

## THE STORY OF THE GREAT INDIAN MUTINY.

BY E. W. L.

## XIV.

NEILL's first act was to recover possession of the bridge of boats, which was occupied by the mutineers. The very next day (June 12th) this was accomplished. Then, by a system of well-timed assaults, accompanied by not a few hangings, he so completely overawed the mutineers and those who sympathized with them, that the mention of his name created a panic. (To cite a parallel case: Nelson's name was a terror to the French. Fifteen years ago I often heard in Parisian *cafés* confirmation of this fact. A player badly beaten at checkers, dominoes, or cards would be told by his exultant conqueror: "Ah! voila un Trafalgar!")

Draw a line from Agra to Allahabad and another from Calpee to Lucknow, and not far from the point of intersection is Cawnpore. Its central situation made it an important point. And here again the folly of the Government manifested itself. Sixty artillerymen, with nine guns, were the only British troops in the place. And yet in Cawnpore there were many European ladies, their children, and many merchants. The native force consisted of the 1st, 53rd, and 56th B.N.I., and a cavalry regiment. Sir Hugh Wheeler, a worn-out veteran who had served half-a-century before under Lord Lake, commanded. General Wheeler did *not* trust the Sepoys; but what could he do? Sixty Europeans, however valiant, could not disarm 3,000 Sepoys. All he could do was to provide a place of retreat, where the Europeans could find refuge in the day of peril. Mrs. Fraser, whose husband had been murdered in Delhi on May 11, entered Cawnpore a week or so later. A faithful native saw her safely through the 266 miles' journey. This lady proved a true ministering angel in the days of distress that came upon the unfortunate city.

Frequent fires were the premonitory signs of the times. Sir Hugh ordered "an old hospital and two brick buildings, one thatched and the other with a stone roof," to be intrenched. Here the guns were placed, and plenty of ammunition, but the store of provisions was scanty. And in this poor stronghold, so slender that to it the sneer of Tobiah the Ammonite could well be applied, the women and children took up their abode.

Who was Seereek Dhoondoo Punt? No one answers; yet forty years ago his infamous notoriety was great. In 1857, all over the civilized world, men execrated the name of NANA SAHIB. Nana was the son of a Bombay Brahmin; he was the adopted heir of the last of the Peishwas—Bajee Rao. Bajee plotted against the British Government; he was dethroned, but was allowed a pension.