

ART. VIII. — THE SIEGE OF DELHI.

ON the 10th of May, 1857, the native troops quartered at Meerut broke out into mutiny. They shot down the officers who strove to pacify them, pillaged and burned a large portion of the cantonment, murdered a great number of English men and women, and marched off to Delhi. They reached that city on the morning of the 11th. The native troops composing the garrison, and the inhabitants of the city, made common cause with the mutineers. The English residents were either murdered or forced to fly; the old king of Delhi was proclaimed Emperor of Hindustan, and the first act of the great mutiny of 1857 duly completed. Why all this was permitted, in the face of the large European force at that time quartered in Meerut, is a question which has often been asked, and to which no satisfactory reply ever has been or ever can be given. There is no doubt, that, had a man of courage and energy — a Munro or a Gillespie — had the control of affairs at Meerut, the mutineers would have perished to a man, the deplorable massacre at Delhi been easily prevented, and in all probability the impending insurrection crushed at the outset. The historian of the Indian Mutiny will have many instances of mismanagement and apathy to record, each bringing in its train a fearful amount of misery and bloodshed, but none so flagrant or so fraught with disastrous consequences as that which witnessed the massacres at Meerut and Delhi, and dared not strike a single blow either to avert or avenge. Ours is a more limited object. We purpose simply to give a brief narrative of the siege and capture of Delhi, and gladly pass over events unpleasant to recall to memory, and a narrative of which is not essential to our subject.

Sir John Lawrence was at this time Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, and the leading civil and military authorities of that province were men worthy to be the seconds of an illustrious chief. The electric telegraph had no sooner flashed up the news than measures were at once taken to avert as far as possible the full effect of the blow which had been struck. At Lahore, Brigadier Corbett, on his own responsibility, disarmed

the large native brigade. English garrisons were swiftly thrown into the important fortresses of Lahore, Umritsir, Moulton, and Filore. The native brigade at Ferozepore attempted to seize the magazine; but the attempt was defeated with loss, and the mutineers were either captured or dispersed. At Peshawur, the native regiments were split up into numerous detachments, and pushed out on the frontier, in isolated situations, begirt with wild and hostile tribes; while at the suggestion of Captain John Nicholson, — a name soon to become memorable enough, — a strong column, under the command of Brigadier-General Neville Chamberlain, was organized to move rapidly from place to place, wherever symptoms of disaffection manifested themselves.

Meanwhile Sir John Lawrence had never ceased urging the commander-in-chief, General Anson, to march upon Delhi with whatever troops he could collect. General Anson was loath to do so. Delhi was a strongly fortified town, strongly garrisoned, and provided with immense munitions of war. To attack such a place with the small force at his disposal seemed to him to savor of madness. He and his advisers were urgent for delay, until a siege train could be collected, and reinforcements arrive from England. However plausible this reasoning might appear from a purely military point of view, the chief commissioner knew the natives too well not to feel that such a policy at such a moment would involve the British Empire in India in utter destruction. As yet the Punjab was quiet. The people stayed awhile to see if the Company's proverbial good-fortune would not recover from the blow just dealt it. But every moment of delay would, in their judgment, be an admission of defeat. The spirit that had carved out our empire was a spirit which quailed at nothing. It was the conviction that that spirit was alive and strong as ever which still maintained the wavering allegiance of the native princes. At that moment the preservation of the British Empire rested upon warlike prestige alone. That prestige once lost, there remained nothing to uphold it. The urgency of Sir John Lawrence won the day. On the 25th of May, General Anson, at the head of a small force, advanced as far as Kurnal, on the road to Delhi. There he was seized with cholera, and died, Sir Henry Barnard assuming the command in his stead.

Simultaneously a small brigade of all arms, under command of Brigadier Archdale Wilson of the Bengal artillery, marched out of Meerut, to effect a junction with the main army at Bhagput, some twenty miles from Delhi. Twice the enemy, with vastly superior forces, attempted to stay his passage, but were defeated with heavy loss, and the junction of the two armies was safely accomplished. They reached Alipore, about five miles from Delhi, on the 8th of June, mustering, in round numbers, six hundred cavalry, two thousand four hundred infantry, and twenty-two field guns.* Ahead of them, they discovered the enemy strongly posted in a walled building known as the Badli Serai, with their flanks protected from attack by inundated and marshy ground, and light and heavy guns planted to sweep the road by which the assailants would have to advance. The cavalry were sent round, by a wide detour, to the enemy's rear, while the infantry advanced to attack the Serai. The rebels fought well, and their artillery did terrible execution in the ranks of the English infantry. But ere an hour was past, their position had been stormed. The English cavalry arrived on the field just as the enemy were driven out, and completed their discomfiture.

Our troops pushed after the retreating enemy, until confronted by a low ridge of sandstone which rises in front of the northern face of the city. The ground here was cut up into walled gardens, under cover of which the enemy rallied, and renewed the battle. General Barnard now divided his forces. One column, under command of Brigadier Wilson, was sent to assail the right of the ridge; the remainder, under his own personal supervision, moved off to attack the left. The ground affording abundance of cover, the rebels offered a stout resistance. Nevertheless they were driven with heavy loss from one position to another, the whole length of the ridge was swept by our troops, and the two columns met in the centre. It was now nine

* The detail was as follows: Sixteen horse artillery guns; six horse battery guns; H. M. 9th Lancers; two squadrons of carbineers (6th Dragoons); H. M. 75th Foot; H. C. 1st Bengal Fusileers; H. C. 2d Fusileers (six companies); the Sirmoor Battalion of Ghoorkhas; and one hundred and fifty sappers and miners. The siege train consisted of eight 18-pounder guns, four 8-inch howitzers, four 8-inch mortars, one 5½-inch mortar, a weak company of foot artillery, and one hundred and fifty artillery recruits.

o'clock in the morning. The summer sun of India was pouring down with a blinding heat, and the English were exhausted with fatigue and long fighting. The enemy gave them little rest. A heavy cannonade was opened upon the ridge, and an attack made upon the right flank of their position. Both were promptly replied to. By five o'clock that evening the sound of fighting had ceased. We* had made good our hold upon the ridge, and the long, weary siege of Delhi was begun. The day's fighting had cost heavily in officers and men; but we had captured twenty-six guns, some five hundred of the enemy had fallen, an equal number returned to their villages, not at all liking the behavior of the "Sahibs" in this their new character, and the Company's *ikbal* (good-fortune) was once again emphatically pronounced to be invincible.

Without the aid of plans, and in the limited space that can be afforded in a single paper, it is not easy to state intelligibly the respective positions of the British and the insurgents, or to convey an adequate idea of the enormous difficulties which the besieging force had to overcome. An attempt must, however, be made.

Delhi is situated on the right bank of the Jumna, which washes the eastern wall of the city, and forms, as it were, the string of which the rest of the city wall is the arched bow. It was at this time entirely surrounded by strong walls of stone and lime, which had always been kept in thorough repair. These consisted of long curtains, with bastions at unequal intervals. The curtains were adapted for musketry fire only; the bastions were of modern construction, and capable of mounting from twelve to eighteen guns each. On the river side rose the king of Delhi's palace, a strongly fortified building, and the Selimgurh, another fort, which commanded the bridge of boats connecting the city with the Meerut road. Inside the city walls

* In the present narrative, the word "we" is sometimes used, for the sake of convenience, to denote the English army, and not as an indication that the writer was present at the operations he describes. It was his fortune to be serving in India at the time, — first as an officer with one of the Sepoy regiments, which signalized its mutiny in the usual murderous fashion, and afterwards on active employ both with Sikh infantry and irregular cavalry; but during the siege he was elsewhere engaged, and did not arrive at Delhi until the last day of the operations.

was the Magazine, a large mass of buildings, containing two hundred guns of battering calibre, and an almost inexhaustible supply of ammunition. The garrison was never at any time less than twenty thousand men, and it was fed continually by the arrival of mutinous regiments from other parts of India. It was composed of all three arms of the service, equipped, accoutred, and thoroughly disciplined after the European fashion.

The besieging army never exceeded ten thousand: at the commencement of the siege it mustered but half that number, and the only twenty-four pounders that could be brought against the city walls were those captured at the battle of Badli Serai. The investment of a city seven miles round with this diminutive force was of course impossible. There was in consequence perfectly free ingress for supplies and reinforcements by the Meerut road and the bridge of boats. To carry the place by a *coup de main* was at one time discussed, and even a plan of assault agreed upon. But at the eleventh hour this most rash venture was wisely abandoned. We might, by dint of a surprisal, have carried the outer walls, but our small force would almost inevitably have been lost and destroyed in the narrow, winding streets of the city, and a failure would most probably have caused the whole of the Punjab to rise up in rebellion. To capture the city by regular approaches was equally impossible. We had only a small body of sappers; working parties could not be furnished from the infantry, who were almost always all on daily duty; and the rebel guns, infinitely superior to our own in weight and number, were quite as well worked. The natives of India have, indeed, a marvellous capacity for the practice of artillery. In the campaigns of Wellesley and Lord Lake, the great loss which the English suffered at Assye, Laswaree, and other places, was entirely due to the tenacity, courage, and precision with which the native artillerymen served their guns to the last. The same qualities were displayed by the Sikhs in their great battles; and it was not without a feeling of pride and satisfaction that the English artillery officers marked the precision of the enemy's fire during the siege of Delhi.

From these remarks it will be seen that the English army

was, in fact, far more the besieged than the besiegers. The most that could be hoped was to hold some strong position until reinforcements and heavy siege guns should arrive; and such a position the fighting of the 8th of June had secured. The ridge which we occupied at the conclusion of that day rises from the river, and runs obliquely towards the northern face of the city, and at the nearest point is distant about twelve hundred yards from the walls. Extending two thousand yards, it terminates abruptly at a suburb of the city, known as the Subzee Munde, but is immediately after resumed and stretches away in a southwesterly direction. The East Jumna Canal, and the grand trunk road to the Punjab, enter the city through this break. This ridge formed the front of our position, and covered our camp, which was pitched with its left resting on the river, and protected thereby; but its right rested only on the Subzee Munde Suburb, which thus became the key of our position, as by it alone could our flank be turned, and our communications with the Punjab threatened.

The points to be noticed on that face of the city which fronted the ridge are as follows: on the right, and close to the river, was the Water Bastion; on the left, and almost opposite the point where the ridge abruptly terminated, the Moree Bastion; between these two, but much nearer the Water Bastion, was the Cashmere Bastion; to the left again of the Moree Bastion was the Lahore Gate, uncommanded by our guns. This was the principal gate of the city, and under shelter of the Paharipore and Kishengunge Suburbs; thence the enemy could emerge when they pleased, and, sallying out from the Subzee Munde, attack our position in flank.

Our left, resting, as I have already said, on the river Jumna, and further covered by the ridge, and in front of that by strong pickets, was incapable of being turned, and secure from danger. The tug of war was on our right, where the ridge terminated at the Subzee Munde. I shall, consequently, ask my readers to dismiss from their minds for the present all consideration of other parts of our position. The key of our position on the right was a building known as Hindoo Rao's house. This was garrisoned by the regiment of Ghoorkhas (the Sirmoor Battalion) and two companies of rifles, under

the command of Major Reid, the commandant of the former regiment. The remainder of the 60th Rifles was encamped within easy distance, so as to be able to send up supports speedily, whenever required. In rear of Hindoo Rao's house, Colonel Tombs's troop of horse artillery was stationed, to overawe the Subzee Munde; and batteries were erected at various points to keep down the fire of the Moree Bastion, and to throw shot and shell into the Kishengunge Suburb, whenever the enemy mustered there for the purpose of attacking the camp in flank.

All along the ridge, but especially to the right and rear of Hindoo Rao's house, the storm of battle raged continually. Day after day, large masses of the enemy, issuing from the Subzee Munde, and covering their advance by a simultaneous fire from all the bastions fronting our position, hurled themselves against our right flank. Nor did repeated repulses succeed in diminishing the severity of these attacks. Fresh troops were continually pouring into the city, full of confidence and elation at their successful mutiny, and these were thrust forward to try their hands at dislodging the obstinate "Feringhees." Fortunately for the wearied defenders of the ridge, no leader of commanding genius arose among the insurgents. Had an Hyder Ali been there to fuse the discordant elements, had there been even sufficient unity of purpose to attack our position simultaneously in front and flank, it is exceedingly doubtful if the ridge would have continued tenable. This danger continually menaced us, and thus to repel all attacks on flank and rear only a small portion of a small army could be spared, the remainder being held in readiness for a general sortie against the whole line of our batteries. To describe these battles in detail would weary the reader, and require far greater space than that of a single paper. A simple enumeration of them, however, is necessary to mark the progress of the siege, and will show better than a general statement the severity of the struggle before Delhi.

On the 9th of June, the day after the battle of Badli Serai, a severe cannonade was opened upon our works, followed, in the afternoon, by an attack on the right of our position. The attack was repelled with heavy loss, but renewed again and

again upon the 10th and 11th, although with diminishing energy. Baffled on the right, the enemy, upon the 12th, attacked the left of our position in great force. We were partly taken by surprise, and for some time a doubtful battle raged, with extreme fury, along the whole front of the ridge. The arrival of reinforcements from the camp below compelled the enemy to retire, and they were finally driven back into the city, leaving five hundred of their number dead upon the ground. On the 17th, the enemy, under cover of a tremendous fire, attempted to erect a heavy battery in the Kishengunge, from which to enfilade our batteries on the ridge. Two columns were at once organized, under Majors Reid and Tombs, to put a stop to this. The work was most effectually done. The battery was ruined, one gun which was being got into position captured, a large quantity of ammunition destroyed, and the enemy driven back into the city. On the 19th, a force of three thousand men, with a numerous artillery, made a wide detour from the city, and attacked the rear of our camp. Fearing lest an attack might also be made in front, the infantry were held in readiness in the batteries, and on the cavalry and field artillery devolved the duty of meeting this formidable danger. They numbered three hundred European and native horse, with twelve light guns. So long as daylight lasted, they succeeded in repelling the enemy; but darkness coming on, the insurgents managed to outflank them, and for a time two light guns were in imminent danger of capture. At this juncture some three or four hundred English infantry arrived on the field. Their steady fire drove back the enemy. The guns were rescued from danger, and the insurgents desisted from further fighting. In the morning, however, the attack was renewed, but with little spirit; and the rebels, disheartened, allowed the English army a few days' rest. On the 23d of June the fiercest attack since the siege began was made upon the rear of Hindoo Rao's house. Four times the enemy advanced, to be repulsed on each occasion with heavy loss. As the morning wore on, General Barnard resolved, if possible, to drive the enemy out of the whole Subzee Munde Suburb, and make this our advanced position. A column was formed, and, after several hours of sharp fighting, the Subzee Munde re-

mained in our hands. The heat was excessive. Out of ten officers in one regiment (2d Fusileers), five were struck down by sun-stroke. In another (1st Fusileers), one was struck down, and six more brought in disabled by the sun. "When I arrived at Hindoo Rao's house," writes an officer who was present, "I found every one exhausted and done up. There were the 1st Fusileers and some Rifles, all done up. I went on to the new advanced battery: it was crowded with worn-out men. The artillerymen, likewise done up, had ceased firing; another party of Rifles, in a similar state, in another position; one hundred and twenty men of the 2d Fusileers, who had marched twenty-three miles that morning, and had had no breakfast, were lying down exhausted; three weak companies of Ghoorkhas were out as skirmishers, but they, too, were exhausted, and the remainder were resting under a rock. The heat was terrific, and the thermometer must have been at least one hundred and forty degrees, with a hot wind blowing and a frightful glare."

The foregoing is sufficient to show the character of the work which the British army before Delhi was called upon to do. The British Empire hung upon their invincibility. There can be no doubt, that, according to all the rules of war, they ought to have been beaten, and perhaps were beaten. But on this, as on so many other occasions, the fortunate inability of the English soldier to understand this disagreeable fact stood him in good stead. He clung to the ridge, bidding defiance to all comers, — striking to right and left and rear vigorously as ever, in spite of the ravages of shot and shell, the sun, sickness, and fatigue. It would, however, be unjust to say that the English soldier bore alone the brunt of the fight. The natives, horse and foot alike, vied with their English comrades in courage and devotion.

It was a motley appearance which the little army presented, composed of so many tribes and peoples, — Hindoos, Ghoorkhas, Sikhs, Afghans, Pathans, and English, — all fighting under one flag. The Ghoorkhas, who formed the Sirmoor Battalion, are inhabitants of the hill country of Nepaul. They must be, in point of size, one of the smallest races of men in the world, and certainly the ugliest. Indeed, no one who has any ac-

quaintance with the current theories regarding the origin of species but must be troubled with disagreeable qualms at the remarkable resemblance between the features of the Ghoorkha and those of some of the monkey tribes. But square, massive, and firm-set, these Ghoorkhas are marvellously strong, possessed of great powers of endurance, and perfectly fearless. Tiger-shooting on foot, a sport which more than any other requires nerve, coolness, and precision, is their favorite pastime. The English have been but once engaged in war against them; but on this occasion they proved themselves, after the Sikhs, the most formidable antagonists we ever encountered in India. Our troops were repeatedly and heavily defeated, and every attempt we made to storm their stockades in front was repulsed. These gallant little hill-men were quartered in Hindoo Rao's house, and never left it during the whole siege. Assisted by reliefs from the 60th Rifles, the 1st and 2d Bengal Fusileers, the Guide Corps, and the 4th Sikh Infantry, they sustained and defeated twenty-four assaults upon their position. The house was literally torn in pieces by the fire to which it was continually exposed. "How men," says one, after examining the ruins, "could have held a building so battered and riddled with shot and shell, the very target of the enemy, is a marvel; yet, as the siege progressed, when it was proposed to remove even the sick and wounded in hospital, they violently protested against being carried away from their comrades even to a place of safety. In this hospital Major Reid pointed out the mark where a patient had been cut in two by a round shot." "I have no words," writes General Wilson, "to express the admiration with which I, as well as the whole force, have viewed the gallantry with which this noble officer [Major Reid], with the gallant band under him, has held the important post intrusted to his command."

The rest of the native soldiers in the English army before Delhi consisted mainly of regiments recruited in the Punjab. Sikhs, Afghans, Pathans, and men from the wild tribes on our northwest frontier crowded their ranks. These men are born soldiers, than whom there are none finer to be found in the world. They are splendid looking fellows. Their worth as soldiers was well attested on the great battle-fields of Fero-

zeshah and Chillianwallah. That old hard fighting had engendered a mutual respect between the two people, and they flung themselves into our cause and quarrel with a whole-heartedness which has rarely been matched. How they fought for us at Delhi, and Lucknow, and on a hundred other battle-fields, ought never to be forgotten by Englishmen; and, whether as infantry or cavalry, we feel assured, that, under officers they admired and trusted, these gallant soldiers would hold their own against the best disciplined armies of Europe. It was pleasant to see the thorough good understanding which existed between them and the English soldiers, apparently in no way hindered or diminished by their total want of any common language. The English soldier would stroll down to pay a visit to his friend, the Sikh subahdar. The latter, delighted to see him, would at once offer him his stool, sitting himself, meanwhile, on his bed. The subahdar, with all the finished courtesy of a native, would then proceed to inquire after his friend's health, in excellent Pushtoo; the other, nothing disconcerted, replies, maybe, in the Yorkshire dialect. The conversation becomes general, and has been known to extend over considerable spaces of time. Unlike the Hindustani, both Sikh and Ghoorkha have a very strong taste for rum; and the mere fact that they could take their "grog" like men raised them immeasurably in the estimation of the British soldier.

The officers who commanded these regiments were picked men, trained to war in the continual fighting which, for some years after the occupation of the Punjab, was kept up by the hostile tribes living upon our frontier. Their names—Coke, Lumsden, Probyn, Wilde, Watson, and others—soon became familiar in our mouths as household words. They were always to be heard of in the front of danger, and first among them was Hodson, the gallant and dashing leader of Hodson's Horse. Among the infantry officers there were some—Captain Wilde, for example—not less fearless than Hodson, and perhaps superior to him in military skill. But an irregular cavalry commandant has opportunities of distinguishing himself which are denied to others. There is a glitter about his achievements which attracts the eye more readily than the sober, but more

solid, performances of infantry. Not that we wish to undervalue the merits of Hodson: he well deserved the reputation he acquired. As a leader of irregular horse he was unrivalled, — a perfect swordsman, utterly indefatigable, and with a courage, coolness, and dash which overcame all obstacles. He was in the thick of every fight. “He always,” writes one, “turns up in moments of difficulty.” There was nothing so forlorn and desperate, but Hodson was ready to venture; nothing so difficult of execution, but by some means or other he managed to do it. His exploits read like stories cut from the pages of a romance. “In the camp at Delhi,” writes one who was present, “when the incessant fatigue to which the soldiers were exposed forbade the strict enforcement of the continual salute, it was remarked that Hodson never passed down the lines without every man rendering to him that mark of respect. The soldiers loved him as their own. ‘There goes that ’ere Hodson,’ said a drunken soldier, as he cantered down the lines; ‘he’s sure to be in everything; he’ll get shot, I know he will, and I’d a deal rather be shot myself; we can’t do without him.’” It must be remembered, that, in addition to the fighting in the immediate vicinity of Delhi, the whole country, for miles and miles around, was seething with rebellion. These disaffected districts were continually being visited by bands of armed insurgents from Delhi, who strove to operate upon our communications. And it was in frustrating their efforts that the eminent abilities of Hodson, as a captain of horse, and a partisan leader, were so conspicuously called forth. We can only express our regret that want of space will forbid our giving any account of his daring expedition to Rohtuck, his capture of the king of Delhi, and his crowning exploit, the capture and execution of the young princes, an act which, for cool and successful daring, could hardly be surpassed.

Other men there were at whose names we would gladly pause, did time allow of it, — such as Colonel Tombs, of the horse artillery, and Neville Chamberlain, the adjutant-general of the army.

But he whose fame rose above that of all others, and who is remembered as pre-eminently the hero of Delhi, was Brigadier-General John Nicholson. It was during the great Punjab

war which ended in the dissolution of Runjeet Singh's monarchy, at the victory of Goojerat, that Nicholson first became known as a daring and skilful soldier. In that campaign he acted as a partisan leader, and, at the head of a few undisciplined followers, made such astonishing marches, undertook enterprises apparently so hopeless, which nevertheless he brought to a successful issue by dint of sheer skill and audacity, that a sect of fanatics arose in the Punjab who adopted the worship of "Nikkulseyne" as a god. So profound, indeed, was the impression which his acts made upon the native mind, that to this day any Punjabee living upon the spot invariably commences his narrative of the battle of Chillianwallah or of Goojerat with the prefatory observation, "Nikkulseyne stood here."

At the conclusion of the Sikh war, he was placed in charge of the Bunnoo district,—a tract of country lying upon our northwest frontier, and at that time inhabited by a race of utter savages. The character of these people may be divined from the following extract from a letter of Nicholson's to his friend, Sir Herbert Edwardes. "Fancy," he writes, "a wretched little Wuzereee child, who had been put up to prison food, on my asking him if he knew it was wrong to kill people, saying he knew it was wrong to kill with a knife or a sword. I asked him why, and he said, '*Because the blood left marks.*'" And again, in the same letter: "Before I close this, I must tell you of the last Bunnoochee murder, it is so horribly characteristic of the bloodthirstiness and bigotry of their dispositions. The murderer killed his brother near Gurwalla, and was brought in to me on a frightfully hot evening, looking dreadfully parched and exhausted. 'Why,' said I, 'is it possible you have walked in, fasting, on a day like this?' 'Thank God,' said he, 'I am a regular faster.' 'Why have you killed your brother?' 'I saw a fowl killed last night, and the sight of blood put the devil into me.' He had chopped up his brother, stood a long chase, and been marched in here; *but he was keeping the fast.*"

In the character of this wild people Nicholson in a very brief time effected wonderful changes. Murder, burglary, and highway robbery became things of the past; and "the

Bunnoochees," writes Sir Herbert Edwardes, "reflecting on their own metamorphosis in the village gatherings under the vines, by the streams they once delighted so to fight for, have come to the conclusion that the good Mahommedans of historic ages must have been just like 'Nikkulsey'n.'"

The convulsion of 1857, so terrible, sudden, and extensive, had the effect of completely shattering the old landmarks and traditionary practices. Everywhere men rose to eminence, who, but for some great emergency like this, would in all probability have passed unnoticed to the grave. At such a time Nicholson could not long remain unheard of. The disturbances had scarcely broken out before an act of brilliant courage proclaimed his name throughout Northern India. The 55th Regiment of Native Infantry had mutinied. With a small party of horsemen, Nicholson flung himself upon them. The daring of the leader and the impetuosity of his charge compensated for the want of numbers. The mutineers broke and fled. All day long Nicholson and his men hung hacking and hewing upon their rear. The regiment was broken up and dispersed. One hundred and twenty dead bodies marked their line of flight; thrice that number crawled, bleeding and wounded, to die in neighboring villages; one hundred and fifty were taken prisoners, and the regimental colors and two hundred stand of arms recovered. On the departure of Neville Chamberlain to join the army before Delhi, Captain John Nicholson, by a sort of popular vote, was called to the command of the Punjab movable column, and invested with the rank of brigadier-general. Moving with astonishing speed from point to point, wherever mutiny dared to show itself, there Nicholson trampled it out in blood. The Punjab was quieted, and then Sir John Lawrence hurried off him and his troops to aid in the capture of Delhi. They marched into camp, a welcome reinforcement of four thousand men. No less than four-and-twenty general actions had been fought around the ridge. General Barnard had succumbed, a victim to cholera. General Archdale Wilson had succeeded to his place. Under his leadership the conduct of the siege had very greatly improved; but we were still acting entirely on the defensive, and the troops were disheartened with long toil, exposure, and fatigue.

With the arrival of General Nicholson, a new era of the siege — the beginning of the end — may be said to have commenced. “Of all the superior officers in the force,” writes General Chamberlain, “no one took the pains he did to study our position and provide for its safety. Hardly a day passed but what he visited every battery, breastwork, and post, — and frequently at night, though not on duty, would ride round our outer line of sentries to see that the men were on the alert, and to bring to notice any point he considered not duly provided for. When the arrival of a siege train and reinforcements enabled us to assume the offensive, John Nicholson was the only officer, not being an engineer, who took the trouble to study the ground which was to become of such importance to us; and had it not been for his going down that night, I believe that we might have had to capture, at considerable loss of life, the positions which he was certainly the main cause of our occupying without resistance. From the day of the trenches being opened to the day of the assault, he was constantly on the move from one battery to another; and when he returned to camp, he was constantly riding backwards and forwards to the chief engineer, endeavoring to remove difficulties.” “He was a man,” writes another, who then saw him for the first time, “cast in a giant mould, with massive chest and powerful limbs, and an expression ardent and commanding, with a dash of roughness; features of stern beauty, a long, black beard, and sonorous voice. There was something of immense strength, talent, and resolution in his whole gait and manner, and a power of ruling men upon high occasions that no one could escape noticing at once. His imperial air, which never left him, and which would have been thought arrogance in one of less imposing mien, sometimes gave offence to the more unbending of his countrymen, but made him almost worshipped by the pliant Asiatics.”

In the mean while the heavy siege-train from Ferozepore was dragging its cumbrous length towards the English camp before Delhi. Its progress was inevitably slow; the rainy season was at its height, the roads were deep and heavy with the unceasing deluge, and the rivers rolling down like great inland seas. Only a weak escort could be spared to protect the train,

and as it neared the city the rebels determined, if possible, to cut off and capture it. On the 26th of August our spies brought intelligence that six thousand men and sixteen guns had left the city to operate upon our rear. There could be no doubt of the purpose of this expedition, and Brigadier-General Nicholson was at once sent off, with a force of about two thousand foot and horse, and three troops of horse artillery, to intercept it. Pushing on through an inundated country, where, at times, the water rose above the backs of the horses dragging the guns, Nicholson came up with the rebels strongly posted in the village of Nujufghur. He attacked at once, and gained a brilliant and decisive victory. Eight hundred of the enemy fell upon the field; the whole of their camp equipage, thirteen guns, and a large amount of treasure and ammunition fell into the hands of the victors.

No further attempt was made to interfere with the siege train, and on the 3d of September the long and anxiously expected heavy guns rolled into our lines.* Gabions, fascines, and sand-bags had been prepared in thousands, scaling-ladders had been constructed, and everything was in readiness to commence offensive operations at once. On the morning of the 7th the last reinforcement arrived,—the 4th Punjab Rifles, commanded by Captain A. Wilde. Although the last at Delhi, this regiment was destined, by its conspicuous gallantry, both there and before Lucknow, to win for itself the highest reputation. They had moved down from our northwest frontier at the rate of twenty-five miles a day, and “as they marched into camp,” writes an eyewitness, “the Europeans turned out to admire the sturdy frames and fine looking faces under the Khakee turbans, and began to fraternize with the new regiment of ‘Sakes,’ or Seikhs, as the Punjabees were called.”

On the night of the 7th of September the siege of Delhi fairly began. Even now, however, the ultimate success of the English arms would have been next to impossible, but for an extraordinary omission of which the enemy had been guilty. Notwithstanding the length of the siege, the long curtains

* These were, six 24-pounders, eight 18-pounders, four 10-inch mortars, four 8-inch howitzers, with 1,000 rounds of ammunition for each piece, and a similar quantity for each howitzer and mortar before Delhi.

which connected the bastions had never been rendered fit for guns. Had this been done, the tremendous weight of artillery which the rebels might have concentrated would certainly have crushed any attempt to establish breaching batteries. As it was, however, we knew, that, if we succeeded in silencing the fire of the bastions, the assaulting columns might be pushed forward with confidence of success. It was determined to breach the Water Bastion and the curtain which connected that with the Cashmere Bastion, but as a preliminary the fire of the Moree Bastion had to be silenced, which would otherwise have taken our batteries in flank. About seven hundred yards from the walls, and immediately below our position on the ridge, a deep, broad, natural ditch (termed in India a *nullah*) ran along the whole northern face of the city. This was converted into our first parallel; and just in front of it, opposite the Moree Bastion, was the position selected for Battery No. 1. This battery was made in two portions: the right, containing six guns, to play upon the Moree; the left, four, to keep down the fire of the Cashmere Bastion. All through the night the working parties labored at the battery, luckily unmolested by the enemy, but the dawn of morning saw only one gun in position. With the first streak of daylight, on the 8th of September, the enemy perceived what we had been at, and a tremendous fire of round shot, grape, and shell crashed unceasingly into the almost defenceless battery. The working parties, however, continued to work on steadily, in spite of numerous casualties; gun after gun was rapidly got into position; an attempt to carry the battery by storm was repulsed with heavy loss; and by eight o'clock that morning the enemy's fire was considerably lessened. By the afternoon the Moree was totally silenced. On that day we had seventy casualties in this battery alone. These operations had, however, the effect of convincing the enemy that our attacking columns would be directed against the Moree Bastion, and consequently they offered almost no resistance to the occupation of the ground selected for our breaching batteries on the left. During the nights of the 11th and 12th a heavy battery was run up at five hundred yards from the Cashmere Bastion, in front of a building known as

“Ludlow Castle.” This was also made in two portions,— the right half containing seven heavy howitzers and two eighteen-pounders ; the left half, about two hundred yards distant, was constructed for nine twenty-four-pounders. This was the heaviest of our breaching batteries, and was intended to crush the fire of the Cashmere Bastion, and ruin both that and the adjoining curtain. Farther to the left, and a little in advance, a third battery, consisting of ten heavy mortars, was run up in a garden (Koodsen Bagh) ; while to the extreme left of our position, and at a distance of only one hundred and sixty yards from the right, or Water Bastion of the city, advantage was taken of the shelter afforded by a ruined custom-house to erect a battery of six eighteen-pounders, in order to smash the Water Bastion.

It must not be supposed that these works were carried on unmolested. Every battery had to be erected under the hottest fire. The enemy had no sooner detected the purpose of our operations upon the left than they hastened to render the curtains fit for the practice of artillery. From every nook and cranny where a light gun could be placed in position grape-shot was rained into the batteries. Protected by the broken nature of the ground, hosts of skirmishers spread over the whole intervening space between our batteries and the city, and poured an unceasing hail of musket-shot into every opening and embrasure. From the opposite bank of the river guns and musketry enfiladed our batteries on the left, while on the right the rebels took advantage of the shelter afforded by the Kishengunge to erect a heavy battery, which raked the whole line of our works from end to end. Thus all our batteries were exposed to a murderous fire from the front and on both flanks. The men fell fast ; reliefs there were none, and the survivors were fast wearing out beneath the combined effects of fatigue, heat, and exposure. But the struggle before Delhi was one which nerved every faculty of mind and body to suffer and endure all things rather than to yield. The contest was one not only for the maintenance of British rule in India, and the national glory ; there was hardly an Englishman engaged who had not the murder of some dear relative or personal friend to avenge. Above all, there was the pride of race, insulted by its

momentary defeat at the hands of a conquered and inferior race. The thought of failure was never entertained for a moment, and never were guns more unflinchingly served.

“At eight o’clock, on the morning of the 11th,” says an eyewitness, “the great breaching battery opened fire. A salvo from the nine twenty-four pounders was followed by three tremendous cheers from the artillery in the battery. As the site of the breach was struck with the iron hail, great blocks of stone fell, and the curtain wall fell clattering into the ditch. The howitzers soon after followed suit. In ten minutes the Cashmere Bastion was silenced ; and then it was a fine sight to see the stone work crumbling under the storm of shot and shell, the breach getting larger and larger, and the eight-inch shells, made to burst just as they touched the parapet, bringing down whole yards of it at a time.”

On the morning of the 13th the custom-house battery opened with terrible effect on the Water Bastion. The enemy’s guns were smashed or silenced almost immediately, and the whole face of the bastion was crushed into a shapeless mass. All through that day a heavy fire was kept up against the fortifications of the rebel city ; and in the evening four young engineer officers — Lieutenants Greathed, Home, Medley, and Lang — were ordered to steal down to the walls, and examine the breaches. Lieutenant Medley has written such a vivid and interesting account of this perilous adventure, that we cannot do better than quote it.

“It was a bright starlight night, with no moon, and the roar of the batteries, and clear, abrupt reports of the shells from the mortars, alone broke the stillness of the scene, while the flashes of the rockets, carcasses, and fireballs, lighting up the air ever and anon, made a really beautiful spectacle. The *ghurees* struck ten, and, as preconcerted, the fire of the batteries suddenly ceased. Our party was in readiness ; we drew swords, felt that our revolvers were ready to hand, and, leaving the shelter of the picket, such as it was, advanced stealthily into the enemy’s country.

“Creeping quietly through the garden, we quickly found ourselves under a large tree on the edge of the cover ; and here we halted for a moment, conversing only in whispers. The enemy’s skirmishers were firing away on our right some thirty yards from us, and the flashes of the muskets lit up the air as if they had been fireflies. The shells and

rockets of the enemy at one moment illumined the space around, as they sailed over our heads, and then left us in total darkness. We now left the Rifle officer, Lieutenant H——, and his twenty men in support, and, with the six men who were to accompany us, Lang and I emerged into the open, and pushed straight for the breach. In five minutes we found ourselves on the edge of the ditch, the dark mass of the Cashmere Bastion immediately on the other side, and the breach distinctly discernible. Not a soul was in sight. The counterscarp was sixteen feet deep and steep. Lang slid down first; I passed down the ladder, and, taking two men out of the six, descended after him, leaving the other four on the cope to cover our retreat. Two minutes more, and we should have been at the top of the breach; but, quiet as we had been, the enemy was on the watch, and we heard several men running from the left towards the breach. We therefore reascended, though with some difficulty, and, throwing ourselves down on the grass, waited in silence for what was to happen. A number of figures immediately appeared on the top of the breach, their forms clearly discernible against the bright sky not twenty yards distant. We, however, were in the deep shade, and they could not apparently see us. They conversed in a low tone, and presently we heard the ring of their ramrods as they loaded. We waited quietly, hoping they would go, when another attempt might be made. Meanwhile we could see that the breach was a good one, the slope easy of ascent, and that there were no guns in the flank. We knew by experience, too, that the ditch was easy of descent. It was, however, desirable, if possible, to get to the top; but the sentries would not move. At one time the thought occurred to me of attempting the ascent by force. We might have shot two or three of them from where we lay, and in the surprise the rest might have run, and we could have been to the top and back before they had seen how small our party was; but the extreme hazard of the attempt and the utter impossibility of rescuing any one that might be wounded in the ditch, made me abandon the idea, when I further reflected that we had in reality gained all the needful information. After waiting, therefore, some minutes longer, I gave a signal; the whole of us jumped up at once, and ran backwards towards our own ground. Directly we were discovered, a volley was sent after us. The balls came whizzing about our ears, but no one was touched. We reached our support in safety, and all quietly retreated to the Koodsen Bagh by the same road as we had come. Lang went off to the batteries to tell them they might open fire again; and I got on to my horse, and galloped back to camp as hard as I could, to make my report to the chief engineer,—the roar of the batteries, as I rode off, showing that they had once more opened fire on the breach.”

Greathed and Home, returning at the same time, reported the breach in the Water Bastion to be practicable, and General Wilson and his advisers determined to assault Delhi before daylight on the morning of the 14th of September.

At three o'clock in the morning the troops mustered in profound silence to the rear of Ludlow Castle. The city was to be assailed at four different points, and the forces were accordingly divided into four columns, with a reserve to bring up reinforcements wherever they should be most needed. The first column, under General Nicholson (to whom also the supervision of the whole had been intrusted), was to storm the main breach close to the Cashmere Bastion; the second, under Colonel Jones, was to enter the city through the breach in the Water Bastion; the third, under Colonel Campbell, was to blow open the Cashmere Gate; the fourth, under Colonel Reid of the Ghoorkhas, was to make a diversion on the right, by forcing its way through Kishengunge and Paharipore to the Lahore Gate. The reserve was under the command of Brigadier J. Longfield.*

As the columns moved off to the various points of attack, a

* The strength of the columns were as follows :—

1st column	{	300 men of H. M. 75th Regiment,
		250 " 1st European Bengal Fusileers,
		450 " 2d Punjab Native Infantry.
Total, 1,000		
2d column	{	250 men of H. M. 8th Regiment,
		250 " 2d European Bengal Fusileers,
		350 " 4th Seikh Infantry.
Total, 850		
3d column	{	250 men of H. M. 52d Regiment,
		500 " 1st Punjab Infantry,
		250 " Kumaon Battalion.
Total, 1,000		
4th column	{	50 men of H. M. 60th Rifles,
		160 " 1st Fusileers,
		200 " Sirmoor Battalion,
		200 " Guides,
		80 " H. M. 61st Regiment,
		65 " Kumaon Battalion,
Reserve	{	250 men of H. M. 61st Regiment,
		200 " Belosch Battalion,
		250 " 4th Punjab Infantry,
Total, 900		

tremendous fire was opened along the whole line of our batteries ; and the 60th Rifles, running forward, spread out in skirmishing order, and opened a brisk fire on the walls. The enemy replied with rockets, shells, and round shot ; and as the head of Nicholson's column came in sight of the main breach, such a fearful fire of musketry was opened upon them that the ladder-men wavered for a moment, and began to fall back. Medley and Lang—the young engineer officers who guided the column—sprang forward, and, calling on their men to follow, jumped into the ditch. In spite of the hot fire which threatened death to any who approached the walls, the ladders were planted. A gallant young officer, Fitzgerald, of the 75th, was the first to mount the breach, but fell dead as he reached the summit. His men poured in after him, shooting and bayoneting all who still attempted to maintain the struggle, and the main breach was fairly won. Not less successful was the assault upon the Water Bastion. In spite of a fire before which the two conducting engineer officers and twenty-nine out of the thirty-nine ladder-men were almost instantaneously prostrated, the breach here had been speedily carried.

The operations of the third column demand a more extended notice. The gateway through which they had to force their way was on the side of the Cashmere Bastion, and had an outer gateway in advance of the ditch. This outer gateway was open, but the communicating bridge was in a ruinous condition, and somewhat difficult to cross. A small party came in advance of the column to blow open the gate. This consisted of Lieutenants Salkeld and Home of the Bengal Engineers, Sergeants Burgess, Smith, and Carmichael of the Bengal Sappers, and a bugler, Hawthorne, of the 52d, who was to sound the advance as soon as the gate had been blown in. Behind these were one hundred and fifty men of the 52d, under command of Captain Bailey, and the main body of the column brought up the rear. Owing to some unforeseen delay, it was broad daylight before the troops neared the gate. The enemy were thoroughly on the alert ; and to blow open the gate under these conditions seemed an act of desperation. It had, however, to be done, and the men to do it were not wanting.

Home ran across the tottering bridge, laid his powder-bags

at the foot of the gate, and jumped into the ditch unhurt; for so astounded were the enemy at the audacity of the proceeding, that they forbore to fire, and only one or two straggling shots greeted his approach. Not so with Salkeld and his companions. A storm of bullets met them as they crossed the bridge. Salkeld succeeded in laying his powder-bags, but fell mortally wounded before he could light the fuse. Sergeant Burgess rushed forward and snatched the port-fire from his failing hand, but fell, shot through the heart, as he did so. Carmichael then ran up and succeeded in lighting the fuse, but immediately after was struck down mortally wounded. Smith hurried up on seeing him fall, but, perceiving that the fuse was alight, jumped into the ditch unhurt, whither the bugler had already carried poor Salkeld. The next moment a terrific explosion shattered the massive gate. Hawthorne sounded the advance, and, with fixed bayonets, and a ringing cheer, the storming party rushed across the bridge. The enemy gave way in every direction, and the Cashmere Gate and the Main Guard were once more in the hands of the English. An act of more consummate daring than this blowing open of the Cashmere Gate it would be difficult to find in the annals of war.

Three columns had now fairly effected a lodgment within the city walls. Much, however, very much, had still to be done. The city was of great extent, and the defenders outnumbered the assailants tenfold. Guns were planted at the top of every street to sweep away the heads of the advancing columns, and an unceasing musketry fire, from the windows of every house, played with terrible effect upon the rapidly diminishing stormers. Moreover, the fourth column, which should have established itself in the Lahore Gate, had been compelled to retreat.

The wisdom of attempting this has been much questioned. It was argued, that, with our insufficient force, we were extending our operations over too broad a surface, and that, had the troops composing this fourth column been employed to strengthen the other three, a more vigorous impression might have been made upon the enemy at those points where we were successful.

The reasons, however, which induced General Wilson to

scatter his forces appear to us unanswerable. In the foregoing narrative we have mentioned the city suburbs (Paharpore, Kishengunge, and Subzee Munde) which lay on the right of our position, and which, communicating with the Lahore Gate, gave the enemy free egress in their numerous attempts to turn our right flank and establish themselves in our rear. Well aware of the great numerical superiority of the enemy, General Wilson feared, that, the assaulting columns once entangled in the streets and lanes of the city, a sortie in force would be made from the Lahore Gate upon his almost defenceless camp, to the imminent risk of the sick and wounded. This was a reasonable fear. And the attack, although unsuccessful, acted powerfully as a diversion, drawing off a large portion of the enemy's troops from other points. The failure was due to a variety of causes. The line of attack was beset with difficulties and very strongly held; the contingent furnished by the Raja of Cashmere, unaccustomed to such terribly severe work, fled in confusion, leaving two or three guns behind them. The other troops were mostly made up of small detachments from various regiments, with only two or three officers to lead them. These fell rapidly, and the men, with no one to direct them, became confused and uncertain. To crown all, Colonel Reid was so severely wounded in the head, early in the engagement, that he had to leave the field without communicating his plans to any one. Under these circumstances, the officer on whom the command devolved had no alternative but to withdraw the troops. This was done in admirable order, and a position taken up at Hindoo Rao's house, with a view to check any retaliating movements on the part of the enemy. None, however, were attempted.

The reserve, under Brigadier Longfield, had, in the mean while, been called up to strengthen the successful columns, and an advance was made into the heart of the city. Colonel Campbell fought his way through the main thoroughfare, up to the Jumma Musjid, — the great Mohammedan mosque, — but the overwhelming forces of the enemy in his front compelled him to fall back at this point. Nicholson, after storming the main breach, had wheeled his troops to the right, intending to clear the rampart road, which ran all round the city imme-

diately within the walls, until he reached the Lahore Gate, and effected a junction with the column under Colonel Reid: for as yet no intelligence of his failure had been received. The enemy were unprepared for this manœuvre, and the rampart road for some distance was undefended. At length, at the Cabul Gate, in a sudden turning, our troops came upon some guns drawn up behind a musket-proof breastwork. The houses on both sides were strongly held. The grape-shot and musketry swept through the advancing column. Taken by surprise, confused, crowded, and unable to return the fire with any effect, the men began to fall back rather hurriedly. At this moment Nicholson sprang forward, and, waving his sword in the air, called on his men to follow. A shot from an adjoining house pierced his chest, and he fell mortally wounded.

That night we held the city from the Cabul Gate to the College Gardens, and the great news was carried by the telegraph to all the stations in the Punjab, removing a heavy burden of suspense and anxiety from every heart. But together with that news came the mournful intelligence that Nicholson was not expected to live. Brilliant as was the part he had played in the great drama which had been acting during the past few months on Indian soil, there were none but felt that these acts of his were but "earnest of the things that he would do." The stern, dauntless courage of the man, his skill, resolution, and marvellous promptitude, had turned all eyes upon him as a tower of strength. Every one knew, that, on his arrival in camp, Delhi *would* be taken by some means or other; every one knew that he would assume the post of danger; and there was a widespread presentiment that he would perish in the accomplishment of his mission, — a presentiment but too true. Day after day the telegraph flashed up the report of his condition. For nine days he lingered, and then died, on the 23d of September, at the early age of thirty-five. Early in that year Lord Canning had inquired of Sir Herbert Edwardes his opinion of Colonel Nicholson's character as a public servant. After eulogizing his many noble qualities, Sir Herbert concluded with these words, destined to be prophetic: "If ever there is a desperate deed to be done in India, John Nicholson is the man to do it." The deed had been done, the hero had fallen, but,

as Sir John Lawrence truly said, "he had left behind him a name which could never be forgotten in the Punjab."

No advance was made on the 15th. In fact, no advance was possible. The rebels had been associated with English soldiers for too long a time not to have discovered their special weakness. Wherever the troops turned, their eyes lighted upon innumerable bottles of beer, brandy, and wine. These the sagacious Sepoy had taken from the merchants' stores in the city, and scattered about in the most liberal and tempting profusion. Maddened with heat and thirst, and even in their calmest moments not indisposed to strong liquors, the English troops may be said to have thrown themselves *en masse* upon this attractive foe, and were very soon rendered as unable to fight, at least for a time, as the bullets of the rebels could have made them. There is little doubt, that, could the enemy have got up their courage sufficiently, and attacked us in force on the 15th, we should have been unable to hold the positions we had so hardly won. So complete, indeed, was the demoralization of the force, that the question of evacuating the city was seriously entertained, and only the energetic remonstrances of the wounded Nicholson preserved the army from this ruinous and disgraceful step. By the 16th the danger had passed. The enemy had been too severely punished on the day of the assault to venture an attack, fatigue parties had been told off to destroy the liquor, and order and discipline had been in a great measure restored. The resistance was no longer of the stern and relentless character which marked the first day's fighting. The streets, too, had been sufficiently cleared to admit of the passage of artillery, and every fortified building was in consequence subjected to a bombardment which rapidly emptied it of defenders. All through the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, steady progress was made, General Wilson being careful not to risk his men's lives unnecessarily, and rightly preferring a somewhat slow advance, which preserved his gallant little army from further losses. At length, on a Sunday morning, the 20th of September, the English flag once more floated over the king's palace, and "treason lay stabbed in her best guarded lair."

Thus ended the memorable siege of Delhi. The garrison

had never been less than 20,000 men ; latterly it had risen far above 30,000. The besieging force had never exceeded 10,000 men ; in August it numbered but 3,050, and of these 2,007 were on daily duty. During the whole siege, 3,837 men had fallen, exclusive of those who succumbed to sickness ; and on the 14th of September alone almost one third of the assaulting force swelled the list of killed and wounded. These numbers speak more eloquently than any language we could use. Neither is there needed any comment of ours. The soldiers of America ; — be they of the North or South, — who have given to the world such signal examples of courage and endurance, will need no help to estimate aright the constancy and fortitude of the little army that held the ridge before Delhi.

R. D. OSBORN.

ART. IX. — *The Spanish Gypsy. A Poem.* By GEORGE ELIOT.
Boston : Ticknor and Fields. 1868.

I KNOW not whether George Eliot has any enemies, nor why she should have any ; but if perchance she has, I can imagine them to have hailed the announcement of a poem from her pen as a piece of particularly good news. “ Now, finally,” I fancy them saying, “ this sadly overrated author will exhibit all the weakness that is in her ; now she will prove herself what we have all along affirmed her to be, — not a serene, self-directing genius of the first order, knowing her powers and respecting them, and content to leave well enough alone, but a mere showy rhetorician, possessed and prompted, not by the humble spirit of truth, but by an insatiable longing for applause.” Suppose Mr. Tennyson were to come out with a novel, or Madame George Sand were to produce a tragedy in French alexandrines. The reader will agree with me, that these are hard suppositions ; yet the world has seen stranger things, and been reconciled to them. Nevertheless, with the best possible will toward our illustrious novelist, it is easy to put ourselves in the shoes of these hypothetical detractors. No one, assuredly, but George