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THE INDIAN ALPS,

1869:

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ON THE MARCH.

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PREFACE.

AT the earnest solicitation of my friends I venture to publish a few very rough sketches of my travels in India.

The only merit they possess is, that the scenes described happened, as I have endeavoured to depict them, and although I fear that they will be but dull reading for the general public, they will not fail to interest my own family, and those still left, who took part in "THE MARCH," and the "SUMMER DAY'S RIDE."

A DAY'S RIDE THROUGH THE INDIAN ALPS.

1869.

My husband, with his staff, had some depôt duty to do at Punkabarry, a distance of twenty miles from our home at Jellapahar (the Frozen Mountain), and I took that opportunity to pay a long-promised visit to a tea plantation, which lay half-way between Jellapahar and Punkabarry.

I rode—my husband and the Hon. Cecil H——, 60th Rifles, my escort. The two children were conveyed in a hospital dhooley, a peculiar and comfortable contrivance, made like a stretcher without legs, but with arms, and a canvas hood like a buggy. The arms were supported by four stalwart Baharia bearers, who trotted along with the boys and the Ayah, and there were fresh relays of Baharias or Lepchas to relieve each other. They (the Baharias) are a light-hearted jolly race; and, notwithstanding the obliquity of their eyes, are decidedly handsome, with fair complexions, long black hair woven *enquiue*, and no beards. Their dress is very picturesque, a tunic of bright woollen cloth, of their own manufacture, confined at the waist by handsome silver belts, from which depends the "ban," a straight Lepcha knife. The tunic descends to the knees, kilt fashion, showing the thickest and strongest legs in the world. The shoe and stocking is in one, like a mocasin. The women wear longer tunics than the men; and, instead of the ban, their girdle is adorned with armlets and charms innumerable, generally enclosed in finely wrought silver cases; and often with their shuttle and bobbins of wool or cotton which they twist as they go along. They usually wear velvet bandeaus, set with turquois and amethysts, round their heads; and, if young, have bright fresh complexions. So much for the children's bearers.

My body-guard consisted of my Joyce, three or four Bangy bearers, who carried our wardrobe in tin "petaras;" my kitmutgar or butler; R.'s ditto; the children's bearers; R.'s ditto, and R.'s jeprassie, or messenger. The Hon. Cecil had also a lot of people, so we formed a goodly merry party as we wound through the lovely zigzag road; but who would not be merry? What heart would not be full of joy in those glorious forests?

It was July: the trees were in full leaf, and not a few of them in flower, while the lesser jungle was ornamented with the snowy "bracta," and bright orange corralla, of a species of massœnda, the graceful feather-like inflorescence of several kinds of polygona, and the rich and striking spikes of yellow blossom displayed by the noble cystopera flora. The hill-sides laced with foaming rivulets, bounding over the rocks amidst the rich green dripping forest, and through the wild gorges, screened from the sunlight by majestic trees, or beautiful arborescent ferns, as they hurried in their mad career down to the rivers which their bright waters help to feed.

The change, as we descended towards Punkabarry, from the silent magnificent upper woods of oaks, chestnuts, and magnolia, to the almost tropical forest which clothes the lower elevation, though not sudden, was sufficiently rapid to be striking, accompanied as it was by the strange and varied combinations of sounds characteristic of the warmer jungles, which increased in violence and intensity as we descended, until the uproar of animal life became perfectly astounding.

Through these glories we travelled, the children as delighted as ourselves; even "Shot," our dog, seemed to participate in the general jubilee, and would now and then dash madly into the jungle after some imaginary prey; the children and dhooley bearers screaming with delight and excitement.

Notwithstanding all this, I began to feel extremely hungry, and to wonder what we would be able to get for tiffin at the Senada Dak Bungalow; and now, when too late, I thought how stupid we had been not to have sent on to order lunch, as at these way-side houses, as a rule, you can get nothing but grilled "moorgie" (chicken) of the toughest description, and chicken curry of the smallest dimensions. The children were well provided with "rootie mucken cheenè" and milk, their favourite lunch.

To expedite the killing of the moorgies, we equestrians started off at a sharp pace; and, on pulling up at the steep avenue which leads to the Bungalow, what was our dismay to see the place full of servants and preparations for a large party. "Oh!" we exclaimed, "how dreadful! the house is full, and the Consammah has his hands full; alas, for the grilled moorgie!" At this juncture we heard the notes of a cornopeon strike up the 'Roast Beef of old England," and R. said "I'm sure I heard Col. H's. voice amongst those talkers, and if so that's M——y calling us to lunch!" In this hope we breasted the steep ascent manfully. And, sure enough, we were soon in the midst of our good friends from Senchal; and I saw that I was surrounded by my "Guard d' Honeur," as a certain four of the R.A. Regiment had styled themselves, from the fact of their having, one day that my pony grew restive, and I was afraid to ride him, improvised a "jampan," and carried me about twenty paces across a nasty ford.

We were all desirous to know what lucky chance had brought these four chevaliers to Senada to-day.

The Colonel said "we knew C—— would forget to order lunch for the 'Mem Sahab,' so he had brought some;" and M——, the musician, said the "reason of his appearance was to enquire if R—— would have the —— band or 'the Cripples,' (as my husband's depôt convalescent band was ungraciously styled,) to play at the depôt ball," a grand event which was soon to take place.

Mr. St. J——, a cousin, by the way, of the late Colonel St. J—— of Wellington, came in all honesty to pay me a phillipine wager of a pair of gloves. I opened the packet, and, instead of one, I found a dozen pairs! Dear little man! I told him I'd bet with him again, so he went his way rejoicing.

Mr. H——, the Adjutant, came to see that the wine was properly cooled, and, "I'm sure," he said, "Mrs. —— is both thirsty and hungry," whereupon the Colonel led the way to our al fresco repast, served under the magnolia and fern trees, close to a brawling stream, in which the wine lay cooling.

I think there was everything under the sun that was good on that grassy table, and how we enjoyed it all, and what a merry speech R—— made.

By-and-by I left to go in search of the children, expecting to find them in the Bungalow at their dinner. They were not there; and, guessing they were near, I went in search and came upon the prettiest picture I ever saw —pretty is not the word, it was perfection—Greuse could not have pourtrayed a more lovely group.

Imagine the back-ground made up of glorious tropical forest, with the snow-capped hills in the far distance, while the gorge was made musical by a babbling waterfall, dancing and leaping along till it reached a pebbly reservoir, in which stood the Ayah with the baby, Georgie, clinging to her, while Toonie, the second water sprite, dashed about the spray in mad delight. Our dear old dog Shot stood on the bank, apparently ready for any emergency, and at a little distance sat the laughing Chokra, in charge of the children's clothes.

I tried to look angry, whereupon Ayah raised her tiny hands in the pretty supplicatory way they have, which quite disarmed me, and so to add to the general fun, flung my whip into the stream, so that Shot might have a bath as well as the children. Oh! what fun it was to see him floundering about and dashing the water over Ayah's snowy petticoats in his gambols. How pretty her well-shaped feet, with their heavy silver bangles, looked gleaming through the water; was it not a study for an artist? Miss B—— will you paint it? Mind, put in the boys, fat, and rosy, and dimpled; the Ayah Mignionne, with well-shaped feet and hands, lovely round arms, covered with bangles; small proud head with a wealth of black hair gracefully fastened *en Greque*, pearly teeth, sparkling dark eyes set in an oval face; and dress her in soft white Indian muslin, with red solla bodice, and graceful white chuddar, and lots of jewels on neck, ears, *nose*, and ankles; and call her Jumna!

I was still intent on the picture, when the Chokra shouted out, "*Mem Sahab logiah*," (the gentlemen are coming). Whereupon there was a general scamper, and the children had just time to reach their clothes when the Sahabs arrived. The Colonel, I should remark, had bee uncommonly glum during lunch, because he could not procure a tablespoonful of green tea to put into one of his favourite cups. He was a ridiculous old epicure, and could hardly eat his lunch for the want of this drop of green tea, which his kit had forgotten; the Dak Consmah had offered some, but none would satisfy the old gourmand but that grown on a certain plantation called Sing Tom. Thanks to the children, of whom he was very fond, he soon forgot the green tea and recovered his good humour.

At this juncture, an imposing-looking servant, an Egyptian, came upon the scene and presented a card with Mr. A——ll's name upon it, the servant saying his master requested permission to join our party.

Anywhere but in India this would have seemed a cool request; but there no one but a gentleman would venture to send such a message. The Colonel sent his salaam, and immediately the handsomest man I ever saw joined us. He explained that he had been detained at the Bungalow for want of a dak; that he was agent of the Khedive of Egypt, travelling through the district with a view to the culture of silkworms. He gave some interesting details about "sericulture," and thought the slopes of the

Darjeeling Hills would suit admirably for the growth of the mulberry tree, on which the worms live. I'm sure his beard was spun by them, it was a *Chef d' œuvre*, such a glorious yellow silk shiny beard I never saw. The Colonel supplied him with a pony, and insisted on his returning with them to Senchal. And now it was time for us to get on to Kursiogn. Our ponies fed and rested, and we were soon under weigh, very grateful to our kind Senchal friends for their hospitality. Before leaving, we promised to let them know what day we should return, so that they would have as many of the Darjeeling people as were disposed for a merry day; and we were to bring with us the planters and stray people about the district, and have a large tiffin party at Sanada.

We reached Caselton, Mr. G——'s tea plantation, at 6 p.m., a pretty place low down on the slope of a hill, long steep avenue and pleasure grounds leading to it, and a grand view of the plains; they look best at a distance. How I pitied the poor creatures broiling there to-day!

We enjoyed a cup of tea, grown on the estate, and were soon dressed for dinner, and, notwithstanding our sumptuous lunch, did ample justice to the pretty dinner á la Russe.

Mrs. G—— is a dear little woman, only eighteen. As we rode to the house we passed through the tea garden. The plants are not unlike the myrtle, set in straight rows a few feet apart. This is a fine season, as May had been wet. Should that month be dry the plant is damaged.

I promised to write of only a single day's ride, but I may here remark that next day we went through the factory, a long, lofty store, one end occupied by a monster tea-caddy, twenty feet high and fifteen broad, which held the tea ready for packing. As you enter the factory you pass a couple of hundred women and children sorting the tea, freshly picked from the plant.

All the different teas, such as "Orange Pekoe," "Souchong," green, and black, come off the one plant; it is according to the standing of the leaves on the tree that the tea takes its name. The coarser specimens are those growing nearest the ground, and the best of all "Orange Flower," growing on the top of the tree, with a mixture of the flower itself.

The women carefully divide the different leaves according to their size, and the children carry them to other workers, who roll each leaf on a table, and again pass it on to those in charge of the fire baskets, wicker-work contrivances not unlike our soiled clothes baskets, placed over braziers of charcoal, where each sort of tea is baked or dressed, when it is passed on to the tea-caddy for packing. Here, again, the work going briskly on, the Babbo stands at the entrance, while coolies weigh out the tea which the packers stow away into boxes manufactured on the premises. Then the boxes are closed, ticketed, and at once placed on the Bangy-bearers' backs, who trot off with their loads, which are sometimes enormous, to the cart-road at Punkabarry, some fifteen miles away, where bullock waggons or trains convey them to Calcutta. Apropos of the ponderous loads these Lepchas carry: The load is firmly strapped on the outer side of a sort of ladder, (the length of the bearer). From this ladder is attached a strap made of bamboo fibre, which strap they pass their arms through, and then round their forehead, thus supporting the whole load on their heads (I've seen a piano carried thus), and in their hands they carry a short, stout bamboo, which serves as a walking-stick, and upon which they rest their load when tired; in this way they trot along twenty to twenty-five miles in the day.

The Caselton Estate is a fine one, ranging over three hundred acres, and worked by as many thousand hands. The coolies grow fat on two or three annas per diem. Mr. G—— is the manager, not owner; he receives fifty pounds per month, with house, servants, ponies and tea. He lives in good style, and I should desire no happier lot for a son or a daughter of mine than to be a "Cha Wallah," or "Cha Wallah's" wife, near Darjeeling.

ON THE MARCH.

For the last three months we knew we were to march in the coming cold weather; vague and wild rumour was at work as to our destination, and the whole regiment had an unsettled feel—at least that portion which mostly frequented our "chotta hazerie" (little breakfast).

On this particular morning, as I sat in the verandah after my drive, waiting for my husband's return from parade, I, too, was busy conjecturing and wondering how we would manage to move, self and three children, one of them a baby. My husband did not count, he marched with his company, he had his horse to carry him; and, for that matter, I had my buggy, but that would not hold us all comfortably; in fact, everything was looking very blue, when my husband and three or four of his familiars rode up to the verandah, looking very jubilant, all exclaiming in a breath, "Hurrah! the route has come, we march on the 1st November for Saugor and Nowgong, Central India."

I may remark (*par parenthèse*) that, as a rule, Her Majesty's officers love any change, even from comfort to the extreme reverse. There was my poor husband, who had a world of trouble on his shoulders—he had to dispose of our home and its belongings, sell our horses and buggy, and buy some conveyance large enough for us, besides tents, &c., &c.—even he was wild with delight.

Our doctor, who loved nothing better than wading up to his waist half the day in a "jeel" (swamp) after game, exclaimed, "Oh! Mrs. C——, only fancy two months' shooting through the best part of India; you shall have your *pot au feu* well supplied, and you shall also have that black partridge feather trimming I heard you wish for."

"Well, on these conditions, I will give you your tea," I said. Whereupon our Consamah, with his attendant sprite the Kitmutgar, appeared with the said tea, poached and buttered eggs, and sundry other delicacies, of which "chotta hazarie" generally consists. It is a pleasant sociable meal, and is always done ample justice to by the warriors who have been at parade and barrack routine since 5 o'clock. We laughed and chatted till 8, when the sun, which even in October on the plains becomes too strong to be pleasant, drove us in and the gentlemen off.

I had never had such a nice house as the one we were about to leave, and I looked sadly round my pretty shaded rooms, and dismally thought—not of to-morrow—but of the 1st of November.

I was interrupted by my husband, who came to tell me to make out a "List of Property for sale," as is the custom, and a very excellent one it is, in these parts.

Every article of furniture, stock, poultry; in fact, everything you want to dispose of, is written down with the prices attached, and sent round the station, and—ten to one—before the week is out you have sold all your household gods.*

It happened so in our case, and by the dreaded 1st our pretty home was completely dismantled, the proceeds in my pocket, "against the road," as we say in Ireland; and we, in "light marching order," possessors of our charpoys, a few chairs, a couple of camp tables and carpets, a small dinner service, and kitchen utensils, &c., &c. Our wardrobe was stowed away in sundry camel trunks, chests-of-drawers, and boxes handy for camel transit.

Then came "big lists," "indents for carriage;" and then also began grumbling both from wives and husbands; the former wanting an extra bullock cart or camel for the conveyance of their poor reduced belongings, the husband storming at the heap of rubbish "*Mem Sahab* will take with her."

I silenced my lord by showing him, *vide* the indent, that I asked for less carriage than any of the ladies with the same number of bairns as myself.

The carriage is expensive—you pay five rupees per mensum (month) for each camel or bullock garry. The tents and boxes usually go on camels; the kitchen utensils and a dozen or so of women and children, the families of the servants, travel in the garrys. With the best intentions to economise, your carriage amounts to as much as your house-rent in the station.

My husband got us a bullock carriage to travel in. The bullocks were a pair of beauties, milk white, and they came from "Neemuch," a place celebrated for "Billeis." The carriage was a *cut* between a little omnibus and a bathing machine, on two wheels. Everyone said it was just the thing, and very cheap for two hundred rupees.

All our servants were paid up (no joke, where there are thirteen or fourteen of the creatures expecting "Tollop"), and otherwise made comfortable, with a suit of warm clothes for the march—and everything was in readiness.

Everyone was jolly, it seemed, but me; I was truly sorry to leave our station, where we had made many kind friends. And now began a round of farewell dinners and parties of all sorts, and at last many touching leave-takings; and on the morning, *i.e.*, about 3 o'clock a.m. of the 1st November, we started on our first march, the Ayah, self, and 3 children, in the machine. The children were frightened, and so was I. We seemed to be in the ruck of the march, jolting along amongst camels, elephants, bullock carts, baggage waggons, and dhoolies; confusion of all sorts—all in the dark. The coachman came from Neemuch with the bullocks, and whether he spoke a different language to what Ayah and I were accustomed to roar at the servants, I don't know; but he either did not, or would not, pay the least attention to our repeated cries of "Cabbadar astijou!" &c., &c. Oh! how

* Though I have known some queer things happen about the "bargains" bought from some lists. A confiding purchaser puts down his name opposite, say, a table, chair, anything you will, in the full expectation that it is sound. When, lo! on the delivery of the article, the deluded purchaser finds his table or chair standing, perhaps, on three legs, the fourth carefully bandaged up by the cunning bearer, who broke it long ago. Then follows a correspondence:—"Mr. I—— begs to return the table or chair to Major F——, who, he feels sure, was not aware of its unsound condition when he inserted it in his list," &c., &c. If Major F—— is wise, he will pocket Mr. I——'s note in silence, throw the chair at the bearer's head, and take it out of him in that way.

glad I was when we at last pulled up at our camping ground, and I found myself in our tent. I saw, to my amazement, our breakfast table laid as neatly and temptingly as in cantonments, the servants in attendance, our baths ready, and everything "ship-shape." or rather tent-shape. I had never marched before, and could not make out how it was managed just yet. We had a fine camp equipage, two field-officers' tents, two sheldares, or tent d'Abris, the latter our bath-room, from which the children and myself soon emerged, bathed and dressed for the day.

I had given no order for breakfast, fancying it would be impossible to get anything more substantial than tea and bread and butter. Judge, then, of my astonishment to find the usual half dozen nice little hot dishes which, they say, you require to give an appetite in India.

Before breakfast was over a host of people dropped in to hear and tell of their adventures of the morning. The most amusing happened to the Colonel's wife: she was riding at the head of the regiment with her husband, familiarly called H. R. H., the initials of his name, and some of the officers, when her firey little Arab took fright at something on the roadside, and started off across country at racing speed. It was very dark, and poor Mrs. H——, half numbed with cold, was quite powerless to stop her horse. In an instant most of the officers who were mounted at the time started in pursuit of the fugitive, when H. R. H. shouted out "D—— you, sirs (he was fond of using strong language in his hot-tempered moods) fall back, don't follow Gezar, or you will drive him wild! leave him to me!" He cantered into the midan field, blew two or three loud notes on a "dog call," and, as if by magic, as Mrs. H—— afterwards told me, Gezar stopped short, and quietly trotted back to the regiment, which, in spite of H. R. H.'s black looks, gave three hearty cheers for Gezar and his fair rider, who was none the worse for her scamper; nor was she aware she had lost any of her dress till the Drum-Major, a most pompous individual, appeared in front of the party, gravely saluted the Colonel, and presented to him Mrs. H.'s chignon, which had been carried away in her flight.

There was a suppressed titter, no one could help being amused at the scene. Mrs. H——, shorn of half her bravery with her back hair; the Colonel looking like thunder, obliged to take the thing, which he had to examine closely before he could make out what it was, from the stately Drum-Major, who handed it on the point of his sword!

We were laughing at the picture when the "chick" at the tent door was raised, and Mrs. H——, the heroine, appeared; we were all rather taken aback, I fancy she saw our embarrassment, for she said—

"I know you were talking over my adventure; come, now, confess; you gentlemen have had that laugh out which nearly choked some of you this morning!"

We made a clean breast of it, and none of us enjoyed the joke more than Mrs. H—— herself.

After ordering dinner, &c., I went out with my husband to see the camp. It was such a pretty sight; we were encamped in a lovely green park, with magnificent topes and avenues of banyanne and tamarind trees; the branches of the former bend down, take root, and form arch after arch round the giant parent stem. The tamarind trees were full of fruit, on which the natives were already making a raid.

I suppose all camps of Her Majesty's Infantry are laid out alike; but to me it was all new; such regular streets, such even squares, would put many

a more substantial town to shame. There was not a tent-peg out of place, the tents snowy white, each line marked out by a bright red flag; the Doctor, with his staff and hospital, a little apart from the rest of the camp, and, behind, the travelling bazaar, commissariat, &c., &c. We walked about, sight-seeing and then visiting; there were eight of us ladies "following the drum," all as fresh and merry as if we had not travelled our ten miles that morning.

The camp dined early to allow the baggage to leave for the next camping ground at about 5 o'clock. An hour before starting you see strings of camels, bullocks, and elephants, for the sick, slowly winding their way through the jungle; and soon the Colassies are hard at work striking tents, the cook and his cart of kitchen things is sent on to be ready for breakfast next morning, the Quarter-Master goes on to lay out the camp, and the Surgeon-Major with his hospital; he, his wife, and two children travel very comfortably in an open carriage. All the world "turn in" early, so as to be able to rise at *réveillé*, which is really a trying moment, no "forty winks" to be had after the inexorable "taps" go. If you don't hurry up, and, after swallowing a cup of scalding tea, start off into your carriage, you are liable to be smothered in the folds of your tent, which the Colassies have been striking ever since the bugle went.

We had been jogging along for about a week, and I was getting accustomed to the jolting of the machine, and the bolting of the bullocks, when all my confidence in both was seriously damaged.

We were nearing the Coffee Shop, a half-way halt. The blazing fire for boiling the cauldrons of tea and coffee frightened the bullocks; they made a furious dash forward, and then down they went on their knees—the effects of the "Garrywan" pulling them up too violently. The result was that I, with my baby in my arms, was pitched to the roof of the machine and cut my eye severely; baby escaped quite unhurt. We were soon got out of the carriage. The Assistant-Surgeon was disturbed from toasting his buns on the point of his sword at the Coffee Shop fire to dress my wounds, and I was comfortably ensconsed near the blazing fire on a pile of cloaks and rugs, and soon "came to" by the aid of tea and buns. By the way, this was the only time I ever saw swords actively engaged, and really useful, when they were used as toasting forks.

Although I was greatly shaken, I remarked what a picturesque scene we formed. The regiment, over a thousand strong, with, I suppose, quite another thousand souls in the shape of *impedimenta*, had halted in a deep ravine; the road had been cut out of rock, which stood up straight on our right, with many a cataract dashing down to the river Sutledge, which swept through the flat grassy lands on our left.

Two roaring fires, one for the upper ten, the other at a respectful distance for the soldiers, threw up their fitful light, glancing now on some bright bit of harness, sword, or bayonet, or mayhap on a tin pannikin from which the men were taking their coffee, and again on the jolly bronzed faces of our friends. The sun was thinking of adding *his* glories to the scene, and I was feeling very poetic indeed and very comfortable, when the bugle sounded, and my romance vanished into thin air; but *not* the reality of the rest of the march. I stoutly refused to go into the bullock carriage again, and, after a little consultation, took possession of a dog cart belonging to my husband's sub, who drove me and the children into camp.

I never went into that garry again. Dr. H——y was so distressed

about my "black eye" that he put a hospital dhooley at my disposal, in which baby and I travelled very snugly for the next three weeks, sleeping nearly the whole march.

We found it so trying to the two big boys, rousing them out of their beds at three or four o'clock a.m., that we had their beds put into the bullock carriage, and in it they slept close to our heads outside of the "Knaughts." Chokra (their boy), and the Ayah slept under it, so they were well guarded, and seldom awoke till they reached the end of their morning's march.

1st December, we marched into Delhi. A couple of marches from that city we received invitations for two balls, one to be given on the 1st by the Colonel and Officers of the ——th to the Gov.-General, who was holding a Durbar there, and the other from Sindia, in honor of the same illustrious personage. Sindia's ball was to be on the 2nd December. They were both sure to be brilliant affairs, and we were proportionately anxious to go. But how was the difficulty of dress to be got over? We ladies held a council of war on the subject. I was sure my husband would not hear of my box of finery, which was in the very depths of the bullock cart, with other heavy baggage "not wanted on the march," being unpacked.

Most of the other ladies were equally sure their respective lords would put a *veto* against their black boxes being disturbed. We were in a great fix, when, in the midst of our dilemma, Captain S—— joined our council, and he volunteered to head a fatigue party, consisting of three or four able-bodied ensigns, to unpack and pack again our boxes.

He actually did this for us. Alas! one poor lady found her "robe de ball" half eaten by white ants.

My unfortunate black tulle was a heap of crumples, with the trimmings deplorably squashed. However, the amiable Captain S—— supplied the latter delapidation with heaps of lovely pomegranate blossoms, than which nothing can look better on black, and the Dhooby ironed out all the creases, so I was all right.

Mrs. H——, to do honor to the occasion, actually went to the torture of having her ears pierced, that she might wear an entire *parure* of Agra jewelry, which Captain H—— promised her. They really were worth suffering a little for; the set consisted of necklet, bracelets, ear-rings, and brooch; medalion paintings on ivory of the different Rajahs and Begums of Delhi, set in beautiful gold filligree work, and strung together by thin gold chains; they were very lovely, and very becoming to handsome Mrs. H——.

We reached the "Jumna Musjid," where the ball was to be, about 9 o'clock—thus early, that we might be in time to see the entrance of the Viceroy.

The drive to the "Jumna Musjid" was in itself a sight never to be forgotten; we passed through a torchlight procession, amidst rows of kneeling elephants, dressed in their gorgeous trappings, and myriads of gaily clad graceful natives; and, at last, reached the foot of the flight of three hundred and sixty-five steps, which lead up to the Jumna. They were handsomely carpeted, and guarded on each side by Native Infantry and Bengal Cavalry. This particular regiment of cavalry prides itself on its horses, all Arabs of the purest blood; indeed, they did look high-bred, and so did their riders, grand fellows, principally Sheiks; their dress sets them off to perfection—a yellow silk courtee, or blouse, caught in at the waist by a splendid Cashmere cumerbund, scarlet trousers, great jack boots, scarlet and

gold turban, scimitar, pistols, &c. The officers' dresses are also very handsome, and their helmet, with its steel spike, gives them a very warlike appearance. The English troops looked small beside all this Oriental splendour. A guard of honour, supplied by the ——th, waited for his Excellency's arrival.

We reached the Esplanade, after climbing the three hundred and sixty-five steps. Such a sight as met our view! In the centre of the red sandstone Esplanade glittered a fountain which sent up, ever and anon, coloured balls and showers of rose leaves; in the basin blossomed water-lillies, and all sorts of aquacious plants, and across the front of the basin a gilded fairy-like bridge was thrown, where the waters of the reservoir divided, and dashed in a bright sparkling cataract down each side of the steps. Oh! I wish I could describe that bright scene!

We passed into the reception rooms, and on to the throne room, which was converted into a *salle de dance;* its marble floor was decidedly bad for dancing, but its covering of white silk made up in glaciness what it wanted in spring, and the splendid band of the ——th made even the Begum of Bapall look as if she could dance. By-and-by his Excellency's arrival was announced by a salute of nineteen guns, and fireworks and deafening cheers, and by half-a-dozen bands striking up the national anthem, and accompanied by his "brilliant staff," he was introduced to everyone and escorted to a raised daïs at the top of the throne room, where he received all the native magnates.

Sindia, the most treacherous, he was, for reasons of state, particularly gracious to, descending to the foot of the daïs to receive him. He, Sindia, is handsome, if you will, but too fat and lazy-looking. His dress was wonderful, a courtee of rose satin, stiff with jewels, white silk cumberbund wrought with gold, white cashmere turban, with an immense aigrette of diamonds and rubies; his scimitar, with its fish's head, the emblem of his house, had jewels everywhere.

The other Mahar Rajahs were all more or less striking, and the little shrivelled old Begum of Bapall was the *lionne* of the night. She is the only Begum who has ever appeared in our every-day world; the high-class women always remain within the Purdah.

She is very clever, and manages her estates herself. Lord M——, not only descended to the foot of the stairs to receive her, but placed her on his right hand. Her Major-Domo, Colonel T——, was in attendance, standing behind her; but she did not seem to require his aid as interpreter, for she chatted in English with his Excellency.

And now dancing began, and it was fun to see the mute astonishment of the natives at our "nautch." During the evening I chanced to stand in a quadrille nearly opposite his Excellency. After the dance was over, he sent an officer whom I knew, to ask if I would allow him to look at a picture of O'Connell which I wore on my neck. I was surprised, and not a little frightened at the request, thinking I might be accused of exaggerated Fenianism, or some equally black crime, for wearing such a picture. However, I unfastened the locket and gave it to the gentleman.

His Excellency, after examining it, brought it back to me, saying "it was a beautiful painting and very faithful likeness of his old friend." I ventured to say it was the only memento I had of my relative. "Relative!"

he said, "may I ask were you an O'Connell?" I told him who I was, and felt very proud of some kind things he said of my uncle and aunt, whom he knew very well.

I felt very much tempted, in my gratitude, to ask him to keep the picture of "The Liberator," but somehow, I did not. I might as well have done so, as have it stolen two years later by a European nurse. Dear me! how that little medalion was admired during the evening; after the Governor had noticed it, it would seem that Sindia's daigrette paled in lustre beside my poor little ornament. Those who had seen it a hundred times before without noticing, were now loud in its praise as a work of art, &c., &c.

I will not tire my readers with further description of the ball, the gorgeous supper, &c., nor with Sindia's ball next night, which was a repetition of this one, only more fireworks, more cannon, and a "nautch," which I did not see. I preferred "nautching" for myself.

Some of our people went to see the Kootab, ten miles from Delhi. We did not go, as we were "killing two birds with one stone," viz., trying sundry carriages which were for sale, and in them seeing the sights about the City. Before night we bought a comfortable landau, with a capital pair of horses. We took on the coachman and grasscuts. We sold our bullocks and garry, so we hoped to do the rest of our march very *comme il faut*.

We saw a good deal of the City of the great Mogul, which was built in the seventeenth century, by the Emporor Shah Jehan. It is rather less than six miles in girth, and is enclosed by a machicolated wall, adorned with a number of gates, some of rare magnificence. We saw some beautiful public gardens, and an excellent and interesting museum, "Delhi Institute," in the Chandy Choke.

We also paid a daylight visit to the Jumna Musjid, when I saw that the waterfall on each side of the steps was but a temporary arrangement. "The bridge was still there, but the waters were gone." We had a grand view there of the immense modern City, and the vast extent of ruins which stretched round on every side. I saw several remarkable books, amongst them an illuminated copy of the Koran, said to be seven hundred years old. These treasures were carefully wrapped in many folds of silk, and securely kept in a large chest redolent of attar, and the almost oppressive fragrance of oil of sandal wood. I was particularly struck by the curious blue tiles which roof some of the old buildings; they look as bright and rich in colour as when first put up.

The Jumna Musjid has the reputation of being the finest mosque in India.

The camp was besieged all day by vendors of paintings on ivory, silk scarfs, jewellery, &c., for which Delhi is celebrated.

We resumed our march before daybreak on the morning of the 3rd, and I felt very grand in my new carriage.

The next halt worthy of notice occurred at Secundra, where we saw the Akbar's Mausoleum. Independently of its historical interest, the size of the building, the magnificence of its architecture, and the beauty of the carvings, render it well worthy of a visit. The upper story is of white marble, and the remainder, as well as the wall which encloses the garden, are of red sandstone. There are many fine trees within the quadrangle, as well as tanks and fountains, and broad paved causeways lead to the mausoleum itself from the massive gates which occupy the centre of each of the four sides.

In the vault below is the plain unadorned tomb, containing the ashes of the mighty Akbar; but on the summit of the mausoleum, an elaborate monument of white marble, beautifully sculptured with Arabic characters, denotes the place of honor. This latter is enclosed by a marble screen of open tracery, abounding in various beautiful designs, executed with marvellous skill and taste. This stupendous mausoleum occupies about three hundred and fifty square yards, and its height is about one hundred feet. Scores of green paraquets (palocorais torquatus), and turtle doves (turtue tisoria) have taken possession of the gardens, the plaintive notes of the latter literally filling the air during our visit.

We got into Agra on Saturday, and so we had two whole days to explore its wonders: what luck it was. The regiment always halts on Sunday, generally a nice quiet day; but this Sabbath, none but those unfortunates obliged to stay, remained in camp after Divine Service. My husband always did "Padre" for the Catholics, and either the Colonel or Adjutant for the Church of England men; and a very imposing sight it was, the men drawn up in two lines, "uncovered", with the officer at the head of each column, reading prayers; I don't know how it was, both parties managed to finish their orisons exactly at the same minute, so as to march off to the band, but they always did say, "Amen" together.

I had heard so much of the "Taj Mahal," that I felt sure I should be disappointed, and, like many an unbeliever "who goes to scoff, and stays to pray," I went.

It was built by Shah Jehan, in memory of his wife, Noor Jehan, "the light of the world" in 1656. She was said to be surpassingly lovely, and, certainly, her mausoleum is surpassingly lovely. It stands inside a quadrangle, which measures one thousand and eighty-six feet by a thousand, and is enclosed by red sandstone walls, with massive gateways of the same material. The grounds are ornamented with flowers and trees, as well as numerous fountains, and an avenue of cypresses leads from the principal entrance to the large terrace, three hundred and thirteen feet square, on which rests the Taj. At the four corners are minarets, one hundred and fifty feet in height, and on each side of the great structure stand beautiful red sandstone mosques, which contrast admirably with the white marble Taj.

The shape of the Taj is that of an irregular octagon, it is surmounted by a dome, supported by four smaller structures of the same kind, and decorated with a number of diminutive minarets.

"The height of the building, from the terrace to the gilt crescent at the summit of the dome, is about 296 feet," says the author of "From Calcutta to the Snowy Range," who adds that "It occupies a square (with the corners cut off) of 186 feet.

The terrace, minarets, and the building itself, are all of the purest white marble, which is perfectly dazzling in the sunlight. It is superbly inlaid with precious stones, disposed in beautiful designs, and abounds with the most exquisite sculptured work imaginable.

A vault beneath contains the tombs of "Shah Jehan," and "Noor Jehan;" while in the body of the building, enclosed within an octagon oval marble screen, are the outer sarcophagi, also white marble, profusely inlaid with gems.

Some doubt exists as to the name of the architect, who conceived and executed this glorious work; but it is supposed it was the same illustrious

Frenchman, Austin de Bordeaux, who constructed the "Peacock Throne," and whom the natives called "the wonderful of the age."

It occupied seventeen years in building, and cost three millions of money; and cheap at the price, I should say.

I then thought, and still think, that the man or woman, who has not been blessed with a sight of the Taj, has seen nothing. But I did not agree with the Italian who, having seen Naples, was content to die. Oh, no! I wanted to see if there was anything else worth looking at in Agra, and so our party reluctantly turned our backs on the lovely incomparable Taj.

Some of the regiment went to see it by moonlight; they said it was even more lovely then than in the day. One of them gave me the following description of what he saw:—"As it grew dark, we started from the camp, and by the time we reached the Taj, the moon, in her first quarter, was of just sufficient brightness to show us the noble outlines of the building, standing out dimly from under the blue sky beyond. Its very indistinctness added a mysterious beauty to the already fairy scene, and as we walked slowly down the solemn avenue of cypresses, which leads to the entrance of the majestic pile, and drank in the perfumed air, heavy with the odours of jassemine, orange, and citron, it seemed as if, indeed, we had at last arrived at the realization of some of the most gorgeous fancies which poets have from times immemorial associated with this Orient land. Rich gushing perfume met us at every step,

> Many a perfume breathed
> From plants that wake while others sleep;
> From timid jassemine buds, that keep
> Their odour to themselves all day;
> But, when the sunlight dies away,
> Let the delicious secret out
> To every breeze that roams about.

"The old 'Bard of Agra,'* 'Mogul Khan,' woke the famed echoes of the dome with his harp, which is of the Irish pattern, and on which he plays admirably. But the effect fell short of my anticipations, possibly because I had hoped for too much. After this, we lit up the building with blue lights, and beheld it in another phase of its marvellous glory; while the old minstrel added music, to complete the enchantment which seemed to reign around us. Finally, about half way down the avenue, we stopped to take another long lingering look at the exterior, by the faint light of the moon and stars, and then said a sad farewell to the almost overwhelming beauty of the wondrous Taj."

We went to the Fort, which is conspicuous from the colour and height of its red sandstone embattled walls. Though, in itself very interesting from its antiquity and beauty, there are within it so many buildings having more attractions for the visitor, that we followed in the steps of the usual sight-seer, and went at once to the Emperor's Palace and the "Motee Musjid." The former, once of exceeding beauty, is now fast going to decay; not so much from age as from the wanton destruction it has met at human hands. The traveller, as he passes along its chambers, must feel great regret to see its walls so mutilated and despoiled of costly precious stones which, in its palmy days, made it one blaze of splendour. Nearly the

* Note.—This old man was, many years ago, in the service of a gentleman, who was an excellent harpist, and noticing his Musselman's taste for music, taught him.

whole structure is of white marble, beautifully sculptured, and much of it consists of open screen work, wrought in strikingly rich designs.

A number of pavilions hang over the Jumna, which flows past the walls seventy feet below; and these carved white marble balustrades, when seen from the river, are said to resemble the finest lace work.

From this we went into the "Shish Mahal," a bath chamber fit only for *Nerids* to bathe it. Its walls are covered with small mirrors, disposed in curious and fanciful figures. In the midst stands a marble basin, so arranged that the water which supplied it passed in a sort of mimic cataract over an array of blazing lamps. The walls were also illuminated, and the general effect must have been beautiful.

Only fancy what a time the great Moguls had of it! and how sad to see—

That city of delight
In Fairyland, where streets and towers
Are made of gems and lights and flowers
All going to decay.

From the Palace we went to the Dewan-i-aum, or judgment seat of Akbar, a large hall, chiefly remarkable for its great size. It is now used as an armoury, in which glittering bayonets and sabres are disposed, amidst banners and flags, with a taste reflecting great credit on the arranger.

We saw the throne of the great Emperor, and also the famous gates of "Somnauth," taken by Lord Ellenborough, in the Afghan campaign. They are large, curiously carved, and made of sandal wood.

We next saw the "Motee-Musjid," Pearl Mosque. This graceful structure, which Mr. Bayard Taylor declared to be "absolutely perfect," rests upon a massive red sandstone platform, and consists of a corridor, open on the sides next the entrance, divided into three parts by marble arches, and surmounted by as many domes. The mosque is of white marble, totally without ornament, yet so exquisitely proportioned, and so exceedingly beautiful, that it well merits the eulogium of travellers. It was erected by Shah Jehan, in 1656.

After this I shut my eyes, and refused to look at any of the commonplace things that surrounded me. I was sated with loveliness, and not sorry to resume our march on Monday morning.

The roads up to this were very good, and we spun along charmingly. The Colonel was kind enough to allow our soldier-servant to stay behind the regiment to drive our carriage through the dark; somehow I had more confidence in him as a Jehu than I had in Mr. Juck Put.

At the Coffee Shop we generally picked up the regiment, when the soldier "fell in," and as it was then about break of day, I was not afraid to be driven by the coachman.

We usually got to camp long before the regiment, and on our arrival the Quarter-Master used to send us a steaming bowl of tea, and bread and butter, which kept the children in good humour till breakfast.

Our next important halt was on Christmas Day; the men had their usual Christmas dinner supplied by their Captains, and altogether, festivity was the order of the day and night. The wonderful stories we heard of gentlemen losing their way home, and getting so inextricably tangled in the tent ropes, that they had to resign themselves to their fate, and finish the night amongst the pegs. We dined at Major H——'s, and I entertained a host of children at a 1 o'clock dinner. We got sundry Christmas-boxes, the most precious, a model in soapstone of the Taj.

We had, up to this, travelled over the best roads I ever saw, as smooth as a bowling-green, and as level. Now the rough work began. We were marching through Sindia's territory, and were, I believe, the only European regiment which had ever passed through unmolested; but he had been so "kow-towed" at the Durbar by Her Majesty's officers, that I suppose he was in good humour, and offered no obstruction to the obtaining of supplies, carriage, &c.; but, alas! he could not make roads for us, and accordingly the regiment was more than once plunged in a "slough of despond." One morning, I particularly remember, we came to the banks of the Chumble, and, after patiently waiting for our turn, we were put into a boat, or rather raft, and so got across; the carriage and horses crossed higher up the river, where it was shallow. But the great difficulty began at the other side, where the precipitous bank of yellow clay was made slippery as glass by the wet feet of the men and cattle, as they strove to gain its summit; it was almost perpendicular, and soon no horse could climb its slippery sides. Our coachman tried to make the horses rush up, but they came back faster than they had gone up. Everyone was cross, and amongst the crossest were the Colonel and my husband. The former came to me, and hoped, as blandly as he could under the exasperating circumstance, that I had got safely over the river. Then, aside to my husband, "D——n it, C——, get that confounded carriage of yours out of the way."

There was, of course, but one track, which we filled. My poor husband was bewildered, the unfortunate carriage could not move out of the way, hemmed in behind by other vehicles, and in front the impassable hill. I suppose his Company saw his look of despair, for, in an instant, before the children or I could get down, they had taken out the horses and attached ropes to the vehicle, and so pulled us up, in right-royal style.

How good those brave jolly men were on a pinch of this kind. They worked that morning like Trojans, and none, from the Colonel down to the drummer-boy, once thought of going to the Coffee Shop, which was at the top of the hill, till every soul belonging to the regiment was safely landed on the Chumble heights. It was 12 o'clock before the last of the garrys, &c., were over, and then the men had half the march to camp before them. Yet my husband said not a grumble escaped the poor fellows; they trudged along, sustained by the prospect of their breakfast and dinner rolled into one, and, perhaps, an extra tot of rum.

Another hard day, I remember. We had just reached the camp, one lovely morning, when the Adjutant rode up post-haste to say we had better not unpack, or even cook our breakfast, as the Colonel had ordered R—— to proceed as soon as the men had had their breakfasts, on a forced march to clear the Antry Pass; it was supposed to be almost impassable, yet it was the only road open for the regiment. Mrs. H—— soon followed the Adjutant to ask us to breakfast with her and the Colonel, and so save the poor servants the trouble, for they had, of course, to trudge along as well as ourselves.

Our horses got an extra feed, and by 11 o'clock a.m., we were again on the road; my husband in command of I don't know many tired men, and a party of sappers and miners, to cut our way through the rocky ravines, which the scouts told us were almost insurmountable obstacles for foot passengers, let alone cumbersome garrys, in which the married men's families travelled. They are curious conveyances, a long cart without springs, roofed and thatched with straw, with a door in the side, and windows generally

gaily curtained. These vehicles held, perhaps, a couple of women, and a dozen or so of children; they are drawn by a pair of bullocks. These were fearful vehicles to get through the Pass.

Our way lay through low swampy grass lands; and at last we reached the beginning of the Pass, which consisted of a narrow defile through towering rocks, so narrow that the greatest care had to be taken to steer the vehicles exactly in the centre of the track, as if a wheel once caught in the beetling rock, it was almost impossible to extricate it. As it was, one unlucky garry stuck, and only could be got out with the loss of its wheel.

At the other side of this "crabb" place, we found the Quarter-Master and his family, who, with all his commissariat arrangements, was at a stand-still. He could not get them up the steep hill which was in front.

It really was a fearful-looking place! Fancy a rough road cut straight up the side of a rocky mountain, with flights of stone steps for carts and heavy carriages of all sorts to get up, with here and there a terrace or plateau to rest on! This road was also very narrow, and on one side yawned a deep ravine, with a roaring river below. No wonder my husband sounded the halt, and let the men rest for an hour, and have their dinners, in order to recruit their strength for the work that was before them. The natives are wretched creatures where anything like physical force is required of them, and were worse than useless for helping up the baggage; besides, they had enough to do to look after their bullocks, elephants, camels, &c., &c.; and so the poor men had plenty on their hands; they had to pull, and haul, and propel, and use all their cunning, to keep a garry which had gained a few yards of ascent, from running backwards, or perhaps falling over the cliff; while the officers were here and there and everywhere, ordering, shouting, and occasionally using their whips or the flat of their swords on the lazy natives.

As for me and the children, we had a comfortable dinner with the Quarter-Master's people, and quietly waited till the ascent was a little clear, when we all walked up the hill, the carriage getting on as it could. By this time I had learned to have unlimited confidence in the coachman who steered, and the grasscuts ran at each side of the horses' heads, as they scrambled up like cats. My husband got great "kudos" for the way he brought the baggage through; not an accident except the loss of one wheel.

Those who were not too tired to take in anything but grog, when they reached the summit, had their reward in the glorious view of the sweeping plains at our feet, stretching away as far as the eye could reach; and best of all, a near view of our camping ground, which we soon reached—a weary party thoroughly tired out.

Here again the men had to put their "shoulders to the wheel," and help up the tents. It's marvellous how quickly it is accomplished, and how soon the howling wilderness is changed into a bustling canvas town; everyone in their place; everyone at work, except the "Mem Sahabs" (ladies), who really have nothing to do but sit and look on.

In time we reached "Jhansai;"* where the regiment was to divide, the head-quarters to branch off for Saugor, and a wing under my husband's command to proceed to Nowgong.

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* One of the officers of the regiment had done marvels of bravery at Jhansai Fort during the mutiny, so it was an object of great interest to "ours;" and Major C——— fought his battles o'er again, acting as cicerone to his brother officers.

A halt of two or three days—such a busy time for my husband, getting his little band properly handed over to him. At last we started; I, the only lady, my husband, his Adjutant, two Subs, and a Doctor—the same who had promised, and had right royally kept his word, to supply us with game. Such stews and perigord pies as we used to rejoice in! What a variety of game we used to get, viz., hares, neil ghy, blue rock pigeon, green pigeon, black partridges, quail, boars' heads, venison, wild duck; no end of good things.

My husband's wing got on gallantly—a right merry little party. By this time we never thought of such a luxury as a road; we went right across country.

One morning, Mr. A'B——tt, (by the way he was son of an Australian millionaire,) was riding beside my carriage; we were making the most of a good level, and he was cantering along, when on a sudden he all but disappeared into a well, which was partially covered with bushes. The horse's hind legs went down; how he managed to get them up again was a miracle. Everyone who knows India will remember what nasty things these wells are, generally flush with the ground, with no protection to hinder the unwary walking into them. They are fearfully deep. I remember in Lucknow there was such a one in our "compound," into which the Dhooby's wife, who was in the act of fighting with her *caro sposo*, accidentally fell. Fortunately she went feet foremost, and arrived at the bottom standing, and unhurt. I believe the husband had some intention of leaving her there, until my husband, attracted by the row and splash, went out, and made the irate Dhooby get into a basket, and had him hurried down to rescue his Ophelia. It was droll to see the dripping pair ascend, clasping each other in their frail car It proved a nuisance to the Bheasty (water-carrier), however, for we could not relish the water from that well for a long time, and he had to go to a distance for it.

On New Year's Day we halted in a lovely part of the country, in a tope of magnificent trees. Our Doctor went out to shoot, intending to have a splendid haunch of venison for the New Year's dinner. I was to dine at Mess that night. Being the only lady in camp they would not let me dine alone, as they made it a point that the Commanding-Officer, my husband, should dine at Mess, in honour of the new year.

So the Doctor went out to shoot, but, instead of a black buck, he wounded a gentle Hindoo, and came home, followed by a crowd of irate natives, carrying the girl with them, all vowing vengeance against the "Doctor Sahab." He examined the wound, which was a mere trifle, and pacified the clamorous crowd with a few rupees. The poor Doctor, who was a most humane man, was greatly put out on account of the mischance, and because there was a rumour amongst the servants that we had not seen the last of the girl's family, that they would return and worry, in hope of extracting more rupees. However, the festivities of the evening were not interrupted, and the dinner was excellent, without the haunch and pasty; and, long after I had retired, I could hear their merry songs; our tent was close to the Mess tent; and, by-and-by, the Doctor's spirits returned, to judge by the zest with which he proclaimed, in the words of Dibdin,—

"This day a stag must die!"

Ah! dear, I have the echoes of those, and a thousand other merry, happy days before me, as I write in this dreary New Zealand Hutt—days too bright to last—days when my husband was the life and darling of his regiment, and

when we lived, as the old Irish saying is, "every day of our lives!" Well, I must not become gloomy, although the New Zealand climate is, at this season, enough to put a "damper" on the brightest spirits.

Our march was nearly over; we had but one exceedingly bad river to cross, and then hie for Nowgong. It was a bad ford, very rapid, and very full of large stones and holes. Baby and I were put into a dhooly and mounted on the bearers' heads, and so stemmed the torrent. One of the men would carry my biggest boy across on his shoulders; judge of my horror to see the man disappear under the water, my boy clinging to him! He was up again in a minute, neither much the worse for the ducking. It was hard work getting the "Married Hackeris," as they are called, over. Bullocks beat mules, "by chalks," in obstinacy, and, as a rule, go to the left when their drivers mean to lead them to the right. Imagine, then, what a difficult task it was to keep them clear of holes and boulders; the hackeris were such top-heavy things, that they were liable to upset; and if they went on the side that had the door the occupants were liable to be smothered before they could be got out, so the men waded up to their waists to keep them straight.

At our halt at Doolia, two marches from Nowgong, the Rajah came in great state to "Salaam," and invited the detachment to a wild boar hunt, and a very exciting affair it was. The Rajah sent me the head; he further sent his band, a raggamuffin lot, to play us out of his territory.

The day after, the band of the gallant 97th played us into Nowgong, Bundlekund, Central India, and my first march was at an end. I was very sorry, and felt all the cares of civilized life begin to thicken around me. The march was like a long sea voyage, when you have few cares beyond hoping for fair weather. Now we had to look for a house, furniture, &c.

My Nowgong experiences I will reserve for a fresh chapter; and, in concluding this, I pray my readers, if any, to excuse the thousand-and-one faults they will find in my poor attempt to describe the incidents of the march.

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