warfare is altogether indispensable, largely increased his beasts of burden and means of transport. Then taking a central position, he waited calmly and prudently until the Sikh designs should be more clearly developed.

November came; the storm had been gathering; remonstrances from the Governor-General had failed; and on the 4th, the Sikh vakeel was formally dismissed. Still immediate hostilities were not anticipated, when suddenly news arrived on the 13th, that the enemy had crossed the Sutlej, and Ferozepore was invested. The British commander hurried by forced marches to its relief, and on the 18th, after a seven leagues' march, at noon the Anglo-Indian army reached the village of Moodkee. A movement of twenty miles under an eastern sun is most distressing, and the wearied troops having bivouacked, ignorant of the proximity of an enemy, cut wood, lighted fires, and commenced cooking. Strange as it may appear, although in the immediate presence of the Sikh army, no vidette had seen it, and the booming of the enemy's guns first gave note of preparation.

The army was in a state of great exhaustion, principally from the want of water, which was not procurable on the road, when about 3 p.m., information was received that the Sikh army was advancing; and the troops had scarcely time to get under arms and move to their positions, when that fact was ascertained.

"I immediately," says Lord Gough, "pushed forward the horse artillery and cavalry, directing the infantry, accompanied by the field batteries, to move forward in support. We had not proceeded beyond two miles, when we found the enemy in position. They were said to consist of from 15,000 to 20,000 infantry, about the same force of cavalry, and forty guns. They evidently had either just taken up this position, or were advancing in order of battle against us.

To resist their attack and to cover the formation of the infantry, I advanced the cavalry under Brigadiers White, Gough, and Mactier, rapidly to the front, in columns of squadrons, and occupied the plain. They were speedily followed by the five troops of horse artillery, under Brigadier Brooke, who took up a forward position, having the cavalry then on his flanks.

The country is a dead flat, covered at short intervals with a low, but in some places, thick jhow jungle and dotted with sandy hillocks. The enemy screened their infantry and artillery behind this jungle, and such undulations as the ground afforded;

and, whilst our twelve battalions formed from echelon of brigade into line, opened a very serious cannonade upon our advancing troops, which was vigorously replied to by the battery of horse artillery under Brigadier Brooke, which was soon joined by the two light field batteries. The rapid and well-directed fire of our artillery appeared soon to paralyse that of the enemy, and, as it was necessary to complete our infantry dispositions without advancing the artillery too near to the jungle, I directed the cavalry under Brigadiers White and Gough to make a flank movement on the enemy's left, with a view of threatening and turning that flank, if possible. With praiseworthy gallantry, the 3rd light dragoons, with the 2nd brigade of cavalry, consisting of the bodyguard and fifth light cavalry, with a portion of the 4th lancers, turned the left of the Sikh army, and, sweeping along the whole rear of its infantry and guns, silenced for a time the latter, and put their numerous cavalry to flight.

Whilst this movement was taking place on the enemy's left, I directed the remainder of the 4th lancers, the 9th irregular cavalry, under Brigadier Mactier, with a light field battery, to threaten their right. This manœuvre was also successful. Had not the infantry and guns of the enemy been screened by the jungle, these brilliant charges of the cavalry would have been productive of greater effect.

When the infantry advanced to the attack, Brigadier Brooke rapidly pushed on his horse artillery close to the jungle, and the cannonade was resumed on both sides. The infantry, under Major-Generals Sir Harry Smith, Gilbert, and Sir John M'Caskill, attacked in echelon of lines the enemy's infantry, almost invisible amongst the wood and the approaching darkness of night. The opposition of the enemy was such as might have been expected from troops who had everything at stake, and who had long vaunted of being irresistible. Their ample and extended line, from their great superiority of numbers, far outflanked ours; but this was counteracted by the flank movements of our cavalry. The attack of the infantry now commenced; and the roll of fire from this powerful arm soon convinced the Sikh army that they had met with a foe they little expected; and their whole force was driven from position after position, with great slaughter, and the loss of seventeen pieces of artillery, some of them of heavy calibre; our infantry using that never-failing weapon, the bayonet, whenever the enemy stood. Night only saved them from worse disaster, for this stout conflict was maintained during an hour and a half of the dim starlight, amidst a cloud of dust from the sandy plain, which yet more obscured every object.

I regret to say this gallant and successful attack was attended with considerable loss; the force bivouacked upon the

field for some hours, and only returned to its encampment after ascertaining that it had no enemy before it, and night prevented the possibility of a regular advance in pursuit."

In this brilliant and sanguinary battle, the British loss was necessarily heavy. Sir Robert Sale, and Sir John McCaskill were killed, and Brigadiers Bolton and Mactier, with Colonels Byrne and Bunbury wounded. The total casualties amounted to 872 of all arms.

Nothing could have been more fortunate than the prestige which Moodkee gave to the campaign. One damning fault of the Spanish generals on the Peninsula was that they literally overmarched their troops until they came to a dead standstill—and this the British commanders most judiciously avoided.

There was great suffering everywhere for want of water. Hunger men may endure for days together; but a burning thirst in a tropical climate is terrible; and when the fever in the blood becomes aggravated by such exertions as the British army had that day made, the whole world seems valueless in comparison with a cup of cold water. None came, however, for several hours; yet the gallant fellows bore the privation without a murmur; and when the following day brought them a reinforcement of two European regiments of infantry, with a small battery of heavy guns, they felt that they were irresistible. Nevertheless, the general, with great good sense, gave them two entire days to refresh; he had nothing to gain by precipitating matters. Ferozepore had been saved by the battle of the 18th, and his communications with the place being in some sort restored, he had time to warn Sir John Littler of his purposes, and to prepare him for co-operating in their accomplishment. These were the chief advantages of delay; besides that, others probably occurred to him, namely, the opportunity which was afforded for the coming up of the corps which had been directed to march from Delhi, Meerut, and other stations. And on the part of the Sikhs, it was doubtless considered that their very numbers would render a long halt on one spot impossible for them; for no country, however fertile, can sustain the pressure of sixty thousand men many days.

A little delay in active operations was, under circumstances, particularly politic, for while the Sikhs were shaken in confidence and marvelling at their discomfiture, the British lion was gathering strength to make another and a deadlier spring.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE BATTLE OF FERROZEPORE.

1845.

On the morning of the 21st, the Anglo-Indian army again took the offensive, and marched against the intrenched position of the enemy, and the details of the succeeding events of that bloody and glorious day are thus lucidly and modestly given still by Lord Gough.

“Instead of advancing to the direct attack of their formidable works, our force manœuvred to their right; the second and fourth divisions of infantry, in front, supported by the first division and cavalry in second line, continued to defile for some time out of cannon-shot between the Sikhs and Ferozepore. The desired effect was not long delayed, a cloud of dust was seen on our left, and according to the instructions sent him on the preceding evening, Major-General Sir John Littler, with his division, availing himself of the offered opportunity, was discovered in full march to unite his force with mine. The junction was soon effected, and thus was accomplished one of the great objects of all our harassing marches and privations, in the relief of this division of our army from the blockade of the numerous forces by which it was surrounded.

Dispositions were now made for a united attack on the enemy's intrenched camp. We found it to be a parallelogram of about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth, including within its area the strong village of Ferozeshah; the shorter sides looking towards the Sulej and Moodkee, and the longer towards Ferozepore and the open country. We moved against the last named face, the ground in front of which was, like the Sikh position in Moodkee, covered with low jungle.

The divisions of Major-General Sir John Littler, Brigadier Wallace (who had succeeded Major-General Sir John McCaskill), and Major-General Gilbert, deployed into line, having in the centre our whole force of artillery, with the exception of three troops of horse artillery, one on either flank, and one in support, to be moved as occasion required. Major-General Sir Harry Smith's division, and our small cavalry force, moved in second line, having a brigade in reserve to cover each wing.

I should here observe that I committed the charge and direction of the left wing to Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge, while I personally conducted the right.

A very heavy cannonade was opened by the enemy, who had dispersed over their position upwards of 100 guns, more than 40 of which were of battering calibre; these kept up a heavy and well-directed fire, which the practice of our far less

numerous artillery, of much lighter metal, checked in some degree, but could not silence; finally, in the face of a storm of shot and shell, our infantry advanced and carried these formidable intrenchments; they threw themselves upon the guns, and with matchless gallantry wrested them from the enemy; but, when the batteries were partially within our grasp, our soldiery had to face such a fire of musketry from the Sikh infantry, arrayed behind their guns, that, in spite of the most heroic efforts, a portion only of the intrenchment could be carried. Night fell while the conflict was everywhere raging.

Although I now brought up Major-General Sir Harry Smith's division, and he captured and long retained another point of the position, and Her Majesty's 3rd light dragoons charged and took some of the most formidable batteries, yet the enemy remained in possession of a considerable portion of the great quadrangle, whilst our troops, intermingled with theirs, kept possession of the remainder, and finally bivouacked upon it, exhausted by their gallant efforts, greatly reduced in numbers, and suffering extremely from thirst, yet animated by an indomitable spirit. In this state of things the long night wore away.

Near the middle of it one of their heavy guns was advanced, and played with deadly effect upon our troops. Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge immediately formed Her Majesty's 80th foot and the 1st European light infantry. They were led to the attack by their commanding officers, and animated in their exertions by Lieutenant-Colonel Wood (aide-de-camp to the lieutenant-general), who was wounded in the onset. The 80th captured the gun, and the enemy, dismayed by this counter-check, did not venture to press on further. During the whole night, however, they continued to harass our troops by fire of artillery, wherever moonlight discovered our position.

But with daylight of the 22nd came retribution. Our infantry formed line, supported on both flanks by horse artillery, whilst a fire was opened from our centre by such of our heavy guns as remained effective, aided by a flight of rockets. A masked battery played with great effect upon this point, dismounting our pieces, and blowing up our tumbrils. At this moment, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hardinge placed himself at the head of the left, whilst I rode at the head of the right wing.

Our line advanced, and, unchecked by the enemy's fire, drove them rapidly out of the village of Ferozeshah and their encampment; then, changing front to its left, on its centre, our force continued to sweep the camp, bearing down all opposition, and dislodged the enemy from their whole position. The line then halted, as if on a day of manœuvre, receiving its two leaders as they rode along its front with a gratifying cheer, and displaying

the captured standards of the Khalsa army. We had taken upwards of seventy-three pieces of cannon, and were masters of the whole field.

The force assumed a position on the ground which it had won, but even here its labours were not to cease. In the course of two hours, Sirdar Tej Singh, who had commanded in the last great battle, brought up from the vicinity of Ferozepore fresh battalions and a large field of artillery, supported by 30,000 Ghorepurras, hitherto encamped near the river.

He drove in our cavalry parties, and made strenuous efforts to regain the position of Ferozeshah; this attempt was defeated, but its failure had scarcely become manifest when the sirdar renewed the contest with more troops and a large artillery. He commenced by a combination against our left flank; and when this was frustrated, made such a demonstration against the captured villages as compelled us to change our whole front to the right. His guns during this manœuvre maintained an incessant fire, whilst our artillery ammunition being completely expended in these protracted combats, we were unable to answer him with a single shot.

I now directed our almost exhausted cavalry to threaten both flanks at once, preparing the infantry to advance in support, which apparently caused him suddenly to cease his fire and abandon the field.

For twenty-four hours not a Sikh has appeared in our front. The remains of the Khalsa army are said to be in full retreat across the Sutlej, at Nuggurputhur and Tella, or marching up its left bank towards Hurreekeeputhur, in the greatest confusion and dismay. Of their chiefs, Bahadur Singh is killed, Lal Singh said to be wounded, Mehtab Singh, Adjoodhia Pershad, and Tej Singh, the late governor of Peshawur, have fled with precipitation. Their camp is the scene of the most awful carnage, and they have abandoned large stores of grain, camp equipage, and ammunition.

Thus has apparently terminated this unprovoked and criminal invasion of the peaceful provinces under British protection.

On the conclusion of such a narrative as I have given, it is surely superfluous in me to say that I am, and shall be to the last moment of my existence, proud of the army which I had to command on the 21st and 22nd instant. To their gallant exertions I owe the satisfaction of seeing such a victory achieved, and the glory of having my own name associated with it.

The loss of this army has been heavy;\* how could a hope be

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\* Killed.—European officers, 37; native officers, 17; non-commissioned, drummers, rank and file, 630; syces, drivers, &c., 10. Total, 694.  
Wounded.—European officers, 78; native officers, 18; non-commissioned, drummers, rank and file, 1,610; syces, drivers, &c., 19; warrant officers, 8. Total, 1,721.  
Grand total of all ranks killed and wounded, 2,415.

formed that it should be otherwise? Within thirty hours this force stormed an intrenched camp, fought a general action, and sustained two considerable combats with the enemy. Within four days it has dislodged from their positions, on the left bank of the Sutlej, 60,000 Sikh soldiers, supported by upwards of 150 pieces of cannon, 108 of which the enemy acknowledge to have lost, and 91 of which are in our possession.

In addition to our losses in the battle, the captured camp was found to be everywhere protected by charged mines, by the successive springing of which many brave officers and men have been destroyed."

These glorious battles were within a month followed up by that of Aliwal—as sanguinary an affair as either of its predecessors, and, in a military point of view, decidedly more scientific in arrangement and execution. In one operation, it seemed a pendant to the beautiful movement on the retreat from Burgos, when Wellington carried his army bodily round Souham's and placed the French general in the afternoon in the same unfavourable position in which he (Wellington) had found himself that morning. The action had not been expected, for the service required had been effected without resistance.

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#### CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE BATTLES OF ALI WAL AND SOBRAON.

1846.

THOUGH the treaty which held the British and Sikh governments in amity provided that the Sikhs should send no troops across the Sutlej, they were permitted to retain certain jaghires, or feudal possessions, on the left bank, one of which comprised the town and fort of Dheerrumcote. Here the enemy had established a magazine of grain; and a small garrison, consisting of mercenaries, chiefly Rohillas and Afghans, were thrown into the place for its protection. But besides that the grain was needed in the British lines, the presence of a hostile garrison on his own side of the stream was an eyesore and an annoyance to the British general; and Major-General Sir Harry Smith was directed with a brigade of infantry and a few guns, to reduce it. He accomplished the service on the 18th of January without loss, or, indeed, sustaining a serious resistance; and was on his way back to camp, when tidings reached the commander-in-chief of a nature not to be dealt lightly with, far less neglected.

It was ascertained that the enemy had detached 20,000 men from their camp at Sobraon against Loodiana. Their objects

were represented to be, not only the seizure of that place, but the interruption of the British communications with the rear, and, perhaps, the capture of the battering-train, which was advancing by Busseean; and Sir Harry Smith, being reinforced to the amount of 8000 men, received instructions to counterwork the project. His business was to form a junction with Colonel Godby, who, with one regiment of cavalry, and four of infantry, occupied Loodiana; and then, and not till then, to push the Sikhs, and drive them, if possible, back upon their own country.

Here again, the school in which he had been taught his trade was evidence in the conduct of the commander, who proved in his hour of trial that Peninsular instruction had not been thrown away. The Sikhs had already shut the garrison of Loodiana in; burned a new barrack, and ravaged the surrounding country. A creeping commander now would have been found wanting; but Smith was a man of different mettle, and, pushing rapidly on, a clean march brought him within twenty-five miles of Loodiana, and with the *réveil*, he resumed his movement next morning.

At Buddewal the enemy showed himself, occupying a connected line of villages in front, and covered by a powerful artillery. To gain his object and reach Loodiana, it was necessary for Sir Harry Smith to change his order of march, and while the Sikhs, who had already outflanked him, opened a fire of forty guns on the advancing columns, Smith massed his weak artillery, and under its concentrated and well-directed cannonade, broke into *échelons*, and threatened the Sikh front, the while making a flank movement by his right, protected *en échelon* by the cavalry. Nothing could be more beautifully and successfully executed than this delicate manœuvre. Sir Harry carried his guns and baggage round the enemy—a small portion only of the latter passing into the temporary possession of the Sikhs.

Colonel Godby, who commanded the invested garrison, having seen the cloud of dust, moved from Loodiana; and marching parallel to the direction which it seemed to take, found himself in due time connected by his patrols with Smith's advanced guard. Both corps upon this placed themselves with Loodiana in their rear, and the enemy before them; the latter being so circumstanced that the British army lay, as it were, upon one of its flanks. But Smith, though he had thus relieved the town, was unwilling to strike a blow till he could make it decisive. He, therefore, encamped in an attitude of watchfulness, waiting till another brigade should arrive, which, under the command of Colonel Wheeler, was marching from headquarters to reinforce him.

Colonel Wheeler's march seems to have been conducted with equal diligence and care. He heard of the encounter of the 21st, and of its results; whereupon he abandoned the direct road to Loodiana, and following a circuitous route, went round the enemy's position, without once coming under fire. He reached Sir Harry Smith's camp in safety; and, on the 26th, Smith made his preparations to fight a great battle. But it was found, ere the columns were put in motion, that the enemy had abandoned their position at Buddewal, and were withdrawn to an intrenched camp nearer to the river, of which the village of Aliwal was the key, covering the ford by which they had crossed, and on which they depended, in the event of a reverse, as a line of retreat. Operations were accordingly suspended, and such further arrangements set going as the altered state of affairs seemed to require.

On the 27th, Runjoor Singh having been reinforced by Avitabile's brigade, 4000 Sikh regulars, some cavalry, and twelve guns, found himself, as he had reason to believe, in a condition to deliver battle; and to intercept the Anglo-Indian communications, he advanced towards Ingraon, where, early on the 28th, Sir Harry Smith found himself in position. His right rested on a height, his left on a field intrenchment, while his centre held ground in the immediate front of the village of Aliwal (or Ulleéwal). The Anglo-Indian army amounted to some 12,000 men of all arms; the Sikhs doubled them in numerical strength, and that too was composed of the flower of their army.

The subsequent details of this glorious action may be rapidly described. Smith boldly advanced against the Sikh position, under a heavy cannonade, while the right brigades were getting into line. The advance was splendid—the British cavalry driving the Sikh horsemen on their infantry, forced the left back, capturing several guns, while on the left of the British line the Ayeen brigade (Avitabile's) were deformed, and the village of Bhoondi, where the right of the Sikhs endeavoured to make a stand, was carried with the bayonet. A general rout ensued, the enemy pressing in confused masses towards the ford, while every attempt they made to rally was anticipated by a charge, and the destruction of the flower of the Sikh army was completed.

The firing began about ten in the morning; by one o'clock in the day the Sikh army was broken and routed, the ground covered with its wreck, and the Sutlej choked with the dead and the dying. The whole of the artillery, fifty-seven guns, fell into the hands of the victors, and the booty was immense; but the victors had neither time nor inclination to dwell upon their triumphs. There was no further danger to be apprehended here. Of the 24,000 men who, in the morning,

threatened Loodiana, scarcely as many hundreds held together; and these, after a brief show of rally on the opposite bank, melted away and disappeared entirely. Having bivouacked that night, therefore, on the field which he had won, and sent in the wounded, with the captured guns, under sufficient escort, to Loodiana, Sir Harry Smith, with the bulk of his division, took the road to headquarters; and, in the afternoon of the 8th of February, came into position on the right of the main army, which was his established post.

In this most glorious battle, the Anglo-Indian army had 151 men killed, 413 wounded, and 25 missing—a loss comparatively small.

The immediate consequences of the victory of Aliwal, was the evacuation of the left bank of the Sutlej by the enemy. The Sikhs had sustained three terrible defeats; they had lost an enormous quantity of military *matériel*, 150 guns, and none could presume to estimate the number of their best and bravest troops who had been placed *hors de combat*. In hundreds the slaughtered and drowned victims at Aliwal floated to Sobraon with the stream; but still with a *tête de pont* to secure their bridge communications with the right bank and the reserve there, formidable intrenchments, armed with seventy heavy guns, and 30,000 of their best troops (the Khalsa), they determined to defend them, boldly held their ground, and dared another battle.

On being rejoined by Sir Harry Smith's division, and having receive his siege-train and a supply of ammunition from Delhi, the commander-in-chief and the governor-general determined to force the Sikh position. Unopposed they gained possession of Little Sobraon and Kodeewalla, and both the field batteries and heavy guns were planted to throw a concentrated fire upon the intrenchments occupied by the enemy. Close to the river bank, Dick's division was stationed to assault the Sikh right, while another brigade was held in reserve behind the village of Kodeewalla. In the centre, Gilbert's division was formed, either for attack or support, its right flank appuied on the village of Little Sobraon. Smith's division took ground near the village of Guttah, with its right inclining towards the Sutlej; Cureton's brigade observed the ford at Hurree, and held Lal Singh's horsemen in check; the remainder of the cavalry, under Major-General Thackwell, acting in reserve.

The British batteries opened a lively cannonade soon after sunrise, but guns in field position have little chance of silencing artillery covered by strong redoubts. At nine, the attack commenced by Stacy's brigade of Dick's division, advancing against the enemy's intrenchments. The crushing fire of the Sikh guns would have arrested the advance of any but most

daring regiments, but the brigadier pressed gallantly on, and while the British bayonet met the Mussulman sabre the camp was carried. The sappers broke openings in the intrenching mounds, through which, although in single files, the cavalry pushed, reformed, and charged. The Sikh gunners were sabred in their batteries, while the entire of the infantry and every disposable gun were promptly brought into action by Sir Hugh Gough.

The Sikh fire became more feeble, their best battalions unsteady, and the British pressed boldly on. Wavering troops rarely withstand a struggle when the bayonet comes into play, and the Khalsas broke entirely, and hurried from the field to the river and bridge. But the hour of retributive vengeance had arrived, and the waters of the Sutlej offered small protection to the fugitives. The stream had risen, the fords were unsafe, and flying from the fire of the horse-artillery, which had opened on the mobbed fugitives with grape shot, hundreds fell under this murderous cannonade, while thousands found a grave in the no longer friendly waters of their native rivers, until it almost excited the compassion of an irritated enemy.

At every point the intrenchments were carried. The horse artillery galloped through, and both they and the batteries opened such a fire upon the broken enemy as swept them away by ranks. "The fire of the Sikhs," says the commander-in-chief, "first slackened, and then nearly ceased; and the victors then pressing them on every side, precipitated them over the bridge into the Sutlej, which a sudden rise of seven inches had rendered hardly fordable. The awful slaughter, confusion, and dismay were such as would have excited compassion in the hearts of their conquerors, if the Khalsa troops had not, in the early part of the action, sullied their gallantry by slaughtering and barbarously mangling every wounded soldier whom, in the vicissitudes of attack, the fortune of war left at their mercy.

At Sobraon, the final blow which extinguished the military power of the Sikhs, was delivered. Sixty-seven pieces of artillery, two hundred camel-guns, standards, tumbrils, ammunition, camp equipage—in a word, all that forms the *matériel* of an army in the field, fell into the hands of the victors. In native armies, no regular returns of the killed and wounded are made out, but the Sikh losses were computed at 8000 men, and the amount was not exaggerated.

On the bloody height of Sobraon the Sikh war virtually terminated, for, on that evening, the Anglo-Indian army commenced their march upon Lahore. Frightfully defeated, and humbled to the dust, the once haughty chiefs sent vakeels to implore mercy from the conqueror. The ambassadors, however, were refused an audience, and it was intimated that the

British generals would condescend to treat with none except the Maharajah in person.

Trembling for his capital, which nothing but abject submission now could save, the youthful monarch, attended by Rajah Goolab Singh, repaired to the British camp. Stringent terms were most justly exacted, and while the rich district between the Sulej and the Beas, and what were termed "the Protected States," were ceded for ever to Britain, a million and a half sterling was agreed to by the Sikh durbar, as compensation for the expenditure of the war, while the Punjaub should remain in military occupation until the full amount should be discharged.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE BATTLE OF MARTABAN.

1852.

THE treaty of Yundaboo concluded the Burmese war of 1824. By its terms, the safety of British commerce and British merchants in Burmah was assured, and for a long period following the termination of the war the terms of the treaty were rigidly adhered to. By degrees, however, a spirit of resentment against the British began to spring up in the only half-civilised country, and in 1851 such resentment found open expression.

In the course of that year, a Mr. Sheppard, the master and owner of a trading vessel of Madras, complained to the Indian Government that he had been seized, ill treated, and imprisoned by the Governor of Rangoon, upon a false charge of throwing a man overboard, that his vessel had been detained, and over a thousand rupees extorted from him; adding that this was one of many acts of injustice, oppression, and tyranny suffered by British subjects in that port. Shortly after, another master of a British ship made a similar complaint, alleging that he had been subjected to extortions, as well as insult and indignity, by the Governor, on an equally false charge of murdering one of his crew. At the same time a memorial was sent from the merchants of Rangoon to the Governor-General of India, in which they alleged that they had, for a long time, suffered from the tyranny of the Burmese authorities, that trade was seriously obstructed, and that neither life nor property was safe, as the Governor had publicly stated to his dependants that he had no more money to give them, and had granted them his permission to get money as they could; that he had frequently demanded money without any pretext, and tortured the parties asked until his demands were complied with; and that, in short, affairs had

arrived at such a crisis that, unless protected, the British merchants in Rangoon would be obliged to leave the country.

After careful consideration, the Governor-General came to the conclusion that the treaty of Yundaboo had been unquestionably set at nought, that gross injustice and oppression had been perpetrated, and that the court of Ava should make due reparation. Accordingly, Commodore Lambert, with H.M.S. Fox and two other steamers, was at once despatched to Rangoon to enforce this demand of the Indian Government, and to present a letter to the King of Ava setting forth the Government's grounds for the taking of such a step.

Arrived at Rangoon, Captain Tarleton, with other officers, landed to present this letter for the king to the Governor of the port. His reception was insulting in the extreme, and an account of the proceedings having been forwarded to the Indian Government, a further and more emphatic "note" was sent. On receipt of this second letter, amendment was promised to the Indian authorities. "The Great English War-Chiefs" were informed that strict inquiry would be made into affairs, just treatment should be accorded the merchants, and that a fresh Governor would be appointed.

This step was taken, but the incoming Governor "chastised with scorpions," instead of with the "whips" of his predecessor, and things rapidly went from bad to worse. A climax was reached when Commodore Lambert sent Captain Fishbourne of H.M.S. Hermes with a letter stating the precise claims of the Indian Government. Captain Fishbourne was informed that the Governor was asleep, which was not true, and that they must wait in an open shed until he awoke and could receive them. After remaining for some little time, they returned to the ship without having been admitted to the Governor's presence.

Commodore Lambert's reply to this latest insult was short and sharp. He seized a vessel belonging to the King of Ava, declared the river mouth to be in a state of blockade, and invited all persons in Rangoon who claimed British protection to come aboard his ship. Four days later, on the 10th January, 1852, a brisk cannonade was opened on the Fox from a stockade on the adjacent river bank. A few rounds from the British vessel sufficed to silence the battery, and immediately afterwards the Fox returned to Calcutta to report the state of affairs.

The next move in the Burmese situation took the form of a lengthy and formal remonstrance to the King of Ava, once more demanding reparation. Regret was to be expressed for former discourtesies; ten lacs of rupees were demanded in compensation; a respectful reception was solicited for the incoming representative of the British Government; and finally, the

removal of the obnoxious were demanded as terms by which alone peace could be maintained.

"If without further delay, negotiation, or correspondence, these conditions shall be consented to, and shall be fulfilled by the 1st April next, hostile operations shall be stayed." Failing this, war would be declared. "The guilt and consequences of such war will rest upon the head of the ruler of Ava."

In answer to this ultimatum, no concession was made by the Burmese, and a hostile expedition was at once prepared.

The armament was to consist of troops from the Presidencies of Bengal and Madras, with the 18th Royal Irish, 35th Royal Sussex, the 51st Light Infantry, and the Staffordshire regiment. The whole force, some 4400 of all ranks, was placed under the command of Major-General Godwin, a veteran officer who was engaged in the first Burmese war. The conditions of peace were specified at the outset. Fifteen lacs of rupees were demanded for expenses, with an additional three lacs for every month after the 1st May. Until these payments were made, the British troops were to remain in possession of such places as they might capture.

General Godwin set sail with his forces on the 28th March, and reached Rangoon on the 2nd April, where he found Rear-Admiral Austin, C.B., the naval commander-in-chief, who had come from Penang in H.M.S. *Rattler*. Martaban, which had a river line of defences about 800 yards in length, was at once selected as the first objective of attack.

Arrangements were made for the attack on daybreak of the 5th April. The Admiral made every disposition possible, "in waters full of shoals and violent currents," for bombarding the position with his five steamers, and to cover the landing of the troops. "It was the admiration of everyone," runs General Godwin's official narrative, "to witness the noble manner in which the *Rattler* worked her way within 200 yards of the wall and close to the pagoda, doing tremendous execution. I changed from the *Rattler* at six o'clock, to superintend the landing of the troops, and went on board a smaller vessel, the *Proserpine*, with my staff. At half-past six the steamer opened fire, and at seven the troops were in the boats, and landed, by the indefatigable exertions of Commander Brooking, under a smart fire of musketry and guns. Soon was the storming party under the walls and over them, with less loss than I thought possible. Lieutenant-Colonel Reignolds immediately ascended to the pagodas on the height, and took possession of them after some skirmishing with the enemy. At eight a.m. Martaban was won, and, considering the enemy's position and numbers, which report gives at 5000 men, we have got it very cheaply."

Thus tersely is the account of the first engagement of the

war rendered. By the 9th, the expedition lay off Rangoon, the principal port on the eastern branch of the Irrawaddy. Occasional patches of forest and rice flats surround the Burmese capital from the midst of whose wooden houses rose in those days the Great Pagoda, a religious edifice of both literal and figurative high-standing. Three hundred and fifty feet has been given as the height of this edifice, and not only was it surrounded by stockades and cannon, but, if reports were true, its interior was loaded with vast treasure, which would make its capture a profitable as well as honourable enterprise.

Not until Wednesday, the 14th April, were preparations fully completed for the assault on the Great Pagoda, but the two preceding days were spent in several severe skirmishes with the enemy. On the 12th, a party landed from the 51st Light Infantry, Royal Irish, and Bengal Infantry met with stout opposition from the Burmese, who had entrenched themselves behind a stockade. After a heavy artillery fire, the place was carried by assault, but with heavy loss to our forces. The heat was terrific. By 11 a.m. the sun assumed such power that Major Oakes was killed by sunstroke while working his battery, Major Griffith died from the same cause in the act of carrying an order, and Colonel Foord was compelled to leave the field of action.

The next day was spent in further landing operations, and on the morning of the 14th the troops moved forward to the grand assault.

About three-quarters of a mile separated the Great Pagoda from the south entrance of Rangoon, whence our troops were advancing. The old road from the river to the Pagoda came up from the south gate, and it was apparently by this road the Burmese decided that the British assault would come. Here they had placed the enormous number of 100 pieces of cannon and a garrison of at least 10,000 men; but, perceiving their extensive dispositions, the British commander decided on another plan of attack.

The troops were under arms at 5 a.m., "all in as fine a temper as ever men were." The route lay to the north-west through thick jungle. Four light guns, 9-pounders, their flanks protected by two companies of the 80th regiment, the rest of the wing of that corps following with two more guns; the 18th Royal Irish, and the 40th Bengal Native Infantry formed the advance. The 51st Light Infantry and the Madras troops formed the reserve.

After a mile's march, the troops came in full view of the Pagoda, which immediately opened fire. Very soon, however, under a galling fire from two guns served by Major Montgomery of the Madras Artillery, the enemy's flank was turned,

and a strong position taken up by our artillery on the east side of the Pagoda. Some time was however spent in bringing up the guns, an operation in which the naval brigade from the Fox rendered invaluable assistance, and meantime the enemy's fire wrought terrible havoc in our ranks. Sunstroke, as formerly, was also severely depleting the British forces.

So hot, indeed, became the Burmese fire, that the General now determined on an immediate assault. Captain Laller, the interpreter, assured the British commander that he could effectively lead a storming party through the eastern gate, and this bold and enterprising plan was at once adopted.

The storming party was formed of the wing of the 80th regiment, under Major Lockhart; two companies of the Royal Irish, under Lieutenant Hewitt; and two companies of the 40th Bengal Native Infantry, under Lieutenant White—Lieutenant-Colonel Coote being in charge of the entire party.

Under a heavy fire from cannon and musket, and led forward by Captain Laller, sword in hand, the storming party swept forward. The eight hundred yards which separated our position from the walls of the Pagoda was crossed in a twinkling, and, with a loud cheer, the eastern gate of the temple was burst in, and, with ball and bayonet, the Burmese were driven from their entrenched position.

The British loss was heavy. Lieutenant Doran, of the Royal Irish, fell mortally wounded, four bullets being found in his body; Colonel Coote himself was struck, and many were the dead and dying who strewed the steep steps of the Pagoda.

"When the storming party reached the steps," says General Godwin, "a tremendous rush was made to the upper terrace, and deafening cheers told that the Pagoda no longer belonged to the Burmese."

The enemy ran in confusion from the southern and western gates, where they were met by the fire from the steamers. Among the first to flee was the Governor, who, with his body-guard in tall gilt hats, beat a hasty and ignominious retreat.

Of seventeen killed on the British side, three were officers, two others dying of sunstroke. The wounded numbered 132. Casualties in the fleet were 17 in all. The number of Burmese dead was never accurately ascertained, but it was considerable. Ninety cannon and nearly as many wall pieces were captured.

"All the country round has fallen with the Pagoda," ran the General's report.

On the 19th May the town of Bassan, on the river of that name, was captured by the British troops after a sharp struggle. After leaving a small garrison in the place, General Godwin returned to Rangoon there to organise arrangements for his main advance.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## THE BATTLE OF PEGU.

1852.

THE next event of importance in this campaign was the desperate attack made by the Burmese on Martaban, to recover the town which they had lost. On the 26th May, upwards of a thousand Burmese made a violent onslaught upon the British troops in occupation. Major Hall of the 49th Madras Light Infantry was in command, and, after some pretty severe fighting, during which three men of a reconnoitring party were killed, the artillery were brought into action with deadly effect, and the foe driven back.

Says one account:—"The British cannon-balls made literal lanes in the seething masses of Burmese, crushing many to atoms, and dismembering others who were unlucky enough to be in their track." The discomfiture of the enemy was subsequently largely augmented by shot and shell from the British war vessels, and a total rout of the attacking party was the result. Martaban was thus securely retained in British hands; but the war was far from being over.

Early in July, Captain Tarleton, R.N., was ordered to ascend the Irrawaddy with five steamers and reconnoitre the position and defences of the Burmese in the vicinity of Prome. This town of wooden houses is about a mile and a half in circumference, and lies on the left bank of the river. It is surrounded by low-lying swamps which at times are inundated by the overflow of the Irrawaddy. At a short distance from the city the river divides itself into two streams—the left, or western, being the deeper, and the only one navigable, except in the heart of the rainy season. On the left bank of the navigable branch of the stream Captain Tarleton soon decried a force of nearly 10,000 Burmese, who from a strongly-fortified bastion were preparing to oppose his advance up the left branch of the river. Eagerly the Burmese watched the approach of the British gunboat, which they believed would shortly be at their mercy, as it steamed steadily forward towards the left branch of the river, where their cannon and musketry were already trained to receive it. Captain Tarleton, however, had no intention of being caught in the trap. Realising the enemy's strength, he resolved to risk his vessel, which was of light draught, in the waters of the eastern branch of the stream, aware that at the rainy season it would be navigable for at least some distance. Such, indeed, proved to be the case, and, to the astonishment of the crowds of baffled Burmese onlookers, the little craft plunged boldly up the eastern water, and was

very soon out of range of their cannon. A few shot indeed reached the British vessel, but no damage was done, and Prome was reached on the 9th without further opposition. Here it was found that no garrison had been left in charge, and after carrying off some guns, and spiking others, and destroying all the enemy's stores they could lay hands on, the expedition returned to Rangoon.

On the return journey the main Burmese army was encountered crossing the parent stream of the Irrawaddy, and a heavy cannonade was opened by the British on the confused mass as it performed its clumsy evolutions. Not only the state barge of the Burmese general fell into our hands, but between 40 and 50 boats containing stores and munitions of war, which were destroyed. After nine days' absence, Captain Tarleton returned to Rangoon in triumph, well satisfied with the result of his reconnoitring operations.

On the 27th July, Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India, arrived at Rangoon on a brief visit, and expressed his great satisfaction with the work of the troops.

Not until the 16th September were any more extensive operations conducted by General Godwin, the interval being spent in collecting munitions of war and transport material, and, by the gunboats, in patrolling the river between Rangoon and Prome. On the date mentioned, however, the embarkation began, with Prome as the objective. On the morning of the 9th October the expedition came in sight of Prome, and the war vessels anchored in the small bay which lies opposite the town. Towards evening the troops were landed. A suburb to the north of Prome, and outside the town, was chosen as the point of debarkation, as it was known that the enemy were in force further to the south.

The landing was opposed by the Burmese with musket and gingale. From some of the wooden houses of the suburb, from the adjacent jungle, and from a small pagoda which faced the immediate path of the troops, a fierce musket fire was poured upon the attacking force, and so hot did this become that it became necessary to dislodge the unseen assailants. Brigadier Reynolds, with Captains Christie and Welsh, with several companies of the 80th regiment, were quickly sent forward to rush the foe from their position—an operation which they performed with great gallantry and with every success, one man only being killed in the attack. The captured pagoda was retained by our men for the night, the enemy not returning to the attack. In the morning the landing was completed, and, on a general advance being made, it was found that the enemy had been so severely handled in the engagement of the previous evening that they had evacuated the place, "leaving in our possession

a town overrun with thick and rank vegetation and abounding in swamps."

Says General Godwin of the position of our troops at this stage of the war:—"I have been for a long time aware of the assemblage of a large force of troops about ten miles east of Prome—nearly 18,000 men, well posted in two or more stockades. It is not my intention to disturb them in any way at present, as, by their concentration at that point, the fine force now assembling here will have an opportunity of striking a blow which may put an end to much future opposition."

Accordingly, a different scene of operations was next chosen. The Burmese, as early as the month of June, had occupied the town of Pegu, capital of the old kingdom of that name, to the great distress of the native inhabitants, who were, however, powerless to offer resistance on their own behalf.

Pegu forms the southern portion of the Burmese empire, and by it had been annexed in 1757. The town itself is situated some seventy miles north of Rangoon. These marauding Burmese it was now determined to dislodge, and to occupy the city by British arms. Brigadier McNeill of the Madras army was selected by General Godwin to command the venture, but the General himself accompanied the expedition. The flotilla was commanded by Commander Shadwell.

The vessels forming the expedition dropped anchor about two miles below Pegu, which is connected by the Pegu river with the Irrawaddy, on the evening of the 20th November. The next morning the debarkation was carried out without any opposition, the troops landing in high grass jungle, and the whole country being enveloped in a thick fog.

The position of the enemy was known to the British commander, as a previous expedition in June had enabled Captain Laller to roughly map the country. The site of the old city, which formed the enemy's position, was formed by a square surrounded by a high bund, each side of which was estimated to be two miles in length. The west side faced the river, and a moat, between 70 and 80 paces wide, ran entirely round the position. It was determined to force a way along the moat and endeavour to turn the enemy's left.

Accordingly, the advance was commenced, Captain Laller and a Burmese leading the direction of march. The Bengal Fusiliers were in front, the 5th Madras Native Infantry followed, and the Madras Fusiliers brought up the rear. The troops marched in file. Slowly and laboriously the invaders crept forward, struggling for two hours through the almost impenetrable grass and jungle along the edge of the moat, and exposed to a warm fire from the enemy. At length a part of the moat was reached which admitted a passage for the troops, but

unhappily it was covered by a strong post of marksmen and two guns. From this point of vantage the enemy kept up a galling fire, and it soon became evident the battery would have to be stormed.

Colonel Tudor, with 250 men, was ordered to drive the Burmese out, and with a cheer the gallant little band plunged into the muddy waters of the moat and, scaling the bank in front of them, drove the foe from their position with cold steel. Having mastered this point, the key of the position, Pegu did not long remain in the possession of the Burmese. With enormous difficulty, over the almost impassable ground, Captain Mallock brought forward his artillery, and kept down the enemy's fire. A short halt followed to rest the troops and collect the not inconsiderable number of wounded. A large pagoda now lay in the path of advance, and from this the Burmese kept up a heavy musketry fire. Here again history repeated itself. Gallantly springing forward with some 200 of the Madras and Bengal Fusiliers, the steps of the pagoda were soon ascended, the foe driven out, and Pegu was ours.

The amount of the Burmese force in Pegu which we drove out on capturing the town, was estimated at 4000 or 5000; our own troops barely amounted to 1000 men. A garrison of 400 was left in charge, and the success of the enterprise duly reported to the Governor-General at Calcutta. The immediate result was a proclamation annexing the entire province of Pegu.

Fighting, however, in the vicinity was not at an end. Day by day unceasing, but abortive, attacks were made by the Burmese to recover their lost position. Major Hill gallantly defended his post, but at length it became necessary to relieve him, and an attempt was made to bring the Burmese to a general action. Early in December, General Godwin once more left Rangoon for Pegu, and with an army of only 1200 men proceeded to seek the enemy in his lair. After a march of a few miles through dense jungle, their position was discovered. "They were admirably posted behind an entrenchment; large spars formed their breastwork, and it appeared to be about a mile long, filled with masses of men, a few hundreds of the Cassay horse, some elephants, and a few guns."

On the advance of the British the enemy for a time made no move beyond firing an occasional shot, and all ranks believed that at length the foe was to stand at bay. On coming, however, to close quarters, the Burmese rapidly retreated, bitterly disappointing our men, and a two days' further march in pursuit failed to bring them to a standstill, and General Godwin and his forces were compelled reluctantly to return.

No further event of importance occurred in '52, but early in the year following, taking advantage of the unsettled state of

the country, and the quarrels between British and Burmese, numerous dacoity chiefs made inroads here and there upon the peaceful inhabitants of the country, raiding and killing and striking terror into the hearts of the country folk.

Against several of these General Godwin found it necessary to direct his forces—one in particular, a chief named Mea Toon, giving immense trouble ere he was finally subjugated. Three times was a British force led against—on two occasions on the 10th January, and again later, with disastrous results to our arms. On the second occasion he succeeded in killing as many as 50 of our men. Finally, in March, Sir John Cleape brought the dacoity chief to bay, and after a severe struggle, lasting four hours, in the course of which two British officers were killed, he succeeded in overpowering the foe. The wily Mea Toon himself, however, effected his escape, and fleeing from the neighbourhood of Donnabew, where the engagement took place, escaped with his immediate following. No trouble was, however, given by him later.

The main scheme of operations now took the form of a series of attempts to bring the main Burmese army to bay, but besides an occasional skirmish, little hard fighting resulted, the Burmese avoiding coming to grips.

Commenting on the state of the Burmese campaign at this period the "Annual Register" tersely sums up the enormous difficulties which General Godwin and the devoted troops under his command had to contend with:—

"An army can do little," says the official narrative, "where there are no roads, nor adequate means of transport for artillery, and when the enemy retires into jungles, and we have to contend against the heat of a tropical sun varied by long periods of incessant rain."

The end, however, was not far off. By this time the greater portion of the Burmese was under our jurisdiction, and the ultimate and final success of the British arms seemed to be but a matter of time. Such, at least, was the view taken by the King of Ava, and without the drawing up of any formal treaty he at length decided to treat for peace by granting the concessions demanded of him. Protection to British trade and life was definitely assured, and the British forces shortly thereafter withdrawn.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

## THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA.

1854.

FOLLOWING upon their declarations of war with Russia, upon the 27th and 28th March, 1854, respectively, arrangements were at once made by the Governments of France and Britain for forwarding a sufficient number of troops to the East. Gallipoli, on the south side of the Sea of Marmora, was chosen as the rendezvous, and here in due course arrived the armies of the allies. The armies were under the respective commands of Lord Raglan and Marshal St. Arnaud. The Turkish army, then actively engaged with the Russians upon the Ottoman frontier at Silistria, was commanded by Omar Pasha.

It was resolved by the three generals, after some preliminary disagreement by St. Arnaud, to advance the armies to Varna, in Bulgaria, and from that base to operate for the relief of Silistria, where a Turkish force was being besieged by the Russians. Our only present concern with the successful defence of Silistria (so that on June 23rd, 1854, the siege was abandoned by Russia), and with the Turkish successes upon the Lower Danube at Rustchuk, is the moral effect which they produced in Britain. At both these places the Turkish troops were practically led by young British officers who had flung themselves into the enterprise without orders, and practically for the pure love of fighting. At both these places their efforts, backed by the unflinching Turkish soldiery, had met with signal success. The names of Butler, Nasmyth, Ballard, Bent, and others were household words in Britain. Men's eyes kindled with enthusiasm as they heard of the defeat of the dreaded armies of the Czar by a handful of mere boys, and now that they had, so to say, tasted blood, the people of Britain clamoured for an offensive, rather than a defensive, campaign. True, the Turkish frontier had been successfully freed from the enemy, and that without the co-operation of the allied armies; true, an honourable peace might be concluded with Russia at this juncture, but both these things, good enough in their way, were not satisfying. Through the medium of the "Times" newspaper, then in its infancy, and in a hundred other ways, backed by the Minister of War, the Duke of Newcastle, and egged on by the Emperor of the French, they clamoured for the overthrow of Sebastopol. Once let that great fortress, the stronghold of the power of southern Russia, be razed to the ground, and a lasting peace might be proclaimed. But no half measures would suffice. Accordingly, the British and French Governments sent specific instructions to Lord Raglan and

Marshal St. Arnaud to proceed with their armies to the Crimea, and to lay siege to the fortress of Sebastopol. This resolution and these instructions saw the commencement of the Crimean campaign.

After one or two preliminary delays, the combined fleets, with the transports containing the allied armies, arrived off the port of Eupatoria on the north-west coast of the Crimean peninsula. Cholera and other forms of sickness, which had been rife amongst the armies during their stay at Varna, showed little abatement on the voyage, as had been hoped, and many men fell victims to the dread disease. It was found that the port of Eupatoria was undefended, but its formal surrender was demanded, in connection with which formality an amusing incident arose. The governor of the place, having an unflinching respect for his own official position, and regarding the formalities of the health regulations of Eupatoria as of paramount importance, calmly, in the face of the allied armies and fleets, insisted upon fumigating and disinfecting the "summons to surrender" in accordance with the Government health regulations! Moreover, he informed the representatives of the Powers that persons landing would have to consider themselves in quarantine for the prescribed period!

From the few Tartar inhabitants of Eupatoria the allies were able to buy cattle and forage, a matter of vital importance to the armies, and after its formal surrender on the 13th September, 1854, the fleet proceeded southward along the coast, anchoring off the Old Fort in Kalamita Bay. The British force landed at the south of the Lake of Kamishlee, and the French slightly to the south of them. By the 18th all were landed, the British numbering 27,000, including 1000 cavalry and 60 guns; Turks about 7000 infantry; and the French 30,000 infantry, with 68 guns.

Partially overcoming the difficulties of land transport by the capture, by Sir Richard Airey, the Quartermaster-General, of a stray Cossack convoy (some 350 waggons were obtained), the allied armies were to move south upon Sebastopol. It was decided they should march parallel with the coast, escorted by their fleets on their right flank. On the morning of the 19th September the march began. The British army took the left, the French and Turks the centre, and the fleets formed the right of the advance.

Between the allies and Sebastopol flow several rivers, from the high levels of the Crimea to the sea, at right angles to the line of march. The first of these is the Bulganak, the second the Alma.

On the march the troops suffered severely from thirst and cholera; many men fell out from weakness also, but by evening

the river Bulganak was reached, and a force sent back to bring in the stragglers.

At the Bulganak the first sight of the enemy, in any force, was obtained, in the shape of a body of cavalry some 2000 strong, backed by 6000 infantry with two batteries. The enemy were observing the advance of the allies from the opposite hill on the far side of the river. For our advance guard of four squadrons of cavalry, in marching order, to engage so large a force in position would have been folly. Accordingly Lord Raglan gave orders for our cavalry to withdraw—a movement which was promptly followed by the Russian artillery fire. Several horses were killed and two men wounded, but the manœuvre was effected successfully, and by the time it was accomplished our main supports were in sight. The enemy accordingly disappeared, with the loss of 35 cavalymen killed or wounded by our artillery, now by this time brought into action.

This was the first combat of any importance in the Crimean campaign, and at its conclusion our troops received orders to bivouac on the banks of the river. Owing to the proximity of the enemy, and fearing an attack at dawn, Lord Raglan gave the command to bivouac in order of battle. He himself passed the night in a posthouse by the riverside.

In the morning, however, the enemy was nowhere to be seen, and it was subsequently ascertained that he had fallen back to his entrenched position on the far side of the Alma. Early in the morning of the 20th September, 1854, the allied armies left their position by the Bulganak and marched forward towards the Alma. The order maintained was, in the main, similar to that of the previous day. The fleet defended the right, the French and Turks marched in the centre, and the British took the left.

Now the Russian position on the far side of the Alma was a strong one. Though the ground to the north of the river slopes down gently to the riverside, and is covered by gardens and vineyards, on the south of the river hills rise to a considerable height almost from the water's edge. This range of hills formed the Russian position.

Nearest to the sea is a hill with steep sides, so steep that the Russian commander-in-chief, Prince Mentschikoff, the former ambassador to Constantinople, deemed it impossible for any troops to scale them. This hill is called the West Cliff. Joined on to it, and forming as it were an eastern shoulder, is the Telegraph Height, so called from the fact that at the time of the battle a telegraph line was in course of construction upon its summit. East of this again is a valley through which runs the main road to Sebastopol, flanked on the other side by the

Kourgané Hill. East of this again the ground slopes away more gently.

Deeming the Western Cliff inaccessible, the Russian commander had not thought fit to defend it, but upon the ledge which intervened between the river and the Telegraph Height he posted four militia battalions, with four battalions of regular infantry as supports, and four battalions of the Moscow corps, a few companies of the 6th Rifles, and a ten-gun battery—the whole under the command of General Kiviakoff. These troops faced the French army. In the pass between the Telegraph Height and the Kourgané Hill, and opposite the British second division, were posted four battalions of light infantry, the Borodino corps, some 6th Rifles, and a battalion of sappers near the bridge crossing the Alma. Across the main road were 16 guns (later called the Causeway battery), with eight other guns to the east of them. These forces, constituting the Russian centre, were commanded by Prince Gortschakoff. The Russian right, on the Kourgané Hill, which at the commencement of the battle faced our Light Division (and later, the Guards and Highlanders) consisted of 16 battalions of infantry, 2 battalions of sailors, 12 heavy guns in the fortified embrasure of the Great Redoubt, and 4 batteries of field artillery, one of which formed the Lesser Redoubt; General Koetzinski commanded. In addition to these troops, the Russian cavalry consisted of 16 squadrons, with 11 sotnias of Cossacks. Altogether 39,000 troops, including 3600 horsemen and 96 guns.

The allied troops were disposed as follows. On the extreme right, next to the sea-coast, were the brigades of Generals Bouat and Autemarre, under the chief command of General Bosquet, and supported by the majority of the Turks. On the left of these, but far in their rear, marched the 7th Division under Camobert, and the 3rd under Prince Napoleon, moving abreast and supported by the 4th Division under Forey, with the remaining Turks. On the left of these again came the British 2nd Division, under Sir de Lacy Evans, supported by the 3rd (Sir Richard England). On the left of Evans again, the Light Division, under Sir George Brown, preceded by the 2nd Rifle Battalion of skirmishers, and supported by the 1st Division under the Duke of Cambridge, parallel with whom moved the 4th Division under Sir George Cathcart. The Earl of Lucan commanded the cavalry. The constitution of the British Divisions was as follows:—1st Division—Grenadiers, Coldstreams, Scots Fusiliers, with the Black Watch, Camerons, and Sutherland Highlanders; 2nd Division—30th, 55th, 41st, 47th and 49th regiments; 3rd Division—38th, 50th, 1st Royal Scots, 4th, 44th, 28th and 63rd regiments; 4th Division—20th, 21st, 63rd, 57th, with 1st Battalion Rifles and cavalry.

Briefly, the plan of attack was this—the French and Turks were first to turn the enemy's left, then the British were to attack him in front. Advancing in the warm sunshine in the order above indicated, the allies made a final halt before the battle at about a mile and a half from the river, on the ground which slopes gently down to the north bank. From this point the enemy's position could be more or less clearly seen, a deep scar upon the slopes of the Kourgané Hill showing the position of the Great Redoubt.

It was at this time that there occurred, as Kinglake tells us, that "singular pause of sound," when a sudden stillness fell upon the allied armies, so intense that the slightest noise could be heard over the field for a long distance. It seemed, indeed, that fighting was the occurrence least of all to be expected—an idea quickly dispelled by the veteran Sir Colin Campbell, who remarked that the opportunity would be a good one "for the men to get loose half their cartridges."

During the carrying out of this order, the two commanders, Lord Raglan and St. Arnaud, rode forward entirely alone to reconnoitre the enemy's position with their field glasses. As the Marshal neared our lines, he was cheered by the British soldiers, and, raising his hat, he replied in excellent English, "Hurrah for old England!"

By this time one o'clock arrived, and the general advance was sounded. At twenty-five minutes past one, the allied fleets opened fire upon the Telegraph Height, and the infantry massed upon the ledge at its base. The result of this fire was that the Russian troops at this place, under General Kiviakoff, withdrew further up the hill towards the Telegraph.

At 1.30 the Russians opened fire. Accounts vary as to the first man hit. Some say he was a drummer carrying a letter, and that he was positively broken in two by a round shot. Others have it that it was an artilleryman riding in front of his gun; but, be this as it may, at length battle was engaged between the land forces. From this point onward the enemy's artillery fire was brisk, and soon afterwards the 1st Division came into range, and was accordingly thrown into line, and the men lay down.

Lord Raglan and his staff were at this point objects of attention to the enemy's artillery, a heavy fire being directed at the brilliant uniforms of the headquarters staff as they moved about the field from place to place.

Now, as before stated, Bosquet faced the West Cliff, Camobert the west side of the Telegraph Height, Prince Napoleon was opposite the Telegraph Height, and Evans, the village of Bourliouk. On his left was Sir George Brown. Suddenly the village of Bourliouk was set on fire, no one knows how, and the

immediate result was a contraction of the British front in order to avoid the stifling smoke and heat, such a contraction threatening to be of considerable advantage to the enemy.

Meanwhile, Bosquet's operations for turning the Russian left had been pushed forward, and were taking effect. His troops, in two divisions, crossed the river respectively at its bar and at the village of Almatamack shortly after two o'clock, and began to ascend the steep West Cliff, encountering no enemy. On gaining the summit, however, they were received by a tremendous fire from the Russian battery No. 4, and for a few seconds thrown into confusion. Almost identically, however, the French artillery arrived and supported Bosquet's force effectively, with the result that their twelve pieces silenced no fewer than forty of the enemy's guns. Meantime the Russian commander, Prince Mentschikoff, hearing of the attack on his left, moved four batteries, seven battalions of foot, and four squadrons of Hussars towards the threatened point, but ere they reached it he seems to have changed his mind, and ordered a countermarch, thereby rendering this large body of troops entirely useless at a critical period of the fight. Bosquet was accordingly allowed to retain the West Cliff, which he had won, but was almost entirely unsupported, and in considerable danger.

Accordingly, St. Arnaud ordered Generals Camobert and Prince Napoleon to advance, in words which the great historian of the war has recorded:—"With men such as you I have no orders to give; I have but to point to the enemy," said St. Arnaud. The advance commenced, and was not wanting in incident. At one time Prince Napoleon was in great danger. General Thomas, perceiving a ball coming in the direction of the Prince, cried to him, "Take care!" and the Prince, putting spurs to his horse, avoided it with the utmost coolness. It, however, struck M. Leblanc, the military intendant, with the result that his leg had to be amputated.

Now, had the advance of these two divisions been successfully carried out, there seems little doubt that the subsequent scheme of battle would have been considerably altered. For two reasons, however, the French divisions halted when they had crossed the river and were about to scale the opposite steeps. The first was that the ground on the far side was found to be too steep for artillery, and the maxims of the French army forbade infantry from advancing unsupported under such circumstances. Accordingly the guns had to be sent round by the ford at the village of Almatamack, causing inevitable delay. The second cause was the unfortunate panic which set in, not unnaturally, amongst the rear ranks of the divisions owing to the galling fire to which they were exposed. The front ranks, being under shelter of the steep river banks,

were, more or less, halted in safety, but the rear ranks were directly exposed to the Russian batteries posted on the Great Road. The measures taken to rectify this state of affairs unfortunately only served to aggravate it. Part of the 4th Division was sent to support Camobert, and this, by increasing the mass of men exposed to fire, naturally increased the slaughter which at this stage has been described as almost a massacre.

At this time the Russians might have materially altered the aspect of affairs by taking advantage of Bosquet's isolated position, and by a free use of the cavalry at their disposal. But neither of these steps were taken.

To Lord Raglan was communicated the state of affairs on the French side of the battle. Immediate action must be taken if Bosquet's successful advance was not to be nullified. For an hour and a half our troops had been under the enemy's fire, and had suffered heavily. This circumstance, together with the repeated requests of the French aides-de-camp, determined Lord Raglan, at the risk of spoiling the symmetry of his front and of the original plan of advance, to move forward at once.

Those present have recorded the joy of all ranks when the order flew down the lines like magic. Nolan it was, of the 15th Hussars, who afterwards carried the fatal order that was to decimate the Light Brigade at Balaclava, who now bore the command down the cheering ranks, and in a few moments the whole of the foremost British line advanced in order towards the river. A few moments later still and Nolan had a horse shot under him as he rode forward with the advance brigade.

Owing to the burning village of Bourliouk, Sir de Lacy Evans, commanding the 2nd Division, had to cut his force into two parts, one passing on the right and the other on the left of the conflagration. The Russian fire from the Causeway batteries was heavy. Evans himself was struck, and nearly all his staff wounded, and some indeed killed. On the left moved forward the Light Division under Sir George Brown, opposed to whom were the Great Redoubt and no fewer than eighteen battalions of infantry, including the famous Kayan battalion.

Straight down through the vineyards and across the river, somehow or other, moved the Light Division. The orders were not to halt until the river had been crossed. It has been reported that some few men, fearing the hail of bullets, which, by reason of their sound among the foliage, seemed in the vineyards to be nearly doubled, took refuge in the farm-houses which stood here and there. But such men were very few, and soon the whole division, under Generals Buller and Codrington, stood on the Russian side of the Alma, sheltered for a moment by the steep river bank. Here Buller, on the

extreme left, halted and reformed his men, holding back the 88th and 77th regiments to protect the allied army from a flank attack.

The remaining five battalions of the Light Brigade pressed forward up the bank, and Sir George Brown himself it was, on horseback, flushed and breathless, who first gained the summit, a mark for the entire Russian artillery. That he remained unshot was a miracle. Simultaneously, Codrington and the Royal Fusiliers, under Lacy Yea, gained the summit of the river bank, and the five battalions pressed on up the hill.

Facing them, on their right and left, were the Kayan infantry columns; in the centre was the Great Redoubt. The Kayan columns on the British left were soon put to flight by the Riflemen, the 19th, and the Royal Welsh, who had joined the centre for the attack upon the Great Redoubt, but the Kayan column on the right engaged the Royal Fusiliers in a stubborn fight.

Terrible was the death roll as our Light Division pressed up the hill towards the Great Redoubt. Men fell on every side. The Welsh and Royal Fusiliers suffered heavily, and for a moment had to pause and reform. The gallant Colonel of the Welsh Fusiliers was killed in the front of his men, and with the words "On, lads, on!" upon his lips. Old Sir George Brown was knocked from his horse, but rose immediately, and remounted with the assistance of a rifleman named Hannan, who coolly asked, "Are your stirrups the right length, sir?" Up swept the scarlet coats, only pausing for a second now and again to reform. During one of these pauses the Eddingtons were killed. The two brothers were in the 95th, the Derbyshires. Captain Eddington was deliberately murdered by a Russian rifleman when lying wounded on the field, when his brother, perceiving the act, rushed forward, in a frenzy, in advance of the regiment to avenge him, and fell, literally torn to pieces by a storm of grape shot. But the men pressed on in spite of all the carnage around them, and then suddenly, as they neared the Redoubt, the smoke lifted for a moment, and disclosed the Russian gunners limbering up and making off. Quick as lightning, young Ensign Anstruther of the Royal Welsh rushed forward with the colours of the regiment, and, outstripping all, succeeded in planting them upon the parapet of the Redoubt. A second later and he fell back riddled with shot, dragging the colours involuntarily with him. A sergeant of the same regiment, Luke O'Connor, seized the colours again, and planted them firmly upon the wall of the Redoubt, when General Codrington, uncovering, saluted the colours, and leapt his horse into the embrasure just as the last of the enemy's guns galloped off. In the fight no fewer than thirty-one officers

and non-commissioned officers had been killed. One Russian gun was captured in the act of withdrawing.

By this time the 1st Division under the Duke of Cambridge, consisting of the Guards and Highlanders, was moving to the support of the Light Division, who thus occupied the Great Redoubt. But as yet they were only at the river, so the Light Division found themselves isolated, while before them were the Vladimir regiment, supported by the Ouglity corps and others, sixteen battalions in all with horse and artillery.

In the meantime the position of affairs on the allied right, where Camobert and Prince Napoleon's divisions were advancing to the support of Bosquet, was distinctly unpromising for the allies. The heavy column under Kiviakoff had checked Camobert's advance, and Prince Napoleon was not yet in touch with the enemy.

At this juncture there happened that which is perhaps unique in the history of battles. On the one side a large proportion of the Russian army was engaged with the French attack, on the other their troops were about to push the British down from the ground which they had so hardly won in the storming of the Great Redoubt. In the centre, however, to the Russian left of the Causeway batteries, there were in the meantime no troops, and here Lord Raglan found himself in his eager pushing forward to obtain a clear view of all that was happening.

The effect of the appearance of Lord Raglan and his staff upon the rising ground in the centre was tremendous. The Russian right, on the Kourgané Hill, seeing a group of staff officers in the centre of the Russian lines, supposed that the French had been entirely successful in their part of the field, and accordingly halted to take counsel as they were in the act of advancing upon our unsupported troops who had won, and were now occupying, the Great Redoubt.

Not content, however, with the moral effect of his presence, the significance of which he fully appreciated, Lord Raglan ordered a couple of nine-pounder guns to be brought up to him, and with these (Colonel Dickson working one of the guns with his own hands, says Kinglake), he opened fire upon the flank of the Causeway batteries, and upon the enemy's reserves. The Causeway batteries retreated higher up the road, leaving it open for Evans' advance; the enemy's reserves were disorganised, and the Russian right advance was for the moment paralysed.

General Evans was quick to seize the opportunity. Advancing up the road with his troops, and with the batteries of Sir Richard England, directed by that General in person, he drove back the Russian artillery and took up a firm stand in line with

Lacy Yea and his Royal Fusiliers, who, it will be remembered, were still engaged with the (Russian) left Kayan battalion. The fight here was a stubborn one, and much depended upon it, for as long as the Fusiliers could hold their own, and keep the Kayan battalion fully occupied, our troops to their right could take up an effective position with comparative ease. But the Fusiliers did more. Assisted by the 55th Regiment, who had been gradually advancing up the hill, and who now poured a flanking fire into the Russians, they routed the Kayan battalion. This advantage was followed up by the Guards, who passing the severely battered but victorious Fusiliers, led the van of that second severe fight on the Kourgané Hill, which ultimately terminated in victory for the allied armies.

Seen at this point of the battle, the British line was more or less continuous, and was formed as follows, from its right—the Grenadiers, covering the Fusiliers reforming; the Coldstreams, the Black Watch, Camerons and Sutherland Highlanders in the order named. Opposed to them were the Vladimir columns, supported as before on either hand by the Kayan columns, that on the British right sadly disorganised by its sanguinary encounter with the Royal Fusiliers.

It was a battle of column against line, the Russians being commanded by Prince Gortshakoff in person, under whom was the brave General Koetzinski.

The fight did not last long. Deceived by the apparent numbers of the red-coated troops advancing in line; assailed with ferocity by the redoubtable Black Watch under Sir Colin Campbell, whose command of "Forward, 42nd!" has become world-renowned; now stormed by the impetuous 93rd, in the main composed of men whose eagerness to fight had led them to exchange into it rather than be left at home; at length roughly handled by the 75th, and unsettled by the successful operations of the allies on their left, where the Causeway batteries were in retreat—the powerful columns broke up after a short but stubborn fight, in which many fell on both sides, and beat an angry and reluctant retreat from the field of battle. Deep-throated sobs of rage were heard as the great grey-coated columns drew off, and to the last, General Koetzinski, borne wounded in a litter, directed the operations of the retreat from the very rear of his defeated army.

So one after another, Vladimir, Kayan, Sousdal, and lastly the reserve columns were driven from the field with slaughter and harried by our horse artillery so that, in places, the killed and wounded "formed small heaps and banks." Of the four Russian generals in this part of the field, three were wounded. The loss of the Kayan battalion alone is estimated

at 1700. The loss of the Guards and Highlanders together was no more than 500 men.

Meantime in the French part of the field, General Camobert's artillery had crossed the Alma at Almatamaek, and now, returning eastwards along the Russian bank of the river, were engaged in shelling Kiviakoff's battalions on the Telegraph Height. Bosquet's artillery fire was also directed upon these troops, and General Kiviakoff supposed the fire to be coming from the ships of the allied fleets. Seeing, in addition to these calamities (for the execution done by the French guns was considerable), the turn of the tide on the Russian right of the field, General Kiviakoff ordered a retreat, and shortly the Telegraph Heights were occupied by the warlike Zouaves. A few Russian riflemen, who had for some reason failed to move, were overwhelmed by the bayonet, and, in spite of a heavy fire from Kiviakoff's retreating battalions, the standard of the 39th French regiment was planted on the Telegraph Height. Lieutenant Portevin was killed by a cannon ball in the act of hoisting it, and later, Marshal St. Arnaud in person thanked the Zouaves on the summit of the hill.

After traversing a couple of miles, Kiviakoff succeeded in halting his men and in once more facing the French fire, but panic soon set in, and a confused rabble of men, guns, and horses trailed off towards the river Katcha.

In no part of the field was the retreat followed up to any extent; our men were for the most part wearied, and our cavalry arm was weak, while Marshal St. Arnaud found it "impossible" for the French army to advance further that day. Had these things been otherwise, there is every probability that much of the later campaign might have been curtailed, if not indeed rendered unnecessary.

As Lord Raglan rode along the field after the fight, loud British cheers arose from regiment to regiment, now slowly reforming, till, says Kinglake:—"From the spurs of the Telegraph Height to the easternmost bounds of the crest which had been won by the Highland Brigade, those desolate hills in Crimean Tartary were made to sound like England."

But in spite of this, Lord Raglan was sad and thoughtful, and spent many hours among the sheds and farmhouses where lay the wounded. In the evening he dined with only two others in a small marquee beside the Alma.

The allies camped where they found themselves at the termination of the fight. The total of French losses, killed and wounded, was between 500 and 600, though a much higher figure was supplied in the preliminary official returns. The British lost a total of 2002 of all ranks, and the Russians no fewer than 5709, including 5 generals and 193 other officers.

On the morning of the 21st September, the dead were buried, and a huge mound some five hundred yards from the river marks their last resting place. Many lives might have been saved had not the number of surgeons and appliances been wholly inadequate. On the 22nd, the allied armies resumed their march.

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CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE BATTLE OF BALACLAVA.

1854.

EARLY on the morning of the 23rd September, 1854, the allied armies left their camp on the battlefield of Alma, and marched northwards towards Sebastopol. Traces of the haste in which the Russian army had retreated were at hand on every side. Here a sword, there a pistol, a belt, or even a tunic; the broad track, strewn with such relics, showed clearly the path of the retreat.

At length the valley of the Katcha was reached, and the camp pitched for the night. The advance was resumed early next morning, and about mid-day, from the ridge of hills separating the valley of the Katcha from that of the Baltic, the armies looked down upon their goal, Sebastopol.

During a brief halt, Marshal St. Arnaud, whose bodily weakness was increasing day by day, dismounted and lay upon the ground. Men noticed that he looked sad and worn. He was, in fact, within a few days of his death.

Here a council of war was held, and it was determined that the northern side of Sebastopol was too strong to admit of an immediate assault, and finally the decision was arrived at of executing a flank march inland and attacking Sebastopol from the south. By the 26th September this somewhat perilous movement was carried out with success, and the little seaport of Balacava surrendered to Lord Raglan without bloodshed. On the same night, Marshal St. Arnaud resigned his command to General Camobert, and three days later he died on board ship, whither he had been carried for passage to France.

Balacava was of vast importance to the allies, as its tiny harbour gave them a means of communication with their fleets whilst these were still out of the range of the guns of Sebastopol. Accordingly the place was garrisoned by troops under Sir Colin Campbell, whilst the main army moved northward a few miles to within a convenient distance of Sebastopol, where they spent many days, some twenty in all, disposing their forces, erecting

batteries, and making all the necessary preparations for a prolonged and persistent siege. Meanwhile, the Russians busily fortified the place, glad of the unexpected delay, since they had anticipated an immediate assault. Several of the finest ships were sunk at the mouth of the harbour to keep the allied fleets at bay, and works of counter-fortification went busily forward. Admiral Korniloff and Colonel Todleben were the two chief officers in command, Prince Mentschikoff having withdrawn the main portion of his army to the Baltic, where he remained for a considerable period in a state of extraordinary inactivity. By the 6th October, however, he was prevailed upon to increase the garrison of Sebastopol to some 53,000 men.

On the 17th October, 1854, the allied armies opened fire upon Sebastopol, and the deafening cannonade was maintained daily till the evening of the 25th October. An account of the siege and final surrender of Sebastopol is given in a later chapter.

In the meantime, on the 18th October, a Russian field army was observed to be manœuvring on the allied flank and rear, and threatening the somewhat isolated garrison of Balaclava. The defensive measures taken for the defence of Balaclava consisted of inner and outer lines of defence. The town and harbour themselves were protected by steep hills, except at the gorge of Kadikoi, towards the north. Accordingly, these hills were fortified by the marine artillery, and held by marines and two companies of the 93rd regiment, while the gorge of Kadikoi itself was defended by six companies of the 93rd Highlanders and a battalion of Turks, with artillery, the whole constituting the inner line of defence.

Now the gorge of Kadikoi opens out into a more or less level plain known as the plain of Balaclava, a mile north of the town. It was here that there was destined to be fought the great cavalry battle which holds so glorious a place in annals of the British army. Right across the centre of this plain, which is three miles long by two broad, and hemmed in on all sides by hills from 300 to 400 feet high, is a low continuous chain of hills or ridge dividing the plain of Balaclava into two portions, called respectively the north and south valleys, and carrying the main Woronzoff Road or Causeway. This ridge of hills was known to our men as the Causeway heights, and constituted the outer line of defence, by which the enemy might be hindered from even penetrating to the south valley. A chain of redoubts were thrown up along the Causeway heights by our engineers and manned by Turks. The only supporting force available in the event of an attack was the cavalry, under Lord Lucan, some 1500 strong, which was encamped in the south valley within the outer line of defence.

The cavalry force consisted of two brigades—the Heavy Brigade, composed of the Scots Greys, Enniskillens, 1st Royal Dragoons, and 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards, under General Hon. James Scarlett, and the Light Brigade, under Lord Cardigan, consisting of the 4th and 13th Light Dragoons, the 8th and 11th Hussars, and the 17th Lancers. The whole garrison of Balaclava was, as before mentioned, under the chief command of Sir Colin Campbell.

On the evening of the 24th October, the troops of all divisions turned in for the night as usual, little conscious of the fact that a force of 25,000 Russians was advancing stealthily towards them from three different directions, their object being to seize the outer line of defence. Arising an hour before daybreak, Lord Lucan and his staff, mounted and moving slowly along in an easterly direction, perceived, in the dim light, two ensigns flying from the easternmost redoubt! Instantly all was activity, for the flying of two ensigns from the fort was the signal prearranged with the Turks to announce the Russian advance in force. The Light Cavalry Brigade was sent forward to support the Turks, and an aide-de-camp was despatched at full speed to Lord Raglan informing him at once of the turn of affairs.

Says a private soldier of the Black Watch:—"It so happened that all our regiment was in camp, and we were expecting to get that day's rest, but the rations were scarcely served out when the words came, 'Fall in! fall in at once!' I need not say that the order was obeyed in all haste by the whole division, and His Royal Highness (The Duke of Cambridge) and Colonel Cameron marched us off in the direction of Balaclava." Thus the 1st and 4th Divisions with Bosquet's forces were promptly despatched to the scene of action, but meantime, in the plain of Balaclava things were happening.

The Turkish defence had not lasted long. Contrary to popular opinion, the historian of the war extols the bravery of the Turkish troops at this juncture, who, if they were compelled to beat an ignominious retreat, did so at least in the presence of overwhelming numbers of the enemy, and practically without support from our troops. In a very little while the outer line of defence was captured, the Russian cavalry in the meantime proceeding down the north valley towards the gorge of Kadikoi. Here, it will be remembered, Sir Colin Campbell stood awaiting them in person with the 93rd Highlanders.

As the foremost Russian horsemen appeared heading towards the gorge, the eager Highlanders began to spring forward, but the angry voice of their veteran commander held them in check, and saved them from being cut to pieces by the cavalry in the open plain. Meanwhile the Turkish fugitives stream-

ing down the south valley towards Kadikoi, had been formed up into some sort of order by Sir Colin, and together with the 93rd they stood awaiting the Russian cavalry charge. That charge never came. But while the steady line of Highlanders poured a heavy fire into the advancing force, without waiting for its effect, the Osmaulis turned and fled, falling over each other in their haste. The Highlanders alone confronted the foe. "Remember, there is no retreat, men!" said Sir Colin, as he rode along the line; "you must die where you stand!" "Ay, ay, Sir Colin," came the quick reply, and a second later the order rang out clear and sharp, and a second heavy volley met the advancing enemy.

It proved too much for the dreaded horsemen of the Czar, and in a few moments they turned and retreated in confusion, another volley helping them on their way. The strain relaxed, the victorious Highlanders turned their faces to watch the retreating soldiers of the Sultan, and in a moment, where had been set, stern faces and lips drawn tight, were seen countenances convulsed with laughter and powder-stained cheeks furrowed by tears of uncontrollable merriment.

For in their retreat past the camp of the Highlanders some of the Turkish soldiers had paused for a second with intent, it is supposed, to pillage. Judge then of their amazement when from out of one of the nearest tents emerged a stalwart and furious Scottish "wife," who seized the nearest of the Faithful by the ear and with stout stick and sturdy arm belaboured his back and his red trousers till the blows resounded far and wide. Not once, but again and again did this angry lady ("she was a very powerful woman," said an eye-witness) belabour the soldiers of the Sultan, and long and loud was the laughter of the 93rd as Turk after Turk fled screaming from her fury, bawling, "Ship! ship!" as he sought a safer refuge at the harbour of Balaclava. "Then, if ever in history," says Kinglake, "did the fortunes of Islam wane low before the manifest ascendant of the Cross!"

In the meantime in the other part of the field events moved quickly. The defeated squadron of Russian horse rejoined the main body in the north valley, and under General Ryjoff moved up to the crest of the Causeway heights, between the captured redoubts, with the intention of falling upon our troops in the south valley. By this time Lord Raglan had arrived upon the scene, and from a position where he could view the whole field observed the Turkish flight at Kadikoi. Quick as thought he directed the Heavy Brigade under General Scarlett to proceed to their support. As the brigade rode along the south valley in execution of this order, they were suddenly aware of a squadron of Russian cavalry gazing down upon

them from the Causeway heights upon their left, and about to hurl itself upon their flank. To face about was the work of an instant, though the odds were about ten to one, and for a few seconds our cavalry awaited the Russian charge. At a well-governed speed and in splendid order the Russians rode down the slopes of the hill, gradually gathering impetus to press the charge, when, from some unexplained cause, their trumpets sounded, the pace gradually slackened, and the whole squadron came to a standstill within some four hundred yards of our troops, and slowly opened out their front as if to envelope our forces.

Scarlett was quick to seize this advantage accorded to him as if by a miracle. Turning to his trumpeter, he called out, "Sound the charge!" and in an instant, with their gallant General several paces in advance, the Heavy Brigade hurled themselves up the hill straight at the halted Russian line.

The front of our "three hundred" was composed of the Scots Greys and Enniskillens, regiments long associated with each other in battle, and old comrades in arms. Side by side they dashed up the gently-sloping ground, and "the Greys with a low eager moan of outbursting desire, the Enniskillens with a cheer," met the enemy with a terrific shock.

Well was it for the gallant General Scarlett that he had ridden several paces in advance of his men, and, hacking and hewing his way single-handed, had cut deeply into the mass of Russian horsemen. For their very numbers became a source of safety instead of danger to him, so that he was enabled completely to escape the shock of the charge of his own devoted troops, which completely crushed the first few ranks of the Russians. After the first fierce shock, the fighting became individual. Here a single scarlet horseman engaged with three or four of the enemy, preserving his life solely by the strength of his sword-arm. There a little knot of three or four cut a pathway through overwhelming odds. "I never felt less fear in my life," wrote one of the Scots Greys after the fight; "I felt more like a devil than a man. I escaped without a scratch, though I was covered with blood."

General Scarlett himself received five wounds, none of which was he conscious of at the time, while Lieutenant Elliot, his aide-de-camp, had no fewer than fourteen sabre cuts, through which he not only lived, but lived to be returned as "slightly wounded"!

The Russians suffered heavily, as our frenzied men cut their way through and through their overwhelming mass. Spectators have described the awe with which they watched this devoted body of scarlet-clad men merge themselves into the sea of Russian grey, and many thought they must be lost indeed. But

the keen and practised eye of the commander-in-chief saw that, far from being overwhelmed, our men, though scattered, were more than holding their own. It was indeed the first step to victory if it could be pushed home without delay. The joy with which the order to support "the three hundred" was received may be well judged from the spirit of Lord Cardigan, who, with the soon to be famous Light Brigade, was halted watching the combat, and eagerly awaiting the order to "go in."

"Damn those Heavies!" cried the Earl many times, as in sheer rage at the enforced inaction, he cantered furiously up and down the lines of his squadron; "Damn those Heavies: they'll have the laugh of us this day!" A spirit shared, it may be stated, by every British trooper on the scene. But it was not to the Light Brigade that Lord Raglan sent the order "to support," but to the comrades of the three hundred—the Heavy Dragoons and Royals.

With wild cheers, and a charge which developed in many places into a neck-and-neck race, these drove in upon the flanks of the Russian horse, and beset the sorely-pressed Cossacks at many different points. Till at length attacked both from within, where the acting-adjutant of the Greys, Alexander Miller, towering on his enormous horse and holding aloft his reeking sword, was collecting his regiment with a stentorian, "Rally, the Greys!"—attacked from without by the Royals and Dragoons, and again charged from within by the Enniskillens—the Russian horsemen began to back, their ranks loosened, and soon they galloped up the hill for dear life in full retreat.

Then, as our Heavy Brigade, slowly and laboriously reformed, there went up such a cheer from the 93rd and all who had witnessed the fight as could be heard afar and all across the plain. A French General exclaimed generously, "The victory of the Heavy Brigade was the finest thing I ever saw." Sir Colin Campbell, galloping up to where the Greys were reforming, uncovered and spoke to the regiment. "Greys! gallant Greys!" he said, according to one version, "I am sixty-one years old, and if I were young again I should be proud to be in your ranks." Nor was this all. As General Scarlett, blood-stained from head to foot, having cut his way from one end of the Russian cavalry to the other, emerged upon the scene, an aide-de-camp tore up to him from Lord Raglan, and nearly throwing his horse upon its haunches, with hand at the salute, delivered in the ears of the regiment the chief's gracious message of "Well done!" which caused the hearts of all to swell with pride and eyes to gleam with joy.

But Lord Raglan was not the man to waste precious time, and instantly comprehending that now at once was the occasion

to push home the cavalry victory, sent two successive orders to Sir George Cathcart, whose 4th Division was by this time approaching the scene, to at once press on and recapture the redoubts. These orders for some reason were somewhat sluggishly obeyed, and so great was the delay that Lord Raglan, growing impatient, determined to use his swifter cavalry arm.

An aide-de-camp with written instructions was despatched post haste to Lord Lucan, to order that the cavalry should advance and recover the heights. Here again the order was misunderstood, Lord Lucan being indisposed to move too far forward without supports, and a delay of half an hour occurred.

Minute after minute passed by as Lord Raglan and his staff from the higher ground swept the field with their glasses, and still no cavalry appeared. Then all at once it was perceived that the enemy with ropes and horses, was preparing to drag off the captured British guns.

Instantly Lord Raglan despatched the world-renowned "fourth order," the text of which was clear and unmistakable. It ran as follows:—"Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns. Troops of horse artillery may accompany. French cavalry is on your left. Immediate."

To Captain Nolan—"the impetuous Nolan"—was entrusted the carrying of this message, and many have recorded the dangerous and breakneck speed at which he set off upon his errand, riding straight down the steep face of the hill, turning his horse's head neither to right nor left, on his urgent journey to Lord Lucan. As one who had been with Lord Raglan watching and waiting for the appearance of the cavalry who never came, it may be readily imagined that Nolan was in a temper, and briefly and uncompromisingly he thrust the order into the hands of his superior officer.

Once again Lord Lucan conceived the enterprise a dangerous one, and ventured unwisely to say so. Nolan, by this time thoroughly roused, blurted out, "Lord Raglan's orders are that the cavalry should advance immediately," and, says Lord Lucan in his narrative, pointed to the north valley, where the Russian guns were dimly seen in battery. It is probable, nay, almost certain, that Nolan merely waved his hand in a general forward direction, but Lord Lucan conceived him to indicate the north valley.

Stung by the implied reproach of his inferior, Lord Lucan resolved to carry out the order at once, as he conceived it, and straightway commanded Lord Cardigan that the cavalry were to advance, not, as Lord Raglan had intended, up the Causeway heights, to recapture our own lost guns, but up the deadly north valley, where the enemy's guns were in position on every side,

Well did the Earl of Cardigan know the awful danger of the task thus erroneously allotted to him, but to Lord Lucan's order he returned a cheerful "Certainly sir!" and, placing himself at the head of his men, quietly gave the order, "The Brigade will advance!"

Again and again poets and historians have placed on record the fearless devotion to duty thus called into play, and if the advance of the Light Brigade was one of the gravest military errors ever made, yet its achievement forms one of the noblest pages of the national military history.

"Gallop!" came the order, short and sharp, and as one man the 673 of all ranks bent to the saddle, and, with Lord Cardigan at their head, swept over the grassy sward straight to where the Russian guns stood, backed by five and twenty thousand horse and foot.

For a moment the foe were paralysed at the awe-inspiring folly of the British. They gasped to see the small body of cavalry, with faces set, their chargers with manes and tails streaming in the wind, galloping down the deadly valley to their death. Then their wonder gave place to rage. From right and left and straight in front burst forth a sheet of flame, and with a deafening crash the hail of lead tore through the devoted ranks.

One of the first to fall was Nolan, who had joined the charge, a volunteer, and right in front of the division rode with uplifted sword, to the intense fury of Lord Cardigan, who claimed that proud position for himself. There is little doubt that Nolan intended to change the direction of the charge, seeing at last the full extent of the error which had been made, but this was not to be. A fragment of a Russian shell tore Nolan's gallant breast, and, says Kinglake, "from what had been Nolan there burst forth a cry so strange and so appalling that the hussar who rode nearest him has always called it unearthly. And in truth I imagine that the sound resulted from no human will, but rather from those spasmodic forces which may act upon the form when life has ceased. . . . The shriek men heard rending the air was the shriek of a corpse."

On into the pen of fire rode the Light Brigade. Saddles emptied fast, and riderless horses, as is the manner of the poor brutes, ranged themselves on either side of the gallant leader, Lord Cardigan, and their hoofs thundered with the rest. Shrieks, curses, groans, and cheers were mingled as onward, ever onward, at racing speed, rode the brave band. Never once did Lord Cardigan turn in his saddle, but, erect and straight, flew over the grass, and, with eyes riveted on the crimson tunic of their leader, the gallant men followed him to

death. Down went man and horse, with shriek, with prayer, and some without a sound, but never a pause in the devoted ranks.

"Now, my brave lads, for old England!" roared Sir George Paget, as they dashed towards the guns; onward, ever onward, till at length the guns were reached, and those who were left rode in behind them cutting and thrusting at the gunners with a maniacal fury.

Lord Cardigan has described the dull wonder with which he found himself unhit by the discharge of a twelve-pounder almost in his face, and the next instant cutting and slashing at the men who fired it. Eye-witnesses have described the awful sights seen after the charge; of the charge itself few can speak with accuracy.

Says a private soldier of the Black Watch, who by this time had arrived upon the scene:—"A Russian gunner was holding his head together. It had been struck with a cavalry sword. He was alive, and was walking to the front, when my comrade called out, 'Don't take him to the front, take him to the rear; our doctors may make something of him.' He was sent to the rear holding his head together. It was often spoken of years afterwards in our regiment."

"I saw one of the Greys," says the same man, Alexander Robb of Dundee, "holding his arm that was nearly cut through. He also was able to walk. As he was passing us he said, 'They say the Russians are not good at the sword, but I never gave a point but I got a parry,' and he made his way, laughing, to the surgeons."

Thus were the guns taken at Balaclava. "It was magnificent, but it was not war," said General Bosquet. The position was untenable, and after a few brief instants the order came "Threes about, retire!" and back rode the shattered force—195 mounted men in all. Once more the Russian fire broke out, and that the carnage on the return journey down the north valley was not heavier was due entirely to the French cavalry, the gallant Chasseurs d'Afrique. Realising the urgent danger of the Light Brigade, they diverted the attention of the right-hand Russian battery upon themselves, and thus doubtless preserved many lives in the ranks of the sadly thinned six hundred.

That the whole charge of the Light Brigade was a grievous error none could deny, least of all Lord Raglan, who angrily demanded of Lord Cardigan, as the scattered remnant of the cavalry reformed—"What did you mean, sir, by attacking a battery in front, contrary to all the usages of war?" It is, however, not unpleasing to learn that, writing privately of the charge, Lord Raglan has described it as "perhaps the finest thing ever attempted!"

With the charge of the Light Brigade, which lasted some twenty minutes, the battle practically ended, and about four o'clock the firing ceased. The Russians still held the captured redoubts, and had indeed succeeded in severing Balaclava from the main allied camps before Sebastopol, but no strategical advantage could dim the lustre and the glorious prestige of the hare-brained charge of Lord Cardigan and the Light Cavalry.

Lord Lucan was removed from the command of the cavalry of the "army of the East," and his request to be tried by court-martial was refused.

The allied and Russian losses at Balaclava were nearly equal in number—between 600 and 700 on either side.

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## CHAPTER XL.

### THE BATTLE OF INKERMAN.

1854.

By the first week of November enormous numbers of reinforcements reached the Russian army in the Crimea, so that not only were some 120,000 troops under Prince Mentschikoff's command, but a corresponding enthusiasm was awakened amongst all Russian ranks by this large addition to their numbers. Such warlike enthusiasm received a great impetus at this time by the arrival in camp of two young Grand Dukes, Michael and Nicholas, sons of the Czar.

The allied troops, on the other hand, had by this time an effective strength of some 65,000 men, and with an extended line of nearly 20 miles to guard it was apparent to all that a severe struggle for supremacy would shortly take place.

As is so often the case in war, those upon the spot, Lord Raglan and General Camobert, though fully aware of a large accession to the enemy's strength, were not so well posted as to its precise extent as were their fellow-countrymen in France and England. In both countries intense anxiety prevailed as to the outcome of the next engagement of the war.

They were not long kept in suspense. The Russian plan of attack comprised a general advance, partly a feint, upon the allied right, simultaneous with a sortie from the city of Sebastopol. Sunday, the 5th November, was the day fixed upon.

On the eve of the battle—the night of the 4th November—and again as early as four o'clock on the morning of the 5th, the bells of Sebastopol were heard ringing, and it was afterwards ascertained that the Russian Church was bestowing her blessing upon the soldiers of the Czar. Moreover, the clangour of the great bells to some extent covered the sound of the foot-

steps of the advancing hordes as they crept forward to the attack some hours before sunrise.

The attack was admirably planned. The extreme southernmost portion of the Russian army, under Prince Gortschakoff, was to feint an attack against the Guards and the French under Bosquet, thereby hindering them from marching to the assistance of our 2nd Division under General Pennefather, in whose charge lay the district of Mount Inkerman. Mount Inkerman itself, the real objective of the enemy, was to be assailed by 40,000 men under General Dannenburg. To the north again, the Sebastopol garrison was to effect a further diversion, engaging the allied left.

Upon the 2nd Division then was to fall the brunt of the fight, for the possession of the high ground of Mount Inkerman would enable the Russians to overlook their besieging enemy, hamper their operations, and, in all probability, compel them to abandon the siege.

On the afternoon of the 4th, General Pennefather, who commanded the 2nd Division, in the absence through illness of Sir de Lacy Evans, going his rounds as usual, observed a somewhat increased activity on the part of the enemy, but not of such a nature as to warrant other than ordinary vigilance. Towards evening a thick mist and heavy drizzle set in, and the outlying pickets on Mount Inkerman strained their eyes through the mist and darkness for a possible glimpse of the enemy. Captain Sargent, indeed, of the 95th, regarded the night as being specially favourable to an attack by the enemy, and increased the vigilance of the picket under his command, reloading some of the wetted rifles with his own hands. Towards four o'clock there rang out the pealing of the Sebastopol bells aforementioned, and several men reported that they distinctly heard the rumbling of waggon or gun-carriage wheels during the early hours of the morning.

With all these premonitions, however, the attack came suddenly, so favoured were the enemy by mist and darkness.

Shortly after the changing of the pickets, and just as day was breaking, a sentry of the outermost picket on Mount Inkerman stood straining his eyes to pierce the mist that lay around him dim and silent. Suddenly it seemed to him a part of it towards the Shell Hill became darker than the rest, and then slowly began to move towards him. The sentry rubbed his eyes, thinking he must be dreaming, but sure enough the dark patch moved slowly up towards him out of the ravine, making never a sound, so thick and deadening lay the mist. Instantly he dashed off to his officer in command, Captain Rowlands, and reported his suspicions, and together in the now rapidly-clearing mist they beheld the approach of not one, but

two Russian battalions in array of battle. Bang! rang out the picket's fire, and firing obstinately, disputing every inch of the ground, it fell back before the now rapidly-advancing foe. The Inkerman engagement had begun.

Quickly the sound of firing roused the camp, and a battery was at once established on a shoulder known as Horne Ridge, to check the enemy's advance by firing more or less at random into the mist. Shortly afterwards, Lord Raglan and General Camobert appeared on the scene and placed an increased battery at General Pennefather's disposal.

By intermittent firing, stubborn resistance, and occasionally a bayonet charge, the advancing Russian columns were thrown back behind their guns, which were by this time posted on Shell Hill.

The respite was not for long. A force of more than 10,000 Russians under General Sornionoff in person next swarmed up in front of Pennefather's devoted troops now slightly augmented by General Adams and the 41st regiment. Again and again did overwhelming masses of Russians pit themselves, with hoarse cries, against numerically insignificant bodies of our troops. Reports have it that the Russian soldiers had been sent into battle inflamed by large quantities of raw spirit, and certainly the extraordinary violence and pertinacity of their attack tends to support this belief. Be this as it may, their most determined onslaughts proved unavailing. With sword, bayonet, and, where the brushwood was too thick to admit of hand-to-hand fighting, with rifle ball, did our brave fellows drive them back, and many a Victoria Cross was won in the detached, but none the less effective fighting of this the first stage of the long Inkerman fight.

Here was Townsend's battery lost and recaptured. Here Lieutenant Hugh Clifford won his cross "for valour," leading some seventy men right into the heart of a column which threatened to turn his flank. Here Nicholson and many another gallant officer was killed; whilst, in this part of the field, Colonel Egerton, with some 260 men, totally routed and relentlessly pursued 1500 of the famous Tomsk regiment.

Kinglake tells the story briefly:—"There are the Russians, General," said Egerton to General Buller, as the great grey mass loomed before them in the mist; 'what shall we do?' 'Charge them!' retorted Buller tersely. And charge them he did with a will, hurling them down the hillside with loud hurrahs, and following their confused and broken ranks with sword and bayonet."

Thus again were the Russians beaten back from the slopes of Inkerman, and in the melee General Sornionoff himself was killed.

The next attack came from another quarter, but still the brunt of the fighting fell on Pennefather's troops.

Meanwhile, in other parts of the field, the Russians had carried out their admirable and well-laid plan of attack. Gortschakoff's forces had threatened Bosquet and the Guards who were opposing him. The Duke of Cambridge, however, who commanded in that part of the field, was not long deceived by the feints of the enemy. Leaving only the Coldstreams to face Gortschakoff (and withdrawing even these before long), he hurried the Grenadiers and Scots Fusiliers to Pennefather's assistance. Bosquet also perceived Inkerman to be the real point of attack, and while still facing Gortschakoff with his troops, held them in readiness to march thither should the need arise, as it very soon did.

Sir Colin Campbell's forces, however, were detained near Balaclava in a state of inaction, to protect that important port; as it happened an unnecessary, but very wise, provision.

Says one of the garrison under Sir Colin:—"We remained in the trenches under arms for three or four hours. The whole Balaclava force was under arms in the same manner, while Sir Colin was riding along the line of trenches and keeping an eye on the enemy in front, which (sic) appeared to be threatening an attack on us. We heard a heavy musketry fire from the front, and it was well on in the day before it slackened, and the enemy were seen to move backwards, out of sight—all but their sentries. We remained the same, however, not knowing what was up."

On the Sebastopol front, on the other hand, nothing of importance happened till, between nine and ten o'clock, a resolute sortie under General Timovieff took place, and the attention of Prince Napoleon was so occupied with this attack, which at one time met with some measure of success, that his troops were unable to reach Mount Inkerman in time to take part in the main fight.

Thus it will be seen that in this part of the field the enemy attained his object and made a successful division. All other troops available were despatched with speed to the scene of the main action on Inkerman.

Of Mount Inkerman itself it may be said that it is in the shape of a long narrow triangle, with base towards the Russians and joined towards the Chersonese by its apex to the high ground of the British camps—this narrow neck being known as the Isthmus. Shell Hill forms its highest point, whilst on either hand, but nearer the allied camp, are lesser heights or shoulders called respectively Home Ridge and English Heights, and lying north and south of the central peak of Shell Hill, and separated from it by a ravine. A lower ridge between

these two was called the Fore Ridge, upon which at either end were the slight defences of the Barrier and Sandbag Battery, both destined ere long to become famous—"the scene of one of the bloodiest combats in history."

For now once more the Russians swarmed up in front of our already hard-pressed outposts, the clearer atmosphere revealing their true and overwhelming numbers.

By this time the Grenadiers and Scots Fusiliers, under the Duke of Cambridge, were rapidly approaching. And now began that terrific struggle over the Sandbag Battery which resulted in that comparatively worthless entrenchment, situated as it was some yards in advance of the British position, being taken and retaken many times with awful slaughter on both sides.

Pennefather's brave fellows, General Adams and his brigade, the Guards, and some of the French infantry waged in turn a fierce war round the comparatively worthless position, and soon its shallow trench was heaped with dead and dying. Time and again the Russians would sweep into the battery, with murder in their eyes and brain, and bayonet any hapless wounded left behind perforce by our outnumbered men. A few brief moments would elapse, our gallant fellows would re-form, and, tooth and nail, with cold steel and even fist to face they would drive out the invader and hunt the Russians down the slope, thence only to return with dogged pertinacity again and again to the assault.

The 56th Westmoreland, the 41st Welsh, the 49th Herefordshire, the 20th and 95th, the Grenadiers, Scots Fusiliers and Grenadiers again—each in turn occupied for varying intervals of time the worthless battery, and then were either forced by weight of numbers to retire or else abandoned the battery themselves, having discovered its incapacity for shelter. Seven times in all was the battery captured by the Russians, and seven times retaken by our men.

Says the great historian of the war:—"The parapet of the Sandbag Battery—it stands to this day—(1869) is a monument of heroic devotion and soldierly prowess, yet showing, as preachers might say, the vanity of human desires. Supposed, although wrongly, to be a part of the British defences, and fought for, accordingly, with infinite passion and at a great cost of life by numbers and numbers of valiant infantry, the work was no sooner taken than its worthlessness became evident, not indeed to the bulk of the soldiery, but to those particular troops which chanced to be posted within it."

And so the mistaken fight raged on, and heavy indeed were the losses around the fateful battery. The dead lay around in heaps.

Here General Adams died, his ankle shattered by a Russian bullet, and General Torrens was here so grievously wounded that he died later. As he lay upon the ground, General Sir George Cathcart rode down to him, crying, "Well and gallantly done, Torrens!" only to fall himself within the hour, a bullet through his heart.

Many are the gallant deeds and hairbreadth escapes recounted from this quarter of the field. The Duke of Cambridge only escaped being cut off by the Russians through dint of hard riding, a horse being killed under him and a bullet grazing his arm. Here Burnaby and his brave little party were some moments surrounded on every side, and only rescued by the French 7th battalion of the line; and here and there "General Pennefather's favourite oaths could be heard roaring cheerily down through the smoke" as he galloped from point to point, encouraging his men wherever the stress was greatest. It was at this time a horse was killed under him, throwing him to the ground in its fall, and men smiled amid the slaughter as they heard the old General "damning" the Russian gunners with all the fervour of his years!

On both sides reinforcements were hurried up continually, and regiment after regiment distinguished itself. "Men! remember Albuera!" rang out the voice of young Captain Stanley of the 57th, as a bullet tore its way into his heart, and his devoted company sprang forward over his body, upholding to the last the splendid tradition of the "Die Hards."

At length, about 8.30, the vast hordes of General Dannenburg were pressed back, and something of a lull occurred. The British still held their ground, but with a frightful loss of nearly 1500 men.

From this time forward the Russian attack was mainly directed at the Home Ridge, and for a while it prospered. In this part of the field the allied forces consisted of some 2000 British, with a regiment of French and a small body of Zouaves, who had joined the Inkerman fight without orders, and for pure love of fighting. Most opportune was the moment of the arrival of this little body of troops, for without hesitation they hurled themselves at a Russian force which in the first brief moments of the onslaught had captured three British guns in advance of the position, and triumphantly restored them to their owners. Kinglake has declared his belief that they were led by Sir George Brown in person, who had discovered them wandering leaderless in a remote portion of the field.

Meanwhile the main body of the Russians advanced, covered by the heavy fire of their artillery on Shell Hill. So heavy indeed was this fire that Lord Raglan and the headquarters staff were in serious danger by reason of it. As Lord Raglan

was directing the movements of the troops from the rear of the British lines, a round shot tore the leg off General Strangeways, with whom he was conversing. Without a cry the old man begged to be assisted from his horse, for he did not lose his grip of the saddle, and was led tenderly to the back of the fight, where he died—a veteran soldier of Wellington's. At the same instant a shell burst, blowing the horses of two more staff officers to pieces, and splashing the headquarters staff with blood.

Lord Raglan had been too often under fire to be in any way perturbed by these events, and never for an instant did he relax his grip upon the battle. It was well indeed that he did not, for the Russians were making headway, and at this critical juncture, the 7th *Léger*, a young French battalion, showed signs of weakening. The French officers, however, never lacking in bravery, beat their men back into line, and, mingled with the remnant of the 56th, literally shoulder to shoulder, the French and British faced, and ere long worsted, the foe.

Back and forwards raged the fight at the Barrier. Now the Russians were in retreat; now for want of fresh troops to press the victory home the pursuit weakened, and they rallied and returned; now they were driving our men back, and all the while their artillery from Shell Hill poured down a pitiless rain of lead upon our wearied troops, and sometimes even on their own front ranks, so close and intermingled was the fighting at this point.

Lord Raglan, ever upon the alert, beheld the weakening of our tired-out forces, and sent a staff officer post haste to Bosquet, bidding him at once bring up supports in force. Meanwhile, as at the Alma, here Raglan changed the whole aspect of the fight by the sudden bringing into action of two guns.

"Bring up two 18-pounders!" came the order, and with crack of whip and mingled oaths and cheers, two of these, our most powerful pieces of ordnance, under the command of Colonel Collingwood Dickson, were placed in position on the ridge, and soon the thunderous fire of nearly a hundred of the enemy's cannon became intermittently punctuated with the deep roar of the 18-pounders. Shot after shot from these massive guns tore whistling across the intervening valley and ploughed their deadly way through flesh and blood, here wiping out a group of Russian gunners, here dismounting a gun, there blowing up an ammunition waggon, till in a brief half-hour the formidable artillery on Shell Hill began to slacken fire.

Many a British gunner was killed in this artillery duel, for the Russian fire was of course drawn against their new assailants, but eager volunteers pressed forward, and the guns were well and nobly served. So good in fact was their practice, and

so great the havoc they wrought amongst the Russians, that Colonel Dickson's battery was specially mentioned in the official records of the battle "for its distinguished and splendid service."

After the distress put upon the Russians by the "18-pounder" battery—one shot of which narrowly missed Prince Mentschikoff and the two young Grand Dukes, who were watching the fight from the rear of the Russian position—the end was not long in coming. Led by their "vivandière, gaily moving in her pretty costume, fit alike for dance or battle," the Zouaves made a dash forward, and hurled themselves upon the enemy with the bayonet. At this moment a number of the Cold-streams joined the Zouaves, and together rushed into the fray. The luckless Russians turned to flee, but soon found themselves hemmed in by the dead-strewn parapet of the Sandbag Battery. The victorious French and British drove them back as sheep are driven to a pen, and slaughtered all they could lay hands on. The Zouave standard was planted above the embrasure, heaped about with bodies.

From now onwards the war was carried into the enemy's lines. Finding the Russian artillery fire dwindling, our troops at the Barrier pressed forward. Step by step, in little knots and companies, our men pressed up the hill, and many a gallant deed was done in this the final stage.

Lieutenant Acton of the 77th rushed forward for some few moments with only one private soldier of his company, to the capture of a Russian battery. An instant later, the whole body followed their brave and impetuous leader, and pressing up the hill reached the battery only in time to see the last gun limbered up.

Here a knot of British would fling themselves upon a company of Russians with the bayonet, and heavy slaughter on both sides would result, but ever upward and forward pressed the victorious advance, the men faint with hunger but vigorous in pursuit, while the French engaged the Russian forces in the flank. Suddenly it was observed that the Russian batteries were being withdrawn in haste, and General Codrington, watching the fight from the far side of Careenage Ravine, glanced at his watch and found the time to be a quarter to one.

By one o'clock, in fact, the battle was practically over, for there was no pursuit worth mentioning, General Camobert, himself wounded in the arm, declining to throw French troops too far forward unsupported—an omission which he afterwards deeply regretted. Prince Mentschikoff was furious when he beheld the soldiers of the Czar in full retreat, and angrily asked General Dannenburg by whose orders the retreat was taking place. The General's answer was short and sharp—

retreat was necessary to avert disaster! Long and bravely had the Russian soldiers fought, but more than that they could not do.

By three o'clock Mount Inkerman was freed from Russian troops, and Lord Raglan and General Camobert rode side by side over the bloodstained field, strewn with the dead and dying of three nations; and Kinglake tells how the British commander-in-chief himself held up, with his one hand, the head of a wounded Russian soldier, parched with thirst, and begged water from his staff for the unhappy foeman. But there was no water on Mount Inkerman, and the poor wretch had to endure for many hours ere succour came.

Nearly 11,000 Russians lay dead upon the slopes of Inkerman—256 officers being amongst the killed; 2357 British were put out of action—597 being killed, 39 of the number being officers. Indeed, the ten British Generals on the field were either killed, wounded, or had their horses shot under them in action—Lord Raglan alone escaping unscathed. Days were spent in burying the dead.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE SIEGE OF SEBASTOPOL.

1854-55.

EXPERTS have declared that had Sebastopol been assaulted within two days of the battle of the Alma, it would have fallen an easy prey to the allied armies of France and Britain. History has shown, however, that this was not done, and that instead, Sebastopol was attacked from the south—the side remote from the Alma; and even at this point not until many days had elapsed.

The time thus granted to Russia was not wasted by those of her subjects who garrisoned the beleaguered town. Under that prince of engineers, Colonel de Todleben, defence works were constructed with an almost superhuman activity, whilst the harbour mouth was blocked to the allied fleet by the simple expedient of sinking Russian ships of war across the bar. This desperate measure was long opposed by many in the councils of Sebastopol, but once decided upon it was promptly carried out. It has been reported that many Russian sailors wept as they watched their finest ships of war settling down in the green waters of the Sebastopol roadstead, and it may be well believed that this was so, for the love of the sailor for his ship is proverbial. The Russian sailors showed no ignoble grief.

The roadstead of Sebastopol may be likened to a letter T, the top part of which constituted the roadstead proper, and the vertical portion the "man-of-war" harbour." The Sevemaya, or north part of the town, was built along the top of the roadstead, and consisted almost entirely of fortifications. To the west of the man-of-war harbour lay the town proper, while to the east of it was the Karabel Fanbourg, or suburb. At the extreme eastern end of the roadstead flows in the Tchemaya river.

This, then, was the town to be defended by Russia against an assault from the south. Accordingly a semi-circle of forts was erected from a point half-way between the man-of-war harbour and the mouth of the Tchemaya; touching at its centre the southernmost point of the harbour mentioned; and having its other extremity on the sea coast at the entrance to the main roadstead, where the sunken ships defended the waterway against the approach of the allied fleets. The main forts on this semi-circle were eight in number, from east to west in order comprising the Little Redan, the Malakoff, the Redan, Flagstaff Bastion, the Central Bastion, the Land Quarantine Bastion, the Sea Quarantine Fort, and Artillery Fort—the last named being within the semi-circle of defence, to the east of the Sea Quarantine Fort.

These works of defence the Russians now toiled at day and night unceasingly.

Meanwhile the allies, having decided upon an extensive siege, in preference to an instant assault, actively pressed forward their siege works. Great difficulty was encountered by the engineers in their task of bringing their stores and battering trains some six or seven miles from the coast to their required position, the means of transport being poor. The heavy Lancaster guns had to be dragged overland by many sailors "tallyed on" to drag ropes, and progress was slow. Work in the trenches was heavy.

Eventually, on the morning of the 17th October, the first bombardment of Sebastopol commenced, the heavy Lancaster battery opening fire about 6 a.m. The noise was terrific, for very soon both allies and Russians were engaged in a tremendous artillery duel. The earth shook, dense volumes of smoke hung over Sebastopol and about the allies' batteries, and shot and shell flew screeching through the air. About midday, when the fleets joined in, the din was redoubled.

On both sides losses, both in men and armament, were severe. Some would serve the guns; others, with pick and spade, would, under heavy fire, repair breaches in the earth-works; others would rush hither and thither with pails of water to extinguish fires which now and again broke out in the timber

of the batteries; others again bore off the wounded on litters to a place of safety—but each and all worked with a will, and never for an instant did the terrific fire slacken.

Now and again the smoke would lift for a moment, and some measure of the damage done on either side would be hastily gauged. Great bravery was displayed by besiegers and besieged, and humour as usual found its way into such an incongruous place. "I say, lads," said a young Scot, one of the redoubtable Black Watch; "I dinna think there'll be many kail-pots boiling in Sebastopol the day!" Nor were there!

The Russian admiral, Kornlinoff, over and over again exposed himself to shot and shell as he rode round from point to point of the defences, and at length so often was he bespattered with sand and stones thrown up on all sides from the earth-works, that he handed his watch over to a courier, telling him to give it to his wife. "I am afraid that here it will get broken," he added, humourously.

Before eleven o'clock the brave man had breathed his last. As he was descending the Malakoff after taking fresh instructions to the gunners of that fort, a shell tore his left thigh, and sadly his aide-de-camp and others bore him to the hospital. There, stretched upon a mattress of agony, the somewhat inaccurate news was brought him that the British guns were at length silenced, and with his last breath he cried "Hurrah!" dying, as he had lived, a brave man and noble foe.

Meantime in the French part of the field of action disasters had fallen thick and heavy. A well-directed Russian shell about nine o'clock burst in a French magazine on Mount Rodolph, the French main battery of attack, and with a terrific noise, heard even above the thunder of the arms, the men surrounding it were lifted sky high, the bodies falling round in dozens. A second explosion in the French lines just afterwards, silenced their land artillery for the day, the attack being maintained by the British artillery and by the allied fleets.

About half-past one the French fleet opened fire from no less than six hundred guns—the Quarantine Sea Fort being the chief object of attack. Soon the other forts towards the sea were engaged by both navies, and awful havoc resulted on both sides.

All through the long October afternoon the battle raged, the cannonade from the sea being in the estimation of Admiral Dundas, the British commander, "the heaviest that had ever taken place on the ocean." Here again both sides suffered heavily, but the forts in the main suffered less than the vessels, many of which were greatly disabled, the Albion and Arethusa being completely crippled. The Rodney ran aground under the eye and well within the reach of Fort Constantine, and from

her position right under the Russian guns maintained an obstinate fight till between six and seven, when the fleet hauled off and the naval bombardment was abandoned in the rapidly-fading light.

Little execution had been done by the fleets, but the disaster sustained by them was heavy, the British and French losing no fewer than 500 men killed and wounded, and moreover, failing in their attack.

Meantime, though the French batteries were out of action, the British land forces were making progress, and soon it became impossible for the Russians to repair the breaches in the embrasures of the Redan, though officers and men bent their backs alike to the work. Then, too, by reason of the heavy fire, the infantry supporting this important work fell back, and for a while the Redan was left defenceless, but the advantage was not pushed home before night fell and firing ceased. The turn of the Redan came later.

More than 1000 Russians had been killed in this first day's bombardment, with but trifling advantage to the allies, so for the next few days the French proceeded to strengthen their attack, while the British batteries kept down to some extent the Russian fire. Thus matters stood till the morning of the 25th October, when the allied rear attacked at Balaclava, and again, some ten days later, at Inkerman, on the 5th November.

In both these contests the Russians lost heavily, but still the assault of Sebastopol was postponed, and it soon appeared that a Russian winter would have to be faced.

Life in the besieging trenches now became monotonous. Duties, as before, consisted of employment in working and covering parties, sharpshooting and picket work, and the long and dreary days were spent when off duty in one form of diversion and another, and many amusing incidents have been recounted, and many tales of suffering nobly borne been told.

A glimpse of the life of a private soldier at this time is very graphically recounted by one of the 42nd. Says this man in his published record:—"The dismal time now commenced, for with digging and picking in the day time, and strong pickets at night, on poor rations, our clothing worn out and verminous, and the nearly worn-out bell tents to sleep in, on the cold bare ground, we were getting less in number every day. As the trenches were formed we had to lie in them at night for the purpose of reinforcing the picket till the remainder turned out. We always had our rifles loaded, even the men in the tents, and false alarms were frequent. Even the poor rations were not half eaten. The pork and salt beef could be seen piled up at the tents untouched. . . . But the commander-in-chief allowed us two rations of rum a day, and one extra on

night duty." "In the tent to which I belonged," says the same man later, "to keep us from lying on the cold, wet mud, we got stones and lay upon them; they were better to lie on than the wet ground!"

Day by day the sound of the big guns reverberated through the camp, and day by day the victims of fever, dysentery, and shot and shell were borne to the hospitals at Kadikoi and Balaclava by the bandsmen and pipers, who were told off to this melancholy duty. An occasional reconnoitre in the intense frost of the Russian winter laid many a poor fellow low with frostbite, and with these and the aforementioned causes the hospitals soon grew full. The medical staff worked nobly, but were wholly inadequate, both in numbers and equipment, to cope with the enormous multitude of sick and wounded.

The worst cases were sent by ship to Scutari, where overcrowding also prevailed, in spite of the utmost efforts and the noble devotion of Miss Nightingale, at this time not long arrived from England.

"As I was going along the passages" (of the Scutari hospital), says a private soldier, "which were full of patients, the rooms also being full, I was beginning to think no one cared for me, when a pleasant-looking lady approached and asked what was the matter with me, calling an orderly to get me into a bed. I was frequently visited by the lady, who was no less a person than Miss Nightingale."

So in the camp and in the hospital the winter wore away with but two outstanding incidents; the great hurricane of the 14th November, and the engagement on the night of the 20th November at the "Ovens."

The hurricane of the 14th November did incalculable harm to all combatants. An hour before sunrise on that day the air was calm, and the wind had fallen after heavy rain the previous night. Suddenly a violent hurricane arose, accompanied by thunder, lightning, and sleet, and instantly all was pandemonium. Large trees were torn from their roots, practically every tent in the allied armies was blown flat, while roofs were carried away from houses in Sebastopol. Vast stores of forage were destroyed, and accounts state that at least one man was swept off his feet and carried some twenty yards by the sheer force of the wind! All day the elements held sway until evening, when the storm abated as quickly as it had arisen, and an intense calm prevailed, the stars shining out upon the miry, stricken camp.

Among the horses and the shipping the casualties were heavy, and the loss sustained by the cyclone of the 14th was not repaired for many a long day.

The story of the capture of the "Ovens" is inseparably

connected with the name of Lieutenant Tryon of the Rifle Brigade, who lost his life in the engagement. The "Ovens" comprised a series of old Tartar caves and stone huts long since untenanted, but now used with deadly effect by Russian riflemen as "cover," whence they could annoy the French working parties. Becoming in course of time unbearable by reason of the accuracy of their fire, it was determined to dislodge them, the task being entrusted to Lieutenant Tryon and some men of the Rifle Brigade. Feinting an open attack with half his men, Tryon, on the night of the 20th November, crept with the other half, stealthily upon the Russians, surprised them into a retreat, and established himself in the very caves which the Russians had vacated. Their retreat was not for long, and very soon they returned in overwhelming numbers to the attack, and three times were they repelled by Tryon and his gallant band. Eventually "supports" arrived to the Rifles, and the "Ovens" were held by our men, to the great admiration of the French. Tryon, however, was mortally wounded by a Russian bullet.

After the affair at the "Ovens" the dull routine went on as before, and sickness did its deadly work amongst the armies of the three combatant nations.

The British Government seemed wholly unable to cope with the requirements of its army in the Crimea, and the tale of the winter's misery has been told by many. The improper food, wretched shelter, inadequate clothing, and deficient medical supplies have been emphasised by hundreds, and small wonder that privation and disease wrought as terrible havoc as did the shot and shell of the enemy.

Towards the end of December, an improvement began to be effected. The women of Britain, from the Sovereign downwards, toiled unceasingly to remedy the defective clothing and increase the comfort of the soldiers, and moreover, wooden huts were erected in place of the now worn-out tents, so that by the arrival of spring the troops were in a better position to carry on their arduous work. Moreover, fresh troops were constantly arriving, and Sardinia furnished a powerful contingent to her new made allies of France and Britain.

Still, with all these advantages, the awful monotony of the siege weighed upon the stoutest of our men, and any diversion was eagerly welcomed.

On the 2nd March, 1855, the Emperor Nicholas died, worn out, it has been said, in body and soul by the protracted struggle in the south of his dominions, and, in particular, by the reverses sustained by his troops in Eupatoria at the hands of the Turks. But the death of the Czar had little effect upon the war in the Crimea. His successor, Alexander, prosecuted the defence with

unabated energy. In May an expedition to Kertch harassed the Russians considerably, while the newly-arrived Sardinians, in conjunction with the French, obtained a signal success on the Themaya.

These were, however, but side issues, and the main armies maintained their dreary watch upon Sebastopol, where work and counterwork, mine and countermine, employed the ingenuities of the engineers of both nations.

The appearance of Sebastopol at this time has been ably shown by Mr. Conolly in his history of the Royal Engineers:—

“Parallels and approaches now covered the hills, and saps daringly progressed in front; dingy pits filled with groups of prying and fatal marksmen, studded the advances and flanks; caves were augmented in size and number in the sides of the ravines to give safety to the gunpowder, . . . while new works were thrown up in front to grapple with the sturdy formations of the Russians.”

Sorties by the enemy were frequent, and, on the night of the 22nd March, a most determined attack was made upon the working parties of the allies from four different points. It failed, however, to accomplish much, and matters continued as before.

On Monday, the 9th April, another terrific bombardment occurred, the British gunners directing their special attention to the Flagstaff Bastion. For several days, until the 18th April, the battery was plied mercilessly with shot and shell, and reduced to a state of distress bordering on annihilation; it still, however, remained unassaulted, and during a temporary truce was patched up once more. On the 21st, however, its fire was reduced to complete silence.

Count Tolstoy in his stirring pictures of “Sevastopol,” so admirably translated by Louise and Aylmer Maude, has given us a vivid glimpse of affairs in this awful battery, “the Fourth Bastion,” as the Russians called it. “You want to get quickly to the Bastions,” says Tolstoy, showing an imaginary visitor through the beleaguered town, “especially to that Fourth Bastion of which you have been told so many tales. When anyone says, ‘I am going to the Fourth Bastion,’ a slight agitation or a too marked indifference is always noticeable in him! When you meet someone carried on a stretcher, and ask, ‘Where from?’ the answer usually is, ‘From the Fourth Bastion.’

Passing a barricade, you go up a broad street. Beyond this the houses on both sides of the street are unoccupied, the doors are boarded up, the windows smashed, . . . on the road you stumble over cannon-balls that lie about, and into holes full of water, made in the stony ground by bombs. Before you, up a steep hill, you see a black, untidy space cut up by

ditches. This space is the Fourth Bastion. The whiz of cannon-ball or bomb near by impresses you unpleasantly as you ascend the hill, bullets begin to whiz past you right and left, and you will perhaps consider whether you had better not walk inside the trench which runs parallel to the road, full of yellow stinking mud more than knee-deep!"

To reach the bastion proper, "you turn to the right, along that narrow trench where a foot soldier, stooping down, has just passed, and where you will see Cossacks changing their boots, eating, smoking their pipes and, in fact, living! Soon you come to a flat space with many holes and cannons on platforms and walled in with earthworks. This is the bastion. Here you see perhaps four or five soldiers playing cards under shelter of the breastwork, and a naval officer sitting on a cannon rolling a cigarette composedly. Suddenly a sentinel shouts 'Mortar!' There is a whistle, a fall, and an explosion, mingled with the groans of a man. You approach him as the stretchers are brought; part of his breast has been torn away; in a trembling voice he says, 'Farewell, brothers.'

'That's the way with seven or eight every day,' says the officer, and he yawns as he lights another cigarette."

In the British trenches similar scenes were being enacted, the same coolness under fire, and resolute contempt of danger being displayed by all ranks and nationalities.

"One day there was a cluster of us together," wrote a Highland soldier to his parents, "when a shell fell close by. The fuse was not exhausted when John Bruce up with it in his arms and threw it over the trench."

Such incidents were by no means rare, and in this wise the summer wore on with varying fortune. In May the command of the French army was taken up by General Pélissier, and on the 28th June the master-mind of the British army was removed—Lord Raglan, beloved and mourned by all ranks, dying of cholera after a brief two days' illness. Kinglake has recorded how on the morning on the 29th, the commander-in-chief of the four allied armies visited the chamber of death, and how the iron frame of the staunch General Pélissier shook with grief as he "stood by the bedside for upwards of an hour crying like a child."

On board the *Caradoc* the body of the Field-Marshal was conveyed to England, and all ranks mourned for one whom they had learnt to trust, admire, and almost love—"so noble, so pure, so replete with service rendered to his country." For seven miles the route of the procession to the *Caradoc* was lined at either side by double ranks of infantry, and, says the historian of the war, during the melancholy march "French and British refrained from inviting by fire the fire of Sebastopol,

and whether owing to chance, or to a signal and grateful act of courtesy on the part of General Ostin-Sacken (now in command), the garrison also kept silence."

So died Lord Raglan, and the command of the British troops now vested on General Sir James Simpson, a veteran of the Peninsular.

On the morning of the 5th September, the final bombardment of Sebastopol commenced, and the terrific cannonade continued till the 8th. The French were the first to open fire, and they did so with a will. Once more the deafening thunder of the heavy guns and shrieks of shell and mortar were heard about Sebastopol, and ere long the cannonade wrought fearful havoc with the "churches, stately mansions, and public buildings of the still imposing-looking city."

From nearly three miles of batteries poured forth the devastating fire, and a storm of iron swept across the doomed town. Buildings could be seen crashing down, large spouts of earth rose high into the air, and, with the glasses, stretcher-bearers could be seen busy at every point.

British and French alike were soon engaged, the Russian return fire being for a long time paralysed by the fury of the onslaught. The Redan and the Malakoff were the particular objectives of the British fire, and soon the faces of these mighty works were seen pitted "as if with the smallpox."

At night a musketry fire was kept up to hinder the Russians from repairing their shattered walls and bastions, till, by the 8th, all was ready for a final and vigorous assault.

The assault was to be in two portions; the French were to capture the Malakoff, and, on attaining this their object, were to signal by rocket fire the fact of its accomplishment. The British were then to assault the Redan, which was connected to the Malakoff by a series of trenches.

Noon was the hour fixed for the Malakoff assault. By half-past eleven the supports were all in readiness. The Guards were posted on the Woronzoff Road, part of the 4th Division was in the trenches, the 3rd Division was held in readiness, while the Highland Brigade, under Sir Colin Campbell, was marched in from Kamara.

Says one of them:—"We had marched nine miles in line of march order, but when we came to our old camp ground we took off our knapsacks, and put ourselves in trench order, only we were in the kilt. . . . We went into the trenches assigned for us to form the support. As I looked towards the Malakoff the French were going in, column after column. . . . They appeared to be keen to be in action."

Dr. Russell tells the story more graphically:—

"At five minutes before twelve o'clock, the French, like a

swarm of bees, issued from their trenches close to the doomed Malakoff, scrambled up its face, and were through the embrasures in the twinkling of an eye. They took the Russians by surprise, and their musketry was very feeble at first, but they soon recovered themselves, and from twelve o'clock till past seven in the evening the French had to meet and repulse the repeated attempts of the enemy to regain the work. . . . At length, despairing of success, the Muscovite general withdrew his exhausted legions."

The retreat was by way of the Redan, which our men now prepared to assault.

"As soon as the tricolour was observed waving through the smoke and dust, over the parapet of the Malakoff, four rockets were sent up as a signal for our assault upon the Redan. They were almost borne back by the violence of the wind, and the silvery jet of sparks they threw out on exploding were scarcely visible against the raw grey sky."

The force selected for the attack was composed as follows:—160 men of the 3rd Buffs under Captain F. F. Maude, with 160 of the 77th under Major Welshford. These constituted the scaling-ladder party. Covering them were 100 more of the Buffs led by Captain John Lewes, with 100 of the 2nd battalion of the Rifles led by Captain Hammond. The remainder of the force comprised 260 of the Buffs, 300 of the 41st, 200 of the 62nd, with a working party of a hundred more. The 47th and 49th regiments were in reserve, together with Warren's brigade.

To Colonel Unett of the 19th fell the honour of leading the gallant party into the fray, and at the outset he fell, badly wounded.

Sharp came the order: "Forward! ladders to the front; eight men per ladder!" and instantly our devoted men crept from the shelter of their trenches to the assault. At a furious pace they dashed up the slope leading to the Redan, and planted several ladders in the ditch against the wall.

But the slaughter was terrific. In less than a minute the slope of the Redan was thickly covered with red coats. In the ditch itself matters were worse. Wounded and dead, bleeding and shapeless, screaming or silent, our men lay heaped in scores, and still the murderous fire poured down from every window and embrasure in the work.

To add to the terrors of their position, our men were now met by overwhelming numbers, who streamed down the trenches from the abandoned Malakoff to the assistance of their comrades in the Redan, the scaling ladders were found to be too short, and after an hour and a half of a disastrous fight our men fell

back upon their trenches, firing steadily, but, for the time being, worsted.

The slaughter had been awful. Colonel Handcock of the Perthshire regiment, Captains Hammond, Preston, Corry and Lockhart, Colonel James Ewan of the 41st, and others too numerous to mention lay dead upon the slope or within the fatal Redan, where many of our men had penetrated in the first fierce rush, and scarcely a man was unwounded.

After this set back, it was decided to attack again at five a.m.—this time with the Guards and Highlanders.

“As the night wore on,” says one of them, “the Highland Brigade advanced and took up position in the advanced trench, and we kept up a sharp fire with our rifles. Sir Colin came along the trenches later, and came down to where we were (by this time) making a new trench. I heard him say: ‘That is your job in the morning,’ pointing to the Redan.”

But the attack was not to be. While searching for wounded comrades, Corporal John Ross of the Sappers wandered far from our foremost lines, and suddenly becoming aware of the absence of the Russian outpost, he crept forward up the slope and entered the Redan!

The place was empty! The Russians had deserted it earlier in the evening, and the retreat from Sebastopol was even then begun.

Graphically Tolstoy has described it:—

“Along the whole line of the bastions no one was to be seen. All was dead, ghastly, terrible, but not silent; the destruction still went on. Everywhere on the ground, blasted and strewn around by fresh explosions, lay shattered gun-carriages, crushing the corpses of foes and Russians alike. Bombs and cannon-balls and more dead bodies, then holes and splintered beams, and again silent corpses in grey and blue and red uniforms. . . . The Sebastopol army, surging and spreading like the sea on a rough night, moved through the dense darkness, slowly swaying by the bridge (of boats) over the roadstead away from the place which it had held for eleven months, but which it was now commanded to abandon without a struggle. . . . On reaching the north side, almost every man took off his cap and crossed himself.”

In the grey dawn of a Sunday morning, the allied armies entered the abandoned city. The Russians blew up magazine after magazine as they left the city, and it was sheeted in flame as the allies entered into possession of it. The fleet was even then settling down in the lurid waters of the harbour, scuttled by the retreating foe.

In the Redan many a British soldier was found stark and stiff with outstretched hand upon a Russian's throat; some were

even found clinging to the parapet as if alive! One of the most heroic episodes recalled with the assault of the Redan is that of Lieutenant Massy of the 19th, who, to hearten his men, stood long exposed in the open to the heaviest Russian fire. Though badly wounded he survived, being long known among his countrymen as "Redan Massy."

Though Sebastopol had fallen, it was not till the last day of February, 1856, that an armistice was concluded with Russia. Shortly before eight o'clock on that day a telegram reached the Russian army, then camped upon the north side of the Sebastopol roadstead, whither it had retreated, and announced the temporary peace. On Wednesday, the 2nd April, a salute of 101 guns announced the conclusion of the war.

By the 11th April preparations for the return home were commenced, and went briskly forward, but alas! how many stayed behind. No fewer than 130 cemeteries in the Crimea mark the last resting place of British dead; in the French great Campo Santo are 28,000 sons of France!

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## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE BATTLES OF BUSHIRE, KOOSHAB, AND MOHAMMERAH.

1856-57.

It is a platitude to say that the kingdom of Afghanistan is, on its Asiatic side, the bulwark of British India. Yet upon this important, if well-known, fact depended the Persian campaign of 1856. A brief recapitulation of history will show clearly the causes which led to the British invasion.

On the fall of the Mogul dynasty in India, the plains of Afghanistan were divided between Persia and Hindoostan, but as the power of their conquerors gradually declined the Afghans rose, under Ahmed Shah, a native officer, and after a successful invasion of Hindoostan, in 1773, founded the modern Afghan kingdom. After varying fortunes, however, the only portion of the once famous kingdom that remained under the sway of Ahmed Shah's descendants was the principality and town of Herat. At this time Mohammed Shah ruled over Persia, and on Prince Kanwan of Herat refusing to pay his accustomed tribute to Persia, the Shah prepared to make war upon him.

Such a quarrel, while looked upon with great favour by Russia, could only end in the weakening of the British outposts of India, and, accordingly, Britain did all in her power to hinder the Persian expedition to Herat, while Russia fomented the

quarrel. Through British influence, Herat proposed to submit to an arbitration by our Government, but, egged on by Russia, the Shah declined to favour any half measures, and accordingly, in December, 1837, Herat was besieged by the forces of the Shah.

Well knowing the importance of Herat, and fearing for the consequences should it fall into the hands of Persia, our representatives strongly urged the interference of the British Government at this juncture.

Two other causes now combined to make critical the situation in Persia. One was the seizing by Persian high officials of a British envoy, returning from Herat; the other the personal insult offered by an intoxicated Indian dervish in the town of Bushire to Mr. Gerald of the British residency. The man in question, without provocation, openly insulted Mr. Gerald in the street, ultimately knocking off his cap. Mr. Gerald very promptly retorted by severely handling his assailant, with the result that the latter appealed to the Governor of Bushire for redress. The British Government, on the other hand, demanded compensation for the insult to one of its representatives.

The tendency of these incidents was to put a severe strain upon Anglo-Persian relations, and at this time the activity of Russia was so marked that Mr. McNeill urged upon the Government the advisability of some show of force to restore our prestige in the affected districts.

At length, therefore, a force from India was despatched to the island of Karrack, in the Persian Gulf, and a corresponding consternation was perceptible throughout Persia, while, at the same time, the Shah was given clearly to understand that the continued siege of Herat would lead to an open rupture with Great Britain.

For a time then, the siege of Herat was raised, and some form of apology tendered to the British Minister, but once more Russia (always, however, unofficially) stirred up the embers of war, which threatened at this period to cool.

Petty annoyances and minor outrages upon British subjects were at this time of constant occurrence, and at length Sir Frederick Maitland, commander-in-chief of our naval forces in India, on the 25th March, 1839, landed some men from the *Wellesley* at Bushire. These men were fired upon by the Persians, but, as the result of prompt action on the part of our troops, a serious affray was averted. On the 29th, however, Captain Hennell, the British resident, was conveyed to Karrack with his staff, it being deemed unsafe for any British officials to remain in the country unprotected.

Eventually, as a result of pressure and the refusal of the

British Government to receive the Persian envoy to the Queen's coronation, and other similar uncompromising measures, peace was more or less fully restored in 1841. But history proverbially repeats itself.

Russian influences were at work, and by 1856 the Persian army, upon pretext of settling local quarrels, was once more in front of Herat, and subsequently captured it. This, with other petty annoyances too numerous to mention, led, in November of that year, to a definite declaration of war against the Shah.

As early as July or August, 1856, instructions had been sent to the Governor-General of India to collect at Bombay an adequate force, with transport, to occupy, in the event of negotiations breaking down, the island of Karrack and the city and district of Bushire, the commercial capital of Persia.

Says Captain Hunt, in his capital narrative of the Persian campaign which he himself went through with his regiment, the 78th Highlanders:—"Bushire is itself a place of much importance, and covers considerable ground. It is defended by a wall, and has no ditch. As a fortress it is inconsiderable—position and trade giving it all its value; and yet as a commercial town, none in the world has perhaps been oftener attacked."

Bushire, then, was the first objective of the British expedition, which, starting from Bunder Abbas in India, arrived in the Persian Gulf on the 29th November, 1856. Once in the roadstead, the British war vessels with their transports made so great a display of force that the Persian Governor of the town despatched a messenger to Commander Jones, the then British Resident, "begging to be apprised of the object of their visit." Commander Jones's reply, which was addressed from the Admiral's flagship, conveyed to the unlucky Governor the scarcely welcome intelligence of the proclamation of war, and intimated that diplomatic relations were at an end.

The next move on the part of the British force was the occupation of Karrack Island, to the north of the town, an operation which met with no opposition, and then on the morning of 7th December preparations were made to disembark the troops in Kallila Bay, some ten miles to the south of Bushire.

Now at length the enemy began to show fight, and appeared in some force in a grove of date palms, near the spot chosen for disembarkation, but they were speedily driven from their positions. As our officers and men sat down to breakfast on the morning of the 7th, previous to disembarking, they were startled by a furious cannonade from the ships' guns, and, on going on deck to find the cause, discovered the grove of date

palms in question to be the object of a heavy fire, which soon dislodged the Persians. From that time on the landing was effected without a casualty, the total firing occupying only a few minutes. A day was spent in resting the men, getting stores and so on, and by the morning of the 9th, General Stalker, who was in command, ordered a general advance towards the town of Bushire, the fleet meanwhile proceeding to approach the city from the sea, and holding itself in readiness to join in the attack.

Early in the morning an advance party proceeded to reconnoitre, and soon returned with the intelligence that a band of the enemy, some 400 strong, had entrenched themselves in the old Dutch fort of Reshire, which lay between our army and the town of Bushire. The enemy had opened fire with matchlocks upon our men.

The fort consisted largely of old houses and garden walls, and afforded good enough cover, so a general assault was ordered, the fort being encircled by our men except towards the sea, where cavalry were posted to cut down any of the enemy attempting to escape.

The columns of the 64th and 20th regiments under General Stopford advanced to the attack, and the enemy's fire at once became heavy. The affair was over in a few moments, and the Persians ran out at the rear of the work and up the beach, anywhere away from our rifles and bayonets, taking no heed of, or probably not understanding, the summons to surrender, and many were shot down while endeavouring to escape. General Stopford himself was killed by a bullet from a matchlock while leading the assault.

Colonel Malet, in command of the slender cavalry force, met his death by treachery. Seeing one of his troopers about to cut down a Persian who, kneeling on the beach, implored mercy with outstretched arms, Colonel Malet bade the trooper spare the wretch, and passed on. No sooner was his back towards the two when the Persian he had spared seized his matchlock from a bush where he had concealed it, and shot the Colonel in the back.

Inside the fort many Persians were found hiding, and some of these were killed, while others made good their escape. Here also were found a large store of dates, of which our troops partook heartily, till a rumour was set on foot that they were poisoned. For some time considerable panic ensued, but the report was, to everyone's relief, proved to be unfounded.

Our troops then bivouacked near the captured fort, while the fleet, with our wounded on board, moved slowly and cautiously down towards Bushire to commence a bombardment the following morning. In the meantime, Commander Jones

had proceeded, in a small steamer carrying a flag of truce, to approach the town from the sea, with a view to summoning the Persian Governor to an honourable surrender, but on entering the narrow channel leading to the roadstead he had been fired upon by the town batteries. Accordingly the orders were given to reverse engines, and Bushire lost its final opportunity of effecting an amicable settlement. Early on the following morning the sound of heavy firing from the town apprised the British camp at Reshire that the fleet had commenced their share of the day's operations. By nine o'clock the land force was under arms, and marched to within a mile of the land force of Bushire, where they were halted to await the issue of the bombardment.

This was not long in coming. Terrified by the heavy ordnance from the British warships, and paralysed by a sight of the land force, now drawn up in line and giving an extended front, the Persian Governor held a hurried council on the rampart.

A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" of that period has given amusing extracts from that momentous conclave:—

" 'They stretch from sea to sea,' said one councillor. 'Their guns are innumerable,' said another; while a third observed, 'They will kill us all if we resist!'"

Small wonder that the sadly perplexed and harassed Governor decided, most humanely, that discretion was the better part of valour, and "pulled down his flag, or rather ordered the flag-staff to be cut down, agreeably to the inconvenient fashion of his country, which gives the victors the trouble of putting it up again."

The cannonade had lasted four hours and a half, but the damage done was slight, owing to the long range of firing necessitated by the shallow waters which surround the town, and it is worthy of note that the British Residency, which had been specially marked out to be avoided by our gunners, was in point of fact the most damaged building in the town!

So soon as the firing ceased, with the lowering of the Persian flag, General Stalker marched the land force into Bushire, and received the formal surrender of the town. As our men approached, many of the terrified Persians succeeded in making good their escape, while others were drowned in so doing. The remainder laid down their arms before the British lines, and to the number of nearly 2000 regular troops were seated on the ground in rows. Thus, under a guard, they passed the night, and it is somewhat ludicrous to learn that every time the sharp words of command rang out for changing guard during the night, the valiant soldiers of the Shah bawled loudly for mercy, under the impression that their last hour had come!

In point of fact, in the morning they were set free, General Stalker deciding that it was useless to retain them prisoners.

The British casualties at the taking of Bushire were nil, the whole operation being effected by the guns of the fleet, though considerable gallantry was displayed by both soldiers and sailors.

As the low-lying marshy district of Bushire itself is far from healthy, the camp of the British army of occupation was pitched some mile and a half from the city walls, and here, entrenched, our men awaited both the arrival of reinforcements and a possible Persian attack from Shiraz, where large numbers of troops were known to be collecting.

On the 30th January, 1857, the welcome reinforcements, the 2nd Division of the British army in Persia, arrived in camp from Bombay, and with them appeared General Sir James Outram, in supreme command of the forces.

The accession of numbers due to the arrival of the 2nd Division brought up the strength of our army in Persia to some 3500 men, with 18 guns. The new arrivals consisted of the 14th King's Light Dragoons, one troop of horse artillery, a thousand Scinde horse, the 78th Highlanders, and two regiments of native infantry. Captain Hunt of the 78th, whose admirable record of the campaign is indeed the standard work upon the subject, was one of the incoming men, and he describes the state of the camp at Bushire at this time, and the uncertainty which prevailed as to the objective of future operations:—

“Supplies of all descriptions,” he says, “were plentiful in camp, and the inhabitants both of the town and neighbourhood were evidently pleased at the British occupancy; indeed they could scarcely be otherwise; for, irrespective of the pecuniary advantages of the presence of a large force which paid heavily, and on the spot, for everything, the orderly look and appearance of soldiers who visited the town, without even sidearms as a protection, contrasted most advantageously with the previous garrison, which had notoriously lived upon what could be stolen or extracted from the citizens.”

Sir James Outram was not a man to let the grass grow under his feet, and it was by this time ascertained that a considerable Persian force was assembled at Shiraz, a town situated above the passes, some 150 miles from Bushire. Moreover, the Persian Government was known to have collected supplies of flour and ammunition at the villages of Borasjoon and Chakota, in the low country—the former forty, the latter twenty miles from Bushire.

Accordingly, on the afternoon of the 3rd February, towards evening, the entire force, with the exception of a camp guard, moved out of Bushire towards Chakota.

Here in the end of December General Stalker had already blown up a magazine of the enemy's ammunition, but had not deemed it necessary to occupy the town, preferring to direct his operations from Bushire.

At Chakota, then, arrived our now largely increased force by nine o'clock on the morning of the 4th February, and a halt of some hours was indulged in, the troops loading arms and making preparations for an immediate engagement. By four o'clock the march was resumed, and the enemy's videttes in the neighbourhood of Borasjoon were sighted by noon on the following day.

The enemy had been steadily falling back, and up to the present our men had encountered nothing more formidable than heavy rain and thunderstorms. Now, however, the army was halted, positions for attack assigned, and final orders given, when, "to the disgust of all, the entire army in our front was descried in full retreat, and going off at such a pace as to render it hopeless to overtake them." Some of our cavalry, however, managed to get into touch with their rearguard, and a few wounds were received by our troopers.

The majority of the enemy, however, were quickly out of sight, having taken to the hills, where it was impossible to follow them, the hills hereabouts being "formidable and of great height, and, except at two or three pathways, utterly impassable."

The 6th and 7th were spent by our men in the enemy's vacated camp, during which time stores were destroyed and some treasure was discovered, together with many horses and carriage cattle.

An amusing incident was reported at this time. On the night of the 6th, an alarm was raised that the enemy was at hand, and in point of fact a half-hearted attack was commenced but came to nothing. During the "turn-out," however, the picket of one regiment, observing a suspicious appearance in the darkness ahead of them, surrounded the spot with extreme caution, and gallantly captured—an old house-door which had been accidentally left propped up against a bush! There was much laughter in the morning over this "daring exploit." On the night of the 7th, the return march to Bushire was commenced.

Up to midnight all went well, but shortly after, a sharp rattle of musketry was heard in the direction of the rearguard, and a halt was at once called. In about half an hour, however, all was pandemonium. Little could be seen, the night being intensely dark, but the enemy were heard screaming like fiends on every side. Horsemen galloped almost up to our lines, bugles were blown, and everything done to cause confusion.

From the first moment of attack our troops behaved with admirable steadiness. The necessary movements were perfectly executed, in spite of the darkness, and the formation of a hollow square, in which to await the break of day, was rapidly performed.

Sir James Outram himself was, in the confusion, thrown from his horse, and somewhat severely hurt, but Colonel Lugard, his chief of staff, assumed the command promptly and effectively. Shortly before daybreak the desultory firing ceased, and many have placed on record the almost tearful anxiety with which our men prayed that the enemy might not have withdrawn before they should have a chance of "getting their own back." At last the morning broke, and to the glee of all ranks the Persian army, under the Shooja-ool-moolk, its commander, was descried "in position," drawn up in line, "its right upon the walled village of Khooshab, its left resting on a hamlet with a round fortalice tower."

As early as possible our artillery were moved up to the front, and murderous volleys were loosed upon the enemy's right, while our infantry were getting into line.

"All night long," says one account, "our cavalry had lain down beside their horses, watching the glare of the Persian guns, and wondering whether they would have an opportunity to seize them as trophies." The opportunity came soon enough. Whether from impatience or some mistaken order, before the infantry could get within musket-shot, our horsemen hurled themselves upon the right wing, and cut their way clean through the Persian force with awful slaughter, and without the assistance of a shot from our infantry, soon had it in full retreat.

The left wing of the enemy was thunderstruck. Without pausing for an instant, they fell back, the two wings thus gradually converging until they became a disordered stream of fugitive infantry, without sufficient discipline to rally, yet without sufficient sense to separate from one another, and so avoid, to some extent, the fearful fire with which our artillery now plied them.

The eighteen guns opened with a roar, and the carnage began. For three long miles dozens of the wretched Persians dropped in their tracks, plied alternately by horse artillery and cavalry, and their retreat became almost a massacre. Indeed, in one instance, since it was found that many of the wounded fired upon our men after their lives had been spared, a group of forty fugitives were cut down to a man, though making signs of wishing to surrender. Again and again throughout the Persian campaign did the enemy behave in this treacherous manner, and the giving of quarter became a precarious leniency.

By eleven o'clock the fight and pursuit alike were at an end, and the battle of Khooshab was won.

The British loss was nearly a hundred killed and wounded; the Persians left seven hundred dead upon the far-extending field. Immense quantities of arms and ammunition fell into our hands, and high praise was bestowed by Sir James Outram on all ranks at the highly satisfactory conclusion of the fight.

After a tedious march, during which they were much hampered by rain, darkness, almost impassable country, and, in one instance, by the mistaken leading of a native guide, our army returned to Bushire, and for several days a well-earned rest was indulged in. Heavy rains fell during these days of waiting, but, when the weather was fine, cricket and occasional race meetings kept up the spirits of our men in camp, and another brush with the enemy was the dearest wish of every one of our gallant soldiers, white and coloured alike.

At this time General Havelock, destined to win fame in India, arrived and took command of the 2nd Division.

Meanwhile, rumours that the enemy was gathering in force at Mohammerah began to come to hand, and as this fort stands at the head of the Persian Gulf, some thirty hours north of Bushire, and commands the entrance to the Tigris and Euphrates, it was felt to be of great importance, and so preparations were soon on foot for its reduction.

In miserable weather, and hampered by sand-storms, our men erected five strong redoubts for the defence of Bushire, and here General Stalker was left in command, with two field batteries, the entire first division cavalry, some of the 64th and Highlanders, together with some native troops.

The remainder, to the number of 3000, were embarked upon the transports and war vessels, and, under Sir James Outram himself, set sail for Mohammerah.

The 6th March saw the sailing of the sloop Falkland for the Euphrates, and the ships engaged in the expedition composed the sloop Circe, with the frigate steamers Ajdaha, Feroze, Semiramis, Victoria, and Assaye. Transports were numerous, and included the Kingston and Bridge of the Sea. These, together with the steamers Pottinger and Pioneer, newly arrived from India, with a fresh troop of horse artillery and the Scinde Horse, made up the fleet.

Mohammerah lies on the north side of the river Kanin, close to its junction with the Shat-ul-Arab, a branch of the Euphrates, and is about thirty miles from the sea. For a quarter of a mile from the river's mouth strong earthworks lined with artillery and musketry guarded its approach. Now, while the left bank of the Shat-ul-Arab belongs to Persia, the right, for sixty miles, is Turkish territory, and accordingly the

attitude of Turkey was somewhat apprehensively regarded, since a hostile demonstration in the river might be regarded by that Power as an infringement of the laws of neutrality. Accordingly, no time was lost so that Mohammerah might be taken before Turkey could have time to interfere. In point of fact, several Turks were killed in the engagement, the inhabitants of the Turkish territory crowding to the river's banks to watch the issue of the fight.

By the 8th, most of the vessels had arrived in the mouth of the Euphrates, and the remainder were expected in the course of the next few days. A tedious wait followed, but by the 17th, Sir James Outram, with the remainder of the force, arrived in the river, and an advance was hourly expected.

Sir James brought bad news. In a fit of mental derangement, both General Stalker and Captain Ethersay, the commodore of the Indian squadron serving in the Persian Gulf, had died by their own hands at Bushire, and considerable gloom was cast over the fleet by these sad events.

"No cause," says Captain Hunt, "save over-anxiety and an oppressive sense of their respective responsibilities could be assigned as a reason for their rash acts."

On the 24th, all vessels were assembled at the rendezvous, some three miles below the enemy's fortifications; a day was spent in transshipping troops into rafts and light-draught vessels, and at daybreak on the 26th the bombardment of Mohammerah began.

The first shot proved highly successful, killing eleven of the enemy, who, it was afterwards ascertained, were at their prayers; and soon after this the action became general.

It is impossible to resist once more quoting Captain Hunt:—

"The morning being very clear, with just sufficient breeze to prevent the smoke from collecting, a more beautiful scene than was then presented can scarcely be imagined. The ships, with ensigns flying from every masthead, seemed decked for a holiday; the river glittering in the early sunlight, its dark date-fringed banks contrasting most effectively with the white canvas of the Falkland, which had loosened sails to get into closer action; the sulky-looking batteries just visible through the grey fleecy cloud which enveloped them; and groups of brightly-dressed horsemen flitting at intervals between the trees, formed altogether a picture from which even the excitement of a heavy cannonade could not divert the attention."

At the end of three hours the Persian fire slackened, and the order for the disembarkation of the troops, at a point selected above the batteries, went forth. A few musket shots alone opposed the landing, and by two o'clock the entire force was ashore and an advance made.

By this time the fire of the Persian forts was silenced, one of the final shells of our ships blowing up the enemy's grand magazine.

Forward now moved the compact scarlet lines to where the enemy's force under the Shah Zadeh in person were drawn up to defend their camp on the left rear of the town of Mohammerah, and a desperate fight appeared about to open. Suddenly, almost as if by magic, the force disappeared. Paralysed by our fire, particularly by the size of the 68-pounder shots, and fearing awful consequences, the Shah's terrible army turned and ran, and though the pursuit was engaged in for three or four miles, only a straggler or two was cut off. At night our cavalry returned, and reported that the enemy, at a distance of eleven miles, was still in full retreat.

Our troops bivouacked in line of battle, but such caution proved to be superfluous, and on the morning of the 27th the British army took possession of Mohammerah.

Stores of grain and ammunition, 18 handsome brass guns in good working order, arms of all kinds, and tents fell into our hands, for a total loss of 10 killed, with one officer, Lieutenant Harris of the Indian navy, and 30 wounded. The Persians had at least 300 killed, while many prisoners were taken.

These latter received every kindness, but for a long time were suspicious of their captors, expecting a fate which would probably have overtaken any of our brave fellows who might have fallen into Persian hands. Fortunately, such a contingency had not to be faced.

The town of Mohammerah, once a place of importance, was found to be a filthy collection of mud huts, and apart from its fortifications (where the guns had been admirably served, some of our ships suffering severely as a result), was found to be of little practical use. The moral effect of such a victory was enormous.

A small expedition under Captain Rennie was despatched up the Kanin river to reconnoitre, while the General fortified Mohammerah to the best of his ability before deciding upon a further plan of campaign.

By the 4th April, Captain Rennie's expedition returned, and reported having seen the Persian army at Ahway. After a few shots, he had captured the town, together with immense stores of grain and powder, the Persian army again retreating with little show of fight. These operations were about to be turned to advantage by the commander-in-chief when a despatch was received announcing that peace with Persia had been concluded at Paris.

Accordingly, operations were at once commenced for evacuating Mohammerah, though the disappointment to all ranks

was keen. By the end of May the evacuation was complete, though Bushire was held till October, when it was handed back to the Persians.

Apart from prestige, an important factor in Eastern politics, the Persian campaign of '56 and '57 may be said to have been of little practical use, but one good result accruing must not be overlooked. It prepared some, at any rate, of our troops for the tremendous struggle which was even then brewing in India.

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### CHAPTER XLIII.

## THE BATTLES AT DELHI.

1857.

THE Indian Mutiny had really its outbreak at Delhi, to which place the mutineers fled when they had taken the fatal step which was to bring death to so many, and which was to weld the Indian Empire closer to Britain.

The imperial city of Delhi was destined to play an important part in the mutiny, and early in May, 1857, the mutineers, inflamed with preliminary successes and inspired by a religious frenzy, entered Delhi. Mr. Simon Frazer, the Commissioner, tried to stem the tide by closing the seven gates of the city, but his orders were tardily obeyed, and the mutineers poured into the city, carrying havoc wherever they went. The bungalows in the Durya Gunge were soon in flames, and every European was slaughtered. No white man or woman could venture forth and hope to return alive, for the rebel soldiers, having tasted blood, were determined to have their appetites whetted. Mr. Frazer ventured out in his buggy to the residence of the Delhi princes, but was seized, and after a desperate struggle was hacked to pieces. His head was struck off, and, horrible to relate, was carried through the streets in barbarous triumph.

Terrible were the tragedies enacted within the walls, and the hapless Europeans calmly waited death, for they knew that they would receive no mercy. At the palace fort the rebels asked to see Captain Douglas, who commanded the guard, and on that brave officer appearing, he was shot down ere he could utter a word. In their hunt for victims they ascended to the murdered officer's quarters, and found there the chaplain of the station, Rev. Mr. Jennings, and his daughter, who had lately arrived from England to be married. They were deaf to her agonising cries and prayers for mercy, and butchered her father before her eyes. After subjecting the poor girl to awful indignities, they hacked her to pieces.

The Delhi arsenal, was at the time of the outbreak the largest in India, and it was well that Britain had brave and capable officers at this quarter. The powder magazine was included in the arsenal, although there was another at the cantonments about two miles from the walls of the city, where three battalions of Bengal infantry were posted. The mutineers intended to attack this point (the arsenal), and Sir T. Metcalfe on the morning that the insurgents initiated the attack closed up the gate at the bridge. He did not suspect that the princes and members of the royal family were hand-in-glove with the mutineers, but his eyes were opened when he saw the rebels march through the palace, which could only have been done through the complicity of the princes. There were only six Britons to defend the arsenal, in charge of sullen and stubborn men whom they dreaded to trust. Guns were posted at every point where attack was possible, and right nobly did the gallant half-dozen prepare to sell their lives dearly in defence of the position. The mutineers were now having the full support of the natives of Delhi, and armed guards came boldly to the arsenal, and demanded its surrender in the name of the King of Delhi. This request was treated with the silent contempt which it deserved, and then the King of Delhi showed his hand by declaring that he would send men with scaling ladders to scale the walls. When these ladders did arrive, the native portion of the garrison availed themselves of this opportunity to desert their posts, and, swarming down the ladders, left the gallant six alone. Outside the howling mass of insurgents, waving their tulwars on high and calling upon the defenders to come out and be killed. Inside, every man of the six—Lieutenants Forrest and Willoughby, Sergeant Stewart, and Conductors Crow, Buckley, and Scully—were cool and calm at their respective posts.

The enemy now began to appear on the top of the walls, and the garrison poured a deadly grape fire upon these customers until the ammunition became almost exhausted. The natives who had deserted the garrison had given valuable information to the rebels as to the position of the guns. Forrest and Buckley were firing and loading the guns as fast as they could, and while the unequal struggle lasted they mowed down the closely-packed rebels. And this they did under a heavy musketry fire at forty yards' range. It was not until the last round that Buckley had his arm shot and Forrest received two balls in one of his hands. Willoughby had determined that the rebels would never secure the magazine and all its valuable store. A train of powder had been laid by Conductor Scully, and when all seemed lost, the Lieutenant gave orders to blow up the magazine.

The fire rushed along the trains of powder, and then an awful crash and roar which seemed to split the earth and rend the vault of heaven told the rebels that they had been thwarted by the Feringhee. The whole magazine with its deadly contents was hurled into the air, and fell, burying hundreds of the rebels in the ruins.

Meanwhile the brave defenders had made a dash for liberty and reached the Cashmere gate. The brave Willoughby was captured while hiding in the jungle, and, after terrible torture, was mercifully put to death. Simultaneous with the attack upon the magazines things were going hard, with the surviving Christian population. The infuriated cowards who glutted their appetite for blood by the massacre of helpless women and children, had gone too far to turn back, for they knew that if the Feringhees became victorious they would all perish. They broke into the bank, and Mr. Beresford, the manager, with his wife and five children, perished. They devised the torturing death of cutting their victims' throats slowly with broken glass, and it was in this cruel manner that the bank manager and his family were murdered.

All the public buildings and churches were plundered, and robbery and murder was rampant in the streets of the city. A sepoy when he takes service, makes a vow to remain true to his salt, *i.e.*, true to their employers. This vow was even more binding in the case of those who had sworn to serve the Queen of Britain, even with their lives, but we shall see how the crafty natives who wore the Queen's uniform and her medals evaded their vow and yet, in their own opinion, remained true to their salt.

Colonel Ripley was despatched from the cantonments with the 54th Bengal native infantry, which had remained loyal, and the line of march lay towards the Cashmere gate. They obeyed their officers with alacrity, and marched boldly forward. Suddenly fifteen troopers of the rebel 3rd cavalry came dashing out to meet them, brandishing their blood-smeared swords. The treachery of the 54th was soon made apparent, for, on the approach of the Sowars they wheeled to the side of the road and left their officers unguarded in the troopers' path. The maniac mutineers dashed upon the bewildered officers and shot or cut them down. Colonel Ripley had his pistols with him, and shot two troopers before being killed. When the slaughter was complete, the bloodstained troopers dismounted, and, walking amongst the treacherous 54th, shook hands and complimented their fellow-villains on their action.

The Brigadier at the cantonments had now only the 38th and 74th to fall back upon, both native regiments, in whose fidelity he could put little trust. At all events he formed them

into line, posting the 38th on the road that led to the Cashmere gate. As long as possible news of the mutiny of the 54th was kept from the other regiments, but when at last they heard it, they showed evident symptoms of mutiny. When the awful crash of the exploded magazine fell upon their ears, the outburst came. "Deen! Deen!" they shouted, signifying "Faith!" and rushed to their arms, which had been piled. They seized the guns, shot the commandant's horse, and were soon in a state of complete insubordination.

The first regard of British officers and men in time of danger, whether it be on sea or land, is for the women and children, and now that the sepoys had shown themselves in their true colours, it was absolutely imperative, if the women and children were to be saved from terrible torture, that they should be removed to either Meerut or Kurnool, cities which were meanwhile loyal and unaffected. Brigadier Metcalfe sounded the retire, and those who could find conveyances were fortunate, as in most cases the native drivers had bolted with the horses and vehicles.

In the guard-house at the Cashmere gate a number of women and children, along with several officers, were huddled. Major Abbott, who was in charge, made the attempt to get the helpless females to the shelter of the cantonments, and ordered them to be placed on the gun carriages. The rebel sepoys opened a murderous fire on the carriages, and the ground was soon strewn with the dead and wounded. Several reached the shelter of Brigadier Metcalfe's house, from whence they were conducted to the river Jumna, where they were allowed to make their escape as best they could.

We need not dwell upon the harrowing details of the adventures of those who escaped. They wandered about the jungle, starving and bruised. Delicately-nurtured women clinging to their babes went raving mad, and many perished. The villagers were every whit as brutal and cruel as the rebel soldiery, and men boasted publicly of outraging white women and then cutting off their breasts. It makes one's blood boil to think of the awful indignities, the almost incredible tortures, and the slow lingering death which was the fate of our innocent and helpless women and children.

Certain nations accused us of wanton cruelty in the slaying of the rebels at the time when the hand of retribution, guided by Sir Colin Campbell, fell upon the inhuman monsters who had weltered and gloried in the shedding of Christian blood. Could the stab of the bayonet, blowing from the cannon's mouth or death by hanging ever atone for the fearful sufferings of the pure and innocent? In our humanity we scorned to devise new tortures or have recourse to those of the Inquisition to

avenge the massacre of the Christian women who had been outraged and done to death. If those who escaped to the jungle suffered untold agony, it was nothing to that which the women who remained in Delhi had to undergo. An officer who had to be an unwilling witness of many of the scenes tells the following blood-curdling story:—

“The sepoys took forty-eight females, most of them girls from ten to fourteen, many delicately nurtured ladies, and kept them for the base purposes of the heads of the insurrection for a whole week. At the end of that time they made them strip themselves, and gave them up to the lowest of the people to abuse in broad daylight in the streets of Delhi. They then commenced the work of torturing them to death, cutting off their breasts, fingers, and noses. One lady was three days in dying. They flayed the face of another lady, and made her walk naked through the streets.”

A number of officers, women, and children sought refuge in a mosque, where they were without food and water for several days. The men could have endured the hunger and thirst, but the suffering of the women and little children was intense. On the fourth day they treated with the sepoys, who on their oath swore to spare their lives and take them before the king. The men laid down their arms that they might get water for the suffering ones, and the whole party quitted the shelter of the mosque. They were instantly seized, and every one killed, eight officers, eight ladies, and eleven children perishing. The children were swung by the heels, and their brains dashed out in the presence of the parents.

On every side were traces of murder and pillage, and it is said that even greater ferocity, if that were possible, was used at Delhi than by the great assassin Nana Sahib at Cawnpore. Certainly the atrocities practised are unequalled in barbarity and cruelty, and coming from men who had broken our bread and eaten our salt, they demanded the most condign punishment. Delhi was now in full possession of the mutineers, and this ancient city, with its hundred mosques and minarets, seemed lost to the British Empire, for the 200,000 inhabitants were in no way reluctant to accept the change in government.

The king, seeing that Fortune had so far smiled on the insurgents, put himself at the head of the new movement. This crafty monarch, whose kingdom lay within the walls of the city, had a love of pomp and panoply, and no doubt delighted his followers by a State procession through the city to the palace of the Moguls. This is an immense edifice of more than a mile in circumference. The wall which surrounds it is over thirty feet in height, and besides serving as a kingly residence, it thus stands as a gigantic fortress.

The princes of the royal house were also concerned in the spread of the mutiny, Prince Mirza Mogul being commander-in-chief of the army, and his brother Mirza Abubeker, general of the cavalry. Although they had foully murdered many of their officers, the sepoys, to give them credit, did not run amok altogether, but put themselves under the command of native officers of inferior rank, who were now given high commands. They also knew that Britain would not let them hold undisturbed possession of the town, so they set about preparing defences in order to withstand a siege. Heavy guns were mounted on the bastions, and the guards were strengthened at the seven gates.

The mutiny was not long in spreading throughout the provinces, and regiment after regiment rose in insurrection, and either murdered their officers or fled to Delhi. From every part tidings came to Agra of a general rising, and it was not safe for any British officer to place himself at the head of any native regiment. The sepoys would swear undying fidelity at one moment, and the next might be either butchering their officers or on the road to join the main band of rebels at Delhi. Will our men be faithful? was the question many an officer had to put to himself, for they were not to be trusted, despite all their vows.

The British regiments, manned and officered by Europeans, had to pass through many perils, and undoubtedly they did good service in punishing the flying rebels. They shot and bayoneted the sepoys who had mutinied, and only took prisoner those of higher caste, and those who had set themselves up in the leadership of the work of mutiny. These rascals were reserved for another fate, either at the hands of the hangman, or, greater punishment still in the eyes of a true believer—blown from the cannon's mouth.

This form of punishment may have been brutal, but it was thoroughly deserved, and the swift death cannot be likened to the lingering tortures to which the women and children of our own flesh and blood had to submit. As this method of punishment became common as the mutiny proceeded, a description of the scene at an execution may be of interest:—

“Three sides of a hollow square facing inwards was formed. On the fourth side of the square were drawn up the guns, ten 9-pounders, which were to be used for the execution. The prisoners, under a strong European guard, were then marched into the square, their crimes and sentences read aloud to them and at the head of each regiment; they were then marched round the square and up to the guns. The first ten were picked out, their eyes bandaged, and they were bound to the guns, with their backs against the muzzles and their arms

fastened backwards to the wheels. The port fires were lighted, and at a signal from the artillery major the guns were fired.

It was a horrid sight that then met the eye. A regular shower of human fragments—of heads, arms, and legs—appeared in the air, whirling through the smoke; and when that cleared away, these fragments lying on the ground—fragments of Hindoos and of Mussulmans mixed together—were all that remained of those ten mutineers. Three times more this was repeated; but so great is the disgust we all feel for the atrocities committed by the rebels, that we had no room in our hearts for any feeling of pity. Perfect callousness was depicted on every European face; a look of grim satisfaction could even be seen in the countenances of the gunners serving the guns. But far different was the effect on the native portion of the spectators. Their black faces grew ghastly pale as they gazed breathlessly at the awful spectacle.

You must know that this is really the only form in which death has any terror for a native. If he is hanged or shot, he knows that his friends or relatives will be allowed to claim his body and will give him the funeral rites required by his religion; if a Hindoo, that his body will be burned with all due ceremonies, and if a Mussulman, that his remains will be secretly interred, as directed in the Koran. But if sentenced to death in this form, he knows that his body will be blown into a thousand pieces, and that it will be altogether impossible for his relatives, however devoted to him, to be sure of picking up all the fragments of his own particular body; and the thought that perhaps a limb of someone of a different religion to himself might possibly be burned or buried with the remainder of his own body, is agony to him.

But notwithstanding this, it was impossible for the mutineers' direst hater not to feel some degree of admiration for the way in which they met their deaths. Nothing in their lives became them like the leaving of them. Of the whole party, only two showed any signs of fear, and they were bitterly reproached by the others for so disgracing their race. They certainly died like men. After the first ten had been disposed of, the next batch, who had been looking on all the time, walked up to the guns quite calmly and unflinching, and allowed themselves to be blindfolded and tied up without moving a muscle or showing the slightest sign of fear or even concern."

The army of vengeance which was to stamp out the mutiny and punish the mutineers, was pushing on from Umballa. The great vortex of the mutiny was at Delhi, and the rebels had such excellent fortifications and were so well armed and provisioned, that a prolonged siege was anticipated. There were many princes with large bands of followers who as yet had

taken no part on either side. They were wise as Solomon in their judgment, for they deferred taking the great step until they saw how the game was to go. These princes and chiefs of the Delhi provinces were loyal enough, but, like the rebel sepoy, they would turn round and cut our throats if it was to profit them in any way. Holkar and Scindia had already sent their contingents to Agra for service under the British flag, and now the Rajahs of Jheend and Puttiala, two powerful chiefs, sent well-drilled horsemen, and the Rajah of Bhurtpur gave his specially-trained bodyguard. These men were good fighters, and would remain loyal and true to their salt as long as their Rajah willed. General Barnard, who was in command of the troops, pushed on as fast as he could to Delhi, and sent Brigadier Wilson with an advance guard to clear a path.

The gallant Brigadier came up with the enemy at a place known as Ghazee-ood-deen-nugger on the 30th of May, and distant about 15 miles from Delhi. The rebels were present in large numbers, and had some heavy guns to which they trusted in keeping their position. Wilson at once saw that the small iron suspension bridge over the river Hindon would form a key to his own attack, and two companies of the 60th Rifles were told off to keep the bridge at all hazards, while a detachment of the 6th Dragoon Guards, with four guns, went along the riverside to turn the enemy's flank. The 60th at the bridge were exposed to a heavy fire from the insurgents' guns, and had to be reinforced. It was plainly evident that the rebels were aware that if they lost this position an important point in the capture of the city would be gained. They handled their guns with great skill, but when the 60th dashed among them with the bayonet they blanched, wavered, and turned tail, leaving the guns in the hands of the Rifles.

"Remember the ladies! remember the babies!" was the battle-cry of the 60th, as they flashed on with gleaming bayonets, and many a mother and many a child were amply avenged in the terrible slaughter they wrought.

Fleeing from the infuriated and victorious troops, the sepoy fled helter-skelter towards Delhi, leaving their guns and hundreds of dead and dying on the field. The Carbineers, who added to the death-roll in the course of the pursuit, chased the fleeing horde to within a few miles of the city. Yet they were not cowed, for, despite the lesson they had received, they were back in greater numbers to the banks of the Hindon the following day. They opened fire with their muskets and big guns, and for two hours there was nothing heard but the boom of the guns and the rattle of musketry. The rebel fire began to slacken, and it was now the time for close combat. Once again the 60th defiled across the bridge, with the 6th Dragoon

Guards as support. Alternately firing and charging, the British rushed the rising ground, on which the rebels were posted, and once again the mutineers had to fly to the sheltering walls of Delhi. Our men were too fagged out to pursue, but there was not an inch of fight in the fleeing mass, and many of them cast their swords and guns away in their panic.

The British burned a village which afforded shelter for the enemy, and were content to take a well-won rest. General Barnard was daily expected, and the Brigadier calmly waited, undisturbed by the faint-hearted mutineers, until such time as the General would order a grand advance upon the Imperial City.

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#### CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE BATTLES AT DELHI

(continued).

1857.

THE army of vengeance was steadily closing upon Delhi, and the plans of Sir Henry Barnard as to the junctions of his force were attended with success. Major-General Reed, who had fought at Waterloo, arrived at Alleepore, situated about one day's march from Delhi, while Brigadier Wilson's troops from the Meerut provinces had joined Sir Henry Barnard, so that the investing force was as complete as could be expected.

As its composition is important, the different details of the force may be interesting, and are as follows:—

Four horse artillery guns of the 1st Brigade, the 2nd and 3rd troops of the 3rd Brigade, three companies of foot artillery, No. 14 horse field battery, a detachment of artillery recruits, a detachment of sappers and miners, H.M. 9th Lancers and 6th Dragoon Guards, six companies of the 60th Rifles, nine companies of H.M. 75th regiment, 1st and 2nd Bengal Fusiliers, and the Sirmoor battalion of Ghoorkas.

The city round which the conflict now centred deserves some little description, not only for its historic associations, but its immense importance as a British stronghold. It is a huge conglomeration of houses, mosques, fortresses, and temples surrounded by strongly-fortified walls. It lies in the midst of a sandy plain on a plateau close to the river Jumna. Its streets are wide and handsome, especially the "street of silver," through which runs an aqueduct shaded by overhanging palms. The mosques are all of magnificent appearance, but the most stately and ornate is the huge snow-white marble edifice built by Shah Johan, with its towering minarets and beautiful sculpture. Again, if we go outside the city walls through any of

the seven gates, we come upon the remains of the great buildings of other days. The present-day Delhi is modern to a degree, and when we gaze upon the ruins of gigantic buildings, of mosques and temples, we have an idea of the Delhi of centuries ago. We have the mausoleums of the Emperors Homaion Mahomed Shah and Jehanara, but the commanding feature is the towering Kootub Minar, which was built in 1206, and is covered over with extracts from the Koran, the walls rising to a height of about 240 feet, terminating in a majestic cupola. Such was the general appearance of the city which had passed into the hands of mutineers, and naturally the British leaders were anxious to regain it.

Inside the city, the mutineers, after their first excess of brutality, and no doubt through a scarcity of victims, must have thought of the retribution that would surely follow. To give them credit, they were not lawless or idle, but obeyed the mandates of their chosen leaders. Military discipline and order were maintained, and men who had occupied very subordinate positions in the employ of Britain, found promotion easy and rapid in the service of the King of Delhi. Yet the townspeople were downtrodden by the savage soldiery, and the town was daily the scene of great disorder. The sepoys looted in every direction, and stuffed their pockets full of overflowing, in fact in many cases they could not walk, so laden were they with coin and treasure. Had Sir Henry Barnard made a dash upon the city when he first gathered together his forces, it is quite possible that Delhi would have fallen into our hands, because the townspeople were so discontented that they would have turned against the rebels. However, the British leader was not apparently aware of this situation, and preferred to rest his troops and mature his plans for the taking of the city.

Now the defences of Delhi were of a formidable character, having been strengthened by officers and men of the Bengal Fusiliers several years previous, and the rebels kept a double watch upon the bastions and martello towers.

After resting his troops sufficiently, Sir Henry gave orders to the effect that an advance was premeditated, and at midnight on the 8th of June the combined Umballa and Meerut force started to march upon the city. After marching for about three miles without meeting any opposition, the British troops were suddenly confronted by a strong rebel force with a dozen heavy guns, which had been placed in a strong position. In the glimmering light of the morning, the rebels opened a deadly fire upon the British lines, and did much execution, our lighter guns being unable to cope with the heavier ordnance of the enemy. Men were falling, and every life was precious, so something had to be done.

“Charge and carry the guns!” cried Sir Henry, and like hounds released from the leash the men of the 75th—that gallant Stirlingshire regiment—bounded forward to death or glory. Through a storm of musketry they dashed, and sprang at the gunners with glittering bayonets. The sepoy turned tail and fled, the guns were ours, and the brave Scotsmen paused to regain breath. The rebels had retired to a second position, where they had a line of defence at the Flagstaff Tower. They fought like men who fight when they feel the halter round their necks, but they reeled before the bayonet, and were soon in full stampede towards the city, to tell their comrades that the Feringhees had come to put them to death.

Our men had gained the old Delhi cantonments, but when they marched in, what a different place it was to that which had been so well garrisoned but a few months previous! Only the blackened walls remained, and all was desolation. Fragments of furniture, scraps of books, clothing, and shreds of women’s dresses lay about. The soldiers took one look upon the desolate scene, and looking, understood, for they turned their eyes to Delhi and ground their teeth. They knew what the torn and bloodstained garments signified, and although they said no word there was a gleam in their eyes which betokened no good for the rebels when they had them at the point of the bayonet. They were not hurried in their vengeance, but pitched their camps to await further reinforcements.

The enemy, seeing that the British did not follow up their early success, grew bolder, and made frequent sallies, but their skirmishing amongst the ruins and tombs of the Delhi of a day that was dead was ineffective, and did little harm to the troops at the cantonment. But the British were not idle, for three batteries played on the city day and night. The guns must have done considerable damage to the city, for the mutineers turned a number of guns upon this position. It was a stoutly-built brick house, and withstood the rebel fire, while the daily attacks of the mutineers upon the battery were easily repulsed by the defending force, which consisted of the Guides, the Sirmoor battalion, and three companies of the 60th Rifles.

In one of these sorties brave young Lieutenant Battye of the Guides received a terrible wound in the stomach from a cannon shot. He survived for a day, and ere he died he smiled to a comrade who came to see him, and quoted the old tag—“Well, old fellow, *‘dulce et decorum est pro patria mori’*; you see it’s my case,” and then he passed away.

The Guides, who were led by their commander, Captain Daly, came in contact with the mutineers, who sniped at them from behind rocks. They took careful cover, and the Guides could not get a shot at them. The rebels were good marks-

men, and several of the Guides fell. Daly and another officer drew their swords and rushed up the rocks. They were followed by their men, and although the sepoys made strenuous efforts to keep their position the sword and bayonet soon demoralised them.

It was on the 12th of June that the mutineers became most dangerous, and suffered the severest chastisement yet administered. They came out of the city in great numbers, and commenced to fire upon the Ghoorkas, until the 2nd Bengal Fusiliers came up to the posts and drove them back from the place. The force pushed home the blow, but as they were unsupported they had to retire, leaving their leader, Major Jackson, dead behind them. The rebels returned, and the 60th regiment, who had taken up a position in Hindoo Rao's house, which commanded a fine situation, had a very hard day's fighting. The Scotsmen and the fierce little Ghoorkas fought with hordes of rebels, who, despite severe losses, returned to the attack persistently, and displayed much courage. The Welsh Fusiliers' left wing, now under the command of Welshman, had again taken possession of the Subzee Munde, or vegetable market, and cleared the streets. Four times did the enemy return to the attack, and as often were they repulsed. The heat was terrible, and our men were fairly exhausted with the heavy fighting. The right wing of the Fusiliers, under Dennis, were also busily engaged with the enemy, and after driving them back citywards and killing a large number in a serai, they were done up, and returned to the shelter of the Hindoo Rao.

To give some idea of the terrible heat, it may be mentioned that the musket barrels and bayonet blades grew warm in the hands of the soldiers. Yet the fight never slackened, and the enemy, no doubt aware that our troops must become tired, kept up an attack all along the line. A large company of the 2nd Bengal Fusiliers, who had marched twenty-three miles that morning and had gone into battle with nothing to eat, were completely done up, having to take shelter behind some rocks, while the Ghoorkas kept the mutineers at a respectful distance. The rebels had two pieces of cannon playing on the British line, but the Fusiliers and Sikhs charged and gained complete possession of the Subzee Munde, driving the rebels away.

The greatest slaughter of the enemy took place at a serai, which is really a halting-place for travellers. About a hundred rebels took shelter in this place, and no doubt felt secure behind the lofty walls. The 60th Rifles heard of their hiding-place, and rushing at the gates burst them open and entered. Then ensued a scene of carnage, for not a rebel was spared, the Scotsmen driving home the bayonet so fiercely that in many cases their weapons were twisted and bent.

The British troops were now masters of the field, and preparations were made for the mortars to be put into position to shell Delhi. A discovery was then made that caused consternation in the camp—the fuses had been left behind at Umballa. This was most regrettable, as no doubt Sir Henry would have followed up the shelling with a general attack. The commanding officers did not show much energy, and those in a position to judge declare that chance after chance was thrown away of at least strengthening the British hold upon Delhi. The troops on the other hand, however, deserved rest, and Sir Henry may have acted on the more careful plan of harbouring the strength of his troops and keeping them fresh for a future attack.

There can be no doubt, however, that the rebels gained courage by this apathy, and as they were strengthened by a number of rebellious regiments, notably the 4th Lancers and the 60th Bengal Infantry, they became even bolder, and harried the British to an extraordinary extent. They were fighting for their lives, and so desperately did they attack our weakened soldiers that if it had not been for a piece of splendid strategy by the officer in charge of the outposts, they might have defeated our troops or at least captured the guns.

The enemy had made this daring and desperate attack on the 15th of June, and had met with much success. The officer of the outposts knew that the rebels recognised our bugle-calls and understood them as well as our own men, so he determined to draw them into a trap. Dusk had now settled over the scene, and presently the bugles rang out the "Retire." The mutineers heard the blast, and in a confused mob, numbering thousands, they advanced tumultuously to pursue the retreating British. Their rush was suddenly checked, however, for when the mutineers were about thirty yards from the waiting British outposts the gallant leader gave the order to charge, and soon the dreaded bayonet was working havoc in the serried hordes, who lost heart and retired in confusion to their position.

The enemy now occupied their attention by forming a battery of heavy guns which rendered the British position at the house of Hindoo Rao quite untenable. The whole force was now concentrated to checkmate this rebel move, and, marching upon the battery in two columns, our men drove the enemy back, won the guns and killed a large number of rebels, hemming about fifty into a corner, where they were shot down.

The town batteries, however, were still arrayed against us, five in number; a large one on the left of the Cashmere gate, a second at the gate itself, a third at the Moree gate, a fourth at the Ajmere gate, and the fifth on the city walls. These batteries were sweeping the British positions to the extent of

over two miles, and they did great damage to our camp. We had three batteries, one at Hindoo Rao, another at the Observatory, and a third at the Jumna Musjid. On the 19th the rebels made another determined attack, and attempted to get to the rear of the British position.

Brigadier Hope Grant, with the 9th Lancers and six pieces of cannon, advanced to circumvent the enemy, but were assailed by a heavy fire of grape when they had reached the Ochterliny gardens, which lie near the cantonments. Grant's guns vigorously replied, and his force was at once reinforced, the attack becoming general. The rebels were fighting with determination, and the British flank was nearly turned, two of our guns being in danger of capture. With brave charges, however, the tide of battle turned, and the rebels fell back, enabling us to take the guns to a place of safety. The 9th Lancers, Carbineers, and the Guides were hotly engaged on the right flank, supporting the batteries of Majors Turner and Tombs.

The ground was not at all suitable for a pitched battle, being of a very broken character, and the fight developed into a series of skirmishes. Our leadership was muddled, and at one time the cavalry, artillery, and infantry were all mixed up, and had it not been for the individual energy of the commanding officers of the various regiments, the confusion might have been attended with serious consequences. Sir Henry Barnard seemed incapable of proceeding upon a preconcerted plan, and the different officers were left to adopt whatever tactics they thought fit.

The enemy was strongly posted, and their fire was well directed, our loss being every whit as heavy as that which we inflicted. Darkness came on, and, instead of retiring to the camp, the troops were ordered to fight on. Needless to say, the confusion became worse, and if the enemy had come to know of the terrible position of our troops and charged, the total rout of our men must have been inevitable. When at last the order came to retire, many of our cannon had to be left on the field until morning, along with the killed and wounded. Among the former was the gallant Colonel Yule of the 9th Lancers, who lay upon the field with four of his men around him. Both thighs had been broken, a ball had passed through his brain, and his throat had been cut. It was a miserable fate for such a gallant officer, who had passed with glory through many a bloody field. The rebels also lost a great number in killed and wounded, but they were so strong that the sacrifice of a few hundred lives made little difference of their numerical strength. Our brave soldiers never lost heart, although they felt that they were badly led, not by their own officers, but by the general in command.

The anniversary of the battle of Plassey (23rd June) came round, and as it was a festival for both Mohammedans and Hindoos alike, being the first day of the new moon, they became even more fanatical, making a furious attack upon our outposts. It is said that every man in Delhi capable of bearing arms came out to exterminate the Feringhees, but as the British had taken the precaution of blowing up two bridges, they could not get their artillery forward. The army opposed to our battered but determined troops was an immense one, and if the confusion of the previous attack had prevailed, our force would have been swamped.

From sunset to sunrise the battle raged, and fierce were the rebel attacks, only to be met with dogged resistance by our men. Repulsed again and again, the rebels grew less determined, and slackened perceptibly, while the British, advancing, drove the enemy back to the city, leaving the field littered with the dead and dying. Our loss was also severe, and thus was the anniversary of Clive's victory celebrated before the walls of Delhi.

It would have been almost impossible now for Barnard to take Delhi with the attenuated force at his disposal, and valuable time was thus lost. He was reinforced by about 500 Europeans, which made up the entire force to 3000 British troops, with three native corps of 600 bayonets each, consisting of the Ghoorkas, Guides, and a Sikh battalion. Continually harassed by the enemy, who were fighting desperately to retain their advantage, our troops lay before Delhi having achieved but scant success, and having little idea of any regular plan. Sir Henry's apathy cannot be accounted for, unless it was due to the fact that he was content to wait until fortune made an opening for him; but he might have waited long enough for that.

The mutiny had by this time spread with alarming rapidity, and all over India, the sepoy, inflamed with the reports of rebel successes, murdered their officers and joined the mutineers. There can be no doubt that the resistance of the rebels at Delhi encouraged the mutineers at other points, and while Barnard's force was lying under the very walls of the ancient capital, the rebels were being daily reinforced by numerous bands of mutineers who made Delhi their Mecca. Rain fell heavily in July, but still our troops were inactive, beyond repulsing occasional sallies by the enemy. Sir Henry was engaged in forming a plan whereby he could gain the city with the least loss of life, but his officers were quite convinced that the city would only be won by a vigorous attack at different gates.

The enemy kept well within the walls, apparently not desir-

ous of engaging the Feringhees in the open. On the 9th of July they made a daring sally, and a body of their cavalry got to the rear of our position through the treachery of a picket of the 9th Irregular Horse. They gained no advantage, being driven off with severe loss. An incident of this skirmish is worthy of mention. Lieutenant Hills of the Horse Artillery, escorted by 80 of the 6th Carbineers, came suddenly upon a troop of about 120 Sowars. A panic ensued amongst his escort, who retired, leaving the guns limbered and useless to Hills. He confronted the enemy, shot two, and unhorsed a third by throwing his pistol at the rebel's head. He was charged by another two of the enemy, and, although thrown to the ground, he felled one of his adversaries before he was cut down from behind. Major Tombs, who was hurrying to his comrade's assistance only arrived in time to shoot the assailant, and running another through the body, he bore off his bleeding comrade. The mutineers lost heavily in this skirmish, but the British also sustained considerable loss. For a few days the enemy remained singularly quiet, and as yet there was no appearance of an aggressive movement on our part.

The rebels had not done with us, however, as on the 14th they poured out of the city about 10,000 strong, and made a furious onslaught upon our right flank. They poured in a murderous fire, which was instantly replied to. The attack and repulse lasted in skirmishing affrays for about three hours, when the enemy seemed to realise that they had had enough of it, and, leaving their dead and wounded behind, they made off as fast as they could to their place of refuge behind the city walls. Our soldiers, eager for the fray, and no doubt throwing their usual caution to the winds, kept up the pursuit until they came up close to the walls. They rushed into a perfect hail of musket balls and grape shot, and before they came to their senses and obeyed the bugles, which were sounding the recall, 16 officers and 230 men were placed on the wounded list, a number succumbing to their wounds.

This was a foolhardy action, involving a needless loss of life, but, done as it was in the heat of battle, it showed the fearlessness of the British troops, and no doubt had its effect upon the miscreants in the city.

Further attacks were made on the 18th and 23rd, but both were firmly met, and considerable chastisement meted out to the bold rebels. Although Sir Henry Barnard was in supreme charge, the active command rested with General Reed, whose health now broke down, necessitating his retiral to the hills. The operations before Delhi were now entrusted to, and ably conducted by, Brigadier Wilson of the Bengal Artillery, a zealous and active officer.

On the last day of July the enemy made another attempt to break our lines, and appeared in force at the Cashmere and Ajmere gates. One column got a couple of guns into position, and played on the Mosque and our central battery, while the other endeavoured to get to the rear of the camp, but being unable to cross the canal they returned to the city. It was evidently a well-planned attack, for the guns on the walls gave them a lot of assistance through a constant fire on our position, which was rather out of range. All through the night the rebels kept up an incessant fire upon our outposts, while their bugles were heard continually sounding the advance, yet no advance came. Frantically the leaders rushed about, shouting "Chulo chai! chulo!" ("Come on, brother! come on!") but no one seemed willing to answer the call.

The incessant boom of the guns continued until the 2nd August, but not much damage was done to our earthworks and batteries. The rebels seemed to be rendered desperate, as it was thought that they believed that the British could close upon them at any time and kill them. They drank *chang* (a native intoxicant), which made them frantic, and they rushed up to our breastworks, only to be shot down in scores. On the 2nd August they lost over 200 killed and 400 wounded, while 9 men on our side were killed and 36 wounded.

An officer graphically describes the British camp during this anxious time in the following manner:—

"What a sight our camp would be, even to those who visited Sebastopol! The long lines of tents, the thatched hovels of the native servants, the rows of horses, the parks of artillery, the British soldier in his grey linen coat and trousers, the dark Sikhs with their red and blue turbans, the Afghans with the same, their wild air and coloured saddlecloths, and the little Ghoorkas dressed up like demons of ugliness in black worsted Kilmarnock bonnets and woollen coats. The soldiers are loitering through the lines or in the bazaars. Suddenly an alarm is sounded, and everyone rushes to his tent. The infantry soldier seizes his musket and slings on his pouch; the artilleryman gets his guns horsed; the Afghan rides out to explore, and in a few minutes everyone is in his place."

The enemy were very desperate on the first day of August—the festival of the Eed, or the anniversary of the sacrifice which Abraham meant to make of Isaac, and they made an attempt to get their guns across the canal, but the temporary bridge which they had erected was carried away by a flood, and they had to retire. It was an awful night, that of the 2nd of August, with the roar of the guns, the rattle of musketry, the yells of the savage rebels, and the cheers of our men. When the morning broke, 22 of our men were found to be killed,

while over 200 rebels lay dead in front of our breastworks. The religious frenzy passed off, and the rebels settled down more quietly in the city, while Brigadier Wilson waited for reinforcements, which were by this time hurrying up for the all important capture of Delhi.

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CHAPTER XLV.

THE BATTLES AT DELHI

(continued).

1857.

BRIGADIER WILSON was badly in want of help, and there was joy in the camp when Brigadier Nicholson marched in one day towards the middle of August at the head of 1000 Europeans and 1400 Sikhs, while he was also able to report the advance of a siege train from Ferozepore.

There was now a more formidable force concentrated before Delhi, which might be set down at about 10,000 fighting men, of whom nearly 5000 were Europeans.

Not long after Nicholson's arrival, information was received in the British camp that the enemy contemplated a move whereby they might cut off the supplies. The exact nature of the tidings was that about 7000 rebels had marched out of Delhi, with a view to crossing the Nujffghur Jheel Drain, and that the army was supported by 18 guns. Brigadier Nicholson organised a movable column, and marched on the morning of the 25th August to turn the enemy. His force consisted of a squadron of Lancers, the Guide cavalry, H.M. 61st foot, 1st European Fusiliers, Cokes Rifles, 2nd Punjaub Infantry, Major Tombs' Horse Artillery, and Remington's troops, with the Mooltan Horse.

A party of sappers were also included in the column, to blow up the bridge at Nujffghur, making in all a force of 1000 European and 2000 native troops. The column marched for about ten miles, when the Brigadier learned that the enemy had crossed the bridge and were preparing to encamp at Nujffghur. He pushed on with all speed, and, after another long march, came up to the village, from which he was assailed by a vigorous fire of cannon and musketry, which was directed against the head of the column.

The General ordered his men forward, and told them to reserve their fire until the last possible minute. The flank of the attacking line were supported by the artillery, and these went forward at a gallop, concentrating their fire upon a serai which the enemy were defending with four guns. Sharply and

clearly came the order from the gallant Nicholson—"The line will advance," and as if on parade the soldiers, with bayonets on the slant, rushed forward, and with a rousing cheer they rushed upon the enemy, who flinched at the appearance of the bayonet. The four captured guns were turned upon the flying rebels, who took up a position at the bridge. Here they attempted to make a show of resistance, but the stand was a brief one. Their lines were soon broken by our relentless artillery fire, and four more guns fell into our hands.

The rebels managed to carry off three guns, and when our troops went forward to hold it while the sappers prepared a mine underneath for its destruction, they opened a heavy fire upon our lines. In the midst of the fire the advanced company held the bridge until the sappers had done their work. The mine was sprung, the arch disappeared, and the troops retired to take a well-earned rest. Brigadier Nicholson had completely baffled the enemy and captured thirteen guns, besides killing and wounding hundreds of the rebels. The British loss amounted to about 120 slain, yet it was a cheerful company that returned to camp, for the soldiers knew that they had done their duty.

A few days later there was a murmur in the air, for through the British lines flew the intelligence that General Wilson had at last determined upon a grand assault on the city. A general order was promulgated by the General, from which we make the following quotation, to show the spirit in which our soldiers went forward in the work of vengeance:—

"The artillery will have even harder work than they have had, and which they have so well and cheerfully performed hitherto; this, however, will be for a short period only; and, when ordered to the assault, the Major-General feels assured that British pluck and determination will carry everything before them, and that the bloodthirsty and murderous mutineers against whom they are fighting will be driven headlong out of their stronghold and exterminated. But to enable them to do this, he warns the troops of the absolute necessity of their keeping together and not straggling from their columns. By this only can success be assured. Major-General Wilson need hardly remind the troops of the cruel murders committed on their officers and comrades, their wives and children, to move them in the deadly struggle. No quarter should be given to the mutineers! At the same time, for the sake of humanity, and the honour of the country they belong to, he calls upon them to spare all women and children that may come in their way."

There was an unusual stir in the camp, for the soldiers moved about with a business-like air which showed their

pleasure at being at last permitted to rush like an avalanche upon the city. The cautious Wilson did nothing rash, but saw that every part of his fighting machine was in thorough order. The soldiers were now fresh and ready, while the promised siege train put in an appearance. It came in on the morning of 4th September, consisting of forty heavy guns, mortars and howitzers, with vast supplies of ammunition. It was well supported by a wing of the 8th or King's Regiment, two companies of the 61st, and a wing of the Belooch battalion. Two days later arrived a squadron of the 9th Lancers, artillery recruits from Meerut, and 200 of the 60th Rifles, while the 4th Punjauh infantry, the Jheend Rajah's levies, and the Cashmere Dograhs arrived two days later.

The force was especially strong in artillery, for the reason that the walls and gates had to be battered down before breaches for the assault by the infantry could be attempted. The rebels in the town were singularly quiet, but they could not miss seeing the great preparations that were going on in the British camp. They were not now the smart troops that had been drilled by British officers in the days before they had been incited to rebellion. They were fanatical, and therefore unreliable, and although they could be trusted to make a good fight for their lives, they were an undisciplined and riotous crew. If that could be said of the sepoy, words fail to describe the character of the mercenaries who clung to the fringe of the rebel army. They were the scum of the country, arrant cowards who gloried in the butchery of defenceless women and children. The batteries were well mounted, and everything was prepared in a manner for the warm reception of the Feringhees. Every sepoy and rebel knew that it meant certain death to fall into the hands of the British, so, making the best of their position, they resolved to fight for their lives.

The bombardment of Delhi proper opened on the 11th of September, when nine 24-pounders opened on the towers and walls at the Cashmere gate. Other guns directed their fire upon the same position, and a ceaseless fire was kept up, so that two days later it was seen that two breaches had been made practicable for escalade near the Cashmere and Water Bastions. On the 14th September, the whole force moved out of camp in three columns to the assault. Major Reid, in charge of the column which consisted of Ghoorkas and Cashmere levies, attacked the Kishengunze and Pahareepore suburbs, but were driven back with heavy loss. The rebels defended desperately, and made big gaps in the British lines.

Brigadier Nicholson was at the head of another column, and he stormed the Cashmere bastion, driving the rebels like chaff before him. His men could not stop, and reached the

Lahore gate, where Nicholson, their brave leader, fell mortally wounded. Brigadier Jones had meantime scaled the breach at the Water bastion, and aided Colonel Campbell in bursting open the gate. The assault had thus practically been attended with complete success at all parts, and although the loss was severe, yet the hardest part of the work had been performed.

It was necessary that the Cashmere gate should be blown up, and this was one of the most daring exploits of the attack. The party in charge of the explosives was commanded by Lieutenants Horne and Salkeld, and consisted of Sergeants Smith, Carmichael, and Corporal Burgess of the Royal Sappers and Miners, Bugler Hawthorne of the 52nd Foot, and 24 native sappers, who were covered by the fire of the 60th Rifles. The whole force rushed towards the gate, bearing the powder, under a heavy fire from the enemy. The drawbridge over the ditch had been destroyed, but the brave men crossed over on planks, and soon had the powder-bags against the gate, with the enemy firing at them through a wicket. Sergeant Carmichael was killed while laying the powder, and while Lieutenant Salkeld was preparing to light the charge, he was shot through an arm and leg. He was in time to hand the match to Corporal Burgess who had no sooner fired the train than he fell, mortally wounded. The survivors of the gallant little party took shelter, and in a few moments the huge Cashmere gate was blown to atoms. Lieutenant Horne at once ordered the bugler to sound the advance to his regiment—the 52nd—and so great was the din that he had to sound three times before the order was understood. Bravely the Oxford Light Infantry, with fixed bayonets, under Colonel Campbell, advanced and secured the barrier, driving the rebels before them in wild confusion.

The city had now been entered, and the British troops, still keeping in formation of columns, marched through the stately streets, which had been the scenes of such terrible brutalities. The British soldiers shot and bayoneted every rebel that came in their path, and drove the cowed sepoys before them like dumb driven cattle.

As evening came on, the British attack was allowed to slacken, but it had been a brave day's work. The whole line of works from the Water bastion to the Cabul gate, including the Cashmere and Moree gates and bastions, were in our hands, and also the church, college, and a number of private houses. Altogether we held the northern part of Delhi, and, considering the impregnable nature of the defences, and the sheer desperation which the natives threw into their fighting, this immense advantage had been gained at a comparatively slight cost.

The enemy, who had suffered severely, fled from the vicinity of the captured position, but they had not yet evacu-

ated the city, and the next day was employed by the British in strengthening their position and directing a heavy fire upon the magazine. The sepoys never came into actual hand to hand conflict with our men, for their marked repugnance to the bayonet deterred them, but they continued to skirmish and snipe at the British troops. The well-directed fire upon the magazine had good effect, for before evening a breach had been made.

This was all that was required, and although the mutineers flocked to this point to defend the gap, the 61st gallantly rushed to storm it. There were a few straggling volleys from the enemy, but only one or two guns on the bastions belched forth. Calmly, as if on parade, the 61st went on—a line of scarlet tipped with steel. They had the dreaded bayonet fixed, and as they neared the gap which had been made in the wall, they broke into the double, and literally hurled themselves at the breach. The craven-hearted rebels were awed by such a charge, they recklessly fired a volley which did no damage, and, with a last look at the oncoming avengers, turned and fled.

The gunners on the walls were seized with a similar terror, and they dropped their lighted port-fires and fled without discharging any of the six guns, heavily charged with grape, which commanded the breach. Through the night of the 16th, when the assault by the 61st was made, the British troops wrought great havoc amongst the mutineers. The bayonets were busy, and our sharpshooters had excellent practice in bringing down any rebel who had the courage to show his swarthy face above cover. Next day the bank, which had been the scene of bloodshed when the mutineers invested the city, fell into our hands, along with the extensive grounds in the midst of which it is situated. General Wilson became cognisant of its importance as a position, and when he moved his guns into the grounds, the Royal Palace, from which the king and the princes had made their escape, was as good as doomed.

The palace, as already indicated, is more of a fortress than a place of residence, and with capable defenders, might have defied an investing army for some time. It was imperative that it should be taken, so our guns battered the stoutly-built walls, while shells were directed over the complete line of buildings.

The resistance was feeble, and when once an entrance had been obtained, the rebels and royal bodyguard fled in all directions, seemingly not desirous of encountering the British troops. The Palace was soon completely in our hands, and large numbers of rebels who sought to defend their abdicated master were at once cut down, while those who were fortunate enough to escape through the grounds, either fell into the hands

of our men posted at various quarters, or were killed by the avenging troops which dashed along the streets of Delhi. The order of the General to have no mercy upon the rebels was carried up to the letter, and although many of the wretches begged and prayed for their lives, it is to their credit as a brave race that it must be said that they met their death bravely in the majority of cases. The women and children were respected, and sent to places of safety.

A story is related of a veteran of the 60th Regiment, who, along with a small detachment, was engaged ferreting out the rebels. They had come across a band of sepoys, women, and children mixed into a heterogeneous mass, and, covering the group with their rifles, called on the men to step aside. This they sullenly did, while the women, who were apparently their wives, stood at a distance, quite well aware of what was to happen. Although ordered to depart, they preferred to stay and see their mutinous partners perish. One of the women clung to the knees of the veteran soldier, who was about to administer the *coup de grace* to a sinister looking rebel. "Oh, Sahib, he is my husband!" "Weel, ma guid wumman," grimly responded the son of Mars, "ye're going to be a weedy sune!" and with that he drove his bayonet through the rebel's heart. "Noo, mistress," he continued, as he surveyed his reeking blade, "if ye ha'e ony mair freends like yer departed husband, jist tak' me tae them, an' I'll be pleased to gie them the same medicine!"

This aptly illustrates the callousness of our soldiers' hearts. They could forgive foes who had killed in fair battle, but they could not bring themselves to spare fiends who had killed and outraged their fair countrywomen.

With the falling of the palace into our hands, the greatest stronghold of the rebels had gone from their grasp. The Jumna Musjid, a palatial building which the mutineers had converted into a fortress, also fell after a heavy attack, in which a number of lives were lost.

In these operations no fewer than 205 pieces of cannon were captured, while a vast quantity of munitions of war fell into our hands. It must not be supposed that all these advantages were gained without heavy loss to our troops. The storming of the gates and breaches was the most dangerous work, and it was at these attacks that the greatest number of lives were lost. There were 8 European officers and 162 rank and file killed, with 103 natives, while 52 officers, 510 rank and file, and 310 natives were wounded. It is impossible to gauge the rebel loss, but it is computed that at the grand assault on the city over 5000 perished, and this death-roll was added to day after day by our pursuing soldiers.

The king, along with his two sons, had fled from Delhi by a secret exit, when the British gained admission to the city. He fled to the tomb of Hoomayon, situated just outside the city. This fine building, which is surmounted by a gigantic dome, served as their hiding-place for a short period, but eventually Captain Hodson of the Guides discovered their retreat, and as it was necessary that they should be captured, he proceeded with his force to the place where they were concealed. He called upon the occupants to surrender, and although they were inclined to treat for terms, the Captain was inflexible, and demanded unconditional surrender. The king, who had attained the patriarchal age of ninety years, had really played an unimportant part in the insurrection, and had merely been set up as a royal figurehead by the mutineers. The Captain, having respect for his grey hairs, spared his life, and also that of the Begum Zeenah Mahal.

The sons of the king had, no doubt much against their will, been actively engaged in the mutiny, and although they were but milk-and-water soldiers, they had chosen to act as leaders, and deserved death. A native of Delhi, writing regarding these persons says:—

“The princes are made officers in the royal army; thousands of pities for the poor luxurious princes! They are sometimes compelled to go out of the gates of the city in the heat of the sun; their hearts palpitate from the firing of muskets and guns. Unfortunately they do not know how to command an army, and their forces laugh at their imperfections and bad arrangements.”

Captain Hodson gave orders that the two princes and a grandson of the king should be shot, and this was done in the city, their naked bodies being hung by the neck in the Kot-wallee, or Mayor's Court, in presence of the people, who were awed at the fate of those who had ruled them. Executions were common in the city, which was now wholly in possession of the Queen's troops.

General Wilson had carried through his trying part with honour, and completed his task when, in the Palace of the Great Mogul he drained a goblet with his other officers to the health of Her Majesty, as Empress of India, while the soldiers cheered, and sang “God Save the Queen.”

With the capture of Delhi and all its attendant excitement there ensued a time of peace for the troops at Delhi, but they were fated to lose the services of the dauntless Wilson. The General's health, which had never been of a robust nature, completely broke down, and he had reluctantly to resign his command, being succeeded at Delhi by Brigadier-General Penny, C.B.

Delhi had been the great focus of the rebellion, the gathering place of the rebels, and now that they had met with ignominious defeat, those who escaped from the avenging army made their way to the surrounding towns, inciting those whom they met to rise against the British.

The rebels had tasted defeat, but they trusted to their overwhelming numbers to bring them victory. While they held Delhi they had inspired the mutineers in other districts by their success, and now that they had lost this important point they as rapidly as possible transferred their operations to the surrounding provinces, where weaker forces met their attack.

Agra and Lucknow became their headquarters, and they fully anticipated wiping out the small garrisons quartered there. In Delhi, the citizens who had been driven to serve the mutineers during their tenure, were only too glad to throw in their lot with the British, and the work of repair and reclamation went steadily on. The troops were seldom idle in pursuing the enemy, and Colonel Greathed of the 84th went after them at the head of a large force. At the military cantonment at Secunderabad there was found a vast quantity of plundered property which had been stolen from the poor unfortunates who perished in Delhi, and the sight of the women's dresses, hats, and bonnets so exasperated the 84th, that they set fire to the whole place.

At Bolundshuhur the enemy made a show of resistance with light guns at the junction of two cross roads. Our heavy cannon soon silenced the rebels' pieces, and the cavalry dashing into the town drove the cringing and affrighted rebels before them. Still keeping up the work of clearing the district, the Fort of Malaghur, which consisted of eight bastions, was blown up. It was while executing this work that brave Lieutenant Horne, who, it will be remembered, led the sappers at the explosion of the Cashmere gate, was accidentally killed by the premature explosion of one of his own mines.

It was now evident that the mutineers were endeavouring to concentrate their scattered forces at Agra, an important and well-fortified British position. Brigadier Greathed judiciously sent his wounded to Meerut, and started on the heels of the mutineers, coming up with them at Alighur, in the doab of the Ganges, and a little over 50 miles from Agra. The rebels made every show of giving our troops trouble, but when once their guns had been silenced, they lost heart, for they could not stand to meet the shock of a bayonet charge; and few can blame them when it is remembered that the finest troops in the world had reeled and broken against the onslaught of the glittering steel propelled by the brawny arms of a rough Highlander. The mutineers were continually losing men since their flight

from Delhi, and in this engagement they must have lost fully 400 in killed alone.

On the 10th of October, 1857, without seeing any other bands of fleeing rebels, the Brigadier entered Agra, the key to Western India. They imagined themselves safe from molestation, and proceeded to pitch camp. While they were doing so a battery of guns belched out a heavy fire upon the troops, and a body of cavalry galloped amongst the men, inflicting heavy loss. Never was surprise more complete, but our soldiers soon recovered, and before the enemy could fire a sixth round, our guns were replying, while our troops were drawn up in position. The ambushed and cunning foe was soon unearthed, and, afraid to give open battle, they fled. The troops dashed after them, and over a thousand rebels were killed, 14 guns taken, along with a vast quantity of stores and plunder.

The rebels were now split and scattered, and this force of Mhow rebels who had been unaware of the arrival of Greathed's large force, were practically disbanded for the time being. Sir James Hope Grant in another direction caught up with the Delhi fugitives at the ancient city of Canonj, and killed hundreds without mercy.

It will thus be evident that the murders of Delhi were well avenged, and Delhi and its surrounding country swept perfectly clear of rebels. Delhi had been dearly won, but it was the turning point in the mutiny, and the mutineers had received a check and a lesson which told upon their subsequent fighting.

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## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE BATTLES AT CAWNPORE.

1857.

CAWNPORE stands out written in letters of blood in the annals of British history, and ranks as one of the bloodiest episodes of the terrible mutiny in our Indian Empire in 1857. It is chiefly conspicuous for the inhuman massacre of innocent men and women and the butchery of little children by the orders of Nana Sahib, that fiend in human form, who was destined to become the central figure of the mutiny.

He first came into prominence at the investment of Cawnpore, and his bloodthirstiness chilled the hearts of the brave defenders, yet roused deep feelings of revenge in those who came to the relief. General Wheeler was in command at Cawnpore—a brave and tried officer, who would fight to the last; and,

being distrustful of a regiment of Oude Irregulars, disbanded them and sent for a single company of the 32nd from Lucknow.

All was quietness at this time—the 3rd of June—at Cawnpore, when news reached Wheeler that the garrison at Lucknow were in sore straits. He immediately sent back the company of the 32nd, and, as an additional reinforcement, ordered a detachment of the 84th to accompany them. This had the effect of thinning the Cawnpore garrison, which now consisted of 60 men of the 84th regiment, 70 of the 32nd, and 15 of the Madras Fusiliers, with a few artillerymen and six guns. Two native regiments were still within the lines—the 1st and 56th native infantry; but as a precaution, the General ordered that they should sleep outside the lines.

The dreaded outbreak came at last, and the first shot was fired on the morning of the 6th of June. Immediately the defenders rushed to the entrenchments to repel an expected attack of the rebel cavalry and infantry, but the first day's fighting was mostly confined to an artillery duel.

The enemy were vastly superior as regards big guns, and their shots proved very destructive to the walls of the barracks. Wheeler's only hope was to last out until relief came, but gradually the enemy closed in, capturing the compounds, bungalows, and other buildings, from which they poured in a perfect hail of bullets upon the brave defenders. Captain John Moore, of the 32nd, did yeoman service in checking these encroachments, and, although wounded in the arm, he sallied out on two occasions at the head of 25 men and spiked the nearest guns.

The deadly fire of the rebels was not the only danger, for the heat was so intense that the death-rate among the women and children became alarming. As soon as they died, their bodies were laid out on the veranda to await the coming of night, when they were cast into a well.

The rebels, desperate to achieve their end, commenced to fire hot shells and red-hot shot, which caused a part of the barracks to ignite. Unfortunately this was the very part where the sick and wounded were lying. Before anything could be done, about forty poor creatures had perished in the flames, while the defenders could not quit their posts in the trenches lest the savage horde would burst in and annihilate the garrison. The barracks soon became so riddled that they afforded but little protection, and the women had to burrow in the earth to find safety for themselves and their children.

Theirs was a terrible plight, with shells screaming over them, and the foul stench of decaying horses and cattle for ever in their nostrils. It should be mentioned that the survivors of the garrison at Futtehghur, which had been aban-

done, to the number of 126, men, women and children, had taken refuge in Cawnpore, where they were lodged in the assembly rooms. They had escaped in boats down the Ganges, and many lives had been lost through the rebels firing upon them from the banks. Little did they dream that a more terrible fate awaited them.

On the eighteenth day of the siege, Nana Sahib sent an old English lady, named Mrs. Greenway, whom he had captured, to the barracks, to offer honourable terms of surrender to General Wheeler. These were to the effect that all Government money should be given up, that the force should march out under arms with 60 rounds of ammunition to every man, and that boats, properly victualled, should be in readiness at the landing-stage on the Ganges, about a mile from the British entrenchment.

These terms were signed, sealed, and ratified on the solemn oath of the Nana. Hostilities at once ceased, and General Wheeler made preparations to evacuate the place which he had so gallantly defended against fearful odds. On the 27th of June, the force, to the number of about 700, marched down to the boats, little thinking of the treachery that was working in the heart of the Nana. There were nearly 300 women and children there, and they took their places in the boats.

The moment all were embarked, Nana gave the signal, and a fierce musketry fire rained upon the trusting and hapless band in the frail boats. Then ensued a terrible massacre, hundreds being killed without a chance of defending themselves, while those who sought safety in the water were shot as soon as they showed themselves. Those in the boat which contained the gallant Wheeler and his daughter made a gallant resistance, and actually succeeded in getting down stream, only to be captured by three of the Nana's boats and brought back to Cawnpore.

The men were separated from the women, and the Nana ordered them to be shot by men of the 1st Bengal Infantry.

"No! no!" answered several of the rebels. "We will not shoot Wheeler Sahib, for he made the name of our regiment great."

There were others who were ready enough to perpetrate the foul deed. The women threw themselves upon the breasts of those whom they loved, and begged to share their fate. They were rudely dragged apart, and just as the rebels were about to fire, the chaplain asked to be allowed to read prayers before they died. This was granted, and after he had read a few prayers, the doomed men clasped hands in a last lingering good-bye. Crack went the rifles, and in a minute they were all shot down, while those who were wounded were soon despatched. So ended the first chapter of the Nana's treachery.

The women and children, to the number of 122, were taken to the Nana's house, and a few days later, along with the fugitives from Futtehghur, were removed to the assembly rooms.

Such fiendish brutality could not go unpunished, and when tidings of the massacre reached Britain, Brigadier-General Havelock was ordered to place himself at the head of a force to march on Cawnpore and Lucknow.

It was not a very pretentious army that left Allahabad on the 7th of July—some 1300 Europeans; but the presence of 600 men of the 78th Highlanders in the ranks gave it additional strength. Major Renaud had been sent on with a small force as advance guard, and Havelock coming up with him, the united forces encamped at Khaga, about five miles from Futtehghur. While the camp was being pitched, the enemy, numbering 3500 with 12 guns, was observed, and orders were given for an immediate action. Captain Maude pushed on his guns to point blank range, and terrorised the enemy with his fire. Against a combined British advance the rebels retreated, leaving their guns behind them.

It was almost a bloodless victory, for the British loss was trifling, while the advantage gained was of immense importance. Worn out with a long march, Havelock decided to rest, and this gave the rebels time to take up another defensive position to block the road to Cawnpore.

Havelock resumed his march on the 14th, and came up with the enemy at Aong. The resistance made was but feeble, and under a galling fire of round and grape shot they once more retreated to the bridge over the Pandoo Nuddee, which was the last obstacle on the road to Cawnpore. What the withering artillery fire failed to do, the bayonets of the Highlanders accomplished, and, leaving a number of guns and ammunition behind, the rebels were soon in full retreat to join the Nana's main force at Cawnpore.

When the Nana learned of the defeat of his troops, he determined upon the slaughter of every European in Cawnpore. About four o'clock on the afternoon of the 15th, the bloody butchery began. The males were ordered out and immediately shot, but the women refused to move, and neither threats or persuasions would induce them.

They clung to each other until at last the enraged sepoy discharged muskets from the windows amongst the poor unfortunates. They then rushed in with sword and bayonet, and soon the place was a reeking shambles. Fiercely the maddened brutes slashed and stabbed amongst the quivering mass. They heeded not the piteful prayers for mercy, but killed women and children alike. There were about 150 women and children in

the room, and soon the floor was piled high with bleeding bodies. The massacre continued for several hours, and at last, thinking that their work was complete, the murderers of the pure and innocent desisted.

Next morning it was found that a number had escaped death by hiding under heaps of bodies, and orders were given to recommence the butchery. Terrified and mad with suffering, the poor creatures, drenched with the blood of their countrywomen, seized their children, and, rushing over the compound, cast themselves into a well, preferring such a death to excruciating torture at the hands of the Nana's myrmidons. That same evening the other mangled bodies were cast into the well, and the Nana's bloody work was completed.

Since that dreadful day a mausoleum has been erected over the well—"Sacred to the perpetual memory of a great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children. xvi. day of July, MDCCCLVII," and guarded by the sublime figure of an angel standing at the cross, to keep watch and ward for aye o'er Britain's noble dead.

Meanwhile, Havelock's troops, unaware of the foul deed which had been enacted within the walls of the city, moved rapidly on, and on the 16th halted at the village of Maharajpoor, before engaging the Nana, who was posted in a strong position about two miles off at the village of Aherwa. He had cut up and rendered impassable both roads, and his heavy guns, seven in number, were disposed along his position, which consisted of a series of villages. Behind were the infantry, composed of the mutineers and his own armed followers, numbering in all about 5000.

General Havelock quickly grasped the situation, and decided upon a flanking movement. The column, therefore, after a short frontal advance, veered off to the right, and circled round the enemy's left. The Nana, observing this move, sent a large body of horse to the left, and at once opened fire upon the British column with all his guns. Still Havelock achieved his object, and turned the enemy's left. Forming into line, the British guns were soon playing upon the batteries, while the infantry, covered by a wing of the Madras Fusiliers as skirmishers, advanced in direct *échelon* of regiments from the right.

Then came the moment for the Highlanders, as three guns of the enemy were strongly posted behind a lofty eminence, and these had to be taken. Under Colonel Hamilton, the 78th moved forward under a steady fire. They reached the guns and charged with fixed bayonets, but the enemy broke and fled. Meanwhile the 64th and 84th regiments had not been idle, engaging the enemy hotly on the left, and capturing two guns. General Havelock now re-formed his force on account of the

retreat of Nana Sahib to a new position to the rear of his first and nearer Cawnpore. The British infantry changed line to the front and rear while the guns were brought up.

While this was being done, the Nana, despatching his cavalry to the rear of the British force, attacked from this point. They charged fiercely, but the British volleys were too much for them, and they withdrew. In the van the fighting was stubborn, and the rebel infantry seemed to be in disorderly retreat when a reserve 24-pounder came to the rescue, and played considerable havoc amongst the British lines. The infantry once more rallied, and the cavalry rejoined the Nana's forces. It was imperative that the 24-pounder should be silenced, as the Madras Fusiliers, the 64th, 78th, and 84th, formed in line, were losing heavily. The rebel skirmishers were becoming bolder and, getting within range, poured a heavy musketry fire upon the stolid British ranks. To make matters worse, the tired oxen could not bring up the guns over the rough road.

The General gave orders for another steady advance. It seemed madness to go forward amid such a storm of shot and shell, but Havelock knew his men.

"No firing, 64th and 78th. Trust to the bayonet, and remember that I am with you."

These words inspired the men with a fresh courage, so, with a ringing cheer, they dashed forward. Steadily they advanced, the enemy sending round shot into the ranks up to 300 yards' range, and then poured a perfect fusillade of grape. The 64th were directly in line of the gun, and suffered severely, but when the order to "Charge!" came, each man bounded forward.

The rebels did not wait for the bayonet, but broke and fled, with the British in pursuit, showing no mercy to the fugitives. The Nana's forces were now in total confusion, and retired upon Cawnpore. The British guns were now up, and a heavy fire was opened upon the retreating host. The battle was over, and the tired troops halted for the night, while the wounded were attended and the dead interred. The British loss was found to be about 100 killed and wounded, which does not say much for the rebel fire, seeing that they had practically target shooting for a considerable time. The enemy's loss was severe, as the dead and dying strewed the road to Cawnpore.

Hardly had the troops settled down to rest when a tremendous explosion shook the earth. Nana Sahib, recognising his defeat, had blown up the Cawnpore magazine, and abandoned the place, with which his name will be for ever darkly associated.

Next day Havelock's force entered Cawnpore, to find that they were too late; a glance at the blood-bespattered room and the ghastly sight of the mangled bodies in the well spoke all

too plainly of the fearful carnage. It was to find this that the brave force had marched 126 miles, defeated the enemy four times, and captured 24 guns. Little wonder that the brave soldiers were maddened by such a spectacle; little wonder that they swore terrible oaths of vengeance.

"I wept," wrote one of the officers of the 78th, "when I looked into the room where the massacre had taken place, and saw the blood on the floor and walls, portions of clothing, and shreds of hair which had been torn from the innocent heads of our women and children. And I was not the only one to weep, for I saw old and hardened soldiers, who had endured the carnage of many a battlefield without a tremor, with tears running down their tanned cheeks."

No mercy was shown to the rebels who were caught. First of all they were compelled to clean up a portion of the blood-stained floor, and as to touch blood is abhorrent to the high-caste natives (they thinking that by doing so they are doomed to perdition), this was a terrible punishment. They were then hanged, and Brigadier Neill, who had now command at Cawnpore, was successful in sending many to their just doom.

Large numbers of the enemy still hung about in the vicinity of Cawnpore, and the troops made several successful sorties. The Nana had wisely quitted the field, and had taken refuge in his palace at Bithoor, where he was strongly supported. The skirmishing bands of mutineers which molested the Cawnpore garrison were gradually driven back, and must have suffered severely. An incident, gruesome it may be, is related of a stalwart Highlander, who had taken part in one of the skirmishes. He was discovered standing musing and gazing intently upon two headless corpses which lay upon the ground.

"What's troubling you, my man?" said an officer who chanced to be near.

"Lo'd, sir, I sliced aff baith their heads, and noo I dinna ken the ane fae the ither, so I doot I'll need tae lat them lie as they are"; and, as if playing football, he kicked the heads aside.

There were others who put notches on their guns—a notch for every rebel they killed.

Knowing what their fate would be if they were taken prisoner, the mutineers gradually fell back to join the Nana's main force. It was Havelock's intention to march immediately to the relief of Lucknow, but his force was sadly in need of rest. At last, all was in readiness, and on the 25th of July he set out at the head of his small band of 1500 men to give battle to countless thousands. Henceforward the stirring scenes of the mutiny were transferred to other fields than Cawnpore.

But Cawnpore was destined to undergo another siege, as the Gwalior contingent of rebels, an inactive plundering and blood-thirsty band, had determined to strike a blow at the city which had been the scene of such terrible massacres. Havelock had relieved Lucknow at this time, and Sir Colin Campbell had gone to the rescue of the force that had to remain shut up there. Fortunately they delayed their projected attack until Campbell had forced an entrance to Lucknow, but when they appeared in large numbers before Cawnpore, on the 26th of November, the position of the weakened garrison in the city was a perilous one.

The rebels drew up at the Pandoo Nuddee, a few miles from Cawnpore. The forts which had previously been used in repelling the Nana's attacks were strengthened, and General Wyndham, who had won glory at the Redan in the Crimea, felt confident of holding the mutineers at bay until Sir Colin Campbell returned with Havelock from Lucknow. When the enemy were sighted at the Pandoo Nuddee, he determined to show them that he did not require to act upon the defensive, but that, if occasion presented itself, he could also attack.

He determined to have the first blow, but it is feared that the bold and intrepid General vastly underestimated the enemy's strength. He marched out to check the rebels at the head of about 2000 men, composed of the 64th, 82nd, and 88th regiments, along with a section of the 34th. He came up with the enemy, and at once opened fire, which was smartly returned by the insurgents from guns which were judiciously posted, and which commanded the British position.

Wyndham saw that he had a superior force arrayed against him, but, trusting to the valour of his men, he renewed the attack. Against the odds the sterling prowess of the British soldier had good effect, and the enemy, menaced with the bayonet, fell back in the direction of their guns, leaving a number of killed and wounded on the field. The pursuit was kept up for a short distance, and resistance was offered by the rebel cavalry, who repeatedly charged to protect their retreating infantry. These half-hearted charges were easily repulsed by steady volleying from our ranks, which emptied several saddles. The cavalry, however, undoubtedly saved the infantry, which stood in danger of being cut up by Wyndham's infuriated troops.

The gallantry of the little band of the 34th deserves high commendation. They threw themselves into squares to deal with the cavalry, and did terrible execution in the ranks. It was during the fight with the cavalry that Captain Day of the 88th, who had fought in all the battles of the Crimea, was

struck by a musket ball and fell into a well, from which his body was never recovered.

While the shades of evening were falling over the blood-stained field, General Wyndham ordered the troops to fall back. This they were nothing loth to do, as they had had a hard day's fighting, and were glad to encamp for the night on the Jewee plain. The camp was well situated, having a thick covering of trees and brushwood in the direction of the enemy, a brick kiln on one side, with the city in the rear to fall back upon if occasion should arise. Meanwhile the rebels had not been idle, and having made sure that the British had given up the pursuit, they also halted and commenced to beat up reinforcements.

In the early morning they advanced upon the British position to the number of 14,000 infantry and cavalry, with no fewer than 40 guns. General Wyndham, no doubt imagining that if the worst came to the worst he had the city to fall back upon, stuck to his guns when the enemy's fire began. There was a perfect hail of shot amongst the brushwood, and the rebel gunners had so accurate a range as to throw the British troops into confusion at certain parts. Officers gave orders and then contradicted them, the result being that Wyndham had no plan of attack or defence. Men were falling rapidly, and the rebel infantry, under the cover of their big guns, prepared to advance. There was nothing for it but to retire, and so hurried was the retreat that the tents and baggage had to be left behind while the troops took refuge behind the entrenchments.

This success made the rebels bolder, so that on the 28th, after forming a junction with Nana Sahib's troops, they prepared to attack the entrenchments. They quickly captured the bungalows, and partially demolished houses in the vicinity, and practically succeeded in surrounding the British position on every side save that which fronted the river. This advantage was not gained without severe loss, for the fire of the British was most effective. Still, it was an immense advantage, and for a time it appeared as if the whole force would be annihilated. The mutineers opened fire from their left and centre with light and heavy guns, driving in our outposts to within a short distance of our own guns. Inch by inch the ground was stubbornly contested, and certainly there was no lack of courage displayed by the defenders. The assembly rooms, with all their contents, consisting of 11,000 rounds of ball cartridge, the mess plate of four Queen's regiments, along with the trophies of the 34th, and an immense quantity of private property, fell into the hands of the rebels. Elated with success, and gloating over the prospect of a second massacre, they attacked with greater vigour than had ever been displayed in

previous engagements. There were many brave deeds that day, and one deserves special notice.

A party of the 64th regiment, only thirty strong, under Captain Wright, held the Baptist Chapel and old burial ground. Finding he was being surrounded, he opened out, and, skirmishing, kept the sepcys at bay. The gallant captain noticed a wing of the 64th marching out, 250 strong, to capture four guns which had done great damage to the British left. Captain Wright dashed forward to act as advance guard to his comrades, and the 64th, without pausing to count the cost, plunged in and spiked three before the gunners had recovered from their surprise. Although vastly outnumbered, the 64th did great execution with the bayonet, and this was the first real check the enemy had received that day. Unfortunately, Captain Mackinnon and Lieutenant Gordon were captured by the rebels, and, although wounded, were murdered in cold blood.

The sailors and rifles came up and captured three 18-pounders and two mortars. This check on the enemy proved the salvation of Cawnpore, for it compelled the enemy to slacken fire. The defenders settled down to a night's fighting, but ere the daylight died, resounding cheers rang through Cawnpore, for deliverance had come, in the shape of Sir Colin Campbell, who had heard the roar of the guns and had pushed on with all speed. The old campaigner took in the situation at a glance, and, assuming command, he at once saw to the safety of his own troops, who rested during the night.

Next morning the rebels opened a cross fire from flanks and centre, which was replied to from our guns in the entrenchments. The sick and wounded from Lucknow, along with the women and children, were safely sheltered, but next day the rebel cannon playing upon the hospital did some damage. Sir Colin was plainly biding his time, and meanwhile, he had sent the invalids and women and children to Allahabad. The 93rd Highlanders did noble service in spiking the guns and repelling assaults. On the morning of 6th December every battery and gun was trained upon the enemy's positions in the town, and all day long a storm of shot and shell raged over the town.

Next day saw the rebels evacuate the town, but if they bargained to escape, they were wrong, for Sir Colin drove home the blow, and such régiments as the Black Watch and the 93rd did fearful execution amongst the flying cowards along the Calpee road. Sir James Hope Grant pursued them further, and administered the *coup de grace*, for the Gwalior contingent was nevermore heard of, and, thanks to Sir Colin Campbell, Cawnpore was once more saved.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

## THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW.

1857.

QUICKLY the Indian revolt spread from garrison to garrison, and the native mind was inflamed with hatred of the British. At Lucknow the native troops waited a considerable time before taking any definite step, but, trusting to the success which had attended the mutineers at Delhi, they at last took the fatal plunge. On 31st July, 1857, large numbers of the 13th, 48th, and 71st infantry regiments left the cantonments without orders, along with two troops of the 7th light cavalry. They fled in hot haste to Seetapore, but were hotly engaged by a party of Europeans under Brigadier Handscomb, who was killed in the encounter.

All sorts of stories were now in circulation to inflame the native mind. According to the chiefs and fakirs, a vast army was marching on India to enforce the greased cartridges and compel the natives to become Christians. That as the Crimean war had made a great many widows in Britain, the Queen intended to marry them to the chiefs of Oude, so that their children might be brought up Christians and inherit the land. To a Briton these tales seem ridiculous, but it must be remembered that the native Indian mind is easily turned when caste and religion is concerned.

It was a trying time for the British officers, for well they knew that their men might revolt at any moment. One officer sums up the situation in the following words:—"In the battlefield men stand alone to face the danger, but there are our wives and families involved in the same risk with ourselves, requiring our protection and our care, and necessarily withdrawing our thoughts from the actual work before us, while their helpless state fills us with the deepest anxiety."

Lucknow at the time of the mutiny was regarded as one of the most important cities. The gilt domes of the mosques and the mausoleum of Asoph-ud-Dowlah gave it a gay appearance when viewed from a distance, but the situation is bad, the soil being white sand, which is driven about by the wind, often completely enveloping the city. It is situated on the south bank of the Goomtee river, where it is navigable at all seasons of the year. A great force of rebels now commenced to gather before the city, and proceeded to invest the Residency.

Sir Henry Lawrence, who was in command, was prepared for the attack, and had placed the buildings formerly occupied by the Resident and his suite in a complete state of defence. A large stock of provisions had been laid in, and the walls

were as well fortified and mounted with guns as they could be. A number of the native troops had remained "true to their salt," and they apparently took as much interest in the preparations for defence as their white comrades. The rebels made many determined attacks, and kept up a steady fire, which fortunately did little damage. When they came to close quarters, they suffered severely, Sir Henry inflicting a number of heavy defeats upon them.

Day by day the siege dragged on, the enemy, strongly reinforced, becoming bolder, despite their losses. Sir Henry had a large number of helpless women and children in his keeping, and at last the provisions, which they trusted would last until relief came, began to run out. Something had to be done, and the brave Lawrence resolved that at all events the women and children should not starve while he had men to fight for them. A sortie upon the rebel camp was agreed upon, so Sir Henry, at the head of only 200 men of the 32nd Cornish Light Infantry, and supported by the loyal native infantry and a few guns, sallied forth to the attack.

The affair was short and sharp, but to the point. The advance guard of the rebels was engaged, and, unable to stand the fierce onslaught of the Cornish bayonets, they fled in total rout, leaving many dead and wounded upon the field. A great quantity of live stock was captured, and, well pleased with the success of his foray, Sir Henry prepared to return.

Just as the troops were re-entering the city, they were thunderstruck to have a murderous fire of grape shot poured in upon their ranks. What had happened? What was wrong? The questions were soon answered. For the fire proceeded from the guns which were in the hands of the native artillery, formerly supposed to be loyal. With the treachery which is so characteristic in the Oriental, the gunners turned the muzzles of their guns upon the returning band, and discharged volley after volley into the ranks, the fire being particularly directed against the 32nd. It was all over in a few minutes, the treacherous rebels who had posed as loyal soldiers of the Queen, fleeing to augment the ranks of the mutineers.

They had done their cowardly work well, for upwards of sixty rank and file were killed and wounded, together with a dozen officers. Sir Henry Lawrence was wounded on the leg, and, unfortunately for the garrison, the wound proved mortal. Hopes were at first entertained for his recovery, but lock-jaw set in, and this brave and dauntless officer died three days after receiving his wound.

The Europeans now realised that they had only their own good arms to trust to, so they determined to avenge the treachery, and defend the women and the children to the last.

The lines commanding the town were abandoned, and the Muchee Bhaun fort, which had been strengthened, became the headquarters of the Lucknow defenders. There were 350 women and children to protect from the murderous rebels, and still there was no appearance of relief, yet the gallant 32nd, or all that was left of them, stuck to their posts.

Meanwhile how fares it with the relieving force under Havelock? This General, when he had sufficiently rested his troops at Cawnpore, resumed operations against Nana Sahib, whose palace and stronghold at Bithoor he destroyed by fire after capturing 16 guns, several elephants, and a few camels. He had but a slender force, and by sickness and wounds it was daily growing more feeble. Still he gallantly pushed on in the direction of Lucknow, and reached Oonas, a little town whose only approach was guarded by fifteen rebel guns. Lucknow lay before, and there must be no turning back. The little force sprang at the guns with the bayonet, drove the enemy back in an irresistible charge, and the town was in Havelock's hands. Resting but a few hours, he hurriedly pushed on to Buserut Gunge, where he found fresh opposition. The gateway was barricaded, and the road, which had been carefully trenched by the mutineers, was guarded by four guns. A stubborn resistance was made to his onslaughts, but the fire from the British guns terrorised the rebels, who, at the next charge, broke and fled, leaving Havelock master of the situation.

Yet dearly was the victory bought, for out of his small force he had eighty-eight officers and men killed or wounded. Sun-stroke was playing havoc amongst the men, but the courage of the Highlanders was amazing under all conditions.

An officer of the 78th (the Ross-shire Buffs) writing home, says:—"I can see the Highlanders are too much thought of here, for we get the brunt of everything. If there is anything to be done, the old General calls out, 'Highlanders to the front! Charge that battery! You only require the word from me. Soldiers, up and at them!' The word is no sooner said than done, for in the next moment the bagpipes are heard skirling, and our wild 'Hurrah!' resounding from the mountains; and look a little to the front and you will see the Scots charging up to the cannon's mouth. But many of these brave men never come back. Poor fellows! We have laid a great many of them in the dust since we came here; and peace be with them. . . . The 78th did for the rebels, and sent them spinning in the air and on the road in all directions, and in three hours there was nothing of them to be seen but legs, arms, and heads."

With his enfeebled force, it would have been madness on

Havelock's part to have gone further forward into the rebel-infested territory, so, on 5th August, he sorrowfully commenced his return journey to Cawnpore. Toiling on, they reached the Ganges, where they were again attacked by the rebels, who opened a terrible fire upon the 78th. The Highlanders did not stand idle as targets for the mutineers, but with a yell of rage and hatred they dashed at the guns, and once again the rebels tasted the terrible bayonet.

"Well done, my own brave Highlanders!" cried Havelock. "You have this day saved yourselves and your comrades."

The shattered force was allowed to proceed to Cawnpore without further molestation, and the expedition had not been in vain, for the rebel army which was besieging the Residency at Lucknow was drawn off to meet Havelock, thus allowing the garrison freedom to lay in provisions and strengthen the fortifications.

Havelock did not put off much time in resting, for, four days after his arrival, he set out a second time, at the head of 1300 troops. Once again the enemy were met at Bithoor, which Havelock described as "one of the strongest positions in India." The plain in front of the enemy's position was covered with thick sugarcane, which reached high above the heads of the men, while their batteries were defended by thick ramparts, flanked by entrenched quadrangles. The British guns made little impression, but once again the bayonet made them flee, and the British pursued them for some distance, killing many in the wild rush.

The force returned to Cawnpore next morning, and took up a position on the plain of Subada, where Havelock issued a flattering note to the force to the effect that it "would be acknowledged to have been the prop and stay of British India in the time of her severest trial."

The force had nothing to do now but wait for reinforcements, and the soldiers chafed at the delay, especially as cholera broke out in the camp. The 78th, which had lost a large number of men, was strengthened by the addition of five companies from Allahabad, and were also supplied with Enfield rifles.

The 5th and 90th regiments arrived at Cawnpore in the beginning of September, while Sir James Outram, the "Bayard of India," also arrived to take command of the Cawnpore and Dinapore divisions. At once preparations were made for the third march on Lucknow, where the garrison was pluckily holding the rebels at bay. A bridge of boats was thrown over the Ganges, and on 16th September, Sir James Outram issued a division order in which he resigned to Havelock the honour of leading on the force to the relief of Lucknow, "in gratitude for

and admiration of the brilliant deeds of arms achieved by General Havelock and his gallant troops."

Sir James accompanied the force as a volunteer, and the army of relief was divided into two brigades of infantry and one of artillery as follows:—1st Brigade of Infantry under Brigadier-General Neill—5th Fusiliers, 84th Regiment, 1st Madras Fusiliers and 100 men of the 64th Regiment. 2nd Brigade of Infantry, under Colonel Walter Hamilton of the 78th, consisted of the 78th Highlanders, 90th (Perthshire) Light Infantry, and the Sikh regiment of Ferozepore. There were three battalions of artillery, the volunteer cavalry, a few irregulars, and a small body of engineers.

At Lucknow, meanwhile, the Residency had been converted into a fortress, but the never-ceasing fire of the rebels told severely upon it. The walls were perfectly riddled with shot, and a number of the women and children who had taken refuge there were killed. The master mind of Sir Henry Lawrence was sadly missed, and with the heavy fire and a spreading pestilence, the lot of the defenders was most desperate. There was need of relief, so, leaving the imprisoned garrison, we will follow the fortunes of Havelock. Leaving Cawnpore in the keeping of the 64th regiment, the force crossed the Ganges, and were exposed to a galling fire from the enemy who, however, retreated to Mungulwar.

The real advance commenced on the morning of the 21st September, and the rebels were soon discovered in their old position at Mungulwar, which they had strongly fortified. The position, however, was soon carried, the rebels offering but slight resistance. The cavalry pursued the fleeing mutineers, and cut down scores, while four guns and a colour were captured, the British loss being very slight. Through a monsoon of rain which lasted for three days, the force pushed on over the scenes of their former struggles, passing Buseerutgunge and the village of Bunnee.

On the afternoon of the 23rd the enemy were descried in a strong position in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, at a place known as the Alum Bagh. It consisted of a large brick mansion, a mosque, a well, and a beautiful garden. Havelock's troops were now in sight of the glittering domes of Lucknow, and with light heart they prepared to give battle to the rebels in their path. The head of the column at first suffered from the fire of the enemy's guns, as it was compelled to pass along the trunk road between morasses.

The force quickly deployed into line, and our guns coming up, a heavy fire drove the enemy back. The 2nd Brigade advanced through a sheet of water, and drove back the enemy's right, while the 1st Brigade successfully attacked the front.

Five guns were taken, and ultimately the enemy retired towards Lucknow, pursued by Sir James Outram at the head of the cavalry. The British force was rested prior to an attack upon the city, but the force was subjected to a constant cannonading from the enemy's guns, which did so much damage that Havelock had to retire his left wing out of range. The sick and wounded, along with the camp-followers and baggage, were left at the Alum Bagh, guarded by a strong detachment of Europeans and Sikhs.

Joyfully did the poor unfortunates in the Residency hail the looming of Havelock's guns, and they redoubled their efforts to defeat the rushes of the rebels, who were now rendered desperate.

On the morning of the 25th of September, Havelock advanced on Lucknow, and found that the enemy had taken up a very strong position at the village of Char Bagh. It should be mentioned that the city of Lucknow is surrounded by a canal, and had the enemy broken the bridges, Havelock's task would have been more difficult, but as it was, they left them intact, contenting themselves by posting heavy guns to defend the Char Bagh bridge. The rebels were in great force, and occupied gardens and walled enclosures, from which they poured an incessant and destructive musketry fire upon our advancing troops.

The 1st Brigade led the attack under Neill, supported by Captain Maude's battery prepared for the attack, and dauntlessly rushed the bridge. Every obstacle was surmounted by Outram and Neill with their gallant Fusiliers. The palisade was stormed, the gunners bayoneted, and the guns taken. Havelock followed up his advantage by bringing up the 78th and 90th, who rushed in impetuously to complete the work. Fighting every inch of the way, and subjected to a heavy musketry fire from walls and gardens, the Highlanders advanced, and after spiking the guns, hurled them into the canal. The houses on both sides of the street were occupied, the rebels slain by the bayonet, and their remains cast in heaps on the roadside.

From this point to the Residency was about two miles by the direct road, which lay through the city. Havelock knew that he had yet to encounter stern resistance, and very soon found out that the crafty mutineers had trenched parts of the road, barricaded others, while every house was loopholed. One of their batteries had a deep pit immediately in front covered with bamboo, and sprinkled with earth, in the hope that the Highlanders, in charging the guns, would fall into the trap and become an easy prey.

Havelock, however, to avoid any danger, took another route, which lay along a narrow road on the left bank of the canal.

The 78th was left to guard the bridge until the entire force, with ammunition, stores, etc., had passed.

The united column pushed on, detouring to the right, but did not meet with much serious opposition until the Kaiser Bagh, or king's palace, was reached. Here two guns and a strong body of the enemy opened fire with grape shot and musketry. Our artillery with the column had to pass a bridge exposed to this fire, but fortunately they were protected by the buildings adjacent to the palace of the Furrâh Buksh. The fire from the battery was terrible, and our men were falling by scores. To make matters worse, a section lost their way through someone calling out, "Cavalry to the front!" Every house was a fortress, so the magnitude of Havelock's task may be imagined. Our men were desperate at seeing so many comrades fall, and many times they charged up to the walls and fired into the loopholes.

A party stormed and kept possession of the palaces of Furrâh Buksh and Lehree Kothee, both of which proved useful. The night was now coming on, and the red gleams of fire lit up the scene.

In the meantime the 78th found themselves hotly assailed. As soon as the enemy saw the movement of the main body, and perceived that only a small body was left at the bridge of the Char Bagh, they returned in large numbers to annoy the Highlanders. The 78th threw out two companies to occupy the more advanced buildings of the village; four companies were sent out as skirmishers, and the remainder held in reserve in the buildings near the bridge. It was hard work to get the carts and cattle over the narrow rough road. The enemy brought two guns to bear upon the regiment at 500 yards' range, and the advanced companies were soon engaged in a tornado of shot and shell.

There was nothing for it but to capture the guns, so the two advanced companies, under Captains Hay and Hastings, pluckily charged up the street and at the point of the bayonet captured the first gun, while the skirmishing party coming to their assistance, silenced the remaining gun, which was spiked, the other being hurled into the canal. The 78th now retired to the bridge, with the wounded, leaving many dead upon the field. The entire line of carts having now passed, the 78th evacuated the bridge, and formed the rearguard of the force. This gave the rebels the opportunity of crossing the bridge, and, protected by a wall on the right bank, they enfiladed the road along which the force had to pass. They were now almost surrounded, but, under a galling fire, they pushed on, yet losing severely.

Havelock by this time had heard of the plight of his

favourite regiment, and ordered the volunteer cavalry and a company of the 90th to their assistance. The lane, however, was too narrow for the operations of the cavalry, and they, too, began to lose men. At length a point was reached where four roads met, but as the British had no guides the officers had to trust to luck, and chose a road to the left, which appeared to be the most direct route to the Residency. They pushed on through a street composed of fine houses, which were loopholed and garrisoned, until they reached the Kaiser Bagh, where they came in reverse upon the battery which was firing upon the main body. After spiking the guns, the force crept under the walls of the Kaiser Bagh, being exposed to a belching fire from the palace, and was at last successful in rejoining the main body.

After a short rest Havelock decided that they must make an attempt to reach the Residency that same night. The 78th and the Sikhs were ordered to advance, and, led by Havelock and Outram, along with Neill and his Fusiliers, they charged with desperate gallantry through streets of flat-roofed loopholed houses, from which a perpetual fire was kept up. Another battery was captured, and every obstacle surmounted. With a ringing cheer the relieving force entered the Residency, being joyfully welcomed by the garrison. Relief had come just in time, for the enemy had driven two mines under the chief works, and if these had been loaded and sprung, it would have been all over with the defenders.

Our loss was very severe, as upwards of 400 had fallen, including the gallant Brigadier Neill, who fell in the final charge on the Residency.

It was not until the next day that the remainder of the troops, sick and wounded, guns and baggage, could be brought into a place of safety. The enemy kept up a heavy fire, and rendered the march difficult and dangerous. After many desperate deeds, all were safe in the Residency, and the rebels, smarting under the treatment they had received, withdrew to positions on the outskirts of the city. The British flag had been kept flying, and the women and children saved from the bloodthirsty ruffians who anticipated a second Cawnpore.

Lucknow had been certainly relieved, but Havelock could not march back to Cawnpore, through a rebel-infested country, with such a large number of women and children, his sick and wounded, and with only a small force to guard them. There was nothing to do but wait at Lucknow for help in his mission. The troops were not idle, as the enemy were particularly daring at times. They were driven from the rear of the position, and the Palace, extending along the line of the river from the Residency, was cleared and taken possession of, making excellent barracks for the troops.

On another occasion three columns of Sir Henry's force gave the enemy a surprise by attacking their works at three different points, destroying the guns, and blowing up the houses which afforded the rebels protection. The garrison had to be maintained on reduced rations, but there was not much fear of the defenders starving. The enemy had still one battery which remained in position close to the Residency, which annoyed the garrison by its fire. Its capture therefore became imperative, and a force of over 500 men under Colonel Napier of the Bengal Engineers, set out to capture it.

The column formed on the road leading to the Pyne Bagh, and, advancing to some houses near the jail, drove the enemy away from them and from a barricade under a sharp musketry fire. The column, having to work its way through strongly-barricaded houses, it was late before a point was reached from which the battery could be commanded. This position having been obtained, and it being discovered that the battery was in a high position, scarped and quite inaccessible without ladders, it was decided to postpone the assault. The position which had been won, having been secured and loopholed, the troops occupied the buildings for the night, and were subjected to a heavy fire from the battery, which somewhat disturbed the slumbers of the men.

They were fresh enough next morning, however, and prepared to advance upon the battery, covered by a heavy artillery fire from the Residency. A severe fire was opened from a barricade which flanked the battery on the right, but this being turned, the troops advanced and drove the enemy from the battery, capturing the guns, which had been withdrawn to some distance, and, driving off the enemy, who defended them to the last with musketry and grape. The guns having been destroyed and the house blown up, the force retired to their resting-place of the previous night.

Everything was now done by the garrison to strengthen its position. Barricades were erected at all available points, the defences of the Residency were improved, and every building put into a state of defence. One of the greatest dangers the British had to guard against was the enemy's mines, which threatened the position from every possible quarter. The garrison had always to be on the alert, and were constantly employed in counter-mining. In this they were very successful, and managed to thwart the rebels at almost every point.

In regard to the mining operations, Sir James Outram, who was now in chief command, wrote:—"I am aware of no parallel to our series of mines in modern war; 21 shafts, aggregating 200 feet in depth, and 3291 feet of gallery, have been erected. The enemy advanced 20 mines against the palace and outpost."

The 78th regiment, as it always did, played a prominent part in the defence, and were posted in a range of houses which were constantly under the heavy rebel musketry fire. The walls of the houses were riddled, but the Highlanders never flinched, and kept thousands of the fierce mutineers at bay. Day by day the siege dragged on, and scarcely a day passed but there was some assault or sortie. The rebels were being strongly reinforced by flying squads of mutineers from all parts, who were content to serve where they were safest in point of numbers. As yet they had made no impression on the garrison, but their numbers were becoming so numerous that Outram and Havelock became extremely anxious.

It is always when the cloud is at its blackest that the silver lining appears, and a message, whether it was false or true, reached the Residency that relief was near at hand. The soldiers cheered, and vowed to keep the flag flying.

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#### CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE RELIEF OF LUCKNOW

(continued).

1857.

COOPED up in the beleaguered city of Lucknow, the brave Havelock received but scanty news of what was transpiring in other parts of India. He certainly felt assured that the British Government would never leave him in that hopeless position, so he settled down to make the best of his situation and keep the rebels in check. It was a trying time for Outram and Havelock, for almost daily the death-roll was increased through wounds or disease.

Meanwhile Brigadier Greathed had been marching through the country, inflicting severe punishment on the mutineers who had fled from Delhi, where the British had won a great victory. The Mhow and Indore rebels were crushed at Agra, and the column which latterly moved from Mynpooree under command of Sir James Hope Grant, arrived at Cawnpore to hear of the precarious position of the British garrison at Lucknow. After one or two minor engagements, in which he inflicted some loss upon the rebels, Sir James determined to proceed to Lucknow, and attempt with his small force to relieve the city.

On 8th November, 1857, he arrived at the famous Alum Bagh, where Havelock had left his sick and wounded under the protection of the 64th regiment. Between this strong position and Lucknow there lay a large undulating plain, intersected by the canal which encircles the city. Yet that plain could not

be traversed, for it was given over to the camping ground of a huge company of rebels. The mutinous force before Lucknow must have numbered almost 50,000, so that the task of relief was rendered impossible to the small British force. It seemed galling that relief could not be given, with the Residency such a short distance away, but it would only have been courting annihilation to attempt to pierce the serried rebel ranks. Therefore Hope Grant took up his position at the Alum Bagh to wait for reinforcements, and to be at hand should Havelock require aid. The two British forces were vastly outnumbered by the enemy, and it has never been satisfactorily explained why the rebels did not attack the Alum Bagh. The position was certainly a strong one, but the mutineers could with ease have invested it from all quarters, and at the same time maintained their pressure upon Lucknow. Possibly they had grown tired of fruitless besieging, and, confident in their numerical superiority, preferred to lie passively on the plain and wait for the attack.

Hope Grant knew that he would not have long to wait, for before leaving Cawnpore he was informed that the dashing and fiery Sir Colin Campbell was on the warpath, and was hastening as fast as he possibly could to form a junction with the troops in Oude, which now comprised Outram and Havelock's pent-up force in Lucknow and Sir Hope Grant's column at the Alum Bagh. Sir Colin, while travelling post haste to Cawnpore, ran a very narrow escape. He was impatient to get at the rebels, and, disregarding an escort, hurried on. He came across a detachment of the rebellious 32nd regiment, and was all but captured, having to take refuge in a post bungalow, where luckily he found some of our soldiers, who were resting after a heavy march. Ultimately he reached Cawnpore, and without further delay marched to Lucknow, where he now knew he should join Hope Grant. This desired junction was effected on 11th November, and Sir Colin immediately assumed command of the Lucknow relief force.

This relieving army was now considerably strengthened, and Sir Colin, trusting to active conjunction by Outram and Havelock from the Residency, determined to make the attack. His force consisted of the 9th Lancers, Captain Peel's naval brigade, Sikh cavalry, Hodson's Horse, 8th, 53rd, 75th, and 93rd regiments of infantry, two battalions of Punjaub foot, native sappers and miners, 10 guns of the horse artillery, 6 light field guns, and the heavy field battery of the Royal Artillery. Sir Colin left his baggage at the Alum Bagh in charge of the 75th, and was further reinforced by 700 men drawn from the Welsh Fusiliers and the 82nd Foot, two guns of the Madras artillery, along with a body of the Royal Artillery and Engineers. The

commander-in-chief advanced from the Alum Bagh in the direction of Dilkhoosha Park ("Heart's Delight"), a former hunting seat of the kings of Oude, with a castle situated on a beautiful eminence in the park. The advanced guard, which had been further strengthened by some companies of the 5th, 64th, and 78th Highlanders under Colonel Hamilton of the 78th, was soon brought into contact with the enemy, and, steadily advancing, was subjected to a heavy musketry fire from the rebels. The vanguard, however, cleared away this opposition, and drove the mutineers over the canal which runs through the park. The rebels fell back upon the Martinière College, but were unable to withstand the fire from our guns. This building was splendidly adapted for defence, standing secure and firm in the centre of a large thicket of mango trees. The enemy seemed to be terrorised by the steadiness of our advance, and abandoned the College after a short conflict, in which they lost heavily. The mutineers seemed to have a wholesome dread of the Highlanders with their kilts and terrible bayonets. Many of them had never seen such men before, and were terrified by their appearance. They called them "petticoated devils," and many firmly believed that they were women sent over to avenge Cawnpore. At all events, the Highlanders were there, and they did much to strike terror into the hearts of the cowardly rebels.

The College having been so easily won, Sir Colin made the park his headquarters. Sir James Outram and Sir Henry Havelock were not idle inside the city, the force being busily employed in digging trenches and erecting batteries in a large garden held by the 90th regiment. These were concealed by a lofty wall, under which several mines were driven for the purpose of blowing it down when the moment for action should arise. It was determined by the Generals that as soon as Sir Colin and his force should reach the Secunder Bagh, this wall should be blown down, and that the batteries should open fire upon the insurgent defences in front, when the troops would storm the Hera Khanah, the steam-engine house, and the king's stables.

Sir Colin had meanwhile arranged his force in the gardens to the best possible advantage as far as safeguarding against any attack, and being in readiness to make a dash for Lucknow at any time. On the 12th an attack was made upon his advance guard by a determined band of rebels. The field battery and Captain Peel's heavy guns came into action, and did great execution amongst the enemy. After the artillery had done its work, the 53rd and 93rd Highlanders, along with the 4th Sikhs, charged the enemy in daring style, causing them to break rank and fly. The 9th Lancers kept up the pursuit, and almost for the first time the rebels received a taste of the deadly lance.

The rear guard now moved up, and a junction was formed nearer and ever nearer the city. At last Sir Colin determined to advance, and, as per arrangement his route was by way of the Secunder Bagh.

This is a strongly-fortified building, surrounded by a wall which was loopholed in every direction, fairly bristling with rifle muzzles. Brigadier Adrian Hope led the troops forward in skirmishing order, and this was the signal for a heavy fire from the enemy's guns. The British guns were quickly brought up by Captains Blunt and Travers, and replied vigorously to the enemy's fire. While this artillery duel was in progress, Hope made a dash at the head of his infantry, and drove the enemy from the boundary walls of the Secunder Bagh into the main fortified building. It was here that the last stand was to be made, and the rebels knew that if they had to surrender there was no hope of mercy, for they were caught like rats in a trap. To the left of the Secunder Bagh the enemy held a line of barracks, which, in the possession of a trained force, might have offered great resistance. The Sutherland Highlanders, supported by a company of the 53rd, rushed the building, and at the point of the bayonet drove the enemy helter-skelter from the position to the plain beyond, where the majority of them were killed. All had been success to Sir Colin's brave army up to now, and it was with a cheer that the men rushed to storm the Secunder Bagh, which was teeming with well-armed and desperate rebels.

Havelock had in the meantime exploded his mine, and through the breach his battery opened a withering fire upon the enemy's defences. Volley after volley was poured in, and this gave Sir Colin's troops the opportunity to make a great attack from his point of vantage. The 4th Sikhs, led by Lieutenant Paul, who fell while gallantly rushing forward, had the honour of opening the assault, while the 93rd and 53rd acted as supports. The Highlanders and Sikhs are staunch friends, and might be seen during this campaign going about camp arm-in-arm, the Sikh with the Scotchman's feather bonnet, and the Scot with his dusky comrade's turban. It is even related that they petitioned their captains to procure the Highland dress for them. It was but fitting then that the Sikhs and Highlanders should share the honours of this glorious attack.

Forward the Sikhs rushed, amid a hail of bullets, with the Highlanders close behind. The rebel fire was terrible, for they knew this was their last chance, and they could not expect mercy from our revengeful troops. A small breach had been made in the wall, but it was so narrow that only a handful of men could enter at a time. This did not deter our men, and the Highlanders, just a little bit jealous of the Sikhs that they

should be the first to enter, ran a neck-and-neck race to the breach through the hail of bullets. They dashed up to the very loopholes, and from the gaining of this position the fate of the rebels may be said to have been sealed. The Sikhs, 93rd, 53rd, and the 90th Highlanders clustered round the doomed building.

The well-known author, Rees, gives a graphic account of the situation.

"Our men," he writes, "dashed in as quickly as the narrow breach permitted. They went under the very loopholes of the enemy, and, cunningly lying down while the enemy let fly a volley at the caps placed on their bayonets, and which our men put up as a target for the time being, they as soon as the enemy's fire was exhausted, and before they could load again, tore down the iron bars, broke up the barricades, and jumped down from the windows in the walls."

Then followed a terrible slaughter, for the rebels were so thoroughly cowed that they offered but little resistance. Here and there one more brave than his fellows would fire his rifle or attack with his tulwar. A bullet in his brain, or the terrible bayonet through his breast soon silenced him. The Highlanders were reeking in blood. Their faces were bespattered by drawing their gory hands over their perspiring foreheads as they momentarily paused in the conflict.

"This is awful!" exclaimed one soldier of the 93rd to his neighbour.

"G'wa, man! this is grand!" and he plunged his bayonet into a cringing wretch who begged for mercy. "Cawnpore, ye deevil!" he hissed, and turned to renew his work of slaughter.

It was the memory of Cawnpore that roused the Highlanders, and the Sikhs were every bit as bloodthirsty. The gateway, the large principal room, and a side room were deluged in blood, and littered with reeking corpses. The green tartan of the 93rd was of scarlet hue ere many hours had passed. The full extent of the silent slaughter with the bayonet may be judged when it is stated that nearly 3000 bodies were dragged from the building on the following day. Cawnpore was avenged with interest.

The troops of the garrison had also been doing brave deeds. Fully 800 of the garrison had attacked other parts of the defences. Men like the 78th Highlanders were spoiling for a charge, and how they rushed upon their foes! The rebels reeled before the shock, and fled, leaving the buildings in our hands. Guns were mounted on the position thus gained, and on the following day opened fire on the observatory (Tara Kotee) and the mess house. Captain Peel's naval siege train went to the front, and drew up within a few yards of the loopholed wall

of the Shah Nujuf, where a heavy and merciless fire was kept up upon the rebel defenders. After the mess house had been battered by our heavy guns, recourse was once more had to the bayonet, which was never known to fail. Nor did it on this occasion, for the position was soon gained and the enemy put to flight.

The task of relief was nearly completed, and madly our men rushed into the enclosure round the Motee Mahal (Pearl Palace), where the rebels made their last despairing stand. It was futile on their part to attempt to stem the rushes of the victorious British troops. They went down like grain before the sickle, and those who steered clear of the bayonet gave vent to yells of terror and fled to the plains, which were already dotted with bands of fugitives. The slaughter of the rebels had been enormous, but yet the killing of a few thousands did not diminish to any great extent the rebel horde which had ignominiously retreated to a place of shelter. The killed and wounded were but as a drop in the bucket, and although Lucknow was for the moment relieved, trouble was yet to be expected from the mutineers who clustered round the city.

Proudly Sir Colin met and grasped the hands of the fearless Outram and the gallant Havelock. With flashing eyes Havelock praised and thanked the relieving and defending troops. It was pointed out to him that his son was lying wounded, but the old warrior continued his address, although his heart must have been rent with anxiety about his son. Fortunately it was only a slight wound, and the lad soon recovered, but the incident shows Havelock as the soldier, who thought it his duty to thank his soldiers before attending to his wounded son. Our great success had not been attended without loss, for we had 122 officers and men killed, and 345 wounded. Sir Colin's first care was for his wounded, and after consultation with Havelock and Outram, he decided to remove the toil-worm garrison to a place of safety. It was evident that it was not worth while to hold the position against such a large investing army.

The tactics which he employed in carrying out a safe retreat show the wily old Sir Colin in his best colours. He was not afraid to meet the enemy again at the head of his brave troops, but, burdened with women, children, wounded and stores, he sought to avoid a conflict, and this is how he managed it.

On the 20th and 21st, he ordered Captain Peel's battery to open a heavy fire upon the Kaiser Bagh, and at the same time Havelock's battery in the palaces opened a tremendous fire upon the same position. Naturally the enemy expected an attack upon this point, and consequently concentrated there. The strategic old General bargained for this, and he silently withdrew the whole garrison. The retreat was managed with-

out a hitch, and the force marched on with Sir Colin in the rear to direct any attack upon the force. The enemy at last learned of the move, and tried to turn the rear at the Alum Bagh but failed. On arriving at that place, Sir Colin pushed on with his charges to Cawnpore, where he fought a decisive battle, which is described in the chapter dealing with Cawnpore. He left Sir James Outram behind with a strong force to check any movement on the part of the rebels.

The British camp was unexpectedly thrown into mourning through the death of Sir Henry Havelock. This brave and Christian General was worn out with the hardships and anxiety of the campaign and siege, and was stricken down with dysentery, to which he succumbed on the 24th November. Safe to say, there was no British officer so genuinely loved and respected by the rank and file. They adored him, and gladly would have died for him, and now that he was gone, they mourned him as only true friends can mourn.

Lucknow had now become the focus of the rebels, who were flying aimlessly about the country, avoiding actual conflict with British troops. Sir James Outram's division numbered almost 4000 men of all arms, and he took up a strong position, being fortified at all points, the circuit of his entire position being nearly ten miles. Here the force remained for nearly three months, while Sir Colin, after retaking Cawnpore, was engaged recovering the Doab and making his final preparations for a final assault upon Lucknow.

These months were full of anxiety for Outram and his men, for they had to be continually on the alert against a mammoth army, which must have numbered close upon 100,000. Against less skilfully prepared fortifications they might have, by sheer force of numbers, overwhelmed the British, but, like whipped curs, they preferred to keep at a safe distance, and harry the British when opportunity came their way. They made one feat bolder than their usual, which had for its object the surrounding of the force and the cutting off of supplies. Outram got to know of the scheme, and checkmated them at every point. Although vastly outnumbered, our force repelled every attack, and inflicted heavy loss upon the mutineers, besides capturing four guns and twelve ammunition waggons.

News came that Sir Colin was once again upon the march, and although the troops under Outram were confident that they could hold back the rebels for ever, they were glad at the prospect of being reinforced and led into the field by the great Sir Colin. He matured his plans carefully, and adopted a line of action which he thought would entail as little loss upon his army as was possible. With this end in view, he sent out strong detachments to all parts, with instructions to meet him

at all costs at Lucknow on a certain date. Thus Sir Hugh Rose, General Hope Grant, and Colonel McCausland scoured the country and achieved several notable victories.

But perhaps the most glorious and decisive victory was gained by Brigadier Franks at the head of a force of 4000 troops. He contrived to prevent a junction with two noted rebel leaders, Bund Hossein and Mhendee Hossein, by attacking the former at Chanda, in the Nagpore territory. The enemy, consisting of 8500 sepoys and a large number of mercenaries, occupied the fort and villages in front of the place. They were driven from this place, leaving behind 300 killed, along with six pieces of cannon. Franks prepared to encamp in this position, when he was surprised to hear the discharge of artillery, and a volley of grape shot crashed into his lines.

The other Hossein, unaware of his relative's defeat, had come up with 10,000 men and eight guns. Franks gave him battle, and in a very short time the rebel had to seek safety in flight. Later, he fought another battle with 25,000 desperadoes, including 5000 trained sepoys, his force being 2500 Europeans supported by 3000 Nepaulese. He totally defeated them, and the enemy fled, leaving a rajah and 1800 dead on the field. Twenty guns, the standing camp, baggage, ammunition, and all material of war were captured. It was almost a bloodless battle as far as Franks was concerned, for, incredible as it may appear, he only lost two men killed and three wounded.

Sir Colin marched from Cawnpore on the 28th February, 1858, at the head of almost 30,000 troops, including about 20,000 Europeans. He had 60 heavy guns and 40 field pieces, while his cavalry consisted of 1500 Europeans and 3000 native troopers. This imposing force was still further augmented by the infusion of 4500 men under the redoubtable Franks, and fully 10,000 fierce and wiry Ghoorka warriors under the loyal Jung Bahadoor. The savage rebels knew that a big force was to be set against them, and they realised that every man would die if he fell into the hands of the British. Rumours spread in their ranks that great red-haired men who were giants, with bare knees, were coming to kill them, and the chiefs had great difficulty in preventing them from fleeing.

Campbell appeared with the 2nd Division of infantry, cavalry, and a section of artillery at a position east of the Alum Bagh on 2nd March, and on the following day the attack on Lucknow commenced, the enemy abandoning Dilkhoosha, and falling back on the Martinière College. The Dilkhoosha was instantly occupied by the 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch), and a battery was soon at work from this position on the Secunder Bagh. Sir Colin, gratified at the arrival of Franks and the Ghoorkas,

resolved to make attacks from the river Goomtee, which flows past the city. A pontoon bridge was thrown across, and 6000 men and 30 pieces of cannon, under Sir James Outram, passed over. The enemy, as was expected, came out of the city in large numbers to check this force.

A heavy artillery fire and a dashing charge of the Queen's Bays sent the rebels back, and Outram was able to strengthen his position. It was an artillery duel during the next two days, the enemy's stronghold, the Martimère College, suffering severely from our shells. Outram had made good his position, however, for he advanced along the Fyzabad road, and, although meeting with stout and desperate resistance, he gained his end, which was the Badshah Bagh, or King's Great Garden, from which his guns had free play upon the whole line of entrenchments formed by the rebels at the canal, rendering them practically useless, besides turning the rebels' entire position.

Sir Colin now had up the naval brigade to deal with the buildings within the enclosure, from the windows of which the rebels kept up a harassing and deadly rifle fire. The mortars, howitzers, and battery guns had little effect, as the rebels, now fighting for dear life, remained wonderfully steady in the trenches.

"A taste of the steel, my men!" grimly exclaimed Sir Colin, as he turned to the Highlanders and Sikhs.

They steadied, and then, at the word, went forward in one silent, death-dealing line of steel. This was too much for the rebels, who fired a few random shots and fled, with the swift-footed Sikhs stabbing them as they ran. The Martimère was won by the bayonet, and with the chief rebel position there also fell the Residency, the Secunder Bagh and Bank House. The Highlanders were once again conspicuous at the Secunder Bagh, which had withstood the thunders of the naval brigade guns. Two companies of Highlanders reached a platform, and were brought to a stop by the dead wall.

"Tear off the tiles! in at the roof, Highlanders!" cried Sir Colin.

This was enough for the brave fellows, and in a minute they had vanished through the tiles and bamboo, and thus the Secunder Bagh was taken.

The enemy by this time were in almost total rout, and Hope Grant swept the surrounding country, cutting up the fleeing bands, while the artillery continued to blaze away at the buildings still infested by the desperate robbers and rebels. The Sutherland Highlanders, with dauntless courage, stormed the Begum's Palace, and swept aside the defenders with their trusty bayonets, which reeked with blood. The gallant Outram held the Goomtee Bridge, and cut up the flying enemy unmercifully.

while the Kaiser Bagh, which was almost an impregnable position in capable hands, fell easily, the rebels fleeing out of the city on the opposite side, only to be ruthlessly cut down by Sir Hope Grant's thousand sabres. The gallant little Ghoorkas won their spurs by the capture of the whole line of trenches which menaced the Alum Bagh, where our sick and wounded had been left.

"It was terrible," writes an eye-witness, "to see the ferocity of the Ghoorkas as they sprang at their foes. They inflicted horrible wounds, but so strong are their arms, it was death every blow."

On the 19th of March, the Moosa Bagh, the last stronghold of the rebels, fell, and Lucknow was completely in our hands. Fighting still took place with large bands of rebels on the outskirts, but they were generally so demoralised that they fell an easy prey.

We cannot close this eventful chapter without detailing a gallant stand made by a slender detachment of that grand old regiment, the 42nd Black Watch. Forty-eight men of the regiment were watching a ford on the river Sardaar, which separates Oude from Rohileund. The notorious rebel Kirput Sing of Rooyat crossed at the head of 2000 men, with two guns, and at once opened fire on the little band. They did not flinch, but stood at their post from sunrise to sunset, when two more companies came to their rescue and made their victory complete. The enemy left 400 dead on the field, including Kirput Sing, his son and brother, along with two guns. Of the 48, five were killed and eleven wounded, including the gallant Captain Lawson.

By deeds such as these Lucknow was won, and the rebels dispersed and driven from Oude. By deeds such as these has the Empire been made, and such deeds of valour are never forgotten, but written in letters of gold on Britain's scroll of fame.

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## CHAPTER XLIX.

### THE FIGHTING AT ALLAHABAD.

1857.

WHEN the spirit of revolt in our Indian Empire first spread abroad, there can be little doubt but that the minds of the mutineers were inflamed by headmen or chiefs who had a natural antipathy to Britain and everything British. We have seen how the rebels at Delhi behaved basely and treacherously, but it was the same all over the Empire. The natives in general had one common bond of union—a growing sense of distrust,

and a fixed and firm apprehension that some danger menaced the religion of the Hindoo and Mohammedan alike. They were also imbued with the gross idea that either the British must be killed off root and branch throughout India, or that the followers of the Prophet or Menou must inevitably be swallowed up in Christianity. Anglo-Indian society remained oblivious to the threatening danger, despising the natives, and never dreaming of the power they would possess in the event of a combined mutiny.

Writing of this apathy, a writer in the "Delhi Gazette" of the time writes as follows:—"Dazzled by the brilliant facility of their past triumphs, they brought themselves to believe in a peculiar mission like the ancient Hebrews; and blindly trusting in their special Providence, neglected all ordinary human precautions for securing the safety and permanence of their position. They knew that there was an evil spirit abroad, but they took no steps to disabuse men's minds until the mischief was done. They made no preparation against the coming tempest though the sea-birds on the shore were shrilly screaming, though a black murky spot was already visible on the horizon, though the hoarse murmur of the storm was breathing heavily on the darkening waters; so no one armed himself against the day of battle. Suddenly a spark was applied to the train laid by many hands, and in a moment of time all was death, desolation and despair."

Such undoubtedly was the case, but the native mind must have been inflamed to an extraordinary degree before the men who wore the British uniform, and who had sworn fealty to the Crown, could have descended to such vile acts of treachery as at Cawnpore and Delhi. It was at Meerut that this slumbering antipathy and racial hatred, which caused so much bloodshed and suffering first broke out. Colonel Finnis, of the 11th Native Infantry, was there shot through the back by a treacherous sepoy, and a hundred bayonets were plunged into his body.

This was the inauguration of the work of mutiny and blood, and all through India the spirit of antipathy animated the mutinous soldiers to deeds of Oriental barbarity. At Ferozepore, the 45th and 57th Native Infantry set the buildings on fire and committed several acts of bloodshed. At Murdaun, where the 55th Regiment (Ochterlony's men) mutinied, Colonel Spottiswoode, who loved and trusted them, was so affected that he shot himself in despair. At Allyghar, brave Captain Hayes was betrayed and hacked to pieces. At Bareilly the infuriated fanatics turned upon their officers and killed and wounded in every direction.

While at Shahjehanpore the 28th Bengal Infantry mutinied while their officers were at church. The Rev. Mr. M'Callum

was shot as he ascended the pulpit, Lieutenant Spens was sabred while he knelt at prayer, Dr. Bowling was shot as he was driving his wife and child to the church, while Mr. Ricketts, the magistrate of the station, was killed in cold blood. The women and children were promised every protection, and were actually allowed to leave the station. They were compelled to walk, and, on alighting, the fiends disregarded all their promises by bayonetting the helpless women and dashing out the brains of the children upon the ground, besides killing all the officers who had accompanied their women under the promise of protection. At Seetapore, Neemuch, Hansi, Benares and Sultanpore the same things occurred, the officers being slain without being given an opportunity to defend themselves, while the women and children and private citizens were ruthlessly massacred.

But of all the gross crimes committed during this trying time, when the flame of mutiny was spreading like wildfire through the country, there were none of such a treacherous character as that of the mutiny of the 6th Regiment of the Bengal army at Allahabad. That regiment had fought gallantly in many a field, as its colours signified, for they bore the names "Mysore," "Bhurtpore," and "Cabul." Allahabad is a fortified city at the junction of the Ganges with the Jumna, and the fort is constructed in a strong position on a tongue of land at the confluence of the two streams.

The 6th were lying at this fort or at the cantonments as might be required, and when they heard of the mutinies at Meerut and Delhi, at once volunteered to march against the latter city. They were thanked for their offer, and the officers commanding the regiment never imagined that their men would become disaffected. A rumour became general throughout the town, however, that the regiment was about to mutiny, and what did the treacherous sepoys do but approach the officers, and, says a writer of the day, "with tears in their eyes entreated them to have implicit trust in their fidelity." The scene that ensued would not have disgraced the early days of the first French Revolution.

The officers and men fraternised in the most loving manner. Perfect confidence appeared to be established on both sides; but, before nightfall stragglers from other stations arrived, who worked up the credulous fools to frenzy. They were told that the Christian Queen's troops were marching all over the country, destroying all who refused to become Christians. The soldiers had been wavering, and very little required to turn them into perfect demons, inflamed with the one desire, namely massacre and safety in flight. That same evening, about half-past nine, while the officers were in the mess bungalow, calm in a sense

of security, they were suddenly startled to hear the bugles sounding the alarm.

With blanching faces they turned out of the bungalow, but the foremost fell with a bullet in his brain, and the work of mutiny had commenced. The mutineers rushed about like veritable demons, slaying and killing whoever dared to impede them. The officers made a gallant attempt to reach the shelter of the fort at the riverside, and a few actually managed to elude the maddened mutineers, but fourteen officers, including nine young ensigns of the 6th, were brutally massacred, and their bodies subjected to terrible maltreatment.

A detachment of the 6th, with two guns, was posted at the pontoon bridge to stop the progress of the mutineers from Benares, who were expected to come to Allahabad. A garden midway between that point and the fort was occupied by about 150 men of the Oude Irregular Cavalry, under Lieutenant Alexander, who was posted there for the same purpose. When the men of the 6th at the bridge heard the sound of the bugles, they at once divined the cause, and turned the two guns in the direction of the city, also firing upon the artillery officer, who bravely dashed off amidst the shower of bullets to warn Alexander of his danger.

Meanwhile the officers of the detachment managed to effect their escape in the dark, although they were repeatedly shot at. Lieutenant Alexander, getting together as many men as could saddle, same dashing up, sword in hand, but was shot through the heart by one of the rebels. The artillery officer, being unsupported, saw that his life was in jeopardy, turned his horse, and galloped to the fort. The garrison of the fort consisted of about 70 European invalids, the Sikh Ferozepore regiment to the number of about 400, about 80 sepoy of the mutinous 6th regiment, along with a number of European volunteers from the city. It was out of the question to trust the men of the 6th, so the officers at once disarmed them, and found that, contrary to orders, they had loaded their rifles, which no doubt they intended to use upon the officers. They were turned out in an unarmed state, and joined their infuriated comrades in the streets of the town.

The mutineers, after looting and wrecking the cantonments, proceeded in a body to the great prison, where they easily overpowered the guards and forced an entrance. Indian prisons at the time were generally crammed full of thieves and vagabonds who could well and fitly be classed "the greatest scum on earth," and the great prison of Allahabad was no exception to the rule. The mutineers released them speedily, and the prisoners were nothing loth to join the sepoy in the work of havoc and death. There were about 3000 prisoners released,

and, along with the soldiers, they marched through the streets, and carried death and destruction on their march. Captain Birch, the adjutant of the fort, and Lieutenant Innes of the Engineers, chanced to be outside when the mutiny happened, and they were caught by the rebels and shot.

A worse fate befel an officer of the 6th, who chanced to fall alive into the hands of the savages—for such undoubtedly the soldiers had become. He was pinned to the earth by bayonets and a fire kindled round his body, and thus he was slowly roasted to death as his own men danced around him and mocked his agony. The European residents who chanced to fall into the hands of the mutineers were horribly outraged before death mercifully released them from their tortures. At least fifty white men and women perished in their houses or on the streets. Some were cut to pieces by slow degrees, the nose, ears, lips, and fingers being first cut off, and then the limbs hacked off by the tulwars of the rebels. An entire family was burned alive, and little children were destroyed before the eyes of agonised parents. Houses were wrecked, and choice articles either carried off or destroyed in the maddest spirit of destruction and hate.

Five officers had reached the shelter of the fort by swimming the Ganges, and three of them were in a state of nudity. The little garrison lay under arms in the fort for five days and nights, watching the infuriated sepoy rushing hither and thither, maddened and desperate, many of them being under the influence of the native spirit called "Chang," which seems to steal away any little sense the ordinary sepoy may have.

The big guns in the fort were brought to bear upon bands of rebels who ventured too near, and many were killed in this way, while the sharpshooters on the walls picked off a number who came within range. The city volunteers, composed for the most part of railroad men, were formed into three small companies and officered. This added to the numerical strength of the garrison, and Colonel Neill at Benares, hearing of the outbreak at Allahabad, sent on about 50 men of the Madras Fusiliers, while he himself hurried to the scene of the mutiny at the head of 40 more, covering the seventy miles of country which lay between the two cities in two nights in light carriages. He found on arrival at Allahabad that the mutineers had grown tired of looting and killing, in fact, the 6th had marched out of the town with drums beating.

Neill, at the head of his Fusiliers, speedily cleared the suburbs, and had for his opponent a Mohammedan Mollah, who had unfurled the green flag of the Prophet and proclaimed himself Vice-Regent of the King of Delhi. He had collected a large band of ruffians, and occupied an entrenched position in

the town. At the head of only 200 men, with a few guns, Neill marched out of the fort and attacked the Mollah's forces so suddenly, and with such vigour, that the rebels broke and fled in all directions, pursued by the energetic Fusiliers, who put many to death.

Meanwhile, the scene inside the fort was a sad one, cholera breaking out, and many also perished from sunstroke. Over seventy fighting men lost their lives through disease, and twenty were buried at one funeral. The shrieks of the insane and the dying rang through the fort, and the 200 fugitive European women were in a sad plight. However, when once Neill with his small force got thoroughly to work in the streets, he rapidly cleared the rebels out of the city, and the fugitives were able to return to their wrecked homes. The mortality was very high for a time, but gradually the disease got stamped out, and Allahabad became free and latterly welcomed Sir Henry Havelock and his Highlanders on their march to Lucknow.

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CHAPTER L.

THE FIGHTING AT FUTTEHGHUR.

1857.

THE 10th Native Infantry, while the foregoing events were occurring, were stationed at Futtehghur, a town on the west bank of the Ganges. This regiment was every whit as famous in Indian warfare as the 6th, who had run amok at Allahabad, bearing on their colours the battles of Buxar and Korah.

In June, 1857, the whole regiment broke out into open mutiny, forced the gaol and released all the prisoners. This was surprising in the extreme, as only a few days previous the men of the 10th had informed their officers of a plan which the 41st regiment at Seetapore had proposed to them in the event of the mutiny. They had even gone the length of destroying the pontoon bridge, so as to prevent any rebels from crossing to Futtehghur. No sooner did the 41st arrive after their mutiny at Seetapore, than the 10th regiment, with a company of artillery and two guns, marched to the Nawab, whom they placed on the throne, laying the British colours at his feet, and firing a salute of 21 guns. The battalion of the 10th were split into two sections, those who were Purbees crossing at once to Oude, with the obvious intention of returning to their homes. They were accompanied by a Captain Bignell, who was killed on the way. Others went off on foraging expeditions in small bands, and many who remained were murdered

by the men of the 41st, because the men of that regiment were refused a share of the public treasure.

The garrison at Futteghur was but a small one, in fact there were only about thirty men capable of bearing arms, and these brave fellows prepared to defend the seventy odd women and children against the attacks of the mutineers. The forces exchanged shots with big guns, and latterly the sepoy crept behind the sheltering bushes, and peppered the defenders with a heavy musketry fire, which did no harm. On the following day the persistent rebels, under cover of their artillery fire, were seen approaching with ladders, which they attempted to set up against the walls. Fortunately the men inside the fort were good marksmen, and were successful in shooting down the bearers of the ladders as they approached.

For four consecutive days the enemy's guns and rifles continued to play upon the fort, and there were several ineffectual attempts to scale the walls. The rebels adopted a new plan on the fifth day, as the riflemen took up positions on the roofs of houses within range. This fire was most deadly, and four of the little garrison were wounded. They next loopholed the walls, and kept up a steady fire at any of the garrison who showed his head above the wall to fire the cannon. Mr. Jones and Colonel Tucker were killed in this manner. On the following day, Conductor Aherne, with one single discharge of grape, was successful in blowing a dozen of the rebels away from the wall of a woodyard.

The rebels then fell into a trap, for after they had cut a hole into this place, the defenders allowed them to enter one by one. When a sufficient number were in, a well-directed shot was thrown amongst them, doing great damage. The place was then set on fire about their ears, and many perished. Frustrated in this attempt, the rebels now commenced a mine, at which they worked in secret for two nights and then sprung it. The report was awful, and the fort was shaken to its very foundations, but no lives were lost.

A breach was, however, made in the walls, and the sepoy were preparing to escalate it, when they were forced to retire under a heavy musketry fire, through which they lost several men. Later in the day they made a second attempt, with no better result, although the garrison lost one of its best gunners in the person of Conductor Aherne, who was shot through the head in laying a gun.

Maddened by such frequent failure, and eager to get at the garrison for the purpose of massacre, the mutineers got a gun into position, and started to fire upon the bungalow which they knew contained the women and children. A number of shots passed through the door, but extra precautions had been

hurriedly taken, and the balls were stopped by a heavy timber barricade. Two of the enemy's guns were dismantled, but still the rebels kept up the attack upon the wearied garrison, and, finding all their attempts useless, started to sink a second mine close to the position of the first. This was a serious outlook, for if a second breach was made, the rebels would make two different attacks, and the defenders were too few to repel the rebels in large numbers at two different places.

They looked for a means of escape, and the only possible way that presented itself was the river, which flowed past the fort. They could not stay in the fort, for it simply meant that sooner or later they would be all savagely butchered, so the brave men who had guarded the women and children so faithfully and well, determined that under cover of night they would make the attempt. The ladies and children were divided into three parties, and at midnight they silently quitted the fort in which they had spent so many anxious and perilous nights. Quickly they took their places in the respective boats, and then an officer went round to call in the pickets, who had previously spiked the guns and destroyed the ammunition.

At two o'clock on the morning of the 4th July, the fugitives shoved off, and congratulated themselves in making their escape unobserved. They could not foresee the end, nor could they rend the veil and know the dreadful fate that was in store for them. The sepoy had not their eyes shut, for no sooner had the boats passed the walls of the fort than the cry rang out, "The Feringhees are escaping." They ran along the bank, firing at the boats, which fortunately were out of range, and the fugitives had gone down the river about a mile without mishap when it was found that the boat which contained Colonel Goldie, his wounded daughter, and other delicate sufferers was too heavy to be managed, so all the occupants had to be transferred to the boat under the command of Colonel Smith. This was safely accomplished, although the sepoy brought a cannon into play. The boats proceeded down midstream, with the sepoy in attendance, shouting and firing from the bank.

At the village of Singheerampore they had to lie-to to repair a broken rudder, and two men were killed by a shot from the bank. Further misfortune was in store for the fugitives, as the other boat grounded on a sandbank, and all the efforts of the men to move her failed. A panic seized the occupants of the craft, and when two boatloads of sepoy were seen approaching, the women and children became frantic, and when the sepoy opened fire they threw themselves into the water rather than fall into the murderous hands of the sepoy. All the ladies were soon struggling in the water, with the exception of a Mrs. Fitzgerald, who remained in the boat with

her child, while her husband stood over her with musket loaded and bayonet fixed. A few of the occupants of the boat escaped by swimming to the other boats.

Those who were in the other boats were scarcely less unfortunate, for the sepoy poured in a merciless fire of grape shot among the women and children. Mr. Jones, who swam to another boat, found most of the occupants dead—a Mr. Rohan, the younger Miss Goldie, a child and another lady lying in the bottom of the boat. All through the night the survivors of the Futtehghur garrison continued their perilous voyage, ever and anon hearing the shouts of their pursuers and the constant drip of the bullets in the turgid waters.

They passed Bithour, where they were fired upon by the sepoy under that infamous scoundrel Nana Sahib. The fire was deadly, and many were wounded. The boats still proceeded down the river, and at last reached Cawnpore, where General Wheeler received them. They had been but spared from one death to another equally as horrible, for they received no mercy from the Nana, and, as described in the chapter dealing with Cawnpore, were brutally massacred. The bravery of the defenders at Allahabad and Futtehghur are bright incidents in a campaign which was distinguished for bravery.

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## CHAPTER LI.

### THE SIEGE OF KOTAH.

1858.

WE have now to deal with perhaps the most sanguinary conflict which marked the closing days of the campaign, when British arms were employed in stamping out the mutiny in all directions. Sir Hugh Rose was entirely successful in Central India, General Whitlock cleared the whole district of Jubbulpore, while General Roberts, sweeping through Rajpootana, bore down upon Kotah, the inhabitants of which had cruelly massacred the Resident, Major Burton, and his two sons.

Kotah is in the province of Ajmere, and was held by the noted rebel, Hossein Ali, who had gathered around him a large force to make a stand against the all-conquering Feringhees. It was in March, 1858, that Roberts commenced his movement upon Hossein Ali, and a trying tramp it proved for his brave troops. Under a sweltering sun, over baked earth, finding the wells dried up, with men and horses dropping by the way, he wearily dragged his way toward Kotah. To add to the sufferings of his troops, most of the water-carriers deserted to the

ranks of the rebel chief, and left the British soldiers parched and thirsty.

The column consisted of the 8th Royal Irish Hussars, the 72nd, or Duke of Albany's Highlanders, the 83rd and 95th regiments, along with the 13th Bengal Infantry—a corps which was greatly mistrusted. The enemy consisted almost entirely of mutineers, chiefly of the 72nd Bengal Infantry, whose scarlet coats were faced with yellow, like those of the 72nd Highlanders who were marching against them, while they also bore the same number on all their appointments as the British regiment.

Bravely the force marched on, passing on the route Sawoor, which was strongly fortified; Jhajpoor, a straggling ill-defended town; and Bhoondee. This latter place is a national citadel, and it was here that the two brigades met, being only two days' march from Kotah.

On the 22nd of March, the division, after great hardships, reached Kotah, and encamped on the left bank of the river Chumbul, opposite the city, but this position had ultimately to be altered to avoid the enemy's artillery. The whole army lay exactly opposite the city, and parallel with the river. The immediate cause of these operations against Kotah was the treachery of the Rajah, who had always protested himself a staunch ally of the British. When the mutiny at Neemuch broke out among the Bengal troops, Major Burton had left Kotah for some purpose. During his absence, the Rajah warned him against returning, as the inhabitants had joined the rebellion, and considerable numbers of mutineers had taken up their residence in the city. Nevertheless, Major Burton, with his two sons, returned to Kotah, and all three were barbarously murdered. The Rajah refused to join his subjects, and shut himself up in his palace, where he was regularly besieged by his own subjects.

Kotah is a large town, girt by massive walls, and is situated on the eastern bank of the Chumbul, well defended by bastions and deep ditches cut in the solid rock, while the entrances are all defended by double gates. In the foreground lies a vast lake, with the temple of Jugmandal built of snow-white marble, rising in the centre.

On the 24th of March two batteries were erected on the banks of the river, one on the right and the other on the left of the British position. Hossein Ali, who was in reality an ex-Pay Sergeant of the revolted 72nd, had about 70 pieces of cannon at his disposal, and he directed a well-trained fire upon the batteries. The siege began with vigour, and the guns of both forces did much execution. Night and day our soldiers and officers toiled in a trench on the scheme of a mine, which

was afterwards relinquished, amid slaughter, wounds, sunstroke, and cholera, but they never flinched.

On the 26th, Major-General Roberts placed a body of troops in the entrenched quarter of the city, which was still in the possession of the Rajah, while 200 men of the 83rd regiment, and the rifle company of the 13th Native Infantry, crossed over the river. The next day or two, during which the artillery fire on both sides never slackened, was given over to preparations for bringing over some of the heavy ordnance and mortars to be used in a grand assault.

On the 30th the final preparations were made, and early that morning three columns of 500 men each passed over in large square flat-bottomed boats to the city, the reserve being under Colonel Macan. The leading column in the assault, under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Raimés of the 95th, was composed of 260 men of the 72nd, and 250 of the 13th Native Infantry; the second column, under Lieut.-Colonel Holmes of the 12th Native Infantry, of 260 men of the 95th regiment, with the 10th regiment of Native Infantry; and the third column of 200 of the 83rd, with the 12th Native Infantry. The Highlanders crept up to the wall in the early morning while it was yet dark, the design being to blow a hole in the wall sufficiently large to admit a storming party. The engineers found the wall too solid to admit of its being blown up. The engineers toiled away, but the day broke and the sun shone forth making conspicuous the Highlanders in their plumed bonnets and tartan trews as they stood in line under the wall of the city. They became exposed to a galling fire from the enemy, and their position for a time was a most dangerous one. The plan of attack was altered, and the 72nd, with the engineers and supports, were ordered to the Kittenpole gate, which, although it had been strongly built up, presented more favourable opportunities for capture. The engineers set to work, and in a few minutes they had the ponderous gate blown to atoms.

Under a heavy fire the 72nd, under Major Thelluson, dashed in at the breach, and won an entrance to the city by turning to the right under the protecting fire of a party which had been placed on the walls of the Rajah's fortifications. The advance was rapid, as nothing could stay the impetuous rush of the Highlanders, who were smarting under the heavy fire they had been subjected to in the morning. It was a fearful moment for them while they stood under the walls, waiting for an entrance, and one of the regiment wrote home as follows:—

“We were in an awful position for more than seven hours. I think it would be about eleven o'clock when the gate was blown up. But it was too bad to keep us in suspense so long,

for you may believe me the torture of the mind was awful. Any who had the opportunity of studying the men's countenances could easily read their minds. You would have seen many a shade of sorrow and sadness. Our plan of attack was simple. Our Brigade—the second—was to attack and storm the right bastions, mounting in all 17 guns, the 72nd forcing through the breach first, supported by the 13th, the 83rd bringing up the rear. The first brigade was to follow on the left attack, both having the town in the centre."

To the sound of the pipes, and shouting the old war-cry of the Greys which had resounded over the field of Waterloo—"Scotland for ever!"—the Albany Highlanders (72nd) dashed on. But little resistance was offered, and rapidly the column moved on to the chief point of attack—the bastion called the Zooraidoor, on the outer walls of the city. The rebels, with their matchlock rifles, tried in vain to stop the onslaught, but fell against the deadly Enfield rifle. On the column reaching the bastion, it was found that most of the enemy had fled, and those who remained were quickly put to flight by the bayonet. Several of the mutineers, in their haste to escape, threw themselves from the ramparts, and were dashed to pieces at the bottom. The column next proceeded along the wall as far as the Soorjpole gate, one of the principal entrances to the town, through which a body of the enemy were flying to a place of safety.

Then commenced the real fighting of the day, for when the column had seized the gate and rushed into the city, the rebels opened a heavy fire upon the British when they had quitted the shelter of the walls. They were entrenched in a strongly-fortified house facing the gateway, which was stormed by Lieutenant Cameron of the 72nd with a handful of men. Cheering and shouting, they rushed in amongst the hail of bullets, and dashed up a narrow passage and staircase leading into the upper part of the building, where they met with a determined resistance from the rebels. The band was headed by "the Lalla," the commander-in-chief of the mutineers, who fought desperately. Lieutenant Cameron was cut down, and several men were killed, so Lieut.-Colonel Parke deemed it expedient to risk no more lives in a fight in the narrow, dark, and intricate passages of the building. The Royal Engineers were told off to destroy the building, and they soon exploded their powder bags at the corner of the building, bringing it down like a house of cards. A large number of the rebels were destroyed by the collapse of the building, while those who sought safety in the open were cut down. There were a few instances of desperate resistance but the rout was complete.

The other two columns operating at different points met with

scarce a check, for the rebels made every haste to save their skins. By evening the whole strongly-fortified city of Kotah was in our hands, and the slaughter of the rebels must have been severe. The 8th Hussars gallantly charged after the flying mutineers, and cut down hundreds of them, capturing the treasure which had been taken from the town, while the 72nd Highlanders captured one stand of sepoy colours, and the 95th two stands. The victory was really gained by a clever flank movement, coupled with the fact that the rebels deserted their guns, which, had they been as well handled as in the early morning, would have repelled any attack. Upwards of 70 guns of different calibre, some very heavy, and a vast quantity of ammunition, fell into our hands. General Roberts, in thanking the Brigade, said that he had been in field fights, he had been in storming parties, but he had never seen men go steadier. It was more like men upon a parade, or on a field day, than men who were facing death. Thus ended the siege of Kotah, which will be for ever memorable for British bravery against terrible odds.

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## CHAPTER LII.

### THE FIGHTING AT JHANSI, ROOHEA, AND BAREILLY.

1857-58.

ONE of the many black deeds of the mutiny was the inhuman atrocities at Jhansi, in the province of Allahabad, and about a hundred miles eastward of Serinje. In June, 1857, the 12th Native Infantry, which had served with distinction at Ferozeshah, and the 14th Irregular Cavalry had their headquarters at Nowgong, but the left wing of each regiment was quartered at Jhansi, which had therefore a considerable force to repel any attack, besides having the advantage of two forts for defensive purposes.

The spirit of mutiny was in the air, and although the regiments named had remained true to their salt, their officers could not put implicit trust in them in face of the stories which were being circulated regarding the success of the mutineers in various parts of India. The officers and women and children took possession of the fort in the city, it being preferred to the Star Fort, which was in the cantonments. For a time the sepoys remained true, but on the 4th of June a company of the 12th Native Infantry entered the Star Fort, and took possession of the cannon and treasure which it contained. The fat was now in the fire, and although the remainder of the men assured

the poor isolated officers that they would remain faithful, no trust could be reposed in them.

In all the phases of the mutiny the crafty and cunning traits in the Indians' character were brought to the surface. They behaved treacherously on every occasion, and broke vows which to them ought to have been sacred. It was thus at Jhansi, and the officers found that they were indeed in perilous straits. On the 5th of June, while on parade, the men, who were still allowed to retain their rifles, deliberately shot down Captain Dunlop and Ensign Taylor, and Lieutenant Campbell was seriously wounded, but succeeded in escaping to the fort. Lieutenant Turnbull took refuge in the branches of a tree, but was brought down by a musket ball, and shared the same fate as Dunlop and Taylor. The other officers who were in the fort at the time of the outbreak, saw what was happening by the aid of field glasses. They at once put themselves on the defensive, and after admitting Campbell to the shelter of the fort, secured the gates and shot down a few of the mutineers who had pursued the wounded officer. They barricaded the gates with stones, and prepared to fight desperately for their lives. There were only 55 Europeans in the place, including the women and children, along with a number of native servants. The women as usual showed admirable bravery and fortitude, cooking for the garrison, carrying refreshments to them at great risk, and, when ammunition became scarce, they cast bullets for the rifles.

The native servants were even not to be trusted, and two of them were discovered attempting to open the gates of the fort. Captain Burgess shot one of the rascals, but the other managed to cut down Lieutenant Powys before he was shot by the captain. The mutineers gathered in force around the little fort, and kept up a heavy fire upon the walls with cannon and musket. Twice the brave defenders attempted to send word of their peril to Gwalior or Nagode, but both failed. Captain Gordon was shot in the head while looking over the parapet of the fort, and as ammunition and provisions were almost exhausted, the little garrison began to lose heart.

The rebels were most persistent in their attacks, and a further disaster befel the brave defenders when two gates were battered in. The rebels offered them their lives if they laid down their arms, and as the days passed and no sign of relief came, the wearied officers were compelled at last to throw themselves upon the mercy of the mutineers. They accordingly came out of the fort and laid down their arms. The mutinous troops at once threw themselves upon the now defenceless men, and tied them in two rows. The men were the first victims of the massacre, Captain Burgess taking the lead, his elbows tied behind his back, and a prayer book in his hands. The women

and children, terrified at the murder of those near and dear to them, stood by and calmly waited until the time came when they too would be despatched. Not one escaped, but fortunately all were destroyed without the inhuman indignities to which they were subjected elsewhere.

It was left to Sir Hugh Rose, latterly Lord Strathnairn, to avenge this black deed. On the 21st March, 1858, he arrived before the walls of the city with a large force, to find that it was held by a large rebel army. He commenced the bombardment of the town, but was immediately brought face to face with a new danger. The Gwalior contingent, which had been shattered, and was thought to be dispersed, advanced from Kalpee, a town on the right bank of the Jumna, and, becoming largely augmented as it marched, the force when it drew up to give battle to Sir Hugh Rose's troops, must have numbered 25,000, while it was also supported by eighteen large pieces of artillery. Still it was not a disciplined force, and Sir Hugh was quick to avail himself of this fact. Without giving the rebels time to form any preconcerted plan, he dashed out to the attack.

So sudden was the onslaught and so daring in its conception, the huge mass of rebels reeled and broke into a confused rout. The British, with a ringing cheer, charged in amongst the now terrified rebels, and the slaughter was great. The contingent was again dispersed, and fully 2000 were killed. All the guns, elephants, and ammunition fell into our hands, and Sir Hugh was now able to resume his siege operations on the town. The rebels in Jhansi must have been affected by the defeat of the large force outside, for on the following day the town fell into the hands of the British column, the garrison fleeing in the course of the night. The pursuit was at once taken up, and before it ended 1500 of the rebels who had been concerned in the Jhansi revolt were destroyed. This was one of the last acts in the mutiny, but the revolt was not to be quelled without the spilling of more British blood in the ill-planned attack on Rooha.

The Highland Brigade, after the final relief and capture of Lucknow, had been engaged in pursuing the rebels in the district and stamping out the rebellion in the province. The Highlanders were encamped at the Dalkoosha, having been ordered to form part of the Rohilcund field force under Brigadier Walpole. On the morning of the 8th of April, the 42nd, 79th, and 93rd Highlanders marched from the camp to the Moosha Bagh, a short distance from which the brigade encamped. Here they remained until the 15th, when orders were issued to recommence the march, as it had been learned that the enemy were active in the vicinity. The advance guard consisted of three companies of the Black Watch with cavalry and guns,

under the command of Major Wilkinson, while the main body followed with the remainder of the 42nd leading. The Highland Brigade was under the command of Brigadier the Hon. Adrian Hope, the whole being under Walpole.

Long before daylight on the 16th the force was under arms, and moved cautiously a few miles across country, when a halt was called, the baggage collected, and a strong guard set over it, consisting of two guns and detachments of men from every regiment. About ten o'clock in the morning the whole force advanced cautiously through some thick wood, and came suddenly upon a native mud fort, the garrison of which immediately opened fire with their heavy guns and musketry. The 42nd was in advance, supported by the 93rd, the 79th being held in reserve. The guns were quickly placed in position, and opened a heavy fire upon the fort, while a movement was also made by the infantry, the Highlanders advancing under a merciless shower of bullets close to the walls of the fort. This mud erection, which did duty as a fort, was called Roohea, and was hardly worth the attention of the British troops. Walpole, however, was determined to clear out this nest of rebels, and gave orders that the infantry were to approach as near the enemy as they could, and skirmish without support.

The British plans were decidedly bad, for the rebels could easily have been driven out by the fixed bayonet without the sacrifice of life which a skirmishing attack entailed. Walpole evidently meant to prevent the escape of the rebels by the main gate, for Major Wilkinson made an attack on the weak side to drive the rebels out and into contact with the main force. Captain Ross Grove, with No. 8 Company of the Black Watch, advanced with fixed bayonets, and without having the slightest protection or cover bravely marched on till they came close to the counterscarp of the ditch, with only the breadth of the ditch between the gallant Highlanders and the enemy. There they lay, waiting patiently for orders to charge, losing men rapidly; in fact, so precarious was their position that a company of the Punjaub Rifles was sent to their assistance. The Punjaubees and Highlanders quickly forming into line, rushed for the ditch, and attempted to get over the parapet, but had to admit defeat, having to retire with heavy loss, two officers and fifty men being killed and wounded. The impetuous assault had failed, and the enemy had sustained but a trifling loss, while the fort was as stoutly defended as ever. Captain Cope, of the Punjaub Rifles, along with four men of the Black Watch, performed a daring deed in going almost under the walls of the fort to bring in the dead body of Lieutenant Willoughby. Creeping to where the lieutenant's body lay, the five men raised it and carried it back to the British lines under a perfect storm of

shot. Captain Cope had his left arm broken by a bullet, and Private Spence, of the 42nd, was mortally wounded.

Brigadier Adrian Hope, angry at the heavy loss inflicted on his men, went near the fort to reconnoitre and endeavour, if possible, to find a better way by which it could be won. The fort was hexagonal in shape, with two redoubts, two sides of the hexagon having no fortifications. The bastions were circular, and the ditch deep and narrow, the escarp and rampart being completely inaccessible at most parts without the use of scaling ladders. The gallant leader of the Highlanders, in his eagerness to learn the internal arrangements, ventured too near, and he had barely been a minute in the zone of fire when he was seen to sway and fall. The bullet had penetrated above the left collar-bone, and he knew that it was mortal, for he exclaimed, "I am a dead man, lads. They have done for me at last." He then asked for a drink of water, which he drank hurriedly, and then expired in the arms of one of his officers.

An officer, writing of the scene, says—"I cannot describe to you the gloom—thick and palpable—which the sudden and untimely death of our amiable and gallant Brigadier has cast over the minds of all. He was the foremost and most promising of all the young Brigadiers; he was the man in whom the commander-in-chief placed the most implicit confidence, and whom all trusted and delighted to honour."

He was the ninth son of the Earl of Hopetoun, and served with the 60th Scottish Rifles in the Kaffir war, where he saw much service. No. 8 Company of the Black Watch were maddened by this loss, and retired clamouring for orders to storm the fort, but appealed in vain, for apparently Walpole had different plans in view. The same writer above quoted states:—"Everybody asks what did the Brigadier intend to do? Why did he send men to occupy the position which they did when nothing was to be gained by their being there? Why, if he intended to take the place, was it not stormed at once, and at the point of the bayonet? Or rather—and this is the main query—why was it not shelled by the mortars and smashed by the breaching cannon?"

For an hour or two the guns played on the fort, but after the death of Hope nothing was done, and the force outside continued to get the worst of it. All the regiments were losing heavily, but it was the Black Watch and the Punjaubees who suffered most severely, the Black Watch having alone forty-two casualties, including Lieutenants Douglas and Bromley.

At sunset the force was withdrawn, and, to the amazement of all, the camp was formed within a mile of the fort, the rebels firing upon the force as it retired. Next morning, when the men moved up to recommence the attack, it was found that the

enemy had retired during the night, leaving nothing behind but the ashes of their dead, and a broken gun carriage. Quietly, thinking no doubt of their dead comrades who had perished in making the assault upon such a paltry place, the Highlanders took possession of the fort, and it was soon given over to the flames. It was found that it was so open and unprotected behind that a regiment of cavalry could have ridden in; and yet the brave Highlanders, who were eager and willing to rush in with their trusty bayonets, were held back, and became targets for a foe concealed behind the brown walls. The garrison was only 400 strong, and the rebels could not have lost many men. "A sad, sad scene it was," says a writer, "the burial of our dead on the evening of the following day."

A short distance from the camp, in a cluster of mango trees, the graves were dug, and the slain consigned to them. The Church of England service was read by a chaplain of that church, and afterwards there was a short service, consisting of the reading of a portion of Scripture, a short address, and lastly prayers. Thus Adrian Hope was left to sleep with the brave men who had fallen in such a miserable engagement as the taking of the mud fort of Roohea.

The rebels had to be pursued, however, and throwing sentiment to the winds, the force moved away on the 17th, and three days afterwards came up to the enemy at the village of Allahgunge. They were in large numbers, and, after the success at Roohea, they were prepared to fight desperately. The British were just as eager to come to grips, and although the rebels were strongly posted, the attack was too much for them. Burning with a desire for revenge, the Highlanders threw themselves upon the enemy, who stoutly met the onslaught. There was a wavering in the ranks when the bayonets flashed, and almost without having the opportunity of firing a shot, the enemy broke and dispersed in all directions, leaving a large number of killed and wounded upon the field.

The force stayed at Allahgunge for three days, occupied in rebel-hunting, while reinforcements also arrived. The next point was an extensive drive in the direction of Bareilly and Shahjehanpoor, and, on 5th May, after a fortnight's marching, by which the district was almost cleared, the force once more came into contact with an extensive band of rebels on the plains to the east of Bareilly.

The engagement was a most trying one, the day being tremendously hot, but the soldiers kept up wonderfully well, and after fighting for about four hours, forced the enemy to retire with some loss. The city of Bareilly was then taken possession of, the victorious troops meeting with but slight opposition, although the 93rd lost several men in a skirmish

with a band of rebels who had taken refuge in one of the buildings in the town. The mutineers were now thoroughly cowed, and the Highlanders kept them continually on the move, dispersing several bands who had attempted to rally. The 93rd marched to Shahjehanpoor, to form a brigade with the 60th Rifles and 66th Ghorkas. Along with this force were some guns, baggage, cavalry, and a few irregulars.

The rebels were first of all encountered at a village named Poosgawah, in which they were strongly entrenched. From this position they were quickly expelled, and the force breaking up into small parties started in pursuit of the retreating mutineers. No sooner had the bulk of the force passed through the village than a body of rebel cavalry appeared in the rear and attacked the baggage as it was straggling through the narrow entrance to the village. The main body of the baggage guard was far in the rear, and the enemy was at first mistaken for the irregulars of the force until they began to cut up the camp followers. At this moment the sick of the 93rd, twelve in number, who, at Surgeon Munro's request, had been armed the night before, turned out of their dhoolies and kept up a sharp fire, which held the enemy in check until the arrival of the Mooltanee cavalry, which had been sent from the front, and which dispersed the rebels at the second charge, the men wielding their heavy cavalry swords with great dexterity, and doing considerable execution amongst the mutineers.

The British force did not suffer much loss, chiefly camp followers, but the bravery of the wounded Highlanders undoubtedly saved the situation. The force remained in the vicinity of the village for a few days, and then once more got into grips with the rebels, who were found in position at a village called Russelpoor, on the opposite side of a deep nullah, flanked on one side by a large village, and on the other by some rising ground.

The guns and the 6th Rifles attacked, the main body of the 93rd being held in reserve, one company, under Captain M'Bean, supporting the heavy guns. The rebels fought with grim determination, and doggedly stuck to their posts, although they were losing heavily under the accurate British fire, the big guns doing great damage to the houses of the village. The attack was entirely successful, and the enemy were eventually driven from their position and put to flight with considerable loss to themselves. The battle of Bareilly, in which the 42nd played so important a part, opened with a short cannonade for about half an hour, the enemy who had gathered in large numbers, latterly falling back from the bridge and nullah, and occupied the clumps of trees and ruined houses in the cantonments.

In this position it was necessary to shell every clump and

house before advancing, which caused considerable delay. All the time the sun was beating down fiercely upon the troops. About ten in the morning the enemy made a bold attempt to turn the British left flank, and the 42nd were ordered forward in support of the 4th Punjaub Rifles, who had been sent to occupy the old cavalry lines, but were there surprised by the enemy in great numbers. Just as the 42nd reached the old lines they were met by the Punjaubees in full flight, followed by a band of Ghazees brandishing their tulwars and shields. These rushed furiously on, and the men of the Black Watch were for a moment undecided whether they should fire upon them or not, their friends the Punjaubees being mixed up with them, when, as if by magic, the commander-in-chief appeared behind the line, and his familiar voice, loud and clear, was heard calling out, "Fire away, men! shoot them down, every man Jack of them!"

Then the line opened fire, but so desperate were the Ghazees that several of them had actually reached the line, and were about to engage the Highlanders when they were swept aside by the volley which spurted in one flame from the ranks. Four of the Ghazees seized Colonel Cameron in the rear of the line, and would have dragged him off his horse, when Colour-Sergeant Gardiner rushed from the ranks and bayoneted them, the Colonel escaping with only a slight wound on the wrist. For this act of bravery Gardiner was deservedly decorated with the Victoria Cross. The enemy now fell back under the fire of the Highlanders, who were at last given the order to advance with fixed bayonets. The rebels had had enough, and broke and fled, leaving the 42nd and 79th to take possession of the fort and post a line of pickets from the fort to the extreme right of the commander-in-chief's camp.

The rebels' power was now completely broken, and they were harried from place to place, receiving no quarter unless they voluntarily surrendered. The famous Highland Brigade, comprising the Black Watch, 78th, and 93rd regiments, were ordered to stay at Bareilly, and during a particularly hot month so far as weather was concerned, took part in many expeditions against the rebels who made any show of resistance. A private writing home at this time says:—"What a change has come over the enemy. At Lucknow and Cawnpore they were as brave as lions, but now I question if they have as much of that quality as the mouse. We are engaged in 'rebel-hunting,' and find the constant knocking about very trying. We have not had a really good brush with the enemy for weeks. Whenever they see us they give a long-drawn howl, and flee in all directions. We then start to ferret them out of the brush, and poor specimens of humanity we find them. They are nothing

like the fierce sepoys we met at the commencement of this great campaign; but no wonder, for any nation in the world would have had the spirits knocked out of them had they received half the defeats that the rebels here have had served to them. The most of them are glad to come into our lines and get a decent meal, so you can have an idea of the present state of affairs."

It was ever so, and although it took time to completely stamp out the insurrection, Bareilly was really the last engagement of any note in the mutiny, and slowly but surely the British soldier, willing and stern of purpose, traversed the land and subdued the rebellious spirits. A few chiefs showed signs of resistance for a time, and the troops were mostly engaged in expeditions against the foolish people who were now espousing a forlorn cause. Thus, in little over a year, the rebellion which boded so ill for British rule was practically stamped out, and the massacres of the innocent avenged. Brave Sir Colin Campbell was raised to the peerage, assuming the title of Lord Clyde, and no man could grudge him the honour.

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### CHAPTER LIII.

## THE CAPTURE OF CANTON.

1857.

ON the 8th October, 1856, a party of Chinese, in charge of an officer, boarded the lorch or junk *Arrow*, in the Canton river, tore down the flag, and carried away the Chinese crew.

Now, the *Arrow* had not long before been registered as a British vessel, and, moreover, the outrage was carried out in defiance, not only of the master of the ship, but also of the British consul, to whom appeal was first made. In either case, the reply was the same—that the vessel was not British, but Chinese.

The fact is that for a long time past British influence in China had been on the decline. The incident of the *Arrow* constituted its first outward expression. Now, the Chinese Imperial Commissioner in Canton at this time was a man called Yeh. To this man a complaint was at once made, and, at the same time, Mr. Parkes, the British consul, thought fit to inform Sir John Browning and Commodore Elliot, the political and naval authorities respectively, of the occurrence.

Several days passed in futile negotiations, so that by the 23rd of the month the matter passed out of the hands of the civil authorities, owing to the repeated refusals of the Chinese Commissioner to order any redress. Admiral Seymour took action on that day (the 23rd), and seized the principal forts of

Canton, holding them without any attempt at opposition. Still the Chinese preserved silence, but on the 25th an attack was made upon the British Consulate. This was repelled without much trouble, but other more serious conflicts were to follow.

In the opinion of the British administrative authorities in China, it was at this juncture deemed expedient to make the occasion one in which to require the fulfilment of long-evaded treaty obligations, and accordingly further demands were made upon Yeh, though the preliminary cause of dispute was still far from being settled.

The method of retort was as might have been expected—a silent celestial contempt of the barbarian demands, so the next move of the British entailed the bombardment of Yeh's official residence. Yeh now offered a reward of thirty dollars for the head of every Englishman, and matters at length grew serious.

A course of reprisals now ensued on both sides, and individual murders were not infrequent, but early in January an attempt was made to poison the whole British community in Hong-Kong, where, as in Canton, and indeed the whole of China, the name of Britisher was one to be spoken with contempt and loathing.

With such a state of affairs, and no decisive action on the part of our authorities, small wonder that British prestige suffered severely throughout China. Our influence at the Court of Peking became nil, and it was feared that further inaction would have a prejudicial effect upon our influence in India, where rumours of the approaching mutiny were beginning to make themselves heard. Accordingly, in the spring of 1857, our Government despatched to China, not only an expeditionary force of some 5000 men, but also a Special High Commissioner and Ambassador to the Court of Peking, in the person of the able Earl of Elgin. Though due to arrive in Hong-Kong in May, Lord Elgin did not finally take up his duties there until the 20th September, for, on reaching Singapore in May, it was found that the mutiny in the north-west provinces in India was turning out to be far more serious than was at first anticipated. How serious indeed that mutiny finally became, is well known to every Britisher to-day, but Lord Elgin was one of the few men to foresee its extent even then. With a promptitude and energy meriting the highest praise, he diverted the whole of his China force to the seat of war, and he himself, only balling for a day or two at Hong-Kong, accompanied the naval brigade to Calcutta.

But it is with China, and not India, that we are at present concerned, and, as before intimated, the 20th September found Lord Elgin back again at Hong-Kong, awaiting reinforcements from Britain in place of those troops which he had taken on to

India. The reduction of the city of Canton was the first object at which he aimed. With that city as a hostage, he deemed it possible to make terms at Peking and restore British prestige.

Till the 28th October inaction prevailed, owing to lack of troops, but on that date the Imperador arrived, bringing the first batch of marines for the expedition. Early in November the American minister, the Russian, German, and French envoys were all at Hong-Kong in view of the general anti-foreign agitations of the Chinese. By the 10th December preparations were complete, and French and British allied presented their ultimatum to Yeh. Meantime the island of Hainan was occupied by the allied troops without resistance.

Yeh's reply to the message of Britain and France was of a truly celestial witness. He totally denied the existence of the main grievance, that of the hostility of the Cantonese to foreigners, slurred over the affairs of Canton itself, and finally recommended Lord Elgin to "adopt the policy pursued by Sir George Bonham, which might, as in his case, procure him the Order of the Bath"! The occupation of the island of Hainan, however, he strongly resented.

On the 17th December, Lord Elgin embarked upon the *Furious*, the *Audacieuse* being the flagship of the French admiral, and the allied fleets assembled at Blenheim beach, below Canton. Germany and the United States resolved to join the allied Powers.

Writing from before Canton at this stage, Mr. George Wingrove Cook, the "Times" correspondent, says:—"We must hope, in the interests of humanity, that when the allotted interval has expired, Yeh will yield. He has at his gates the representatives of the four great nations of the earth, . . . and they are all equally determined to tolerate no more this foolish Chinese pageant."

In the interests of humanity also, time was granted to as many inhabitants of Canton to escape as might care to avail themselves of the advantage. The floating population—a literal and not a figurative phrase, availed themselves largely of the interval, and house after house detached itself from what a moment before appeared to be solid ground, and slipped off down the river out of the way of the allied guns. Half a million are said to have fled at this time. Twenty-three British ships of war, sloops, gunboats and the like were at this time before Canton, whilst the French fleet numbered nine. The combined armament was over 500 guns. Our total attacking land force numbered some 7000 men.

Christmas Day passed uneventfully, the interval being occupied by the various naval and military preparations, and up to

the last moment it was expected that Yeh would yield; but dawn on the 28th saw the last hope gone.

Just as the day was breaking, the hoisting of a white ensign to the main of the *Actæon* gave the signal to open fire, and, with no crashing broadside, but steadily, one by one, the iron mouths belched forth their rain of shot and shell upon the doomed city. For twenty-seven hours without intermission the guns of the allies poured their iron hail upon Canton, and the bombardment disclosed many strange traits of Chinese character, particularly the celestial impassivity.

"These strange Chinese actually seem to be getting used to it," wrote Mr. Cook in one of his letters to the "Times." "Sampan and even cargo boats are moving down the river like London lightermen in the ordinary exercise of their calling; people are coming down to the bank to watch the shot and shell fly over their heads. Many curious instances occurred, and strange sights were to be seen. A 12-pounder rocket fell short, and was burning on the ground, when a Chinaman attacked it with a flail as though it had been a living thing. Of course it burst at last, and blew the poor fellow to pieces. In a room opening upon the river a family were taking their evening meal within 200 yards of the *Phlegethon*, which was keeping up a constant discharge of shells, which passed within a few yards of their heads. The light was so strong that the interior of the room was visible in all its details—the inmates were all eating their rice as though nothing particular was happening outside. . . . All day long the sampans were proceeding from ship to ship, and selling fruit and vegetables to the sailors who were bombarding their city. Who can pretend to understand such a people as this?"

Who, indeed? But the Chinese nature has a darker side, as we shall see later.

At times during the bombardment troops were disembarked for reconnaissance, and the general plan of the assault arranged, and after a brief exchange of musketry the East Fort was captured in this way, and shortly afterwards blown up.

As antagonists the Chinese were not found to be particularly formidable. They were in overwhelming number, it is true, and imbued with treachery, but while from a distance they would fire their gingsals, so soon as our men approached to close quarters, they would throw down their arms and run.

During the first hours of bombardment, the movements of our troops on land took the form principally of reconnaissance, and the grand assault was reserved for the morning of Tuesday, 29th. The city by night, as seen from the ships, presented a wild and dazzling sight. The inflammable houses caught here and there, and at times the whole place seemed enveloped by a

ring of flame, while the native brigades could be seen rushing hither and thither in wild effort to quell the flames which everywhere opposed them.

At daybreak the general bombardment ceased, and from three divisions of the allied troops the attack commenced, British troops forming the right and centre, the French taking the left. The extreme right was composed of our naval brigade. Some stiff fighting was anticipated before the city wall could be gained, and then, by the aid of scaling ladders, our men were to pour themselves into the city and carry by assault its main fortifications of Magazine Hill and Gough's Fort and a barn-like building called the Five-Storied Pagoda.

Now the attack commences. Sharp comes the order to advance at the double, and into the dense brushwood and tree-covered space that lies between them and the wall of Canton plunge fearlessly the troops of France and Britain.

Stubborn was the resistance of the Chinese. Dropping back from tree to tree, and firing from dense cover, practised troops might have delayed their enemy's advance indefinitely, but, strange to say, few men were killed at this point of the attack. Indeed, the loss of the allies at the storming of Canton was extraordinarily insignificant, considering the huge number of their armed assailants.

On and on pressed our men, firing incessantly at the top of the high wall now appearing in front of them, and thronged with Chinese and Tartar soldiers, and all the while on the watch for any Chinese face which might show itself for an instant in the brushwood, or amongst the stunted hillocks. Here a man would throw up his shoulders with a short cough, struck through the lungs by a bullet from a Chinese ginal, aimed from who knew where; there a man would drop with a groan with shattered ankle or with wounded thigh. Instantly the bearers of the medical corps would fearlessly dash to his side, stretcher in hand, tenderly raise their wounded comrade, and, with swinging steps, remove him to the ships, where was the floating hospital.

Many gallant deeds were done by British and by French alike, but the coolie corps came in for the special commendation of Mr. Cook.

"They carried the ammunition on the day of the assault, close up to the rear of our columns, and when a cannon-shot took off the head of one of them, the others only cried, 'Ey yaw!' and laughed, and worked away as merrily as ever."

At length, however, the wall is gained, and to the last the Chinese man the top and pour down a fire upon the party advancing with the scaling ladders. When at length it seems that we are not to be driven back by any force opposed, the

hordes of Chinese and Tartar soldiers, leaping down inside the city, fled to conceal themselves behind the neighbouring houses to keep up a musket fire from there.

Major Luard is the first to gain the wall. Snatching the foremost ladder from its bearers, the gallant Major scrambles up, closely followed by a Frenchman. A moment passes, and our men are swarming up in dozens, firing down upon the Chinese in the city, and rushing along the wall towards the right, where the Five-Storeyed Pagoda awaits them with sullen fire.

The fighting at the Pagoda is short and sharp. Quick as thought the bayonets are out, and ere a few moments pass the Chinese and Tartar defenders are fleeing for their lives, with all the Chinaman's abhorrence of "barbarian" cold steel. The next to fall is Gough's Fort, where similar scenes are enacted, and, shortly after midday, the main defences of the city of Canton are in the hands of the allies.

The total casualties had been slight—some 15 British and 2 Frenchmen killed; while the Chinese dead have been estimated at 200. But the capture of Canton may be said to be quite unlike the capture of any other city. The main defences, it is true, had fallen, but no formal surrender had occurred, and so for many days conflicts between victors and vanquished were of frequent occurrence.

"People ask," says the "Times" report, "not what we are going to do next, but what the Chinese are going to do. These curious, stolid, imperturbable people seem determined simply to ignore our presence, and wait till we are pleased to go away. Yeh lives much as usual. He cut off 400 Chinese heads the other morning, and stuck them up in the south of the city."

A strange picture this, of a conquered city. The Governor, whom one would naturally expect to be busied with making formal submission and arranging terms of surrender, going about his business as usual, and carrying on administration in his old barbaric way.

Very slowly and laboriously did the allies effect some semblance of order in Canton, and in a few days the precise casualty list came to hand. The number of killed was as we previously stated, while the wounded totalled some 81 British and 32 French. Among the killed was gallant Captain Bate. At one stage of the attack upon the city wall it was found necessary to send someone forward to reconnoitre the ditch and ascertain the best position for the placing of a scaling ladder. This duty involved the crossing of a small vegetable patch which lay in front of our fellows, and which was exposed to a perfect hail of hostile bullets. At once Captain Bate of the *Actæon* volunteered for the dangerous mission, Captain Mann of the *Engineers* accompanying him. Quick as thought they dashed

across the deadly patch of garden and reached the other side in safety, where they stood for a moment looking down into the ditch. A sigh of relief went up from our officers and men as they beheld the mission half accomplished, when suddenly Bate was seen to throw up his hands and fall headlong. A Chinese bullet had found a billet in his brave heart. He never spoke nor stirred when, a few moments later, his body was recovered.

This and many another tale of deeds bravely done was told during the succeeding days, when the allies sought to restore some show of law and order in the city of Canton.

Mr. Cook's tale of a scene round the camp-fire of some of our naval brigade is too good to be missed, bearing in mind the strictness of law against looting. Says Mr. Cook:—

“Never was an army kept under stricter discipline. The eccentricities of the British sailor are kept under strict repression by the provost-marshal, and if a man is found ten yards in front of the outposts he is incontinently flogged, unless he happens to be a Frenchman. Yet somehow pig is very abundant.

‘Where did you loot that pig, Jack?’

‘Loot, sir? We never loots; there's an order against looting, and it's pretty strict, as we knows.’

‘But how do you get all these pigs?’

‘Why, d'ye see, we lights our fires o' nights, and I think the pigs must all come to the light, and the sentries must take 'em for Chinamen and fire at 'em, for we generally finds two or three with their throats cut in the morning.’

This was all the explanation I could get,” adds Mr. Cook, with an undoubted chuckle.

New Year's Day, 1858, now arrived, was held as a gala day by the victorious army. A formal procession of the Ambassadors was held to Magazine Hill, to officially “take possession of the city,” while the ships in the harbour were decked from stem to stern with bunting. A royal salute at intervals frightened many Cantonese into the belief that the bombardment was recommencing.

Thus the days passed, interspersed with military duties and the erection of huts upon the city walls for the occupation of the soldiers. Probably in spite of the strictness of the anti-looting orders some “curio collecting” was indulged in by our men, and that not always with the willing consent of the Chinese. Any way, many strange silks and furs and even jewelled ornaments found their way into the baggage of this man and the haversack of that.

At length, on the 5th January, the capture of the great Yeh himself was determined upon, and, once mooted, the project was carried out with secrecy, alacrity, and success. For not only did Yeh himself become a prisoner of the allies on that

day, but with him the lieutenant-governor of Canton and the Tartar general. The Treasury, 52 boxes of dollars, and many other rich spoils fell into our hands upon the same auspicious occasion. Early on the morning of the 5th, several bodies of British troops shouldered their way through the city, each upon its separate mission. That under Colonel Holloway proceeded straight to the palace of Peh-kwei, the acting governor of Canton, and little resistance was met with as they burst open the doors and searched room after room for the person of the acting-governor himself. Eventually the old gentleman was discovered at breakfast, and promptly, and without bloodshed, he was placed under arrest.

A truly Chinese interview passed between the old man and his captors. Asked for his keys and seals of office, he regretted exceedingly that that particular morning, of all others in the year, he should have mislaid them! He promised to make search for them, and once more expressed his regrets. Such shilly-shallying was too much for Colonel Holloway, and a whispered consultation followed. A few moments passed, and presently in marched a stout sergeant-major with an axe, which he brandished about in an ominous and terrifying manner! Like magic the missing keys were found, and the governor was removed to the British headquarters!

The scene at the capture of the Treasury was similarly typical of the peculiarities of the Chinese. Almost without resistance the place was taken possession of, the bayonet proving invaluable as a persuasive power, and the search for the city's treasury commenced.

Taking into account the fact that for six days no guard had been mounted to hinder the Chinese from removing their treasures, it was anticipated that little money would be found. Quite the reverse, however, proved to be the case. Fifty-two boxes of silver dollars, sixty-eight packets of solid ingots, and a whole room full of copper cash were recovered, while furs and silks and other loot was left untouched. The officer in command of the company, Captain Parke, pressed the Chinese coolies who had assembled outside in their hundreds into the work of removing the treasures of their own city to the British camp, and soon all was safely stored and under guard.

Meanwhile, in another part of the city, the French had succeeded in laying hands upon the Tartar general, who was found almost alone in a deserted palace, and elsewhere the hunt for Yeh was being vigorously pushed forward.

Mr. Parkes and Captain Key, receiving information that the Imperial Commissioner was in hiding in a library not far from the Tartar general's palace, proceeded thither with all haste, only to find one old man in possession of the place. After

much interrogation and a mild threat or two, this individual was induced to lead the searchers to the house of the Tartar lieutenant-general. Here the doors were burst in by a party of a hundred blue-jackets, and a room-to-room search commenced.

After a few moments an old man in a mandarin's cap and coat threw himself before the party of British officers, and protested wildly that he was Yeh, of whom they were in search, but so vigorous was his self-identification that it was promptly suspected that he was an impostor. He was therefore retained in custody while the search continued. He turned out subsequently to be the Tartar lieutenant-general himself, and was placed under arrest. A few moments later, Captain Key, hearing a sound as of persons escaping by the back of the house, hurried in that direction, and was just in time to perceive a mandarin of huge stature hastening along a narrow passage. Suspecting this person to be the Imperial Commissioner himself, Captain Key, without further ceremony, threw his arms round the neck of the fugitive, and proclaimed him prisoner.

It was indeed Yeh himself, very eager to escape, but without the slightest idea of defending himself or otherwise securing his desired purpose. Many papers were captured in the house, amongst them both incriminating and amusing documents.

Says Mr. Oliphant, Lord Elgin's secretary:—"I reached Magazine Hill (where the headquarters were established) shortly after the prisoners arrived there. Yeh, seated in a large room, and surrounded by some of his immediate attendants, was answering in a loud, harsh voice questions put to him by Sir Michael Seymour with reference to Englishmen who had been prisoners in his hands. Though he endeavoured, by the assumption of a careless and insolent manner to conceal his alarm, his glance was troubled, and his fingers trembled with suppressed agitation!"

He had heavy sensual features, this mighty mandarin, whose power was such that he had caused to be beheaded no fewer than 70,000 of his countrymen during his two years of office in Canton. But though Yeh may have been in some state of perturbation while interrogated by our high officials, he yet retained sufficient self-possession to display great insolence. In the matter of the British prisoners he was unable, he said, to recall exactly what had become of them, but, after all, it was an unimportant matter! Mr. Parkes, one of only two really competent Chinese linguists, acted as interpreter.

It was soon decided that little information could be got from Yeh, and it was determined to keep him prisoner on board the *Inflexible*, whither he was at once conveyed, under a strong guard. A few days later the Governor Peh-kwei was formally restored to his office as administrator of Peking, with the assist-

ance of an allied council of three, composed of Colonel Holloway, Captain Martineau, and Mr. Parkes.

Lord Elgin, Baron Gros, and other plenipotentiaries were present at his installation, which was conducted with much pomp and ceremony. In the course of an address, Lord Elgin pointed out the firm resolve of the allied Governments to retain military occupation of the city until such time as all questions pending between these Governments and the Emperor of China should be satisfactorily settled. In the meantime it was intended that the Governor, with the newly-appointed Council, should be responsible for the preservation of order in Canton.

Thus for some days matters remained, while negotiations with Peking proceeded. The time was spent in perfecting, so far as possible, the affairs of the city of Canton, meting out a rough justice, and in visiting the prisoners, where indescribable horrors and past brutalities upon the unhappy prisoners were brought to light by our Commissioners. Most of the poor wretches found surviving were liberated, and a more liberal and humane policy urged upon the Chinese Government.

About this time America and Russia joined with France and Britain in the agreement to insist upon the proper recognition and treatment of foreigners throughout the Chinese empire. The main terms insisted upon by the allies at Peking were the appointment of a high Chinese official to confer with Europeans upon matters concerning them, such as a free transit throughout China under proper protection from Chinese authority; permanent diplomatic relations at Peking; unrestricted commerce, and indemnity for losses and expenses incurred.

On the satisfactory adjustment of these matters the international blockade of the port of Canton was raised on the 10th February, and in about three weeks time Lord Elgin and Baron Gros proceeded north. The treaty of Tientsin was signed on June 26, 1858, and for a time comparative quiet prevailed in China. The British colony at Canton was re-established, and Yeh, the late Imperial Commissioner, degraded from his office, was deported by the British to India.

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#### CHAPTER LIV.

### THE BATTLES AT THE TAKU FORTS.

1860.

It is one thing to make a treaty with the wily Celestial, but quite another to see that that treaty is enforced.

The causes which led to the Chinese war of 1860 are soon told. Together with France, her old ally of 1858, Britain had

determined to strictly enforce the stipulations of the treaty of Tientsin, which followed on the fall of Canton, but when a British envoy was entering the Peiho river for the purpose of obtaining the formal ratification of the treaty, fire was opened upon the squadron from the forts at the mouth of the river.

Thus it was that a British army of about 10,000 men, and a French force of 7000 men were despatched to China. Our army, the bulk of which came from India, was collected at Hong-Kong during March and the beginning of April. It comprised two infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and a small siege train. The 1st Division, consisting of the 1st Royal Scots, the 2nd (Queen's), the 31st, and the 60th (Rifles) regiments of British soldiers, the 15th Punjaub Infantry, and the Loodianah regiments of native Indian troops, with batteries of the Royal Artillery and a company of Engineers, was under the command of Major-General Sir John Michel, K.C.B. The 2nd Division, composed of the 3rd (Bufs), the 44th, the 67th, and the 99th (Lanarkshire) regiments, the 8th and 19th Punjaub infantry, with similar equipment of artillery and engineers, was under the command of Major-General Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B. The cavalry brigade was made up of the 1st Dragoon Guards, one of our crack regiments, and Probyn's and Fane's regiments of irregular native cavalry, which, under their dashing leaders, had gained a great reputation during the mutiny.

The French force, sent direct from France, assembled at Shanghai. It was under the command of General de Montaubon, a typical "beau sabreur" of the army of the Emperor.

Lieutenant-General Sir Hope Grant, of Indian fame, was in command of the whole expeditionary force.

The British and French commanders were at Shanghai when the reply to the joint ultimatum of the allies was received by Mr. Bruce, the British representative there. It was, as Sir Hope himself expressed it, "cheeky in the extreme." The following extract shows this clearly:—"For the future," ran the official communication, "the British minister must not be so wanting in decorum. It will behove him not to adhere obstinately to his own opinion, for by so doing he will give cause for much trouble hereafter."

It was decided on receipt of this extraordinary document, early in April, to commence operations at once. Towards the end of May all preparations for the campaign in the north were completed, and by the end of July the combined French and British fleets of warships and transports stood off the mouth of the Peiho river, and the troops were able to discern in the distance the boasted Taku Forts, at which a British admiral had been previously repulsed, and which it was their immediate objective to take by assault.

The forts were situated two on each bank of the Peiho, several miles distant from the mouth, the strongest being the larger one. They were built on the extremity of the firm ground, in front of them being a great expanse of deep and sticky mud, to land on which and to storm the forts would have been an impossibility. It was therefore decided to land at Pehtang, a town and forts standing on the river of that name to the north of the Peiho, and advance from this direction to the assault of the Taku forts.

It was rumoured throughout the fleet that the Emperor of China had sent a message to General Grant, informing him that a picket of 40,000 Tartars was lying in wait at Pehtang forts, "with a force of 200,000 under the commander-in-chief, Sang-ko-lin-sin, between that and Tientsin." He therefore recommended the General to go away, if he valued the lives of himself and his people.

The disembarkation of the troops at about 2000 yards from the Pehtang forts, on the afternoon of the 1st August, was accomplished.

During the night an officer penetrated into the town, and discovered it had been abandoned by the Chinese soldiers, and that most of the guns in the town were only wooden dummies.

At length, on the 12th August, the general advance commenced, ten thousand British and five thousand French participating. The first British division, with the French, moved along the causeway, to attack the Chinese entrenched position at Sinho, while the 2nd Division and the cavalry diverged to the right, to cut off the retreat of the enemy. The march of these latter troops was laborious in the extreme, the mud being knee-deep, but, after four miles, harder ground was reached, and the troops found themselves faced by an extended line of Tartar cavalry.

Our new Armstrong guns, then for the first time tested in actual warfare, began to create great havoc among the enemy, whose wretched gingals and small field guns were absolutely ineffective at the long range. For a time, however, the Tartars bore this destructive fire well, and finally succeeded in effecting a well-directed charge in spite of it. Our cavalry, however, speedily put them to the rout, and the exhausted state of our horses alone prevented a lengthy pursuit and a heavier loss to the enemy.

Meanwhile, on the causeway, the 1st Division was engaged in bombarding the enemy's entrenched position, and after twenty-five minutes the latter found their position untenable. Here, as elsewhere, our cavalry were too exhausted to pursue, and the field guns were hurried forward to pour their deadly volleys into the masses of retreating Tartars.

By the afternoon the battle of Sinho was virtually over, though individual skirmishes still took place. Our loss was only two killed and some dozen wounded, and the French casualty list was equally light. The loss of the enemy, however, was very heavy, the plain being dotted with Tartar corpses for a long distance, while dead bodies in heaps lay within the enemy's entrenchments. Considering, however, that the allied troops outnumbered the enemy by two to one, it must be admitted, with General Napier, that the enemy "had behaved with courageous endurance."

At the conclusion of the engagement at Sinho, it was discovered by the allied commanders that the force there encountered was but a strong outpost, the main body of the enemy being located behind entrenchments at Tang-ku, some three miles further along the causeway.

Accordingly, Sir Hope Grant decided to postpone the forthcoming action until the morrow, the remainder of the day and night being spent in pushing forward our heavy guns up to the Chinese position and in digging pits for our riflemen. At half-past five in the morning the 1st Division pushed forward to storm the Chinese position, the 2nd Division being held in reserve. The contest was sharp and short, the Chinese replying with spirit to our fire, which from our 42 heavy guns was destructive in the extreme.

Some explanation of the tenacity with which they stood to their guns was afterwards forthcoming, when it was found that many of the wretched gunners had been tied to the pieces of ordnance which they served!

After the enemy's fire had been silenced, our infantry dashed forward, and the foremost of our men, the Rifles, found themselves just in time to bayonet some of the last of the Tartar defenders. The fugitives could be seen streaming out of the village towards a bridge of boats spanning the Peiho, by which they reached the village of Taku upon the further bank of the river. Though no precise estimate of the enemy's dead could be obtained, dozens of them lay amongst the guns, dozens more in the ditches, scores had been swept down the river in junks or borne off by comrades, and numbers had crawled down to the village to die. The full opposing force was estimated at 6000. The allied casualties amounted to 15 wounded, not a man having been killed.

The way was now clear for an attack upon the Taku forts. Some disagreement arose as to which of the four should be the first object of the allied attack. The French were in favour of first assaulting the larger southern fort, the strongest of the four, but Sir Hope Grant, observing that the nearer of the northern forts, though small, commanded all the others, decided,

in spite of the French protest, to make this the object of attack. Several days were spent in preparation, road-making, and the like, and during the night of the 20th August, after a hard night's labour, everything was found to be in order for the attack. Bridges had been thrown over the principal canals, intersecting the country, batteries had been erected near the forts, and twenty heavy guns and three mortars were mounted, four British and four French gunboats moved up the river to join in the attack, and a storming party of 2500 British, consisting of a wing of the 44th, a wing of the 67th, and two detachments of marines, together with 1000 French, mustered under Brigadier Reeves for what was to prove the hardest fight of the campaign.

At daybreak our batteries and gunboats opened fire, the fort replying briskly, and the engagement was begun. Hotter and hotter grew the cannonade, and after an hour had passed and our storming party was in momentary expectation of receiving orders to advance, suddenly a tall black pillar of smoke was seen to shoot up from the fort in front, and immediately afterwards to burst at a great height like a rocket. The earth shook for many miles. A magazine had blown up. The enemy's fire ceased for a moment, but the garrison seemed to be determined to serve their guns so long as one of them remained, and manfully reopened fire. Half an hour later a similar explosion occurred in the second northern fort, having apparently been caused by a stray shell from the gunboats. By seven o'clock, the large guns of the enemy having been silenced, and a small breach made in the wall, the storming party received orders to advance.

As the men went forward into the open, they were assailed by a hail of bullets by the Chinese, and many wounded began to drop in the line of advance. The British portion of the force was sadly hampered by the necessity of carrying sections of the pontoon bridge by which it was intended to span the two ditches which ran round the front of the fort. After all their exertions, however, the bridge proved useless, a round shot in one instant completely smashing one section, and knocking over the fifteen men who carried it. The French, on the other hand, carried light bamboo ladders, which proved sufficiently effective to enable them to cross the ditch, whilst our men had to swim or struggle over as best they could.

The first ditch crossed, a formidable obstacle presented itself. The intervening twenty feet of ground between the ditches had been thickly planted with sharp-pointed bamboo stakes, over which it was almost impossible to walk. It was here that our greatest loss occurred. Missiles of all descriptions rained down upon our troops halted before this formidable

obstruction. Arrows, handfuls of slugs, pots of lime, and round shot thrown by hand constituted the enemy's ammunition, and now and again the defenders leapt upon the walls to take more careful aim at the attacking force.

At length, a few men succeeded in reaching the walls, and while the French were fruitlessly endeavouring to plant their scaling ladders, Colonel Mann and Major Anson, perceiving the drawbridge tied up with rope, cut it free with their swords. The bridge fell with a crash, and was totally wrecked by its fall. Eventually, however, a long beam was thrown across, and one by one our men advanced across it to the walls. The progress was slow, a considerable number of the men being unable to perform this feat with success, and numbers of them fell into the muddy ditch below, among the hilarious laughter of their comrades, which even the near presence of death failed to damp.

By this time ladders had been dragged over by the French in considerable numbers, and planted here and there against the walls, only to be thrown back by the active defenders. The British meanwhile running round the walls, eagerly sought a scaleable place.

At last a French soldier holding aloft the tricolour, with a wild cheer on his lips, succeeded in placing his foot upon the parapet for a moment before falling back dead. His comrades were immediately in his place.

Almost simultaneously young Chaplin, an ensign of the 67th, holding high the Queen's colours of his regiment, half scrambled and was half pushed up the wall, and, amid the wild hurrahs of his men, planted his flag upon the parapet, where it fluttered in the breeze. A sharp conflict took place the instant after at the nearest battery upon the wall, and before the enemy were driven off young Chaplin received several severe wounds.

Already a number of British had penetrated through a small breach in the wall, and, entering the streets below, had come to a hand-to-hand encounter with the garrison. Headed by their stalwart commander, the Chinese with unwonted courage presented a bold front to our advancing troops, and for a moment a desperate struggle ensued. Then, as their leader, who proved to be the commander of the forces, fighting in the front rank, and refusing to submit, fell dead, they turned and fled pell-mell through the streets. Unhappily for them, the same obstructions which had so hampered the advance of our troops, now lay in their line of retreat, and as they endeavoured to struggle through the ditch and over the staked ground, a great slaughter took place.

"Never," said Colonel Wolseley, "did the interior of any place testify more plainly to the noble manner in which it had

been defended. The garrison had evidently determined to fall beneath its ruins, or to the last had been so confident that they had never contemplated retreat. Probably the stoutness of the resistance was due to the example of the Chinese commander, an exceedingly rare one, it being proverbial among the Chinese that the officers are almost always the first to bolt when defeat seems probable."

Preparations were immediately made for an advance on the second northern fort, when suddenly a white flag was hoisted on the principal fort on the southern bank, and a mandarin was rowed over in a boat to treat for terms. He could not, however, give any definite assurance of capitulation, and he was told that if the second fort was not surrendered in two hours it would be taken by storm.

The allotted time passed, and our men advanced to the attack. Not a shot was fired on them, nor any sign of resistance made, and suddenly, to the astonishment of all, down went the flags of the fort. The troops entered and found the garrison of 2000 all huddled together in one place like so many sheep. It was a sudden transformation, since they had thrown away their arms and evidently expected nothing less than massacre, being much astonished when they were sent over to the other side in boats, and allowed to go where they pleased.

The Chinese were evidently completely cowed, and, after some of the usual shilly-shallying, the mandarin in command of the southern forts delivered them into our hands, "together with the unconditional surrender of the whole country on the banks of the Peiho, as far as Tientsin."

This struggle cost the British 67 men killed and 22 officers and 161 men wounded. The casualties of the French numbered 130. The Chinese dead lay everywhere, within and without the forts, and their loss must have exceeded 2000 killed.

Thus, with the capture of the Taku forts, boasted as impregnable throughout the Chinese Empire, ended the first stage of the war. The gunboats cleared the way of the rows of iron stakes and ponderous booms which obstructed the passage of the river, and by the first week of September the allied troops, with the exception of the Buffs, left to garrison Taku, and a wing of the 44th regiment sent to Shanghai, which was at that time threatened by the Taiping rebels, were in quarters at Tientsin.

For a time it appeared that the war was ended. The Chinese Government professed great anxiety for peace, and Lord Elgin, our ambassador, who accompanied the troops, was in daily communication with its emissaries. Treachery, however, was feared, and the Chinese duplicity being well known, the advance on Peking was decided on.

On the 8th September the 1st British Division and half the French force moved out of Tientsin, the remainder being left in the town owing to inadequate means of transport. When, on the 13th inst., the allies reached the village of Hu-see-wu, it was arranged in response to the urgent entreaties of the Chinese that the army should halt within a mile and a half of the old walled city of Chang-dia-wan, and that Lord Elgin, with 1000 of an escort, should proceed to Tung-chow, to sign a convention with the Imperial Commissioners there, and then to proceed with the same escort to Peking for its ratification.

Mr. Parkes, Lord Elgin's secretary, with some officers and an escort, set out in advance to arrange preliminaries, and while the main body were on their march upon the 18th, they were horrified to hear the sounds of distant firing, and shortly afterwards a few of Mr. Parkes's party galloped up. They had had to fight their way through the Chinese, who had set upon them suddenly, and the remainder of the party had been captured.

Sir Hope Grant immediately prepared for battle. In front were at least 30,000 men, while the allies numbered 3500 in all, but there was no question of retreat. Seeing the allies coming, the Chinese opened fire from skilfully-concealed batteries, which defended their five entrenched camps. For two hours the contest raged hotly, and, at the end of that time, the French troops on the left had carried the works in front of them, while Fane's Horse, dashing through the village street on their flanks, completed the enemy's rout. In the centre our artillery speedily silenced the enemy's guns, and the Tartar cavalry on the right were put to flight by the Dragoons and Probyn's horse.

Our casualties did not amount to 40 in this engagement, while hundreds of the enemy were cut down by the cavalry in the long pursuit. Seventy-four pieces of cannon fell into our hands.

After halting for some days until the 2nd Division and the siege guns had come up, Sir Hope Grant on the 2nd October commenced the final march to Peking. All overtures of peace were in the meantime rejected, until the captives should be delivered up to Lord Elgin. Progress through the dense country was slow, and numerous isolated skirmishes took place. On the 7th October the French wing reached Yenn-ming-yenn, the famous summer palaces of the Emperors of China, and here a halt took place for several days, while the French gave themselves over to indiscriminate plunder and wanton destruction.

The army ran riot in the sacred precincts of the Imperial residences. Every French soldier had in his possession stores of gold watches, strings of pearls, and other treasures, while many of the officers amassed fortunes. The British, however,

were prohibited from individual plundering, although a large number of the officers seized the opportunity of the halt to pay a visit to the palaces, and returned laden with booty.

So great was the amount of treasure brought back by these that when, on the instructions of Sir Hope Grant, the whole of the loot thus obtained was disposed of at a public auction which lasted over two days, and was certainly one of the most singular scenes ever witnessed, the share of each private soldier was not less than £4 sterling. Sir Hope Grant and his two generals of division renounced their own large shares of the booty, thereby sensibly increasing the gains of the private soldiery.

By the 12th of October the allied armies assembled before the Au-ting gate of Peking, and demanded its surrender. On the 8th, Mr. Parkes and some of his party had been released, the Chinese alleging that these were all the prisoners they had in their possession; but we had reason to suppose that others remained in their hands. Accordingly, a battery was erected in front of the gate, and the enemy were given till noon to surrender the gate.

At five minutes to twelve General Napier stood watch in hand, and was about to give the order to fire when it was intimated that the gate had been surrendered. It was immediately taken possession of by our infantry, while the French marched with tricolours flying and drums beating. But though the gate was in our hands, the remaining prisoners had not yet been delivered up, and our guns were still pointing threateningly from the city gate, when in the afternoon eight Sikhs and some Frenchmen in an emaciated condition came into our camp.

On the 18th, the fate of the remaining prisoners was discovered, Colonel Wolseley coming on a cart containing coffins. These were opened, and from the clothing they were proved undoubtedly to be the missing men. It was found that they had been most cruelly done to death, and the rage of the troops at this discovery was near exceeding all bounds. Sir Hope, however, had given his word that the city should be spared, but as the Summer Palace had been the scene of these atrocities it was by Lord Elgin's orders razed to the ground. An indemnity of £100,000 was paid as compensation to the relatives of the murdered men.

Further preparations were made for a complete bombardment of Peking, when, on the 24th October, peace was declared.

## CHAPTER LV.

## THE BATTLE OF AROGEE.

1868.

THE man who stands out most prominently in Abyssinian history is Theodore, the king of kings of Ethiopia. He was a remarkable personage, perhaps the most remarkable who has appeared in Africa for some centuries. Having led the life of a lawless soldier, accustomed from childhood to witness the perpetration of the most barbarous acts of cruelty and oppression, there is only one standard by which to measure his career, and that an Abyssinian one.

The British Consul, Mr. Plowden, heard of his accession at Massowa, in March, 1855, and at once proceeded to join his camp, with the approval of the Foreign Office.

The news of Plowden's death having reached London, Captain Cameron was appointed to succeed him, it being the resolve of the Government to persevere in the policy of cultivating friendly relations with Abyssinia. The new consul was instructed to make Massowa his headquarters, and he was further directed to avoid becoming a partisan of any of the contending parties in the country. Cameron was well received by the king. He received a letter from Theodore, to be forwarded to the Queen of Britain. This strange epistle, which was received at the Foreign Office on February 12, 1863, contained a proposal to send an embassy to England, and a request that an answer might be forwarded through Consul Cameron.

On its arrival, the letter was put aside, and no answer was sent.

The letter, which was afterwards to become so famous, contained the following sentences:—

“I hope Your Majesty is in good health. By the power of God, I am well. My fathers, the emperors, had forgotten our Creator. He handed over our kingdom to the Gallas and Turks. But God created me, lifted me out of the dust, and restored this empire to my rule.”

Early in 1864, a young Irishman named Kerans, whom the Consul had appointed as his secretary, arrived with despatches from Britain, which were seen by the king. Imagine the latter's wrath when there was no reply to his letter! Theodore felt insulted. Only one mode of retaliation could soothe his wounded feelings, and forthwith he adopted it. The British Consul and all his suite were put in prison. Cameron was afterwards tortured with ropes, and the whole party were sent to the fortress of Magdala and there put in irons.

Colonel Merryweather, our representative at Aden, after

trying everything, despaired of securing the release of the prisoners by peaceful means. A warlike demonstration, he saw was inevitable, and in March, 1867, he reported to the home authorities that the last chance of effecting the liberation of the prisoners by conciliatory means had failed.

In July, 1867, the British Cabinet finally resolved to send an expedition to Abyssinia, to enforce the release of the captives.

Bombay having been fixed upon as the base of operations, the Government of that Presidency was asked to make all the necessary arrangements. In August, Sir Robert Napier, the commander-in-chief of the Bombay army, was appointed to command the expedition.

The task which the force had to accomplish was to march over 400 miles of a mountainous and little known region to the camp occupied by Theodore, and to use armed force to release the British officers whom he detained as prisoners.

The king had now broken up his camp at Debrataber. His power was entirely gone. His once great empire was wholly in the hands of rebels. Slowly towards his last stronghold he was marching, encumbered by his guns and mortars and by much heavy baggage. According to the campaign arranged, the British force and the king would advance on two lines which would meet at Magdala.

The army, under King Theodore, consisted of about 3000 men, armed with percussion loaders, about 1000 matchlock men, a mob of spearmen, and about 30 pieces of ordnance which his people could not properly handle. This rabble was to oppose the enormous disciplined army of the British. Doubtless it was this fact which led Theodore to be described as being like "an exhausted, hunted lion, wearily seeking his lair, to die there unconquered and at bay."

When Sir Robert Napier arrived upon the scene of operations, upwards of 7500 of his men were ready to give battle. Two courses were then open to him. He could have chosen to intercept Theodore in his flank march before he reached Magdala, and so prevent the prisoners falling completely into his power, or, by the alternative plan, which was adopted, allow Theodore to reach Magdala at his leisure, with all his guns, and thus place the British prisoners at his mercy.

The beginning of February saw the pioneer force under the General marching on the road from Adyerat to Antalo. The difficulties of the road were great, but the indomitable zeal and energy of the force overcame them. Along the route the force was well received by the people. The commander took care to leave a good impression behind him, and this he did in several ways, but especially by the prompt payment he ordered for everything that was brought for sale.

Theodore was also marching to Magdala, and he had surmounted difficulties in a manner that was afterwards to astonish his foes. He had odds against him, but he knew every inch of the country, and won the race. Still, the king had already sealed his own doom. He had devastated his one faithful province of Bagemder. He burned Gondar, destroyed all the villages round Debrataber, and put to death in the cruellest manner possible three thousand persons in the course of eighteen months. There could only be one result of such barbarism. The inhabitants of Bagemder, hitherto devoted to the king's person, rose against the tyrant and his diminishing army. Such a state of affairs could not last long. The king had reduced a rich province to a desert, and in order to keep his troops alive it was necessary that he should move.

Back fell the king upon his fortress, his last hope in this his time of bitter experience. He began his wonderful march in October, 1867. It was forlorn, but magnificent, and at once stamps Theodore as a man of brilliant resource. With no base of operations, surrounded on every side by enemies, and with the ever-present necessity of constructing roads over which to take his heavy artillery, he achieved what his own countrymen had described as an impossibility. By the 1st March, 1868, the king saw the end of his wonderful undertaking approach. All that remained was to drag the heavy ordnance up the Wark-waha valley to Arogee, and thence up the steep declivity of the Fala saddle to Islamgye, at the foot of Magdala.

The king now spoke frequently of the advance of the British. One day he remarked, "With love and friendship the English will conquer me, but if they come otherwise I know that they will not spare, and I shall make a blood-bath and die."

On the day Theodore's army arrived at Arogee, he sent orders up to Magdala that the irons were to be removed from Mr. Rassam. This might be taken as a sign that the king was about to relent, but it was too late—a fact which he seems to have realised himself very shortly after. His conduct now became eccentric in the extreme. He invited the British prisoners to come down to Islamgye and see the great mortar brought up. When the operation was completed, the king conversed with the prisoners, and said that if only his power had been as strong as it was a few years ago, he would have gone to meet the British on landing. Now, however, he had lost all Abyssinia, and had only that rock upon which he must needs wait for them.

Stranger than ever, this once mighty ruler of men admitted to Mr. Rassam that when he was excited he was not responsible for his actions. This was soon proved. On one occasion when the king had drunk to excess, he was aroused by the

clamouring of the native prisoners he had released. Enraged at this, he ordered them all to be put to death, commencing the work of execution himself. Many were hurled alive over the precipice, and those who showed signs of life were shot down by the soldiers. The massacre lasted for three hours, and was responsible for two hundred deaths. According to one of his body-servants, Theodore spent most of the night, after this massacre, in prayer, and was heard to confess that he had been drunk when he committed it.

Meantime, on the 28th March, the British commander-in-chief had encamped at Santava. Two days later the 2nd Brigade arrived, accompanied by the naval brigade from the Rocket, under Captain Fellowes of the Dryad. As usual, the blue-jackets were the very life of the force. They chummed with the native troops. They joked and laughed and danced, and kept everybody in good humour. The close friendship between the sailors and the Sikhs was most amusing. The latter could not speak a word of English, and yet the jolly tars seemed to understand their every wish.

The two hostile forces, which for months had been converging from Debratabor and the sea to the same point at Magdala, were now nearly face to face.

"On that dark basaltic rock," says Markham, "was the hunted fallen king, with only 3000 soldiers, armed with percussion guns and matchlocks, a rabble of spearmen, and a number of pieces of ordnance which his strong will had created, but which his people knew not how to use. Only a faithful few of his followers could be depended on to stand by their brave master to the bitter end. His mighty prestige alone kept the shattered remains of his army together."

So much for the predicament in which Theodore found himself. Now for the British position. In numbers they were nearly equal to the enemy. They were armed and provided with all that science could suggest for such an undertaking, besides, they were in a friendly country, and had abundant supplies.

Bitter must have been the fallen Theodore's reflections now. How he must have sighed for some of his lost power and might as he realised the magnitude of the task awaiting him! Yet he had some power left. The prisoners were still in his hands. It was quite possible for him to make the one object of his enemies turn out badly.

Early on 10th April the 1st Brigade, under Sir Charles Staveley, began the descent of the Beshilo Ravine. The brigade was led up the steep Gumbaji Spur towards Aficho. The 2nd Brigade, under the commander-in-chief, followed. The cavalry was ordered to remain at Beshilo, with instructions to

be in readiness to advance when called upon. It was not intended that the fight should begin before dark.

Colonel Phayre had ascertained that Wark-waha valley was unoccupied by the enemy. A message to this effect was accordingly sent to Sir Robert Napier. Staveley, through whose hands the communication had passed, advanced along the heights, and Napier ordered the naval brigade, A battery, and the baggage to follow the king's road up the Wark-waha ravine. Napier and his staff rode up to the front in the course of the afternoon, and were present at the action. Meanwhile Colonel Phayre reconnoitred the country so far as Arogee plain, and the 1st Brigade advanced along the Aficho plateau.

Right in front loomed Theodore's stronghold, a thousand feet above. All was silence, and nothing stirred to break or mar the stillness. Time passed, and the British force waited anxiously. At last the silence was broken! Between four and five in the afternoon a gun was fired from the crest of Talla, 1200 feet above Arogee. It was followed by another and still another, until the air seemed full of the sound of musketry. Then the British soldiery were amazed and startled. The very pick of Theodore's army poured down upon them, yelling defiance as they came.

It was a trying moment, but the British blue-jackets were not long in realising what it meant. In an instant they got their rocket tubes into position, and opened fire upon the enemy coming from the heights. Staveley also acted without loss of time. All the infantry of his brigade were moved down the steep descent to Arogee. Then the snider rifles opened a fire which no troops on earth could have withstood.

The Abyssinians were simply mowed down. Unable to get within range with their antiquated rifles, they became merely a target for the British fire. Hope must have left them then. Led on by the gallant old warrior, the Fitaurari-Gabriyi, they returned again and again to the charge with great bravery. But men could not struggle against machines. The most heroic courage that ever filled the hearts of heroes was without avail in face of such unequal odds. While the battle of Arogee was in progress, a thunderstorm broke over Magdala, and the roar of the thunder seemed to struggle for mastery against the roar of artillery.

Night came on and stopped the action. It was then found that Gabriyi and most of his chief officers were dead. Slowly the broken Abyssinian force made its way back to Magdala. There was no disorder, and now and then a cheer could be heard from the throats of the defeated warriors. A detachment of the enemy was still left, however, and it advanced to attack the British baggage train. Some stiff fighting followed, in

which the gallantry of Theodore's followers was again manifest. Driven back again and again with great slaughter, the Abyssinians continued to advance, heedless of all danger, until they were checked by the baggage guard. Those of the enemy who had got into the ravine were hemmed in, and their loss was terrible. The Dam-wanz that night is said to have been choked up with dead and dying men, and the little rill at the bottom of the ravine ran red with blood.

The main body of the enemy, too, had not yet reached safety. The blue-jackets had taken up a position more to the front, and into the retreating force they sent rockets, with terrible effect. Shots were also fired at the crest of Talla, whence the guns of Theodore had played, but just when they had got the exact range the naval brigade were ordered to cease firing.

The Abyssinians estimated their force at 3000 armed with guns and matchlocks, and about 1000 spearmen. Of these, from 700 to 800 were killed—349 having been killed on the left attack alone; 1500 were wounded, most of them severely. Many of the survivors fled without returning to Magdala, and all night the Abyssinians were calling to their wounded comrades, and carrying them off the field.

The British numbered close on 2000 men, of whom Captain Roberts and six men of the 4th, twelve of the Punjaub Pioneers, and one Bombay sapper were wounded—two mortally, nine severely, and nine slightly. Four of the wounds inflicted on the Pioneers were from spears, which proved that the fighting was not all on the side of the British.

It was computed that 18,000 rounds of musketry were fired by the British. The action will be remembered in military history as the first in which the snider rifle was used.

Touching in the extreme is the description of events in Theodore's camp on the night of the Arogee battle.

"As the shades of evening closed round, Theodore looked down and saw his army reeling under the deadly fire of the British troops. He walked, sad and desponding, to the foot of the Selassyé Peak, and there in the thick darkness, with peals of thunder resounding over his head, he waited for the return of his chiefs and soldiers. Then a broken remnant began to crowd about him, coming up the steep path. . . . At a glance he saw it all. His army was broken and destroyed, and no hope was left but in concession to an invincible enemy. At midnight he deputed Mr. Flad and Mr. Waldmeier to go up to Magdala and make proposals of peace to Mr. Rassam, confessing that with the destruction of his army his power was gone."

## CHAPTER LVI.

## THE STORMING OF MAGDALA.

1868.

AFTER the day of slaughter at Arogee, Sir Robert Napier hesitated. The safety of the captives was ever in his mind. Upon his forbearance depended their lives, and the signal success of the campaign. A perceptible movement upon Magdala might have deprived the desperate Theodore of every ray of hope, and have caused him to order the immediate slaughter of the captives. And so Sir Robert Napier decided to ask Theodore to surrender. His messengers were actually on their way to the Emperor with a peremptory demand to this effect when they met two strangers, who turned out to belong to the band of captives. The whole party thereupon returned to the British camp. On arrival, one of the captives who had been sent as a messenger by Theodore spoke to Sir Robert.

"I have been sent down to you, Sir Robert, by the Emperor, to ask why it is you have come to this country, what it is you want, and whether you will return to your own country if the captives are released?"

Sir Robert's reply, which he asked the two messengers to convey to Theodore, was explicit in the extreme. "Tell him from me," said Sir Robert, "that I require an instant surrender of the prisoners, with their property, of himself, with the fortresses of Selsasse and Fahla, Magdala and all therein. He may rest assured that honourable treatment will be accorded him."

The captives fulfilled their mission. Theodore was furious, and again he sent them down to the British General with a petition for better terms, "as he was a king, and could not surrender himself to any chief who served a woman. Rather than surrender," he added, "I will fight to the death. Can you not be satisfied with the possession of those you came for, and leave me alone in peace?"

They were sent back by Napier with the message:—"You must surrender yourself unconditionally to the Queen of Britain. Be assured that honourable treatment will be accorded you."

It was then that Rassam, another of the captives, did a very diplomatic thing. He asked the king to repose his trust in him, let the captives go free to the camp, and he guaranteed that the British chief would return to his own country. The king believed in Rassam. He trusted to his influence to reconcile him with the commander-in-chief, and gave him orders to assemble immediately all the European captives, with their property, at the Thafurbate gate of the fortress.

The parting scene was a strange one. Theodore addressed each and all of the captives in an affectionate manner, wishing some of them well, and asking others to forgive him for what he had done to them. As soon as news of their release reached the army, the soldiers hurried to headquarters by hundreds to await their arrival, and eager crowds greeted them. Sixty-one in number, they looked to be in good condition, and were objects of great interest to all.

On Easter Sunday 1000 beeves and 500 sheep were sent by Theodore to Sir Robert Napier, with the hope that the British soldiers would eat their fill and be merry. But Sir Robert was not to be caught napping. He sent an officer up to Magdala to say that he couldn't think of accepting anything from his majesty until himself, his family, and his fortresses were surrendered to the Queen of Britain.

Meanwhile, preparations had been proceeding for taking Magdala by storm. Escalading ladders were made out of dhoolie poles; powder charges, hand grenades, etc. were also made ready for use. The elephants brought up the Armstrong battery to the camp, and, in short, everything was ready for a grand assault, which was expected to take place at noon the following day.

On the morning of Easter Monday, April 13, 1868, there arrived at the British camp eight Abyssinians, richly appavelled. One look sufficed to show that they were chiefs of high degree. Ushered into the presence of the commander-in-chief they stated that they came down to offer Fahla and Selasse on condition that they were allowed to depart unmolested. Their conditions were promptly accepted. They were then questioned as to the whereabouts of Theodore. Their answer was a profound surprise to the British general. They said they expected that the king had either gone to Gojam or to the camp of the Galla Queen Mastevat. Who would have dreamt that the king would have left his fortress? Still, the fact was apparently indisputable, and Napier promptly adopted means for the capture of the missing monarch.

He at once offered a reward of 50,000 dollars for Theodore, dead or alive, and messengers with this announcement were at once despatched to all the neighbouring camps. Next Sir Robert resolved to occupy Fahla and Selasse, and to move upon Magdala. Regiments in columns of fours proceeded to Fahla Plain. First came the Duke of Wellington's Own—a regiment destined to play an important part in the forthcoming last act of the Abyssinian campaign. The road was steep and difficult to negotiate, but the troops, in toiling on, passed enormous boulders until they found themselves full under the noonday sun, on the crest of the gorge between Fahla and Selasse.

On arrival at the heights, six companies of the 33rd Foot advanced with bayonets fixed, driving the natives before them out of the fortress. The chiefs were assured that their people would not be harmed, but that they must leave at once for the plain. As the natives emerged from the pass they were disarmed. When they reached the terraced ridge, where the army was halted, they drew back in fear, but they were soon reassured. Men, women and children were eager to greet the soldiers, for the chiefs had assured them that these were their best friends.

While this strange scene was being witnessed, Colonel Loch and Captain Speedy were manœuvring at the extremity of Selasse, on the road which encircled the fortress and thence led to Magdala. Looking up to the heights the British officers saw a number of men careering about on the plateau which connected Selasse with Magdala. It was ascertained that they belonged to the enemy, and their dress indicated that they were chiefs. When these men saw the cavalry advancing round the corner at Selasse they retired slowly and in good order to Magdala, firing as they went.

As the British proceeded, the officers soon discovered the meaning of the presence of the Abyssinians. They had been attempting to secure a number of cannon and mortars lying at the Selasse end of the plateau. The cannon were at once seized by our men, and were found to be mostly of French and British manufacture.

After retiring as far as the foot of Magdala, a few of the Abyssinians made a pretence of preparing to charge, but apparently hesitated. Along the brow of the famous fortress many dark heads could be seen, and now and then shots awoke the echoes. Suddenly the Abyssinians who were first noticed made a dash towards Captain Speedy and the artillery, which accompanied him. After coming within three hundred yards the natives halted, and judge of the surprise of the British officers when they discovered that the foremost among the company of horsemen was no other than Theodore, king of Abyssinia!

Such a discovery was of course highly satisfactory to the British, who had been somewhat downcast at the report of the king's escape.

As showing the reckless courage of the king, it is said that his words of greeting to the British were, "Come on! Are ye women, that ye hesitate to attack a few warriors?"

As Theodore and his followers showed a disposition to advance, some soldiers of the 33rd were ordered to take up a position commanding all paths leading to the valleys on all sides of the plateau. A company of the 33rd, who had eagerly

ascended Selasse for the purpose of planting their colours on its rampart, were also invited to aid in the defence of the captured artillery.

A few shells were now sent whizzing amongst the Abyssinians, who had by this time commenced a desultory firing. Very soon, growing alarmed at the work of our artillery, the Abyssinians retired for shelter behind some wooden booths. A few more shells, however, soon dislodged Theodore and his men from their hiding places, and they beat a rapid retreat towards Magdala. Still they had not finished, and continued to fire at all who came within reach of their mountain stronghold. Their persistent firing ultimately lured a detachment of the 33rd Foot into action, but without marked effect, and shortly after this orders came from Sir Charles Staveley to cease firing. At the same time the British flag was hoisted above Selasse and Fahla. Only Magdala now remained.

Describing the stronghold, one of the correspondents present says:—"Suppose a platform of rock, oval in shape, and a mile and a half in length, and from a half to three-quarters of a mile in width, rising five hundred feet perpendicularly about a narrow plateau, which connected its northern end with Selasse. The rock was Magdala, the plateau Islamgee. On the western and southern sides Magdala towered above the valley of the Melkaschillo some two thousand feet. The eastern side rose in three terraces of about 600 feet in height, one above another. Its whole summit was covered with houses, straw-thatched, and of a conical shape. The extreme brow of the fortress was defended by a stone wall, on the top of which a hurdle revetment was planted. But the side fronting Islamgee was defended by a lower wall and revetment constructed nearly half way up the slope. In the centre of the revetment was a barbican, up to which led the only available road to the fortress."

Fahla and Selasse having been left in the hands of sufficient garrisons, the remainder of the British troops were withdrawn to Islamgee, where they were halted behind the captured artillery. Sir Robert Napier had been at great pains to ascertain the strength of the fortress. One thing he had made sure of, that at only one point was it assailable, and that was the side which fronted the troops as they stood upon Islamgee.

Then Napier distributed his force in preparation for the attack. Soon twenty guns were thundering at the gates. Theodore could not misunderstand the meaning of the British now. It was surrender or death for him and his followers.

The bombardment lasted two hours. At the end of this period Napier had made up his mind that the defenders were weak, and that the British troops would suffer very little loss

in the assault. He therefore ordered the Royal Engineers, the 33rd, the 45th, and the King's Own to be prepared to carry on the attack. Already the fire from the fortress had ceased. Soon signals for rapid firing were given to the British artillery, and under the furious cannonade which proceeded, the British troops began their march along the plateau.

Upon their arrival within fifty yards of the foot of Magdala, the order was given to the artillery to cease fire. Then the Engineers at once brought their sniders into play, and for ten minutes they and the 33rd and 45th rained a storm of leaden pellets upon the defenders.

Theodore and his brave followers had been concealed while the artillery was at work. Now, however, the king showed himself. Up he sprang, singing out his war-cry, and with his bodyguard he hastened to the gates, prepared to give the invaders a fitting welcome. He posted his men at the loopholes and along the wall, topped with wattled hurdles. Soon his signal was given, and heavy firing was directed upon the advancing soldiers, several of whom were wounded. Next the British fire was concentrated on the barbican and the revetment, through the loopholes of which rays of smoke issuing forth betrayed the presence of the enemy. Slowly the soldiers advanced through the rain which accompanied the thunderstorm which now raged. For a minute there was a pause, and then again a dozen bullets hurtled through the advance guard of the troops, wounding Major Pritchard and several of the Engineers. Then Major Pritchard and Lieutenant Morgan made a dash upon the barbican. They found the gate closed, and the inside of the square completely blocked up with huge stones.

A drummer of the 33rd climbed up the cliff wall. Reaching a ledge, he ascended another, and shouted to his companions to "Come on!" as he had found a way. In a short time the intrepid soldiers had passed all the lower defences, and scattering themselves over the ground they made a rush for the other defence, 75 feet above them, passing over not a few ghastly reminders of the battle. There were obstacles in the way, but they could not stop the excited Irishmen. They leaped forward and fired volley after volley into the faces of the Abyssinians.

Nor must we forget the charge of Drummer Maguire and Private Bergin upon Magdala. It is related that the two men were advancing a few paces from each other to the upper revetment when they saw about a dozen of the enemy aiming at them. The doughty pair immediately opened fire, and so quick and well-directed was it that but few of their assailants escaped. Seeing a host of red-coats advancing upward, the others retreated precipitately. Over the upper revetment both men made their way, and at the same time they observed a man

standing near a grass stack with a revolver in his hand. When he saw them prepare to fire, he ran behind it, and both men plainly heard the shot fired which followed. Advancing, they found him prostrate on the ground, in a dying state, the revolver clutched convulsively in his right hand. To their minds the revolver was but their proper loot, and, without any ceremony, they wrenched it from the grasp of the dying man. The silver plate on the stock, however, arrested their attention, and, on examining it, they deciphered the following inscription—"Presented by Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, to Theodore, Emperor of Abyssinia, as a slight token of her gratitude for his kindness to her servant Plowden, 1854."

The soldiers were in the presence of the Emperor, and he was dying. Soon the rest of the troops followed their leaders, and the British flag was straining from the post which crowned the summit of the Abyssinian stronghold. Then, while the sound of "God Save the Queen" rent the once more peaceful air, and the soldiers of the Queen joined lustily in the triumphant cheers, the once proud Emperor of Abyssinia, in all the gorgeous trappings of his state, and surrounded by a crowd of interested spectators, breathed his last in the stronghold where he had thought to give pause to those he regarded as the enemies of his kingdom.

Soon after "the Advance" was once more sounded, and the soldiers filed in column through the narrow streets, the commander-in-chief and staff following.

When the cost of the assault came to be reckoned, it was found that 17 British had been wounded, though none of them mortally. The Abyssinian dead were estimated at 60, with double that number of wounded.

On the fourth morning after the fall of Magdala, the Abyssinians, to the number of 30,000, commenced their march for Dalanta. Every living soul having left, the gates were blown up, and the houses set on fire. The flames soon did their work, and nothing escaped.

On the 18th April, 1868, the troops turned their faces northward for their homeward march, their object fully attained.

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CHAPTER LVII.

THE BATTLES OF AMOAFUL AND ORDASHU.

1874.

FOR years the Ashantees had been a source of trouble and annoyance to the British settlers on the Gold Coast, and the campaign of 1873-74 was by no means entered upon without

considerable provocation from this barbarous and fanatical people.

With the march of time, Britain extended and strengthened her hold upon the settlement, and ultimately, pursuing this policy, brought out the Danes, and made exchanges with the Dutch there. These proceedings culminated in Britain becoming possessors of the whole of the territory formerly under Dutch protection. The taking over of the Dutch forts caused heart-burning among the Ashantees. Particularly was this the case with regard to Elimina, where, at the time the negotiations for the transfer were being considered, a number of Ashantee troops were lying.

King Koffee Kalkali, the ruler of the Ashantees, protested against the transfer, maintaining that the Dutch had no right to hand over the territory to Britain, as it belonged to him. Notwithstanding, the Dutch contrived to get rid of the truculent Koffee and his followers then stationed at Elimina.

Not only did the Ashantees resent the Anglo-Dutch agreement, but other tribes in several instances also took objection. This especially was the case as regarded the Fanties and Eliminias, who hated each other, and interchanged hostile acts, although by this time both were under one common protection.

The old hatred of Britain had been awakened. King Koffee assumed a dominant and aggressive spirit, and became bent on invasion. To some extent he was abetted by the Eliminias, who, in part at any rate, were disloyal to the whites. From these causes arose the campaign of '73-'74 and the battles of Amoaful and Ordashu.

At the outbreak of hostilities the British force available to resist attack was ridiculously meagre, numbering, it is computed, not more than 600 men, scattered over several stations.

At home, the Government was slow to act, and not until repeated application had been made for white troops was the appeal given heed to.

That renowned soldier Sir Garnet Wolseley was commissioned to operate against the Ashantees. The announcement gave great satisfaction. If the spirit of the wild tribe was to be crushed, it was felt that Sir Garnet was the man to do it. But his task was no light one, and without white troops the issue was doubly doubtful.

His instructions, briefly, were to drive the Ashantees back over the Prah, then to follow and punish them until they should consent to be peaceful, should release their prisoners, and comply with terms necessary to our own interests and those of humanity.

The deadly nature of the Coast, "the white man's grave," was doubtless a potent factor with the Government in that they did not immediately acquiesce with Sir Garnet's request

for white troops. But, as we know, the Government at last acceded, and the regiments selected for service in that disease-pregnated country have added lustre to their fame and also another page of glorious history to the story of the pluck and endurance of Britain's soldiers. The total number of troops under the command of Sir Garnet Wolseley being made up of Colonel Wood's native regiment of 400 men, Major Russell's native regiment of 400, the 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch) 575 strong, the Rifle Brigade 650, 75 men of the 23rd Fusiliers, Royal Naval Brigade 225, 2nd West India Regiment 350, Royal Engineers 40, and Rait's artillery 50.

About the end of October, 1873, Sir Garnet Wolseley began his forward march into the interior. There was fighting to be done ere long, for the enemy made an attempt to arrest the progress of the troops by besieging Abrakrampa, the chief town of the province of Abra, of which the native king was Britain's staunch ally. A three days' ineffectual leaguer ensued, during which the Ashantees lost heavily, while not so much as one white man was injured. With Sir Garnet close behind, the Ashantees thought it best to recross the Prah and retreat towards Coomassie.

Through the dense bush the troops marched in the garish and dazzling sunlight, and at the end of their daily tramp through the hostile country they were glad to lie down and rest in the huts provided for them. In the way of rations the men were well looked after by the commissariat department, the fare being as follows:—One and a half pounds of meat, salt or fresh, one pound of pressed meat, one and a quarter pounds of biscuits, four ounces of pressed vegetables, two ounces of rice or preserved peas, three ounces of sugar, three-quarters of an ounce of tea, half an ounce of salt, one-thirteenth of an ounce of pepper. With such substantial and varied feeding the hardships of the march were minimised and weakness was rare—another striking illustration of the truth of the maxim of the great Napoleon that “an army goes upon its belly.”

The further the British force progressed, denser and loftier grew the forest, although the Engineers with unflagging energy had cleared a pathway as far as the Prah. On the 15th December, 1873, Sir Garnet Wolseley was able to report “the first phase of the war had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion by a few companies of the 2nd West India regiment, Rait's artillery, Gordon's Houssas, and Wood's and Russell's regiments, admirably conducted by the British officers belonging to them, without the assistance of any other troops except the marines and blue-jackets who were upon the station on his arrival.”

Sir Garnet arrived at Prashu on the 2nd January, 1874,

and was joyfully received by the assembled soldiers. Early in the same morning an Ashantee embassy was espied on the other side of the Prah. These ambassadors brought a letter from the truculent King Koffee, in which the wily savage had the audacity to point out that the attack upon him was unjustifiable.

The "Times" correspondent wrote that "many stories were afloat about the King of Ashantee's proceedings. The following is a fair specimen, and illustrates well the extreme superstition of the Ashantees, showing by what influences Koffee is popularly supposed to be guided, and upon what councillors he is supposed to rely in the present crisis. Koffee, the story goes, recently summoned a great meeting of his fetish men, and sought their advice as to how he should act towards Britain, and whether he ought to seek for peace or stake his fortunes on the result of a war. The fetish men at first declined to give an answer, until they had been guaranteed that, no matter what their reply was, their lives should not be forfeited. Having been assured upon this point, they then replied that 'they saw everything dark, except the streets of Coomassie, which ran with blood.' King Koffee was dissatisfied with the vagueness of this reply, and determined to appeal still further to the oracle. He resorted to what he considered a final and conclusive test. Two he-goats were selected, one entirely black, the other of a spotless white colour, and, after due fetish ceremonies had been performed over the two goats, they were set at each other. The white goat easily overcame and killed his opponent. King Koffee, after this test, was satisfied that he was doomed to defeat at the hands of the white men."

He immediately sent the embassies before referred to, to seek for peace, but the object which was of greatest importance to him was to avoid the humiliation of seeing his territory invaded by the whites. When, however, he found that all his conciliatory overtures were powerless to hinder the advance of the British, the national pride of the chiefs and the ardour of the fighting population was too strong to admit of any restraint. These causes, combined with the threatened humiliation of seeing his capital invaded by the British and his fetish supremacy destroyed, nerved him for one desperate effort.

For this final move Sir Garnet was prepared. In his notes for the use of his army the commander says:—

"Each soldier must remember that with his breechloader he is equal to at least twenty Ashantees, wretchedly armed, as they are, with old flint muskets, firing slugs or pieces of stone that do not hurt badly at more than forty or fifty yards range. Our enemies have neither guns nor rockets, and have a superstitious dread of those used by us."

With these and similar heartening instructions, the coming fight was anticipated eagerly by our troops, the Fanties alone, who were employed as transport bearers, proving unreliable. These latter deserted in thousands, thus throwing extra work upon the white troops, many of the regiments having to carry their own baggage.

Information was received at the British headquarters on the 30th January, 1874, that a big battle was pending on the morrow. The natives were assembled in enormous strength, and were prepared to offer a stout resistance. On the eve of the fray the advance guard of the British force was at Quarman, a distance of not more than a couple of miles from Amoaful, one of the principal villages of the country. Between these two places lay the hamlet of Egginassie, and to this point Major Home's Engineers were busily engaged preparing a way for the advancing force.

In front of Amoaful 20,000 of the natives had taken up a position. Of this fanatical horde there was not a man but would be ready to perpetrate the most wanton cruelty, and to whom butchery was but second nature. As usual, the Ashantees were armed with muskets that fired slugs. They held a position of considerable strength upon the slopes of the hill that led to Amoaful. The dense nature of the bush, high walls of foliage, through which our troops had to pass, made it difficult for the soldiers to fire with precision, or make rapid progress. The protection of not only our flanks, but also our rear, was a matter of special importance and anxiety, for in the enclosing screen of underwood it would be no difficult task for a stealthy and numerous foe to surround and decimate small detachments of the not over strong British force. But every precaution was taken to guard against surprise, and the British general had every confidence in each member of his force, officers and men alike.

The troops were early on the move, and with precision they filed into their allotted places. Led by Brigadier Sir Archibald Alison, the front column was comprised of the famous Black Watch, eighty men of the 23rd Fusiliers, Rait's artillery, two small rifled guns manned by Houssas, and two rocket troughs, with a detachment of the Royal Engineers. The left column was under the command of Brigadier McLeod, of the Black Watch, and contained half of the blue-jackets, Russell's native troops, two rocket troughs, and Royal Engineers. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, V.C., of the Perthshire Light Infantry, had charge of the right column, which consisted of the remaining half of the naval brigade, seamen and marines, detachments of the Royal Engineers, and artillery, with rockets and a regiment of African levies. The rear column was made up of the second

battalion of the Rifle Brigade, 580 strong, and the entire force was under the skilful command of Sir Garnet Wolseley.

The forces were disposed so as to form a large square. By this means Sir Garnet hoped to nullify the favourite flank tactics of the enemy, but to some extent the formation had to be broken on account of the entangling brushwood.

The battle of Amoaful was fought on the 31st January. Lord Gifford and his scouts were the first to get in touch with the enemy, and the desultory firing heard warned the leading column that the conflict was opening. The British forces met opposition about eight in the morning, and soon after the spitting of red musketry and the curl of white smoke were conspicuous in the dark, thick bush. So fierce was the onslaught that it is calculated that had the Ashantees used bullets instead of slugs scarcely a man of the Black Watch would have lived to tell the tale. Nine officers and about a hundred men of the regiment were rendered useless by the blinding fire of the Ashantees. The marshy nature of the ground impeded progress, and in the underwood the skulking natives fired incessantly at the advancing troops.

Under a heavy fire, the left column were struggling to oust the enemy. There, while urging on his men, the gallant Captain Buckle, R.E., was mortally wounded, having been hit by two slugs in the region of the heart.

The troops succeeded in occupying the crest of the hill, where a clearing had been made, and the enemy was driven away from this position by an advance of the naval brigade and Russell's regiment.

"Colonel McLeod," says Sir Garnet Wolseley, "having cleared his front, and having lost touch of the left column, now cut his way in a north-easterly direction, and came into the rear of the Highlanders about the same hour that the advance occupied Amoaful. I protected his left rear by a detachment of the Rifle Brigade. Our left flank was now apparently clear of the enemy."

The right column were also soon hotly engaged, and so dense was the jungle between it and the main road that the men, in firing, had the greatest difficulty to avoid hitting their comrades of the Black Watch.

Mr. Henty, regarding this, says:—"Anxious to see the nature of the difficulties with which the troops were contending, I went out to the right column, and found the naval brigade lying down and firing into a dense bush, from which, in spite of their heavy firing, answering discharges came incessantly, at a distance of some twenty yards or so. The air above was literally alive with slugs, and a perfect shower of leaves continued to fall upon the earth. The sailors complained that either

the 23rd or 42nd were firing at them, and the same complaint was made against the naval brigade by the 42nd and 23rd. No doubt there was, at times, justice in these complaints, for the bush was so bewilderingly dense that men soon lost all idea of the points of the compass, and fired in any direction from which shots came."

Casualties in the right columns were also numerous, and Colonel Wood, the commander, was brought in with an iron slug in his chest. The command of the wing now devolved on Captain Luxmore. But though the village was entered, the fighting was by no means at an end, and a final great effort was made by the Ashantees to turn the rear and drive the British from Amoaful. Sir Garnet immediately ordered the Rifle Brigade, hitherto unemployed in the battle, to take the back track and defend the line of communication towards Querman.

This was about one o'clock in the afternoon, and the Rifles succeeded in repulsing the natives. It will thus be seen that on all sides of the square the Ashantees had tried to break through. For more than an hour they maintained the attack, but the resistance offered completely set their attempts at naught. The climax came when Sir Garnet, observing that the Ashantee fire was slackening, gave orders for the line to advance, and to wheel round, so as to drive the enemy northwards before it.

The movement was splendidly carried out. The wild Kosses and Bonnymen of Wood's regiment, cannibals, who had fought steadily and silently so long as they had been on the defensive, now raised their shrill war-cry, slung their rifles, drew their cutlasses, and like so many wild beasts, dashed into the bush to close with the enemy, while the Rifles, quietly and in an orderly manner as if upon parade, went on in extended order, scouring every bush with their bullets, and in five minutes from the time the "Advance" sounded, the Ashantees were in full and final retreat. Even then the enemy were not inclined to take their beating without protest, and for several hours continued to harass the troops by sudden but abortive rushes.

Terrible carnage had been wrought on the Ashantees. The losses they suffered have been estimated at between 800 and 1200 killed and wounded. The king of Mampon, who commanded the Ashantee right, was mortally wounded. Amanquatia, who commanded the left, was killed; and Appia, one of the great chiefs engaged in the centre, was also slain.

The British loss was over 200 officers and men killed and wounded, the Black Watch suffering most heavily, having one officer killed, and 7 officers and 104 men wounded. In his despatch Sir Garnet said:—

"Nothing could have exceeded the admirable conduct of the 42nd Highlanders, on whom fell the hardest share of the work"—the highest praise for which any regiment could wish.

Having thus delivered a crushing blow to native power, the troops marched forward to complete the work which they had so well begun. It was evident that before the spirit of the Ashantee savage could be thoroughly broken Coomassie must be entered. Towards this end, Sir Garnet and his troops immediately set their faces.

Hard fighting, however, was not yet at an end, and on the day following the rout at Amoaful, February 1st, the Ashantees made a stand at Becquah, an important town standing a short distance from the line of communication, and which would undoubtedly have been the cause of considerable trouble and loss of life had the General moved directly north without causing the place to be destroyed.

Only about a mile separated the camp from Becquah, and the force creeping silently upon the village, soon engaged with the enemy. Sharp firing took place, and the natives, unable to withstand the assault, turned tail and fled. The men of the naval brigade were the first to enter the place, and soon the huts were a mass of flames. Some native accoutrements and much corn fell into our hands. Following this, several villages which lay between Amoaful and Coomassie were taken with comparatively little fighting, the Ashantees having evidently taken much to heart the severe loss inflicted on them on 31st January. Each village passed through had its human sacrifice lying in the middle of the path, for the purpose of affrighting the conquerors.

"The sacrifice," says Mr. Stanley, "was of either sex, sometimes a young man, sometimes a woman. The head, severed from the body, was turned to meet the advancing army, the body was evenly laid out, with the feet towards Coomassie. This laying out meant no doubt, 'regard this face, white men; ye whose feet are hurrying on to our capital, and learn the fate awaiting you.'"

The spectacle was sickening, and the wanton cruelty made the victorious troops even more determined and anxious to put an end to these frightful barbarities.

From behind a series of ambuscades, the advance was again resisted at the river Ordah. After clearing out the enemy, it was learned that a large force had assembled at Ordashu, a village situated about a mile and a half beyond the northern bank of the river. Things had become serious for the Ashantees, and King Koffee now sent another letter to Sir Garnet, imploring him to halt in order that he might gather the indemnity, at the same time promising to give up his hostages,

the heir-apparent and the queen mother. Sir Garnet's reply was firm. He would march to Coomassie unless King Koffee fulfilled his promise by the next morning. The hostages failed to arrive, and the British troops were on the forward move at half-past seven in the morning.

The advance guard, consisting of Gifford's scouts, the Rifle Brigade, Russell's regiment, and Rait's artillery, were early in touch with the enemy, who had sought to impede progress at Ordashu. King Koffee himself directed the battle from a village nearly a couple of miles from the scene of conflict. As the successive companies marched up they became engaged, and the firing was fast and furious. The enemy must now drive back the invaders or submit, and the throes of this final struggle for supremacy between barbarity and civilisation, the Ashantees fought with great bravery. But the Rifle Brigade proved as steady as a rock. When they moved it was forward, the rapid fire of the sniders and the well-placed shots of Rait's artillery gradually demoralising the defenders.

In this fashion the Rifle Brigade were gradually drawing close up to the village, and at the critical moment, with a ringing cheer and a rush, they carried the day. Although the village had been occupied the natives continued to rush to their doom, and the terrible loss inflicted on them by the Rifles was greatly added to by the naval brigade's fire and that of the troops of the main column, as they attempted to carry out their favourite flank movement.

The corpses lay thick on the roadside, while the bush was littered with dead and dying. Sir Garnet rushed the whole of the army through Ordashu, and then, without loss of time, "the Forty-Twa" were again in the van, heading towards Coomassie, a sufficient force having been left to guard Ordashu.

At Coomassie the troops had little difficulty in effecting occupation. The king and his household had fled, and further fight in the Ashantees there was none. Lord Gifford's scouts were the first to enter the town, and were followed by the Black Watch.

Coomassie, a veritable Golgotha, was razed to the ground, the palace destroyed, and the fierce spirit of the Ashantees quelled.

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## CHAPTER LVIII.

### THE BATTLES WITH THE ZULUS.

1879.

SAYS a writer in "Blackwood's Magazine," in March, 1879:—  
 "To break the military power of the Zulu nation, to save our

colonies from apprehensions which have been paralysing all efforts at advancement, and to transform the Zulus from the slaves of a despot who has shown himself both tyrannical and cruel, and as reckless of the lives as of the rights of his subjects . . . is the task which has devolved upon us in South Africa, and to perform which our troops have crossed the Tugela."

Such causes enumerated above would appear to the unprejudiced observer to be more than sufficient *raison d'être* for the British invasion of Zululand, but when one takes into account the unimpeachable statements of those long resident in the adjacent colony of Natal, one cannot help believing them to be a direct, if not wilful, misrepresentation of the facts.

The kingdom of Zululand in 1873 lay, as all are aware, between the British colony of Natal on the south and the Transvaal Republic on the north. Now, while the Natal border had always been in a state of quiet and peacefulness, and the nearer settlers were on friendly terms with their Zulu neighbours, the northern border of the kingdom was in a constant state of unrest. For one thing, the Transvaal Boers were, upon one pretext and another, constantly encroaching in a southerly direction on the confines of Zululand; for another, they were in the habit of treating the Zulus and other tribes with an unpardonable severity.

The accusations brought above against Cetewayo, King of Zululand, appear also to have been largely unfounded. He was crowned, at his own request, by the British Commissioner, on the 8th August, 1873, and had ruled his people well and in a fairly enlightened manner, though it is true he observed many barbarous native customs in the punishment of Zulu offenders. He may, however, be declared to be a competent and capable native ruler.

Zululand being at this time under British protection, though ruled by Cetewayo, the Zulus were not permitted to resent the intrusions of the Boers upon their borders by a recourse to arms. When, however, on April 17, 1877, Great Britain, in the person of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, annexed the Transvaal Republic, on the ground of its mismanagement, incapability, and gross ill-treatment of the native races by slavery and other means, it was felt by Cetewayo that the time had at last come when the question of his disturbed border would be satisfactorily adjusted.

The Transvaal Boers were "paralysed" when the edict of annexation was read to them, and strong protests were issued to the British Government against this high-handed proceeding. Accordingly every effort was made to conciliate the Boers until such time as they should have settled down under the new regime, almost the first of these concessions taking the form of

an anti-Zulu view of the border question. Upon this question of the Transvaal-Zulu border, the whole matter of the war now turned.

As late as 1876 the Zulu people begged that the Governor of Natal "will take a strip of the country, the length and breadth of which is to be agreed upon between the Zulus and the Commissioners (for whom they ask) sent from Natal, the strip to abut on the colony of Natal and to run to the northward and eastward in such a manner as to interpose all its length between the Boers and the Zulus, and to be governed by the colony of Natal."

Such a Commission was appointed, and, on December 11th, 1878, the boundary award was delivered to the Zulus at the Lower Tugela Drift. It was, on the whole, favourable to the Zulus, but so fenced about with warnings and restrictions as to be virtually negative in tone, and, in fact, many have asserted that by this time the British Government had made up its mind to the annexation of Zululand. In any event, the award was followed up with an ultimatum from Sir Bartle Frere, containing thirteen specific demands. One of these entailed the "disbanding of the Zulu army, and the discontinuance of the Zulu military system."

By this time a considerable British force was present in Natal to protect the interests of the colony, and as a "means of defending whatever the British Government finds to be its unquestionable rights."

The reasons given for the issue of the ultimatum were three in particular. The first had reference to the affair of Sihayo. On July 28, 1878, a wife of the chief Sihayo, an under-chief of Cetewayo's, had left her husband and escaped into Natal. Hither she was followed by Sihayo's two chief sons and brother, conveyed back to Zululand, and there put to death in accordance with the native custom for such an offence. These culprits the Natal Government now demanded should be given up to be tried in the Natal courts. Cetewayo, however, did not regard the offence as a serious one, and offered money compensation in place of the surrender of the young men, "looking upon the whole affair as the act of rash boys, who, in their zeal for their father's honour, did not think what they were doing."

The demand for the person of the Swazi chief, Umbilini, formed the second point. This chief, a Swazi, was not under the jurisdiction of Cetewayo, and though he was charged, and had been frequently convicted of raiding, Cetewayo was in no way responsible for his acts, otherwise than as an over-lord.

The temporary detention of two Englishmen, Messrs. Smith and Deighton, formed the third especial grievance, and for these several offences large fines in the way of cattle were demanded

in the ultimatum. Says Miss Colenso, daughter of the then Bishop of Natal, and historian of the war:—

“The High Commissioner (Sir Bartle Frere) was plainly determined not to allow the Zulus the slightest “law,” which, indeed, was wise in the interests of war, as there was considerable fear that, in spite of all grievances and vexations, Cetewayo, knowing full well, as he certainly did, that collision with the British must eventually result in his destruction, might prefer half a loaf to no bread, and submit to our exactions with what grace he could. And so probably he would; for from all accounts every effort was made by the king to collect the fines of cattle and propitiate the Government.”

Such efforts were, however, unavailing, owing to the shortness of time allowed for collecting the cattle, and no extension of the period was granted. Moreover, in the natural agitation caused among the Zulus by the grave turn events were taking, any concentration of troops on the other side of the border was construed into an intention on the part of the Zulu king to attack Natal, and urged as an additional reason for our beginning hostilities.

On the 11th January, 1879, the allotted period having expired, war was declared.

“The British forces,” ran the document, “are crossing into Zululand to exact from Cetewayo reparation for violations of British territory committed by the sons of Sihayo and others,” and to enforce better government of his people. “All who lay down their arms will be provided for, . . . and when the war is finished the British Government will make the best arrangements in its power for the future good government of the Zulus.”

On the 4th inst., Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford, who had been resident in the colony since August, '78, was appointed commander-in-chief of Her Majesty's forces in South Africa.

Ulundi was to be the objective of the campaign, the British force to be divided into four columns, which should enter Zululand at four different points, and concentrated on Ulundi.

No. 1 Column, under Colonel Pearson, was to assemble on the Lower Tugela at Fort Pearson. It consisted of a company of the Royal Engineers, 2nd Battalion of the Buffs, 99th regiment, naval brigade with two guns and one gatling, one squadron of mounted infantry, about 200 Natal volunteers, two battalions of the 2nd regiment Natal native contingent, one company of Natal native pioneers, and a detachment of Royal Artillery.

No. 2 Column was to co-operate with No. 1. Colonel Dumford was in command, and the corps was composed almost entirely of natives; the Natal native horse, 315 in number, the

Natal native contingent and pioneers, and three battalions of the 1st regiment, with a rocket battery composed it.

Colonel Glyn commanded the 3rd Column, and Rorke's Drift was the point selected for the crossing of this body of troops. It consisted of six guns of the Royal Artillery, one squadron of mounted infantry, the 24th regiment, 200 Natal volunteers, 150 mounted police, the second battalion of the 3rd regiment, with pioneers, native contingent, and a company of Royal Engineers.

No. 4 Column, under Colonel (afterwards Sir Evelyn) Wood, V.C., was to advance on the Blood River. Its strength was made up of Royal Artillery, the 13th regiment, 90th regiment, frontier light horse, and 200 of the native contingent.

In addition to the four columns, a fifth, under Colonel Rowlands, composed of the 80th regiment and mounted irregulars, was available. The total fighting force numbered some 7000 British and 9000 native troops—16,000 in all, with drivers. The Zulu army was estimated at not less than 40,000 strong.

Probably no campaign has ever opened so disastrously for British arms as that which was undertaken against Cetewayo in January, 1879. At first sight, all appeared easy enough. Preparations were made upon a complete scale. Both transport and means of communication were regarded as highly satisfactory, and the first movements were conducted with success, and the two centre columns, Nos. 2 and 3, crossed the Tugela in safety, and effected their proposed junction in front of Rorke's Drift. Many cattle and sheep were captured in these first skirmishes of the campaign, and some few Zulus were killed with but slight loss on the British side.

On the morning of the 22nd January information came to hand of the presence of a large Zulu army in front of the two centre columns, and Lord Chelmsford himself, with the greater portion of his force, advanced to clear the way. A force consisting of five companies of the 1st battalion 24th regiment, a company of the 2nd battalion, with two guns, 104 mounted colonials, and 800 natives were left to guard the camp at Isandhlwana, which contained a valuable convoy of supplies. It was 1.30 a.m. or thereabouts when the advance columns with Lord Chelmsford left camp, coming first into contact with the enemy at about five miles distant. Till about 8 a.m. nothing happened in camp worthy of notice. About this time, however, detachments of Zulus were noticed coming in from the north-east, and immediately the force got under arms.

Slowly the Zulus began to work round to the rear of the British camp, and very shortly the 24th regiment found themselves surrounded. At this point the camp followers and native troops fled as best they could, the Zulus killing with the assegai

all they could lay hands on. In a little while the British were entirely overwhelmed.

Says Miss Colenso:—"After this period (1.30 p.m.) no one living escaped from Isandhlwana, and it is supposed the troops had broken, and falling into confusion, all had perished after a brief struggle."

One bright incident alone stands out distinctly on this fatal 22nd January. On the storming of the camp by the Zulus, Lieutenants Melville and Coghill rode from the camp with the colours of their regiment. On they spurred in their frantic flight to the Tugela, and Coghill safely stemmed the torrent and landed on the farther shore. Melville, however, while in mid stream, lost his horse, but clinging to the beloved colours, battled with the furious torrent with all the energy of despair. The Zulus pressed upon them. Quick as thought, Coghill put his charger once more into the current, and struggled to the assistance of his brother officer, and, despite the fact that a Zulu bullet made short work of his horse, the two devoted men succeeded in making their escape with the colours still in their hands. The respite was not for long, however. Soon the yelling hordes were upon them, and, fighting fiercely to the last, Lieutenants Melville and Coghill died bravely upholding the honour of their country.

Meantime the advance party had pushed forward, and came in touch now and again with the enemy, who ever fell back before them, till about midday, when it was determined to return to camp. About this time word came to hand of heavy firing near the camp, and returning gradually till about six o'clock, when at a distance of only two miles from the waggons, "four men were observed slowly advancing towards the returning force. Thinking them to be enemy, fire was opened, and one of the men fell. The others ran into the open, holding up their hands, to show themselves unarmed." They proved to be the only survivors of the native contingent. "The camp was found tenanted by those who were taking their last long sleep."

Nearly 4000 Zulus were found dead in the neighbourhood of Isandhlwana, showing the stout resistance made by our men. But, at the best, the disaster was a fearful one, the total Imperial losses being put at over 800 officers and men.

The night of the 22nd January saw another historic incident of the war—the heroic defence of Rorke's Drift. At this important ford of the Tugela, vital to the British lines of communication, were stationed Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead, and B company, 2nd battalion 24th regiment. One hundred and thirty-nine men in all constituted the numbers of this devoted band. A mission station, one building of which was

used as a hospital, and one as a commissariat store, made up Rorke's Drift.

At 3.15 p.m. (the time has been noted with great accuracy), Lieutenant Chard, who was down by the river, heard the sound of furious galloping. Louder and louder grew the hoof-beats, and ere long two spent and almost beaten horsemen drew sudden rein upon the Zulu bank of the Tugela. Wildly they demanded to be ferried across, and in a few frenzied words told the terrible tale of Isandhlwana. The Zulus were coming, they cried, and not a moment was to be lost!

One of them, Lieutenant Adendorf, remained behind to aid in the defence; the other was despatched post haste to Helpmakaar, the next point in the communications, to warn the troops and bring up reinforcements. Rorke's Drift must be held at whatever cost and against any odds! With feverish, but well-directed haste, all hands set to work to put the mission buildings into a state of defence. Mr. Dalton, of the Commissariat Department, assisted ably in the work that every man now tackled with a will. Loopholes were made in the buildings, and by means of two waggons and walls of mealie bags, they were connected and provisioned with the stores.

At this time, between 4 and 4.30 p.m., an officer of Dumford's Horse, with about 100 men, arrived, but these being totally spent, were sent on to Helpmakaar, and the Rorke's Drift garrison prepared cheerfully to face the foe. They were not long in coming. Whilst Lieutenant Chard was in the midst of constructing "an inner work of biscuit boxes, already two boxes high," about 4.30 p.m., the first of the enemy, some 600, appeared in sight. Rushing up to within fifty yards of the now extended position, they yelled defiance at the defenders, but a heavy fire from the loopholed masonry gave them pause at once.

From now on, the defence of Rorke's Drift became one prolonged and watchful struggle. Again and again the frenzied Zulus threw themselves against the slender defences of the gallant band, and again and again were they hurled back, now with rifle fire, now with bayonet, but ever backward. Darkness set in, and still the rushes continued, till at length it was found necessary to retreat into the inner line of defence composed of the biscuit-boxes aforementioned. At length the enemy succeeded in setting the hospital on fire, and the awful task of removing the sick, under the fearful odds, was taken in hand. Alas! not all could be removed, and many perished. No effort, however, was spared to get them all out, and at the last, with ammunition all expended, Privates Williams, Hook, R. Jones, and W. Jones held the door with the bayonet against the Zulu horde.

Now and again the battered entrenchments were repaired with mealie bags, and still the unequal fight went on. By midnight the little band was completely surrounded, and the light of the burning hospital, showing off garrison and assailants, revealed the awful struggle that was going on in the lurid light. "Never say die!" was the principle of the garrison, and it was carried out to the letter.

At 4 a.m. on the 23rd January the Zulu fire slackened, and by daybreak the enemy was out of sight. Hand grasped hand, as it was slowly realised that the foe were beaten back and the flag was still fluttering over the gallant garrison. Even now Lieutenant Chard, nearly dead beat as was he and were all his men, relaxed no effort, and the work of repairing the defences went forward. Not without cause, for about 7 a.m. more Zulus appeared upon the hills to the south-west, but about an hour later No. 3 Column arrived upon the spot, and the enemy fell back. Seventeen killed and ten wounded were the casualties of the little garrison, while more than 350 Zulus lay dead around the mission station. At one time the number of the attacking force was estimated at 3000.

Rorke's Drift, however, apart, the disaster to the British at Isandhlwana was paralysing in its effect upon not only the colony of Natal, but the home country. The outcry against Lord Chelmsford was bitter in both places. He was accused of having neglected the simple precautions which the Boers had always adopted in fighting with the Zulus, and which had been observed in our own campaigns against the Kaffirs. Though the silent celerity, the cunning, and the reckless bravery of the foe were well known, the camp at Isandhlwana had been pitched in a site singularly exposed and indefensible; it had not been protected even by a single trench, nor were the waggons "laagered." The arrangements for scouting had permitted a large Zulu force to assemble unperceived. The small party in Natal of which the Bishop of Colenso may be regarded as the leader, argued that Sir Bartle Frere had not only commenced an unjust war, but had commenced it with inadequate resources. Other parties declared it to be a military accident which ordinary prudence could not have foreseen.

Panic, however, reigned for a season in Natal. "It is impossible," wrote Mr. Archibald Forbes, the special correspondent of the "Daily News," in a graphic description of the situation which appeared on May 7, 1879, "to imagine a more critical situation than that now existing round the frontier of Zululand. The British territory lies at the mercy of the Zulus."

With such a state of affairs, the pacific intentions of King Cetewayo were never more clearly shown than at the present

junction, when he failed to press home the advantage his people had already won. Instead, the king once more made overtures of peace. "Cetewayo," ran one message, "sees no reason for the war which is being waged against him, and he asks the Government to appoint a place at which a conference could be held, with a view to the conclusion of peace." Added to such messages as these the Government expressed, through Sir Stafford Northcote, its anxiety "to promote an early and reasonable pacification of South Africa."

Miss Colenso's observations at this juncture are emphatic in the extreme:—"The High Commissioner's (Sir Bartle Frere's) habit of finding evil motives for every act of the Zulu king, made the case of the latter hopeless from the first."

Be these things as they may, the war, once begun, was carried on—but under new auspices.

With a feeling of relief the public learned, on May 26th, that Sir Garnet Wolseley had been sent out to South Africa to take command of the forces, and to conduct, as the Queen's Commissioner, the Governments of Natal and the Transvaal, and our relations with the Zulus. In making this appointment, the Government were careful to explain that no slight, either upon Sir Bartle Frere or Lord Chelmsford was intended, but that "an arrangement by which the chief civil and military authority at the seat of war was distributed among several persons, could no longer be deemed adequate." On June 28th, Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived in Natal.

Meanwhile, the other columns of the expedition had been operating with more or less success elsewhere. On the day of Isandhlwana, Colonel Pearson's column had been engaged against an impi of 5000 Zulus, ten miles south of Ekowe, and defeated them with heavy loss. With 1200 men he then prepared to hold the carefully-entrenched position he had selected round the mission buildings at Ekowe. In a very brief space of time he found himself cut off from his communications, and hemmed in on all sides by the enemy. By means of heliograph signals communication was kept up by the beleaguered force and Fort Tenedos, the base of relief on the Tugela, and by this means it was soon ascertained that towards the end of March the defenders would be hard pressed for provisions. Relief was accordingly hurried forward, and on the 29th of the month a column of 4000 British troops fresh from England, and 2000 natives, started from the Tugela. Every possible precaution was observed by Lord Chelmsford, who commanded in person. At early dawn on the 2nd April, Colonel Pearson flashed intelligence to the relieving force that the enemy were approaching.

The Zulus swept on with their usual reckless valour, and

were met with a perfect hail of lead and fire, gatlings and rocket batteries being used with deadly effect. Again and again they renewed the onset, but "never got nearer than twenty yards to the shelter trenches," and after an hour and a half of splendid fight, they broke and fled. The cavalry cut down the fugitives, and of their force of 10,000, 1500 lay dead upon the field. This engagement at Gingihlovo, resulting in the relief of Colonel Pearson, cost us but a trifling loss.

Elsewhere, Colonels Wood and Rowlands had joined hands, and were pressing Umbilini, the Swazi chief, who had succeeded in cutting up some 45 men of the 80th regiment while sleeping in camp on the Intombi river. Colonel Wood, on March 28th, captured this chief's stronghold at Hlobani, but while returning to his camp with many captured cattle, was trapped by the whole Zulu impi, and, on the following day, his camp at Kam-bula was attacked by 20,000 Zulus. For four hours a desperate fight ensued, but finally the enemy were driven off. Soon after this Umbilini himself was killed.

The tide of war now turned. By the 15th April all the British reinforcements had arrived, and the invasion of the enemy's country, deferred by Isandhlwana, was again considered. Ulundi, as before, the king's chief kraal, was the objective of the expedition, and much time was yet spent in getting together supplies for the large force now about to be employed, and in considering the route it was to take.

The interval now elapsing was conspicuous for an occurrence which threw a gloom over the whole field force, and even the continent of Europe itself.

On June 2nd, the young Prince Imperial of France, who had been allowed to proceed to South Africa largely as a spectator of the military operations, was sent with a small escort of troopers to examine the proposed line of march from the Itilezi Hill. Lieutenant Carey of the 98th went with him. Ever eager in adventure, and careless of personal risk, the Prince insisted upon setting out with only a portion of his escort, the others not having turned out in time. The discovery of a good water supply for the next camping ground was the object of the reconnaissance. Never for a moment supposing that the Prince and Lieutenant Carey would proceed far without the Basuto members of their escort, whose extraordinary powers of sight and hearing rendered them invaluable on such an occasion, Colonel Harrison and Major Grenfell rode back after a certain distance. The others went on alone. About 3 p.m. the little party halted at a deserted kraal, deciding to leave again in an hour's time, but before the hour was over the native guide came hastening in to say that a Zulu had been sighted coming over the hill. The Prince never foolhardy, at once

gave the order to "Mount!" But the Zulus were quicker. Firing a volley from the mealies, which grew high on every side, they rushed down, assegai in hand. All succeeded in mounting but the Prince, whose spirited grey charger would not be controlled. In a moment he was alone, on foot, surrounded by the savage foe. Turning round, on seeing his riderless horse, several of the troopers saw the Prince running towards them on foot. "Not a man turned back. They galloped wildly on." Some distance later they met Colonels Wood and Buller, and to them they made the melancholy report.

Next day, General Marshall, with a cavalry patrol, went out to search for the Prince, and lying in a donga, 200 yards from the kraal, they found his body, stripped bare with the exception of a gold chain and cross which he wore round his neck. There were no less than eighteen assegai wounds in the body, every one of them in front, as he had died fearless to the last and facing the relentless foe. The bodies of two troopers were found some distance away; they had been killed in their flight.

"What citizen of 'Maritzburg,' says the historian of the war, "will ever forget the melancholy Sunday afternoon, cold and storm-laden, when, at the first distant sound of the sad approaching funeral music, all left their homes and lined the streets through which the violet-adorned coffin passed on its way to its temporary resting place?"

Transferred at Durban to the flagship of Commodore Richards, the *Boadicea*, and thence, at Simons Bay to *H.M.S. Orontes*, the body of the gallant boy was brought to England with every mark of sorrow and respect. Lieutenant Carey was found by court-martial to be guilty of misbehaviour before the enemy, but military opinion condemned the verdict, and on his arrival in England he was released from arrest. All ranks and all classes were profoundly sympathetic towards the Prince's mother, the ex-Empress Eugenie.

In this interval of waiting also, the bodies of those who died at Isandhlwana were at length interred, the 24th regiment burying its own dead before the assembled battalions.

Once more Cetewayo was reported to be eager to submit, and on June 30th chiefs of rank arrived at Lord Chelmsford's camp, bearing elephants' tusks, the Zulu symbol of good faith. They were told that the British army would advance to a position on the left bank of the Umoolori river, and there halt, if certain conditions were complied with. These were that the two seven-pounders captured at Isandhlwana and the captured cattle, should be restored by chiefs of authority, and one of his regiments should come and lay down its arms.

By noon on July 3rd these demands were not complied with, and some of our men who went down to the river to water were

fired on by the Zulus. On July 4 the whole force crossed the river at 6.45 a.m. and advanced towards Ulundi. Streams of Zulus soon appeared on every side. The cavalry on the right and left became engaged two hours later, and slowly retiring as the enemy advanced, passed into "the square," which had been drawn up in a singularly advantageous position. The enemy advanced in loose formation, throwing out, however, the customary "horns" of the Zulu impi. Then, when the distance was sufficiently reduced, the fire of the infantry commenced. The enemy fired rapidly, but, as usual, with little effect. The British artillery fire was tremendous. Volley after volley swept through the Zulu ranks as they rushed boldly in to the attack, but the issue was not long. The devoted "braves" began to waver, and the ripe moment was seized upon by Lord Chelmsford. The cavalry swept out of the square, which opened to let them through, and within an hour the Zulus were in full retreat. The 17th Lancers wrought tremendous execution, killing and riding down in all directions. No less than 150 of the enemy fell before this squadron alone.

Brief, as described, was the battle of Ulundi, which terminated the Zulu campaign. The credit of the victory admittedly belongs to Lord Chelmsford, who thus regained much of the prestige which he had forfeited at Isandhlwana.

The British lost 10 killed at Ulundi; the Zulus nearly 1000. Our force numbered 4000 Europeans and 1100 natives; the Zulus counted 20,000 in all.

Later in the day the army advanced to Ulundi, burnt it with all the other military kraals and returned to camp. Nearly all the leading chiefs in Zululand marked the victory by their submission.

Cetewayo himself, footsore and weary, was run to earth on the morning of August 28th in a kraal near the Black Umoolosi. The kraal was surrounded, and the king bidden to come forth. Cetewayo, creeping out, stood with kingly composure and defiance among the dragoons. He was taken by sea to Cape Town and there confined in the castle. He was a man of splendid physique, and, says a writer, "showed good-humoured resignation." He took to European clothes, and was photographed.

The terms of peace were subsequently dictated by Sir Garnet Wolseley at Ulundi, on the 1st September—the anniversary day of Cetewayo's coronation.

## CHAPTER LIX.

## THE BATTLE OF MAZRA.

1880.

THE battle of Mazra, one of the stiffest of the many battles between Britain and Afghanistan, was the deciding blow in a campaign with a curious history.

About 1878, hostilities were very pronounced in Afghanistan against Britain, and, as a result of these, the Ameer, who appeared unnerved at the troubles, abdicated the throne. This action after a time was consented to, General Roberts temporarily taking over the supreme control.

While Britain was casting about for someone qualified to fill the position of Ameer, Abdurrahman Khan appeared on the scene. Abdurrahman was the son of Afzool, and nephew of the Ameer, Sheer Ali. He had taken a prominent part in the rebellions formed by his father and uncle against the Ameer. This prince entered the country with a few followers, and in the belief that, from the capacity he had displayed during Sheer Ali's time, he was likely to make a good ruler, negotiations were opened up with him on behalf of the British Government. Eventually he accepted the position of Ameer, and was installed at Cabul.

While these events had been taking place in and about Cabul, Ayoob Khan, the brother of Yakoob Khan, who had been deposed, was at Herat. During Sheer Ali's rule, Yakoob Khan and Ayoob Khan had together governed Herat independently of their father, and as soon as it became known to Ayoob that the Indian Government had resolved not to place Yakoob Khan on the musnud of Cabul, he began making preparations to assert, by force of arms, his own claim to the Ameer'ship.

The intention of the new claimant was to make an advance on Kandahar, the capital, and it was as a result of the success of this movement that the battle of Mazra had ultimately to be fought. During several months Ayoob, with fixed determination, occupied himself in making arrangements for the advance on Kandahar, and so satisfactorily had these been accomplished that by the 9th June, 1880, he was ready to form his camp outside the walls of Herat, preparatory to a march forward. The town of Herat is situated about 367 miles from Kandahar, and, as a matter of fact, the Indian Government was somewhat sceptical as to Ayoob's capability of marching an army so far. Nevertheless he did it, with what results we shall see.

About the 12th June the claimant commenced his march. His army at starting consisted of 2500 cavalry, of whom only 900 were regulars, the rest being Khazadars, or mounted militia ;

ten regiments of infantry, varying in strength from 350 to 500 men; and 5 batteries, including one mule battery, with about 30 guns. Roughly, he had altogether between 7000 and 8000 men, and when it is remembered how hardy and resolute the average Afghan is, this in itself was a fairly formidable enemy that had set its mask towards the capital of Kandahar.

Hearing of the advance of Ayooob, British forces were at once posted to various parts of the country to obstruct the journey forward, but it was not to be; for, as was afterwards discovered, the unusual precedent was to present itself to Britain of her beginning a campaign in very bad fashion and finishing up brilliantly.

We have already referred to the strength of the forces which Ayooob Khan was to lead, and with these he made splendid progress on his journey to the capital. The obstructions which were put in his way were easily overcome, and the defeat of General Burrows was one of Ayooob's greatest triumphs of the campaign.

By about 20th July Kandahar was occupied by about 4000 British troops, and on the 9th August General Roberts, according to orders, started his famous march from Cabul to relieve Kandahar.

About this time Ayooob Khan's army was considerably strengthened by Ghilzais, having an army then under his control of nearly 20,000. But the real crisis was only brewing, and the splendid skill and resource of that ablest of British generals, Sir Frederick Roberts, was soon to be rewarded in the splendid triumph of Mazra.

The arrangements made by General Roberts prior to setting out on his famous mission to Kandahar, were of the most complete order, and he led in round numbers fully 10,000 troops to the scene of hostilities. Of these, close on 2000 were Europeans, and 8000 camp followers. General Roberts took with him a certain amount of European stores, such as rum, tea, and five days' flour, but trusted largely for other supplies to the food and forage to be obtained on the line of march. But even this was not left to chance, and to facilitate the General's obtaining such supplies, the Ameer sent with him several chiefs.

It was indeed a curious sight as the troops plodded onward, eager for the fray, for, in view of the difficulty of the road, the General took no wheeled vehicles with him, and even the guns were mounted on mules and elephants. But the commander's foresight as to the difficulties he would have to encounter did not end here, and knowing that the ordinary road for supplies might be exhausted by the previous passage of troops and the presence of large bodies of insurgents, he changed from this route, and marched by the Logur Valley, which had been com-

paratively untouched. Although this road had the small disadvantage of hindering a couple of days longer the progress of the army by the ordinary route, it brought him into contact with the latter again a short distance before reaching Ghuzni. Here some opposition was anticipated, but, notwithstanding, none was experienced, and the army continued its march unmolested.

General Roberts accomplished this march, which must, reckoning his detour, have been little less than 370 miles, without any opposition, in 24 days, being an average of  $14\frac{1}{2}$  miles a day. Considering the difficulties that had to be encountered on the way, this was splendid progress. Picking up the garrison of 1100 men at Khelat-ighilzai, he arrived at Kandahar on August 31. Here was a feat almost unparalleled in history, and reflecting the highest credit on the troops, and their skilful, gallant and energetic commander.

The news of General Roberts' approach soon spread, and Ayooob Khan, knowing well apparently what he had to face in furtherance of his desires before referred to, at once made an effort to open communications with him. General Roberts, however, having in view the whole situation and the nature of the negotiations, was entirely against this course, and would hear of nothing but unconditional surrender from the other side, and also the surrender of such prisoners as had been previously taken in the course of engagements.

The General then proceeded to encamp, and prepared for the coming battle. Passing round the northern wall of Kandahar, he encamped between the city and the enemy's position. The British General was continually on the alert, and in the determination not to leave a stone unturned to accomplish his purpose, he immediately sent out his cavalry to reconnoitre. The main reason for this action was the fear that the Afghans, after hearing of the way their leader's attempt at negotiations had been received, would retreat without fighting, and thus prolong the trouble, another prominent reason being General Roberts' repeated experience of the moral effect of a prompt blow. In furtherance of his designs, Roberts determined to give battle the very next day.

During the first week in August, Ayooob, fresh from his victories elsewhere, directed his main body to appear in front of the city, his cavalry having invested it several days previously. Still watchful and on the alert, his method of going about matters was extremely guarded. He had erected batteries and occupied villages and posts on every side save the north. Up to the time of the approach of General Roberts, however, he did not venture on more than annoying the town with a distant and desultory cannonade, and the occupation,

chiefly by the armed peasants and Ghazis, of a few posts near the walls.

On the other hand, the citadel was occupied in great force, and the garrison felt confident that they could defend their position against all Ayob's attacks. In an attempt, however, by one of the British Generals, General Primrose, to impede the progress of the besiegers, the British troops lost heavily. The garrison set about the work of repairing the fortifications and otherwise taking every opportunity to make their position as strong as possible.

Returning to General Roberts' decision to strike a prompt blow, the result of the cavalry reconnaissance and the General's own personal examination was the plan that we will mention after describing the position taken up by Ayob Khan more minutely. About three miles from the north-west angle from the city of Kandahar is a range of heights running from south-west to north-east. Parallel to this range, and at a distance from its crest varying between one and three-quarters and two and three-quarters miles flows the Argaridub, which, by the way, is almost everywhere fordable at the end of August. In the intervening valley are many villages, enclosures, and gardens. Towards the south-west, or the enemy's right, the range is terminated rather abruptly by a hill about 1000 feet above the level of Kandahar. This hill, called the Pir Paimal, is joined to the rest of the range by a col or neck, over which passes the road leading from the north-west angle of the city to the valley of the Helmund, in which is situated, at a distance of about four miles, the village of Mazra. Here, after a close scrutiny of his position, Ayob had determined to establish his standing camp and headquarters.

The pass above mentioned is called Baba-wali Pass, and provided the advantage of leading directly to the centre of the enemy's advanced position, which was on both sides of the road. The front of the Pass is screened from the city by an isolated hill, lower than the range in front. In front of Pir Paimal and to its right rear are situated several villages. In rear of the position again, and covering the village of Mazra from an enemy advancing up the river is a detached hill. It was on the crest of the main ridge of this that guns had been mounted, and, taking into consideration the arrangement of Ayob's camp, the leader of the Afghans was evidently expecting a front attack.

On the other hand, General Roberts' plan of operations was entirely in contrast, and was yet simple, effective and safe. In the first place, the General resolved to amuse the enemy by demonstrations by General Primrose with a part of the Kandahar garrison against the Baba-wali Pass. Secondly, he sent

General Gough's cavalry to the river at the entrance to the valley, to turn the enemy's right with the three infantry brigades of the Cabul-Kandahar force. The whole scheme was worked out with admirable foresight, and thoughtful resource.

At nine o'clock in the morning of 1st September the battle began. According to instructions, General Primrose made demonstrations against the Baba-wali Pass, and fired with his heavy battery at the troops occupying it. The ruse succeeded well, and attention was fixed for the time on Primrose and his attempted attack.

It was recorded by one of the officers of Primrose's forces that this trick on the part of General Roberts succeeded in a greater degree than was really expected, and, as the enemy appeared to be entirely deluded by it, the British forces were encouraged on seeing that the very initial part of the proceedings pointed to complete success. Primrose having thus attracted the enemy's attention, General Roberts next despatched Gough's cavalry brigade to the Argaridab, where it was favourably placed, either to cut off a retreat towards Girishk or to carry out a pursuit up the valley.

Simultaneous with this, he gave the order to the infantry, commanded by General Ross, to advance. All the forces were now in action, and the battle had commenced in real earnest. One eye-witness of the scene stated that the spectacle of the forces marching towards each other was one of the most impressive of many campaigns. The first of the brigades to come into collision with the Afghans was General Macpherson's of the 1st Brigade. In front of Macpherson, and a little in advance of the right of Pir Paimal Hill, was an elevated and strongly-occupied village. This village was heavily shelled by the British artillery for a time with steady effect, and the enemy made an effectual reply. Gradually the opposing forces seemed to be wavering, and, observing this cringing, the 92nd Highlanders and the 2nd Goorkhas rushed on and stormed the village in most gallant fashion.

The bravery displayed by these regiments was splendid, and in determined fashion they forced the enemy out of their position. The 2nd, or Baker's, Brigade then came into line with the 1st, the 3rd, or Macgregor's, Brigade being in support. These two brigades were making for Pir Paimal, but they were to encounter stubborn resistance.

On the way, a number of orchards and enclosures had to be passed through, and here the enemy, showing in great numbers, fought desperately and well. Great forces of the Afghans came out of hiding, and, as the brigades appeared, rushed on them in overwhelming numbers, forming a formidable attack. As a great show of fight was anticipated, however, the brigades never

rallied a moment, and nothing could resist the heroic onslaught which they made to win the day. The Afghans, with admirable foresight, had prepared thoroughly for any attack that might be made upon them in turn, and, besides occupying every available covert, they also lined every wall.

The Afghans, as indeed most Orientals, are an exceedingly formidable foe when under cover, and at the outset they absolutely refused to give ground to the fire. It was only to the repeated rushes of the brigades that they yielded, and it was here that the British losses were greatest. But the British attempt was shortly to be successful. Natives and Europeans vied with each other in courage, and cut the enemy off at every corner. Forcing their way on, the brigades made great progress, and were ultimately successful in their desire to capture Pir Paimal.

The resistance still shown by the Afghans was characteristic of the race, and, although falling in large numbers, there was a determination goading them on almost equal to that prevailing on our side. From Pir Paimal the infantry continued to push on notwithstanding the desperate attempts of the enemy to hold their ground. Pressing the Afghans still further from their position, two of their camps and several pieces of artillery fell into the hands of the brigades, and here there was a perceptible slackening of the resistance on the part of Ayoob's army.

It is one of the most wonderful things in war to note to what extent an apparently trifling occurrence will turn the scales of fortune.

Up to this time, although the British forces had certainly had the best of matters, in that they had made good progress, the Afghan army had never belied their reputation as a daring, if not foolhardy, race. But at this stage, when so little lay between the armies in regard to the main issue, the inevitable hitch was to occur and spoil the ultimate prospect of an Afghan victory. It was only a slight hitch, to be sure, but it was sufficient to create a much wider breach, and after the British brigades had been successful in making the small capture noted above, an extraordinary alarm began to spread along the enemy's line, and soon the flight became general. The whole of the Afghan forces retreated before the British infantry in the utmost confusion, leaving behind all ammunition and so on in their flight. The infantry, much exhausted as a result of their heavy work, pursued the retreating forces, picking up guns at almost every step.

By noon, Ayoob's standing camp at Mazra was in our hands, and the battle was over. The enemy was completely routed. But while the infantry were thoroughly exhausted with their morning's work, the cavalry, which up till now had largely

participated only as spectators, at this juncture began to play a vital part in the issue. With his fine body of horsemen, Gough waited his opportunity, and, as soon as he saw the chance, dashed forward and crossed the river to where the fugitives were fleeing in retreat. The sight of the enemy with the cavalry in chase was in entire contrast with that which had been witnessed an hour before. The pursuit of the cavalry at the heels of the retreating Afghans was continued over a great distance at a terrific pace in the direction of the valley of Khakrey to the north, till the pursuing body, getting even with their quarry, succeeded in sabring between 200 and 300 of them. By this time the Afghans were utterly fatigued, but, scattering on all sides, many managed to get clear of their pursuers. The main object of Gough's dash forward—that of dispersing the enemy on all sides—had been satisfactorily accomplished, and, making a complete circuit, he afterwards returned to camp.

On the way back Gough's forces joined the 3rd Bombay cavalry and 3rd Scinde horse, under General Nuttal, so that had any mishap occurred in Gough's pursuit of the enemy, these other forces would have yet saved disaster. General Nuttal, during the hottest part of the fighting, had been stationed with his brigade at Baba-wali Pass. When General Roberts saw the enemy was breaking, Nuttal and his forces were brought through the Pass, and ordered to carry on the pursuit for no less than fifteen miles up the river. In the course of his chase, Nuttal was successful in cutting up more than a hundred of the fugitives, and, like Gough, completely dispersed the enemy in flight.

The loss of the enemy in this battle, one of the stiffest in the history of Afghanistan, were severe. The killed alone would probably be upwards of 1200. A study of the figures as regards the work done, shows the havoc played by the respective British forces. Thus, on the direct line of the infantry advance no fewer than 650 dead bodies were found, while between 300 and 400 were slain by the cavalry in pursuit, many corpses never being recovered. This in itself shows that the attack on all hands by the British forces had been a deadly one, and was in most instances followed by disaster to Ayooob's army.

In the action itself Ayooob lost some 32 guns, and six others, including two captured by General Burrows, were afterwards brought in, thus completing the total number of pieces possessed by the Afghan leader on the morning of 1st September, when the battle began. The general nature of the flight is here strongly evidenced. Not only was Ayooob's army completely dispersed in every direction, but also completely cowed, while he himself, a discredited man without any political future, made the best of his way to Herat.

The only drawback, if such it can be called, to the entire success of this action, was that the Afghans got away too easily. For, in point of fact, the cavalry, from the difficulty of their positions, were unable to inflict the crushing blow upon the retreating forces that they might otherwise have done if better situated. Nevertheless, it has to be recognised that if the infantry had been so greatly fatigued there could have been no flight. For we have seen how desperate the Afghans were in their attempts to gain a victory, while the main object of the cavalry's pursuit, that of dispersing the enemy, was yet successfully accomplished.

The total number of casualties in General Roberts' force was only a little over 200—surely a small price to pay for so brilliant and decisive a victory.

The real cause of the enemy's flight, the incident recorded about the taking of two of their camps, was greatly aided, it is supposed, by the spirit of dissension in the Afghan ranks. As to Ayooob himself, there was no want of skill on the part of his advisers, no matter what the ultimate result was. Ayooob himself was not a man of much ability or force of character, but it was evident all along that he had some excellent military counsellors with him.

In the papers relating to this campaign presented to the Houses of Parliament, the very important statement was made as a matter of fact that never had an army been handled with more skill than was Ayooob's during its brief and ultimately disastrous campaign. Such a statement, coming from such a source, goes far to prove that the acumen shown in things military on the part of the Afghan leader was not a little remarkable. His advances to the scene of the final battle were conducted most methodically, and in accordance with all the rules of war. Indeed, the generalship of Ayooob, and the conduct of his troops were such that the conviction got abroad that the operations had been directed, and the guns worked, under the supervision of Europeans, although no proof of this could be obtained.

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## CHAPTER LX.

### THE BATTLE OF TEL-EL-KEBIR.

1882.

THE battle of Tel-el-Kebir stands out pre-eminently as one of the most glorious achievements in the history of that gallant old regiment, the 79th Highlanders. The circumstances leading up to the battle were of a somewhat peculiar nature, and,

briefly, are as follows. On the 26th June, 1879, the Khedive Ishmail, who had caused Britain much trouble, was ordered by the Sultan of Turkey to resign, and his son Tewfik was appointed as successor. A short period after this, Britain and France re-established dual control of Egypt, and this continued for two years.

About the end of that period a fellah officer, calling himself Ahmed Arabi, who had assisted Ishmail during his efforts to overthrow the constitutional ministry, headed a band of Arab officers, who complained of the preference shown to officers of Turkish origin. The dispute thereafter expanded into an attack on the privileged position of foreigners, and finally it was directed against all Christians, foreign and native.

The Government was then too weak to suppress the disorder, and for the time being certain concessions were made to Arabi. That individual, from being made Under Secretary for War, was afterwards appointed to the Cabinet. But the danger of a serious rising brought the British and French fleets, in May, 1882, to Alexandria, and after a massacre had been perpetrated by the Arab mob in that city on the 16th June, the British admiral bombarded the place.

The leaders of the national movement prepared to resist further British aggression by force. A conference of ambassadors was held at Constantinople. The Sultan, on being invited to quell the revolt, hesitated, and the British Government determined to commence the work. France, invited to take part, declined, and Italy took up a similar attitude. It was thus that the battle of Tel-el-Kebir came to be fought.

An expeditionary force, detailed from home stations and from Malta, was organised in two divisions, with a cavalry division, corps troops, and a siege train, numbering in all about 25,000 men. An Indian contingent, 7000 strong, complete in all arms, and with its own transport, was prepared for despatch to Suez. General Sir Garnet Wolseley was in command, with Lieutenant-General Sir John Adye as chief of staff.

The camp of the enemy was situated on the southern slope of a ridge at Tel-el-Kebir, and was hidden by the folds of a plateau which lay between this and the British camp. Their lines were drawn from a canal on the south to the northern slopes of the ridge, the highest part of which was occupied by three works for their heavier artillery. It was evident that they dreaded a turning movement on one or both flanks. A part of the lines had been executed nearly a year before the war broke out, for Tel-el-Kebir was held by Egyptian (or rather by American) strategists to be a position of the greatest importance. A single line of continuous trench, to which the Egyptians trusted, was prolonged northwards shortly before the

battle, and the work was here only partly complete. Continuous lines are condemned by European military writers as essentially weak, because once broken at any point they are probably lost to their entire extent. Tel-el-Kebir was to prove the truth of this tactical axiom.

One open work for guns was erected on the south slope of the desert ridge. The soil being light, cover was easily obtained. The trenches were about deep enough to allow of a man firing easily over the parapet, and an exterior ditch, some four feet deep, was dug at most parts of the line outside the mound. The gun positions, which were conspicuous above the surface, had embrasures very neatly riveted with maize-sticks and mud, but in so dry and sandy a country they would probably have been much damaged by any heavy practice from the guns which they contained. Arabi Pasha had paid special attention to his flanks, and on the north a line of parapet ran almost south-west at an acute angle to the front, along the crest of the ridge, to defend the position from the much-dreaded turning movement on his left flank. The southern flank was protected by the canal, and the Wady, a river which Arabi intended to flood. A battery of four Krupp guns was here placed outside the canal.

Such was the position on which the Egyptian War Minister staked the fate of his army for the Tel-el-Kebir fight, having with him there some 26,000 men of his entire available army. About half of these, including some 6000 negroes, the best troops to be found in Egypt, were trained soldiers, the rest being recruits of one or two months' standing, sent down in trains from the depot near Cairo, and drilled at first with clubs, until they were able to handle a rifle. In addition to his regular troops and recruits, Arabi had enlisted the services of some 6000 Bedouin irregulars, both foot and mounted men. These were expected to make periodic raids on the British lines of communication. These raids, however, were not carried out, for though the Bedouin shiekhs would ride furiously up and down in front of our outposts, as if to show their valour, a single shot was found sufficient to disperse them, and they refused to come nearer. Moreover, when one of them was wounded, the whole tribe followed him home in disgust. Thus the Bedouin attacks were of little avail.

The British troops reached Kassassin, which is situated in the neighbourhood of Tel-el-Kebir, a few days before the battle was fought. The Bedouins, although they had not taken part in any fighting, hovered by night over the battlefield of Kassassin, where, a few days before, a vigorous attack by Arabi had failed. The Bedouins murdered or mutilated all the wounded who could not be shown to be Moslems.

While the Egyptian position covered the junction of the railways from Cairo and Belbeis, and was sufficiently strong, it had nevertheless its weak points, one of which was the intersected character of the country through which a retreat might have to be made. But the difficulty, which also of course affected the pursuit, would have arisen in almost any position taken up to oppose an advance from Ismaileh.

The line of operations chosen by the British General was incomparably the better of the two. The flat, open desert, without any natural features such as would interfere with evolutions on a large scale was far better suited for the advance than the narrow banks which lead from village to village at High Nile in the Delta itself. Thus the advantage of taking the strong works of Kefr-dowar in reverse, the shortening of the distance from Cairo, and the proximity of the important railway junction at Zaga-Zig were also considerations favouring the line adopted. The desert was generally hard enough for all arms, although some miles of drift sand had to be crossed.

To Arabi's forces may be added about sixty guns.

Against the forces mentioned above, the British mustered only 11,000 infantry, with 2000 horse and 60 guns—a strength which, according to ordinary calculations, was quite unqualified for the task. The British army was extended into two lines, about a thousand yards apart, over a distance of three miles. The front line was composed of two brigades, whose duty it was to attack the highest part of the ridge—Graham's Brigade on the right and Alison's Highlanders on the left. Graham was supported by the guards, and between this and the supports of the Highland Brigade were 42 guns of the artillery division. A gap of more than 2000 yards was thus left between the Highlanders and the railway, along which the naval brigade and the iron-clad train advanced. The Indian troops, who supported the Seaforth Highlanders, south of the canal, formed the extreme left of the British line. The cavalry division, held in reserve for pursuit, was on the extreme right in the second line. The reserve ammunition train, with the telegraph and pontoons, bringing up the rear.

The enemy were to be taken entirely by surprise, for Arabi had not been expecting the attack for a day or two yet, or from such a position, the British troops being stationed at Ismaileh. Notwithstanding this, when the great camp was struck at Kassassin at sunset, the news soon reached the enemy's ears, in spite of the secrecy maintained, and it is said that until midnight the Egyptians remained under arms, after which, in accordance with Oriental custom, they fell asleep, and, according to their own account, so remained until awakened by the shots of their outposts.

Sergeant Palmer, of the 79th Highlanders, in one of the most vivid published narratives of the battle, mentions that while the British army lay camped at Kassassin the brigade orders issued on the morning of the 10th September, foreshadowed the night march on Tel-el-Kebir, which began the same evening. One of the instructions in those orders was that each man's water-bottle should be filled with cold tea—for the purpose, it is supposed, of keeping the soldiers awake. The regimental orders issued in the afternoon confirmed the brigade orders, and announced that the position of Tel-el-Kebir was to be attacked with the bayonet; no one was to load; and not a shot to be fired until the men were over the enemy's entrenchments. The 79th, upon whom the bulk of the fighting fell, cheered vigorously when the orders were read to them. They had the fullest confidence in their leader, Sir Archibald Alison, who, although severe, is described as a just and reasonable man, well versed in war. There were thirteen victories inscribed upon the Highlanders' colours, but scarce a man in the rank and file had seen a battle, for it had been last in action during the Indian Mutiny.

The regiment paraded at 5.45 p.m. When the words "Stand at ease!" had been given, the captains of the respective companies explained to their men what they were to do to ensure victory at Tel-el-Kebir.

The remarks of Sergeant Palmer at this juncture are particularly impressive:—

"Our captain," he explains, "was no great orator, but he had a straightforward, manly manner of speech, which somehow stirred the blood. As far as I can remember, this was what was said:—'Men, you are marching to-night to attack a strongly-entrenched position called Tel-el-Kebir, mounting some 60 guns, and sweeping our line of approach. On the march from Nine Gun Hill there must be no smoking. The strictest silence must be kept, and, unless ordered to the contrary, you are to continue the march steadily, no matter if bullets and shells come hail-stone-fashion into the ranks. No bayonets are to be fixed till the order is given, and no man is to charge until the last note of the bugle is finished. The bayonet alone is to do the work, and not a shot is to be fired until the trenches are carried. You are to fight on so long as a man stands up. Remember the country and regiment to which you belong, and fight now as fought the Highlanders of old!'"

It is further recorded that as the troops were marching to Nine Gun Hill chums were giving each other messages for home in case of being killed, for all knew there was hard fighting before them.

Reaching Nine Gun Hill, where lay their camp, the brigade

in dense darkness deployed into line of half battalions of double companies at deploying intervals. During the halt at this hill, two lots of rum per man were served out—the first allowance of strong drink since quitting board ship. The regimental teetotaller called it “Dutch courage,” but nobody needed an incentive to fight. The rum proved very comforting to the men in the chill night air, and when they had bolted it—for it had to be swallowed on the spot—most of them went to sleep; this to many their last sleep prior to the final long sleep of all. About 1.30 a.m. the march was resumed, the 79th being appointed the directing regiment, while Lieutenant Rawson, R.N., had the duty of guiding it by the stars.

Occasionally clouds would obscure the sky as the men plodded on, but the North Star and part of the Little Bear remained visible. Sergeant Palmer and another non-commissioned officer were told off to march on the directing flank, close to Lieutenant Rawson. They were ordered to take off their helmets and keep their eyes fixed on a certain star, and if it should disappear they were instructed to inform Rawson in a whisper. Within the space of one hour several stars disappeared, and as they did so the Lieutenant indicated others for the men to watch. At this point the strictest discipline was maintained, and silence was vigorously enforced, save that occasionally a horse would neigh and another answer back in the cavalry ranks; not a sound was to be heard but the low trampling of many feet on the sand, described as resembling the fluttering of a flock of birds.

Once a man on whom either the rum had taken effect, or the weird silence had had an ungovernable influence, broke out into wild yells. Sir Garnet Wolseley immediately rode up, and ordered the offender to be bayoneted, but the regimental surgeon interposed, and begged leave to chloroform him instead. This was granted, and the man was drugged into insensibility and left lying on the sand.

After the troops had marched at a funeral pace for about two hours, a halt of twenty minutes was commanded. As the orders were slowly passed from company to company in a low tone of voice, they failed to reach the flanks of the brigade, which continued in motion, retaining the touch until the extremities all but met in front of the centre. Thus the brigade in effect formed a great hollow circle. The line had to be laboriously straightened out and re-formed in the inky darkness, and in all but silence. It was a fine proof of discipline that this was accomplished in the short space of twenty-five minutes, and about 4.30 a.m. the advance was resumed. Those present have described how the monotonous slow-step marching induced in them an almost overpowering sleepiness, somewhat

incompatible, but not unusual, with a prospect of shortly facing the enemy.

The Colonel of the 79th, Sir Archibald Alison, at this period was becoming anxious, and was beginning to fear that something was wrong, as the minutes slipped by and nothing was discovered of the enemy's position. Turning to Lieutenant Rawson, he exclaimed in a low tone, "Are we on the right track?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply; "we have the north star on our right, and another in front, and soon we ought to be there."

Suddenly out of the darkness ahead appeared shadowy forms, an appearance followed up instantly by the crack of a rifle and the roar of artillery. Never for a moment did the serried British ranks betray the confidence which had been placed in them, and though to spring forward was the impulse of every man, yet none stirred. Slowly and irresistibly the force moved forward. Here and there a man fell backward with a bullet through his head. The others made no sign.

All at once the order rang out sharp, "Fix bayonets!" and with alacrity the troops obeyed, the Highland regiments in the van. The order for the charge was now eagerly awaited, but the moment was not yet ripe.

For fully one hundred yards the silent force crept on, with arms at the slope, and the sound of the enemy's bullets upon the British bayonets has been likened to the sound of hailstones on a tin roof. Suddenly the welcome command, "Prepare to charge!" rang out on the early morning air, for dawn was breaking, and a sigh of relief went up from the eager troops. An instant later and the "Charge!" was sounded. As the last note of the bugle died away, a mighty cheer went up, the pipes broke out into the slogan, and like a wave of the sea, with their gallant Colonel at the head, shouting, "Come on, the Camerons!" the devoted Highlanders swept forward over the enemy's position.

A space of two hundred yards intervened before the first trench was reached, but at full speed, and shoulder to shoulder, not an instant was lost in traversing it. All the while the enemy fired vigorously, but fortunately aimed too high, and little damage was done. Now the charge was checked by the first trench, twelve feet in depth and twelve feet wide, which yawned in front of our men. Many fell headlong into it, but, scrambling and cheering, strenuously pushing, they gained the far side, and at length fell upon the enemy, steel to steel.

It is reported that the first man to gain the other side was a brave young soldier, Donald Cameron by name. He joined desperately hand to hand against a throng of Egyptians, till he received a bullet through the head and fell back bleeding into

the trench, never to stir again. Others were by this time pushing forward, though the steepness of the trench proved an almost insurmountable obstacle. In spite, however, of constant slipping back, and the difficulty of obtaining foothold, soon large numbers of the Highlanders gained the summit of the trench, and, cleaving their way with the bayonet, they swept headlong on towards the second trench, with stentorian cheers. Here similar scenes were enacted, and many hand-to-hand conflicts took place ere the force halted for a moment and then resumed the victorious onslaught.

It is reported that between two trenches an extraordinary incident, and one which for a moment threatened to bring ruin to the British arms, occurred. Even as the Highlanders swept on towards the second trench there were loud shouts of "Retire! retire!" and for an instant the ranks wavered. But not for long. Fortunately a staff officer in the nick of time galloped forward, and shouting, "No retire, men! Come on! come on!" led the hesitating ranks once more against the enemy.

Sergeant Palmer, to whose narrative we have before referred, gives the explanation of this singular occurrence, though the story is questioned by other writers. It seems that the cries of "Retire!" had been treacherously raised by a couple of Glasgow Irishmen, who had somehow evaded the precautions that were in force since the days of Fenianism to prevent the enlistment of disloyal characters. On two occasions they had been proved cowards, or something worse, and non-commissioned officers had been told off to watch their conduct in the field, it being left to the discretion of these to inflict summary justice if necessary. When the traitors were seen and heard to raise their coward voices, short shrift awaited them, and the bayonets of their fellows inflicted a speedy retribution.

In the rapidly-growing daylight it was now perceived that a short halt would be necessary to reform the somewhat scattered ranks, and this hastily effected, the brigade swept down before Tel-el-Kebir Lock, driving all opposition before them. Over the crest of the hill lay the white tents of the Egyptian camp, on the far side of the canal, and as the Highland ranks rushed on, the fugitive Egyptians threw themselves into the water in hundreds, and as many as gained the opposite bank were seen running like deer across the desert.

By now the 2nd Brigade arrived upon the scene, together with the Scottish division of the Royal Artillery at a gallop, and these quickly unlimbered and opened fire upon the rapidly-dispersing forces of Arabi. Then again dashing on, they took up a nearer position, and continued their deadly work. As they had passed the Highland Brigade a tremendous cheer went

up from battery after battery, and loud shouts of "Scotland for Ever!" rent the startled desert air.

The battle of Tel-el-Kebir was won. All that now remained was to push the victory, and this Sir Garnet was not long in doing. The 42nd were sent forward to clear the village, while the cavalry poured down across the desert in their hundreds. As these latter arrived, bitter disappointment was visible upon their faces, and they exclaimed as they shot past the now halted Highlanders in a whirl of dust, "You —— Jocks haven't left us the chance of a fight!" Such has ever been the spirit of the British soldier, and a brave show the cavalry made, as, with "flashing lances and waving swords," they swept on upon their work of annihilation.

The battle was won, but the casualty list was a heavy one, numbering 339 of all ranks. Of these no fewer than 243 occurred in the Highland Brigade, showing the lion's share which that brigade had taken in the conflict.

Among the wounded lay the intrepid Lieutenant Rawson, through whose skilful leading the British plan of attack had met with so great success.

Says Sergeant Palmer:—"The sights of the battlefield were gruesome, now one looked at them in cold blood. The artillery had wrought fearful havoc. I remember one heap of twenty-four corpses, some blown absolutely into fragments, others headless and without limbs. In the outer trench our dead and wounded lay more thickly than those of the enemy, but in the inner trenches and in the spaces between, for one man of ours there were ten Egyptians."

Meanwhile, the British commander had prepared, with admirable foresight and patience, for the pushing home of his victory. The rapidity of the subsequent pursuit was even greater indication of sound military insight than the admirably-planned attack of the early morning. Cavalry and artillery vied with each other in cutting up and harassing the hard-pressed foe, now in full retreat at all points. For everywhere our arms had been successful.

The Indian contingent, moving out of camp at 2.30 a.m., having a shorter distance to cover than the main brigades, stormed the battery which defended the canal by attacking the gap which lay south of the Highlanders, and plied the defenders with canister at a range of 30 yards. There are few recorded instances in military history in which artillery have been so handled, fighting alone against infantry in an entrenchment, but the departure would appear to have been fully justified by events.

For already so shaken by the northern attack were the entrenched Egyptians, that they were quickly dispersed by the

bold tactics of Colonel Schreiber's batteries, and a general rout ensued. By 4 p.m. on the same day, General Macpherson, with two squadrons of Indian horse, had reached Zag-a-zig, 26 miles distant, had captured the station, with five trains, and was in telegraphic communication with Cairo. Fortunately the orders issued by Arabi for the flooding of the district had not been carried out, or the position at Zag-a-zig would have been untenable.

The whole position was now in the hands of the British, and at length Arabi confessed himself beaten, surrendering "to that great nation, in whose clemency he placed his trust." Hereafter his army was entirely broken up, straggling along the canal to Zag-a-zig, where its disarmament took place. The enemy's rifles were either broken or thrown into the water.

The Egyptian dead numbered two thousand.

Not content, however, with the signal victory at Tel-el-Kebir, Sir Garnet Wolseley had more work to do, and a prompt dash on Cairo was no sooner conceived than carried into effect. Though it was well known that the city of Cairo was garrisoned by some 10,000 fresh troops and though the strength of its defences was admittedly formidable, Sir Garnet never hesitated for an instant.

By four o'clock in the afternoon of the 14th September, the day after the battle, the Indian cavalry brigade, with the 4th Dragoons and Mounted Infantry rode into the outskirts of Cairo, where the barracks were at once surrendered to them, some 50 troopers, a mere handful, accepting the submission of the garrison. Later the same evening another small detachment of 150 men demanded the submission of the citadel. So great was the prestige of our troops, that the 5000 armed soldiers who formed the garrison marched out submissively, and our Indian cavalry at once took possession, "riding like black demons into the formidable fortress."

On the 15th, Sir Garnet Wolseley, attended by the Foot Guards, and fresh from his victory at Tel-el-Kebir, arrived in Cairo by train, and the campaign was brought to a glorious and successful termination, barely three weeks from the time of landing the expeditionary force. Arabi himself was banished to Ceylon.

No praise can be too high for the secrecy and energy with which the enterprise was carried out, and all ranks came in for the hearty congratulations of the commander-in-chief. The Highland Brigade, upon whom fell the brunt of the work, justly recall Tel-el-Kebir as one of the most glorious of their many glorious victories.

## CHAPTER LXI.

## THE BATTLE OF MINHLA.

1885.

A PERIOD of comparative quiet prevailed in Burmah for some years following the conclusion of the war of '52. Gradually, however, this was broken, and on the accession of King Theebaw to the Burmese throne, in '78, relations between the Burmese and the Government of India became seriously strained. On his accession King Theebaw in the most cold-blooded manner massacred most of his nearest male relatives, and with these and other outrages it soon became undesirable to maintain a British convoy at the Court of Ava.

In 1879 this official was withdrawn from Mandalay, and on his retirement matters went from bad to worse. Ever intriguing, with first this Power and then that, it was felt that British prestige in Burmah was at a low ebb. Moreover, dacoities and persistent raiding by the hill-tribes served still further to unsettle the country, and so poor was the authority of the king that these lawless acts and expeditions threatened to overflow into British territory.

In the autumn of 1883 a particularly brutal and appalling massacre of 200 unarmed and defenceless prisoners in the Mandalay prison, by the orders of the king, still further augmented the trouble, and a considerable number of the subjects of the Burmese king crossed with their families into British territory, attracting the special attention of the Government of India to the prevailing state of affairs. Moreover, Bhamo, the second city of the kingdom of Burmah, had been captured by the Kachyin tribes, and these were expelled by the king only with the greatest difficulty—another evidence of Theebaw's incompetent ruling.

Two causes combined at this juncture to bring matters to a head. With a treasury impoverished by his expedition against the Kachyin's, Theebaw cast about him for a means of replenishing it, and his efforts to obtain a large loan from French sources was very closely watched by the Government of India, who naturally viewed the introduction of French capital with no very favourable eye. Unfortunately for Theebaw, his efforts to negotiate the French loan proved unavailing, and a convenient opportunity for repairing the deficiency presented itself in the alleged breach of contract on the part of the Bombay and Burmah Trading Company, which had worked the timber monopoly of the forests of Upper Burmah for the last few years. It was stated by the Mandalay authorities that the company's agents had been exporting, as subject to a low rate of duty,

quantities of logs which were really of a description liable to pay a higher rate.

The first demand for back payments on this account was estimated at £100,000, which was £30,000 more than the company were owed by the king on account of previous advances made to him. The agents, however, declined to recognise the claim when it was first mooted in August, and the dispute was carried on till two months later, when a royal decree from King Theebaw put an end to the protests by awarding a fine of £230,000 against the company. This preposterous fine met with a remonstrance through the medium of the Chief Commissioner for British Burmah, and not only was this remonstrance unheeded, but in October the king's troops fired upon some of the Company's draughtsmen, bringing matters to a crisis.

Drastic action was the outcome of this unfortunate business—the immediate cause of the third Burmese war. The Viceroy of India issued an ultimatum to King Theebaw, “requesting the latter to receive a British Resident at Mandalay, to settle the dispute in concert with the Burman Ministers, and asking for an explanation of the hostile conduct of the Burmese troops with regard to the company's servants.” The 10th November was fixed as a limit for the king's reply, and meantime a force was got together in preparation for eventualities, and the Burmese themselves prepared for the worst by massing their forces at Minhla on the Irrawaddy.

The time for parleying soon passed by without a satisfactory answer from King Theebaw, and on the 14th November the British expedition crossed the frontier.

Major-General, afterwards Sir, H. N. D. Prendergast, V.C., was placed in command, while Colonel Sladen accompanied the troops as chief political officer. A naval brigade, a field battery, two garrison batteries, one British, and two native mountain batteries, three European and seven native regiments of infantry, and six companies of sappers and miners made up the force. Brigadier-Generals Foord, White, V.C., and Norman commanded the first, second, and third brigades respectively, while Captain Woodward, R.N., was in charge of the naval detachment. The native troops hailed from Madras, Bengal, and Bombay, while the British regiments were composed of the Liverpool and Hampshire regiments of the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers. There were 10,000 men in all.

The part played by the naval brigade was of the utmost importance. The quickest and most satisfactory method of carrying out the campaign was at once seen to be an advance by water direct on the capital. At Rangoon were then lying a number of light-draught steamers belonging to the Irrawaddy

Flotilla Company, and these with H.M.S. Irrawaddy, the armed launch Kathleen and other vessels made up the river transport and defence. No fewer than 55 steamers, barges, launches, etc., were employed in the advance. This began on the 14th November. "There is not the slightest doubt," says one account, "that the Burmese king and his country were taken completely by surprise by the unexampled rapidity of the advance."

A minor naval engagement was the opening one of the campaign. Moving out of Thayetmyo, the British post on the river nearest the frontier, the Irrawaddy, on the 14th, the first day of the advance, engaged the first Burmese batteries she came across, some 28 miles up stream, and was successful in cutting out the king's steamer and some barges, which she brought back in triumph and without a casualty to our arms. Two days later the batteries themselves were captured by a land force, after a very feeble show of resistance.

On the 17th, however, at Minhla, where indeed most resistance had been anticipated, the Burmese made a determined stand. Successively they held a barricade, a pagoda, and the palace and redoubt of Minhla. A somewhat simple plan of attack was decided upon, which proved highly successful. The forts were to be attacked from the land face by troops landed higher up the river, and marched down through the dense undergrowth, while the naval brigade was to feint a determined onslaught from the river or front of the position.

Seven miles below Minhla, on the morning of the 17th, the land forces were disembarked, the first and second brigades on the left bank, the third on the right, for the forts were on both sides of the river. Immediately after the landing, the Irrawaddy and Kathleen made all speed up stream to Minhla, and soon the terrific noise of their great guns told of the commencement of the feint attack. Slowly and stealthily the troops crept forward in the dense underbush. Presently Kolegone on the left bank, the strongest of the Minhla forts, was reached, and, to the surprise of all, it was found to be empty. Shaken by the gunboats, and learning at length of the advance of a great land force, the Burmese, leaving only a few wounded, had evacuated the fort.

But the fighting was to come. On the right bank the enemy held a strong barricade in front of Minhla, and an obstinate resistance had to be overcome with cold steel ere the foe was driven out. Lieutenant Drury was killed here, and other officers wounded, but the fighting was not for long. Driven out of their barricade into a pagoda, and from there again into Minhla itself, the harassed Burmese eventually became victims to a panic. Throwing down their arms, others jumping

in the river, many fleeing over land, the soldiers of King Theebaw fled in all directions, leaving 170 killed and nearly 300 prisoners in our hands. The British casualties totalled 36, of whom only five were killed, one being an officer. This, the most important engagement of the campaign, thus proved itself to be a victory cheaply bought, and in confidence and high spirits the troops moved out of Minhla on the 19th, leaving only a small garrison to hold the place against a possible recapture.

No further resistance, with the exception of a little desultory firing on the far side of Pagau, the ancient city of temples, was now met with for nearly a hundred miles up the river, but on the 24th of the month the fleet came in sight of Mingyan, where the whole Burmese army was reported to be assembled. Here, as before, resistance was slight, the task of turning the enemy out of their position being entrusted to the naval guns. Though Mingyan was not reached until the evening, Captain Woodward at once opened a terrific fusillade, and soon silenced the enemy's batteries and musket fire, driving all before him. Darkness now put a stop to the operations, but on resuming firing in the morning it was found that the Burmese had cleared out with heavy loss. British casualties were virtually nil, two or three men only being slightly wounded.

The route to Mandalay now lay open, and news was apparently carried to King Theebaw of the irresistible British advance, for on the afternoon of the 26th, as the flotilla was approaching Ava, envoys from the king approached General Prendergast with offers of surrender. The General's reply was brief and to the point—only in the capital could details of surrender be arranged. The steady forward movement was recommenced.

On the 28th of the month Mandalay was occupied without resistance, the city's defences being at once occupied by our soldiery.

Says a published record:—"The people seemed everywhere of a friendly disposition, and the soldiery gave up their arms and were allowed to disperse, a measure which afterwards proved highly disquieting, though the consequences of it could not at the time have been foreseen. There was doubtless a considerable party in the capital favourable to the palace and its inmates, as could only be expected; so, after an interview with the king, and a slight survey of the state of affairs in Mandalay, Colonel Sladen advised General Prendergast to let Theebaw and his family be sent out of the city without delay, for fear of an outbreak of the plundering hangers-on of the late favourites.

Accordingly, on the 29th November, the obstinate Theebaw and his wives were despatched by river to Rangoon, an exit which marked the termination of the royal reigning dynasty in

Burmah, for on January 1st, 1886, rather more than a month from the occupation of Mandalay, a Viceregal proclamation was promulgated through the late Burmese Empire. "One of the shortest documents of its kind," it ran as follows:—

"By command of the Queen-Empress, it is hereby notified that the territories formerly governed by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will, during Her Majesty's pleasure, be administered by such officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint."

In such unmistakable and uncompromising terms was the annexation of Burmah accomplished.

Meanwhile, intriguers were found to be at work, and it was decided that the continued presence of King Theebaw, though a prisoner, was undesirable in Burmah. The king, quite a young man, was accordingly despatched to Madras, with a chosen band of attendants, where he was lodged, pending orders.

Fighting, however, was not yet entirely over, for almost immediately after the occupation of Mandalay and the disbandment of Theebaw's army, dacoities began to take place all over the country, especially in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, from which it is surmised these attacks were organised and probably executed by gangs of the late soldiery. The Tinedah-Woon indeed, said to have been one of the chief instigators of the late king's warlike enterprises, was captured on the night of the 28th whilst attempting to leave the city disguised as a coolie or common labourer.

But, however instigated, these dacoities proved a serious trouble and menace to British authority, and some stiff fighting, attended however with little loss of life, had to be gone through before the country was finally pacified.

An unfortunate incident which occurred is worthy of record, as it concerned the company so intimately connected with the above events. Seven European employes of the Bombay and Burmah Company were engaged in timber operations up the Chindwyin river, at Keedat, at the time the ultimatum was despatched to Mandalay, and three of them were killed during their attempt to obey the order to return, and the rest imprisoned for a time. They were only released by a timely and rapid march from the Manipuri State, headed by Colonel Johnstone, the political agent there, aided by Manipuri troops.

During the month of February, 1886, Upper and Lower Burmah were, under Mr. C. Bernard, as Chief Commissioner, united into one province. On the 31st March, General Prendergast left Mandalay on the successful termination of his mission.

## CHAPTER LXII.

## THE BATTLE OF THE ATBARA.

1898.

THE struggle for supremacy in Egypt was far from being finally settled at Tel-el-Kebir. With the voice of discontent, bursting now and again into open revolt, with that potent influence, fanaticism, always at work, small wonder that the Soudan was the scene of perpetual conflict, and at length matters reached a crisis at the end of 1897.

The voice of rumour, growing louder and ever nearer, at length brought warning to Sir Herbert Kitchener, the Sirdar of the Anglo-Egyptian army, of threatening movements of a dervish force near Berber, and Anglo-Egyptian reinforcements were promptly hurried to the front to stem the tide of what promised to be a formidable revolt. The Egyptian army was at this time in a very complete state of organisation, thanks to the great brain which day and night watched over its growth and prepared it against all eventualities, and now the time had come for action the ultimate issue of events was confidently awaited in Britain. General Sir Herbert Kitchener had had fifteen years' experience of Egypt. He had been Intelligence Officer in Sir Garnet Wolseley's campaign, commander at Suakim, fought with success again and again against Osman Digna, and finally succeeded Sir Francis Grenfell as commander-in-chief in Egypt. No man was better acquainted with the Egyptian question, and none knew better how to meet the coming difficulty.

The dervish forces were under the leadership of Mahmud and Osman Digna, and were reported to be marching steadily northward, with an ever-growing army, to attack the British force.

That force was now rapidly set in motion. With such men as Kitchener, Hunter, Macdonald, and Gatacre, to name but a few, no loss of time or energy took place, and in a few short weeks a formidable British force, admirably equipped in all arms and perfectly organised, was marching southward.

By March 1, the reinforcements were at Berber, some 25 miles from the junction of the Nile and the Atbara rivers, near which place it was rumoured that the dervish army, instead of advancing to the attack, were strongly entrenching themselves against our force. By this time the British army in the field numbered some 12,000 to 13,000 men. They were divided into four brigades. Three of these were Egyptian, under the chief command of General Hunter. The fourth was British. The first brigade, under General Macdonald, comprised the 9th, 10th and 11th Soudanese, and the 2nd Egyptian, and it is not too much to say that never had any troops, British or native,

more confidence in their sturdy leader. General Macdonald had risen from the ranks, after conspicuous and repeated gallantry in Afghanistan. He had been taken prisoner in the Boer war at Majuba, and fought gallantly with his Soudanese at Gemaizeh, Tooki, and Afafit, and it is safe to say his devoted troops would have followed him wherever he might be pleased to lead them. These troops were at Berber. The second brigade, of similar constitution, three Soudanese regiments, the 12th, 13th, and 14th, together with the 8th Egyptian, was under the command of Colonel Maxwell, and quartered half way between Berber and Atbara, while at the latter place, and not far removed from the enemy's outposts, was the third, or Egyptian, brigade, under Colonel Lewis.

The total strength of the Egyptian army was thus brought up to some 10,000 men, with 46 guns, while three gunboats operated on the Nile from Atbara. The fourth, or British, brigade, was under the charge of General Gatacre, and, after a forced and memorable march to Berber, in the first part of which the admirably constructed Egyptian railway played a valuable part, had encamped in the neighbourhood of the second brigade at Debeika. The Lincolnshire (10th), the Cameron Highlanders (79th), and the Warwickshire made up the force, while the 1st Seaforth Highlanders, under Colonel Murray, were daily expected. A maxim battery completed their equipment. Thus the total force under the Sirdar's supreme command may be estimated at 14,000 men, with 52 guns in all.

The precise strength of the enemy was unknown, but it has been variously estimated at 15,000 to 20,000. The Arab spy is notoriously indifferent to accuracy, and thus precise particulars were almost unobtainable, in spite of the most strenuous efforts of Colonel Wingate, the chief of our Intelligence Department.

By the 16th March the whole Anglo-Egyptian force was concentrated at Kemir, some seven miles from Fort Atbara, and the men of all ranks and regiments, in the pink of condition, were keen and eager for the fight. Some days, however, were now spent in reconnoitring the enemy's position, and in this connection invaluable services were rendered by the gunboats which patrolled the river. Almost daily did these seek a brush with the enemy's outposts, and both loot and invaluable information were brought back to camp by the enterprising naval commanders.

Says the late G. W. Stevens, in his famous work on the campaign:—

“You may imagine that the officers of Her Majesty's navy did not confine their work to looking on. A day or two ago, Mahmud had been transferring his war material in barges from

Metemmeh to Shendi (a point some hundred miles up the Nile). Knowing the ways of 'the devils,' as they amiably call the gunboats, he had entrenched a couple of hundred riflemen to cover the crossing. But one gunboat steamed cheerfully up to the bank and turned on the maxims, while the other sunk one 'nuggar' and captured two."

With minor engagements of this nature, and in the camp hard drill and busy preparation, the days passed by, till at length, on the morning of Sunday, March 20th, the force moved out of Kemir, southwards, in the direction from which the enemy were known to be advancing. Two days previously the long-expected Seaforths had arrived in camp, and met with a warm reception from their British and Egyptian comrades. They arrived "smiling all over, from colonel to private, to find they were in time."

Great was the joy of all ranks when it was at length announced that Mahmud's force was on the Atbara river, and almost certain to give battle. Rumours were rife at this time, the most credible being that Mahmud had seized the Hudi ford, a few miles south of Fort Atbara, but on reaching here on March 20th and 21st, not a dervish was to be seen. The same day, however, as Hudi was reached, the cavalry had a brush with a party of advanced dervish horse, and succeeded in chasing them off into the bush. Our men, however, lost seven troopers killed, the first casualties of the campaign.

By this time the sand and dust of the desert had been exchanged for the thickly-grown, low-lying land of the Atbara, and the change was a welcome one in many ways, though indeed the scrub afforded ample cover for the enemy. The day following this a stronger reconnoitring force encountered some more dervish cavalry, and shots were exchanged, which brought the whole army to the front hot foot, but with the emptying of a few Dervish saddles the incident terminated. Everything, however, tended to show that a general engagement could not be long delayed. And for our officers and men, the sooner it came the better, for though food was plentiful, the camp equipments were scanty, and comfort almost unknown.

Says Mr. Steevens at this stage:—"Though the Soudan can be live coals by day, it can be aching ice by night. Officers and men came alike with one blanket and no overcoat, for you must remember that we left Kemir with the intention of fighting the next day or the next."

The Egyptian army were better off than their British comrades. Knowing the Soudan, an Egyptian officer summed up the difference of the equipments of the two armies in a single sentence:—"I've been in this country five years, so when I was told to bring two days' kit, I brought a fortnight's."

The British, however, unprepared for the long delay, had to make the best of things, and these discomforts, added to the eagerness of the men, made a general engagement the one prayer of all. On the 27th March, Haig's reconnaissance of the Atbara river took place, but for a distance of 18 miles not a sign of Mahmud was to be seen, only "the impenetrable, flesh-tearing jungle of mimosa spears and halfa grass, through which no army in the world could possibly attack."

On the morning of the 27th, the 15th Egyptian, with some friendly Yadin, who had many old scores to settle with Mahmud, arrived at Shendi in three gunboats, and, surprising a large party of the enemy, captured nearly 700 prisoners, mostly women, and killed 160 of the Baggara warriors. The captives were brought down to Fort Atbara, where they "are now probably the wives of such black soldiers as are allowed to marry."

This important encounter, the result of the Sirdar's carefully laid plans, almost certainly forced the engagement. For, distressed at the loss of their women, and now unable to retreat to Shendi, the fighting men of Mahmud's army must be distracted at all costs. A fight with the British must occur without delay if the Khalifa's enterprise is to succeed. As yet the precise position of the enemy's main force was unknown, but at last, on March 30th, General Hunter's reconnaissance located them, and the joyful news went round the camp like wildfire.

Nakheila, 18 miles away, on the Atbara, formed the stronghold of Mahmud. The General "had gone on until he came to it," says Steevens. "He had ridden up to within 300 yards of it and looked in. The position faced the open desert, and went right back through the scrub to the river. Round it ran a tremendous zareba." For a few days speculation was rife in camp as to the next move. Here was the enemy at last, not attacking as expected, but waiting to be driven from his entrenched position either by bayonet or hunger. What means would be adopted to accomplish a successful issue?

The decision was not long in coming. By April 3rd, the camp was at Abadar, on the 5th at Umdabieh—nearer, ever nearer to the enemy. A brush here and there was of daily occurrence now, and raiding became part of the routine. The description by Mr. Steevens of the scene of one such raid gives a vivid picture of the state of affairs at this juncture.

He was returning with the camel corps convoy from Fort Atbara, whither during the days of waiting they had ridden for supplies, when "suddenly one of the men discerned cases lying opened on the sand about a hundred yards off the trampled road. Anything for an incident. We rode listlessly up and looked. A couple of broken packing-cases, two tins of sardines, a tin of biscuits half empty, a small case of empty soda bottles

with Sirdar stencilled on it, and a couple of empty bottles of whisky. Among them lay a cigarette box, a needle and reel of cotton, and a badge—A.S.C.—such as the Army Service Corps wear on their shoulder-straps. We were on the scene of last evening's raid. Two camels, we remembered, had been cut off and their loads lost." With such incidents as these, and another reconnaissance in force by Hunter, terminating in a miniature battle with seventeen casualties, the evening of the 7th April arrived. In the early morning of the 8th, Good Friday, the long-expected battle was to be fought.

Dawn was the hour fixed for the attack. Unlike the approach to Tel-el-Kebir, the night of the march immediately preceding the battle on the Atbara was conspicuous for its brilliant moonlight. At six the force moved out of Umdabieh. At seven a halt was called, and till nearly one o'clock the troops rested. Some ate, some slept, but all were at last assured of the certainty of the morrow's action. At one o'clock the march was resumed, and, under the guidance of Bunbashi Fitton of the Egyptian army, the dervish zareba was cautiously, but surely, approached by the Anglo-Egyptian squares. Between four and five another halt took place, and the prospective battle was discussed in low tones in the prevailing cold. Some slept once more, others shivered, waiting for the dawn. At length the sun rose and disclosed the enemy's position right in front and the serried ranks of Britain ready to give battle.

Says Mr. Steevens:—"The word came, and the men sprang up. The squares shifted into the fighting formations, and at one impulse, in one superb sweep, nearly 12,000 men moved forward towards the enemy. . . . The awful war machine went forward into action."

Twenty-four guns, under Colonel Long, were on the right flank, and 12 maxims were divided among the right and left flanks and the centre. Crash! broke out the roar of artillery, and in an instant the front of Mahmud's camp was raked from end to end. The puffs of smoke floated lazily across the foreground as the iron hail tore its way into the quick-set hedge of the zareba, and here and there flames sprang out where the rockets compassed their work of relentless destruction. Once during the awful cannonade the dervish cavalry formed up on the extreme left of the position, emerging from the bush in handfuls, but a heavy maxim fire soon drove them back. For fully half an hour the enemy made no reply, and then, after this interval, the bullets began to whistle over the heads of the Anglo-Egyptian force. As at Tel-el-Kebir, the fire of the dervishes was aimed too high, and little damage was done.

At 7.30 the "Cease Fire!" sounded, and the infantry moved forward to the attack. The commanding officers of the various

regiments made stirring speeches to their men. Colonel Murray, addressing the Seaforth Highlanders, said:—"The news of victory must be in London to-night." General Gatacre's words were to the point, "there was to be no question about this, they were to go right through the zareba and drive the dervishes into the river." The moment had arrived. The bugles sounded the "Advance!" the pipes screamed out "The March of the Cameron Men" with that voice of glorious memories and lust for battle which the pipes convey when heard in war, and the force swept forward on the foe.

Upon the Camerons fell a prominent part. They were to clear the front with a hot rifle fire, and while some were doing this others were to tear opens in the zareba or surmount it by scaling ladders. Next behind them followed the Lincolns, the Seaforths, and the Warwickshires. For a few moments as the force rushed forward, the enemy made never a sound. Then suddenly, as the Camerons reached the crest of the ridge overlooking the zareba, the murderous fire broke out. Fortunately, as always in the Soudanese campaigns, the fire was for a great part too high, and the casualties, though heavy, were not so great as might have been expected. Meanwhile, General Macdonald's brigade advanced, and only about a minute elapsed from the time the combined force crowned the rise of the hill till the Camerons and Soudanese had torn down the zareba and made way for the main body of the army.

"General Gatacre, accompanied by Private Cross, was actually the first at the zareba," says an eye-witness. "Cross, of the Camerons, bayoneted a big dervish who was aiming point blank at the General." The simultaneous right attack by the Egyptians and Soudanese was also a fine spectacle. General Hunter himself, helmet in hand, led his men on to the zareba, but thirty yards from it was a strong stockade, backed by entrenchments, and this too had to be stormed. It was a thrilling quarter of an hour, and nothing could be finer than the way these almost insurmountable obstacles were tackled by our troops, and that in the face of the hottest fire imaginable from the dervish defenders.

Inside the zareba, from behind stockades, and from holes in the ground swarmed the black, half-naked dervishes, running everywhere, turning now and again to fire at their assailants, but making ever for the river. Scores of them lay stretched upon the ground. The slaughter was awful. Gradually the ground grew clearer. The maxims had galloped right up to the stockade and poured their merciless fire into the living contents of the zareba. The Warwicks "were volleying off the blacks as your beard comes off under a keen razor." Death and destruction reigned on every side.

But the British had lost heavily. Captains Findlay and Urquhart of the Camerons had been killed storming the zareba. Lieutenant Gore of the Seafortths fell in the same place, and, indeed, most of our casualties were sustained at this place. "Never mind me, lads; go on!" called Captain Urquhart as he fell stricken; and go on they did, killing and slaying at every step. Piper Stewart of the Camerons was killed leading the way.

The fight was now practically over. Only the pursuit remained. On stumbled our men over the broken ground till suddenly there "came a clear drop under foot—the river. And across the trickle of water the quarter mile of dry sandbed was a flypaper with scrambling spots of black. The pursuers thronged the bank in double line," says Mr. Steevens, "and in two minutes the paper was still black spotted, only the spots scrambled no more." "Now that," panted the most pessimistic senior captain in the brigade, "now I call that a very good fight!" Shortly after this the "Cease Fire!" sounded, and only the cavalry pursuit remained.

Nearly 4000 prisoners had been taken, including Mahmud himself, who was found hiding beneath a native litter. Zeki, formerly Governor of Berber, was killed. Osman Digna, wily to the last, had again escaped, but all the other important dervish emirs were among the dead. The former, with his horsemen, at an early period of the action got into the river bed and made off in the direction of Damara. They were pursued by General Lewis's cavalry, but the jungle on the river banks was so dense that the pursuit had to be abandoned. Colonel Broadwood, however, chased a large party of dervishes into the desert, where he captured a number of prisoners.

The British casualties were three officers and 18 men killed, with 88 wounded. Four British officers and two British non-commissioned officers belonging to the Egyptian and Soudanese brigades, and 14 native officers were wounded, while the native regiments lost 50 killed and 319 wounded.

Other accounts put the total Anglo-Egyptian loss at 81 killed and 493 wounded, out of the 12,000 men in action. The dervish dead alone numbered 3000, and Mahmud's ten guns and hordes of prisoners showed the significance of the crushing victory at the Atbara. The jubilation among the British force was great, and loud cheers marked the termination of the battle. After the engagement, the Sirdar, who had been under fire all the morning, rode over the battlefield. He was received with enthusiastic cheers by every regiment of the British brigade, which he thanked individually for their gallant victory. He also received an ovation from the Egyptian and Soudanese, among whose trophies were a great number of standards, spears,

and drums, in recognition of the signal gallantry shown by the native troops.

The Sirdar provisionally promoted on the field a sergeant-major of each native battalion which crossed the zareba, to subaltern rank. In conversation with Colonel Money, whose helmet had been traversed by a bullet, the Sirdar, referring to the slow and steady advance of the Camerons under a withering fire when attacking the zareba, said:—"It was one of the finest feats performed for many years. You ought to be proud of such a regiment." Colonel Money replied that he was "right proud of it."

In the afternoon the three British officers killed and the 18 British soldiers who fell in the action were buried on the gravelly slope near the zareba where they met their fate, and the graves were afterwards covered with a zareba to prevent their desecration. "The burial service," says an eye-witness, "was most impressive. It was attended by the Sirdar, Generals Hunter and Gatacre and their respective staffs, by every officer off duty, and by detachments of all the regiments. No farewell shots were fired, but a firing party presented arms, and the band of the 11th Soudanese and the Highland pipers played laments."

Inside the zareba, visited after the fight, the dervishes lay dead in scores, choking the rifle pits and entrenchments, and "it was curious," says one who was present at this exploration of the late battlefield, "to see the Soudanese soldiers filling their water-bottles from a pool containing dead dervishes." About an hour after sunset, the wearied troops returned to their camp at Umbadieh, which they reached about three o'clock on the Saturday morning. The wounded started an hour or two later.

The captive Mahmud attracted much attention, and all were eager to catch a glimpse of the famous Arab leader. To the Sirdar, who interviewed him, he said little but that the campaign had been conducted at the Khalifa's orders. He preserved a stoical silence on all other subjects, and seemed indifferent as to his fate. He was described by those who saw him as a remarkable-looking man, of grand physique and good features. "He has," says one of these, "a dignified presence, and a quite natural haughty disregard of the common herd. He looks intelligent and strong-willed. He is being well treated. In his captured stronghold were found six heads fixed on poles, and one body, dreadfully mutilated."

On the Sunday following the battle, when the camp had been moved from Umbadieh to Abadar, a great church parade was held, and a thanksgiving service for victory conducted by the chaplains of all denominations present with the forces. At its

conclusion the British Brigade was formed up in square, and the Sirdar, advancing to the centre, read a telegram from the Queen, which filled the heart of every listener with pride. "I greatly rejoice," said Her Majesty, "at brilliant victory." And then, with her infallible consideration and womanly sympathy, "I desire to be fully informed as to the state of the wounded." Needless to say, the reading of this message provoked the wildest enthusiasm, and at the call of the Sirdar three hearty cheers for the Queen rent the stifling desert air. Other congratulations were to follow. From the Khedive, Mr. Balfour on behalf of the Government, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Cromer, and others too numerous to mention heartfelt expressions of joy and pride kept pouring in, and "In short," said the Sirdar, in conclusion, "everyone is extremely proud of the conduct of the army in the field."

It is impossible to take leave of the battle of the Atbara without quoting somewhat extensively from the narrative of a soldier who was through the fight. Corporal Inglis, of the Cameron Highlanders, gives a vivid picture of the great engagement:—

"As we approached the enemy's position," writes this gallant non-commissioned officer, "my feelings got a bit of a shock. I was thinking of home, and wondering if that day was to finish my existence, when a large flock of vultures came swooping down, and settled right in front of us. I had often read about them, but never saw them before. Some instinct surely tells them of a coming battle. It made a lot of our fellows feel queer for a bit, as the big brutes kept walking up and down, looking at us. We moved on till within 500 yards of the enemy's front. We could see all was bustle and excitement within the camp. We halted, charged magazines with several rounds, and sat down with fixed bayonets, and for the next hour were interested spectators of the Egyptian artillery shelling the enemy. . . . Just as the advance sounded, one of our men was shot through the head. We ran under a heavy fire till within one hundred yards of the zareba, when we got on the knee and poured in five terrible volleys. What a terrific noise! We could see the enemy looking over their zareba and laughing in our faces, all the while keeping up a heavy fire upon us. We ran till close to the zareba. I was in the front rank, and another chap and I caught hold of a branch, and, turning, hauled it clean away, leaving the palms of our hands badly torn and bleeding. Men at other parts did the same, and as soon as the dervishes saw their protection giving way, they jumped out of the pits (in which they were lying), fired a volley into our midst, and eventually turned tail. Clutching my rifle in my hand, the fearful work now began of bayoneting the dervishes

in the pits. Lots of them could not get out, and they fought in desperate fashion."

The treachery of the dervishes is well shown by the same graphic narrator:—

"One lance-corporal was running up the hill through their huts when three of them made for him. He shot one, bayoneted another, and then the third man threw down his spear and held up his hands (in token of surrender). The lad pointed to the rear, showing his captive the way to take for safety, and was in the act of running after the enemy again, when the man he had spared picked up a rifle and blew the lance-corporal's brains out. General Gatacre was running up behind, and, seeing the incident, gave the dervish such a blow with his sword that he nearly severed his head from his body. After that the order was given to show no mercy. It was not easy to distinguish the men from the women. A woman was on the point of being stabbed, when the fellow discovered his mistake and, laughing, turned away, when she immediately ran a spear clean through him. In an instant four bayonets pierced her body. On ceasing fire I found myself alone, wondering how I had escaped, and a fervent 'thank God!' escaped my lips."

With such stirring tales as this the battle of the Atbara was brought to a successful issue, and crushing was its effect upon the forces of the Khalifa. Not until September were the dervish forces able once more to confront the arms of Britain, and then for the last time.

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## CHAPTER LXIII.

### THE BATTLE OF OMDURMAN.

1898.

THOUGH the snake of Mahdism had been severely scotched at the Atbara, it was far from being killed, and from the termination of that battle preparations were steadily pushed forward for the final overthrow of the Khalifa.

The magnitude of these preparations was upon a scale never before seen in the Soudan, and the army, assembled at Wad Hamed by the end of August, the largest that had ever taken the field in that disordered region. Regiment by regiment the troops poured into the town of Wad Hamed, the point of concentration chosen by the Sirdar, till the Egyptian army had been raised to nearly double its strength, and its attendant flotilla of gunboats vastly augmented. The railway had been pushed forward to Atbara, and, trainload after trainload, the

troops dismounted almost upon the scene of the former battle-field, and pushed steadily southward, British, Egyptian, and even the recent dervish foe, all pressed into the service of the British army.

Mr. Steevens' description of the changed conditions at Atbara is graphic in the extreme:—

“The platform was black and brown, blue and white, with a great crowd of natives. For drawn up in line opposite the waiting trucks were rigid squads of black figures. . . . The last time we had seen these particular blacks they were shooting at us. Every one had begun life as a dervish, and had been taken prisoner at or after the Atbara. Now, not four months after, here they were, erect and soldierly, on their way to fight their former masters, and very glad to do it. . . . In mid-April the Atbara was the as yet unattained objective of the railway; in mid-July the railway was ancient history, and the Atbara was the point of departure for the boats. Just a half-way house on the road to Khartoum.” And, adds Mr. Steevens sententiously, “What a man the Sirdar is!” Indeed, such organisation has seldom been seen before or since.

The force destined to overthrow the last stronghold of Mahdism was made up of two infantry divisions, one British and one Egyptian; one British cavalry regiment, and ten squadrons of Egyptian horse, and eight companies of camel corps, with batteries of artillery, a siege train and maxims—the latter to be used with deadly effect against the army of the Khalifa. The usual medical services and transport, both by land and river, completed the equipment. Six “fighting gunboats” accompanied the expedition.

The British infantry division was under the command of Major-General Gatacre, and Colonels Wauchope and Lyttelton respectively commanded its two brigades. The first brigade was made up to nearly 3500 strong, and consisted of Camerons, Seaforths, Lincolns, and Warwicks, with a maxim battery. Four battalions, each over 1000 strong, of respectively 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 2nd Rifle Brigade, and the 1st Grenadier Guards constituted the second brigade. The whole division was thus about 7500 strong.

The Egyptian Infantry division consisted of four brigades (in place of the three which had fought at the Atbara), and its first, second and third brigades respectively under the commands of Macdonald, Maxwell, and Lewis, were constituted as before. The fourth, under Collinson Bey, consisted of the 1st, 5th, 17th, and 18th Egyptian regiments. The total Egyptian Division numbered 12,000 men.

The cavalry numbered 1500 in all, of whom 500 were the 21st Lancers, under Colonel Martin, and the remainder Broadwood

Bey's Egyptian horse. Long Bey, of the Egyptian army, had supreme command of the artillery—forty-four guns and twenty maxims.

With camel corps and transport, the total land force numbered some 22,000 men of all arms.

On the 23rd August, 1898, the Sirdar held a general review of this imposing force at Wad Hamed, and company after company filed past the commander-in-chief, stirring the dust of the desert in dense clouds. Early on the 24th, the march south began. Rumours were rife in camp as to the Khalifa's intentions and probable plan of action. It was thought by some that he would advance to meet our force in the open, by others that he would entrench himself in the fastness of Omdurman. His army was reported 45,000 strong.

Hajir was the first object of attainment by the British army, a distance of 40 miles from Omdurman, and thence the route lay by Kerreri, where a low range of sandstone hills inland led to the Khalifa's city. The work of shifting quarters from point to point was characterised with the mechanical and infallible precision which marked every move of the Sirdar's vast army. Writing from Wad Hamed about noon of the 26th August, the historian of the war says, "The camp is a wilderness of broken biscuit-boxes and battered jam tins"—where but a few hours before had been concentrated a force of 20,000 men.

Slowly the army marched south, and for a week its progress was uneventful. Moving in the form of a vast square, with sides a mile long, it crept nearer and ever nearer to Omdurman.

By the 28th, Gebel Royan, or Hajir, was reached, and from the hill overlooking the camp the Nile could be viewed almost up to Omdurman itself, and at this period the first dervish cavalry patrols were sighted. These, however, fell back without showing fight. The same day the gunboat Zafir, the flagship of Captain Keppel, sprang a leak and sank within a few moments. The utmost coolness was displayed by all on board, Captain Keppel being the last to leave, and no lives were lost, but the Zafir was, of course, rendered useless, and the naval commander's flag was transferred to the Sultan.

A striking example of the altered conditions of warfare in modern times is to be found in an observation of Mr. Steevens at this point. "The correspondents," he says, "would find the chief disadvantage of rain (of which the army had had by this time considerable experience) in the possible interruption of the field telegraph, which has been brought here, and will probably advance further." An admirably-equipped field telegraph formed a not unimportant adjunct to the army's equipment. From now on, reconnaissances were of frequent occurrence, and on the 30th, some five Arab horsemen were overtaken and cap-

tured by Major Stuart-Wortley's friendlies, and shortly afterwards the army reached Kerreri.

From this point Omdurman was clearly visible, "the Mahdi's tomb forming the centre of a purple stain on the yellow sand, going out for miles and miles on every side, a city worth conquering." Clearly visible, too, was the enemy's army, a long white line stretching in front of the city wall with a front of three miles.

On September 1 an admirable and final reconnaissance was effected, and the enemy's exact position and strength located. On the night of September 1st, the British army bivouacked under arms at the village of Agaiga, fully expecting the Dervish attack, but not until the morning of the 2nd did our scouts report the entire dervish army to be advancing against the British position. Their front was estimated at between three and four miles. Countless banners fluttered over their serried masses, and they chanted war-songs as they came steadily on.

Short and sharp came the orders from headquarters, and in a very short time the British army had taken up its appointed position in front of its camp at Agaiga. On the left were the 2nd battalion Rifle Brigade, the Lancashire Fusiliers, the Northumberland Fusiliers, and the 1st battalion Grenadier Guards, with the maxim battery manned by the Irish Fusiliers. Then came the 1st battalion Royal Warwickshire regiment, the Cameron and Seaforth Highlanders, and the 1st battalion Lincolns in the order named, with a battery of maxims directed by the Royal Artillery. The Soudanese brigades, under Generals Maxwell and Macdonald continued the fighting line, with the Egyptian brigades, under Generals Lewis and Collinson, in reserve. Captain Long had his maxim Nordenfolt batteries on both flanks. The British fighting line formed a large obtuse angle, with its convex side towards the enemy. Facing either flank of it were, on the British right, the heights of Kerreri, on their left the hill of Gebel Surgham. Between these two the enemy was now seen to be advancing.

About 6.30 a.m. the British opened fire with a suddenness which must have startled the advancing foe. Frightful was the execution done during these first few moments of Omdurman. The foe were mown down in handfuls, yet fresh men ever rushed forward to fill their places, and still for a time they pressed forward.

"No white troops," says Steevens, "could have faced that torrent of death for five minutes, but the Baggara and the blacks came on. The torrent of lead swept into them, and hurled them down in whole companies. You saw a rigid line gather itself up and rush on evenly; then, before a shrapnel shell or maxim the line suddenly quivered and stopped. The

line was yet unbroken, but it was quite still. Sometimes they came near enough to see single figures quite plainly. One old man with a white flag started with five comrades; all dropped, but he alone came bounding forward to within 200 yards of the 14th Soudanese. Then he folded his arms across his face, and his limbs loosened, and he dropped sprawling to earth beside his flag." In such manner did the Mahdists fight their last great fight, but the issue of this, the first stage of the battle, was not long held in the balance. By eight o'clock firing ceased, the Dervishes being by this time all out of range, and leaving scores of dead upon the field.

Half an hour later the advance was sounded, and in the order known as "echelon of brigades" the troops moved off towards Omdurman. As they approached the hill of Gebel Surgham a heavy dervish fire broke out, and it was then apparent that the Khalifa had divided his army into three. The first portion had attacked the British camp at Agaiga in front; the second, under Ali Wad Helu and the Sheik el Din, had moved towards Kerreri to envelop the British right; the third, under the Khalifa himself, lay in wait behind Gebel Surgham, where they had bivouacked the previous night.

Both flanks were soon hotly engaged, and former scenes repeated. When the Dervishes drew off behind the ridge in front of their camp, the Sirdar detailed General Lewis's and General Collinson's Egyptian brigades, which up to this point had been held in reserve, to watch the attempt which the dervishes made to overwhelm our left, and meanwhile the cavalry were sent on in advance.

Just as the brigades reached the crest adjoining the Nile, the right, comprising the Egyptian brigades, marched out of camp and became engaged with the enemy. The action was now general. It was found that the Dervishes had re-formed under cover of the rocky eminence two miles from camp, and had marched under the black standard of the Khalifa in order to make a supreme effort to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Meanwhile a mass of about 15,000 strong bore down upon the two Egyptian brigades on our right. These, supported by a battery of maxims, succeeded in forming up steadily in order to face the Dervish attack. The Sirdar swung round his centre and left, leaving the 1st British Brigade with General Wauchope with the transport. General Maxwell's Soudanese brigade seized the rocky eminence, and General Macdonald's brigade joined the firing line.

In ten minutes—before the attack could be driven home—the flower of the Khalifa's army was caught in a depression, and came under the withering cross-fire of three brigades and their attendant artillery. Manfully the devoted Mahdists strove

to make headway, but their rushes were swept away, and their main body mown through and through by the sustained and deadly fire of the Sirdar's troops. Defiantly the Dervishes planted their standards and died by them. It was more than human nature could bear, and after the dense mass had melted to companies, and companies to driblets, they broke and fled, leaving the field white with jibbah-clad corpses, like a meadow dotted with snowdrifts.

Meanwhile on the left was taking place the great incident of the battle of Omdurman—the fine charge of the 21st Lancers against enormous odds. Colonel Martin's orders were to prevent the broken enemy from returning to Omdurman, five miles away from the field of battle. The 21st Lancers unexpectedly came upon the enemy's reserves behind Gebel Surgham, who were 2000 strong, but whose precise strength could not be ascertained owing to the nature of the ground. The cavalry were then in column of troops. They deployed into line for the attack, and charged. When they were within thirty yards of the enemy they found the latter, who had been esconced in a nullah, and had been concealed by a depression of the ground.

Wild with excitement, coming on to the attack, the Lancers had not a single moment for hesitation. They charged gallantly home, the brunt of the business falling on No. 2 Squadron, who absolutely had to hack their way through the enemy, twenty deep, exposed as they were to a withering infantry fire. They struggled through, but every man who fell was immediately hacked to pieces by the swords of the fanatic foe. The men of the British cavalry rallied, bleeding and blown, on the far side of the lanes which they had cut for themselves in the enemy's ranks, and with admirable fortitude they re-formed as coolly as if they had been on parade.

One corporal who was covered with blood and reeling in his saddle, was yelling, "Fall in! fall in!" to the remnant of his company. "Fall out, corporal; you're wounded!" roared an officer. "No, sir! Fall in!" bawled the wounded man, waving his bent lance; "Form up, No 2!" and No. 2 Squadron re-formed—four whole men all told.

Then it was that Lieutenant Grenfell was missed for the first time. Lieutenant de Montmorency, with Corporal Swarback, dashed out to effect, if possible, the rescue of his body. They were immediately joined by Captain Kenna. With their revolver fire the two officers kept the enemy forty yards away, and would have secured Lieutenant Grenfell's body if the horse upon which it was placed had not shied with its burden.

Seeing that a second charge would be futile, Colonel Martin dismounted his men, and with magazine and carbine fire drove the enemy steadily back into the zone of the Anglo-Egyptian

infantry fire, the Lancers having accomplished their object by covering the enemy's line of retirement, though at the cost of heavy casualties.

"This maiden charge of the 21st Lancers," says an eyewitness, "is regarded as an extremely brilliant affair."

All over the field the enemy were falling back before the tremendous fire of the British, but a last splendid stand was made by the Khalifa's most devoted followers to the south-west of Gebel Surgham. Upon Macdonald fell the brunt of this last and most determined engagement. Suddenly the enemy poured down from Kerreri upon Macdonald's right, and for a moment things looked critical. "To meet the attack he turned his front through a complete half circle. Every tactician in the army was delirious in his praise. 'Cool as on parade'—Macdonald was very much cooler. Beneath the strong square-hewn face you could tell that the brain was working as if packed in ice. He saw everything. Knew what to do. Did it. All saw him and knew they were being nursed to triumph." The issue was not long; the British fire tremendous. Soon the enemy remaining fled in all directions, and the fight was won.

At a quarter past eleven the Sirdar sounded the advance, and the whole force in line drove the scattered remnants of the foe into the desert, while the cavalry cut off their retreat to Omdurman. At 12.55 the Anglo-Egyptian column, preceded by the Sirdar with the captured black standard of the Khalifa, headed for Omdurman once more, this time unopposed.

The slaughter of Omdurman had been appalling. The dervish casualties reached the astonishing total of 11,000 killed, 16,000 wounded, and over 4000 prisoners. The Anglo-Egyptian losses were phenomenally small, some 66 killed of all ranks in both forces—387 killed and wounded together. Such was the extraordinary disparity in the numbers. The Khalifa himself escaped with the Sheik el Din to Omdurman. Ali Wad Helu was wounded. Mahdism was completely overthrown. The only dervish force now left in the field was that of the garrison of Gedaref up the Blue Nile. Here, some days later, Parsons Pasha, the Governor of Kassala, killed 700 of this number, and dispersed the rest, with a loss of only 37 killed.

No words can be too high in praise of the courage and discipline of the Egyptian troops. Led by such able men as Macdonald and Lewis, they had proved themselves first-class fighting men, and hearty congratulations were conveyed to all ranks from Her Majesty the Queen when the news of Omdurman became known in Britain.

Newspaper correspondents suffered heavily on the day of Omdurman. The Hon. Hubert Howard, acting for the "Times," was killed by a bullet, but not till the end of the day. Colonel

Rhodes, of the "Times," and Mr. Williams, of the "Daily Chronicle," were wounded. Mr. Cross, of the "Manchester Guardian," died shortly afterwards of enteric fever—a heavy list in all.

Meanwhile the advance to Omdurman continued, and about two o'clock in the afternoon the city of the Khalifa was reached. Here for some days past the gunboats had been doing considerable execution. The forts on Tuti Island had been totally demolished, and the dome of the Mahdi's tomb and the mosque of Omdurman partially destroyed. The destruction thus wrought became clearly visible as the British troops approached the city. They were met on the outskirts by "an old man on a donkey, with a white flag," and after some parley with the Sirdar, and an assurance that the British would not put all the inhabitants to the sword, the way was continued into the heart of the city. Strange scenes were witnessed. Assured at length that the victors would not massacre and pillage, the inhabitants streamed out in their thousands, and, with shrill shouts of welcome, escorted the British soldiers through the streets.

"Yet more wonderful were the women," says Steevens. "The multitude of women whom concupiscence had harried from every recess of Africa and mewed up in Baggara harems, came out to salute their new masters. There were at least three of them to every man. Black women from Equatoria, and almost white women from Egypt. Plum-skinned Arabs, and a strange yellow type . . . the whole city was a monstrosity of African lust."

The capture of the Khalifa himself was the one thought uppermost in every mind as the British troops streamed into Omdurman, and the Khalifa's citadel was the first object of the quest. Here were found the numerous members of his bodyguard, but the leader himself had disappeared, slipping out of his conquered city, even as the white troops had marched in! All ranks were much chagrined by this failure to capture the wily dervish leader, but it was felt that his power was broken once and for all, as indeed proved to be the case. The work of disarming his bodyguard proceeded apace, and very soon, finding they had little to fear from the victorious troops, the inhabitants of Omdurman set to work to loot the Khalifa's corn. Among the captives released were Sister Teresa, a captive nun, who had been forcibly married by the Khalifa's orders to a Greek, and Charles Neufeld, a captive German merchant, who had suffered many years of imprisonment and brutality, and whose record of life in the Khalifa's capital is full of interesting details and unique experiences.

By this time evening had set in, and all ranks were

exhausted with the labours of the day, though the army continued to pour into Omdurman. "Where the bulk of the army bivouacked, I know not," says the historian of the campaign, "neither did they. I stumbled on the second British brigade, and there, by a solitary candle, the Sirdar, flat on his back, was dictating his despatch to Colonel Wingate, flat on his belly. I scraped a short hieroglyphic scrawl on a telegraph form and fell asleep on the gravel with a half-eaten biscuit in my mouth."

On the 3rd September the majority of the army moved out to Khor Shamba, where they camped. The stench of Omdurman was found to be intolerable. Dead donkeys lay about the streets, and filth and squalor were perceptible on every side; the boasted capital of Mahdism proved to be little more than a vast collection of miserable hovels, and one and all were glad to be out of it, if only into the fresh air of the desert. Preparations were now made for one of the crowning acts of the campaign—the visible avenging of Gordon, who had died so nobly at Khartoum, distant less than two miles up the Nile.

Here, on the morning of Sunday, 4th September, the Union Jack and the Egyptian crescent were flung to the desert breeze, above the ruins of the Residency of Khartoum, half a dozen paces from the spot where Gordon died.

The Sirdar, accompanied by the Divisional Generals, the Brigadiers, and the full staffs, together with detachments from all branches of the Anglo-Egyptian army, steamed up the Blue Nile to the ruins of Khartoum, early in the morning, and landed at the Masouri stage on the river bank opposite the Residency. Gordon's old palace, though gutted, was still intact in its foundations. On the summit of the dismantled walls two flagstaves were raised, and detachments of representative troops, with the band of the 11th Soudanese regiment, the drums and fifes of the Grenadier Guards, and the pipes of the Highland regiments, formed up reverently round the historic spot, the gunboat Melik being made fast to the quay beside the Residency. In the centre were the Sirdar and his full personal staff, on the right the Divisional Generals and their staffs, and on the left a detachment of officers and sappers of the Royal Engineers—Gordon's old corps. The background was composed of the picturesque ruins of Khartoum, amid which were growing wild palms, acacias, and lemon trees.

At ten o'clock the Sirdar gave the signal, and amid the crash of the first saluting gun and the opening strains of the British National Anthem, the personal aide-de-camp to the Sirdar and Lieutenant Staveley unfurled the Union Jack. The Egyptian aide-de-camp to the Sirdar and Major Nutford next hoisted the Khedivial Crescent, and thus the cry for vengeance heard for

fifteen long years was for ever stilled. Amid the booming of the salutes and the rolling bars of the British and Khedivial National Anthems could be heard the shrill cries of crowds of natives and slaves exulting at their emancipation from cruel seridom. Then the music changed. The Highland pipers wailed out a dirge, and the fifes of the Grenadier Guards played a dead march in memory of Gordon and of the heroes fallen in the late battle.

Now the chaplains to the forces—the Rev. J. M. Simms (Presbyterian), the Rev. A. W. B. Watson (Anglican), and the Rev. Robert Bundle (Roman Catholic), read appropriate passages of Scripture and prayers. The religious service was followed by the firing of 15 minute guns. The impressive and touching service was brought to a close by the Sirdar calling on the troops to give three cheers for Her Majesty the Queen-Empress and the Khedive. They were given with a fervour which awoke the echoes for miles around.

What may be described as a side-ceremony then began. Fifes played the Dead March, pipes wailed a lament, and the band played Gordon's hymn, "Abide with me." When the solemn music ceased all the general officers stepped forward and congratulated the Sirdar, and half an hour was subsequently spent in visiting the chief historical points of the ruined city and the totally dilapidated remains of the steps on which Gordon was killed.

The Sirdar then re-embarked and returned to camp. There were those who said that during the closing ceremonies he could hardly speak or see for emotion. "What wonder? He had trodden this road to Khartoum for fourteen years, and he stood at the goal at last. Thus, with Maxim, Nordenfelt, and Bible we buried Gordon after the manner of his race."

Of the subsequent advance through the former country of the Khalifa a correspondent gives a vivid picture. "If ever there were any who entertained a thought of pity for the Khalifa and his following when they considered the crushing force which is advancing to their annihilation, if they could have been with us upon the road during the last few days, all thought of sentiment and pity would have vanished, and even the most philanthropical would have longed, as do we, to volunteer our aid in ridding the world of a tyrant so brutal and a butcher so ferocious.

All along the line of march there are evidences that the country was once a flourishing, populous province, well cultivated where occasion offered. Yet to us it was a wilderness of desolation, every mile with its evidences of the tragic means by which it had been depopulated, and every landmark showing the handiwork of the ruthless destroyer. From end to end it has

been swept with fire and sword. The very crops have grown, withered, and died without a hand to gather them. Mile after mile of earthen village lies deserted, ruined and destroyed, and now in the courtyards where the women were wont to grind corn and card cotton, with their children playing at their skirts, jackal and hyena disport amongst the broken distaffs and the bones of the murdered women and butchered infants. Well may we cry, 'Retribution and Khartoum!'

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#### CHAPTER LXIV.

### THE ADVANCE OF ROBERTS.

1900.

THE war of 1899-1901 in South Africa is of too recent date to call for a very minute exposition of the causes which led up to it.

The first appearance of the Dutch in South Africa took place in 1652. On the invitation of the Netherlands Government, Britain seized Cape Colony in 1795, holding it for a period of seven years, when it was restored to the Netherlands. Five years later Britain again seized it, and it was finally ceded to them upon a payment of £6,000,000. From this time forward strife commenced between the Boers and the British immigrants. English was the language chosen for the law courts of Cape Colony, and all slaves of whom the Boers held many thousands, were freed under British rule. Both these happenings gave great offence, and in 1836 the Boers made their "Great Trek" into new territory.

Says Mr. Julian Ralph in his history of the late war:—"Great Britain never ceased to regard the Boers as her subjects, and yet did nothing to interfere with their course or the government which they set up."

In 1852, after many bickerings, the famous Sand River Convention established the Transvaal Republic, over which Great Britain "held the right to impose conditions, upon which she granted the Boers what rights they held, and this British overlordship was acknowledged by them without protest." The Orange Free State was set up under somewhat similar conditions, with, however, somewhat more extended privileges than those enjoyed by the Transvaal. The Transvaal government went from bad to worse. Frequent friction with the natives, marked by savage cruelties on both sides, and the virtual enslaving of many natives, brought the Government of the Transvaal into disrepute, and in 1877 the British Commissioner, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, formally annexed the Transvaal,

reporting that the majority of people desired annexation. Protests were, however, numerous, and shortly after order had been apparently restored the newly-annexed territory revolted, defeating the British forces at Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill, in what has become known to posterity as the First Boer War.

An armistice was ordered by Mr. Gladstone's Government in March, 1881, and the Boers were granted self-government under British suzerainty. Further independence was granted to them in 1884.

The discovery of gold in the Transvaal Republic had by this time led to a great rush of new settlers, called by the Boers, the "Uitlanders," to whose energy the present prosperity of the country was now largely due. These European settlers, the Uitlanders, were of course subject to the laws of the Transvaal, and very soon they found that instead of possessing equal rights with Transvaal burghers, though forming nearly three-fourths of the white population, they were at disadvantages in every way. Dutch was the only language of government, and was taught in the public schools. British citizens were assaulted, and even murdered by agents of the Transvaal with impunity, and right of franchise was refused.

The Uitlanders determined on revolt, and a somewhat premature movement was made by Dr. Jameson, in his famous, and of course disastrous, raid. Negotiations now ensued, and Sir Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner at the Cape, held many meetings with President Kruger of the Transvaal, with a view to securing fair and equal rights for the Uitlanders. The sequel is fresh in the minds of all. Prevarications, endless delays, and abortive conferences followed—the Boers all the while arming themselves for the forthcoming conflict which they had virtually decided upon. The British yoke was to be thrown off once and for all.

Gradually Britain massed her forces in South Africa, and when finally, on the 9th October, 1899, the Boer Government presented a virtual ultimatum, war became inevitable. The ultimatum protested against the right of the British Government to interfere in the affairs of the Transvaal. It demanded the withdrawal from South Africa of the British reinforcements, and it desired an answer to these demands before 5 p.m. on the day in question. The British reply was brief and to the point; it merely announced that Her Majesty's Government had no further announcement to make to Mr. Kruger.

At first the British preparations were wholly inadequate. Some 20,000 British troops in all were available on the spot, but a complete army corps of 50,000 men, under Sir Redvers Buller, was mobilised in Britain and despatched at once. Divisional commanders were Lord Methuen, Sir William Gatacre,

and Sir Francis Clery. The opening engagement of the war took place on October 12th, when an armoured train, conveying cannon to Mafeking was attacked, and several men were captured. On November 1st, the Free State Boers, siding with their Transvaal brethren, invaded Cape Colony.

To relieve Kimberley, Ladysmith, and Mafeking, where the frontier garrisons were enclosed on all sides by the enemy, now became the objective of the campaign. Lord Methuen moved from the Orange River for the relief of Kimberley, and on November 23rd, with the Guards and the 9th Brigade, drove 2500 Boers out of their entrenched position at Belmont with the bayonet. Two days later, at Enslin, near Graspan, a memorable battle was fought against 3000 Boers, and the British, though successful, lost heavily—14 killed and 91 wounded out of a total force of 550 men. On November 28th the battle of Modder River, against 8000 Boers, was fought. Ten hours' fighting under a burning sun resulted in the British holding their own, but with a loss of 4 officers and 71 men killed, and 19 officers and 375 men wounded. On the 11th December, Lord Methuen's force fought a fierce engagement at Magersfontein, to the north of Modder River, where General Cronje had prepared a long series of concealed entrenchments. The British force numbered 11,000, the Boers 15,000, strongly entrenched. The Highland Brigade, marching in quarter column in the dusk of early morning found itself close to the barbed wire obstructions of the strongest entrenchments, and a tremendous rifle fire at close range greeted the hardy Scotsmen. Nothing could exceed their gallantry, but no troops could stand against that awful blast, and one man in every five of the 3000 led by General Wauchope was mown down. The gallant Wauchope himself fell, riddled by bullets, at the head of his men, a brave and well-beloved soldier. For the whole day the fight raged, but it was found impossible to dislodge the Boers, and a retreat to Modder River was inevitable. The British losses were more than 850 casualties—the killed alone totalled 152, and 130 men reported missing.

Meanwhile General Gatacre had begun operations in Cape Colony north of Queenstown. He occupied Bushmen's Hock on November 27, while his main force was at Buller's Kraal. On December 10th, the day before Magersfontein, he met with a sad reverse in making a night attack on Stormberg, when he was misled by guides and at daybreak was surprised by the enemy. Five hundred of his force were cut off and made prisoners. All attempts to reach Ladysmith had been fruitless.

General Symons, acting under Lieut-General White at Ladysmith, occupied Dundee and Glencoe, and fought the first serious battle of the Natal campaign on October 20th, in an attack on

Lucas Myer's army, 6000 strong, who held an advantageous position on Talana Hill. At the cost of his own life, General Symons accomplished a successful issue. The Boers were driven from their guns, and these were captured. The next day a fierce engagement was fought at Elandsplaagte. General French's cavalry and the Gordon Highlanders played conspicuous parts, and a heavy defeat to the enemy resulted. Four British officers and 37 men were killed; the wounded of all ranks totalled over 200. The Boer losses were put at 100 killed, 108 wounded, including General Kock, and nearly 200 prisoners. Generals White and Yule now joined forces in Ladysmith, which was at once invested by the enemy. Disaster now overtook the relieving force. At Nicholson's Nek nearly 900 officers and men were taken prisoners. On December 15th General Buller fought a fierce battle with the enemy at Colenso, and lost eleven guns, having 1097 officers and men killed, wounded, and missing. Operations were now brought to a standstill.

Few will forget that dark December day when check after check to the British forces in South Africa announced the war was at a standstill, and little forward movement could be made until the hands of our commanders had been strengthened, and that, too, considerably. The disasters did much to bring out the national doggedness and determination. From every county and every colony, from remote Highland hamlets and from the teeming cities of the Empire the flower of Britain went forth to do battle for her honour in South Africa, and the Government, at length convinced of the arduous nature of the enterprise, lent an able assistance to the national will and determination.

On December 23rd, 1899, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar left London for Cape Town, to take supreme command of the British armies in South Africa, and he was joined at Gibraltar by his chief of staff, Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, who had travelled post haste from Egypt. A sigh of relief went up on every side when these two able and distinguished officers, backed by a vast and ever-increasing army, took up the reins of war in the disordered kingdoms.

Matters now began to mend slowly. A detachment of 120 colonial mounted infantry, on December 30th, under Captain Montmorency, were cut off near Dordrecht, and for a whole night held out gallantly against a force of 800 of the enemy. In the morning they were relieved by a party of the Cape Mounted Rifles. The next day General French conducted successful operations near Colesberg, and on the 1st of January he shelled their position, compelling them to fall back. The same day Colonel Pilcher defeated a commando at Sunnyside.

With such small successes the arrival of Lord Roberts was heralded, and every day reinforcements poured into South Africa. A desperate attempt was made on the 6th January to overwhelm Ladysmith, but after 17 hours' fighting, the foe were driven back with heavy loss.

The turning point of the war, however, was reached when, on January 10th, 1900, Roberts took charge of hostilities, and began his famous march to Pretoria. A month after his arrival at Cape Town, Lord Roberts and his staff went north, his movements being shrouded in mystery. On the 9th February, 1900, he took over command at Modder River camp, and within three days his great movement was begun. The Highland Brigade, under the bravest of soldiers, Major-General Macdonald, were engaged with the enemy to the west of the railway, this being to attract the enemy's attention from the preparation for a greater event. The intention was to make straight to relieve Kimberley. Suddenly the Free State (as it was then) was invaded at various points to the south of Modder River. General French, who had been withdrawn from Colesberg with his cavalry, dashed north, brushing aside or ignoring small parties of Boers, who sought to oppose him. The General then swept in a circle round the east of Magersfontein, and after a trying march, Kimberley was reached late in the afternoon of Wednesday, February 14th.

The Boer commandoes had timely warning of the advancing hosts, and, recognising that in the circumstances their position was untenable, the enemy took to flight. There was very little fighting. The Kimberley garrison moved out when it was apparent that the relief force was at hand, but the enemy did not wait for these. The garrison was too late to intercept the retreat, the Boers getting away in the darkness. The Boers' loss in arms and ammunition was enormous. The first of the besieged towns had been relieved, but not at a cheap price. It was work which cost Britain, from Belmont onwards, 129 officers and 1818 men. The British infantry brigades followed in the wake of General French, and marching north-east, occupied Jacobsdal, the Boer base of supplies.

General Cronje, one of the most stubborn of the Boer generals, whose tactics were typical of his reputed border ancestry, saw that he ran a great risk of being surrounded in his trenches at Magersfontein. There was one loophole of escape—to the east between the rear of the British cavalry and the front of the infantry. Accordingly Cronje warily made towards Bloemfontein by this route. But he was not circumspect enough, and his retreat was soon discovered. British infantry and cavalry were despatched in hot pursuit, and he was brought to bay on the 10th at Paardeberg, in the valley of the Modder River.

On that day an attempt to storm the Boer laager failed. The British circled round the doomed Cronje, and day by day the lines of investment were drawn closer. Shot and shell were poured into the camp of the Boers, who, like rabbits, buried themselves in holes in the river bank. Quite a number of Boer commandoes were defeated, but despite this, and the fact that his camp was in flames, and shot and shell were dropping into it like rain, the obstinate Cronje refused to yield. The statement that Cronje was a descendant of the old raiders of Gallogway was certainly amply qualified by his tactics throughout. However, on the morning of Majuba Day—27th February—the Canadians, Gordons, and Shropshires dashed forward, and entrenched themselves in a position which commanded the Boer camp. After this, Cronje saw that further resistance was useless, and, with 4000 men, unconditionally surrendered.

It was a small force that was commanded by Cronje as compared with the army of besiegers, and he had held out magnificently. After the battle an examination of the enemy's position showed this. The whole of the river on both sides was honeycombed with trenches, but such trenches as had never before been used in warfare; they were really underground dwellings, and perfectly secure unless a shell was dropped into the opening above. Straight projecting missiles were bound to fail to have an effect. The condition of the whole laager, and trenches, however, was a frightful one. Every three paces lay dead horses, mules and cattle, polluting the air, and it was no wonder Cronje was forced to surrender at last. The parting between several men and their wives at this stage was extremely heartrending, and both were crying bitterly. The completeness of the capture was the more singular in view of the determined character of the enemy, and it was thought, at the very least, the enemy would destroy their guns and ammunition before surrendering.

The pursuit and capture of the Boers cost Britain no fewer than 98 officers and 1436 men.

Pushing on from Paardeberg, Lord Roberts, on the 7th March, outflanked the Boers at Poplar Grove, compelling them to retreat, and three days later he defeated them at Driefontein. Ex-President Steyn fled from the capital, and on the 13th Lord Roberts took possession, as he himself put it, "by the help of God and the bravery of Her Majesty's soldiers." The total casualties, since the army left Modder River, were 2086 officers and men, killed, wounded and missing.

The occupation of Bloemfontein had a wonderful effect on the course of events. The Boers withdrew from northern Cape Colony, and the British forces crossed the Orange River on 15th March. There had been much desultory fighting

in this district, and the British losses would amount to about 2000.

While the relief of Ladysmith by General Buller was taking place, Lord Roberts rested at Bloemfontein for six weeks for the purpose of re-organising his transport service, and generally strengthening his forces. This inactivity on the part of the British commander was fully taken advantage of by the Boers, who swept down to the east and south-east of the capital. It was then Lord Roberts decided to check the enemy's progress, and the battle of Karree was fought, at which the enemy made their last stand between Bloemfontein and Brandfort. Their attitude had become unceasingly aggressive, and if the Free State burghers, who had surrendered to Britain, were to be assured of her ability to protect them, it was necessary to check the raids and incursions in the country immediately north of the capital. Lord Roberts deputed this task to the 7th Division, commanded by Lieutenant-General Tucker, the 1st and 3rd cavalry brigades under General French, and the brigade of mounted infantry under Colonel le Gallais.

At an early hour in the morning the whole force, preceded by a screen of mounted men, moved out of the advance camp in the direction of a ridge which commanded the line of railway north of Modder Bridge. It was known to be occupied and entrenched by an outpost of 1500 Boers. Moving forward over the plain, which the British cavalry had already reconnoitred, General Tucker was soon in front of the enemy's position. After a stiff fight and attacks from various positions, the object of the advance was fully attained, and the troops bivouacked on the position they had carried. The Boers, however, succeeded in getting away over a flat country with all their guns and waggons.

This was followed by several rather unfortunate mishaps to the British forces at Sanna's Post and Reddersburg, the latter being particularly noted for a gallant stand by the Royal Irish Rifles against great odds. Three companies of Royal Irish Rifles and two companies of the north regiment of mounted infantry which had been captured by the Boers, were falling back for a position when they were surrounded by over 3000 of the enemy, occupying a kopje. They defended the position for nearly 24 hours, notwithstanding that they were without food or water, and were exposed to the shells of the enemy's guns. This fight was one of rifles on the Boer side and artillery on the other, and before darkness fell all the gallant British fellows were being led away. General Gatacre, who had been advised of the fighting, hurried to the scene, to arrive two hours late. At this time the whole country was reeking with active spies. As a result of Reddersburg about 600 men were cap-

ture. While at Sanna's Post, another unfortunate mishap, 37 officers and over 500 men were made prisoners. After this came the stiff engagement at Wepener, which lasted several days. An attempt was made to encircle the enemy by the British general, and while the opposing forces received a check, both sides suffered heavy casualties. This attempt at encircling the enemy was not successful.

The end of April found Lord Roberts' preparations finished, and the opening days of May witnessed the beginning of the triumphal march north. The British front extended across country for forty miles, and time and again overlapped the burgher flanks and threatened their lines of retreat. After several days' hard marching, during which splendid progress was made, Kronstad was reached, and here great opposition was expected. Great preparations had been made by Lord Roberts to make his march a successful one, and before the rapid advance of the British forces the Boers fled in confusion from the position at Kronstad. No fewer than 10,000 of them passed through the town the night previous to the arrival of the British forces, quite a number of the residents following. The enemy had been reinforced by 3000 men from Natal, but the position they took up was quite untenable, and they beat a retreat.

Thus, no fewer than 128 miles had been covered by Lord Roberts' forces in about twelve days' time. For a week the forces rested at Kronstad, and getting ready for the march again, an advance was made towards the Transvaal. On the 23rd May the forces arrived at Rhenoster River, where again they were surprised in finding the enemy had gone, having fled during the night of our arrival. The enemy had occupied a strong position on the north bank of the river, which had been carefully entrenched, but they did not think it advisable to defend it when they heard that General Hamilton's force was at Heilbron, and the cavalry, which crossed the Rhenoster, some miles lower down the stream, was threatening their right rear.

Right on from here the British march to the Vaal was made with great progress, and although the enemy threatened strong resistance on several occasions, they always retreated in front of the British forces, and evacuated their strongholds. On the Queen's Birthday, 24th May, the British forces entered the Transvaal, and encamped on the north bank. The advance troops, who crossed first, were only just in time to save the coal mines on each side of the river from being destroyed. The river was crossed amid loud cheers by Compton's Horse and the Dorset Company, who were fired at by several scouting parties of Boers. These were pursued, and had a very narrow escape from being captured. General Botha had considered

the line of the Vaal indefensible, and the big guns were taken to Pretoria. After this it was becoming more and more evident that the Boer forces were shrinking at the thought of opposing such an army as General Roberts led, and on May 28th, when Klip River, which is 18 miles from Johannesburg, was reached, the enemy, who had prepared several positions, where they intended to set up opposition, again fled, or abandoned one after another of their vantage grounds. So hard were the enemy pressed on this occasion, that they had only time to get their guns into the train, and leave the station when some of the mounted infantry dashed into it.

The complete success of Lord Roberts' march seemed now only a matter of time, but there was no falling off in the desire to press forward as quickly as possible, the more so seeing the enemy were being hustled out of their various positions. On the Tuesday following their arrival at Klip River, the British forces arrived at a point about ten miles from Johannesburg, without any serious opposition. The enemy were completely taken aback, as they did not expect the arrival until next day, and had not even carried off all the rolling stock. On the Thursday Johannesburg was in the hands of the British.

Lord Roberts, on the Wednesday, had summoned the town to surrender within twenty-four hours. The Boer commandant considered this course inadvisable, as the town was full of burghers, but these difficulties were overcome, and the Field-Marshal entered and hoisted the British flag. The entry of Lord Roberts into Johannesburg has been described as a spectacle to be remembered by all who beheld it. After formally accepting the surrender of the town, Lord Roberts left the building, and, remounting his charger, proceeded to the next ceremony, which was the hauling down of the Transvaal flag. Numbers of the rugged burghers who were witnesses to this action appeared touched to the heart. When the flag was lowered tears were seen streaming down the faces of several men as they looked at the loss of all they had been fighting for during many weary months. While the National Anthem was being sung, a tall Free Stater, an artillerist, refused to remove his hat, and a fellow-spectator, a small man, attempted to pull it off, whereupon a British soldier standing near pushed the aggressor away, saying,

"Leave him alone. He fought for his flag; you fight for none."

Lord Roberts took up his quarters at a small inn with the sign "Orange Grove," and here a rather interesting anecdote is recorded, the truth of which has, however, been denied by the principal actor.

Early in the evening, soon after the Field-Marshal reached

his quarters, one of the officers of the staff approached him in order to discuss a matter of importance. He found the Field-Marshal with one of the innkeeper's little children on his knee, trying to teach the mite to trace the letters of the alphabet. When the officer entered, Lord Roberts looked up with a smile and said, "Don't come now; can't you see I'm busy!"

Only 30 miles now separated the British forces from Pretoria. After the taking of Johannesburg, the people began to lose all confidence in their leaders, and during the short period that the troops stayed in the town, large numbers of the Boers came forward and surrendered. After hearing that Lord Roberts had reached Johannesburg, Kruger joined the retreat. Gathering up his goods and chattels, the ex-President, leaving his ignorant and deluded burghers to their fate, scuttled ignominiously out of the country.

Continuing his march forward, General Roberts made straight for Pretoria for his crowning effort. On the way a number of lingering parties of Boers were met, and these were driven off to surrounding hills. On Monday, the 4th June, the troops started on what was supposed to be their final march. After going about ten miles, however, the district of Six Mules Spruit was found to be occupied by the enemy. Two companies of the mounted infantry, along with four companies of the Yeomanry, were despatched to the scene, and quickly dislodged the enemy from the south bank. After pursuing them for nearly a mile, the companies found themselves under a heavy fire from guns, which the Boers had placed on a well-concealed and commanding position. The British heavy guns, naval and Royal Artillery, which had been purposely placed in the front part of the column, were hurried on to the assistance of the mounted infantry as fast as oxen and mules could travel over the great rolling hills by which Pretoria is surrounded. The guns were supported by Stephenson's Brigade, and after firing a few rounds they drove the enemy out of their positions.

The Boers then attempted to turn the British left flank. In this they were again foiled by the mounted infantry, and Yeomanry, supported by Maxwell's Brigade and Tucker's Division. As they still kept pressing on the left rear, General Roberts sent word for Ian Hamilton, who was advancing three miles to the left, to incline his forces and fill up the gap between the two columns. This finally checked the enemy, who were driven back towards Pretoria. General Roberts was expecting that he might have been able to follow them, and as the days were then very short in that part, and after nearly twelve hours' marching and fighting, the troops had to bivouac on the ground fought-over during the day. Just before dark the enemy were beaten back from nearly all the positions they had

been holding, and Ian Hamilton's mounted infantry followed them up within 2000 yards of Pretoria, through which they retreated hastily. Colonel de Lisle then sent an officer with a flag of truce into the town, demanding its surrender.

Shortly before midnight Lord Roberts was awakened by two officials of the South African Republic—Sandburg, military secretary to General Botha, and a general officer of the Boer army—who brought him a letter from Commandant Botha, proposing an armistice for the purpose of settling terms of surrender. Lord Roberts replied that he would gladly meet the Commander-General the next morning, but that he was not prepared to discuss any terms, as the surrender of the town must be unconditional. At the same time his lordship asked for a reply by daybreak, as he had ordered the troops to march on the town as soon as it was light. In his reply, Botha stated that he had decided not to defend Pretoria, and that he trusted the women, children and property would be protected. About one o'clock in the morning Lord Roberts was met by three principal civil officials with a flag of truce, stating their wish to surrender the town. At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 5th June, 1900, Pretoria was occupied by His Majesty's troops, and nearly 4000 British prisoners of war were released.

But the occupation of Pretoria was not to see the termination of the war. May 17th had seen Mafeking relieved by Colonels Mahon and Plumer, and cordial was the welcome extended to these officers by its harassed garrison and by its brave defender Colonel Baden-Powell. For six months and six days the gallant defenders had held out. On February 26th Ladysmith had been relieved, after a siege of nearly four months, General Buller making a formal entry on the 2nd March; but much yet remained to be done elsewhere, and a species of guerilla warfare ensued.

On July 31st, Generals Hunter and Rundle captured the Boer leader Prinsloo with 4000 of his men, but De Wet, the wily and mobile head of the Boer cavalry forces, still remained at large, and for nearly 18 months the war dragged on its weary course, the blockhouse system of Lord Kitchener, now in supreme command, gradually reducing the number of the foe in the field.

Peace was finally signed at Pretoria on May 31st, 1902, both the Transvaal and Orange Free State having been formally annexed by the British Empire.

No less than 1072 officers and 20,870 non-commissioned officers and men had died in the field, either from wounds or disease, whilst the total Boer losses will probably never be known.

## CHAPTER LXV.

## THE BATTLE OF JIDBALLI.

1904.

To say that the story of Somaliland lies before it, is, at first sight, to make a self-evident and apparently obvious assertion. But undoubtedly the future of the country will constitute by far the most important part of its history. The "Unknown Horn of Africa" was but recently, and is indeed still, a barbarous land whose tale is yet to be told. Day by day, however, the story is being added to, and this out-of-the-way district of Africa is at the present receiving an amount of attention from European Powers which will ensure it, ere long, an important and prosperous development.

As early as 1840 treaties with the native chiefs of this tract of land opposite Aden had been concluded by the British. Between 1873-77 the country was practically annexed by Egypt, but was given up and eventually occupied by the British in 1885, who declared a Protectorate over it, to the great satisfaction of its inhabitants. The reasons for such occupation were obvious—partly to save the country from relapsing into barbarism, and partly to prevent its occupation by other Powers, by which the overland route to the east might be menaced. Such Powers were France, Italy, and Abyssinia. The outcome of conferences between these Powers—with France in 1888, Italy in '91 and '94, and Abyssinia in '97—fixed the boundaries of the Somali Coast Protectorate. So far the story of Somaliland development was a peaceful one, and the commerce of the country in skins and hides, ostrich feathers, gums, cattle and sheep bade fair to grow and flourish to the profit of all concerned.

In 1899, however, the name of the Mullah began to be first heard. In that year Haji Mohammed Abdullah, a strict Moslem and Somali patriot, started a fanatical movement in the Dolbahanta country against both British and Abyssinian rule.

For several months, however, apathy marked the attitude of the British Government towards the Mullah and his following. It was thought that the rebellion would in all probability come to nothing, and nothing was accordingly done to check it. The issue proved the contrary, and as the Mullah's following increased and he now and again moved within a threatening distance of Berbera, the principal port, it was felt that something must be done. The Abyssinians were the first to make a move, and, massing a large army, they fought a sanguinary battle in the Ogaden country against the forces of the Mullah at Jig-gigga. The immediate outcome of this engagement was to drive the

Mullah towards Berbera, and ~~once~~ more his presence in the vicinity, and his frequent daring raids, had the effect of unsettling the countryside.

Accordingly, in 1901, Colonel Swayne, the Consul General of the Protectorate, took the field with a small force, but with most unfortunate results. It has been suggested that not only was the force at Colonel Swayne's disposal totally inadequate, but that his appeals to the Foreign Office did not receive the backing they merited; in any event, disaster overtook the small expeditionary force. Not at first, however. On June 1st the column reached Sanala, and captured much of the enemy's live stock. Leaving a Zareba under Captain Macneil with 300 men, Colonel Swayne moved against the Mullah's camp at Yahol. The zareba meantime was fiercely attacked, but gallantly defended, and the enemy driven off. Further operations resulted in the break up of the Mullah's force, but the Mullah himself escaped across the Haud desert, where pursuit was, under the circumstances, impossible.

A period of comparative quiet followed, extending to nearly six months, but at length, in December, 1901, the Mullah once more resumed his operations against the friendly tribes. Colonel Swayne again got together a force, but while operating between Bohotte and Mudug sustained a severe reverse at Erego. Two officers, Colonel Phillips and Captain Angus, with 50 men, were killed, and the British wounded numbered over 100. The force was attacked in the thick bush, and the Somali levies were severely shaken by the savage onslaught of the Mullah's men. Under the circumstances Colonels Swayne and Cobbe, the latter wounded in the engagement, decided to retreat to Bohotte.

Not a little anxiety was occasioned at home over this setback, and the immediate outcome of Colonel Swayne's urgent entreaty for more men was the despatch of large reinforcements under General Manning. Such measures were felt to be especially necessary, as a Hungarian adventurer ("of the worst type," says one account) was reported to be directing the Mullah's forces, and would assuredly make the most of the British reverse. This report was, however, discredited. In any event, large reinforcements were now despatched to Berbera; Bombay Grenadiers from Aden, and Bombay Infantry from Simla, Soudanese and Sikhs, with maxims and many extra officers—all were hastened to the scene of war.

General Manning himself set foot in Berbera on the morning of the 22nd October, and at once all was renewed activity. The campaign, however, was destined to be a failure, owing to inefficient transport, the service of which utterly broke down, and also to the great daring and activity of the opposing force, whose fighting qualities had been seriously underestimated.

As far on April 15th, 1903, advices reached this country from Somaliland, telling of successful reconnaissances and bright prospects of success, but two days later, on the 17th, and again on the 23rd of the month, two such severe blows were inflicted on the large British force now in the field as to render a second withdrawal from the country necessary. Colonel Plunkett, in charge of a strong party of the King's African Rifles with maxims, set out from Galadi in the direction of Walwal, on the 15th of the month for the purpose of rounding-up stock in the bush. After marching 40 miles, the force left its spare kit and maxims, and pushed on after the carriers, who, with the cattle, were following the Mullah's rear. On the 17th the force was surrounded by the enemy and cut to pieces. No fewer than 10 officers and 174 men were killed, among them Colonel Plunkett himself. The enemy's force was estimated at 80,000, of whom they left 2000 dead on the field. Only 41 of the little British force managed to reach camp, six alone being unwounded. Both maxims fell into the Mullah's hands. A force under Colonel Cobbe in the vicinity was, with the greatest difficulty, extricated by General Manning, who left Bohotte at midnight on hearing of the disaster.

But alas! this was not all. A week later, on the 23rd, the flying column under Major Gough, operating to the north, was attacked with a loss of two officers, Captains Godfrey and Bruce, and 13 men. With the greatest difficulty it reached Bohotte, and here the 1902 campaign came to a disastrous termination.

Small wonder that considerable dissatisfaction should by this time have arisen at home over the conduct of the Somaliland campaign. The question of withdrawal from the country was even mooted, but fortunately overruled, and a still stronger force was once more got together to initiate the campaign which is at the present time (1904) in progress.

Meanwhile the Mullah sustained a trifling defeat at the hands of an Abyssinian force on the 31st May, the remains of the British expedition being still at Bohotte, where they were detained until plans of reinforcement and advance had been duly organised.

On the 21st June Major-General Sir C. Egerton was appointed to command the Somaliland expeditionary force.

Shortly after the General's arrival at Berbera, active and most strenuous preparations were made for an expedition which should at last succeed in overthrowing the Mullah's power. Several months were spent in these preparations. Reinforcements began to arrive in large quantities at Berbera; from Simla came mounted infantry and Punjaubees, companies of the Norfolk and Yorkshire regiments, mounted infantry from Bombay, 300 of the Hampshire regiment from Aden, a telegraph

battalion of the Royal Engineers from Lorne, two companies of the Army Service Corps from Durban, Natal, and even a strong contingent from the newly-formed Boer colony in South Africa, with camels and transport materials, and all the munitions of war poured into Somaliland in a steady stream.

Sheikh was chosen as a first base of concentration, and later this was advanced to Kurit, where there is a capital and abundant water supply. Lack of water indeed has constituted one of the chief difficulties attending operations in Somaliland—the possessor of the somewhat infrequent wells being master of the situation. Transport, too, is of even greater importance than ever in such a country, Somali camels alone being found thoroughly suitable for the purpose. Many thousands of other camels were imported into the country, but it was found that they stood the climate ill, and in many instances were totally useless. Under the circumstances, the local supply had to be mainly depended upon, and as this proved to be wholly inadequate, the best had to be done under adverse circumstances. In due course, however, garrisons were established at Bohotte, Ganero, and Burao, and early in December the General issued a proclamation to the tribes that operations were about to commence, and abjured them to preserve a loyal and helpful attitude to the British arms.

On the 19th December occurred the first fight of any importance. On that date Colonel Kenna, moving out of Eil Dab, on a reconnaissance, came on 2000 of the enemy at Jidballi at the head of the Nogal Valley. Fierce fighting ensued, the enemy losing 80 killed and nearly 100 wounded. The British loss was two of the Tribal horse killed. These troops fought with conspicuous gallantry, and earned the special commendation of their British leaders. After the engagement, Colonel Kenna fell back upon the main body as the Mullah was reported to be in force in the Nogal Valley.

Such indeed proved to be the case. On January 11th was fought what may be described as an important battle at Jidballi, the enemy losing over 1000 killed, and retreating considerably shaken. At nine o'clock on the morning of the 11th, General Egerton advanced upon the enemy's position. Leaving the heavy transport in a zareba, 12 miles in the rear, the force advanced in the following order.

The 1st and 2nd Brigades, commanded respectively by Generals Manning and Fasken, marched in one large square, covered by a screen of Illaloe natives on the front. The advance guard was composed of the Gadabursi horse, with the Somali mounted infantry. On the south flank was Major Kenna with two companies of British and three companies of Indian mounted infantry. The Tribal horse, supported by the Bikauirs, had

been sent from the north flank to work round the enemy's rear to prevent them making a way to the east or north.

Slowly the British force worked up towards the enemy's position—a deep nullah directly in front of the line of march. Nearer and nearer came the attacking party, until within 700 yards of the position. Suddenly the Mullah's dervishes swept down with wild cries, and hurled themselves towards the square. They never reached it. From rifle and maxim swept forth such a fire as must have astounded those who lived to recall it. For ten minutes an awful hurricane of bullets hurled back the Mullah's soldiers, and then, doubly bewildered by the flank attack of the mounted troops, they turned and fled. The attempt to rush the square had failed. It was the only one they made. Losing heart under the terrific storm of lead, they scattered, helpless and disordered, in all directions. Three hundred lay dead upon the field.

Major Kenna's mounted infantry now took a hand in the engagement, and for two hours inflicted severe punishment on the fugitives at short range, killing over 500, as they fled hither and thither, and only pausing when his horses were worn out for lack of water, and ammunition began to run short.

The Mullah's army at Jidballi was estimated at 5000 men, of whom they left, as stated, 1000 dead behind their line of flight. The Mullah himself, who was a few miles distant, escaped. But the victory had cost us dear. Three officers, including Lieutenants C. H. Bowden-Smith and V. R. Welland, were killed, together with nine of the native troops, whilst the wounded officers numbered nine, and other wounded 22. The total British force numbered 3200 of all ranks.

Captain the Hon. T. Lister, of the 10th Hussars, who was at first reported missing, was found also to have been killed. He was the eldest son of Lord Ribblesdale—a young man of five and twenty.

Thus ended the fight at Jidballi, a position which the Mullah had ordered his forces to hold to the last, and there can be no doubt that the effect of the victory was far-reaching, if indeed it did not succeed in shattering the morale of his troops. Meanwhile, the pursuit of the fugitive was actively proceeded with.

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## CHAPTER LXVI.

### THE BATTLE AT HOT SPRINGS.

1904.

FOR a series of years matters had been in an unsatisfactory state between Thibet and the Indian Government. This was

caused by the non-fulfilment of treaty obligations on the part of the former. The Indian Government made long-continued efforts to bring matters to a proper understanding, but all without result. These efforts were frustrated by combined duplicity on the part of the Llamas of Thibet and of the Chinese authorities. The Thibet and Chinese authorities having repeatedly failed to fulfil their promise of sending properly-authorized deputies to settle matters of dispute and disagreement, the Indian Government at last felt compelled to send a political agent to the seat of Thibetan authority in order to have proper parties to deal with. Accordingly, Colonel Younghusband was despatched for that purpose, but for his protection he required a military escort. The progress of the party was reported from time to time, everything going on peacefully, when the country was startled by the account of the following engagement, the British forces, under General Macdonald, comprising 1000 men, also four guns and two maxims.

The whole history of war shows no parallel to the extraordinary action fought at Hot Springs, the tragical romance of it being heightened by the fact that it took place in the throne of the winds of the world, in a secret place of the earth under the shadow of the mighty snow-capped mountains. The Thibetan position extended for about a mile from the road under which the springs issue. Up the steep ridge the road was barred by a wall ending in a blockhouse. Walls were built on every fairly level spot on the ridge. When Colonel Young- husband asked Brigadier-General Macdonald to get the Thibetans out of their position, if possible without firing, our force was deployed and moved slowly up the ridge. The Thibetans manning the topmost wall, numbering about 200, surrendered without resistance, and allowed themselves to be disarmed. The remainder, however, obstinately held their places till our troops were within a few feet. They then sullenly retired towards the blockhouse, where the Lhasa General and other Thibetan officials were collected. Within a short time there was gathered between the blockhouse and the ridge a great mob of Thibetan soldiery. Estimates as to their number differ, but the place they occupied would have held a battalion in quarter column, and the Thibetans were shoulder to shoulder. The driving operation was carried out with the most admirable exactitude, the troops showing great self-restraint in not firing, although not knowing when the Thibetans might attack them.

When the Thibetans were all gathered together, Brigadier-General Macdonald, Colonel Younghusband, their staffs, the press correspondents, and others rode up to look at them. At this time the Thibetan rear was perfectly open, and they could have marched away if they had wished. The mob, nevertheless, stood

together round the Lhasa General in a discontented frame of mind and muttering angry threats. Their attitude was sufficiently hostile to induce Brigadier-General Macdonald to order up two more companies of Pioneers with fixed bayonets. Presently there was a thin ring of Sikhs round the Thibetans, but no one dreamt of the terrible event which was impending. The officers got off their horses; some sat down to eat sandwiches, and others brought out cameras. Suddenly a scuffle began in the north-eastern corner of the ring. The Thibetans shook their fists in the faces of the Sikhs and commenced throwing stones. The Lhasa General himself fired the first shot, blowing away a Sikh's jaw. A great tumult instantly arose. The Thibetans uttered a wild shout, drew their swords, and surged forward in all directions, firing their matchlocks. About a dozen swordsmen made a desperate rush in the direction of Brigadier-General Macdonald and the small knot of officers surrounding him.

Major Dunlop had two of his fingers slashed off. This assailant was shot down by Lieutenant Bignell. Four Thibetans made for Mr. Edmund Candler, "Daily Mail" correspondent, who was unarmed. He received no fewer than 12 wounds. Brigadier-General Macdonald himself shot down one of Mr. Candler's assailants at a few yards distance, and Lieutenant Davys, I.M.S., promptly killed two others, thus saving Mr. Candler from death. The other Thibetans, rushing forward, were met by revolver fire. Meanwhile, the Sikhs in front had drawn back a few yards, and met the Thibetans who were trying to climb over the wall with a terrible magazine fire. Four or five of the enemy actually climbed over the wall, and died like heroes. One old man, armed with only a matchlock, sprang over the heaps of dead and deliberately kneeling down, well in advance of the others fired into the Sikhs. He was riddled with bullets. The Thibetans were so huddled together that they were unable either to use their swords or to fire. Many of them probably killed each other in their mad excitement. Finally the mob surged to the rear, breaking through the ring of Sikhs.

The scenes that then followed were impressive and more awful than a fight in the cockpit. The Thibetans, though their retreat was still open, disdained to scatter and run. They tramped away slowly and steadily, sullen and solemn, followed by a perfect hail of bullets. The mountain battery came into action and tore their line with shrapnel. A terrible trail of dead and dying marked their line of march. Finally the last wounded Thibetan limped round the corner about 400 yards away. The grim tragedy was over. The whole affair did not last ten minutes, but in that short space of time the flower of the Thibetan army perished. The Thibetan General and the whole

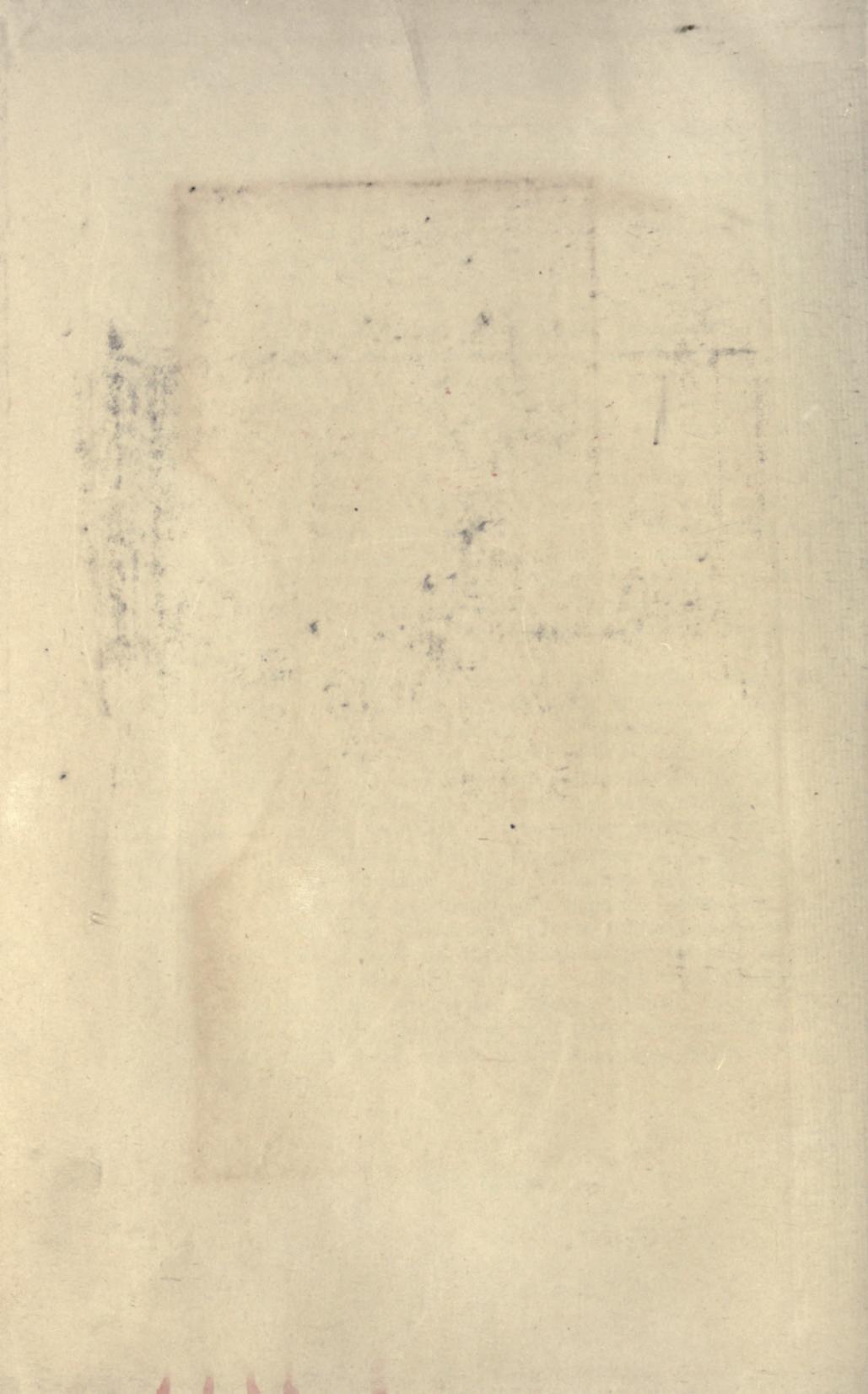
of his personal escort, as well as five high Lhasa officials were killed. Our own small losses are accounted for by the fact that the Thibetan swordsmen in the front rank could not reach the Sikhs, who had fixed bayonets, while the men in the middle of the mob were unable to use any weapon, but they all died game.

All those who witnessed the scene will carry for ever the memory of the grim, determined faces lighted with devildom and savagery. The Lhasa General himself undoubtedly provoked the fight, for in his interview with Colonel Younghusband his attitude was that of a man determined to either die or turn the Mission back. Part of the fearlessness shown by the Thibetans was undoubtedly due to want of knowledge of the effect of modern firearms, as well as contempt for the smallness of our forces. The Thibetan soldiers outnumbered the wing of the Sikhs by six or seven to one. The impassive stolidity of the Sikhs of the 23rd and 32nd Pioneers deserves a word of admiration. Had they given way before the rush of the swordsmen, or had Brigadier-General Macdonald and the small knot of officers shown less personal courage, a disaster one does not care to dwell upon might have taken place. Colonel Younghusband and his staff were amongst the onlookers near the Thibetan soldiers, and were wholly unarmed.

The total British casualties were 12, but, besides these, two or three officers and a number of men received bruises from the flat edge of the Thibetan swords. Immediately after our wounded had been attended to, several officers with attendants went out among the wounded Thibetans scattered over the battlefield, binding up injured limbs, administering water, and applying field dressings to the wounded. Our troops provided dressing splints, hastily improvised from the muskets and scabbards abandoned by the enemy. The Thibetan prisoners were employed in placing the wounded under shelter. The next day men were sent out from Turin, and a large number of wounded were brought into a house in the village, where Captain Baird and Lieutenant Day attended to them. They were evidently most grateful for these attentions. Some of them were to be seen cheerfully smoking cigarettes, and there were no signs of cringing in their manner, which rather suggested a proud and independent spirit.

THE END.





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