

MAJOR-GENERAL CHARLES WINDHAM, C.B.,
THE "HERO OF THE REDAN."

THIS gallant soldier, of whose heroic valour, coolness, and determination, as leader of the Redan storming parties, it is impossible to speak too highly, is a grand-nephew of the distinguished statesman, William Windham, whose estate at Felbridge, in the county of Norfolk, descended by lineal heirship to the present Windhams. The General was born in Norfolk, and is the fourth son of Vice-Admiral Windham, and younger brother of the late Mr. W. H. Windham, who represented East Norfolk in 1832; he is also brother of the Countess of Listowel, and uncle of Lord Ennismore. He was a Guardsman, having spent his early military career in the Coldstreams. He entered the Army in 1826; acted during the campaign as Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the Fourth Division; and subsequently he was appointed by General Simpson to the command of the Second Brigade of the Second Division, upon Brigadier-General Lockyer's appointment to the Ceylon command; and he was afterwards appointed Commandant of the portion of Sebastopol occupied by the British (Karabelnaia). The heroic course which Colonel (now General) Windham took in the assault on the Great Redan is to be reckoned among the most glorious achievements of the war. After describing the difficulties with which the storming party

had to contend, from the superior numbers and position of the enemy, and from a general impression entertained by the soldiers that the place was mined, and that they might be at any moment blown up, the frightful and disproportionate loss of officers, who fell by reason of their prominence in endeavouring to dissipate any undue apprehension of the kind—we are told that the Brigadiers capable of guiding the attack were reduced to one—Colonel Windham. This gallant officer did more than could be expected of human energy to accomplish, in order to obtain a prompt and adequate reserve with which he felt the Redan might have been held, despite any amount of force the Russians could bring to bear upon them. Three times did Colonel Windham send officers to Sir W. Codrington for reinforcements; for though the need of help must have been obvious to the superior officer placed in a position to command the entire attack, none came. All three officers failed to deliver their message, in consequence of being wounded whilst attempting to pass from the ditch to the rear of the Redan. The Colonel's Aide-de-Camp, Lieut. Swire, was next dispatched, but he, also, was dangerously wounded as he went on his perilous errand. For an hour the enemy were mowing our men down by hundreds, and even the small dribblets that from time to time arrived were so disordered from the fire to which they had been exposed as to be almost useless. At length Colonel Windham determined upon taking a course which, for personal daring and recklessness of his own life, has rarely been paralleled.

A Russian officer stepped over the breastwork, and tore down a gabion with his own hands; it was to make room for a field-piece. Colonel Windham

exclaimed to several soldiers who were firing over the parapet, "Well, as you are so fond of firing, why don't you shoot the Russian!" They fired a volley, and missed him, and soon afterwards the field-piece began to play on the head of the salient with the grape. Colonel Windham saw there was no time to be lost. He had sent three officers for reinforcements, and, above all, for men in formation, and he now resolved to go to General Codrington himself. Seeing

Capt. Crealock, of the 9th, near him, busy in encouraging his men, and exerting himself with great courage and energy to get them into order, he said, "I must go to the General for supports. Now, mind, let it be known, in case I am killed, why I went away." He crossed the parapet and ditch and succeeded in gaining the fifth parallel, through a storm of grape and rifle-bullets, in safety. General Codrington asked him if he thought he really could do anything with such supports as he could afford, and said he might take the Royals, who were then in the parallel. "Let the officers come out in front—let us advance in order, and if the men keep their formation, the Redan is ours," was the Colonel's reply; but he spoke too late—for at that very moment the men were seen leaping down into the ditch, or running down the parapet of the salient, and through the embrasures out of the work into the ditch, while the Russians followed them with the bayonet and with heavy musketry, and even threw stones and grape-shot at them as they lay in the ditch. Colonel Wind-



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ham is universally allowed, by the course which he took, to have retrieved, in his own person, the honour of the army on that day, aided by those brave men who fell for the most part at his side in his attempt to sustain this unequal contest. These eminent services are thus recognised in the General Order for Colonel Windham's promotion:—

"The Queen has also been most graciously pleased to command that Colonel Charles Ash Windham, C.B., shall be promoted to the rank of Major-General, for his distinguished conduct in heading the column of attack which assaulted the enemy's defences, on the 8th of September, with the greatest intrepidity and coolness, as specially brought to the notice of her Majesty in the public despatch of the Commander of the Forces, dated the 4th of September, 1855."

It is known only to a few of the friends of this gallant officer who have survived the Crimean campaign, that when the celebrated flank movement of the army was made on Balaclava, Colonel Windham on that occasion was the bearer of the despatch to the naval Commander-in-Chief (Admiral Dundas), requesting the co-operation of the fleet, and that he afterwards proceeded with the order from Admiral Dundas to Sir Edmund Lyons, directing him to take the *Agamemnon* round to Balaclava.

"DIEU ET MON DROIT."—This was the *parole* of the day given by Richard I. of England to his army at the battle of Gisors, in France. In this battle the French were defeated; and in remembrance of this signal victory he made it the motto of the royal arms of England, and it has ever since been retained.