

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

London Correspondence.

[From our Special Correspondent.]

London, July 31, 1857.

THE MUTINY IN INDIA.

With so important a place as Delhi in the possession of mutineers—with 30,000 men less in our native army, and massacre and rebellion spreading around—it is no wonder that the mail of the 28th instant was eagerly looked for. To those who had relatives there, how fearful was the suspense! to all, who rightly understood the matter, how serious a contingency was involved!

It came but gave little information of a decisive kind. The siege of Delhi had not materially progressed; the besieged held the place with perseverance; though they were routed in every sortie made. General Barnard, successor of General Anson awaited the arrival of a siege train, and reinforcements, before striking a blow which must be decisive and have no likelihood of failure. The postal communication had been destroyed, and alarm was everywhere manifest.

At Calcutta the panic led to the native regiments being compelled to deliver up their arms. This was a delicate operation; but, by combined energy and promptitude, it had been successfully accomplished. The disaffection, however, had not spread to the Bombay or Madras armies, so that this may be viewed as matter of expediency rather than of necessity; and the continued loyalty of those armies, with the fact that, though naturally excited, the people themselves have not participated in the rebellion, affords ground for belief that it is a military and not a national outbreak.

Various accounts have been published of the massacre at Delhi; and of course every probable or improbable cause has been stated, as causing the outbreak: but, that it is a religious one, appears the most likely. A letter from a missionary says,—“there has been for many years a Brahminical prediction current among the natives, and which I had often heard referred to—viz., that the British rule in India would last just 100 years; and I should not be surprised that this pseudo prophecy may have had some influence in inducing the sepoys to revolt at the present time. Various causes of this revolt are assigned. Some ascribe it to Russian intrigue; others to the machinations of the Mohammedans of India, who have always been the most radically disaffected subjects of the British Government, and who are now making cat-paws of the Hindoos in the present instance, to serve their own purposes. I am myself, for some weighty reasons, inclined to be of the latter opinion. The ostensible cause of the outbreak, however, there can be no doubt, is connected with religion. It has been for some time past a growing conviction among all the natives of India that the British Government with the view of completely destroying their nationality, would forcibly induce them to break the rules of caste, and thus assimilate them to its European subjects; and, most unfortunately, that wretched cartridge business (of which you have no doubt heard) confirmed the sepoys in this notion, and proved, though not the actual cause, yet certainly the occasion, of this extensive mutiny.”

The objection to cartridges, referred to, is, that in their composition animal fat is used; and, by biting off the end, before firing, caste is broken—caste, the obligations of which on a Hindoo are paramount to all beside. “Some of the sepoys” (says Lieut. Wright, in despatches on the subject) “who conversed with me on the subject, said that the report had spread through India; and when they go home, their friends will refuse to eat with them.” At first it was thought only an idle prejudice; but on parading those who so objected, such a representation was made to him by the detachment that he felt bound to make known the circumstances to the Commander-in-chief.

Major-General Hearsey, Commander of the Presidency Division, in reporting the uneasiness among the sepoys at Barrackpore in January last, suggests as a cause—“Perhaps those Hindoos who are opposed to the marriage of widows in Calcutta are using underhand means to thwart Government in abolishing the restraints on the marriage of widows; and conceive, if they can make an ignorant portion in the ranks of the army believe their religion or religious prejudices are eventually to be removed by force, and by force they are all to be made Christians—and thus by shaking their faith in Government, lose the confidence in their officers, by inducing sepoys to commit offences (such as incendiarism, so difficult to put a stop to or remove)—they will gain their object.

Doubtless the cartridges were only made the

pretext, other and deeper causes remaining behind. The regiments who have revolted are mainly Rajpoots, of high caste, and the most haughty and refined of the native. The late General Sir Charles Napier, one of the best Indian officers, long ago drew attention to the danger which threatened from the cultivation and improvement of the sepoy element, while the officers commanding them were often mere boys, luxurious dandies, incapable of that decision and influence which were necessary to control such a spirit as raged beneath them.

The proselytizing influence of the missionaries has also been made a stalking-horse. Their efforts and successes are said to have alarmed the natives; but this is disproved by the fact that the populace themselves have not revolted; and while, in the fury of the outbreak, all were sacrificed indiscriminately, yet where was there an outbreak by frantic soldiery in which similar results did not ensue? The argument was used in the House, and fully answered. There always will be machinations against Christianity, amongst those whose superstitions and oppressive rule it breaks down: but the thousands who have embraced it—with those, also, who have been blessed by our rule—are far from sympathizing in a revolution which would bring again on them the curses from which they have escaped.

Mr. Disraeli brought the matter before the House on Monday, and strove to make it appear a national outbreak, owing to our misrule and to indignation against it. He talked over the old story of the deposition of the Rajah of Sattara and coupled with it the annexation of Oude; contending that both were the causes in the native mind, whose virulence found this vent. But, while we know that the native Princes, before our rule, flayed their subjects alive, and oppressed them to the very dust, is it at all likely that their deposition, and the milder, more beneficial sway of the East India Company, could cause rebellion!

Doubtless there are great and crying evils in the Company's administration civil and military. The memorial of the Bengal Missionaries recently presented to Parliament (and which I noticed in a previous letter\*) entered into some of them; but the military service is by far most defective, and must now be entirely remodelled. A commission will go out immediately, to thoroughly probe the subject, and in concert with the Governor-General, take such steps as may be necessary to remove the evil. We have allowed mismanagement to go on till it has produced its own effects. Three months ago the Governor-General of India pointed out that while in Bombay “there is one English to nine native soldiers, and in Madras one to sixteen; in Bengal, (the centre of disturbance) there is only one to twenty-four, and that in a region where the authority of Europeans is most essential to curb the pride of caste, to counteract the usages of immemorial routine, and to convince the Rajpoot, no less than the Bengalee, that his masters are determined to hold the throne of India unchallenged.”

We find, also, that even in the fury of the outbreak, those officers who have proved worthy of their position, and made themselves beloved by their men, in many cases retained their influence. But the better officers are drafted off into civil employ, made collectors and judges, while the inferior only remain in the military administration. The administration of justice also, where the nearest magistrate is often 50 miles away, without even a bridle-road of communication, is it to be wondered at that abuse of power by the police has led to serious evils? The whole administration wants alteration: 150 millions cannot be ill governed with impunity, even though they be “effeminate Hindoos” and, now that the matter has assumed such an aspect, it must be attended to fully.

The ex-king of Oude, whose mother is now here, whining because he is no longer able to ravage, flay, and violate his subjects, has been found connected with the conspiracy, and is a prisoner. His pension of about £100,000 per year, will now be forfeited, even if his life be spared; and this will aid towards defraying the expenses of the war, as well as prove a lesson to other treacherous schemers. Let any one know candidly what Oude was under his domination—what it is, and is likely to be, under our sway, and then all the sophisms as to depriving him of sovereignty will vanish before the claims of bare humanity and the public good.

But there is a powerful contagion in rebellion, be it right or wrong. If our rule be not at once sternly vindicated—if condign punishment be not immediately visited upon the mutineers, and their rebellion quelled, root and branch—then indeed may we fear a war of races, and all

\* See Christian Messenger, July 15, page 213.

the battles of Clive, Hastings, and Wellesley will have to be fought anew.

But such will not be. The government is in earnest; all other details are postponed until the mutiny be subdued; troops are being poured into the disaffected districts; and thousands more are going out. It will be a bloody retribution, for the massacred of all ages and both sexes will be avenged, and the murderers paid in their own coin. Such is State policy: we have India, and must keep it, Statesmen say; what shall be said of the morale of such doctrine? To give way, the national spirit refuses, as it did in the Persian and Chinese wars: to go on, must involve all the details of war. And, in thinking of this subject, I can but revert to what I said some time ago, and leave the theological discussion to those who can resolve its intricacies. Those who read my recent letters will know all, without saying more.

To-night there is to be a meeting for “united and special prayer, at the Freemasons' Hall,” on this subject. All classes—orthodox and heterodox, godly and profane, are excited on the affair. India is the brightest jewel in the British crown—the envy of other nations, and the very eye-apple of our national constitution. Those who touch it will invoke all the fury of the British lion; and as Sebastopol appears to have had no terrors for the national mind—as Allahabad, Sobraon, Moodkee, Seringapatam, are forgotten—Delhi must repeat the lesson to those who will but hear it and die.

I have said that in the fury of the massacre all distinctions were lost. Women and children, civil residents, merchants, and those whose vocation it was to preach the gospel—all shared a like fate. The following sad account tells its own horrible tale:—

“At a meeting held at Hull, on the 23rd., the Rev. R. Hall, B.A., communicated some painful intelligence that had been received that day from several of the missionaries in India, and particularly from Agra and Benares. From these it appears that many of the missionaries of the Baptist and other denominations had been, and were still, in the most imminent danger from the Sepoy mutineers, and that eight or ten at least, including four Baptists, had been cruelly massacred—namely, Mr. McKay; Mrs. Thompson; (widow of a late missionary), and her two daughters. Waylayat Ali, a native christian, who was with Mr. Mackay, had been cruelly murdered; as had also Mr. Roberts and his family, members of the Baptist Church at Delhi. The Rev. Mr. Gregson, of Benares, (late of Beverley), had been in imminent danger, but it was hoped that his life had been spared. The only details of these atrocities were from Silas Curtis, a native teacher employed by Mr. McKay, who had himself narrowly escaped, and fled to Agra. He said he saw the dead body of Waylayat Ali lying on the roadside, hacked and mangled. His furious murderers hacked him leisurely with their swords, saying between each cut, “Now preach to us.” His two sons were also murdered. Mr. Mackay, it appears, on the outbreak of the mutiny, fled for refuge to a large house near his own, and he and several other Europeans defended themselves for some time in the cellar. Their enraged enemies, not able to get at them, obtained artillery, and battered the house to the ground. One of Mr. Mackay's servants reported that Mrs. Thompson and her eldest daughter were dead, and Grace, the youngest was dying. The names of the Rev. Messrs. Hubbard and Sandy, of the Propagation Society—and the Rev. N. Jennings, Government chaplain at Delhi, and his daughter—are also among the dead. The Christian inhabitants at Barrackpore and Calcutta had formed themselves into a volunteer guard.

Some portions of the Indian press having abused their freedom, being conducted by renegade Englishmen in the pay and service of seditious native Princes, the Governor-General had issued a licensing system. The effect which malignant and false statements may have at the present moment, on the ignorance of those unable to discover their falsity, is more than sufficient defence for this course.

Three of the great steamers belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company have been chartered for the transport of troops. There are vast quantities of artillery stores in the arsenals of Calcutta—but also, a deficiency of gunners. For want of a Siege train and artillery, General Barnard delayed his attack on Delhi; and this may be regarded as the weakest branch of our service there, while the mutineers have many Sikhs in their ranks; and the Sikhs proved long ago that they were capital gunners. The reduction of Delhi, is, however, only a matter of time: time in this instance being of greater importance than usual, from

the effect which delayed success may have on those wavering between rebellion and constancy.

The defence was maintained with vigor, and we hear of two sorties having been made, repulsed, however, with great loss to the besieged. The reinforcements waited for would soon arrive and then retribution would soon begin in earnest. Accounts from Madras state positively that the city had been taken, on the 26th June; but advices from Bombay to the 1st July do not confirm the news.

Although the mutiny had spread further in the Bengal Army, it was not so general as might have been expected, and in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies all remained quiet: only one small rising having been attempted in Ferungabad, and promptly put down. At Benares however, in attempting to disarm the 27th native infantry, the greater part of the Sikhs and the 13th Irregular Cavalry joined the mutineers. The last additional news is—that of the Bengal army, 50 regiments have ceased to exist—some having revolted and others having been disbanded.

Part of the plot had been to take Calcutta, on the 23rd of May. It was most complete in all its arrangements. When discovered the troops bound for China were sent for as fast as they could arrive.

The 70th native infantry was thanked by the Governor for their loyalty. The 6th native infantry at Allahabad rivalled them in expressions of attachment, but rose upon their officers and foully murdered them.

The stations where women and children have fallen victims to the barbarity of the mutineers, and where dreadful cruelties have been endured, are Ourat, Delhi, Russenabad, Housi, Hissar, Shansi, Bareilly, and Saghenweor.

On the 15th June another sortie from Delhi was repulsed with great loss. On the 16th all was quiet. Three thousand rebels were encamped outside the Ameer Gate.

At Ferozepore, on the 13th, military executions had taken place.

At Shansi, ladies and children took refuge in the fort, which was soon overpowered—all sacrificed by these villains.

Delhi is not likely to fall till more troops arrive. It is defended by 30,000 mutineers, and the city is well fortified, although commanded by our artillery. Delhi is almost equal to Mooltan in defences.

Later news may be expected (if Delhi be taken) by the 5th August; the ordinary mail will not be due till the 12th.

NAVAL VICTORY IN CHINA.

Our enemies have not got it all their own way. John Chinaman, but recently so sarcastic on our inability to touch his boasted empire—so bombastic on the defeat of the barbarians, has felt that we have yet some strength left.

On the 27th of May, 13 junks were captured; and on the 28th, 27 more, heavily armed. On the 8th June, 2000 of our naval force engaged and captured a fort, and took or destroyed 127 junks mounting over 900 guns, and employing 9,000 men! That is something decisive, and will require all Yeh's flowery terms to torture into any thing else than what the Yankoes would call a severe whipping, and Osric describe as “a very palpable hit.”

I noticed recently the improvements which the Chinese had made in naval architecture and gunnery. Everybody knows what the junka were, and how the “Nemesis,” war-steamer, in her first bout, “run them down in shoals, battering the fortifications to the earth, while they seldom directed a well-aimed shot, or evinced a disposition to engage in a hand-to-hand conflict.” Perhaps they thought that a junk should no longer be “broken to pieces with the same facilities as a tea-caddy,” and so set to work. Certain it is, however, that in this last engagement they proved no contemptible foemen, and “stood to their guns with unexampled constancy.” We conquered, as now we seem to consider is a matter of course in our Chinese battles; but, as marks of our enemies' skill, three officers and eight men were killed; three officers and fifty-three men were wounded. The Chinese loss is not known, but doubtless considerably more.

Of course, we fight to win—and win that we may procure peace, and extort reason from the wooden-headed, cruel despot who gives us all this trouble to batter common sense into him. Perhaps this victory may settle the matter: and the sooner the better, because we want the Artillery for India, (or perhaps may want it), and are tired of throwing away powder and shot at people who will only be compelled to pay us for doing it, by and by—having the hard knocks for somebody else's fault, and settling the bill in addition!