

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1898.

WAR IN THE KHYBER

THRILLING DETAILS OF WAR AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

Pathan Warriors, the Best Sharpshooters in the World, High up on the Rocks, Peppering Away at Every Man in Sight—The Unconquered Enemy.

LANDI KOTAL, Khyber Pass, Jan. 2, 1898.—The campaign in Tirah has now reached a stage at which it will probably remain until the spring crops are destroyed. On Dec. 23, Gen. Hammond's brigade marched up the Khyber as far as Fort Ali Masjid without opposition. Indeed, it would have been difficult for the enemy to do much harm on account of Gen. Hammond's admirable precaution in the distribution of his pickets. A couple of days afterward Gen. Lockhart's division which had followed close on Gen. Hammond's heels as far as Ali Masjid, branched off southward into the Bazar Valley. It was uncertain whether the enemy would show more resistance in the Bazar or in the Khyber, so I remained with Gen. Hammond's brigade, which was to march eleven miles farther up the Khyber to Landi Kotal the day after Christmas. Results have shown that this was the best course I could have taken, since there was little fighting in the Bazar Valley; and I have seen quite enough of the wonderful agility and excellent marksmanship of the Afridis in the Khyber and of the tactics adopted by the English to give me a good knowledge of the conduct of campaigns in these border lands of Afghanistan and India.

It was an interesting march up the narrow, rocky Khyber, with its many towered villages and its splendid natural defences. A well-constructed road, that reminds one of the Via Mala in places, winds higher and higher through a series of U-shaped valleys which have been formed by glacial action. Precipitous mountain walls, rising 2,000 to 3,000 feet above the valleys, surround the latter on all sides and, gradually closing together, form passes narrow and dangerous to an invading army. Lower hills and masses of loose stones and rocks again cut up the valleys into a hundred smaller defiles, and it is on one of these conically-shaped projections, towering up to the height of 700 feet, that the fort of Ali Masjid is situated, nine miles from Jamrud.

Nothing could be more dreary than the general aspect of the country, but it one goes to the side of a cliff he may be astonished occasionally at seeing below him a lovely green ravine, sprinkled over with villages and shaded by many a fruit tree. One of these settlements, called Lala Chins, situated near Ali Masjid, was destroyed by the brigade before we left the fort. The natives did not attack us while engaged in this work, but when Gen. Lockhart's division started up the pass into the Bazar Valley there was considerable sniping, and a picket of the Forty-fifth Sikhs was attacked, with the result that two were wounded and one killed.

On Dec. 26 we marched to Landi Kotal without a shot being fired. This large fort at this place had been completely wrecked excepting the outer walls, which were left standing by the enemy. There were sixty villages, each with its tall, well built tower, belonging to the Zaker Kehls, a short distance below Landi Kotal, and these we started at once to blow up, since the enemy refused to surrender a single rifle. Everything went smoothly for the first two days. I enjoyed watching the towers fall and the different companies sallying forth to the villages in their search for grain. It seemed as if the enemy were afraid to attack us until the morning of Dec. 29, when a shower of bullets whizzed among the foragers. Every man instantly took to cover, but it was astonishing that no one was hit. The enemy were firing from a distance of 700 yards, but even at that distance if a soldier exposed himself he was certain to have a bullet pass within a yard of him. Gen. Hammond and his staff also narrowly escaped being hit by a volley from the Afridis on the same day.

The enemy only aim to surprise the English, and if the latter expect an attack and take precautions against it the cunning savages will lie low till another day. They do not suffer severely from the destruction of their villages, since they have many caves in the mountains where they can keep snug and warm.

Hardy and accustomed to daily fights among themselves, they are a foe that only can be subdued by constant harassing through more than one season. Even

when the inhabitants of the Khyber were receiving 87,000 rupees a year from the Indian Government as a subsidy for keeping the pass open, they were always at war with one another. Each tower is commanded by the next one, and the various owners of villages were accustomed to amuse themselves, daily by taking pot shots at their neighbors. They know the ranges from every peak to every point on the road, and since their lives depend upon their marksmanship they have attained a degree of proficiency in the use of the rifle which is second to no sharpshooters in the world. I can only compare their shooting to the splendid work done by our Western rangers in their wars against the redskins.

As there were luckily no casualties on Dec. 29, we all came back to dinner in the best frame of mind. I have had the honor to be a member of the Oxfordshire mess during my stay with the Peshawar column, and I must say I never sat down among a more cheerful lot of officers than I did on this particular night. Col. Plowden of the Oxfordshires, one of the kindest and courtiest of men, told me that he was going to picket the heights furthest from camp on the morning, to allow the "Dak" or mail, to come through, and all the officers were pleased because their post would be a dangerous one.

Alas! gloom has been thrown over the Oxfordshire's mess since then, and as I pass between the rows of tents I miss several familiar faces. There was another figure which had been very prominent in camp, but which will never more be seen. It was that of Major-Gen. Sir Havelock Allen, M. P., an authority on military matters and a noted warrior. He was to go to Jamrud, but his own carelessness cost him his life. He was shot by an Afridi soon after leaving Ali Masjid. During the night a Gurkha was killed by one of the enemy within five yards of the lines.

On the morning of Dec. 30 nearly the whole brigade marched down the road to a point half way between Ali Masjid and Landi Kotal, where we were met by the troops from the former place. Sir Havelock Allen was passed on to his escort, the Oxfordshires posted about the heights, and the foraging and blowing up of the towers was renewed. Finally about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, all the troops marched back to Landi Kotal except the Oxfordshires, a company of the Inniskillings and of the Gurkhas and a mountain battery stationed near the camp. The furthest pickets retired a half hour later and joined Col. Plowden, who started to march to camp. Suddenly a perfect hailstorm of bullets poured down upon the little body of men. The shot came from both sides of the valley simultaneously. The Oxfordshires were completely outnumbered and were in the worst position possible. Three men fell almost at the onset. The only safety lay in seeking cover instantly, but the wounded men had to be helped along. Nothing could have been more trying to the splendid qualities of the soldiers, but they bore themselves in a manner characteristic of brave and humane Anglo-Saxons. There was Col. Plowden grasping the situation at a glance and ordering his men to the only available cover, at the same time helping to carry away a wounded sergeant. Further down Capt. Parr and Lieuts. Carter and Fielding were engaged in the same work. The only cover at first was a shallow gully which proved to be unprotected from certain far away heights, so they were obliged to work on till they got into an empty pond and all the time the number of wounded was increasing, scores of bullets were dropping about their feet, their water bottles were being smashed, sword hilts broken and helmets pierced. Down came Lieut. Owen from his picket, running the same gauntlet together with his handful of men. Col. Plowden, as he rushed out again to help a wounded man, was shot through the abdomen. Lieut. Owen had his arm smashed the Sergeant Major was dangerously wounded through the back and several more privates were hit. The pond even was not sufficiently protected from the excellent Afridi marksmen, for they planted their bullets with such accuracy that if one of the Oxfordshires stood upright for a moment the chances were even that he would be killed. The enemy came nearer and nearer until their voices could be heard a few yards away. The handful of the Oxfordshires waited two hours, until it began to get dark, before they dared to move. Then Capt. Parr and Lieut. Fielding made a gallant charge with a few of their men

and drove the enemy back long enough for the rest to get on with their wounded to an empty village which was near at hand. Capt. Parr at the same time hastened to reinforcements from Capt. Davies, who, with sixteen men, was picketing a height a long way up the valley. Capt. Davies and his men arrived just in time to assist in the retirement, and the Inniskillings, firing from another village, and the Gurkhas from a hilltop, did excellent work in driving off the enemy.

Capt. Parr was wounded seriously in the leg toward the last. The wounded were carried into two different villages. There were scarcely a score of men to guard them. Two of the dead had to be left out on the field. The enemy had already occupied neighboring villages and were firing at every moving object they saw. Strange to say, Col. Plowden's servant and horse turned up at the village where the Colonel lay wounded, and a plucky bugler, Crowhurst, volunteered to take a message to camp asking for reinforcements. The bugler must have had at least 100 bullets fired at him, but cleverly and fast he rode, leaving the road and taking to protected valleys or "nullahs" as far as possible. Happily, he reached camp, and in three minutes after he had reported to the General the latter was on the road with his staff and a large force to the rescue.

Darkness had set in and the troops expected to be attacked at any minute. They reached the village where the Oxfordshires were still holding their own and proceeded at once to remove the wounded. Col. Plowden and Lieut. Owen, with several men, lay wounded in one of the little clay dens that were ranged around the walled inclosure. When I entered, the Colonel, in his characteristic way, looked up smiling, in spite of his wounds and the intense cold, and greeted me with a humorous remark.

It was a disagreeable walk back to camp by the suffering men in the litters and not knowing how near the enemy might be. Many of the latter were communicating with each other by uttering the cries of owls or jackals.

The wounded men behaved like the soldiers that they are. Some of the poor fellows who had their arms nearly shot off marched unaided all the way to camp, a distance of three miles. There were in all seventeen casualties, including four men killed. Some of the wounds are very dangerous, but the patients are doing as well as can be expected. It is strange there were not more fatalities, since many of the wounded men who escaped death were hit twice and many others had their clothing or parts of their accoutrements cut by the bullets. Lieut. Carter has kindly allowed me to copy a portion of a letter which he wrote to his family describing his experience, and I give it without alteration:

"You will probably have news about it in the papers a long time before this reaches you, but I know you will like to have my own account of it. Last Thursday the regiment was ordered to picket the road toward Ali Masjid to get the mail through. I was posted with fifteen men of my own company furthest down the road. At 3.50 P. M. we were ordered to retire. I must tell you that the Colonel, Fielding and the doctor were with me, and also a Maxim gun. We were allowed to retire till a half company of Parr's joined us, and then the enemy opened fire on us from about 200 yards. Luckily there was a nullah on our right, into which we got, but three men were hit in the first volley and we had to get them away up the nullah first. The devils kept on shooting at a head was shown above the nullah. When the wounded had been sent forward we retired and held a small pond, and in this place our first man was killed—shot through the head. The Colonel, Fielding and another man tried to drag him away up the nullah and in doing so the Colonel was shot through the side and a bullet passed through Fielding's helmet. Just then poor Butler was shot through the leg and Parr and myself tried to tie it up, although we saw he was hit in an artery. I got him on my back and bolted across a bit of open ground, but in the middle he was hit again in the back and the force knocked me clean over. However, Fielding and myself managed to drag him under cover and he knew me and asked me to write home to his people.

"Then I was sent to get reinforcements and had to double about a mile when I

found Davies, who took sixteen men down the nullah and told me to cover his advance with another half company. About half an hour afterward they sent up to me to take twenty men and get away the dead and wounded. All this time the enemy were firing like blazes. When I got into the nullah again I found them all lying down and Parr and the sergeant-major wounded in addition to two dead and five other wounded men. By this time the enemy had closed all around us and were throwing stones to make us look up. We heard the devils talking away not twenty yards from us. Then they started yelling and charged home to us, but we went out on them and exchanged shots at about ten yards. I fancy we must have got into them, as they were quieter after that, and we got all our wounded into a house at the top of the nullah about 8 P. M."

The next day foraging went on as usual, but without any disastrous results, as the retirement was most carefully guarded. It was found that several of the Afridis had been killed by the Oxfordshires and the Inniskillings, which fact served as a balm to our feelings. The cunning savages were so careful not to expose themselves that on New Year's day (Yesterday) it was resolved to hunt them a bit in their mountain recesses. A regiment of Gurkhas made a detour over the mountains so as to shut out the enemy from retreat toward the south, while Gen. Hammond, with a large detachment, went up a valley toward the rocky walls over which the Gurkhas were likely to come. Many caves were found in which the Afridis had stored beds, clothing and grain, and in one of the holes several articles belonging to Sergeant Hopkins of the Oxfordshires, who was killed two days before, were found.

The contents of the caves were burned while we waited, the heights having been carefully picketed. But a catastrophe occurred which shows only too clearly what dangerous foes these Pathan devils are. Four Taker K-hls, or Afridis, crept around among the rocks so cleverly that they were not noticed by the pickets until they got within range of the General and some of his staff, who were standing below the burning caves. Four officers with Gen. Hammond and myself, were awaiting the completion of the plot to ensnare the enemy, little thinking that the savages would dare to shoot so near their pickets; when suddenly there came among us the whistling sound of bullets. One of them, passing within a foot of me, caused me to look up in time to see the puff of smoke which followed its expulsion from the rifle, not 200 yards above me. Not a single movement, however, could I detect, and the only thing to do was to get under cover as quickly as possible.

Gen. Hammond and his staff also made haste to get out of sight of the sharpshooters, but a sickening thud and a groan told me that one of them had been hit. On running back to the spot I was shocked to see Lieut. Hammond, a nephew of the General, lying prostrate on the ground. Fortunately, there were not more than four of the enemy engaged in this first attack, and these were not armed with magazine rifles or they would probably have killed Gen. Hammond and the rest of us, who were bearing away Lieut. Hammond to a safe place. Lieut. Hammond is a young man of extraordinarily fine physical development, a good staff officer and a soldier who had a most promising career before him. When I saw the hole the enemy's bullet had made in the very centre of his back I sympathized greatly with the English in their being obliged to carry on this trying kind of warfare, and could not help admiring their pluck and determination to see the affair to the end. The enemy appeared in numbers at different points immediately after this, and quite a fusillade began on both sides. Happily the Gurkhas, coming over the ridge at this juncture, were able to give the death blow

to two of the enemy at least and probably more. There were four casualties on the English side, including one Gurkha killed.

I shall now quit these scenes of bloodshed as there is little to be gained by my remaining till the spring. There will be a succession of attacks and repulses on both sides until the summer, when the enemy will most probably be brought to subjection. The history of a week is like that of the one preceding. Snowstorms will follow snowstorms and I fear lest some more of my friends who have been so kind to me in dreary Tirah may be brought face to face with death.

From the warm haunts of the buffalo, the tiger and the bison, in the central provinces where I expect to find myself in a few days, I should only be able to hope for the best and to wish the soldiers on the frontier speedy promotion.

—A. Donaldson Smith.

A Novelty of the Season.

Dresden is full of "Circos" the second of the series of Bangert's Cycle of the World of Homer, which now is surely promised for the 26th of February. It is the first novelty of the Dresden Opera house this season, and there is feverish anxiety to get everything into shape in good time. The artists in charge of the principal parts declare that they have never studied or sung anything as difficult, and the task of the choruses is also very complicated. The stage mechanics had to solve some comm. drums, too. Polyphemos, the giant, with but one eye on the forehead, will be sung by an artist enclosed in the form of a man nine feet high, and the colossus will walk by means of very clever machinery. The single eye of the giant will shine in a greenish hue like that of a cat. The background of this scene will show the volcano Aetna in full course of eruption, and a grand scene picture is promised on this occasion.

A Monument for Abby.

Mme. Melba has started a movement to provide for a monument to the memory of Henry E. Abbey. She believes that his services to the cause of music and the drama should be commemorated. Melba will, it is understood, head the list of subscribers with a liberal amount. It is said that all of the artists who were under Henry E. Abbey's management have been communicated with. They include Mme. Patti, Henry Irving, Mme. Sarah Bernhardt, Mme. Modjeska, Mme. Jane Harding, Mme. Rejane, Monnet Sully, Beer-bohm Tree, Wilson Barrett, Josef Hofmann, M. Coquelin, Mrs. Langtry, Lillian Russell, Eugen d'Albert and M. Saraze. Nothing new has transpired concerning Melba's plans for an opera company of her own next year.

Mrs. Webber's Dance.

The following from the Daily News, St. Johns, Nfld., will be read with interest here: "The matinee given in the T. A. Hall by the Boston Comedy Co., on Saturday afternoon, drew a full house. In this performance a special feature was introduced by Miss Edwina Grey. It was the execution of a step dance. She was attired specially for the occasion in a superb dress of spotless white, and not only looked charming, but tripped the light fantastic in such a graceful and precise manner that she fairly electrified the audience. During the performance Miss Grey, or as she is socially known, Mrs. Price Webber, was presented with a handsome bouquet by an admirer."

Bernhardt May be Manager.

Among other candidates for the vacant managership of the famous Parc Theatre at Brussels, where the French drama and comedy has had a home for many years, Sarah Bernhardt has also announced her willingness to contract for a long lease. This theatre receives a large subvention from the city of Brussels, but, on the other hand, the city exacts a guarantee for the artistic management of the playhouse.

CAUSE FOR ALARM.

How baldness begins.

How to prevent it.

Every person, male or female, shrinks from baldness. It adds to the appearance of age and is a serious discomfort. The cases are rare when the falling out of the hair may not be stopped, and a new and healthy growth of the hair promoted. The hair grows in the scalp like a plant in the soil. If a plant flourishes, it must have constant attention; it must be watered regularly and find its food in the soil where it is rooted. It is so with the hair. Neglect is usually the beginning of baldness. Dandruff is allowed to thicken on the scalp. The hair begins to loosen. The scalp loses its vitality. The hair, insufficiently nourished, begins to fade and to fall. The instant need in such a case is some practical preparation which, supplying the needed nourishment to the scalp, will feed the hair, give it strength, and so produce a strong and healthy growth. All this is done by Dr. Ayer's Hair Vigor, the most practical and valuable preparation for the hair that can be obtained. It tones up the scalp, does away with dandruff, stops the hair from falling, restores the original color to gray or faded

hair, and gives an abundant and glossy growth. Those who are threatened with approaching baldness will be interested in the following voluntary statement, made by Alderman S. J. Green, of Spencer, Iowa. He writes:

"About four months ago, my hair commenced falling out so rapidly that I became alarmed, and being recommended Dr. Ayer's Hair Vigor by a druggist, I resolved to try this preparation. I have been now using it for three months, and am much gratified to find that my hair has ceased falling out and also that hair which had been turning gray for the past five years has been restored to its original color, dark brown. It gives me much pleasure to recommend this dressing."

S. J. GREEN, Alderman, Spencer, Iowa.

Those who are interested in preserving and beautifying the hair will do well to send for Dr. Ayer's Curebook. A story of cures told by the cured. This book of 100 pages is sent free, on request, by the J. C. Ayer Co., Lowell, Mass.