

Reminiscence of the Mutiny.

Mr. Garnet Man said:-

I have been asked to give a few reminiscences of the great Indian Mutiny which flooded that country with blood, and which showed the great heroism which belongs to our race, and the magnificent manner in which soldiers and sailors and the women out there at that time behaved during that eventful epoch. But for an instant I must ask you to look back into the dim vista of the past, for it is sometimes good to view the past that we may be better able to judge the better for the future. I may tell you that it is over 60 years ago since I left these shores on my first visit to India just before the Mutiny commenced, and to show what great strides that civilization and invention have made since then, I may as well tell you that I left Gravesend in a ship which was then considered one of the biggest sailing ships: it was about 1,400 to 1,500 tons. Now we read in the papers of a vessel of 15,000 tons being built. In those days there were no steamers round the Cape: there were no telephones.

I well recollect posting to Gravesend – to go aboard that ship – with my mother in a post chaise with fine horses obtained from the Crown at Sevenoaks, in the keeping of Mr. Pawley, whose son is now Sec. of the Canterbury Cricket Club. Time has flown since then, and the post-chaise and the post boys have passed away. I also recollect being taken as a small boy to ---- and seeing the gallows on which men died generally for robbing the mail. Years have passed away since then but the other day – about three weeks ago – I went to visit the old place. The road, which was then the Coach road, is now overgrown with woods. There is no gallows there, and the whole country has been changed, while the roads have also been changed and macadamized. In those days it was my greatest pleasure to be taken to the corner of the lane, which I visited only a few weeks ago, to see the Hastings and the Tonbridge Mails, and the old coaches at Xmas time, laden as they were with Turkeys hanging all around them. I remember them going with six horses at Xmas time to Hastings, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Sevenoaks. I drove along the coach road the other day, and I did not meet anything but a few motorcars. So passed away old times. I recollect also that in our houses there was nothing but candles. I recollect the invention of the met lamp and the fuss when the first met lamp was introduced. And then, last but not least, and I recall it to your recollections because it shows the tremendous strides which we have made in comfort since then. When we wanted to light a fire in the morning, to see the maid take a flint and steel, and strike the flint and steel until the sparks struck the tinder, and then take a piece of magerial dipped in sulphur, and thus light the fire. Lighting a fire was not such an easy thing in those days: it was a work of art. I could well imagine our maids now grumbling if they had to hit a flint and steel before being able to light a fire. Times have changed, and in all these things, in one way changed for the better, but I do not know if it did not make us too lazy and grumble at not having gas and electricity. We never knew the want of the telegraph and telephone. I recollect a great sensation when introduced and invented, and it was in use. A telephone message was sent from Aldershott to London by which means the murdered F was arrested and afterwards hanged. That was the first time, within my recollection, that the telephone which now flies all over the world and carries messages from and to every center, was used for such a purpose. Now we have telephones in every

house: we have wireless telegraphy: it is most wonderful. We have improved in a great many things since I was a boy some 70 years ago.

But now I have promised that I would give you some reminiscences of the Mutiny. I landed at Calcutta, having been 5 and a half months on the voyage, and without having seen land for the greater part of the time. When we were going down past Ushant fourteen sailors were up in one of the yards. They were getting in sail: one of the yards broke and five men were dashed to the deck, while their brains were dashed like spawn upon the deck, and others went over the side. I well recollect rushing to the side of the vessel and swing them and the most wonderful thing was this, that they were so buoyant that they were not sinking up to their necks; they were as far as half out of the water with their hands stretched up, shrieking for aid. Some of the gallant sailors rushed to the boats but were stopped by the Captain who said he would dash in the brains of any man who touched the boats. I remember that they hissed him. I saw their sad faces. I heard the shrieks of the poor drowning wretches shouting despairingly for help: I saw them sink and rise every few minutes. Not one of them was saved: they passed out of our lives, out of our sight – drowned every one of them. And the Captain called us afterwards, there were 16 of us and he said "Young fellows and boys, I knew very well with the heavy seas in this roaring Bay of Biscay that if we had set down a boat, ever man in the boat would have been drowned. It was merely to save the lives of the remaining crew that I refused to let down a boat. There are 16 of you and I require you in the Queen's name to work for the safety of the ship. I will divide you into two watches: the remaining crew will do the top work, and you shall do deck work, and I shall make you "larboard" and "starboard". (They had "port" substituted for that now.) So while on the voyage, - and many of us paid out passages, we had to work at the sails until we got to Madras. We had four or five months at it, and we got active sailors running up the masts, setting the topsails, and by the time we landed at Calcutta we were full bodied sailors, and useful sailors. The time has passed away since then and out of those 16 men, most of them men generally and officers in the army, only three are left. Six died in the Mutiny, killed from their wounds, some died from drink, but out of the whole lot only three are left. One was General N , who married Miss Norman, who was a relation of Sir C. K . Of the three we are all pretty well decayed and hardly able to talk. I must now tell you how the providence of God saved my life in that terrible storm in which we lost six men. One night I was called larboard and I was called up to assist at the sails. It was my duty to stand on the fo'c'sle and haul in as the sail was lowered. I was hauling it in with nothing else between me and the rolling sea as we turned from side to side, when the halyard gave way, one of the sails flipped me off my legs, and the only place I could have been flipped into was between the catheads and the anchor. They were two big pieces of wood that stuck out where the anchor passed out. I was thrown with great impetus against these two pieces of wood that were standing between me and the raging sea. If it had not been for those two pieces of wood I should have been drowned at that time. I have to thank God's providence that he allowed me to be flipped there. There I lay with my ribs nearly broken, all the wind knocked out of my body, and a rope passing through my hands like a red hot iron. Presently the Bo'sun came to me and assisted me. He said "My God sir you had a narrow escape. You will not be drowned in the sea by any means". Well, we eventually get to Calcutta, and in those days it took a long time: there were no steamers,

no telegrams. When we arrived at Calcutta there was a great commotion: doubt was expressed in every man and woman's face. The Mutiny had started. I joined the Calcutta Light Horse. In the afternoon there was an uproar: many were attending service. We rushed out, saddled our horses and were off. My squadron was ordered to march towards Fort, and my squadron formed a kind of guard around there. Presently the guard came up with two wretched men, with their arms tied behind them. They were taken under a tree, ropes were placed around their necks, and I, as a boy, had the painful sight, seated as I was on my horse, of seeing the men drop and swing round and round. They were but common sights in those days. They were spies trying to tamper with the native soldiers and good soldiers too, to get them to open the gates of the capital to a force which was coming down. We waited there about an hour and saw one the most terribly affecting sights: I saw the wife of one of the poor men, as he was swinging, sit and fan his feet with a fan. I will ever recollect it, but before I finished my career there I counted 64 men and women I had seen hanged. I got used to seeing it. The next few things I shall have to pass over quickly because there are some slides which I want to show you. We were working in D, where General H was in command, and it was while living in the house of General Sir F., a descendent of General K that he commanded six men to be blown from the guns. I shall never forget the sight: it was terrible. Although 55 years have passed since then, I have it so firmly implanted in my memory, that I think perhaps you would like to hear of it tonight. There were six guns put in a line in the barracks or the Park. We were drawn up one side: on the other the 10th Europeans [?]. We had to get out pistols ready and sit with our swords drawn. Presently six men with their arms tied behind them were led out of the stables. These six men were followed by 20 other men who were following with brooms and baskets. When they were brought to the six guns I shall never forget their white teeth gleaming, and the terrible expressions on their faces. I saw the guns loaded: there was only a half pound in the flannel bag. Their backs were put to the guns and their arms and legs were tied to the wheels: they had nothing over their faces. Their sentence was read out and the guns were fired. I thought it was a year between the firing of the gunners and the time when the guns went off. There was a heavy boom we saw a blood red smoke in the air with bits like brick-bats flying about. When the smoke cleared away the men with brooms and baskets swept up the pieces, and on the wheels were still left ties, the arms of the men still quivering, where they had been torn from their bodies. It was a rather surprising thing to a young boy just out from England. But we went up country after this: we went through scenes of desolation and misery. The next thing was that I was [line cut off] -----

I was appointed to the 3rd Sikh Irregular cavalry. That was a regiment there were many Sikh land owners: it was very much like our Yeomanery here at home. We had about four officers, Europeans. I recollect getting ready in the B H when we came across the body of a lady: she had been cut to pieces. Her head was cut off, her legs were cut off, and we buried her in a "3 dozen" just where we were. A three dozen was a box holding about 3 doz. beer. We went further and found wrecks. The country was all up in arms. We had to sleep out in the open with every man always lying with his pistols loaded, our swords by our sides, and yet as we marched towards B. A. I think we avenged the death of those men and women and made those Indians remember it from that day to this. I went to _____ and heard of their difficulties and of how 20 or 50 Sikhs when the Mutiny started, entrenched themselves in a place not the size of this schoolroom, with

another floor to it. For water they dug a well right in the middle of the room and with the earth taken out of the well piled it up against the walls so that the rebels would not be able to get in. For six weeks those men fought against thousands of Indians and yet they held their own and they were eventually relieved. I went up with the 3rd Relief Cavalry, but before we went up there, a very bad accident occurred which shows how careful a man should be in seeing everything is prepared and fit when an expedition starts like this. You have heard of the old Brown Bess. It is a musket that was much used and fought with at the battle of Waterloo. Well it was changed to the Martin Henry rifle. It was served out of the 16th regiment one and all of them. Thirteen hundred men were on the march when they were attacked by a party of the rebels outside this place of A . They defended themselves well as they could only they found to their horror, that having expended their first pouch full of ammunition, and they went back on the reserve ammunition, the great big bullets used for Brown Bess. The consequence was those poor wretches were surrounded by these rebels and they had no chance of replying to their fire. So the rebels came down upon them: our men stood shoulder to shoulder fighting as well as they could, but what could they do? At last the men, in a rage, smashed them and ran as fast as they could back to D from which place the force had been sent out. When they got to G they plunged into the river, with the rebels after them: some were so wounded they could not move. An old friend of mine, at the immediate risk of his life, took out a boat and swam across with the boat and saved some of their lives. And perhaps some those who had read the "Times" might have seen an account of the gallant action, in the obituary notice, which was put in that paper. When those soldiers got back, out of the 1,300 only 400 escaped. They returned naked: they had nothing on to swim the river. When we arrived at D the women of the regiment went to meet their husbands and found that many of them had been murdered through carelessness. General Lloyd was supposed to have been at fault. General Lloyd was in his house at the time. He was a very good old fellow, but too old a man to do the work. So the women took broomsticks and chased him round and round and gave him the biggest thrashing he ever had in his life. Then they got drunk, and I am sorry to say that in the Indian hospital next morning every person was found dead. Whether the women or the men did it I do not know. When we woke up next morning Gen. Lloyd had disappeared and the Indian hospital and not a living soul in it. I could go on from story to story, but I must go on to when we came to Lucknow, and when we entered the palace after we went to Cawnpore. On the way there we found nothing but burning houses, deserted cantonments, and women and children murdered most vilely. I recollect it was summer, and I remember afterwards going to Cawnpore and looking down the well, the well which is well known for its malignant incidents. Down that well I believe it states on the engraving, where I went 40 years afterwards, 200 men, women and children were thrown. They could not have been, for the diameter of the well was no bigger than this platform. If you looked at a regiment of men, you would see that 200 men would fill it, and fill it twice over. There never were 200 thrown down that well. A large number of the women, sisters and wives of officers at that time were taken away by Rajas and made their wives. They were made members of the Harem, and after the Mutiny those poor women did not like to appear again in Society and they died in those Harems No one knows anything about them, but I could mention two or three but it would only be hard to the relatives of them if I ventured to mention any names, and so I refrain from doing so. Now with regard to my

reminiscences of the mutiny there is one great fault in regard to the incidents which I am relating, and that is that I am obliged to say "I, I, I," but I do not see how well I am well to avoid it when relating events such as these. Another merciful preservation of my life occurred during the Mutiny, I had ridden – I was then appointed to the 3rd Sikh Irregular Cavalry- out, and it was my duty to take certain of the men, and go here and there carrying messages. We each carried messages for 6 or 12 miles. I went to one place with a couple of Sikhs to find out if any mutineers were there and collect all news and write it down and send it back, and after going six miles give it to another man, . By this means we carried news very quickly. I was riding ahead of my men along the river C . Orders had been given to sink every boat on the river. We could not get across ourselves until a boat was brought along. I recollect seeing a boat drop down the river, a very innocent looking boat, and I hailed the man who sat steering the craft. He was passing me so I raised my carbine and shot at his middle, but instead of hitting him middle, I did not make sufficient allowance for the swaying of the boat, - I hit him in the hand, and the bullet went through his hand and smashed the rudder, the tiller went broadside on to the stream there was a sudden tilting over and the boat capsized. From out of the boat I cannot tell how many Sepoys heads appeared. By this time the boat had floated down as far as from the school to the Kent Hotel, after I hit the man, and then 20 of our men came up. We tried to get across, but they had ridden themselves. There was a fusillade and there was not one man saved in the boat in the end. Every man was shot. I was afterwards riding on the road, well a head of my men trying to get up to B - there was a big bank on one side and high elephant grass which would have nearly come to the top of the lantern screen, when I felt a swish by my head. My life had been saved by my horse shying. I pulled out my pistol but my horse was rearing and my opponent was swinging something round with yards of rings round it. All this time my horse was getting cracks over the nose and was consequently not very quiet. I drew my sword and went at the fellow again, but what with the horse prancing and shying he knocked my sword out of my hand also, I was in an awful predicament. I had got my wrath up by this time and I started my horse full at him being at this time both without my pistol and my sword. As I got near I threw myself from my horse right on top of him and got him by the neck and tried to strangle him. The force of the impact knocked him down and I was on top. He lay on his back, I trying my hardest to strangle him but with very little strength left in me by this time. At that moment assistance came and I was pulled away from my opponent. I lay on the ground gasping with all the breath knocked out of my body and I fainted. I was found with my hands round his neck; I could not speak; my opponent could not speak because I was choking him and I should have succeeded but the man was taken by the scruff of the neck away from me, and as I said I lay on my back, and what with exertion and the excitement, I fainted. When I came too my opponent was swinging to the branch of a tree. Maj. Richardson had come up in time. That was another escape of my life. I think I have given you enough incidents now. I am sorry that I am not able tonight to give any pictures like those of the cinematograph of accounts of the war and of fights during the war, but you must recollect that these things occurred many years ago, and I am talking years ago when no such thing as the cinematograph was in existence, when no such thing was taken as instantaneous pictures, when there was no such thing as moving figures in the great perfection it has reached now. I had but attempted to bring to your notice something of what occurred during the mutiny, and I will show you a few

pictures which have been taken, and which will illustrate the lives of some of those gallant soldiers who fought so splendidly during the war.