

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

Camp Alum Bagh
Dec 18th, 1857.

My dearest Mother,

I commenced to-day my promised letterⁱ, purposing to detail therein to the best of my memory, the many and I may fairly say terrible adventures of my late life, but without a journal, or data of any description to refer to, save my own memory, it must be allowed the task is one of no small magnitude, and were it not that I knew for certain, that a detail of my own personal adventures will be far more valued by you, than any general account (one or two of which will shortly be published on the subject) I would fain bury the whole in oblivion, as indeed would almost everyone who has witnessed and undergone the horrors of the late siege, which appears to me like a terrible dream from which one has suddenly awoke, so much so that at times, I feel inclined to argue with myself whether the whole can really be true, or not, so suddenly did the storm (the approach of which, till it burst over our heads, not a soul had the most remote idea of) gather and overwhelm us. I remember my last letter as well as possible - it was written on the eve of my departure for a month's shooting at the commencement of April, from which period I shall begin my letter, and by writing little by little every day, hope in a short time to arrive at the events of the present day, though with bad ink and pens, and a very conflicted jumble of events in my head, the chances are against its being a very connected affair.

In accordance with my intention, the beginning of April saw me at Gondah, on the Nepaul frontier, where, in addition to some very tolerable shooting in company with a friend, we enjoyed a very pleasant month, little dreaming either of us, how far differently we should be employed the next. My leave expiring by the end of the month, I rejoined the Regiment, my friend (with whom I had been staying) promising to apply for leave, and give me the benefit of his society during May; which it is needless to say, never came about. On my return, I found my commanding officer on the point of starting, on medical certificate, to the hills, whither he took his departure that same evening, the 20th April, and the second in command being also away in cantonments on a few days leave, the charge of the Regiment was virtually made over to me, the second in command having been always more or less a sinecure, and having only very lately joined, knowing but little of the man. So perfectly in the dark was I as to what was brooding, that I assumed charge of the troops with the greatest pleasure, and certainty of all going well, which was increased, by the commanding officer having assured me that everything was in capital working order. He, poor fellow, as it turned out, was as ignorant of the true state of affairs at that time as I was, but no sooner had I taken his departure than I observed a perceptible difference in the bearing of the men, which I at once remarked to the second in command, and that some evil agency had been at work during my absence. I had not the slightest doubt of this in my own mind, as an insolent and insubordinate spirit had given place to a bearing the very reverse which had always before been the character of the regiment. The spirit made itself known, as usual, first in the recruits of the corps steadily refusing to have anything to do with the cartridges. That this was a mere pretext cannot be doubted, as the articles in question were of the old description, and up to the date of my departure on leave the men had freely used, and shown not the least antipathy to them. On the feeling first manifesting itself, I was assured by the native officers and non-commissioned that not the least antipathy to them existed in the ranks, and that the feeling extended no further than the recruits, who had imbibed the idea that there was something

objectionable in them, owing to the numerous false reports that they acknowledged were then going about. This appeared to me at the time reasonable enough more especially as I had not the slightest cause for doubting the veracity of their statement. Accordingly I was induced to assemble the native officers, and senior non-commissioned and make them instruments in dispelling the idea, which they did in my presence, and doubly assure that from their explanation all has cleared up, which was in my mind fully verified by the cartridges being used for the next three or four days without the slightest objection being made, and I flattered myself that by the exercise of a little tact I had managed to put matters all straight.

However, my fond hopes were doomed to be blasted, for one evening, when I was as usual superintending my parade, the Sergt. Major informed me that a squad of recruits steadily refused to even handle the cartridges, which had been issued to them for exercise that evening. This at once brought me to the spot, and finding that all expostulation was in vain, I made prisoners of the whole squad (some 30 men) and reported the same, strengthening the quarter guard on the occasion.

On parade being dismissed that evening the men refused to disperse, and it was not till I had assembled the native officers, and desired them in the strongest terms to get the men to break off, that I succeeded in getting my orders carried out. They still, however, remained in gangs in and about their barracks, and the Havildar Major, who behaved remarkably well throughout, told me that the recruits had been taunted by the older Sepoys with having lost caste by touching the obnoxious articles, which they asserted as usual were prepared with bullocks' and hogs' lard. The taunts he assured me, had been joined in by several of the native officers, which was the first intimation I had of the scoundrels I was dealing with.

The Regiment remained in a mutinous state the whole of that evening, and I reported it as such at once to the second in command, whom at the same time urged in the strongest manner to come down at once as he was the responsible man, and the only one that Government would make answerable. Accordingly he arrived at 12 o'clock at night, when he sent immediately for the native officers, and, finding all expostulation in vain, and it appearing from their morose and indifferent manner that they were privy to the whole affair, and moreover determined to render us no assistance, we resolved on reporting the state of the Regiment at once to higher authority – but as he was on the point of starting the next morning for the above purpose, the native officers came to us in a body, and implored us in the most earnest manner possible to delay reporting so grave a charge as a mutinous spirit in the Regiment for a few hours; assuring us that, should a parade be assembled, they would themselves step out in front of their respective companies, and bite the cartridges, when they were convinced that the non-commissioned and men would at once follow their example and the credit of the Corps would thereby be saved. It is hard to doubt the word of a body of men who have always previously proved true to you, and whose veracity you have not the smallest reason to suspect. It was therefore solely on these grounds that the second in command and myself resolved to give them one more trial, and thereby endeavour to our utmost to save the credit of the Regiment to which we belonged. This, as matters turned out unfortunately proved to be unsound policy but, had the plan succeeded, we should have gained immense credit for the tact and good management we had evinced, in bringing the men to a sense of their duty without Proceeding to extremities. In fact it may be compared to playing a heavy stake, as the whole game was thrown upon the evening parade proving successful or not. But to the point –

The bugle sounded, and the men at first steadily refused to turn out. They, however, after a short delay, fell in, and we proceeded to the ground where we found the native officers, drawn up in a body in front of the column. A bundle of cartridges being produced, they were handed to them, when to our astonishment they refused to receive them, averring as the reason that the men had sworn to take the life of anyone of them who set the example. This threat was also loudly called out from the ranks, and our attention attracted to it by the native officers. The Corps was therefore at once broken off, and a report made to the Brigadier, who proceeded to the spot immediately on hearing the same, and directed us to blow the parade call. This was obeyed with evident reluctance, and the Corps being drawn up the Brigadier addressed them, pointing out (as both of us had frequently done before) the enormity of their crime in disobeying orders. This proving of not the least avail, neither he, nor his staff being able to make the slightest impression on them, the next morning he determined, should they not come round in the interim, to report the state of the Regiment to Sir Henry Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner.

That night neither the second in command nor myself laid down, the men (whose lines were close to my house) continuing in a state of mutiny the whole night. The two Staff Sergeants of the Corps (whose families we had visited on their sending away) remained also with us in my bungalow as did also several of the men of the Regiment who formed exceptions to the rule by remaining staunch to us. The state of affairs was duly reported the next morning, the men remaining in open mutiny, in their lines, which was anything but pleasant for us, as they all had their arms and a large supply of reserve ammunition, in the magazine in their possession, independent of each pouch being full.

The events of this day (the 3rd of May) will ever remain indelibly engraved on my memory, for, as things have since out, doubtless our lives were most determinedly sought after. About 12 o'clock an immense excitement became apparent to me from the verandah of my house in the lines of the Regiment; the men rushed to the place where the arms were kept, and seizing their muskets, at the same time a rush was made to the magazine. The Quartermaster Sergeant of the Corps came running breathless into the compound, and implored us to arm ourselves and fly, as the men had seized their arms, and the Grenadier company, in whose lines we had perceived the greatest excitement, had sworn to kill both me and the Sergeant-Major, whom they asserted had been the cause of the new cartridges being introduced. Both our horses having been saddled the whole morning in expectation of something serious occurring, we armed ourselves and mounted them sharp, and proceeding towards the lines, found the Corps assembled in irregular gangs in front of their huts. Finding, on our showing ourselves, that they did not advance towards us, and knowing that they had seen us, induced us at once (greatly against the imploring of the few men who had remained staunch to us) to advance towards them. On the men finding me put a bold face on the matter, the native officers came to the front, and this was the only instance in which they did us any service by remaining round us, and declaring that, they would sacrifice their own lives rather than any harm should come to us. We accordingly advanced into the lines, I taking the left wing and my brother officer the right wing. After considerable difficulty we obtained a hearing, and addressing the men, brought them so far to a sense of their duty as to induce them to disperse from around the magazine, and a few of them to restore their arms to their proper place, though the majority (who had previously loaded them.) took them with them into their barracks. This point gained without a shot being fired at us (at which we were both most agreeably surprised) we once more indulged a hope that some portion of the Corps at least might be saved. It was only a stern sense of duty that induced us so far to expose ourselves to what at the time we conceived to be certain death, which in all probability it

would have been had we hesitated, or shown the least wavering, but riding suddenly amongst them took them so aback that even those who had most determined to murder us had not the decision to do it.

Immediately on our lives being threatened, the Sgt.-Major was despatched to the Brigadier, four miles off, and the same was communicated to Sir Henry Lawrence, who at once decided on ordering a large force down from the city, composed of H.M.'s 32nd and Native Infantry Regiments and two Cavalry ditto. This we knew nothing of til nearly nine o'clock that night at which time the Major of Brigade came galloping up to my house, and ordered me to parade the Regiment at once. I accordingly galloped to the lines, sounded the bugle, and got the Regiment (who had evidently got an inkling that force was to be resorted to should they show the least resistance) after a short delay to form up. No sooner was the same completed than the whole force from the city, consisting of about 3000 men, appeared on the ground. The Regiment was wheeled into line, the Artillery galloped to the front, and unlimbering within twenty yards' line, loaded with grape, and stood by their guns with lighted port fires. The Regiment were directed to ground their arms and divest themselves of their accoutrements, the magazine being taken possession of by a detachment of H.M 32nd Regiment. The order was obeyed by about two thirds of the men, but the remainder, on the guns being loaded and port fires lighted, broke their ranks, and made a bolt of it, assembling in strong parties with loaded muskets in the rear of the lines. A detachment of the 7th Light Cavalry being sent round to cut off their retreat, and they proving equally disaffected and mutinous as our own men, by hanging back and showing an evident disinclination to act against their brethren in arms, induced me, in company with another officer, to ride amongst them and put a bold face on the matter. We did not give the matter a thought, but rode at the first large party we came to, and were received by a man making a thrust at me with his bayonet, which I succeeded in knocking aside by a parry of my sword, the blow thereby taking effect on my unfortunate horse instead of myself, into whose shoulder it entered. Before, however I could make a cut at him, the man was stopped from further attempt to put me out of the way by a Havildar who seized his musket, and by his good example deterred others from joining their comrade in despatching me, and induced them (on the assurance that the guns would not open unless resistance was offered) to return to the parade Ground, and ground their arms, which, together with, those of the whole Regiment, colors, drums, magazine, and in fact everything, were then and there conveyed to the arsenal in carts brought by the troops for the purpose. Thus for the time ended our unfortunate Regiment, nothing being left of it but a mutinous rabble.

The feeling I experienced at this crisis can be better understood than described. All my labour, pains, and extreme interest with which I had devoted myself to the Regiment, hoping to render it most efficient and smart - all repaid by the grossest ingratitude and baseness. I assure you, so disgusted was I at the time that I cared not the least whether I was knocked over by them or not, which perhaps induced me more readily to offer them so many easy opportunities of so doing. The manner in which I was bullied and treated at the Court of Enquiry afterwards made me sinful enough even to wish at times that I had fallen a victim, though from the turn events shortly took, I congratulated myself not a little on having to witness the very men who had done their best to ruin me and the other officers of the Corps in precisely a similar predicament, and to receive an apology from them for the wrong view they had taken of the case.

The next day a Court of Enquiry was in orders to sit and investigate the cause of the mutiny, composed of the senior officers of regiments stationed in cantonments, and I was

called upon to give in the names of the ringleaders, in which list I included almost all the native officers, and numerous others of all ranks, who we were directed to have seized and made prisoners of. The Regiment being paraded for the purpose, we proceeded about the business, with a Guard of Europeans and Irregular Cavalry and succeeded in carrying it into effect without any resistance. The Court accordingly sat, and for twelve long days were both my brother officers and myself subjected to a course of most cruel bullying, the details of which would (were I able to write them) fill nearly a quire of paper. Suffice it to say that the great desire was to take the part of the men, and cast every slur on the officers of the Regiment, who were at that time condemned for having driven the men to mutiny by bullying and subjecting them to an inordinate course of discipline, on which point I (as Adjutant) was particularly alluded to. This, as you may believe, did not tend to alleviate the vexation I had undergone in the destruction of the Regiment, more especially as the accusation (as I afterwards proved to the complete satisfaction of Sir H. Lawrence and Government) was entirely groundless. Had I not done this, and had not matters so shortly after turned out which in themselves entirely vindicated me, I had resolved on applying for a Court Martial, as to remain in the Service with a slur of that stamp on one's character would be in every man's estimation worse than sweeping a crossing! The Court sat twelve days, and after it had covered several quires of foolscap with proceedings, as lengthy as they were useless, peremptory orders were received from Sir H. Lawrence to close the Court forthwith, owing to news that morning having been received of the rebellion at Delhi, and mutiny of the troops there stationed, no time being now left to waste on red tape and foolscap, but to prepare to meet the storm which, it was now evident must speedily burst over us.

In the meantime I had prepared a clear defence against all the accusations thrown on the interior economy of the Regiment, and had the next day the satisfaction of being assured by Sir Henry that he was perfectly satisfied that not the slightest blame was attributable either to myself or any of the other officers of the Regiment, and added that our conduct in endeavouring to our utmost to save the Regiment, and bring them to a sense of their duty at the risk of our own lives, should be duly reported to Government. This triumph I was indeed proud of, and it amply made amends for the annoyance I had suffered. My Commandant, on hearing of the state of affairs on his way to the hills, immediately retraced his steps and rejoined about this time.

But I had almost forgotten to tell you a most important discovery that was brought to light the last day of the sitting of the Court, which was sufficient in itself to clear me entirely of all accusation, which was, that correspondence was discovered between my Regiment and the 48th Regiment N.I. stationed in cantonments, which had been going on for some time, and at the bottom of which were the scoundrels of native offices of my own Regiment. Among numerous letters, one was produced dated May 3rd, the day the Regiment was disarmed, inviting the above 48th Regiment to join my Corps and rise at 12 o'clock that day, murder all the officers of both Regiments, and seize their respective magazines. Had this taken place, the other Corps would of course have joined, and a general massacre would inevitably have been the result. But it pleased Providence to will it otherwise, for in answer to the above invitation a letter was produced from the 48th Regiment to the effect that they and the other Regiments in cantonments had not yet fully matured their plans, until which they required my Regiment to wait, when, due notice being given, a general rise, both in cantonments and amongst the irregulars, would be the result. This letter was not received by my Regiment till the afternoon of Sunday, the 3rd May, though the invitation they despatched to cantonments was sent early in the morning. The delay was consequently interpreted into acquiescence on the part of the 48th Regiment, and they accordingly rushed for their arms, and rose

prematurely. This (as was afterwards proved) saved perhaps the whole of the Europeans in Lucknow, as from the fact of the Irregulars not having assisted my Corps at the time of the mutiny, a feud naturally sprang up between them, and providentially continued till the commencement of the siege. This fact was the cause as you will hereafter see) of the Irregulars remaining staunch during the mutiny in cantonments.

A day or two afterwards we were directed by Sir Henry to prepare rolls of all the men we considered the most implicated in raising the mutiny in which list we included (with one exception) all the native officers, about 60 non-commissioned officers and 100 men. These were all dismissed the service by him in person in the presence of the other Irregular corps assembled for the purpose. A long speech was made to them, and rewards both in money and promotion awarded to all who had stood by us, or shown an inclination to do so, during the mutiny. Their arms and accoutrements were then returned to them, and we once more found ourselves in command of a Regiment instead of a rabble!

An order now came for us to leave Moosah-Bagh and proceed to the city, where we were located in the Doulut-Bhana palace till the siege began, in company with the other regiments. At this time Sir Henry, seeing that the storm was rapidly gathering, marched the 32nd Queens and European Battery into cantonments, where they were encamped clear of the native troops. The officers commanding the native regiments swore that their men were not disaffected, and till the last moment were infatuated in this belief, in the same manner as has been exhibited throughout the entire service. Notwithstanding this, Sir Henry (as also very many others) saw and knew perfectly well that rottenness existed at the core. Several alarms now took place in Cantonments, and one night it was reported that the regiments were rising and had commenced firing cantonments. This caused an immediate flight of all the poor women and children into the Residency Bungalow, round which the European guns were placed. The alarm took place in the middle of the night, and the flight being a precipitate one, the ladies were seen in every stage of deshabelle. A similar occurrence happened several times, and induced Sir H. to order all the women and children to vacate cantonments and proceed to the Residency in the city, where preparations had been commenced already for the siege.

But to return to myself. A sudden order arrived one day for me to hold myself in readiness to march with the wing of (.....?) at 12 o'clock that night to a destination that would be made known to me on the point of starting. This I found was to a place called Mulliabadⁱⁱ about 40 miles from the city, where I proceeded in company with a man of the name of Weston, who was despatched thither by Sir Henry as a political, to ascertain the state of feeling in the district, and enquire into a row that had shortly before taken place in the same quarter. He had with him 550 Irregular Cavalry, which, together with my 5 companies, formed our little army. We remained out altogether ten days, during which death continually stared us closely in the face and the expedition ended in our being compelled to make a precipitate bolt of it for our lives. On arrival the next morning about 10 o'clock, after a most fatiguing march, we found the place in a most disturbed state, which was increased by our advent, which caused a general rising and threatened immediate attack. However, Weston who fortunately for me had been many years in (.....?) and independent of being a first rate linguist knew many of the chief men both in the place itself and all around, sent for most of them, and after a long Durbar and an immensity of expostulation, induced them to get the people to disperse, we at the same time assuring them that no more troops were coming out from Lucknow and that we had come out merely for the purpose of enquiring into the late riot.

All remained well for that day, but the next morning a large detachment of native troops made their appearance en route to another part of the district, and encamped a mile or so from us. This fact was of course unforeseen by us when the above assurance was made to them, and it caused an immediate rising. Armed men poured in from all directions, and things began to look uncommonly nasty. Early in the day all our Irregular Cavalry deserted to the enemy, leaving us with only my men, who had mutinied only a fortnight previously, and who I knew full well were not to be trusted should we be compelled to proceed to extremities. Armed bands continued to pour in all day, and all day did we every minute expect to be attacked! The native officers of Irregular Cavalry however, remained by us, and behaved uncommonly well. About 8 o' clock that evening the Repaldar, or Chief Native Officer of the Irregular Cavalry who had been down to the town returned at a gallop and implored us to prepare for defence, as an attack was about to be made on us. We accordingly took up our position in a mosque close by, I disposing my men in the best possible way about it. My men swore not to desert me, and remained at their posts for some hours, the enemy all round us, beating their drums and shouting, they being all more or less concealed by large topes of trees, so that not a man did we see. Our position was a ticklish one, as I did not the least depend on my men were we to come to blows with the enemy, and I was therefore determined not to be the first to draw blood. We remained in position till 12 at night, when, from what cause I cannot to this day discover, the enemy withdrew without an attack, and we therefore retired our men, and proceeded to our former position in the tope close by.

This delightful state of things continued for some days, when one morning, a tremendous hubbub was perceptible in the city and armed men arriving from all sides. While we were cogitating in our own minds the cause of this commotion, a Souar came galloping in from Lucknow with a letter from Sir Henry, announcing to us the mutiny in cantonments, and desiring our immediate retreat on Lucknow. The Repaldar also galloped in at the same time, entreating us not to lose a minute, as an immediate attack was determined on. Things now wore a most serious aspect, and many an anxious thought did I turn to my men, on whose fidelity for the time solely depended our lives. Not a moment, however, was to be lost. The tents were struck and off we marched, making a circuit of the town where they had prepared us a warm reception which we fortunately escaped by making a round of it.

After clearing the town we struck across country, carefully avoiding the road and were fired upon nearly the whole way from the villages on either side of the numerous topes that lay on our route. I lost several men killed and wounded, notwithstanding which they remained by us and swore they would see us safely into Lucknow, on reaching which, they added, should they find the Regiment had gone over they would of course do so also, but not till they had deposited us in safety.

Never shall I forget this day (May 31st). We did not reach Lucknow till 4 o'clock the next morning, having been in the saddle exposed to a fierce hot sun and wind all the previous day, effecting our retreat in skirmishing order the whole day. We both shook hands on our arrival, congratulating ourselves not a little on our escape, which was truly a wonderful one, neither of us ever expecting to reach Lucknow alive. We owed our lives (under God's keeping) to Weston's judgment and knowledge of native character, and the manner in which he pacified the chief men on our arrival and several times afterwards, and also to my own men, who, as you see, stood by us like trumps, and behaved in this instance nobly. The native officers of my Corps were highly rewarded by Sir Henry, and both Weston and I obtained his congratulations and approbation of our conduct. We found the Regiment still standing,

though the cantonments had mutinied the previous night, when the outbreak took place at about 9 o'clock, commencing with the 7th Cavalry, who, after having murdered their officers, galloped into the 71st N.I. lines, which corps (as did soon after all the others) joined them. Fires speedily broke out in all directions, and very soon the Cantonments for upwards of two miles were a continuous blaze. Our guns opened from all sides, but unfortunately did little execution except in one case, where the mutineers rushed to seize them but were driven back with considerable slaughter by rounds of grape fired into them at close distances. The Brigadier and several other officers exposed themselves in endeavouring to bring the men to a sense of their duty, and were many of them killed and wounded. How fortunate was it now that the woman and children had been moved into the Residency! Had they not, numbers of them would have been slaughtered. Almost all the mutineers escaped (numbering about 9,500 men), and joined their comrades in the district in which by this time nearly every Regiment had mutinied.

Sir Henry, who had been busy heretofore preparing our two positions, viz. the Mucchee Bhawan and Residency, for defence, now redoubled his exertions. The magazine was entirely removed to both the above places, where thousands of hands were employed daily laying in provisions, and rendering them as strong as possible. We still remained in our position in the Doulut Bhana Palace, where Sir Henry, who paid us daily visits, directed us to fortify ourselves and lay in provisions, thus endeavouring to show our men they were still trusted, and never anticipating a siege of the magnitude we afterwards experienced, but indulging perhaps in the vain hope that they might possibly continue faithful to us. This, in my own mind, I knew they would do as long as the city stood, but I felt certain that then they must go, and my anticipations were afterwards fulfilled.

Sir Henry's orders were peremptory, so no time was to be lost in strengthening our position (useless as I felt it to be), and the consequences to me were serious, as from exposure all day to a fierce sun I was attacked by a bad fever two days before the general rising.

Sir Henry at this time perceiving the disadvantage of holding two positions in the city, with the small force we numbered, resolved on withdrawing the greater part of our magazine and stores from the Mucchee Bhawan to the Residency. This operation was accordingly forthwith commenced, and actively proceeded with till the beginning of the siege. It will perhaps be as well here to endeavour to explain to you these two positions, in one of which Sir Henry had determined we should undergo the terrible struggle we experienced. The Mucchee Bhawan was a very old and dilapidated fort, commanded by buildings on all sides which afforded immense and most secure cover to the enemy. This was, by the expenditure of an immensity of money and labour, put into a tolerable state of defence, though no amount of either could render it worthy of being called a good fortification. The Residency was about a mile distant to which ran a capital road, and in this position was enclosed an area of about two square miles, in which were included all the buildings belonging thereto, together with numerous others round about, which we connected together with breast-works and walls so as to combine the position as much as possible, which although on higher ground was completely commanded on all sides by buildings and mosques etc., a fact which we afterwards painfully experienced, and the work of demolishing which was incomplete when the siege came so suddenly upon us. All our dawks and communication with the rest of the world was long before this period stopped, and except by *cossid*ⁱⁱⁱ ? we seldom received any news. Cawnpore, however, we knew had gone, and the poor garrison closely beleaguered. Heavy firing was continually heard in that direction, and an occasional *cossid* ? made his appearance, bearing imploring letters from Sir Hugh Wheeler for assistance. A council of war

was one day held, and it was determined to send three companies of H.M. 32nd to reinforce him! Fortunately however, for us Sir Henry most resolutely put his veto against so insane a project, for had they gone we must inevitably have perished, while they could not possibly have afforded the slightest help to the poor Cawnpore garrison, whom it was out of the range of possibility to assist. Conceive such a painful state to be in, knowing full well the awful extremity they were in, and utterly powerless to offer the slightest aid!

The storm was now rapidly thickening all around us. Fugitives arrived daily, flying in for safety from all quarters of the district with stories more horrid every day: the officers of whole detachments that had been sent out from Lucknow murdered, amongst whom were all the unfortunate men who passed us at Mulliabad. Numbers of the men of my Regiment at this time requested their discharge, which was only too readily granted, and desertions became every day more numerous. I could not trust them the least after hearing the astounding news we daily did, and yet it was our duty to pretend to our utmost that we did.

Things continued in this state till the memorable 30th June, which day formed the first in the long calendar of misery we were afterwards to suffer. The enemy had been for some days reported to be in great strength in the vicinity of the city, and on this date Sir Henry had determined to reconnoitre their position. A force was therefore told off, consisting of about 300 of H.M. 32nd, all the Regular Sepoys that remained faithful to us, six field-pieces, an 8-inch howitzer, and a few cavalry. The above force started at 6 o'clock a.m., the heat at the time being terrific, the Europeans without their breakfasts or any refreshment, with a seven-mile march along a heavy sandy road before them.

At the above distance from the city they came in view of the enemy's position, which extended for an immense distance on either side of the road from village to village, and were speedily saluted by a heavy cannonade, which told with most deadly effect on our poor fellows, the first shots mowing down whole sections of H.M. 32nd, which formed the head of the column. The enemy deployed, and completely outflanked our miserable force. The Artillery galloped to the front, and after firing one or two rounds on the enemy, which by the way was only done by two guns, the drivers mutinied, cut the traces, leaving the guns and deserting to the enemy. The mahouts belonging to the elephants drawing the 8-inch howitzer followed their example, and that gun amongst others was also left standing in the road. The enemy's artillery, which far outnumbered ours, now blazed with deadly effect, and their infantry surrounded our devoted band, both in front and flank, pouring in a most hellish fire, which laid our poor fellows low by dozens. The men, who were totally exhausted by fatigue before the fight commenced, and whose leader, Major Case, was killed, now fell into perfect disorder and a retreat commenced, which speedily degenerated into a headlong flight. Our own guns were rapidly, in addition to the enemy's, turned against us, and now was witnessed one of the most lamentable flights ever made by a British force. Every man, as he was wounded or fell to the rear from sheer fatigue, was cut to pieces by the enemy, who followed close on their heels. The Brigadier was despatched at a headlong gallop to the Residency for reinforcements to cover the retreat, and speedily three companies of the 32nd were despatched to the Iron Bridge, the entrance into the city which they held, till the remnant of our devoted band had passed over, when they retreated into the position, the enemy pouring over the bridge and rushing headlong into the city, which rose forthwith. And so commenced the siege, and so ended the defeat of Chinhût, where some 125 Europeans and 6 officers, together with many natives, were left dead on the ground.

At this time I was on my back with fever, in a state bordering on delirium. Immediately on the retreat being known, an unusual commotion was perceived in the Regiment, which was shortly made known by numbers of the men, instead of obeying the parade bugle, coming to us and making known for the first time to us the morning's disaster, in consequence of which to stand any longer was impossible, as the city all around us had commenced rising, and recommending us to fly into our defences at once! This we were not slow to obey, and my poor commanding officer, pulling me out of bed, supported me; together with the Sgt.-Major, till we reached the Mucchee Bhawan, to attain which we had to make a circuitous route for upwards of a mile to avoid the enemy, who were pouring into the city in all directions, slaughtering every European they chanced to come across, and so narrow was our escape that the enemy had possession of the very road by which we effected our retreat almost before we reached the gates of the fort. The gates were immediately closed and in a few minutes we were closely besieged, the enemy pouring in a heavy fire from all the commanding buildings in the vicinity; which was returned briskly from our parapets and loopholes.

This state of affairs (of which I did not at the time know much further than being deafened with the incessant rattle of musketry and booming of cannon all around being laid low with fever which kept me to my bed) continued during the short stay we fortunately made in the fort. At 12 o'clock next day a signal was made to us from the Residency (to communicate with which we had erected a Semaphore) to the effect that we were that night at 12 o'clock to blow up the magazine, spike all the heavy ordnance, and destroying to the best of our power all our shot, shell and ammunition, evacuate the place and retreat into the Residency. All hands that could be spared or made available were at once employed in throwing the gun-shot down wells (several of which we had in the position), and stowing all our small-arm ammunition on top of the magazine, etc. Providentially the fever left me immediately after entering the fort, and I had now only to battle with that extreme prostration, which it leaves, which, however, I so far succeeded in overcoming as to be able to crawl about a little. At the appointed hour all having been got ready we formed in order of march, fully expecting to have to fight every inch of the road, and having seated myself on a gun limber being too weak to ride, the gates were opened, and out we sallied in the greatest silence, which had also accompanied all our preparations. And the road being gained, we advanced at a brisk pace towards the Residency, the guns there covering our retreat and firing over our heads as we advanced. Providentially not a shot was fired at us, and we gained the position without the loss of a man, which proved that the enemy had not the least idea of our intention, as had they only resisted us numbers must inevitably have fallen before the desired goal was attained.

The enemy during the first few days of the siege confined the severity of their fire to the day, the night being principally employed by them in sacking the city, and as good fortune would have it, they were busy in this operation when our retreat was effected, which accounts for our not having been molested. We had only just gained the position when the magazine exploded, shaking the whole city and filling the sky with dust and smoke, as you may conceive when I tell you that some 300 barrels of powder together with stores of ammunition exploded. On this movement being successfully carried out depended the safety of the whole garrison, as had we been annihilated (which, if the enemy been aware of our intentions, they would have had little difficulty in doing) the garrison would have been so reduced as to have rendered their holding out as long as we did an impossibility. But, by God's blessing, all was managed capitally and the whole completed with perfect success. The gates of our position were now closed (after our rear had entered), and doomed not to be opened again till our

deliverers were at hand, and a period of misery and suffering, which it had been ordained by Providence that we should undergo, had been completed.

At daybreak the next morning the enemy besieged us most desperately and closely bringing their artillery to bear on all the houses in our position, into which round shot and shell crashed with deadly effect, and a perfect rain of bullets showered on every part of the position. I tried in vain to overcome the prostration I was suffering from, which though considerably better would not yet enable me to proceed to duty. For the first few days, therefore I was laid up in a room next to Sir Henry Lawrence where I was lying when the shell which caused his lamented death crashed through the partition wall and mortally wounded poor Sir Henry, as he lay on his bed. The noise it made of course was tremendous, and the dust so great that nothing was to be seen in the room till the smoke cleared away, when Sir Henry was found on the floor, with his right leg almost severed from his body at the hip joint, which was completely smashed. In company with several others, I rushed into the room, and assisted in carrying him out. Never shall I forget the scene as long as ever I live! Poor man! He exclaimed at once, though in the most intense agony that he was mortally wounded, and desiring that all the head men might be sent for, appointed poor Major Banks (destined shortly after to meet a similar fate) to succeed him, and addressing a few words to all around him, was carried away to the hospital. Here was indeed a blow! Our head man gone the first day. The most profound melancholy seized the whole garrison on hearing of it, and he died the second day after receiving the wound, suffering the most fearful agony the whole time.

Finding myself rapidly getting back my strength, in two days I proceeded to duty, and had assigned me a post in the rear of the position, at which I remained throughout the entire siege. The enemy daily increased in numbers around us, and daily opened guns from fresh positions, pouring in a perfect hailstorm of bullets on all parts of the garrison. Never shall I forget this part of the siege, and had they only continued to press us in the extreme manner they did for the first thirty days, very few more would have seen them in possession of the place. The labour was intense, and many sunk under the sheer fatigue engendered by getting neither rest in the day or sleep at night, but it was fighting for dear life, which fact alone enabled us to stand so much. For twelve days at a time I never had my clothes off my back, in which time they were wet through and through dozens of times, both by rain and perspiration, for to add to our miseries the rains set in with fury immediately on our being made prisoners, and not an atom of rest could be taken except snatches of sleep, from which we were invariably roused up, ere we had succeeded in getting a few winks, by alarms. Our casualty list increased daily, and cholera made its woeful appearance to swell the list. Numerous desertions took place every day from among the native portion of the garrison, and every circumstance seemed to be against us, though every man felt it his bounden duty to keep his thoughts to himself and make the best of matters, notwithstanding the black prospect one could not fail to see before one. Fortunately at this crisis we had abundance of provisions and spirits, without which it would have been physically impossible to have stood what we did. I used on an average to drink some half dozen wine glasses of raw spirits in the course of the day, and never felt the least the worse for it, as when one was not wet through with rain, one was soaked through with perspiration. The enemy's fire was so deadly and hot that to execute any repairs was an impossibility in the daytime. Consequently we were compelled to repair our shattered defences at night, in which operation, notwithstanding the dark, lots of our poor fellows used to get knocked over, as the enemy fire was always directed to any position where the sound (ever so slight) of working was going on, which compelled us invariably to execute such with the most perfect silence possible. Owing to the suddenness with which the siege came upon us, almost all our wretched defences were incomplete, and

many we were compelled to leave so throughout, though with the greatest possible difficulty we managed to complete (after a fashion) some that had been left most advanced, and connected others more imperfect together by breastworks thrown up with the greatest difficulty, and in the most imperfect manner. At first we used to fire over these, but the enemy were so close on us that numbers of our poor fellows were knocked ever, which eventually compelled us to surmount the works with sandbags and boxes filled with earth, all of which had of course to be done in the most intense silence at dead of night. Another labour that was at this time added to our already overtaxed exertions was burying dead cattle, numbers of which were killed daily in the garrison, and cholera having already broken out, it of course behoved us doubly to allay (to the utmost of our power) its ravages on our weak garrison. Consequently, in addition to other duties, one suddenly found oneself called upon to aid in burying carrion in a most advanced stage of decomposition, and many a time, after a hard day's work, during which one's energies were exerted in full force towards driving back our determined and fanatical enemy, has one found oneself summoned (perhaps just as one had fallen down from sheer fatigue) to assist in the above loathsome occupation.

Such, my dearest mother is a description, and but a very faint one, of what we had to undergo at this time. A more graphic one it is out of my power to give - indeed words, however well expressed, must fail in conveying an adequate idea of our excessive labours and miseries at this time. The hospital very shortly became so crammed with victims both to the enemy's fire and cholera, that the unfortunate wounded had to be stowed away in any underground or tolerably secure corner that might be found. One grave was dug at night for all, and at this period of our sufferings from 30 to 35 corpses used to be thrown into it, officers, soldiers, ladies, children, and all Europeans promiscuously. This had always all be carried out in the dark, owing to the churchyard being commanded on all sides by the enemy, so that to pass through it in the daytime was almost certain death. Forty children fell victims the first fortnight, and many poor ladies, who were all stowed away in underground cellars, notwithstanding which two were shot dead the first week and several wounded. Things continued in this manner getting worse and worse daily till the memorable 20th July, on which date the enemy made their most determined effort to storm the place, but by the blessing of Providence were unsuccessful. Several parties were suspicious of their mining towards us, as large bodies of them had occasionally been seen digging. The engineer officers, however, with their usual incredulity persisted that such could not be the case, as they were unable to drive galleries any length. However, they were speedily undeceived on this head, as will presently be narrated.

About eight o'clock on the above day large masses of our foe were seen pouring into position around us, and complete regiments marching across the bridges into the city. This, of course, (dead beat as we all were from our incessant labour of the previous twenty days) sufficed to brace us up for the struggle, which we then felt certain was to take place. Accordingly extra grog was served out to the whole garrison, and I believe not a man of us differed from the general opinion of dying sooner than allowing the enemy to gain an inch of our ground. At half past nine the enemy sprung a very large mine, heavily loaded, which shook the entire position, throwing down several of the houses within our lines, and prostrating many who were near to it on their faces. The attack now commenced in furious style, the foe coming on in the smoke in strong columns, which were suddenly stopped short in their determined advance by rounds of grape and canister being rained in on them from two eighteen and two nine-pounders situated in the Medan Battery, which were discharged and reloaded till the guns were so hot that to serve them any longer became an impossibility. Repulsed in that quarter, the attack then became general all round our defences. My post was

assaulted almost immediately after the explosion, but we were all ready for them, and from our loopholes poured in a continuous rattle of musketry so close that almost every shot told, notwithstanding which, as fast as one party was driven back another came on and was saluted in the same manner. The other officer and myself, who were commanding, each manned our loopholes, and we were obliged to change our muskets for fresh ones every ten minutes, as the barrels became so hot from rapid firing that it was impossible to hold them. Four poor fellows were, however, laid low by shots before twelve o'clock, received through the loopholes, and my cap was perforated by a bullet. At the above hour, after having repulsed numerous attempts and feeling ready to drop down from downright exhaustion, on they came again, and so far succeeded as to place scaling ladders against the wall of the house on the top of which we were stationed, but fortunately for us they proved to be too short, and the first scoundrel that did succeed in gaining our loopholes was bayoneted and shot through the same, which damped the spirit of the others, of whom there were at this time hordes so close under our walls that the muskets from the loopholes could not be depressed sufficiently to touch them. Accordingly it became necessary for us to mount the parapets and fire down on them, which we did with killing effect, they returning the compliment from beneath us also all round. Numbers of them shortly strewed the ground, and finding they had no chance they drew off, leaving their ladders and all their wounded, who were speedily decapitated by us. Several other attempts were made after this, but about two o'clock they began visibly to withdraw, and at three the attack ceased, though almost the usual amount of firing into our position continued.

Never shall I forget, or indeed will any man who experienced that day, how deeply grateful we felt to the Almighty on their at last withdrawing, as, had they only persisted for another hour or so, I don't think we could have prevented their getting in, which, had they only succeeded in doing at any part, the whole must inevitably have fallen. Every one of us was so completely done that I for one fell down from the intense hard day's work. Six poor fellows were killed and four wounded on my post, though the loss we inflicted on the enemy was at least ten times that number, which was proved sufficiently by the amount of bodies which thickly strewed the ground outside, where they were left to rot, causing us thereby an intolerable nuisance, for to remove them or rather, to have attempted to remove them, would have been certain death. Many a hearty shake of the hand was given that evening, and congratulations exchanged on the gallant manner in which the enemy had been driven back on all sides. Their loss that day was tremendous, as the whole of our position was, outside, covered with dead bodies, and we were afterwards told by spies that they acknowledged to 1400. Our loss was one officer killed and thirty-eight men, though our wounded were, unfortunately very numerous, many of whom afterwards died.

A description of one of these attacks must suffice for all, of which I believe there were five, though the one narrated was the most determined one. They all commenced with the explosion of one or two mines, which served as a general signal. Our eyes were now opened to their capabilities of mining, and I became particularly vigilant on that head, as my post was closer to the enemy than any part of the garrison, and he had excellent cover up to almost the very walls. I therefore kept the greatest attention towards this point, and my exertions were amply repaid by discovering sounds of the enemy at work underground towards the Brigade Mess, a large building in the lower story of which were numbers of women and children. I was certain on this point, and reported the same at once, when the engineer commenced a countermine, the shaft of which, by working all night we managed to complete to 18 feet deep, when a gallery was commenced, and run to 20 feet by the next afternoon. The enemy all this time were busy at their mine, and we were entirely guided by the sound of their pick,

which directed us so truly that in a few hours we ceased work, and they broke into our mine, intensely of course to their astonishment, which, unfortunately was not great enough to deter them from bolting, which they did in the most precipitate style, leaving their light burning and mining tools behind them. Possession was immediately seized of their mine, which was found to run for 30 yards in a straight direction for the above building, under which they would have arrived within another twenty-four hours. Powder was at once laid in their mine, and the whole blown up. In this instance (though I say it who perhaps ought not) I was the means of saving numerous lives, and probably the whole position, as the panic caused by such an explosion and loss of life would have been tremendous.

The day after (viz. 21st July) my good and kind friend Major Banks was shot dead through the head, leaving his poor widow and child. In him I lost a true friend, and the garrison a head which would have been of inestimable value to all. Our list of killed and wounded increased every day, and although numerous spies had been sent out, none ever returned, till one day an exception happily took place as a man came in at night with a note composed of three lines written in the Greek character, and concealed in a small quill, which was as follows: "A force has this day crossed the Ganges sufficient to crush all opposition, and by the blessing of God we hope to be with you in a few days." This news filled us with joy, and every man bent himself to his labour with a double will, animated by the hope of speedy relief. A messenger was despatched into the city, to await their arrival, and to direct them to send up the rockets as announcing to us their approach. In many nights did we strain our wearied eyes for the proposed signals, and for many evenings were we doomed to be disappointed, till at last it appeared too true that we were given up, or perhaps abandoned, the force not being able to fight its way to us. Despair fell upon the hearts of all as this terrible conviction rose before us, which was farther increased by the enemy at this time sending in spies with stories that the whole of Havelock's army had been annihilated in endeavouring to force their way to us -with the intention, of course, of intimidating the native portion of our feeble garrison, and inducing them to desert us. Every man now felt it incumbent on him to bear a cheerful face, while the almost certainty of a second Cawnpore tragedy appeared forcibly to rise before us. Not that we should ever have subjected ourselves to that fearful end, as in our position was a large powder magazine with 800 barrels of powder, and on the top of this we had all determined to stand, should we find our fate inevitable!

Still we kept on fighting day and night incessantly, no news of any description reaching us, except the enemy's reports of our relief being destroyed and no hope left! We remained in this wretched state of despair till the 22nd of September, on which date the joyful news reached us by a spy (the same who brought us the previous note) to the effect that succour was at hand, Outram and Havelock in full march to our assistance! Oh, what intense delight was visible in every man's face the morning after this announcement was made! Excessive joy took place of the most profound despondency, which was increased by distant guns being distinctly heard the same afternoon. A cheer rang through the garrison, which came from the inmost heart of everyone, though many were still afraid to be too sanguine. The next day, however, no doubt existed on the matter, and the day after that we saw from the look-out tower our deliverers at hand, fighting their way nobly through the city, the enemy raining down on them a storm of bullets from each side of the streets, leaving their track too plainly seen by the dead bodies of our gallant fellows, with which their path was strewn! Every man who could possibly manage it crowded to the look-out tower, and strained his anxious eyes in the direction of the firing. The most painful thing to us was being totally unable to assist them, as we could not possibly have sallied out, and to have fired in that direction would of course have endangered our poor fellows as much as the enemy.

About nine o'clock that night, however, a cheer such as no description can give any idea of, a cheer never to be forgotten by those who heard it, ran through and through the garrison, filling the air and bursting from the hearts of all! Our brave deliverers were at hand, and had commenced entering our entrenchments! A general rush was made to welcome them, notwithstanding peremptory orders had been issued binding us to our respective posts. But it was in vain to expect any one to obey. Every one's heart was too overflowing to think of anything but embracing our noble fellows, and all the sick and wounded who could possibly crawl out of hospital, as also many poor ladies, joined in the general rush. The rush was made for the main entrance, viz. the Baillie Guard Gateway, which had been earthed up inside, and against which some gun tumbrils filled with earth had been driven to barricade it against the enemy. These we set hard to work to remove, with a view of letting our deliverers in, the bullets flying thick round and in the gateway itself, from which many of our poor fellows were killed, and I received one through the back of my coat. This unfortunately came from our men outside, who at first in the confusion and dark mistook our position for the enemy and being too hasty to wait the opening of the Gate, leaped the ditch and scaling the earthwork poured in through the embrasure of a gun. Poor fellows! it's wonderful how any of them ever managed to reach us, as their entrance into our entrenchments was nothing less than a headlong flight from the enemy, who were pressing close on their rear, cutting up all their wounded, and pouring a deadly shower on them the whole way up to our very walls! They had been fighting hard from 8 o'clock in the morning, and had left 600 of their number killed on their track through the city.

The incessant fire on our beleaguered garrison, however, still continued, and for the next few days increased instead of diminishing, and the enemy invested both Outram's and Havelock's force same manner and with the same desperation as they did our original garrison. This job will be much better described in Papers and Despatches, so I will not waste time over it, but proceed to give you an account of the wonderful escape that befell me on the 18th of August, which is a day that will always occupy a prominent place in my calendar.

My post (as I previously mentioned) was in the rear face of our defence, and was a large one-storied building in the corner of a yard (the Sikh Square) with a terraced roof, round which was erected a six-foot parapet (loopholed) through which we used to fire on the enemy in the surrounding houses, from which it was only separated by a very narrow lane. I had long been suspicious of mines, and had already discovered two large ones (one of which I previously mentioned). The enemy had also evidently serious designs on my post, as we caused them an immensity of annoyance from our loopholes, shooting down anyone that appeared, which we were enabled to do with certainty owing to their proximity. I now got a supply of hand grenades which I used now and then to amuse myself by administering to them, and one dark night they managed to get under our walls, and began digging out the bricks in the bottom of them, with a view evidently of blowing us up with bags of powder. I heard my gentlemen at work, and dropped a hand grenade or two on top of them, which bursting just when they ought, blew upwards of eight of them literally to pieces. This was a sickener to them, and made them speedily desist, though they still continued to keep up a daily continued pepper on our loopholes which were so breached every day that they had to be repaired every night. However, they found that two could play at that game, and as we had heaps of ammunition we used completely to breach and knock to pieces all their loopholes. The hand grenades were administered whenever they showed themselves in force, and of them they had doubtless (from previous experience) a most wholesome dread, for I managed to kill a great many by them.

I had constantly urged the Brigadier to have some horses that were picketed in my yard removed, but the same was never done, and the end of it was, our blow up, as, from the noise they made stamping the ground with their feet, I got dreadfully confused in listening for the enemy's mines, which it was very difficult to detect, owing to their mining in the most cautious manner, making little or no noise. Notwithstanding, therefore, our greatest attention, they managed to carry a mine completely under the building, which was totally destroyed, as also many poor fellows. Almost all day and night I remained on the top of the building superintending operations, and on the eventful morning, after having slept in the same place, I was as usual at my post on the top, when I remarked an unusual silence on the part of the enemy. I had just fired at a man through a loophole from which I hardly had drawn my rifle, when the sentry who was standing at my elbow exclaimed: "A mine! A mine!" I peeped through the loophole, and saw a jet of white smoke issuing from an enclosure on the opposite side of the road, which proved to be the smoke issuing from the shaft of the enemy's mine caused by the fuse igniting. I had not time to give the alarm before the house shook beneath me, and before I was able to leap from the parapet the whole broke up under my feet and ascended into the air! Further than this I, of course, have no recollection of what took place, till I found myself on the ground, buried up to the waist in rubbish and considerably stunned and bruised, with a hellish musketry fire all round me. Knowing not a moment was to be lost, and feeling certain that my only chance of escape consisted in at once extricating myself if possible, I struggled violently to accomplish this, being considerably stimulated by the very strong chance of being bayoneted by the enemy. While in this helpless and pitiable plight, on freeing myself, and finding I was (by the blessing of God) blown inside instead of outside our defences, I speedily made a run for it, thereby presenting myself a perfect cockshy to the bullets of the enemy, which rattled round me as thick as hail, but fortunately without doing me any damage. On my way I came across my brother officer, whom I found on his face with his hands and head considerably cut, and covered with blood, from which I at first took him to be killed, but thinking it was as well to satisfy myself on that point before deserting him I turned him over, and on his uttering a confused grunt, I pulled him up by the neck of his coat and brought him under shelter. On attaining this point, we found the space occupied only a few minutes previously by the building which formed my post entirely vacant, and in view of the edifice (of which, by the by, not a square foot of masonry was left standing) a breach upwards of thirty yards broad presented itself, exhibiting to our full view the buildings on the opposite side of the lane, which swarmed with the enemy, who rained a storm of bullets both through and around the breach. The explosion, which shook the whole of our defences to the very foundation, speedily brought reinforcements to our relief, though not before the enemy possessed themselves of part of the square, which they quickly perforated with loopholes, and poured a most deadly fire therein. But a 24-pound Howitzer being fortunately brought to bear on them, they were in an hour or so driven out, though it was not till evening that we succeeded with the greatest difficulty in gaining the ground we had lost.

As if I had not had escapes enough that day, I was all but blown up again that evening, for having volunteered with a party of Europeans, ten in number to sally out and hold a house which was situated a short distance outside our walls, and which had always been a source of annoyance to us, I proceeded there, and planting my men in the most advantageous positions to answer the fire of the enemy, I waited for the signal of the Engineer officer (Fulton, who was afterwards killed), who was laying the powder, to withdraw my party. This however, was omitted to be done, and the train was exploded, blowing the house to pieces, and sending the walls about our ears in all directions. One man of my party was severely injured so much so as to die afterwards, and we should all have inevitably been destroyed had not the train

failed properly to ignite. This blowing down of houses was done with a view of destroying the enemy's cover about us, and as such did material service, as we gained complete possession of the ground we had that morning lost, and judging from the numbers of bodies we found, committed tolerable havoc on our foes. When my sketches make their appearance you will be better able to understand the day's disaster, as in them is a sketch of the breach as it appeared after the explosion, and also the battery we erected to protect the same. This battery, in which were two nine-pounders and an eight-inch mortar, was placed under my charge, and I held command of it till the evacuation of the garrison. In a short time I became quite a gunner, and managed to work the mortar with considerable effect. From long experience I knew perfectly the range of all the houses about, also the enemy's batteries, and a wholesome administration of eight-inch shells used to form one of my greatest delights, more especially as one had a full view of the effect of the same, and the range I usually fired at was so short, that it entailed keeping close under cover to avoid the pieces of one of our bursting shells.

On the arrival of Havelock's force, two large mines were discovered by them, running under the two most important posts in our defences, the Medan battery and the Treasury. The former mine was complete, chambers cut for the powder, which it only wanted to render it ready for springing. Of these we had not the least idea, and had Havelock's force not come when it did, in a few days the above two posts would have been blown in, entailing thereby the loss of many lives and some of our heaviest guns. There is no doubt that Havelock just arrived in time, and it is my firm belief, as also that of almost all the garrison, that we could not have held the position beyond the end of September. It was not on the score of provisions that we had anything to fear. Of these we had enough, as was afterwards proved, but it was on account of the native position of the garrison who for a long time had been in a very rickety state, and naturally very anxious and suspicious at seeing such an immense time elapse before succour was at hand. We had difficulty in pacifying them at the end of August, and a general desertion was fully anticipated about that time which was providentially averted by a spy coming in with a report that a force was being collected at Cawnpore for our relief. This induced them to determine to remain with us till the end of September, but it was openly stated amongst them that did not succour arrive by that time, they must go. This must inevitably have caused our destruction, as even with them we had not men enough to man the defences, which were of such a wretched description that had the enemy once succeeded in gaining a portion of them, the whole must to a certainty have fallen.

A deal of very hard fighting took place for the first fortnight after the arrival of Havelock's brigade, owing to General Outram endeavouring to open the communication with the Alum-bagh outside the city, where a portion of the force and all the baggage had been left. Every day was a continuation of storming houses, in which many brave fellows were uselessly laid low, as after a short time it was found that the enemy were so numerous and obstinate that to effect the object with the men we had (which, by the way, was upwards of 4000) was impossible. Consequently all the ground we had fought for and held so nobly had to be given up, and it ended by Outram and Havelock's force only keeping sufficient space outside our original defences for their own accommodation. This they fortified, and in this they found themselves as closely besieged as we had been hitherto, till the arrival of the C. in Chief. One good thing, however, was that we succeeded in destroying most of the enemy's formidable batteries and positions, though some dreadful failures were made at first. In one of them I happened to be a participator, and narrowly escaped with my life. You will see my name mentioned in General Outram's despatches which no doubt will make the best of the

failure, though a most lamentable one it must be acknowledged to be by all who know the true state of the case.

We were ordered one day to sally out and destroy a certain number of guns around us, for which purpose about 200 Europeans and 80 natives were told off. We accordingly went, and in a few minutes were hammer and tongs with the enemy, who poured a killing fire of musketry upon us from the houses on either side of the streets we had to traverse before reaching the guns. In this said fire the party carrying the spikes and bursting powder were all killed or wounded. We therefore, on storming the first battery, which was done in gallant style, found neither of the aforesaid most necessary materials at hand. We had therefore to hold possession of the guns under a most deadly fire for upwards of a quarter of an hour, during which lots of poor fellows were laid low, as the enemy had time to collect in numbers around us, and pepper us most unmercifully from all the buildings about. It now for the first time became known to us what had been the fate of the unfortunate party, and the guns being spiked by bayonets broken short off at the vents, we proceeded to the next battery, but unfortunately here the man who had volunteered to show us the way knew nothing about it, and instead of taking me to the point in question, pioneered us into the strongest portion of the enemy's position. This we speedily discovered to our cost, as an advance further was impossible. The retreat was therefore sounded, and a headlong one indeed it speedily became; the enemy in full cry after us and so close on our heels that as fast as a man was wounded and fell, his head was cut off. This was the sad style in which we entered our defences, leaving a sad list of killed behind us.

I had this day another narrow escape, for in advancing a man rushed out of a house just behind me, and taking a deliberate pot shot at my august person, succeeded fortunately in committing no further injury than cutting the neck of my coat. Finding his shot fail, and seeing I turned about with a view of despatching him with my rifle, he made a straight rush at me with his tulwaur^{iv} in hand, evidently with the hope of making speedy mince-meat of me, but my rifle was at my shoulder just before he had succeeded in seizing the muzzle with his hand, and a steady pull of the right barrel trigger sent its contents crashing through his brain, which brought my friend to a sudden stop, and he rolled over as dead as mutton. Had the rifle missed fire, nothing could have saved me, as I was separated from the party, which probably induced my friend to select me for his vengeance, though I am happy to say, thanks to a kind Providence, and my trusty rifle, I was enabled to turn the tables.

On its now being discovered that to open the communication was impossible, it became doubly necessary to economise our provision. Accordingly we were placed on half rations, which was subsequently reduced to quarter, and ultimately one fifth, which was, I can assure you, barely enough to keep life and soul together, and had it not been for the cold weather numbers of us would have sunk under it. But here again the hand of a kind Providence was perceptible, as during our greatest miseries, when we were worked to the highest pitch of endurance, we had fortunately abundance of food and liquor, which it would have been impossible for us to have done without. Our rations latterly were of the worst description, the coarsest flour and the most sinewy indigestible beef, into which all our battery bullocks were converted. However, a good appetite with me generally served as excellent sauce, and I managed to devour all I could get, and as much more as possible, which, by the way, was precious little. Owing to this coarse food, nearly all of us became afflicted with a species of dysentery, which killed many and reduced one's small amount of strength materially. I got it about three weeks before the evacuation, and was terribly reduced. However, I managed to shake it off immediately on getting outside.

If these were miseries to us, what were they to the poor women and children, neither of whom were a degree better off. But they behaved most nobly throughout, no grumbling, no complaining of any kind, though too many of them were left widows and childless. There were several births during the siege, but I believe only one child survived. Poor Mrs. Banks bore her loss most heroically, and I am delighted to say managed to save her only child, a little girl, which was of course an immense comfort to her. Poor woman! she was so kind to me latterly when I was laid up with dysentery, and it is entirely to her attention that I owe my speedy recovery, and, indeed my life. The Despatches and other accounts that will be published will give you a full and detailed account of every day's sufferings, which has been officially journalized for government, so you must wait for them to get a more full idea of all we went through, which I have but feebly expressed here. I forgot to mention, however, that about the time that I was blown up and all those poor fellows were destroyed on my post, another labour was added to our already overtaxed exertions in digging countermines and this proved to be the hardest work of the whole, as we used all to take our turn with pick and shovel in common with the men, who, without our example, would in all probability have given in. In a short time we were rewarded by discovering lots of the enemy's mines which they were driving under our defences on all sides, and the only way in which we could guard against them was by making listening galleries at close distance all round our line of defence, by means of which we were enabled, by listening attentively, to detect them at work, and in several instances we sprung these countermines, blowing lots of them up in their own mines. This extraordinary mode of warfare became a perfect underground battle one burrowing against the other, and extremely unpleasant work it was, I can assure you, lying listening for an hour together at the end of one of our mines, probably some forty feet underground and in pitchy darkness, the enemy so close to you that you constantly pictured to yourself their suddenly springing their mine and burying you alive! You see all this capitally described in my work, so I will not say any more about it here.

My escapes, you will see, were considerably narrow and numerous, though I have not enumerated half of them, and I did not experience any more wonderful than most other members of the garrison. Every moment we were exposed to the enemy's fire, and death around and in the midst of us in every shape, which continued in unabated fury for 88 long days till the arrival of Havelock and Outram. We felt ourselves then tolerably safe from total destruction, though we stood almost as great a chance as before of being knocked over. Our hardships by no means ceased though they were mitigated, and many a gallant fellow of our original garrison was laid low between that time and the Chief's advent after their names had appeared in the list of survivors.

I shall now bring my story up to the Commander-in-Chief's arrival with 6000 men, who were only enough to open the communication with us, and terrible hard fighting they had to undergo before they could reach us, which happy event took place on the 24th November (my birthday). A peremptory order came therewith to totally evacuate the position, though this was kept as secret as possible, but from steps that were taken it became evident to all that we were to abandon the ground on which we had fought so long and so nobly against the hordes of the enemy: All the ladies, wounded, sick and children were first sent off, and on the night of the 27th (I think it was) at 12 o'clock, in the greatest silence, we marched out of the defences in small bodies, having previously withdrawn all the guns, ammunition etc. and destroyed everything that could have been of service to the enemy. Many a bitter pang of regret was expressed by all of us of the original garrison on marching out, and knowing that the position, every inch of which we of course knew perfectly by heart and in which so many

of our poor fellows had been sent to their long homes, would speedily be in the hands of the enemy. The communication with the outside of the city was kept open by a powerful chain of posts for upwards of five miles, which closed in and withdrew in the most perfect silence as we passed on, till the whole line was evacuated, which was done so splendidly that not a life was lost. The enemy had evidently not the slightest idea that we were abandoning the place. About four o'clock in the morning we found ourselves outside the city close to Sir Colin's camp, and many a hearty shake of the hand was given amongst us, and many a prayer of gratitude uttered in silence on being once more able to look around us at the open country, which at one time none of us dared hope ever to feast our eyes on again!

I applied at this time to be attached to the Fusileers, and three days after marched with them from the "Dil Khoothan" position to the "Alum Bagh", where we are now, forming one of the corps which compose the rearguard of Sir Colin's army, which started for Cawnpore the day after we reached this post, in time to catch the native scoundrels who had laid siege to that place.

I have now brought, my yarn up to the present time, so here we are, waiting for the Chief's advent with 15,000 men, to proceed once more against the city, which stands full in our view about six miles distant, and which the enemy are fortifying and rendering as impregnable as possible, and a precious warm job it promises to be, though with such a force as we shall then number a regular investment will doubtless take place.

I think I mentioned in a former letter, notwithstanding the longing I felt to get away when besieged inside, I no sooner found myself out than my curiosity to see the re-taking of the city overpowered every other feeling, and I volunteered to remain with this Regiment sooner than accompany the garrison to Cawnpore. The Chief is now at Futtehpore, opening the communication with Agra and the North-West, which point is a most primary one to be effected owing to the increasing demands for carriage and commissariat, to meet which the resources of the North-West are absolutely necessary to be called into request. This point gained, we will return at once to Cawnpore, and from there advance towards Lucknow with a force of 15,000 men. Another column is also advancing via Jaunpore, and as I told you before, Jung Bahadoor is at Gomekpore assembling a force of 10,000 Ghoorkas, with whom he advances on (.....?.....) after taking which he proceeds to Lucknow and joins the Chief's army. We shall then number about 30,000 men before Lucknow, and if we don't make them smart for it with that force it's a pity! This cannot from present appearances be looked for before the end of next month or beginning of February, which will enable the whole operation to be completed before the hot weather sets in! These arrangements are of course subject to change should unforeseen circumstances occur, but I sincerely hope they will be carried out, as it will be everything, gaining possession of the city before the hot weather commences.

In the meantime things continue in much the same style here as when I last wrote, with the exception of the enemy becoming a greater nuisance with their guns, which they have brought considerably nearer and effected some slight damage thereby. We sold them a bargain, however, the other day, in taking them completely by surprise and capturing five guns, which they were taking out with a view to intercept our communication with Cawnpore, which we have lately succeeded in keeping tolerably open. The whole affair was admirably managed and our loss fortunately very trifling. The Fusileers formed the reserve, so I did not partake of the fun, in which lots of the scoundrels were slaughtered. By this opportunity I hope to send home my sketches for publication, though they must first go to the Governor-

General, who has expressed a desire to see them. This is a good thing for me, as it brings my name forward, and will be the means of my disposing of a good many copies in Calcutta. They were very roughly done in sepia, for I had no time to finish them the least, but I am told they are good so must take their chance and if they are published by a first-rate house in London, I doubt not they will be turned out uncommonly well. The dedication to Her Majesty I also send home with another to the memory of Sir Henry Lawrence should Sir George Cowper decide against the former when the latter will be substituted, though such is the interest and curiosity now universally felt in the siege of Lucknow that perhaps Her Majesty may deign to honour me. If so the thing will go down well; at all events I don't think I can lose by it - indeed, by advertising in the papers in this country my agents tell me that upwards of 100 copies have already been bespoke, which promises well.

We are, I see, all granted six months' (.....?.....), which is about the least Government could have given us. This, for me, amounts to £75, which, together with my regulation compensation, will make up about £200. This will help to mend matters, though it falls very far short of what I have lost. But I am taking to grumbling, so shall bring this volume to a close as a hawk goes out from camp this day, the 29th of December.

Adieu, then, my dearest Mother, and with best love to my dear Father, Emily, Louisa, Mary and all the family, also to Grandmamma, Aunt Toppy, and Uncle, and till next opportunity,

Believe me,

Your ever loving and affectionate son,

Clifford.

P.S. As I rightly conjectured, I eat my Christmas dinner in solitude on outlying picket, with the enemy's round shot occasionally playing at long bowls outside my tent. However, this did not prevent my thinking of you all, and drinking all your healths in a bumper of beer!! No other liquor to be had. I hope you'll be able to make out this book, for letter is no name for it but I have written it as legibly as the worst of ink and pens can enable me to do.

ⁱ This document has been created on 3 June 2007 by Sylvia Murphy by applying Optical Character Recognition to a scan of a 25 page typescript copy of the original provided by Michael J. Mecham, on behalf of the Mecham family of Australia. The Mecham family deposited the original letter with Sydney University in the late 1940s, to provide for research access and safekeeping. In 1957, on the centenary of the Siege of Lucknow, the letter was used as the main source of a two-part article by David Macmillan, and published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 27 July and 3 August. A person by the name of David S Macmillan was Archivist at the University of Sydney 1954 – 1968 and subsequently a Professor at Trent University in Ontario, Canada.

See Journal of the Army Historical Society vol.LX, Autumn 1982, p.166 Captain Clifford Henry Mecham, by John Fraser, for a lengthy discourse of the service career of the author of the Lucknow letter. He is noted for his publication, "Sketches and Incidents of the Siege of Lucknow" (1858:London)

ⁱⁱ Probably Malihabad to N.W. of Lucknow, per Imperial Gazetteer Atlas of India

ⁱⁱⁱ Ref: Hobson-Jobson: The Anglo-Indian Dictionary: Cossid is 'A courier or running messenger'

^{iv} Spelling in original probably 'tulwar'. Hobson-Jobson lists 'Tulwaur' - 'a sabre'