

## Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

## London Correspondence.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

London, October 9, 1857.

INDIA.

DEAR SIR:

The above word still continues to be that on which are hung our hopes and fears. As in the Russian war, we hear of those feats of daring, that constant and high-souled endurance, and indomitable bravery, which make the Anglo-Saxon character so remarkable—which at first conquered India, and now, in the time of her treacherous and dastardly carnival of blood, stand as breakwaters, around which vainly dash the surging seas of howling, frantic, blood-dyed fanaticism and crime. Like the Crimea war, also, we receive accounts of the miserable imbecility and incapacity of leading men: and chief in office as chief in these characteristics, stands Lord Canning, Governor-General.

My last letter recounted how General Havelock and his little band of invincibles—the Xenophon and Spartans of to-day—had to pause in their onward march to relieve Lucknow and Agra (both besieged), after retaking Cawnpore from Nena Sahib, who had massacred his prisoners.

After the brilliant victory on the 29th July, at Busarut Gunge, the gallant General having no cavalry to follow up his success, and being hampered with sick and wounded, commenced a retrograde movement to Cawnpore, reaching it in safety. The cause of his first retreat was, that the insurgents had contrived to destroy a bridge over a river which is at this season broad, deep and stormy, on the road from Cawnpore to Lucknow and occupied the Lucknow bank in a strong position, with heavy guns. He advanced again on the 5th August, and was met the next day by about five thousand men, whom he engaged and defeated, taking their guns. He then pushed on; but finding that the enemy were in considerable force (50,000 men) near Lucknow, while his own band was reduced to about 900 men, it would have been merely courting annihilation to have advanced without reinforcements. His retreat was slow and masterly, the enemy flying before him.

On the 12th, they attacked him with two guns on the northern side of the river, before recrossing to Cawnpore. A participator in the struggle says:—"There were only 120 men of the 78th Highlanders present, the remainder being sick. Our whole force consisted of only eight hundred men, including the Sikhs. The enemy's two guns would have destroyed nearly every man, of us, but for our timely resolution—a desperate one, no doubt; but it had to be done; or all would have perished beneath the deadly fire. The General rode up to the 120 Highlanders, who were nearest the strongly entrenched battery; but, looking at their diminished numbers, gave no order. But we understood his wish, before words could utter them; all rushed forward to the charge, and in less than five minutes, captured the brass nine-pounders, bayonetting the gunners and all who supported them. General Havelock rode up after us, crying out, "Well done, brave Highlanders! you have saved yourselves and your comrades—you have saved the army!" We did not lose a man in the charge, though it was thought by other corps, to be a mad attempt. As we started, the last round of grape shot went immediately over our heads; but, in their haste to fire, the enemy lost their elevation, and so we escaped."

Brave Highlanders! as, at Waterloo, the "old guard" failed to pierce your close ranks—as, at Alma, you crowned the mountain ridge, face to face with blazing death, unmoved and calm—at, Balaclava, your double ranks alone stayed the proud cavalry—and as, at Inkerman, foot to foot you grappled with mightier swarms—so, now, is your valour the same, and your repute the same. Said Menschikoff when he saw the troops quietly ascend the pass which he had deemed impregnable, "They are not men, they are devils!" and, say the Sepoys now,—"he (Havelock) has a regiment of fiends in petticoats."

No only the kilted Highlanders preserve and extend the fame of England's warriors. I have just read that 18 mounted gentlemen kept 500 armed rebels in check: and, that about 50 others entered an enclosure where some 500 mutineers were—shut the gate and threw the key over the wall, to show they were resolved on death or victory, and then went to work with the 500, who fell before them "like sheep in a

slaughter-house": we may add another simile apropos: as our ladies and children fell in the slaughter-pen of Cawnpore.

But I must return from this digression, to continue Havelock's proceedings. Surely an Englishman may be pardoned for pausing a moment to pay just tribute to the heroes of his country.

After the victory of the 12th, the column crossed the Ganges, to Cawnpore, to wait reinforcements from lower Bengal. During absence, Cawnpore had been threatened by a body of men; but when General Neill advanced to meet them, they all took to flight.

On the 16th, Havelock again fought the rebels, and with his usual success, 12 miles from Cawnpore. Two guns were taken. We lost not a man, but had 15 wounded. The cholera was severe among the wearied men, and the enemy appeared to follow an incessant course of harassing, to wear them out.

There we must leave them, and anxiously await further intelligence, which may perhaps arrive ere this letter be posted.

General Havelock is reported to have been wounded on the 12th instant, but only slightly. Every one here in England, except a few malignant rivals, is eloquent, with his praise. Already he has received promotion, and will doubtless have more. We shall see whether our system will keep to its general plan, of snubbing real merit, or give way for once to popular demand, and to justice.

It is confidently reported that the gallant General is a Baptist! True or not, he shows by his conduct that the exercise of practical religion does not prevent the noble and glorious discharge of his vocation as a defender of his countrymen, an upholder of his Sovereign's dignity, and a chastiser of murder. That the General belongs to some body of Dissenters is generally understood, and he is even said to address his men on the subject of religion. That, however, would scarcely be true, judging from other features of his character. I know not how others may deem it; but, personally, I should rejoice if the gallant soldier were found to be a Dissenter.

The regiments which mutinied at Lucknow and Cawnpore had been organized into some order, and joined by many of the inhabitants: in fact the country swarmed with hordes of rebels. Under such circumstances merely to have held his place would have been much of itself, without victory, and the terror which it struck into the natives.

His force had decreased to 900 men, worn out with fatigue. Reinforcements could scarcely arrive for a fortnight at least; though two regiments are on their way. Meanwhile, he apprehended simultaneous attacks from the combined forces of the enemy, to annihilate his feeble band. The Oude insurgents were gathering about the river, the side of Futteypore, and from Callipee, where Gwalior mutineers, strong in artillery, threatened to cross and form a junction with the Oudeans. A steamer had been sent by the General to destroy the boats at Futteypore, but his force was too weak to oppose the passage of the Jumna at Callipee. The Oude people are making aggressions on our villages to the north of the Ganges, and it is feared that communication between Allahabad and Benares may be intercepted.

Between Cawnpore and Lucknow there were about thirty-five thousand mutineers, and it is considered doubtful whether Sir J. Outram will be successful in passing up the Gogra; the river is lined with forts, well manned with mutineers. Outram's advance, however, up the Gogra, will, it is hoped draw off the mutineers from Havelock, and enable him probably to escape from the dilemma in which he is placed.

No fear is entertained but that the Sikhs will prove true to the English in fighting both against Mahomedans and Hindoos; but unless English troops arrive out soon the Sikhs may, after they have put down the Sepoys, turn against the English.

But at Lucknow, while all this was going on! Even yet, we hardly dare hope. Nena Sahib blockaded the place with other mutineers. Thus I was right in imagining that the report of his suicide was a sham. He is busy, yet; but whether he will have a chance of repeating his Cawnpore horrors is what we now dread. A statement in a private letter gives news which, if true, is glorious, and sets us at ease: may it but be true!

It is said, that the enemy's attention was so directed to Havelock's advance that the besieging troops left few before the city—the rest swelling those who went to meet the terror-dealing "Ferringhee." Havelock met and routed them. But, on their return, they found

that the garrison, starved down to famine rations, and with but few of those, had sallied out, and amply replenished themselves from their besiegers: thus averting their chief danger, and that which the foe most counted on. Anger and mortification are said to have led to fighting among the outwitted insurgents—who, beaten, plundered, and foiled, were drawing off.

I add again, this seems too good to be true. But if so, what a grand and crowning finale to this passage of our history!

There is, too, the introduction of hitherto unemployed naval force, to our aid. Captain Peel (known to fame in the Crimean war) had arrived at and left Calcutta, for Allahabad, with 400 seamen, ten 68-pounders, and a steamer towing flats. Reference to the map will show that their course, to Allahabad, up the Ganges, would leave them not far from Cawnpore and its locality. The reinforcement would be left at Agra, and even to Delhi; but "unless Captain Peel makes his way up the river very quickly and before the rains cease, it is scarcely believed that he will get his guns up to Delhi; but if he cannot carry his guns beyond Allahabad he will, it is expected, push on for Delhi without them. Should the water-carriage fail, it would be exceedingly difficult, on account of the badness of the roads, to convey such heavy guns (one of them an 84-pounder) to Delhi by land."

The remainder of the 33rd Regiment from Mauritius, and a battery of artillery from Persia, had arrived at Bombay. 500 gunners and drivers of the artillery were also soon expected from China.

Great alarm was aroused at Singapore, by discovery of a treasonable conspiracy between the convicts and a Sikh political prisoner, on parole. His name was Kheonuah Singh, Chieftain in rank. He was seized, and ultimately removed to Penang. "The convicts are 3000, of the vilest scum and riff-raff of all India—native of Bengal, kith and kin to the baby-burners and ravishers. The Europeans are on the alert, and looking forward with anxiety to the great Mohammedan festival of Mohworum, when most danger was apprehended.

Lord Elgin left two ships at Calcutta, and went off to China in a third. Sir Colin Campbell had arrived, and ran up the steps of the landing wharf like a young man. His presence was felt to be worth 10,000 men. All classes of Europeans had become disgusted with and alarmed at the proceedings of Lord Canning, Governor General. Fickle, self-opinionated; despising danger till it came, and then unable to meet it—all accounts represent him as endangering the lives of the Europeans instead of saving them. But more of this hereafter: there will come a time of reckoning for him, is the general hope. May it not be, when mischief shall have become irreparable! 'Tis much to say—but said it is—that his shilly-shallying prevented Cawnpore being saved! Also, that under his very nose, in Calcutta itself, conspiracy was allowed to ripen, and only the arrival of Lord Elgin with forces from China prevented an outbreak. Warnings abundant and urgent were also given, of the coming insurrection, but all without preparation or notice. It is the old story of Government routine and red-tapism.

Although the populace have not as a body joined the mutineers—and though the Madras and Bombay troops are, in the main faithful—yet there is an uneasiness and nervousness which may at any moment burst into flame, with sufficient opportunities. Though the mutiny in the Bombay 37th Native Regiment was repressed, yet a plot had existed at Belgaum to murder all the Europeans. A regiment had been disarmed at Rutnagherri. The 8th Cavalry absolutely refused to go to Bengal; and though they were immediately disarmed, yet no further steps appears to have been taken with them, and it was feared such leniency would incite others to still bolder rebellion.

In the Punjab, too, the Mohammedans, who greatly outnumber the Hindoos, are said to be very excited; and a friendly one warned our Commissioner that if Delhi were not taken in a month, they would all rise. We hope, however, that reinforcements would avert that danger.

From Delhi we have much that is interesting, but not much of real intelligence. Sorties continue with the same result to the mutineers, and adding to their fears. The Hindoos and Mussulmans often quarrelled, and were pacified by the King. This sovereign appears to lead but a dog's life of it, after all. The artillery had found out the range of his palace, and an occasional visit from it did not improve his quietude. He had offered (it is reported) to capitulate, on having a pension of 30 lacs of

rupees. Cool certainly; and as coolly answered, that nothing of the kind would do. Disease and famine were on the increase: the city was completely invested; houses and palaces were seen to topple; all was ripe for assault. Ah, that day! Burning with passion, our soldiers wait but the word; and then, augmented by fresh forces, and thinking of comrades, wives, daughters, slain and debauched—let the mutineers—16,000 though they be, look well to it. One cannot help looking at it as it is, not as it should be. Our troops are beyond control, taking revenge. Alas for that full cup of retribution!

An incident is said to have occurred at Allahabad, which, if true, exhibits the combined ignorance, wantonness, and destructive propensities of the mutineers. Close to the fort is a railway terminus: the line, apparently, having been only just completed. The rebels had seen an experimental train enter the terminus: and, when ravaging the station, fought shy of the room where the snorting monsters they had seen were ensconced. At last a party of the more daring opened the door, peeped in, and, seeing all quiet, ventured to poke the engines with sticks. The grim locomotives being still quiescent, they mounted on them, destroyed some of the valves and delicate work—and to rouse the monsters, they hammered them with the butt-ends of their muskets, to see if they would make the same snorting noise as before. This rough treatment, however, the poor engines could not bear. They were on an inclined plane, the wheels being blocked; but the mad crew loosened the restraining blocks, and the iron horse began to move! Away, horror-stricken, and in headlong rout, poured forth those valiant soldiers, to escape the fury they fancied they had aroused! But the engines did not move very far; and, from behind trees and walls, the lilliputians hurled stones and brickbats at their iron Gulliver, though nothing could scare their courage up to another close attack. I give the story as I received it, and vouch not for its likelihood or authenticity.

Fresh revelations of almost inconceivable horrors are still made. Common humanity is at a loss to imagine a reason, much less excuse, for such deeds as these:—European ladies were suffocated by soda-water bottles, which those fiends thrust in their mouths and throats. They cut bones out of the surrounding flesh, from living victims. A young girl was taken, ravished, tied down to a plank, and then her flesh was cut till the nerves were laid bare, her teeth dragged out, and the scalp lifted.

One of the murderers at Cawnpore, on being hung, had his death accidentally rendered more severe; but, even then, far more merciful than the deeds he had done. The rope slipped up between his jaws; he freed his hands and grasped it: but the executioners tore them away, and, pulling at his legs, broke his neck. This will show how summary is the retribution, where guilt has been proved. Hanging and blowing away from cannon, are the legal punishments; though there is little doubt that our soldiers, in very many cases, do and will take the law into their own hands—that law having, for judge, counsel, and jury, cold steel or a cartridge.

At the Cawnpore massacre, just before the Sepoys fired, the chaplain asked leave to read a few prayers. The Nena granted the request: the chaplain's hands were loosened sufficiently to allow access to a prayer-book; and we can well imagine how the grand old Litany of the church would be appreciated, by those treading the verge of eternity: "In all time of our tribulation; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment—good Lord, deliver us!" The prayers done, our brethren shook hands all round. Then came the death volley. "One Sahib rolled one way, and one another, as they sat; but they were not dead, only wounded; so they went in and finished them off with swords."

The daughter of Sir Hugh Wheeler (noble girl! is said to have told Nena—"It is against the practice of any religion to war on women and children. Be well assured that our deaths will be amply avenged." But he ordered her hands to be filled with gunpowder, that its explosion might kill her: and that is the last we hear of the heroic girl. There were sword slashes in the wooden pillars of the room, and long hair, carried in with the stroke. Who shall say if such be hers, or no?

Nena Sahib has resolved not to fall alive into the hands of the English. He has a body-guard, who are engaged to deprive him of life, should he be likely to be taken prisoner by the English.

In one of the sorties from Delhi, the garri-