

A
VOLUNTEER'S SCRAMBLE

THROUGH
SCINDE, THE PUNJAB, HINDOSTAN,
AND THE
HIMALAYAH MOUNTAINS.

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ETC.

CHAPTER I.

Barrackpore—Calcutta Shops—Servants—Neemtolla Ghat-Adjutants—Schools and Colleges—Roman Catholic and Protestant Priests—Small Pox and Cholera—Calcutta Mall—Native Festivals.

BARRACKPORE is a large military station on the left bank of the Hooghly, distant about 17 miles from Calcutta. Owing to its proximity to the Presidency capital, most officers consider it a very desirable place to perform duty at, although many inducements are offered for the lavish expenditure of money. There is a large park, bearing a very Englishified appearance, just outside of cantonments; but the horticultural garden and menagerie are not so good as one might have expected. At a trifling expense, Government

would be able to collect a splendid variety of wild animals and birds. A very tame giraffe is occasionally permitted to take a stroll through the park, without being annoyed by the presence of his keeper. The long-necked animal quite enjoyed his rambles, because he could then select his own boughs for satisfying his hunger.

During the Hindoo festival, several Calcutta people visited Barrackpore for a few days, and, like the London cockneys going to Gravesend or Margate for a slight change, so the Calcutta good folks came to Barrackpore with a similar object. Duty or pleasure frequently took us to Calcutta, but I was disappointed with the place, although the noble edifices and public buildings have rendered it well worthy of being denominated the City of Palaces. Not that the inhabitants are inhospitable; in fact, the reverse is the case. The houses situated in Garden Reach are princely mansions, their erection must have involved an enormous outlay. However, in our degenerate times the wealthy no longer care about displaying their high style of living as in former days; the rich merchant or civilian hoards up his treasures, and only allows the rupees to dribble through his purse one by one.—(But after all they are perfectly right). Thus it is that many of the larger houses are uninhabited, and no tenant ap-

pearing desirous to occupy these palaces, the landlord seldom considers it worth while to repair the dilapidated buildings, but allows them to fall to decay.

Some of the European shops are magnificent ; both the external and internal arrangements are on a par in elegance and size with English shops. Few on their first arrival can refrain from paying them a visit, but owing to that bad system of giving unlimited credit, every article is excessively expensive. Young officers arriving from England are soon allured into these tempting repositories, and in less than three months the careless stranger contrives to contract debts, which perhaps he will be unable to liquidate for a period of six or seven years. This ruinous custom of allowing credit should be discountenanced as much as possible. The shopkeepers themselves would infinitely prefer cash payments, but they are afraid to adopt this system, on account of giving offence to their old customers, who might feel offended at the innovation. None except those who have experienced the misery of being involved in pecuniary affairs, can form an adequate idea of the annoyances suffered by a debtor. How frequently does it happen that mere lads arrive in India as their own masters, having only just lately been released from scholastic trammels ; the change of scenery, and the fact of their being free agents, turns the giddy brains

of these youths, and they imagine themselves to be men, giving themselves airs accordingly. The tradesmen readily give them credit to a certain amount, well knowing when it is time to check the string attached to the victim's nose. Bills are daily sent in, and as often returned, the debtor being unable to raise the needful; the owner of the goods sold next commences "dunning," until eventually he "pulls you up," as the saying goes, before the Military Court of Requests. Let all young people whose destiny leads them to India, pause a moment, and seriously reflect upon the shame that every high-minded officer in the army must experience, when brought up before his brother officers as a defaulter. Why should these unpleasant exposures exist? If one feels disposed, it is easy to avoid them; by practising a little self-denial, an immense amount of anxiety and trouble is spared us.

Since serving in the army, I have repeatedly heard old officers lamenting over their early extravagance, expressing their regret at being unable to take advantage of the furlough regulations, on account of the lowness of their funds. Let me remind my young friends, that after a ten years exile in a country like India, where one has been exposed, alternately, to heat and war, the heart pines for home, longing to obtain a glance of dear friends, parted from long, long ago. Only imagine the

feelings of a man thus circumstanced, who, after a long absence, cannot visit his home on account of the debts contracted at the commencement of his Indian career. Some ignorant people assert that the debts of Indian officers are principally contracted through their gambling propensities; now this is most erroneous. I do not suppose that the same number of men could elsewhere be selected, who are less addicted to gambling than the officers in the Honourable East India Company's service. It may safely be affirmed that very few, if any, regular gamblers could be picked out from the Bengal army. The older officers discountenance this most pernicious vice, and as far as I have observed, they always endeavoured to check gaming transactions. Of course I do not mean to state that small play does not exist in the army at all; no, it is a well known fact, that at whist the players stake small sums, for instance, sixpenny points, &c.; but what I wish the reader to understand is, that the Calcutta shops and regimental messes, and not *gambling*, form the principal cause of young officers finding themselves so often over head and ears in pecuniary difficulties. To enumerate the ill effects arising from debt, would require a greater space than at present can be bestowed upon the subject, but being in the vein for offering advice gratis, the present opportunity affords an excuse for cautioning young officers to be extremely

careful in selecting menials to perform permanent domestic service.

The Calcutta servants are proverbial for their dishonesty, surpassing all others in villainy and deceit. Such a feeling as gratitude never for a moment dwells in their hearts, and even those whom you have sheltered, clothed, and fed, for a period of twenty years, will take advantage of your kindness, by robbing you whenever they can do so with tolerable safety to themselves.

The valet de chambre, or bearer, is perhaps the greatest rogue attached to the establishment; his duty consists in taking charge of his master's wearing apparel, and acting as a sort of head man over the other servants. Unless a sharp look out is kept upon this individual, he will defraud his master to an alarming extent. Unfortunately, few officers deem it worth their while to be troubled with accounts, consequently, a clever bearer, under such circumstances, can commit depredations with impunity. Some of these servants, though arrant rogues themselves, retrieve in a measure their faults, by exercising a sharp scrutiny over their fellow servants, not permitting them to cheat their master even in the smallest matter. The kitmutghar, or table attendant, is another individual who skilfully contrives to ease his master of a little superfluous cash. It has been calculated that, for every rupee laid out and charged as table

expenses, the kitmutghar derives a profit of 200 per cent. To tell the truth, the most careful man will find how useless a task it is to try to prevent himself from being daily cheated by his servants. The experiment has been repeatedly tried, but all efforts have failed to prevent this system of robbery, for robbery it is, nor can you designate it by any milder appellation. Bad Indian servants are an intolerable nuisance, and no matter how kindly treated, they invariably give a vast deal of unnecessary trouble.

Unfortunately the extreme heat and superstitious prejudices of the various castes of natives, oblige gentlemen to entertain an incredible number of domestics, half of whom are almost useless; for instance, a Hindoo bearer considers it derogatory to his caste to wait at table; the kitmutghar, in like manner, refuses to pull the punkah or polish boots; the syce or groom cleans the horse, but will not cut grass wherewith to feed him; the bheestie, or water carrier, would die rather than condescend to clean or sweep out your room; a man of the Mhater caste is the only individual who can be induced to perform the latter operation, and he is considered the lowest of the low. Neither Hindoo nor Mussulman would permit a Mhater to touch any of his cooking utensils; in fact, these despised creatures are treated with the most superlative con-

tempt by the Brahmins, who would not even touch a Mhater in order to save the poor wretch from drowning ; nevertheless this degraded class of men are useful in their way. The following servants are absolutely necessary for an officer's establishment :—A bearer, at six rupees a month, and his assistant at five ; a kitmutghar at seven ; a syce at six : a grasscutter for your horse, four ; a water carrier at five ; a washerman at six ; a Mhater at four ; and if the neighbourhood of the station is famous for thieves, an additional servant will be requisite to keep watch during the night, as all the doors of a bungalow are generally thrown open during the night until the termination of the hot weather.

In the *Bagh-o-bahar* (a native book), the author, in describing the character of a prince famous for his justice, and for his able management of the country confided to his care, states that theft was so rare in his days, that the traveller proceeding through the jungle might chink silver in the palms of his hands and nobody would molest him, whilst the inhabitants of villages and towns reposed during the night with their doors wide open. If possible, one should avoid employing resident Calcutta servants, for under no circumstances will these men quit the presidency, consequently if an officer should be suddenly ordered to

proceed up country, he experiences no little annoyance by discovering, only just previous to his departure, that nearly all the servants have a decided objection to accompany him. Perhaps it would be a good plan for all young officers to abstain from engaging menials until joining their regiment; by so doing they are enabled to procure a superior class of men, who, previous to their engagement, should be obliged to produce certificates of good character.

There are some servants, who, having served the officers of a particular regiment for a number of years, become as it were attached to the corps, and upon their master dying or proceeding to England, readily obtain employment from any of the other officers who happen to require an addition to their establishment; these are the best servants. An excellent order has lately been issued which will confer a great blessing upon young cadets, who, for the future, immediately on their arrival, are to be dispatched up country—thus in a great measure escaping the Calcutta snares. At few stations in India do people lead such monotonous lives as in Calcutta, where the inhabitants, for the greater portion of the year, can scarcely be said to exist. Such a listless apathy predominates, that even visiting acquaintances are looked upon as a decided bore. The heat of Scinde is bad enough,

but what with tates and thermantidotes, the dry winds are easily cooled as they enter the rooms; but the Calcutta atmosphere is peculiar to itself, and its pernicious effects upon the European constitution are discernible in the sickly countenances of those who daily take an airing on the Mall. Strangers generally complain of the paucity of Calcutta amusements, but where the heat is so oppressive, what kind of diversion could be enjoyed? Lately a few musical amateurs have established glee societies, and doubtless this step will soon meet with universal approbation and support.

The public balls at the Town Hall are not so aristocratic as formerly; the admission of half castes gave considerable offence to some of the leading people, who no longer support this branch of amusement. Strange to say, although there are several excellent actors, still the only performance fit to be seen takes place in Fort William, in a small theatre conducted by European soldiers attached to the garrison. A French party erected a circus and were well supported; the well-executed feats of horsemanship calling forth loud acclamations of applause from the native portion of the spectators. A few jugglers attempted to amuse the public, but signally failed in their exertions. These constitute the Calcutta amusements, occasionally varied by the announcement that a charity sermon will be

preached in such and such a church, which, of course is to be followed up by a subscription. The two best hotels are those under the management of Messrs. Spence and Messrs. Wilson and Co., and there are several private boarding-houses; but visitors are recommended to take up their temporary residence at either of the hotels, where they are not so restricted with regard to regulations, &c. A Frenchman superintends the management of a very comfortable hotel at Barrack-pore, so an admirer of French dishes can enjoy them to perfection at this neat suburban hotel.

Except during the months of December and January, the Calcutta meat markets are not well supplied with wholesome provisions; in fact, the heat will not permit the preservation of mutton or beef for any length of time. Good fish is procurable throughout the year, but the sweet-flavoured "Tupsee Muchee," or mangoe fish, stands prominent in the list, as being considered by epicures, superior in quality to any other species caught in the Hooghly. They generally make their appearance towards the end of May, which is likewise the commencement of the mangoe fruit season; hence, the fish are called mangoe fish. They are very expensive when they first arrive, and ladies during the course of their evening drive, are not too proud to

be seen purchasing these dainties from the fisherman, whilst the fish are yet alive. Properly speaking, they should be cooked immediately upon being captured; however one soon gets tired of them. They attain the size of fine sardines, though some of course are considerably larger.

The Hooghly contains immense prawns, which constitute a favourite meal with the natives, who fabricate an infinite variety of dishes out of a mere handful of these fish. It is astonishing how easily a native can convert them into apparently a delicious curry, although there's too much kneading with black fingers, and too many ingredients employed in the formation, to please a European palate. Luckily the natives possess a different opinion upon the subject, being very partial to such a medley; but they suffer for their gormandizing, as the enormous quantity they devour frequently produces violent attacks of cholera. Many English residents eschew prawns on account of the prevalent supposition, that they fatten upon dead Hindoo bodies, and other refuse thrown into the river.

Neemitolah Ghat ought to be a capital feeding-place for fish having a taste principally confined to dead bodies. At the above-mentioned locality, the Hindoos burn their defunct friends, and woe betide the inqui-

sitive or unsuspecting individual who approaches too near this disgusting ghat; particularly if he is gifted with very sensitive olfactory nerves. One day when passing the place in a small boat, the force of wind and tide drifted our craft much nearer to these funereal piles than we had anticipated or wished, however, astonishment in a measure made us disregard the horrible effluvia that pervaded the air.

We were surprised at the innumerable birds of prey that were congregated together, the vultures twinkling their glassy eyes as they anxiously watched the burning dead bodies, which in some cases had already been attacked by some hungry bird, with an appetite no longer to be restrained. Ever and anon a fortunate bird would discover a tit-bit, which immediately became an object of desire, and forthwith a dozen aspirants for the horrid morsel would be engaged in a deadly feud.

What a cheering and pleasant prospect for a poor devil of a Hindoo, who ere life is extinct has been carried down to the river side to surrender up his breath! It often happens that these wretched creatures recover, but instead of meeting with a warm reception, their tender-hearted relations refuse to speak to or to support them, and for the remainder of their lives they become outcasts of society.

According to Hindoo mythology, an individual recovering from illness, is supposed to have offended the Deity, who punishes the delinquent by refusing to receive him into heaven. Under these circumstances, their domestic attachments being for ever severed, they retire to a settlement some few miles above Hooghly, where, by performing penance and other religious ceremonies, their future fate and punishment can be alleviated in some measure. At present the Hindoos who prefer flinging their deceased friends into the river, are obliged to attach a stone, or a bit of metal to the bodies. This was a very necessary precaution, not only in a sanitary point of view, but on account of the dead bodies continually catching in the chains of vessels lying at anchor in the river. The stench is sufficient to bring on sickness, particularly in the hot weather, besides, where ladies are perpetually passing to and fro, such disgusting exhibitions should not be allowed to take place. The natives, however, care little for such revolting spectacles, their constant occurrence hardens even the most sensitive feelings; in fact, the good folks of Calcutta should feel greatly indebted to those indefatigable and very efficient scavengers, the adjutants, kites, vultures, and crows. The former birds, during the cold weather, which is generally their breeding time, retire to the Sunderbunds. Their re-appearance is a sure sign that

the hot season is rapidly coming on. Fort William has always been one of their favourite haunts, which may possibly be owing to the tranquility of the spot, and the kind treatment they receive from European soldiers, who take as great an interest in them, as some ladies show in a spaniel. The old ones are extremely cunning, and well they may be, for the boldest are occasionally deceived by a variety of mischievous tricks. Some of the barrack boys insert gunpowder into a marrow bone, a small bit of touch-paper having been previously ignited. The greedy bird, afraid of his comrades carrying off the prize, rushes impetuously at the bone, which he swallows whole, not perceiving the danger incurred, until the explosion takes place. Some fasten a couple of bones together with a piece of string, so that they may be about a couple of yards apart from each other. A favourable opportunity soon occurs; when two birds are close together, the bones are flung between them and each swallows one, when, of course, a ridiculous though rather shocking scene is the result. I have had ocular demonstration of the ease with which an adjutant will demolish, at a mouthful, a young kitten, succeeded shortly after by a crow. However, on closely inspecting an adjutant's bill, the wonder ceases, for the muscular power of the jaw is immense. As a matter of course, nearly all old Indians amuse their juvenile visitors, by relating various

anecdotes in proof of the prodigious strength of these birds, such as their knocking over bullocks, and, when suddenly turning from one street into another, skewering a man with the beak, with as much facility as a soldier bayonets his enemy. But, joking apart, I should little relish encountering one of these birds, when not prepared to receive his charge.

There are several native schools and colleges in Calcutta and its neighbourhood; some of them are noble edifices, and in addition to the splendid endowments already settled upon them, charitably disposed people annually contribute what in England would be termed large sums towards their support. Yet notwithstanding these pecuniary advantages, it is a well known fact that the institutions are not so beneficial as might be expected. Those natives who have received what is termed an English education, generally surpass their countrymen in roguery. I was dining in company with two or three of these Eastern sages, when the topic of conversation chanced to be turned upon the subject of schools and literature. "Ah," said one of the sable guests, "we are getting enlightened, our minds are daily improving;" and by way of demonstrating his argument, this enlightened gentleman imbibed a wine-glass of *raw brandy*, swallowing the spirit without winking. This gentleman's ideas of civilization rather tickled my fancy. I do not

wish the reader to imagine that all the natives are drunkards or rogues; in fact some of the wealthy Baboos are very decent fellows, but taken as a body, it is the firm conviction of many, that the educated natives are less moral, and worse characters, than those who never attended an English institution. Whilst upon this subject, I cannot refrain from expressing my great regret, that the charitable institutions in India have large sums of money annually lavished upon them, whilst those of our own countrymen are permitted to remain in a state of bankruptcy. Take for instance, that noble institution in the hills called the Lawrence Asylum, after its benevolent founder. This asylum was intended for orphans of European soldiers, whose parents either died or were killed in action in India. At present the funds are at such a low ebb, that they are scarcely sufficient to liquidate the necessary expenses, and unless voluntary subscribers assist the committee, it will be impossible to carry on the benevolent intentions of the founder. I hope those who take the trouble to peruse these few lines, will add their mite towards bestowing a good education upon the poor orphans, and at the same time providing them with a comfortable home. The English people are always so ready to subscribe to charitable institutions, that I feel convinced this appeal on behalf of the Lawrence School, will not be permitted

to pass unheeded by. Let the reader recall to mind the fierce struggles that have lately taken place in the Punjab, when so many poor children suddenly were made fatherless; and surely those who possess wealth, will not begrudge a small sum towards repairing, at least in some measure, the loss sustained by the orphans. The native college at Serampore is a princely building, that cannot fail to attract the attention of travellers proceeding up or down the river Hooghly. But Calcutta is overwhelmed with native schools, and they enable government to obtain the services of Hindoos, who are employed as clerks in government offices. Many of these educated gentlemen receive a monthly salary of from twenty-five to a hundred rupees. With respect to Christianity there are very few cases of conversion. The Hindoo has a great aversion to our religion, and some time will yet elapse ere their present prejudices will be eradicated from their stubborn breasts. The Brahmin priests are ever on the alert to check any favourable feeling that may exist regarding the Christian faith. Many high caste Hindoos decline sending their children to the English schools, as they imagine that these establishments are raised with some sinister motives. Some are afraid that the youthful mind might easily be induced to embrace another creed, and thus for ever lose their high caste. However, though

the Hindoo abhors the religion of the Christian and Mussulman, it is a matter of opinion and doubt as to his possessing any true spirit of religion himself. For the sake of appearances they daily perform the prescribed ablutions in the river, muttering a medley of prayers, and looking very demure all the time. But though they are such implacable bigots, those who have had any intercourse with the Hindoos, must allow that their religion is all nonsense. Even the Mussulmen would prove easier disciples, and THEY seldom renounce their faith; consequently the reader will perceive the vast obstacles that are thrown in the path of the missionary. The Hindoo possesses such a depraved and base disposition, that it would be a matter of immense difficulty to make him even understand the goodness and purity of the Almighty. His own god is represented as being licentious in the extreme, cultivating neither morality nor holy thoughts, and in fact, on reading the religious books of the Hindoos, the peruser will discover that scarcely a pure quality is ascribed to the Deity. No want of zeal can be attributed to the missionaries, who strive their utmost to spread the truths of the gospel; but with all their zealous exertions in such a praiseworthy cause, few converts flock to the banners of the cross.

The Roman Catholic priests are allowed to be the

most successful in inducing the natives to embrace Christianity, and this appears more wonderful, when it is remembered, that their pecuniary funds are not so ample as those of the Protestants. Most of the Roman Catholic priests in India receive no regular stipend at all, and lately there has been an universal outcry against such a disgraceful omission on the part of the authorities; for considering that they perform equally arduous and constant duties with their Protestant brethren, it appears strange that no remuneration is allotted them for their labours.

Nearly half of the European soldiers in a regiment are Roman Catholics, then why should there not be a priest in the service of Government, who daily would perform mass for the benefit of the soldiers, receiving a similar salary to that enjoyed by Protestant chaplains, namely, five hundred rupees a month. Such indeed should be the case, that is, if the labourer is worthy of his hire.

At Darjeeling, a convalescent depôt in the Himilayah mountains, the Roman Catholic priest daily attended hospital, read prayers and comforted the sick, besides performing mass every morning and evening on Sundays. The distance from the priest's house to the barracks was fully two miles, and that too, up a very steep ascent the entire way; yet still this really good and

faithful minister of God, willingly set the distance at naught, although deriving no pecuniary remuneration from the Government for his charitable services. Though I have abused the Hindoos as a body, and ventured to express an opinion regarding the difficulty and almost impossibility of, at present, converting them, still there are several highly talented and worthy gentlemen, who could be selected from amongst their sect. If the missionaries could only induce the Brahmins to embrace the Christian religion, half of their onerous task would be at once completed, for the other Hindoo castes would at once follow the example of the Brahmins, and become converts. Such an event is indeed, little likely to occur, for the wily Brahmin already perceives the immense influence he has gained over the weak intellect of his brother Hindoos; he reaps too lucrative a harvest, and would never on any account change his faith for one devoid of all pecuniary advantages. Thus they are ever anxious to instil into the minds of the young, even from their infancy, that the religion of the Sahibs is that of infidels and fanatics. Time, the great conqueror of all difficulties, can alone master these prejudices.

Cholera and small pox nearly every year visit Calcutta, carrying off the population by hundreds. The former complaint is principally attributable to the quan-

tity of fish and fruit consumed by the natives, who do not appear to be acquainted with any medicine for relieving this dreadful scourge. The cholera generally attacks its victim very suddenly : perhaps a man will be walking along the road, apparently in a perfect state of health, when unexpectedly down he falls, and in a few hours becomes a corpse. Thanks, however to the hospital under European management; several poor fellows, since its establishment, have been snatched from an early grave. The small pox, though not so rapid in terminating the existence of its victim, is often fatal, and owing to the infected mingling promiscuously with the people in public thoroughfares, many, who might otherwise have escaped, catch the complaint. Again, the absurd prejudices of the natives add to their misfortunes, by assisting the disease in its increase; for few Hindoos, on account of religious notions, will allow themselves to be vaccinated. But who could wonder at the cholera and small pox being so prevalent in Calcutta, after having inspected the drainage arrangements of the native portion of the town.

During the rainy season the atmosphere is impregnated with a disgusting effluvia, arising from the open drains. Those who have traversed the worst and most populous localities in the city, must admit that, without any exaggeration, a scavenger's cart in London would

emit a heavenly odour in comparison with some of the Calcutta streets. The drains are constantly blocked up by the accumulation of filth, and as they are always kept open, the inhabitants must certainly be gifted with very strong powers of endurance, for the houses in some cases are actually built over these streams of pollution. Then again, the small tanks, or rather pools of stagnant water, must breed diseases amongst the children; and if the commissioners of sewers do not shortly adopt some stringent measures towards the cleansing of the town, a plague in all probability will visit the Indian metropolis. No fault can be descried as far as concerns the European quarter. The streets here are kept remarkably clean, whilst the shopkeepers and others employ a number of water carriers, who daily water the roads, and thus lay the dust, besides rendering the atmosphere much cooler.

The Calcutta Ghats, or landing places, are magnificent specimens of decorative architecture, erected by charitable native gentlemen, and the Indian Government; their appearance, from the river, resembles sometimes a handsome covered gateway surrounded by a capacious colonade, in the front of which, sloping towards the waters, extends a broad and well-built flight of stone or brick steps. Early in the morning hundreds of natives may be seen congregated upon these ghats, as being most convenient for performing their prescribed ablu-

tions. If a wealthy native feels desirous of having his name handed down to posterity, he either excavates a large tank, or erects a handsome ghat, which he calls after himself. The expense incurred in digging a tank, or building a decent-looking ghat, amounts to a larger sum than many people would imagine ; in fact it is a useless expenditure of money, which might be more beneficially laid out. At a distance the old ghats look not unlike the ancient remains of Grecian architecture ; the dilapidated columns might be taken for those of Athens, were it not for the surrounding scenery. The variety of costume attracts the attention of the stranger, and affords him a vast amount of amusement, but the novelty soon wears away. Hindoos, Mussulmen, Parsees, half castes and Europeans may be seen mingling in the streets throughout the day. Towards sunset the scene assumes a more animated spectacle, particularly on the Mall, that grand centre of fashion, where all Calcutta, weather permitting, enjoys a little exercise and fresh air after the arduous duties of the day. It is highly ridiculous to observe how the Anglo-Indians strive to imitate the Europeans in their mode of life. True it is, that every *krani** boasts of keeping a conveyance of some sort, but with respect to these equipages, it must be owned that they are lamentably deficient as to elegance

* Clerk.

and style. The same fault may be discovered in their dress ; nothing but glaring colours will suit the taste of the Anglo-Indian ladies and gentlemen. However, out they all swarm like so many bees from a hive, some in carriages and Palkee gharees, and others in buggies.

The Mall at sunset is preferable to a play ; the actors are all real, and no end of sport rewards the quiet spectator. First rolls along a lumbering gaudy-coloured coach, containing an old dowager, who no doubt, in her own estimation, is the very picture of fashion ; her bonnet (lately purchased from a French shop) *must*, of course, be “the thing,” for Madame — assured her dark customer, that all the young ladies in Paris wore bonnets of that shape, when her correspondent last communicated to her the latest fashions of Paris ; her gown, frock, or whatever that article of apparel is called, was a white one, having as many flounces attached to it as there are rattles at the end of the snake’s tail. But to give the reader an idea of the dowager’s taste, it will be necessary to state, that the old lady has concealed her hands by wearing black kid gloves, which are rather in unison with the white dress. A dark bevy of young ladies are seated in the same coach, lounging back in a very *negligé* air : however, after all, poor things, they create for the pedestrian an endless source of amusement, ren-

dered doubly agreeable from the fact that no serious mischief results from their innocent display of conceit. Next we have the aristocratic ladies, who, propped up with pillows, and with ghost-like countenances, roll easily by, their extreme languor and the fatigue undergone in dressing for the drive, incapacitating them from bowing to their friends. Poor things! they forcibly reminded one of some treasured exotic flower that is treated with consummate care; not that the owner expects it to flourish luxuriantly, but merely to sustain life and bear some resemblance to a green plant. Then gallops past an equestrian party, followed by an old parched-up gentleman, whose very look would be capable of turning milk sour. The spectator suddenly starts on one side to make way for a racketty sort of broken down buggy, containing three or four sailors, who, a little the worse for liquor, recklessly drive their steed through the crowded mass of conveyances, and by dint of a few songs, bellowed out in bass voices attest their utter disregard for anything at all approaching decorum.

A few years ago the only ice procurable in Calcutta was that produced by artificial means. The small quantity manufactured, and the great demand for it, rendered this delicious luxury a very expensive one, and only to be enjoyed by the wealthy. But lately

some speculating Americans have supplied Calcutta with a considerable and constant supply of Wenham Lake ice. Opposition rapidly reduced the high price at first demanded, and at one time four seers could be purchased for one anna. This was too cheap to last for any length of time, and at present ice in Calcutta is sold at two annas a seer—which is a sum equivalent to threepence in English money. A seer is about two pounds weight. The daily consumption of ice in Bengal is greater than the casual observer would calculate upon—in fact, a very profitable trade can be carried on by selling ice, although a vast quantity of this commodity daily melts away. I was quite astonished to hear that the dealer lost daily half a ton of ice, which he assured me was owing to his constantly opening the ice-house to oblige his regular customers. After the evening drive, a pineapple or mango ice is really a treat.

Those who keep up large establishments, and are anxious to preserve their furniture, must constantly bestow much attention to it, otherwise it rapidly falls into disorder. The heat and white ants are its principal enemies; the former cracks and destroys it immediately, particularly if of native workmanship; for the lazy mechanics seldom trouble themselves with selecting well-seasoned wood; as long as a purchaser

takes the article off their hands, little reck they how long it lasts. The insects likewise commit sad havoc with the mahogany tables and sofas, though perhaps after all your servants do more damage than heat and insects together. The bearers are excessively careless in this respect, and though dreadfully stingy with their own property, they manifest a reckless disregard for that of their masters. Furniture, if procured from a European upholsterer, is generally very expensive; most people, however, prefer obtaining a good article by giving a high price, than purchasing a bazaar rattle-trap for a few rupees—which, by the bye, is almost sure to fall to pieces after a day or two's wear and tear. Luckily subaltern officers are seldom troubled with an over-abundant supply of furniture ware. According to the rules of the service, a regiment generally remains either two or three years at each station, consequently it would be superfluous waste of coin were he to furnish his house as expensively as the residents, when in all probability, on receiving marching orders, he would be unable to obtain a proper value for his household goods. A subaltern should learn to be contented with a table, a bed, and a couple of chairs; a SOLDIER requires no addition to the above.

House-rent in Calcutta is high, and likewise at Barrackpore; at the latter station most of the bungalows

are the property of natives, who, with their natural avidity, would if possible raise the already exorbitant rent; but, fortunately, if the tenant murmurs at the rent, which the landlord refuses to lower, an appeal is preferred: a committee "sits" upon the house, and if they consider the plaintiff has just cause for complaint, a monthly rent is forthwith settled upon the bungalow in question. This of course refers only to such houses as are situated within the limits of cantonments, and therefore subject to military jurisdiction.

With regard to the burial grounds, the natives certainly surpass the Europeans in their care and respect for the resting places of the dead. It is a very pleasing trait in their character, for the Mahommedans bestow great care upon their burial grounds, keeping them remarkably neat, and if possible, selecting for their site the most picturesque spot in the neighbourhood. Many tombs, tenanted by once wealthy individuals, are beautifully ornamented with glazed tiles, the cold marble floors, and richly carved walls, forming a striking contrast, when placed in proximity to the humble mound of earth erected over a poor person. Our cantonment grave yards are seldom visited by Europeans, they generally present too gloomy an aspect to cause any wish to go over them. And yet sometimes a delicious melancholy steals over one, on reading the various in-

scriptions to the memory of Englishmen, long, long ago fallen victims, either to climate, war, or the knife of fanatical assassins. Though the natives regard their own tombs with feelings of veneration, it does not prevent a few of the evil disposed from robbing the tombs of Europeans of their marble slabs.

I had frequently heard of the splendour displayed by the natives of Calcutta during their grand festivals; however, I was sadly disappointed in my expectations, for, with the exception of a large and turbulent assemblage of men, who day and night effectually banished sleep from the domains of the peaceful inhabitants, I could not discover anything approaching the grandeur of the Seikh "tomashas." Tom toms, crackers, and grotesque representations of tombs and gods constituted the only "tomasha." During the continuation of these festivals, the rich daily entertain their poorer relatives; nautches are performed for their amusement, presents are lavishly scattered in all directions, and at the conclusion of these heathen saturnalias, a pretty round sum will have been expended, whilst the old proverb is verified that "a fool and his money are soon parted." There are one or two very hospitable native gentlemen residing on the road between Calcutta and Barrackpore. Several of us were invited on one occasion to attend a nautch, given by a well known Rajah.

The beautiful gardens attached to the house were magnificently illuminated, the trees and walls being covered with innumerable little glass lamps of variegated colours. The grounds were thrown open to the public, and at one time, during the night, must have contained fully 20,000 people, who maintained the greatest decorum throughout. The Rajah did his utmost to make the splendid supper provided for his European guests palatable, by procuring excellent champagne. The Ead and Mohurren are the principal Mahommedan festivals, both being kept up with unabating zeal and spirit. Generally speaking, at military stations, a strong guard of sepoy's accompanies the procession; this is a very necessary precaution, for formerly, most serious disturbances, resulting in bloodshed, were of frequent occurrence, and even at the present day, notwithstanding the exertions of the guard, a row will be produced through the machinations of an over zealous fanatic, who makes religion the ostensible cause for creating mischief. The infrequency of quarrels is a matter of some surprise, for the clashing together of two bigoted sects like the Hindoos and Musselmen, would naturally lead one to suppose that very serious consequences would arise from these public demonstrations of religion.

Strange to say, although the Mohurrun is not a

Hindoo festival, still, with the exception of the Brahmins, nearly every caste of Hindoo will enter into the spirit of the tomasha, raising as great a hubbub as the Mussulmen portion of the assembly. All classes of the community, rich and poor, subscribe their quota towards manufacturing a tazer, which is meant to represent the model of a tomb, supposed to resemble the one erected over the body of the Saint Hoossein. The framework is overlaid with silver and gilt tinsel, and by torch-light looks pretty enough. At Delhi, Lucknow, and other wealthy cities, these tazees are decorated with real gold and silver ornaments. The last day of the Jubilee is a general holiday, nor will any true believer voluntarily absent himself from the gay scene. An immense multitude is thus congregated, and owing to the variety of costume, as well as the numerous coloured umbrellas, the long procession with its incessant uproar, presents perhaps the most singular effect and scene, that can well be met with in India. A river is considered the most propitious place for receiving the tazer, and on the evening of the last day, it is conveyed with great pomp, and finally consigned to a watery grave. Should no river or canal happen to flow in the vicinity of the town or village, the tazer is buried in a particular spot set aside for the purpose. But it rarely occurs that a village is situated so far away from a river, as to be beyond the limits of

a day's marching distance. At night a legion of flaming torches illuminates the country round, making the swarthy countenances of the excited crowd assume a wild and even fierce expression. Up country, in many of the independent states, the Hooli, and other festivals are splendidly kept up. The wealthy kings lavish large sums upon the fabrication of tazees; camels and elephants are made to assist in these ceremonies, accompanying the procession, and constituting no slight attraction in the eyes of the poor people, who loudly manifest their admiration of the handsome gold and silver trappings which decorate the bodies of the unwieldy animals. A young camel is generally killed upon these occasions, and the flesh, which is considered a great delicacy, is distributed amongst the mob. During the Mohurrun, the poor folks receive provisions and money from the rich Mussulmen; the latter according to the Koran being taught from infancy to bestow alms upon their poorer brethren. We certainly cannot refrain from admiring some of the traits most prominent in Mussulman character, particularly that of almsgiving; however, they are a strange race, blending charity with revenge.

CHAPTER II.

Dawk Travelling—Thugs—Tiger and Hog Hunting—Jungle Life—The Floriken and other Game Birds—The Regiment on its March.

SOMEBODY has said that the Indian soldier is a locomotive animal, perpetually marching all over the country; this mode of taking exercise, no doubt greatly conduces towards the maintenance of his health, as well as relieving the mind from gloomy thoughts and pining after home. Perpetual change of air and scenery frequently dissipates the dark clouds that will occasionally arise in the horizon of the exile. The wandering life a soldier leads in India, assists in elevating his tastes for the beauties of nature, whilst the hardships which after all are very pleasant, render him a serviceable friend when needed. Troops stationed at Barrackpore are often sent out into the district on outpost duty, and during my stay at Barrackpore, I was fortunate enough to be ordered to Midnapore, a large civil station, which some fifty years ago formed the military head-quarters;

however at present, only three companies are stationed there. If proceeding by oneself, the most convenient mode of travelling is by dawk, and perhaps a short description of a dawk journey may be acceptable to the English reader.

A palanquin or dhooly having been procured, the traveller proceeds to the post office, and there gives orders for "laying his dawk." If the distance is for a hundred miles or more, four and twenty hours notice is requisite, otherwise the bearers, not having received any intimation of your approach, will not be ready at their post to take you up. Many who contemplate a long march prefer travelling in a dhooly, which being of lighter construction than a palanquin, is not so fatiguing to the men, and therefore the rate of going over the ground is considerably increased. Eight men are sufficient to convey a palkee ten miles on a stretch, and this distance completed, a fresh relay are ready to start onward immediately upon your arrival. An extra coolie, with a couple of small pittaraks, or tin boxes, attached to either end of a pliant bamboo stick, runs alongside and keeps up with the palkee. These boxes contain wearing apparel and a few necessaries; for if the trip is seven or eight hundred miles, it will be impossible for your servants to remain with you. A musalchee, or torch-bearer, likewise accompanies the

dawk. It is generally the custom to bestow some trifling present upon each relay of bearers; this custom is so prevalent, that although they have no RIGHT to expect any gift, still they always ask for "Bucksheesh." But the novice should bear in mind, never to offer them anything before the completion of the stage. By promising them some pecuniary remuneration previous to starting, their exertions will be stimulated, and the journey is performed with greater celerity. Cases have occurred up country where the bearers have so intimidated unprotected ladies, that the latter have readily given up the entire contents of their purse. The bearers are principally Hindoos of a not very high caste, the elasticity of their limbs adapting them for this peculiar style of labour. Even with a heavy burden they will travel at the rate of three miles and a half an hour; but should the night be cool and the road even, they will easily proceed four miles. The pace is a very agreeable one, and with well-trained bearers, entirely free from all jolting; the only cause of annoyance is the constant application for "Bucksheesh," and the incessant singing of the bearers. However, an old stager cares little for these minor disturbances, and the peculiar hush-a-bye baby tune, rapidly soothes him to sleep. Dawk travelling, though a very comfortable mode of getting over the ground, is like every other luxury,

attended with some expense; the charge is eight annas, or a shilling for every mile, besides an extra fee for as many pittarah bearers as the traveller chooses to take with him, each coolie receiving two annas. Entirely for the convenience of travellers, government has erected small staging bungalows all over the country; these are situated at equal distances from each other, so that if the traveller feels fatigued, he can always procure a night's lodging by paying one rupee for the same. Servants are or ought to be constantly on the spot, to supply one with eatables; but, unless in the vicinity of large towns, grilled fowls and tea without milk are the only refreshments procurable. Many officers imprudently perform dawk journeys during the heat of the day, and that too in the height of the warm season. These individuals imagine that because they have hitherto escaped with safety, they are always likely to carry with them the same good fortune, but several very severe and dangerous cases of fever have resulted from needless exposure to the mid-day sun.

Night is the most appropriate time for undertaking dawk journeys, nor is it so harassing to the poor bearers who, alas, are not much commiserated by their European burden. Young ignorant persons foolishly

maltreat and abuse their bearers, wondering at the slow pace at which they travel.

In traversing a district covered with jungle, travellers should be careful to have fire-arms by them ; in fact, no one ought to move in India without pistols. If men do not attack you, possibly a tiger or some other wild denizen of the forest will suddenly pay you an unwelcome visit. The startling anecdotes of wild beasts or Thugs attacking the dawk are greatly exaggerated, for we seldom hear of a European traveller being molested. The dawks are all managed and under the control of government ; consequently, no party of Thugs has the temerity to attack a European, who, moreover, would prove no contemptible adversary if attacked by half a dozen Thugs.

Midnapore is a pretty place, but owing to the iron nature of the soil, the storms that are constantly bursting with terrific fury over this locality, are perfectly awful, the lightning literally running along the ground for an incredible distance. At about the commencement of the south west monsoons, which generally set in towards the end of May, the station is annually visited by a hurricane, lasting (at least the one I witnessed did,) for forty-eight hours. Large trees, weighing several tons, were torn up from the ground, their immense boughs

being hurled several feet away from the trunk. The Midnapore district was formerly one of the haunts most favoured by the Thugs. From the civil magistrate and others, I contrived to gather a number of amusing anecdotes connected with these gentlemen of the road. Thanks to English laws and the ably managed Thuggee department, these unfeeling murderers are gradually disappearing from India. It is a mistaken idea to imagine that only low caste Hindoos are admitted into the Thug fraternity. Men of every creed offer themselves for enlistment, and provided they can produce good security against their committing any treachery, they are readily admitted as members. The Thugs are governed by peculiar laws of their own, any deviation from, or disclosure of these regulations, being punished with death, or at least severe chastisement, such as the loss of a limb or an eye, and expulsion from the fraternity. Not a century ago this formidable league of bloodthirsty men committed most daring murders with impunity, but luckily for the present generation, the Thugs are not so faithful to each other as formerly. Several, either through timidity, or being weary of committing crime, surrender themselves up to justice, and obtain a mitigation of their punishment by becoming informers, or spies. With their assistance government acquires valuable intelligence, which enables its officers to capture parties of

Thugs, perhaps in the very act of committing some lawless adventure. Thugs generally perform their depredations or murders in gangs, placing themselves under the command of one, selected from the fraternity on account of his superior skill and boldness. These little detachments established a regular system of discipline; for instance, previous to attacking a house, different divisions are told off *a la militaire* for particular duties. The commandant would dispose of his men in the following manner:—four Thugs, armed with axes, are ordered to break open the doors and windows, and immediately a breach is formed; four others, already on the alert, rush inside the dwelling and commence seeking for treasure, or any other valuable property. Four men remain outside, to receive the stolen goods and carry them off into the jungle, whilst the remainder of the party act as a sort of rear guard, by covering the retreat of their comrades, fully resolved to fight, or if necessary, murder those who opposed them. Strangling was formerly the favourite mode adopted by Thugs, when they made up their minds to murder a victim, but now poisoning has become very prevalent, and appears to be quite the fashion. There is a certain white flower that grows in a wild state by tanks and jheels, from which a deadly poisonous milk can be extracted; its name has escaped my memory, though on the Barrack-

pore-road my servants frequently pointed it out to me. This flower is admirably adapted for the purposes to which it is applied by the Thugs, possessing as it does the peculiarity of not discolouring water, and being moreover tasteless. A few grains of the pounded petals, if inserted into a tumbler of water or wine, are sufficient to produce a gradual and perfect lethargy, resembling intoxication. Sepoys visiting their homes, on furlough, are frequently selected as victims. The Thugs dispatch their spies in every direction, to ascertain when and how any travellers are likely to proceed on their journey. Perhaps the wily Thug skilfully encounters, as if by accident, a sepoy on the road; by dint of well-trained cunning, the unsuspecting victim is easily enticed into a conversation, and a temporary sort of friendship being struck up, they sit down to rest awhile under the shade of some tree. The Thug quickly seizes the first opportunity for commencing operations; whilst the sepoy's back is turned, a few grains of this poisonous powder are deposited in his lota, or drinking cup, and the deed may be considered as half consummated. Owing to a variety of circumstances, the Thug deems it safer not to murder the sepoy, but merely to *drug* him. In this case, after drugging the person until he resembles an intoxicated man suffering from the effects of a fit, the acute Thug, to prevent all suspicion, rushes off to the nearest village

and reports to the Thanadar, that in travelling along the road, he perceived a sepoy lying in a drunken state, perfectly at the mercy of any one who felt inclined to do him an injury. The tale succeeds, and by the time the poisoned man recovers his senses, the culprit has secured a safe retreat. When murder is committed, the body is sometimes disfigured, or hacked up into small pieces and flung down a well, or else thrown into a river if one should be close at hand. No doubt many of the dead bodies seen floating on the surface of the Ganges, and supposed to have met with a natural death, have been murdered by Thugs, through the instrumentality of fond relations, anxious to possess the coin of their too long-lived friends.

Anecdotes are still extant of treasure parties being attacked by large bodies of Thugs and Dacoits. On one occasion a guard, consisting of two hundred disciplined troops, received a most signal defeat. But this occurred years ago. From the accounts of those who escaped, it seems that a powerful ambuscade was concealed on either side of the road, through which the treasure party had to march. A dense jungle, together with a rough and narrow path, greatly assisted the attacking party, which consisted of some six hundred men. The advance guard were permitted to pass the ambush unmolested, but on the arrival of the main body, some ropes and net work,

hitherto skilfully concealed, were suddenly raised some six feet from the surface of the road, thus entangling the whole party. The manœuvre was easily carried out, although the uninitiated would have considered such a transaction as an impossibility. But the reader must be informed that Indian bullock carts are most unwieldy conveyances; and as they proceed along the road in single file, if only one hackery chances to halt, those in the rear are likewise immediately brought to a stand still. The confusion is considerably increased by the stubbornness of the animals, which once frightened, bolt headlong in all directions, dragging the hackery after them. Very rare indeed is it that a European is attacked by Thugs; the latter being perfectly well aware, that in the event of a sahib suddenly disappearing, a regular hubbub, and indefatigable search would be instituted by the police, until some clue were discovered with regard to the fate of the missing man. It would be well for all officers if they paid attention to government orders, commanding them on all occasions to report their arrival and departure from the different stations they march through. By following out these instructions, should any accident occur, measures could be adopted in order to trace the perpetrators of the mischief. With natives it is different; many a weary pilgrim on his journey to

the holy temple of Juggernaut, falls an easy victim to the ferocity of Thugs. From the numerous magisterial reports, we perceive that an incredible number of Hindoo devotees were, and no doubt are, even now annually murdered on the road between Calcutta and the above-mentioned holy shrine. Their relations, either from apathy or not possessing the means, seldom commence enquiring into the long absence of their friend, until a considerable length of time has elapsed since the individual's disappearance. Of course this wanton delay enables the murderers to make good their retreat, and thus escape with impunity. With the reader's permission, we will leave these tales of crime and murder alone, and change our topic of discourse, substituting in its stead a few remarks upon Indian field sports.

Happy are those who take a delight in Nimrodian amusements; as before remarked, nothing conduces so much towards the maintenance of good health in India as the moderate enjoyment of hunting and shooting; but then these recreations should only be prosecuted at certain cool seasons of the year. First and foremost stands tiger-hunting, which has deservedly been styled a princely pastime; for excitement and dangers it surpasses all other Indian sports, but in order to enjoy this amusement, the huntsman must possess a few spare rupees; for a tiger hunt, if properly ma-

naged so as to insure a certain "kill," is perhaps a more expensive sort of recreation than one would imagine. Elephants are usually employed in the chase, and sometimes as many as twelve or fourteen will be brought into the field together. A commissariat officer is a useful fellow to become acquainted with on these occasions, particularly if the neighbourhood contains good sport, and he himself has charge of several elephants. The Sunderbunds, near Calcutta, swarm with tigers, which commit sad devastation amongst the villagers' flocks, as well as occasionally killing the shepherds and labourers themselves. The native boatmen dread remaining in the Sunderbunds all night, for cases have occurred of men sleeping on the deck and being suddenly snatched up and carried away into the jungle, before any assistance could be received from their fellow-boatmen.

The most propitious period of the year for tiger shooting is during the hot weather; but I would strongly dissuade the sportsman from venturing out of doors in the heat of the day, unless it be in the months of November, December, January and February. Letting alone the extreme danger from the fierce rays of the sun, the unwholesome malaria, arising from decayed vegetation produces, if not death, a yet worse calamity in the shape of fever, which gradually under-

mines the constitution, affects the brain, and renders a man's existence almost unbearable. But after all, though the tiger indulges to a greater extent its rambling propensities during the cold season, which perhaps leads the sportsman a longer chase than anticipated, still he is amply compensated, and certainly enjoys his hunting expedition with greater zest, than he would were he to follow up a tiger's track during the whole of a grilling day in June. Generally speaking, it is the custom to make up a party, for then more elephants can be brought into the field; besides, it is tedious work spending a fortnight in the jungle all by oneself.

Some well-trained elephants enter into the sport with a spirit that vies with their master's, and display their eagerness for the combat by charging furiously down upon the tiger, and that, too, with an impetuosity not to be restrained by the violent blows administered upon their heads, with sharp iron hooks carried by the mahouts, or drivers; in fact, very dangerous consequences would result from checking them, for the sight or even scent of a tiger is sufficient to drive an elephant half insane. Woe betide the hunter who unfortunately mounts a cowardly animal; should the frightened elephant turn tail, and bolt through a dense high jungle, death would be the almost inevitable result, or at least a compound fracture. How the mahouts manage to

reduce their gawky steeds to such a docile state appears wonderful ; but some assert that the kindness and care bestowed upon them is the solution of the grand mystery by which the mahouts gain the mastery over their huge charge.

After a long and tedious journey, or on return home from a hunting expedition, the mahout, preparatory to cooking his own repast, feeds his elephants ; the meal consists of a number of coarse flour cakes and sugar canes, but if the latter is not procurable, boughs of trees or dry Indian grass forms a famous substitute. Mango and neem leaves are preferred by the elephant, but it is seldom that they can obtain such luxuries—the latter being a tree held in veneration by the natives, and the other bearing a favourite fruit. The mahout with his own hands forces the cakes one by one into the animal's mouth, patting and talking to him during the operation, after which the huge creature is driven to some neighbouring stream or tank, and there undergoes a regular scrubbing all over, turning over upon either side as ordered by the mahout, and allowing himself to be washed with far greater obedience and less noise than most little children in nurseries. These ablutions performed, back into camp ambles the old fellow, and after his two fore legs are chained together, he is permitted to demolish as much green food as he

feels inclined for. The price of a good shikaree or hunting elephant is about 800 or 900 rupees, though of course many are valued at 2,000 rupees.

In former days the native rajahs were passionately devoted to field sports, always proceeding through the jungles with great pomp and splendour, their camps resembling an army about to engage an enemy, so numerous were the retinue that accompanied the monarch. Latterly this manly amusement has been gradually neglected, whilst, alas! more feminine pleasures have been substituted in their stead. The Rajah of Burdwan is an exception, for this hospitable prince frequently visits and keeps up his preserves, inviting Europeans to accompany him in his expeditions. The Nepal, Delhi, Lucknow, and other rajahs, nominally keep up a sporting reputation; but from all accounts the sport they treat their guests to is not worthy the title. To tell the truth, many visitors attend merely to be present at the sumptuous repast always provided by their regal host after the completion of the day's labour.

A tiger, unless pushed into a corner, where retreat without fighting is impossible, will seldom rush at his assailants: for, although of a most ferocious disposition, the tiger nevertheless surpasses in cowardice any other jungle animal of the same size and strength. A buffalo has been known to defeat a tiger single-handed. I

once heard an Indigo planter narrate an instance in which a tiger visited a herd of tame buffalos, and after several useless attempts to carry off a young cow, the largest bull rushed furiously to the rescue, and after a sharp conflict, succeeded in obliging his feline opponent to quit his dominion. With the exception of venomous snakes, perhaps no bite of either reptile or animal is so dangerous as that inflicted by a tiger. The natives increase the evil effects of the wound, by applying cow dung, or some other filthy substance to the injured part, this, in a day or two, produces violent inflammation; followed shortly after by mortification. The most efficacious treatment is that of applying frequent cold water applications to the bitten part. An experienced sportsman can readily detect the lair of a tiger, by what in Scinde is termed “pugging” him down.

Hog sticking constitutes another favourite diversion amongst Europeans in India. If well mounted upon a spirited horse, a chase after a tusher is exciting in the extreme, and even the novice forgets the danger, as he madly imitates his comrades in pursuing the wiry foe. The three Presidencies have all their own peculiar method, whereby the wild boar is made to bite the dust. The Bombay people carry and wield their spears something after the fashion of the knights of old, when engaged in the tournament; and in the opinion of many,

it is the easiest and best way. The Madras pig sticker uses a very short spear about four feet in length, which, when approaching within striking distance, he hurls direct at the boar. The Bengal hunter prefers holding his spear downwards, in a perpendicular direction.

Next to the tiger, the wild boar is considered the most destructive of animals; in sugar plantations, their visits are attended with a vast deal of mischief, and against these grunting invaders the labourers are constantly waging war; however, the wild boar is too ferocious an enemy to oppose single handed, and the labourer, unless ably supported by nearly the whole of his village, dreads encountering his inveterate foe, whose sudden approach is a signal for the annoyed cultivators to beat a rapid retreat, either to their village or some raised bamboo platform, erected in the fields for protecting the ploughman from the incursions of wild animals. A large sized boar is more than a match for twenty of these timid natives, and I have received ocular demonstration of the facility with which a hog will rip open the stomach of a horse, or otherwise render the steed incapable of carrying his rider. The enormous height that a hog will spring over when hotly pursued, could never be credited by those inexperienced in hog sticking. Many people possess a decided prejudice against eating the flesh of a wild pig; this is a

ridiculous fantasy, carried by some to an absurd pitch ; for I have known some families who never permitted pork to appear upon their table, thus foolishly betraying their fastidiousness before their menials, who, if Mussulmen, gladly avail themselves of this opportunity to assure the Hindoos that their master has a greater respect for the Mahommedan religion, than he ever showed for Vedism. Now, as to the flesh of a wild pig being unpalatable, the idea is a most mistaken one, for sweeter or more nourishing meat is not procured in any of the Calcutta bazaars. The head, in particular, is delicious, and up country, salted pork forms a considerable article of consumption. The animal feeds simply upon the nutritious roots of small trees, and during the season, he luxuriates entirely upon sugar canes. Now, regarding the tame village pigs, which subsist upon any vile refuse they can pick up, no person would wonder at another expressing his disgust at being asked to eat some of the flesh, for it is not only unpalatable, but unwholesome.

Some hogs have been known to afford an hour's good run, the hunters at the same time being mounted on very superior horses. When hotly pursued, the jungle boar often turns sharp round, charging the nearest of his foes ; if unsuccessful in reaching his object, the rage he evinces is truly grand, but when irritated by a slight

touch of the spear, seldom does he entirely miss his aim. They frequently endeavour to rush betwixt the horse's legs, and success generally attends this manœuvre; for once or twice I have seen steed, rider, and hog roll over and over each other. If much excited, the furious animal takes advantage of his foe's position, by attacking him when down on the ground, and their sharp long tusks measuring upwards of six inches in length, inflict most severe wounds. As the reader probably is aware, a Mussulman has the greatest abhorrence of eating pork, whilst the more rigid disciples of the prophet abstain even from touching a pig. Some Hindoos are not so fastidious, and as for the Seikhs, they are very partial to ham and bacon, considering them as the greatest delicacies procurable. These animals are to be met with all over the Indian peninsular; they prefer frequenting low grass jungle, situate within easy trotting distance of some neighbouring sugar plantation.

All the officers of the Bombay army are passionately fond of pig sticking, nor will any youngster rest contented until he has performed the gallant feat of "taking a spear," as it is called. During the cold weather some delightful shooting excursions are got up by the residents of out stations. If a pleasant and picturesque spot could be selected within reasonable distance, ladies formerly accompanied the party; but latterly, owing to the non-

sensical innovations that have been introduced into society, the fair sex, no doubt much to their disappointment, in a measure, have been debarred from enjoying the pleasures of a temporary jungle life. Many English people form very erroneous ideas of the meaning of the word jungle. Some imagine that a jungle merely signifies a wood or forest, whereas the term is applied to any desert, wild, or uncultivated spot ; hence also an uncivil or ignorant man is denominated a junglee admee, or wild man. No matter in what part of India you may happen to reside, care should be taken not to venture in the jungle regions during the months intervening from September to November. An experienced sportsman, generally speaking, contrives to supply his table by means of his gun, and if in a good locality, a noble bill of fare appears daily on the board.

Deer are so numerous, and require so little skill in knocking them over, that there is scarcely any difficulty in obtaining a haunch of venison. Naturalists affirm that there are upwards of twenty different species of deer in Bengal alone ; but it is a matter of doubt, whether such a number be extant at the present day. Amongst those most common, may be enumerated the antelope, red deer, moose deer, hog or para deer, which is found all over India ; roe buck, musk deer, and a sort of samber. The musk deer is rarely shot, nor have I ever

seen one so low down as the plains, the hills being their favourite haunts. Epicures consider the flesh of the antelope the most palatable, the rest possess neither flavour nor nourishment. Unless driven from the jungles and forced to take to the open country, they afford little sport.

If you keep good dogs, jackals offer excellent practice, and keep greyhounds in condition. Rare fun can be procured even by the possession of a mongrel pack of country dogs; and in the vicinity of some stations, foxes, hares, or jackals are so numerous, that frequently four or five runs occur before breakfast. Waterfowl swarm in myriads on every large sheet of water, particularly if situated in the centre of a jungle a few miles away from cultivation. The sportsman should always, if possible, pitch his camp near a spot frequented by wild fowl, for in general these birds, in endless variety, literally cover the water, and upon the slightest alarm, with loud quackings, arise from the surface like a dark cloud; the peculiar noise made by their wings being audible for a considerable distance. Several herons may be seen on the edge of the same lake or jheels, but they never mingle with the ducks or teal, appearing to keep aloof from their noisy neighbours—the crested heron is a magnificent bird. Partridges and quail are likewise abundant; the latter

being considered a dainty dish during the season, at which period they are as fat as butter, and near some stations so numerous, that officers frequently knock over thirty brace before breakfast, and that too within five hundred yards or so of their compounds. However, when sojourning in the jungle, one cannot expect to enjoy much sport amongst the feathered tribe, with the exception of wild fowl—pheasants only inhabit the Terai districts, situate close to the foot of the Himilayah Mountains.

At Darjeeling, we used to obtain the beautiful snow pheasant, but unless hung up for several days they were scarcely worth cooking. The floriken or, as many term it, the bustard, supersedes all other game birds in flavour. Its favourite haunts in Bengal, are low open countries or thin grass jungles; they are in prime condition during the hot season; but on the approach of the cold weather they become wild, and the sportsman will discover that it is no easy matter to shoot them. Native princes hunt them with falcons, and if well-bred great amusement can be derived from this ancient and noble sport; but after all, I cannot admire the wholesale slaughter committed against game birds by several gentlemen who shall be nameless.

Those who are fond of falconry, should make their hawks chase herons and such like, and thus avoid

destroying the sport of others. The cock floriken equals a small turkey in size, whilst its plumage surpasses that of our barn-door monarch, his crest being of a more aristocratic size and fashion. In days of yore only Rajahs, and princes of the blood, were permitted to appear in public with the crest of a floriken stuck in their turbans. Ely's patent wire cartridges, No. 4 shot, are admirably adapted for the pursuit of this bird, which generally rises fully eighty paces from the sportsman; though when wild, one seldom obtains a shot at them, unless they should chance to fly overhead. The ortelan is another delicious little bird about the size of a wren; they differ vastly in weight and flavour from the species met with in Italy, possessing this advantage over their European brethren, that whereas in England gourmands are, or at least were, obliged to pay a guinea a dish, in India, a poor krani can enjoy the dainty for a few annas. The Italian bird, however, is much larger. By way of a change, I have captured these birds by means of a small net, and a merry night we all made of it. We went to work precisely as a fowler catches sparrows in the dark; namely, one held the net behind a bush, another supported a torch, whilst the rest with large bamboos beat the boughs, and as a matter of course, the birds rushing towards the light, as they always do when disturbed, were easily

captured in the net. A bird called the jungle fowl is very common, and is frequently converted into excellent curry. The crow of a cock bird is most musical the first thing in the morning, and if not of too lazy a disposition, the sportsman may even from his tent-bed knock over a straggler or two as they run hurriedly past. Snipes come into season after the rains, and may then be found in almost any locality. The natives round Calcutta derive a very decent livelihood by snaring these birds, and disposing of them at the rate of a rupee a dozen.

Night is of all times the best to enjoy a jungle scene ; the tranquillity that reigns around, and the pale moon shining through the dark foliage, spreads such a solemn and quiet, though pleasing sensation, that one could almost resolve to quit for ever the haunts of man, to enjoy unmolested repose in the green wood. Oh ! who can imagine the delicious feeling that steals over the Indian hunter, when after a capital day's sport he reclines in an easy chair opposite the doorway of his tent, facing a lovely sheet of water, surrounded on all sides by a lofty and dense jungle. The grateful cheroot wafts a gentle and soothing spirit round the young exile, and endeavours to cheer him for the loss of absent friends. This is the most appropriate hour for holding mental communion with those we love, and

under the benign influence of nature, perhaps in these happy hours we are irresistibly impelled to forgive and pity our enemies. Ever and anon the pleasant reverie is disturbed by a startled deer or pig rushing quickly in front of your small camp; or perhaps the distant jackal commences his midnight cry, gradually coming nearer and nearer, until ascertaining his close vicinity to man's abode, he pricks up his ears and trots nimbly away, scarcely moving the small boughs in his silent retreat.

The flying fox next soars overhead, flapping its heavy wings with a discordant noise. The servants are busy cooking their meals, each individual has a kitchen of his own, and it is really pleasant to witness their happy faces, and the zeal with which they carry on their culinary operations. The horses have been fed and rubbed down for the night; but as if wishing to provoke the syces, they keep rolling over and over in the dust, until weary of such an amusement they compose themselves for sleep. The glare from the huge bonfire enables us to admire the fagged dogs, who are slumbering at their masters' feet, and as a proof that yon little spaniel enjoys a day's sport as much as his sahib, even his dreams are of the chase, and he occasionally utters a bark, though not quite so loud as when rushing in pursuit of wounded ducks.

Such is the happy life an Indian sportsman leads; and many a pleasant hour of my exile has been spent in the jungles. All officers allow that they consider the days occupied in marching from one station to another, as the happiest of their lives. A slight annoyance is experienced at first starting, but after a couple of marches one gradually becomes accustomed to, nay, one even enjoys a camp existence.

Calcutta people rarely move any distance from the presidency, and therefore are seldom enabled to form even an idea as to the pleasantness of a long march. With military men it is otherwise; they are constantly on the move, and consider themselves quite at home in their canvas houses. In England, no exertion is required preparatory to starting on a journey; the numerous well-managed railroads and steamboats, have removed the obstacles which formerly beset the travellers' path. But India, which is wonderfully behind hand with respect to rapid locomotion, possesses none of these advantages; so that travelling in the Company's territories requires a long purse, and no ordinary amount of patience. When a regiment receives marching instructions, five or six days' notice is given for the officers and men attached to the corps, to make preparations for leaving the station. This is a very busy time, for camels, bullocks, hackeries and other conveyances

have to be procured for baggage purposes. Every one endeavours to dispose of superfluous articles of furniture, &c., and this is generally managed by the aid of sales and auctions ; however, the poor subaltern is obliged to part with his goods at a ruinous sacrifice. The resident bazaar shopkeepers are of course in attendance, and frequently re-purchase a commodity for half the sum that only a few days previous to the auction they had sold it for. The mess tent is always sent on in advance directly after dinner, so that breakfast may be ready for the officers upon their arrival at the encamping ground on the following morning. The regiment generally commences its march at about three o'clock, A.M. As the tents come up, a regular Babel scene reigns all around for about half an hour. The officers' servants, covered with dust, and straining their vocal powers to the utmost, rapidly tumble into camp, and immediately pitch their respective masters' tents. The ground each officer's tent is to occupy, has been previously marked out by the quarter master, who always precedes the regiment ; and thus much confusion is avoided. For the space of ten minutes, nothing is audible but a tremendous battering of pegs with mallets, whilst occasionally the monotonous creaking of a slow hackery adds to the tumult, which is furthermore increased by the camels sending forth their plaintive moan, as if entreating to

have their heavy burden removed from their backs. The number of camp followers is incredible; and all considering it incumbent upon them to issue orders, or offer unsolicited advice at the same time, the noisy, though not very unpleasant scene of confusion may easily be imagined. The breakfast bugle, to the delight of the hungry marchers, at length sounds its cheerful call. It would perform wonders with a person possessing a consumptive constitution, could he by any chance witness the ravenous attack made upon the numerous edibles laid out. Some are not contented with the mild China beverage, but prefer beer or claret; such slight debauchery being permitted on the line of march.

During the march the most amusing sketches might be taken by a caricaturist; amongst the most ludicrous would be the native officers, mounted upon their miserable looking steeds, for they seldom ride a horse of any spirit or size; they being very indifferent equestrians, their display of horsemanship occasions a vast deal of merriment amongst the sepoys, for the poor old superannuated subadars and jemadars certainly appear to great disadvantage on horseback; the ragged tattoos, as these small ponies are called, are generally vicious little brutes, and when in close proximity to each other create such a disturbance, that in the end they contrive to ease

themselves of their biped burden, and that too with marvellous rapidity and skill.

Having marched half of the day's journey, the regiment halts for half an hour to enable the men to regain vigour; in the meanwhile one of the mess servants, who had arrived the previous night, has ready for the officers a cup of warm coffee, or a small dash of mountain dew, the latter being in great demand on a cold morning; the scene at this half way house can only be imagined by those accustomed to India marching. The first large log of timber that came to hand, our thoughtful servant seized, and by the time we came up a right noble fire offered us a warm reception. The sepoy's gathered round to obtain small bits of ignited wood for their hookahs, and displayed a reckless indifference for their fingers by snatching and carrying off, in their naked hands, several flaming pieces of charcoal. Jack sepoy, in passing through a village, is not very particular as to whose firewood he takes to construct a temporary fire for himself. The inhabitants are usually asleep, and on awaking next morning are disagreeably informed by ocular demonstration, that, during their slumbers, their roof has mostly disappeared and allows the daylight to peep through pretty considerably. This destruction of private property could never be entirely prevented, owing to the number of soldiers,

and to their being sometimes favoured by such dark nights that it was impossible to detect the offenders.

If any ladies accompany the regiment, they generally follow in carriages or buggies ; however, complaints were heard amongst them of the tediousness of the journey, though every effort had been made to render their journeying comfortable. A short time elapses, the camp is pitched, and then the most perfect tranquillity succeeds to the late hubbub ; the horses alone now make any disturbance, and that only for a few minutes before twelve o'clock, the usual feeding hour. An impudent fakeer squats opposite your tent, and in a low growling voice solicits alms, and he obtains his request, only the *arms* bestowed upon him generally consist of flesh and bone, particularly if the vile impostor has disturbed the siesta of "Gareeb, Parwar, Koodawund." There are two Hindostani terms constantly used in conversation ; when an inferior is speaking to a man of rank, they signify cherisher of the poor, Lord. Towards the cool of the evening, sepoy and camp followers swarm out of their tents like so many ants, hurrying to and fro in various directions, creating a pleasant little humming sound, which relieves the monotony that lately pervaded the temporary canvas village. After breakfast all disperse, and each wiles away the hours according to his

taste or fancy. The sporting characters stroll round the adjacent country with a gun over their shoulders; others again prefer a quiet snooze; whilst a few, happy in being the owners of three or four horses, amuse themselves with attending personally to the comfort of their steeds, seeing that the proper quantity and quality of food is allotted to each meal; these personal inspections are occasionally absolutely necessary, for when servants perceive carelessness in their masters, they at once take advantage of this indifference, by withholding nearly one half of the corn, and that which they do place before the horses, is of so abominable a quality that it frequently makes them ill.

Tiffin is an indispensable meal, punctually placed on the table at two o'clock, after which a quiet game at whist, chess, or backgammon, occupies the time till near sunset, when the Nimrods make their appearance, bearing with them some signs of sport. Each shikaree has some little anecdote to relate connected with the day's shooting; the most delicate portion of the game, such as snipe and partridges, are presented to the ladies, whilst the messakhousemah seizes the larger kind, and appropriates it for the sole behoof of the "sahib logue." In the evening, for an hour or so after dinner, a cheroot and chit-chat conclude the business of the day; the mess-tent is struck, and im-

mediately starts on ahead, leaving its late tenants fast in the arms of Morpheus. Such is the daily routine of camp life, varied of course according to circumstances; such as when marching through a civil or military station, the regiment may receive from the residents a challenge to play a cricket match, ending of course in a jollification; then perhaps comes a rajah's turn, who, if anything like a decent fellow, will be certain to entertain the officers, proposing fun and amusement of some kind or other, in honour especially of our passing through his district. The Burdwan rajah is famous for his hospitality in this respect, and his extensive pleasure grounds, with a well-stocked menagerie, he willingly throws open for inspection.

John Company bestows almost a parental affection upon the sepoys in his service, and this kindly feeling is very prominent in the care and comfort of the sick. Spare doolies, attached to the doctor's establishment, always accompany a regiment on the line of march; so in the event of any private feeling suddenly indisposed, which after long marches is by no means a rare occurrence, particularly if the district traversed partakes of a damp and marshy nature, he is instantly placed in a dooly, and hurried away to the doctor. The doolies are very comfortable conveyances for an invalid, and it is a matter of some surprise that they are not in

requisition at home, instead of the unwieldy shutter that is used in the event of an accident. Why not have at every police station and hospital a certain number of doolies, (which by the bye in London might be wonderfully improved by dint of mechanical skill,) and let men be constantly in readiness to convey any unfortunate patient to the nearest hospital. Rainy weather or a dust storm in camp is very disagreeable; for after the continuance of heavy rain, the water pours through and under the tent most unmercifully, saturating bedding and traps instantaneously. Severe cases of fever often follow these showers, starvation being recommended as the only cure for the same, although many express their firm conviction that by imbibing lots of brandy pannee, and smoking loads of cheeroots, the fever is easily warded off. This advice smacks something of that given by Bob Sawyer to Mr. Pickwick, when the latter gentleman was half-drowned in the pond. Seriously speaking, spirits can never check a fever, and if the reader would follow my advice, he would never take stronger beverage than water; and that too, not only when suffering from the effects of fever, but under all circumstances, even when in a perfect state of salubrity.

The sepoy's manifest great horror of rain, and no doubt they have good reason for the same, as cholera

and bowel complaints generally make their appearance after the rains. The latter sickness, in the opinion of many talented medical men, is in a great measure produced by the sudden transition from intense heat, to a nasty, muggy, and damp oppression of the atmosphere. But after all, who can feel astonished at a nigger complaining of violent stomach-ache, when he swallows such immense quantities of burning hot curries, made up of every species of astringent and heating ingredients. I have felt often perfectly disgusted with our sepoy's' gluttony; for, boa-constrictor like, they actually stuff and gorge themselves to such an extent, that a few hours' sleep is actually necessary to shake off the effects of their over-abundant meal. A certain quantity of food is cooked, and no matter whether they have had sufficient or not, still the operation of stuffing is continued, until the entire dishful is demolished; for they will not leave off eating so long as a grain of rice appears on the platter.

In former days, previous to our occupation of India, this gluttony was always carried to a great excess amongst the soldiers. Many a victory was easily achieved by a mere handful of men, who taking advantage of their slumbering over-fed antagonists, suddenly rushed into their camp, and put them to an utter rout. The great Akbar frequently owed his successful engagements to the tor-

pidity of his opponents, and I believe, even to the present day, sepoys in the service of native princes, adopt the same system of carelessness as that pursued by their ancestors. The regiment halts about every tenth day to refresh the men and cattle; and the dhobees or washermen taking advantage of the halt, wash their masters' linen, which, when hung out to dry, makes the camp resemble, in appearance, the yard of an English washerwoman's on a mangling day. The march from Barrackpore to Dinahpore is very passable, being neither too long nor too short; the time we occupied on the road was about thirty-four days. The bridges constructed over the numerous ravines and canals which intersect the line of march were in a very dilapidated state, and considerably impeded the regiment. The men only passed over in small detachments at a time; so, as we mustered nearly 1,100 strong, not including camp followers, the reader can imagine the delay arising from such an obstruction. An iron bridge only lately completed, occupied the regiment a good hour in crossing over. The engineer officer, or some official, had previously requested that the sepoys should be ordered not to keep time together, and only to pass over in sections of companies. The first halting ground from Barrackpore is a very picturesque spot, and is close to Chandernagore, a French settlement, some twenty-

three miles from Calcutta. In marching through the Gallic Indian town our band favoured the slumbering inhabitants with the British Grenadiers' march and other melodious strains. Chandernagore is a remarkably cheap place, and the French residents are among the most hospitable in India. The police arrangements are admirably conducted, and at times, owing to turbulent characters, their assistance is called into requisition.

In fact rows are of frequent occurrence at this settlement, and several cases have occurred whereby the attention of the public has been drawn seriously to the subject. It is a pity that government could not induce the French to resign all pretensions to this paltry little piece of land, extending only six miles in length, and about four or five in breadth.

CHAPTER III.

Patna — Granary — Sonapore Races — Whirlwinds—Dinapore—
 Vineyards—Boats—Provisions—River Scenery—Musquitos—
 Tornados—Accident—Visit to the Holy Shrine of Junghera—
 Fakeers—Superstitious Boatmen.

WE all hailed with delight our arrival at Patna, a large and very ancient city adjoining the military station of Dinapore. Patna contains an immense population, and according to David the inhabitants should be extremely happy, for to judge from the legion of small children, who are perpetually crawling over and along the streets, one would feel inclined to think that the quivers required for holding them could never be constructed. Though the heat is very oppressive, particularly during the months of April, May, and June, still the climate is more salubrious than in most of the Hindostani districts. There are few buildings worthy the notice of travellers, either within the city or its suburbs, except a famous granary, erected several years ago, at a period when the country was threatened with famine. In shape it bears some resemblance to a large bell, and has attained con-

siderable local celebrity on account of its loud echoes and curious rumbling sounds. The summit is gained by a flight of circular steps, and the ascent proved very fatiguing. This was the building that Jung Bahadur rode up on horseback, but though at first the feat appeared a singularly bold and dangerous one, yet since my visit to the hills, and witnessing the performances of the hill ponies, my wonder has considerably decreased, as Bahardur's wonderful exploit is an every day occurrence in the wilds of the Himilayahs. The town of Patna, including the civil station of Bankipore, extends along the right bank of the Ganges for a distance of ten or twelve miles, perhaps further, the road throughout being an excellent one, and entirely screened the whole way from the fierce rays of the sun, by means of a right noble avenue of trees, planted by some Governor-General half a century ago. Several wealthy natives reside in this district, having collected their vast hoards of treasure by speculating in corn and grain. These are the sort of fellows who make money by buying up all the grain in the country, and then disposing of it at their own rates; war is hailed with joy by them.

Patna has likewise a native dockyard for constructing large country river boats, many exceeding 1,800 or 2,000 maunds burthen. A maund varies in weight, but in Calcutta it is equivalent to about eighty pounds,

so by a little calculation, the reader will discover that the Patna boats are not very small ones. As far as I could ever learn from the natives, who by the bye were very sparing in their communications, it appears that including iron work, sails, oars, and gear, a 2,000 maund boat would cost quite 2,300 rupees; but this is an exaggerated statement and hardly to be depended on. A great opium, indigo, and corn trade flourishes here, the former however is entirely monopolized by government. On the opposite side of the river, the celebrated race course of Hajeeapore forms some amusement for holiday people. The races which annually take place rank with the most noted in India; they commence in November, and continue for a period of eight or nine days. A few days previous, nearly every European within a hundred miles forwards his or her tent to the festive scene. Ladies honour the field with their smiling countenances, and perhaps the greatest pleasure is to perceive their enjoyment. One or two military bands are in attendance, so in the evening parties are held nightly in some large mess tent, pitched and boarded expressly for the purpose. Even Calcutta people deem it worth while to spend their holidays at Hajeeapore, and what with the innumerable tents, and strange spectacles of ladies roaming through the camp, the scene is altogether a very exciting and novel one. Each family is provided

with its own little cookshop, and as the services of nearly all the household establishments are required on these occasions, the immense number of menials would astonish those unaccustomed to visit pic-nics of such a magnitude. A scene productive of a vast deal of merriment, will now and then occur amongst these patriarchal abodes, though perhaps not particularly agreeable to the parties most concerned.

Whirlwinds are of frequent occurrence in India, though seldom of a very destructive description; they are just sufficient to create a little annoyance and damage, so as to permit the spectators indulging in a quiet laugh at his friend's expense. For instance, without any previous intimation whatever, a tent will be carried a short trip into the air, and if the unfortunate lady or gentleman should happen to be engaged in the operations of the toilet, say just turned out of bed, rather an awkward predicament is the result.

These whirlwinds are termed "shytans," or devils by the natives, and are supposed to be the disturbed spirit of some mortal, who has been refused admittance to heaven. On their approach a native invariably endeavours to escape from the revolving dust, muttering in the interim some short prayers, which, according to his taste, are either offered up for the devil, or on his own account. If a whirlwind sweeps across the threshold,

the unlucky omen causes a great panic amongst the residents of the house, thus signalled out as an object of some coming unknown fate. The fakeers as usual, work upon the credulity of superstitious people, and by means of legerdemain, &c., derive large pecuniary fees, pretending to possess great influence over the shykans. So ignorant are the Bengalees, that they place implicit reliance upon the infamous assertions of these fakeers, who for "Bucksheesh" cover their confiding followers with mud, order them to fast, besides a variety of other penances, winding up with the promise to ward off all the evil effects that are believed to follow in the wake of a devil's visit.

One is rather puzzled with regard to the larger species of dame nature's corkscrews. I have frequently watched their primary diminutive formation and progress, and eventual disappearance, having during the height of their strength rushed through the column. But a wonderful phenomenon which I could not account for was frequently visible. This was, that although the wind blew tolerably fresh from the south, still the whirlwind took an exactly opposite direction, from which it would suddenly diverge into some other course. In fact, it appeared as if a quantity of quicksilver had been inserted within a dusty pillar, which was kept in motion by three or four enormous giants kicking it to

and fro from each other, until finally, a harder kick than usual burst the affair.

During the siege of Mooltan, our camp was visited by the largest shytan that even the "oldest inhabitant" ever remembered to have seen. This whirlwind ten minutes after its apparent formation had a diameter of fully fifty feet; this was at about twelve o'clock in the middle of the day, which had been a remarkably hot one even for the Punjab. Its duration from the commencement to its disappearance was upwards of fifteen minutes. Every tent it struck was knocked over, and the huge column appeared to take a delight in the mischief it was creating. No sooner did it quit the infantry tents, than it forced itself (a most unwelcome guest) amongst those of the cavalry, and when some individuals would be congratulating themselves upon their fortunate escape, the tormentor seemingly regretting having made such a hurried adieu, would suddenly rush furiously back, committing greater devastation than ever.

The whirlwinds generally contain heated air and electricity, which has frequently been proved by scientific men up country; however a few, through which I passed, were so deliciously cool and pleasant, that on some occasions when reclining in my tent scarcely able to breathe on account of the oppressive atmosphere, I would

willingly have consented to share my tent with as many “ devils ” as had any inclination for my society.

A small tree in a few seconds is utterly denuded of its leaves, and cases have occurred in which the thatched roof of a small bungalow has been destroyed by the furious gyrations of these rotary imps. When many of them are seen playing about, it is almost a certain prognostication of a violent dust storm. The reader, with his or her usual condescension, will perhaps pardon this slight digression and return to the Hajeepore race course, or visit the fair which is likewise annually carried on there at about the same period. Be not alarmed, ladies, at yonder mass of sable turbaned individuals; rest assured their manners and behaviour are vastly superior to the Greenwich and London fair goers. There is no barbarous pushing or coarse language here, not even the most fastidious upholder of the laws of society in India, would ever witness any proceeding likely to call forth disapprobation. Only behold the excessive politeness with which they make room for their European superiors and masters.

A lady might traverse the temporary bazaar from one end to another, without even receiving the *touch* of a native. Each speculating shopkeeper resides in a queer little canvas hut, scarcely capable of containing himself, and it is a profound mystery where he secretes

his wares during the night; possibly they form his couch. Yonder, squatted cross-kneed, upon a well worn carpet, may be seen a worthy diamond merchant, travelled the entire distance from far famed Delhi, in order to dispose of his valuable trinkets; doubtless, experience has taught him that, wherever the Sahib logue congregates, there will he reap the richest harvest. A few paces further on, and we are astonished at the novel sight of cashmere shawls, but let us not pause at this enchanting stall, the high price attached to these articles hopelessly annihilates every idea of possessing one of the delicate fabrics, so let us hurry away from the loquacious merchant.

The Indian evenings are generally mild and agreeable, and at Hajeepore they are doubly so, particularly if you happen to enjoy the acquaintance of a nice family. All those stringent and useless conventionalities of society which are kept up when residing within the precincts of cantonments, are now for the time, almost disregarded. The pleasures of a pic-nic are considerably diminished when fashionable etiquette is the order of the day. When invited to partake of the hospitality of a friend, all guests are requested to supply themselves with knives, forks, tumblers, and plates, the host intimating in his chit, that "it is camp fashion." Of course the big wigs are continually entertaining friends and

visitors; so at about two o'clock the idler can find half an hour's recreation, by peeping through the tent's chick, and observing the various dresses of the Kitmutghars or table attendants, as they rapidly or slowly proceed towards the tent where their master purposes to dine; all carry their Sahib's plates and other dinner apparatus neatly tied up in a clean napkin. Beer is the favourite beverage consumed all over India; many ladies prefer it to wine, and show their judiciousness in selecting this most invigorating drink in preference to the trash sold for, and denominated wine by, baboo scamps. However, in Calcutta, it is not considered fashionable for ladies to imbibe such a homely liquor. Oh no, they could not condescend for a moment to desecrate their lips with such vulgar stuff. Bachelors, perhaps lamenting over their single state, occasionally exceed the proper quantum, and the consequence is a severe attack of the liver complaint, compelling them either to retreat to the sanitariums in the hills, or else to seek the benefits to be derived from a sea voyage. But, *en passant*, beer drinkers are not the only victims of the liver, for even the most abstemious suffer severely from this complaint. I calculate that, on an average, there is not a regiment in India without some of its officers complaining of pain in the side. Some poor fellows are suddenly attacked, never having previously experienced any un-

pleasant feelings with regard to their livers ; the abscess rapidly forms, and assumes a dangerous turn, and unless it bursts favourably, death is the natural result. There is scarcely so much danger if the pain comes on gradually ; judicious treatment and proper attention to diet perform wonders, but the faculty strongly recommend all invalids afflicted with liver complaint, to proceed to sea. When these measures have been adopted, the patient, as far as I have been able to ascertain, has always been restored to his usual state of convalescence. Though India is so fatal to the European constitution, it seldom occurs that a native complains of his liver being diseased.

The sportsmen visiting Hajeepore obtain excellent quail shooting, and if we were to inspect the contents of the dishes, we should discover that haunches of venison, teal, snipe, and other dainties grace the table. As the time for departure arrives, gloom pervades throughout camp, and like boys returning to school after the midsummer holidays, a few dread the hour of separation. On their return home, young ladies look cross, and pout their pretty lips. At the band stand (the most scandalous place in existence, for the music drowns a person's voice, so that the talkative mischief maker can hurl his or her venom with impunity), the polka dancers exclaim against the intolerable dulness of the station, laying

particular stress, and pouring sharp invectives upon the sordid and stingy disposition of the bachelor officers. These little murmurings are continued until a regimental or station ball dispels the gloomy cloud. The vine appears to flourish well in the Patna district; even our gardens at Dinapore contained splendid vineyards, but the fruit is small and excessively acid. The vineyards are of a peculiar construction; several brick or mud pillars, eight or nine feet in length, are erected at equal distances from each other; thin twigs of bamboo are stretched across the top of these pillars so as to connect one with another. Three or four slips are planted at the foot of every column, and owing to the rapid vegetation, they quickly shoot up, running round the bamboo so as to form a shaded avenue impervious to the rays of the sun. A diminutive bird called the amadavat commits great damage in the vineyard, immediately the grapes make their appearance; but their depredations could easily be checked by enveloping each bunch in a small muslin bag. The native gardeners with their usual stingy stupidity, pertinaciously prefer acting on the penny wise and pound foolish system, and are disinclined to expend a few annas for purchasing the material wherewith to protect their fruit from the rapacity of the feathered tribe. The common mina is a very mischievous and dainty bird, and phrenologists

would be sure to find its organ of destructiveness very prominent. Though the climate appears to be very favourable for the cultivation of the vine, few trouble themselves with endeavouring to improve the fruit, which may be attributable to the slight encouragement offered towards its produce. The intoxicating liquor most prevalent amongst the natives, is extracted from the toddy tree. It appears strange that amongst the numerous speculations carried on by Europeans in India, no person has yet attempted to construct vineyards of sufficient magnitude to enable him to supply a few customers with really good wine. Surely some favourable locality in the hills could be selected for establishing a vineyard. There is, I believe, a brewery somewhere in the vicinity of Simla, or Mussoorie; but from all accounts the liquor made there is trashy stuff. At present, unless residing in Calcutta, the greatest difficulty exists in procuring drinkable wines and liquors. Those offered for sale by most native shopkeepers are the nearest approach to rank poison that one could well imbibe, being originally of the very worst description, and further adulterated with water, or some strong decoction, in order to enable the vendor to derive a more remunerative profit. Those who are partial to really good wine, can never obtain this scarce commodity, by applying at a wine vault owned by a

native. The only plan is to have it forwarded direct from England, or through respectable Calcutta houses. The enormous quantity of beer annually consumed in the East is almost incredible; the duty alone would amount to several thousand rupees. Now, if an enterprising, honest, and civil individual, could be induced to supply good beer and wines, reserving for himself only a moderate profit, there can be no doubt that a handsome fortune might be realized in the course of a few years.

The most agreeable mode of travelling in India is decidedly by water, and if the voyage is undertaken during the periodical rains, it is also by far the most expeditious. As a general rule the boatmen consider it unsafe to navigate the river during the night, as frequent accidents have resulted from not being thoroughly acquainted with the numerous dangerous eddies, hidden rocks, and sand banks that intersect the route. However, some fearless individuals, pressed for time, occasionally surmount all difficulties, and venture to proceed day and night; by this means they travel 200 and odd miles within twenty-four hours. The speed varies, and of course depends upon the style of boat hired for the trip. If a large family contemplate an aquatic excursion for any distance, a boat called a pinnace will be requisite. A pinnace is the nearest approach

to an English craft of all the native boats, but the resemblance is an excessively faint one. The largest are of about eighty or ninety tons burthen, with a couple of masts schooner rigged; a commodious kind of poop is erected on the after part of the boat, which is divided into five or six comfortable sleeping apartments, with a large cabin for meals, extending either between the berths or across the beam, the latter being more convenient, and cooler. These boats have a draught of from two to five feet, and in the event of being becalmed the crew work at the oars. Their monthly hire is moderate, amounting to less than eighty rupees, although people blessed with a heap of superfluous cash, frequently pay nearly twice the above sum. Nearly all the indigo planters, and residents of civil stations situate on the banks of rivers, keep private pinnaces of their own in lieu of yachts. Owing to the filth and smoke incidental to a kitchen, many people will not tolerate the nuisance of having the culinary operations performed in the same boat as that which they themselves occupy, consequently a smaller one is in attendance. This constitutes a great inconvenience, causing as it does a detention of half an hour, sometimes more, whenever the family partakes of a meal. Again, should the pinnace proceed faster than the kitchen, the former is obliged to take in sail and wait until its tender comes up.

Another style of river boat in requisition is the beaulio, much lighter and smaller than a pinnace, though not considered so safe. With a fair wind and propitious tide, the speed attained astonishes the person travelling in them for the first time; nor is this surprising, for the Calcutta beaulios appear to fly rather than sail over the surface of the water; a swallow could not skim a lake's bosom more gracefully. Unless a cautious serang steers the boat, any slight shift of wind is sufficient to capsize the whole concern, which is by no means a rare occurrence, for of all people in the world the Bengalees are the most careless. They are perfectly indifferent as to their vessel turning over, being assured that no matter what happens to the freight, they themselves can easily avoid danger by their skilful swimming. Three or four rupees a day are generally demanded by the owners of a beaulio, but for any long period no regular hire is settled, so people must make their own bargain. The up country cargo boats in shape are not unlike a London coal barge, only the cabin is a raised thatched one, and possesses the great advantage of being built of lighter material, thus becoming more manageable. A boat of this description, in lieu of a better, can be converted into a very comfortable water conveyance for a European. One, for instance, of six or seven hundred maunds burthen, can be fitted up in a couple of days with every

convenience, capable of affording accommodation for two individuals. The hire of one of these boats is less expensive, but you obtain the services of an inferior class of boatmen, for whenever the wind freshens up stronger than usual, the nerves of the navigators are affected, and they commence complaining of every variety of imaginable dangers, striving their utmost to persuade you that inevitable death would result, if any further attempts were made to struggle against the enraged elements. Being arrant cowards at heart themselves, they consider that a similar craven spirit predominates in the breast of others, and on the traveller urging them to prosecute their journey, the most absurd obstacles are raised in order to carry their point by frightening the sahib. The most satisfactory plan to adopt in such an emergency is to extract the cork from a bottle of brandy, and ply the crew with its contents; the desired effect is produced instantaneously. Dutch inspired courage aids the traveller, and the hitherto alarmed sailors would now venture upon any hazardous undertaking. With renewed vigour the oars are plied, whilst the manglee, a wee bit elevated, warbles some exciting heathen ditty. I never neglected to supply my boatmen with a daily allowance of arrack, hence my journeys on the whole have always been performed with celerity.

A devil-may-care subaltern, who unavoidably has overstayed his leave, or an officer particularly anxious to hasten towards the seat of war, generally hires a small dingy to convey him to his destination, comfort on these occasions rarely being brought into consideration. Setting the lilliputian fishing canoes on one side, a dingy is the smallest built water conveyance afloat, but at the same time if provided with a serviceable sail, which is seldom seen in Bengal, a dingy under skilful management will rapidly outstrip the larger description of country boats, and that too with as much ease as a steamer runs past a heavy laden collier.

The risible faculties of a stranger to Eastern travelling would have been brought well into play, had he seen the accommodation on board the fragile barque in which, on one occasion, the writer was compelled to embark. A very slight grass matting stretched across bamboo sticks formed the cabin, which was only three feet in height and scarcely six in length. During the day I was under the painful necessity of reclining on my back, and this unpleasant position was rendered doubly annoying on account of the dreadful heat, which at midday, on referring to the thermometer, I found to be as high as 120 degrees ; how I managed to survive the imprisonment baffles my knowledge. The servants

bitterly complained of the confined space allotted them, and were perpetually in a nervous state of fear, not doubting but that some accident must eventually occur, owing to the over crowded state of the boat. A tailor who accompanied me frequently offered up prayers for our safety, but the miserable man was more frightened than the rest, and he selected the roof of the cabin for his post. Thus he was not only exposed to the effects of the sun, but likewise had to be ever on the alert, for any sudden lurch or unusual motion of the skiff, rendered his position neither pleasant nor enviable. In fact his dangerous seat at first alarmed me, but after awhile anxiety on his account ceased, for never did a leech cling to a horse with greater tenacity than he did to the roof of the dingy. The crew consisted of three men to pull, whilst the other performed the duty of helmsman. Fortunately for them the wind was in our favour, consequently the sail was set and away we started down the river. The utmost speed our craft attained was perhaps nine miles an hour, so with such a propelling power, the reader may imagine that whenever we struck against a sand bank, the shock was sufficient almost to knock the teeth down ones throat. Without any exaggeration, sometimes when rushing impetuously down the centre of a very rapid current, with a strong breeze blowing well aft, I distinctly per-

ceived the dingy leap over the sand bank, with its bows considerably raised out of the water whilst performing this manœuvre.

The reader may feel inclined to think that I am striving to take a "rise" out of him, but he may rest assured that what I have just stated has frequently been the case, and those who have been accustomed to the navigation of Indian rivers, will readily vouch for the truth of my statement. The up country boatmen can undergo great fatigue, and their strenuous exertions when seated at the oars, have frequently been the admiration of Europeans. They generally partake of only one meal a day, but they then contrive to stuff down as much as would satisfy the appetites of six moderate people. Their favourite dish is a queer medley, consisting of rice, curry, an innumerable variety of spices, and when able to procure fish, that likewise is added to the general stock. They never drink the intoxicating arrack with their meals, but imbibe a certain quantity preparatory to retiring to rest for the night. To judge from their horrible grimaces, it would appear that the liquor is in no way palatable to them, but that they merely regard it as a powerful narcotic, and use it as a composing draught. We always started just before break of day, and towards sunset lugowed, or came to an anchor, at the first convenient landing-place

descried by the impatient boatmen. The crew were very particular in selecting a clean spot on which to erect temporary cookshops, and unless the bank presented a favourable appearance for performing culinary work, they would continue pulling and pulling, until opposite a locality that met with their approbation. The boatmen's kitchen is a primitive affair altogether, only consisting of an open sort of cauldron formed of baked clay, weighing about twelve or thirteen pounds. Simple though the arrangement undoubtedly is, still a gourmand would be wonderfully surprised at the sumptuous repast which a clever servant will place before his master, with the aid of such a gipsy contrivance. In the midst of a sandy desert or wild jungle, these kitchens are invaluable to the quiet going traveller. After remaining all day in an uncomfortable box, no one can form an idea of the luxury of an evening's ramble along the margin of the water. Even though our community was small, still, owing to religious prejudices, three fires were lighted for cooking purposes. First, I had my fire; then came the Mussulman attendants, who would not prepare their own meals over either mine or the fire of the Hindoos; and the Hindoos would only cook with their own utensils.

A great deal of consummate humbug exists in all these pretended forms, and the following statements

prove the absurdity of these ideas and religious prejudices, both with regard to Mahomedans and Hindoos. The crew and my servants would have undergone the torments of starvation rather than eaten a repast off a plate used by myself; yet, not one amongst them objected or even demurred at taking a small pull at the brandy flask, which perhaps a short time previously, and before their very eyes, had been withdrawn from my *infidel* lips. The Hindoo boatmen hesitated not a moment in drinking the spirit openly, but the more orthodox followers of the prophet, waited till the shades of evening enabled them privately to partake of the forbidden liquor.

In performing a long journey, the necessary precaution of laying in a good supply of provisions is frequently overlooked by travellers. Now the constitution frequently suffers considerably by the sudden change of diet; so in order to obviate this misfortune, the headmenial should receive instructions to halt at every large town before which the boat arrives, for it is useless to attempt obtaining any provisions from the smaller villages. Even milk and eggs are not procurable on all occasions, which may be owing to the excessive fear a villager entertains for an European.

The boatmen created some little diversion for themselves by chasing the small fishing-boats, and I am

ashamed to own, that instead of checking, I rather encouraged their mischievous conduct. The timid fisherman, with wonderful quickness, detected our approach from an incredible distance, and once convinced of our *caste*, hesitated not to make a precipitate retreat. Many succeeded in evading us, but those we captured were, of course, amply remunerated for the fish taken from them. Notwithstanding the kindness shown these people, they always appeared anxious for our departure, betraying such evident symptoms of terror, that I verily believe our little force, by presenting a bold front, could have intimidated a whole village of these cowardly fellows.

Though the boats employed in navigating the Ganges are crazy and awkward looking vessels, loss of life, according to the imperfect native accounts, is not so great as might be expected, considering the numerous dangers that beset the lives of the boatmen. Again, those who have investigated the subject, ascribe the unfrequency of the loss of human life, not so much to the *skill* manifested by the boatmen, as to their timidity and reluctance in launching their crafts during tempestuous weather. On suddenly rounding an angle, the traveller is often surprised at the unexpected appearance of a large expanse of water strongly resembling a lake.

During the rainy season these reaches extend for a distance of twelve miles in length, by perhaps six in breadth. The winds which frequently visit these large tracts of water, rage with such unmitigated violence, that in less than an hour a regular little sea makes its appearance. Sometimes boatmen of a more adventurous disposition than their brethren, or possessing greater confidence in the safety of their boat, will for a large pecuniary remuneration venture to cross the river in a fresh breeze. But the generality on perceiving symptoms of bad weather, endeavour to escape the coming puff, by hauling alongside the nearest bank, and fastening their craft, contrive to make themselves comfortable, by disembarking and enjoying their hubble bubbles.

During my aquatic excursions, the great annoyance suffered from not having laid in an ample stock of wines and groceries, put me to considerable inconvenience. These articles of consumption are not easily procurable on the route, and even when an opportunity occurs for inspecting the stock in trade of a native, although the fellow seduces you into the belief that he vends European stores, still after disembarking and proceeding to his shop it is excessively disgusting to discover that the only European commodities in his possession, are a few needles, pens, paper, and other useless articles ;

thus, a most vexatious delay is the result. If the boat is sufficiently large, goats and fowls will be found a very acceptable addition, and I always preferred taking a small supply of hams and preserved provisions with me.

Young subalterns, anxious to make a rapid trip, are seldom over fastidious as to their commissariat arrangements. A little flour, a fowl or two, and cheroots, together with a flask of brandy, are all that he cares about. Of course any addition that he may perchance succeed in placing on the table is always welcome. Fish breed so plentifully in almost all the Indian rivers, that a person purposing proceeding any distance by water conveyance, will find it very advantageous to purchase a small net. They are readily procured in any bazaar, situate near a river, for a few rupees. The evening is the most propitious time for capturing the finny tribe, and having fastened the boat securely for the night, in less than a quarter of an hour your navigators will catch sufficient fish for the whole community. The fish being netted so near the bank, are naturally small, but once or twice an excellent meal have I made off them, where otherwise, the cravings of nature would have been compelled to remain in abeyance longer than agreeable. The Ganges is a favourite resort for tortoises, but notwithstanding the pressing appeals of my servant, he never could succeed in inducing his master to par-

take of the eggs or flesh, which, according to his account, resembled those of chickens. Even the crew blamed my taste ; however they would not permit the meat to be wasted, and, amply compensated for my reluctance in eating it, by consuming every edible portion of a large tortoise, which one of the men easily captured as it was sneaking up the bank. All the boatmen considered the tortoise a very dainty dish, but I always entertained a decided antipathy to devouring the creature, for they possess, so Europeans say, neither the flavour nor wholesomeness of the species picked up at sea. The natives convert the thick shell into a variety of uses ; it made a capital baleing machine for the boat, and a few years ago, the martial spirits of the age employed it in lieu of buffalo hide shields, and sharp indeed must have been the tulwar that could penetrate the shell. But, by way of amusement, setting aside the table dainties, sportsmen should always remember to carry with them their fowling pieces and rifles, whenever proceeding on a river journey.

During my last trip, several favourable opportunities for adding to the luxuries of the table could not be taken advantage of, as I neglected to carry fire-arms with me. Ducks, and in fact every species of water-fowl were continually flying across the boat, for being seldom molested, they became so remarkably tame, that

the boat glided past immense flocks of ducks and teal, quietly floating on the surface, within twenty yards of our craft. Deer now and then trotted through the jungle to quench their thirst, besides other animals which, however, fortunately escaped without even having a shot fired after them. Alligators are very numerous in the smaller rivers branching off from Gunga's sacred stream, and notwithstanding the horrible character bestowed upon them, naturalists are disposed to believe that they are generally perfectly harmless reptiles. However, most natives form a different opinion as to their voracious appetites, asserting positively that ocular proof has convinced them, that not only men and children have been seized by alligators, but likewise sheep and small cows which, for coolness, had resorted to the water. The teeth of these river monsters are held in some repute by the superstitious; women wear them suspended round the neck, under the impression that the possession of such a charm will not only ward off domestic evils and unhappiness, but even convert a childless woman into a joyful mother. The alligator attains the size of twenty feet, but I have never seen one longer than fifteen from the tip of the tail to that of his snout. The otter may occasionally be perceived actively engaged in diving after his prey, or stealthily crawling up the mud bank,

apparently fatigued with his day's hunting. Nearly every fishing village has its pet tame otter, which is permitted to wander unmolested through the bazaar, and in so doing, contrives to obtain a tolerable supply of food from the friendly shopkeepers. However, like a mountaineer restricted to the plains, and pining for his fresh mountain air, the otter, although receiving such munificent treatment, will not forego the pleasures of the chase. At all times of the day he enjoys his pastime, much to the amusement of the little sable children, who fearlessly pull their aquatic pet about, as if it were a lap-dog, forgetting that the bite of an otter is as severe, if not more so, than that of a monkey.

In floating down the Ganges, a lovely and ever shifting panorama is constantly displayed on either side, carrying away the excited senses on one continual stream of admiration. Now appears a large native town with its numerous ornamented ghats, upon the shiny steps of which are gathered crowds of bathers; just gaze for a second at the graceful figures of the women, how stately they glide past, although carrying on their heads the large water jars common to the country. Further on we row past an assemblage of fair bathers, who, detecting the gaze of strangers fixed upon them, hurriedly, and with mermaid trepidation disappear beneath the waves, until the cause of their

terror has passed by. Some, more nonchalant than the rest, merely sink upon their knees and laugh merrily from underneath their glossy ringlets. Another ghat is reached, and one's risible faculties are put into motion, by observing a sable mamma's maternal solicitude in attending to the cleanliness of her diminutive darling, who might be taken for a small monkey, if removed a few yards distance. At the present moment, the young urchin is undergoing the ceremony of having his head covered with a thin coating of yellow slimy mud, preparatory to receiving a sousing in the holy river. The young gentleman in the meantime, by no means passively resigns himself to his unavoidable fate; and manifests his entire disapprobation of the whole proceeding, by forcibly bringing into play his lachrymal talents, and that too with such good will as ought to prove a most effective check against the ferocious attacks of all the alligators ever reared and brought up in the Ganges, even including those educated in Tank Square, Calcutta. On nearing another ghat, which perhaps is fortunate enough to be half-shaded from the sun's rays by a broad spreading peepul tree, the reflecting traveller pauses to take a glance at yonder aged and decrepid Brahmin. To judge from his attenuated form, the observer would naturally arrive at the conclusion, that the hoary bather's age exceeded by several years

the period usually allotted to man. Aged though the old Hindoo must be, his infirmities debar him not from performing the prescribed ceremonies of his religion. There, standing all the while up to the waist in water, he quietly mutters his prayers; his shrivelled parched-up skin, contrasting strangely with the plump, fair form of the damsel at his side. Every little ripple appears to shake him, and the thought immediately arises, can it be possible that this old devotee, who is so near the brink of the grave, really places any reliance on his religion, or faith in its dogmas?

The reverie is quickly interrupted by a herd of tame buffaloes, driven from the neighbouring jungle in order to partake of the refreshing element. Perchance their sheds are on the opposite bank, so the herd betake themselves to the stream, and with only their noses above the surface quietly commence their journey. The mere lad in charge of this quadruped detachment, after selecting the strongest buffalo, seizes hold of the tail, and insists upon the animal ferrying him across the river, free of all charge. Rapidly, away glides our little dingy; dense jungles, with an ever variegated foliage, pass in succession; their lovely though gloomy recesses almost tempting one to disembark and stroll through their dark glades. The jackal, wild pariah dog, and the wild wood cutter, the latter a biped

scarcely more civilized than the quadrupeds, occasionally rush, startled back into their dark abodes, no doubt afraid of our approach. And now the rapidity of the stream, and the strenuous exertions of the boatmen, lately redoubled on account of the sun's disappearance, carry us impetuously onwards, and the jungles are left in the rear. Cultivation once more asserts her sway ; waving fields of corn or sugar cane appear to flourish luxuriantly ; and now we arrive at an indigo factory. In front of the white stucco building, an apology for a garden attracts the attention of the traveller. Doubtless the individual who has taken the trouble to rear the few shrubs consisting chiefly of orange and lime trees, considered himself an horticulturist of no ordinary talent ; and if he derived any amusement from his garden, why should those whom it concerns not laugh at the poor man's feeble efforts to produce "pleasure grounds." As we near the little ghat leading to the garden, a European with a gigantic sola hat, nearly a yard in diameter, beckons us to halt, and the invitation is accepted. The lord of the soil, although deriving a handsome profit from his pelican kind of life, excites no envy in the breast of his neighbours ; no one covets his solitary abode and broad lands of indigo.

Although anxious to avoid all unnecessary detention, who can refrain from taking compassion upon the

solitary factor? Consequently we “pull up,” resolved to remain half an hour with him. With true old Indian hospitality he places at the disposal of his guest whatever dainty is stored in his house. Allusion is made to the quantity of shikar* abounding in the neighbouring jungles, and at the same time the lonely host gives a pressing invitation to his new acquaintance to remain with him for a few days longer. Reluctantly the traveller declines the hospitable offer, and once more betakes himself to the boat. A few minutes pulling again changes the scene; a tall pepul tree looms in the distance, and being under the necessity of passing almost directly under its wide spreading boughs, we contrive to catch a hasty glimpse of the few dark figures squatted on their hams, alternately gabbering away like monkeys, and handing round their rude hubble bubble from one to another. A filthy looking individual, utterly denuded of clothing, with the exception of a small dirty rag, negligently wrapped with a single turn round his loins, is seated apart from the noisy group. He keeps on muttering some prayers in a most outlandish language, and were it not for the piercing glances that ever and anon he flung round the smoking circle, one would imagine that the conversation had no peculiar charms for him, for apparently he gave little or no attention to

* Shooting—sport.

what was going forward. The paint marks on the face, the long thick matted hair hanging over the shoulder, clotted with mud from the river, together with the impudent air of the man when he perceived our approach, all combined to convince me that the individual in question was a fakeer.

In order to make an impression upon the lower orders, and by way of convincing them of his sanctity, he resided in a sort of hut with one room, the scanty dimensions of the same barely allowing him to recline at full length. The roof formed of jungle grass, no doubt would have offered but a poor retreat from the sun's rays had not the wily devotee erected his dwelling under the large pekul tree alluded to above. As for the others it is easy to perceive that they are all travellers, who weary of their day's march have taken advantage of the pekul tree's grateful shelter to rest their weary limbs awhile. The fakeer, although in his heart cursing the travellers, is obliged for sanctity's sake to produce fire for their hookahs. And now gladly we pass this wretched hypocrite, leaving him to entertain his guests as best he may.

On, on the skiff glides, and through an opening amongst the trees we occasionally obtain a hasty glimpse of some old ruined temple or tomb. A few wild pigeons appear to be the only living creatures hovering over the

decayed memorials of a bygone race ; though had we time to disembark and inspect the interior, in all probability we should discover some aged hermit at his beads, or a religious mendicant seated by the roadside, soliciting alms from the passer by. The sun is about setting, and the bright sky warns the feathered tribe that it is time to roost ; flocks of wild fowl soar overhead, and the extreme stillness that reigns around, enables the enraptured listener to hear the cackling of the drakes which lead the van. The night birds, although not possessing very musical or agreeable voices like the English tribe, still manage to charm the lover of nature with their mournful note. In some small bay offering a safe retreat, a species of crane stands conspicuous on the margin of the water, anxiously on the alert to seize any fish, imprudent enough to venture within his reach. Our boat disturbs the crafty fisher ; with great exertion he spreads out his wings, takes a gentle spring and alights some twenty or forty yards lower down.

The boatmen by this time are hungry, their arms ache, and joyfully they discover a clean landing place, which meeting with universal approbation is selected for our halting ground. The most active of the crew nimbly jumps on shore, and with inconceivable celerity drives a strong stake into the bank, round which is fastened a rope, and we are all then snug till daylight. Fires

are lighted, kettles, pots, and other apparatus appertaining to the culinary department make their appearance, almost as if by magic, whilst the busy natives commence preliminary operations. Indian cooks are proverbial for their aptitude in their art, particularly in the fabrication of curries; but unfortunately, with all their skill, their habits are inveterately dirty. Hence arises the ancient "Qui Hi" saying, "an epicure who wishes to enjoy his dinner, should never minutely inspect his kitchen." So kind reader, as the kitmutghar has deemed it advisable to establish our temporary cook shop close to the gangway of the boat, the most agreeable method of escape from smell and smoke, will be to take a ramble through the jungles for half an hour, by which time dinner will be ready. After the overpowering heat of the day, producing a lassitude seldom experienced in any other climate, the deliciously cool evening breeze proves very grateful, invigorating as it does one's languid frame.

In threading the jungle path, or perambulating through the meadows, the agreeable hum of innumerable little insects—the charming perfume emitted from the wild flowers, and the blossoms of the larger jungle trees add to the soothing effect of the scene, whilst increasing the charm; a jackal suddenly crosses the path, and with laughable agility faces about, and as

rapidly makes his disappearance. As if by way of revenge for being disturbed during his evening stroll, the brute having fled to the neighbouring thicket commences an incessant howling, until his wife and family, together with others of his race within audible distance of the ringleader join in chorus, until the unfortunate would-be slumberer pours forth maledictions from the very depth of his heart.

It is time to retrace the homeward path, and how forcibly is one reminded of "Lalla Rookh," on witnessing the numerous fire-flies that light up every shrub and tree, resembling so many diminutive lamps illuminating the garden of a fairy's abode. Dinner is over, and the bed once more comes into requisition; but sleep visits not the eyelids of the traveller; mosquitoes, with indomitable perseverance commence their tormenting attacks. One fat rebel gingerly keeps buzzing about his victim's ears, rather irresolute in the selection of a spot from whence to take a meal. The slightest motion of the arm and the enemy beats a precipitate retreat; but the novice should not be deluded into the belief that his rest will be unbroken for the remainder of the night. Again the buzzing foe approaches, and having amused himself with one of his own peculiar ditties, settles on one's cheek. Warily as you vainly imagine you raise a hand, softly and slowly bringing it down to

within six inches of the tormentor ; this time certainly a favourable result must attend your vigilance. Down falls the avenging fist with an awful smack, making ear and cheek tingle again ; but the pain and failure are rendered doubly aggravating by hearing the mosquito mocking your chagrin, as he merrily rejoices at having escaped the fierce blow aimed at him.

But the mosquito is not the only nocturnal pest, for a very diminutive insect, scarcely perceptible to the naked eye, called I believe a *midge*, is perhaps the most annoying tormentor of the two. The midges attack the slumberer without any noisy warning, and that too with such zeal, that upon awaking after a restless sleep, it is no uncommon occurrence to discover one's clothes and sheets covered with blood. At meals when candles are required, no one can possibly enjoy the repast with any degree of satisfaction or relish ; for no sooner are the lights placed on table, than hundreds of thousands of insects, attracted by the flame, hover round the candles or lamp, so as materially to interfere with the dinner arrangements. Heaps upon heaps encounter an untimely fate by performing suttee, whilst the rest commit suicide by drowning themselves in the beer and wine glasses. The natives, with barbaric philosophy, cared little for what they considered only a trifling annoyance ; busily engaged in preparing their favourite dish,

consisting of prawn curry, and it is impossible to say what besides, they reeked little for the attendance of insects, but maintained a stoical indifference.

The first intimation received on the approach of daybreak, is the monotonous gurgling of the hubble bubble. Most natives commence and end the day by smoking a hookah; the merchant concludes a bargain by inviting his friend to join him in a smoke. Should squally weather make its appearance, the crew must have a puff; if a heavy shower of rain falls, the hookah is resorted to; otherwise rheumatism, cholera, and a host of other maladies, would be the consequence of neglecting to inhale the fragrant weed. A favourable breeze springs up, the sail is set, and under such propitious circumstances it would be manifest ingratitude to Providence were they not to light their chillum. Europeans, probably unwilling to imitate the "niggers," generally eschew the practice of smoking hookahs. However, there are a few old Indians who still steadily refuse to adopt the new fashions and etiquette of society, which young England introduces year after year into the country. The individuals in question would forego any pleasure, rather than be debarred from enjoying the luxurious gratification of the eastern pipe. These old fellows bestow great attention upon their hookah, nor do I wonder at their strong

predilections in favour of the genuine Delhi tobacco, which is a curious mixture of fragrant roses, herbs, and other ingredients, and when ignited produces a delicious odour, not even distasteful to the most fastidious cigar detester.

Ladies who prohibit their husbands from smoking cheroots, will offer no objection to the hookah, and will even allow the same to be inhaled in the drawing-room ; at least, such is frequently the case up country. In Calcutta, however, such proceedings are not tolerated for a moment ; upon second thoughts, perhaps it is just as well, for occasionally natives vend most spurious trash in lieu of Delhi tobacco. This rubbish being manufactured in Calcutta, might possibly possess a flavour of stabling instead of sweet-scented roses and herbs. According to native ideas, the fact of a man stepping over the tube of another's hookah, amounts almost to an indelible affront.

Formerly, at messes, unpleasant little dissensions were frequently occurring. For instance, a menial would inadvertently walk across an officer's hookah snake. The hookah-burdah or pipe-attendant immediately became highly incensed ; and anxious to vindicate the insult offered to his master, rushed furiously at the offender, upon whose person he administered summary punishment. These squabbles amongst the domestics

frequently caused a vast deal of mischief between the sahibs. Travelling in a moderate sized dingy is far more expeditious and preferable than trudging along in a heavy budgerow. The latter are, after all, a cumbersome kind of craft, drawing from two to three and a half feet of water; whereas the former float in nine inches. As previously remarked, sand banks are numerous in the Ganges, and towards the commencement of the rains, at which period the river is unusually low, the larger description of native boats frequently ground, and remain in this awkward position for two or three days. This delay would of itself be a disagreeable predicament, to say nothing of the probable danger resulting from the visitation of a tornado. These severe gusts of wind are very prevalent up country, and though of short duration, are exceedingly violent during their continuance. Boats often lose their sails or masts, besides sustaining, in many cases, severe damage, owing to the inexpertness or timidity of the navigators. Now, a small dingy can easily escape the coming tornado, by running close under the shore, whereas the unwieldy budgerow, in attempting a similar manœuvre, might possibly ground upon some sunken bank, and remain exposed to the fury of the waves, which almost instantaneously increase to a large size. Luckily, these squalls only last for a short time; in a few minutes the

heavy sea goes down, and it is curious to observe how, once more, the numerous little boats swarm out from the shore, and literally cover the bosom of the river. The reader has probably frequently noticed the reckless manner in which many of the Thames barges are overloaded with a cargo of coal, or some other commodity, in so much that the swell produced by a small river steamer threatens to, and often does swamp them. A similar practice prevails in India.

The stingy Hindoo merchant is desirous of dispatching a certain quantity of goods by water carriage. For this purpose he hires only one boat, where he should have engaged two. However, his mean and sordid disposition shrinks from the expense of the extra hire. On an average, during the inundations, four out of twenty boats never reach their destination; happily the crew are most expert swimmers, hence the loss of life is not so great as might be expected. On a late occasion, when floating down the Ganges, my small dingy was very nearly wrecked; as it was, the roof of my cabin together with the mast and sail, were entirely carried away by the wind. This catastrophe occurred within a short distance of the dangerous Junghera rocks, and at the time I anticipated meeting with a watery grave; not that the danger could not be in some degree mitigated by precautionary measures, but the

alarmed natives appeared so petrified at the terrors, quite unexpectedly gathering on all sides, that they were utterly incapable of making even the slightest exertions for our safety. The waves kept continually breaking over us, and the oars became worse than useless when plied by such a timid crew; however, by a most extraordinary piece of good fortune, our boat of its own accord floated into a narrow creek, to the infinite joy of all.

The sun had only just retired to rest when the squall burst over us, and by the time we reached land darkness had fairly set in. Never shall I forget that miserable night; the wet crew were shaking violently, either from their late drenching, or from excessive fright. All the community had taken refuge under the lee quarter of the boat, huddled close together like so many frightened sheep. My kitmutghar was bemoaning the breakage of sundry plates and dishes, and vainly endeavoured to strike a light from a wet bit of tinder. The roofless cabin presented a miserable aspect, whilst every stitch of clothing in my possession was actually saturated with water, even the apparel packed in tin cases had not escaped. In this dilemma, a tremendously stiff dose of brandy was administered to each individual, and the stimulant had the desired effect. With nerves braced up and spirits renovated, the crew commenced

exerting themselves, in order to render our position for the night as comfortable as existing circumstances would permit. They rapidly dispersed, and with the ready tact of natives, when they chose to make themselves useful, they were not long in returning to the boat, bearing with them tokens of having made an admirable foray. In about a couple of hours, a fresh thatch was erected over the boat, and a decent kind of supper having been provided, I was soon fast asleep; but not before the sound of the everlasting hubble bubble reached my ears; a proof that my people were endeavouring to make the best of their misfortune.

It was impossible to proceed next day, for in the bottom of the boat a leak was discovered, so a halt was proposed to afford the boatmen an opportunity for repairing it, and likewise to enable the washerman to dry the drenched linen. It was fortunate that this detention occurred so near the celebrated shrine of Junghera, for it might not have suited my convenience to pay the place an express visit. But now that a few hours hung heavily on my hands, I resolved to wile away the time by crossing over to the island, by means of the ferry boat. We were longer in performing our transit than anticipated; this the boatmen attributed to the rapidity of the current, which always rushes past these rocks with tremendous fury.

According to the information volunteered by the head ferryman gratuitous, during the height of the rains, and whenever the wind was at all fresh, the passage to and fro was attended with considerable risk, in so much, that few people attempted to cross over except during a lull. On landing, I was perfectly astonished to observe the number of pilgrims assembled at the ghat, forgetting in the excitement of the moment that Junghera, from time immemorial, has ever been considered one of the holiest of Hindoo shrines. The geological formation of the rock is granite, limestone, and a sort of quartz; however, art having come to the assistance of nature, the whole island is covered with shrubs and small trees.

The approach to the highest temple is by a very picturesque flight of stairs, and during the ascent a magnificent view is obtained of the surrounding country, and the noble river flowing through its fertile soil. Several smaller temples, of minor importance, are visible on all sides of the hill; and rude images, representing figures of gods, &c. appear sculptured on the large slabs of rock, scattered about in various directions. The resident faqueers, who are all Hindoos, derive a princely income by practising upon the credulity of the numerous pilgrims visiting their abode. The kind-hearted stranger is nerved to compassion by the abject

appearance of these profligate impostors, but not a doubt exists as to the generality of faqueers being the wealthiest race of men throughout all India. Strange indeed is it that the Hindoo, so cunning himself, should allow others so grossly to impose upon his credulity in religious matters.

In forming my unfavourable opinion of the faqueers, I have not allowed prejudice to lead me astray, nor are the statements herein presented, at all exaggerated. My sole object has been to expose the character of these base and sensual men. Their villainous skill, which is carried to perfection in instigating fanatics and weak minded individuals to commit crime, even that of murder, is scarcely conceivable by those unacquainted with the nature of the people in question. The thief, murderer, and political offender, alike apply to the nearest faqueer for protection from the search of the police, nor are they ever refused.

The rock of Junghera would, and no doubt *has* frequently offered a secure retreat for some miscreant, who was compelled to evade the law officers. Even if the refugee had committed a dozen murders he would receive shelter. When I presented the surly faqueer with a couple of rupees, the impudent fellow had not even the grace to look me in the face, but accepted the gift with the air of a man, who considered that he was

performing an act of great condescension ; this display of heathenish pride was sufficient to disgust one, so I hurriedly quitted the scene, bearing with me a less favourable impression than ever of the faqueers and their foolish disciples. Late in the afternoon my own people reported that the boat was tyar (ready), but the superstitious fellows, preparatory to starting, requested permission to visit the famous shrine, to offer up thanksgivings for our late miraculous escape, as well as to bestow a few pice to propitiate the river deity ; it would only have caused an ill-feeling not to have acceded to this request, consequently, away they started, although I was considerably vexed at this useless delay ; they promised to return immediately, but, as might have been expected, remained absent fully three hours ; upon taxing the blockheads with breach of faith, they offered in palliation some paltry excuse, whilst the head boatman wound up the discussion, but assuring me that Vishnu willing, our journey would now be prosecuted in safety. Asking them all about their expedition, and how they had been employed, they produced a number of charms which had been purchased from the faqueers, and commenced boasting of the wonders and riches which would accrue from their possession.

My Mussulman attendant smiled at the sanguine expectations of the Hindoos, and confidently whispered

in my ear, that the boatmen were “Kaffirs,” and fools for thus throwing away their cash. However, he himself wore round his neck some sort of a charm, and when I asked him why he condemned others for adopting a religious custom, similar to that adopted by himself, he replied “Oh, as to that, there is no comparison between their creed and mine.”

CHAPTER IV.

Proceed to Darjeeling—Colgong—Shurghotty, Otters, Lizards—
Cocoa-Nut Trees—Purniah—Titalyah—Buffaloes.

It was towards the end of May that I received orders to proceed without delay to join the Darjeeling Convalescent Depôt. Darjeeling is quite a new station, and still in its infancy, though eventually it may possibly gain some importance on account of the salubrity of the climate, and its proximity to the presidency capital. The sanatorium is situated in the Himalayah mountains, at an altitude of 7,200 feet above the level of the sea. After my long residence in the worst description of climates, namely, those of Scinde and the Dhera Jhat, naturally enough the very prospect of visiting such a delightful locality was sufficient to renovate even a worse constitution than mine. The very idea of struggling through snow, and climbing up lofty peaks was delightful, and I hurriedly made the necessary arrangements for the march. My destination was about three hundred miles from Calcutta ; but as the kind reader has

accompanied me down the Ganges, as far as Junghera, he may as well continue in my boat, and proceed a little further, until we arrive at a landing-place, designated Shurghotty, on account of its once having been a favourite resort for hungry tigers. The rapidity of the stream soon carried us far away from the rocks of Junghera, and the more beautiful ones of Colgong made their appearance; and shortly after, we arrived at the termination of our river trip. There was luckily a dawk bungalow at Shurghotty; but like many other buildings appropriated for the use of travellers, the rooms and furniture bore not the slightest approach to cleanliness. The hotel keeper, if such a miserable looking creature can be considered worthy of that title, appeared quite astonished at the arrival of a "sahib;" on recovering from his surprise, he commenced bellowing out to his assistants with the greatest volubility imaginable, no doubt calculating that his temporary lodger would on departure offer a large remuneration if he perceived "mine host" exerting himself out of the usual way. The old chap would have wearied even a Job's patience, had the old patriarch happened to seek lodgings at Shurghotty dawk Bungalow; for I really thought the fellow in charge would never cease searching for the house keys, and when, after the lapse of half an hour he discovered the immense bunch,

it occupied him no little time to select the right key. Wonders and annoyances however, never cease; at least such is the general impression, for the Kitmutgar having performed the task of opening the door, out rushed some thirty bats, leaving behind them a most insufferable stench. On a further inspection, it was very evident that little or no attention had been paid towards rendering the rooms habitable; for flies, musquitos, and lizards reigned in undisturbed tranquility, whilst the spiders spun their silken web within two feet of the floor, which clearly demonstrated the fact of the wall having no acquaintance with the brush. The bungalow being situated fully two miles from the ghat, my traps did not arrive till noon; but by means of tiffin, and inspecting an old dog's-eared dilapidated dawkh book, wherein travellers were accustomed to insert their names, together with a few remarks as to the civility of the people, and cleanliness of the building, I contrived to make the time slip away agreeably enough for an hour or so. Preparations not having been completed to enable me to proceed on my journey, it was necessary to defer my departure till the evening. Under these circumstances, a couch was placed in the verandah, and never at a loss for amusement, it was not long ere I managed to gain a further insight into the wonders of the insect creation. I also obtained a capital

view of a couple of otters, which were busily engaged in their piscatory pursuits; the scene of their performance being a picturesque canal which flowed in front to within ten yards of the bungalow. Once or twice they succeeded in capturing large fish, weighing apparently about a pound and a half. Their mode of bringing them to the land between their teeth, reminded me of a large Newfoundland dog fetching a stick which his master had thrown into the water. I am inclined to coincide with the natives, who are of opinion that it is impossible to tame otters so completely that they become subservient to their masters' will; although far from possessing the docile disposition of the dog, still, an otter, unless tormented, is perfectly harmless; instead of shunning, they appear rather to seek the habitations of men, for the two otters having disported to their heart's content, quietly came into the verandah of the dawk Bungalow, and perambulated the house with the greatest *sang froid*. A provoking circumstance, occasioning a whole day's detention, was suddenly announced to me by the head servant of my establishment. The breathless lackeys asserted that no polkee was procurable for love or money; so after calling in the aid of a young Hindoo, who styled himself, "generally stim agent," it was eventually decided upon engaging a couple of common native bullock hackeries,

to carry myself and chattels as far as Purneah, from whence I should be enabled to lay a palkee dawk to take me to Darjeeling. After breakfast, on the following morning, I returned to my former position in the verandah, and amused myself by watching the lizards catching flies and insects. The agility and expertness displayed by these four-legged hunters were perfectly astonishing; and when they desisted from their sport, on account of the paucity of game, I really felt as impatient and angry as they themselves must have been.

The lizard tribe is very numerous in India, but the larger species only are considered dangerous; yet, notwithstanding the asseverations of clever naturalists and old Indian residents, there are many ignorant and timid individuals who, maintaining the erroneous idea of all lizards being venomous reptiles, issue strict orders to their domestics never to permit a lizard to escape with its life; now the fact of the matter is this, that the house lizard is not only perfectly harmless, but renders very good service by destroying flies and other insects. As I closely watched the hunters, one fellow nearly six inches long suddenly rushed out of a crevice in the ceiling and commenced his sport; it was highly interesting to observe how cautiously he proceeded about his business, only occasionally missing his aim. It was evident our friend in question was an old and able

hunter ; for, whereas many of the smaller lizards, apparently too rash and hasty in their spring allowed the prey to escape them, this old boy sneaked stealthily up to his object, stopping every now and then, as though anxious not to create suspicion in his victim ; by dint of able management, and a complication of manœuvres, the lizard succeeded in arriving to within three inches, where he remained steadily pointing, or as some imagine, fascinating his prey ; till making a sudden spring he brings the hunt to a successful close.

Lizards are very partial to white ants, but hesitate to attack the black ones, which oppose a fierce and warlike resistance, and though very diminutive and singly insignificant, are yet formidable in a body. These tiny warriors frequently worry a young lizard to such an extent, that death ensues from the severe handling ; with that wonderful instinct bestowed upon them by the Almighty, no sooner is a lizard *hors de combat*, than hundreds of ants, eager for the fray, appear on the stage, nor will they quit the leviathan foe until every particle of flesh has been stripped from his bones. One small lizard that I had been watching for some time, met with a very untimely fate ; he was in the very act of springing on a fly, when a piece of the ceiling fell and brought him to the ground ; unfortunately for him, he tumbled into a large ants' nest, and before he could

succeed in extricating himself from his dilemma, an overwhelming force had effectually seized hold of the invader. The fierce struggle going forward was really very exciting, but it soon came to a conclusion. Having disturbed the numerous combatants, I discovered that only the skeleton of the lizard remained, every particle of flesh having been carried away; the operation was skilfully performed, and the skeleton being perfect, it formed a very appropriate memento of Shurghotty.

In the cool of the afternoon, accompanied by the "Generally stim agent," I sallied forth to pay a visit to the village; my native acquaintance, though a consummate rogue, was evidently a shrewd and well-informed man in his way; he imparted a quantity of local news, and dilated to some extent upon the value of cocoa-nut trees, which appeared to thrive well in the neighbourhood of Shurghotty; in fact, this is the most valuable tree in India. It is converted into no less than three hundred different uses, to enumerate the whole of which would require a greater space than I can afford; the milk extracted from the nut in its green state, constitutes a wholesome and deliciously cool beverage in the hot weather. Sportsmen after a tedious day's work, generally pour a few drops of brandy into the nut; this is considered a great improvement. The faculty, as well as the natives are averse to eating the

cocoa-nut, thinking it very indigestible. Some people, particularly those lately arrived from England, eat immense quantities of this fruit, making it more agreeable to the palate, or to use a Griff's phrase, "more toothy," by covering this regular cholera pill with jam or sugar. The hard shell of the nut is invaluable to the native, who would find it difficult to exist without its friendly aid; and some ingenious man would have to produce some new style of hookah and bowl bottom; for at present and for ages past, the cocoa-nut shell has constituted the poor man's hubble bubble. Visit also the house of a native, and you will perceive that nearly all the lamps, drinking cups, and a variety of other domestic and ornamental articles are fabricated of this useful fruit, although the more wealthy inhabitants generally possess brass or silver drinking cups.

Vinegar of inferior quality is manufactured from the cocoa tree, as well as the well-known intoxicating liquor, called by the natives arrack; this is a very powerful and stupefying drink, and death has frequently resulted from indulging in it to an injurious excess. Palkee bearers and boatmen are very partial to this spirit, and previous to starting on a journey, they enjoy a glass all round. Thugs, fanatics, and the lower caste of Indians imbibe great quantities of arrack, particularly if about to be engaged in the performance

of some nefarious transaction, such as strangling a strong man, who it is expected will offer strong resistance, or robbing a valuable treasure-chest, over which a sentry keeps watch.

On one occasion I observed a man labouring under the effects of arrack, his object appeared to be to cut down a sepoy, who it was afterwards ascertained had in some way or other offended him ; the cowardly hound required some powerful stimulant ere he could muster sufficient courage to attempt attacking his opponent. He contrived to overshoot the mark, and being in a beastly state of intoxication, the object of his hatred received timely warning, and the would-be murderer had not strength enough to deal a fatal blow, but fell himself insensible to the ground ; whereupon he was seized, and is now enjoying a somewhat laborious recreation considerably awarded by the civil power.

A native never enjoys his wine like a gentleman, no matter what may be his rank or position in society ; if he be seated to taste wine, it is with the firm determination to become inebriated ; he knows no medium, and he either refrains entirely, or swallows glass after glass till he falls under the table.

The cocoa-nut oil surpasses in excellence that expressed from the mustard plant ; and is, in fact, the best manufactured in India. Hindoo women, as well

as the men and children, daily anoint their bodies with the cocoa-nut oil* ; the usual time chosen for this operation is after bathing in the river. This custom is very repugnant to our European ideas of cleanliness, for the constant application of the oil creates so offensive a smell, that those who bestow extra attention on this part of their toilet are scarcely bearable, and should a stranger be placed suddenly in the midst of a large assemblage of natives, his first impression would be that he was in the vicinity of some working steam-engine. Some young Hindoos have very soft and oily skins ; and to judge from their anxiety to display their naked shoulders to the passers by, it may be imagined that they are as proud of a glossy skin, as European ladies are of a fair complexion.

Cocoa oil is used by the priests to illuminate their temples, and many of the most religious amongst them, anxious to propitiate their god, offer up large cruises of oil, confiding the offering to the hands of their priests. The leaves of this wonderful palm are brought into requisition in various ways ; when easily procured, the villagers spread them over their huts ; neat and delicate little mats are also made of them, which though not so valuable, are preferable to the finest Persian carpet, so

* In some districts cocoa-nut oil is not procurable. The natives under such circumstances, apply mustard oil to their bodies.

far at least as comfort is concerned. If a native possess any ingenuity, he can erect for himself a hut entirely out of a cocoa-nut tree; the trunk forms substantial posts, which may be firmly secured together by means of the fine coir rope manufactured from the fibre enclosing the kernel, the leaves are then fastened on in small bundles, and shelter the inmates of the huts even from the heavy rains of June, July and August; and during the hot weather sol strives in vain to penetrate through this simple but serviceable roof; and if the native be industrious, he may enjoy the luxury of a coir mattress, which, owing to the heat of the climate, is cooler and more pleasant than the finest bed ever made of eider down; let him but continue his labours for the space of ten minutes more, and he will be able to enjoy a whiff from a new hubble bubble; another ten minutes elapse, and with the valuable aid of yonder primitive funny looking machine misnamed a saw, lo and behold a couple of lamps afford sufficient light to permit our friend to peruse the Vedas; or perhaps not blessed with the knowledge of Hindoo characters, he has merely lighted the lamps to enable him to cook his dinner, which probably consists of a delicious curry, fabricated from the late contents of the very shell out of which, in a quarter of an hour he will be smoking. But we have not yet completed the investigation of the interior of

our friend's cocoa hut. Ah! what is this? the sly rogue drinks spirituous liquor. Behold with what stealth he fetches from yon dark recess a small cup, and pours therein neither more nor less than a tolerable modicum of the very liquor, that only a few days previously had been extracted from the tree which our friend has rendered so subservient to his comforts, and which has provided him with a pretty little domicile.

A great quantity of indigo is cultivated in the Purneah district, but when I passed through the country no inconsiderable alarm prevailed amongst the indigo planters, who were bitterly complaining of the heavy deluge of rain that had already committed a vast deal of mischief to the crops. Several fields were nearly swamped with water, and the older cultivators expressed their opinion that unless the rain ceased, all the indigo speculators would be ruined. The Bengal indigo is superior to any cultivated elsewhere, and generally grows to the height of two feet; and although I merely walked through a small strip of indigo plants, my white pantaloons were most effectually dyed. I frequently wished to witness the process of converting this celebrated dye into cakes, but never succeeded in satisfying my curiosity. The regular rains were now rapidly approaching, and it became a matter of serious conjecture whether the road to Darjeeling would be prac-

ticable. The prospect of traversing the terai jungles at this period of the year was far from cheering, and even could this obstacle be overcome, people informed me that I should experience no ordinary difficulty in ascending the mountains, owing to the swollen condition of the hill torrents, and the inundations that were daily increasing round the country situate at the foot of the hills.

However, a long distance had to be travelled over, ere the sanatorium was reached, so I hurried to the "stim agent," and the two conveyances in the course of the evening, came jingling and creaking up to the door. Immediately this gratifying spectacle presented itself, the Nawab of Bhawalpore's state carriage recurred to my mind, only the latter might well be considered an easy couch, in comparison to the present miserable looking affair. There appeared no other alternative, consequently squatting cross-legged in the after part of the hackery, the order was given and the unwieldy machine trundled along. For a short distance we proceeded agreeably enough, at least as comfortable as one could well expect, the nature of the conveyance being taken into consideration. Our start was so propitious that the driver began to sing a ditty, and I to congratulate myself on having had the good fortune to obtain a couple of hard working bullocks, for these generally stubborn animals were now ambling along famously.

Scarcely had four miles of the journey been completed, when the rain fell in torrents, whilst the darkness was so intense that the driver and bullocks were not perceptible, although I was only seated a yard or so in their rear. This individual received repeated orders to halt, but the fearful howling of the wind prevented him from hearing a word I uttered, until at last down came the whole bunch and dice of us. This was an accident that I had beforehand prognosticated. I knew perfectly well that the frightened bullocks would rush wildly across the road, terrified at the darkness. Not possessing either a tinder box or matches we were unable to strike a light, so remained in ignorance as to the nature of the locality we had rolled into, or what extent of damage had taken place. After a vast deal of annoyance and exertion, (there being only two of us,) the hackery was ultimately raised from its awkward predicament. Leaving me to smooth down my apparel and recover somewhat from the unpleasant tumble, the coachman, by dint of groping about in various directions, at length happily discovered the wheel ruts, so pulling the vehicle into the road, the bullocks were rapidly harnessed, and once more we jogged along.

However, the fates were decidedly against us, for after proceeding a short distance, a tremendous thunder storm burst overhead, and continued raging without

intermission throughout the night. The rain of course washed everything away, and with the winds' assistance contrived to render my position a most disagreeable one, whilst, to complete the mischief, the temporary hood that had been erected was now worse than useless; for the splintered and springy pieces of bamboo, at every jerk of the hackery, kept continually striking me in the face. The vivid flashes of lightning aided us most materially, for otherwise we should have been compelled to pull up; the road itself was entirely under water, and on either side was a deep ditch, which made it rather ticklish work travelling in a bullock cart during a dark night. Large trees, mostly mango and babool, were distinctly visible. Some benevolent individual, probably a civilian, collector, or commissioner, had planted an avenue all along the road, extending nearly from Sheerghotty to Purneah, a distance of thirty miles. The creaking boughs and loud peals of thunder dreadfully frightened the bullocks, which on witnessing each flash betrayed violent symptoms of fear, trembling and shaking all over, until some extra loud thunder clap rolled overhead, when the startled cattle would rush madly along for upwards of twenty or thirty yards. This would have proved an admirable method of performing a rapid journey, only the darkness of the night prevented the driver from distinguishing the road from

the fields. Towards daylight the cold was excessively disagreeable, and I felt it the more on account of my saturated linen, and having remained in one cramped up position for upwards of eight hours.

The prospect of having to continue in the same miserable plight for nearly six hours longer, greatly damped my spirits, and I was about to resign myself to despair, when my eyes chanced to fall upon a dark looking object huddled up amongst my wet blankets and sheets, —the suspicious looking object aforementioned bearing a very strong resemblance to a bottle of beer. My conjectures fortunately proved correct; the wise kit-mutghar had deemed it advisable tha this master should carry a certain quantum of strong liquor, and thus, unknown to me, had placed a bottle of beer in the hackery. However, a corkscrew, that useful appendage to a travellers' equipment was not forthcoming; so, producing my regimental sword, I commenced hacking away at the neck of the bottle. According to the very ancient and true adage, "misfortunes never arrive singly," and its truth was exemplified on the present occasion; for the very first blow being hastily and unskilfully executed, the glass smashed into a hundred pieces, so that not even one single drop ever reached my lips. As if the case had only been of yesterday's occurrence, perfectly can I recall that stormy night—the

pitiful expression depicted on the countenance of the driver, as he anxiously watched this, to him, at least novel operation of cutting off the neck of a glass bottle with a sword. When the smash was perpetrated, it was ludicrous to observe how the fellow started back with a yell; no doubt a suspicion arising in his breast as to the probability of my assigning the cause of the accident to him. What with seeking for a corkscrew, and then drawing the sword, &c. the preparations had occupied some few minutes; but alas, the expected draught was suddenly dashed from my thirsty lips. No muttered imprecation however burst from my disappointed tongue; far from it. I smiled! Yes, actually smiled, and although excessively annoyed, quietly re-ascended my elevated perch, ordering *coachee* at the same time to drive on. Jehu perceiving his master apparently in a high state of merriment at the unfortunate disaster, thought it incumbent on him to enjoy the joke too; whereupon, just to convince him of the selfishness of human nature, poor Jehu had to undergo three or four smart reminders across the shoulders. As day began to break, a lovely and fertile country was laid open to our view, rendered doubly charming on account of the late refreshing shower of rain, that had decked the meadows and foliage with a complete set of verdant attire. Immense commons

dotted all over with mango groves, and picturesque villages, extended on either side, as far as the eye could reach. Large herds of cattle were grazing upon the rich grass, and were now busily occupied in picking up the nourishing leaves which the late storm had so lavishly scattered about in all directions. The trees bore signs of having sustained more damage from the force of the wind, than the effects of the lightning; in fact the huge limbs torn off the trees entirely obstructed the route for our hackery; consequently we had to make a new road for ourselves, and a wretched one it was too. The ground was literally strewed with the golden fruit, which proved a great temptation to the village urchins, who long ere day broke had repaired to the mango groves, and in a short time succeeded in gathering a rich harvest. These severe storms are very distressing to the owner of the property, which is sometimes utterly destroyed during a few hours, entailing a greater loss than people imagine to be the case. The mango forms the principal means of subsistence amongst the poorer people, that is during the fruit season. It makes a very palatable curry; or, when unripe, a good cook will produce for his master a first rate bowl of mango-fool, which by the bye is a grand treat, reminding one as it does, of the delicious gooseberry-fool manufactured in dear old England. With the ex-

ception of a few breaks caused by the violence of the gales of wind, the whole of the road to Purneah may be said to be sheltered from the rays of the sun, by a noble avenue of trees. Our fatigued cattle must have appreciated this fortunate circumstance ; for after travelling during the entire night, and that too upon a very inferior road, they could scarcely crawl along.

It was late in the day before I reached a hospitable friend's house, where my saturated habiliments and haggard appearance, together with the disreputable looking carriage, and its dirty half-naked coachman, created a vast deal of amusement for those who were present, when I drove with such dignity as I could assume, up to the front door. From Purneah, as anticipated, a dawk was easily laid to Darjeeling, although every one endeavoured to persuade me that it would only prove a useless expenditure of money. Every body was of opinion that the roads would be impracticable ; however, having gone so far, I was resolved to prosecute the journey if possible ; in fact there was no other alternative, after having received orders from the General. Therefore, I quitted Purneah the next evening, determined to make forced marches, and thus perhaps succeed in reaching Darjeeling previous to the setting in of the rains. The rain as if in spite again poured down, and

the palanquin not being waterproof, admitted the water so freely, that another unpleasant ducking fell to my lot. On arriving at the dawk bungalow, the weather declared itself more favourable; and the sun making his appearance, the heat proved too great, so I deferred the prosecution of my journey until late in the afternoon, when the air would become much cooler. The bungalow as usual afforded shelter for a certain number of bats, beetles, and other insects, besides containing dirt and filth sufficient to manure a ten acre field. By dint of persuasion, and other stimulating measures, the dormant faculties of the head-servant were finally awakened, and that personage with the aid of his assistants, after a deal of unnecessary hubbub, prepared one of the rooms for my reception. As for obtaining anything like a decent meal, I never for a moment considered such a thing probable; and having given instructions to grill a fowl for my immediate consumption, the kitmutghar hurried away, and shortly after his exit, the screech of a miserable half-starved chicken told me that its days were numbered.

In India we are not over particular as to hanging up our poultry for a day or two, in order to make it tender; sometimes the fowl, as on the present occasion, is caught, killed, cooked, and eaten within the short space of half an hour. Whilst my dinner was being prepared, I

enjoyed that greatest of Indian luxuries, a cool bath, and the powerful sun quickly placed dry apparel at my disposal. At a little after noon a fresh set of bearers reported their arrival, and once more a start was made, though earlier in the day than I had intended. In fact the heat was far too oppressive, either for man or beast; we had only proceeded four or five miles, when the people complained of the sun's powerful rays. Easily perceiving that they were not endeavouring to shirk duty, I took compassion upon the poor fellows, for the perspiration was pouring in streams from off them.

Though in a palkee, and being consequently somewhat sheltered from the sun, I still experienced a difficulty in respiring, whilst the pulse became quick and feverish, so we pulled up by the road side under the grateful shade of an extensive mango grove. I handed each man half a glass of brandy, and in return they brought me several mangoes, which formed a tolerable lunch in the absence of a more solid one. After a couple of hours halt we proceeded on our way; the bearers appeared in high spirits, and bore me along faster than ever. A dawk journey presents a very favourable opportunity for a man to amuse himself by building castles in the air, or conning over his future plans, and moreover leaves an abundant margin for reflections. Now the gratitude displayed by my bearers,

merely because I permitted them to rest, instead of insisting on their prolonged exposure in the sun, caused me to reflect awhile upon the general character and disposition of the lower orders of the Indian race.

Were it not for the foolish prejudices instilled into them from their very infancy, the *people* would be tractable enough. But the wily Brahmin possesses too great an influence over their moral feelings, and as long as they are kept in ignorance, it is useless to suppose that any radical change in their condition can take place. True, government has established large institutions for educating the natives, and those supported by private individuals are daily increasing all over India. But the question naturally arises, “What is *the* system of education carried on in these establishments!” The general opinion of those who are most capable of forming one on this important topic is, that the present system of education is dreadfully deficient.

Next to the South Sea Islanders, or the savage race inhabiting the desert wilds of Africa or Australia, perhaps the Bengalee labourers of the soil may be considered the most *uncultivated* and ignorant people in existence. The ryuts, or common farmer’s labourers, are fit objects for our compassion, as few people are aware of the oppression and severe labour to which they are subjected to. Those who have travelled much in

India, cannot have failed to observe these wretched men working at the plough, long ere the lark had quitted its nest. The slightest shower of rain appears to freeze their half clad bodies, and what clothing they had girded about their loins seemed a mere farce. At present the Indian labourer is generally remunerated for his services in kind, and not in coin, although they would vastly prefer the latter mode of payment. This unhappy class have arrived at such an utter state of helplessness, that they are now completely held under the thumb of their hard task masters, who, when excited or angry with the poor ryuts, answer their mild remonstrances by threatening to carry them before the nearest magistrate. The jail has not the same terrors in India as it possesses in England; many prefer the comparatively slight labour allotted to prisoners, to the ever fatiguing toil of one whose lot it is to till the ground of a hard-hearted Zemindar.

During my dawk trips and other excursions, frequent opportunities occurred for me to converse with these poor people, and to inquire into their social state. On some of these occasions, the unhappy creatures for a time relieved from fears, or perhaps confiding in the stranger's faith, would disclose secret grievances which had lain long, long dormant in their pent up breasts. Truth and nothing but the truth appeared strongly

depicted in their worn out countenances, and I really felt for the oppressed labourers, when they thus betrayed their unhappy lot. From their own statements, and in fact their attenuated forms corroborated the tale, none of them ever tasted meat, and the sample shown me of their daily food, consisted of such poor nourishment, that verily even swine would have turned up their noses at such miserable fare. In the mango season they contrived to live more luxuriously, but during the remainder of the year, rice of the coarsest description, with an occasional handful of parched gram, or common Indian corn, constituted their simple means of subsistence. As to complaining, poor fellows, not one possesses the temerity to lodge a complaint against this well fed and opulent Zemindar; who, doubtless, would easily, by cunning equivocations, refute the charge and turn the tables upon his accuser. No, at present the poor man has no alternative, but to submit patiently to the “oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,” for alas it is to be feared that justice is seldom their portion. Government will, doubtless, in time institute a searching investigation into the deplorable social condition of the lower classes, for after all, who is it that reaps the bountiful harvest, produced by the hard worked ryuts? Can it be possible that some *native* individuals in authority suffocate the groans and

cries for justice, that may occasionally reach the ears in official chambers.

Whilst the benevolent public are expending immense sums of money on the establishment of educational buildings for the middle classes, why should the barbarism, which is known to exist amongst the lower orders, be permitted to remain unnoticed or uncared for? Now those who are at all acquainted with the Bengalees (who are supposed to have received a tolerable education) must allow that upon an average three scholars out of ten derive as much harm from attending these institutions as they acquire knowledge. Many philanthropic, but over zealous people, will be inclined to differ in opinion upon this subject; however, their zeal often leads them astray, or perhaps having associated with only the wealthy *Baboos*, they have been unable to form a thorough acquaintance with the morality of the poorer Hindoos. Now it is a well known fact, that the imperfect education attained by a Hindoo, only tends to increase his cunning; and amongst other evils and newly acquired propensities is that of a taste for spirituous liquors. I defy any one to contradict the melancholy fact just asserted. Of course there are exceptional cases, and many an upright, honest Hindoo resides in Bengal. These are the men who should exert themselves in the grand educational movement, now

going on in India. It is a very general custom to abuse the Hindoos for indulging in strong liquors, but in my opinion the principal offenders were those who sanctioned the licensing of native grog shops. This is certainly a most pernicious system, and one that may eventually produce dire mischief amongst such an uneducated class.

Not long ago, a Hindoo considered it a sad disgrace to be seen in a state of intoxication, but now this feeling of shame no longer exists, and a drunken native rolling through the streets, or lying insensible on the road side, is by no means a spectacle of rare occurrence. Even the immaculate Brahmin has been known to drink on the sly. Strange indeed is it, that spirits should possess such a fascination, that even the head and chief of the religious sects bow down before the inebriating shrine of Bacchus. The Mussulmen gladly avail themselves of these convenient spirit shops, and the poor people seek relief from the dram. Unless some attention be paid to their interests, the fate awaiting these unhappy individuals can easily be conceived; and unless the principal cause of drunkenness is removed, this vice will never be eradicated from the land. Let not the reader suppose for a moment that I regard the lower orders of Hindoos in a more favourable light than the wealthier classes. Compassion alone has prompted me to speak a

few words in favour of the cultivators of the soil. And many will bear me out in the statement, that the *Ryuts*, who labour for the luxurious Zemindars, are an ill-used and underpaid race. At present, we know them to be grossly superstitious, ignorant, and mean, and their character has been considerably influenced by the severe measures and harsh treatment constantly adopted by the overbearing Zemindars, whose power certainly should be curtailed.

The foregoing reflections have carried us on to the next dawk bungalow, situated within a mile of a large village called Titylyah. Shortly after our arrival a Nimrod rode up and took possession of the rooms adjoining those I occupied. Englishmen travelling in the East, are not so reserved as their countrymen when visiting the continent of Europe. Somehow or other, the gentleman just arrived and myself soon struck up an acquaintance, and being naturally pleased with each other, we agreed to have dinner in the same room; and after the meal, whilst enjoying the fragrant weed, I ascertained that he had just returned from hunting the wild buffalo, which he assured me were numerous in the neighbourhood. His expedition had been a very successful one, and the exciting anecdotes of which he appeared to have an inexhaustible store, helped to while away the time pleasantly enough.

I have witnessed little of this kind of sport, but that little was sufficient to convince me that no ordinary danger attended wild buffalo hunters. To attack a bull when alone is no joke, particularly if he should be grazing on a common from whence no retreat is at hand, in the event of the bullets not performing their duty. The most approved mode of knocking over these animals is by harnessing a couple of tame buffaloes to a country hackery laden with grass or jungle. The hunter then either conceals himself behind the vehicle, or reclines at full length upon it. Upon approaching the supposed locality of the wild herds, the tame animals should be given their liberty, and allowed to wander through the jungles at pleasure, eating the grass, or munching the decayed leaves. Of course, considerable patience is required, otherwise the bulls either charge furiously down upon you, or terrified themselves, make a rapid retreat out of harm's way. But by concealing the person, and remaining perfectly quiet, an easy and short shot will be sure to remunerate you for having patiently suffered a temporary purgatory of a couple of hours. A tough old bull sometimes requires a hard hit or two, ere he succumbs to his conqueror. Only those who can rely upon an unerring aim should venture to oppose a buffalo single-handed, for when wounded, these animals become fiercer and bolder than a dozen

tigers put together. At the Oude and Lucknow wild beast fights, which occur annually, the strength exhibited by the buffalo even in its tame state has caused considerable astonishment and admiration to the spectators. They are often brought into the arena to oppose tigers, leopards, &c., but the latter rarely obtain a victory ; for after a charge or two the buffalo easily contrives to repel his adversary's attack. Cases have occurred when bulls received upwards of fifteen bullets before they were compelled to bite the dust ; and my new friend was obliged on one occasion to climb up a tree for refuge, and being hard pressed, was forced to leave his fire-arms on the ground as they considerably impeded his progress.

In this elevated position the brute made him perform penance for his late murderous intentions ; but after undergoing a trifling detention aloft for ONLY four hours, a herd of tame oxen fortunately came to the rescue, and relieved the fatigued Nimrod from his very awkward predicament.

On glancing at the corporeal proportions of the good-natured narrator, I could not refrain from smiling as the idea arose to my mind, that of all individuals in the world, he appeared to be less adapted for performing feats of agility than any one else. He observed me endeavouring to conceal my risible inclinations, and

laughed heartily as he recalled the circumstances, and said, that at the time he had his doubts as to whether the bough upon which he had taken refuge were capable of sustaining his weight; or being of an apoplectic nature, he considered it highly probable that the constrained attitude in which he was forced to remain would deprive him of his senses. My friend must have weighed fully seventeen stone.

We tasted some fresh buffalo meat, but it was inferior to even the common beef sold in the village bazaars. The hump, according to all accounts, is the only palatable portion of the animal. The immense horns, when suspended in some conspicuous position, form a very ornamental addition to the museum of a sportsman. The buffalo is very partial to sugar-canes, and if a herd enters a plantation they commit sad devastation, in some cases occasioning utter ruin to the unfortunate sugar-planter. It requires a sharp and practised eye to distinguish a wild from a tame buffalo, for it frequently happens, that a wild animal straying away from its own herd, chances to fall in with a tame one. If the old chap is viciously inclined, he will in all probability charge down upon the wayfarer, whom doubtless he esteems an interloper. Thus to avoid any unpleasant catastrophe of the above description, it is always the

safest plan to steer clear of their vicinity, otherwise it may be a case of "stand off the grass."

If a sound unbroken slumber for eight hours at a stretch may be considered a favourable indication that the reposer possesses a clear, and therefore happy conscience, I can safely assert that at least for the night in question, I could boast of being so blessed. Rising early in the morning, a hasty breakfast was discussed, and the palanquin made its appearance, surrounded by the usual motly assemblage of bearers. Previous however to starting I entered the buffalo hunter's room; but the apoplectic old fellow was snoring away at a furious rate, making more fuss than a bevy of grampus whales. He was muttering in his sleep something connected with horses, bulls, &c.; so not wishing to disturb his pleasant dreams, I would not awake him, but quietly getting inside my palkee, away the whole party trotted off to the next staging bungalow, distant not more than sixteen miles.

CHAPTER V.

Scenery—Sillighoree—Jungle Scene—Vivid Lightning—Ascent of the Hills—Darjeeling—Barracks at Jullah Pahar—The Superintendent of Darjeeling—The Cuds—Hill Ponies—Pedestrian exercise recommended for Invalids—The “Old File”—The Darjeeling Butcher.

THE rain which had fallen during the night had refreshed the earth considerably, the dust too was prevented from half suffocating us, whilst a delicious coolness pervaded the atmosphere. Our road principally extended along the banks of a very pretty river, and the enchanting scenery that kept perpetually passing before me in review was so exceedingly beautiful, that ever and anon I insisted upon the bearers halting for a short time, so that I might feast my eyes upon the never to be forgotten pictures of nature's own handywork. The numerous little villages half concealed by the dense foliage, graceful figures of women performing their morning ablutions, herds of cattle crossing the shallow ford, followed by the natives in charge, who carried on their heads their lower wearing

apparel neatly tied up in a bundle, so that the water should not wet their linen, and then the hum of children's voices amusing themselves with some rustic game, all combine to spread an air of contentment and prosperity over the apparently happy villages. The clear running stream, from whose depths every now and then an active finny tenant leaps out high into the air, as if inquisitive about the weather, forcibly reminds the English exile of his schoolboy days.

The scenery during the morning's dawd was more diversified than any I had yet met with. At one time a dense bamboo jungle concealed the view of the adjacent country; then shortly after my cavalcade dived into a dell, which not being a very flowery one, would not possess any charms for the botanist. Perhaps our road lay through a large village, whereupon mechanics set down their implements, shading the glare from their eyes in order to obtain a more advantageous view of the passing traveller. Women returning from the river covered their faces with their dress, or turned into some little by-path to avoid the gaze of the stranger. Old avaricious money-making Hindoos, with their accustomed civility, slowly rise from the ground to make a low salaam to the Feringhee sahib, and having performed this ceremony, again apply themselves to their accounts with greater assiduity than ever.

Then we are amused by some of the boldest village children, who keeping up with our party for a short distance, loudly ask for Bucksheesh ; striving strenuously to attract attention, by performing an endless variety of juvenile antics. Poor little urchins, how gladly they avail themselves of our arrival to suspend for a while their laborious toil. In the East parents soon turn the services of their children to account ; small boys six years of age may frequently be seen in charge of a large herd of oxen, and when arrived at the age of eight, they become useful in tilling the ground. Some of these little lads would astonish the English farmers by their skill in driving the ox plough.

The village and its noisy tenants are rapidly left behind, large tracts of jungle are passed, and we emerge upon an extensive common, until we reach a narrow mountain rivulet. The hot and panting bearers gently place the palkee upon a soft grassy carpet, spread luxuriantly beneath a small but thick leaved neem tree, whilst a general movement is made by the whole troop to enjoy a bath and quench their thirst. The limpid element is very inviting, and heedless of fevers, cholera, and a host of other Indian complaints, I could not resist the temptation of a dive ; so retiring lower down the bank I plunged headlong into the cold water, which

after the heat of the sun almost petrified my body. Judging from one's shadow, it must have been past noon, so in nautical phraseology we made the hour eight bells. A cold fowl, washed down with a bottle of beer, and flavoured with a mild cheroot afterwards, proved very acceptable to the inner man, and having digested this agreeable jungle repast we continued our route. Scarcely had the palkee proceeded a few yards, than it was let violently down with a tremendous bump, which at first rather startled me, for I began to calculate upon the probability of having received, or being about to receive a visit from a huge tiger, or some other equally unwished for guest. At last I contrived to ascertain, after listening to the repeated shouts and vociferations of the bearers, that a large yellow snake, measuring about twenty feet, had caused the sudden panic. The reptile managed to escape by crawling into the high grass jungle, where no one seemed inclined to follow him.

On nearing Sillighoree a few antelopes were grazing on either side of the country, and we perceived a European mounted on an elephant, evidently endeavouring to obtain a shot at the deer. At about five o'clock in the afternoon the dawk bungalow came in sight, being pleasantly situated on the bank of a small river, whose waters, however, were now rushing past at a

furious rate, testifying that considerable rain had already fallen on the hills. The weather wore a most threatening aspect, and the sable landlord, observing my anxiety and hesitation, strongly opposed my determination to proceed that night. However, his arguments failed to induce me to remain under his roof until the following morning. Thinking that my friend was only adopting a plan usually carried on by hotel keepers all over the world, I resolved to baulk his speculations, and merely ordered the officious host to produce a bottle of beer. The bearers too were rather disappointed, for I ordered them to make immediate preparations for departure. Well would it have been had the old fellow's advice been attended to, for never did palkee traveller ever undergo such a tissue of miseries as I endured during the night in question. On my returning from the hills some nine months later, I reminded the hotel keeper of the circumstances, and he enjoyed a quiet laugh when I informed him of all my little misfortunes, which would have been avoided had I listened to his arguments.

Punkah Barriah is the first hill station from Sillighoree, distant from the latter place about seventeen miles, and situated in the first or outer range of the Himalayahs, at an elevation of about 1,600 feet above the level of the sea. The road ran through the terrible Terai, a jungle that is dreaded by the natives

and Europeans more than the visitation of cholera or small pox. On halting half way to strike a light for the companionable cheroot, for the first time the noble Himalayahs met my gaze. Though within seven or eight miles of their base, owing to the mist that clad their dark sides, they were very indistinct, and the rain which shortly after poured down in a perfect deluge, entirely concealed them from my view for the remainder of the day. I was astonished that I had not seen the snowy range, for people informed me that on a clear day the hills were visible from Titalayah. The torch that always accompanies a dawkh, though saturated with oil, steadily refused to keep alight, but as fast as it was lighted the obstinate flame expired. Thus we were placed in a very unpleasant dilemma, for night quickly overtook us, and the most intense darkness reigned around, so that we were compelled to advance at a snail's pace, until at last we were suddenly brought to a stand still. A momentary cessation of the rain, and a feeble gleam from the half shrouded moon, enabled us to ascertain the cause of the detention. However, even had the night been as dark as Erebus, the furious sound of rushing waters would have been sufficient to tell us that a neighbouring hill stream was close at hand. In inspecting the ghat it was easy to perceive that the river was at present unfordable. Naturally enough

considerable excitement prevailed amongst our party, on discovering the awkward predicament in which we were thus placed. My position was worse than all, for not a stitch of dry linen could I place on my body, my shoes and stockings were wringing wet, nor could I perceive that the rain was at all likely to abate. In Scinde or the Punjab such a detention would have proved no great hardship, but unfortunately the present stoppage occurred in the very centre of the Terai jungle itself. Strange to say that notwithstanding the prognostications of the doctors, no fever resulted from this exposure to the jungle night air, so I was particularly fortunate in escaping as I did.

Upon looking about us we discovered that there were other jungle wanderers besides ourselves. The same obstacle that detained our party, likewise prevented upwards of fifty individuals from proceeding on their journey. Like sensible people they perceived the inutility of grumbling, so having managed to light a fire, they quietly squatted round its cheering blaze, and chatted away with the greatest nonchalance imaginable. The Hindoo shopkeeper, with his accustomed shrewdness, had unpacked his bundles of merchandize, converting them into a sort of four, or rather three walled hut, none the worse, in the owner's estimation, for being a roofless one. His bullocks were secured for the time

being, to a small wooden peg, but appeared rather uneasy at the prospect of having to fast longer than usual. The hill travellers were not so patient under existing circumstances, but continued fretting and fuming long after the wiser Hindoo had fallen asleep. The moon occasionally peeping through the clouds, enabled those who were most anxious to continue their journey, to reconnoitre their unpleasant position. The river was boiling up in a most turbulent state, and my head swam after watching for a short time its wild career. One or two bullocks approaching too near the brink, were suddenly swept violently away, and they must have been carried down the river some distance.

It would have been sheer madness for any human being to attempt to cross the stream in its present swollen condition, the danger being considerably increased by large trunks and boughs of trees, as well as gigantic pieces of rock being swept down at a terrific rate. Three weary hours had already passed, and as there were still no signs of the river falling, our precarious position was by no means an enviable one. Just as I was about to return to my palkee in despair, four government elephants luckily arrived on the opposite bank; however, it at first appeared rather uncertain whether or no we could derive any assistance from our welcome visitors. The first three that came up resolutely

refused to stem the rapid torrent, and it was only after much coaxing, occasionally blended with a few tender raps over the skull with an iron hook, that the fourth and largest animal could be induced to attempt our rescue. The next difficulty was how to fasten the palkee on the elephant's back, but after listening to innumerable propositions, and the usual deafening noise having been carried on for half an hour, the palkee was safely conveyed to the opposite side. A second and third trip carried the whole party over, much to the envy of the unfortunate individuals who were under the painful necessity of remaining in their stationary predicament, until the river had subsided to its usual level. Scarcely had we crossed over than rain again descended, if possible, with renewed fury, so that the ford must have been rendered impassable for at least a day or two longer. The torch became perfectly useless, and the bearers showed evident symptoms of alarm, and at last they stated that it would be dangerous to prosecute the journey a foot further, as all felt convinced we were ascending the hills. That their asseverations were founded upon truth, I discovered in a manner far from satisfactory or agreeable, for suddenly my heels were jerked high up in the air; an instantaneous halt and a suppressed scream from the bearers, who were, as sailors would term it, "brought up all standing," convinced

me that some unforeseen accident was impending. A vivid flash of lightning clearly showed us that we were within an ace of quietly walking over a precipice, how deep none could tell, for we could not see far down the dark abyss. The poor bearers, shivering with cold and fright, could scarcely carry the palkee. Our progress now was remarkably slow, two or three men went on in advance, cautiously feeling the way, but even with these precautions, we frequently experienced some narrow escapes. The road, as we ascended higher and higher, gradually increased in steepness and danger, until finally, the men set down the palkee, earnestly entreating me to remain quietly where we were till daybreak. Such a proposition could not be entertained for a moment, besides I felt convinced that the dawk bungalow, at Punkah Burriah, could not be very far distant, as it was only 1,600 feet above the base.

Arriving so lately from the heated plains, I naturally enough fancied the atmosphere of the hills piercingly cold; but this was only a secondary consideration, for the constant and vivid lightning caused no little alarm. Although the foliage was as dense as man ever penetrated, still the flashes illuminated its dark recesses, whilst the terrific peals of thunder rolled round the hills, in a manner sufficient to awe the boldest heart. As for the palkee bearers, they crouched round my

palkee, frightened to an extent perfectly astonishing to behold. The rain, the river, and the annoyance suffered from the treacherous torch, had so completely engaged my attention, that the brandy and cheroots were at a decided discount. However, the stimulating liquor now came into requisition, and a glass served out to each man, produced in their breasts a considerable amount of Dutch courage. In fact, all became so emboldened, as to volunteer proceeding towards the halting ground. Their offer was readily accepted, but not without considerable misgivings on my part; however, the thunder, lightning, and rain suggested the impropriety of remaining all night exposed to their fury. So an order was given to advance without delay; for I was rather suspicious that what little courage had been instilled into the bearers, might very possibly as rapidly ooze out again. My calculations were correct concerning the distance from Punkah Burriah; for in less than ten minutes, the long wished-for house made its appearance. On inspecting the rooms, I discovered them to be scarcely habitable; the roof leaked to an alarming extent, so that after all, my condition was just as uncomfortable as ever. Upon arousing the kitmutghar, it became evident that kitchen supplies were scarce; the old man by way of apology, stating that had he received previous intimation of the coming of a traveller,

he would have made a point of producing a decent repast. Ordering mine host to place on the table such dainties as his larder contained, he spread a pretentious table cloth, thereby inducing the notion that a sumptuous dinner was about to follow these goodly preparations. But the reader may imagine my disgust, when the kitmutghar only produced half a dozen stale biscuits, asserting that at present he could offer no other refreshment. I declined partaking of such indigestible food, and retired forthwith to a couch, which however was far from tempting, being saturated with water. On the following morning by dint of a successful foray, the kitmutghar contrived to capture a fowl, which was quickly converted into a "sudden death" for breakfast; and after discussing its merits, I mounted a hired hill pony, and continued the ascent. Though early in the morning, the atmosphere was not particularly clear, owing to the dense mists that kept perpetually rising from the valleys. As the sun became more powerful, I obtained an occasional glimpse of the plains, which stretched away for miles and miles; whilst the large rivers intersecting the country resembled so many little water courses. Near the base of the mountains appeared the Terai jungle, looking, from my elevated position, like so many furze bushes; although in this wild waste there flourished trees,

exceeding in size any that grew in India. On contemplating the rugged and steep pathway which we had traversed the preceeding night, it appeared incredible that a palkee could be conveyed safely up such a mountain road, particularly under such unfavourable circumstances. The zig-zag pathway, that must have occupied some time in excavating, could be traced almost to the very foot of the hills, and its greatest breadth did not exceed eight feet. However, that energetic hill engineer officer Captain B——, has lately wonderfully improved the whole of the road as far as, and even some miles beyond, Darjeeling. Invalids, or visitors to the sanitarium, are obliged to leave their palkees at Punkah Burriah, and prosecute the remainder of the journey on small hill ponies. Ladies can generally be accomodated with chairs; and perhaps this is the most convenient mode of ascending the mountains; for equestrianism up such precipitous localities, is not very agreeable to timid riders. A chair is a sort of conveyance not unlike the sedan chairs used by the wealthy in the time of Queen Elizabeth. It is generally supported on the shoulders of four men, who will convey their burden at a rate perhaps of three miles and a half an hour. Like most of the hill villages, Punkah Burriah is a place of no repute; containing a miserable bazaar of a dozen houses, only sufficient to supply the few travellers who pass

that way, with the common necessaries of life. The dawk bungalow, though outwardly far superior to its humble neighbours, is not half so comfortable; as scarcely a plank, doorway, or window, could be selected as being impervious to the rains or fog. The rainy season had now commenced in earnest; in fact, nearly all over India it begins in May, generally continuing until the middle of September. The rains are always ushered in by a tremendous storm, accompanied by loud thunder and vivid lightning. Calcutta is yearly visited by these terrible gales, lasting sometimes for nearly thirty-six hours. Fortunately for the shipping interests, some kind of warning is given previous to the arrival of the hurricane. The atmosphere for a day or two becomes unusually oppressive; the closeness of the nights prevents one from enjoying unbroken rest, whilst legions of out-door insects pester the house with their company. These gales, though destructive, are very welcome to those who have no property liable to be damaged by the wind. Directly the storm bursts, the air as if by magic instantaneously becomes cooler; and the refreshing shower washing the flowers and trees effects a wonderful alteration in the appearance of the vegetable kingdom. In process of time, Punkah Burriah may become of some importance.

The herdsmen and land cultivators have a great dread

of the terai, on account of the malaria induced by decayed vegetation, as well as by the noxious mists, that issue in dark clouds from the swampy ground during the night. A few poor people had already taken up their quarters near this hill station, and possessing rather active dispositions, had already cleared small patches of jungle, ready for the reception of Indian corn or sugar-cane; the soil at this altitude being particularly well adapted for the cultivation of the latter. During the height of the rains, or for fully two months after their cessation, a march through the terai is considered unsafe, even for a native constitution. Nor can the timber merchants obtain the services of wood-cutters, until all danger vanishes, which is generally three months after the departure of the wet season. Europeans visiting the hills for pleasure, and not *ordered* up, should undertake the journey during the months of November, December, and January. At this period of the year one can laugh at the dangers of the terai; whilst *en route*, the sportsman can enjoy almost every species of sport, as tigers, deer of various kinds, buffaloes, pheasants, &c., swarm in these immense forests; the aspect of the scenery, moreover, is more attractive, and the air cool and pleasant. The small *tatoo*, upon whose back I ascended the first portion of the day's journey, had only arrived a few hours previous to myself, con-

sequently, after his late thirty miles march, he did not appear to relish such an immediate start ; the poor little animal, besides being old and blind, did not strike me as being over and above surefooted ; to tell the truth, he kept constantly tripping, and with the stubbornness of a mule, refused to take the inner part of the road, whenever we encountered any object. Thus a little timid excitement prevailed for the first few miles, after which, as in the case of all other dangers, imaginary or real, custom relieved me from fearing the stumblings of the wretched little creature. At last, emboldened by perceiving that after all, no accident appeared likely to occur, I threw the reins over the tatoo's shoulders, and jogged along famously. The clouds and mist obscured the scenery, and nearly all day I was enveloped in clouds; but as I ascended higher, trees, different from those of the plains, began to make their appearance. Oak, saul, chestnut, and rhododendron trees flourished luxuriantly. The oak appeared first at an elevation of about 3,500 feet. The saul and saup are most in request for building purposes, but although the expense of felling the tree, and converting it into planks, is in itself a mere trifle, the speculator is not remunerated by dispatching it to Calcutta, the carriage expense from the hills to the presidency being tremendous.

The delicious feelings experienced by a person who

has been actively employed in the burning plains for a period of six years, and who for the first time in his life ascends the Himalayah, cannot easily be described. I have wondered at, and admired the truly grand scenery of the Bunnoo and Dera ghat hills, but their grandeur was diminished by the deficiency of huge forests of mighty trees. True, wilder and superior beauty of its kind could nowhere exist; the enormous rocks, heaped upon each other in admirable confusion, possessed a charm, and instilled into the gazer's heart a feeling of pious awe. But the noble Himalayahs eclipse all that I have ever seen.

Every alternate step the traveller takes up, the zig zag pathway displays a different view. Hundreds of feathered songsters of every hue and species, pour forth their melodious notes with enchanting sweetness, as if welcoming the invalid visitor to their sylvan abode. The low distant murmuring of a hill rivulet occasionally greets the ear, bringing with it visions of fine speckled trout. Ever and anon the sharp cry of the barking deer steals up through the deep valley; its leopard like voice startling the smaller animals, making them prick up their ears, and finally dash headlong into a thick cover.

On turning some abrupt angle, a lovely scene after tasteful nature's own heart suddenly bursts on the

view, chaining the enraptured gazer to the spot; a crystal stream bounding joyfully over its rough and stony bed, winds its tortuous channel through the ever verdant valleys, until suddenly rushing behind a huge blue mountain it vanishes from sight. The wild broad-faced mountaineer gaily pursues his journey, warbling as he proceeds a few snatches from some hill ditty. Then low, low down may be perceived a whole string of bullocks, heavily laden with goods for Darjeeling; slowly they continue ascending the steep road, until another angle hides the procession. It took me nearly seven hours to reach the next staging bungalow, but the building at that time presented such a miserable and dilapidated aspect, that I had not sufficient resolution to make a halt of even half an hour; mounting a fresher and superior animal to the last, the ascent was again continued. At length we arrived at Pucheem, which is a beautiful little spot, situate within seven miles of Darjeeling, and by a late computation, discovered to be at an elevation of 5,600 feet above the level of the sea. Owing to its picturesque attractions and salubrious air, Darjeeling residents, during the fine weather, frequently get up pleasant pic-nics, fixing head quarters at Pucheem. Sportsmen on these occasions carry fowling pieces with them, nor need they ramble far away in search of game,

for the jungle fowls and pheasants are constantly passing in front of the very bungalow itself, the cocks at early morn crowing away with as much gusto as their tame brethren of the farm-yard; and anon struts the anxious mama, actually invading the green compound, followed by her hungry brood. Give me the cold bracing air of the hills for restoring a man's appetite. The hitherto half-starved delicate youth, who in the plains merely troubled Mrs. So-and-So for half the wing of a diminutive quail, now tucks in to beef-steak, mutton, and beer with a ravenous zeal quite marvellous to behold; witness his deeds during the few days pic-nic; the spectacle would afford infinite pleasure to his anxious friends.

After partaking a toothy jungle dinner, a quiet game at whist monopolizes a spare hour or two, when chairs are placed so as to enable the occupants to view the deep valley yawning at their feet; cheroots are produced, and perhaps the slightest dash of whisky or brandy, that flavours (or, if the reader prefers it, spoils) the cold spring water which one drinks whilst smoking. All the pic-nic fraternity now feel happy and contented with each other, whilst to heighten these pleasant sensations, our vocalist favours us with "Hearts and Homes," or "By the sad sea waves."

I have visited several parts of the hills, but never

came across a large, or even a tolerable sized village. A hill village generally contains about five or six buildings, the architecture of which is simple enough, though superior in outward appearance to those erected in the plains. Those inhabited by the head men are of singular construction, being raised some six feet from the ground, and according to all accounts, resemble a Canadian's or North American Indian's hut. Native ingenuity converts the bamboo, which flourishes luxuriantly in the valleys, into a neat and light roof. In fact, the building materials consist entirely of bamboo, which being split in halves forms the flooring. Some hill native gentry are not over particular as to the solidity of their floors, consequently, the wide cracks and slender sticks generally make a stranger rather cautious as to walking across such an unsafe floor. However, the hill people are of too hardy a race to suffer from the effects of the wind which rushes up through the crevices with great force. But were the faculty to be consulted, I strongly suspect they would not recommend a person of rheumatic tendency to inhabit one of these buildings. Nearly every village possesses a saw-pit, a shed for cattle, another for stores, whilst the best is allotted for the family.

Immense labour is required in clearing even a small portion of ground, just sufficient for the villager to sow

a year's supply of corn. In order to encourage hill cultivators, government charges no tax upon the cleared land for a period of five years. A surveyor then measures the property, and the superintendent fixes a certain annual tax upon the same, which varies of course, according to the locality. If in the vicinity of Darjeeling, I believe for farming purposes the landholder has to pay a rupee per acre per annum; but some of the Lepchas residing further in the interior have a very slight imposition attached to their land. Nearly, if not the whole produce is consumed in the hills, with the exception, by the bye, of fine young early potatoes, which meet with a ready and very remunerative market in the plains, several maunds being yearly despatched to Calcutta alone.

The hill people equal the Irish in their partiality for potatoes; at Darjeeling they are very moderately priced, and during the season can be purchased at the rate of a rupee a maund; a maund is about eighty pounds. Fancy, poor Irishmen; do not you feel jealous of the hill people? they purchase eighty pounds of fine, good, sound potatoes, for the small sum of two shillings! Another Irish peculiarity is likewise shared by the hill people, and that is, the propensity to rear swine. In passing through a village one cannot help observing the thriving condition of the grunTERS; their owners

allowing them to roam about their dwellings at will. I was strongly reminded of poor Paddy, when I perceived the children and small pigs rolling together head over heels in the mud. The swineherd finds a ready market for his stock at Darjeeling, but European residents prefer purchasing sucking-pigs, and rearing them as farmers do in England. Visitors are thus enabled to surprise their friends in the plains, by presenting them with first-rate cured hams, or a fine fitch of bacon.

Passing a native butcher's shop one day in company with a friend, we were infinitely amused at witnessing the process of cutting up a pig, which was sold as fast as the vendor could deal the different joints out. Some purchaser would express a doubt as to the weight of his joint, whereupon the whole batch mauled and handed it round to each other in a manner that no European butcher would tolerate.

On nearing Darjeeling, the scenery increased in beauty, and the air became more rarefied. As the shades of evening were approaching, I met several woodcutters returning home, laden with their heavy burdens. Many of them crossed the main road, and preferred struggling up the steep, but shorter by-tracks leading towards their destination, to travelling along the longer but easier road. The strongest European

would find it no easy task to ascend these rugged steeps, which the Booteas, and other hill people clamber up with apparent ease ; performing the feat with a heavy burden attached to their backs. Cutting up a tree into planks is a more laborious task than most people would imagine. The process of raising the trunk over the saw-pit occupies nearly a couple of days, and after the planks are sawn up, it is no easy matter to convey them to their destination.

A Captain ——— invented a sort of truck, but it never answered his expectations. At present, goods of every description are conveyed to and fro, either by means of bullocks, donkeys, or human labour. Formerly wood was a complete drug in the Darjeeling market ; but owing to landholders round about the station having ruthlessly cut down the trees on their property, and that too, without rhyme or reason, the value of timber is now daily increasing, and no doubt in the course of a few years, the building of houses will be rather expensive work.

The convalescent barracks for European soldiers are erected on the summit of a mountain, called by the natives, Jullah Pahar. The site selected is not such a healthy locality as might have been chosen, but at the time government was desirous of establishing a depôt without any delay ; hence, it was only when the bar-

racks were completed that the authorities discovered their mistake.

Jullah Pahar is 7452 feet high, and as its name implies is famous for its being the head-quarters of thunder-storms and earthquakes, which are of frequent occurrence. Nearly all the trees on the highest peak are blackened and withered by lightning blasts. The barracks are a couple of hundred feet lower down; but owing to the irregularity of the ground, scarcely any order has been observed in their erection. They are all huddled together, presenting rather a gloomy appearance. The hospital is a fine capacious building, situate on a high peak, and overlooking the whole of the barracks. Thanks, however, to the salubrious climate, the hospital contains but few patients, and they, alas, are poor fellows who have little or no chance of recovery in whatever climate they may be ordered to. But invalids complaining of liver, fever, and general debility, derive considerable advantage from a year's sojourn in the hills. In fact, it frequently occurs that after a couple of months residence, the patient has entirely recovered his health. The officers houses are neat and comfortable bungalows, provided by government; each quarter being built upon a separate eminence.

It will be necessary again to refer to Jullah Pahar, so

at present let us push on for Darjeeling, where I hope to find a substantial repast awaiting my arrival. Fortunately I encountered the very individual whose hospitality I purposed seeking; we soon reached his house, but alas, for the mutability of human affairs, scarcely had the grateful flavour of a noble dinner entered the room, than a sudden sickness came over me, and instead of sitting down to a comfortable meal, the doctor arrived and recommended an emetic. Every newly arrived visitor generally catches a mild fever, caused no doubt by the sudden change of climate. Some people, however, contrive to escape, and if fourteen days elapse without fever, the doctors appear to think that there is no longer any fear. However, it is impossible to account for fever and other complaints seldom attacking some constitutions, whilst the robust and healthy are severe sufferers. Now, although recklessly exposed to heat and rain, together with jungle malaria, for a space of seven days, I fortunately escaped scot free. On the other hand the superintendent of Darjeeling, in visiting his district, caught fever immediately he quitted the hills, and this occurred during the month of November, which is considered the healthiest period of the year. He was compelled to return, and for some days remained in a very precarious state. Terai fever had slightly attacked him, but the favourable climate even-

tually brought the sufferer round, although none had entertained any hopes of his recovery. Doctor C—— is a kind, hospitable, and gentlemanly man, held in great esteem by all who are acquainted with him. The native hill inhabitants likewise appreciate their superintendent's rule, placing considerable confidence in his integrity.

The Darjeeling district has undergone vast improvements within the last few years, whilst the population of the town itself has increased wonderfully. Many of the Sikkim Rajah's subjects, abominating their prince's tyrannical rule, have fled their country, preferring the lenient government of the English. The Sikkim Rajah deprecates the harbouring of these runaways by the British, asserting that a great decrease in the revenue has resulted thereby. However, all his remonstrances have little effect, for since the late shameful and cruel treatment experienced by Doctor C——, when last that officer visited the Sikkim territory, our government not receiving any satisfactory explanation of the infamous transaction, have refused to carry on any communication with the Rajah. His subjects, however, are allowed to visit our country, and carry on some slight traffic with the Darjeeling people. The commodities they chiefly offer for sale consist of large hampers of oranges, walnuts, musk bags, hill cutlery, skins of squirrels, deer

and other animals, thick woollen stuffs, tobacco, ginger, dogs, sheep, oxen, fowls, and small horses. The above are purchased at a very moderate rate, or are exchanged for European and Hindostani goods. Fine English gunpowder is greedily sought after; and a good pinch of snuff is not to be sneezed at. Natives, with that peculiar obstinate, and ignorant disposition inherent to them, seldom rest contented with their lot. Previous to the Sikkim Rajah's rupture with his powerful neighbours, he was annually in receipt of a very handsome allowance, which of course has since been withdrawn; and as long as the Rajah refuses to surrender up his vile minister and impolitic adviser, not the slightest chance exists of the two governments entering again into a friendly alliance. But after all the Sikkim district is a paltry bit of territory, and since the Prince lost his pension has become as poor as a church-mouse. Report states, that the private and public treasury to boot, can scarce muster sufficient pice wherewith to procure a tolerable repast. The minister appears to possess great influence over the prince, who is only a puppet in the courtier's hands. Even the few taxes that with difficulty are extracted from the wretched inhabitants, become the property of the minister. The fifty or sixty soldiers are badly paid, and worse armed.

I have seen some of them, but shall describe these warriors more fully hereafter.

What consummate conceit and confidence in their own paltry strength do some people possess; man is indeed a queer, foolish lump of clay. In the course of life, how carelessly and with what headlong speed does he rush towards that which, instead of adding to his comforts, only injures those formerly enjoyed. What a ridiculous farce was performed by the Sikkim man, who, with such paltry means at his disposal expected to terrify a government like ours. The fact of the matter is, that most native princes are utterly ignorant of the British power, and having raised a disturbance, only perceive their danger when too late to recede. From all accounts, the prime minister at Sikkim was the cause of the late outbreak, he having persuaded the Rajah to treat Dr. C—— so inhospitably. The refugees loudly abuse this individual, and declare him to be not only a villainous extortioner, but a man capable of committing any cruelty in order to gain information. He is likewise an able promoter of the slave trade, which diabolical profession will never be abolished, so long as its principal supporter holds the reigns of Sikkim government.

Darjeeling is at an elevation of about 7,165 feet, and a person looking up from the valley below, cannot

refrain from expressing his admiration of the lovely little sanitarium, which in form may be said to resemble an immense amphitheatre. Ten years ago scarcely more than three or four European houses graced the village, but at the present day upwards of three hundred are visible, varying in rent from forty to one hundred rupees a month, according to size and situation. Those bungalows, erected on a favourable site for obtaining a view of the snowy range, are always in great request, as no one begrudges a few extra rupees when such a lovely panorama lies constantly stretched before him. A friend of mine who owned one or two excellent houses in Darjeeling, was always incensed when, after praising his own property, he was reminded by some facetious individual, that his houses certainly, as far as architectural design was concerned, were admirably built; but the great drawback to their occupation was, that no view of the snowy range could be obtained from the windows. This generally produced the hasty exclamation, “oh! d—— that snowy range, I can never sell my property through its infernal scenery.” Many people object to visit Darjeeling on account of the perpetual rain and fogs, from which, for nine months in the year, the station is never free; however, it generally clears up for an hour or so in the morning and evening; in the latter every body perambulates along the mall;

some riding on small hill ponies; others carried in chairs; whilst the gentlemen, and the wiser portion of the community enjoy pedestrian exercise. Little children thrive famously at Darjeeling, and the rosy cheeked urchins run and gambol about with twice the spirit they possessed when residing in the plains.

Darjeeling is not such a fashionable station as either Simla or Massourie; hence, only people who are really ill visit the place. Young ladies are seldom seen; however, scandal goes on here as at other places. All new comers should immediately purchase a hill pony, for without this animal it is impossible to climb up the long and precipitous roads with any degree of comfort. A very decent pony can be bought for eighty or a hundred rupees, although I never laid out even as much for two ponies. But then one was blind, and the other had an unpleasant trick of rearing, or rushing impetuously backwards whenever any object suddenly presented itself round the sharp angle of a rock. Considering the dangerous nature of the roads, these pernicious defects in body and disposition were far from being agreeable. Once or twice, the pony and myself rolled down the steep cud together; on one occasion placing both our lives in danger.

Riding up a steep pathway in company with a friend, we contrived somehow or other to lose the road, which

as night was approaching made us feel rather anxious.

Unfortunately, an abrupt precipice was on one side of the now very narrow foot-track, whilst the ground offered no resistance whatever; to turn was out of the question, for we had no room to perform that operation, and at last my pony slipping, steed and its rider rolled head over heels down the dark abyss. After reaching a depth of ten feet a large stone momentarily impeded our progress; and here no doubt would have terminated further descent, had it not been for the obstinate, frightened little animal, which commenced struggling violently, striving his utmost to shake me off. My foot was entangled in the stirrup, but with a vigorous effort the pony succeeded in rolling over the stone, no doubt, kindly intending to drag me with him; however, his intentions were frustrated by the girths breaking, and thus placing me at liberty and in safety at the same time. We heard the tahoo bumping down the cud at an awful rate, and shortly after the sound died away. Although I never expected to see the pony alive again, still I was anxious to save the saddle, consequently, three or four men went in search of the fallen property. Strange to say, the animal was discovered, after proceeding to a depth of perhaps about 200 feet. His ribs were considerable sufferers, two of them being broken, but the tumble

wonderfully improved his disposition, and diminished his wicked propensities; for previous to the accident he frequently bolted with me, but now he became less skittish.

The Booteas annually bring to the Darjeeling market several untrained tatoos for sale, the price varying from fifteen to fifty rupees; owing however, to the tedious and rugged journey they are obliged to perform, it is seldom that the animals possess clean looking legs; whilst the sharp stones considerably damage the hoofs. The roan-coloured are deemed the strongest, and being eagerly sought after by residents, form no contemptible source of profit for the horse merchant. With few exceptions tatoos are never shod, and should a visitor to the sanitarium possess an erratic disposition, he prefers bestriding a quadruped gifted merely with the hoofs dame nature has provided for these sure-footed creatures. In fact, when one is constantly roaming about the valleys, and visiting favourite pic-nic localities, it would be almost dangerous to attempt riding an iron shod pony.

My surprise has frequently been considerably excited when I have observed the hill tadoo, spider-like, crawl up precipices, which owing to their perpendicular formation, appeared almost to defy us. And again, in descending a slope that no man could help running,

instead of walking down, these small animals steadily with the utmost facility perform the trip. Provided they are well groomed and taken care of, an enormous quantity of fatigue and work fails to knock them up. Simple indeed is their diet, consisting of seven or eight pounds of coarse Indian corn, with a few blades of a thick species of grass, or the leaves from young bamboo and cane trees.

Although unfortunately there are some invalids who are too weak to enjoy pedestrian exercise, still the Darjeeling doctors, amongst other prescriptions, invariably advise their patients to employ their own legs in preference to those of the tatoos. They appear to consider the climate of Darjeeling as utterly useless, unless plenty of pedestrian exercise be brought in as an auxiliary.

There may be some truth in all this, and we find the climate most favourable for children, as well as being admirably adapted for those suffering from fever and other Indian diseases. Those afflicted with dysentery should never visit Darjeeling, as a more unpropitious sanitarium for this dangerous complaint could not well be selected. Of course, when walking is so strongly recommended, the authorities have provided suitable roads for those desirous of testing the advice of the faculty; as the visitor arrives, or at least is supposed to arrive in

a very weak state, it would be impossible to expect that he should immediately be capable of walking his ten miles before he sat down to breakfast; consequently, to enable him to proceed by degrees, there are a variety of roads all differing in length; these are generally cut round the neighbouring hills, and the pedestrian's first ambition is, to walk round what is called Darjeeling Hill, which may be a distance of about a mile; but this feat must be performed before breakfast, otherwise the honour is half annulled. Although this appears but a short distance, still, owing to the rarefied atmosphere, the invalid puffs away at his self-imposed task like a small steam engine, until finally, after eight or nine days, this morning exercise is performed with scarcely any exertion, and as a proof of a regained appetite, the fine white bread and delicious hill butter, disappear with marvellous celerity.

The ambition of the pedestrian is now directed towards Birch Hill, which is about four miles in circumference, but the road is not so level as that round Darjeeling Hill; therefore, the performance is no joke. Patience and occasional halts succeed in overcoming all difficulties, and in less than a month this formidable walk is considered a mere trifle; in fact, quite a morning stroll.

During my frequent perambulations of this hill,

rarely did one of the fair sex cheer me in my task; no doubt the distance was too great, for it never entered my head to ascribe their non-appearance to laziness; however, I often encountered Major —— and P——. We seemed to meet each other day after day, exactly at the same spot, thus proving with how much punctuality we all rose from our couches. But now there yet remains the climax of pedestrian feats; this consisted in walking round both Birch and Darjeeling Hills before breakfast, whilst in the evening we walked round what was called the saddle; this latter road was no less than eight miles long, so that with the addition of the morning exercise, the once invalid now contrives to march over thirteen miles of not very level ground. Very few certainly ever performed, much less continued to keep up, this scale of pedestrian exercise; but a civilian of my acquaintance, who bore the quaint soubriquet of “Old File,” daily performed the above feat, or else made up the distance in some other way. This is the only mode by which one can hope to regain health, and rebuild a broken constitution; medicines up in the hills rarely assist in the patient’s recovery, and doubtless in many cases, do greater injury than good.

But though many carry out their doctor’s instructions

with regard to exercise, there are but few I imagine, who pay any attention to the course of diet prescribed for them; the salad and wild fruits are so tempting to one newly arrived from the scorching plains, the former mixed with preserved lobster and steeped in bowls of rich cream, are delicious treats; still it is well to eschew such luxuries, and be content with good honest mutton or beef, which may be procured at Darjeeling at moderate prices. The most nutritious and best meat is procured from a German, who originally visited Darjeeling as a missionary, and no doubt purposed to preach the great truths of Christianity with great zeal to the natives. The hill sanitarium, though a wide field for his praiseworthy intentions, failed to offer sufficient inducement for a further prosecution of the good cause, and he being a keen-sighted and clever fellow, doubtless perceived at once, that the gigantic task before him could scarcely be brought to a successful issue till after the lapse of many years; and considering the occupation of a butcher more remunerative than that of preaching the gospel to a bigoted race of men, he resigned the latter, and established himself in the former office.

Many will probably blame the Missionary for his want of zeal; in a pecuniary point of view, however, he

has benefited himself very much since he has taken to the slaughter of kine, for he is now one of the wealthiest residents, supplying nearly all the station with excellent meat, including pork, sausages, hams, tongues, humps, bacon, poultry, eggs, milk, and butter; the last mentioned commodity defies competition, and is equal to any manufactured in England.

I have taken a little pains in enumerating the above list of articles of consumption, for the following reason. A short time since some person or persons lately amused themselves by stigmatising the station at Darjeeling as being an excessively dear locality, and a place moreover, where it was almost impossible to obtain any article required; these, and other equally false statements, might do the station some mischief; but as a sample of what can really be procured at Darjeeling, I have enumerated the stock of the butcher's shop alone; some articles of daily consumption are, of course, dearer in the hills than in the plains, such as beer and preserved meats in tins, owing to the expensive Coolie and boat hire from Calcutta; certainly they are not cheap, but what reasonable person will deem it a necessity to eat preserved meats, which are not considered wholesome, when for one-third of the price, fine fresh mutton or beef may always be placed on the table. Aye, but

Englishmen all the world over are funny creatures, so it is useless entering upon a long discussion on the subject, for should capricious fashion order its votaries to subsist on alligator's tails, verily every body in "society" would on the spur of the moment prepare tanks in which to breed the prescribed reptiles.

CHAPTER VI.

Bazaar—Society—Institutions—Convent—Missionaries—Houses—Snakes—Trees—Vegetables—Flowers, &c.—Mountain Rambles—Snowy Range—Leeches.

THROUGH the unwearied exertions of the Superintendent, Darjeeling can boast of an excellent bazaar, containing several shops, mostly tenanted by Hindoos, from which a tolerable supply of every necessary may be procured throughout the year. A few good carpenters and artizans from the plains have been induced to take up their quarters in this bazaar; but they demand high prices for their labour, aware of the superiority of their work over that of their fellow-workmen of the hills. The bazaar and suburbs contain a mixed population of upwards of 4000 inhabitants; the huts altogether devoid of architectural pretensions, are indifferently constructed of bamboo, and thatched with the same, split into pieces two feet long by an inch broad. Some of the wealthier inhabitants shingle their houses; this is done by nailing bits of wood to the beams, in the same manner as slates are fixed to the roofs of English houses.

The "reading room" at Darjeeling has obtained its title by courtesy only, presenting a melancholy spectacle of empty shelves, excepting those occupied by stray numbers of old reviews, or monthly publications, together with a well-fingered army list, and Calcutta almanac. However, not to be a member of the above institution, would be considered as betraying literary indifference, and a want of public spirit. Darjeeling society is placed on a footing entirely its own, and no digression is tolerated from the forms laid down. Should any visitor attempt an innovation upon established usages, his proceedings would be regarded with universal disapprobation; whilst everybody exclaims, "La, what a remarkably *strange* man, Mr. So-and-so is." Like all other hill stations, Darjeeling rejoices in its scandal groves; and the objects of ridicule or blame, generally have communicated to them the opinion of the community at large, for which information he or she has to be grateful to some officious friend, who like a bird of ill omen, takes delight in hovering over his pretended friend's abode, anxiously on the alert to be the first to convey unwelcome news. Unfortunately, India swarms with these pests of society; these social vultures, who would unhesitatingly dip their foul beaks into a mass of corruption, provided they could pick therefrom a few morsels to make a meal. The greatest excitement pre-

vails when a new face makes its appearance on the Mall ; everybody is in a ferment to ascertain who the individual can possibly be ; what class of society he moves in, or whether he moves in any at all ; until at last the grand mystery is solved, and the new arrival takes his place as an acknowledged Darjeelingite.

The ennui of the station is occasionally dissipated by balls got up by general subscription, or hospitable residents entertain visitors at their own houses. These parties are carried on with more spirit than those in the plains ; every individual is expected to dance ; all lounging on sofas or chairs is interdicted, until the requisite number of dancers are made up ; and such a rarity as a wall-flower is seldom seen. The musicians are generally procured from the barracks, and play waltzes, polkas, &c., in rapid succession, whilst the dancers are in no way behind them in zeal and activity. The ball-room at Darjeeling possesses this advantage, that it can dispense with that artificial air-cooler, the punkah. This enormous fan not unfrequently causes much annoyance to the ladies, for being kept perpetually waving to and fro, it interferes considerably with the arrangements of the head-dress. At Darjeeling the punkah is unknown ; and the nights being excessively cold, dancers prefer closing the doors and windows, instead of throwing them wide open. A cloud will perhaps uninvited visit

the ball-room, but this only “lends enchantment to the scene.”

Ladies in the hills are not confined to the house all day as in Calcutta. Paying morning visits, pic-nics and shopping, assist in passing away the time. The latter as may well be imagined, is the most expensive amusement of all, for no place in India comes up to Darjeeling in the price of European goods. Mr. Martin’s shop used to be the best conducted repository for these ; and a large party generally congregate to make purchases, inspect recent additions, and of *course* talk scandal ; the latter originating in the lively imaginations of the gentlemen, and left to the lady confidante for circulation, who no doubt sets out on a visiting expedition, purposely to have the felicity of retailing the newest scandal. The goods offered for sale are of every description ; jams, preserves, lobsters, oysters, soups hermetically sealed, being in great request are charged accordingly. Bachelors alone are foolish enough to indulge in these costly luxuries. A pot of jam that cost two or three shillings in England, at Darjeeling would sell for six rupees. On the rumour of the arrival of a fresh stock, the well-known shop is taken by storm—the assailants being of both sexes. Mr. Martin, the obliging owner, may be perceived hurrying to and fro, answering innumerable questions,

but at the same time contriving to dispose of his various wares with such celerity as would excite the envy and cupidity of the native itinerant box wallah, alias pedlar. Ladies attack bales of muslins, dresses, &c., with characteristic pertinacity, and insatiable curiosity; whilst the bachelors pounce upon whatever strikes the fancy, not for a moment considering whether such purchase is, or ever will be of any service to them. An acquaintance of mine, far more mischievous than all the children put together, once bought a score or two of trumpets, and presented each child he met on the Mall, with one of these toys. The result was far from "a concord of sweet sounds;" and the noise and annoyance thus created, brought upon the author a severe penalty, as he had to listen to a lecture a mile long, administered by every lady he encountered on the road.

Shopkeepers at out-stations rapidly make large fortunes; nor is this surprising, when we consider the handsome profit they realize on every commodity. Not content with a moderate gain, many take advantage of their customers' position, well aware that the distance from Calcutta is too great for an impatient man to wait until the articles he requires can be forwarded to him. These up country traders live like princes, and appear to lead an easy life. Some drive about in costly carriages, and seem to spend as much as they gain; but

others who commence trade with the determination of sticking to it, lay by good store of wealth.

Books are about the cheapest commodity offered for sale. I have frequently observed valuable works kicking about the shop floor, thrown down apparently as useless trash, and obtainable under these circumstances for a mere trifle. Unless kept with great care, constantly taken from the shelves and thoroughly wiped, the mildews and fogs of Darjeeling soon destroy books. The least damp affects the binding; a fact which came within my own experience, for scarcely a book or paper that I brought up to Darjeeling was worth the trouble of packing when I quitted the hills. There was a library independent of the reading-room; but a great drawback to its general usefulness was, that the books were mostly in German and other foreign languages. To remedy this evil, an opposition book club was instituted, supported by members paying a monthly subscription of four rupees, and furnishing a good supply of English works,—scientific productions, as well as magazines and lighter reading.

There is a pretty little convent at Darjeeling, which at present contains only five or six nuns, under the management of a very amiable Lady Mother, who, like all ladies of her profession and high rank, was highly accomplished, and an excellent linguist. From all

accounts she had given up a large property for the good of her convent. The nuns seemed happy, and were not so demure looking as they are generally supposed to be, yet still one could not refrain from lamenting the secluded life to which they had voluntarily devoted themselves. Several Protestant parents send their children to receive education at the convent ; and one or two ladies who visited the dormitories, expressed themselves in favourable terms with respect to the interior arrangements, and the kind attention bestowed upon the children. Those pupils not professing the doctrines of Rome, are permitted to attend the Protestant church, which by the bye has a very picturesque appearance, being constructed of a species of white stucco, and erected on a conspicuous hill, the sloping sides of which are covered with a lovely grass carpet.

Talking of churches reminds me of the clergy. Darjeeling appears to be a favourite spot with the ministers of God, many having resided in the hills for several years ; however, their efforts have seldom been attended with very encouraging results. These missionaries are generally Methodists, Presbyterians, &c. ; consequently, quarrels and misunderstandings are perpetually occurring between themselves and the clergy attached to the Established Church, thus raising considerable obstacles in the way of converting the heathen.

The profession of a missionary is truly no sinecure, as they seldom receive any remuneration from government, although poor fellows, their noble exertions in the Saviour's cause, outstrip those of the men who are really paid for the work. Most of the clergy in the service of government, after a servitude of fifteen years, retire upon a very handsome pension ; thus they need suffer no anxiety with respect to pecuniary affairs. Some of these aristocratic preachers are lukewarm, caring little for the future welfare of the flock confided to their charge, whilst a few could be selected who never came out to India with any determination of striving their utmost towards spreading the truths of Christianity. A few of the more zealous no doubt exert themselves, and become admirable examples to their lazy fellow-labourers ; but the arduous duty of going amongst the villagers and hill people, devolves almost entirely upon the poor unpaid missionaries.

The Hindostani menials are useless appendages to one's establishment ; the intense cold of the hills freezes their blood, and entirely strips them of all energy. They rarely remain with you for a fortnight, and immediately make preparations for withdrawing from, to them, such an ungenial climate. This is very provoking, for the domestics usually engaged at Darjeeling are a lazy impudent set of scamps, with the exception

of the Lepchas; but then again, their knowledge of European ideas of comfort is not very extensive, whilst they may perhaps be classed amongst the dirtiest race of human beings under the sun; although in one respect they are allowed to surpass all other natives in the East, and that is, in their extreme honesty in all pecuniary transactions.

To give an idea of their cleanliness it need only be mentioned, that once having girded round their loins a blanket, it is seldom removed until the stinking mass of rags falls off the body. A Lepcha attached to my establishment, and whose only duty consisted in catching beetles and butterflies, once ventured into my sitting-room, leaving behind him a stench that was infinitely worse than that of a badger; in consequence, for the future he was prohibited from entering even the verandah. The thick coarse woollen stuffs manufactured in the hills are so durable, that a twelvemonth's constant wear fails to render them unserviceable; so one can imagine the odour emitted from such a garment is not very agreeable.

Formerly, strangers on their first arrival were put to vast inconvenience, but now a very decent hotel has been established, where every necessary is supplied. Visitors purposing to reside some months at Darjeeling, will find it advisable to take up their quarters at this

hotel for the first few days, they in the mean time are enabled to look about them preparatory to selecting a furnished house for the season ; this is preferable to the plan usually adopted by many, who arriving during the months of December, January, and February, immediately hire the first empty bungalow pointed out to them. Of course, occasionally, considerable inconvenience attends these hasty measures. The rains commence, and when too late the tenant discovers his choice to have been misplaced ; the water pours through the thatch work, the walls and floors become damper than vaults, besides a host of other defects, rendering the house scarcely habitable.

The constant rains, snow, and inroads of the white ants, render house building rather expensive work ; still, speculators who prognosticate the future rise of Darjeeling, continue purchasing localities for bungalows. A locality consists of a patch of ground one hundred yards square, for which government charges an annual rent not exceeding fifty rupees. Most of the old land proprietors are averse to the disposal of their property unless under very favourable circumstances ; for they entertain very sanguine ideas relative to the future prosperity of the station, upon the completion of that greatest of Indian phenomena, the railroad.

Should the Governor-General and the big wigs con-

descend to spend the hot weather at Darjeeling, instead of proceeding to Simla, no doubt the inhabitants would derive considerable advantage; and perhaps the presence of the highest Indian authority, might offer an inducement to agriculturists to endeavour with greater zeal than at present to cultivate hops, cotton, and other valuable produce, which now remains in a stagnant condition for lack of encouragement being shown to the cultivator.

Almost all the furniture constructed in the hills is made from the saup tree, which is really magnificent timber, but soon liable to decay, on account of the damp and numerous insects; amongst which, the small stag-beetle may be mentioned as being the most destructive, as well as a species of wood-louse, whose unwearied exertions rapidly destroy chairs, tables, and every other article in the room. The oak arrives not at the same perfection as the species in Europe; in fact, the natives rarely cut it down for timber or building purposes.

Snakes though numerous are perfectly harmless, nor during a stay of nine months could I discover one longer than three feet. Their activity is less than that of those met with in the plains, which may be attributable to the cold atmosphere, for on being placed at liberty in the room they invariably retreated to the fireplace, where coiling themselves up they appeared to

enjoy a quiet snooze. I only met with four species, and these, with the exception of a black individual, scarcely differed one from another.

During the season the wild walnuts, ready shelled, can be purchased for a mere trifle; in fact the fruit falls to the ground in such quantities, that the hill people willingly offer a sack full for a couple of rupees. The other species of wild fruit, with the exception of peaches, are all very sour; and even the raspberries, so tempting in appearance, are utterly useless unless converted into tarts, the precaution having been taken to insert a cart-load of sugar into the dish. The raspberries are of five different species, and flourish so luxuriantly that, in many places, scarcely a yard of jungle can be traversed without encountering one of these prickly bushes. A kind of wild strawberry occasionally peeps through the thick grass, but is so diminutive that it requires a sharp eye to detect its retreat, and even when discovered the slightest pressure of the fingers squeezes it into nothing. Again, the wild plantain has frequently led me a pretty chase, and having succeeded in gaining the huge bunch of fruit it was discovered to be inedible; it was only just previous to my departure from the hills that I ascertained that the wild plantain never arrived at perfection, but always ran to seed.

Within the precincts of the station itself there are

few horticultural domains ; this, in a great measure, is owing to the uneven nature of the grounds generally surrounding the bungalows. However, the older residents have established summer houses in various spots situate within a short distance of Darjeeling. At those suburban retreats horticultural experiments are carried on, and some are attended with unexpected success. These gardens are situated much lower down than the site of Darjeeling, perhaps at an elevation of 4,800 feet above the level of the sea. Vegetables of every description thrive luxuriantly at an elevation of 5,000 feet, and present a very different appearance to the stunted withered up sprouts, the produce of the plains. Beds of delicious strawberries surprise the new comer. As for the flowers, go seek the cause of yon sickly faced youth's sudden melancholy fit, and he will point to a tuft of violets, whilst the tear that trembles on his eyelash as he turns hurriedly away, betrays the emotion caused by the sight of the flower associated with happy recollections of days gone by. Daisies and buttercups side by side with the modest primrose, are too great a treat for an Indian exile to enjoy all in one day. Roses are cultivated with success ; the moss rose alone excepted ; every effort to make this flower, has hitherto been unsuccessful. The dahlias are magnificent ; of every hue, size and form, and vie with the European plants in

beauty ; one species of an inferior sort flourishes in a wild state in almost every compound.

A Darjeeling Christmas table presents a rich variety of English vegetables, amongst which may be enumerated peas, french beans, cauliflowers, carrots, celery, lettuce, turnips, and potatoes. Those who are addicted to horticultural pursuits may take an active part in the laying out and management of their garden, for the friendly clouds, in a measure, screen the amateur gardener from the fierce rays of the sun. Of course, in the plains, without such protection, out-door exertion is impracticable, at least for ladies. In a work like the present it is not possible to do more than hint that the neighbouring hills and valleys of Darjeeling, would, in all probability, present a noble and extensive field for botanical and geological researches. Happy is the pic-nic goer who blends science with pleasure, for he alone can fully appreciate the beauties of nature. Nothing can be more delightful than a sylvan ramble through endless forests of gigantic and umbrageous trees, walking over beds of wild flowers, heaped up in lavish profusion, and revelling in the peculiarly delicious mountain air. True, the ascent is laborious, but the summit gained, how rich the reward provided by nature for her votary's zeal.

In threading the forest paths, innumerable humming birds, so diminutive as to be easily mistaken on a hasty

glance for beetles, flit from bough to bough like fairies. The beautiful green pigeon coos to his lady love in plaintive notes, whilst ever and anon a startled pheasant whirls overhead, and instantaneously disappears down the thickly wooded "cud." No human step approaches to disturb the pleasant reverie that imperceptibly steals over one. The woodcutter never ascends such an altitude, and why should he? He can cut his faggots 3,000 feet lower down.

The hill deer is an elegant creature, and frequently springs through the thicket with marvellous agility. The poor little animal, on perceiving itself in the presence of a stranger, abruptly halts to take a steady gaze at its enemy, man. Not considering it safe to remain in his vicinity, the deer sniffs the air and commences a retreat; click, click, bang, and down rolls the sweetest bit of venison that ever rejoiced the heart of an alderman. All jungle rambles should take the precaution of carrying fire-arms, whenever they undertake an exploring expedition. Not that the hill people would molest the English traveller, far from it, for the English are held in great esteem by the mountaineers; but there are several four footed denizens who would not hesitate to attack a man, if the cravings of nature pressed too heavily upon them. I have frequently heard young men complaining of the paucity of Indian sport, ap-

parently forgetting that it is not at all likely that wild animals will walk up to a man's tent to be quietly shot at. Now in order to obtain good sport in India, a man must, *imprimis*, be gifted with a good constitution, strong nerves, and a vast deal of patience; secondly, he must resolve upon taking things as they come, or in other words, the luxuries of civilized life must for the time being be laid aside. The usual fault, and one moreover very prevalent amongst young sportsmen, is to proceed on a shooting excursion as though it were a pic-nic party, where ladies were expected to grace the scene. For instance, three or four tents form the camp, in lieu of one small *routy* ;* then innumerable servants accompany their master, who, in many instances smokes cheroots, &c., &c., instead of beating up the jungles. As far as regards shooting excursions in the hills, camp equipage and domestic establishments should be reduced as much as possible. Towards the Booteia frontier, where the mountaineers are capable of carrying great burdens, two attendants will be found sufficient; and in the way of provisions, a side of bacon, a hump, or tongue by way of change, a pound or two of tea, rusks, and a short allowance of brandy. Perhaps the most important part of the hill sportsman's equipment, may be a couple of thick country blankets, one to act as

* Routy, a very small tent.

a bed, the other to wrap the guns in, as being preferable to gun cases.

Those who have never frequented mountainous districts can have little idea of the fatigue attending the descent of a cude, aggravated not a little by the stinging nettles, the thick stems of which, the size of a man's arm, bristling with prickles, inflict terrible punishment, if unluckily a false step or sudden jerk send them in your face. Raspberry bushes, creepers, and the prickly cane impede the hunter's progress considerably, besides disfiguring his personal attractions. I fancy I hear the reader exclaim, with a sneer; "and this is what you denominate Indian sport!" "Bide ye yet" is the reply. "Ah! my friend—I told you so—look at yonder cave; take care, here she comes," and true enough out rushes a noble female bear, betraying by her vivacity the possession of two or three cubs. One barrel is fired, another follows its example, the rifle then discharges its contents. If all be unsuccessful it is a regular "*case*." Down charges the old bear, head over heels, or "all of a heap," as the saying goes, and then knives come into play. Reader, once and for all, if you wish to shoot a bear, do not pitch your tent some three miles from the station, in order to be within reach of luxuries; no, for once in a way, let the blue firmament of Heaven, or the clouds, be your only canopy for a day or two; never mind mar-

ring the beauty of your physiognomy by bramble scratches, or falling down a hole, for rest assured that with patience and a little skill, the above is the only way to shoot hill bears.

From the commencement of the rains, when the "Terai" is mostly under water, tigers take up their quarters at the foot of the hills; but owing to the malaria arising from the jungles, Europeans never venture to attack them in their insalubrious haunts. The natives, however, urged on by pecuniary motives, set snares for them, and by taking the skins to the Superintendent's office, receive for the same five rupees, a sum much under that obtained in Scinde, where thirty rupees are bestowed as a reward for killing a tiger. A native rarely enters the lists in personal combat with these animals, but prefers the less dangerous mode of capture by stratagem. A favourite method, and one which seldom fails of success, is to plant sharp poisoned arrows in a sloping direction, amidst the long grass and shrubs. A number of men then draw themselves up in line, and with shrill, unearthly noises, accompanied by the unceasing "tom, tom," commence beating the jungles. The frightened animals rush headlong through the bushes, until a concealed arrow pierces their flesh; the poison being of a very deadly nature soon takes effect, and after wandering about for a few minutes, the

wounded creature drops down dead. Deer, also are frequently snared in this manner.

Many of the residents during the cold months leave Darjeeling, with its frosts and snows, to enjoy a huntsman's life at the base of the mountains. Bullocks and buffaloes are always grazing in the Terai; so that tigers at all events have no cause to complain of the paucity of prey. The Terai abounds with every species of game, whilst fishermen can enjoy their peculiarly English pastime, either with or without the fly. This is rarely employed with success in the Bengal rivers, as the fish seldom rise to an artificial bait. In some of the hill streams noble specimens of trout leap over falls and rocks with wonderful agility. Hook one of these gentlemen, and I will trouble you to land him in a moment. Here let me inform those who are fond of piscatory amusements, and who purpose going to India, that it is advisable to furnish themselves with a good set of tackle previous to leaving England, as otherwise they may find some difficulty in obtaining it. The angler should always take the precaution of having by his side a double barrel gun, loaded with ball; very dangerous encounters have occurred quite unexpectedly, particularly when the banks of the river are covered with thick jungle. Tigers have been known to spring unawares upon their totally unprepared victim, thus monopolizing

the sport. Perhaps the more harmless deer may visit your fishing ground, in order to quench his thirst; shoot him, my dear sir; do not remain too long admiring his symmetry, his branching antlers, and elegant movements; he will be off as soon as he perceives your vicinity, and you will be minus a delicious addition to your jungle larder. Partridges, wild ducks, teal, jungle fowl, and pea-chicks are constantly presenting themselves as food for powder. The pea chick is a very good substitute for a turkey; in fact, when very young and tender, some few prefer the former, the latter being generally deficient in flavour. A prejudice exists against them, however, so this really dainty dish seldom makes its appearance on the dinner table. These birds are easily domesticated, and follow their master like a dog. A labourer may be frequently met, returning home after his daily toil, followed by one of these graceful favourites. The natives pet and regard them as sacred birds, nor will they permit if they can possibly help it, even a European to shoot them. In some districts of Bengal disturbances have occasionally taken place, entirely originating in young Englishmen wantonly shooting at peacocks, after having been requested by the villagers not to do so; and lives have even been lost during the fray. When I say disturbances, I do not mean with respect to government, but only to the persons who shot the peacocks.

Those who are anxious to behold the noblest efforts of nature, should visit the Himalayah mountains. The grandeur of the scenery, diversified as grand, baffles description ; and scarcely a spot in the world can surpass in beauty this glorious range. The loftiest flights of imagination must fall short of the exquisitely beautiful view of the snowy mountains from Darjeeling. For some days after my arrival the weather continued so cloudy, that the perpetual fogs, and hazy state of the atmosphere, prevented me from obtaining even a glimpse of the snow-clad peaks. One morning, however, during the course of a pedestrian excursion, just after turning a sharp angle, the whole of the snowy range burst suddenly into view. At first I could scarcely believe my senses ; but thought the awfully grand panorama thus stretched before me, must be the work of imagination ; the chimera of a feverish, or sickly constitution. For a long time I stood gazing up and along the stupendous icy barrier ; and when retracing my homeward steps, kept continually turning round to obtain another look at the splendid prospect. Until lately, the height of the Himalayahs was a disputed point ; some asserting that none of the peaks reached a higher elevation than that of Dewalghurry, 27,000 feet above the level of the sea. But Mr. Smart, attached to the survey department, has within the last few months returned from accompanying Captain

Sherwill's expedition, and very kindly placed at my disposal some tables relative to the altitude of the higher mountains round Darjeeling. On referring to these, it appears that the loftiest peak seen from the Sanatarium, and denominated by the natives Kunchinginger, is 28,176 feet, or upwards of five miles above the level of the sea.

To describe, or even to give any idea of this majestic peak, whose towering heights pierce the clouds, is altogether beyond my power. It seems a fit emblem of the pure road which leads to heaven. At about the height of 18,000 or 20,000 feet, commence the regions of perpetual snow, so that a huge mass of some 8,000 feet, consisting, it is supposed of nothing but frozen snow and hard rock, towers above its neighbours. Illness prevented my joining Captain Sherwill's party; from all accounts, those who took part in the expedition underwent considerable fatigue and hardships. Captain Sherwill, who is not only a very talented officer, but a most agreeable companion, returned with a severe and dangerous fever, which, however yielded to the genial climate of Darjeeling.

The varieties of temperature one encounters when exploring the hills, are very trying to even the strongest constitution. One night the traveller may be sleeping on the brow of a hill with the thermometer at 30 de-

grees or thereabouts ; next day he descends into a deep valley, and perspires profusely ; the thermometer then ranging from 85 degrees to 95 degrees in the shade. The heat of the valleys I always fancied more oppressive than that of the plains, there being, perhaps, a less circulation of air. It is advisable to refrain from sleeping in the valleys. I always contrived to make my nocturnal resting-place on the summit of some hill, and starting early in the morning, would reach the bottom of a valley where, selecting a favourable spot in the stream, a plunge in its clear limpid waters would produce a ravenous appetite for breakfast, after which the ascent was undertaken at leisure, and continued until a well-sheltered nook, or a few feet of level ground offered a grateful resting-place for the night. A huge heap of dry sticks your attendants rapidly pile together, a rasher of bacon with a potato or two is soon prepared, and the day's proceedings are wound up with a glass of *weak* brandy and water, accompanied by the social cheroot or pipe.

With the setting sun all retire to rest. It is astonishing the effect produced by spirits upon persons of even the strongest constitution, when indulged in at an elevation of 10,000 or 12,000 feet. I have had opportunities of observing this, and Captain S—— informed me, that at 19,000 feet it is perfectly dangerous to take

any quantity of raw spirit, as even half a wine glass of brandy produces intoxication. I would recommend all hill travellers to drink nothing but hot tea ; for travelling up mountains and down valleys, across bridges of very questionable security, requires a firm and steady nerve, which it is impossible for those who indulge freely in the use of spirits to retain long in the snowy regions. Leeches are very numerous, particularly in the height of the rainy season, when they may be seen crawling along the trees, footpaths, and banks, in myriads. Fortunately they are diminutive in size ; were they as large as those usually sold by chemists, even a man of twenty stone would be reduced very considerably in the course of a morning's walk.

The leeches met with in Darjeeling are about three quarters of an inch long ; but though small, they are by no means contemptible with regard to their powers of suction. Sometimes thirty or forty will attack your leg at the same time, and the consequent loss of blood renders it necessary to devise some mode of repelling these troublesome assailants. The plan usually adopted by old stagers, is that suggested by the Lepchas ; it consists in a not very elegant style of walking dress ; namely, taking off the stockings and tucking up the trowsers above the knees, whilst an attendant keeps close in the rear on the watch, to knock off any culprit

that has the audacity to attempt making a meal off his master's calves. It sometimes happens that through accident, or intentionally, the sahib's reveries are interrupted by a sharp cut across his shin, which seems rather harder than warranted by the occasion. The wood-cutter, whose occupation carries him into the head-quarters of the leeches, suffers very severely, and it made a fellow thank his stars that he had not been born a wood-cutter, when an individual of that class, with his feet and legs saturated with blood, passed by, groaning under a mighty bundle of wood, for which perhaps he would earn a two anna piece, losing for this small silver coin fully ten times its weight in blood. There is a still more obnoxious insect which belongs to the tick species. It works its way into the flesh, taking up its quarters well underneath the skin. At first no pain is suffered from the intrusion, but this easy state of affairs is not of long continuance; violent inflammation ensues, increasing until the red skin bursts and discloses an ulcer which takes some time to heal. Centipedes of an enormous size are very numerous, but indeed, the entomologist would find innumerable objects of interest in Darjeeling.

CHAPTER VII.

Expedition—Night Encampment—Temporary Habitation—Bamboo Suspension Bridge—Friendly Rencounter with Bootias—Thunderstorm—Arrival at the Advanced Guard of the Sikkim Rajah's Territory—Hospitable Reception—Novel Nostrum—Flowers—Birds—Butterflies, &c.—Return to Darjeeling—Conclusion.

THE cold weather in Darjeeling is very healthy. Rains, fogs, thunderstorms, disappear, succeeded alternate years by frosts, and snow which covers the ground three or four inches deep; and those who are able to do so, make arrangements for visiting the interior. Having obtained a month's leave from the Commandant, the commissariat preparations were soon effected, and the spot which I resolved to constitute my head-quarters being only ten or twelve miles from Darjeeling, it was settled that all my establishment should accompany the expedition. Owing to some delay in the hour of departure, night overtook us ere we had proceeded half way. The servants, with the exception of my syce, had started with the provisions early in the

morning; so, although it was as dark as Erebus, we had no alternative but to push on, not doubting but that eventually we should arrive at our camp, where a good dinner according to my calculation would await my arrival. The darkness seemed to me extraordinarily intense on this eventful occasion. The hill pony kept stumbling and starting back every moment, until at last, common sense dictated the propriety of dismounting; even then the road, or rather foot-track assumed such a steep and rough character, that the syce, who was a Nepaulese, strongly advised halting for the night. This advice coming from a hill man was not to be disregarded, although the idea of sleeping *al fresco*, without even a blanket to cover one, was far from agreeable.

Without either çheroot or beer to reconcile me to my fate, I must confess I began to appreciate the comforts of a house. Immediately we had decided upon halting for the night, my syce fastened his favourite to a tree, and vigorously rubbing dry sticks together, in less time than it takes me to write, he succeeded in making a glorious fire, which roared and crackled away at a tremendous pace. We drew round it, the syce, tatoon, and myself, and the group, together with the blazing fire, must have presented a strangely wild and banditti-like appearance. Sleep was out of the question, for we

thought it probable, that leopards, and other four-footed rangers of the forest might be prowling in our vicinity. The leopard we frequently heard during the night; however, after keeping watch, and anxiously looking out for the rising of the moon, towards morning I fell into a sort of doze. I was speedily disturbed by the syce, and now daylight revealed the fact, that we had mistaken our way, and whilst retracing our footsteps, the dangerous precipices we had passed during the night were perfectly awful to contemplate. How in the name of fortune that one-eyed tatoo contrived in the dark to walk along a rocky, rugged track, only a foot and a few inches in breadth, in safety, even to this day perplexes me.

I afterwards ascertained that this track was only intended for the Lepchas and other hill folks journeying on foot, being selected by them as the shortest route to Darjeeling.

The servants who were terribly frightened at their master's non-appearance on the previous night, seemed really rejoiced on my arrival, nor could the most fastidious epicure have found fault with the breakfast, to which after my involuntary fast, I did ample justice.

The guard house being within twenty yards of my encampment, my privacy was not so unrestricted as I

desired, consequently we advanced five miles further into the interior, nor had we any cause to repent this move. The road being tolerably well constructed, and very steep, we soon arrived at the river Rungheet, a noble hill stream which equals almost any of the mountain rivers in grandeur, and in the wildness of its scenery. Its rapid flowing waters contain trout and other large species of fish, that would afford an agreeable pastime for the skilful angler. The approach to the Rungheet is particularly attractive, shaded as it is by magnificent trees, whose sombre influence invades the traveller's senses, whilst it heightens the effect produced by the roaring torrent, which dashes close by, although concealed amid the dense foliage. Within a quarter of a mile of the river, extensive grass jungles, bamboo plantations, besides a variety of other shrubs and gigantic trees, are met with. The traveller has to show his activity in traversing the sharp shingle, and climbing over the huge and slippery rocks that considerably impede his progress. Having discovered a lovely sylvan retreat within three feet of the cold murmuring stream, the servants proceeded to clear the ground and erect a small hut. At first, and how could it have been otherwise, my jungle engineers entertained different opinions relative to the formation of our tem-

porary jungle fortress. Various plans were designed and traced with a rough stick upon the clean soft sand, each projector considering his own superior to the other competitors. Their vociferations brought me amongst them, and in order to terminate the noisy altercation, I adopted a plan of my own; and as all agreed that it was the most feasible, we immediately commenced work. A species of osier bent over bamboo poles, and fastened securely in the centre, constituted the frame work, and resembled a dome, over which thick bundles of dry grass, intermingled with plantain leaves, formed an admirable thatched roof. The same material composed the sides of the dwelling, the outer layer of leaves being daily replenished, so that my hermitage always bore a fresh and neat appearance.

The deliciously cool plantain became a famous substitute for a carpet, so that with a few additional improvements, the hut was not only comfortable, but assumed an air of luxury not easily imagined. As previously remarked, the wild plantain, though abundant in the valleys, never bears fruit, but the leaf, which varies in length from three to seven feet or more, is employed by the natives as a medicinal agent. For boils and sores it is made to answer the purpose of a poultice, and though many are doubtful as to its rumoured merits, I

have witnessed its efficacy when applied to a boil, and have seen it employed successfully in allaying the pain caused by a sword cut.

By degrees the servants erected separate apartments for themselves, and in process of time a perfect little colony sprang up, and I almost resolved on constructing a more stable mansion for the benefit of pic-nic parties and travellers. This retreat, however, would not have been habitable during the rains, as jungle fever would be the inevitable result of sleeping a night or two so far down in the valley. Who would imagine that such a fairy-like domain could, during certain seasons of the year, be tenanted by such a grim demon, as jungle fever undoubtedly is. I was completely charmed with my new residence, and richly enjoyed the peaceful evenings that slipped rapidly by; a little after sunset, reclining in an easy chair, most ravishing and melodious sounds were wafted through the air, whilst the clear river, tumbling and leaping over its rocky bed, rushed past with the impetuosity of a race horse. Occasionally an unusual body of water forced downwards, would dash violently against a huge sunken rock, the concussion raising a sparkling fountain twenty feet high. Birds of the king fisher tribe keep perpetually fluttering across the stream, or, alighting on an isolated rock, commence gazing upon the lovely scene as though en-

tranced; the pale moon peeping through the clouds illuminates the dell for an instant, and as suddenly disappears in the folds of a dark cloud, consigning the world again to darkness; anon, she again deigns to smile, casting upon the river's bosom a silvery line, resembling a phosphoric streak. Such soothing moments, when the mind is relieved from meaner thoughts, and no longer calculates upon its own worldly aggrandizements, are incentives to retrospection and reverie, and who could refrain from recalling pleasant faces long, long ago, left behind, but not forgotten, ere stern fate had planted its insignia of banishment upon the Indian exile. What mournfully pleasant speculations arise as to the probable occupation in which our friends are at the very moment engaged; although, alas! those whom we considered perhaps the healthiest, may at that very hour be passing away from the earth.

The following morning, after the completion of the domestic arrangements, an exploring expedition was set on foot, though in a great measure impeded by the intense heat, so that our party contrived to wander but a short distance from home. The road itself winding over steep hills, presented such formidable obstacles, as would have proved too trying, even for one blessed with a strong constitution. I was sadly disappointed at being compelled to return thus early, but it was some

consolation to come across a rude suspension bridge constructed of bamboo and cane ; this singular specimen of native architecture was suspended over the river, for all the world like a weaver's web, so delicate its formation, that it required a mere zephyr to put the whole fabric in commotion. This ingenious contrivance is supposed to be capable of bearing the weight of one man only at a time, with any degree of safety, but frequently jealous husbands not relishing the idea of even a temporary separation from their wives, insist upon the lady preceding them by a couple of feet, whilst others go over hand in hand. The person who ventures over a mountain bridge must possess a strong nerve, and those who attempt the passage should remember always to look straight to the front, and on no account to gaze below ; a sudden trip or careless step might be attended with fatal consequences ; and should the passenger chance to fall into the boiling element beneath, the stream will rapidly sweep him away, mutilating the body by tumbling it against the numerous half concealed rocks. It was amusing to watch the Lepchas and Booteias from the Sikkim country crossing over the bridge in question, for this was the principal locality through which all the traffic passed ; a few had sheep strapped on their backs, somewhat resembling the manner in which a gipsy woman carries her child ;

others fearlessly ventured upon this mere web, having a huge hamper of oranges slung across their shoulders ; then followed a family party, with a cow in their train, which, being too unwieldy a passenger for transit, had a cane thong securely fastened round her neck, and *volens volens* was most unceremoniously lugged through the boiling torrent ; and here we may observe, *en passant*, a pleasing feature in the character of the natives of the hills, distinguishing them from those residing in the plains.

In Calcutta for instance, a poor wretch may meet with ever so severe an accident, and few Samaritans will be found ready to stir three paces out of their way to assist the sufferer ; happily the hill people are more alive to the claims of brotherhood, and in crossing rivers, or in the jungle when separate parties meet casually, the whole community will exert themselves, if necessary, to assist one another. Those of the Sikkim people we had encountered, exhibited so friendly a disposition, that we felt strongly inclined to take a peep into their own country ; accordingly, with two attendants and a supply of salted provisions, we ventured to quit our own territory for that of the neighbouring Rajah.

Not much relishing the passage of the suspension bridge, I endeavoured to discover some fordable place

lower down the river, but after expending much time in a tiresome and fruitless search, we were forced to return to the bridge. These bridges are constructed of single bamboos, lashed together, and affording standing room for one foot only at a time; you have nothing to hold by but a very slender balustrade of cane, supported by props of the same, at intervals of about a foot; hesitation was useless, so plucking up my courage I mounted the rickety concern, and in spite of the violent shaking, not only of the bridge, but also of my nerves, the opposite bank was reached in safety; the sensation, when about half way, was anything but agreeable, and when within six yards of the terminus, a frightful giddiness suddenly assailed me, but knowing that to wait on the bridge in this state would involve certain death, I pushed forward and arrived on terra firma. What a relief it was! but this wonderful escape from a watery grave haunted me for some time, particularly during my sojourn in the Sikkim land, for the operation of crossing the bridge, although this time safely effected, had to be performed again on our return. Before attempting the ascent, I availed myself of the luxuries of a bath, and one or two other creature comforts, kindly provided by nature for the *use* of man, not abuse.

For the first mile our path lay through groves of bamboos, and long grass jungle, which entirely inter-

cepted our views of the river, whose murmurings, however, constantly reached our ears. Ever and anon we descended into a deep and gloomy recess, where so solemn a stillness prevailed, that, as if by mutual consent, not a soul of the party spoke above a whisper, until we emerged into a more cheerful path. We occasionally encountered a few travellers proceeding towards Darjeeling, who hastily put the usual queries, of where we were going, and upon what mission; then, as we passed on, would stare after us, wondering no doubt what could possibly be in the wind, to induce a Feringhee, (or European) to visit these wilds. The track up the mountain had been slightly improved by man; and dame nature, in one of her cheerful freaks, had not a little added to the toil and perplexities of the path, by throwing huge masses of rock in the way. One land slip was of great size, and had only lately fallen down, as was very evident from the appearance of the earth and the still healthy freshness of the trees, which lay scattered and half buried at its base. Not having any instruments at hand, it was impossible accurately to ascertain the height of this land slip, but, at a rough guess, I should suppose it to be not less than four hundred feet.

These convulsions of nature are truly grand; some produced by earthquakes, and others by the fierce action

of a mountain torrent, washing away and undermining the base of a precipice. House agents in Darjeeling are kept in a state of perpetual excitement, not knowing but that a land slip may precipitate their houses down a cude, an occurrence which though rare, does occasionally happen. Night overtook us ere we had ascended 3,000 feet, but fortunately we alighted upon a snug grassy spot, conveniently sheltered from the bleak mountain winds. A fire, capable of roasting an ox, quickly sent its glaring flame upwards, and we all gathered round its cheerful heat to partake of our rude though welcome dinners. We had scarcely completed the repast when a couple of Booteias, guided by the huge bonfire, visited our camp, and requested us to give them a portion of the lighted wood wherewith to cook their rice. We who had satisfied the cravings of nature, were now enabled to obtain a favourable view of our newly arrived friends. The ceremony of boiling rice and potatoes having been concluded, our attention was next attracted to a bit of hollow bamboo, about a foot in length, and capable of containing a quart of water. However, after a little patience, we observed that our visitors were not teetotallers, for, filling up the bamboo with rice, or some other grain, and a certain quantity of water, they contrived to brew a very palatable beverage from their primitive still. The entire process

lasted not more than half an hour, when they imbibed the liquor through a small bamboo tube, somewhat after the fashion prevalent in England when one enjoys a sherry cobbler. After a short chat, carried on in a most abominable mixture of languages, we all composed ourselves for sleep. Towards midnight the whole party were aroused from their slumbers by the visitation of an earthquake, which, however, was not of long duration. A gale of wind almost immediately followed, raging with such terrific violence, that all felt anxious for daybreak. The trees creaked fearfully, and permitted the wind to revel amongst their branches in such an unlimited manner, that on beholding the huge dark shadows of timber overhanging our sleeping apartment, we entertained considerable misgivings as to the safety of our position. A tremendous thunder storm, accompanied by occasional flashes of very vivid lightning, wound up nature's midnight spree; after which the pale faced moon once more condescended to show her countenance. Wild animals kept continually rushing past our camp, but it was impossible to ascertain their *caste* on account of the darkness; but to judge from the noise they made in dashing through the thickets, I should suppose that not a few of the apparently frightened runaways, were animals above the ordinary size of hill deer. Although we were all up with the lark on

the following morning, still our fellow travellers had already departed, nor were we long in imitating their example.

The road this day was very much steeper, and cut up with deep ruts, and the rocks so slippery from the rain of the preceding night, that our progress was very slow ; but laborious as was the ascent, the increased grandeur of scenery tended greatly to reduce the toil of struggling and scrambling up the zig-zag track. We reached the summit at about four o'clock in the afternoon, and a lovely view of the snowy range was presented to us ; the intervening space being filled up with lofty ranges of blue mountains, deep valleys, and rivers, which in the distance resembled silver threads. Small patches of cultivation were distinctly visible upon the slopes of the hills, whilst here and there white wreaths of smoke gracefully ascending through the trees, indicated where some indefatigable individual had resolved upon taking up his solitary residence, after having cleared the jungle. We determined to proceed no further that day, but by three o'clock next morning we were on the move. The mists concealed the neighbouring country, so that about noon we arrived at the Sikkim Rajah's advanced guard, without having seen anything on our road, and which was worse, quite unconscious of our close vicinity to the Sikkim warriors.

Too tired and hungry to beat a retreat, we put a bold face upon the matter, and a few paces brought us into conversation with one of the soldiers; who by the way, held in his hand a bow of curious workmanship, to the string of which was affixed an arrow two feet and a half long, with a very suspicious looking barb, slightly discoloured with some red stuff, which the syce immediately recognised as poisonous matter. It appeared that the head man was absent on business, but hourly expected home. His wife, family, and a few soldiers, gathered round us, loudly demanding the cause of our visit. My syce, though very slightly acquainted with the language, acted as interpreter, and with the tact inherent amongst eastern people, unhesitatingly informed our enquirers, that the "Sahib had merely come to enjoy the scenery of their country, and purposed returning again, if the jungles offered sufficient sport to tempt him to do so." This answer appeared to satisfy their curiosity; but in reply to a request to be furnished with shelter for the night, they told us that the head Jemedar being absent, they dared not admit us within the guard-house. Fortunately for us, in the midst of this dilemma, the great man arrived, and after a short conversation with his men, he advanced smilingly, and offered comfortable quarters for the night. His good wife bustled about the farm yard, (if I may so call it),

and soon brought in milk, butter, and rice, which with some ham, proved very acceptable. My entry disturbed some young ladies busily engaged preparing some kind of grain for distillation, but on seeing me, at a sign from their parents, they relinquished their task, and hastily prepared a couch for my reception. Towards night the whole of the establishment, together with the soldiers, congregated round the guard-house fire, no other habitable building being near; and as they entered, I presented each individual with a small coin. This to them, very valuable gift, raised me considerably in their estimation, and a glass of brandy which the old Jemadar gulped down, as if he had been accustomed to a daily dram, completely won his good will. An amicable footing being now established, I commenced a survey of my host and friends; the former who in virtue of his office, enjoyed the privilege of sporting a peacock's plume in his conical hat, was a merry, good natured looking man, and might have seen sixty summers. He was a keen sportsman, passionately fond of the chase, and continually engaged in shooting excursions; his weapons consisting of bows and arrows, hunters' knives, and swords. He asserted that the deer were as large as cows, so I conclude there must be Nyl Ghaie in those parts of the hills, for this animal frequently attains the size of a small ox, and its flesh, when properly cooked,

tastes exactly like beef. The old frontier guardsman pressed us very warmly to stay a few days longer with him ; but as I was anxious to return to my temporary quarters by Christmas Day, I was compelled to decline the proffered hospitality. The worst of these people is, their utter disregard of cleanliness ; for they really have some pretensions to good looks, and some of the women, with their plump, rosy cheeks, look so pretty at times, that one would feel inclined to kiss them, only (your pardon dear reader), their clothes are so offensive. Nearly half the night was spent in revelry ; all singing in turns, the Jemadar and myself included ; but the old gentleman had made so free with my brandy and whisky, that I imagine even his wife could not comprehend the meaning of his song. She, however, appeared to enjoy the hilarity of her spouse ; if one might judge, that is, from the uproarious bursts of laughter in which she indulged.

Early next morning my ablutions were performed under a hill spring, the coldness of which was sufficient to petrify any Bengalee. My host greeted me on my return, looking very SEEDY after the proceedings of the previous night ; and when I was taking my departure, asked for some English medicine. I did not happen to have any with me ; but recollecting that amongst the provisions, my thoughtful kitmutghar had inserted an

hermetically sealed tin of lobsters, I thought this novel medicine would do very well for a substitute, and presented it to him.

My risible faculties could with difficulty be commanded, whilst with all the pomposity of a quack, I gave the patient instructions as to the quantity of a single dose. Whether the remedy proved efficacious or not I never ascertained, for having no professional reputation at stake, I did not care to run the risk of being taken prisoner. In fact, just about the period of my visit, disturbances seemed impending on account of some travellers going too far into the interior.

But although some hostile demonstration was made on the part of the native power, it subsided without any outbreak. The descent though very rapidly performed, made our legs ache to such a degree that they shook like aspen leaves; so that finding it impossible to proceed, we determined on an early halt, purposing to travel during the night. Next day we reached the bridge, but the remembrance of the former transit returning with the accompaniment of horrible forebodings, it was not without a vast deal of hesitation that I could bring myself even to mount it.

Scarcely had I proceeded ten or twelve paces, when happening to cast my eyes downward, the same giddiness came over me as on the former occasion, and I beat

a hasty retreat, but by so doing was placed in an awkward predicament; for how to reach the opposite bank was a perfect mystery. As for again attempting to walk over the bridge, that was out of the question, so my only alternative seemed to be to swim across. Being a tolerably expert swimmer, the swiftness of the stream had no terror for me; but the rocks which were most probably concealed in the midst of the river were far more formidable obstacles.

I proceeded to divest myself of the greater portion of my apparel, which some Lepchas perceiving, rushed up, entreating me to desist from so dangerous an undertaking; representing the absurdity of risking one's life, when by mounting one of their backs, I could go over the bridge in safety; besides, continued they, we are not subjects of the Sahib log, and if any harm happens to you, we who are going to Darjeeling for trading purposes, shall inevitably fall under the displeasure of Doctor C——. Finding that my persuasive powers had no effect upon these hill people, I consented to their proposal, and jumped upon my biped steed's shoulders, to which I was strapped by means of a long cummerbund. Thus united we presented the appearance of a second edition of Siamese twins, though probably the contrast of the pale and swarthy complexions had a more curious effect.

We went over very gingerly indeed, but when we reached the centre, the bridge shook violently, and one bamboo gave way at the joint. The Lepcha stood his ground famously, but spoke not a word. Once or twice I was nearly unfastening the cummerbund, so as to be ready at a moment's notice to strike out, in case of being hurled into the foaming torrent below. Happily my swimming powers were not put to the proof; no further accident occurred, and a few minutes brisk walk brought our little habitation in view.

Like Robinson Crusoe of old, I resolved to remain at home for the future, and to rest contented with morning and afternoon rambles. Willingly would I again take the same trip, provided government would sanction the undertaking; but of course, I should proceed much further into the interior, for in my humble opinion a large lake is no doubt to be met with. I was disappointed with regard to the wild flowers, which though very brilliant, are perfectly scentless, with the exception of the air plants, some of which emitted a delicious perfume.

The gigantic creepers, amongst which the "elephant" is conspicuous, climb to the tops of the loftiest trees, killing some of them in their close embrace. The birds with their gorgeous plumage are no songsters. The beetles and butterflies are really splendid. I col-

lected a great many of them, but the white ants were not deterred by camphor from entering the box, and soon destroyed my entomological collection. Several of the butterflies resemble decayed oak leaves, indeed, may easily be mistaken for them, and are thus providentially enabled to conceal themselves from a certain bird, the name of which has escaped my memory, to whose rapacity they would otherwise fall a prey.

On my return to Darjeeling I found the whole country covered with snow, and I could scarcely recognise my old haunts in their eider-down garments. I could not stay to enjoy this rare treat, for illness compelled me to seek other climes for the restoration of my health. I am indebted to Mr. Smart, who was assistant to Captain Shirwell for the following table:—

Names of Mountains.	Elevation above the sea in feet.
Kunchinjinga	28,176 The highest peak
Jumroo	25,311 in the world.
Kubroo	24,004
Pundeem	22,015
Nursing	19,139
Singoleelah	12,329
Tendon	8,662
Tongloo	10,079 The Nepaul fron-
Darjeeling	7,165 tier guard is some-
	where about here.

Names of Mountains.	Elevation above the sea in feet.
Jullah Pahar	7,452 The European bar-
Rockville	7,134 racks are erected
Birch Hill	6,880 on this hill.
The Superintendent's house	6,966
Lebong	6,039
Senchal	8,606 A lovely view of
Punkabarry (approximate).	1,600 the plains from
Kursion . . ditto . . .	4,500 this hill.
Senadah . . ditto . . .	9,000

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