

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1900.

The Gibraltar of India.

The recent deposition of the Maharajah of Bharatpur, or Bhurtpore as it is sometimes written, for misgovernment, recalls some of the most remarkable episodes of the conquest of India by the British. A fortress of great natural strength, Bharatpur had the distinction of withstanding the fiercest assaults of Lord Lake, the colleague of Sir Arthur Wellesley, afterwards the Duke of Wellington, at the height of his victorious career.

Ranjit Singh, Maharajah of Bharatpur, was one of the first of the princes of India to enter into an alliance with the British government. In the Maharrata war of 1803 against Scindiah of Gwalior, a Bharatpur contingent helped Lord Lake to gain the celebrated victory of Laswari; but when in the following year, war broke out also with Holkar of Indore, the Maharajah of Bharatpur withdrew from the alliance and gave shelter to the shattered army of Holkar under the walls of Deeg. Lord Lake at once attacked Deeg and carried it by assault, and then laid siege to the fortress of Bharatpur itself. The mud walls were of great height and thickness, with numerous bastions, and the garrison was composed of 8,000 men. The besieging force was 12,000 strong, but was deficient in heavy artillery. Little impression was made on the defences, and after losing more than a third of his army, Lord Lake abandoned the siege.

The failure of the attack by the British was almost magical in its effect on the people at large and invested Bharatpur with the reputation of being under divine protection. The prestige of the British was at stake, and the continued independence of Bharatpur became a danger to their supremacy, but the British authorities bided their time, contenting themselves with consolidating their possession in other parts of the country. In 1825 their opportunity came when the reigning Maharajah died and the succession was disputed by two cousins. A thoroughly equipped army of 25,000 men was sent under Lord Combermere to reduce the defiant fortress to submission. Whereas Lord Lake's siege train had comprised only 14 guns, his successor had 112 pieces of the newest patterns of the period, some of them being mortars throwing 8 and 13 inch shells. The remainder comprised forty guns and ten field howitzers of 54 inch calibre, a formidable array of guns for the country and time. The investment began on Dec. 10, 1825 the garrison making no show of resistance and reserving their artillery fire so as not to waste ammunition. So rapid was the work of the British engineers that the parallels were completed and the investment made effectual by Dec. 21. A message was sent to the town offering a free passage to the women and children, but no answer was returned. By Dec. 24 every exit from the town was closed, and the guns placed in position, some within 250 yards and the bombardment began.

The effect was such that a large number of the guns of the fortress were dismantled, being of light caliber and feeble range. On the night of Dec. 26 the garrison made a sortie and captured the advanced British battery, but were repulsed. They recaptured it, but were again driven out. The next day they opened fire with all their guns, but did little execution. In reply the British opened fire from about two hundred yards' distance, and not only set fire to the town, but drove the garrison to the shelter of the fort. It was at this stage that the character of the siege became remarkable. Notwithstanding the powerful artillery of the besiegers no impression was made on the massive mud walls. The damage done by day was repaired at night, the garrison working like mules and in perfect silence. They gathered courage from the ineffectual bombardment and were stimulated by their leaders and their priests, who reminded them of an ancient prophecy. The alleged legend was to the effect that the walls of Bharatpur had been built by the gods themselves, who had decreed that the place should only be captured when an alligator came across the sea to besiege it. To the native mind this amounted to the endowment of perpetual invulnerability, and so

they lay secure in the efficacy of the prophecy.

The British, at last realizing that the open attack must fail, took to mining, but the garrison countermined and destroyed the besiegers' work. Then came the most astonishing thing that had ever happened in India under similar circumstances. For the first time the garrison learned the name of the besieging General. Had it been Napoleon, Wellington, or any of the celebrities of the day it would have made no impression on them, but the name of Combermere destroyed their courage. In their language "Combermar" signified an alligator, so the prophecy had come to pass. The rest was inevitable. The British mines were sprung on Jan. 18, 1826, and the final assault was delivered on the following morning. The fortress fell and the prophecy of many centuries was fulfilled. The Jats, the flower of the beleaguered army, held the breach and perished to a man, and Bharatpur passed under alien rule. Bharatpur occupies an important strategic position west of the Jumna, on the railway between Agra and Jeypore, in Rajputana, and is sometimes called the Gibraltar of India.

WHITES IN TROPICAL AFRICA.

They Have Been Increasing At a Rapid Rate in Recent Years.

About ten years ago there were less than 300 white men living in the Congo Free State. There was scarcely a merchant among them and only a few missionaries. Most of them were employees of the government and they were engaged in exploring the new territory, in establishing and officiating stations and in training the natives for service as soldiers, both hands and workmen. The proportion of deaths among them was appalling and, with very few exceptions, they were obliged, every two or three years, to take long furloughs in more healthful regions.

The latest statistics with regard to the whites living in the Congo Free State show that about 1,700 are scattered all over the State. The exact number on Jan. 1 last year was 1,630. One-sixth of the entire number live at Boma, the capital of the State, fifty miles up the river, and a large part of them are in charge of or are employed in the public offices. About two hundred of them are living at Matadi, ninety miles up the river, and most of them are in the transportation service; for Matadi is the starting point of the railroad connecting with the Upper Congo and here all freight is transhipped between the railroad and the European steamers. There are nearly as many white men at Stanley Pool as at Boma, for Stanley Pool is the place where freight is transhipped between the railroad and the upriver steamers; and here also are the shipyards, where the steamers are put together and repaired.

A large number of State, commercial and missionary stations are now established on the upper river and on its tributaries far north and south of the main stream. Thus over 700 whites are now living on the upper river system above Stanley Pool and about 400 of them are really in Central Africa, for they live from 1,000 to nearly 2,000 miles from the mouth of the river. Just about one-half of the white personnel are Belgians and nearly all the leading nations are represented in the remainder.

The increase of whites in the French Congo territory is also very large. This large region is just north of the Congo Free State, and though it is officially known as the French Congo, an important part of it is tributary to other streams flowing to the Atlantic or to Lake Tchad. On Jan. 1 last 739 whites were living in the French Congo, of whom five-sevenths were French. They are not so generally distributed through the country as in the Congo State, for commercial and missionary stations are not yet widely distributed. The largest white population is at Brazzaville, at the head of the navigation on the Ogowe River, several hundred miles from the ocean. About one-seventh of the white population are women which is a larger proportion than in the Congo State. A small but steady stream of settlers is

flowing from Germany to German South-west Africa. The statistics are not very recent, but in 1896 2,025 whites were living there, of whom 945 were women and children. Fifteen years ago there were very few whites in that part of Africa, but it is now forging ahead faster in its development than any other part of the German possessions.

BOARDING WITH AN IDOL.

How Three Famished Sailors, Shipwrecked in India Were Sustained.

Capt. Murray, a Port Royal S. C., bar pilot who has followed the sea since boyhood and visited nearly every section of the habitable globe, is full of interesting reminiscences of happenings in distant lands in which he participated. The old pilot is fond of relating an incident which occurred near Calcutta, India. The vessel which he commanded, a fine clipper ship, was wrecked in a typhoon in the Bay of Bengal and all hands save himself and two companions who succeeded in reaching shore in the ship's gig were lost.

The three exhausted men immediately sought food and shelter and while thus employed came upon an immense wooden image which they correctly surmised to be an Indian idol. Night was upon them and the tired men bivouacked nearby and their attention was soon attracted by the appearance of a score of low caste Hindus, each of whom carried in his hands a savory dish which he placed before the inanimate god. After each native had deposited his offering with pious signs and words they departed, and when the hungry sailors satisfied that their strange visitors had departed for the night they greedily devoured the bounteous repast intended for the idol. Murray and his companions remained in the neighborhood for several days subsisting nightly on the offerings brought by the Hindus as a tribute to their god and remaining concealed in the day time.

One night ten days after their shipwreck two natives suddenly surprised the three men while they were in the very act of making their usual meal and a fight ensued. The natives proved no match for the resolute and well armed Americans and soon beat an ignominious retreat, leaving the latter complete masters of the situation. The captain and his companions, fearing that the natives would return in force and massacre them, made their way to Calcutta, where they secured passage in a homeward bound vessel.

Some fifteen years subsequently Pilot Murray recognized in Capt. Cole of the ship Kirkum, which called there for a cargo, one of his old companions in the exciting encounter in far off India. The recognition was mutual and the two men were delighted to renew their acquaintance after half a generation.

Gallantry.

She—At least you will credit me, Mr. Sixcap, with having an eye for beauty.

He (desirous of saying something highly complimentary)—Indeed I do, Miss Claire—I don't wonder you spend so much of your time in front of the looking glass.

Repaid.

H—Do you really think her heart was broken when he jilted her, as she so loudly proclaimed? I noticed she married in less than a year.

She—True enough. But look whom she married—a glue manufacturer.

For some weeks the Family Herald and Weekly Star of Montreal, have been publishing most flattering testimonials regarding their two pictures, "Christ in the Temple," and "Home from the War." We notice the letters come from people capable of judging, too, and having seen the pictures, we must say they are magnificent and deserving of all praise.

Family Herald and Weekly Star subscribers are certainly getting their dollar's worth this season. "Christ in the Temple," is the finest piece of art ever before the Canadian public. Old subscribers to the Family Herald are rushing forward their subscriptions in order to get the pictures for Xmas. This should be the banner year for the Family Herald and Weekly Star.

"These trousers are no good," said the Chicago man.

"And why not?" inquired the suave tailor.

"Because," cried the Chicago man in a tone of intense sarcasm, you have actually gone and put flaps on the pistol pockets.

UNREST IN WEST AFRICA.

Reports received by mail from west Africa and the Gold Coast tell of general unrest among the natives from the coast to the furthestmost regions of the interior. This condition of things is ascribed to the severity exercised by the British toward the Ashantis, and to rumors that orders have been received from England to expatriate the Ashanti tribes from their territory, which is rich in gold deposits. Those who survived the military operations, the rumors said, were to be deported to other parts of the British possessions in Africa. The destruction of villages without regard to the women and children, who are turned out to starve, and the systematic devastation of the farms and crops of the natives are, it appears from the reports from all parts of the interior, causing the native races whose territory is threatened with invasion by the whites to prepare for resistance. Even the Hausas, who have hitherto been the source from which the British have drawn their best fighting material in west Africa, are showing symptoms of alienation from the British, and the missionaries who recently visited the Sokoto country and Kano were very badly received and requested to return. The reports of their reception have been published and their demands on the British Government to bring the chiefs of Sokoto and Kano to reason have gone back to Africa and created no small stir. The importation of the more savage races from Uganda, Somaliland and other parts of east Africa, of Jamaica negroes, and of Sikhs from India to take part in the subjugation of the Ashantis has also contributed to disturb the other native races.

Matters are no better in the Sierra Leone protectorate, which was not very long ago the scene of the massacre of many missionaries, several Americans being among them, and where the rising of the natives against the hut tax was put down only after great loss of life on both sides. An English correspondent, describing the condition of the natives and their sentiments toward the British Government, contrasts it with the state of things in the neighboring French territories, which, unlike the French Congo, are under the administration of French Government officials.

In the French Soudan and west coast settlements, instead of the hut tax, a poll tax of 25 cents is levied on all male natives in the country parts and 40 cents on those in the towns between 10 and 50 years of age. The tax in French Guinea is, moreover, collected through the chiefs, who receive 20 per cent, of the total amount as compensation for their cooperation; and this is in conquered territory. In the British protectorate, where the inhabitants were free tribes who had beaten back every effort of the Mandingoes and Foulahs of Futa-Djallon to invade the British settlements through their territory, and who placed themselves voluntarily under the British flag, the engagements made with them have been set aside, and the hut tax is being collected by corrupt and tyrannical native police under such circumstances that many of the natives, rather than pay \$1.25, the amount of the tax, burn their huts and take to the bush or escape into the French territory.

In order the better to cope with the disaffection and the difficulties threatened, the British Colonial Office has directed the prolongation of the Sierra Leone railway to be proceeded with at once. A section of the line has already been opened as far as a place called Rotiunk, about fifty miles southeast of Freetown, and the extension to Bo, eighty miles further to the eastward, has been begun. The gauge is 2 feet 6 inches, and owing to the urgency of the case the road will be built in the lightest possible manner and with temporary wooden bridges. The Gold Coast railway, which already extends from Sekondi on the coast to Tarkwa, where there are gold deposits, is to be carried on to Kumasi. The distance is 180 miles and the gauge 3 feet 6 inches. The object is partly commercial, partly military, as it is said that when it is completed troops from England can be in Kumasi in fourteen days.

The Lagos railway is about to be opened to Ibadan, the three long steel bridges connecting Lagos with the mainland being finished. The line is 126 miles long, of 3 feet 6 inch gauge, and connects Lagos, which has 60,000 population, with Abeokuta of 150,000, and Ibadan, of 180,000 inhabitants. The further extension to Ogbomisho, Ilorin, and Rabba on the Niger is under consideration. This railway also is military as well as commercial, and has in view the penetration of the great, populous and fairly civilized regions lying to the eastward of the Niger, of which Lokoto and Kano are among the most important.

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GREAT JUMPING BY A MULE.

Over a Manger and Through an Opening 21 By 30 Inches in Size.

A most remarkable story, the truth of which is vouched for by Major B. R. Selden, the well-known street car man, and several of his employees, concerning two full-grown mules jumping through a small window in the old horse car stables in Manchester, has just come to light. The story as related by Major Selden, and sworn to by several of the most reliable men in his employ, is as follows:

The blacksmith, Henry Dandridge, who has since died, was required to go to the stables daily to examine and replace all shoes that had become loose or been lost while the mules were at work. On the occasion referred to above he had purchased a new sheepskin apron, which the mules had never seen, and when Dandridge went into the stall without warning, one of them, "Bet," became alarmed at the sight of the leather and leaped through the open window to the ground outside.

Major Selden says he came in about this time, and upon learning the cause of the excitement, ordered the man to go back into the stall, and when he started the mule reared up and was about to repeat the performance. He feared the mule might not be so fortunate in the second jump and told the man to come out of the stall.

The 'Maggie' mule, says Major Selden, jumped through a window the same size on the opposite side of the stable and as far as he could discover, upon close examination, neither of them received the slightest scratch. He says tracks were plainly visible on the outside where the 'Bet' mule landed and made an effort to turn and again face the window, she being still halted to a scantling on the inside. The halter chain, four feet long, was attached to a beam four and a half feet above the floor on which the mule stood.

Window opening, 1 foot 9 inches by 2 feet 6 inches. Trough, 2 feet wide. Top of trough to floor, 2 feet 11 inches. From bottom of window sill to ground outside, 4 feet 7 inches.

Major Selden says 'Bet' was selected from forty two mules owned by the Richmond and Manchester Railway Company on account of her size, as a regular tug, to draw cars up the hill from Ninth and Cary to Ninth and Main streets, and would weigh about 950 pounds.

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Still Unconvinced.

Benedick—It is sad that most of the people who commit suicide are unmarried. How are you going to get around that?

O'Batch—Oh, well, I s'pose after a fellow has been married awhile he gets so he can put up with almost anything.

Quite Singular.

Captain John Randolph brings to this office a potato weighing two pounds. He frankly confesses it was the largest in the patch. This is unusual. Most people who bring vegetables to this office say they left the larger specimens at home.

Employment Worth the Punishment—'Willie,' said the elder sister at the juvenile party, 'you'll be ill if you eat any more, and then you won't be able to go to school tomorrow.' 'Well, said Willie, with a sigh, 'it's worth it.'



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