

LETTER FROM AN OFFICER
OF THE 86th REGIMENT.

Palace Hospital, Jhansi, 27th April.

Many thanks my dear Ned for your kind letter of 20th January. I suppose you will have heard by this time of my having been wounded on 3rd instant at the storming of this place. I am nearly well now and expect to be able to travel to Bombay in two or three weeks. I will now give you fuller particulars of the fight than I was able to send to Papa by last mail. On the evening of the 2nd there was a report in camp that we were going to attack the town of Jhansi at 12 o'clock that night, went to bed at 9 and about 12 I heard an Orderly Dragoon from the General's camp trot into our lines and ask for the Colonel: I immediately got up and awoke Mr. Kingir and Henry who lived in the tent with me, and we dressed while you could say Jack Robinson and went out to our parade ground, the men were silently and quickly falling in and by and bye, the Brigadier came up with the 25th N. I. and told us off into two parties with the 25th as support, we were now marching rapidly in the direction of the town when Cochrane the Adj. rode up to me and told me to ride like fun to an advance post and bring in 50 of the Grenadier company. I turned my horse's head and went off like a shot. I never enjoyed a gallop so much. I had about 2 miles to go, and as I wanted to get back in time for the assault you may be sure I did not lose much time, I soon arrived at the outpost, gave my orders to the officer in command, and back à la fine course, I just arrived as one of the parties was moving off with the ladders, so I dismounted and turned my horse loose never expecting to see him again. The officers of this party were Major Stuart, Dartnell, and Fowler and Robbin R. E. The enemy opened a very heavy fire from the wall and several of the men carrying the ladders were killed and wounded. When we got to the wall and were putting up our ladders, the niggers kept throwing down huge stones on us, besides firing briskly with their matchlocks and rockets, I am sure I don't know we escaped being spiffigated to a man, I got my ladder up in good time but the brutes knocked it down again with a long piece of bamboo and at the same time smashed nearly all the rungs out of it with a huge piece of rock, Dartnell was more fortunate and he was the first man over the wall. I went up his ladder and was in four or five, he was very much cut up, 5 desperate cuts on his left arm and hand, one on his right leg and a bullet wound in the stomach, it was fired so close to him that his clothes were singed, but fortunately the ball was turned by his sword belt and only inflicted a flesh wound; he will lose the use of his left hand. The General has recommended him for the Victoria Cross. We soon drove the enemy from the wall and they retreated to the fort fighting every inch of the ground. When we got to the fort we were exposed to a tremendous fire from both flanks and front, an officer who had been in the Crimea said he never saw heavier fire even before Sebastopol. We had now done all that was expected of us viz: driven the enemy into the fort but Darby placed himself at the head of the men and actually made a rush at the gate of the fort, this was unfortunate as the fort could never be taken by infantry. It has five different walls and gates one inside of the other. The Niggers came out in thousands, and we were obliged to retire on our reserves, and we then drove them back at the point of the bayonet. Here I was wounded and carried back to camp, there was nothing more done that day but in the night they got up a couple of mortars and soon made the fort too hot for the fellows inside, so they evacuated

it, and tried to escape to Calpee but they were cut up by the 14th Drags. as soon as they got down into the plain. The right attack did not succeed so well as ours, the two officers who led the storming party were killed, and nothing went right, the Regiment was the 3rd Bombay European. They gave up and came up by the breach after a party of the 86th. We had 4 officers in our Regiment wounded, and poor Stack the Surgeon killed, the next day it was reported that there were 40 or 50 desperadoes in a large house outside the town, so a party was sent out to dislodge them, they had got into a dark place under the house all arches, and it was a very nasty place to get into, as one could not see. Lewis of ours got about twenty of our men and made a rush in, but a big Nigger jumped up behind him and gave him a frightful cut on the back, dividing the shoulder blade and two ribs, the men drove the fellows out and they were soon disposed of. We got a good deal of prize here in jewels and cloth of gold &c. &c. They say the Sub's share will be about £500, so if I get the Dhar prize money as well, I will be pretty well off, it is £300 more. The Doctors say all we wounded fellows will have to go home as soon as we can stand the fatigue of the journey to Bombay, if we do I hope the Regiment will come home before we have to come out again. We expect 6 companies of the 71st here to-morrow, Simpson, and Bonham and a lot of fellows I knew in Quebec are with them, Dartnell and I are very snug here. We have got a room all to ourselves, but the heat my dear Ned is something awful, it is about 100 here and in the camp 113, the 1st Brigade marched the night before last to lick a lot of rascals about three marches out, I don't know whether they will go on to Calpee, there is a large force of the enemy there, but I dare say Sir Colin will do for them: I have got as mementos of Jhansi, the model of a gun field piece, a small brass God, native sword, and a handsome English spangiel, he must have belonged to some of the unfortunate people who were murdered here 1st June, 4 of our Lieutenants have been promoted by last Gazette, so I am now nearly certain that I have got my Lieutenancy.

My horse found his way back to camp all right, and I sold him to Coates for £15 he was worth £30 but there were so many horses taken as prize and sold cheap that I could not get more for him.

The Rance's father and Prime Minister were caught the other day and hung. We took several elephants here, one was an enormous brute, said to be 150 years old he had bars of pure gold on his tusks valued at £500: he was in a great state of excitement when I saw him, owing I suppose, to the noise, firing, he was breaking great branches off of the trees about him and throwing them at our men. We have had 7 officers and 50 men killed and wounded in the 86th. The Niggers fight very well behind walls and in houses but in the field they only wait to fire a few rounds and then bolt like fun. I must now close this letter, and with best love to all at home, believe me my dear Ned,
Your very affectionate brother,
S. W. SEWELL.

MILITARY CHAPLAINS.

"When we landed in the Crimea, 26,000 strong, as fine a body of men as ever trod the earth, yet helpless without God's arm, there were but five chaplains with the Force; and, before the winter of 1854 had well set in, two of them were dead and one invalided: indeed, shortly after the battle of Inkerman, it seemed as if the ministrations of the Church would become almost unknown to our Army. Who was it stepped in at that critical moment, and raised our stricken band to a goodly body of sixty-five able, and,

I think I may say, faithful Chaplains? None other than the warm-hearted people of England. The tale of dying hundreds and spiritual destitution became the topic of every newspaper of the land; the letters of our Soldiers imploringly asked for ministers of God; an urgent appeal was made to the society for the Propagation of the Gospel to increase its mission to an afflicted Army; the Minister of War was besought to send out more Chaplains; leading articles in *The Times* eloquently and earnestly pleaded in a holy cause: in a word, one general was heard, "Give to our suffering heroes the consolations of Religion." Sir, we, as a nation, have our faults, but certainly we are not fickle. The same heart that beats so truly to British Soldiers in '54, beats as truly to them now. I say, then, you need not fear opposition in carrying out any moral reform in the Army: the House of Commons, which is but the people in action, will heartily supply all that is really necessary for the spiritual discipline of our Troops."

This latter sentiment is strictly in accordance with our own view, and it cannot too frequently be repeated. To the credit of Lord PANMURE the list of Military Chaplains was much augmented, and we hear the best and accounts of the effect of their employment. But the increase had no reference to India. It is in respect to the Regiments in that country that Mr. Wright addresses General PEEL, as, we think, with great, we wish we could have written, irresistible force:—

"The spiritual advantages now possessed by a Regiment at home, only make it feel more keenly the want of a Chaplain, on its embarkation for the East. Here, then, let me respectfully ask you, Sir, to carry on the good work, now so well begun, by appointing a Chaplain to every Regiment immediately it is ordered on foreign service—at least, to every Regiment which, for the time to come, shall be stationed in India. Viewed simply as a moral policeman, a sensible earnest-minded clergyman, walking daily among a thousand men, each of whom, on Indian soil, is worth at least £100 to the State, would be a source of gain instead of expense to the Treasury. I know the stereotyped answer to my proposition, "Oh! that will never do; it was tried for a long time, and found a great failure." But the hasty objectors forget, that, when, under the old régime, every Corps in the Service had its Chaplain, that Chaplain was generally appointed without any consideration whatever as to his qualification. In those days, Chaplaincies, like Esquisnacies, Lieutenancies, and companies, were disposed of without the smallest regard to the fitness of the parties applying for them. Being the especial patronage of the Colonels, they were not unfrequently put up for sale. As to the duties, they might be performed by deputy, or they might not be performed at all; or if the principal attached himself to the Corps on the strength of which he was borne, the chances were that the arrangement proved to be the most mischievous of the whole. It was generally found, that the charms of the mess-table, rather than any desire to exercise a moral influence over the conduct and opinions of the Soldiers, kept the Chaplain at Head Quarters." Such a state of things, or any approach to it, could not exist now: it would not be tolerated for a single moment. Our youngest Officers would despise the minister of the Gospel who could talk of godliness from the pulpit, and pass an ungodly life out of it; while Officers commanding Regiments, supported by a Commander-in-Chief determined to show no favour to high or low, would soon adopt means to be relieved of so heavy an infliction. Again, if we consider the position and pay of a Military Chaplain, the authorities can, if right means be adopted, always secure a faithful clergyman to be a pattern to all ranks of the service. With a few alterations in the warrants bearing upon Chaplains I feel assured that a body of clergy may be attached to the Army, which shall be a blessing to our Soldiers, a bright example before the heathen, and an honour to our country.

I am afraid, Sir, we have not, as a nation, properly considered the condition of our Soldiers during their long years of service in India. There they are, at all times exposed to the dangers of a passing war, or the violence of a sweeping epidemic, or the temptation of a lasting idleness; they, therefore, require every support that can be given them, especially that of a Chaplain, who, dwelling in the midst of them, may day by day encour-

age them, while honest and true towards their earthly sovereign, not to forget Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Who can tell the benefits resulting from the regular ministrations of the Church, upon the bodies and souls of men exposed to the depressing influence of a tropical climate? We can doubt the intense comfort afforded to our Soldiers by a faithful minister of God, during those awful visitations of cholera and fever which, from time to time, visit our Indian cantonments."

Nothing that we could write would add strength to this appeal. But lest it should be supposed that Mr. Wright only contemplates an augmentation to the number of Protestant Chaplains, he says in a truly catholic tone:—

"I know the delicate question which will at once present itself: "What, is to be done for the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics?" I answer, they must be dealt fairly with; honesty will be found the best policy. Give to every Highland Regiment its Presbyterian Chaplain, and the Roman Catholics a body of priests in proportion to the number of Roman Catholics in our Army. Taking the average amount of all our Corps for a period of 25 years at 145,000 men, the division by creeds would stand nearly as follows: 107,000 Church of England; 30,000 Roman Catholics, and 8,000 Presbyterians. If, therefore, the Church of England require 92 Chaplains, which, considering our home and foreign stations, would be about the necessary number; then the Presbyterians should have eight, and the Roman Catholics 25. In this statement I am not at all casting aside the privileged position of the two Protestant bodies—maintain it, I ask, to the letter, but at the same time be just to all. As a Clergyman, zealously attached to the Church of England, I wish that our Troops could do without a single Romish priest; but, as an honest man, I am bound to say, that if the Roman Catholics are received into our Army, and fight manfully with it, we must, in justice, give them their fair share of spiritual care. In vain shall we try to evade the duty; sooner or later that duty must be done; and "if well 'twere done, 'twere well if 'twere done quickly." When the fight becomes fierce and bloody, there is no cry, "Presbyterians and Roman Catholics to the rear," but the one universal shout is, "Forward! forward!" I say, therefore, to continue the present system; that of confining Chaplains and Assistant Chaplains to the Church of England, is an injustice to thousands of brave Soldiers, and a severe injury to that Church, of which I daily thank my God I am a member. Feeling, then, that the principle I am maintaining is a thoroughly sound one, viz., that every Government is bound to see to the moral and religious care of the army; that absolutely controls, I appeal to you, Right Honourable Sir, as one who desire every good for the Soldier: and I earnestly beseech you to give, to all creeds in our ranks, that spiritual care, which, as Christian Troops, borne whither they know not, and carrying their lives in their hands, they can most justly demand."

We most heartily echo every syllable of the foregoing, and trust that the Secretary of State for War will seize an opportunity of bringing the subject before the House of Commons in a separate motion. Whether or no, every Soldier, of whatever persuasion, must feel that the Rev. Mr. Wright has established a new claim to the gratitude of the Army. (*U. S. Gazette.*)

The *Nouveliste*, of Marseilles, of the 28th of May, states that at five in the morning of the preceding day, two non-commissioned officers of the 58th infantry, fought a duel on the high ground near where the Imperial Palace is being built. The weapon used was the sword. One of the combatants was killed on the spot, and the other slightly wounded in the abdomen. After the survivor's wound was dressed he was committed to the new military prison at Marseilles.

The French protectionists, and particularly the ironmasters, are straining every nerve to obtain a prolongation of their monopoly.

The *Morning Herald's* Paris correspondent says several hundred students have sent a round robin to *Figaro* and other newspapers, conveying a challenge to the subaltern officers of the army. The authorities have interfered.