

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

LONDON CORRESPONDENCE.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

Delhi taken, after six days fighting.

GREAT SLAUGHTER: 600 BRITISH SOLDIERS AND 40 OFFICERS.

London, October 30, 1857.

MR. EDITOR,

Although, in ordinary course, I should not write till this day week, yet the above news are so important and gratulatory, that it will not do to keep them without comment so long.

On all hands it was understood that Delhi was the key stone of the arch of Sepoy mutiny. That very stone has fallen—that arch has given way; and its ruins, if not utterly swept away in retributive wrath, will point out to ages the horrid tale of Asiatic conspiracy and British victory.

This is the history of its fall:—

On the 31st August the mutineers sent into camp a white flag, asking for terms, and offering to give up all actual murderers. The reply was—"The British Government will hold no terms with murderers, rebels, and mutineers. Surrender must be unconditional. Any other rebel, coming to propose other terms, will be hung. All future negotiations will be carried on at the muzzle of our guns."

The siege train, for which decisive operations were delayed, arrived on the 5th September. Extraordinary exertions were at once made to render it available: several batteries, armed with heavy guns, were established in commanding positions, within a short distance of the city walls, so that the bastions could be immediately destroyed. Having succeeded in this, the bombardment of the city commenced. The enemy replied smartly with grape and musketry; but our loss was inconsiderable, and the fire maintained with vigour. On the 10th and 11th Sept. two sorties were made from the city, but without result. For two days longer our artillery played on the city, till, on the 12th, the Cashmere bastion and half the adjacent curtain were in ruins. Preparations were then made for assault; and General Wilson, in a published order, laid down the line of conduct to be pursued. No quarter was to be given to the mutineers, but the women and children were to be spared, "for the sake of humanity and the honour of our country." Indiscriminate plunder would not be allowed; prize agents would be appointed, and all captured property divided. Concealers of captured property would be handed over to the Provost-Marshal for summary punishment, and lose all claim on division.

It is pleasing to read this, and the earnest manner in which observance of it was enforced on officers: for public attention has been much directed to the foretold horrors of a sack of the city, when taken, by an ungovernable and maddened soldiery.

The Cashmere bastion was at last thrown down, and formed a rugged causeway, over which an order was given for a column of assault to penetrate into the city. This was at once effected with extraordinary facility, the English troops at once lodging themselves in safety, and pressing upon the garrison, which withdrew towards the interior of the town or thronged upon the ramparts to offer the last resistance of despair. From the edge of the river to the extreme western corner of the fortifications, the whole works, including three powerful bastions, were taken on the morning of the preliminary attack. The guns along this line were turned upon the foe, who still held a great barrier, consisting of two gates, a palace of enormous size, and several other strategetic points lying across the city. But the energies of the assailants never flagged: the magazine and royal residence were bombarded—the former was stormed on the 15th, the latter a few hours after; and guns of large calibre, baggage, and treasure, fell into the hands of the victors.

The conflict was carried on gallantly and steadily; the English were in 4 columns; their rockets flying into the crowded positions of the enemy, and gradually driving them from point to point until the principal avenues of the city were occupied, and only the bridge of boats across the Jumna was left to the confused and dispirited Sepoys.

Rapidly and effectually the various columns forced their way along the ramparts and through the streets; but at various intervals they encountered a desperate resistance from barricades, entrenchments, fortified houses, and masses of the insurgents lurking in the narrow thoroughfares and arcaded bazaars characteristic of an

Eastern city. How much shall we hear of those dreadful days! how much more, will never be told! The greatest loss of our troops appears to have been in the streets, and not on the ramparts and in the breach. 600 rank and file, and 40 officers, paid the penalty of victory. How many of the rebels, we know not—except, that a vastly superior number must be reckoned on.

On Sunday morning (what a Sunday morning!) the whole city was in complete possession of General Wilson's army. As to the portion of the garrison which escaped, we are not able as yet to trace their movements very definitely. It seems to have been considered impossible to destroy the bridge of boats by which they made exit; and long before the place had been decisively reduced, the whole of the cavalry, and numerous battalions of infantry, had evacuated it. Private communications state that the inhabitants, who craved for mercy and received it, were found in a state of deplorable destitution, having been pillaged and oppressed with diabolic brutality. Bankers had been robbed, women outraged; and the population welcomed an army that came to save them from blood-thirsty oppressors.

The King of Delhi, with his two sons, escaped—not dying at the gate, tiger-like, as Tipoo Sahib—not with the insignia of the rank he had assumed—but, disguised as a woman, his two sons with him in the same fashion; and those of his women who remained from the former break-up of his Jenana or harem, adopting their lord's ruse, dressed in male clothes and escaped as well. They must have deemed us like to themselves, in making no distinction between sex or age. What could we have done to them except to keep them out of harm's way?

Our troops would doubtless, as ordered, show no quarter to the mutineers: but those who escaped, it is feared, would break up into bands, and, as of old, before our rule, ravage the country with a species of brigandage: infesting the highways, taking refuge in the hills, and only being gradually hunted down, like wild beasts, as our troops can scatter to find and meet them. The great point of meeting at present, however, will be Lucknow, the next strongest hold of disaffection. The swarms that besiege that well-sustained city would be swelled by such accessions; but from the accounts we have, little fear need be entertained of the ultimate result. As a most eloquent writer says, in summing up the recent victory and its results, the fall of Delhi is "the ratification of that imperial bond by which we are acknowledged the masters of India. Three several times have the English contended for possession of the ancient Hindu and Mohammedan capital, and thrice have they scattered a host under its ramparts. Sixty years ago, the Jumna was dyed with Mahratta blood, and the battle-victory of a day placed the inheritance of Timour under our authority. Then the last effort of barbaric ambition was made, and a line of siege batteries was erected before the walls; but once again the English dissipated the hostile army with retributive slaughter, and for half a century they reigned in peace in the city of marble mausolea, of Florentine delicacy and Saracenic splendour, and the Mogul lords of Asia sat as puppets on a titular throne. Thirdly, a treacherous pretender, without even the claim that belongs to rapacious genius, murdered every Christian within his reach, became a monarch of assassins, and for awhile exercised profane sway from the Hall of Nobles. Speedily, however, the British army was thundering at his gates, and in four short months the final conflict came. Six bloody days were spent on the ramparts and in the streets. From the Cashmere to the Cabul gate the retributive columns gradually drove their foes, undaunted by torrents of fire from the houses, the red granite palace, the antique fort of the Patans, the lofty castellated gateway. Inch by inch these columns of assault pressed on: death must have stained every step along the fortifications, and especially the wide 'Chaudri Chank,' three quarters of a mile long, inside the city, and commanded by the fortified palace with its mounted turrets and loopholed barbicans. There was no pitched battle in the breach, as at Badajoz: but, as if in some enormous Russian Redan, the English fought till the garrison fell slowly back through the maze of the houses and the dense population; their adversaries closing on them in a deadly grapple, till they were forced from the gates in the rear."

And it is the proudest subject of all, that the Indian army did it alone. "The Mogul has disappeared from Delhi before a single cartridge had reached the besiegers' camp, from the Chaham. Not one recruit was required before Wilson and Nicholson reconquered the capital of North Western India. Before the gleam of a single bayonet had become visible in the West,

our countrymen had grasped the sword of Clive, swept the Punjab, threw themselves in a dauntless attitude between a hundred cities and a hundred thousand rebels, broke the spell of successful revolt, and in a flame of glory marched from gate to gate of the metropolis of treason. The ancient capital of Hindu Rajahs and Mohammedan Emperors has fallen; with a population of 150,000, garrisoned by an army, fortified by 12 double towers, English bastions, ditch, glacis, and circumvallation of solid masonry—the proudest and most beautiful acropolis of Asia, an architectural throne, a religious shrine, a monument of power—all that was wrested from us, we now possess. The ephemeral Mogul empire of 1857 is already in its coffin, and the bearers are wandering in search of a sepulchre."

Next in importance, amid the shifting scenes of conflict, is Lucknow. It is still safe—the "besieged," says a letter, are "as jolly as can be, under the circumstances: plenty to eat, but no luxuries except fighting." "Two guns, which especially annoyed the besieged, were undermined, and blown up. Another mine was sprung under the feet of those advancing to attack, and killed 400 of them. The garrison then made a sortie which completed their discomfort. The rebels sent a short time since for 1000 Gazees fanatics to lead the storm;

but they were repulsed with such great and terrible slaughter that the say they will never attack again, even if Lucknow be not taken for two years. The fanatics alone left upwards of 200 men dead upon the ground. The enemy's guns are however still playing upon the works of the besieged, and it is reported that they even throw in hand grenades, but it is not credible."

I think my last letter stated that General Outram had joined General Havelock, that the Ganges had been crossed, and that the united forces were on their way to the relief of Lucknow. It was expected that they would arrive before the city about the 25th of Sept.; but much would depend on the amount of opposition met with on the route. A letter dated the 3rd Sept. says, "We have now 1500 Europeans. The cavalry is nearly 100. We have a battery of horse and foot artillery, and six 24-pounders drawn by elephants, besides some mortars; and when the 90th and 5th join us, which they will do about the 12th or 15th, we shall be able to give the 'blackguards' something they don't expect. The people are beginning to turn to us. They see it is only a Mohammedan affair, and would not suit them."

Two regiments had sent in to General Havelock, offering to lay down their arms if their lives were spared. The reply was, that no overture from rebels could be entertained; but if they gave ocular demonstration of their sincerity, by fighting their fellow mutineers, their case would be taken into consideration.

General Havelock had issued a proclamation, that all rebels from Oude who are in custody with their wives and children are to be kept as hostages, to secure against a repetition at Lucknow and elsewhere of the atrocities committed at Cawnpore and Jhansi. "Captain Bruce, who is superintendent of police, went to search the house of a Nuwab, one of Nena Sahib's followers, for papers and other matters. The Nuwab is now before Lucknow, and commands a troop of the insurgents. In examining the apartments, after seizing all the documents, he discovered that the Nuwab had left his female relatives behind. This fact coming to the ears of General Neill, a guard was at once placed over them, and it was hinted to the ladies that they would be alone protected so long as any English women and children who might fall into the hands of the Oude rebels should be uninjured. It is believed that this intimation will be conveyed to the Nuwab and his son, and they may thus be induced to spare any unfortunates who may happen to fall into their hands, and probably induce the Nena to act after the same way."

"Nena Sahib himself never preserved a European female alive, but he is outdone by the Nuwab of Futteghur. On the 2nd of July this man blew away from guns one gentleman and three ladies. Their names were Mr. and Mrs. Birch, Mrs. Beckford, and Mrs. Defontaine. After the mutiny at Futteghur they had succeeded in escaping into the country, and had only just been discovered. Besides he has offered for the capture of every European a reward of fifty rupees. And yet we are told no man is to be summarily dealt with unless it can be proved that he has been actually present at a murder! The whole of the Futteghur district is stamped with the most atrocious crimes, and they are shared and participated in by the low-

est as well as by the Nuwab and his minister Hidaet Ally, and still by the recent order in Council no villages are to be burnt. The Nuwab of Furruckabad, it is believed has some European females alive, but in such captivity that we suppose even death would be preferable."

General Havelock, (now that Delhi has fallen) is looked on as the chief mover in the war. News of his advance is anxiously looked for. Meanwhile, we have cause for doubt and fear that his proceedings will be hampered, and rendered in some instances nugatory by Lord Canning's interference. It is reported that Mr. Grant, a popular favourite of his Lordship's, had been sent as a civil authority, above the Generals; and one of his first steps was to liberate 150 of the Cawnpore mutineers, whom General Neill had arrested. If this goes on, farewell to lasting success. As the *Times* remarked, "there is no doubt, that in 24 hours they were in the enemy's camp, telling them that, after all, we were afraid of and recognized their power, and dared only to conciliate them." Lord Canning appears not only obstinate, and jealous of military power, but almost traitorous to European preservation and success. The public voice calls loudly for his recall, but calls in vain, for routine and red-tapism are strong in the land.

At Agra, on the 19th Sept., all was quiet. Our authority had been re-established at Hattarass, Allyghur, and other places adjoining, by Major Montgomery. The Gwalior mutineers, with a few guns, and several thousands in number, were encamped between the Chambul and Dholpore, but their movements were closely watched. Mr. Colvin, the Lieutenant-Governor of the northern provinces, had died from disease—brought on, it was thought, by the anxiety of his duties.

While General Outram was on his route from Allahabad to Cawnpore, he met with a body of rebels who had crossed the Ganges from Oude. On being pursued by Major Eyre they fled precipitately to their boats, about half a mile off, and endeavoured to escape across the river. They were quickly pursued by cavalry, who on reaching their boats, kept up a galling fire of musketry on them. The infantry came up soon afterwards, and caused great havoc among the crowded boats; but the enemy stood their ground until the guns opened fire, when the panic-stricken rebels threw themselves into the river. Showers of grape were now poured among them, which completed their destruction—only a few scattering survivors, out of a body of three hundred, escaping.

Anxiety is felt as to Assam. The native troops waver; the planters have taken refuge in the station; and only about 100 men have been sent as aid from Calcutta. The Assamese are a warlike race, and have two battalions, 1000 strong each. The Europeans are there quitting the open country, and taking every precaution against their secret foes.

Bengal is in a very disturbed state. The province is covered with parties of rebels, who go about the country plundering all they can.

The 93rd Highlanders had arrived at Calcutta, welcomed and welcomed. Other troops had arrived at Galle, in Ceylon, so that their destination would soon be reached.

At Scinde, the troops were disarmed by surprise. At Kurrachee a plot to massacre all the Christians was discovered. 43 conspirators were seized: of whom three were killed in attempting to escape, 14 were hung, four blown from guns, and 22 transported.

At Shikapore a disturbance took place by some native soldiers getting possession of the guns, at night time, placing them in the parade, and trying to excite a general mutiny. They were dispersed, and the fire of the two guns silenced, in two or three hours. It was pitch dark, so that the numbers of the mutineers could not be determined.

"The Punjab still stands out in bold relief to the rest of India. There, wherever mutiny has raised its head, it has been promptly and severely crushed. In no single instance has Sir John Lawrence failed of success. The 55th, composed of Brahmans, who mutinied because they 'preferred death to loss of caste,' being pursued, took refuge with the Swats, who not only plundered them of their wealth, but converted them into Mohammedans, and then turned them adrift: the 9th Cavalry, 26th, 46th Native Infantry and others, were cut up almost to a man."

At Gya an attack was made by the 5th Irregular, mutineers. They were met by some Europeans and Sikhs, and retreated; our soldiers taking from them some horses and children. These were retaken through the cowardice of our native supporters. The numbers appear to