

Affairs in India.

FALL OF DELHI AND RELIEF OF LUCKNOW

From the Bombay Gazette, October 17.

THE CAPTURE OF DELHI.

THE following account of the last days of the siege of Delhi and the assault of the place will be read with much interest; it is written by an eye-witness:

"Your readers will have understood, from the intelligence which has been from time to time published, that from the period of the arrival of our army before Delhi, in June last, up till very lately the position occupied by our troops has been in effect a purely defensive one. It extended from the picket at Metcalfe's house, close to the river on the left, along the ridge facing the north side of Delhi as far as the Suddzee Munde suburb on our right, where this ridge terminates—the distance from the city wall averaging from 1,200 to 1,500 yards.

"We had from the first no choice as to the front of attack, our position on the north side being the only one that could secure our communications with the Punjab, whence our supplies and reinforcements were drawn.

"Whether the city might or might not have been carried by a *coup de main*, as was contemplated first in June and afterwards in July, it is needless now to inquire; but, judging from the resistance we afterwards experienced in the actual assault, when we had been greatly reinforced in men and guns, it appears to me fortunate that the attempt was not made. In Delhi the enemy possessed a magazine containing upwards of 200 guns and an almost inexhaustible supply of ammunition, while their numbers were certainly never less than double those of the besiegers.

"By the beginning of this month, however, we received the siege train from Ferozepore and further reinforcements of European and native troops from the Punjab, and, it being known that there was no hope of any aid from down country for a considerable time, it was resolved that the siege should be at once commenced and prosecuted with the utmost vigour.

OUR FORCES FOR THE ASSAULT.

"Our available force amounted, in round numbers, to 6,500 infantry, 1,000 cavalry, and 600 artillery, Europeans and natives; the regiments in camp being her Majesty's 9th Lancers, her Majesty's 6th Dragoon Guards, Guide Cavalry, Hodgson's Horse, and detachments of the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Punjab Cavalry:—Her Majesty's 8th Foot (part of), 52nd Foot, 60th Rifles (part of), 61st Foot, 75th Foot, 1st and 2nd Bengal Fusiliers, Sirmoor and Kumaon Battalions, (Ghoorkas) 4th Sikh Infantry, Guide Infantry, 1st, 2nd, and 4th Regiments Punjab Infantry:—Four troops of Horse Artillery (Tombs', Turner's, Remington's, Rennie's), two light field batteries (Scott's and Bouchier's), and some companies of Foot Artillery attached to the siege guns, which numbered about forty heavy guns and howitzers, ten heavy and twelve light mortars.

"The means of the Engineers were very restricted, not in officers but in trained men, of whom there were only about 120 regular Sappers. Some companies of Muzbec Sikhs had, however, been rapidly raised and partially trained; and a body of coolies had also been collected, who worked remarkably well; the park had been at work for some time in collecting material, and 10,000 fascines, 10,000 gabions, and 10,000 sandbags were ready for future operations; field magazines, scaling ladders, and spare platforms had also been duly prepared, and great credit is due to Lieutenant Brownlow of the Engineers in charge of the park, whose activity and intelligence contributed not a little to the eventful success of our operations.

"The north face being the side to be attacked, it was resolved to hold the right in check as far as possible, and to push the main attack on the left first, as the river would completely protect our flank as we advanced: second, as there was better cover on that side; third, as after the assault the troops would not find themselves in narrow streets, but in comparatively open ground.

"The front to be attacked consisted of the Moree, Cashmere, and Water bastions, with the curtain walls connecting them. These bastions had been greatly altered and improved by our own engineers many years ago, and presented regular faces and flanks of masonry, with properly cut embrasures; the height of the wall was twenty-four feet above the ground level, of which, however, eight feet was a mere parapet three feet thick, the remainder being about four times that thickness; outside the wall was a very wide berm, and then a ditch sixteen feet deep and twenty feet wide at the bottom, escarp and counterscarp steep, and the latter unrevetted, and the former revetted with stone and eight feet in height. A good sloping glacis covered the lower ten feet of the wall from all attempts of distant batteries.

Details are then given of the formation of the several batteries, daily down to the night of the 10th.

OPENING OF THE BATTERIES.

"On the 11th our batteries opened fire, a salvo from the nine 24-pounders opening the ball, and showing by the way it brought down the wall in huge fragments what effect it might be expected to produce after a few hours. The Cashmere Bastion attempted to reply, but was quickly silenced, and both portions of No. 2 went to work in fine style, knocking the bastion and adjacent curtains to pieces. Majors Campbell and Kaye, Captains Johnson and Gray, had charge of No. 2. No. 3, however, did not commence fire till the following day, when the full power of our artillery was shown, and a continuous roar of fifty guns and mortars pouring shot and shell on the devoted city warned the enemy that his and our time had at length come. Night and day until the morning of the 14th was this overwhelming fire continued. But the enemy did not let us have it all our own way. Though unable to work a gun from any of the three bastions that were so fiercely assailed, they yet stuck to their guns in the open, which partially enfiladed our position; they got a gun to bear from a hole broken open in the long curtain wall; they sent rockets from one of their martello towers, and they maintained a perfect storm of musketry from their advanced trench and from the city walls.

"On the night of the 13th the Engineers stole down and examined the two breaches near the Cashmere and Water bastions, and both being reported practicable, orders for the assault were at once issued, to take place at daybreak the following morning.

PREPARING TO STORM.

"The arrangements for the storming were as follows:—

"1st Column.—Brigadier-General Nicholson. H. M. 75th Regiment, 1st Bengal Fusiliers, and 2nd Punjab Infantry.—To storm the breach near the Cashmere bastion, and to escalate the face of the bastions. Engineer officers attached—Lieutenants Medley, Lang, and Bingham.

"2nd Column.—Brigadier Jones, C. B. H. M.'s 8th Regiment, H. M.'s 61st Regiment, and 4th Sikh Infantry.—To storm the breach in the Water bastion. Engineer officers attached—Lieutenants Greathead, Hovenden, and Pemberton.

"3rd Column.—Colonel Campbell. H. M.'s 52nd Regiment, 2nd Fusiliers, and 1st Punjab Infantry.—To assault by the Cashmere gate after it should be blown open. Engineer officers attached—Lieutenants Home, Salkeld, and Tandy.

"4th Column.—Major Reid. Detachment of European Regiments, Sirmoor Battalion, Guide Infantry, and Detachment of Dograhs. To attack the suburb Kissengunj, and enter the Lahore gate. Engineer officers attached—Lieutenants Maunsell and Tennant.

"5th Column.—Brigadier Longfield. H. M.'s 60th Rifles, Kumaon Battalion, and 4th Punjab Infantry, the reserve. Engineer officers attached—Lieuts. Ward and Thackeray.

"At four a. m. the different columns fell in and were marched to their respective places, the heads of Nos. 1, 2, and 3 columns being kept concealed until the moment for the actual assault should arrive. The signal was to be the advance of the Rifles to the front to cover the heads of the columns by skirmishing.

THE ASSAULT.

"Everything being ready, General Nicholson, whose excellent arrangements elicited the admiration of all, gave the signal, and the Rifles dashed to the front with a cheer, extending along and skirmishing the low jungle, which at this point extends to within fifty yards of the ditch. At the same moment the heads of No. 1 and 2 columns emerged from the Kodsee Bagh, and advanced steadily towards the breach. Our batteries had maintained a tremendous fire up to the moment of the advance of the troops, and not a gun could the enemy bring to bear on the storming columns; but no sooner did these emerge into the open than a perfect hailstorm of bullets met them from the front and both flanks, and officers and men fell fast on the crest of the glacis. For ten minutes it was impossible to get the ladders down into the ditch to ascend the scarp, but the determination of the British soldier carried all before it, and Pandey declined to meet the Charge of the British bayonet. With a shout and a rush the breaches were both won, and the enemy fled in confusion.

BLOWING IN THE CASHMERE GATE.

Meanwhile the Explosion Party advanced in front of the column straight upon the Cashmere gate. This little band of heroes (for they were no less) had to advance in broad daylight to the gateway in the very teeth of a hot fire of musketry from above, and through the gateway and on both flanks the powder bags were coolly laid and adjusted; but Lieut. Salkeld was by this time *hors de combat*, with two bullets in him. Sergeant Carmichael then attempted to fire the train, but was shot dead. Sergeant Burgess then tried and succeeded, but paid for the daring act with his life. Sergeant Smith, thinking that Burgess too had failed, ran forward, but seeing the train a light, had just time to throw himself into the ditch and escape the effects of the explosion. With a loud crash the gateway

was blown in, and through it the 3rd column rushed to the assault, and entered the town just as the other columns had won the breaches.—General Wilson has since bestowed the Victoria Cross on Lieutenants Home and Salkeld, on Sergeant Smith, and on a brave man of her Majesty's 52nd, who stood by Lieut. Salkeld to the last, and bound up his wounds.

THE TROOPS INSIDE.

General Nicholson then formed the troops in the main guard inside, and with his column proceeded to clear the ramparts as far as the Moree bastion. It was in advancing beyond this towards the Lahore gate, that he met the wound which has since caused his lamented death, a death which it is not too much to say has dimmed the lustre of even this victory, as it has deprived the country of one of the ablest men and the most gallant soldiers that England anywhere numbers among her ranks.

"The 4th column, I regret to say, failed, but as it was too far for me to know anything of its real progress, I prefer leaving its story to be told by another, instead of sending you a vague and imperfect account. Had this column succeeded, its possession of the Lahore gate would have saved us much subsequent trouble.

"I regret that my account must stop here, as being wounded myself at this stage of the proceedings, I was unable to witness the subsequent capture of the magazine, the Burn Bastion, the Palace, and finally of the whole city. Some one else will, doubtless, conclude my story in a more worthy manner than I have told it. On the day of the assault, we had 61 officers, and 1,178, killed and wounded, being nearly one-third of the whole number engaged. The 1st Fusiliers alone lost nine officers, and other regiments, I believe in proportion. The Engineers suffered heavily; the three officers conducting Nos. 1, 2, and 4 columns, (Lieutenants Medley, Greathead and Munsell) were all struck down early in the fight, and of 17 officers on duty that day, 10 were put *hors de combat*.—The loss of the enemy is never likely to be correctly ascertained, but at the end of the operations it is probable that at least 1,500 men must have been killed between the 7th and 20th and a very large number wounded who were carried away.

REMARKS ON THE SIEGE.

For the complete success that attended the prosecution of the siege, the chief credit is undoubtedly due to Col. Baird Smith, the Chief Engineer, and to Captain A. Taylor, the director of the attack. The plan of the attack was bold and skilful; the nature of the enemy we were contending with was exactly appreciated, and our plans shaped accordingly.—Pandey can fight well behind cover, but here he was out-manœuvred—his attention being diverted from the real point of attack till the last, and then the cover which might have proved such a serious obstacle to us was seized at the right moment without loss, and all its advantages turned against him. With plenty of skilful workmen the siege works might have been more speedily constructed, but with the means at our disposal the wonder is that so much was done with so little loss.

If the siege of Delhi was not a regular siege in the same sense with that of Bourtchouk or Seringapatam, it may yet bear a fairer comparison with a greater than either, that of Sebastopol. In both the strength of the fortifications was as nothing—it was the proportion of besieged to besiegers, the magnitude of the arsenal inside, and the impossibility of a thorough investment that constituted the real strength of the place; and in fact, neither were properly speaking sieges, but rather attacks on an army in a strongly entrenched position.

DELHI AFTER ITS FALL.

"Later and fuller accounts state that on the evening of the 20th the capture of the place was completed by the seizure of the palace, Selimgurh, and the bridge. The mutineers seem to have contested every foot of ground so long as they could fight under cover; and though it appears that very many of them have been killed, the loss on our side was necessarily great. We have, however, no trustworthy statement of the entire number of killed and wounded. Between 10 o'clock, a. m. and of the 20th, the palace, which had been cleared of its defenders and inmates by the shells of our force, was taken possession of by our troops. The King and his sons had fled in disguise along the road to the south, and large bodies of the mutineers had effected a timely escape in good order before the beaten remnant were driven in headlong route from the city. Delhi, after its capture, is described as a perfect picture of desolation. Its houses in ruins, and valuable property lying about the streets, while living figures were few and far between, the victors having allowed the non-combatant inhabitants safe conduct out of the place.

TO QUEEN VICTORIA—IN THE PALACE AT DELHI.

"On the night of the 21st September, the conqueror, General Wilson, proposed the health of Queen Victoria in the Dewan-i-Khas, the beautiful white marble durbar hall of the palace, where once stood the famed peacock throne, and which bears the well-known inscription, meant to apply to the palace and its

gardens generally, and which now reads like a mockery:—

"Oh! if there's an Eden on earth, it is this."

"Here, in the palace of the Great Moguls, the health of our Queen was drunk by her victorious soldiers with enthusiastic cheers, which were taken up by the gallant Ghoorkas, who formed the personal guard of the General.

CAPTURE OF THE KING, AND EXECUTION OF HIS SONS.

"On the 21st the Old King surrendered to Captain Hodson and his cavalry near the Kootub Minar, which is about fifteen miles south of Delhi. He was accompanied in his captivity as in his flight by his chief wife, the Begum Zeenut Mahal, 'the Ornament of the Palace.' The King is said to be nearly ninety years of age, and it is probable that he is scarcely in any way responsible for what has been done in his name, so that, as at present informed, we cannot condemn the clemency which has spared his life. He is now a prisoner in what was once his own palace. Two of his sons and a grandson, who were captured also by Captain Hodson, at the tomb of Humayoon, about five miles from Delhi, and who are known to have been leaders in the rebellion, have received the reward of their treason. They were shot on the spot, and their bodies were brought back to the city, and exposed at the Kotwallee or chief police-office, where it is said so many of our countrymen were so brutally and cruelly murdered.

THE PURSUING COLUMNS.

"On the 23rd, two columns of our troops started in pursuit of the fugitives, one under Col. Greathead of H. M.'s 8th Regiment, marching on Allyghur, the other proceeding down the right bank of the Jumna towards Muttra and Agra. We had no precise information as to what these pursuing forces had done, but by accounts from Agra one appears to have reached the neighbourhood of Allyghur, and the other that of Muttra on the 28th ult. We are also, as yet, uninformed of the destination or fate of the fugitives, but it is thought that some are making for Oude, and others for Gwalior. We trust that, numerically weak as our loyal forces are at present, the mutineers driven from Delhi may not be found more troublesome elsewhere than they were there.

"Foremost in the list of officers who fell in the capture of Delhi, we regret to state, is the name of the able and gallant Brigadier-General John Nicholson, whose distinguished but too brief career was closed by a mortal wound received in the storming of the city.

OTHER ACCOUNTS OF THE FALL.

The following is the substance of a letter from the Chief Commissioner, dated Lahors, 20th September, 1857:—

"The palace of Delhi was found to be evacuated this morning, and is now in our possession. The mutineers had lost all the gates of the city but the Turcoman and Delhi. The Ajmere gate was taken without loss, the mutineers deserting fast. The King and Royal family had fled. Mr Greathead the Commissioner, died of cholera last night at Delhi."

A telegraphic message from Col. Durand, announces the arrival of an express from Nee-much, 1st inst., containing a copy of a letter from Delhi of the 22nd ult., from Col. Beecher to Captain Nixon, and giving further particulars of the capture. It says:—"All going on wonderfully well at Delhi. The King and the Begum Zeenut Mahal are close prisoners.—The Princes Moerza Moghul, Abu Bukkur, and Kheysar Sooltan, were brought in by Hodson, from Humayoon's tomb, and shot at the Delhi gate on the 22nd. Their bodies are lying at the Kotwallee, where so many of our poor countrymen were murdered and exposed. A pursuing column under Col. Greathead (H. M.'s 8th) of 1,600 infantry, 18 guns, and 600 cavalry was to leave on the 23rd. Delhi is a perfect picture of desolation, completely abandoned, and a vast amount of property left behind.—We regret to learn the death of the gallant Nicholson. The officer appointed Governor of Delhi, is Lieutenant Colonel Burn, 1st Bengal Native Infantry and Superintendent of Army Clothing."

LETTERS FROM DELHI.

The following are extracts from private letters, bearing dates from the 14th to the 21st September:

September 21.

The capture of the city of Delhi, of the Palace, and the Fort of Selimguur, was completed yesterday. All honour to the noble army which, under command of Major-General Wilson, has effected this most important conquest, by which the wide spread rebellion of the mutinous Bengal army has received a complete defeat in Upper India. The days of Clive and Lake are again revived among us.—Neither the devastation of that terrible scourge, the cholera, nor the deadly stroke of an Indian summer's sun, which have so grievously thinned the ranks of our small army during the past three months—the harassing and almost incessant duties of the camp, the ever recurring combats with a highly-trained and veteran enemy, who out-numbered us by thousands in