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THE RED YEAR

A Story of the Indian Mutiny

BY LOUIS TRACY

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CHAPTER VIII—(Continued.)

The Brahmin's brain was bemused with drink, but it took in two obvious elements of the tale at once. Here was a fortune to be gained by merely cutting a throat at the right moment.

"That is good talking," said he. "Mount, friend, and leave me to answer questions."

Chumru saw that he had gaged his man rightly, and the evil glint in the subadar's eyes told him the unspoken thought. He climbed up behind the high-peaked saddle and, after the horse had showed his resentment of a double burden, was taken through the bazaar as rapidly as its thronged streets permitted. Sure enough the canal bridge was watched.

"Whither go ye?" demanded the officer in charge.

"To bring in a Feringhi who is in hiding," said the Brahmin.

"Shall I send a few men with you?"

"Nay, we two are plenty—" this with a laugh.

"Quite plenty," put in Chumru. The officer glanced at him and was convinced. Being a Mohammedan, he took Chumru's word without question, which showed the exceeding wisdom of Chumru in selecting a Brahmin for the sacrifice; thus was he prepared to deal with either party in an unholy alliance.

They jogged in silence past the Alumbagh. The Brahmin, on reflection, decided that he would stab Chumru before the hoard was disturbed and he could then devise another hiding-place at his leisure. Chumru had long ago decided to send the Brahmin to the place where all unbelievers go, at the first suitable opportunity. Hence the advantage lay with him, because he held a strategic position and could choose his own time.

Beyond the Alumbagh there were few houses, and these of mean description, and each moment the subadar's mind was growing clearer under the prospect of great wealth to be won so easily.

"Where is this bungalow, friend?" said he at last, seeing nothing but a straight road in front.

"Patience, brother. 'Tis now quite near. It lies behind that trope of trees yonder."

The other half turned to ascertain in which direction his guide was pointing.

"It is not on the main road, then?"

"No. A man who has gold worth keeping loves not to dwell where all men pass."

A little farther, and Chumru announced:—

"We turn off here."

It was dark. He thought he had hit upon a by-way, but no sooner did the horse quit the shadow of the trees by the roadside than he saw that he had been misled by the wheel-tracks of a ryot's cart. The Brahmin sniffed suspiciously.

"Is there no better way than this?" he cried, when his charger nearly stumbled into a deep ditch.

"One only, but you may deem it too far," was the quiet answer, and Chumru, placing his left hand on the Brahmin's mouth, plunged a long, thin knife up to the hilt between his ribs.

CHAPTER IX.

A Long Chase.

It was not Lawrence's order but Malcolm's own suggestion that led to the desperate task entrusted to the young aide by the Chief. While those few heroic volunteer horsemen drove back the enemy's cavalry and held the bridge over the Kokrail until the beaten army made good its retreat, Sir Henry halted by the roadside and watched the passing of the exhausted men. He had the aspect of one who hoped that some stray bullet would end the torment of life. In that grief-stricken hour his indomitable spirit seemed to falter. Ere night he was the Lawrence of old, but the magnitude of the calamity that had befallen him was crushing and he winced beneath it.

Out of three hundred and fifty white soldiers in the column he had lost one hundred and nineteen. Every gun served by natives was captured by the enemy. Worst of all, the moral effect of such a defeat outweighed a dozen victories. It not only brought about the instant beginnings of the siege, but its proportions were grossly exaggerated in the public eye. For the first time in many a year the white soldiers had fled before a strictly Indian force. They were outnumbered, which was nothing new in the history of the country, but it must be confessed they were out-generaled, too. Lawrence, never a believer in Gubbins's forward policy, showed unwonted hesitancy even during the march to Chinut: he halted, advanced and counter-marched the troops in a way that was foreign to a man of decisive character. Where he was unaccountably timid the enemy were unusually bold, and the outcome was disaster.

Yet in this moment of bitterest adversity he displayed that sympathy for the sufferings of others that won him the esteem of all who came in contact with him.

By some extraordinary blunder on the commissariat the 32nd had set forth that morning without breaking their fast. Now, after a weary march and a protracted fight in the burning sun, some of the men deliberately lay down to die.

"We can go no farther," they said. "We may as well meet death here as a few yards away. And, when the sepoys overtake us, we shall at least have breath enough left to die fighting."

Lawrence, when finally he turned his horse's head toward Lucknow, came upon such a group. He shook his feet free of the stirrups.

"Now, my lads," he said quietly, "you have no cause to despair. Catch hold of the leathers, two of you, and the horse will help you along. Mr. Malcolm can assist in the same way. And I will bring us to the city."

One of the men, finding it in his heart to pity his haggard-faced general, thought to console him by saying:

"We'll try, if it's only to please you, your honor, but it's all up with us, I'm afraid. If the end doesn't come today, it will surely be with us tomorrow."

"Why do you think that?" asked Lawrence. "We must hold the Residency until the last man falls. What else can we do?"

"I know that, your honor, but we haven't got the ghost of a chance. They're a hundred to one, and as well armed as we are. It 'ud be a different thing if help could come, but it can't. If what people are saying is true, sir, the nearest red-coats are at Allahabad, an' p'raps they're hard pressed too."

"That is not the way to look at a difficulty. In war it is the unexpected that happens. Keep your spirits up and you may live to tell your grandchildren how you fought the rebels at Lucknow. I want you and every man in the ranks to know that my motto is 'No Surrender.' You have heard what happened at Cawnpore. Here, in Lucknow, despite today's disaster, we shall fight to a finish."

An English battery came thundering down the road to take up a fresh position and assist in covering the retreat. The guns unlimbered near a well.

"There!" said Lawrence, "you see how my words have come true. A minute ago you were ready to fall before the first sowar who had lifted his saber over your head. Go now and help by drawing water for the gunners and yourselves. Then you can ride back on the carriages when they limber up."

Malcolm, to whom the soldier's words brought inspiration, spurred Nejdi alongside his Chief.

"Will you permit me to ride to Allahabad, sir, and tell General Neill how matters stand here?" he said.

Lawrence looked at him as though the request were so fantastic that he had not fully grasped its meaning.

"To Allahabad?" he repeated, turning in his saddle to watch the effect of the first shot fired by the battery.

"Yes, sir," cried Malcolm, eagerly. "I know the odds are against me, but Hodson rode as far through the enemy's country only six weeks ago, and I did something of the kind, though not so successfully, when I went from Meerut to Agra and from Agra to Cawnpore."

"You had an escort, and I can spare not a man."

"I will go alone, sir."

"I would gladly avail myself of your offer, but the Residency will be invested in less than an hour."

"Let me go now, sir. I am well mounted. In the confusion I may be able to reach the open country without being noticed."

"Go, then, in God's name, and may your errand prosper, for you have many precious lives in your keeping."

Lawrence held out his hand, and Malcolm clasped it.

"Tell Neill," said the Chief Commissioner in a low tone of intense significance, "that we can hold out a fortnight, a month perhaps, or even a few days longer if buoyed up with hope. That is all. If you succeed, I shall not forget your services. The Viceroy has given me plenary powers, and I shall place your name in orders tonight Captain Malcolm."

He kept his promise. When Lucknow was evacuated after the Second Relief, the official gazettes recorded that Lieutenant Frank Malcolm of the 3rd Cavalry had been promoted to a captaincy, supernumerary on the staff, for gallantry on the field on June 30, while a special minute provided that he should attain the rank of major if he reached Allahabad on or before July 4.

From the point on the road to Chinhut where Malcolm bade his Chief farewell, he could see the tower of the Residency, gray among the white domes and minarets that lined the south bank of the Goomtee. He had no illusions now as to the course the mutineers would follow. Native rumors had brought the news of the massacre at Cawnpore, though the ghastly tragedy of the Well was yet to come. He knew that this elegant city, resplendent and glorious in the sheen of the setting sun, would soon be a living hell. A fearsome struggle would surge around that tower where the British flag was flying. A few hundreds of Europeans would strive to keep at bay tens of thousands of eager rebels. Would they succeed? Pray Heaven for that, while Winifred lived!

An in all human probability their fate rested with him. If he were able to stir the British authorities in the south to almost superhuman efforts, a relieving force might arrive before the end of July. It was a great undertaking he had set himself. Yet he would have attempted it for Winifred's sake alone, and the thought of her anguish, when she should hear that he was gone, gave him a pang that was not solaced by the dearest honor a soldier can attain—promotion on the field.

It was out of the question that he should return to the Residency before he began his self-imposed mission. Already [illegible] cavalry were swooping along [illegible] banks of the routed troops. In a few minutes the only available road, which crossed the Goomtee by a bridge of boats and led through the suburbs by way of the Dilkusha, would be closed. As [illegible] had to press Nejdi into a [illegible] ore he could clear the left [illegible] vancing army. Then, easing [illegible] he swung off into a by-[illegible] ng was centering down the [illegible] led to Rai Bareilly and thence [illegible] Allahabad.

At [illegible] o'clock he was ten miles from Lucknow; at eight, nearly twenty. The quick-falling shadows warned him that if he would procure food for Nejdi and himself he must seize the next opportunity that presented itself, while a rest of some sort was absolutely necessary, if he meant to spare his gallant Arab for the [illegible] of endurance that still lay ahead.

[illegible]ough he had never before traveled [illegible]at road he was acquainted with its main features. Thirty miles from his present position was the small town of Rai Bareilly. Fifty miles to the southeast was Partabgarh. Fifty miles south of Partabgarh lay Allahabad. The scheme roughly outlined in his mind was, to buy, borrow, or steal a native pony which would carry him to the outskirts of Rai Bareilly before dawn. Then remounting Nejdi he would either ride rapidly through the town, or make a detour, whichever method seemed preferable after inquiry from such peaceful natives as he met on the road. Four hours beyond Rai Bareilly he would leave the main road, strike due south for the Ganges, and follow the left bank of the river until he was opposite Allahabad. He refused to ask himself what he would do if Allahabad were in the hands of the rebels.

"I shall tackle that difficulty about this hour to-morrow," he communed, with a laugh at his own expense. "Just now, when a hundred miles of unknown territory face me, I have enough to contend with. So, steady is the word! good horse! Caesarum invehis et fortunas ejus!"

Thus far the wayfarers encountered during his journey had treated him civilly. The ryots, peasant proprietors of the soil, drew their rough carts aside and salaamed as he passed. These men knew little or nothing, as yet, of the great events that were taking place on the south and west of the Ganges. A few educated bunniahs and zemindars,* who doubtless had heard of the wild doings in the cities, glanced at him curiously, and would have asked for news if he had not invariably ridden by at a rapid pace.

As it happened, the route he followed was far removed from the track of murder and rapine that marked the early progress of the Mutiny, and the mere sight of a British officer, moving on with such speed and confidence, must have set the worthy folk awondering. Between Rai Bareilly and the Grand Trunk Road stood the wide barrier of the sacred river, while the town itself must not be confused with Bareilly—situated nearly a hundred miles north of Lucknow—which became notorious as the headquarters of Khan Bahadur Khan, a pensioner of the British Government, and a ruffian second only to Nana Sahib in merciless cruelty.

All unknown to Malcolm, and indeed little recognized as yet in India save by a few district officials, there was a man in Rai Bareilly that night who was destined to test the chivalry of Britain on many a hard-fought field. Ahmed Ullah, famous in history as the Moulvie of Fyzabad, had crossed the young officer's path once already. When Malcolm took his untrained charger for the first wild gallop out of Meerut—the ride that ended ignominiously in the moat of the King's of Delhi hunting lodge—he nearly rode over a Mohammedan priest, as he tore along the Grand Trunk Road some five miles south of the station.

It would have been well for India if Nejdi's hoofs had then and there struck the breath out of that ascetic frame. Of all the firebrands raised by the Mutiny, the Moulvie of Fyzabad was the fiercest and most dangerous. Early in the year he was imprisoned for preaching sedition. Unhappily he was liberated too soon, and, his fanaticism only inflamed the more by punishment, he went to the Punjab and sowed disaffection far and wide by his burning zeal for the spread of Islam. By chance he returned to Fyzabad before the outbreak at Meerut. The feeble loyalty of the native regiments at Lucknow sufficed to keep all the borderland of Nepaul quiet for nearly two months. But the reports brought by his disciples warned the moulvie that the true believer's day of triumph was approaching. Moreover, the Begum of Oudh, one of three women who were worth as many army corps to the mutineers, was waiting for him at Rai Bareilly, a placid eddy in the backwash of the torrents sweeping through Upper India, and Ahmed Ullah had left Fyzabad on the evening of the 29th to keep his tryst.

It was, therefore, a lively brood of scorpions that Malcolm proposed to disturb when he dismounted from a wretched tat he had purchased at his first halt, and fed and watered Nejdi again, just as a glimmer of dawn appeared in the east. According to his calculations he was about a mile from Rai Bareilly. The hour was the quietest and coolest of the hot Indian night. Some pattering drops of rain and the appearance of heavy clouds in the southwest gave premonitions of a fresh outburst of the monsoon. He was glad of it. Rain would freshen himself and his horse. It made the ground soft and would retard his speed once he quitted the high road, but these drawbacks were more than balanced by the absence of the terrific heat of the previous day. He unstrapped his cloak and flung it loosely over his shoulders. Then he waited, until the growing light brought forth the untiring tillers of the fields, and he was able to glean some sort of information as to the position of affairs in the town. If the place were occupied by a prowling gang of rebels he might secure a guide by payment and avoid its narrow streets altogether. At any rate, it would be a foolish thing to dash through blindly and trust to luck. The issues at stake were too important for that sort of imprudent valor. His object was to reach Allahabad that night—not to hew his way through opposing hordes and risk being cut down in the process.

The lowing of cattle and the soft stumbling tread of many unshod feet told him that some one was approaching. A herd of buffaloes loomed out of the half light. Their driver, an old man, was quite willing to talk.

"There are no sahib-log in the town," he said, for Malcolm deemed it advisable to begin by a question on that score. "The collector-sahib had a camp here three weeks ago, but he went away, and that was a misfortune, because the budmashes from Fyzabad came, and honest people were sore pressed."

"From Fyzabad, say'st thou? They must be cleared out. Where are they?"

"You are too late, huzoor. They went to Cawnpore, I have heard. Men talk of much dacoity in that district. Is that true, sahib?"

"Yes, but fear not; it will be suppressed. I am going to Allahabad. Is this the best road?"

"I have never been so far, sahib, but it lies that way."

"Is the bazaar quiet now?"

"I have seen none save our own people these two days, yet it was said in the bazaar last night that a Begum tarried at the rest-house."

"A Begum. What Begum?"

"I know not her name, huzoor, but she is one of the daughters of the King of Oudh."

Malcolm was relieved to hear this. The wild notion had seized him that the Princess Roshinara, a stormy petrel of political affairs just then, might have drifted to Rai Bareilly by some evil chance.

"You see this pony?" he said. "Take him. He is yours. I have no further use for him. Are you sure that there are none to dispute my passage through the town?"

The old peasant was so taken aback by the gift that he could scarce speak intelligibly, but he assured the Presence that such an hour none would interfere with him.

Malcolm decided to risk it. He mounted and rode forward at a sharp trot. Of course he had not been able to adopt any kind of disguise. While doing duty at the Residency he had thrown aside the turban reft from Abdul Huq and he now wore the peaked shako, with white puggaree, affected by junior staff officers at that period. His long military cloak, steel scabbard, sabertache and Wellington boots, proclaimed his profession, while his blue riding-coat and cross-belts were visible in front, as he meant to have his arms free in case the necessity arose to use sword or pistol.

And he rode thus into Rai Bareilly, watchful, determined, ready for any emergency. So boldly did he advance that he darted past half a dozen men whose special duty it was to stop and question all travelers. They were stationed on the flat roofs of two houses, one on each side of the way, and a rope was stretched across the road in readiness to drop and hinder the progress of any one who did not halt when summoned. It was a simple device. It had not been seen by the man who drove the buffaloes, and by reason of Malcolm's choice of the turf by the side of the road as the best place for Nejdi, it chanced to dangle high enough to permit their passing beneath.

The sentries, though caught napping, tried to make amends for their carelessness. In the growing light one of them saw Malcolm's accouterments and he yelled loudly:

"Ohe, bhai, look out for the Feringhi!"

Frank, unfortunately, had not noticed the rope. But he heard the cry and understood that the "brother" to whom it was addressed would probably be discovered at the end of the short street. He shook Nejdi into a canter, drew his sword, and looked keenly ahead for the first sign of those who would bar his path.

Dawn was peeping grayly over the horizon, and Ahmed Ullah, moulvie and interpreter of the Koran, standing in an open courtyard, was engaged in the third of the day's prayers, of which the first was intoned soon after sunset the previous evening. He was going through the Reka with military precision, and as luck would have it, the Kibleh, or direction of Mecca, brought his fierce gaze to the road along which Malcolm was galloping. Never did priest become warrior more speedily than Ahmed Ullah when that warning shout rang out, and he discovered that a British officer was riding at top speed through the quiet bazaar. Assuming that this unexpected apparition betokened the arrival of a punitive detachment, he uttered a loud cry, leaped to the gates of the courtyard and closed them.

Malcolm, of course, saw him and regarded his action as that of a frightened man, who would be only too glad when he could resume his devotions in peace. Ahmed Ullah, soon to become a claimant of sovereign power as "King of Hindustan," was not a likely person to let a prize slip through his fingers thus easily. Keeping up an ululating clamor of commands, he ran to the roof of the dwelling, snatched up a musket and took steady aim. By this time Malcolm was beyond the gate and thought himself safe. Then he saw a rope drawn breast-high across the narrow street, and gesticulating natives, variously armed, leaning over the parapets on either hand. He had to decide in the twinkling of an eye whether to go on or turn back. Probably his retreat would be cut off by some similar device:, so the bolder expedient of an advance offered the better chance. An incomparable horseman, mounted on an absolutely trustworthy horse, he lay well forward on Nejdi's neck, resolving to try and pick up the slack rope on his sword and lift it out of the way. To endeavor to cut through such an obstacle would undoubtedly have brought about a disaster. It would yield, and the keenest blade might fail to sever it completely, while any slackening of pace would enable the hostile guard to shoot him at point-blank range.

These considerations passed through his mind while Nejdi was covering some fifty yards. To disconcert the enemy, who were not sepoys and whose guns were mostly antiquated weapons of the match-lock type, he pulled out a revolver and fired twice. Then he leaned forward, with right arm thrown well in front and the point of his sword three feet beyond Nejdi's head. At this instant, when Frank was unconsciously offering a bad target, the moulvie fired. The bullet plowed through the Englishman's right forearm, struck the hilt of the sword and knocked the weapon out of his hand. Exactly what happened next he never knew. From the nature of his own bruises afterwards and the manner in which he was jerked backwards from the saddle, he believed that the rope missed Nejdi altogether, but caught him by the left shoulder. The height of a horse extended at the gallop is surprisingly low as compared with the height of the same animal standing or walking. There was even a remote possibility that the rope would strike the Arab's forehead and bound clear of his rider. But that was not to be. Here was Frank hurled to the roadway, and striving madly to resist the treble shock of his wound, of the blow dealt by the rope, and of the fall, while Nejdi was tearing away through Rai Bareilly as though all the djinns of his native desert were pursuing him.

Though Malcolm's torn arm was bleeding copiously, and he was stunned by being thrown so violently flat on his back no bones were broken. His rage at the trick fate had played him, the overwhelming bitterness of another and most lamentable failure, enabled him to struggle to his feet and empty at his assailants the remaining chambers of the revolver which was still tightly clutched in his left hand. He missed, luckily, or they would have butchered him forthwith. In another minute he was standing before Moulvie Ahmed Ullah, and that earnest advocate of militant Islam was plying him with mocking questions.

"Whither so fast, Feringhi? Dost thou run from death, or ride to seek it? Mayhap thou comest from Lucknow. If so, what news? And where are the papers thou art carrying?"

Frank's strength was failing him. To the weakness resulting from loss of blood was added the knowledge that this time he was trapped without hope of escape. The magnificent display of self-command entailed by the effort to rise and face his foes in a last defiance could not endure much longer. He knew it was near the end when he had difficulty in finding the necessary words in Urdu. But he spoke, slowly and firmly, compelling his unwilling brain to form the sentences.

"I have no papers, and if I had, who are you that demand them? he said. "I am an officer of the Company, and I call on all honest and loyal men to help me in my duty. I promise—to those who assist me to reach Allahabad—that they will be—pardoned for any past offenses—and well rewarded. . . ."

The room swam around him and the grim-visaged moullah became a grotesque being, with dragon's eyes and a turban like a cloud. Yet he kept on hoping against imminent death itself that his words would reach some willing ear.

"Any man—who tells General Neill sahib—at Allahabad—that help is wanted—at Lucknow—will be made rich. . . . Help—at Lucknow—immediately. . . . I, Malcolm-sahib—of the 3d Cavalry—say. . . ."

He collapsed in the grasp of the men who were holding him.

"Thou has said enough, dog of a Nazarene. Take him without and hang him," growled Ahmed Ullah.

"Nay," cried a woman's voice from behind a straw portiere that closed the arched veranda of the house. "Thou art too ready with thy sentences, moulvie. Rather let us bind his wounds and give him food and drink. Then he will recover, and tell us what we want to know."

"He hath told us already, Princess," said the other, his harsh accents sounding more like the snarl of a wolf than a human voice. "He comes from Lucknow and he seeks succor from Allahabad. That means—"

"It means that he can be hanged as easily at eventide as at daybreak, and we shall surely learn the truth, as such men do not breathe lies."

"He will not speak, Princess."

"Leave that to me. If I fail, I hand him over to thee forthwith. Let him be brought within and tended, and let some ride after his horse, as there may be letters in the wallets. I have spoken, Ahmed Ullah. See that I am obeyed."

The moulvie said no word. He went back to his praying mat and bent again toward the west, where the Holy Kaaba enshrines the ruby sent down from heaven. But though his lips muttered the rubric of the Koran, his heart whispered other things, and chief among them was the vow that ere many days be passed he would so contrive affairs that no woman's whim should thwart his judgment.

So the clouded day broke sullenly, with gusts of warm rain and red gleams of a sun striving to disperse the mists. And the earth soaked and steamed and threw off fever-laden vapors as she nursed the grain of life and bade the arid plain clothe itself in summer greenery. It was a bad day to lie wounded and ill and a prisoner, and despite the cooling showers, it was a hot day to ride far and fast.

Hence it was long past noon when a servant announced to the Begum that the sahib—for thus the man described Malcolm until sharply admonished to learn the new order of speech—the Nazarene, then, was somewhat recovered from his faintness. And about the same hour, when a subadar of the 7th Cavalry clattered into Rai Bareilly and was told that a certain Feringhi whom he sought was safely laid by the heels there, so sultry was the atmosphere that he seemed to be quite glad of the news.

"Shabash!" he cried, as he dismounted. "May I never drink at the White Pond of the Prophet if that be not good hearing! So you have caught him brethren! Wao, wao! you have done a great thing. He is not killed?—No? That is well, for he is sorely wanted at Lucknow. Tie him tightly, though. He is a fox in guile, and might give me the slip again. May his bones bleach in an infidel's grave!—I have hunted him fifty miles, yet scarce a man I met had seen him!"

CHAPTER X

Wherein Fate Plays Tricks With Malcolm.

If it is difficult for the present generation to understand the manners and ways of its immediate forbears, how much more difficult to ask it to appreciate the extraordinary features of the siege of Lucknow! Let the reader who knows London imagine some parish in the heart of the city barricading itself behind a mud wall against its neighbors: let him garrison this flimsy fortress with sixteen hundred and ninety-two combatants, of whom a large number were men of an inferior race and of doubtful loyalty to those for whom they were fighting, while scores of the Europeans were infirm pensioners: let him cram the rest of the available shelter with women and children; let him picture the network of narrow streets, tall houses and a few open spaces—often separated from the enemy only by the width of a lane—as being subjected to interminable bombardment at point-blank range, and he will have a clear notion of some, at least, of the conditions which obtained in Lucknow when that gloomy July let carried on the murderous work begun on the previous evening.

The Residency itself was the only strong building in an enclosure seven hundred yards long and four hundred yards wide, though by no means so large in area as these figures suggest. The whole position was surrounded by an adobe wall and ditch, strengthened at intervals by a gate or a stouter embrasure for a gun. The other structures, such as the banqueting Hall, which was converted into a hospital, the Treasury, the Brigade Mess, the Begum Cotee, the Barracks, and a few nondescript houses and offices, were utterly unsuited for defense against musketry alone. As to their capacity to resist artillery fire, that was a grim jest with the inmates, who dreaded the fallen masonry as much as the rebel shells.

Even the Residency was forced to use its underground rooms for the protection of the greater part of the women and children, while the remaining buildings, except the Begum Kotee, which was comparatively sheltered on all sides, were so exposed to the enemy's guns that when some sort of clearance was made in October, four hundred and thirty-five cannon balls were taken out of the Brigade Mess alone.

Before the siege commenced the British also occupied a strong palace called the Muchee Bhowun, standing outside the entrenchment and commanding the stone bridge across the River Goomte. A few hours' experience revealed the deadly peril to which its small garrison was exposed, and Lawrence decided at all costs to abandon it. A rude semaphore was erected on the roof of the Residency, and on the first morning of the siege, three officers signaled to the commandant of the outlying fort, Colonel Palmer, that he was to spike his guns, blow up the building and bring his men into the main position. The three did their signaling under a heavy fire, but they were understood. Happily, the prospect of loot in the city drew off thousands of the rebels after sunset, and Colonel Palmer marched out quietly at midnight. A few minutes later an appalling explosion shook every house in Lucknow. The Muchee Bhowun, with its immense stores, had blown to the sky.

That same day Lawrence received what the Celtic soldiers among the garrison regarded as a warning of his approaching end. He was working in his room with his secretary when a shell crashed through the wall and burst at the feet of the two men. Neither was injured, but Captain Wilson, one of his staff-officers, begged the Chief to remove his office to a less exposed place.

"Nothing of the kind," said Sir Henry, cheerfully. "The sepoys don't possess an artilleryman good enough to throw a second shell into the same spot."

"It will please all of us if you give in on this point, sir," persisted Wilson.

"Oh, well, if you put it that way, I will turn out tomorrow," was the smiling answer.

Next morning at eight o'clock, after a round of inspection, the general, worn out by anxiety and want of sleep, threw himself on a bed in a corner of the room.

Wilson came in.

"Don't forget your promise, sir," he said.

"I have not forgotten, but I am too tired to move now. Give me another hour or two."

Lawrence went on to explain some orders to his aide. While they were talking another shell entered the small apartment, exploded, and filled the air with dust and stifling fumes. Wilson's ears were stunned by the noise, but he cried out twice:

"Sir Henry, are you hurt?"

Lawrence murmured something, and Wilson rushed to his side. The coverlet of the bed was crimson with blood. Some men of the 32d ran in and carried their beloved leader to another room. Then a surgeon came and pronounced the wound to be mortal. On the morning of the 4th Lawrence died. He was conscious to the last, and passed his final hours planning and contriving and making arrangements for the continuance of the defense.

"Never surrender!" was the dying injunction. Shot and shell battered unceasingly against the walls of Dr. Fayrer's house in which he lay dying, but their terrors never shook that stout heart, and he died as he lived, a splendid example of an officer and a gentleman, a type of all that is best and noblest in the British character.

And Death, who did not spare the Chief, sought lowlier victims. During the first week of the seige the average number killed daily was twenty. Even when the troops learnt to avoid the exposed places, and began to practise the little tricks and artifices that tempt an enemy to reveal his whereabouts to his own undoing, the daily death-roll was ten for more than a month.

There was no real safety anywhere. Even in the Begum Kotee, where Winifred and the other ladies of the garrison were lodged, some of them were hit. Twice ere the end of July Winifred awoke in the morning to find bullets on the floor and the mortar of the wall broken within a few inches of her head. That she slept soundly under such conditions is a remarkable tribute to human nature's knack of adapting itself to circumstances. After a few days of excessive nervousness the most timorous among the women were heard to complain of the monotony of existence!

(To be continued.)

* Bunniah, grain dealer; zemindar, landowner.

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MANY SIGNATURES TO TEMPERANCE PETITION

Federation in Session Here—Wished to Present Petition to Government This Week.

A meeting of the N. B. Temperance Federation was held Wednesday afternoon in the Temperance Hall, Market Building with a fair number of representatives from various parts of the province present. Report on the progress of the prohibition petition work were presented and it was shown that a large number of signatures have been obtained.

An endeavour was made to have the petitions ready to present to the government here during exhibition week, but Premier Hazen had replied that it was impossible to hold a meeting of the government here at that time.

The petitions will be presented to the government before the next session and it is hoped to secure the legislation to go into effect next year.

I. C. R. COMMISSION BEGIN INSPECTION OF BRANCH ROADS

Moncton, N. B., Sept. 15—(Special).—The commission recently appointed by the dominion government to make enquiries respecting the branch lines with a view to their acquisition by the Intercolonial, advocated by Hon. Mr. Emmerson, began a tour of inspection today. The commission consists of E. Triffin, general traffic manager of the I. C. R.; D. A. Story, general freight agent I. C. R., and U. A. Bowden. They went north this morning to inspect the Kent Northern and Caraquet railways.

Mr. Emmerson addressed a liberal rally at Memramcook Saturday evening. Another liberal meeting is on Monday night at Wheaton Settlement was addressed by Mr. Emmerson, Oragnizer Wall and others.

APPROVE OF CAMP GROUNDS AT WESTFIELD

Committee Recommend They Be Taken Over By Conference.

Inspection Trip Made Wednesday--Another Meeting Held Here Recommends Amalgamation of Children's Fund and Sustentation Fund.

The committee appointed by the New Brunswick and P. E. I. Methodist conference to report on the desirability of the camp grounds at Westfield met in the city Wednesday and, after a trip of inspection to the grounds drew up a resolution setting forth that the grounds were desirable in every way for the purpose in view and recommending that the conference take prompt action to place the tract properly under the control of the conference by the appointment of a board of trustees, or some such action.

The committee consisted of Rev. S. Howard, president of the conference; Prof. W. G. Watson, of Mount Allison University, Sackville; Rev. George Steel, of Bedeque; Joseph Bullock, James Myles, W. D. Baskin, J. B. Tait, St. John; J. J. Weddall, Fredericton; R. C. Tait, Sackville.

Rev. James Crisp also accompanied the party as secretary and the trip to Westfield was made in a gasoline launch chartered for the occasion. The lots are now owned by a syndicate composed of gentlemen interested in the Methodist church and are not under the direct control of the conference.

After deciding favorably as to the desirability of the grounds the committee also decided to recommend the taking over of the land by the conference.

The committee of the Methodist conference appointed to consider the amalgamation of the children's fund and sustentation fund met in the city yesterday. After much discussion of the details it was agreed that the funds should be amalgamated and a subcommittee consisting of Rev. Thomas Hicks, of Point de Bute, and Rev. G. F. Dawson, of Chatham, was appointed to draw up a working plan to be submitted at the next meeting of the conference. The members of the larger committee were:—Rev. G. M. Young, St. Stephen; Rev. J. S. Gregg, Grand Lake; Rev. W. F. Dawson, Chatham; Rev. A. D. McCully, Bathurst; Rev. George Steel, Bedeque, P. E. I.; Rev. Thomas Hicks, Point de Bute, and Rev. F. A. Wightman, Montague, P. E. I.

FIRST MOOSE OF SEASON ARRIVED WEDNESDAY

Shot at Douglas Harbor by A. Coakley on Opening Day.

The first carcass of moose to reach St. John in the season which opened Wednesday arrived in the afternoon by river steamer from Sheffield. It was shot at Douglas Harbor by A. Coakley who came upon the forest monarch in the water after pond lilies.

The moose weighed about 800 pounds and to get the carcass ashore it was necessary to back a cart into the water It was brought to Sheffield and sent to St. John, consigned to Fred McMulkin.

An express train running 60 miles an hour without stopping for 25 hours would just travel the distance covered by the packets (placed end to end) sold in one year of "Salada" Tea. Annual sale exceeds eighteen million packets.

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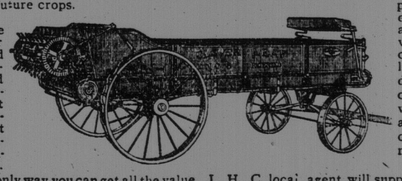

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