

appointed a K.C.M.G. in the same year. He had been a Fellow of our Society since 1849.

**Captain Hans Busk.**—We have also to record the death of Captain Hans Busk in London on March 11th, in his 67th year. He was the eldest son of the late Mr. Hans Busk, of Glenalder, Radnorshire, and was educated at King's College, London, and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated as a Bachelor of Arts in 1839, being called to the Bar two years later. Captain Hans Busk was best known by his connection with the Volunteer movement, of which he claimed to have been the sole originator. Captain Busk belonged to the Victoria (1st Middlesex) Rifle Volunteers, and had been a Fellow of our Society since 1873.

**The Pundit Nain Singh.**—We have received from Colonel Edmund Smyth the following interesting details regarding our recently deceased gold medallist Nain Singh :—

THE GRANGE, WELWYN, HERTS, 8th April, 1882.

DEAR SIR,—I saw in the obituary of the *Times* of the 15th March, a notice of the death of the famous Pundit, Nain Singh, and as I happen to have known him, in years gone by, perhaps better than any one else, I send you this short account of him for publication in this month's 'Proceedings.'

First I will explain how I think he and the others who were trained as explorers by Colonel Montgomerie came to be called Pundits. Nain Singh was a Government schoolmaster in the village of Milum, District of Johar, Province of Kumaon, in the Himalaya, and was, I think, the first man sent to Colonel Montgomerie to be instructed in the use of surveying instruments, and his title of Pundit (which means schoolmaster) seems to have stuck to him during the remainder of his life. The same name was also given to the other explorers who followed him, who were not Pundits at all. Pundit is a title generally given to learned Hindus, but schoolmasters are always called Pundit whether learned or not.

Nain Singh belonged to a peculiar set of people, generally called Bhootiahs (quite different from the Bhootiahs, or Bhootanese, of Bhootan), who inhabit the highest accessible parts of the different valleys in Kumaon and Gurhwal, which form the head-waters of the rivers Ganges and Kali (called Sardha or Surju lower down). Their villages are situated at an elevation of from 10,000 to 13,000 feet, at the foot (on the south side) of the various passes leading into Tibet; they are well and substantially built, though only occupied from June to November in each year. The Bhootiahs pass their lives in trade with Tibet, and they are the only people allowed by the Tibetan authorities of Nari-Khorsum (that part of Tibet which is the basin of the Upper Sutlej river, and north of Kumaon and Gurhwal) to enter their country for purposes of trade. From June to November they are constantly going backwards and forwards over the passes, bringing the produce of Tibet (borax, salt, wool, gold-dust, also ponies) and taking back grain of all kinds (as no grain is grown in that part of Tibet on account of its altitude and want of water), English goods, chiefly woollens, and other things. The goods are carried on the backs of sheep, goats, ponies, yaks, and jhoopos (a cross between the Tibetan yak and the hill cow). During the remainder of the year they move down to the foot of the hills and sell their produce to the Buniachs or traders, who meet them for that purpose at the different fairs held at Bagesar, Ramnugur, Kasipur, Burmdeo, Kotdwara, and other places. Most of them have another set of villages in the lower hills besides those I have mentioned close to the passes, which their families occupy during the cold weather. They are a hardy and enterprising race, and many of them find their way during the cold weather to Delhi and Meerut, and some as far as Bombay and Calcutta, where they can purchase English goods at a cheaper rate.

The origin of these people is uncertain; they have Hindu names, and call themselves Hindus, but they are not recognised as such by the orthodox Hindus of the

plains or the hills. While in Tibet they seem glad enough to shake off their Hinduism and become Buddhists, or anything you like. I was employed for many years in Kumaon and Gurhwal and knew these Bhootiahs perhaps better than any one else. In 1862-3 I was in correspondence with Colonel (then Captain) Montgomerie—I think it was about an expedition I was going to make into Tibet—and hearing he wanted some trustworthy men to train as explorers in that region, I strongly recommended him to engage some of these Bhootiahs, both on account of their thorough knowledge of the Tibetan language, and also because they had the entrée into the country. He asked me to select two, and send them to him to be trained. I accordingly chose our friend Nain Singh, who was then employed as Pundit (or schoolmaster) of the Government school of Milum, in Johar, and the second man I chose was his cousin (not brother, as stated in the English translation of Nain Singh's journal) Manee or Maun Singh, who was Putwarie or chief native official of Johar. Manee was far superior to Nain Singh in position, wealth, and intellect, and might have done well, but unfortunately he was too well off in his own country to take to the rough life of exploration.

After being trained they were both sent off together, in January 1865, with directions to trace the great river Brahmaputra from its source in the mountains, east of the Mansarowar Lake, to Lhasa, a supposed distance of 800 miles, and in returning to take, if possible, a more northerly route. They crossed the Johar Pass from Milum, and met with great difficulties in Nari-Khorsum; it had probably become known they were an exploring party; they had to return twice, and it was then resolved to try and make a start from Nepal; there they also met with difficulties, and Manee seems to have been discouraged and left Nain Singh, and after making a rather long tour in the north of Nepal, he returned home and is, I believe, still Putwarie of Johar. Nain Singh, however, stuck to his work, and after some further delay managed to join a party who were going from Nepal to Lhasa. He entered Tibet from Nepal by the Kirong Pass, and after travelling due north for about 130 miles, struck the great river at the monastery of Tadum, and then, turning to the east, followed the course of the stream for 600 miles till he reached Lhasa. He stayed there some months, recruiting his finances by turning his old profession of schoolmaster to account, and teaching the Tibetans arithmetic. He returned the same way as far as Tadum, and then explored new ground for 200 miles until he reached the sources of the Bramaputra in the mountains, not very far from the Mansarowar Lake. This was in 1866.

In the following year, 1867, Nain Singh tells me in one of his letters which I still have, he was sent by Colonel Montgomerie over the Mānā Pass (near the temple of Badrinath) to Gartok (the capital of the Tibet district of Nari-Khorsum), to Chujothol, and the gold mines of Thok-jalung, the climate of which place he compares with that of the Mansarowar Lake, to give me an idea of it, as he knew I had been there. Thok-jalung he describes as much colder. He gives the elevation as 15,000 feet. This is evidently a mistake, as in his journal it is, I think, said to be 16,300 feet. That of the Mansarowar Lake is 15,200 feet, and this would account for the difference of temperature. He found about 500 tents of miners there, and says that to avoid the cold (cold wind I suppose) these tents were pitched in great holes. Captain Montgomerie's account of this important journey, with the tables of observations taken by "the Pundit," are published in the Society's 'Journal,' vol. 39.

I used to hear very frequently from both Nain Singh and Manee, but can only find four of their letters now, which I shall be glad to lend to any one wishing to see them. They are written in Hindee. One is from Manee, the other three from Nain Singh. In two of these letters he informs me of the great loss he had sustained, in being robbed of the gold chronometer given him by the Royal Geographical Society in 1868. It was stolen from him six months after he received it, and

while, he says, he was in the performance of his public duties. The fact is, he entrusted it to some one to take to his home, and the man stole it. He was much distressed, and expressed a hope that another chronometer exactly like it, with the same inscription engraved on it, might be sent to him, and he would gladly pay the cost of it; and then he went on to write in Hindee character the English words of the inscription, which were these:—"De President and Council of de Rael Jographical Society of London to Pundit Nain Singh for his great Jographical exploration. 25th May, 1868."

The Council was not able to comply with Nain Singh's request, but in May, 1877, the much higher honour of a Royal medal was awarded him in these terms:—"The Victoria or Patron's medal is awarded to the Pundit Nain Singh, for his great journeys and surveys in Tibet, and along the Upper Brahmaputra, during which he has determined the position of Lhassa, and added largely to our positive knowledge of the map of Asia." Colonel H. Yule, who had taken all along the greatest interest in the man and his work, received the medal at the anniversary meeting on behalf of Nain Singh, and in his reply to the eloquent words in praise of this native explorer addressed to him by the President, said: "He is not a topographical automaton, or merely one of a great multitude of native employés with an average qualification. His observations have added a larger amount of important knowledge to the map of Asia than those of any other living man, and his journals form an exceedingly interesting book of travels."

For the last few years of his life Nain Singh had retired into private life, and lived in comfortable circumstances during the hot weather in his native village of Milum, where his cousin and former companion Manee was Putwarie; and during the cold weather on a small *jaghire* or estate in the plains given to him by the Government for his services. He died at Moradabad (I believe on the 1st of February last), of cholera, contracted at the great January fair of Allahabad. He must have been about fifty-seven years old. Nain Singh was employed for many years under me, and I always had a very high opinion of him; a more truthful or reliable man could, in my opinion, not be found for the work he was called upon to do. There may be mistakes in his journals, but no wilful ones.

I don't know what family he leaves behind, but there were two boys, nephews of his, educated at the Mission School at Almorah, who became Christians some years ago, and are now studying medicine at Agra, under Dr. Valentine.

The great exploit of Nain Singh, his journey from Nepal to Lhassa and back to the Mansarowar Lake, in 1865-6, need not be further described here. A translation of his journal, with introductory remarks by Colonel (then Captain) Montgomerie, was read before this Society on the 23rd March, 1868, and published in the 38th volume of the Society's 'Journal.'

EDMUND SMYTH, Colonel.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### *The Sources of the Irawadi and the Sanpo.*

37, EDGWARE ROAD, W.

Having had engineering charge of the districts in British Burma through which both the Irawadi and Salween rivers run, and constructed many miles of embankment along the former river, Major Sandeman's paper read at the meeting of March 13th was naturally of great interest to me. I had intended to make some remarks upon it in the discussion which followed, but the lateness of the hour prevented me; on this account I beg permission to send you the following observations, for insertion in the next number of the 'Proceedings.'

Previous to the reading of the paper, I was of opinion that the portion of the