THE MUTINY AT VELLORE.

It seems to be now generally admitted, although for a time strenuously denied, that the greased cartridges had much to do with the great Indian revolt of the Sepoys in 1857, which led to so much massacre and seriously endangered our Eastern empire. An order, relative to shaving, equally interfering with native notions of caste, and quite as ill-judged, produced an earlier mutiny, on a more con-fined scale, at Vellore, which exploded most unexpectedly on the night of the 9th of July, 1806, and was specially signalized by the murder, amongst many others, of an officer of rank and merit who commanded in the for-tress, Colonel Fancourt. Nothing fore-shadowed the movement, which burst like a thunder-clap from a summer cloud.

This was long considered a very memorable episode in our Indian annals, until it dwindled into insignificance when compared with the comprehensive and sweeping at-tempt so recently and arduously suppressed.

In Gleig's "History of British India" we find this paragraph:—"There occurred under Sir George Barlow's administration a mutiny

among the native troops in the Carnatic, of which, though sufficiently alarming at that moment, it were out of place to give here any detailed account. Enough is done when we state that an injudicious order respecting some points of dress appearing at a moment when missionary exertions chanced to be unusually great, the sons of Tippoo and their adherents took advantage of the circumstance to excite, to a furious degree, the religious prejudices of the Sepoys. They rose in rebellion at Vellore, put to death many European officers and a considerable portion of the 69th Regiment, and were not quieted at last till Colonel Gillespie, at the head of a body of dragoons, and salved a large number of them. dragoons, had sabred a large number of them. For a time serious apprehensions were enter-tained lest the disposition should prove general; but this, on inquiry, was found not to be the case. The obnoxious orders were repealed, and the troops returned everywhere to their allegiance.

The following narrative of the earlier revolt in 1806 contains particulars never made public, and was written at the time by Mrs. Fancourt, widow of the Colonel who was massacred in the outbreak. The MS., in her own handwriting, was given by her to a near and dear relative and friend of the present writer as an authentic document, without any restrictions as to its future use. Many readers may take an interest in the recital, which would lose its value if altered in the slightest degree. We therefore give it as originally

ACCOUNT OF THE MUTINY AT VELLORE ON THE NIGHT OF THE 9TH OF JULY, 1806.

"Colonel Fancourt and I retired to rest on Wednesday evening a little after 9 o'clock. About 2, on Thursday morning, we were both awakened at the same instant by a loud firing. We both got out of bed, and Colonel Faucourt went to the window, which was open, and called aloud and repeatedly to know the cause of the disturbance. He received no reply, except by the rapid continuance of the firing from a vast number of Sepoys assembled at the main-guard. Colonel Fancourt then went down stairs, and in a few minutes returned to his writing-room, and requested me to bring him a light. I instantly did so, and placed it on the table. He then sat down to write, and I shut the window from which he had spoken to the Sepoys, fearing some shots might be directed at him as he sat, for they were then firing in all directions from the main-guard. I looked at my husband and saw him turn as pale as ashes. I said, "Good God! what can be the matter, my dear St. John?" To which he replied, "Go into your own room, Amelia." I did so, for I saw his mind was so agitated I did not think it right to repeat my question at that moment. I heard him, two minutes after, quit the writingroom and go out of the house.

"Between 2 and 3 o'clock I believe the firing at the main-guard ceased and the drums beat, which I afterwards heard was owing to my husband's exertions to quiet the Sepoys. There was no more firing for some time. After my husband left the house I think he returned again, though, as I imagine, but for a moment. I certainly heard the door of the writing-room tried, very soon after the firing at the main-guard ceased; but having, after he left me, bolted the door, if it was he, he could not enter, and went away again without saying anything. When I heard the door attempted, I called out, "St. John, is it you?" to which I received no answer, and whoever it was, he quitted the house immediately.
"I then bolted all the doors in my own

room, and brought my children into it. I fell on my knees and fervently prayed that Colonel Fancourt's endeavors to restore peace in the garrison might be crowned with success and his life spared through the mercy of God. I dressed, and twice cautiously opened the hall-door and felt my way to the lower end to look where there was most firing. I perceived it was chiefly directed at the European barracks.

The last time I ventured from my room, between the hours of four and five, as I stood at the lower end of the hall, which was quite open to the veranda, a figure approached me. It was so dark I could only see the red coat by the light of the firing at the barracks. I was dreadfully frightened, expecting to be murdered; and having left the children in the bedroom, I dreaded that their last hour was come also. I had, however, courage to ask, 'Who is there?' The answer I received was, 'Madam, I am an officer.' I then said, 'But who are you?' The gentleman answered, 'I am an officer of the main-guard.' I inquired what was the matter. He said it was a mutiny; that every European on the guard had been murdered except himself, and that we should be murdered also. I made no reply, but walked away to the room where my babes and female servants were. The officer went out at the opposite door of the hall where we had spoken together, and never got down stairs alive, for he was butchered most cruelly in Colonel Fancourt's dressing-room. I have since heard that his name was Lieutenant O'Reilly, 1st Battalion, 1st Regiment of Native Infantry.

"When I had this conversation with the above-mentioned officer, I began to think it unsafe to quit my own room again. As soon as daylight appeared I went into Colonel Fancourt's writing-room and looked through the Venetian blinds on the parade. I saw some soldiers of the 69th Regiment lying dead. Four Sepoys were at that moment on the watch at the door of Colonel Marriott's quarters, and several issuing from the gates of the palace. The latter were not firing-indeed, I think they were unarmed-and were making a great noise. At this time there was firing on the ramparts, and apparently in all parts of the fort; at least, I heard firing in many different places, though at the main-guard and the barracks all seemed quiet. The Sepoys were then employed in ransacking the

houses, intent on murder or plunder. "At this moment I gave up all for lost. opened my dressing-table drawer, and took out my husband's miniature, which I tied on, and hid under my habit shirt, determined no

to lose that but indeath. I had secured his watch some time before, to ascertain the hour. I had hardly secreted this much valued re-membrance, before I heard a loud noise in the hall adjoining my bedroom, I moved softly, and looking through the door discovered two Sepoys knocking a chest of drawers to pieces. I was struck with horror, concluding their next visit would be to my apart-

"My children and their female servants were at this time lying on the mat, just before the door, which opened into the back veranda, and which at the time of the commencement of the mutiny seemed the safest place, as shots being fired at the windows, we were obliged to move as far as possible from them.
I whispered my ayah that the Sepoys were in
the hall, and told her to move from the door.
She took my children under the bed, and begged me to go there also. I had not time for reply, for the door we had just left was at that instant burst open. I got under the bed, and was no sooner there than several shots were fired into the room; but although the door was opened, no one entered. I took up a bullet which fell close to me under the bed.

"The children were screaming with terror at the firing, and I expected that our last moment had come; but willing to make one effort to save my babes, I crept from my hiding-place into a small adjoining room, off the back of the staircase. I opened the window, from which I saw two horse-keepers. I returned instantly to my bedroom, and desired the ayah to take my little babe in her arms. I took Charles St. John in my own, and opening the door of the back staircase ran down as quickly as I could. When we got to the bottom we found several Sepoys on guard at the back of the house. I showed them my babes, and told my ayah to inform them they might take all we had if they would spare our lives.

"One of them desired us to sit down in the stable with the horses. Another looked very surly, but did not prevent our going there.
Whilst we stayed in the stable, I told the
ayah I had my husband's watch; and requested
she would hide it for me. She dug up some earth with her fingers, threw it over the watch, and put some chattles onait. We had not been seated many minutes before we were ordered away by a kind Sepoy. He told me to go into the fowl-house, which had only a bamboo front, and we were, in consequence, exposed to view, until the same Sepoy brought us a mat, which we made use of by placing it before the door to hide ourselves; and afterwards the same man gave my little boy half a loaf of bread to appease his hunger.

"There, I suppose, we sat about three hours, in the greatest agony of mind, endeavoring to quiet my dear little Charles, whom I found it very difficult to pacify, so terrified was he by the constant firing, and cried sadly to get out, and go to his papa. Several times, from my concealment, I saw the Sepoys taking out immense loads of our goods on their backs, tied up in table-cloths and sheets. They all went by the way of the ramparts, which made me fear that they still had possession of the works. I know not how I supported myself through all the horrors of that night and morning. What I dreaded most was to hear of my husband's murder, and I really believe I should have braved death, and searched for him on the parade, had not the situation of my babes withheld me from the rash attempt. My dread of having them murdered during my absence, or of leaving them wretched orphans, made me remain in the place of refuge.

"Thoped for the arrival of the 19th Dragoons from Arcot. The few lines Colonel Fancourt wrote in his room, I thought most probably were intended to be sent express to Colonel Gillespie, who was, on that morning, coming to spend a few days with us. But whether Colonel Fancourt had the means of sending his despatch or not, I was quite ignorant. Still, however, I thought the news might reach Colonel Gillespie on the road by some chance or other, and hearing a tremendous firing at the gate strengthened my hopes that the regiment had arrived.

"Our house appeared, at this time, quite deserted by the Sepoys; but suddenly several of them rushed into the compound, and called out, as the ayah said, for me, determined to find and murder me. She requested me to go into the farthest corner of the fowl-house, which I did, taking my Charles with me, and covering him with my gown. I had much difficulty in keeping him quiet. He screamed at every instant. I expected we should all be massacred; but the firing at the gate became now so strong that the Sepoys were obliged to fly to it, and once more vacated the house, by which unexpected incident we escaped impending death. I was so thirsty as several times to drink dirty water out of a dirty chatty, and give the same to my dear Charles

"At last I heard distinctly the horses of the 19th Dragoons upon the drawbridge, and huzzas loudly repeated. Then I hoped everything, and a moment after they entered the An officer rode in and called for me by name, but I could neither answer nor move. Again, I heard my name repeated, and saw an officer in a red jacket who I thought looked like my husband. I made an effort and sprang forward to meet him. It was Mr. Maclean. I called for my husband. He told me he was alive. Colonel Gillespie and Mrs. Maclean then joined us, and both gave me the same assurance. They took me up stairs and forced me to drink some wine and water. When the agitation of my mind had a little calmed down, they told me that Colonel Fancourt was wounded, though not dangerously, and that he must be kept quiet. About an hour after I was told by the surgeon of the 19th that my husband was in danger, but that worse wounds had been cured; his were flesh wounds, and the balls had not lodged. Hope still made me think he would recover. I would not even ask to see him, thinking the interview might agitate him too much. Alas! I found too late there were no hopes of him from the first, for he breathed his last about 5 o'clock on the same afternoon. Thank God, he died without much suffering. That his death was happy I am fully satisfied, for he lived religiously, and met his fate like a brave soldier, in the faithful discharge of his duty."

Here the narrative ends. When Colonel Gillespie forced his entrance into Vellore, his dragoons put 700 Sepoys to the sword before the mutiny was totally suppressed. This gallant officer obtained great credit for his prompt energy on this occasion, and became one of the most rising men in India. He fell in the Nepaulese war as Major-General Sir Robert Rollo Gillespie, being shot through the heart while leading three companies of English soldiers to the assault of the fortified position of Kalunga, in October, 1814. Of the four companies of the 69th Regiment which formed the weak European garrison of Vellore, 164 were killed, and nearly all the officers .- Dublin University Magazine.

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