

duced by the earth's atmosphere are reduced to a minimum. We have previously remarked that the pole of the ecliptic is situated in Draco, and that the nearest star to it greater than the fourth magnitude is Zeta Draconis. Some conception of the general extent of this constellation can be gathered from the following lines:—

"A line from Dubhe, in the Bear, sent right the Guards between,
The stars which form the Dragon's tail in midway will be seen.
Far to the east the body winds, where Lyra's lustres glow,
A ray from Vega to the Pole its lozenge-head will show."

The diagrams of the midnight sky of September also represent the appearance of the heavens at 2 A.M. on August 15th, at 10 P.M. on October 15th, at 8 P.M. on November 15th, and at 6 P.M. on December 15th.

NAPIER OF MAGDALA.



Napier of Magdala

THE name of Napier has been so frequently connected with military and naval triumphs, from the time of the first Napoleon down to the present day, that it has almost become to English ears a guarantee for whatever success could be desired. The idea of failure has been never connected with it, because it could never be said that a Napier had failed in any undertaking fairly confided to his charge. The race of daring brothers and cousins descended from the man of Merchiston who framed the *canon mirabilis logarithmorum*—men who were as dauntless of soul as he was subtle in brain—have left, each of them, a name and a fame that are historical. They have scarcely sunk below the horizon when the famous name is wreathed with fresh laurels by another Napier.

Whoever has studied the history of British rule in India will have been tolerably familiar with the deeds of the Napier who was destined to be the conqueror of Abyssinia. As Brigadier, and afterwards as General Napier, he fought in all the fierce wars that were waged on Indian soil, from the outbreak of the first war in the Punjab, in 1845, down to the final suppression of the

terrible Sepoy Mutiny in 1858-9. Sir Robert has earned his honours by severe soldierly work. He had his horse killed under him at Moodkee, and was himself severely wounded at Ferozeshah. He fought at Sobraon and Lahore; conducted the siege of the fortress of Kangra; and was chief engineer at Mooltan, where again he was seriously wounded. He commanded the scientific corps of the right wing at Goojerat; and he was with Sir Walter Gilbert in that famous pursuit of the Affghans across the territory of the Punjab to the gorges of the Khyber Pass. Subsequently, under Lord Dalhousie, he carried out, as chief engineer, various important works in the conquered province, and reduced the predatory hordes of the Suleiman and the Black Mountains to submission. During the mutiny of the Sepoy army, as chief of Sir James Outram's staff, he took part in the battles round Lucknow; he commanded a column in the rescue of the siege train at Charbagh; he rendered ready and most important service at Gwalior; at Jowra Alipore he dashed with the suddenness of a tempest on a body of rebels ten times as numerous as his own troops, and drove them in panic rout. In

August, 1858, he surprised Mann Singh in Paoree, stormed the place with shot and shell, put the rebels to flight, razed their stronghold to the ground, and after a brief rest was again in pursuit of their scattered bands. In the campaign in China, memorable for the disastrous loss of the British in the attack on the Taku forts, and which ended in the capture of Peking, General Napier served with his characteristic energy and vigour. Twice during his career of warfare in the East he earned the thanks of Parliament for his brilliant services.

When all peaceful attempts to recover our fellow-subjects held in captivity by King Theodore of Abyssinia had proved vain, and it became necessary to have recourse to arms for their deliverance, an expedition was determined on, and Sir Robert appointed commander-in-chief. Never, perhaps, was an expedition inaugurated under more lugubrious forebodings—never, certainly, has any warlike enterprise been concluded with a success so complete and satisfactory. Difficulties of so formidable a kind, it was said, would have to be encountered, that it were almost hopeless to expect to surmount them. The route of the advancing army would lie through a savage country practically inaccessible to numbers—the natives would rise against them and bar their progress—famine would mow them down, and pestilence dog their steps—and the tropical monsoons would overtake them before their work was half done; and they would disastrously succumb to the manifold obstacles that lay in their path. It is perfectly true that great difficulties had to be encountered, though they were not precisely of the kind which the croakers insisted on. What they were likely to be, Sir Robert, from his long Indian experience, extending over some quarter of a century, was exceedingly well qualified to judge, and he took the necessary precautions against them. People at home could not understand the real drift of the prudential measures he adopted; and it is amusing, now that all is done, to review the criticisms of the press as they were promulgated from time to time while the expedition was in its earlier stages. By degrees the prudence and foresight of the commander began to be recognised. It was seen that he was fully prepared for all emergencies. The natives, who were to have barred his way by their hostility, were transformed into friends and allies, because they were made to understand, by the magic of cash payments for everything, that it was to their interest to aid and not to hinder the advance of the British force. So thoroughly was the native mind subdued to this conviction, that the cardinal difficulty of the enterprise—the difficulty of the journey—was solved more by their assistance than by any other means. The four hundred miles of savage and mountainous wilds which lay between Magdala and the coast were bridged over by the good feeling engendered by ready-money and fair dealing, which made the whole line of march a profitable market for the native produces. The maxim that “honesty is the best policy” has rarely been illustrated in so forcible a manner, and the policy of honesty never produced more welcome results. The hardships of the route were endured with exemplary fortitude by the entire army; amidst excessive labours and fatigue, alternating with privations of a most trying kind, they pressed steadily forward. Had their advance been opposed by the forces of the chiefs whose districts they traversed, who can tell what the result might have been?

We may imagine the surprise of the cruel tyrant when, on that 10th day of April, the blow was struck which at once annihilated his sovereignty and taught

him what was the true strength of the distant island people whom he had insulted, and whose fellow-countrymen he had held in chains. But we need not dwell on that brief battle, where he saw his best and bravest mown down “like grass beneath the scythe”—nor on the events which so rapidly followed—the surrender of the captives, the storming of Magdala, and the death of the tyrant at the downfall of his rocky fortress. These events are too fresh in the memories of our readers to need recapitulation.

The object of the expedition being accomplished by the rescue of the captives and the destruction of Magdala, the invading host, without an hour of avoidable delay, retraced its steps, once more to contend with the difficulties and hardships of that weary route. After the success of their united endeavours, Sir Robert issued a manifesto to his troops characterised as much by its frank generosity as by its terseness and point. A brief extract from this document, will not be out of place:—

“Soldiers of the Army of Abyssinia,—The Queen and the people of England intrusted to you a very arduous and difficult expedition—to release our countrymen from a long and painful captivity, and to vindicate the honour of our country, which had been outraged by Theodore, King of Abyssinia. I congratulate you with all my heart on the noble way in which you have fulfilled the commands of our sovereign You have released not only the British captives, but those of other friendly nations. You have unloosed the chains of more than ninety of the principal chiefs of Abyssinia. Magdala, on which so many victims have been slaughtered, has been committed to the flames, and remains only a scorched rock. Our complete and rapid success is due, first, to the mercy of God, whose hand, I feel assured, has been over us in a just cause; secondly, to the high spirit with which you have been inspired. The remembrance of your privations will pass away quickly, but your gallant exploit will live in history. The Queen and the people of England will appreciate your services. On my part, as your commander, I thank you for your devotion to your duty and the good discipline you have maintained. Not a single complaint has been made against a soldier, of fields injured or villages wilfully molested in property or person. I shall watch over your safety to the moment of your re-embarkation, and to the end of my life remember with pride that I have commanded you.”

Falsifying all the gloomy predictions of the croakers, the expedition returned to the coast without loss, and thence re-embarked—leaving behind them only the remembrance of their stern deed, a lesson of retribution intelligible to other savage despots, and a memorial of the power of Britain to protect her sons and avenge their wrongs.

The conqueror of Abyssinia arrived in England at the end of June, and on the 3rd of July the thanks of both Houses of Parliament were, for the third time, awarded him. We shall quote only a few words from the speech of Mr. Gladstone, the leader of the Opposition, expressing the general feeling of the country. Mr. Gladstone said, “While we readily acknowledge that all have well done their part from first to last, it is impossible not to dwell upon the character of the man whose name first appears in the motion; without him it might have been possible that great things might have been achieved, but there has been a completeness in the work performed which we cannot do otherwise than connect in a special manner with the special qualifications of his mind and

capacity. Without him we scarcely could have hoped that this expedition would stand upon record as a rare example among those occasions when a nation resorts to the bloody arbitrament of war, of an occasion upon which not one drop has been added to the cup of human suffering that any forethought or humanity could have spared, and on which the severest critic, when he reviews the proceedings, will find nothing from first to last to except to, whether it be with respect to their military or political or moral aspect. No man can read the despatches of Sir R. Napier without seeing that, after we have given to him the praise of a commander apparently consummate in his means of meeting every demand that has been made upon him for military qualities, there is something which remains behind—that there is a mind firm of purpose, never losing for one moment its thorough balance, and amid all anxiety and excitement, keeping the eye steadily fixed upon moral aims, and remembering under all circumstances the duty of keeping and maintaining untainted and in virgin purity and honour the character of this country. Nor can any one become acquainted with Sir Robert Napier—as we must all feel that we are acquainted with him after we have read his interesting, his manly, his simple, and his modest account—without being conscious that we depart from the consideration of this subject not only with gratitude and admiration for the general, but with respect, with regard—I would almost say with affection—for the man.”

According to precedent in such cases, the thanks and encomiums of Lords and Commons are accompanied by a substantial token of the gratitude of the country. Sir Robert, raised to the peerage, will take rank with the first of his name and lineage, and will enjoy an accession of wealth honourably won. He has also received the freedom of the City of London, accompanied with a sword of the value of two hundred guineas. The page which tells his story to future times will exhibit a new phase in the history of war, inasmuch as it will treat of a dangerous enterprise on a costly scale prompted by humanity alone, and untarnished in its execution by a single act of cruelty or oppression. “A victory is twicet itself,” says Shakespeare, “when the achiever brings home full numbers.” Never has so valuable a triumph been gained at so small a cost of life as the triumph at Magdala; it has been well termed a tearless triumph,—seeing that the “achiever” brought away the whole of his force with their numbers all but undiminished.

Our portrait is from a photograph given by the General himself to an Indian friend, and the autograph is copied from his first signature as a British peer.

MY FIRST CURACY.

CHAPTER VII.—PAROCHIAL VISITS.

PERHAPS it is among the most difficult matters in a clergyman's administering rightly and profitably to the wants of his people, to know when to make his parochial visits.

Of course there are general rules which are always observed. To go at once when sent for, especially in sickness, is an obvious duty. But I refer to ordinary visitation. Here also some rules may be given, as, for instance, the avoidance of the dinner-hour, washing and rent days, or when their relations have arrived on a hasty visit, or other equally ill-timed seasons.

On the other hand, it is not politic to make our parochial visits on certain fixed days, at settled hours, always on the same people. I have had experience in these things. I bought my experience, and I paid rather

dearly for it too. The only occasions when pre-arranged times are necessary, are when groups of neighbours are invited to meet in one place. This system of visiting is now much carried out, under the name of “cottage meetings.” By catechising the children, and by various devices, these meetings may be made very profitable, both to young and old.

I think that the most convenient time in which to call upon farmers and tradespeople is invariably in the afternoon. And this period of the day generally suits most people, whether clergy or laity; the parishioners will have more leisure time to attend to your remarks, and be most likely in a better temper, after the earlier business part of the day has passed away. Moreover, it is a well-known rule among clergymen, never to ask for a donation, if possible, until after your expected benefactor has dined.

I think, however, that schools are best attended to in the morning; both master, children, and yourself, are fresher, and the boys and girls are more likely to give heed to what you teach them, than if you had stepped into the school during the last half-hour of the afternoon's work; but with visiting, and especially with the sick, the afternoon is, from my experience, the best time for parochial visits. When I entered into the ministry, an old clergyman put me upon my guard about laying too much stress on the arrangements of the room, the laying out of the family Bible, the tract you lent last carefully put by its side, the spectacles also, and I found that this caution was necessary.

I will give an instance or two in illustration. The event occurred in my first curacy, and I have since met with many similar cases.

I was called upon to visit and relieve an old woman, who was reported as being dangerously ill. I made no delay, but hastily told the messenger that I should be at the house in the course of an hour; accordingly, upon my arrival, I found that I was expected, and was shown up at once into the patient's room. I found the sick woman cleanly dressed, and prepared to receive me; she was engaged in diligently reading her Bible, and several other devotional books and religious publications lay scattered around her on the bed.

With this visit I was rather pleased; in the first place, I was exceedingly glad to find the old lady so happily employed in what she took great pains to impress upon me was her greatest delight in life.

After a few general observations upon sickness, its trials and its blessings, and brief prayer, I left, promising to call again in the course of a couple of days.

This I did, and again I found the woman similarly engaged in reading her Bible; but upon my making a pointed remark or two upon the holiness of daily life required in us by God, I was rather shocked by the replies she made, and perhaps more so by the tone in which she uttered the words, than by the words themselves; she plainly told me that she was very sure of going to heaven, and that I need not trouble about the safety of her soul.

The next visit I paid was quite unexpected either by mother or daughter, so much so, that the latter, with whom the old woman lived, rushed up-stairs as I approached the door, evidently to tell her mother of my arrival.

My knock was quite unheeded, though the door was standing open, and the sound could be most distinctly heard up-stairs. I heard a good deal of tramping about overhead, and presently, in answer to my repeated knocks, the daughter came smiling down the stairs, but looking slightly flurried.