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The

Battle

of

"Muddy Flat"

1854

(Being an Historical Sketch of that Famous Occurrence, written specially for the Jubilee Commemoration thereof at Shanghai, April 1904; with some Added Particulars Relating to the Shanghai Volunteer Corps.)
THE BATTLE OF MUDDY FLAT: APRIL 4, 1854.
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The Battle of Muddy Flat.

As Mr. Wetmore rightly remarks, in a paper contributed to the "North-China Herald" some fourteen years ago, Shanghai residents of the present generation can hardly realise the stirring events which were of frequent occurrence in the fifties. It is only within the province of this article to deal with those stirring times so far as they concern the events leading up to that memorable fight, known as the Battle of Muddy Flat.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the Shanghai of the fifties was very different from the Shanghai of the present day. At that time the settlement extended only to the Honan Road on the west, the interval between that and the Defence creek being mostly open country, with an occasional hamlet here and there and a few missionary residences; the old Race course, which skirted the eastern bank of the Defence creek, occupying a considerable portion of the space.

FORMATION OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

Shanghai was opened to foreign trade on 17th November 1843, and in 1853 there were about 375 foreigners residing in the port. At this time China was in the throes of the Taiping Rebellion; nor were the Taipings the only rebels in the field. Several other secret societies were in arms, and in this neighbourhood the Triads were the most active. In April 1853 things began to assume a serious aspect. Early in the month news arrived that Nanking and Chinkiangfu were both in the hands of the Taipings, and there was nothing to prevent them from marching on Shanghai. Under these circumstances Sir George Bonham, Minister Plenipotentiary to China, sanctioned the formation of a British volunteer force in Shanghai. On 8th April, 1853, meetings were held at the British and American Consulates. Mr. Rutherford Alcock, H.B.M.'s Consul, presided at the former. He said that the fall of Nanking had led to steps being taken for the defence of the Settlements, and that without taking any alarmist views it was far better to realise the full extent of the danger and prepare for it. Rules for enrolment were drawn up, and Captain Tronson, of the 2nd Fusiliers, Bengal Regiment, was asked to take command of the corps. "The meeting was well attended, and quite unanimous in the propriety of the proceeding as a precautionary measure."

COMMITTEE OF CO-OPERATION.

The American meeting also came to the conclusion that the formation of a corps of Volunteers was expedient, and eventually a Committee of Co-operation, consisting of British and American residents was formed, for the purpose of considering and carrying out any steps that might be found necessary for safeguarding the Settlements. This Committee worked in conjunction with such military or naval authorities as might be in Shanghai.

DEFENCE CREEK.

On 12th April a public meeting of all foreign residents was held. Mr. R. Alcock, with the French, Prussian, Dutch, and American Consuls were present. This meeting confirmed what had already been done. It is noteworthy that it was at this meeting that Mr. A. G. Dallas recommended that the Settlements should be enclosed by a Creek or ditch. He pointed out that this could best be done by making a Creek from the Soochow to Yangkingpang Creeks. This scheme was carried out, and the Creek survives to this day under the name of Defence Creek.

CAPTAIN TRONSON'S DEPARTURE.

The events of the next few months do not concern us much. Suffice it to say that...
under Captain Tronson's command the men were soon instructed in the rudiments of military discipline. They were drilled three times a week, early in the morning, so that mails were no excuse for non-attendance. When Captain Tronson left, about two months after the Corps had been formed, the men showed their appreciation of his services by presenting him with a handsome testimonial.

TRIADS IN THE NATIVE CITY.

The next event which concerns us is the capture of the Native City by the Triads on 7th September 1853. The capture of the City came as a great surprise and for foreigners alike. It was apparently accomplished without fuss or noise. Mr. Wetmore thus describes it:

"On a lovely morning in September (8th) 1853, when my boy came to my room for his usual ministrations, he told me in an excited way that the rebels had risen in the City, killed some of the officials, and were in undisputed possession of the place. The news came like thunder from a clear sky, as the day before everything was as peaceful in Shanghai as at the present time, and there had been no rumour that the city was in danger from rebels, either within or without, as none were supposed to be nearer than at Nanking; the tale in fact seemed perfectly incredible."

It was nevertheless true, and when Mr. Wetmore got to the Bund he found the usually peaceable country folk looting the Custom House. The Taotai escaped from the City with the aid of some foreigners, who lowered him over the wall. On the 9th September foreigners were placed on guard at the Customs, and at the English Church. The rebels maintained fairly good order in the city, and showed no disposition to interfere with the foreigners who paid frequent visits to that place to see what was going on. The foreigners, however, had an exciting time.

THE IMPERIALISTS.

The capture of the City brought along a large force of Imperialists, who camped on the Western bank of Defence Creek. The City was closely invested from all sides except that on which the Settlements were, and the rebels were also attacked from the river. The headquarters of the Imperialists were at the Red Joss house above the Stone Bridge on the Soochow creek, and a line of strong earthworks and fortified camps extended from Tunkadoo on the south side of the city, and parallel with its walls, to the Ningpo Joss house on the north-west, where there was a formidable mud fort, and thence, crossing the Defence creek, continued, on its western bank, along the edge of the present Race course about half way to the former site of the Horse Bazaar.

Battles and skirmishes were of almost daily occurrence, and occasionally large fires would be caused by the furious bombardment of the Imperial war junks. During November a brush took place between the Imperialists and the foreign guard which was on duty at the English Church. The volunteers and some seamen helped to drive the refractory troops out. Except for the frequent battles between the rebels and the Imperialists nothing further worth recording took place until the following April.

THE CHURCH TOWER.

That the foreigners took some interest in the fighting may be seen from the following paragraph in the "Herald" dated 1st April, 1854.

"We have been requested to caution the community against ascending in large numbers on the Church Tower, in order to watch the attack of the Imperialists against the City. The upper portion of the tower is very slightly built, and if it be crowded as on Wednesday night last, and again on Thursday, a catastrophe too painful to contemplate may result."

From this it would appear that the fighting was regarded as being more in the nature of a firework display than of serious warfare.

THE RAISON D'ÊTRE.

We now come to the events directly responsible for the battle in which the volunteers took such a prominent part. As stated before, the Imperialist troops were
encamped along the west bank of Defence Creek. On 3rd April they attacked four separate parties of foreigners in less than two hours. A lady and gentleman walking on the race course, then this side of the Creek, were suddenly surrounded and set upon by four or five of these ruffians armed with swords and spears, while several shots were fired at them from a distance. They escaped but the gentleman sustained no less than seven wounds, two of which were severe, though fortunately they did not prove dangerous. A small guard of eight men and an officer turned out on the alarm being given and found the Western face of the Settlements swarming with Imperialists who fired on every foreigner they saw. With the aid of Volunteer reinforcements the Imperialists were driven out, one of their camps was destroyed, and another was shelled.

The official account of the first fracas says that between 3 and 5 p.m. on the 3rd a party of Chinese soldiers proceeded into a building in progress of erection by a British merchant, for the purpose of robbery. When called upon to desist they attacked the merchant with swords and spears, and in self-protection he had to fire at them. Within the next two hours three separate parties were attacked, including the lady and gentleman above-mentioned. The Taotaes wrote to Mr. Alcock that day to apologise for the disturbance.

AN ULTIMATUM.

Mr. Alcock replied on the following day to the effect that the Imperial troops were becoming such a source of danger to the foreign community that, unless they struck camp and went 3 or 4 li further away in a South-Eastern direction by four o'clock that afternoon, they would be expelled from their entrenchments and their camp destroyed.

UNFAVOURABLE REPLY.

At 2.30 p.m. the Chinese General replied to the effect that the trouble of the previous day was the affair of some idle vagrants. He warned the Consuls that the troops with idlers and vagrants numbered twenty thousand men, and that if the foreigners fell upon them they would incur a very serious risk. But now we have come to a point where an eyewitness's account will give the best idea of what actually took place. Mr. Wetmore thus describes what happened after the attack on the lady and gentleman who were walking on the race course:

MR. WETMORE'S ACCOUNT.

"I, with several other residents armed with rifles, at once started for the scene of the outrage, and, on reaching what is now the head of the Maloo, saw parties of the Imperial soldiers, extending from the site of the old Horse Bazaar in the direction of the present Gas works, waving their flags and slowly advancing in a defiant attitude. We joined the four or five English marines on picket duty, who were sheltered by a large circular grave mound about where the junction of the Lloyd and Ningpo Roads now is, and were exchanging shots with the advancing Imperialists. There we remained for half an hour or more without any material accession to our numbers (as at that time of the day most of the residents were out for their afternoon exercise, and some delay took place in communicating with the men-of-war in port), when, as the Imperialists were pushing their left towards the site of the present jail, it looked as they were trying to cut off our retreat. The situation began to be decidedly unpleasant, as, if we continued to remain under cover there seemed to be a strong chance that we should be captured, while a movement to the rear involved the possibility of being hit by some of the bullets which were flying pretty freely. I had nearly made up my mind to the latter alternative, when the rap, tap, tap of drums was heard in the direction of the Settlement, and soon a column of marines and sailors from the English men-of-war came in sight, followed by a number of Americans with a small howitzer of Mr. E. Cunningham's. The appearance of these reinforcements brought a feeling of unspeakable relief to our beleagured party, and caused the Imperialists to draw rapidly back towards
their headquarters on the Soochow Creek. Thither they were followed for part of the way by the English force accompanied by the British Consul, Mr. Alcock, while the Americans threw a few shells into the camps on the other side of the Defence creek to the left, when, darkness coming on, all returned to the Settlement and quiet prevailed during the night.

THE 4TH APRIL.

Early the next morning operations were resumed by Captain O’Callaghan of the Encounter, who sent an armed force in boats to capture and bring under his guns a number of West Coast war junks that were anchored opposite the Old Dock. As, however, there was a towing and did not fire until the entrance and P. noon the whole decided that a demand should be sent to the British Consular grounds, and as the Encounter was anchored off the P. and O. premises, I had a fine view of the whole affair, though the shot from the Encounter came perilously near. Of course all business was suspended, and in the forenoon the Treaty Consuls held a consultation with the naval commanders, when it was decided that a demand should be sent to the Chinese General-in-chief insisting on the withdrawal of his soldiers from the vicinity of the Settlement, and informing him that, falling a compliance with this, an attack would be made upon his position at four o’clock by all the available foreign forces. The result of this consultation was rapidly disseminated throughout the Settlement, and all the able-bodied single men, as well as some who were married, responded to the call for muster in front of the Church at 3 p.m. The line was formed in the Kiangse Road, and extended nearly from the Nanking to Hankow Road. First came marines and bluejackets from H.M.’s ships Encounter and Grecian, with a field-piece, then the infantry volunteers under Mr. T. F. Wade (afterwards Sir Thomas Wade), H.M.’s Vice-Consul, about 200 men in all. Next the American party of marines and sailors from the U. S. sloop of war Plymouth, with one brass gun, a score or more of sailors from some of the merchant vessels, and volunteer residents, some in charge of Mr. Cunningham’s howitzer, and the rest armed with rifles, in all about 100 men. The English force was commanded by Captain O’Callaghan, with Lieut. Roderick Dew second in command, and accompanied by Mr. R. Alcock, H.B.M. Consul. The Americans were led by Captain Kelley of the U. S. sloop Plymouth, with Lieut. John Guest second in command, and accompanied by Mr. R. C. Murphy, U.S. Consul.

THE BATTLE.

At about half past three the column started with drums beating and colours flying, and we marched up the line of the Maloo, which was then but a narrow roadway through the fields. Arrived at the point where the Hupeh road (which was then the eastern side of the Race Course) cuts the Maloo, a halt was ordered, to await the reply of the Chinese General-in-chief to the dispatch which had been sent by the Consuls in the morning. The general opinion was that, if he had been in doubt before, the rather formidable demonstration we were making would induce him to yield to the Consular demands and withdraw his troops to a point further in the interior, and that we would simply have to march back as we had marched out. A few moments however decided the matter, as word passed rapidly along the line that a courier had arrived from headquarters, and soon it was known that the General refused to move his forces. At this intelligence there was a marked decline in the exuberance which had characterized the march out, and faces generally assumed a much more serious look, and I have no doubt most of the company wished themselves well out of it. As for myself, after the experience of the previous day, I must confess that I did not feel eager for the fray, but the word was given to advance and there was no holding back. The force then divided into two portions: the English went straight on, and took up a position in a little grove of firs
which stood at the end of the Maloo, opposite what is now the Lloyd Road. The Americans turned to the left, following the Race course along what are now Hupeh and Pakhoi Roads until they reached a point on the Course near the present Polytechnic building. Here we came in full view of the long line of Chinese entrenchments, their parapets decked with innumerable flags which fluttered gaily in the breeze, and one could hardly realise that instead of these gaudy preparations having been made for some brilliant fête at which we were to assist, as their appearance might betoken, they were indications of hostility and defiance. At this point our little band came to a halt, the guns were unlimbered and prepared for action, and we who had rifles were sent out to occupy a position to the left and act as sharpshooters, for which duty the ground was well adapted, being covered with mounds. My post happened to be on the extreme left close to the Yang-king-pang Creek. At four o'clock precisely fire was opened simultaneously, by the two howitzers of the American and the one gun of the British party, upon the Imperial camps and defences on the opposite side of the creek. Meantime our skirmishers worked gradually forward until we were considerably in advance of the shelling party, but as the enemy kept well under cover there was little for us to do. From my position on the extreme left I had an excellent opportunity to notice what was taking place on the other side of the Yang-king-pang. Hardly had our guns commenced firing when I saw the dreary waste of graves and mounds in that direction begin to brighten up with scarlet spots moving rapidly in and out of the intricacies of the ground, and it became at once apparent that the rebels in the city had embraced this heaven-sent opportunity to make a sortie and attack in force the works in front. Thicker and thicker grew the scarlet turbans, and the rebel swarm continued until the whole space between the city wall and the Yang-king-pang was covered with them, and so close were they to me that I could readily have exchanged communication with the nearest of them. Then with shouts, and waving of flags, and firing of guns, and brandishing of swords, they darted from mound to mound gradually working up to the enemy's position.

Looking next in front of us, it was evident that the flags which had decorated the parapets so brilliantly at the outset were now rapidly disappearing, and, as their tops could be seen moving across the country in the distance, it was manifest that the Imperialists were in full retreat. The shelling of the camps had continued for about half an hour, when word was passed to the skirmishers to fall in with the main body for a charge to the front. I must say I thought this was a bad move. I was very comfortable where I was, and much interested in watching the movements of our unexpected allies, the rebels. It was evident that the Imperialists were running away as fast as they could, and it appeared to me the best plan to let them do so quietly. However, orders must be obeyed, and we of the skirmishing party had to take hold of the ropes and help drag forward the guns. The order was given to Charge! and away we all went at a round trot, hurrahing as if it were the greatest fun imaginable, straight for the Defence Creek and the fortified camp on the other side. As is the case at the present day, there was then a gentle rise from our position to the creek, and the parapets beyond were six or seven feet high, so that it was impossible to see what was going on behind them. Thus far, I had not seen any of the enemy nor had I heard a single shot from the works, but though it was evident the foe were in full retreat, I thought it probable that a rearguard sufficient to deal with us might have been left behind. As we advanced with our glad hurrahs, the thought occurred to me that we could not reach the defences in front, which were evidently the objective of our commander, without wading waist deep through the creek, and this prospect of a cool mud bath, with perhaps a taste of cold steel at last as we crawled up the opposite bank, was not particularly attractive. However I thought "in for a penny in for a pound," and con-
tinned my cheers with the rest. Now at length we neared the precipitous bank of the creek, and I prepared myself by a preliminary sviner for the cold plunge I expected to make the next instant, when suddenly the order Halt! was given and echoed by several voices. At once it flashed through my mind that our gallant old commander thought it was all plain sailing right up to the foot of the parapet, and was entirely ignorant of the existence of the little obstacle that now confronted us in the Defence Creek with about four feet of mud and water. It also occurred to me that if any of the enemy were behind those works, we were in an extremely awkward plight, as we were not more than fifteen or twenty feet from them. At the same instant the air became lively with the ping, ping, ping, of bullets, and turning round to see what others seemed to think of it, I found a bluejacket lying curled up just behind me, and hearing one sailor remark to another "Poor fellow, he has lost the number of his mess," realised what had happened to him. Next there was G. G. Gray, of Russell and Co., being carried off with a bullet through each leg, and a marine close by with his face covered with blood. At the same time I saw many of the party executing a flank movement to the left, leaping a ditch on the side of the course, and seeking the friendly shelter of the grave mounds. A glance was sufficient to show me the wisdom of this movement, and without waiting for special orders I executed it myself as rapidly as possible. The mound which sheltered me was close to the verge of the creek, and I found there a lieutenant of the Plymouth. We crawled to near the top of the mound from which we could look over the parapets in front, and I saw only one Chinaman, and could not see indications of the presence of any more. After a time the humming of bullets ceased and our somewhat scattered force was collected together again. While all this was going on the English were by no means idle. After shelling the camps from their position, a portion of their force, including the volunteers, was detached to make a détour and attack the enemy in flank; and following up a creek at the north of the Horse Bazaar, they crossed some distance further up, and marching across country with little if any opposition from the flying Imperialists, took possession of the abandoned camps in front of us. As for the works to the left, including the mud forts and the entrenchments extending to Tunkadoo, they were captured and occupied by the rebels. Thinking all was now over, our party marched along the Race course to the old Grand Stand, just on-site where the Horse Bazaar is, but hardly had we reached that point when the air again became alive with sound, but this time of screaming shot, and once more we had to seek the best cover obtainable. These missiles we learned afterwards came from the junks which had escaped up the creek in the morning, and anchored off the present Gas works. Their crews fired broadsides of shotted guns at us and then jumping overboard all swam ashore and retreated to positions of safety. Soon after this episode the English party joined us and together we marched back to the settlement, many of the sailors decked with strings of cash and other spoils which they had secured.

After Thoughts.

The general feeling however was not one of unalloyed satisfaction. The Imperialists had been driven from their camps, it is true, and thus far the object of the expedition had been achieved, but it had been at a considerable sacrifice of life on our side. Then our success had not been accomplished single-handed, as the rebels had been an important factor in the result. Indeed I have often doubted if the Imperialists would have left their camps at all, except perhaps in our immediate front, had it not been for their unexpected assistance. Then again the Imperialist force was estimated at 10,000 fighting men, and it seemed not at all unlikely that they would return and attack the settlement as soon as they recovered from what must have been to them a great surprise. I doubt very much if many of them were killed, as our shells appeared to range too high, exploding a long way in their rear, and the rifle shots could hardly have penetrated the thick walls of mud. As for the shower of bullets which greeted us.
when we came to a halt at the edge of the creek, and which did so much mischief in our ranks, I never could understand whence it came. Although I was close to the Imperialists works, I did not hear the report of a single gun or see one puff of smoke coming from them. The bullets must have come from a distance as I saw many of them strike the ground, throwing up jets of dust in our midst, and they were either fired by retreating soldiers or we were unfortunate enough to receive the fire of the English party, which was coming up in the rear of the camps and consequently in our front, and this seems more likely as the casualties in their ranks were attributed to our fire as they were approaching us from the west. There appears to have been no clear understanding between the English and American commanders as to the plan of operations, and owing to the rough nature of the ground between their position and ours, and as neither party had any mounted men, no communication was had or attempted between the two parties until ours had come to a halt on the banks of the creek. Thus, as moreover the enemy’s parapets completely shut out from our view the country beyond, we had no idea of the movement being made by the English detachment in the rear of the camps until after our firing had ceased.

The Imperialists made much more show of fighting on the third than on the fourth of April, as on the first day they appeared in the open in considerable numbers, and not only held their ground but advanced upon us, while on the second day they remained completely hidden behind the walls of their camps, so much so that I saw only one of them, though I had the best possible opportunities for observation.

My own opinion has ever been that to the unexpected co-operation of the rebels, of whom their besiegers had a mortal dread, we were chiefly indebted for our easy victory, and that had it not been for them the result for us would have been disastrous. The only other explanation of the passiveness shown by the Imperialists is that, their General may have concluded that he had made a mistake in not acceding to the demand of the Consuls when he saw the threat made by them was not an empty one, and that the foreign force was proceeding to attack his camps, and fearing the complications which might arise in consequence he may have ordered his soldiers to withdraw without resistance. That 10,000 men strongly entrenched should have given way to three hundred, not half of whom knew anything about fighting, seems incredible, if resistance had been really intended. As for the men engaged in the affair their behaviour was unexceptionable throughout. Most of the residents who participated in it were men of intelligence and quite as competent to form correct opinion as to the expediency of the step as those whose official position gave them the power to decide to take it; and not a few were of opinion that the circumstances of the case were not such as to warrant a resort to such extreme measures, involving the gravest risk to the safety of the settlement. Whatever may have been their opinions, however, none held back when the attack had been decided upon, though all must have realised very keenly the serious danger to which they were committed, and the Shanghai Volunteers particularly were entitled to the greatest credit for the leading part they took in the affair. Their flanking march was a perilous enterprise, as it took them for some distance directly towards the Imperialist headquarters, and had the retreating soldiers rallied and attacked them, they would almost inevitably have been cut off, for they were a long way from all support, and would have had no chance to escape except by swimming the Defence creek which had brought our party to stand.”

THE “NORTH-CHINA HERALD’S” ACCOUNT.

Mr. Wetmore’s description deals almost entirely with the American attack. The movements of the British force were described at length in the “North-China Herald” of 8th April, 1854, from which we take the following extract:—
MUDDY FLAT.
April 4th, 1854.

Shells were thrown into the camps from the field piece, under Lieut. Montgomery of the Encounter, with great precision and effect, while the main body of the British Naval forces, in conjunction with the volunteers, moved on to occupy them. To effect this, a détour had to be made, beyond the Riding Course, as the bridge which formerly led across the Yangkimyang Creek (on the South of the Settlements) had been previously broken down. The Creek was crossed at the wooden bridge to the westward of Paddy Bird Grove. Six Marines and six Volunteers were stationed at this point to protect the rear of the attacking party. On crossing the bridge, the regular forces under Captains O'Callaghan and Keane, advanced to the south-eastward, while the Volunteers under Mr. Wade, advanced to the south so as to cover the flank of the main attack. The shelling had now begun to take effect, and numbers began to retreat from the west side of the camps. As our men advanced upon the North front of the most northerly camp, numbers of soldiers were visible behind the embankments. On their nearer approach, as they were concentrating upon a gateway leading into the camps, before which a wooden board had been erected, a cannon was discharged, which killed one seaman of the Encounter and wounded several others. The men went bravel-forward and the Volunteers advanced upon the right. A volley of musketry was fired by the Imperialist soldiers, on which they had evidently relied, but the ditch was crossed and the camp taken. At this time one of the Volunteers was dangerously wounded by a musket shot, through the head. The Imperialists now retreated rapidly towards their camps on the Soochow Creek. The camps were soon set on fire, and as there was a fresh breeze blowing the flames spread rapidly. The order to retire was now given,—two wounded Chinese found in the camp were removed to a place of safety, and the troops defiled towards the north along the banks of the creek. The Americans in the meantime had done their part well and bravely, but we regret with considerable casualties. They were unable to get into the camps, in consequence of their being unprovided with the means of crossing the Creek, and after their occupation by the British, they retired to defend the rear, towards the Soochow Creek where the Imperialists were re-assembling in considerable numbers. Two war-junks lying in the Creek fired two broadsides,—the shots were not badly aimed but they fortunately took no effect. The return was accomplished without further incident, the advancing bodies of soldiers having been effectually checked by the fire of field pieces. The rear-guard left at the wooden bridge was compelled to retire upon the guns, as the numbers of the enemy approaching were too large and the fire too hot. The report goes on to say that the whole fight only lasted about two hours and that the Volunteers behaved with great coolness. The total losses on the attacking side were two killed and 15 wounded.

CORRESPONDENCE.

On the evening of the 4th April Mr. R. Alcock, H.B.M.'s Consul, wrote a long letter to the foreign consuls in which, after stating the reasons which had led to the battle being fought he went on to say that "the only consolation is to be found in the conviction, which the resistance made by the Chinese soldiers, and the refusal of their officers to give any order to avoid bloodshed, materially tend to confirm, that after the events of yesterday there was no safety for the settlement if these encampments were allowed to remain; and that however deplorable the sacrifices which their compulsory removal has entailed, they are small, compared to those which awaited the whole community, had any hesitation been shown in proving our determination to put a stop to unprovoked aggression of so dangerous a character," and, he added, "we can only hope that this may be the last effort the armed force will called upon by a stern necessity to make for the protection of the community; but if it should unfortunately prove otherwise, I am satisfied that under existing circumstances in China, there is less to be risked and lost by a firm and unhesitating resistance, whether the attacking party be
Insurgents or Imperialists than must inevitably be incurred by any temporising or timid policy.”

Mr. Alcock also wrote to H.E. Keil, Acting Provincial Judge, saying that he could not express regret at having been constrained to such a measure, especially at such a crisis. If the troops would not obey his Excellency’s instructions it was time they were taught that there was no measure necessary to their safety that the foreign community would not undertake. The foreigners had no desire for further bloodshed but they would not allow the position near the race course to be re-occupied by any troops.

This letter was written with the concurrence of the French and American consuls.

Gratitude of the Community.

On 12th April a letter signed by 146 British subjects was addressed to the officers and men of H.M.S. 's Encounter and Grecian, and to Mr. Thomas Wade, thanking them “for the prompt and decisive measures taken for the defence of the Settlement.” The Americans sent a similar letter to their Consul and the officers and men of the U.S.S. Plymouth.

The losses sustained in the battle were 2 killed and 16 wounded. Of the latter two, Mr. J. E. Brine, and Capt. Pearson of the American merchant ship Rose Standish, afterwards died. Captain Pearson was buried with military honours and the body was followed to the grave by the Consular Corps and Naval officers and seamen from British and American ships. The ships in port and all the consulates lowered their flags to half mast and the flags on the city wall were also lowered. The rebels fired a salute of three guns from the East gate at the time of the funeral.

Mr. Brine only survived Capt. Pearson by a few days. He was buried with full military honours on 30th April.

The Effect of the Battle.

It was at first doubtful whether the Battle of Muddy Flat had been sufficiently decisive to keep the Imperialists from attempting to camp near the Race Course again. They did not try to return to their old camps and although various rumours were constantly afloat about their intention to avenge their defeat, they never did so. Towards the end of May a report was current to the effect that the Imperialists had vowed vengeance on the foreign community and that they had some mysterious understanding with the rebels who were to co-operate with them in overwhelming the Settlement. This, however, was nothing more than a report. The Imperialists directed all their attention to the siege of the city and attacks and counter-attacks were. if anything, more frequent than they had been before the 4th April.

Captain O'Callaghan.

On 28th April Rear-Admiral J. Stirling, Commander-in-Chief on the China station wrote a somewhat guarded letter to the gallant commander of the Encounter. Whilst carefully avoiding any expression of opinion as to the justice of the attack he said that personal conduct of Captain O'Callaghan and his officers and men had elicited his warmest admiration. On 4th August the British Residents in Shanghai presented the gallant Captain with a handsome piece of plate in recognition of his services on the 4th April.

Parliamentary Approval.

The official correspondence respecting “the attack by the Imperialists on the foreign settlement at Shanghai” was presented to both houses of Parliament. The approval of the government was conveyed to Mr. Alcock in the following letter:

Superintendency of Trade,
Hongkong, 22nd August, 1854.

Sir,—I had the honour of transmitting to the Earl of Clarendon copy of your Despatch reporting the circumstances of the late attack upon the Imperial camps, and I conveyed at the same time copy of my communication to you of the 19th April approving of the measures you had taken.
A stone tablet was erected in Trinity Cathedral to the memory of those who fell in the battle, of which the following is a copy:

Sacred

TO THE MEMORY OF

R. H. PEARSON
OF NEWBURY PORT, MASSACHUSETTS, U.S.A.,
LATE COMMANDER OF THE AMERICAN SHIP "ROSE STANDISH";

J. A. BRINE
OF THIS PLACE, AND A MEMBER OF THE VOLUNTEER CORPS:

W. BLACKMAN
CARPENTER OF H.B.M. STEAMER "ENCOUNTER";

G. MCCORKLE
SEAMAN OF THE U. STATES SLOOP "PLYMOUTH";

WHO FELL WHEN IN ARMS IN DEFENCE OF THIS SETTLEMENT
ON 4TH APRIL, 1854.

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED BY THE COMMUNITY
AS AN EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE FOR GENEROUS SERVICE,
OF ADMIRATION OF THEIR BRAVERY
OF SORROW FOR THEIR DEATH

"THOU HAST GIRDED ME WITH STRENGTH UNTO THE BATTLE;
THOU HAST SUBDUED UNDER ME THOSE THAT ROSE UP
AGAINST ME."

PSALM XVIII—39.
I have the great satisfaction of now stating to you that in a Despatch from Earl Clarendon, dated 16th June, His Lordship says: “Her Majesty’s Government entirely approve of Mr. Alcock’s proceedings, and they consider that he displayed great courage and judgment in circumstances of no ordinary difficulty,” and the Government views with similar approbation the conduct of Vice-Consul Wade as reported in my Despatch.

I have, etc.,
(Signed) John Bowring.
R. Alcock, Esq., etc., etc., etc.,
Shanghai.

SOME INCIDENTS.

On 8th November some Imperialists came on to the Race Course and fired at the American guard. Sailors were landed from an American warship in port and a threatened attack in the rear from the rebels caused the Imperialists to retire.

On 13th December the French bombarded the East gate of the city where a battery was being erected in spite of their protests. A landing party demolished the earth works and spiked the guns.

The Imperialists frequently sprung mines close to the city walls, sometimes making very big breaches in this way. The rebels however usually repaired the walls without much difficulty. On one occasion they were too quick for their foes and captured over 300 bags of powder before the mine had time to explode.

On 21st June during an engagement between the two parties some Imperialists fired on the English Guard which had been placed on the Race Course. The marines fired back and then retired. Admiral Stirling who was in Shanghai at the time demanded and obtained full satisfaction for this outrage.

EVACUATION OF THE CITY BY THE REBELS.

We must now pass on to February 1855. In the intervening period the rebels had been having a pretty warm time, being attacked by both French and Imperialists. On 17th February, during the night they evacuated the city, and Chin A-ling, the General, fled towards Sioawaik with a few followers. Most of the latter were captured and beheaded by the Imperialists. The news of the evacuation was almost as great a surprise to the foreign community as the news of the occupation had been. During the night of the 17th a big fire was observed to be raging eastward over the city, and when next morning dawned a vague rumour came in that the Imperialists were in the city. The latter when they did get in behaved in a most brutal manner, butchering right and left.

“Immense mounds of heads and headless bodies were everywhere about the city and the suburbs, and the unfortunate people who were found alive were ruthlessly pillaged. One unlucky man had been compelled to pay three hundred thousand taels to the insurgents and the Imperialists now made him pay two hundred thousand more for having complied with these demands.” The rebels before they left the city filled a number of houses with combustibles and set them alight; it is estimated that the fire thus created destroyed half the city. The Imperialists marched into the city by a breach they had blown in the walls some time before. Numbers of the rebels found refuge in the British settlement until they could get away to a safer place.

THE VOLUNTEERS.

After the Battle of Muddy Flat the Volunteers appear to have been disbanded and it was not until 1860 when the Taipings again threatened Shanghai that the Corps was once more enrolled. During August there was a good deal of fighting in this neighbourhood, both English and French forces engaging the rebels. On 14th August the community was somewhat startled by finding rebel proclamations posted all over the Settlements, and during that week energetic measures were taken to put the Settlements in a state of thorough defence. In addition to the outer line of fortifications stretching from the South gate to the Soochow Creek, barriers were placed across the principal streets. The “Herald” of the 18th August says: “these it is intended shall be held by the Volunteers, who we are sure, will in case
of need give a good account of themselves and their weapons. A rebel is easier to hit than a pheasant or a snipe, and our band of Volunteers, now we believe 150 strong, will form no despicable addition to our means of security."

THE TAIPINGS AT NINGPO.

In December 1861, Ningpo was taken by the Taipings and the Volunteers were once more called upon to undertake a great deal of hard work.

The volunteers drilled in Messrs Dent and Co.'s godown. The Corps was enthusiastic in its work and at one time could parade two companies of 80 men each.

They were employed, chiefly, in patrolling the streets, and in January 1862 the Light Horse under the name of Mounted Rangers were enrolled for scouting purposes. On the 12th March a meeting of the Volunteers was held at which it was decided to form half a battery of Artillery. On 25th August the Mounted Rangers, under Capt. Borlaise, R.N., scattered a large rebel force near Shanghai, killing many. So long as there was any likelihood of the services of the Volunteers being required there was no lack of men, but when things once more settled down enthusiasm in amateur soldiering died down and in July 1867 things came to such a pass that a suggestion was made to form the Volunteers into a Rifle Company. All arms were called in and without actual disbandment the Corps was allowed to sink into a state of dormancy until the following October. A deficit of £1s. 50d. in the finances was met by selling the rifles. The meeting in October resolved to let the Corps remain in abeyance until necessity arose for action. The members kept their names on the muster roll and held themselves in readiness to drill if required to do so.

THE CORPS REFORMED.

In 1870 the massacre in Tientsin alarmed Shanghai and in July "the S.V.C. met in the main guard for the purpose of reforming the Corps. There was a very large attendance. Sir E. Hornby presided." It was arranged that the foot was to consist of three Companies, besides a corps of Mounted Rangers. The command of the Corps was invested in the Chairman of the Municipal Council for the time being, and the Council undertook to provide arms and pay the expenses of the Corps. The Corps was to consist of the Rifle Brigade, Fire Brigade, and Rangers. Two hundred names were inscribed on the muster roll exclusive of the fire brigade. The French Municipal Council raised a Volunteer force the same week. At the end of July there were 500 names on the Volunteer Roll. The firemen seem to have had charge of the two Armstrong guns which were lent to the Volunteers by Mr. Telge. In August the Corps was armed with Sniders and a year or two later Martini-Henry rifles were introduced.

In that month an attempt was made to form a Volunteer Reserve Guard composed of the 500 to 600 able-bodied residents who had not joined the Corps. The scheme however was not enthusiastically received and fell through. Later in the year two 12-lb. howitzers were ordered from Hongkong for the Artillery. On the 12th October the Corps paraded to receive a stand of colours presented by the ladies of Shanghai. The year 1870 was one of the busiest times the S.V.C. has ever had. Drills, parades, sham fights and route marches were of almost weekly occurrence.

THE NINGPO JOSS-HOUSE RIOT.

The next occasion on which the Volunteers were called out was during a riot in the French Concession. The French authorities wanted to make a road along side the Ningpo Joss House and on 3rd May 1874 the natives became so incensed that they rioted, burnt down a number of houses and attacked several Europeans. The Volunteers were called out at 9 p.m. The fire brigade seems to have done most of the work on this occasion as the natives were setting fire to houses right and left. Captain Hart took command of the Volunteers. When the latter got to the scene of the riot the rioters, warned of their approach, had dispersed.

During the riot the French police and Volunteers killed eight Chinese. Captain Hart was afterwards given the rank of Major, and was the first to hold that rank in the S.V.C.
Under Major Hart's command the volunteers did not seem to prosper and so little interest seems to have been taken in the Corps that in October 1878 a public meeting was called "to consider the present condition of the Corps, and to take such measures as may seem most advisable in order to restore it to its former state of efficiency."

PUBLIC MEETING.

At this meeting Major Hart proposed that No. 1 Company and the Mih-ho-loongs should be amalgamated. He further suggested that one style of uniform should be worn by the whole Corps, but at an adjourned meeting modified his suggestion to a resolution that one kind of uniform should be worn by the whole of the infantry Corps. The meeting finally decided that there should only be two Companies No. 1 and the Mih-ho-loongs, and No. 2. The Rangers seem to have gone out of existence. No. 1 and the Mih-ho-loongs being virtually non est during their amalgamation. No. 2 Company claimed to be the senior Company, and this point was again raised in the "North-China Daily News" a few years ago. Major Hart in a letter to the Captain of No. 2 Company pointed out that No. 1 Company, the Mih-ho-loongs, had never been disbanded.

In 1879 the Council decided to provide the uniform of the Corps. Early in this year Major Hart resigned. In the spring it was definitely decided that the uniform of the Corps should be scarlet.

On 7th April the Volunteers met to elect a new commanding officer, and their choice rested upon Captain Holliday of No. 1 Company. Mr. Holliday retained command of the Corps until 1882 when he left for home. In 1883 his brother, Mr. C. J. Holliday was selected to take his place. During the former's tenure of office commissions were issued to Messrs. Brodie A. Clarke, George Lanning, and W. H. Anderson, whose names are still on the strength.

BUILDERS' RIOTS.

On the 9th June 1882 there was a strike among the builders in Shanghai, and as they gathered in large numbers and stoned the police, No. 1 Company of the Volunteers was called out. This had the desired effect and the rioters dispersed without giving any further trouble.

FIRST ANNUAL INSPECTION.

The first Annual Inspection of the Corps took place on 14th April 1883 when Major Halahan, specially appointed by General Sargent at Hongkong was present. On this occasion there were 176 officers and men on parade. In June 1883 there was a riot in the Maloo but the Volunteers, although warned, were not called out as the police force was sufficient to quell the riot.

ARRIVAL OF THE GUNS.

In February 1886 a battery of 4 Armstrong 9-pounder guns arrived, a present from the British Government to the S.V.C. These are still the weapons of the Artillery, and although of a somewhat antiquated pattern there is no reason why they should not see a good many more years' service in the Corps.

NEW COMPANIES.

During 1884 a Portuguese Company was formed and in 1891 a German Company was enrolled, which took the name of Prince Henry of Prussia during His Highness's stay here. The year 1895 was the next year of importance in the history of the S.V.C. In that year the first paid adjutant, Captain MacKenzie, was introduced and the Corps was re-armed with Lee-Metford Rifles.

THE WHEELBARROW RIOT.

The modern history of the Corps cannot be dealt with at any length in this article and space prohibits us from giving anything more than the merest outline of the Corps' doings during the past ten years. On 5th April 1897 the famous Wheelbarrow Riot took place. It was caused by the raising of the license fees by the Municipal Council. The riot was started by a mob of about 700 coolies crossing from the French Settlement on to the Bund. They attacked the police who would have been overwhelmed but for the assistance of numerous members of the Shanghai Club. At noon the general alarm—consisting of rapid strokes on the Fire bell and the firing
of four guns by the senior British ship—was given. The Volunteers promptly responded and the various companies were instructed to patrol the bridges and mount guard over the chief buildings of the Settlement. During the night the German Company, which was on duty at the Yunnan Road bridge was stoned and detachments of “A” Company and the Light Horse were sent to their assistance. The mob was thus effectually dispersed. On Tuesday the 6th the Council most ignominiously backed down and agreed to postpone the increase of license fees for three months. So indignant were the Volunteers that at first there was some talk of the whole Corps resigning in a body. Happily the Council resigned instead, after a meeting at which the leading members of the community expressed their indignation at the loss of prestige caused by the Council’s surrender of its rights.

RECENT YEARS.

In 1898 a Naval Company was formed to work two Nordenfeldt guns purchased by the Council. After 1900 it was disbanded. During the past ten years the “C” Company and the Portuguese Company have gone out of existence. In 1897 the Reserve Company was formed, but it was in 1900 that the most important changes in the Corps took place.

THE YEAR 1900.

The Boxer trouble started a new era in the history of the S.V.C. Whereas before then the Corps numbered only about 500, this trouble raised the strength to nearly 1,000. In this year the uniform was changed from red to khaki and when the Boxer troubles were at their height a Japanese Company was formed. On its first appearance on parade it numbered 95 officers and men. A Customs Company and an American Company were also raised, but the latter seems to have been disbanded after the crisis. In this year the Council purchased six Maxim guns which were distributed among the infantry companies. They have recently been placed in the hands of the Maxim Company, which promises to be one of the most useful branches of the Corps. During the troubles of 1900 Major Mackenzie, the commandant of the Corps was at home on leave, and in his absence Major Brodie Clarke was in command. Although Shanghai was not attacked during 1900 there is no doubt that the ready response to the call to arms had a good moral effect. Had it not been for the Volunteers there would probably have been a panic in the Settlement as at one time there was not a single warship in Port.

As usual, after the trouble was over the numbers decreased again, but, nevertheless, Shanghai has now a well-armed, well-drilled force of about 500 men, and should there be any necessity for more there would be no difficulty in getting them.

LIEUT.-COLONEL MACKENZIE.

Lient.-Colonel Mackenzie gave up the command of the Corps in the spring of 1903 and his place was taken by Major W. M. Watson of the Chinese Regiment, who has been seconded by the British Government for three years’ service with the Corps.

THE S. V. C. AS IT IS.

In conclusion we give a statement of the number of officers and men on parade at the annual inspection on 2nd April 1904.

<table>
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<th>Capts.</th>
<th>Lieuts.</th>
<th>Sergts.</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>68</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>—</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</table>

Total... 377

There are 495 men on the Corps roll, including a Reserve Co. of over 80 men.
A LINK WITH THE FIFTIES.

There is, so far as we know, only one gentleman living in Shanghai at present who was a resident in 1854—Doctor J. Edkins. In response to a note asking for some assistance in the compiling of this supplement Dr. Edkins intimated that he would be glad to see the writer on the following day. Seated in a cozy little room in the Customs he received the writer with his usual kindliness. Although, in his 81st year Dr. Edkins is still hale and vigorous, and bears his years so lightly that he appears nearer three than fourscore years of age. He took his degree at the London University in 1843 and in 1848 was out here in the London Mission. Dr. Edkins remembers the capture of the city by the Triads quite well. The foreign community, he said, soon got accustomed to the whizzing of balls and the noise of the fights which were constantly taking place between the Triads and Imperialists. Dr. Edkins, and numerous other foreigners paid frequent visits to the city, and the insurgents showed a uniform friendliness towards foreigners, never attempting to molest them. Some people attributed the ill-feeling between the Imperialists and the foreign community to the friendly relations between the latter and the rebels. Cannon shots and rifle bullets fired by both combatants frequently struck missions and foreign dwellings. In Doctor Edkins' own dwelling a shot once came through the East window and struck and broke a rocking chair. On the day when the city was captured, when a big fire was threatening the Mission Chapel Doctor Edkins spoke to Kirhang, the generalissimo of the Imperialists, as he was walking in the midst of his men, who at once sent orders to the city magistrate to take steps to arrest the danger.

Another interesting recollection of Doctor Edkins' is that he showed Robert Fortune, the man who introduced tea into India, over the city during the Triad occupation. As regards the reason for the Battle of Muddy Flat, he heard more about the attack on Doctor Medhurst, who was riding down the Maloo, than about the assaults on the lady and gentleman who were walking on the race course. Dr. Edkins and a great many others thought that the action of the English and American Consuls in this affair was somewhat too hasty, and he could only explain it by a natural chivalry where a lady had been attacked. He, himself, did not see the battle, though Mr. Wylie of his Mission went out with the force which attacked the camps. Mr. Wylie, however, like a great many others, thought that the Chinese would retire when they saw that the Consul's threats were no idle words. The Custom House was rebuilt after the Triads had left the city and when Dr. Edkins paid a visit there shortly afterwards he saw Sir Thomas Wade, who was sitting in an alcove at the north end of a long room superintending the clerks in their duties. When the insurgents evacuated the city the English and Americans showed them the greatest kindness, even paying numerous barbers to shave off the long locks which rendered them so conspicuous, and helping them to go on board ships which would take them safely away.