

CHAPTER XVII.

SIR GARNET WOLSELEY.

Parentage—Early Education—Beginning of Military Career—First Battle; Wounded—Return to England—At Balaklava—Promoted—At the Quarries—Another Wound—In India—Advancing on Lucknow—Attack on the “Happy Palace”—Lieutenant-Colonel at Twenty-six—In the Chinese War—Narrow Escape from Capture—Return to England—Visit to Canada—Groundless Fears of Violence in Boston—“Tossing Up” for visiting United States and Confederate Armies—Running the Blockade—The Cigar and the Sentinel—Rejoining his Companions in Canada—In England—Fighting the Zulus—Death of the Imperial Prince—Egyptian Expedition—Observations on Character.

IT is generally admitted that the subject of this sketch is England's greatest living soldier. He has participated in a series of wars against civilized and savage foes, winning victories under the most discouraging circumstances; and, though still in the prime of his manhood, he has a record of thirty years of service, and a galaxy of medals in attestation of his success.

He was born in the county of Dublin, Ireland, June 4, 1833. The family came originally from England, but one of its younger members settled in Ireland in 1744, and was created baronet of Mount Wolseley, in Carlow. The Wolseleys numbered more than one distinguished soldier in their line; they were on the English Protestant side as opposed to the native and Cath-



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abatis, or fences. After severe work the ground was sufficiently cleared to admit of the advance of a storming party. The Eightieth was selected to form a part of this attacking force. The Fifty-first Infantry was also included in it. This regiment was officered by a young man named Taylor, and Taylor and Wolseley were the first two who rushed up the path leading over the breastwork, which was so narrow that only two could occupy it. While racing for the honor of getting in first, both young men were wounded, and, strangely enough, in the same manner. They were each struck by a ball in the thigh. In Taylor's case the artery was severed, and he bled to death almost instantly. With Wolseley the artery, though laid bare, was not cut. Lying helpless on his back, he waved his sword and shouted to his men to advance, and not until the work was carried would he allow himself to be taken to the rear. The wound was a severe and painful one, and he was obliged to go on crutches for many months. This battle, the last of the Burmese war, was always memorable to him as being his "baptism with fire." Two months afterwards, still suffering severely from his wounds, he went on a visit to his family in Dublin, and as soon as he was convalescent was appointed lieutenant in the Ninetieth Light Infantry.

In the following year, 1853, the Crimean war broke out, and in 1854 the Ninetieth Regiment sailed from Dublin, and landing at Balaklava, proceeded immediately to the front. They were occupied from the very day after their arrival in fighting in the trenches. Wolseley was put on duty as assistant engineer. This duty in the trenches was very severe, the cold being intense; and the enemy constantly making sorties, the

troops were kept continually on the alert day and night. Wolseley, whose talent for sketching was well known, was commissioned to prepare a plan of Inkerman, including the trenches. The cold was so severe that the water-colors froze on his brush; but he succeeded in making the plan, greatly to the satisfaction of the general.

Wolseley was promoted to a captaincy in December, 1854, and for several months subsequent was engaged in engineering work on the fortifications around Sebastopol. This fighting in the trenches, severe and dangerous as it is, is yet of a monotonous and uninteresting character. The army battered persistently at the great Russian works, the Mamelon and Malakhoff, which in turn rained fire almost night and day on the British troops. Besides these two great forts a series of trenches, known to the British as the "quarries," guarded the Russian lines. On the 28th of May it was decided by the French and English generals that the French should make a grand assault on the Mamelon, and the English on the "quarries," after a general bombardment of the Russian works. The 6th of June was fixed for the bombardment, and so terrific was the fire that in the afternoon the Mamelon and Malakhoff were almost silenced. Next day the attack on the "quarries" was made. They were carried with a rush, the storming-party being led by Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, of Wolseley's regiment. The Russians made three desperate efforts to retake them, but the English soldiers held the works, and the Russians at last retreated. Wolseley's share in the dangers and honors of this day was very great. He did double duty, for, having worked as engineer all day in the

trenches, he joined the assaulting column in the evening and took part in the desperate hand-to-hand conflict that followed the rush of the storming party. Between the repeated attacks of the Russians, he busied himself with constructing a parapet along the side of the quarries, composed in great part of the bodies of the dead. So exhausted was he when morning came after the twenty-four hours' contest, that he himself fell asleep beside this terrible wall of corpses, and lay there to all appearance lifeless. An officer of his regiment passing by, and seeing him lying there, blood flowing from a flesh wound which he had received, supposed him to be dead, but on examining him more closely, raised him up and fairly carried him until they met a mounted officer who lent Wolseley his horse. So ended what the young soldier still calls "the hardest day's work he ever did in his life."

Two days after he again reported for duty, and on the 17th he took an active part in the fourth general bombardment of the defences of Sebastopol. This disastrous assault was a failure, though attended with fearful loss of life on both sides. For the next two months the work in the trenches went on as before, many of the officers yielded to fatigue and sickness, and those who remained on duty had often to serve twenty-four hours at a time. This was a common occurrence in Wolseley's life at this period. On the night of the 30th of August the Russians made a sortie, and Wolseley received a terrible wound while defending the gabions from their attack. Prince Victor of Hohenlohe, who happened to be near, called a surgeon to see him. The surgeon glanced at Wolseley, and said, "He's a dead 'un." The wounded man, though half

smothered in blood, managed to say, "I am worth a good many dead men yet." But so severe was the wound that when the doctor made an examination he still considered the case a desperate one. The gabion against which Wolseley had been standing when wounded was filled with stones. A round shot had struck it, and some of the stones were literally driven into Wolseley. One was embedded in his cheek, and when it was extracted and the jaw sewed up, it was found that one eye was so injured that the sight was destroyed. His whole body was pierced with sharp fragments, the right leg was very severely wounded close to the bone. It was expected that tetanus or erysipelas must follow such injuries, but his wonderful vitality defied the attacks of death. He was placed on a stretcher and taken to a cave, in order to shut out the light from his injured eyes. Here he passed several weeks, and while still feeling much dispirited from the fear that he should become totally blind, the news of the fall of Sebastopol reached him. Shortly afterwards he was about to return to England, having recovered the use of one of his eyes, when he was offered an appointment in the quartermaster-general's department. This he accepted, and remained in the Crimea until the conclusion of the peace with Russia. Thus he was one of the very last to quit the land where he had done and suffered so much for his country. He returned to England in July, 1856, and rejoined the Ninetieth. But only one year of peace had passed in his stormy existence when his regiment was ordered to India. The Ninetieth numbered a thousand men: seven hundred embarked in the "Himalaya," the other three hundred, among whom was Wolseley.

sailed in the "Transit," an unfortunate ship, which in the course of this voyage had to put back to land no less than three times in a disabled condition. Besides the three hundred men of the Ninetieth, there were six hundred others aboard, and of this large number there were few who had not to help by constant pumping to keep the ship afloat. There was a rent in the side, twenty-four feet long, and five hundred tons of water were pumped out in one day. When in the Indian Ocean a cyclone struck the ill-fated vessel, but they escaped its fury only to strike on a coral reef some days later. Here the "Transit" settled, and as she was rapidly going to pieces, the whole company took to the boats and made for the island of Banca, which was fortunately but two miles distant. Here they lit fires, and for eight days lived a primitive sort of existence. The only provisions they had with them were biscuits, and their only shelter was the sails of the wrecked ship, which they stretched between the trees. Not an article of baggage or clothing except what was on their persons had been saved. A week of their Robinson Crusoe-like existence had passed when a gunboat stopped at the island, and two days later a man-of-war was sent to convey the shipwrecked company to Calcutta.

They found confusion and terror reigning, for the terrible mutiny was in full progress through the country. Delhi had not been captured, and Lucknow was besieged by the enemy. They were obliged to remain in Calcutta until they were supplied with arms and clothing, and on the 29th of August they set out on the long journey for the "up-country." Everywhere burned houses and devastated villages gave evidence

of the fearful struggle. They passed through Cawnpore, where a few months previously had occurred the most inhuman massacre that stains the page of history. They saw the well in which the bodies of the three hundred murdered women and children were cast by order of the infamous Nana Sahib, and the sight intensified the sentiments of hatred and revenge which later bore such bitter fruit. Whatever may be said of the injustice of the British rule in India, and of their oppression of the natives, it must be conceded that the atrocities of the mutiny were such as to call out the bitterest feelings on the part of the white race in that country. The soldiers everywhere were animated with a furious desire for revenge; the natives, knowing they had no mercy to expect, fought desperately, and this state of things gave to the war in India a peculiarly ferocious character.

When the Ninetieth reached Lucknow they found their advance barred by a fortified building, the Dilkoosha, about two miles from the city, and another fortification known as the Martinière. Both of these were carried by the British artillery with no great loss, and the latter was held by the Ninetieth. Wolseley ascended the highest point of the fortifications, and enjoyed the view of the magnificent city in the plain below. Later on, while enjoying a bath, he was hastily summoned to action. The enemy, with a great force, was making a desperate effort to retake the building. They were driven back with heavy loss, but Wolseley was ordered with his men to turn out and form a picket line for the defence of the canal surrounding the city. The next day, another fortification, the Secunderabagh, was to be taken. This was a garden, about a hundred

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olic party, and they took a full share in the sanguinary contests that turned the unhappy island into a battlefield. The military taste descended in full force to Garnet, who, while still a boy, attending a day-school in Dublin, read all the chief works on military history. He announced his determination to become a soldier while he was still a mere boy, and at fourteen his name was put down for a commission. He studied engineering and fortification diligently, and much of his success, especially in the campaigns in Africa, is attributed to his early attention to these studies.

At nineteen years of age he received the desired commission, being appointed ensign in the Eightieth Regiment, which was then engaged in the Burmese war. He was ordered to join his regiment at once, and arrived in Burmah at a time when a sad disaster had befallen some British troops who had marched against a Burmese leader named Myat-toon, known to the English as the "robber chieftain." Of the five hundred men who were sent on this expedition the greater number were killed, and the rest obliged to disperse. To wipe out the stain of this disaster a very considerable force under Sir John Cheape was sent against Myat-toon. Wolseley's regiment formed part of this force. The march was a terrible one, through a dense jungle in intense heat, and the troops suffered severely from fever, dysentery, and cholera. Wolseley's remarkably healthy constitution carried him safely through this trying experience, although many of those who had like himself but just arrived succumbed to disease. They found the "robber chieftain strongly intrenched, the whole forest or jungle for two miles around his stronghold being defended with stockades,