

## CHAPTER VII.

LANDING OF THE TROOPS—ADVANCE ON LIN'S FORT—TREACHEROUS MODE OF WARFARE—CAPTURE OF LIN'S FORT—ATTACK OF THE BRAVES—POSITION FOR THE NIGHT—THE BOMBARDMENT IS CONTINUED—DEATH OF CAPTAIN BATE—SKIRMISH WITH BRAVES—ESCALADE OF THE WALLS OF CANTON—ASPECT OF THE CITY—SCENE FROM MAGAZINE HILL—CAPTURE OF THE CITY—CAPTURE OF GOUGH'S FORT—CHINESE LOOTING PARTIES—TARTAR GARRISON OF CANTON—CONDITION OF THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS—EXPLOSION OF A MAGAZINE.

ON the 27th we were able to perceive, from our post of observation, Major Clifford, Quartermaster-General, landing with a party composed of two companies of the 59th, under Major Burmister, with the Engineers to prepare stages for the disembarkation of the troops and guns on the following morning. The outposts, which were kept by the 59th, and extended for about half a mile into the interior, were unmolested during the night. In consequence of the shallowness of the water in the creek, the landing was fixed for nine o'clock on the following day, that being the earliest hour at which the tide would serve for our gunboats. The French, however, being in ships' boats, reached the landing-stages first, and requested General Strau-

benzee to allow them to disembark, to which he acceded. Before their disembarkation was completed, the rest of the 59th and artillery arrived in the gunboats, and as soon as the 59th were landed, they and the French Naval Brigade moved up towards Lin's Fort, the original party under Major Bannister being in advance. As I observe in the French papers that our gallant allies have claimed some credit for being the first to land on the 28th, it is only fair to state the amount of risk they incurred, in landing at a spot which had been in our possession since the previous day.

From our exalted position we had a splendid view of the commencement of the bombardment, which began shortly after daylight, and continued without intermission for twenty-seven hours. Ten o'clock was fixed as the hour for the landing of the blue-jackets of the Furious under Captain Osborn ; and I was glad to avail myself, by accompanying him, of the opportunity afforded of being an eye-witness, under the most favourable circumstances, of all the operations.

Thanks to the exertions of the Sappers, a very fair road had been made through the village near the landing-place. After passing through it, we met a wounded man of the 59th, and two wounded men of the French Naval Brigade,—the first evidence of any active resistance having been offered to our progress. These men had been wounded in a slight skirmish which had resulted in the precipitate retreat of the

Chinese. Meeting Loch, who was temporarily attached to the General's staff, in the village, I pushed on with him as quickly as possible to the front. As we proceeded, the country became very broken ; small hillocks covered with graves were surrounded by dry paddy-fields, by which their slopes were sometimes terraced. It was just the country for skirmishing in ; and had not our enemy been contemptible, they might have harassed us seriously as we advanced. As it happened, what little danger there was arose rather from a species of treachery than from open warfare. Captain Hackett of the 59th, while carrying a message, was suddenly surrounded in the village above mentioned, only a short time after we had left it, and his head was cut off within sight of his own men, who succeeded in killing one of the assassins, and capturing the other. This man was brought up to headquarters, and hung the same evening. The man of the 59th we had met, told us he had been shot from behind a hedge after he had passed it. Indeed it was very difficult to know whom to regard as enemies, and whom to ignore as such. The hills were crowded with spectators watching our proceedings ; yet it was only natural to suppose that every villager was an enemy at heart, though they did not venture on open warfare, or seem to anticipate our considering them in the light of foes.

We found the front about a mile from the village, and, when we arrived, the French and English admirals and General Straubenzee were seated at luncheon in

a grave. The advance had pushed on so rapidly in pursuit of the retreating Chinese, that there was a pause in the operations in consequence of the guns and ammunition not having come up. Moreover, we were close to Lin's Fort, the capture of which it had been arranged should complete the first day's operations. As the French had a light field-piece with them, it was agreed that they should open upon Lin's Fort from a hillock within easy range, while the 59th should occupy a joss-house to the right, from which they could reach the embrasures of the Fort with their Enfield rifles. To the joss-house, which was deserted, we accordingly repaired, and, screened by the wall, amused ourselves by trying to repress the harmless fire which the garrison kept up at intervals. When our field-piece came up, and a shell burst near them, these brave defenders unhesitatingly evacuated the fort,—a fact as patent to our allies as it was to ourselves. When the banner of the last man had disappeared behind the rising ground beyond, the French rushed in ; and it must be admitted that there was no reason why we should not have done the same. It was an operation entirely devoid of risk for either party ; but to our allies is due the credit of their superior quickness of perception. Indeed, so little of this quality had some of our own men, that they rushed at the fort with loud shouts, apparently mistaking the tricolor, which waved from its walls, for a Chinese banner. As the French sailors often carry small tricolor flags in the pockets of their spacious

trousers, their conquests are rapidly proclaimed. Upon this occasion the leading marine, having been provident enough to supply himself with a national "pavilion," sprung upon the walls flag in hand, and, shouting "Vive l'Amiral!—l'Empereur!—la France!—l'Angleterre!" all in a breath, created an intense amount of enthusiasm, and was embraced by his admiral, and invested with the legion of honour on the spot.

The fort was a small circular building, fitted for the reception of about 200 men. We entered and inspected it, and from the parapet obtained a good view of the city walls, about 600 yards distant. As soon as the Chinese perceived us in possession, the guns from the city opened upon us, but without much effect. Meantime the naval brigade and marines had been coming up, and extending far to the right, over undulating ground covered with graves and clumps of wood. From Lin's Fort we had an excellent view of a skirmish in which they engaged with some braves, who now appeared for the first time in some force. These latter were soon driven back to the base of the hill on which Gough's Fort is situated, but only to advance again as our men retired. Indeed, as a considerable distance separated the combatants throughout, the Chinese seemed to gain confidence from this mode of warfare, and began to collect in great numbers behind a small village, from which they made a grand advance, with quantities of banners waving, and great yelling and vapouring, throwing forward skir-

mishers in pairs carrying gingalls, making contemptuous gestures at their enemies, and indulging in divers antics, for which their leader, a tall man in blue, who carried a huge sword, was especially conspicuous. He was followed by a standard-bearer capering along ten yards in advance of the crowd. This brave army ultimately succeeded in occupying a straggling wood, and in ensconcing themselves in the horse-shoe graves with which the hill-sides abounded, and which formed natural rifle-pits. Above these, with their heads well under cover, they defiantly waved flags, and managed, with their gingalls, to wound some of our men, as they dodged from one grave to another. The hill presented somewhat the appearance of an animated rabbit-warren. Two or three shells, however, judiciously dropped amongst them from Lin's Fort, soon started them from their hiding-places; and the gentleman in blue displayed even more agility in hopping back again at the head of his army, than he had in his advance.

As this was the position we intended to occupy for the night, the remainder of the afternoon was spent either in replying to the guns from the city with our field-pieces, or in checking the advance of the braves whenever they ventured to attempt to reoccupy their old position. Our loss during the day's operations had been trifling. With the exception of poor Hackett, we had not a man killed, though, I believe, two or three afterwards died of the wounds they had received from gingall balls. The scene had

been one of considerable interest and novelty, if not of fighting. As none of the staff were mounted, and the distances were great, one or two of us, who were amateurs, were glad to find that we could be of use in carrying messages. Our headquarters for the night was a joss-house in rear of Lin's Fort, which was occupied by an allied force, while in the bamboo groves to the right the marines and naval brigade were encamped. Our slumbers were presided over by gods and goddesses, but unfortunately were a good deal disturbed by the groans of some wounded men, who had been brought in to the verandah. Long before daylight on the following day, we were once more on the alert, and scrambled in the dark over the rough ground to Lin's Fort, the walls of which were lit up by the lurid glare of numerous fires of our men, who were encamped round it.

Meantime the bombardment was maintained with unabated vigour, and as I listened to the whistle of the round-shot, and watched the meteor-like shells of our mortar-battery circling through the air, or the flaming track of the rushing rocket, the old nights of Sevastopol were forcibly recalled to my recollection.

As day broke the enemy once more opened fire upon us, and by this time the troops were on the move in all directions. The right wing was advancing upon a small hamlet, with a view of occupying a large building in it known as the Asylum of Indigent Females. The French, with the 59th, were taking up their position to the left, while we moved across

the broken country to the Asylum. The enemy kept up as brisk a fire as they could, but apparently were incapable of directing their aim. They succeeded, however, in inflicting one irreparable loss upon us upon reaching the village. The General and his staff, accompanied by Captain Bate, proceeded to reconnoitre the walls, preparatory to bringing up the scaling-ladders. As they approached to within thirty yards of the walls, they sought shelter from the sharp matchlock-fire which was opened upon them, behind a mud house. It was necessary, however, that the ditch should be inspected, and it was in the performance of this dangerous service that Captain Bate, who undertook it in company with Captain Man, R.E., was killed.

Nine o'clock was the hour at which it had been arranged with the naval authorities that the firing should cease; it was not yet eight, and we were already under the walls. The shot and shell from our ships, which were at this time principally directed at the east gate, and that part of the wall opposite to which we then were, constantly fell near our own men: the angle of the Asylum was blown up by one shell, another burst among a party of the 59th, killing one man and wounding five.

The shot of the enemy was not apparently directed upon our men, or turned to any one point. It fell in distant cabbage-gardens to the right, whistled high over head to the left, seriously damaged unoffending trees in rear, and was very disagreeable for



amateurs, for no one spot was safer than another ; feeble rockets, barbed as arrows, thudded about, and fizzed for a moment in the grass, and the grasshopper buzz of a gingall ball was occasionally audible. Upon our occupying the village, the population, chiefly consisting of old men and "indigent" females, with goat's feet, whose home ought to have been the Asylum, came tottering out, prostrating themselves on the ground and beating their breasts ; dragging little children after them, they stumbled and hobbled over the rough ground among our men, by whom of course they were in no way molested.

All this time the Land Transport Corps, composed of Chinamen, were employed in bringing up ammunition to the front, to be used against their own countrymen, with a reckless disregard of gingall balls, and an absence of patriotism truly edifying.

Meantime, a large body of braves coming round the north angle, attacked our extreme right, and Colonel Holloway's brigade of Marines was extended in skirmishing order to repel them. A pretty hot fire was also being kept up on the embrasures by the rifle company of a regiment of Madras Native Infantry, part of the 59th Regiment, and by a rocket battery of the Marine Artillery, under Lieutenant Studdert. From the hillock upon which this battery was placed, an admirable view was obtained of the city wall, and the scene of operations generally ; and I took advantage of a few quiet moments in a grave, before the order for the assault was given, to make

a sketch. Some heavy guns in the foreground, manned by blue-jackets under Lieutenant Beamish, were dropping shot and shell into Magazine Hill. As we had now been for some time exposed more or less to the fire of our own ships, and the French were apparently bent upon escalading before the time, the order was given for the French and the 59th to escalade, which they did simultaneously, Major Luard being the first man on the walls, closely followed by a French officer and Colonel Graham of the 59th: Lieutenant Stewart, Royal Engineers, however, would have disputed this honour with the foremost, had not his ladder given way. Where so little honour was to be gained by anybody, as at the siege of Canton, it is hardly fair for either party to appropriate the entire modicum. There can be no doubt that had there been anybody on the walls at the time and place at which they were scaled, the rivalry would not have been the less keen between our allies and ourselves; as it was, the enemy deserted the embrasures the moment the ladders were placed against them, and not a shot was fired at us from the time the walls were scaled to the capture of Magazine Hill, except from our own ships.

The scaling party on the right, not knowing that the left had assaulted before the time, were necessarily not upon the walls for some moments afterwards. The ladders were soon swarming with marines and blue-jackets, like bees clustering into a hive. Then



we raced along the wall to Magazine Hill ; Canton, silent as a city of the dead, lying at our feet, with here and there a corpse stretched in some narrow lane, to give a character of reality to the supposition. Whenever a luckless Chinaman was seen scampering over the country to the right, or the flutter of a bit of blue cloth indicated a human being in the streets to our left, dozens of Minie bullets showered round the devoted object—seldom, it must be admitted, striking it. I observed one man dodging about among the graves for at least a quarter of an hour, making short dashes from one grave to another, amid a storm of bullets, just as one runs from shelter to shelter in a shower of rain.

The city wall was about 25 feet in height, and 20 feet broad ; the guns were of small calibre, and wretched workmanship. A little beyond Magazine Hill, the Chinese made a stand upon the walls, and a short and rather sharp combat took place at close quarters, in which Lord Gilford was wounded, and the General himself so hard pressed as to be compelled to shoot a man with his revolver. At the same time the enemy opened a fire upon us from some guns, planted upon the walls about 200 yards distant, which were not immediately silenced.

The scene from Magazine Hill at this time was peculiar and exciting : 200 feet below lay the city, mapped out before us ; a vast expanse of roofs, a labyrinth of intricate lanes, in a vain attempt to follow the windings of which the eye was bewildered ;

—a pagoda here, there a many-storied temple, or the successive roofs of a yamun embowered in luxuriant foliage, above which towered a pair of mandarin poles, —beyond all, the tapering masts of our own ships. Such were the principal features of the view in a southerly direction ; but its striking element was that impressive silence, that absence of all movement on the part of a population of a million and a half, that lay as though entombed within the city walls, whose very pulsation seemed arrested by the terrors of the night before, and whose only desire, if they could think at all, appeared to be, that the bare fact of their existence should be forgotten by the conquerors.

This deathlike stillness upon one side, was rendered all the more remarkable by the hubbub which was going on all round. On the right the Tartar troops, on the western walls, were replying with some vigour to the fire of a field-piece we had now brought to bear upon them ; on the left the wall was still swarming with our men, who had just scaled and were crowding up. In rear the two blue-jacket forts were partially in flames, and we were completing the business with a few rockets from Magazine Hill ; while from the same spot we had just opened a fire upon Gough's Fort, still occupied by the enemy. As it was not yet ten o'clock, a good morning's work had been already accomplished. The Marines and French had turned to the right on surmounting the wall ; but the 59th had been told off to

take an opposite direction, and secure our position on the extreme left.

Having seen that Magazine Hill was satisfactorily in our possession, I accompanied General Straubensee, who returned along the wall to the southern face. Here we found the 59th engaged in a little desultory rifle practice with the enemy, who were picking our men off the walls from the tops of their houses : while we were there, Lieutenant Bowen of the 59th received a wound, of which he afterwards died, from a match-lock. General Straubensee, therefore, withdrew the men to an angle in the wall, which afforded good shelter, and where a building above a gateway offered some accommodation for the men. We found a wounded old Chinese warrior lying here, whom we revived with a little brandy-and-water, but from whom we could not obtain much information, though he was evidently puzzled at being humanely treated. This point was made the advanced post for the night.

As the capture of the city might now be said to be complete, I took advantage of the company of Captain Hall and Mr Parkes, who, with a strong escort, were going to open up a new line of communication with the river, to return to the Furious. The east gate was barricaded on the inside ; upon forcing it open we found an arc of wall in which was another gate, and which formed a sort of loop upon the main wall, enclosing a small collection of houses. On bursting these open, a number of frightened inhabitants, crouching in corners, immediately made their presence known

by prayers and supplications for mercy. As one of these was an eating-house, with a large copper full of ready-made tea, we refreshed ourselves preparatory to new labours. Clearing these houses of inhabitants, we opened the next gate, and proceeded along the narrow streets of the suburbs, all of which were deserted, and the shops and houses shut. Still we could not be secure against a sudden attack from the numerous narrow lanes and dark corners in which the suburbs abound. Crossing the open parade-ground, we made our way unmolested to the river near French Folly, and I reached the Furious at one o'clock.

At three o'clock the same afternoon Gough's Fort was taken, and our right was advanced from Magazine Hill to the North Gate. In performing this operation we met with some resistance; and throughout the night our advanced post, which was composed of blue-jackets under the command of Sir Robert Maclure and Captain Sherard Osborn, was a good deal harassed by the Tartar troops occupying this portion of the city. These soldiers had throughout exhibited considerably more courage than the Chinese braves. Mr Parkes subsequently found the return of their killed and wounded, which was stated to be 450. The right and left advanced-posts were held by our men. The French troops principally occupied the five-storied pagoda—a commodious and substantial building situated upon the wall: as a Chinese military position, it had suffered a good deal

from our shot, but was nevertheless convertible into a most roomy and comfortable barrack. It is a very good specimen of Chinese architecture. The annexed woodcut is taken from a photograph, for which I am indebted to Dr Forbes of the "Cruizer."



Five-Storied Pagoda.

On the following day Lord Elgin proceeded up the river to the Actæon, then lying off the Dutch Folly ; and Mr Wade and I started off for the front with a communication from His Excellency for the General. We found the fighting over, and the city walls in complete possession of the allies. Thus, a most important result had been achieved with a trifling loss to ourselves, and in a manner calculated to produce a deep impression upon a population whose habitual



insolence to foreigners had rendered it extremely desirable that they should be made aware of the power we possessed of inflicting a severe punishment for insults, whether offered by the authorities or the people. The bombardment, which had lasted for twenty-seven hours, at the rate of nearly a hundred rounds per ship, was terrific in aspect, and in its effects upon certain portions of the city, but by no means so destructive of human life as might have been expected. Directed principally against particular gates or angles of the wall, or against Magazine Hill, few shot or shell fell in the heart of the town ; and the people soon found out the safe corners.

It was afterwards reported by Chinamen that many women and children had been crushed to death by the crowds swaying to and fro under the influence of panic in the narrow streets ; but we have no evidence of this. From the thin sprinkling of dead bodies I saw in the quarters most destroyed by our fire, and from the reports of others, I think Mr Cooke's estimate of 200 (not including the Tartar garrison) is a very fair approximation as regards the whole number killed. At the same time it may be remarked that, so far as the actual capture of the city was concerned, the bombardment for more than a day and a night was quite unnecessary : from the feeble resistance offered to us, it was evident that the walls might have been stormed as surely, if our cannonade had only lasted for three hours instead of twenty-seven. Indeed, during the

whole of this time only two shots were fired upon our ships in the river from guns upon the walls. But the nature of the resistance may best be judged of by the list of killed and wounded, and the unusually small proportion which the former bears to the latter. In the entire British force, consisting of nearly 5000 men, the result of the two days' operations was eight killed and seventy-one wounded, including among the former one killed by our own shot, and one waylaid and murdered by villagers. The French, out of a force of 900, lost only two men killed and thirty wounded. Doubtless the mortality would have been greater had the attack been made from the west side, on which they were prepared for us, under the impression that we should adopt the plan of attack of 1842; but, under all circumstances, we should always have retained those advantages which result from such an immeasurable superiority of weapons, military skill, and *morale*, as would render failure in any military operation in China inexcusable, except under very peculiar and exceptional circumstances.

On our way to the city I observed, in the suburb, large looting parties, composed of Chinese blackguards, ransacking the houses, and looking out for stragglers from our men, with whom they occasionally exchanged shots. They preferred, however, to be left alone, and kept as much out of sight as possible. At one place a pawnbroker's tower was being thoroughly gutted; a party on the top were engaged in overhauling the contents, and throwing over to their

comrades below rich furs and brocaded silks ; nor had we time, as we passed rapidly on, to interrupt them in their deeds of spoliation. It was already becoming evident that the work of administering the government of a large city, containing a million and a half of inhabitants, so ready, upon the first opportunity, to prey upon each other, would be by no means an easy task for foreigners totally unused to, and comparatively unacquainted with, the system by which vast urban populations were governed and controlled, and only in one or two instances able to speak their language.

A great part of the suburb had been destroyed, so as not to afford shelter to thieves or assassins upon the immediate line of communication. The East Gate, at which we entered, was occupied by Colonel Graham and the 59th ; and on our arrival at the front, we found that the General had just left Magazine Hill to make a circuit of the city walls. We therefore took advantage of a strong French escort to follow him. As we passed along the west wall flanking the Tartar quarter, the people were collected in groups gazing at us with interest, but with an air of profound respect and submission : when we warned them to disperse, they at once obeyed. At one guard we found a Tartar officer, whom we dislodged, and replaced with a small French guard. At the western gate we were informed by the English officer who had been on guard there for some hours, that great crowds had been pouring out of the town, but

that when assured of our pacific intentions, they had ceased to manifest alarm or leave the town. The few persons with whom Mr Wade conversed, announced themselves to be Tartar soldiers, and presented a much finer appearance than the Chinese. The Tartar population of Canton has been established there for a century, and originally came from Kirin, in Manchouria. They were sent to this city to overawe and maintain order amongst the proverbially lawless population of the province. Numerous little white flags fluttered from sticks upon the wall and on the neighbouring houses, to avert further hostilities on the part of the barbarians. As we turned along the south wall, we observed terrible evidence of the destructive effects of the bombardment. The south gate had been totally destroyed by fire, and a broad scar of burnt houses extended towards the centre of the city. Yeh's yamun was a heap of ruins ; the wall behind it was battered and breached, and every house-roof was perforated with shot-holes.

Generally the habitations partook more of the nature of hovels, than the residences of the respectable citizens of one of the most important and flourishing mercantile emporia in the empire. Decidedly the handsomest part of the town was in the neighbourhood of the Confucian Hall, near the south gate. Here some gaudily-painted yamuns and joss-houses reared their fantastic gables amongst the massive foliage of the large trees which were planted in the court-yards.

The next day (the last of the year) Lord Elgin landed himself, and ascended, by means of a scaling-ladder, the south-east angle of the wall, at the point where it was destined to be levelled so as to form the permanent line of communication. In the short piece of suburb intervening between it and the river, sentries had been placed ; and the houses were being demolished, after the inhabitants had been allowed to remove their goods and chattels. A canal entered the city at this point, passing under the wall, in which there was a water-gate. Up to this time our military position was confined to the walls alone. No European had yet entered the city, but it looked calm and tranquil as ever. The alarm of the inhabitants appeared to have subsided. It was reported that the city authorities were still exercising their functions, and that Yeh had taken up his abode with one of them, and was in innocent expectation that fresh overtures touching our treaty right to enter the city were about to be made to him.

An unfortunate accident occurred to swell the list of killed and wounded, in the course of the afternoon. Some blue-jackets, employed in clearing out a magazine, allowed a spark to fall among the powder, and an explosion ensued which caused the death of five men, and severely injured twelve more.

Thus closed the year 1857, so eventful in the history of British arms throughout the East, and thus closed with it the reign of the Imperial Commissioner, Yeh.