SKETCHES IN ASSAM.

BY

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PREFACE.

MY readers will, I hope, pardon me writing this little book. It's only intended for light reading and to try and pass a few weary hours away.

I have noticed a good deal of depression among Assam residents; this can't be all due to liver; and am afraid that short yields and low prices have, in a great measure, to answer for this. My only apology for venturing out of the beaten tract is, to try with a few harmless jokes and fancy descriptions, to invoke some laughter and mild chaff among those who I have endeavoured to entertain.

It would be a source of much regret and uneasiness to me if I have in any way overstepped the mark and gone too far, but I trust I have not.

They are at best fancy sketches, in which even an amateur is allowed to use some coloring. Other books in print on Assam and its surroundings are, no doubt, far superior to this, but they answer quite a different purpose. I must therefore throw myself on the clemency of my readers, reminding them of the climate it has been written in, the depression in tea, and the various other drawbacks incidental to such work. If, however, my little book should while away a passing hour, or raise a smile where a frown has been, I shall feel myself amply recompensed for my trouble: so we will ring the bell and draw up the curtain on the panorama entitled—"The place to spend a happy day—an Assam Tea Garden."

S. O. B.

April 1885.

"WRITE a book? Why, I should sooner dream of an helephant dancing a Can Can, as Bubbler produce hanything in the literary line."

"It's a fact, though," says Tootler, "I 'eard it from Snorter, who got it from Ventilator, who says somebody from down the way brought the yarn up."

"Well," replies Snorter, "old Bubbler's a very good, 'onest, 'ard working Doctor, who has a speciality for a delinqent liver," as he recollected some far-famed rakers with a shudder. "As I was saying, a very good fellow in his way; equally at home with a cow or a coolie, but write a book, I would as soon believe it if you told me you seed that Rhino a-climbing a tree to ascertain if our far-famed Shikary had moulded those bullets yet, and was coming to finish 'im off.

"*Cest fait accomplis*" responded Tootler, who owned an old French dictionary which he had picked up out of a second-hand booksellers in Rhada Bazar during his last visit to Calcutta, and, now piqued himself on his knowledge of the French language, "*cest fait accomplis, Messieurs.*"

"Oh, shut up." replies Ventilator. "You think no one has been on the continent but yourself," as he remembered those French dinners he used to have at that dirty little café in Liecester square, when sometimes after his first bottle of beer, he would begin with—" wretched country Assam—don't understand the art of dining out here—no wonder a fellow gets disgusted. Go to Paris—that's the place for a good dinner: the café Francais, Palais Royale," and he looks fiercely round the table to see if any one will contradict him but apparently that day nobody else owned to the soft impeachment, or he would have been sat upon. Lucky for him our young Parisian friend was away, or he would have *parley voued* him into a cocked Topi in no time.

"I still believe it must be a hideous dream, for the only time I know him take to writing is during the beef season," adds Snorter. "No Joke, I can tell you, if Bubbler gits old of the beef-book first, as he smilingly scores his name down for all the large

joints, apologisingly telling you he did not think you would care about such a great 'ulking piece," and Snorter sucked furiously at his pipe and swore he would put up with this sort of thing no longer: "I have 'ad my share of shin-bones, shoulders, and eds," and if he had a thigh bone handy and Bubbler happened to turn up, I am afraid he would háve committed an assault.

"Lets go and visit him, and ax him about this 'ere book.

"Agreed; but," adds Ventilator who was a bit of a *bonne vivant* in his way, and had horrible recollections of sudden deaths and semi-warm tinned tripe, "give him *khubbur* first." So the chit was written, and they received a cordial invitation from the Doctor.

The day arrived and off they went, and on reaching the Bungalow they found Bubbler playing with a parrot who immediately began to scream, "Sketches in Assam, take a copy, take a copy," and would not leave off till they put their names down for one each. This annoyed Tootler who thought to himself,—a neat trick, Doctor, but it won't wash. I knows you determined the first opportunity to score his name out, but it was no go. The minute he took up the pen, the horrid bird began screeching out

again, which made Bubbler turn round sharply and asks Tootler what he wished to do ?

" Oh," says Tootler, " I was only a-going to book for another copy, may as well have two."

" Certainly," and down went his name again, and the Parrot shrieked with laughter.

" So it is true that you have written a book " all said.

" Yes ; I plead guilty, and intend to throw myself on the mercy of the Court."

" Whatever made you go and do a thing like that," they all three exclaimed with one voice, as if the Doctor had committed manslaughter.

" I am extremely sorry " said the Doctor in an apologetic tone ; " will never do it no more. It tain't so very bad, and I have a-tried to do the best I can. You must not look on it as an artistic production, but simply the outpourings of a grateful heart for your numerous little delicate attentions to me ; nor must you be too rough on my orthography, for I haint 'ad the hadvantages some on you 'as. My worthy parient though that one of us at college was enough for the lot ;" and the Doctors feelings nearly overcame him as he produced a bottle of gin and cold water together with some dropsical looking Burmahs.

"Help yourself, gentlemen; very glad to see you. Don't be afraid." What a pity, thought Snorter, I did not bring my pipe with me. It'll take a blister at the back of one's neck to make those hideous things draw. "Gentlemen," said the Doctor "I have written a little work; I claim no particular merit for it, and have simply given a few, as I hope, amusing sketches. At the same time I have interspersed it with some practical advice, and have thrown in a chapter on what to eat, drink, and avoid." Avoid gin, thinks Snorter, who had a particular aversion to white satin, in this shape at any rate. All very well for the Doctor, and he hummed that favourite song of Vance's—

Temple Bar, Temple Bar,
I never go East of Temple Bar,
I never go East at all.

I have likewise endeavoured to call the attention of Government to some of the abuses perpetrated by them on a body of quiet, unassuming gentlemen, whose only fault is that of opening up the country, encouraging labor, and expending large capitals on an industry treated worse than any in the world. Why the Bulgarian atrocities are mild in comparison; and if by my little book, feeble as it may turn out, I have done any thing to cause a little harmless chaff, a little fun, and remove some of the depression so prevalent, I will

counteract the order for that retreat I thought would be required if tea continues much longer in its present depressed state. However, I will give a few extracts and the reader can judge for himself.

Snorter, Ventilator and Tootler winked at each other expecting to have a fine joke. Bubbler began in his rich mellow tone, not unlike an "old clo" after a hard day's work. However, they were astonished, then amazed, then they coughed, then began shuffling uneasily in their chairs, and Snorter at one passage took a strong pull at his peg which nearly choked him. When the Doctor had finished he asked them what they thought of his book.

"Oh, very good, very amusing. But outsiders can get very little information from it." Braggem tried a Norton's pump, but they only replied, you have been on the continent we knows, an understand what an Olla Porida is, and Braggem thinking they were taking a rise out of him, says, "Never heard of it? Why cousin Sarah and I had tea and shrimps when we went on the continent," but it turned out that Braggem's continental tour consisted in a trip to Greenwich on a penny steam boat. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* Now Snorter winks knowingly, and won't let out much. "Point of honor, Sir, I assure you; but there is one thing

I can tell you, I don't think you will be disappointed," and Snorter walks away whistling, "Oftimes in the Starry Night."

Quite correct. The place to spend a happy day—an Assam tea garden—being a few sketches by S. O. Bishop, is published, and many will go in for the book, perhaps, not for its intrinsic value, nor for the love of literature, but from CURIOSITY.

SKETCHES IN ASSAM.

CHAPTER I.

"ANYTHING else you would like, Doctor, this morning done." "No, nothing more, thank you," replied Nouland to Nobbler as he mounted his horse and rode away.

The above was heard one warm morning in July outside the hospital on a Tea garden in Assam, about 7 P. M. Thought Nouland I have put my foot into it, as usual. Nobbler need not have been so short with me. I only asked him for a new pucca hospital, with pucca bath-rooms, fumigating chamber and cook-house; be cheaper in the long run than the present buildings, and last much longer: perhaps I spoke to him at the wrong time. Yes, that was it: had he, who was young to the country, known the Planter better, he would never

have been so rash as to have tackled him when he did.

As Nobbler walked away, he mumbled to himself—"Its all very well for a Doctor to order pucca buildings, and this and that to be done in the present state of Tea. I wish he would invent a divident machine," for the mail arrived that morning with a friendly letter from the Secretary at Home, to say the Directors were astonished at the short yield up to date, 200 maunds behind last year. "Do they think I drink it?" And Nobbler, who did not indulge much in the fragant cup, smiled scarcastically, and wended his way to his work with a determination to do or die.

Now, had Nouland waited till after breakfast, he would have found Nobbler much less irritable, for the sun has come out, the leaf withered, and the garden breaking into a flush, which bids well to make the decrease up. Nobbler would have replied quite differently; and as you split the second bottle of beer with him, you saw your nice neat trim wards, your nurses in their white muslin frocks and Garibaldi jackets, the tesselated bath-rooms and lavatories, and you felt happy and radiant.

Early in the morning, and about 4 in the afternoon, are the two worse times I know of to ask a favour, either to borrow a dâk, or a cask of beer, or

anything else. The early morning, because it's a very busy time : he has had the Sirdar come up to say the leaf is as green as when it was plucked and not fit to roll, that four coolies have bolted in the night, coupled with which he has received a letter from Government to say if his coolie returns are not sent in within 24 hours, the consequences will be most serious. To complete his happiness, the Secretary writes and growls about decrease and expenditure ; on the top of this he is recommended to go in for pucca hospitals, lines, and various other little expenditures not estimated for by him : No wonder he is a trifle short in his answers as well as his outturn.

Four P. M. is equally as bad, for having been up late the previous night in the Tea-house, and risen at 5 A. M., he indulged in half-an-hour's nap after tiffin, and why bottled beer and sardines should make you irritable, is a problem very difficult to solve. You only sleep for an hour or so ; it's not very warm : nice moist-heat, about 98°, but nevertheless the fact remains the same, that the above times are not the best in the world for asking Nobbler for a dâk or anything else.

It is a weary problem to solve, worse than the whole book of Euclid. If Tea costs a shilling to make, and hardly fetches that, where is the profit

to come from? The fact of the matter is, people don't understand Indian Teas, and if they do, don't know how to make it, hence its want of popularity. For instance, this sort of thing occurs daily. *Scene*—a snugly furnished parlour. Occupants Mr. and Mrs. Toozle, time 6 P. M., the table is laid for tea.

Says Toozle—"Now Polly, my dear, is it not time to make the tea? I have been reading Gladstone's last speech and am rather thirsty."

"Yes, dear, kindly ring the bell for the kettle," for Toozle and his wife were a very polite old couple.

"In it comes; are you certain it boils," says he, "put it on the fire for a minute, my dear."

Now Polly takes a spoon and tea-caddy and carefully puts in the tea, being some of the last lot sent home by their affectionate nephew Grogler: one spoonful for each person and one for the pot.

The kettle is gaily boiling, the tea-pot is warmed to prevent the tea getting a chill previous to the Pekoe Souchong being put in. In goes the boiling water, the pot is wrapped up in a cozy made out of an old blanket, with as much care as the largest diamond ever unearthed. Toozle goes to sleep, and Mrs. Toozle goes on with the stockings, and the tea is left to draw for ten minutes. Heavens!

are they making an infusion? This may do very well for China, but not for Indian.

The proper way is not be stingy with it; use perfectly boiling water. Don't keep it standing more than two or three minutes, and then pour it out, you get a delicious cup, with a splendid aroma; you don't want to extract all the tannic acid. No; leave that for the servants, the coats of whose stomachs are stronger than yours. Thus Grogler's little present is not appreciated as it should have been, and when old Toozle dies, he finds the trifle of legacy is not as much as he expected. When Grogler sent the box home, he did it with the best intention in the world, knowing how dearly his old aunt and uncle liked their Tea.

Chapter II.

YES : you only want to know the Planter to like him. When I first began practice, I did not understand him, nor he me. I did not know how to take him ; for living in Assam is apt to make one's liver rather susceptible ; hence, occasional outbursts of irritability. The coolie is a curiosity, and calculated to drive any one without a very strong intellect, perfectly silly in a few years, but more of him anon. Each garden has a hospital and dispensary ; no expense is spared in the way of drugs or instruments ; the Doctor is told to order any thing he likes in the shape of medical comforts and medicine. When you hear the sickening rot poured out by Exeter Hall people, don't believe it. I have practiced among coolies for some

years: Its all very well; you must remember what each coolie costs per head before he reaches the garden, and its very likely that a Planter is going to do all he can to injure his health and lose his money; very much like a whale! Coolies are the most obstinate, headstrong beasts in the world. I should imagine, driving mules would be merely a pleasant pastime after working them. In nine cases out of ten, they don't like to go into hospital. The natural idea is, force them; exactly, and what is the result? When his agreement is up, away he goes, and takes a lot of his friends with him. No; you must humour him: there is one class called Buyiahs, they are terrible; they will not take food from the hospital, and they won't work, and they won't wash, and they will do nothing but clamour for advances, which, when they get, they spend recklessly in a day.

A good batch of this class of coolies when up goes your death-rate. In vain you provide European doctors, Native doctors, hospitals, food, medicines and first-class water; they go out. Yes, they die from dropsy, from dysentery, from diarrhœa, and very often from sheer apathy. Accompany me down to the hospital and have a look round. You would say—"Got a lot of wretched-looking coolies here. Why don't you

keep them in hospital and feed them up, and give them clothes, and get them bathed and oiled every day; soon cure them, you know, nothing so very alarming?" Lets take a case—its no use going through a lot. This is Ramlall, a Buyiah coolie, imported a few months ago, cost 79 rupees 12 annas and three pice, landed up here. What do you think of him? I should say he is worth about 12 rupees and hardly that. Now, what has decreased his value so: hard work and hard treatment you are going to say. I will give you his history: he belongs to a lazy, dirty lot of coolies, who won't do a stitch more work than they are obliged. On arrival he received two rupees advance, and got a share of a comfortable, water-tight hut and a nice chung; his blanket he brought with him, and proceeds to make himself comfortable; the two rupees he probably spends in two days, and comes up for more. For three or four more days he does nothing, just putting things straight, he says to you, will begin in earnest directly. After a few days you gently intimate to him that its time to start working. Oh! yes, that's just what he wants, and off he goes to light hoe. Twenty nulls is his task, which he can easily finish by 12 noon, if he likes, and as soon as he gets into it, if he goes out at early

dawn, can complete the task by ten. But he is not very anxious, and finds it harder than he thought. Whenever he gets an opportunity he lies down, goes to sleep, or slips away to the lines to his hut. Do you meet him and ask the reason, he will say, "feels fever coming on. One can't be too careful, your first rains," he adds; so the time slips away and pay-day arrives; he, instead of receiving full or three-quarters, hardly gets any, as he has done no work, and he borrows a little more from you: so he goes on till you get rather sick of advancing, and you find Ramlall is not looking so well. The next time your Doctor calls, Ramlall is brought up to the hospital and you find him suffering from anæmia and atonic dyspepsia, probably caused by eating bricks, for they are very fond of doing this. This class of coolies eat all sorts of muck. The Planter says pleasantly—"Can you do anything for him?"

"Yes," you respond, "he wants feeding; his stomach wants regulating; then he requires a course of some preparation of iron."

"Certainly, give him anything you like to order, only pull him round."

"Well, I had better put him into hospital, had I not?" But this Mr. Ramlall sets his back up against; he is a respectable man, always paid his

rent and taxes in Bengal and did not come up here to be humbugged. No, his legal adviser, named Government, would see to that, and we had better be careful.

CHAPTER III.

HE will condescend to take a little medicine, but will do nothing further; though you tempt him with the choicest of viands, he won't have them at any price. He will drink as much rum as you will give him, and take milk to his hut, which he barters for anything he can get. So he goes on; dropsy sets in, and he crawls up one fine day to your bungalow and wants a little more advance. You give him another rupee; what does he do with it?

You would think he would buy a few articles of domestic comfort; a little rice, a little salt, a little ghee and condiments. Devil a fear! you gave him this on Saturday night, the next day off he marches to the nearest market,

selects the fattest duck he can buy, brings it home, half cooks it, eats it, and what is the consequence? His stomach is weak, he can't digest it, so it passes into the intestines in an undigested state, sets up irritation, brings on an attack of choleraic diarrhœa, which, if it does not prove fatal to Mr. Ramlall, makes him so weak that its only a question of time.

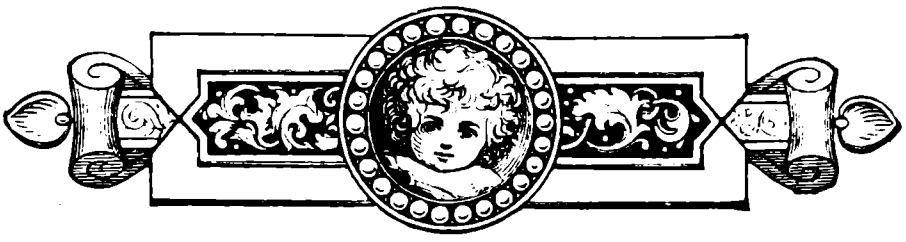
This is a true picture ; I know both sides of the question. Planters are willing, and do spend yearly large sums over their coolies for medicines, food and attendance. But what's to he done with a certain class? If you are unfortunate enough to get them into your garden, up goes your death-rate through no fault of your own. Government steps in and takes notice of it ; thus it creeps into the papers, and the next thing you see is, shocking high mortality in a Tea-garden—8 per cent. of deaths. Whereupon Mr. O'Donel, the honorable member for Tipperary county, seeing this, thinks it would be a nice little opportunity for a flare up, as he has not said much for some time. So he goes to his Club and has a quiet dinner, a dozen oysters to commence with, clear soup, turbot and whiting, hashed calf's head and veal cutlets, a slice out of a saddle of mutton, wild duck and port wine sauce, iced pudding and

dessert. He has a bottle of Sauterne, one of Dry Monopole, and finishes up with liqueur and coffee.

Lighting an havanah, he hails a hansom and proceeds gaily down to the House. Waiting for a little, he attracts the Speaker's notice, and getting on his legs, begs to call the attention of the House to the fact, that some wretched garden has had the unprecedented high average of deaths of 8 per cent., and moves that an enquiry be made.

Now, had the honorable member been out here himself and sunk a large capital in Tea, and been working and waiting for the last 15 years, looking forward to getting a little profit so as, at least, to enable him to take a change to England, he would not waste the valuable time of the House by going into these questions. Did he know a little about the weary struggles, the disappointments, the obstacles Government throw in the Planter's way, the annoyances with coolies, bad prices, blight, sun, pestered with long returns half-yearly and monthly, he would make a different speech. Why, is it not to the Planter's benefit to look after his coolies : what does he go to the expense of wells, medicines, doctors, and all these kinds of things for ? Amusement, I suppose.

I recollect once being called to an accident: a coolie boy broke both his thighs; one in two places, through his own carelessness in the Rolling Machine, when, I can tell the honorable member for Tipperary, that that boy was taken to the planter's own bungalow till his fractures were set, and kept there all night; the Planter himself from time to time giving him a little Champagne, which I had ordered. Let the honorable member put this in his pipe and smoke it. I am happy to say the boy made a good recovery, and is working to this day.



CHAPTER IV.

NO; Assam has been opened up and made what it is by the immense capital that has been invested in it by the planting community, and it's time Government made a few concessions. I can understand if our Tipperary friend came out for a trip, he would go back with quite a different opinion, and I fancy the next time he caught the Speaker's eye, our Pecksniffian orator would begin by saying—He begs to call the attention of the House to the fact, that he has just come back from a trip to Assam ; that he has gone thoroughly into the question ; that he was laboring under a mistake. He finds Planters are hampered by a great number of restrictions.

Government require a great deal too many returns, and more freedom should be given for importation; less trouble to aspirants requiring lands for cultivation, the whole of the waste lands surveyed by Government and allotted out in plots, the same as in other colonies, Government reserving what they require, and the rest to be available for any one of good character who applied for it and paid the survey fees; that the first applicant gets it, so as to avoid two persons applying for the same grant at one time; that the roads be all taken up and kept in repair by Government, and no road be allowed to remain impassable for weeks at a time in the rainy season. Some stringent measures should also be taken to punish the coolie for insolence, laziness, and refusing to work; these and many more improvements might he suggest, in which case he would not be wasting the time of the House. The honorable gentleman probably sees "Punch" at his club; does he recollect this, it represents two fair ladies outside a Pub.

Says No. 1 "Mary Hann, I has stood you porter; I has stood you mild ale; I has stood you gin; I has stood wilks and mutton pies; I am not agoin' to stand you any more, that's my little game."

So it is with the Planter, he has stood the coolie blankets, rum, milk, advances, medicines, vegetables, and moreover, he has stood his laziness and his insufferable cheek, and he is not agoing to stand any more, that's his little game.

CHAPTER V.

SCENE—A Planter's bungalow. *Time*—6 A.M. A Planter is walking up and down his verandah.

"Yes," he says, "I think I will go and see my old friend Leaven, and stay the night; Mullins told me I had better take a little change now and then; it will do me good, there is nothing very particular going on to-day."

So he calls for his servant. Unfortunately this gentleman is unwell, he was out at a little dinner party the night before with some of his Mahommedan friends and feels rather hipped, so he sends his compliments and says he has fever.

"Never mind," says the honest Planter, "the Chowkidar can pack my traps up, and Leaven

always keeps plenty of servants. I can manage for one night."

So he calls his Chowkidar and tells him to put his things up: no need to take a mattrass, the Gladstone and portmanteau will hold all. He sent to the lines for two coolies to carry them, and ordered his horse for 9 A. M. The things are ready, and Mr. Gopal and Mr. Mongol make their appearance about 7 A. M. to carry the traps, distance to go 8 miles; as they fastened the portmanteau and Gladstone on to a long bamboo, together with two dirty bundles and a cocoanut pipe-bowl and are about starting, a slight shower comes on, and the Planter, who was called Bagster, ordered them to put two blankets over the load and start away; he gave them particular injunctions to go quickly, as he might get wet, and would require a change when he got in.

"Certainly," they replied, "we shall be there in the twinkling of a Jew's eye," and off they started merrily.

Bagster answered a few letters, took a little stroll round, and at 9 vaulted lightly into the saddle and went off at a hand gallop. He had not proceeded more than a couple of miles, when he caught up his luggage. This rather staggered him—two miles in over two hours—not very quick

travelling. He, in a mild tone, asked them to hasten up, and off he went; before he got to his destination, a shower came on, and he became a trifle moist.

On arriving, Leaven was very pleased to see him, and promptly offered a change.

"No, thanks," says Bagster; "my things won't be long, I passed them on the road."

"Have a peg?"

"It's rather early," responds Bagster, "and Mullins advised me not to take anything before breakfast; however, it can't do any harm, as I am damp. I will just take a quarter of a glass of whiskey in a tumblerful of water."

The morning passed away, they compared samples and had a Tea-tasting match, and came to the conclusion, they were both making 12-anna Teas, and that some one was a-doing of them in the eye, and they took another small peg just to wash their mouths out.

Then the leaf came in, and Bagster had a sherry and bitters before breakfast in the shape of watching the dusky belles getting their leaf weighed. They adjourned to the bungalow, still no sign of the things.

"Have a change?" says Leaven, "as it is breakfast time."

"I can't make out where those dear creatures of mine have got to: ought to have been in long ago," and proceeded to array himself in one of Leaven's shirts—a thick flannel one—unfortunately it was in the rains, and the dhobie was seedy, consequently Leaven was hard up for clean clothes, and Bagster, when he went to put the shirt on, found it a trifle fusty, the fact of the matter being, that the bearer made a little mistake, and had given him a sun-dried one that had done duty the day before.

Breakfast proceeded, still no sign of the coolies. Bagster indulged in a nap, still they did not come; so Tea came in; this, coupled with the thick shirt, brought out the pricklyheat at a fearful rate. Evening, and nothing had arrived. Too bad, and he mixed himself a weak peg. At last, about dusk, up turned Gopal and Mongol, and thumped the things down in the verandah in a defiant way; the portmanteau was wet and dirty, and turned upside down; the Gladstone was looking very dilapidated, and had evidently had a fall or two.

"What, on earth, have you been doing all this time?"

"Oh!" says Gopal, "Mongol got an attack of shun (sun) and that delayed us."

What could Bagster do? It was late, and he wanted to get rid of the flannel shirt, for it was causing dreadful irritability. So resolving to have a reckoning with them on his return to the factory, he asked Leaven to get his bearer to unpack his things and give him a bath.

He found his pillows damp, likewise the remainder of his things, and they looked as if a lot of dirty water had been poured over them.

He went to get his bath, and knocked his knees against two kerosine tins of water, which an obliging *paniwallah* had left for him at the foot of the steps leading down into the bath-room. He put on his damp clothes and spent a wretched evening, though Leaven tried to do his best to amuse him. All his yarns fell flat. Bagster turned in early and had a pleasant night, for owing to his clothes arriving so late, his bed was not made up till after dark, and it swarmed with mosquitoes.

CHAPTER VI.

NOW, what is the reason of all this delay? Bagster started the things off in good time, and they ought to have been in by 12 easily; 8 miles in five hours is not very hard travelling for two strong coolies with a light load.

Well, to begin with, these amiable gentlemen did not go straight off when they left the bungalow. No, Gopal, who was a family man and an affectionate husband, turned into the lines to see his wife again, as she wanted a little money to settle her washing bill with, and Mongol had a flirtation with a young lady he was sweet on, so it was after 8 when they started.

We will now introduce another scene. A road raised with rice fields on either side; two coolies

proceeding slowly along with a long bamboo slung over their shoulders tied to which are a portmanteau, Gladstone bag, two dirty bundles, and the pipe-bowl.

"Hush," says Gopal, "I think I hear the old man a-coming."

"My eyes," says Mongol, "aint he just a 'ammering his 'oss along this morning."

"Oh," says Gopal, "he's got a new Turcoman up from 'Art's, and he is a-taking it out on him."

"I am rather astonished at this," answers Mongol. "He is generally so werry careful of his 'osses."

"Shut your potato trap," says Gopal, "and 'urry up."

At this moment Bagster galloped up alongside, and says—

"Now, then, look alive, my men, I am afraid the rain is beginning."

"All right, Sahib, we are coming as fast as we can"; so ramming his spurs in, he disappeared round the corner at a break-neck pace; as soon as he got well away, Gopal and Mongol stop by mutual consent.

"Fancy the old man has got a peg in him; never seed him go so before," says Gopal.

"I daresay," replies Mongol, "nothing very wonderful about that."

"'Ullo! rain, by Jingo:" and hastily taking a blanket each off the traps, they plumped them under a tree, and sitting down on them undid the *hookah*, and had a smoke.

After a short time Gopal says—"We had better be moving, I am very dry: had rather a wet night of it; Ramchuron got spliced and gave a feed; we kept it up rather late; 'ang that jemadar for sending me hout to-day"; so they took up their bundles and proceeded at a good round trot for three miles, when they arrived at a crossing where a few huts stood and a shop; one hut was rather better than the rest, and had a bit of red rag fastened to the end of a bamboo fluttering in the breeze. Above the entrance to this hut was written:—

THE NIGGER'S HEAD.

ENTERTAINMENT FOR MAN AND BEAST.

Licensed to sell Spirits.

To be consumed on the Premises.

"Thank goodness," says Gopal, "we have arrived here at last," and they dropped the portmanteau and Gladstone bag down into the mud, for it was now raining fast. Carefully removing

their own bundles, and taking the pipe and blankets, they proceeded to enter, and in a playful manner forgot to take Bagster's things with them.

"Now then, look sharp," says Gopal to the landlord; "give us a quartern of *sharab* and two outs;" this they quickly consumed, and Gopal exclaims—"I feel better now."

At that moment they were joined by another gentleman, who was dressed very decently, in a white coat, and wore a belt round his waist, which had a buckle and brass-plate with the name of the garden on it.

"Hullo! Well, I'm blow'd if 'ere 'aint Juddoo: how are you old fellow," and he was hailed with great delight by both. "Where are you off to?"

"Not very far, only into G———t with a telegram. Guv'nor said I was to look sharp, and be there by 10, but was not to get the letter wet, and as it is raining, I thought I would step in here for 'arf-an-hour."

"Can't be too careful," he said with a wink.

Time—12 o'clock. "Let's have a toss," says Gopal, "for liquors: odd man pays."

"No you don't," says Juddoo, who had a painful recollection of having met these two gentlemen before, and when he tossed they either all three

came the same, or else he had to stand the shout—"I don't mind odd man, and the other two toss."

"Very well, agreed," replies Gopal with a significant wink at Mongol, who says "how are your poor feet"; and as he ran his fingers quickly through his ambrosial locks, they slapped their coins down on the counter.

"Now then," says Juddoo, "all pull up at once."

Of course, Mr. Mongol came up tail, Gopal head; so any way it was two to one against Juddoo; the upshot being that he had to pay the lion's share: they had some refreshments and indulged in a smoke.

This amusemeut went on for two hours, the rain merrily proceeding to pour down outside.

"No use making a move yet," says Mongol in rather a thick tone, and he seemed unsteady on his pins: "let's have a short nap, and wait till it clears up," responds Juddoo.

"The very thing," echoes Gopal, who had had a late night.

"Bring the traps and let's get out the pillows, and we may find a flask of whiskey. I had forgotten about this."

"No fear," says Mongol, "I seed him a-putting the flask into his breast-pocket this morning before he started; you don't catch that child a

travelling without his lotion," and they all three laughed.

The things were now brought in and the portmanteau unstrapped, in doing which Gopal broke a buckle.

"That's the worst of these cheap articles, hevidently a bazar purchase," flinging the buckle out of the door. "We are dished after all ; blow'd, if he has not locked his things up;" luckily, Bagster had taken this precaution, knowing his servant would not accompany the ruffians.

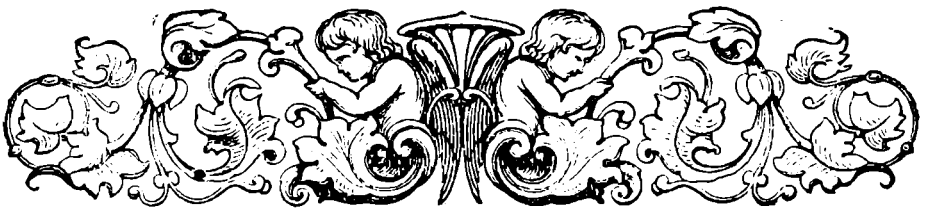
"Never mind," says Mongol, "I can pick the locks," picking up a rusty nail. But the Chubbs' stood their ground bravely, and after tampering with them, gave it up.

"Never mind," says Juddoo, "daresay the pillows are damp, and might give us a cold in our heads." So they proceeded to arrange temporary beds by putting the portmanteau and Gladstone on the floor, and spreading the blankets on the ground, made themselves as comfortable as they could under the circumstances.

Mongol and Gopal had the portmanteau for a pillow, and Juddoo the Gladstone bag ; they were soon fast asleep. About four they woke, the rain had ceased :

"Let's make a move," says Juddoo, and, after

tossing for some more *sharab* and soda-water separated, Juddoo with his telegram, the other two with their load, which seemed to balance very badly ; and, with a zig-zag stride, they commenced to do the last three miles, and arrived at 7 P. M., having started at 7 A. M. to do eight miles. They were the worse for liquor, insolent and defiant.



CHAPTER VII.

SCENE—A Planter's bungalow. *Time*—7 A. M. Letter bag just arrived, contains a telegram. "Fifth Invoice valued at 8 annas 1 pie: shall we sell? Wire reply before 2."

"No, I am blessed if I do," says Sandy, "referring to his invoice book"

"No red leaf in this shipment, and it's one of my best. I am not going to let the agents have their own way, because they burnt their own fingers last year, by buying, its no reason they should want to get my Tea for nothing to ship home and make a large profit. No, I am just as cute as they are, and will write and give them a snorter. In the meantime I will send a telegram;" which ran thus :—

"Don't sell under 11 annas, if unattainable ship home."

"Here, Chowkidar, run to the lines and tell the Jemadar to send a good man up to take this chit to the Telegraph Office at g—t; he must go quickly and be there by 10: Distance to go 6 miles, time, 7-30 A.M.

Juddoo came up immediately and started off at a slinging trot.

[The same Bungalow, and Sandy in a furious rage, tearing his hair and letting volley after volley off; he has just received the following telegram]—

"5th invoice sold, averaged 7 annas 10 pie, market depressed, your wire arrived day after sale."

Just then up came Juddoo, who had been sent for. Sandy in a pleasant tone proceeds to cross-examine him, and elicited the fact, that "the telegram was handed in the same day, it was, at 11 A. M., I heard the Kutchery gong being struck as I entered the hoffice," said Juddoo, with unblushing effrontery. Sandy exclaims "too bad," and it suddenly strikes him to look at the receipt, but this he cannot find, so he writes off to the Baboo and gets the following reply:—

"Baboo Chunder Sen has the honour to inform Mr. Sandy that his telegraph message was handed

in at 6 P.M., and, being marked *urgent*, was instantly despatched."

Then Sandy went for Juddoo and gave him a slap or two. This Having relieved his feelings, he went into the Bungalow and Juddoo hurried away to his hut; when Goolapee, his better-half, saw him, she nearly fainted, and rushed for soap and warm water.

"You little ass," says her husband, "bring me the looking glass," and call Sunkar.

Now this gentlemen was the regular sea-lawyer of the lines, and though not legally qualified, was as cunning as an old fox, and was always consulted by the rest of his sable brethren if anything went wrong.

Juddoo viewed himself in the glass. "Well, he 'aint done much; might have left a better mark, however, Sunkar will fix it up." At this moment he entered.

"What's up?"

"Not very much, the governor has been in one of his tantrums and has beaten me severely," answers Juddoo, with a wink. "I want you to paint me up a little, and I must be off, for I intend having the law on 'im, I do; he hought to be ashamed off hisself; gets bad prices for his tea, and then rounds on me."

"All right," replied Sunkar, "sit down," and with the aid of some mud and gum, and red paint, he makes a very ugly looking temple ; he then proceeds to kill a fowl by cutting its throat and lets the blood run well down Juddoo's coat and turban.

"I think you will do now ; you had better be off." So Juddoo has a strong cup of tea, and shoving a rupee into Sunkar's hand, together with the fowl, kisses Goolapee, clutches a stick, and sneaks through a back way.

When he is out of sight, he goes off at a round trot, and for a badly injured man, makes much better time than he did when he went with the telegram.

Chapter VIII.

THE interior of a large building full of Natives of various descriptions, and on a raised railed-in platform, sitting at a desk, under a punkah, is a young man, who is apparently trying a case; on one side below the Magistrate is our friend Juddoo, with his blood stained coat and turban looking as ghastly as he possibly can. The other side is Sandy, calm and dignified. The court is plainly furnished, and only contains one picture, a huge edifice, which looks like a mansion.

People going in used to gaze at it. "Father's house, I suppose; must be well connected, I will go and call on him when court is over." But it's nothing of the kind, it is only a large picture

that the Government present to all their Magistrates; if you had gone a little closer you would have seen underneath, 'Exeter Hall.' Yes; this is ordered to be hung up in all courts in India in a conspicuous place, so when the Beak writes his judgments out, this may catch his eye.

The case is heard, witnesses examined, and Sandy is fined 10 rupees. The Magistrate knows the insolence and the provocation Sandy has received only too well, for that very morning, after breaking three eggs, one after the other, and finding them all go off like squibs, he had made for his servant and asked—"What do you mean by giving me bad eggs for breakfast?" "Bad, are they, the cook must have rung the changes on them, for I see'd the hen a-laying them myself early this morning, when I went out to try and find some mushrooms for your breakfast."

This was too much for the man of law and he went for Abdool, and was just going to administer a severe chatisement, when he recollected Exeter Hall, and he contented himself with giving a mild rebuke: a wonderful control over their tempers have magistrates.

Juddoo goes back to his factory and over a glass of grog that night, says to a few admirers,

"teach 'im to take his ring off next time he hits me," and Sandy has the satisfaction to find the market rising daily, and by not sending his Teas home, has lost several thousand rupees. Whose fault, is this? Why, it's the Government. Whose fault is it that Bagster gets an attack of rheumatism and has to pay Mullins a heavy bill for attenddance. It's Government.

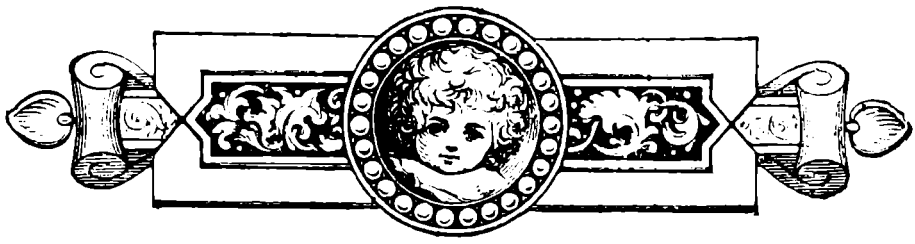
And, why? I will tell you. At various stages along the high road, Government have Pubs, so that the dear coolie may get a little refreshment as he wends his weary way along. What is sold? A pernicious liquor called *Shrab*, the component parts of which are not known; it's intoxiciating, that's a certainty, and not very expensive. These grog shops are the bane of a Planter's life, and are not required. They do a deal of harm, and are splendid places for bad characters to congregate, and there is more scandal talked, more coolies enticed away, more mischief done, and more messages delayed by these, than anybody knows the extent of except the planters.

When the king of New Zealand was in England, numerous petitions were presented to him for the suppression of grog in his dominions. The same thing when Cetewayo was over, and if it applies to one set of natives why not to another.

"Oh," Government say, "Assam's such a depressing climate, so slow after Bengal for the poor coolies, no amusements, no nothing; hard lines if he canot have a Pub to go to sometimes." Far better, we say, to do away with them. Let only the Planter have rum, and use his own discretion to whom he sells it. He can do it now, but the little gain he gets is counteracted by these baneful grog shops.

Yes, it's no secret, the present Government is getting ancient and going down hill; poor old thing! She sees a good deal through a pair of spectacles which want cleaning, and are evidently not Solomen's best.

At present we have a very one horse arrangement; no matter, let the planter spend money, brains, and the best years of his life in not one of the jolliest climates in the world. It's all the same to Government as long as the poor innocent coolie is not bullied nor over-worked; he grows fat and arrogant and some day, perhaps, when too late, they will find out that they have been cherishing a viper in their buzzums.



CHAPTER IX.

WE all suffer from a little superfluity of bile at times, and have our various remedies for getting rid of it. Some by long walks, some by starvation, some by Cockle's pills at night and Hockings Seidlitz's powder in the morning, some by curious methods.

I went once to stay a night with a man called Rattler, and the way he got rid of his bile was strange, and I thought at the time mean; but I altered my opinion when I came to know him better, and recognise his liberality and many noble qualities. If this catches his eye, I hope he will forgive me my little sketch, for he would still prove a nasty customer in a rough and tumble, after a pleasant dinner with some of Kellner's

Phuillac, or perhaps if Tea is looking up, a bottle or so of his Pomeroy and Grano Extra Sec, and over some of Watson and Summer's best Burmahs we get into a friendly chat.

"Not a bad old man, Gladstone," he says. Though I am inclined to conservative measures, I can't help admiring his indomitable pluck and persuasive terms; he has a trifle too much soft soap for my taste, but he is good at heart. There is none of your cant about him; never thinking of himself and utterly careless about providing for his own kith and kin. "Why, hang it, let's drink his health, and here is to the Grand Old Man, and may he live for many years to come, to give us the benefit of his masterly rule." We both heartily drank the toast. He then passed on to another subject, for he was very well read and had travelled far and wide before he came to embark his brains and capital in Tea. I got a little sleepy for I had come a long journey and the sun was rather warm that day.

"What," he says, in his cheery voice, "going to sleep; this will never do, I thought you said it was a very bad habit to go to sleep so soon after meals."

I felt ashamed of myself: how ungrateful. Here he had given me the best of everything, a first

rate dinner, good cheroots, and I was beginning to nod, so I pulled myself together. He told me of catching wild horses in Valparaiso; of netting zebras in California; of stalking the wily rhino in Australia; of finding the largest diamond in Queensland, and wound up by relating a famous yarn, how he drove 6 horses and a coach in Tasmania slap through a river. "I give you my word of honour, Sir, and lost nothing but a bandbox beloging to an old lady who had emigrated in the hopes of securing a hubby among the innocent settlers."

We went off to bed and slept fairly well, but I had rather troublesome dreams; for instance, I dreamt I was driving 16 zebras through a river, and I could not pull them up to get a drink of water. Just then the coach gave a lurch, and I woke up with a start to find my stretcher falling over, and my mouth as dry as a lime-kiln.

The next morning I noticed that my worthy host was a trifle irritable and not quite so playful as the night before, he only toyed with his anæmic eggs, and I fancied the whites of his eyes were streaked with yellow. I said nothing, wondering what strength of Podophylin pills he required, for he was a muscular, well-made man.

I was about beginning in my best professional style, "You are looking a trifle seedy this morning; been spending too much time in the Tea-house. You must really be careful of yourself during the rains, for this is a more depressing climate than Valparaiso." I was going to suggest a little dose, followed by an alterative; when I noticed his eagle eye sparkle. What could it be? I saw nothing; but he did, and he rose and walked up and down his verandah and seemed pleased. I followed, still I saw nothing; it was a damp morning and all I could see was acres of Tea, and a wretched looking creature enveloped in a blanket crawling up to the bungalow in a crab-like way. Yes, that was it, and my muscular friend hailed him with much the same delight as the Missisippi pilot did the proa he run over on a dark night going down the Hudson, so graphically described by Artemus Ward. His face was brilliant—the yellow tinge was fast giving way to a few congested blood-vessels, denoting cerebral excitement.

On came the coolie: "Good-morning, Rames-sar, can I do anything for you? Want a day's leave I suppose; been overworking yourself. Well, I dare say you can take it."

"Oh! don't trouble yourself," answers Rames-

sar. "I was not going to work, anyhow, my rheumatics is a-troubling me again; this damp weather always affects them."

"No, I wanted to speak to you about my hut, it leaks badly."

"How is that," says my worthy friend. "I re-thatched them all during the cold weather."

"I knows you did, and you remind me now of it often enough, too. Do you think after working 'ard all day, which I has to now you have got so werry particular about your hoe, that I have time to go 'unting about for firewood, and how the dickens do you think I will get the kettle to boil, so I just takes a 'and full of your thatch. You need not be so stingy about it, it don't cost much, plenty of it. You aint a hopened up such a vast h'errear as all that."

Of this he is painfully aware of, and it is rather a sore point with him. Still he does nothing. I am astounded. I had heard he was a good master to his coolies, and if he did explode occasionally, they did not mind it, and when they were sick, he was liberal to a degree.

I have seen him give a coolie a dose of quinine and wash it down with Exshaw's No. 1 brandy, but this was more than flesh and blood could stand. What a scandalous place Assam must be, I

thought, resolving not to believe the numerous yarns one hears.

He only replied : " I am very sorry, Ramessur, I have no thatch now in hand. I tell you what I will do, if you like ; I will put a few iron sheets over the leaks. You don't object to an iron roof do you ?"

" No," says he, we " always have them in Bengal, but with a nice ceiling to prevent us getting sun-stroke, ye know."

I looked at Rattler. His pupils were dilated and his face twitching. I wondered if he kept blistering fluid handy ; he will certainly require a course of treatment. Better perhaps take him to my bungalow for a week. Not a bad idea, and I may as well order those few stores I require. I got a Great Eastern catalogue yesterday, and I looked, it up again. Yes no doubt, which would get it. Coolie—stores, stores—coolie, coolie—stores, and my caviare, herring a la Sardines hung on a thread. I get them ; no, the coolie won the victory, and out poured such a volley, that it shook the bungalow and reverberated away in the distant hills like thunder.

The coolie did not think it anything extraordinary ; for pulling his blanket tight round him, he waddled away.

Rattler turning to me with a smile both child-like and bland, says : " Annoying creatures. Have a peg before you go ? You won't ! "

" No," I said, " I never drink so early."

" How changed you are," he replied, " a little one won't hurt you, will it ? " And I with those cussed stores still uppermost in my mind, said " perhaps not," knowing he would only take a thimbleful in a glass of water. Yes, like the Mississippi pilot, he was dry ; you might have tapped him, and you would not have got enough bile to stain a rupee.

CHAPTER X.

IT is quite true. The Buyiah class of coolie, and they are not the only one, are not very particular. You may give them a nice thatched hut, a good chung to sleep on, and make them far more comfortable than they ever were in their wretched apologies for huts in Bengal. You go to the expense of pucca wells, putting down Norton's tube pumps, and provide such water as in their wildest dreams they never dreamt of in their own country. Are your comforts appreciated? Not in the least. He gets his water from any dirty hollow, because by so doing he saves himself the trouble of going a few yards to obtain pure stuff. He is too lazy to get firewood, and burns his chung for a start; then lies on the floor; gets cold, or bron-

chitis or, congestion of the lungs, or dysentery, and costs a small fortune in medicines, rum, milk, and beef tea, to pull him round again.

When the chung is consumed he probably sacrifices a door, and supplements this with a handful of thatch from the roof. "What's the good of a door?" he says: "'Aint afraid anyone is going to run away with the family plate." So his existence progresses, getting filthier, more dropsical and lazier every day. Round comes the Government Inspectors.

Ah! these are your lines? Huts very leaky. No chungs? This won't do; and he writes in his report to Government, "Regulations not complied with. Lines very much out of repair," and so on.

In vain the Planter explains that all the lines have been re-thatched and thoroughly repaired the last cold weather and it's the fault of the coolies. The Magistrate, for they inspect, is probably a good fellow and knows all this, but what can he do? He must make his report; yes, and to give him his due he very often tones it down a little, but he can't do much. Government is inexorable: some reform is required.

I don't suppose there is any industry in the world so hampered as Tea-planting; or a more hopeful, cheery set of men than Planters. Blow high,

blow low, they are always the same: it's very hard. The yearly coolie bill is a heavy item in the expenditure, and very often at the end of the year, if you have been unfortunate enough to get a bad class of coolies among your importations, have very little to show for it. Get a certain class and you can do very little for them; they turn up their noses at food cooked for them, they won't go into hospital; what will they do? I will tell you—they will come up night after night and clamour for advances. You can certainly get rid of them by sending 3 months' pay and a certificate from a medical man to say they are unfit for the work of a Tea Garden. But this is cold comfort if you have a large batch, and to say the least, very expensive. It's the fortune of war,—they were all imported, and to begin with, brought a little cholera into the factory, which carried off some 30 of your best coolies, for cholera always selects the finest for her victims.

Careless, one will remark, to let them in. Exactly, but only last year I know of two batches who arrived from the steamers with clean bills of healths, and, to say, no need for segregation. In both cases cholera broke out and carried off some 40 souls or more, and debilitated nearly twice as many.

Nobody's fault; the Planter bears the loss, only

another nail. You report it to the magistrate. Out he comes, and says, "shocking depravity, will make enquiries," and rides away, and as far as you are concerned here the affair stops.

The magistrate is the only one that benefits; he draws his travelling allowance. I for one am perfectly sick of the emotional twaddle about coolies; one would imagine that the Planter is antagonistic to the very labor that works his garden. A great reform is needed; trust more to the Planter and worry him less; give him more power over his coolies, and only interfere when they are badly treated, starved, and not paid. Then I think the Inspector's billet would be a sinecure, and like me, he would have to time to write a book.

An amusing yarn is told of an Inspector of labourers in olden days. He was inspecting a garden, and his knowledge of the language was limited; all he said to the coolies was in a loud stentorian voice, "Chung Hai?" "Chung Hai?" The coolies took him for a Padre sahib, or a member of the Salvation Army. Another Inspector used to say, "I can always judge the health of a garden by the jackalls. If they are a wretched, thin looking lot, no need to go any further, but if those you come across are plump, then look out;" but he was a sportsman.

CHAPTER XI.

I AM now going to describe characters I have met with, likewise introduce a few fancy sketches to enliven the work up. I trust nobody will be so foolish as to get their shirts out at imaginary likenesses. If they do, I can't help it, for I have not spared myself.

Allow me to introduce to you our hopeful gent, as nice a little fellow as ever walked round the hoe. He was always hopeful, and only too glad to see you if you called on him : he was one of the few scandal never touched, and was deservedly popular wherever he went. Did you arrive at his Bungalow sick, nothing was too good for you ; he would prescribe a few remedies till the doctor arrived, for they don't always live in the next

street : he came from a family of doctors, and knew a good deal about treating ordinary cases.

" Yes," he would say, taking you by the button-hole and probably pulling a button off, " not doing very well this year, doctor ; blight, short rainfall, and a heavy sick list," at which I would wince, " have thrown me a bit behind. But it will be all right next year." Slowly remarking, " I will just drain No 10, and get up the sub-soil red earth, you know ; and I shall cut down that old Tea, manure it and give a 10 null-hoe. I shall prune the rest at 2 feet 6, and give it a fifteen null," and adding, " those coolies will be better next year ; it's their first year up, you know, and they are a trifle dropsical and debilitated. I will be easy on them now, and you said, doctor, they would be very fit next year."

As I ride away, I think, will they ? Does that next year ever come. Not always, in some cases, and in others never ; for worn out with the climate, and weary of waiting for that profit which comes too late, hopes disappointed, worried with coolies, badgered by Government, the merry Planter sinks into that narrow space, into which we must all go, sooner or later.

Hic jacet ; he who came out with such hopes, with such spirits and glowing prospects, who wrote

those amusing letters home to his friends, and as he sent his yearly box of Tea, said, " I am getting on ; won't be long before I take a trip home to see you all again : perhaps next year " This is no exaggeration ; let's hope it's the exception, and that there are bright prospects in store for the the Planter in future.

Chapter XII.

THE Medical gent is a curious specimen, at first sight, you are not certain who you have called in; for he might be anything, from the proprietor of a menagerie to a travelling showman. Of a heavy build and comfortable appearance, with his neat-fitting white clothes and dropsical leggings, you wonder where you have met him, and suddenly recollect it must have been at the Agricultural Hall or at the Christmas cattle-shows near the fat pig's pen. Yes; as he waddles into your bungalow and advances with elephantine playfulness up to you to feel your pulse, your heart sinks, and you are sorry you sent for him.

"Ah! let me look at your tongue. You are a trifle bilious;" in vain you say. "Nothing of the kind,

Doctor, I am just a little out of sorts. Think it's the weather."

"Nonsense," he replies, as he proceeds to open your eyes with his delicate fingers, which from the heat are not unlike over cooked sausages, and you become painfully aware of the fact, that he must have been compounding white mixture, for there is an unmistakeable smell of peppermint about his hand that there is no disguising, and he makes your eyes smart.

"Ah! I thought so. Your conjunctiva is as yellow as a guinea," and he proceeds to make up a dose that would kill a horse. He would like you to take it there and then, but this you protest against, and when he is gone, give it to your bearer and take a couple of Cockle's instead, and a dose of Seidlitz. He will probably have mixed a bottle of medicine up as well, to take three times daily, "just to curry-comb the liver up a little, you know," he says. You try a dose in a rash moment: curry-comb it up, it makes it jump, and you have to take a peg to keep it quiet.

Mullins calls again in a few days, and he is a little irritable. He has breakfasted with Nobbler and got a thick glass of beer by accident; this is a fatal occurrence. If it's anything Mullins dislikes, it is a thick glass of beer. Old residents say if he has

not got a ear for music, he has one for the sound of a cork being drawn. Most of the servants knew this weakness, and it was whispered that Mullins sometimes greased their palms; at any rate he doctored them, and servants are rather superstitious. It is breakfast-time, and several fellows have dropped in. There are a row of black bottles on the sideboard, and now the servants are begining to open them, Mullins has his eye on one who knows him, and is under treatment for spleen. Out comes the first cork, with a dullish sound. That won't do; and finds its way to Slogger, who does not notice it, his ear not being so well-trained; besides, he is having an argument with Grogler about the thickness of a rhino's hide. No. 2 is drawn—no better; that goes to our hopeful friend. The cork breaks with No. 3, and he rams it in with his finger: that goes to the military gent who is on the topic of cricket,—"Ha, used to give them some leather hunting to do, and made a row in their timber yards, by gad, Sir." No. 4; no mistake this time; the cork comes out like the crack of a breech-loader on the 1st of September. An imperceptible signal, and the bottle finds its way to the medical gent, who is radiant. But he got done in the eye once, for he was travelling with a planter, and

went into unknown regions where his eccentricities were not known, and at breakfast a bottle went off like a gun without any powder. The Khansamah brought it to Mullins, whobbling like a jelly-fish *en route;* he was totally oblivious to all signals, till Mullins, in a fit of desperation waved him off to his young friend, and said *Boro Sahib paila*, which means, the "head boss first."

"What, no beer, Mullins?"

"No, thank you, I will wait a little. My grandfather told me it was a bad thing to drink before eating anything."

But this got about, and when Mullins is struggling with a potatoe chop consisting of bits of chicken as dry as chips wrapped up in an ulster made of waxy potatoes, his host will say: "I know you don't like your beer opened till you have eaten something," with a fiendish wink, and by the time the medical gent is ready, if several fellows are present, very likely all the beer out of the well is exhausted, and he gets one from a fresh opened cask which has been standing for the last fortnight in the back verandah to prevent the beer getting mouldy. But to return to our story. He had breakfasted with Nobbler, and by accident got a bad glass of beer, and coming on to you in the afternoon, he is a trifle irritable. Catching sight of

your bottle covered with dust, and only one dose out of it, he thinks he has got you: but he 'aint. Planters were not born late on a Saturday afternoon. He says, "not taken much of my medicine. What's the use of wasting it?" Wonderful, how careful he is of your drugs all at once. "Oh," says Grogler, "that's the 3rd bottle I have had; the first did me so much good, that I got the compounder to make a little more up," and the medical gent rides away growling. Give him a tough fowl, a thick glass of beer, a torn mosquitoe net and one thin pillow, it's then a dangerous experiment to ask him to prescribe for you in the morning.

I recollect one other medical gent who came out here, but did not stay long. He did not understand the planters, nor they him; he was clever enough and had taken honors at Edinburgh, and was strongly recommended by the professors. He had been used to trim wards, deft nurses, where he only had to write a prescription and it was made up, give an order and it was carried out: how different he found it out here. Fancy him standing in the back verandah of a bungalow,—time 6 A.M. A good looking military sort of man, rather inclined to *embonpoint*, dressed in knickerbockers, whose legs would have delighted Oscar Wilde, they are so very æsthetic, is smoking a

Manilla and introducing our Edinburgh graduate to about 30 coolies enveloped in blankets, and looking about as wretched as they possibly can. Says he, "Here you are doctor ; just run the mover and prescribe for them." The doctor selects a bulky looking coolie, and makes a careful clinical examination of him. He taps him, and he percusses him, and sounds him ; he looks at his tongue, he turns his eyelids up, he turns them down ; he takes his temperature, and finally comes to the conclusion he is suffering from anæmic dropsy. "You don't mean to say so," says our military friend ; "I should not have thought it. Are you quite certain. Had you better not give him another run over. You have only been 20 minutes, and we have only 30 cases to go into, and I have nothing to do in the mornings. Take your time, take your time, it seems rather a complicated case. Had no idea he was suffering from dropsy ; should have thought he was suffering from moxodæma, by Jove!" and he puffed furiously at his cheroot.

"Perhaps I had better write a prescription," says the wretched doctor.

"Perhaps it would not be a bad idea," says the Captain, and he writes : "*Diet.*—The first thing in the morning a little sago and milk sweetened with white sugar, and about one hour or so after-

wards, two eggs beaten up with a little rum. At 11, some well-cooked rice with fresh vegetables, ghee, dhâl, and condiments, with the breast of a fowl; at four, a basin of warm milk and a piece of bread; about seven, some arrowroot with plenty of milk and a little port-wine." The Captain has been looking over his shoulder as he wrote.

"Anything else, doctor, you could recommend?"

"Well, yes, I think I would make him bathe in Tidman's sea salt, it will give a vigor to his limbs, and improve his muscles."

Here is Punch again. *Scene*—the inside of a coffee-room and a commercial traveller, who has just had a successful round, is ordering his breakfast.

"Get me a fried sole, a couple of devilled kidneys, some grilled ham, two light boiled eggs, hot buttered toast, roll and coffee.

"E'es," answers the waiter, "anything else you would like."

"Well, get me a sweet omelet to follow up with."

The waiter looked at him and says: "Where's the likes of you been accustomed to these sort of things. You will just get what you are used to—heggs and bacon." So, answered the Captain, give him what he is accustomed to: steel mixture, dhâl and rice.

The doctor goes on; the Captain walks up and

down as if he was on parade, and at last the doctor has waded through the whole thirty cases, and a little wearily says, "now I will write the prescriptions in the book and the dispenser can make them up. The sun is getting warm, I want to be off."

"Very sorry," answers the Captain, "but I got a note from him last night, to say his grandmother had got toothache, and he was going to stay at home to try and ease it, and sent up here for a little creosote oil; would you, just for once, mind making of them up yourself? You will find everything there," waving his hand to a dirty wooden almirah. "Excuse me, I must be off to my hoe; good-bye."

Our young Esculapius felt depressed. He opened the almirah and began to look for what he wanted. He commenced by cutting his hand against a compound Jalap powder bottle, which had been broken off at the neck, and a bazar bill did duty for a stopper. Next he got hold of the measure glass and smeared himself with carbolic oil, for the Captain had been doctoring his favourite fox terrier that morning. Then he got hold of the scales, and it took him half-an-hour to adjust them, and when he had done so, he could not find the ipecacuanha he was going to use, and finally he knocked down a bottle of

assofætida that had been laying *perdu* for years. The almirah was low and he had to stoop down; this brought his pricklyheat out, for the sun was now beating in strongly, and he rose to put his helmet on and knocked his head; this made him use unparliamentary language: the coolies, too, began to wink at each other, as if they were having a fine time of it. But a change came over their countenance, for the doctor heard La Fille de Madame Angot being whistled, and looking up, there stood the Captain smiling and gay.

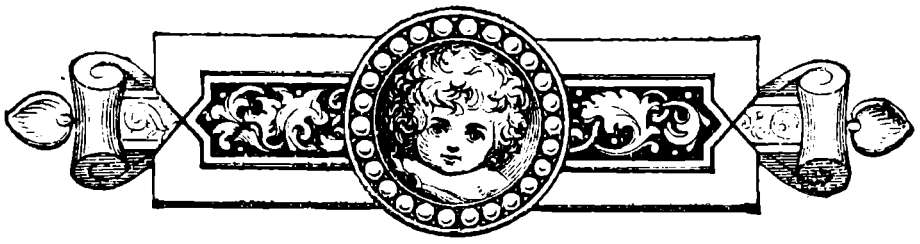
"What, not done yet? Must apologise for leaving you. Ha! but you see; ah! business must be attended to; ah! but we will soon polish them off. What an earth are you doing with those medicines? These are what you want," pointing to a lot of black beer bottles, which the doctor had thought contained kerosine oil.

"You see, ah! I always keep my medicines in solution;" and hastily pulling the cork out of one, he spilt about a pint of white mixture over the doctor's clothes, and evidently, from the smell, the worthy Captain had not spared the peppermint.

"Very sorry, 'pon my soul. Beg pardon, had no idea the cork was in so loose."

The gallant gentleman proved a quick and

accurate dispenser, for with the dexterity of an American barman, he dosed the whole thirty, now handing one a glass of castor oil, now giving another a dose of white mixture, then running in a go of steel mixture, finished up with a flourish as he poured about 2 drachms of compound jalap powder into the dropsical man, he says, "That's the way to do it," and in about 5 minutes the coast was clear. Our martial dispenser then indulged in a glass of beer, and the doctor rode off, leaving an odour of peppermint behind him worse than the pit of any theatre, for he had sent his clothes on and had no change.



CHAPTER XIII.

I WAS sitting in my Bungalow one afternoon, for business was slack, and there was not much doing. I also felt rather dull, and the time seemed a long way off before I should see old England again : the next year did not come. Suddenly I heard the sounds of horse's hoofs coming rapidly up the carriage drive. A patient ; I ran to look. Yes, there could be no mistake, somebody coming to have a tooth out, or corn extracted ; so hastily rushing into my bedroom, I brushed my hair, threw a little lavender water over my handkerchief, seized the last number of the *Lancet*, and tried to look as professional as possible. Up rode a neat and natty looking gentleman and dismounted. I sent his horse to the stable, and

politely asked him to step in, and offered him a peg. He said, rather shortly, "I will wait a minute or two, no hurry, ye know," and carefully dusting a chair, sat down, laying his thick bamboo stick and topi with mathematical preciseness on the table. He was taciturn and not inclined for conversation, and looked unhappy, but he eyed the whisky bottle. I was sorry I had not read the *Englishman* that morning, for it's as well to keep yourself *en courant* with the market, for your planter is a wily gentleman, and will catch you, and have you on a piece of toast if you don't look out. For instance, should you meet Tavish, who will say—"Had a sale!" you falling into the trap and thinking it's a good one, answer—"allow me to congratulate you."

He will very likely respond—"Keep your congratulations to yourself," and as you ride away, think—"liver again." But had I taken up the *Englishman* that morning, I should have seen Tavish's sale at 8 annas 4 pie. No; he did not want sympathy, he wanted somebody to round on; luckily his agents lived so far away. After that I always glance through the sales before starting on my rounds.

I now took up a Burmah and proceeded to light it and threw the match on the floor. Good-

ness gracious! What had I done? This seemed to rouse him, and he glared angrily at me. I thought it best to soothe him; he was evidently suffering from excitement, and from my previous experience of this class of patients, humouring to some extent paid best. So I said softly: "Don't trouble, no fear of burning the old barn down." "Can't be too careful," he responded, severely, and rising, picked the match off the floor and carried it out as tenderly as he would have done a baby. Better be careful, thinks I, and proceeded to remove his stick, but put it down again, as I saw him returning. He was more contented, and sat down, but his eye caught the stick. I had not laid it quite straight. He frowned, took it up, gave it a polish with his handkerchief and set it on the table. I again pressed him to have a peg or a cup of tea, but he answered sharply: "Plenty of time, what's the use of worrying a fellow," and he relapsed into silence.

I began running over in my mind the best treatment for him and if he would stand cupping or not, when suddenly he rose, and made a clutch, not at my throat, but the bottle. Thirsty, after all, I thought, and was proceeding to uncork a soda-water bottle, when he waved me off, and taking out his handkerchief gave that unfortunate bottle

such a polishing that would have delighted the heart of any old furniture dealer. He rubbed it up, rubbed it down, rubbed it round the sides, till I began to tremble, for it was the last bottle of green seal I had in the Bungalow ; he finished his polishing, extracted the cork, cut it straight, gave a final rub, set the bottle down and was calm and collected : those wretched stores seemed further off than ever. He did not think he had done anything out of the way. In a pleasant tone he said "Now, doctor, I *will* have a peg. He never touched on Tea, and I had been told he was very fond of shop—must not believe reports one hears. He started about the franchise and said : "Have you read Gladstone's last speech ; a splendid piece of oratory, and the troops have nearly reached Kartoum."

I replied, "I had not noticed the above news," when he said, "What a fellow you must be, you evidently don't read the papers." Not a word of shop passed his lips, and after getting me to put my name down for a raffle for a lathe, he asked me to call for his pony and mounted and rode away. I called for a cup of tea, lit another Burmah, and thought of the old proverb—"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched."

This gentleman went home for a change not

long ago, when a curious adventure happened to him.

"You see, I arrived in England, and after a very short stay in London went home to my people, who were delighted to see me, ye know. I recollect the first night I arrived; we had a light supper at 9 and went to bed. Yes," he said "a bit of bread and cheese and two thin slices of bologna sausage, with a glass of table beer, followed by family prayers are but a weak substitute for the Alhambra and an oyster supper afterwards at Scott's. I tried to go to sleep but could not; the bed was luxurious. What was it? I shut my eyes and counted sheep going through a gate, as recommended to do by my family doctor in Assam, who used to say, "Better than any sleeping draught," but I have my doubts; "be fast asleep before you have got to 20." But this prescription failed, and I gave it up; after counting to 400 I was wide awake; I was rather sorry, I had not a wee drappie in my flask.

We had had lots of fun coming home, and the few days I rested in London to get a pea-jacket made and buy some paper collars, went out somewhere every night, so now felt a trifle depressed. "What's to be done? I didn't like waking my father up. I wonder if I could slip out to the Ram's Head, have a night cap and a smoke, But he gave

up all hopes when it flashed across his mind that the door was locked and bolted. He looked out of the window, but the drop was too far, and he did not like to negociate a descent by the water pipe. I will risk it; so putting on his pea-jacket over his night-shirt and placing a Tam-O-Shanter on his head, with the night light in his hand, he proceeded out, but did not go far and returned. Yes, he who had faced a mob of infuriated coolies and challenged the lot; he who had mounted the most vicious horses, felt nervous. He entered his bed-chamber and refreshed himself by brushing his ivories, and hastily putting the tooth glass into his pocket, sallied out again. He proceeded under easy way till he reached his father's room and he gave a knock, but a cold sweat came over him when he heard the click of a revolver, and a stern voice asking who is there? "It's only me, its only your own James; I have got such a fit of indigestion I can't sleep; it must have been the Bologna," and he gave a fearful groan. His worthy parent arose, after a little delay, during which time James wished he had put on his trousers for the wind was blowing up-stairs on to the landing, though he was well-protected above with the pea-jacket, yet the night-shirt was short, for he had grown since he had left home

and, of course, abroad, wore pyjamas. But these latter looked too dissipated for a quiet family, so he had raked some old sarks up he left behind some 12 years ago.

The door now opened, and his father appeared, not with the key of the side-board, but a lump of sugar smelling strongly of peppermint worse than the 3rd class carriage of any excursion train. "Here you are, my boy, this is an excellent remedy;" but James jibbed at the family recipe worse than a horse put in harness for the first time, and his heart sank within him, his legs trembled and his knees knocked together. "Oh, thanks, very much, but my doctor in Assam cautioned me against peppermint; he said the results might be disastrous."

"Try a little soda and rhubarb or one of Wyaths' soda and mint tablets. They are excellent, and will give you relief immediately."

"Don't trouble," says James, with a wink: "Perhaps the slightest sensation of whisky in a wine-glass of water would relieve me."

"Very well," answers his excellent parent.

"I will go myself," said James, "give me the key, and I will slip it under your door as I return."

"But," says the paternal, with a grim smile, "you are hardly clothed sufficiently."

"It's all right," said he impatiently.

"Can you find it?

"You bet," for James had taken most careful bearings when he saw the cellaret locked up, with longing eyes. So taking the key, off he went, mixed himself a stiff glass, which he drank, and hastily putting four fingers into the tooth-glass, returned, put the key under the door and went to bed, not before he finished the other peg, as he was afraid the indigestion might return. The next day, to be on the safe side, he bought a bottle of old Tom and wrapped it up in a knicker-bocker stocking, determined to be on the right side next time.

Chapter XIV.

ANON planters burst into matrimony. You will notice a man getting very proper, and he begins to enlarge on the joys of a married life; yes, he will do it. So he writes a letter home to that sweet little girl he used to be so spoony on, or he meets some young lady out here, in which case, perhaps, he is better off Yes, he forgets that some years have passed since he sat under the apple tree in the orchard with Betsey Jane and made daisy chains. He goes down to Calcutta and meets his *fiancée* on the steamer, and is nearly getting into a row for going up to a pretty little thing in white muslin and pink.

"Beg a thousand pardons: thought you were

Betsey Jane," and he is introduced to a sweet looking party in blue spectacles, who frowns at him, thinking he is beginning badly and will have to be put straight. She presents him with a pamphlet on woman's rights, and his happiness is complete.

Another gent, who is well off and owns a private garden, thinks it's about time he married, but he has no one he is sweet on at home, so waits his opportunity. This occurs through a charming young lady coming out to her relations: he falls in love, she reciprocates his affections, and for once, the course of true love runs smoothly: the wedding takes place and they settle down.

He furnishes his Bungalow in first rate style buys carriages, horses, plate, gets up good servants, and they start on the broad path together. "Its no use getting too much," she says, and with a playful hand begins to stop his reckless expenditure. "We shall be going home next year," and he not wishing to damp her faithful ardour, replies "Yes, love, next year or the year afterwards. I think you can manage to exist till that time, and then we will go home and take a marine residence on the banks of the Thames, and I will scull you about, and we will have picnics on Monkey Island and forget about Assam. Yes,

next year; and you may as well ask your people to keep their eyes open for the sort of cottage we want. Mind, we will have our poultry, cow, pigeons and pigs. I intend to cure my own bacon; no more anæmic eggs for me," and he smacked his lips at the thought of it, and in the exuberance of the moment, gave his wife a kiss, and rushed out to see if there was a flush coming on.

Two years glide away and he seems no nearer the "home-cured." "Next year," he says cheerfully: Do you go to see him, you are filled with envy, he has every thing so nice. His table is perfection, and she gives him such charming little surprises in the shape of tarts and creams and jellies; does a little amateur cooking with a kerosine stove and produces such dishes, the like of which he never dreamt of when a batchelor. He has a good time of it, and wonders he never married before. Then she cuts and sews all his papers, opens his correspondence and helps him in a hundred and one little things; sees his slippers are aired every day so he should not get cold in his feet, and looks after him like a wife does. Sometimes he gets little surprises, when he comes home, and finds his pet bed he has had for years, stained with black varnish, which makes it look like a trestle;

but this is a trifle, and, as he says, in a melancholy tone, " I don't mind the furniture being done, you might have left the bed alone."

" Oh, nonsense," she says, " you must be fashionable.

Yes, as he sits down to his breakfast table glittering with fresh cut flowers, and instead of that famous stew he used to have consisting of joints of a tough *murgy* chasing slices of waxy potatoes round a greasy pool, with buoys here and there in the shape of pepper corns, he has a famous stew, the basis of which is hare soup and claret. The old time honored potatoe chops are forever banished, and light oyster patties and delightful mayonaises take there place. He revels in fresh cream and frollicks over pastry as light as love, as a scarcastic friend of mine said once as somebodys. So time slips away, and the wifie is beginning to suffer a little from want of society of her own sex. True she sees a lady now and then, but they are like angels visits, few and far between. She would like to go to a flower show or a picnic, which latter she does indulge in, but after sitting down on a red ants nest, finds that even picnics have their drawbacks out here. She finds herself unconciously beating the Trois Temps with her pretty little feet, as hubby is reading out the last Tea

sale. She is loosing her color and actually her Ayah pulled a grey hair out that morning. She is suffering from the climate and wants a change ; her appetite is not so good as it was, and she does'nt care for lawn tennis Once a year she gets a dance, but, is it ? You might as well compare a Parisian dress with a country one. A dance takes place in a small room to the music of a wheezy piano, also suffering from the climate, and her partners are nor quite as good as she used to get in Park Lane : they, too, are suffering from ennui and don't waltz with that agility they did. Oh ! for one night at Willis's rooms with the Hungarian band playing the Blue Danube Waltz ; just then her partner puts his foot through her last new dress from home, and her cup is full.

The wifie endeavours to take great interest in Tea and listens patiently to her husband's conversation about fermentation and valuations, brokers and agents, and only wishes she could go down and have it out with these naughty men. But its nair good ; he finds his better half not looking so well. She, poor thing, struggles bravely on. She won't go till hubby does. At last the family practitioner is sent for. He sees at a glance that muddy complexion, eyes without any lustre, lassitude, loss of appetite, and a feeling as if it was

an exertion to do any thing. Yes, nothing for it but a change, a sea voyage and trip to England will invigorate the frame and restore the impoverished blood ; so it is settled, and her faithful swain takes her down to Calcutta and sees her off.

" I will join you next year," he says merrily, and back he comes to his garden. You go and visit him afterwards and find him sending a draft off for £50 at 1s. *7d.* " No joke," says he. His jolly little wife writes and says she is as careful as she can be " but you know, dear, things have gone up in price since you were at home, it's so long ago." No need to tell him that, poor fellow, its only rubbing it in. He knows this perfectly well, and it will be longer yet, so he closes his draft book with a sigh and you proceed to breakfast somewhat changed. He has tried to keep up the flowers, but has not time to arrange them, and his chowkeedar's ideas are a little different to what his wife's were. He misses the savoury stew and the pastry, and wearily picking at the leg of an ancient fowl, he says, " I have been reading Shakespeare, and I was very much struck with what Hamlet says, ' Sometimes things turn out stale, flat, and unprofitable.' Of course he was alluding to a tea garden."

" Yes, matrimony is very jolly. It reminds me of a man who was hanged and then resuscitated, and

afterwards questioned about it. 'Oh,' say he, 'the turning hoff warn't bad, a nasty crick to your neck, but the coming too was someut hawful.' Like wedlock, the turning off aint bad, but when you lose your wife through ill-health, and she has to reside at home, the coming back to potato chops is something awful. I have seen knowing old boys out here, for instance, my Valpairaiso friend, when I have been enlarging on matrimony and all its advantages, lay his finger delicately along his nose and wink knowingly. But he has never tasted the sweets of fish-pies, and had his favorite pet bed stained black; no, they are out of it."

CHAPTER XV.

OF course, we have a comic gent up here ; the district would not be complete without him. When you first see him, you can't help smiling : there is an unmistakeable look of comicality about him that is perfectly irresistible. He makes you laugh without opening his mouth, and I dare say he often thought me very rude for doing so, but I could not help it. With a comb and a piece of curling paper, he can send you into convulsions.

The first day I met him, he took me on one side, and in a mysterious way said, "Have you come across any entozoa up here, because you will find them very common among the coolies from the amount of filth and unripe fruit they eat, and dirty water when they get a chance to drink

it." I gave him a look intending to annihilate him on the spot, but it did not ; and I said, " I think, Wilmot, I know my profession."

" I dare say you do," he said, with a merry twinkle : " I would not imply that for one moment. But all I know is, I should have been very glad of the hint when I first came out."

I subsequently found him quite right, and Keating would have made a small fortune if he had started an emporium out here for his celebrated worm tablets. I afterwards got to know my friend much better, and when he rode 30 miles in a hot sun and pulled me through a bad attack of fever, I saw there was something behind that comical way of his which bespeaks a generous heart, and thinking of others more than himself. He is one of the finest whips up here, and many are the hair breath escapes he has had. I only recollect him getting badly hurt once, and that was not the fault of his driving. He was going along fast to see a coolie who had an attack of the sun. Yes, Wilmot did not spare his cattle if there was suffering humanity to be relieved. " I can't help it if I screw my Turcoman ; plenty more where this came from, for Hart & Co. can always supply me," and he dashed furiously along the road. He had nearly reached his destination and was already polishing

his cupping machine up, when the gallant steed gave a shy at a coolie who suddenly rose up in the Tea. Crack went the shaft and away went the buggy. Wilmot threw the cupping instrument at the coolie's head and tried to pull up ; he could not ; so he steered into a ditch, the trap turned over, and he was pitched out. I saw him two hours afterwards ; he still had the merry twinkle, and said—"I have come to grief at last, my collar-bone is gone." I bound him up, but he was very particular, and said "I think you have got the axillary pad too tight ; its pressing on the artery." I however felt his pulse and told him it was beating steadily, and he need be under no alarm.

Then he surveyed himself in the glass and was fairly satisfied, though he said "not quite up to Saville Row." He fancied he had a rib broken, but I could not find it, and after he got home, a brother practioner, as smart a little surgeon as ever stepped out of Charring Cross, tried, but he could not. Then his native doctor had a go. Yes ; he soon found it. I think he was either flattering Wilmot, or the rib was impacted.

Numerous are the anecdotes about Wilmot, and they would fill a book. I have not time to mention them all, but will do one or two. My hand is

beginning to tire, and before I have finished I am afraid I shall have to invest in one of Pulvermacher's electric bands to strengthen the muscles. He was one of the coolest men I ever met; nothing ever put him out; he reminds me of a celebrated Surgeon who was doing an important operation about the neck—removing a tumour. He was explaining the operation as he went on, step by step; "What you must look out for is the carotid artery, or you may wound it, as it's in immediate relation"—at that moment he cut it, and a jet of blood gushed out. With the greatest *sang froid* in the world, he put his finger on it, and said "In which case you proceed to tie it," and he did so, and finished the operation successfully, too. The Irishman did not come out quite so well; he was steering a yacht along a very rocky coast. "Do you know all the rocks about here?" says the anxious owner "Shure I do," replies our Hibernian friend; just then the steamer struck with a fearful crash. "Ah! by Jabers, that's one of em." Yes, Wilmot was cool. I can fancy him on a field of battle, amid shot and shell, doing an amputation and whistling the Last Rose of Summer. He is a dangerous man to try and take a rise out of; though you might have the laugh at him, he would not forget you.

One fine day you would be breakfasting out, and who will turn up but Wilmot, about 4 P. M. He would say, with a merry twinkle, "Going my way; will be happy to give you a lift, and in you jump, glad to escape a ride in the hot sun. So telling your syce to lead your tat home, you take your seat by his side. He is radiant and seems to have some joke which he keeps all to himself. Off you start merrily and at a good pace. You exclaim—"Mare rather fresh to-day."

"Oh, no," says your comic driver, flicking her up with the whip and making her lay her ears back in a playful manner; she is only running freely up to the bit." Yes, you think, a little freer than you like.

"What is it? Your nerves don't seem in such good order to-day."

At that moment you see a gharry crawling along in the middle of the road in front of you. You say, "Look out, here's a gharry."

"Oh, is there?" replies he, taking out his glasses and polishing them up and adjusting them on to his nose. "So there is; what a strange thing to see in Assam," and drives rapidly on. They were fast approaching, he was frightened out of his wits, but not Wilmot. They got within a few yards. The syce called out, the gharry

pulls slightly to one side, and Wilmot goes by like a flash of lightening ; you could not have put a rupee between his wheel and the gharry wheel, while the other wheel of the buggy was suspended over a yawning ditch for a few seconds. He was astounded, and a cold perspiration broke out over him. Not so the driver, for turning to him, he said "I will ask you not to lean so heavy on that far side when we are near a ditch, you might upset the balance. I will trouble you for a light."

So they went on shaving gharries, negociating shaky bridges at the same pace, now plunging into a herd of buffaloes, never slacking and tossing about like a ship at sea. The voyage from Calais to Dover would be a treat in comparison. They are nearing their destination, and the planter gave a sigh of relief ; let me get once more on *terra firma*, and never again will I try to take a rise out of a doctor ; this, and many other vows did he make. Suddenly a frightful thought entered his mind. Yes ; he remembered giving orders to remove a rotten old bridge and put down large earthen-ware pipes

Would it be done? His agony was intense. Then he solaced himself, "Of course it must be finished." At that moment they turned a corner, and in the distance he saw the fresh earth thrown

up in heaps, and a fearful chasm yawning like a new made grave open to receive him: they had put the pipes down and forgotten to fill in the earth. No time to lose, they were going 10 miles an hour. In a ghastly tone he says, "Look out, for God's sake, look out, doctor, there's no bridge, and I am putting pipes down. Pull up!"

"Oh, it's all right," says Wilmot, "I won't hurt your beastly old pipes; will pay for them if I break them," and whipping up Susannah, away they went. The planter gave himself up for lost, and clutched the buggy tight with both hands and clenched his teeth; and the driver, he put the reins in the clip for a minute while he lighted another cheroot.

They were nearing the place; it looked ugly. It was three feet wide and six feet deep, with the pipes at the bottom. In another moment they are up to it, he lifts the mare with the reins, gives her a touch with the whip says "Now old girl." She cocks her ears and goes at it; there is a crash, a jolt, and away spins the buggy again with its occupants all safe. It was a grand piece of tooling and even our friend, whose nerves were considerably shattered, could not help exclaiming—"By Jove, doctor, magnificently done!" They rapidly drove up through the garden, shaved the

gate-post and landed under the porch. The doctor would not get out, he had a few miles further to go, and he hated delaying on the road. So hastily swallowing a cup of tea, he drove away, while the passenger took a strong peg and resolved never to drive with him again.

"Splendid driver, but cuts it too fine for me." And as Wilmot drove away, he shouts out—"Hope I did not break your pipes."

Wilmot was coming out from home with his wife and niece. At some port they put into *en route*, they went on shore, and were getting into the boat to return to the steamer, which was whistling vigorously, when he suddenly recollected he had forgotten to set set his watch by the town hall clock. So he says—"You go on, I will catch you up before you reach the steamer," and he hastily left the quay. They proceeded on board, no sign of the doctor; they whistled furiously, yet he did not come: his amiable wife was in despair, and his pretty niece wrung her hands. "Do stop," exclaimed every one to the Captain, for he was very popular on board.

"I will give him a quarter of an hour, and can stay no longer; we are behind time now," says the Captain.

The quarter of an hour passed and the steamer

began to move, when suddenly a black speck appears in the horizon. Glasses are got out, and at last they discover the doctor, who is seated high up in the prow of a boat looking as if he was just coming out for a little deep sea fishing, and not to catch a steamer. She proceeded very slowly, only keeping way ; on came the boat and there was Wilmot as unconcerned as possible, and as he approached, he kissed his hand to the Captain, and holding his watch up, shook his head. Yes, there he was, as cool as a cucumber, smoking a cheroot, with his straw hat placed negligently on the back of his head to give his temples the full benefit of the sea breeze. The boat drew near ; Wilmot got up, unstrapped and put on a mackintosh so as to avoid the spray as they ran alongside the steamer, for he was a careful man, and did not want to spoil his suit—navy blue, trimmed with black braid, and very becoming he looked in it. Ascending quietly up the ladder with a merry twinkle in his eyes, and carrying a bag of oranges under one arm and a bundle of plantains under the other, he kissed his wife, calmed his niece and said, "Sorry to have delayed you, Captain, but your time is a trifle fast," and he disappeared down the gangway to his cabin to enjoy his recent purchases.

CHAPTER XVI.

HE was a cute gent. Cuttler was all there. Where he came from no body seems to know. He was as keen as a razor, and glided into our midst as quietly as he glided out again, but not without leaving a little trail behind in the shape of a share in a rising young Tea garden which he made himself. In a few years he did the trick, but how, I can't tell you. He reminded me of the Major in Dombey & Son, Sly Joe, devilish sly. Yes, he was close, and difficult to draw. You might have inserted the longest Norton's Tube Pump down his throat without extracting enough water to shave by. When I used to ask him how it was done, he would close one eye and say —"My dear boy, we live in an age of progress.

My health is rather delicate, and my worthy parents entreated me not to stay out longer in this dreadful climate than I could help. Without being personal," he added "Assam is all very well for great hulking fellows of the Claimant build, with constitutions like horses, bought up on fat bacon and cabbages; but, my dear fellow, for one like myself, nursed in strawberries and cream, who was taken out daily into the park for an airing, even when a youngster, the less of this sort of country I see, the better," and catching hold of me, he whirled me round in the deux temps and nearly gave me a fit.

He soon got an appointment, and then another, and finally took charge of a garden while the owner went home for a year or two, at the end of which time he came out again, and everybody wondered, except Cuttler, what he was going to do, and the pumps were again brought into requisition but without any effect. He would exclaim carelessly, "Except its something very big, I won't take another appointment." Numerous were the councils of war held over him, and the old cronies were in desperation. You heard it remarked that he was a sly dog; "Dear me! only just found this out?" All at once it came out that he was going to take charge of his own garden.

"Own garden;" no one knew that he had one. Yes, he had been quietly opening out a nice young estate in conjunction with two partners who dropped from the skies; like the apple that was attracted by the earth, so were they attracted by his brilliancy of speech, his affable manner, his wit, and they recognised in him a sharp business man, well abreast of the times, and when Cuttler's old grandfather left him a nice little legacy, they joined hands and went in.

Cuttler, who got the land and made the garden, and displayed such energy, good sound knowledge and common sense, combined with such forethought and skill that made the seniors mad with envy. Among others, our martial Captain heard of this wonderful garden, and being interested himself, for he was trying as well to solve the weary problem, made up his mind to get hold of Cuttler and see how the thing was worked. So the Captain determined to kill an old lame sheep he had running about, which he had bought cheap from a coolie doctor when he went for a change on the river, besides sent to the Bazar for champagne and a bottle of sherry; then writing a friendly chit to Cuttler asked him to come and dine and stay the night. Cuttler received the chit, but he was suspicious; he smelt

a rat. "What can he want me for? I owe him nothing, and he can't be wishing to get a small loan out of me."

Winking to himself, however, he decided to go, and in the afternoon he ordered out his dog-cart and high-stepping nag, for he hated riding or driving screws. "Don't see the fun of wasting time on the road," he said. "If a horse can't take me a few miles at a hand-gallop," for he was a light weight, "he is not worth his corn. Slow riding and driving is very well for nervous people and fat men," glancing at me, "but it don't suit this child."

I used to tremble when he wanted to borrow a dâk, for I am rather particular about my steeds poor as they are, and don't care to lend my hacks out. No; 16 stone up, heavy roads, and plenty of work, leave very little spare time to loan them.

Cuttler climbed into his dog-cart, and doing the 10 miles under the hour, drew up at Ilfracombe Lodge with a flourish, for this was the name of the Captain's shanty. The Captain was ready for him. "Ha! glad to see you: haw! Have a glass of sherry," pouring him out one of his best, a heavy sweet wine. But he was too knowing a dog, he had very painful recollections of Assam sherry, and many a heartburn he suffered from,

and numerous the rupees he invested in, those soda and mint tablets to put him right.

"Ah, what, won't take a glass of sherry; then, have a peg, a soda and brandy? "Thanks," replied Cuttler, wondering what he wanted to draw him on. But not a word about Tea: he discussed town and the west end, for it was whispered that the gallant gentleman had blue blood in his veins, and that a 15th cousin on his father's side was related to the 25th cousin of a lord, though only a Scotch one, but better than nothing. Then he talked about the Row. "Yes, charming place," says Cuttler, "I have been there: its full of lawyers."

"Well, haw" now. Ah, I can't say I had ever met many of the legal profession in the Row. 'Pon my soul, never noticed them you see, haw. I did not go very early in the morning, not very fashionable, ah?"

Replies Cuttler, "The offices open at 9."

Then it transpired that while he was meaning Bedford Row, the Captain's thoughts were wandering to Rotten Row, and that charming young lady he used to ride up and down with, and he gave his moustache a fierce twirl.

Dinner was now served, the lame mutton turned out tough and scraggy. "Haw, don't know

what it is, but my sheep won't lay on flesh this year."

"No," says Cutter, "evidently not. Are you fond of coursing"

"Ah ; never tried it out here ; used to go in for it at home. Ah : but why ?"

"Because you would have a very good chance, I should say, if you entered these for the Waterloo Cup."

The Captain did not enter into the joke ; he was rather touchy about his mutton.

"Don't spare the wine, plenty more where this came from," waving his hand as if he had a go-down full of it ; but Cuttler was very doubtful the first sip, and he knew the brand, though the Captain had carefully removed the label and faked the wire up a little round the cork, yet there was no disguising the heavy sweet wine.

"You are not getting on," says his host.

"Very well, thank you."

"Don't you like dry wine." Got it straight from Page and Sandeman's, Pall Mall, London. My palate won't stand anything except the very best," and he swallowed a glass with great gusto, for Sim was not very plentiful with him, and when he got a chance he made the most of it. After dinner they lighted their cheroots, and the Captain

thought it was about time to begin tackling him, so taking a long pull at his cheroot, he began much in this style :

" Haw, ha ; what branch of the family do you belong to, haw ? Devonshare or Barkshire."

" Neither," answers the wily Cuttler ; " my father was a French count and my mother a Pole."

" Haw, exactly. Where is your family resident."

" No where in particular," responds Cuttler, fencing with consummate skill. They usually rent a house in Park Lane for the season, have a flat in Paris, and a house in Brunswick Square, Brighton, for the seaside."

This rather took the Captain's breath away, and he mixed himself a stiff peg of whisky and soda and sucked at his manilla. So the evening went on.

Cuttler was one of those knowing gentlemen who don't drink fair with you, and help themselves to a thimbleful under cover of the water-jug, while you are drinking your own four fingers, and the Captain thought Cuttler looked larger, and once or twice he saw two Cuttlers, and he grew bolder and bolder. At last he said, " They tell me you have a nice little garden, and you have made it very cheap ; how do you do it ?"

" You flatter me," responds Cuttler, " it has cost

a lot, I can tell you, both brains and capital combined."

He was nonplussed, and said, "At what distance do you plant your Tea," thinking he must do so very close, "so as to be economical."

"Oh," answers Cutter "12 feet apart."

"12 feet apart," says he, astonished.

"What's that for?

'Well," says Cuttler, "I will tell you, but don't repeat it for goodness sake, or everybody will be doing it, and you will spoil the game." The Captain promised faithfully not to blow the gaff.

"Now, mind, let it be a secret, and not an Assam one, for he knew Assam secrets ran out like soap suds down a gulley hole.

"Well, you see that bitch of yours had 13 pups."

"Yes," he responds, wondering what he was driving at, as he had promised them all.

"You killed 7 of them, did you not?"

"Yes,"

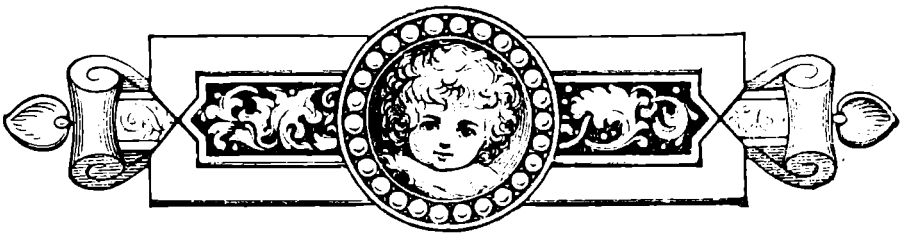
"And you are now feeding her up, so she can support the rest."

"Exactly," answer the Captain,

"Well, that's just it; you plant your Tea too close. All very well for a rich, loamy forrest soil, but now-a-days grass land is all the go, very well for small China jât. But Singlo is fashionable: and what's

the result? You plant the land too close and give the soil more than it can feed; you make no allowances, and so you go on from year to year. What you want is manure, fish manure, or bone manure: that's the straight tip, don't let it out, and I think I will be off to bed; you look rather sleepy, so good night," and away he went chuckling to himself, "That's his little game. Is it? He wants to find out how it's done. Does he? My boy, you go on with your antiquated ideas: you have had much longer experience than I have, but it won't work," and Cuttler, laying his finger gently along his nose, sought his virtuous couch, while the Captain had a bad night of it. He dreamt he was deep-hoeing, and Cuttler stood over him with a stick, and would not let him go and get a drink of water.

The next morning he was irritable and had a suspicion of headache, and his tongue was like the back of a Latin Grammar. He only played with his Chota Hazaree, and as Cuttler drove away whistling, Wait till the Clouds Roll by, he shook his fist at him, and said, "I will have it out of him yet," and retired to his back verandah, where he dosed the coolies with such determination and so much white mixture, that for a few days no sick came up.



CHAPTER XVII.

WE have, of course, up here the following gents, an I will describe them all at once: these old boys meet sometimes, discuss various topics, and air their opinions, and if it had not been for a little bird named Langridge who was present at one of these cabinet meetings, this would never have been written. He being one of those objectionable pushing youngsters, who in a few years having grasped the whole *sub cheese*, is looked on as being rather a forward young gent. "Why, he actually told me," says Tavish, "that he thought I left too much Tea on the bushes, and it would be better in the boxes. Confound him? Trying to teach his grandmother to suck eggs," and he scowled savagely.

Here they are, dinner just over: Tavish the argumentative gent, Grubbins the theorectical gent, Galvanism the haw, ha gent, and Pherson the honest old gent. They were as talkative as a party of old tabbies over afternoon tea.

"Yes," says Galvanism as he sets his glass down with an unnecessary clatter, which fails to attract either the attention of his host or the Kansamah. "Yes, the season has been a very open one."

What he meant, none of the others could understand, and thought he was trying to take a rise out of them; but Grubbins said, "I suppose, you mean as regards prices; kindly speak for yourself," and he flushed up. "Haw, I beg pardon I was alluding to the short outturn and general depression in tea. Meant no offence I'm sure. Your teas have been most favourably reported on."

"Very well," responded Grubbins, "be careful": and at that moment Tavish ordered tea to the disgust of the haw, ha gent, who kept exploring the bottom of his glass, as if he expected a fountain of Sim to spout forth; and when the Khansama came to take it away, he clutched it tightly; but no good, for Tavish was arguing with Grubbins about bone manure, and totally oblivious

to the others signals; while the honest old gent hummed a tune from La Favourita, which ran thus—"Happy and glorious, a quart among four of us." Langridge was, however, wise in his generation, and preferred a glass of Bass.

"Now," says Tavish, stirring a cup of red leaf; "we must do the trick next year."

"Yas," replies Galvanism; who had a look on his face as if he had just swallowed a bottle of pickles, and was chasing a stalk round his tea cup with his spoon. "I fancy we will be all thare next year, what do you say Pherson? By Jove if he has not gone to sleep," pouring a tea spoonful of his tea down his neck: "glad to get rid of some of it at any price."

This woke him up with a start and he exclaimed, "Inspan. Gentlemen, I have made up my mind; when you are all agreed on your verdict, wake me up," and off he went again; at which Langridge grinned like a Cheshire cat and said, "The old gentleman seems sleepy, why don't he go to bed?"

Grubbins answered "Little boys should be seen, and not heard," and nearly choked himself with a gulp of tea, for it was strong and tawny, and the cup required a good deal of deep hoeing to reach the sugar, and the cows must have

been all about calving; or it was cheese making week, for the milk had been put in with homeopathic doses. The cups were large, about the size of a French washing basin, and held quite a pint.

Says Tavish "Its our cultivation that's wrong; we don't expose the roots enough in the cold weather."

"Haw, exactly," responds Glavanism.

"My theory is, hoe deeply down the centre of your line, and pile the earth round the bushes, so when the rain comes on, you will have a natural reservoir for the water within reach of all the suckers," states Grubbins, "and at the same time, before you pile the earth round, you might put down chloride of lime, which will kill the red ants and act as an antisceptic," for Sir Joseph Lister had just been made a baronet and Grubbins was great on antisceptics, and had sent to the bazar for some carbolic acid tooth powder that very morning.

This produced a fierce argument with Tavish who was in favor of bone manure. "Not so very difficult to get it," he says, with a grim smile. "Ah, Pherson, how are you off for soddar."

Pherson only murmured out "Span," and failed to see any joke in Tavish's remark.

Then Galvanism cut in by adding "Haw, splendid idea. I recollect the old governor used to have his

orchard done so every year; but, ahem, ha; he was in favor of liquid manure," and he tried to attract the attention of the Kansamah to remove his cup; but failing to do so, upset the Tea over honest old Pherson's leg; which had the effect of making him jump up in double quick time and shout out "Too bad, assegais, by all that's holy!"

Here Landridge ventured a remark, and said "It was all rot; a 10 null hoe and manure for old and heavy pruned Tea, and fifteen null for the rest, was quite sufficient; clod hoe, ye know, and fertilise the soil; break them up the first light hoeing."

Then Grubbins asked him "If his mother knew he was out," and offered him some sweets, which he always carried about with him when he was in a married district; and said—

When I was of your age, I went to bed always at ten,
Never put on airs at all, nor aped the ways of men,
But now you call for bitter beer, and in my face do blow,
The smoke of anna Burmahs foul: Oh, I should like to know,
What would the seniors have thought of this some fifty years ago?

and telling Langridge he would find one of Captain Mayne Reid's last works in the next room, plunged into an argument with Tavish about red spider, its prevention, and cure.

"My theory is," explains Grubbins, "before plucking begins, or as soon as any symptoms of red spider appear, to light sulphur fires combined with dried cow-dung, at intervals of six feet apart, under the bushes; bound to curl them up." But Tavish was in favor of a manual fire engine and Jay's Purifier.

Galvanism, who was anxious to negociate a peg, was also in favour of Jay's Purifier.

Langridge had gone to bed, and Pherson woke up with a start and proposed whist. "Lets's have a gamble; we have had enough shop, we won't play long and have fairly high stakes. What do you say? one anna points and four annas on the rub," and the frolicksome old boys sat down to the dissipation of long whist: Tavish and Pherson against Grubbins and Galvanism.

Presently Tavish had an argument about a faced card, and the game was stopped for a quarter of an hour while Clay was consulted. Then Pherson objected to a remark; Galvanism asked Grubbins, "How he was off for soap?" which Pherson said "meant a call for trumps; and if he did that at the Park Club, he would be turned out," and Tavish joining in raised a strong argument, which Galvanism finally settled by throwing down his hand and proving he had not a single trump, which

upset all Grubbin's theories and they lost the first rub.

So the game went on with varied luck, and they indulged in a glass of negus each, which Galvanism thought was only hot water bewitched, and about 12, the game came to a termination.

Grubbins and partner got the worst of it, the northen Siva fought shy of the I. O. U.s, "Rather hae the siller." They each owed 13 annas, and the amount being made up at last with half anna stamps, they went to bed, and slept as only old boy's do.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WE have a show man in the district: Yes, we are a bit proud of our dressy gent, and not without good reason. "Very sorry," Bulrush would say, "Can't help it, runs in the family. When I was a baby, all my baby linen was pucrhased at a West-end house, and I am as well known at Pool's as you are at Grish Chunder Deys," and he would gently hum a song, for he had a splendid voice, and at birthday parties or 'Xmas gatherings, he was much sought after, for not only did he set your table off like a fine silver centre piece, but would bring the house down with The Monk.

"Oh, it runs in the family," as he sung fragments of a well-known old comic song which goes something like this—

"I belong to the uppar ten, the uppar ten, the uppar ten,
Yes, I belong to the uppar ten, the uppar ten thousand."

He was our boss rider, too, up here ; and to see him got up in the cold weather, was a caution to sore eyes : he was dazzling—a mixture of Regent Street and Houndsditch rolled into one. And as he sits nuxa, with that easy grace and confident air, only to be acquired on Hamstead Heath, your feelings rush back to the coverside, and the time when you were in the first flight with the Cotswold hounds after a mountain fox, when a leaping pole was more serviceable then the finest hunter ever foaled.

One fine day I was polishing up my instruments, for they were getting a bit rusty, when I heard the sound of a horse coming rapidly up the drive. I rushed out ; yes, no mistake, that must be Bulrush. The regulation helmet and yellow puggaree, the fashionable cut coat, the wroughty cords, the boots and tops resplendent with polish, the plated spurs, silver mounted crop, and bird's-eye scarf could belong to no one but our fancy man. I was very glad to see him, but some how or other, I had a sort of misgiving that something was going to happen. He swaggered in and said in a careless way, "Just called to have a tooth out."

I said "Certainly ; take a seat."

"Not so quick" says he. "I have had a long ride, and perhaps a small peg, or glass of sherry would not be out of place."

I was ashamed of myself in my anxiety to do business. I had forgotten my first duty to my guest.

"Don't apologise," he said, "I can quite understand your feelings," as he tasted the sherry, and put it down with about the same degree of pleasure a man does, after he has swallowed a dose of salts. I forgot the sherry was a bottle of sweet wine I had got out of the bazar a month ago for some jelly, when Nobbler had sent me a present of some bullock's feet who had died of old age.

I now proceeded to examine the tooth which was situated rather far back; and, as I rammed my sausage-like fingers into his mouth,—forgot, I had just been applying some friars' balsam to a cut, but he did not; and said, "Dear me, you have left a taste of drugs in my mouth worse then any chemist's shop. Do you think you can extract it?"

"Oh, no doubt of that," I said confidently, wondering if, by a little *ruse dé guérre*, I could obtain the fee first, for it was a very nasty tooth, far back, and decayed on one side; a left upper molar. We had breakfast first, and about 4 P.M. proceeded to operate.

He said, "Won't hurt, will it?"

"Not in the slightest," said I flourishing about a gum-lancet; but this he set his foot against. I placed the forceps carefully in and seized the tooth. At that moment he put his hands up. Thinking he was going to clutch me, I gave a twist before the shank of the instrument was well down, and was not so fortunate as I was with the miner (for account of this, you must wait till "*Regrets*" is published by same author as this little work).

I heard the well-known crack I knew too well; if I had given him an anesthetic, this would not have happened, but no other medical man being handy, I did not care to administer it *alone* for such a trifling operation. Any one who is a bit nervous should have one for tooth extraction: much better for both patient and operator.

He washed his mouth, and spitting the fragments out said in a voice of reproach, "You have broken it."

I answered "The decayed part has gone; if you will sit down, I will get the remainder out for you."

He replied. "No, thank you;" but the tone he said it in—have you ever proposed to a charming young lady who has £500 a year of her own,

and good expectations besides from a maiden aunt, who loves you about as much as a black man does a white one, and been refused when you popped the question? You will understand the tone of voice he used.

I told him not to mind, the gum would soon grow over. He gave me a look, and said "I suppose you are not going to put something in, to relieve the excruciating agony I am suffering?"

I applied an anodyne, and he stayed the rest of the day and night with me. I had a jolly time; he was not abusive nor anything of that sort, but kept on. In vain I offered him all the delicacies of the season to eat, stewed *moorgly* and mushrooms, beefsteak fried in onions, tempted him with the driest of sim, choicest of claret; at dessert, the juciest of walnuts, and wound up by bringing out some choice havanahs.

"No," he would mournfully say, "I don't expect I shall touch anything for weeks." He counted out my fee—how distasteful it seemed,—and exclaimed "I would have given you double to have got it out," till I began to think that he was under the impression I had some spite against him and did it on purpose.

The weary hours dragged away. How I regretted giving that twist. Night arrived: he was no better,

and paraded up and down like a Smithfield martyr, occasionally lying on the bed in the spare room and emitting fearful groans. Doubtless he was suffering great pain, but did not make the least of it. I tried to cheer him up, and said the gum will soon grow over again.

There was a gun in the corner of the room ; it caught his eye. I thought best not to allude to the subject any more. Thankful was I when he said, " I guess I shall have no sleep to-night. Can't you give me something to compose me ?" I did : how glad I was when he got off. To break a man's tooth, and then put him up for the night, is worse than the examination at the Royal College of Surgeons.

He got up the next morning and was much better, and freely apologized if he had said anything the previous day to hurt my feelings.

From that time I became more or less his slave. He never missed an opportunity of rubbing it in. Did I ever meet him, and ask how he was— " Oh," he would say, " pretty well ; that tooth you broke for me is troubling rather." In course of conversation did he say, " I tell you, Sir, I knocked that snipe down at 101 yards." If I expressed any astonishment, he would give a start as if a pin had been driven into him, the company would say " Hulloa, old fellow, what's up ?"

"Oh, nothing; only that confounded tooth again," and out would come the whole yarn—pleasant for me. However, I forgive him, and I hope he will me, for a pleasanter companion and a nicer fellow you would not wish to meet than Gentleman Bill. Even the captain when he hears he is coming, furbishes his old park suit up and takes the grease spots out with Sal-volatile, and inks over suspicious places. We would not part with our dressy gent for anything; he keeps us up to the mark, and in a jungly place like Assam, it's refreshing to get a glance of Bond Street sometimes.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE have a pack of hounds in our part of the country; I have never yet enjoyed the pleasure of a run with them, because my catle have enough to do, instead of hunting. Another thing is, I can't do as my grandfather said a good rider should; that is, jump a five-bar gate holding a fourpenny bit between each knee and the saddle. But we have several good riders up our way, besides the Boss rider; among others the Captain. "Haw! you see, accustomed to hunt with the North Devon. Find these, haw, a trifle slow.

I will describe a meet and run, as best I can. As it's all from hearsay, the master must pardon me if I have made many glaring errors; these

can be easily corrected in the next edition, if it ever runs to it.

The hospitable M. F. H. usually invites his guests the night before, say Saturday, to hunt on Sunday ; don't be shocked, they do this in Paris, and our Master is a bit of a Parisian himself.

We have no church nearer than 60 miles, so perhaps it's better than doing nothing. At 5 A. M. in the morning the stirring sounds of a banjo are heard, and shortly afterwards, Moggins, who owns the hounds, enters the stranger's room. He is faultlessly attired in one of Poole's best red coats, made by our tailor, from what at first sight seems to be a red blanket, but on closer aquaintance proves to be a red table cloth out of the bazar, which, coupled with silver buttons, does not look so bad.

He has a pair of white cord breeches, tight at the knee, and a little loose about the side pockets, doubtless to carry a few red herrings in case the scent gets stale. He wore boots resplendent in polish, and the tops had evidently been brought to such a state of perfection, which only apricot jam and cream can give. He had plated spurs, hunting cap, and carried a heavy thonged whip ; dog-skin gloves and a pruning knife sticking out of his coat-tail pocket behind,

completed his *tout ensemble*, and very much like going he looked. To give him his due he could ride a bit, and was always with the hounds, especially at feeding time. He mounted a brown rough-coated stud-bred horse, who looked as if he would be equally at home in saddle or a pug-mill, but nevertheless, he won him a steeple-chase not long afterwards, owner up, and carrying 2 maunds dead weight under his saddle, against such a field as Pot-boy, Yellow-boy and Screwlette.

The military gent came next ; he was in mufti—"Haw, hardly worth while sporting pink—must draw the line somewhere, ah." He was peculiarly got up, and looked a cross between a butcher in reduced circumstances, and a cattle dealer on strike. He wore yellow cord trowsers and black spring-side gaiters, a monkey-jacket, blucher boots, red flannel shirt, soft black felt hat, and a thick stick completed his get up ; he was ready for anything. Mounted on a weedy horse, who looked as if he had been put up by contract and they had forgtten to finish him, he was equal to heading a mob of wild horses or running in bullocks.

Buddles was the best mounted of the lot, on a magnificent Waler which would have been cheap at four figures.

"Yes, Sailor-boy could go, and jump a little too :

his owner was never left in the lurch ; he looked very workmanship like in his neat-fitting red coat and breeches, boots and tops,—evidently not local productions. One other gentleman was present. At first glance you could not decide which was out with you, the rector or the doctor ; he was a cross between the two ; mounted on a white pony, which never altered his pace from the time the hounds went away till the time tbey stopped, always cantering in a quarter of an hour behind every body else, and pulling out his repeater would " Ah, a quick thing, that last : Quarter of a mile as the crow flies, and a close country too ; " and taking a pull at his flask would look smilingly around. He dressed in ordinary costume, but very neat, from his fawn-colored riding trowsers, bird's-eye scarf with a foxe's tooth mounted in gold for a pin, and black hat. He looked very quiet, and evidently infused an air of respectability to the hunt. They now mounted, and accompanied by the hounds, consisting of some five couples of various colors and sizes, looking game to tackle anything from a wild cat down to a line dog, rode gaily away. On reaching the open everybody began to look for the jackall. The captain wishing to help, got ahead of the hounds and commenced working up a patch of long grass, and flourishing the thick

stick, trying to get a jackall out, was rebuked by the Master for getting before the hounds, and reminded that he was not out with Her Majesty's

"Haw! Beg pardon," and reined his fiery steed back. They hunted high and low but no jackal could be found; the villagers joined and beat up with long poles, but no go, and it was feared a blank would be the result. Suddenly a view, halloa! no mistake. There was the captain standing up in his stirrups, and supporting himself with one hand on the neck of his charger, emitting fearful sounds, and waving his black stick.

"All right," says the master, "I 'aint deaf," for he was a little nettled the captain should have stolen a march on him. Quickly drawing the pack together off, he went at a hand gallop followed by the rest; they soon got up to where the jackall had broke, just in time to save the gallant gentleman from a fit caused by the exertion of shouting.

"There he is," he said, excitedly; and a wretched looking animal, evidently game in one of his legs, was seen sneaking away some fifty yards off.

The dogs were laid on and away they went, riding hard for the brush. The military gent went over a bund a foot high in a way that would

have delighted Soapy Sponge,—left hand holding the bridle high up in the air level with the horse's head, and right hand high up, waving the thick stick—it was exhilarating. They now arrived at a bamboo fence; this, Buddles and the master took in their stride, but the remainder of the field drew the line at timber, and here the thick stick came in handy: a gap was soon made and off they went but never got up to the hounds.

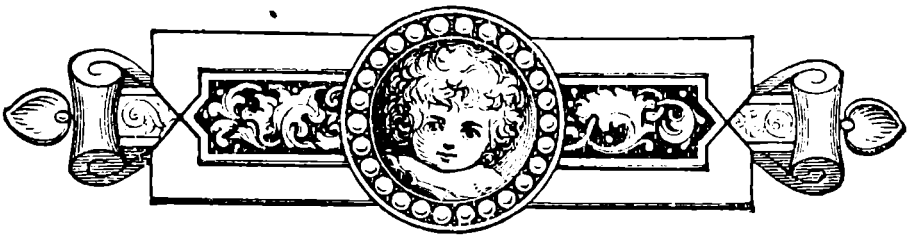
The scent was burning, and though stained by goats once or twice, which threw them out, the gallant master Moggins made some brilliant casts, and soon hit the line off again, and they ran into the jackal, dicky on his off leg, after a quick thing of seven minutes—distance, half a mile as the crow flies—across a cramped country.

It was a splendid performance, and no one, except mounted like the master and Buddles, could live with the hounds. However, the rest of the field were up in time to see the *coup de grace* given to the jackal with a rusty pruning knife by Moggins, who presented the military gent with the lame pad and says—

"It does my heart good to see you go. Haw! Used to go a bit, in my day, you know. Horse is just off grass and out of condition, you see; Ha; I rode him at the gates of Ilfracombe Lodge

one night for a bet by moonlight, and he got over, rapping his fore legs badly, and has funked timber ever since, by Jove.

The sun was now getting warm, so they retired homewards and had a supplementary gallop after a village dog on the way, which only saved his life by going to earth in a deep drain. Over breakfast the run was gone into again, and after the beer, the bund was raised to four feet—"with a nasty take off, you know." But they have a good deal of fun and no accidents; doubtless a gallop with them does more good than all the medicine in the world. Shake the liver up, and, 'pon my soul, I think I shall go out myself next year. Here is success to the Master and his pack!



CHAPTER XX.

SAYS Bobbins to his better half, one morning shortly after Christmas,—"I think, my dear, as we have entertained all our senior friends it's only right and proper we should give the youngsters a treat."

"*Avec beaucoup de' plaisir*" responded Mrs. Bobbins, "and let's have it as soon after Christmas as we decently can"—for she was a careful wife. "We had better include Morris and Mullins amongst them, though Mullins is nearly as old as myself, and I don't suppose Morris calls himself a youngster, since he has been ten years out; yet Mullins will be certain to come if he knows there is a good feed on, and Morris, who has recently come from the old country, will be glad of

an opportunity to sport his new dress-suit, silk socks and pumps."

So the invitations were issued and sent, with a pretty little Christmas card to each; a few days afterwards they all accepted, except Mullins. Mrs. Bobbins was delighted.

"They are all coming, only Mullins refused, and to tell you the truth, Billy, I am not sorry; he takes up a lot of room, and will be as surly as an old bear if he does not get Sim."

"Stuff and nonsense," says Bobbins, "where's the likes of him been brought up to Sim; don't suppose he ever tasted it before he came to Assam,—was glad to get 'arf-a-pint of Cooper a few years ago. He is beginning to think too much of himself since he sported a buggy; ought to be too glad to get into a little society and see life," and Bobbin's surveyed himself in the looking glass. "I dare say he has got his dress-clothes up the spout, and does not care to face a large party in that blue serge of his," and Bobbins determined to be even with Mullins yet.

"Now, about the menu," says Mrs. Bobbins.

"Oh! I tell you what I will do," responds Billy, in a fit of generosity, "we will kill the old goose.'

"What! poor old Kitty, why she has been with us since we were married."

"Never mind," he answers, "look at the depression in tea, and Kitty has given up laying, and she is old and dropsical, and has rheumatics in her legs. I think it would be a mercy to put her out of her misery."

"Very well, dear, only let her be well raced about before she is killed or she will be tough."

"All right," he replied, "and before you have her put down to roast, tell the cook to dip the carcass into boiling water with two table-spoonsful of vinegar in it, that's the thing to soften tough meat; and don't spare the onions in the stuffing."

"We shall want something else."

"Oh! there is a bit of beef in the cask; get that well soaked, put two or thee entrees on this, with some soup and fish, will do first rate. Make them a chocolate pudding, give beer, claret and hock, and I think," says Bobbins, "we bad better confine the waiting to our own servants; you know what a confusion a lot cause, and they are most careless with the liquor—spill it over your cloth, you know,"—says Billy, with a wink. "None of your Mullin's code of signals here for fresh bottles."

The eventful day arrived. The party was to commence at 4 P.M., at which period they all assembled. Yes, there was Moggins, Sourkrout, Neot.

Langridge, Sandriff, Caviare, and last, but not least, arrived Morris, attired in a lawn-tennis suit of white flannel, and he looked most killing, but he was doomed to disappointment, for prisoner's base, rounders, and king-of-the-castle seemed more popular, and he felt rather bad, as he had intended to astonish them with that new serve he had seen the Renshaw's do at Home. However, not to make himself disagreeable he played rounders with the energy of a school-boy.

Lemonade, toffy, hard-bake and oranges, were distributed with a liberal hand. Morris did not care much about this class of refreshment. However, Mullins had told him to live quietly, so he indulged in a suck of toffey, and split a bottle of lemonade with Caviare.

Darkness put an end to the sports and they adjourned to the bungalow to prepare for dinner. Morris filled every one with envy ; his silk socks spotted with red, brought down the house ; and he was exuberant ; he was a little at a loss how to make himself pleasant before dinner. He did not know exactly what to say, so he challenged Sandriff to a game of fox and geese, and recommended the rest to play beggar-my-neighbour and patience, which latter they found they had to exercise, for the dhoby being ill, Bobbins could not get his dress

shirt without a lot of difficulty, so there was some delay before the feed began.

Morris had the honor of taking the lady of the house in to dinner and the rest trooped in. The conversation was rather limited. Morris did his best; he asked Sourkrout if he had come up on his bicycle—and if he missed the pantomime much; and then he turned to Neot and asked him if he was disappointed at not seeing a Christmas tree. But they seemed more intent on the grub. So Morris admired his new gold studs in the pier-glass opposite, and endeavoured with one of Mullins' signals to attract the Khansama's attention, for he was thirsty after all his exertions, and wanted another glass of hock; but for once the signals did not work properly, and he determined to consult Mullins about them on his return. After dinner dessert came on, and Morris enjoyed a fig and pulled a cracker with Langridge, and took wine with Moggins, a glass of Gilbey's best Marsala, and topping up with a glass of sweet curaçoa, he thought himself quite a dog; how glad he was he accepted.

After dessert they adjourned to the drawing-room and played at hunt-the-slipper and forfeits, and when later on, a dish of snap-dragon was brought in, their enthusiasm knew no bounds, and they drank the health of their entertainers with

voices, in glasses of hot negus and water. Shortly afterwards they adjourned to bed well pleased with their treat, and Bobbins said to his wife, "everything passed off very well."

"Yes, did it not, dear," she replied, "and there is one thing more," says Billy, "there will be no sair hids in the morning," and he was soon wrapped up in the arms of Morpheus.

Chapter XXI.

YES, he had been seriously ill, and it was decided a change home was the one thing required to set him on his legs again. His was a serious illness, and he only answered to the helm very slowly, but thanks to his splendid constitution and the magnificent training he received in Valparaiso, he pulled through. When we started from the garden in a large country boat to go down the river to catch a steamer, it was quite 2 P.M. and Starlitt, a neighbouring planter, accompanied us, and a real boon he proved; his racy little annecdotes and his excellent provisioning of the craft—for we started from his ghât—did much to enliven our trip.

Sloggans was slightly peevish and irritable, for

being of very active habits, the slightest restraint was agony to him. The boat was one of the ordinary country ones, covered over with a roof with space to stand outside if you preferred it,—which we did,—for the interior smelt worse than any fourth-class chandler's shop. Starlitt, who was of a merry disposition, got on the roof and sung, "A life on the Ocean Wave," but was quickly suppressed by Sloggans, who said, "If you attract the boatmen we shall never get to our destination to-night,—which we did not, for when three quarters of our journey was over, it came on so dark that we had to anchor on a sand-bank and do the best we could. We hastily made a kind of hut to sleep in, just room enough to contain two mattrasses put on the sand over our waterproof sheets, and determined to give the boat to the invalid. A fire was made and we collected as much firewood as ever we could and Starlitt proceeded to make an enormous fire.

"It's very evident," says Sloggans, "that you have never camped out. Do you know the first law is to preserve your fuel for all night to keep away wild animals, and at the rate you are bundling it on, in a couple of hours it will be *non est.*"

We now proceeded to dinner, and very savoury it proved, for Startlitt, before starting had filled

a stewpot with mutton and vegetables the aroma of which was worse than the Welsh goose (in *Regrets.*) Sloggans took this under his special care and doled it out as if we were cast-a-ways who were not certain to a week or two when they should be rescued. In vain Starlitt asked for just another spoonful of gravy—

"My dear fellow, if you consume all that, what's to be the basis of the next brew?"

But I cot 'im, I did; yes, I cot him a-dipping his bread into the gravy and taking it down with a relish. He caught my eye, but I did not split on him to Starlitt. We had a trifle of something between us, and I thought best to hold my tongue, but he does not mind me splitting now.

After dinner we sat and discussed politics for a time, when Sloggans said he would turn in, and Starlitt's countenance seemed to brighten up and he rose to show him his sleeping quarters, but at these he gibbed worse than any mule with a mountain gun, and evidently thought there was a plant on. It was not till I put my veto against him sleeping on the sands that he reluctantly yielded to the chandler's shop. Starlitt now cheered up, with sundry winks produced a whisky bottle and began to mix two glasses of stiff grog. "Remember doctor, We have to sleep on the sands."

Lighting his Burmah, he regaled me with numesous yarns. I can't think of them now, but he told me how he went to the Derby once, and never saw it after all." "How was that," says I, "did you get run in for thimble-rigging, or what?"

"Oh no, not so bad as that," he says," "it was Maccaroni's year, and just before the race I paid a bob and mounted a gipsy van in company with a very stout man, at which I winced, and he said: "Just as everybody was shouting 'Here they come!' the roof fell in and down I went—luckily on the top of the fat man, and by the time we were rescued the numbers were up—it was a dead heat between Maccaroni and Saccharometer."

He told me of his last trip out,—how he got in with a travelling companion in the same cabin, whose favorite beverage was lemonade and sherry; and, as he said, "he was very ill if the sea was the slighest bit rough." "It was not jolly, and has put me off sherry ever since.

It was late when we turned in, the fire had not burned out, but the bottle had. The next morning we reached the steamer in safety, and Sloggans went off to England and returned after some months like a giant refreshed, I am glad to say, to solve the weary problem.

CHAPTER XXII.

WE all liked him, he was so free, so open-hearted and generous, flowing over with Hibernian wit: it was a treat to call on him. Lord Charles lived at the time in a small shanty made out of the end of the tea-house, and, barring the pig, I should imagine was not a bad model of an Irish cabin, though I have never yet had the pleasure of seeing one, and have only read descriptions of them in books. The present shanty, called Leinster Cabin, consisted of a sitting-room, bed-room and bath-room, opening from one into the other, both useful and unique. The entrance to the dining-room was guarded by three monkeys, two parrots and several dogs, the pick of which, "Rusty," a charming little

Irish terrier he brought out with him from the "Ould country." By constantly keeping her hair short she stands the climate well, and to see the way she walks into half a roast fowl or duck would do you good.

Yes, whan her noble owner throws the carcase of a roast goose to her she is delighted, and though she can't catch it in her mouth, yet there is no fear of spoiling the carpet.

You walk straight from the road into the front room, and at first you think you have by mistake got into an old Marine shop; there is such a blending of various articles, arranged with charming simplicity, both neat and ornamental. For instance, on the cheffonier, you will find a half cut cold ham, the *debris* of a cheese, flanked by a bottle of castor oil for the coolies, some sulphur ointment, and cartridges containing gunpowder, with a tea-cup of shot ready to put in, among an array of glasses, jugs, mugs and various plates and dishes. Above, on the wall, keeping watch, we have a select lot of coloured prints from the *Freeman's Journal.* There is the noble chief who rules Ireland's rights looking down with hungry eyes on the ham with numerous other celebrities around him. The floor is covered with a Brussels' carpet made of

empty soda-water bottles, beer-bottles, oil tins, a large tin of lard, enough to supply a militia regiment, dried monkey skins, goat skins, and some hoes in the corner, make up a curious medley. The furniture is somewhat ricketty and suggestive of gymnastics; and for a stout man like myself to sit down on a chair whose legs are kept together with twine is rather a dangerous experiment. The table stands on three legs and that occupies three-quarters of the room, and when I go to lunch there it's rather a tight squeeze—but always a hearty welcome and plenty of grub. The menu is varied and good. I won't say much about it; you probably begin with fried tinned haddocks and hot buttered toast, and wind up with bread, treacle and cheese and bottled beer or claret, or if you prefer a cup of tea you can have it, the best Bonn produces. My experience, however, at tiffin is, that there is not a very great demand for the "cup that cheers but does not inebriate." No; Bass and Pilsener seem more popular.

We will not intrude into the privacy of the bed-room; suffice it to say it's about the size of an ordinary police-cell, and entirely occupied by a large mosquito net, there hardly being room for the toilet-table, consisting of an old beer cask turned up side down and a *Freeman's Journal*

doing duty for a toilet cover. The bath-room is a temporary building, very low, and with a shaky floor. I ventured in once, but one leg going through, I was glad to escape without other accidents, and always perform my ablutions in a corner of the sitting-room, the bason being brought down for me. A new bungalow is now in course of erection on a large scale with all modern improvements, and promises to be replete with every comfort.

He, too, find it's not all beer and skittles, and that the coolie is a trifle more difficult to manage than an Irish pig, but he is cheerful among all the trials of Government returns, monthly, half-yearly and yearly ; demands for statistics of yield per acre, and the amount of manure used to the square foot, and the comparison of yield between the manured and the unmanured portion ; the advantages of liquid over artificial, and so on.

He said to me while I was driving him from his own garden to a neighbour's house, " Can Government expect us to supply them with all these returns voluntarily, when they hamper us in every possible way ?" Just then the buggy gave a jolt and rattled two or three of his teeth. " Confound these roads," he says—" they are worse than a passage from Holyhead to Dublin on a rough night.

We were just outside his garden, when I replied, "Why, don't you see, dear old Government are doing them up. Yes, hang them," said he, "and with my own labor too. It's very riling"

"How is that," I answered."

"Oh! do you see that strong-looking coolie there, bringing that basket of earth up."

"Yes."

"Don't you recognize him? You ought to, you pulled him through a bad illness." Of course, this is Lalgee, the man who was nearly going out with dysentery, and you used to feed from your cook-house with soup and sago, and gave him cherry-brandy till I asked you to substitute rum."

"What on earth is he doing, working on the road for?"

"Oh, it's only Government again, driving home another nail. You understand. his agreement was up and he would have probably renewed, together with several more, but a contractor offered him better pay and easier work,—what's the consequence? He goes, and a dozen more, and here they are working under my very nose, close to my garden and lines, no doubt making an excellent advertisement for the remainder of my coolies. You know, yourself, what a lot of sickly coolies came up for me last year, involving a large out-

lay in advances, medicines and food. It's very hard that I should have to replace those coolies, now working for Government, by new importations, at great expense and trouble. My neighbours would not have taken these coolies on, and if it had not been for this contractor, who takes the road from Government, giving them work, they would have only been too glad to have renewed their engagements with me. The contractor leases a portion of the road from Government ; he wishes to make as much out of it as he can, so gets labor anyhow, shuffles over the work, and makes as much as he possibly can out of the contract."

" I don't mind this," he says, " if he would only let my coolies alone. I am powerless and can do nothing ; it's too it's too bad, after Planters bringing the amount of capital they have into Assam that they should be treated so. I wish Mr. O'Dowd, or O'Donnel, or what ever O' he is, instead of wasting the time of the House by calling attention to the mortality, would call attention to a few of our grievances. Government are down on you like a thousand of bricks if you are unlucky enough to get a bad string of coolies into your factory, and have a high death rate. They are now doing the very

thing to increase it, for, when I have got strong healthy coolies and good workers, they are enticed away by these blessed contractors, and mine is not a solitary case. Too bad ; too bad."

Yes, it's time a Commission was formed to go into some of these questions, for until the Planter is less hampered and fettered by Government chains, so long will Tea remain the unpopular occupation it's fast drifting into.

I here passed the garden Lord Charles was going to, and put him down and drove away. This is all true, hall-marked and stamped, and can be easily proved ; it is only the same old tale, that has been going on for years, but it requires to be like an Irishman's cabin—ventilated.

Chapter XXIII.

"I WILL go down and have it out with them," says Tackler to his friend Sloggans, one day, "the season has been a fairly good one, besides, I want a little change."

"The very thing," replies Sloggans, "give Messrs. Grabbler and Twister a good talking to. I can't understand them;" and he made imaginary cuts with his stick as if he had the unfortunate gentlemen in front of him; lucky for them this was not the case.

"It won't be very expensive," thought Tackler. "I can get some clothes made up here by my dhirzee and buy the cloth in the bazar. I have an old suit I used to wear in the park; this will do very well for a pattern." So the cloth was

purchased, 8 yards, and the celebrated clothes made up.

A quiet check, with squares the size of a chess-board. Can have it washed on my return, he thought. Sloggans accompanied him to the ghât to see the last of his friend. His luggage was a curiosity; an old portmanteau which had been in the family for years, which in lieu of straps, long since used for braces, was tied round with a clothes-line; a dilapidated hat-box, with a label prominently still sticking to it, with the legend—"Hotel de L'Anglais, Paris," to show everybody the gallant gentleman had been on the continent. But a little bird whispered that the label referred to the time when his father went for his honey-moon. We all have our little weaknesses and cherish them, this was one of his. The hat-box was fastened with a boot-string, and contained, an old Tam O'-Shanter travelling cap, 2 briar-root pipes, some paper-collars, and a magnificent scarf to dazzle the beauty and fashion of Calcutta with.

Besides the above travelling companions he carried some bedding, tied up in an old coolie blanket with *bate*, which a third-class dealer in old clothes out of Gravel Lane, Shoreditch, would have turned his nose up at.

In due course he arrived at the Great Eastern Hotel; the worthy Secretary eyed him, much in the same way as a curator of a museum would some new curious specimen, and said: "My good man this is not Radha Bazar."

But at that moment Tackler held up the hat-box, and he caught sight of the magic words-Hotel de l' Anglais, Paris, and he replied, "Oh! Beg pardon, took you for Rutledge's young man, thought perhaps you had a consignment of monkeys."

However, matters being satisfactorily arranged, and Rip Van Winkle being played at the time at the theatre, no further notice was taken of Tackler. The next morning he got up early and had his hair cut, which wanted doing badly, and proceeded to array himself in his new suit.

He looked very fetching—'Arry a-going on a trip to Margate would have been a fool to him. Certainly the coat was a trifle baggy and one sleeve longer than the other, and the breast pockets a little too near the arms. The trowsers also were tight at the knee and very broad at the foot—this being the fashion when the park suit was made—I but my gallant friend had, apparently, not taken this into consideration, and did not notice these little defects, and when he fastened on a

green scarf, striped with gold, he looked quite rollicking, and might have been anything from a ticca gharry-wallah to a third-class leadsman on a spree.

Hailing a ricketty second-class gharry, he was driven off to the offices of Messrs. Grabbler and Twister, determined to give them a piece of his mind. The ticca drew up with a flourish, and the gay Tackler went up the stairs three at a time, whistling—"Up in a balloon, boys." He was shown in and found himself face to face with Grabbler, but he did not produce the effect he intended, for Grabbler and Twister were steamer agents as well, and Grabbler says—"Very sorry, but I have just filled up the vacant mate's billet for the *Indore*, but you shall have the next, I promise you," and he continued answering his letter to Sandy, for he received a snorter that morning, which made him very unhappy, and he telegraphed home for instructions, for Sandy threatened to play Old Harry with them if they were not more careful in future. Tackler says,—"Haw, ha! Just come down from Assam."

"Indeed," says Grabbler, "you should have gone to Jamrach's agents, we don't buy wild animals here; found it did not pay,"—expecting, Tackler to produce a wild cat from under his coat, and there was plently of room for it.

"Haw, ha! you mistake, my name is Tackler, and I belong to Delwanah Tea Estate."

"Oh! beg pardon," says Grabbler, "it's so long since I saw you, did not know you in your tourist suit. You are very welcome,—take a seat," and he sat down on the edge of a chair, hardly knowing how to begin.

"I can't understand that last batch of coolies you sent up."

"Can't you," says Grabbler, "more could we, they are a very jungly lot,—but won't they learn Assamese?"

This was a stopper, and before the gallant deputy from Assam could answer, he was asked to taste some of his Tea. "A trifle weaker in the cup, than in former years, not quite the strength it used to have,—fancy your garden wants a little stimulant." (Not so much as I do, he thought); "This is the very thing for you,"—giving him a small sample bag of guano, which the Deputy put in his pocket, and the residents at the hotel went in a body to the manager, certain there must be something wrong with the drains, till it was discovered that Tackler was the delinquent, and he was very nearly asked to transfer his custom elsewhere, when matters were satisfactorily arranged and the Deputy carried his

sample out early in the morning and left it on the *maidan.*

No, he could make very little headway with Grabbler. He was asked if he would like to go over his accounts, but this he did not want to do. Then Twister came in, and was introduced ; with the two of them he got on worse than ever, and his courage failed him. Glad was he when they presented him with a ticket for Wilson's Circus and he got away.

His stay did not last long in Calcutta ; he found the weather very warm and paper-collars expensive, so after paying a visit to Hart's, he left, glad to return to Assam. He had a little accident at Hart's, for going to look at a horse, he was politely asked to throw his legs across. This he did, and as he was clambering into the saddle he heard a report as if a pistol had gone off, followed by some chuckling ; he discovered the checks had split right across a very unlucky part, so he gave up his mount, and borrowing a pocket-handkerchief from the obliging proprietors, he tied it round him and went off.

On his return he was very quiet about his interview with Messrs. Grabbler and Twister—he would wink knowingly and turn it off by saying,—"heard a splendid thing at the circus. The clown said to

the ring-master—'a train ran over me this morning and never hurt me,' and then Tavish would cut in peevishly, and respond—"as old as the hills, he stood under a bridge and the train went over" and Tackler has not been down since.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN every district in Assam there a set of seniors which the youngsters have irreverently styled "chronics," who look with a very jaundiced eye on the youngsters who come out; and, as they think, accomplish what it has cost them some 15 or 20 years to do in less than a quarter of the time.

We get ship-loads of them. The City Line,—the British India,—the Star Line,—run them out in shoals. Sharp, active, young gentlemen, who have had a good training at home and soon grapple and master the intricacies of Tea-planting. The chronics forget we live in an age of advance, everything has altered since their time. It was all very well in olden days, when gardens were

scattered far and wide and Planters few; when they visited each other once in six months on an elephant, and drank a glass of rum-and-water and played a game of draughts, and for another 12 month dwelt on the visits, when a four week's old *Englishman* was a treat. Passed away is that era of tea-pruning, of cutcha bungalows, tank bathing once a week with 2 annas worth of bazar soap,—passed away have red-flannel shirts and worsted stockings. Times have changed since the planter cast a few bullets out of sheet lead, and loading his trusty single-barrelled gun, (no breech loaders in those days) and accompanied by his bob-tailed pariah, went forth to seek a deer for a little change from the monotonous morghee.

The coming generation are smart young fellows, who ride up to call on you on one of Hart's best Turcomans, in neat fitting boots and breeches, or tool a natty turn-out along at ten miles an hour. Yes, there goes Slasher with his tandem, two well-trained bazar tats drawing an animated clothes basket on wheels. As you meet them at Xmas time, sipping a glass of dry Monopole and holding it up, exclaim—"Ah! not quite dry enough for my taste, give me Pommery and Grano Extra Sec." You say, humbly,—"I have done my best,—

very sorry; next time I ask you will have the Extra Sec—next year I will order it."

Perhaps not so very long ago a glass of tart cider or flat table-ale was a treat to them; it's wonderful what a judge of wines one becomes about Xmas time; its our only little opportunity, and why should we not buck? It does no harm, and is sometimes amusing. Talking about table-ale, I know a friend of mine who once went home, and he was asked out to tiffin.

"What will you drink?"

"Oh," he says, "beer please," and the lady of the house ordered some—he tasted it and made a very wry face.

"Don't you like it?" says she.

"No," he answered, cannot say I do; what beer is it?"

"Well, it's what the servant's drink; we never touch beer," she replied. "Well, all I can say is, I pity the poor servants." The pretty housemaid smiled, and the comic gent, for it was he, was never asked again.

The chronics forget that the world moves round quicker than it did, and the struggle for existence is becoming harder and harder; only a boat well built and manned can make headway in the swift and deep waters of the river called Life. The

weak craft must sink and be lost for ever. We don't grow younger. Oh, that we could always keep so, but as we advance in years we begin to descend slowly, but gently, that hill which very often comes to a termination too quickly. My readers, do we put the break on quick enough? I fear not, always. Do we recollect that we are not so elastic as we used to be: and instead of joining those, who, like ourselves, are already half-way down, try to keep up the ridiculous farce of going it with the youngsters; not bearing in mind that they are barely to the top of the hill when we are nearly at the bottom, on the other side, while we have forgotten more than they have ever seen.

It's a miserable spectacle trying to keep up a juvenility totally foreign to our appearance, forgetting, as soon as our backs are turned, the youngsters say—"Did you see old Bullock last night? Game old card; got rather squiffy and made an ass of himself."

No, we have had our day and must be content to live on the glories of the past. A grim old enemy is age, but creeps slowly along, like a pilot engine, forges steadily ahead. Many are the devices that one makes to fight it off. Whiskers once the pride of your heart, are ruthlessly sacrificed for the sake of looking young. But it's nae good.

Crow's-feet appear, you find you blow more over the bheels than you did ; you do not ride with that firm seat and confident smile at a bund as you did ; formerly you would have gathered the reins, let in the Latchford's, and gone over like a bird. Do regrets ever come for chances thrown away, opportunities wasted? Yes, sometimes, thick and fast.

If this chapter catches the eye of a new arrival, do'nt let him get into the habit of calling his seniors Chronics ; he will be one himself some-day, and what's the end? They retire, yes, and keep their carriages—Bath chairs at six-pence an hour—a melancholy ending. You meet them living at a third-rate watering-place, their only dissipation being racing each other along the Parade for goes of gin and tonic.

Yes, there they are—Tavish, Pherson, Grubbins, and the Military gent. Occasionally one of them goes up to town ; they toss up, and the losers pay for a third class return—"To see the market, you know?"

On his return, he is asked, "How did you find it?"

"Oh," he says, "much changed, could not come across Barnes's," then he forgets, does this frisky old gent, what he went up for, and says—"depressed,

very depressed," and starts off at "a break-neck pace in his Bath chair; it takes an ounce of blue pill and a seer of salts to bring back the bloom again to his withered old cheek after the trip. So take my advice, be careful.

Carpe diem—or such may be your fate.

Chapter XXV.

IT is always a cause of speculation to young fellows coming out here what they shall drink. I hope I am not getting on thin ice and that it will break and let me in, but this little work would seem very much out of place, coming from the hands of a medical man, if I did not add something on the subject of what to eat, drink, and avoid.

We certainly have the excellent work by Doctor Moore, and it seems rather unnecessary my trying to improve on his book, but I am not—I only wish to give a few hints about Assam diet. I don't suppose Doctor Moore ever tasted the sweets of an Assam potatoe chop, ye stew, ye cutlet, ye sudden death, and numerous other little

succulent dishes served up as only an Assam cook does.

"Now Doctor, what do you recommend me to drink?" is a question often asked by thin, attenuated youths just out from home, who look as if steel nibs were a favorite article of diet. I am very cautious and begin sparring; I say "What were you in the habit of drinking at home." If he is a Sandy, he usually replied. "Mulk mon, just butter-mulk and a drap a parter wie my parritch on the Sawbboth."

I reply to this great brawny Aberdonian,—"For the present just ye gang on as ye are going, and if you feel yoursel a trifle low and losing your appeteet, come to me again and I weel recommend ye a soop o' partar." If he is not a northener, in answer to my question he will say,—"Oh, not much, a glass of table ale, you know, Doctor, not very strong."

Yes, I have had painful recollections of table ale (*vide* "Regrets" when published) where the Lieutenant asked me to take a drink with him, having fist emptied the salt-cellar and a rose torn up into the beer-jug! Poor fellow, he was not accountable for his actions, and I drank to his speedy recovery in the nauseous compound.

If from a cider country, he will say, "Just a

glass of hard cider, you know, Doctor." Know? I once visited Hereford, and had a pint or so of cider at supper. Let's draw a veil over what happened; suffice it to say I never valued chlorodyne so much before in my life, and I was too weak to go to the Cathedral the next morning.

The question of stimulants out here is one to which I have given a good deal of thought and consideration, mixed with practical experience, and have come to the honest conclusion that, in most cases, if not in all, a little is beneficial, if not absolutely necessary. To the young aspirant fresh from home, I say—"Put your foot down on spirits with a determination, and don't touch them till you have been some years in the country;" He will say, "But Oh, Doctor,"—and I add, "Yes, we know my boy; I was brought up in a family as well as you, and before the Captain and Tavish we say, "Ha; accustomed to a night-cap of hot grog every night at home in the smoking-room." But we know in our innermost hearts, and it's nothing to be ashamed of, and can see it now, the dear old supper-tray with the bread and cheese and a few wafers of meat, and a jug of that celebrated ale; and spirits, true, but in that old fashioned decanter holding Glenlivet which never seemed to grow less. At times

your kindly old father, after a hard days shooting or hunting, would take a little in a wine-glass with hot water.

The only time we took spirits was at Christmas when the pudding was set on fire, and in the evening when the snap-dragon was brought in.

Do we ever think of those days amidst all the changing scenes of Assam? Do we ever recollect our brothers and sisters, scattered far and wide, and the dear old days, perhaps some kind faces on this side of the bourne we shall never look on again?

No, not as often as we should. Young fellows get into the habit of saying, "Have not written home for months; no time, you know, now-a-days nothing to say." Nothing to say, does he ever think of the joy there is among the faces left in the home circle when they receive a letter from him; how it's canvassed and gone into, what interest they take in that day's moorghy shooting, and his loving old mother says, "Poor fellow, does not write so often as he used to do, has not much time." Don't leave off a good practice—don't fall into that pernicious habit, when your letters get shorter and shorter and finally stop for good. Don't forget your brothers and sisters who you were brought up with,

and spent so many happy days together. No, try at least to keep up a correspondence with these. You hear young fellows say, "Oh, I don't know what Charley is doing, have not heard from him for an age." You answer, "Do you write to him?" "No, have not written lately; no time." Exactly, one has time for other amusements and pursuits, why not a friendly letter home, and in turn, to your brothers and sisters? Don't leave the good old practice off, you can always make time, and as you write and describe perhaps your last little day's shooting, it takes you back years, to those old days of yours at home, when with ferret and gun you sallied forth to wage destruction against the rabbits.

Yes, keep up the good old custom; for some day a black-edged letter arrives: it's only the death of one of your brothers. Perhaps like yourself, he, too, was in a distant land trying to solve the weary problem as well. Perchance, fighting for his country, either by sea or land, or cattle tending, or sheep farming; all the same; the news falls on you and sets you thinking, and thoughts flash back to the time you nearly fought about whose turn it was to shoot out of that old rusty single-barrel, so thin that it's a providence it never burst; whose turn it was to mount the old pony.

Yes, it makes you thoughtful, and very likely you are sorry not having written to him sometimes. Don't give up your writing home to those who you were brought up with, though you may have nothing to say ; yet, believe me, they like to hear from you, and it's all news to them, if its only a description of your last morning with Moggins's hounds.

Yes, when we talk about the smoking-room now-a-days, I say we had one too, but it went by the name of the little-room, and had a fine old flavor about it. It was the smoking-room but the boot-room as well, and had a racy smell of old boots which all the screws of birdseye myself and brothers burnt, failed to smother.

" Ya'as, as I repeat to Pherson, " I used to enjoy my seltzer and brandy in the smoking room. Governor objected to it in the dining room," but honest Phersom knows better, he has seen a good deal of life, and shakes his head. He is too well-bred to contradict you, but knows perfectly well that the soft-green cushioned lounges, were simply cane chairs ; that the seltzer and brandy was a glass of the servant's beer, that the full flavored havannahs, were screws of bird's-eye from the White Horse. I know Langridge and Morris will say, speak for yourself. I will ; but, am I the

solitary one? No; I know lots. You will tell me quietly, perfectly true; but must lay it on a little thick with the Captain, you see, he is such a howling swell, still a little bird tells me he was'nt always so; and I catch a vision of a plainly furnished room and two occupants smoking, young fellows, briar-wood pipes and one says, "Hang it, F'wed, don't keep all the liquor to yourself, give the bottle a back-hander," and over comes, yes, no secret, for he has confessed to me on the quiet, a jug of tart cider. Just you tell him this when he begins bucking to you about the red-plush lounges, and how we drove. "Ya'as, used to tool along in those days;" precisely, tip the bailiff to let you handle the ribbons when he took the milk to the station in a light spring-cart, drawn by one of your father's superannuated hunters. I have a delightful remembrance of pulling the wrong rein once and upsetting the milkcart; luckily it was on our return journey and the cans were empty. I ran up a bank and the poor bailiff got bruised badly. For sometime he fought rather shy of me, and I found driving to be nearly as expensive as it is out here. Believe me, my boy, we all drove at home. Yes, tandem, an old chair turned upside down, Tom in the shafts, and Polly as leader.

But I have strayed from my story. I was adding—fight shy of spirits when you come out, and the longer you keep off them the better ; they are far more inflammatory than beer in small quantities taken at meals. I should recommend a pint of beer at breakfast and a pint at dinner ; a quart of strong beer in the midday to a young fellow who has to go out almost immediately after, and stand under a hot iron-roofed tea-house for some hours is not beneficial. You tell him so, he replies, " A pint won't satisfy me." Of course it won't, nor will a gallon in the hot weather. You must bear in mind you don't take it to quench your thirst ; if so you might just as well do like the navvies do, have a bucket of water and oatmeal mixed. You never see them drink beer at work, and I have some experience among them, though do not think I was actually one myself.

Take the rough edge off with a bottle of tonic or a glass of water, if you are not too hot ; milk is liable to turn acid on your stomach, except you hail from the North. In some cases, mind—I write some cases—my Lud, nothing will turn acid on those stomachs. You simply drink your pint of beer at meals because you work harder, do not get such nourishing food as formerly, and require a little something to make up for the enormous

loss of tissue in the warm weather by perspiration. But if you overdo it and drink beer between meals or too much at meals, it has a bad effect; you cannot digest it, it turns acid on the stomach, it renders you heavy, sleepy and *muggara* and has just the opposite effect intended; and as you swallow two strong aperient pills and mournfully stir a glass of white mixture up in the morning, you say: "What a humbug Mullins is, he told me a little beer would not hurt me."

Are you always candid with your Doctor? Did you tell him about that bottle you split with the military gent before breakfast? That bottle you had at tiffin, the other with Pherson, and the glass you had in the afternoon? Better than drinking spirits, you know, and the wily Planter turns and rounds on me, and replies "I have seen you do it, Doctor." Quite true, but do not always do as a Doctor does, but as he advises. Doctors were gay deceivers ever, and if a Doctor does overstep the mark on some festive occasion, look over the little fault, he is only like yourself, human, and though he knows better, has done it. I will confess, once after a tiffin, an obliging firm in England had sent me a case of champagne; never mind who; my friends got wind of it and down they swooped like a flock of vulture

including the military gent, who could sniff Sim twelve miles off. In they came, Tavish, Cuttler, the military gent, and a certain gentleman from the North who had made botany his special study at home, and who, on first landing, went to the Great Eastern Hotel and called for a sherry cobbler, much in the same way as he would have done for a pint of porter at home. It was brought, and of course with it the inevitable straw. He looked at the khansamah and said in broad Aberdonian "Hamon, what do ye soop it we a straw?" Well they all assembled, and I blush now to think of the numbers of bottles we drank, and even took a dozen away in the buggy with them; we were all going over to Tavish's to dinner. Just before we started, a chit came for me to go and see a patient, who, luckily, was not very ill, but he paid me a yearly stipend and thought he had a right to my services, and to send for me at all times and for the slightest ailment. If he ever called on me; on leaving, he would say, "Ai maister, gi'e us two pulls."

I would say, "Nonsense, mon, you are all right, what do you want to dose yourself for?" He would answer: "Dom it mon, I paiys you your money, gie us them."

I started ahead of the others to see my patient, and thought how loose the syce had put

the saddle on, for I felt very unsafe. On my way, I called in to see Pherson who was seedy in bed at Tavish's, but for once he did not appreciate me, could not or would not see the point of the latest joke I retailed to him, with which the military gent had produced roars of laughter white at tiffin—it's wonderful how easily we are amused at times. Subsequently I found out from the others that he was just as "dense" with them as he was with me. Tavish told him a racy little story which he had heard from a certain river captain, which, at other times Pherson would have had told over to him several times, but which only elicited the *muggara* reply, "See nothing funny about that, think it's rather vulgar," and poor old Tavish, who was in excellent spirits, and wished to cheer him up a little, felt sat upon: but Pherson's cup was however full, when the Aberdonian woke him up in the middle of the night with most unearthly noises, and he went to see what was up, and found him sitting on the floor, laughing and saying, "Ah mon, I want a drink of warter."

I found my patient reclining out in front of the bungalow in a long chair, for it was evening, and looking very sour; "You ain't a 'urried. yourself," he says, "might have been dead for all you care," and he eyed me suspiciously.

I took my thermometer and placed it under his arm to take his temperature, and tried to amuse him, but like Pherson, he failed to see any fun in my stories. After about a quarter of an hour he said sarcastically: " 'Aint you going to take the thermometer out?

" Oh yes," I said, and shoved my hand down the back of his neck. He was very angry.

" You won't find it there," and he took it out and gave it to me. I looked at it gravely, but to this day never found out what it was. I then proceeded to feel his pulse and caught hold of his wrist. He was on a long chair, and I on an ordinary dining one. I gave a lurch, and over I went, pulling him with me. *Tableaux*—I made a rush and mounted my horse and prescribed Sim; he took me at my word, and for once sent punctually for his medicine, and swallowed it too. I had to give him a dozen of champagne to square it up, and after this there was very little left of the six dozen sent out to me as a little present from England. *Sic transit glorie Simkionia.*

No, Langridge, Dandriff, Neot, Caviare, Sourkrout, stick to your modest little pint of beer at meals; don't take spirits; one of these days you will be in charge of a large concern; rather young for it, people may say, but knowing ones

will answer—"So steady, you know, never touches anything except a glass of beer at meals, and no fear of getting seedy, and wanting a change too soon. No; he is the man for my money."

I don't say spirits are drunk to excess out here, for take him on the whole, you won't find a more temperate man than the planter, amid all the trials of heat, coolies, sun, mosquitoes, and amiable letters from Secretaries, indited by hungry Directors. It's a wonder that he is as abstemious as he is.

To my younger clients, I say, avoid spirits. To my older ones, if you find you are getting atheromatous deposits on the coats of your arteries, and the blood does not course through so quickly as it did, take a little good Scotch whiskey in preference to brandy, to stimulate the jaded frame, but don't overdo it. I have sometimes thought; I repeat, thought,—my Lud, that we don't always know where to draw the line and send the blood coursing through our animated old vessels quicker than there is any need to do, but perhaps it's only imagination subsequent on the deterioration of the faculties, due to the sun. The sun, jolly old fellow, naughty old fellow, warm old fellow, aggravating old fellow, cribbing old fellow—yes, he is a thorough rascal, and worse than any lodging-

house cat I ever knew. It reminds me of the time when I was a student at St. Bartholemew's, and I used to ask for the remainder of that baked "jimmy"—(for explanation of "jimmy" see *Regrets*, soon to be published) that I had left over-night from supper, and my landlady replied "Please, sir, the cat eat it."

Yes, as I am sometimes called in to prescribe for a patient who feels a trifle billious; "felt the sun, a little, you know." Was it the sun, or perhaps that Malay curry and extra glass of beer. No, could not be that; the sun was very warm yesterday; *tres bien*, sun's back is broad, so is the cat's.

I was once called in to prescribe for a larky young gent. No mistake, suffering from headache; a tongue coated with yellow fur, and conjunctivas the color of saffron, evidently a billious attack, and I gave him suitable medicines. Two days afterwards I called again, not expecting to find him in the house. Yes, there he was, and in bed too. I felt puzzled; his tongue was still coated with fur, and he was sick at times and had a headache. I asked him if he had taken the medicines. "Oh, yes," he replies, "not much fear of that, after the way you impressed it on my memory, and a fat lot of good they have done," speering at me as if he had me on a bit of toast, "better change them."

I was silent; I had given him podophylin pills and salines and these had failed, and I was beginning to think, perhaps, I was getting rusty and required a change home, when a ray of hope shone down and glimmered across his dingy mosquito net like a shooting star.

Yes, I 'ad got 'un—"How about diet?" I asked, for I had enjoined light diet. He fell into the trap.

"Oh, only been eating light food, Doctor; you hammered this into me pretty well."

"Come, what did you have for breakfast yesterday?"

"Oh, nothing much. I began with soup, then fried fish, then I had some Irish stew, a roast duck, and finished up with egg-curry and a bottle of stout." Month—July, Thermometer—98°. Heavens! and he calls this light diet. I suppose scrap iron would only be a trifle to him, and I walked away wondering if croton oil would have any effect.

The above is not a Cachar yarn, and if it catches my young friend's eye, who made an excellent recovery, I am certain he will bear me out in the above.

Doubtless, except you have a charming little wife to look after you when you are sick, and who substitutes barley water for soda-and-whisky, you

come badly off; for your cook, excellent as he may be for you when you are well, has rather limited resources for a sick dietary, usually confined to jug-soup, which is warm water frightened with a fowl, custard-pudding made out of stale eggs, and *foos-fâss*, a compound made out of rice squashed to the consistency of a poultice, studded here and there with tough fragments of fowl, liberally seasoned with pepper corns: about as tempting to a sick man as a boiled leg of pork and peas is to one who suffers from *mal-de-mer*, and is going across the Bay of Biscay in rough weather.

There is no lack of food in Assam of its kind. Planters spend with a liberal hand over their messing account, but do they always get their value? Easier said than done; he has no time to order his food nor the inclination to do so, either.

Is it the height of felicity, when you have struggled through breakfast on a hot day, to see a not over clean gentleman stagger in with the leg of a deer, and displaying, with calm indifference, the part, livid and bloody, showing were the slugs found their billet, and exclaiming, "Ke korribee? Roast korribee, Boil korribee or Stew korribee?" Or, he does not finish his sentence, and can hardly be surprised if the next moment he finds himself and the meat in the middle of the compound.

Plenty of grub, and you sit down to breakfast and plunge into the mysteries of a stew, or any other dish, like chewing a lot of fiddle-sticks; is it to be wondered that sometimes one is glad to substitute tinned lobster, tinned salmon, or sardines, as a little light change from the billious compounds, often served up revelling in ghee and tinged with garlic? During my limited experience things have much changed, and Planters are becoming alive to the fact that, perhaps, if it's a trifle wearisome to go into these matters, yet it pays to curtail the ghee, heavy-prune the garlic and get the fowls killed over night, cleaned and hung up in the back verandah; there is nothing wrong about it, and far better than have your liver curry-combed by Mullins's rakers; saves stores, saves temper, saves beer, saves your health, and last, but not least, saves Doctor's bills.

Yes, have your fowls killed overnight and cleaned and hung up; if very hot weather, put a dash of pepper over, they will keep; hang in a cool, breezy place in a piece of muslin. Better still, if you have a punkah over your bed, hang them there. You say, "horrible idea, your next day's grub dangling before your eyes as you lie in bed." It's nothing, you soon get used to it. Tender, well-cooked food, saves your stores, and is far better for you.

A nice tender, boiled moorghy, stuffed with rice, and served up with onion sauce, is less likely to make you billious on a hot day than a tin of lobster,—saves your temper, for who does not get put out by masticating tough meat, when your teeth are not of the best ; saves beer—because if you get a nice cooked meal you don't want to drink so much ; it saves your health, for too many stores are bad. You order stewed fowls and mushrooms, he makes an ordinary stew, and at the last moment empties in a tin of mushrooms, which come up tepid and stringy, and you wonder that you get a little collicky. Spend less, cook less, and pay a little attention to what you do have cooked, and you will find the benefit of it.

Don't for one moment imagine I am trying to throw a slur on your tables, it would be but a sorry return for the hospitality I have received for a number of years from you all, my occupation causing me to travel a good deal. I know it occurs at my own table. I do my best, but cooks have a passive spirit of resistance, found in no other animals except donkeys.

What to Avoid—Drinking a bottle and-a-half of beer and going to sleep after breakfast ; bathing on a full stomach, too many tinned provisions, coming in heated and sitting under a punkah

going all the morning on an empty stomach, and supplementing this with a glass of beer or peg, without taking a sandwich or biscuit; sleeping under a punkah without light woollen pajamahs on, avoid being too gloomy, read a little light literature, go out occasionally for a visit. Avoid too much physic, and last of all, avoid staying too long in the country. This I particularly wish to draw attention to, it ought to be made penal. Yes, we have our heroes as well; one of a large family comes out and gets a billet, or obtains one before he leaves home and works away, gets on very well, but can't save much, though he is told he requires a change. How can he go? Can, perhaps, do so at the sacrifice of his billet; no, he thinks; he knows of the weary struggles at home now-a-days there are, perhaps, younger members of the family who have to be provided for. So on he goes, till one fine day, debilitated by the climate, he is struck down by illness, his frame is too weak to carry him through; a little delirious wandering about the old plaee at home, and he passes across that deep dark river and disappears into the thick jungle on the other side.

This is a melancholy picture, but alas! too true in many cases. Nobody should stay too long out;

it is the duty of owners of large companies, and any one else who employ Europeans in Assam, to see that they get a change after a certain number of years. If circumstances won't permit of them to go home, at least go to Darjeeling or some hill-station, or a short trip to sea. I know in some cases it's the fault of the man himself—he won't go. Make him, hunk him out; if he has not sufficient, shove a draft into his hands, it will repay you a hundred-fold, he will come back refreshed, re-invigorated, he will waltz round the hoe, and the Tea-house will be merely like an afternoon promenade Concert at Covent Garden. Repay you by his brightened up faculties, by his care, by his attention, and last of all by his gratitude, and when the next season you take a prominent place in the market, you will never regret that little draft you gave Mills, and those few months' leave.

If this catches the eyes of those it's intended for, think it over though the words only come from one who would like to go himself.

It's a disputed point about wearing flannel in Assam. I don't mean banians, but flannel shirts, coats and trousers. I think for those who have out-door work to do and flit from the hoe to the plucking, and thence to the Tea-house, alternating

between, perhaps, the rain and a hot atmosphere, that flannel is needed. I don't advise thick flannel shirts, which to my knowledge are fearful reservoirs, but thin flannel, silk and wool, are the best, and flannel trousers, if you are among the hoe and wet tea much, with a white drill coat, for if you have a flannel shirt, a flannel coat as well, is superfluous. To those who can't stand flannel and don't bathe till evening, I should recommend when they come in at midday either to change their linen shirt and banian, and have a dry rub, or put on a flannel coat. If you have a silk and wool shirt, this will not be necessary. When you take your bath in the evening, change the silk and wool for a banian and linen shirt. Always have a good protection to the head, but not too heavy or thick a *Topi*. I believe there is such a thing as educating yourself to too thick a covering; what is the result? You get tender and wear a thinner *topi* and get *coup-de soleil*. No, have a moderately thick protection, and if required, on an extra hot day, or if you are a wee bitty billious, carry an umbrella. Of later years punkahs are creeping to the front at night. I am often asked "what is your opinion, Doctor?"

I say, "well, I only tried one last year, and like the man who got married, wonder I never did so

before." It's all rot, the seniors say : absurd, never thought of such a thing in my day, we used to peg it out ; exactly, but don't forget about the age of advance and progress. Remember, Adam and Eve only wore garments made of fig leaves, but times have changed and Pherson, and Tavish and Grubbins, would look very curious arrayed in plantain leaves. We must go with the times.

Think of hot close nights, not a breath of air, your pillows wet through ; in vain you turn from side to side, you perspire freely, you drink gallons of water, you only get snatches of sleep, towards morning when it becomes cooler, and is nearly time to rise, you perhaps begin to doze off, but you must get up, start your rolling, and set everything a going. Are you fit for it? No, you have had a bad night, hardly any sleep, are weak, exhausted, and feel like an animated rag doll.

Glad are you when breakfast is over, and you drop off to sleep. It's all very well to say bad thing to sleep after meals, but you are exhausted, and must have the sleep some time in spite of your teeth.

Now, supposing you have a small punkah gently pulled, you can turn in early, for you are not afraid of the heat ; you put on silk and wool

pajamas and coat, and you enjoy a good night's rest, wake up fresh in the morning, go off to work and don't want to sleep in the afternoons.

I recollect meeting a Manager of large gardens in Lower Assam once. He was a Scotchman and shrewd; he saw the advantage of it and said :—"I always give my assistants an extra *punkah wallah* for the rains, so they can get the punkah at night." You will hear a few old jaundiced chronics crying out against it, but don't listen to their ravings. I tell you there is no danger, no more than there is in these sudden breezes that spring up, and not so much.

A quiet comfortable sleep, under any circumstances, must be preferable to lying for hours perspiring like a bull, cursing the climate and the heat, and only sleeping by instalments at a time.

We have not churches near in all our districts, but those who have are freely used. Sometimes a passing visit from a clergyman takes place, and he is always heartily welcome. Once, a few years ago, a society made the great mistake of sending out an itinerating missionary to evangelise the planter. He was doubtless a good man in his way, and sincere, but he was not the class of man for planters, who are educated men and gentlemen. They don't object to a Reverend of

their own station in life who puts a word in in good season ; but this one was in the habit of dropping his *h*'s, and wanting in tact and common sense. He would, for instance, rush up to your bungalow on a bazar tat and come into your verandah, and say " Brother, are you safe ? "

Grubbins thinking perhaps it's an insurance agent, says—

" Too late, I am insured in the Standard.' Tavish put him up for a night, for he was most hospitably received wherever he went, and it rather jarred on Tavish's ear when, before retiring for the night, the good man offers up a prayer, and says : " Let your 'oly 'and descend on our dear brothers' 'ed, we beseech you." Whereupon Tavish puts on his Tam-o-Shanter and thinks the prayer is out of place, if not impertinent.

No, a well educated man is always welcome. The planter is conservative, as a rule, and if he does have to eat a roast fowl, prefers doing so with a silver-plated fork to a steel one. This has been a long chapter, but has embraced several subjects.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"I THINK the Russians have been less threatening since the Mounted Volunteers have been raised," says Crackers, sheathing his sword, with a fierce clatter; it was doubtless a first-rate movement, and a fine body of men have been got together, ready for anything; it makes one feel more secure in Assam. They have made wonderful strides since they began.

Yes, a fine body of troopers, in their neat fitting uniforms turned out in Harman's best style, as the noble Commandant, mounted on his fiery charger, looking ready for anything—fit to charge a haystack or a corn bin—puts them through their drill. There they are, the comic man and all: he is

whistling fashionable airs down the barrel of his rifle and throwing the company into convulsions with an unmoved countenance. They form fours, right-about-face, and finally ground arms, the comic gentleman bringing his down with such force on his right hand trooper, Private Badcraft's toe, that brought tears into his eyes. He was full of fun, was the comic man ; he knew his drill, no mistake about that, so had more time for his comicalities. He wore his helmet wrong side on, did a slow march hopping on one foot, and finally brought the house down by going through an evolution on his hands with his carbine in his mouth. But he did it once too often, and was called out of the ranks. Out he came with a bound, and turning three somersaults stood at attention, and after being severely reprimanded sat up and begged like a dog with his helmet in his hand and was taken off to the guard-room by a file of men and a corporal ; even they could hardly march for laughing, the prisoner evidently telling some little story. They are a first-rate corps, and bid fair to rival the Mounted Behar, in time. Yes, handy with their weapons. To see them charge a square of beer bottles ; the way the heads go off is a treat, cutting the Turk's head is a fool to it, and reducing the *moorghies*

to sections shows a knowledge of drill that is surprising, considering the short time they have been raised. They had target practice the other day after breakfast. I was not present, but a young friend of mine told me all about it. He says :—

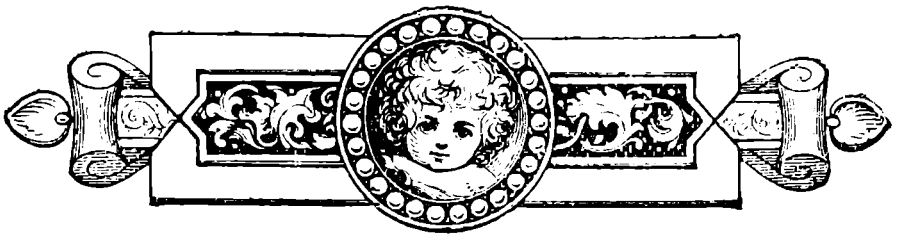
"After a first-rate meal we formed up, and marched down to the butts. The Serjeant accompanied us and acted as marker, doubtless finding the front of the target the safest place to stand. They were a little at a loss to know in what position to fire, some being for laying on their backs and firing over their feet, "the correct Wimbledon touch," says Crackers, who piqued himself on knowing all about the city corps, ye know. Another suggested flat on the stomach was the thing, but this was waved off as being rather uncomfortable after a good breakfast ; so it was resolved to kneel down on one knee. Just then it was thought better to refer to the sergeant, as the gallant hofficer in charge of the party was not quite certain himself. So the drill master was called from the butts and appealed to ; he gave it in favor of lying flat on the ground and great were the lamentations.

Volley after volley was fired, and at last the target was struck, immense sensation and good

fellowship was the order of the day, but this was damped by several claiming the honor. At last it was decided that Shunter had done the trick.

"Oh"! says the irate Cracker, "you need not buck, it was only a "houter," but 'twarnt, and turned out to be a "hinner." Several good shots were made after this, and as the shades of night were falling fast, the company were reformed and marched back in double quick time, and three cheers being given for Gladstone, they separated. It's a good move, it promotes friendly meetings, improves shooting, and gives a little outing sometimes; we get few enough in Assam. A band, I believe, is in contemplation, and the comic man is to have the drum, here will be a fine field for him. A camp of exercise will be formed at regular periods fixed upon, a fancy dress ball is to be held. I wonder if the comic man will go as clown? Every one ought to support them—either join or become an honorary member, it entitles you to wear the uniform, the chief attraction, besides you get a carbine and sword, can shoot for all prizes, and if you are not a duffer, could soon cover your side-board with cups and other trophies. If Tea will only look up a little, we hope another year to send our picked eight to Wimbledon Common to compete for the Queen's prize. If they don't

win it will, at any rate, pay their expenses. I hope those who, from age or rotundity of figure like myself are debarred from becoming an active private will, at least, join as an honorary member of the corps. A fat man in uniform is never a very becoming sight, and becomes less so on horse-back.



CHAPTER XXVII.

WHY does Indian Tea not pay? I will tell you one little sentence, which runs thus :— Not pushed enough. Yes, this is the whole reason.

An enterprising pill manufacturer has given £150 to the first soldier who posts an advertisement of his celebrated pills on the palace gates of Khartoom, and I believe a further reward to the first man that presents a box to Gordon; poor fellow, he must want a couple by this time, (written before his lamented death took place).

Planters say, oh! "Too shoppy, this sort of thing." So it is, but its much shoppier staying out here all your life. It's simply the outpourings of maniacal buyers who exclaim,—"Indian Tea is not what it used to be, a trifle weak in the cup."

Rot! there is more care, more attention, more labor, more capital and more brains expended in the manufacture of Indian Teas than ever there was. It must be pushed, we must struggle with it, worry with it, till we carry it through, for through it must and shall go; let's all give a push to start the tambourine a rolling; once off don't let it stop; keep it up, keep it up; rub in, post a circular on old Gladstone's door—

"Try Indian Teas, keep you awake, never go to sleep over a long sitting." We must begin, everybody can help; to the owners of small gardens who don't make Tea in such large quantities, instead of packing it in large chests, do so in smaller, and try to sell it out and out through your friends at home. Make it a *sine qua non*, that Indian Teas should be drunk on the voyage home; Steamer lines supplied with small boxes for the homeward voyage, of Indian Teas for the benefit of residents in India, who drink nothing else. Ram it down at all railway stations, agitate, fight, scramble, growl; it is bound to come to the front.

See the great race for the tea cup! Only three horses worth mentioning; India, Ceylon and China. Hark at the shouts from the ring "six to four. I will lay on India, five to one against

Ceylon, any price ag'in China and some of these 'houtsiders; 'ere you are." The bell rings, away go the horses, only two in it, and in spite of the deadweight India carries, called Government, under the saddle, wins by a length.

Ceylon, who has no weight to carry, is well up, but China nowhere; off the course, beaten out of the field.

Hurrah! we will do it yet. Wake up out of sleepy hollow, don't be content when you have made your Teas and sent them off, to sit quietly down till they are sold, and get a telegram, "1*s.* 3*d.*, *market depressed.*" I wonder who is more so?

You can't get a decent pound of tea under 2 bob or "2-and-a-kick." Where is the middle-man? Like the police, nowhere to be found when wanted. My 'heyes, would he not have a rough time of it, if we could only get hold of him?

Who is it that keeps me out of that nice little villa on the Thames?
The Middle-Man.
Who is it that calls my tea most awful names?
The Middle-man.
Who is it that keeps me out in this unhealthy land?
The Middle-man.
And gives such dreadful prices which I cannot stand?
The Middle-man.

2

Who is it that makes all the profit and eats his turtle?
The Middle-man.
Who is it that grows so rich and fat and lives in a villa called Myrtle?
The Middle-man.
Who is it that don't do the hard work and has the fun?
The Middle-man.
Who is it when he meets the Planter, begins to cut and run?
The Middle-man.

3

Yes, it's him, and no mistake:
Apologies, none of us will take.
Oh, the middle-man trample him down,
He is the Prince, and the Planter the clown.
In the Pantomime.

Yes, he comes between us and our luxuries—if we could only deal straight with that red-faced grocer, we should be all right; but no, it's not to be; but something must be done, we a'int a-going to stand it 'hany longer, thats our little game.

I don't want to have to start a retreat out here, though I know all about that peculiar line of business; away with dull care, away with all this depression-amalgamation. Let's start a few shops in Australia, in the large towns; "Won't pay my dear fellow, been tried." Of course, it won't at first—nothing ever does—but it will do. Select your teas and select your men, send them straight from

here to start small emporiums: Must have the right man though; never mind, it's all for the best.

I wonder if the Captain would go? He is the very man; I can see him now, so polite in his manner:—

"Haw? Nothing more to-day, won't you try a small packet of red leaf—Haw, for the servants? Ah! thank you; here is your change, allow me to put the parcel in your carriage, or shall I send it round to you?" That's the way to do it, make the teas up in suitable packets, and like everything else, it's bound to go. It begins to move. I feel it; yes, slowly revolving; round it goes, faster and faster; keep it up, apply some more grease to prevent friction; it's all right, full speed, straight ahead, and no stoppages.

Poor old Grubbins has an excellent theory; he told me on the quiet, so as the idea belongs to him I hope no one will step in and do him in the eye, or else I shall get sued for damages for letting the cat out of the bag. Says he, "My theory is to buy up all the perambulating tea stalls in London, and supply them with the Best Broken. Of course, put in good pushing men." He says like the military gent, "splendid idea." "Haw! here you are, ha! all 'ot, all 'ot and biling, only a penny a cup."

Fancy the Captain with a furry cap on and that muffler and monkey-jacket, he might add wilks to the tea, and bread and butter—do a splendid trade. I for one will take a few shares in the concern; get Tavish and Pherson as Managing Directors. Well done, Grubbins, happy thought, I should say pay twenty per cent. on the outlay. Then let those out here whose wealthy parents are guardians of the poor, give the contracts for teas to Indian, just as cheap as China, and far better; so we must go on, drive a nail in here and another there, never miss an opportunity.

As soon as I have a little time, I am going myself to write a letter to the *Lancet* about Indian Teas. We must all help; what's become of the cute man?

Where is Cuttler? If not too proud, he could push it a little, a nice sharp active fellow. I daresay would not mind taking a perambulating stall now and then; say, for instance, at the boat-race or the Derby. If any one can sell it he can, why he would, talk you into buying 'alf a chest like winking. I know Mrs. Pennywinkle and Mrs. Bobbins, and numerous other ladies, will say: "Smells too much of the shop." Never mind; it's only for a time, and we shall get that pic-nic on Eel-pie Island let, and not sit down on red-ants. The fair sex can help us to recommend it to all the

old tabbies at home who sit in Parliament round their afternoon tea; they will find they get much more change out of it than China.

It's all right; Moggins has just written to me to say he has had "a splendid run, got hold of a tough old jackall (called government), whom we often had a turn after, and who has given us a lot of trouble, but we cot him at last. I imported a new hound called Churchill, who took him by the throat, and it was soon all over. I am so glad the villagers have been complaining to me for several seasons of his conduct. So now we shall be able to make a fresh start and go along splendidly."

I was reading a letter a short time ago in the *Englishman* about Ceylon, and comparing the difference between the way government treated it and India. Yes, no doubt about that, and it's a crying shame. Planters are too forbearing, too good, and put up with a great deal too much; but a worm will turn at last, and so will a planter; he only requires a little working up.

If, instead of bickering and petty squabbling, jealousies and hard words, we were to unite and pull together, a long pull and a strong pull, we are bound to come to the front. I say we: though I am not a planter. I have had something to do

with tea in my time. I have lived with the planters; I have worked with the planters; I have doctored the planters; I have dosed the planters, as they well enough know, and I have pegged with the planters, and I am rather hot on the subject—

> "Then up rise ye, my merry, merry men,
> For it is our opening day."

Yes, in *Regrets*, there is a short story called Roberts the Cabby. I can't give it all here as it will spoil the fun, besides, I have not room for it; so I give the last few lines. "It's nair all luck. Some are content to go through life with the same old cab, same old harness, same tarnished brasses, same old broken-kneed horse. Yes, never having any ambition to own a smart cab of their own, or even brighten the one up they have. Others there are who are ambitious: they oil the wheels, polish up the brasses and come to the front. Instead of going on creaking and groaning and bemoaning their fate, crawling along at four miles an hour down World-street, they run smoothly doing eight."

Have you ever been at a railway station before a train comes in, and seen the excitement of the whole place a quarter of an hour before it arrives: Ticket offices thrown open, porters start

into life, cabs drive up, and all is 'xcitement. This is called India Teas Junction—the train is coming, India Teas start up into life and activity. Book right through from wholesale station to retail; no stoppages, no changes.

Chapter XXVIII.

"Sorry, old man, I can't come over and see you, and stay tiffin to-morrow; but I am going to have a clear-out."

"Oh!" I respond, "bless my soul; no idea you were leaving the country, book me for a pair of bellows and the harmonium."

"You misunderstand me; have not been feeling so well lately, and, a'hem! am going to, a'hem! take a little aperient medicine."

"Oh! are you," I reply, and think as I ride away, those wretched stores are further off than ever. This is a frequent occurrence, a little amateur doctoring done without, at least I hope so, any distrust in me, but simply from the reason that they don't want to trouble a doctor for such trivial

ailments, not with a view to economy, for every European in Assam is entitled to medical attendance free ; it's all provided for him, and it may be a horrible thought. Perhaps, they have hideous nightmares when they think of Wilmot's or Ryott's or Mullins's rakers, and decline in much the same pleasant tone as Bulrush did, when I asked him to just let me punch the remainder of his tooth out ; punch, readers, punch with care ; punch in the presence of the Planter. (For remainder see Mark Twain.) But do you imagine when you go to Wilmot and describe your symptoms that he don't know you? Don't flatter yourself, like Brookes did when he went to pawn his watch, and the pawn-broker's assistant began looking down the list of stolen property.

"Oh!" says Brookes, "you won't find my name and address down there ; this is my first visit."

"Not so certain," replies the assistant, and winked, hereupon my friend in the paper cap, who was trying to negociate a plane, smiled : vide *Regrets* when it is published. "My first acquaintance with my uncle, dear smiling old fellow, with his three balls, two to one : ag'in your getting it out again, more likely twenty to one"

As I repeat, you won't deceive Wilmot, too old a bird, and he asks, "been taking any medicine?"

"Oh, no, nothing; a tea spoonful of pyretic saline;" but your eyes drop, you don't confess that for the last year every other Saturday night you have taken a little something; it does not matter, may be Cockles', may be Mother Beecham's, may be Holloway's, and may be Woodcock's wind pills, or if like some you have blue blood in your veins and are liable to the fashionable disease, why you will take Blair's; yes, you will always find a box of Blair's gout pills at Ilfracoomb Lodge. "Haw! don't take them now; ha, but you can't tell—better be on the safe side. Govenar has a twinge sometimes, and, Oh!" he gives a start, but it warn't the fashionable twinge. No, it was a little stab we all recognize behind, or on the right shoulder, gives you a jog now and again after a late night, and you say: "Confound Bullock, what a fellow he is for fresh air, given me a nasty rheumatic pain, wonderful, how it always attacks the same joint?"

No, it's a mistake taking too much medicine and dosing yourself. Whoever quoted this passage "throw physic to the dogs," was not so very far wrong, and 'pon my soul the older I get the more I believe there is some truth in this.

Liver, nearly as naughty an old boy as Sun, and has a back quite as broad as the cat's. Liver a little sluggish; liver not acting; liver dull, says Shanter:

nasty taste in the mouth in the mornings. I should say the majority of mouths in India in the mornings are not a bed of roses. "Don't feel up to my work, no appetite, dimness of sight;" Yes, it takes a good pair of eyes to see your commission now-a-days, weak about the legs and fees depressed at times, and a host of other symptoms; "I know my liver is not acting, and I am going to have a day off."

How does he know it's his liver? Has he reveived a medical education. The above symptoms may be due to a hundred and one causes. I have never seen an abscess of the liver in a European, during my practice in Assam. Oh! but you have had no experience. No, not much, only ten years out here, quite long enough to have caugh sight of one if they were prevalent; my heyes aint so bad as all that; so Shanter takes a couple of mother Beecham's pills when he goes to bed in the evening, and supplements this with a tumbler of white mixture to be taken the first thing in the morning; rises and walks up and down his verandah; goes into his bedroom, and looks at the nauseous compound, smells it and puts it down again, wondering why doctors put peppermint in, and thinking a gin sling would be much more preferable. Suddenly, however, he looks at his tongue in the glass, and says—

"Yes, no mistake," and gulps down the hideous compound and eats a bit of preserved ginger to remove the taste. After a little while he has some hot tea and toast, and thinks he will settle down and write a few letters home; he has not written for some time; so he begins—

"MY DEAREST OLD FATHER,—I am reallya shamed of not writing to you sooner;" here Mother Beecham gives him a jog. After a little, he resumes his letter, "but have been so busy, that I have had no time. I have received your last six letters, and am glad to hear you are enjoying such good health." He stops again, for the white mixture is having a row with old Beecham; so off he goes carefully, feeling so much better he thinks as he puts on his *topi*, and whistles "I am so very volatile, I am such a volatile young man." Resumes the letter: "I am getting on very well, the little investment I made with Parker, through your so kindly advancing me the needful, has turned out satisfactory; but now-a-days Tavish tells me small areas won't pay"; here the row begins again, another stoppage, never gets the letter finished at this rate, and off he bolts merrily singing—

"Going to run all night,
Going to run all day;
I 'll back my money on the Beecham nag,
Somebody back the Grey."

Goes on writing: "and Parker writes and says, we had better put out another 50 acres. I don't want to get into debt with the agents, they have heavy losses in speculation and expensive establishments to keep up, and are obliged to charge a small rate of interest for advancing the capital required to do this; so could you just let me have another little amount? Say, a thousand pounds to go on with. I know your expenses are heavy, as there is a large family of us, and perhaps you will think it rather forward of me giving you little advice, but could you not curtail somewhat at home? You are always impressing it on me, would it not be desirable to move into a smaller house and keep a hunter less?" Perhaps he has kept too many. This letter was never finished, for just then the row began worse than ever. Shanter got up thinking perhaps you can have too much of a good thing, and went off humming—"I am Doctor Bolus Squills, and I cures you of all yer ills."

Just then in comes a friend of his who is related to the aristocracy. "What's up, old man? Looking rather washed out, had a late night in the Tea house? Why don't you get your firing done earlier?"

"Washed out," replies Shanter. "I feel as if I had no 'innards.

"You should be careful: don't take medicine."

"I never do, at least hardly ever."

"What! scarcely never."

"Well, very seldom; and if I do, it's only a couple of mother Woodcock's wind pills."

Lord Charles stays to breakfast, and after a preliminary weak peg, which Shanter feels to want, they fall to, and make a good meal, and the afternoon passes pleasantly away. Mother Beecham has stopped growling. No wonder, a seer or so of beef; quart of Bass, prawn curry and ham would stop any growling. Don't put in these little outings. Believe me it's not all due to liver; teeth decay rapidly out here and often account for that bad taste in the mouth. Lassitude may be due to overwork; look at the miles you tramp through the hoe—wet, fine, or a fierce sun, all the same, like the village postman, round you go. Loss of appetite may be due: I say may be, my Lud, to smoking too much in the morning on an empty stomach, or to a little dyspepsia, consequent on that tin of tripe you ate last night, or those tinned pork sausages. Don't put it all down to liver. Nonsense, we imagine we have got liver. Does any one know what it is, and what you would be if you had liver; I will enlighten you on the subject. You would be a miserable specimen of

humanity, with a nasty, leary, yellow, look about the eyes, pinched-up features, complexion the color of Bullrush's puggaree, no appetite for anything, unable to walk half a mile, irritable, peevish, shivery, and a nuisance to yourself and everybody else ; instead of the bright, cheerful, good-natured, hospitable fellow that you are.

Look at the Captain giving them some leather hunting to do, you would think he does not know what bile is, never heard of such a thing.

Watch Tavish making a rally at tennis, and Nobbler, Groggler, and Mullins working up a Bheel for snipe, up to their middle in water and slush.

Liver? Ridiculous, never heard of it. Liver? Could you drink your beer, could you go out in the sun ; d—l a fear, you would soon know all about that. I tell you what it is and we all suffer from it—a little dyspepsia—now and again. Granted the liver gets a trifle sluggish sometimes and is more susceptible, that's all, and this is not confined to India. Have you never met with irritable people at home? Why, I thought my old schoolmaster was so at times, see *Regrets.* He had a splendid remedy for getting rid of his superfluous bile, none of your pills for him ; no, good exercise; I believe you, he could lay it on with a liberal hand. That's it, exercise, if you feel a little out of sorts.

Then you answer "Exercise? I do plenty of that." Confound you, I know you does, and you let's me know it pretty often, too. I don't mean that exercise which at times is depressing., No, I mean something more exciting, something that will take tea out of your thoughts for a few hours. Lawn tennis—come over and have a game with me,—am not much of a player, began too late in life, you see, but will amuse you and suggest no rakers.

Try polo, cricket, quoits. A long walk, if its cold weather, or a good gallop. If this fails, knock off your beer for a day or so, live on lighter diet: try anything else, mother Beecham? No, don't take medicine on your own responsibility if you can help it, you are entitled to a little advice, though you need not come it too strong, like my friend did, and want two "pulls" every time you meet me, yet if you can't pull yourself round with any of the above homœpathic remedies, better come to me, than by raking yourself out with powerful medicines the therapeutic properties of which you know nothing, and of the pathological changes it causes, less. Then would I have fewer patients coming to me with a smile and saying "Eno's fruit salt, why I can drink a quart of it. Salts, I laugh at them, and castor oil, —very good for old tabbies and children,—but not for me, Doctor," with an air of triumph. In course

you do, thanks to your excellent custom of having these little outings, and I find that nothing short of croton oil or a hose with a donkey engine attached is any good. Take my advice, throw your physic to Moggans's hounds and trust more to a little discrimination in what to eat, drink, and avoid.

You may laugh at me, and say this is only the outpourings of a billious maniac, who is trying to relieve his bile and our pockets; it won't do we knows you, and perhaps, I hope not, will do and say as the gent did with whom I made a little bet at Croydon. What did he do? Why when my horse won and I went to draw the stakes, he tore my book up, I mean ticket, and says: "You hought to be ashamed of yourself, you do, a-trying to do a poor 'ard working man hout hoff an 'onest liveliood, you hought. You backed Arliquin." (For remainder see *Regrets* when it is published). I hope you will be more lenient with me than the book-maker was.

Taking medicine at night and going out to tiffin the next day is like one who goes to bathe in the sea, and steps in up to his middle and gets out again. He only half does it, the same as you do; you stir up quiescent bile and don't get rid of it, and your last state is very likely worse than your first. Gie it up; gie it up.

Chapter XXIX.

LET'S take a peep at our Agents. We don't much like intruding, after those abusive letters we have written; we are not in Assam, and off our own dung-heap don't feel quite so plucky, and are rather sorry we wrote so strongly, and enter the offices nervously, but are set at ease at once by the hearty welcome we receive.

"So glad to see you, you know; must come and stay with us while you are in Calcutta, won't hear of you going anywhere else."

You are enchanted; what nice people; they are so affable, so kind. So thoughtful the agents are, kindness in themselves. If you don't go to live with them, having made other arrangements perhaps you go and dine with them and

are struck with the luxuries around you. If married, you are introduced to a charming lady, dressed in the last Parisian fashion, who drives to the band-stand every night in her barouche and pair. The dinner is magnificent, and you get bubley jock and bashed neeps as well.

After dinner the lady of the house adjourns to the next room and plays on a splendid piano, one of Harold's best, and as the soft music is wafted to your ears, a flash of intelligence passes through your brain, a thought comes back to you, not of the old days at home, not of tepid lemonade and sherry parties, not of Willis's rooms, not of Monaco, and not of Newgate. No; what then? Only one little word as you glance at your host; a small word, yes, you know all about it; you understand what has puzzled you for many a long day in your bungalow in Assam—and the weary hours you have spent trying to solve it. You asked Grubbins, you asked Tavish, you asked Pherson, and at last you go in desperation to the Captain.

"Haw! very sorry; ah! don't quite know myself, daresay they mean cooking utensils;" but you have solved the problem.

E'es, the one little word SUNDRIES is no longer Greek to you.

Ai, ai, lassies mun weep and Sandy's mun

work. No doubt establishments require a great deal of keeping up. Calcutta is an expensive place, we all pretty well know, so thinks Tonald, so let the world jog along as it will, I'll be free and easy still, free and easy, free and easy. I'll be free and easy still, and returns to Assam to his tough old moorghy, but does not forget his visit to his Agents and the crampped tatties and gigot of mutton. I hope for one moment they won't feel hurt at the above. I should be so sorry ; for the hospitality of firms in Calcutta is proverbial, and it would be but a sorry return for all the kindness and attention one receives on going down for a visit once in ten years. But, *pardonnez moi*, this little work is written to try and relieve the long faces and fearful depression one meets up here now-a-days.

Sometimes a member of the firm visits Assam, he, too, wants to have a look round, so he arrives, in wonderful good humour, with the latest thing in tweeds and leggins, and a marvel in boots.

"Ah ; this is your bungalow, is it ?"—seems disappointed ; expected to see a tumble down old thatch building in the present state of the market.

" Find pucca cheaper, do you, and lasts longer ? No fear of getting bitten by snakes, and find your health improved, can do more work ? Hum,

ha, just so," and that clears up the little doubt about the estimate being a trifle over last year's.

Ees, he has solved a little problem. "It's all right," he says, "can't be too careful of your health. Anything of that kind, do at once, don't trouble the firm about it."

"Want a pleasure boat, do you?"

"Well, I daresay, not a bad idea; you live near the river, and rowing expands your chest."

"I will make a note of it and speak to my partners on my return." On his return he reads in his pocket book.—"Pleasure boat, speak to partners about it," and wonders what on earth made him promise to go to a pic-nic at Howrah that sort of thing not being in his line, and he forgets all about it.

Yes, he comes up, and he goes down again, in many cases not much wiser than he was before; he has enjoyed himself and spent a few rupees at Nap. Had a most delightful time. No idea Assam was such a jolly place. All nonsense about the climate. Fellows are not so badly off as they imagine, and he resolves to be more careful about recommending increase of pay every year and heavy commissions.

Just so: splendid climate from November till end of February; but let him come up in

August, he will then know all about it. Let him pay his visit when the air in some parts of Assam is impregnated with malaria ; when the mosquitoes are as large as humming bees ; when it rains for days at a time, as it only can rain in Assam ; when the Planter can't wither his leaf and manufacturing becomes anything but a pleasant pastime ; then he will understand some of the trials, some of the drawbacks of Tea planting, and instead of sitting in a nicely furnished office, under a punkah, in white drill pants and French cambric shirt with gold and turquoise horse-shoe studs, and writing :—

DEAR SIR,

"We are astonished at those last samples sent down to us. The liquor is very inferior, pale and weak in the cup, the outturn dull and of a darkish green color ; perhaps you are not aware that it should be of a bright yellow like a new penny ? We can't help thinking that more attention should be paid to your withering : don't overdo it and don't underdo it. Trusting we shall not have to write to you again on this subject ; we remain dear Sir."

Yours faithfully,
GRABBLER & TWISTER."

No, he would not write like that, but like this :—

DEAR SIR,

"We are sorry to hear you have had such unfortunate weather for manufacturing, but trust it has cleared up. Of course, with the difficulties of withering, the samples

are a little off, but very good, considering the fearful weather you are getting."

Then Baffler, who has been in tea for the last 12 years, a first-rate man, who works hard for the interests of his employers, is wroth, and not without very good reason; it has been raining for the last 12 days persistently, his leaf-houses are full. Why does he not stop plucking? Stop an old tabbie's tongue. He has a flush out all over the garden and must pluck it. Pluck finer? Exactly, and not make your estimate and get the sack.

No, he does the best he can, withers his leaf somehow, breaks it up, and by dint of working night and day, gets it off. The weather clears and Baffler thinks—after all not so much harm done, for he always takes a good place in the market. A little inferior tea? Can't help it; we wanted the rain, it will do a lot of good, but I wish the local board would arrange for delivery at night instead of day.

Just then he receives Grabbler and Twister's letter; is it to be wondered at if he is a trifle put out? Is he aware that the outturn should be a bright yellow. Does he know a duck can swim? Baffler is too straightforward, he might have easily have kept the sample back; not he, it went in its turn, and Baffler writes and tells them if they are not

satisfied they had better get somebody else. He knows he has done his level-best, and he is quite content.

This produces one in reply :—" Sorry he should have taken offence at their letter, but the market is so low at present, thought he would be glad of a hint."

Hint to a man who has forgotten more than they ever knew about tea. If he don't know, who has been working at it practically for the last ten years, who does? Really it's too bad that a superior class of educated, hard working, far-seeing men, should be treated as a lot of duffers, requiring to be dry-nursed over the slightest thing, from making a *moorghykhana* to levelling a lawn tennis ground. No wonder managers and superintendents get disgusted ; a little different to that beautiful picture entitled " a letter from home."

Cahpter XXX.

"AND they call this pleasure, I suppose, a-getting the bile out of you. I must confess its rather rough on one; for my part I wish I was safe on land again."

Thus spoke Slasher; *Time*—10 A. M. *Place*—the Indian Ocean aboard the good ship "Wonder." Slasher was bound for home after several years' hard work in Assam, He found the time hang heavy, for there were hardly any planters on board among the passengers, and the few there were, did not seem inclined to talk shop. He tried playing quoits made of rope, stiffened with tar, and thrown into buckets, but this brought back unpleasant recollections, so he gave it up. But there was one object on board which was tantus

tantalus, and all day long he was accustomed to fidget round it, and in the end he proved a veritable Jonas, and this accounts for the number of days she took going home. Its put down in the log as being due to detention caused by the quarantine and cholera; but no such thing. It was simply Slasher that caused it; it was the binnacle, this was never cleaned according to his idea, there always being a smudge left. He tried to give it a dry rub one day, but was indignantly told by the quarter-master to keep his "'ands hoff," so he watched his opportunity, and under the cover of darkness, crept up, bribed the watch with some grog which, while they were drinking, he gave the unfortunate binnacle such a rubbing that altered the course a point or two. That did not matter: he relieved his feelings and was able to get a good night's rest afterwards. He flirted with the fair sex but was very cautious; rather a sell to get spoony going home when one will have such a pick afterwards. No: you don't catch a weazel asleep, and he fought very shy of the spins.

Right glad was he when they reached Marseilles. There he went ashore and had such a lunch, as makes our mouths water to this day. He has told me the Menu so often that I have no difficulty in giving it here.

POTAGE.

Julienne au gras

POISSON

Anguilles a la Tartare

LEGUMES

Petits Pois au Natural

Cepes a 'l huile. Asperges Entiers

ENTREES

Saucisses Trufees.

Galantine de Dinde

REMOVES.

Fricassee de Grenouilles

Fillets Mignones de Bœuf

The above, together with a bottle of vin ordinaire at half a franc, and a petit ver, completed the repast. He thought himself quite a dog and went for a walk. Two naughty ladies followed him and he took refuge in a hair-dressers. He did not want his hair cut, so he made them understand this after some difficulty ; by exclaiming "nai lage catibee, champouvey vous. "They did so, wonderful," Slasher remarked on his return to Assam, "how one can make himself understood abroad? After a little I found myself quite *comme il faut*." He landed at Gravesend after a somewhat tedious voyage, went up to London, and stayed at a celebrated hotel in Covent

Garden. How glad he was! and promptly ordered dinner. It was such a blow out that I give it here:

SOUP.

Pea

FISH.

Fried Skate

ENTREES

Pork chops. Hashed Calves Head

JOINT

Roast Bullocks Heart stuffed with Sage and Onions

PUDDING

Baked Roley-poley

GAME

Larks

DESSERT.

Double Gloster Cheese

Gingerbread Nuts. Apples and Oranges

Wines

A pint of 'alf and 'alf and a go of Gin.

He felt better; "I like to hear Mullins brag about the little dinners he had in town. Fancy it did not come up to this," and out he sallied for an evening's amusement. He had not the latest cut in clothes, but he would get some new ones in the morning; in the meantime Tavish, before Slasher left Assam, gave him a long overcoat made in the year 1. This he now wore

with a soft felt hat, and it covered a multitude of sins: he looked very much like a resurrectionist or second-class mute out on the spree. He went into some celebrated wine vaults and indulged in a glass of real old Port, straight from the wood, then buying a penny cane and lighting a vevy-fins, he felt he was a doing of it. To what place shall I go he thought, at he proceeded along the strand admiring himself in the shop windows. I have it the very place Grubbins told me to be certain to go, a nice high-class entertainment and highly moral; so accosting the first bobby he met, he enquired the way to the Judge and Jury. The bobby eyed him up and down, turned his bull's-eye on him, evidently taking him for a dynamiter, as they were very prevalent just then.

"Judge and Jury? There ain't no such place now a-days; you hought to be ashamed of yourself, you hought."

"Excuse me, I have just come from abroad.

Must be an American Fenian, thought Robert, feeling for the handcuffs, and, as this meant promotion, determined to run him in; but Slasher hearing the rattle, said hurriedly: "Just home from Assam, and I was recommended to go to see the Judge and Jury, by a friend out there. I have not been in London for ten years."

"That halters the case, Sir," replied Robert; "'scuse me, your friend must have been a-making game of you. The Judge and Jury has been knocked on the head for years by the Society for the Suppression of Vice"

Where upon Slasher waxed wroth, and determind to to have it out with Grubbins on his return.

"Can you recommend me to any place of amusement?"

"Yes, I should advise you to go to the South London, near the Helephant and Castle. Go down Ludgate Hill and get into a bus at Faringdon Street, this will take you right down. Don't make a mistake and go to Spurgeon's Tabernacle instead."

Off Slasher went, and after some trouble, he found a bus and proceeded down to the South London Music Hall; he paid a bob and went in. How delighted he was. He wished those fellows from Assam could only see him now. He called for some hot rum and water. The entertainment was varied. He was most struck with the performing monkeys, being a novelty to him. After the performance was over, he went out and had some supper at a perambulating oyster-stall, where he was joined by a friendly young woman who asked him the time, saying she had been to service

at the Chapel and must be home by ten, "or her mother would be very angry."

She was, however, with some difficulty persuaded to stay and join in the *al fresco* meal. Slasher was in rare spirits, seeing life he thought, as he swallowing a native the size of a cheese-plate, well saturated with chilli vinegar and black pepper, which produced such a fit of coughing that brought tears into his eyes. The obliging young lady had to slap him on the back to bring him round and took the opportunity to purloin the silk handkerchief which he bought in Assam off the Bombay merchant and had been keeping for his trip.

Let's draw a veil over the remainder of the evening; suffice to say he got back to his hotel early in the morning, and found Covent Garden all alive, oh! A cabbage catching him on the side of the head, then tripping over a barrow-load of cauliflowers, made him think he had had quite enough for one night, and right glad was he when he got to bed. The next morning he felt rather hipped and indulged in a soda and brandy. A ridiculous mistake occurred here, for taking a little stroll he entered an establishment and called for a "B and S," having been put up to this before he went home by his friend Starlight. To his amazement they brought him beer and stout, which nearly

made him ill, so handing the beer and stout to a coal-heaver who just then came in and whose stomach was not so tender, he explained that he meant brandy and soda. This he swallowed with feverish haste, and started home to breakfast. He ordered a red-herring, but was startled by the waiter exclaiming—"Very sorry, Sir, can't oblige you with a 'erring; we draws the line at 'errings; give you a nice salmon cutlet."

Slasher here found out that money won't do all in this world. After breakfast he went off to Bond-street to get measured for some new clothes, which he badly wanted. Stepping into the shop, he sauntered up to the counter: the proceedings of the proprietor were strange, for he promptly locked the cash-box up, and abruptly asked, "What can I do for you?"

"I want to be measured for some clothes."

"You have made a mistake," said the fashionable tailor, "don't deal in ready made articles. You should try Moses or Kinos; you will find one of the yellow 'busses take you to Shoreditch in no time."

"You misunderstand me, I have just come"—

"Excuse me, Sir, it's not in my line."

They were evidently at cross purposes, while Slasher was brusting to finish his sentence, and say

he had just returned from Assam. The tailor was thinking he was one of those gentlemen just got over a little temporary retirement, for Slasher wore his hair very short—regular crop you know? The tailor's suspicions were further roused, when after taking his measure for some new clothes and demanding £5 deposit, Slasher with an important air, wrote out a draft for £10 on Messrs. Shagg, Shunlot & Co., and asked him to change it.

"Very sorry, have not so much in the house. If you will wait I will send the foreman off to get it changed at your Agents."

The foreman departed in a cab and, in half-an-hour or so, returned with the draft marked "not known"; and a letter to say—"there was a Mr. Slasher coming home, but he had not arrived, or would have been certain to have called and presented his credentials, and no doubt the draft was a forgery." He whispered to his head man, who went out and returned with a bobby, and it was only after considerable delay, going to the hotel and thence to the office, that the mistake was explained.

The tailor was profuse in his apologies but Slasher would have them at no price, so he took the tailor's advice and went off to Shoreditch and got rigged out in a fashionable suit and bought a canary-colored dust over-coat, for it was summer.

Shagg and Shunlot then told him he had better carry a little cash and not write drafts, as they were not always accepted at Pimlico and St. John's Wood.

"I don't intend shopping there," said Slasher, who heard that the West-end was expensive.

"I am afraid wherever you do your shopping, they will prefer ready money," replied Shunlot, with a wink.

That evening Slasher went off to the Alhambra, and finding it unpleasantly warm, he gave his overcoat—the one made in the year 1—to the attendant at the cloak-room. He enjoyed himself very much, and had a drink or two, and as he caught sight of himself in the glass felt flattered. The ladies were very polite to him, but he was cannie after his previous night's experiences, and received their attentions coldly. On coming out he was quite frisky, for the music and refreshments had made him jovial. On reaching the cloak-room he gave up his ticket. "Six pence, please Sir."

"I won't give it," responded Slasher."

"Very sorry, sir. There are the rules," pointing to them. "Sorry I can't give the coat up without the money."

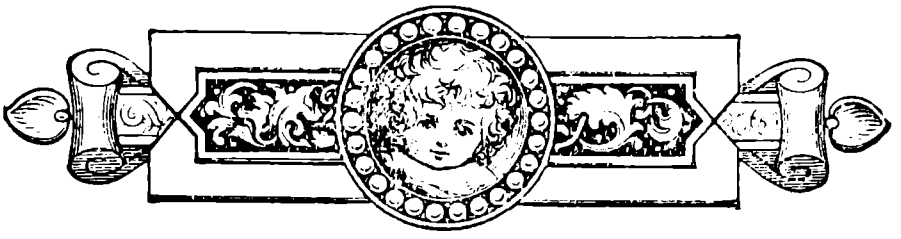
"Then you can keep it and be d—d to you," said the apparently indignant Slasher, who was

glad to get red of it at any price, for it was green at the collar and poke-eaten. He spent a few more days in London seeing the lions, and found he was quite the man about town. Buying a bag of nuts he ascended the monument ; then adjourned to the Lowther Arcade and bought some bead necklaces for his sisters, for he was of a generous disposition, was Slasher. A dinner at the Holborn was too utterly utter, though it rather confused him eating his dinner to a full band ; he had often done so in Assam, but they only were composed of mosquitoes : it made him nervous and uneasy. For instance, this was the sort of thing :— To his soup they played.—"Froggy would a wooing go." Then to the entrees, consisting of friccaseed fowl, the band struck up—"Should auld acquaintance be forgot." The dinner, however, was good, and well served. Slasher now thought it was time he looked his people up. He had got a first-rate outfit which he picked up at various places, including a two guinea tourist suit from Cheapside, a pilot-jacket with velvet collar—for he still felt chilly at times—morning coat with silk facings, a chimney-pot hat, broad at the brim and low in the crown, and a pair of patent leather boots. He created quite a sensation when he arrived home.

His worthy father thought him a little *outre*, but his mother said, "Never mind, he is only Home for a short time; why should he not be fashionable. Yes, like my friend in *Regrets*, when he dressed to go to the Oxford, he was only a trifle fashionable thought Brookes. (See Brooke's first visit to the Oxford, accompanied by Mullins when they were medical students, in *Regrets*, shortly to be published).

The first Sunday he went to church he was a little late, and as he walked up the middle aisle the clergyman said "When the wicked man," &c., Slasher made a personal matter of it, and when the plate came round, put in a four anna piece he had with him. That will puzzle him, he thought; curious how he twigged me so quick: I was not very naughty in London; then he thought of the oyster stall and blushed.

Slasher was very glad when the time came for him to return to Assam. He found dinner parties stiff and chairs without arms uncomfortable, and the lady of the house looked daggers at him when he took the bottles out of the cruet-stand one by one and polished them up, and putting the flowers straight made every one wonder. He did not care for the lawn-tennis parties, and wanted something stronger than tepid tea and lemonade.



CHAPTER XXXI.

"WONDERFUL, how sound I sleep!" thought Raddish; "never heard the night chowkidar ring the gong again last night. He can't strike it regular every hour; lazy beggar, has a good pay for doing it, and only to work from 7 P.M. to 5 A.M., and the whole day to sleep; but I will be even with him yet,"—thus soliliquised Raddish who had a great objection to be, what he called, humbugged by the wily native in any form, and they found him a difficult, if not unpleasant, gentleman to play their pranks on.

Mr. Sarmessur was a sturdy young villager who owned a neat little cottage, some cows, ducks, geese, besides renting and cultivating some land in an adjoining village and was well off for an Assamese.

"Why on earth did he work" you will at once say? for it's a most unusual event for a villager to exert himself in the slightest on a tea garden when he has a comfortable competence without. Quite correct, but Sarmessur had succumbed to the gentle passion which overtakes us all sooner or later. Some, perhaps, when young and in their prime; some when past the youthful stage; some in the meridian of life, and some with one foot in the grave: it attacks all from prince to pauper, sooner or later. No shirking; like whooping cough or measles; you are bound to get it some day, and Sarmessur was no execption to the general rule.

Yes, he had fallen in love with Cheenee, a fair young damsel, the belle of Luxingong village. Poor Sarmessur, he was hopelessly gone, but she turned her nose up at him, and said unless he could produce the usual gold ornaments she would marry his rival, an older man, a widower who was was pock-marked, but owned a herd of buffaloes and several pounds of good solid jewllery. So Sarmessar became a night chowkidar, determined to save money, and marry the girl of his heart. He used to watch her go for water, and she drove him nearly to distraction by her hundred and one little coquettish ways. She had lovely hair, jet

black, which she could sit on, and at times let fall down over her lissom form as per accident, and give her pretty little head a shake, as if quite unconscious that anybody was looking, for she was a bit of a prude and had been carefully brought up, still remembering with a shudder the fearful beatings her mother gave her at times for flirting with the boys when she took her father's buffaloes to graze.

She looks very charming as she steps gracefully along, balancing one *kulsie* on her head and carrying another under her arm, for she has been to fetch water. Every movement brings her beautiful form into play and shows such gracefulness, such suppleness of limb, such a splendid contour of figure, mixed with maiden modesty and timid bashfulness, that attracted other eyes besides Sarmessar's, and once set the heart of one of the old chronics beating at such a fearful rate when he rode past, that on arriving at his destination, took two stiff whiskeys and sodas to bring him round. There she stands having a flirtation with the widower, knowing that Sarmessar is watching her; like others of the fair sex, she thought, nothing like keeping one up to the mark. Love-making would be very stale, indeed, if it were not tinged with jealousy and seasoned with rivalry.

So thought Sarmessar as he watched his rival flirting with Cheenee, who was evidently saying something naughty, for just then she blushed, gave him a rap witha piece of sugar cane she was eating, and walked away.

He hit his steed, a mangy old buffaloe over the head, and cantered off. She looked very fetching dressed in the native costume : a sort of petticoat made out of home-spun silk, with a cloth thrown round the upper part of her body with naive simplicity ; and, as she walked along, displayed every movement of her elastic frame with a tantilization almost driving you frantic. As she opened her mouth, they revealed a set of ivories which would have made a West-end belle go mad with envy ; they were not stained with that hideous practise of chewing *pân* so prevalent among all Assamese ladies.

I have read Mr. Barker's interesting little work, and must say I can't agree with him on one point.

He runs down the fair sex among the Assamese and says they are ugly and coarse. I totally disagree with him, and I know others will side with me who read this book. His views must have been narrowed, or he never had such opportunities as has fallen to my lot. Being a medical man my profession has brought me into contact with there

fair creatures more than once. I recollect years ago being called in to see a villager not far from where I was residing. What interest I took in his case; how I attended him without any fee with the exception of a few oranges and plantains; and how often he required medicines which I never grumbled at making up for him. His lovely daughter came and fetched them herself. Her name was Tulsee, and even as I write this, old as I am getting, the remembrances of the past steal over me in a delightful dream—but—I must shut up or my feelings will overcome me; for its no secret I have long since climbed to the top of that hill, mentioned before, and am rapidly descending the other side.

Perhaps Mr. Barker did not have a very good chance of judging, or his pretty little wife corrected his work before publication, or he never could have cast such a slur or written such a libel; for I have seen Assamese young ladies out here equal to, if not superior, to some you meet in King's Road, Brighton in the season, and if Raddish speaks the truth, he will bear me out in what I say.

But to return to our story: Sarmessar had a private arrangement with the bungalow chowkidar, who, as soon as Raddish was asleep, gave the signal "all safe for the night," for which he got a present occasionally of oranges and sweet potatoes.

But Raddish was of a suspicious nature, and heard things which very often astounded the natives. Yes, the dusky gentlemen had to get up very early in the morning to get at the blind side of James Raddish.

Night came on ; nine struck, and Raddish went off to bed, for he was very careful of himself and kept early hours, except when he had guests, then he would sit till ten but not a minute more. He would say, early to bed and early to rise makes you grumpy and causes your temper to rise. Telling the chowkidar to put the lights out, and knowing he would soon go to sleep, he entered his bedroom and undressed and went to bed.

No ; his movements were peculiar. He first of all performed a breakdown ; then he went to a box and brought out an alarum ; this he polished up and oiled with the same fiendish delight that the fellow does the guillotine before an execution. At last, he seemed satisfied, and set it down with a final polish. He then lighted a cheroot and got Barker's book on Assam and was soon fast asleep, for he was not interested in a description of Assam, with which country he was tolerably acquainted. He woke and looked at his watch ; the chowkidar must he asleep, he thought, and he crept steadily out ; no doubt snoring peacefully away ; and

slipping out of his Bungalow with the alarum set, he proceeded to place it at the bottom of the ladder leading to the gong. Then back he came and had a weak peg for he felt chilly, and taking his gun up fired a right and left off at an imaginary jackall. This had the desired affect, for Sommessar who was quietly sleeping woke up with a start:—he was dreaming he was married to Cheenee, and guns were being fired, a usual custom in honor of the event. May as well go and ring the gong, he thought, now I am awoke, and off he went blithly. He was just going to mount the ladder, when he heard Raddish, who had been watching at the window, call out "*Khubardar! Khubardar!* Too late: he made a step forward, there was a sharp click, and the alarum went off, and away he ran as if ten thousand devils were behind him. Raddish, who had come down, went after him, calling out for him to stop, but the more he called the faster he went, leaving a clatter behind him worse than an elephant bolting with his chains. Yes, the more he called "Wo," the faster he would go, and Raddish, who was nearly convulsed with laughter, gained very little on him. At last he fell into a hollow, and Raddish caught him and took off the alarum in the shape of a large RAT-TRAP. Luckily his skin was tough and the teeth

did not penetrate, but it gave him such a fright, that he resigned his billet on the spot, which remained vacant for many a long day, the Assamese saying money would not tempt them to undertake the job, for there was a *bhoot* (ghost) there who had fearful teeth, and if he once got hold of you, would not let go. So Summessar went back and married Cheenee :—no, she married the widower ;—wrong again, for, becoming tired of the monotony of village life, she tried town-life, and as far as I know, though its wrong to say so, found it the more preferable of the two.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"THEY are the dirtiest, lankiest, crankiest, cheekiest, breakiest, ugliest, dearest, naughtiest and dressiest, I should think, in the whole of India," says Stodger, as he sat down to breakfast as hungry as a hunter. I know the Preadamiters will laugh at this chapter, and say, "dare say had none at home;—comes here and grumbles when he has 'alf a dozen a-running after him." Just so, though we kept one servant at home who did everything: made your bed, waited at meals, cooked the scraggy piece of mutton for Sunday's dinner, and boiled the taters, greens and fat bacon on week days; milked the cow, fed the pigs, emptied the slops and performed numerous other offces, still she was always neat and clean

at table ; she was a princess in comparison to some of the gentlemen you are lucky enough to get up here. I am not alluding to Calcutta servants, or other parts of India. Certainly we don't get the créme de la créme in Assam. They fight shy of this country ; think they will never return to their native home again ; have heard fearful accounts of the climate, which is not improved by seeing a ghastly object come down, sometimes wrapped in a bundle of dirty clothes, suffering from fever and spleen. Can this be their gay host who gave that parting little dinner a few months ago in Cabutrass lane, who departed smiling in his new clean clothes, patent leather shoes, natty pantaloons, fitting tightly to those elegantly turned pins. They now hang in baggy folds ; his locks, which were redolent with hair oil and shone like a new shilling, were uncombed and unkempt, and in lieu of that magnificent fly-catcher he wore on the top of his head, it was displaced with a dirty woollen comforter, and his whole get up was very different to what it was when he returned thanks after his health was drank at the parting dinner, and when he replied in a few chosen words, which ran thus :—"*Bais* and *Cockais*. I am leaving you for a short time to travel to a far off and distant land, beset

with numerous dangers, wild animals, fevers and all sorts of annoyances, but only for a little while. Ram Chunder, who sits smilingly at my right hand, says it's not so bad. He has returned after 12 months with a comfortable competence for life, but he has cautioned me about taking service with an old resident ; he says they are soured, lock up the liquor and dispute every item of the bazaar bill with the tenacity of a down-east pedler ; won't allow you to use more than 7 moorghy's a day, and grumbles at 12."

"Equally disagreeable," Ram Chunder states, "is it to get into a bungalow with a *mem sahib*. You say she don't know the language. *Acha*, but she knows you have not used four seers of milk, consumed 12 moorghys, half a seer of sugar, and numerous other little things in one day. Off she goes to the *burra sahib*, who is her husband, and he, angry at being troubled with domestic duties, for he got married on purpose to get rid of them, takes the matter into his own hands, and says "Ram Chundra" with a shiver, and very soon in a forcible manner convinces you that you must have sadly neglected your arithmetic while at school. "No, for choice, give me one of those nice young gentleman just out from home who have such faith in you, that I

have thought sometimes," says Ram Chundra, "they have not been accustomed to many servants in Belât, for they seem so proud when they first engage you. *Bearer* is one of the first words they learn, and *Qui hai:* they keep on *Qui hai-ing* all day. This is the sort of thing. *Qui hai? Sahib.* bring my pipe. *Qui hai? Sahib.* Lace my boots up. *Qui hai? Sahib.* Fill my pipe. *Qui hai? Sahib.* Pick my handkerchief up *Qui hai? Sahib.* Oh, nothing you——"

"But this running about," replies Ram Chundra, "is made up by the implicit confidence he places in you. He gives you the keys, and he generally has a nice large outfit. You hear the climate is warm and moist in the rains, and cold during the remainder of the time; so it is,—damp and detestable during the rains, and you should always wear flannel next to your skin. No difficulty about that" replies Ram Chundra with an expressive wink. "No occasion to trouble about buying them hif you are hengaged with a young gent just arrived; but, if on the other hand," he added in a solemn voice, "you 'as the misfortune to get hengaged by an old resident, take my advice and take your own flannel with you, for you will find that 'is are riddled worse than a sieve, and Joseph's garment would be mild along side of them. This

nice young man from the country will hand you over all and ask no questions, only don't be put out at his *Qui hai-ing* all day at first, but dress up smart to attention at the word of command, and it's your own fault if in 12 months you don't come back with enough to start a comfortable business of your own, and instead of looking on your visit to Assam as one of the gloomiest in your life, you will look back on it as *the* one bright spot in your weary pilgrimage through this vale of tears;" his feelings here quite overcame him, and he sat down amid the cheers of his companions.

Yes, servants are different out here to what they are home; who can't remember them? The fat cook with the well turned ankle who used to pretend not to see you. Yes, we have all done it; got hold of a piece of bread and held it under the joint, catch the dripping and swallow the delicious morsel. I can see one of the Preadamiters creeping in and opening the little door of the old fashioned roasting apparatus on the pretence of helping Cooky; but baste a piece of bread instead of the joint, and all she says is, "For shame, master James, I will tell your papa," but she never does, and before you have done, you probably bring on a bilious attack. Who can't bear in mind the rosy nurse, the clean,

smiling housemaid who poured out your beer so nicely, and the amateur flirtations you had in the evenings—at least I did, and my brothers I know. After a time we used to find the parlour very slow ; the dear old governor did not like to be disturbed over his paper at that time, and I thought it very rough on rats—I mean boys—I was thinking of Wells's Rough on Rats—try Hop Bitters ?

But my father was easily put out—for instance, if you sneezed he would look up and say, "Dear me, that boy has caught a cold." Did you go and take a book out of the case, and in doing so pull the shelf down with a row of books, he would give a start and say, "Can't you be a bit quieter ?" Then you would give this up and put all the books back, upside down, and the next time the governor went to look for that treatise on high farming, it would drive him nearly frantic. You would try a game at draughts, have a dispute with your brother, and because you knocked the board over, upset a chair, nearly pulled the cloth off together with the lamp, and finally finished with a rough and tumble under the governor's chair nearly upsetting him, he would be inclined to lose his temper, and we would slip off to the kitchen, jolly old place ! I can see it now, the fat old cook dozing off ; Martha and Mary deep in

Bow Bells or the *Family Herald*, and Sarah, the scullery maid, telling her fortune with a greasy pack of cards.

I know Pherson will object to the scullery maid and say, draw the line here, you never had one, you are a-laying it on too thick; but, I protest, I haint.

Our approach would be hailed with delight. The govenor would not notice it for some time, then the peals of laughter would be too much for him. He would ring the bell furiously and up would go Mary the housemaid.

"What are the young gentlemen doing in the kitchen?" And we would have to wend our way back to the parlour, and the governor would say "I don't like you boys in the kitchen. Why can't you amuse yourselves: get a book and read."

Another rough and tumble and the supper tray would be brought in and, during prayers, the governor would think that passage very inappropriate, "Blessed is the man who has his quiver full of them.

My father was different to others; he was so easily put out. I will tell you one or two things that ruffled his temper, and I am certain my readers will agree with me and say it was most unreasonable. For instance, we had to go to his room to

get some gunpowder to shoot the nasty birds who came and eat his fruit. We were so considerate for him in doing this. If we spilt some on the floor and the governor got up in the night, lighted a match to see the time and dropped it on the floor on the top of the spilt powder, because this fizzed up in in close proximity to his legs and made him jump and knock his shin against the sharp edge of the whatnot, he was put out, and said, "Confound those boys." Again if one of us lost his pocket knife and whitled a stick with his favourite razor, the next time he went to shave, he thought he had got hold of a piece of hoop iron and this made him uneasy. Sometimes we played gipseys, and once used the brougham for a caravan ; and because we lighted a fire with sticks at the bottom to boil our kettle, he did not like it, and would say that it would spoil the carriage and such rot, when it only killed the insects and prevented the cushions from getting eaten. One day I went to sleep in the mastiffs' kennel, and because I appeared at table swarming with fleas and a fine leathery smell about me,—it was during the summer holidays—the governor made an awful fuss and said it was unpleasant, he was so very particular. Were there half a dozen apricots ripening in the sun and protected by muslin to keep the birds off, because I and my

brothers eat the apricots and made the net into a tent, he was put about, and when I repeated that the early bird gets the worm, he failed to see were the joke came in, and I spent a *mauvais quart d'heure* with him afterwards. So don't you agree with me he was rather touchy?

We must go back to Stodger who is sitting down to breakfast very hungry. He begins with soup which is clear and thin, and may have had a fowl somewhere near it some time. He points this out to his servant, and explains that the custom at home was, at your tiffin, you always had thick soup and clear to dinner. I have had it a la mode beef, Sloggans knows the place as well, Drury Lane, 3*d* per plate including a chunk of bread. The next day you get soup to breakfast of the consistency of a bran mash and not unlike. Next dish cutlets, so nice, cutlets made out of a tender fowl, killed over night and fried in eggs and bread crumbs. *Pardonez moe*, have you ever tasted one? Matted together in shreds, pink inside, flabby and semi cold, eating much like a piece of fried door-mat would. Next dish a boiled fowl with caper sauce, looks very tempting at first sight, you think a pot of bill stickers paste tintacks has been poured over it. This you discover to be the sauce. No difficulty about carving, for the whole of the flesh falls

off as soon as you begin to carve it, and the skeleton stands out in bold relief; you try it, the flesh divides up into shreds. Have you ever been lagged, and done a month's hard labour and picked oakum? You haven't? Well you can't understand what the flesh is like: it has a resinous taste and smell. You pin all your hopes on the egg curry, and in it comes looking as only egg curry can look—the halves of four bilious looking eggs floating in a rich pool of ghee and other niceties. I can compare then to nothing but a ripe field of corn and the setting sun throwing its lovely golden shadows over it. You taste the greasy mess and find out its hot, hot, and you don't forget this in a hurry either; so hastily swallowing a bit of bread, you give it up, at least Stodger does. Tap another small bottle of Bass and tell your Kansamah to open a tin of sardines. Never look out of the carriage windows—I mean back verandah. Things are often seen you would rather not see: for instance Stodger looks round just in time to see the sardine tin has been opened, and the Kansamah having disturbed the top row, is putting them straight and wiping the the oil off his fingers by running them through his hair, which puts him off sardines for a week. You are disgusted and send for your cook, and afterwards are sorry for having done so. He is ill and

comes making hideous faces, with a dirty old *rezai* round his head and he is limping, having pain about his leg, and has been applying turpentine, which accounts for the resinous taste about your breakfast. Can this be the *chef*, who makes those light potatoe chops, who turns out those brilliant entrees and racy stews. E'es that's him, and you turn away with a feeling very much like you did when you crossed from Calais to Dover the time you went on the continent, you know, which afterwards turned out to be a cheap excursion to Boulogne and back, five Bob return ticket, and gave you two hours in France; but—nevertheless we have been on the continent for all that.

How your servants break things, and get everything out of order, that sometimes its impossible to obtain a clean glass of water. I have tried all kinds of filters. The filter la mobille is very good, but the Kansamahs find it a handy weapon when they have a few words with the chowkeedar and are liable to break it over his head. Thank goodness! Doctor Gray of the Jorhat Tea Company has invented one, which for its simplicity in action, durability, its strength, its absence of intricaces and constant supply of pure water, beats all I have ever come across, and I don't think the servants will break it in a hurry, the general rule being that you have to

get up early every morning and clean it yourself, except you want water during the day the consistency of the Thames at low tide. Should you be married, your charming little wife won't let you do this, and is quite jealous of your interference, prefering to do it herself. But to those unlucky bachelors its trying to your temper to have to begin the day by cleaning your filter painfully suggestive of under ground sewage. Now, with Gray's new filter, all this is done away with ; it can't get out of order. The veriest *ocra* (owl) can understand it. This sort of thing frequently occurs : *time*, say 12 P.M., *scene*, a few bachelors are playing a friendly game at loo, and Cracker's says, " will you oblige me with some water ? "

" Plenty there," you say irritably, as for the last ten minutes you have been writing I.O.U's. at the rate of three per minute for the benefit of Cairns and Crackers who pocket them with much the same carelessness as they would a ticket for soup or order for the Union.

" None here" exclaims Cracker, and to convince you of this, turn's the *suroy* upside down over Beak's head and empties about a cup of water down his back, which nearly causes a row. I rouse up the sleepy Khansamah, who says—*Aray ? sâf pani nai hai* ; and I have to open another case

of Sim to quench the thirst of my guests. This would never have happened if I had had one of Gray's filters, as I think it would see the gayest and thirstiest of bachelor parties out, including loo, till 4 in the morning, and have enough for the party to bathe in afterwards :—

Every one should try one,
Every one should buy one.

Useful for Hospitals. Useful for Lines. Useful for Dispensaries. Useful for Bungalows. Useful for Picnics. Useful for all. I am certain Sir Wilfred Lawson only wants to see them to appretiate them, and would order a dozen at once for the Houses of Parliament.

Of course, we find many good, honest, faithful old servants in India as anywhere else, but few contrive to reach Assam ; so a good many of us train local ones. They are not bad, if you don't mind their little eccentricities. I remember a gentleman once dining with a married man. Dinner past off all correct, but he had a new boy he was teaching : hardly before the cloth was off the table and prior to the lady of the house learving, his servant rushed at him with a dilapidated pair of old baggy bursting carpet slippers, which a Jew would have turned his nose up at, and before he could stop him, he

seized him by one of his legs and nearly threw him out of his chair in his endeavours to get his boot off. The lady of the house laughed heartily and only thought it was a good joke, though the planter was profuse in his apologies.

"NO; I am not."

"Well, I beg your pardon."

"Oh, don't mention it," and the gentleman I addressed seemed as pleased to meet me as a digger is when he turns up a large nugget.

Yes; its weary work being in a large hotel in Calcutta not knowing any one. You speak to your nearest neighbour, who in nine cases out of ten answers you very shortly; for the recent dynamite explosions have created quite a scare, and the fright has even penetrated to Calcutta. So you sit wearily through the excellent dinner provided for you, and with anxious eyes watch the people who are acquainted with one another. What would you not give to join yon small table and be

permitted to participate in the joke, though it be as stale as your own conversation.

The gentleman I spoke to seemed inclined to be friendly. I don't know what made me take him for a Doctor: at any rate he did not seem flattered by my doing so, and promptly responded—"No; I am in iron." This was a stumper. Had he said linseed oil or tallow I could have understood him. But iron? I destest irony at any rate. When I told him I was a weary pilgrim from Assam, he brightened up, and seemed astonished when I said to him I had been ten years out.

"Well, you look well enough at any rate."

"Yes:" I said "the result of a careful life," and I gave a solemn wink. "There is no reason that one should not live for years in Assam if you don't do foolish things."

"And you are a Coolie Doctor, are you?"

"Yes," I responded, "I am," and I wondered why he took such interest in their dwellings and surroundings; can he be going to invest in Tea? What a pity I am going home, he might have come and stayed with me, and I would have seen that he made a good investment. But he still kept hammering away at tea houses, lines, bungalows and stables.

"Oh, that's all right," I said "only its a dreadful

trouble keeping them in repair," I answered. To my astonishment he performed a highland fling the floor!

"What's up? the heat I suppose," and I was about to rush for ice; when he stopped and said, "Excuse me, Doctor, giving vent to my feelings. Present buildings take a lot of keeping in repair, do they?"

"Yes;" I replied, rather shortly; "of course they do." Then he said "just step here, and I will show you how to avoid this." So I slowly followed him upstairs, for though I am not a Scotchman, I am cautious.

"This is the thing for you," and he shewed me pictures of iron houses of every description, for tea houses, stables, bungalows and and lastly for coolie lines. These struck me as being the very thing needed; they are clean, durable and will last any length of time. They are supported by iron posts which can be let into stone or Pucca work, and all that has to be done is to fill in the spaces with anything you like. "These huts," he continued, "can be put on the barrack system or singly."

Now as a Medical man, and looking on them from a sanitary point of view, they struck me as being the very identical thing required, and much

better than Pucca ones. They can be readily moved, which Pucca masonry can't, and in cases of epidemics, the Ekra walls can be pulled down and burnt, thus only leaving the frame work to be disinfected again. In cases of fire; walls could be easily pulled down and the fire checked. They are light and neat-looking in appearance, and I trust the passing notice I have given may induce planters to try them. Of course, the primary thing to be considered is that nasty question of outlay. The cost, however, seemed to me to be moderate enough, but the freight up to the garden has also to be considered; if there could be some reduction made in this, they would come cheaper.

I suggested to Mr. A. McNiven who represents A and J. Main & Co., Glasgow and London, to put me up a nice Bungalow and stock a cellar. I told him it would be a capital advertisement, and he might throw in a few servants houses and a stable, and planters could come and see for themselves. But he did not quite seem to see it, and wearily answered—"Nair mon, I canna de it on my ain responsibility."

"Oh," I answered "never mind, turn the main on," but he didn't see the point. He is, however, going to take a run through Assam, but I advised him to prospone his trip till the cold weather, as

wandering about Assam in the rains with an iron church and houses would not be very lively work, and I had grave doubts if planters could assist him with carts, &c., to move them in the rains. So he has put off his visit till the cold weather.

I know one gentleman, a friend of mine, who has been nearly driven wild by his coolies pulling the thatch out of their huts for firewood. He will hail these new huts with delight and dance a jig when they are erected. It will *do* Mr. Sebessar in the eye, and, instead of lighting his fire with a handful of thatch from the roof, will have to go out and get firewood: even then I believe he will use the walls, for such is the perversity of some of these gentlemen, that sooner than go out and hunt for themselves, they will use the first thing that comes to hand to burn, but I don't think they will be able to pull the iron posts out when once in. I forgot to mention that he showed me some neat railings which will prevent those wretched goats from nibbling off our early Marshall Neils and asparagus so often productive of naughty language in the mornings.

That Cup of Tea.

"CHA Lao?" is heard every morning in nearly every Bungalow in Indian. Is this a good thing? has often been the question put to me by residents in this climate. Wrong or right I always answer, that I consider the morning cup of tea, as its drank in Assam at any rate, about as bad as taking a dram of whiskey, and this is killing and no mistake at this time in the morning.

Why? I will tell you. To begin with it's strong, and tannic acid is one of its chief component parts. Most gentlemen like their cup of tea at dawn and the Kansamah has hardly time to wake up and get a stretch, before he hears a melodious voice singing out "Cha Lao?" The Kansamah is just puzzling his brains how many fowls he will

be able to run into yesterday's accounts, so in an absent sort of way he takes up a handful of tea and throws it into the pot and fills up with hot water : this he puts on one side to stand while the milk is being brought. After some ten minutes have elapsed, this arrives, and the tea is poured out, of a good tawny color ; he throws in a handful of sugar and takes the tea off to his master, who comes out in the verandah and swallows this down, without taking anything else as a rule.

It has no immediate action, and seems to brighten him up and stimulate his jaded frame. But somehow or other he does not care much about *chota hazree*, and feels a little squeamish, a trifle shakey, and can't make it out. I don't understand this in the least, he says, I only had a single peg after dinner and smoked one Burmah. It must be the climate ; there is no doubt I want a change, and straightway applies for leave home.

In my humble opinion a cup of strong tea flavored with weak milk is about as bad a thing as one can take in the morning, and tends very much to cause that sickness and irritability of stomach so often prevalent among Indians. *Pour quoi ?* Well, you see, we aint all on 'as got a wife who is up with the lark, or rather, the crows, and with her deft little hands lights the kerosine

stove and prepares you a cup of tea, and takes good care that hubby dear is not saturated with tannic acid; that the right quantity of tea is put in, and while hubby is sweetly dreaming of that last 12 anna average he got, she carefully gets him a sweet biscuit and a slice of German sausage so that he shan't take the matutinal cup on an empty stomach. The cup of tea under the above regimen does no harm. But to those poor lost bachelors who have no charming little wives to administer to their wants in the morning, it's quite a different thing; and, bad as it may seem, a dram would do less harm than the cup of tea the Kansamah brews for them.

"But what can I do, Doctor, to remedy this? I am miles away from home, and don't care about advertising for a wife. I will certainly get married when I go home; but times are too bad for one to go for a change now," is the answer I am frequently met with.

"Well. I will tell you what you can do? Buy a little kerosine stove and put it down to the factory. See that your water is boiling every morning, and put your own tea in; don't make an infusion, but simply let the tea stand for barely two minutes, and pour it out, adding a liberal supply of milk.

We can't all run to a slice of German sausage in the morning, but we may always get a piece of toast or bread and butter—and I should recommend something, however trifling, to be taken with the cup, and you will find that tendency to sickness and inability to eat *chota hazree* less. I often ask my patients, did you get this at home? "Oh, yes," they answer, but don't seem quite clear on the point. For my part I know if we had asked for a cup of tea before breakfast, there would have been a revolution in the house: and I never got one at any of my relations houses. But, perhaps, I am old fashioned and out of the world. But believe me that that strong cup of tea taken alone and on an empty stomach, is very likely to cause a train of symptoms to follow, which are put down to anything else except this, and very often only discovered when irreparable mischief has been worked. Its a good old adage: "a stitch in time saves nine."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"I WILL go as far as the ghât with you and see you off," says my young friend. I was delighted ; it was indeed friendship to ride 17 miles to see the last of me for some time at any rate ; but when later on I discovered that it was more to get a sniff of the Brahmapootra, he fell slightly in my estimation.

We arrived comfortably at the ghât and discovered the steamer was not due till 3 P.M. ; luckily there was one of those floating dâk Bungalows to which we adjourned to seek refreshments. Our spirits rapidly rose, and my companion with eager eyes glanced over the tariff bill said : "Yes, no mistake, every thing here from Sim down to ginger beer."

"What will you have ?" said I

"Well, I think, as you say it's a bad thing to

drink spirits in the morning, I will just have a little hock and soda."

"Certainly," says I, was I not off to Belat; "hang the expense; here goes." Calling the Khansamah I ordered hock and soda; he seemed puzzled. I repeated my order, and received a determined response of *Nai hai.* Nevermind, lets try Sim and soda: again *Nai hai, Sahib*; he was very sorry but had sent off for his supply, which had not arrived; he, however, produced some Pilsner beer and soda-water. Just then my luggage turned up, and among other things, a bottle of whisky. My friend soon spied out a fish hanging up, and he promptly ordered this to be cooked with some rice and soft boiled eggs. We had, besides, a cold boiled *moorghy*, bread, butter and a Bologna sausage.

"We shall do very well" said he, rubbing his hands, "and I think we'll just have a biscuit and a glass of beer to keep us a-going till the fish is cooked." So taking up the glasses, he asked me to open the beer, at the same time polished them with an old rag he found in the corner. We were now joined by the obliging steam agent, who called in to see if he could be of any service to us, and accepted our invitation to stay to breakfast.

Suddenly my companion turned pale. "What's up? Not sun I hope?"

"No"

"Not sea sickness?"

"No." It was only the appetising smell of the fish being cooked; but it seemed to produce the same pleasant sensation to him that a leg of pork, sage and onions does to some on a rough day in the Bay of Biscay. The cook-room was alongside the saloon; "But what makes him use so much ghee," said he?

I responded, "You can't cook without."

"Why don't they use dripping?

"There aint none: you are wandering." Thinking a little cold water to his head would do him good, I suggested a wash; and by the time he had finished, tiffin was ready and we proceeded to business: the agent and myself managed several seers of rice and fish, which latter had a peculiar taste about it, a cross between a badly smoked piece of salmon and a stale bloater. I remarked this to him. "It's nothing," said he, "it's a month late for Harle masse: I will trouble you for some more."

Its wonderful what an appetite steamer agents have. I suppose its the air, as between us we finished the fish. The other guest would not have it at any price. He proved wise in his generation, for on asking the Kansamah why, living in the river,

he could not get fish in season. He said he was very sorry ; it wasn't his fault ; the fish had been left by his predecessor, and had been hanging ever since: pickled in sand and preserved by the sun. We conquered our feelings and agreed it was the raciest bit of fish we had had for some time, and turned with a sickly smile to the moorghy. But our friend was well ahead of us, he had finished the breast and left us the legs, which had belonged to the oldest of my laying hens. We had a smoke and a cup of tea, when the steamer arrived and I proceeded on board.

I found only one passenger, who seemed rather astonished as I rushed up and told him I was off to *belât.* This did not produce the effect I expected, for after eyeing me up and down, said to himself, " One of Cook's tourists I suppose—cussed nuisance. Daresay will want half my cabin," as he lighted a Burmah and turned away. However when he found out that I was not a Cooktonian, and put away the flannel coat which he would not have at any price and got into decent clothes, he seemed mollified and accepted a cheroot rather suspiciously from me, not being quite certain of it would explode or not. We plunged into conversation, and he said in answer to my question about the culinary

arrangements, "I think they do their best; dinner will be on soon, and you can judge for yourself."

"To speak the truth, we had a very decent one: soup Jullienne, which was a trifle spoilt by having a handful of large peas apparantly thrown in at the last moment. *2nd Course.*—Fish,—tinned salmon—this I dare not face. Fellow passenger was a plucky man and I rather shivered remmembering I slept in the same cabin. *3rd Course.*—Cutlets a la Miri with sauce a la Francais. *4th Course*—braised chicken, cabbage and potatoes. *5th.*—Curry and rice followed by sweet omelet. A curious accident happened here just before the omelet was brought up. I saw the Khansamah struggling to open a pot of guava jelly, and two minutes had hardly elapsed when the omelet was served: it was warm but the jelly was cold. How did it get inside? I asked my fellow passenger. "Oh," he answered, "they opened it out on the companion, then rolled it up like a newspaper. You are not 'alf fly. Did ye nair ken the finger prints?" Hoots" mon, that's note I have awiles kenned worse than yon.

The omelet was followed by cheese which evidently knew the river, as well as the Serang in charge of the boat; this is saying a good deal. The

next day my companion de voyage I thought looked a trifle pale, and no wonder—old cheese and tinned salmon: at any rate the cheese was changed for a fresh one. After dinner we smoked and read, this he soon got tired of, for its not easy with small print and a steamer lantern. My companion was deeply interested in some book, and supplemented the light with the cabin candle. Evidently a literary man; must cultivate his aquaintance; suppose he has got hold of the last new novel. In the morning I glanced at the work he was reading. I took the book up but dropped it like a hot potatoe and gave a scream; it was too "awfully "awful:" *The Loves of the Harem!* Naughty man! who would have thought it. No wonder; sooner than give it up, he got an extra light; a terrible shock to me this, won't do for one going to *Belât*, and I felt inclined to treat him coldly. He remarked that the title was the worst part of it, and that it was more of a history than anything else. I smothered my feelings and the incident passed off. He got out at one of the steamer stations and I saw him no more.

We had a most obliging medical man on board who had travelled far and wide; he did everything he could to make us comfortable, and proved very entertaining. "If you have anything to complain

of," said he, "about the commissariat, let me know." The second day out, in a mysterious tone he says, "there's a ham on board."

"You don't mean to say so," said my fellow passenger. Bless my soul" and his eyes shone up and sparkled with liquid fire. I, too, was moved, though not particularly partial too pig, yet a nice tender York ham. Well, you know the river gives one such an appetite. But the doctor went on to say it was bought especially for the Lord Bishop of Calcutta who was expected to travel by this boat, and I doubt if the butler will give it up. But I said his Lordship is in Assam and very likely won't travel by this boat; besides, I added, if he does, I dare say he won't mind our depriving him of it at any rate. I have not the pleasure of his Lordship's aquaintance, but I will take all risks, and if it comes to the worst, will write to him on the subject. Ham can't be such a special treat to him.

"Very well" said our medical friend," I will do my best."

"Don't lose any time" I responded, "for this air is dreadful."

A few minutes afterwards he returned, his face wore a puzzled look, his hair stood up, and he seemed like a man who had received a severe

shock, like one who had come into a fortune or found an infernal machine.

"What's up? Not ill I hope?"

"No, gentlemen," he says "but the ham is bad, not fit to bring on table; *it* was purchased in a hurry and looked all right before it was cooked, but its a failure."

I thought my friend would have had a fit. "Is it all bad," says he? "Irretrievably, so that you could not get a small piece out of it." Perhaps the inside is better," clinging like a drowning man to a straw. From the mournful way with which the Doctor shook his head, I knew there was no hope.

"Never mind," replied my cabin pal, "You shan't be disappointed," and he rushed away, and from the bottom of his portmantean produced a battered tin of Chicago beef. How glad was I that I left my revolver at home.

To sum up from my little experience, I think these boats are a great boon. I was very comfortable, and there is a freedom about them which is delicious. The Kansamah asks you what time you will have your meals, and you can take them at any time you like. The food is varied and good. The Doctor ordered a special treat one night for us—a roast duck. We thanked him for his kindness. Though, to myself, I think an

anæmic duck slaughtered, feathers singed off, the shrunken corpse plunged into boiling water, less preferable to the homely *moorghy*.

The first morning I got up and told my boy to get me a cup of coffee and some toast. He disappeared but returned in a few minutes with his eyes starting out of his head, and in a breathless tone said, you are to get eggs, Sahib. I fairly broke down and did a breakdown to the astonishment of the Commander who thought I had gone *pâgul*. There is no mistake about the way one travels; who can't recollect the weary waiting about at ghats for tea chests which never arrived—carts and bullocks probably struggling amid a mass of mud and water, ten miles off, and can't possibly be here till morning. The Captain, resigning himself to his fate, you are left cooling your heels with a walk on the burning sands, and having the delightful satisfaction to hear steam being blown off and ordered for 5 A.M. the next day.

No: these mail boats are a great blessing for rapidity of travelling to all. Sometimes it may be the ardent lover impatient to bask in the sunny smiles of his intended; sometimes the doating husband rushing off to meet his faithful partner when no steamer could be fast enough; sometimes,

but very seldom, a poor unfortunate fleeing from his hungry creditors; sometimes a sick man whose nerves are a trifle shaken, who wants fresh air and rapid changes, to whom a slow steamer would prove a veritable charnel house; and last but not least, somebody anxious to reach that haven of bliss he has heard so much about, and once more indulge in the delights of trotters, wilks, and oysters the size of soup plates, so dear to the man of refined tastes. All in a hurry; and as we glide through the water, we drink to the health of the promoters of the line in the best Whisky we can get:

"Alas! when we used to go on the river,
For tic doleroux, nerves or the liver,
To this very day it fairly makes me shiver.
When I think of them floating Haiks, Oh,
never again, niver.

I forgot to mention that from Gowhatty to Dhubri we had one of the bosses on board. He was very polite to me and asked if I had been properly fed. I replied, "I dinna look as if I was starved." He asked me about the grub. I said considering the accommodation and the uncertainty about the number of passengers, that I considered the mess to be to be very fair; but suggested they might exchange the sardines at tiffin for something lighter, say, a cold hump, and perhaps

alter the rule about only retaining the 'am for the Bishop.

The boss came on board in the morning and had exactly the same *chota hazree* as I did myself, except in addition I saw four oranges carried into his cabin with the two straw colored eggs. You would have hardly known he was on board; I only noticed they gave the brasses an extra polish, and 'oley stoned the decks, rather to my discomfort than otherwise. I likewise hope for the benefit of future passengers, who may feel inclined to indulge in light literature at night, that the Company should provide a better LAMP.

During our downward trip, an amusing incident occurred, showing that one should not judge by appearances. We arrived rather late in the evening, and made fast alongside another boat which contained two passengers, who were at dinner. A gentleman who had joined us, not the "Loves of the Harem," but another, watched them anxiously feeding, and said, "Oh, I know who they are; they are going up for the Railway, poor fellows. Perhaps it's their last chance of getting a square meal, and they are certainly not neglecting the opportunity. They have a hard time before them and will miss the little recherché dinners on board the boats."

The next day I casually asked a gentleman whom I met who they were. "Oh," he said, "two foreigners of distinction going up for big game shooting to Assam." I hope another time my friend won't judge by appearance. *It reminds* one of Punch—"I say, my good man, do you think we shall find a fox here?

"I can't say. Them places which seem most likely are often less likelier than them that's most likeliest."

The journey from Dhubri to Calcutta is somewhat tedious; you vary between steamers, boats and trains in a promiscuous manner. The last train I was in before I reached Kaunea afforded great fun. Two trucks of rubber got on fire to begin with; then we ran rather short of firewood and cribbed some from an old woman's house which produced a torrent of abuse in best Bengali. Finally the engine left us on the line and went off for a fresh supply of water which had been exhausted by putting out the fire. I indulged in a walk, and was sorry I had not brought my gun with me. Certainly there is a latitude about Indian railway travelling that is to be found nowhere else I should imagine. At a certain Dák Bungalow were I was delayed waiting for the train to take, me to Calcutta, an amusing thing happened. I was sitting in the centre room when I overheard

the following conversation: No 1.—One of them hens is dead. No. 2—You don't mean to say so: not one of the big ones? Yes one of the big ones. No. 2—What did she die of? Oh, says No. 1, she had a fit. Well, says No. 2, it cannot be helped, take her off to the cook house. How carefully I avoided chicken at dinner that day and stuck to cold beef. Two other gentleman dined with me, and during dinner I retailed what I had heard—told them I thought the fellow did not know I understood the language. They tackled the khansamah, but he swore by all that's holy that the defunct hen was most carefully buried; no doubt he spoke the truth, but where?

After all, at least for the present, my trip to England is deferred for a time, and I am going to try my luck among the Darjeelingites and continue my old occupation of titivating the wily planter up, who, living in such a healthy climate, will require fewer rakers than my old clients. Its a splendid change after Assam, and I never get irritable now, and have almost forgotten how to use a naughty word.

I had a dream last night, and they say dreams come true if you repeat them, so I will this. I dreamt Gladstone had been pensioned off and retired to the Melrose Hydropathic Establishment and

was taking sulphur baths. Why? I don't know, except with some ulterior motive; perhaps to get used to the smell of brimstone. I dreamt Lord R. Churchill went into the planters' grievances and took the question up in the House, and voted that some of the numerous restrictions imposed on them be removed. I dreamt the middleman had a fit after a heavy dinner at the Mansion House and expired at Myrtle Villa. I dreamt I saw old England again. I dreamt the Captain did not take his pistols out, but came forward and said "Shake hands, old fellow, I did not know you" and——I dreamt my little work was not hooted down but favourably received. Goodbye. Is it to be a dream or a reality? *Exit omnes.*