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The Dust of Old Dacca, East Bengal.

AT THE CANNON'S MOUTH.

(William Carey, Dacca, East Bengal, in the 'Juvenile Missionary Herald'.)

Dacca was built ten generations ago, and has ever since been crumbling to dust in the sun. Its outer walls were first softened by salt, and then swallowed up by the jungle. Down the centuries have come the fierce annual rains, scouring out its streets and dissolving its gullies. Only the hardest substances have been able to survive. Here and there a decaying tomb, the fractured shell of a palace, or the sinking buttress of a bridge points to the past; but, with these exceptions, and one bit of battered iron, there is nothing that remains of a royal city, once famous as the capital of all Bengal.

The 'bit of battered iron' is a fine old gun set on a solid carriage of masonry. It stands near the centre of the chank—our chief market square—and weighs 64,814 lbs. Its surface of hammered metal is now so worn that a number of figures in bosses which once adorned it can only be faintly traced. It has occupied its present position for exactly seventy years.

Where it came from originally no man seems to know. The oldest records of the city do not tell us, and the almost obliterated designs on the metal itself fail to give a clue. Some facts, however, have been ascertained. There were two guns, and they stood in front of a palace built



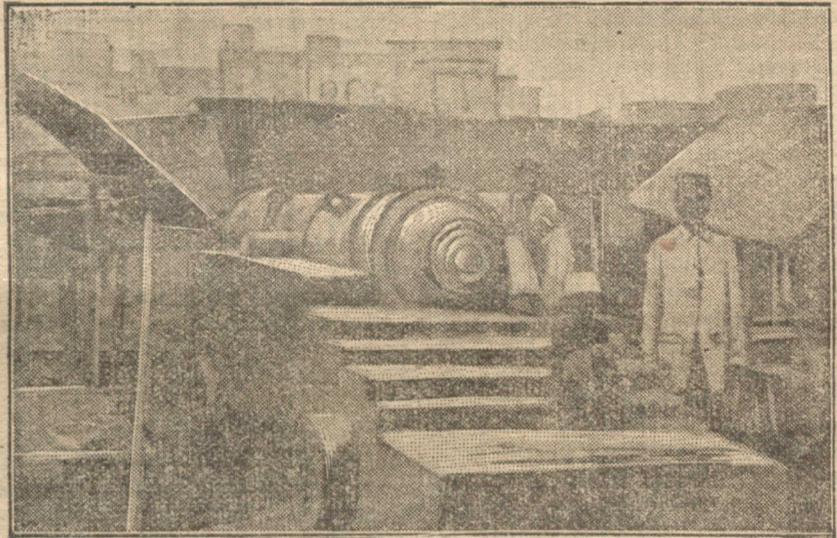
THE DUST OF OLD DACCA—AT THE CANNON'S MOUTH.

by Sultan Mahomed Shujah, the massive gateway of which still faces the river after two hundred and fifty years. Before the palace was a masonry embankment with broad terrace and steps down to the water's edge. The cannon stood on either side of the steps, guarding the gate. They were placed there by the famous Mogul General, Mir Jumla, the greatest of Aurangzib's warriors, and the conqueror of

Assam. He was an old man, and had won many battles before he came to Dacca, in one only of which, fought near Allahabad, 114 pieces of cannon fell as spoil to the Imperial camp. Whether this particular pair were part of such spoil or not we cannot tell, but they were brought

a piece remains. The trio hugging and patting it in the picture could doubtless account for several successful hauls; certainly, the little one looks cute enough for anything.

The square in which the cannon stands once had a fine flag-staff in the centre, at



THE DUST OF OLD DACCA.

here by Mir Jumla, and placed on the 'royal stairs.' Mir Jumla afterwards marched from Dacca, taking his army through Assam, and bent on the conquest of China. But the 'rains' set in, sickness thinned his force, and he was obliged to return. He died on the way. The two pieces of cannon had their day of pomp and show, and then, the embankment crumbling beneath them, they fell into the river. The larger of the two entirely disappeared, but the other could be seen at low tide, and, at last, after long neglect, it was fished up by elephants and dragged to its present place.

The story current in the bazaar is as follows:

"The guns were two sisters, the name of the lost one being 'Fat Black,' and of this, 'Lady Mary.' 'Fat Black' was the first to go away. 'Lady Mary' subsequently sank; but at low water her face could sometimes be seen, and strange noises came out of her mouth. At night she could often be heard to wail 'mujhko uthao'—'take me out'—and, at length, an attempt was made by prison labor to heave her up. This signally failed. Then Mr. Walters, the magistrate, had a dream, directing him to try again by means of elephants, which he did successfully, with much ceremony, on the following day.'

Such is the history of perhaps our oldest relic, and now it is regularly worshipped by Hindus from the villages near. They smear the muzzle with red paint, hang garland of flowers round its neck, and present offerings of pice and cowries, which are placed in the bore. This is almost a daily occurrence, and shows what hold idolatry still has over the people's minds. When the worshippers have gone away, naughty boys come with long bamboos, hooked at the end, which they dexterously introduce into the nozzle, till not

the foot of which crouched the gun. Then the whole place was open, and the effect must have been good. Now, on three sides there has risen up a nest of trumpery, tin-covered stalls, some of which are filled only twice a week. The effect is dismal. At the back of the gun there is still an open space, and I stood there making my third venture in Urdu this morning. It was a favorite preaching stand with some of the old missionaries, notably William Robinson, who regularly used it for years. The Mohammedans, however, who swarm in that quarter of the city, appear to be case-hardened, and often give trouble. They cursed us as we came away this morning, bidding us 'burn in hell.' Happily, their curses are as powerless as this old weapon. Not so the preaching and teaching of Christ. Within a stone's throw of 'Lady Mary,' just behind that line of brick houses in the picture, is a little school for Hindu and Mohammedan girls. Fourteen of them are 'Christian Endeavorers,' and the best of these is a little Mohammedan lassie, eleven years of age. Her name is Sultani, and she will be really a little 'empress' for Christ some day. She leads the meetings in her turn now, and her teacher tells me that 'she loves Jesus very much indeed.' Charles V. had twelve cannons, which he named 'the twelve Apostles,' and big guns no doubt they were. But these little ones will do better service in the kingdom of faith and love.

Cooking Cabbage in Oil.

Mr. J. B. Martin, of Fu-k'iang, remarks in 'China's Millions': 'One sometimes reads descriptions of the people that leave a bad impression of them in one's mind. Our servant is a living example of many things that we hear but patience and prayer are