

A SPORTSWOMAN IN INDIA



Isabel Savoy.

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A SPORTSWOMAN IN INDIA

*PERSONAL ADVENTURES
AND EXPERIENCES OF
TRAVEL IN KNOWN AND
UNKNOWN INDIA*

By ISABEL SAVORY

WITH FORTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS AND A
PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR

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To
ETHEL MARION HICHENS

I OFFER THIS BOOK ;

WHEREIN ARE TO BE FOUND

“THE INCURABLE ILLOGICALITIES OF LIFE, THE FATHOMS OF
SLACK, AND THE MILES OF TEDIOUS.”

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CHAPTER I

PIG-STICKING

**The Taj—A Total Eclipse—Mian Mir—Visit to
Kapurthalah—Pig-sticking—The First Spear
—An Ugly Customer—Back to Lahore.**

CHAPTER I

PIG-STICKING

Not see? because of night, perhaps? why, day
Came back again for that! before it left,
The dying sunset kindled through a cleft:
The hills, like giants at a hunting, lay,
Chin upon hand, to see the game at bay,—
“Now stab and end the creature—to the heft!”

ROBERT BROWNING.

IT would be absurd to describe the journey out to India; as well might one launch forth into impressions of Piccadilly from a hansom, since half society has already been bored by the voyage to the East, and the remaining half still more bored by reading accounts of the same. Suffice it to say, that we shook the dust of the P. & O. *Egypt* off our feet on January 14th, and landed in Bombay,—in India, with its two hundred and eighty millions of inhabitants, and its area of one and a half million of square miles.

“The Land of Regrets” is a country to visit, but not to live in; parts of it, from a shooting point of view, are of course Paradise—it is all of it more or less interesting to see, the hills are full of fine scenery, and if a tour there includes Kashmir, the traveller’s cup will not be an empty one. But India in the hot

weather is a very different place to the white-faced Europeans whom the want of the rupee keeps in their stations. Along the dusty, split, and parched plains, the thermometer at one hundred and two degrees—

The cattle reel beneath the yoke they bear,
The earth is iron, and the skies are brass.

Of this side, as a rule, the traveller sees nothing.

At present the Punjab claimed us, and the only place at which we stopped on the way north was Agra. Leaving Bombay on Sunday evening, we arrived there on Tuesday afternoon ; and as it was of course comparatively cool, drove off at once to see the building of which Lord Roberts writes : "Go to India. The Taj alone is worth the journey."

Built by the great Mogul Sháh Jehán in 1630 to the memory of his wife Núr Mahál, the "light of the palace," the Táj Mahál, "the tomb of Mahál," is not one of the "sights" of India, but one of the wonders of the world. It was twenty-two years in building, though twenty thousand workmen were employed every day ; and it is said to have cost considerably over forty millions of rupees, even in days when labour was all forced. But such a sum is easily accounted for by the marble and jewels alone, which came "by toiling men and straining cattle, over a thousand wastes, a thousand hills." Out of the sun and glare, from the dazzling blue sky and giddy saffron haze, we walked down the two rows of cypress-trees—the Semitic emblem of death, entrance

to darkness and oblivion long—and stepped through the heavy, fretted and carved, marble doors, into the cool, solemn vastness of the great tomb. Through the dim, green light the marble screen, pierced and modelled like the finest lace, gleamed round the two sarcophagi of the wife and her husband. Núr Mahál lies in the centre beneath the dome, Sháh Jehán on one side. The voice of a Mohammedan worshipper formed an indescribable and never-to-be-forgotten echo, rolling up to the vaulted roof of the great dome : “Allah ho Akbar—La ilaha Illallah.”

The secret of the fascination of the Taj lies in its extraordinary simplicity and dignity. Complexity is the curse of this age, and nothing is so hard in art or in life as to be simple and yet not insipid. The solemn Taj embodies repose—its size almost seems to vary with one's own imagination ; something of movement is imparted to the structure—a huge phantom about to pass away, not of this earth earthly. The sight of it translates one into indefinite regions . . . ; it is seen with the heart, before the eyes have time to take it in ; and with all its faults its appealing beauty casts a spell like an imperfect human being, whose presence scatters every prejudice in its overwhelming fascination.

In those days voluntary contributions to public buildings were non-existent. Great men built their *own* memorials. “Who,” said an intelligent Hindu, pointing us out an unfinished mausoleum near Agra—“who would have built this monument to his memory

if not *himself*? He died before it was finished, and so of course it never was completed."

Agra is a great place for pig-sticking; and as we drove over to Fatehpur Sîkri, we saw for the first time what sort of country provides one of the finest sports in the world—a sport with which we became well "acquaint" hereafter.

One of Akbar's great imperial roads took us to the ruined city. Fatehpur Sîkri was intended to be the capital of the Mogul Empire; but the superior position of Agra on the great waterway of the Jumna made Akbar eventually select that city. His mosque at Fatehpur Sîkri, an accurate copy of one at Mecca, is Mohammedan in style, while the six adjoining halls are Hindu. The Hindus, like the ancient Greeks, never made use of the true structural arch; to this day they will not use it, for, as they say, "An arch never sleeps," meaning that by its thrust and pressure it is always tending to tear a building to pieces. On the walls of the mosque are written in Arabic: "The world is a bridge; pass over it, but build no house there. He who hopeth for an hour may hope for eternity. The world is but an hour—spend it in devotion; the rest is unseen."

It would be hard to take no interest in India's history, with associations of the great Mogul Emperor Akbar on every side. Born in 1542, the real founder of that empire, he subjugated the whole of the Punjab from the heart of Afghanistan; he conquered Kashmir, recovered Kandahar, annexed Sind, and won Bengal,

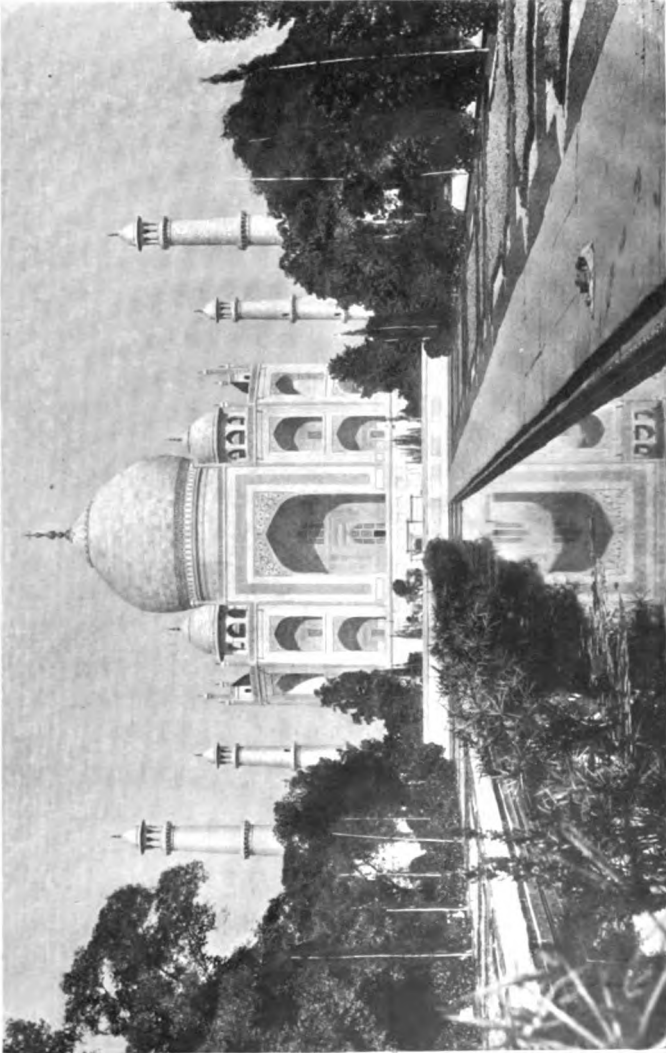
bequeathing to his successors a united empire, and a land revenue of twenty and three-quarter millions sterling.

One of Akbar's wives was a Christian; and he promulgated a new State religion, broader in its views than the Musalmán faith: he himself worshipped the sun every morning as a representative of the Divine Soul which animates the Universe. At any rate, he has been a force in the Indian world which lives even to-day as strongly as ever. Under his grandson Sháh Jehán, the Mogul Empire attained its highest union of strength with magnificence. He enriched his grandfather's capital with the exquisite Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque); he built the Taj, the Jamá Masjid (Great Mosque) at Delhi, and the Palace, which covers a vast parallelogram of 1,600 feet by 3,200 feet, and includes the most sumptuous buildings in marble—most beautiful of all, the Diwán-i-Khás, or Court of Private Audience, upon the inlaid walls of which is inscribed, "If there is an Elysium on earth, it is this, it is this." Sháh Jehán's Peacock Throne, its tail blazing in the shifting colours of rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and diamonds, was valued at six and a half millions sterling.

In spite of their magnificence, the reigns of the Mogul emperors tell a tale of tragic drama, darkened by mutiny, jealousy, and intrigue. Akbar had rendered a great empire possible in India by conciliating the native Hindu races; but his great-grandson Aurangzeb gave up this policy, and after his death the decline

and fall of the Moguls followed. His Indian provinces had covered nearly as large an area as the British Empire at the present day, his land revenue demand alone amounted to thirty-eight millions sterling; his reign is a dream of vast wealth, a lavish luxury, a riot of magnificence, impossible to realise. And it fell. . . . Down upon it swooped the destroying hosts of the Persians in 1739 from far Central Asia, massacring and pillaging, and returning through the Khyber Pass with a booty of thirty-eight millions sterling. No less than six times the Afghans burst through the passes, plundering and slaughtering all before them; districts were entirely depopulated, as the ruins testify to this day. The Sikhs and the Hindus rose at the same time. The Sikh sect was mercilessly crushed; and by reason of the barbarous cruelties inflicted on them, the Sikh, who never forgets, stood staunch to England in the Mutiny more than a hundred years later, saved the Punjab, and saw the downfall of the last of the Moguls. The Hindus, however, succeeded in their rebellion, and the empire was further shaken by contests between the sons of Aurangzeb. Lastly upon the scene appeared the French and English.

The Dutch had raised the price of pepper from three to six shillings a pound, therefore the merchants of London decided to trade direct with India, instead of with Amsterdam; and so on December 22nd, 1599, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, with the Lord Mayor in the chair, at Founders' Hall, the "East India



TAJ MAHAL

Company of Merchants in London" was formed, with one hundred and twenty-five shareholders and a capital of £70,000.

Picture those early voyages, our fights with the Dutch, the Spaniards, the Portuguese, the French. Recollect Lord Clive, Warren Hastings, Lord Wellesley, and see at last the French completely defeated, the Mogul Empire broken up, and the Hindu Confederacy dissolved. We won India from the Hindus. Helping the several princes against one another, they were allowed to retain their titles only by acknowledging our supremacy. Puppet emperors reigned at Delhi until the Mutiny, when the last of the great Moguls was, after his rebellion and defeat, removed as a State prisoner to Rangoon, where he died. And thus, through hundreds of years of struggle, a long chain of events had led up to Englishmen wandering about Akbar's Mosque, the Tāj Mahál, and other memorials of past glory, until three people from Warwickshire were to be found sitting on the black marble slab which had formed Akbar's seat in the Hall of Audience. This far-famed throne is cracked across, and the Musalmán theory is that the Mogul stone, frozen with horror, cracked at the thought of a Hindu sitting on Akbar's throne.

From Agra we journeyed to Buxar on purpose to see a *total eclipse* of the sun, for which object astronomers had come out from England with us; indeed, half India was there or thereabouts; the Viceroy and thousands of Europeans went; Buxar station was

crammed with "specials." We stationed ourselves on a small mound, under some shady trees; the eclipse began about midday, when the moon could just be seen overlapping the edge of the sun. Through smoked glasses, telescopes, and glasses of every kind, the great concourse of people gazed at it, and the excitement grew intense as the moon drew farther and farther across the sun. It became perceptibly cooler. The thousands of spectators, watches in hand, were almost breathless as 1.43 p.m. approached—the time of totality. The sky began to turn blue-green like twilight, the stretches of burnt yellow plain around us assumed a brown hue, which spread over the horizon and the sky immediately above it. Every man's face turned a horrid, sickly yellow in the weird light. Dimmer and yet more dim—a hush was over the murmuring crowd; 1.43, and the moon glided entirely across the sun, showing us nothing but a large black body hanging in the sky. Venus glimmered through the green and yellow haze, and another star or two shone, the grass looked more purple than before, and the colour of the whole dark world was unique. . . . Two minutes passed, and then suddenly a bright light flashed from the edge of the moon. The Sun!—The Sun! The tension was over, a wild cheer broke simultaneously from the whole throng as the brilliant edge of the lord of creation slid from behind its temporary screen, and once more lit the earth. A fresh breeze sprang up; the ghostly light faded gradually away; but all the rest of the day the marked coolness of the air

showed the result of banishing sunlight for a couple and a half hours, only *totally* banishing it for *two minutes*.

Buxar did not tempt us to linger, for having so lately left England, we felt even that January heat. The Punjab would be much cooler. Thirty-two hours training saw us arrived at Lahore station, thence driving out to Mian Mir, the military station, where we stayed with General Sir George Walseley, then officiating in the Punjab command *vice* Sir William Lockhart.

The pig-sticking season was by this time in full swing; and our whole party from Mian Mir was invited to stay in one of the few remaining native states by H.H. Maharajah Sir Jagatjit Sing Bahadur, K.C.S.I.

It was a short journey from Lahore, and at the station, which was five miles' drive from Kapurthalah, we were met by landaus, and bullock carts for our luggage. The Maharajah put us up at his Guest House, a luxurious bungalow built in charming gardens, next the Palace. It was very French in its decorations, and a trifle over-gilded perhaps; but after the somewhat rough-and-ready Punjab arrangements, that was a pardonable sin. The shady portico over the hall door was full of ferns and flowers, and the gardens afforded officious *malis* (gardeners) ample opportunities of pressing gorgeous buttonholes on us whenever we came out. A French chef fed us, and our own personal servants waited on us.

Soon after we arrived, a State call was paid upon

us by the Maharajah and his orderly officer. His Royal Highness was twenty-five years old, though I should have put him down as at least ten years older ; but those who have been born to absolute power, who have never known a thwarted desire, and who have been reared under the fiercest sun in the world, age even more quickly than the ordinary sons of the East, who are self-possessed men when they should be bashful babies. Kapurthalah spoke French as well as English, and was dressed like a sahib, except that he wore a vast turban and a diamond brooch. We sat down and talked for a short time, until we suggested that we must not detain our visitors any longer, without which intimation an Oriental does not take his leave. Ten minutes later three of our party drove over to the Palace, and having returned the call, we had tiffin by ourselves in our ornate octagonal dining-room. Later on an orderly officer called and invited us to the Palace for tennis—a strange “At Home” of turbans and black faces. The Rānee (Princess) Canari was our hostess ; formerly a hill girl, she is the Maharajah’s “newest” wife, and in coming out of Purdah has of course lost all caste and all respect in the eyes of the unenlightened native. She had had a little education, spoke French, and wore Parisian gowns. The other wives were strictly Purdah women ; the Maharanee herself had been married to the Maharajah at eleven years old, when he was thirteen. Mohammedans are, of course, polygamists, and they look upon marriages

as so many contracts. English women who espouse them in England as civilised men should not ignore the fact that it is the *rarest* exception to meet with a single unmarried Mohammedan in India, and that complications have before now arisen when a native ruler has returned with a European wife to the land of his birth. That Kapurthalah should treat the Rānee Canari as his *companion* is a welcome fact; and he told us that he should not allow his eldest son and heir, Ticker, to marry till he was twenty years old, and then to have but one wife. It is the thin edge of civilisation.

We were taken to call upon *the* Maharanee, Ticker's mother, later on—a little gipsy, childlike individual of refined appearance, weighed down by gold-embroidered garments, chains, necklets, bracelets, rings, necklaces, forehead star, anklets, and nose-ring. Compared with this daughter of the bluest blood and of a thousand kings, Queen Victoria's own family tree would be but as a thing of yesterday.

Is it *life* which the Maharanee leads—which all Purdah women all over India lead? In the white-walled homes of kings, or in the reed-roofed hut, lives woman after woman, thousands upon thousands of them, surrounded by fields they may not roam in, above the tumult of the packed bazaar, through nameless horrors of the stifling night, old in grief, and wise in tears,—

A life which ebbs with none to staunch the failing,
Love's sad harvest garnered in the spring.

A narrow, intolerant religion is at the root of this crying evil, and the only weapon to be employed against it is knowledge. Knowledge will breed scepticism, scepticism will breed tolerance, and tolerance will, with the advance of civilisation, open the door. But knowledge, education, must come first.

Before we dined that night, we went to the great Durbar Hall with the Maharajah and his retinue, and were all shod with rinking skates. The floor was "taken" with considerable grace and agility, considering how little we knew about it. It was, to a certain degree, a *childish* amusement for a ruler of the land; and still more so were the varieties of clockwork toys and expensive French knick-knacks which filled the rooms in the Palace, and were displayed to us that evening when we dined with his Royal Highness. Rānee Canari was excluded from the battery of native eyes round the table. We had a very French meal, of which a *pilau* gratified the Maharajah, and took, he explained, a whole day to make; music brought the evening to a close, Kapur-thalah himself singing "Polly winked his eye," out of *The Geisha*.

We were all looking forward to the next day and to our expedition after pig; and conversation that evening turned, as it always does turn, upon the threadbare comparisons between fox-hunting and pig-sticking.

"Fox-hunting! what is it," said F., "but a mob of



WILD BOAR.

[Page 14.]

The next morning early, while it was yet fresh and cool, we all met together outside the city. The country appeared to be a nice one, not particularly stiff, and there seemed to be some fine patches of cover well separated from each other. The Maharajah mounted us, and provided M. and myself with Champion and Wilton's side-saddles belonging to Rānee Canari. Spearing on the near side of a horse is most dangerous, and is not allowed; but there is no reason why a woman on a side-saddle should not quite easily carry a spear. It need never be awkward. It should be carried, when riding, diagonally across the body, and held about the centre of the shaft, the knuckles downwards, the shaft lying underneath the fore-arm, so that it is ready to hand, less dangerous to one's friends when riding, and to oneself when falling. M. used a long, underhand spear made of male bamboo, the spear-head narrow and leaf-shaped, with a sharpened rib up each side, the edges and point kept sharpened from day to day. She was an "old hand" at the game.

An ideal horse for riding pig should be quick and handy, *must* be fast, not too big, and bold and staunch to pig. A small-sized waler or an Arab is more to be depended upon than a country-bred, which will not always face pig.

Duly mounted, we walked off to the first cover, spreading over the country as we went—a motley throng, including fourteen elephants, fifty native beaters, and several of the Maharajah's staff. I could not help

thinking how much it reminded one of drawing for an outlying fox at home.

One of the native officers' horses bucked a little soon after we had started, and his rider, whose saddle was apparently slippery, and whose seat was obviously insecure, took a heavy fall. His turban flew off, and his long black Sikh hair came tumbling down; however, the smart aide-de-camp hastily coiled it up again, wound his turban once more round his head, and gingerly remounted.

Arrived at the first cover, a long line was formed, directed by a head *shikari* on a pony, with several assistant *shikaris* at different points. The great grey elephants, caparisoned in scarlet and gold, crashed slowly through the tall yellow grass in the centre; on either side they were flanked by the dark natives in their white turbans and waistcloths, and here and there a mounted sowar in Kapurthalah uniform; slowly and silently, except for beating and tapping with sticks, the line moved through the jungle, a long, pointed crescent of colour. Around, as far as the eye could reach, lay the flat, cultivated stretches of plain, and above us a sky without a cloud. The riders were divided into small parties, and rode immediately in the rear of the line; in every party one experienced man gave the word "*Ride*" before anybody thought of starting after a pig.

It was too early to have grown hot, and we paced along, full of vigour and joyous motion, devouring the jungle with our eyes, and alive to the slightest

sound. It was, however, quite quietly that the first pig broke, and a few seconds of tense silence followed, moments of excitement too keen for words, as, all associations of pigsties and bacon fading away, every one gazed and gazed at that wiry form lobbing away across the open, for all the world, as Cruikshank says, like "a carpet-bag tumbling end over end." The fever of impatience to be off at once! but it is absolutely necessary to remain quiet till the boar has got well away; otherwise, himself the wiliest of all cunning animals, he hates to leave a good sanctuary, and only does so when he thinks the coast is clear. If he finds himself at once being followed, he will nip round and slip back to cover at lightning pace, and quite decline to leave it again. It seemed a lengthy minute, though it cannot have been really long, before S., leaning forward in his saddle, called out, "*Ride!*"

Oh! the vigour with which the air is rife,
 The spirit of joyous motion,
 The fever, the fulness of animal life,
 Can be drained from no earthly potion.

Everything was forgotten but the maddening, all-engrossing present: the wind in the horses' faces; the rattle of their hoofs; and eyes only for one grey object fast disappearing.

It was indeed *Ride*.

Over the valley, over the level,
 Through the thick jungle, ride like the —



IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO REMAIN QUIET TILL THE BOAR
HAS GOT WELL AWAY. [Page 18.]

Hark forward! a boar! away we go!
Sit down and ride straight!—tally ho!
He's a true-bred one—none of your jinking;
Straight across country—no time for thinking.
There's water in front!—There's a boar AS WELL;
Harden your heart, and ride pell-mell.

Away went the party as hard as they could go, five of them, S. and G. riding to the right and left, M. taking her own line more or less between the two. It is astonishing that a pig, ungainly animal as he looks, should cover the ground as he can; but all this time our boar appeared to be lolluping along at an easy canter, while the horses were galloping all they knew to keep within sight of him. Away they went, across a field or two, quite simple riding, until a big wall loomed in front, and there was nothing for it but to take it. The unmistakable gleam of water just showed beyond. The boar quietly cantered up to this big place, and down it for a few yards, then turning, with a wonderful knack he somehow jumped himself sideways over it, and was soon bundling across the piece of fallow beyond. For the field it was a case of—

Harden your heart like a millstone, Ned,
And set your face like a flint,

and the three leaders, S., G., and M., charged it gallantly in line, with the two others following. G.'s horse, a biggish waler, sailed over wall, water, and all, in his stride. S. hit the wall hard, and his horse and he disappeared completely in the watery

uncertainty beyond, but they emerged on the right side, and were soon to the front once more. M.'s horse left his hind-legs in the ditch, but recovered himself; and the two others came through the hole made by S. The pig had taken advantage of a footpath across the fallow, and was rambling comfortably along it, while his pursuers were still riding as hard as they could lay legs to the ground. One of the others had taken it quietly with a view to saving his horse—a fatal thing to do; the only result being that when the time comes when you wish to overhaul your pig, you find that he has got his second wind and is impossible to catch up at all.

Meanwhile, our boar turned at right angles into a road, and after following it a quarter of a mile, charged a stiff and forbidding-looking gate which led out of it towards a small cover across two or three fields. He smashed the bottom bar and was through in a moment, but at the same time unfastened the gate. G. was ahead, and as he gave the others a lead, and his horse rose, the gate just swung open before he had realised that it was unlatched. It caught his horse's forelegs and turned him over—a heavy fall; but G. landed on his back, with nothing worse than bruises, and was soon up again and following hard on the heels of the others, who, when they saw him stand up none the worse, had dashed on.

There is great art in learning how to fall: frequently the mere act of holding on to the reins will prevent the rider from falling directly upon his head by bringing

him over more upon the muscles of his shoulders and back. On the other hand, in the case of turning a somersault, the farther from the horse, the better.

A big prickly pear hedge or two were the next fences to be negotiated. Choosing her spot and riding down at the first one fairly fast, M. landed well on the opposite side. The next was stiffer, and had a little ditch towards them; the pace was beginning to tell. Pulling her horse up to a canter and getting him well together, she ought to have cleared it easily, but it was a bad take off; anyhow, they blundered it, and the Arab came on his head and got a nasty cut or two from the prickly pear, which at the same time unnecessarily ventilated M.'s skirt and exposed a large amount of boot! However, S., G., and herself were all going strong, when the pig took advantage of a scrap of cover to squat down and recover his wind. The two men rode on to view him away; M. remained behind, and suddenly a rustle behind her betrayed the cunning hog, thinking he had given every one the slip, creeping out where he had gone in, and scurrying away almost on his own old line again. A shout brought S. and G., and they were galloping in pursuit once more.

And now a sharp turn right-handed had, after a sloping field, brought an ugly-looking, deep nullah across the line. It was a breakneck drop, but without hesitation the boar threw himself down, and then, leaping some six feet up on the opposite side, was off. M. found a place lower down where her clever

little Arab scrambled in and out, and was once more following the other two, in view still of the pig as he galloped along. It was a rough bit of country, overgrown here and there with tufts of grass ; and suddenly there was a flutter of habit, a vision of heels, the little Arab disappeared in a buffalo hole, and M. landed in the middle of some tall reeds on the edge. She had her reins, which always saves the extreme annoyance of being left riderless ; but in this case she had her horse to extricate, and having picked up her spear and scrambled on again, was just in time to see the pig, some way ahead, charging some unfortunate natives, who were cutting reeds and grass for thatching purposes, on the right. Indignant and vindictive, he deliberately deviated from his course, caught one fugitive between the knees as he fled, cutting his thighs badly, sending him head over heels, and went on his own way rejoicing. A pig possesses the shortest temper of any living animal, and when roused, his sharp, curving tusks, used with incredible swiftness and unerring aim, are useful instruments !

It is quite impossible in pig-sticking to watch the ground over which one rides ; the sole aim and object *must be* to keep the eye on the pig, and with a childlike faith to place all else in the hands of the horse. Corners must not be cut off nor short cuts chosen in bad ground, for no one has any idea what they may be coming to, whereas the pig must have found some sort of a footing (however " sketchy " that footing may be), and is better than no guide at all.

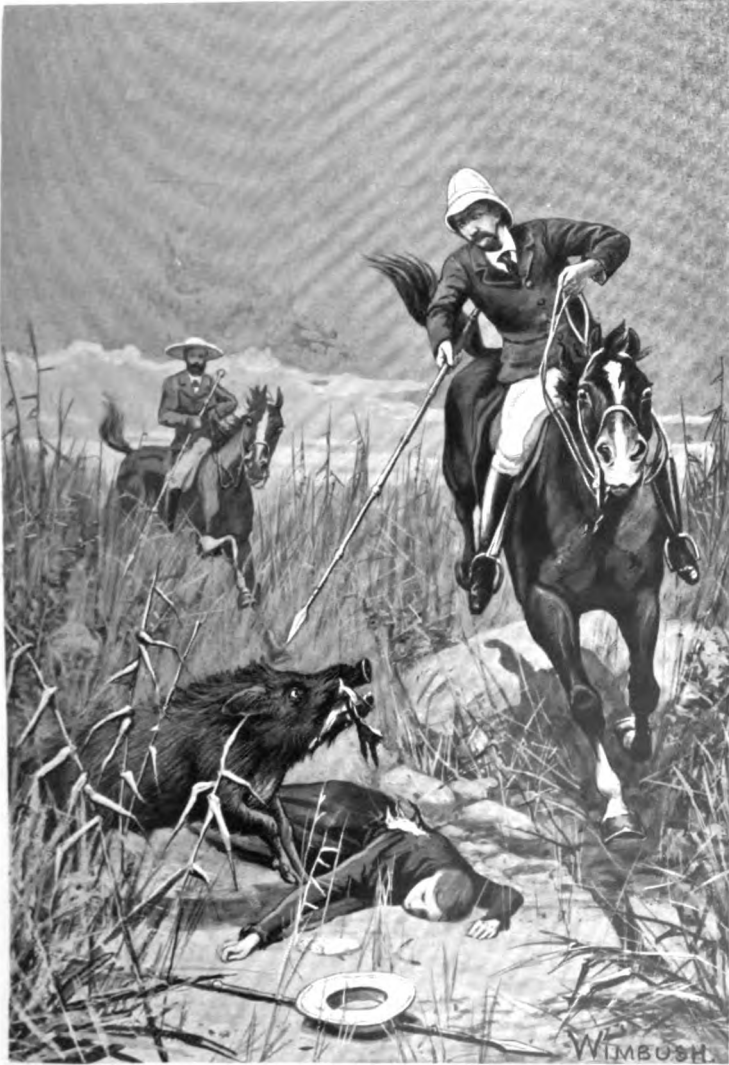
A little farther on, and S. was upset over a *goanchie*, as they call a lump formed by roots of grass: he was soon on again and leading with G.; but there were indeed "wigs on the green" that day.

Now they were gradually overhauling the pig. G. was close to him, with his spear in readiness; but every time he got within spearing distance the pig would jink, and leave G. some paces to the bad. Now this side, now that side, he jinked. Meanwhile, M. was coming up upon the right, her good little mount white with lather, but no one was looking as fresh as when they started; the pig, as he jinked, seemed to be edging over right-handed too. However, she pressed on; rattle-rattle went the hoofs over the hard ground. Suddenly the pig darted round, seemed to get away like lightning from S., and in another moment was charging for all he was worth at M.

Often and often it happens that the best man, the first man, does not get "first spear"; so now. Drink to the unexpected! it was going to lie with M. to do or die. In a brief second all the well-known injunctions flash through the mind, of which "keep hold of your spear till death do you part" is first and all-important: time for reason was there none, it was a field for instinct alone.

On came the pig straight for the Arab's shoulder and forelegs—a gallant charge. Keeping her horse going at best pace, M. leaned well down, intending to lunge her spear straight into him low down in the

body, just behind the shoulder, directly he was within reach. Her body swung forward as she made the effort . . . there followed an instant of deadly sickness . . . Gracious heavens! she missed him. It was but an instant, home went the pig's charge, and over went the Arab as though he had been a ninepin. M. was hurtled into the air, a vision of sky followed, and then *stars*. . . . Sitting loose as she leaned down, she came well away from the horse, and a few seconds after, getting up giddy and sick, the first thing her dazed eyes rested on was the pig charging again at her as hard as he could gallop, with a hoarse grunt of resolute defiance. His bristles were all erect, standing up at right angles to his curved spine, his great wedge-shaped head and keen tusks were lowered, his vast muscle working round the great shoulders all seemed to add a savage resolution to his charge. M.'s spear lay several feet off her, and she did the only thing there was time to do—*threw herself flat on her face and lay still*. In another second the pig was cutting what remained of her habit into ribbons, and she could feel sharp gash after gash in the small of her back as he tore at the body of his prostrate foe. Then G.'s voice rang out, and never was woman more glad. He speared the boar and drew him off M., who sat up once more, considerably bruised and battered, but still with plenty of life. The last scenes in such a contest would be sad and horrible, if they were not so full of danger and excitement.



HE SPEARED THE BOAR AND DREW HIM OFF. [Page 24.

The pluck of the bull-dog does not beat
The pluck of the gallant boar.

He was magnificent. Furious with rage, again and again he literally hurled himself upon the spears in his mad longing to get at S. and G., till at last he died, facing his foes—splendid animal! It was quite grievous to see him lying dead. He was thirty-eight and a half inches high at the withers, and his tushes measured eight and a half inches. He was one mass of thew and sinew, and weighed three hundred pounds. Half a dozen beaters slung his mighty carcass on a pole, and took him home to divide his flesh amongst them. His tushes fell to G., first spear, which should by rights have fallen to M., whom the sight of a fresh horse seemed quite to have revived. We called up the elephant with the drink box to slake that best of all thirsts—the pig-stickers' thirst. M.'s game little Arab had had a bad fall and was pretty well done, but he had been going fast enough, when the pig charged them, to avoid his being seriously damaged; he was only ripped in two places. She herself insisted on going on. "Rest!" she said, somewhat boastfully, "I shall have all eternity to rest in."

The next piece of cover we drew was thick, and the line of beaters advanced noisily with drums, tom-toms, sticks, and shouting.

On they came, of every race a mingled swarm,
Far rung the groves, and gleamed the yellow corn,
With tom-tom, club, and naked arm.

We riders, on fresh horses, were posted outside the cover at intervals and at points where it was expected that a pig might break. Needless to say, he finally went away just where he was not wanted, and headed straight for the river which watered the district we were in, and which our first pig had not gone near. Is there a man who in his heart of hearts does not dislike open and unknown water! But nothing comes amiss to a pig, though English specimens are said to cut their throats if they try to swim. He was in, steadily making his way over, in a moment; and having emerged on the opposite side and gone straight off, riders were perforce obliged to follow. S. piloted the party, who slithered one after another down the muddy bank, and swam for it. The horses all behaved well except G.'s, who, somewhere about the middle, started plunging, and they parted company. G. secured the long tail of his charger, whom he was riding second horse, and they both got across and scrambled out, minus whip and stirrup; off G. galloped as he was. Our pig headed for some bushes, and was in them before one had time to look round. We waited for coolies, sent them in, and proceeded to beat him out. But his temper was now thoroughly aroused: he bowled over three coolies, and then, although everybody was well on the *qui vive*, he sneaked away down a road, and was going out of sight, when S. caught sight of him, raised a wild Tally ho! and every one lay legs to the ground.

S. caught him up first, and pressed him closely,

but the astute wretch got into a mango grove. Over a mud wall into the grove flew his pursuers, in time to see the pig lobbing away across the field beyond. Through and under the trees and brushwood every one pushed their horses: it was an awkward "lep" out of the grove, a stiff pear-hedge set on no mean bank, but it was duly negotiated, and a race down the next field followed. At the bottom yawned a blind nullah, and it was a toss-up whether to go slowly and jump in and out, or whether to fly the whole thing; unfortunately, the landing was boggy, and two empty saddles marked the fate of our two flyers.

In the next field the pig turned and tried to make back for the mangoes. S. was near enough to ride at him, and the pig charged him directly he gathered S.'s intention. The horse was not a very handy one, and S. missed the pig, was bowled completely over, and broke his collar-bone. Every one galloped to the rescue, and first spear did actually fall to M.'s proud lot. The boar went straight for her; for the second time that day she leaned well down, and this time drove it home in triumph. But unfortunately he went off with her spear, and was evidently not badly wounded at all. The first thing he did was to smash the spear short off against a tree; then, seeing G. coming up, deliberately charged straight at him, and with the neatest precision of aim, ripped his horse almost from shoulder to quarter. G. speared him at the

same time, but it seemed to have no effect at all ; he was nothing more or less than a fiend, with the grit of a thousand devils. An unfortunate *mali* (keeper of the mango grove) had hurried up, full of curiosity, which was promptly satisfied : the boar carefully stalked him, rolled him over, rent his scant garments, and once more galloped off.

All this was the work of a moment, and no riders seemed able to get near him ; now, however, they were not far off, racing down a road, the pig only just in front. Over he threw two wretched women, one after the other, who were going down the road with waterpots ; both were badly cut. Through a village he rattled, tilting a native, who was standing by a well, straight into it ; finally he was brought to bay near a sugar crop, and taking up his stand he charged time after time at his pursuers in turn. I have never seen such magnificent pluck or such implacable defiance in any animal ; he never lost either his head or his heart, and his grim, devilish temper was a study. Speared twice again, at last he fell and died, " the bravest of the brave " : humans would do well if they could play the game of life as nobly, and meet death as callously.

God grant that whenever, soon or late,
Our course is run and our goal is reached,
We meet our fate as steady and straight
As he whose bones in yon desert bleached.

Are these the feelings, aroused in all thinking minds
by the nobility of creation, which we have often heard



THE BOAR ROLLED HIM OVER, AND ONCE MORE GALLOPED OFF.

[Page 28.]

censured and mis-called *unwomanly* and *hard*? The staid matron and the Society butterfly may, through a touch of jealousy, or by reason of their narrow prejudices, condemn women whom happy occasion has enabled to call into play those latent forces and capabilities with which they have been endowed ; but the trophies which decorate the walls of their *sanctum sanctorum* call forth admiration and reverence, rather than constitute mute witnesses of outraged womanhood.

That evening "the boar, the mighty boar, was certainly our theme." Kapurthalah told us an incident which illustrates the extraordinary agility of pig. A boar was being hard pressed and galloped into a nullah, which was steep and deep, more like a narrow chasm than a ravine. Down this, along the bottom of it, he raced, followed by a sahib upon a fast waler. The banks on either side, overhanging the path, were some six feet or more in height. Suddenly the pig turned a sharp corner out of sight ; by some superhuman effort he scaled the bank and gained the top. Turning short round, he leaped the entire width of the nullah and landed safely on the opposite side, clearing both horse and rider as he jumped, except for the sahib's pith helmet, which he knocked off !

The great Bacon remarks that "Hog-hunting is not only more scientific, but is a more dangerous sport than tiger-shooting." Certainly tackling a wounded boar on foot involves great risk ; but I should say that more lives have been lost after tiger than can ever

have been sacrificed to pig. When a pig comes to bay in a place which is either inaccessible or else would involve danger to a horse, there is, after all, nothing left for it but to attack him on foot. It is said to be "an act of madness which many young sportsmen practise, but which in time gives way either in deference to the severe admonition of rips and bites, or to that cooler mode of acting which results from experience." S., I know, had a great tussle once : he had been riding after a pig, and had no one with him but his servant on a second horse. They came up with the pig, who was slightly wounded, in a place which was rocky and precipitous—it was a corner with an old cave in the background ; behind the great boulders the pig was standing. There was no other way of reaching him except on foot, for a horse could not have turned among the rocks and would have been worse than useless. Throwing his reins to his servant, S. walked towards the boar, his *syce* calling out to him very encouragingly, "*Khabardar, sahib ! khabardar ! bara khirab janwar !*" ("Take care, sahib ! take care ! very wicked animal !") The pig's wicked little eyes were glued upon S., and as his enemy drew closer to him, he gathered himself together, and, giving a savage grunt, charged straight at S. From that position on the ground his great head would seem to entirely cover his chest, the rigid bristles of the neck tremble and heave in an agony of rage, the great teeth snap, their foam squirts in S.'s face. He comes ! And now is the time to grasp the spear tight, bend forward, and send up

a short prayer, for rarely in this life does a man face deadlier risk than when he meets on foot the charge of an Indian boar. What equals that deadly sickness of a pulse-beat's length which comes over the doomed *shikari* as his spear-point *glides along*, and not into, the leathery shoulder of his foe? It was practically impossible for S. to spear him in front, for if he attempted to do so, the spear would only strike his head, be knocked up into the air, and the pig would be upon him in a moment. The best, or almost sole chance seemed to be to await his charge till he should be within reach, and then to spring aside and spear him as he rushed by; but heavy riding-boots and the hard ride only a few moments before made this a risky business, and it would be difficult to be quite quick enough. Long as descriptions always seem, there must have been no time in reality for thinking or hesitating,—in another moment the boar was upon S. He took his chance, stood still, and stood the charge—almost, it would seem, till the pig was on the point of his spear; then, as he had planned, jumping aside, he ran the spear well home into his ribs and heart. But it was more a lucky fluke than anything.

A boar is full grown at five years old, but he fills out till he is eight; after nine years old his powers begin to wane and his temper grows worse; from that time he is an ugly customer to meet. He may live till he is sixteen or twenty, but he is then in his dotage.

A spear should never be thrown at a pig like a javelin ; all sorts of serious accidents have happened through this being done. I know on one occasion an enthusiastic griffin (as new arrivals from England are called) hurled his spear at a pig which was jinking in front of him, and the spear rebounding off the iron ground, went into his horse above the outside of the stifle on the off side, and came up with the point projecting near the hip. With frantic kicks the horse sent the spear flying some twenty feet into the air, whence it came hurtling down among us all, and it was the greatest mercy that it fell clear of horses and riders.

I believe the wild boar is supposed to be the original stock of our domestic breeds of swine : of course they were well known here in our little England till the reign of Henry II., when they seem to have disappeared ; and King Charles I.'s project to restock the New Forest with them turned out a failure. William the Conqueror, a true sportsman, made any man killing a pig liable to have his eyes put out. Nowadays, in Europe and in Asia, wherever deep recesses of forest and marshy ground are to be found, wild boar abound. Vambery, in his journey through Central Asia, found them in enormous numbers in the extensive swamps of Turkestan. But India, and India alone, is the land of pig-sticking. In the matter of sport "the shiny East" has stood the test of time better than any of her rivals. Once upon a time America was equally attractive to the lover of *shikar*,

but the fine old grizzlies, deer, and bison, have come to be gradually wiped out, most effectively, alas! by the native "trappers" and others, for the sake of their skins. South Africa was a serious rival, but her day, although it has been a brilliant one, must be confessed to have passed its best. Elephant, rhino, and lion fall before the improved breechloaders; and the survivors, slow-breeding animals, fail to restock the country in anything like adequate proportion to the numbers slain. India is to the *shikari* still The Land of Promise. But unless the great nullahs of Kashmir are more strictly preserved, unless, throughout the Central Provinces particularly, the native village *shikari* is prevented from killing every head of game he can lay his hands on, it only means a matter of time for India to be "shot out."

Leaving Kapurthalah, we returned to Mian Mir, just in time for a few terribly wet days.

It did come on to blow and rain to boot,
That Noah's flood was but a spoonful to't.

It was our first experience of Oriental rain, and the mud, after it was all over, was a revelation. M. and I were very anxious to go round Lahore native city on an elephant, and finally the commissariat let us have two *hartis* out of the lines, where I had often seen them in their abnormally tall loose-boxes. We drove to the city, along the main approach to Lahore, a straight road like a bar of dusty iron, and shaded by the dustiest of dusty tamarisk-trees, for

all the effect of the rain had passed off. Sleeping men lay by the roadside in the unblinking sunlight, looking like sheeted corpses. *Ekka* ponies in jingling *ekkas* passed us, some of them driving "Tommy" back to the cantonments; they say an *ekka* is the most wonderfully balanced contrivance in the world, and the lightest vehicle ever made. Trains of grain-carts were pushed and pulled on one side as we drove by; it is not all in a moment that the ponderous white bullocks can be moved. One of them, particularly stupid and weary-eyed, lay down, and the relentless wheels creaked slowly right over him, but he got up none the worse. Some of them were resting, lying down between the shafts, at the roadside, and waking up at intervals to blow through their broad, wet muzzles like grampuses.

Arrived at Lahore, not near the European quarters, but at the gate of the old city, the elephants met us, and we proceeded on them very slowly through one of the quaintest places in the world. The little streets were like so many ramifications in a gigantic ant-heap, swarming with life—such business, such talking, on either side houses piled one above each other, any way and all ways, their flat roofs and balconies occupied by picturesque natives smoking hookahs. The never-to-be-forgotten smell of an Eastern bazaar and a great Eastern city, the glaring sun, the pure and dazzling colours, the superabundance of humans, form memories which come back again and again. And behind all that the eye sees, the *Purdah* women, the Eastern ways

and Eastern life of which we know *so little*, steep such a scene as this one in an interest born of mystery.

Leaving the elephants, we went over the fort which was repaired by Akbar, and from it we saw Shahdra, the mausoleum of Jehangir, Akbar's son. This building, seen from the fort, is supposed to be architecturally perfect, because the full and proper number of minarets can be there seen by the faithful, and represent a concrete example of the Mogul greatness. The palace of Ranjit Singh was interesting, very gaudy in the matter of interior frescoes. Ranjit Singh was the founder of the Sikh Kingdom in the Punjab, and after the fall of the Moguls he obtained from the Afghan King the Governorship of Lahore. He organised the Sikhs into an army under European officers, which for steadiness and religious fervour has had no parallel since the "Ironsides" of Cromwell. As I have said, they were our backbone at the time of the Mutiny. Ranjit died in 1839, having been ever loyal to the English. At his funeral four wives and seven slave girls were burnt with his body without a word of remonstrance from the British Government, the four Rānees burning themselves at their own desire from pride of family and caste. Ranjit Singh was enormously wealthy, and as he was dying he gave into the hands of the Brahmins, as propitiation to the gods, treasure worth a million sterling. The supposed infant son of Ranjit and a dancing girl was recognised as Maharajah Dhulip Singh, and when the British annexed the Punjab in 1849, owing to rebellion, he received an allowance

of £58,000 a year, on which he lived for many years as an English country gentleman in Norfolk.

Lahore is interesting as having been for so long the home of Rudyard Kipling. One can picture his going over to the cantonments at Mian Mir and learning the ways of Private Thomas Atkins as no other man on the face of this earth knows them. As head of the School of Art, he designed the Law Courts—great, airy, massive buildings, full of rooms.

Before leaving Mian Mir we went for a delightful moonlight picnic at the famous Shalimar Gardens, which Sháh Jehán (the builder of the Taj) considered “the home of his emotions.” Driving there in the twilight, the gaudy sun having long disappeared, and a cool freshness having begun to move the hot air, we strolled through the dark, shady mango-trees, by the broad stone tanks full of water, with fountains playing on every side. The air was full of scents and silences. Sháh Jehán was evidently a man of perception. Later on a band played, and we dined, a party of seventy, in one of the great open stone halls overlooking the gleaming, moonlit water.

CHAPTER II

PESHAWUR AND THE KHYBER PASS

A Day with the Peshawur Vale Hunt—The Native City—Through the Khyber Pass—Lunch in Camp on Active Service—General Hart's Brigade—Ali Musjid—Khyber in Old Days.

CHAPTER II

PESHAWUR AND THE KHYBER PASS

Are those billions of men really gone ?
Are those women of the old experience of the earth gone ?
Do their lives, cities, arts, rest only with us ?
Did they achieve nothing for good for themselves ?

I believe of all those men and women that filled the unnamed lands,
every one exists this hour here or elsewhere, invisible to us.

WALT WHITMAN.

BACK again in Mian Mir. It is itself a hideous station and a most unhealthy one. Most of it was originally an old Sikh burying-ground, and it is now known as the "Graveyard of India." For this reason it has not been made as much use of, as a military station, as was at first intended. It possesses a fine church, close to the General's house, where we were staying, and an indifferent polo-ground.

The ordinary Tommies in India are much to be pitied : people out there are very good to them, getting up sports, matches, sing-songs, and so forth, and I have heard it argued that they are quite "spoiled." At the same time, they have no Society, and when a Tommy wants to be lazy, when he wants to shake off a fit of the "blue devils" and to be amused, to be anywhere but in the sight of the eternal lines and the eternal

uniform and the fellow-Tommy he sees every day, every hour of his life, where is he to go? Where is his Mary Ann? Where is the friendly pub? Where are the lanes and the villages to saunter and gossip in? Where are the shops, the omnibuses, the parks? Instead of which, in his own words: "I'm a Tommy—a blooming, eight-anna, dog-stealing Tommy, with a number instead of a decent name. If I had stayed at home I might ha' married that gal, and kept a little shop in the 'Ammersmith 'Igh. 'PRACTICAL TAXIDERMIST,' with a stuffed fox, like as they has in the Aylesbury Dairies, in the window, and a little case with blue and yellow glass eyes, and a little wife to call 'Shop—shop' when the door-bell rung. I'm sick to go 'ome—go 'ome—go 'ome. I'm sick for London again; sick for the sounds and sights and smells of her—orange peel! and asphalte! and gas! sick for Vauxhall Bridge, for the railway going down to Box Hill, with your gal on your knee, and a new clay pipe in your face—that, and the Strand lights, where you knows every one, and the bobby that takes you up is an old friend as has taken you up before. No more blooming rotten-stone, nor khāki, nor guard-mounting, and yourself your own master with a gal to take and see the Humaners practising hooking dead corpses out of the Serpentine on Sundays; . . . instead of which here I am, where there ain't no women, and there ain't no liquor worth having, and there's nothing to do, nor see, nor say, nor think, nor feel."

Of all God-forsaken spots to be quartered in, Mian

Mir must be one of the worst. To begin with, the climate, cold in winter, cold enough for a log fire and fur coats, becomes unbearably hot by the last week in March, and develops into an oven later on.

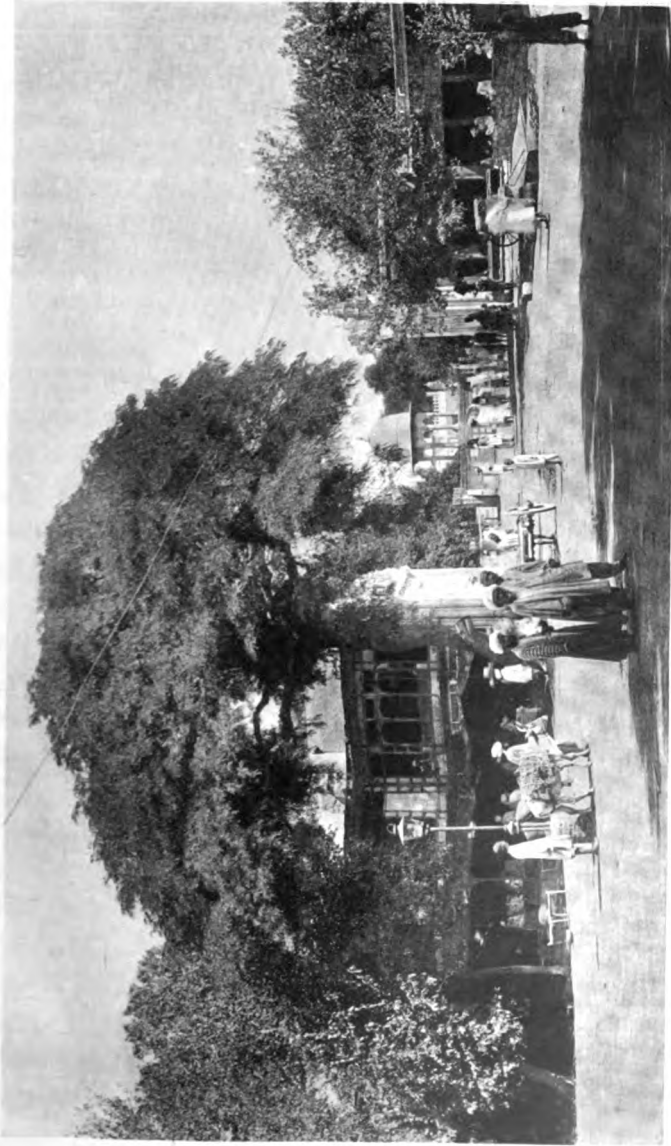
As for the place itself, coming out to India and expecting to see palms and cocoanut-trees, jungles and tropical vegetation, I found—flat, brown plains, broken in parts by cultivation or by dried-up, stunted bushes, roads buried in thick white dust, and overhead a sun which scorched and glared from morning to night in a sky which never possessed a cloud upon its brazen face. The lines stretch some distance in Mian Mir—white, dazzling buildings; brown flats of earth baked like bricks reaching up to the walls and forming the Tommies' "play-ground." Besides the lines was the hospital, also the dusty, grassless polo-ground, and the little club, the garden of which was kept well watered. Officers' bungalows on either side of roads which were ruled across the station and shaded by that dusty and tired-looking tree the tamarisk, completed Mian Mir. The church, as I have said, is the feature of a place which has nothing in it or round it to please the eye, except flat, endless monotony, dust and heat. The very bungalows themselves looked as though they might have been built yesterday, the *débris* of building hardly yet removed from the bare, brown compound, edged by a mud wall and innocent of any suspicion of green.

Nothing will grow without copious waterings, and as the life of a soldier is one of many moves, few people

spend much over a garden which they may have to leave at any time. India is never "home": there is no "home" to be proud of there, and to beautify. In the General's garden there were hedges and bowers of roses, and hundreds of pots of violets, all well watered by an energetic *mali*; but even *they* were not like English ones, for they had no smell.

India has been summed up as a "land in which everything smells except its flowers." In the early morning one misses so the *earthy* smell, the exquisite, moist, fresh scent of daybreak.

While we were at Mian Mir I drove one day into Lahore with Miss —, who was one of the house-party, our principal object being to get some money out of the bank. On our return Miss — locked the notes into her dressing-bag, meaning to settle up some accounts the following day. What followed should show every one the impossibility of trusting native servants, unless they have been proved worthy. Miss — went upstairs at night as usual, undressed, and was soon in bed, with Terry, her little terrier, curled up on a rug on the floor near her. Suddenly she heard a slight movement behind the curtain, and then another! Surely it could not be fancy?—yet Terry never stirred. She sat up in bed—why, the curtains had moved and there was a space between, through which the dim light shone; and there was something else—what was it? *A face*—surely not—not a *human face*, with glaring eyes? Was she dreaming? She seized her match-box and hastily



SILK MARKET, PESHAWUR CITY.

struck a match—*damp!* another—*damp!* another! She always put three out ready by the box. The curtain shook; something—what!—came from behind it—a noiseless step: it was a figure. In the semi-darkness she sprang out of bed, and at the same moment the figure of a native sprang forward with a knife in his hand. . . . Miss —, with a good loud shriek and plenty of pluck, went straight for him, and they grappled together near the wall; but her screams roused the house at once, and the main object of the ruffian was to get off. He cut her hand badly, and, breaking from her grasp, dashed down a passage and through an open window, out into the compound; an exciting chase followed, and in the end he was caught by the servants. He proved to be the cook's mate, and had, of course, known of the money being taken out of the bank. Little Terry had been drugged, which accounted for his apathy and apparent deafness. The thought of the man's having lain behind the curtain while Miss — undressed was an unpalatable one. He was given—I forget how many years'—penal servitude in Lahore Jail.

We drove over there one morning to see the prisoners making carpets, eventually to be sold at about a pound a square yard. Some of them, with colours admirably blended, were magnificent; others were glaringly crude. The prisoners, with feet tied as a rule, sat in rows at the big looms, twisting a hundred balls of coloured wool.

On February 17th M. and I left Mian Mir and went off to Peshawur, where we stayed with my sister and her husband, W. R. Merk, C.S.I., who was then Acting-Commissioner *vice* Sir Richard Udny. From the flat roof of the Commissioner's bungalow, the best bungalow in Peshawur, we had a fine view of the whole country round, and at last saw in all its reality the far-famed *frontier*, embodiment of a word which had been printed as a newspaper heading in England larger than any other word for months past. The cantonments lay in front of us—to the west; the walled native city was behind us; the racecourse on our right; while all round Peshawur stretched a well-cultivated plain almost entirely bordered by hills. Those lying on our right, particularly, and those facing us, looked beautiful enough in the bright sun, all the topmost peaks white with snow; but as we rode or drove nearer them the grey crags and the dark defiles become defined, and mountain after mountain assumes an impenetrable and a dreary aspect.

No one could live in Peshawur and be unconscious of that Debatable Land only thirteen or fourteen miles distant, nor help peopling with Afridis, Yusufzais, and other hill tribes, those weird heights forming their fastnesses which had been the scene of so many struggles with the British. One little break in the chain, the entrance to the Khyber, interested us more than any other spot.

The Peshawur Vale is so much enclosed by mountains that it is hardly odd that it should develop into

a furnace later on. A dense yellow haze envelops the place through the summer months—underneath this pall Peshawur gradually stokes up to white heat; but through the winter it is one of the very best stations to be in.

Of course we inspected the kennels of the Peshawur Vale Hunt, and pronounced them excellent—in fact, superior to some English ones! And when offered a mount apiece for a hunt that week, we most gladly accepted.

The evening before found M. and myself, our host and hostess, all, as the hands of “the enemy” neared the hour of eleven, intimating our wish to retire; for we hunt to please, and there is no pleasure in hunting with “a head” at 6 a.m. We were getting quite accustomed to the unrest of an Indian night and the barkings of the pariah dogs; the incessant chatter of the servants and the stamping of horses no longer kept us awake and annoyed.

It seemed as though we had just put our heads on the pillow, when, at a miserably early hour, 4.30 a.m., a dusky figure salaaming by the bedside gradually separated itself from our dreams, and assumed the fat and unwelcome form of our *ayah*. Sleepily we tumble into our habits and buckle the chin-strap of our sun-helmets.

Breakfast is ready in the dining-room, and we soon find ourselves on the spot, with hot coffee, eggs, and hump (a really good Punjab *hump* is bad to beat).

As we turned out upon the verandah the air was like needles, so keen that *poshteens* were the greatest comforts, for we drove on to the meet, about four miles. I brought my *poshteen* home, but, like most of them, it was not well enough cured to last in England; besides which a sheepskin coat with the wool inside, black astrachan collar and cuffs, and embroidered all over in yellow, attracted a crowd in this critical country.

Arrived at the meet, we found quite a large field, and our own four *syces* on the look-out for us. There was a great variety of horseflesh—walers, Persians, Arabs, country-breds, and tats of all sorts, as the term is in this country. A good pony is as handy as anything else for this hunt, unless there is weight to be carried.

The Master and two whips, in orthodox pink, were on walers; the kit of the rest of the field was distinguished by its sweet variety. As the sun would be hot by 10 a.m., thin coats and sun-helmets were *de rigueur*. No ambitious toilettes in snowy leathers, spotless pink, and irreproachable top hats, but an assortment of butcher boots of all shades of yellow brown and black, and anything that would tuck into them.

Naturally, the pack itself was not out of keeping with its surroundings. Hounds cannot be imported into India under £16 a couple, and so, once arrived in the Shiny, good, bad, or indifferent are one and all exceedingly precious, and as long as they can raise

a trot cherished to the last. Many of them are gifts from packs at home, and out of these drafts occasionally a skirter, a mute runner, or a noisy one, is to be seen. Miscellaneous they *must* be, immaculate *never* ; but the P.V.H. has at the same time many virtues—it shows capital sport, it affords endless fun, and it is without exception the best hunt in India. Ootacamund is not nearly as good a country, besides being short of jacks.

Our M.F.H. takes a look at the watch in his wrist-strap—6 a.m. sharp—one note on his horn, a reminder from the whips, and the pack moves off down a sandy road shaded with tamarisks.

There were half a dozen ladies out besides ourselves ; one among them, the well-known Lady Harvey, looks upon Peshawur as an Indian *Melton*, and brings her stud there regularly every season ; in spite of her short sight she went well. One good lady boasted a lineless, peach-bloom complexion, which hurried her home at the least sign of rain.

We jog along for a couple of miles, and almost as soon as we reach the covert, a marshy *jheel* lying in some delightfully fresh meadows, a ringing Tally ho ! on the far side proclaims that a jack has already gone away. A moment—while stirrup-leathers are adjusted and solar *topis* strapped on,—and the field is off,—

Here's a health to all hunters of every degree,
 Whether clippers or craners or hill-top abiders ;
 The man that hates hunting he won't do for me,
 And ought to be pumped on by gentlemen riders.

The hounds are out at the far end of the *jheel*, and streaming across the first few grass fields, the keen air positively ringing for miles as they drive at their jack through a thick bit of reeds on the edge of the grass land.

What *is* scent ? is asked scores and scores of times. Does the subtle essence float in the air breast-high, or does the jack leave it behind him on the ground he crosses, wherever a pad has touched ? Or is it neither, or both ? Those who hunt most know best that the mysteries of scent are not to be fathomed.

But there is a scent this morning, and that is all we care for. The Master, taking his horse by the head, is crashing through the patch of dry reeds, over the stubs, and scrambling through the straggling fence which separates it from open country ; we follow as best we can, our ponies blundering about, envying the ease with which the M.F.H. on his clever waler got over such ground.

Half the field now diverge to the right, the rest of us going left-handed, with the Master's pink back ahead. We were galloping over a spreading country, some fields lying fallow, waiting to be sown, others with their new crops ; the different fields were separated by little ditches with a bank on either side, trappy little places, and it was wonderful how cleverly most of the tats flew them.

But all is not so easy and smooth as at first sight it seems : the pack disappears for a moment beyond a slight rise in the ground, with a corresponding fall,

and when we are near enough to see what is happening, a series of jumps—splashes—scrambles, and a marked check in the hounds' pace, show that a brook of sorts must lie down there.

The nearer we come the less we like it, for though it proves to be jumpable, it is banked up high on either side, and both take-off and landing are awkward and slippery. A waler is soon floundering about in the middle, several horses have refused it altogether, two or three jump it standing, and get across more by luck than management on to *terra firma*. Our M.F.H. took a fall on the opposite side, and cantered off in the wake of the pack with a muddy back.

After a good deal of scrambling, we four found ourselves on the right side: the far-sightedness of those of the field who had kept bearing away to the right, where there was a bridge, became apparent.

We still streamed on merrily, and turning sharp to the left we gained our first experience of riding over, or rather through, paddy (rice) fields. It is grown, so to speak, under water, by means of flooding the low ground from brooks or tanks on a higher level; each little field is banked round in order to be more or less independent of its neighbours, and the water is let in or drained off, as the case may be, at the native's will.

Sahibs wade and splash about all day in this mud and water after snipe; now we were called upon to ride to hounds through it. The little banks and ditches nearly hidden in "greenery" were terrible

pitfalls. An unfortunate lady whose pony "forgot to jump" one of these grips was properly baptised from head to toe in mud and water.

Some sound ground once more enabled us to get on terms with the pack; but even here, especially when we got at all low down, there were traps for the unwary, and again and again a soldier who knew the country would shout a warning to others who, like myself, had not ridden across it before.

Pit where the buffalo cooled his hide,
 By the hot sun emptied and blistered and dried;
 Log in the plume grass, hidden and lone;
 Dam where the earth-rat's mounds are strown;
 Cave in the bank where the sly stream steals;
 Aloe that stabs at the belly and heels;
 Jump if you dare on a steed untried—
 Safer it is to go wide—go wide!
Hark from in front where the best men ride:—
 "Pull to the off, boys! Wide! Go wide!"

Again we were among crops and floundering on, crawling over the little "bunds" or small banks, our M.F.H. on his raking, yawing chestnut still going great guns and heading the right-handed division. An unseen hole put M. down in a soft, earthy bed, but a good-natured man picked her up and held her mount while she scrambled into her saddle.

Meanwhile, our jack was heading more towards Peshawur; and after pushing along over a few more fields, we found ourselves in the peach-gardens, acres and acres of orchard-like country. We ducked under the boughs and rode between the trees as best we

could, till a friendly path came in sight ; hounds still rattling along at top speed. We cantered down it, when—horrors!—the *canal* glistens in front of us—too wide to think of jumping *that*. The hounds tail over, one after another ; just to the right lies a horrible little footbridge made of a few logs and some earth—anything but “confidential” to look at. I afterwards found these were nothing accounted of in the P.V.H. Seeing several bold spirits venturing across, and many more pushing to the fore, I hastened up without loss of time, and following our second whip, walked my pony slowly across. It was barely two feet wide in one place, and shook all over ominously. I would no more have thought of riding a hunter over it at home than I would of jumping a telegraph wire. Just as I was over, a vast splash rent the air!—poor Captain N., on a country-bred, had disappeared from view, and with him a big piece of earth off the side of the bridge, like a large bite out of a slice of cake ! There was no time for condolence or chaff. As soon as we saw the pair, with the help of a couple of natives, on a fair way to getting out, we were off.

This bridge being useless, most of the field galloped off down stream to find another ; but several thrusters and one lady on an Arab pushed their horses down the bank of the canal, plunged into it, swam across, and with much difficulty scrambled out on the opposite side, without a dry stitch on them.

We turned away from the peach-gardens by-and-by, and were thankful to be in open country again,

with the quick-recurring little fences, which need a handy horse with his hind legs well under him to be successfully negotiated. Small as they are they begin to bring frequent grief; the severity of the pace is telling—surely it cannot last much longer, unless jacks are endowed with the nine lives of a cat.

The hounds are tailing now, spreading out over the country like a comet and coming to a head in a single point; but there is such a scent that Ranger, Bonnybell, and Dauntless are still straining every nerve.

Into a grass field now, and across it we gallop; my eye was on our first whip, who was pulling his horse together, while everybody else except the lady on the Arab turned off for a road and bridge which lay through the hedge to the right. These two galloped abreast down the field, downhill, at what was apparently a big ditch at the bottom. Landing on the farther side, another yawning chasm faced them, and having thrown themselves over that, there remained still a third.

“One of our gridirons!—the seven sisters!” some one said.

And there really *were* seven parallel dykes, with big banks between them.

All glory be to the lady and her good mare, for by some extraordinary skill they picked their way over each “grave,” and landing on the little sound bit of turf between, neatly slipped over the next, jumping lightly, to an inch, on to the narrow bank, and so on over the whole seven. Vainly the whip alongside was

trying to do ditto; at number three there was a crash, his horse was fairly on his back in the bottom of the dyke, and a pink coat was clinging desperately to the top of the bank.

On over the bridge the rest of us flew, and as we rise the opposite side we view our jack not *fifty* yards in front of the leading hounds. Tally ho! yonder he goes!

There is a scream for the good of the hard-working pack, as well as for the field's own enthusiasm. Now he gains a small plantation and baffles hounds for a moment; now they are all but on him; but no—he slips out of Ranger's jaws and saves his skin. Only for a moment. Bonnybell and Dauntless are upon him, his gallant legs fail and his head is swimming—a last effort, and he is no more. . . . Who-whoop! . . . Up come the panting hounds, and while the last obsequies are performed we jump off, loosen our girths, and breathe our mounts. They look as though they want it, especially some of the smaller ponies, who have been hustled along faster than they like. It reminds one of—

Ride with an idle whip, ride with an unused heel,
But once in a way there will come a day
When the colt must be taught to feel
The lash that falls, and the curb that galls, and the sting
of the rowelled steel."

It was a seven-mile point, and we had come round-about, time a little over an hour: what more do you want? At any rate, a good many of us felt we had

had enough for one morning, or that at least the ponies had, and were therefore contented to hark quietly back along the road to Peshawur, under the sun which was even at that early hour beginning to feel hot.

At home—by which I mean in England—after a good day's hunt, when an acceptable dinner has come to an end, we sink into the depths of the best-cushioned arm-chair, and in the warm firelight gallop once more across the grass country of fancy, and jump with consummate ease the vast fences which invariably enclose the happy hunting-grounds of dreams. Though we do things differently in the Shiny, they do not compare so ill after all with the old originals; and that morning in Peshawur was quite a thing not to be forgotten, when, after discussing a very solid breakfast, we all found ourselves stretched in long cane chairs outside in the shady bungalow garden, among scented orange-trees and great palms, with iced drinks at our elbows, discussing the whole morning's ride from first to last, and reading each his English mail, which was just in. Then towards tea-time we strolled down to the club for tennis and racquets, loafing and coffee, meeting together again—once more the self-same party who only a few hours before had ridden together, fallen together, cursed and admired each other, followed and led one another after the best pack of hounds in Asia. The band played gaily while Society gossiped; all the latest home papers were read, and the tennis-courts were in great request. By-and-by "God save the Queen." (I wonder how

many times in one day in the whole of India it is played.) We drove back to dinner feeling there might be worse places in the world than Peshawur in the spring.

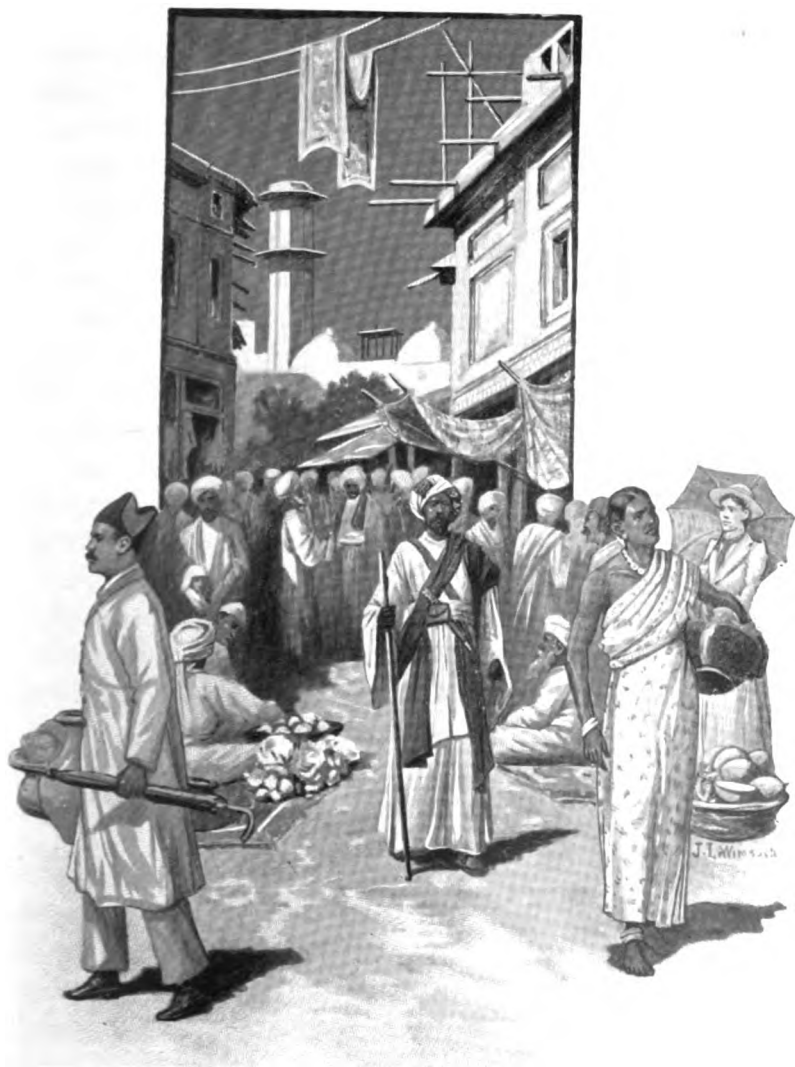
There are few more interesting sights than its native city, which on account of its position upon the frontier, surrounded by such varied types of humanity, is, among all Indian native cities, unique. India, unlike England, has few large towns. For instance, in England and Wales, in 1891, more than half the population lived in towns with upwards of twenty thousand inhabitants, while in British India less than one-twentieth of the people lived in such towns. India, therefore, is almost entirely a rural country, and many of the so-called towns are mere groups of villages, in the midst of which the cattle are driven afield, and ploughing and reaping go on. Many millions of peasants struggle to live off half an acre apiece, or one thousand two hundred and eighty to the square mile; for the peasant clings to his fields and parcels them out among his children, even when his family is too numerous to live upon the crops, instead of migrating to tracts where spare land abounds. If the rain falls short by a few inches, the result is one of those terrible famines of which we have heard so much lately. However, Peshawur is an important city of eighty thousand inhabitants, walled-in and fortified.

We drove in at one of the few gates, and were struck *dumb* with the infinitely picturesque scene.

Before us stretched a street *crammed* with natives, all walking, all talking, all dressed in white and scarlet and blue and yellow—every conceivable colour. Sikhs, Afridis, Afghans, Yusufzaies, Pathans, Hindoos, Mohammedans, all meet in Peshawur. Most of them are armed, with quaint knives and what not concealed in their draperies. One realises at once what it is to be the only Englishwoman among thousands of natives. Every eye is on you—not rude nor staring, but you feel *eyes* everywhere; and you begin to realise that were there no cantonments outside, you would probably have one of the many knives in your back,—which reflection puts you on your mettle. The secret of the British power in the East is that they have no fear.

The fascinating bazaars on either side held the native sellers and their workmen; we bought some of their quaint waxwork, and slippers of all colours with turned-up toes; farther on carpets and saddlebags and *poshteens* were to be had; the silver was of a very rough description.

I have never seen such a veritable rabbit-warren of humanity as Peshawur native city: the little mud-coloured, flat-roofed houses seemed as though they could not get near enough one another, and were piled and squeezed into every atom of space, tier after tier, gallery after gallery; and from those down the street hung out carpets, silks, embroideries, forming a carnival of colour which would satisfy the most thirsty soul, waving above the strange Oriental



STREET IN PESHAWUR.

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throng below, and flashing and fading into the dazzling blue sky.

To be back once more in the cantonments was to feel so near and yet so far from that unique city, the hum of which could always be heard even in our bungalow. But Peshawur was not a quiet spot in those days : it was crammed with troops, who were still waiting till all the tribes should have sent in their submission, and paid their fines in rifles ; from morning till evening we could hear distant sounds of various bands, and bugle calls.

In the early spring it is a charming station, and after Mian Mir appeared a paradise. Every compound was filled with orange blossom ; every bungalow hedge was made of roses in full bloom ; orchards of pink peach blossom stretched for miles round the lines ; the scent was intoxicating and overpowering—perfumed Peshawur. The trim lawns on either side the Mall, well shaded, were gay with flower beds ; here and there a bungalow was half-hidden in creepers ; and behind them all stretched the lines. Cantonments all over India vary but little : the everlasting native strolls down the roads ; the everlasting mem-sahib goes out calling under a sun umbrella ; the everlasting cool-looking subaltern drives in the same cart, same pony, same terrier running behind ! Three more months and the whole place would be deserted, except in the evenings, when the white-faced sahibs who cannot get up to the hills meet to while away the stifling hours in the club.

We were most anxious to go up the Khyber Pass, but every one told us that it was impossible till peace was concluded ; however, Sir William Lockhart was of course omnipotent, and he finally wrote to say that he had ordered an escort to be ready at 9 a.m. at Jamrud on the following day, and that General Hart at Ali Musjid would expect us to breakfast and lunch. But he stipulated that, as there was "a minimum of danger," we should wire first for Mr. Merk's leave. The latter happened to be away, but his answer to my sister's telegram was satisfactory. "Go with my blessing." So March 22nd, at 7.30 a.m., saw us driving through cantonments in a *tum-tum* with a pair of grey *tats*.

Across nine or ten miles of flat plain, and finally over the border, we drove till we reached Jamrud Fort, a building of light brown mud, with a caravanserai and a parade-ground. We had passed an immense amount of transport on the road, strings and strings of mules and camels, carrying grain and provisions for the troops up at the front. In the transport lines near Peshawur there were no fewer than five thousand camels alone. Aggravating though the wretched *oonts* may be, it was impossible not to pity them and the poor mules, whose bones were bleaching on many a roadside round Peshawur ; starved and out of condition, the sufferings among the transport animals form quite one of the worst sides of the war. For this Frontier Expedition, Government had had to lay their hands on thirty



CAMP BELOW ALI MUSJID.

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CAMP BELOW ALI MUSJID.

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thousand ponies in a week ; half of them were in a wretched state to start with, and quite unfit to withstand the cold they encountered. The camels could get no proper food up among the mountains, and they succumbed in hundreds. We passed many of them, their loads having been removed, left to die by the roadside.

But to return to Jamrud : it stands at the foot of the mountains which surround the plain of Peshawur, a sort of initial letter at the entrance to the Khyber Pass.

We were met by Major Cooke-Collis, and taken over the fort, which is itself actually in Afridi country by three miles. Here the unfortunate 4th Dragoon Guards had sweltered all the preceding summer and autumn months, in a spot which is literally nothing but rocks and stones, off which, like so much fire-brick, the sun must blaze. On the walls of the mess-room the black-and-white drawings from "Alice in Wonderland" are excellent, and must have successfully whiled away somebody's time.

We had, however, little time to spend in admiration, for no one was allowed in the pass after 3.30 p.m. It was not long since Sir Havelock Allen, wandering off it by himself, was shot, a short distance from the road, by the Afridis : we were the first women who had been up at all since the war broke out.

As we trotted off from Jamrud, our escort from the 9th Bengal Cavalry joined us, four in front, one on either side of our cart, and six behind, all jingling along together.

Closer we drew to the dreary, frowning mountains, the road rising gradually, till at last we were threading our way through the most rough-and-tumble hills ever seen. The road lay sometimes far above us, sometimes below us, as the case might be, snaking its way between high precipices and overhanging cliffs, and twisting round corners which required very skilful driving. It dawned upon us with what ease a regiment could be hopelessly cut off and shot down in those winding defiles and steep chasms, especially late in the day, when it was dusk.

England has not forgotten the sad tale of General Elphinstone's little army in 1842, whom the Afghans had sworn to see safely leave the country. These treacherous natives surrounded them in a little pass not more than forty feet wide, and from the heights above shot them down and hurled stones upon them. The survivors perished of cold and want; all except *three men*, who alone escaped alive. Of these, two were murdered at Futteeabad, and one man—one only—lived to tell the tale. ' Dr. Brydon, alone, worn out with fatigue, starvation, and wounds, grasping in his right hand the hilt of his broken sword, and leaning, rather than sitting, on a miserable, dead-beat pony, rode into Jellalabad, the only survivor of the Kabul Army.

It is impossible to go through the Khyber Pass without memories such as these crowding into the brain. The lifeless, wind-swept mountains, with their stunted tufts of vegetation fading in the wastes of sand, call up picture after picture of the past.

The Khyber has been well named The Gate of India, for the road through it and over the Bamian Pass is the only route which is practicable for artillery across that vast wall of mountains between Burmah and Beloochistan, a distance of three thousand five hundred miles. The great Napoleon's dearest desire was to lead an army through Persia, by way of Herat, into India. It was not to be ; but as we drive along visions rise before us of other conquerors and their armies, whom from the furthestmost ages these mountain heights have seen, countless hosts, streaming along the selfsame road our tats are trotting down now.

There was Nádír Sháh, the Persian monarch, who swooped down on India with his destroying legions in 1739, and returned through the Khyber, after sacking Delhi, with a booty estimated at thirty-two millions sterling, and the great Koh-i-Noor diamond. Having observed the magnificent jewel glittering in the *puggaree* of the fallen Mogul monarch—himself the son of a sheepskin cap-maker—he suggested to his royal captive that they should exchange turbans.

Long before Nádír Sháh's day, in 327 B.C. another army wound down the Khyber, fair Greeks and Macedonians, led by Alexander the Great. Earlier still, before Mohammedanism or Christianity were thought of, Tartars, Persians, and Afghans trooped down to their conquests and plunder in India, intermingled with caravans of traders, and religious pilgrims from Thibet, Tartary, China, and Siberia, on their way to worship at the holy places of

Buddhism. Further back still, there is a misty outline of an invasion by an army of Darius, King of Persia.

There has never been any tide of conquest and emigration *out* of India ; what *has* gone out, and particularly by this pass, was wealth immeasurable and inconceivable, and one great religion : a wealth over which nations have squabbled from time immemorial ; a religion which once influenced millions, and which is now in—

that last drear mood
Of envious sloth and proud decrepitude,
While . . . whining for dead gods that cannot save,
The toothless systems shiver to their grave.

As we drove along we soon began to meet whole families of Kabulees coming down the pass, with their shaggy Bokhara camels and heavily laden saddle-bags full of carpets, spice, and various Eastern merchandise. Little Afghan children were tied in *poshteens* to the saddle-bags, their heads jerking and bobbing backwards and forwards at every stride.

The Afghans themselves claim their descent from the Israelites, and hold that they are the representatives of part of the lost Ten Tribes, who never returned from the Assyrian Captivity into which they were carried by Tiglath Pileser, 721 B.C. The Kashmiris also claim the same ; the competitors, in fact, are many and various, and a cataract of nineteenth-century ink has flowed in vain in the cause



THE KHYBER PASS.

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of a subject which never has been and never will be satisfactorily proved.

These Afghans with the *khaileefa*—as a company of camels and merchandise is called—were armed some of them with Persian hilted swords and with matchlocks called *jesails*, the stocks of which are strange-looking hooks, shaped like a sickle, and intended to fit under the arms. Low sheepskin caps they all wore, and rather gay-coloured clothes, contrasting with the dark, keen, ruffian-like faces.

Now horses hate camels; as we drove up and met the long train, with the great, slow, swinging bodies of the camels and their broad, cumbersome loads reaching half-way across the road, their long, inquisitive necks stretching over the remaining half, the ponies hesitated, and required much coaxing and gentle persuasion to be made to go at all. I ought by rights to have pulled up and made the *khaileefa* take the outside of the road, instead of taking it ourselves; for there was no protection whatever at the edge, which dropped straight down, a steep bank ending in a precipice. The camels, one after another, hugged the high cliff on the opposite side; we got on very well till we were somewhere in the middle of the never-ending stream, and then one camel, particularly “nasty” and supercilious-looking, taller than the rest, and taking up still more room as regarded his load, suddenly swung right across the road in a menacing manner. Before I could do anything the ponies dashed to the opposite side, wild with

fright, and began backing the cart over the edge ! Appalling moment ! No whip or voice was of the slightest use. I remember the thought flashing through my mind that the others were amazingly cool, as the wheels neared the edge of the precipice. That which takes a moment to read happened in a second of time. Another instant, and the ponies seemed to rise up in the air and the cart to fall under our feet !—we tumbled out on either side into the arms of some of the Afghan camel-drivers ; at the same time our *syce* and others seemed to get hold of the cart and ponies, and to haul them back into the road. And thus most providentially was a very serious accident averted.

We drove on, winding round the rocks, until at last Fort Maude towered above us, its blackened and ruined walls a disgrace indeed to the British Government, who, in spite of every warning, refused to send troops up to it and to Ali Musjid in time to prevent the fatal catastrophe and loss of prestige which occurred when the Afridis overpowered the Khyber Rifles and burnt and sacked both forts.

We met a few Afridis on the road—tall, athletic highlanders, lean and muscular, with high noses and cheek-bones, fair complexions, and long, gaunt faces ; a tribe of brave robbers, but only possessed of the honour which exists among thieves. Excellent marksmen and nimble and hardy as mountain goats, they picked our men off from behind the crags, and then moved up the mountains at a long, slow, wolf-like trot—a characteristic point about the Afridis.

Below Fort Maude was a little valley, a green patch watered by a streamlet, over which a primitive mill had been put up—Lala China ; where in 1878 Cavagnari met Sher Ali's officer and received a reply which was the cause of our war with Afghanistan.

The Russian frontier question has not been shelved yet ; our borderland and Afghanistan are full of no common interest, and may yet be the theatre of one of Britain's last wars. It is well worth while to recall past events, in the face of the old saying that "History repeats itself," a saying which never had a greater chance of verification than it has now among the hill tribesmen, whose rate of civilisation, of progression, is practically *nil*. Will it be too uninteresting to look back upon our old disagreements with Russia, our old battles with the Afghans, our perilous marches across this frontier, when what *has been* shall so likely *be again* ?

On the report in 1877 that a Russian envoy was about to visit Kabul, our Viceroy, Lord Lytton, announced his intention to the Amir—Sher Ali—of sending a British mission there, under General Sir Nevile Chamberlain. However, the Russian General, Stolietoff by name, informed the Amir that the simultaneous presence of two embassies would not be convenient. The Amir therefore refused to allow the British mission to enter Afghanistan ; but as he did not communicate direct with the Viceroy, it had already started and arrived at the Khyber. Here Sir Nevile Chamberlain deputed

Major Louis Cavagnari to ride up the pass and demand leave for the mission to enter it. Down by this same little mill which we had just seen, Cavagnari met the commander of the Afghan troops, who flatly refused permission, and added that, but for his personal friendship with Cavagnari, he would, in obedience to the Amir's orders, have shot down both himself and his escort.

War was immediately declared ; and eventually Lord Roberts, after hard fighting and untold difficulties with transport in that mountainous, desolate region, saved the position and entered Kabul. Sher Ali and that hornets' nest, the Russian mission, had fled to Turkestan, where the Amir died ; his son Yukub Khan, assuming the government, arranged and signed a treaty with the British, principally through the consummate skill and diplomacy of Cavagnari.

A British representative was to reside in Kabul, and this same able administrator, now Sir Louis, was given the appointment. He arrived at Lord Roberts's camp in Kurram in July 1879, and he spent that evening with the great General, whose own heart was full of gloomy forebodings. Peace had been signed all too quickly, the Afghans were by no means crushed, and Lord Roberts had terrible fears for the friend who was going beyond England's reach into the heart of a treacherous and implacable enemy.

Sir Louis Cavagnari himself was hopeful as ever, and spoke of his wife's joining him in Kabul in the

spring ; but that farewell dinner was a sad one, and when at its conclusion "The Queen" had been drunk, Lord Roberts could hardly find words in which to propose Cavagnari's health.

Next morning they both rode out of the camp together, and in the valley took leave of each other, Cavagnari setting forth on that fateful mission ; but they had only ridden a few yards along their different roads before an unaccountable impulse made them simultaneously turn round, ride back, shake hands once more, and part—for ever.

Only two months later all India was struck aghast at the awful news of the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his staff at Kabul.

Once more Lord Roberts, after much fighting, entered the capital of Afghanistan. The walls of the Residency were pitted with bullets and drenched with blood, but no traces of the bodies of the Englishmen, who must have died so hard, were ever found.

O you Members of Parliament who live quietly at home ! you wire-pullers of the greatest nation in the world ! does it ever repent you of the lives you have sacrificed in remote regions at the altar of your god, Party Power ? You cut down expenses, you tie the hands of able men on the spot, and then you regret that England's prestige is trailed in the dust, and the blood of her gallant men wantonly shed.

To conclude : Yukub Khan abdicated, and was sent into India. Abdur Rahman was nominated in August, 1880, Amir of Afghanistan, where he still

reigns. The British Government presented him with ten lakhs of rupees, twenty thousand breech-loading rifles, a heavy battery of four guns and two howitzers, a mountain battery, and a liberal supply of ammunition.

What is wanted on the Indian frontier are roads and railways—pioneers of civilisation—which would bring the Afghans and the hill tribesmen into direct contact with the English. Hatred and misunderstandings, which arise first and foremost from the difference of race, can *only* be eradicated by mutual knowledge. If trade between the nations were to increase, the isolation of the Afghans, the Afridis, and other tribes, and our bitter conflicts, would become things of the past. As it is, if India were to-morrow invaded by an army from the north, that army would be joined by every one of the two hundred thousand warlike tribesmen.

Why were all the warnings about Merv unheeded, and called by a distinguished politician of the day "Merv-ousness"? A little later and they were *verified*. Skobeloff's victories over the Tekke mountains gave Merv and Sarakka into the hands of the Russians, and Turkestan was in direct communication with St. Petersburg. This enabled the Russians practically to dictate terms to the Boundary Commission which the British Government sent to define the northern limits of Afghanistan, and to turn out an Afghan garrison from Punjeh under the eyes of the British officers.

Why was it possible for the Amir to say that

he had warned us repeatedly of the advance of Russia, but that no attention had been paid to his warnings, owing to the strife of parties in England, and to the excessive caution of the British Government?

To return to our drive. We passed the spot where Sir Havelock Allen rode off the road and was shot, and at last arrived at Ali Musjid Fort, which the Afridis had sacked. Below its ruins and well down in the hollow of the hills lay General Hart's brigade—an unwonted sight in the Khyber Pass.

Whose are the khāki tents that crowd the way,
Where all was waste and silent yesterday?
This City of War, which in a few short hours
Hath sprung up here?

We began to hear the hum of the camp and sounds of life from the little bazaar which had already grown up among the camp-followers.

General Hart met us, and apologising for the roughness of everything, took us past the Post Office tent and the officers' mess into his own quarters. Who would look for luxuries in a camp on active service? But it was quite a luxurious lunch which we sat down to later on, each lady shedding the light of her countenance at a separate table, the first womenkind who had been seen since the force started on its expedition.

We sat on big square sacks of *gram* (corn), and of course a good many things, such as wine-glasses and salt-cellar, were non-existent; but we had a most

cheery lunch, drank all sorts of toasts, and heard and told all sorts of news.

The officers' own individual tents struck us a good deal : the best way in was on all fours, for they were only high enough, long enough, and wide enough for a man to lie comfortably at full length. The Tommies were not provided with one of these little khāki graves apiece ; but slept sixteen in a large tent, with their rifles rolled up inside their blankets with them. The Afridis and Pathans are wonderful rifle thieves, and love a rifle better than their own souls. In spite of sentries, hardly a night passed without their visiting the camp, and drawing revolvers from underneath pillows, rifles almost out of the sleeping men's very arms, and disappearing with their booty.

The troops at Ali Musjid had begun to play hockey, in default of any other sort of recreation, and had had a match against Jamrud. But it was already getting hot, and later on, when our troops were *still* quartered there, the number of deaths among them was appalling. The sun-scorched valley was fitly named by the Tommies "*Helly Musjid.*" In the winter it had been bitterly cold : General Hart told us their average for tubs was *one* in eleven days, and most of the officers found it resulted in a cold. Spring brought freezing, piercing winds, which whistled unmercifully down the valley, as down a funnel ; to be succeeded later on by a hot wind, which, if the other had flayed off every particle of skin, burnt and dried and covered with sand all that was left on the bones.



A RIFLE THIEF.

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Arithmetic on the frontier is a one-sided affair ; as Rudyard Kipling says, there is not only the chance of being "potted" at any moment from behind a rock during—

A scrimmage in a border station—
 A canter down some dark defile—
 Ten thousand pounds of education
 Drops to a ten-rupee *jesail*—
 The crammer's boast, the squadron's pride,
 Shot like a rabbit in a ride!

but dysentery and enteric combine to pile up heavy odds against Tommy : few at home realised how many that summer, in the Bara Valley, at Ali Musjid, and in other camps on the frontier, might have said,—

We've the fever here in camp—it's worse than forty fights ;
 We're dying in the wilderness the same as Israelites ;
 It's before us and behind us, and we cannot get away,
 And the doctor's just reported—five more deaths to-day.

While we were finishing lunch a conjuror—a real juggler—appeared, one of the camp-followers, and squatting down on the ground, wearing nothing except a loin-cloth and his turban, with therefore no possibility of concealment, began his tricks. He picked a small twig off one of the stunted bushes which was withering under the sun near us, ran his fingers down it, stripping off the leaves—small leaves like those of a sensitive plant—and then proceeded to shower them down among us, but not alone!—with the leaves came great live scorpions ; not little things like Italian scorpions, but

formidable animals almost as long as my hand. We did not fall in love with this creeping company, so he gathered them up, crumpled them one by one in his hand, and they disappeared! Then he waved his thin, bare arms in the air, and a live cobra appeared to drop into one hand. Its fangs had been extracted, and he threw it into the midst of us. But how he did these extraordinary feats I have not the faintest idea.

After this lively entertainment we had to hurry away to ride up to the charred ruins of the fort with Captain Anderson and Captain Bruce, on a couple of ponies they had provided. It was a stiff climb, but the view both up and down the pass was fine, and looking down on to the little camp, with its regular lines of tents and pathways between marked out with white stones, much incident was mutely expressed. But *the* view we had was afterwards from the top of one of the hills near the fort; it was a panorama. Afghanistan, the land of mystery and treachery, lay before us in the far distance, and the Kabul River wound like a grey thread across the plain.

Ford—ford—ford o' Kabul River—
'Cross the Kabul River in the dark. . . .

Visions of the disastrous fording of that river by the 10th Hussars rose up before one. It was one night in March, 1879, that a squadron was ordered to cross and surprise the enemy. The ford was nothing more than a sandbank, and splashing along

in the dark they made the fatal mistake of bearing too much downstream. Suddenly the first man's horse was in deep water and struggling for life—the bank was lost. One after another, exactly like a flock of sheep, the squadron rode over the edge. In the darkness and confusion no man knew what was happening, nor that they had lost the ford. Nineteen men and a great many horses were drowned ; an Indian river is a wide swim.

The tragedies of this tragic land were on every side. India has been dearly bought, and we have not yet ceased our payment.

The pickets on the hills on all sides, for which General Hart was noted, reminded us that we had to pass by a certain time *our picket* at Fort Maude, and at the same time show our pass. We tore ourselves away from our hospitable entertainers, drove off, and ended a memorable day, not only in a most famous pass, but also in a camp on active service.

CHAPTER III

FROM DALHOUSIE INTO CHAMBA

Up to the Hills—Dalhousie—Leopards—The Rains—
Expedition into Chamba—Monkeys—Kudjjar—
Rajah of Chamba—Arrangements (*bundobust*)
for our Shoot.

CHAPTER III

FROM DALHOUSIE INTO CHAMBA.

ROAD-SONG OF THE BANDER-LOG (MONKEYS).

Here we go in a flung festoon,
Half-way up to the jealous moon!
Don't you envy our pranceful bands?
Don't you wish you had extra hands?
Wouldn't you like if your tails were—so—
Curved in the shape of a Cupid's bow?
Now you're angry, but—never mind,
Brother, thy tail hangs down behind!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

OUR visit to Peshawur over, we went back again to Mian Mir before going up to the hills with Sir George Wolseley. Mian Mir was, as they say, "stoking up" by that time, and from breakfast till tea-time the bungalow was entirely shut up to keep out the hot air; every wooden shutter was closed, and there was not sufficient light in the rooms for painting, for instance, in spite of all the hours to be whiled away. Those hours began after a late breakfast; we got up and rode about seven o'clock, fortified with *chota hazri*, until the sun drove us in, where one was bound to remain till after tea.

Lunch was a thing unsought for in the hot weather: the General and his aide-de-camp had their work to

do in their respective rooms, and the rest of us slept and read and wrote. Tennis always followed after tea. India ought to possess twilight, but unfortunately the capacity for doing anything by halves has been denied her; the sun sinks—goes out—like a lamp extinguished, and we almost groped about for the net and balls just as it had become cool and pleasant for playing!

One thing I like now to recall at Mian Mir—the creaking of the water-wheel in the garden, worked by plodding oxen, hour after hour, all through the hot, slow, sleepy, silent day. How often that drowsy slumber-song carried one over the Borderland and through the Divine Gates! I hear it now, complaining, monotonous, and essentially *tired*; I have never tried to listen to a sleepier sound. With noiseless movements the servants passed like shadows through the quiet, dark rooms, the only sound they made the rustle of the curtains which divide room from room. Outside, the sunlight was garish in its intensity, and the burnt compound glared. And it was to this we said our adieus on April 6th and proceeded to the hills, where we met with not a few adventures.

The platform at Mian Mir station the evening we left was crowded with natives in white and coloured, clean and dirty garments, frantically jostling each other and chattering in the sun. As a native goes down casually to the station and waits the rest of the day and all night until his proper train leaves on the following morning, most of these had probably slept

in and about the station. Strange in the hands of a native servant does one's luggage soon become ; an *ayah* forgets to pack much, and at the last moment she wraps in towels, pinned together, half the contents of one's drawers. Interesting relics of this sort I recognised on the platform among polo-sticks, gun-cases, rolls of bedding, sun-helmets, and what not. Our *dhobi*, the washerman, went with us, and as he jostled among the throng a flat-iron tumbled out of the bundle tied up in one of our sheets upon his back, in which he carried all our washing "kit," and his own food, cooking-pan, and spare garment.

It was a hot journey : we dined at Umritzer station and had a short night, for we were called at 2 a.m. the following morning. Sir George was anxious to start early ; and having dressed by the light of the railway oil, we struggled out of the train, yawning, on to the platform. *Tongas* and bullock-carts were waiting under the stars in the dark road, and were eventually packed by a much tried aide-de-camp. We were off, and if sleepy, it was at least cool.

Dawn broke to find us still driving uphill through a rough scrub country ; the plains began to lie below us, and in front lay the zigzag outline of the Dalhousie hills. We changed with each other from the back to the front seats of the *tonga* for the satisfaction of being jolted and bruised upon some fresh bone ; but in spite of the lack of springs we nearly dropped off to sleep when the sun grew hot. A *dák* bungalow at last raised every one's spirits. Ponies which we had sent

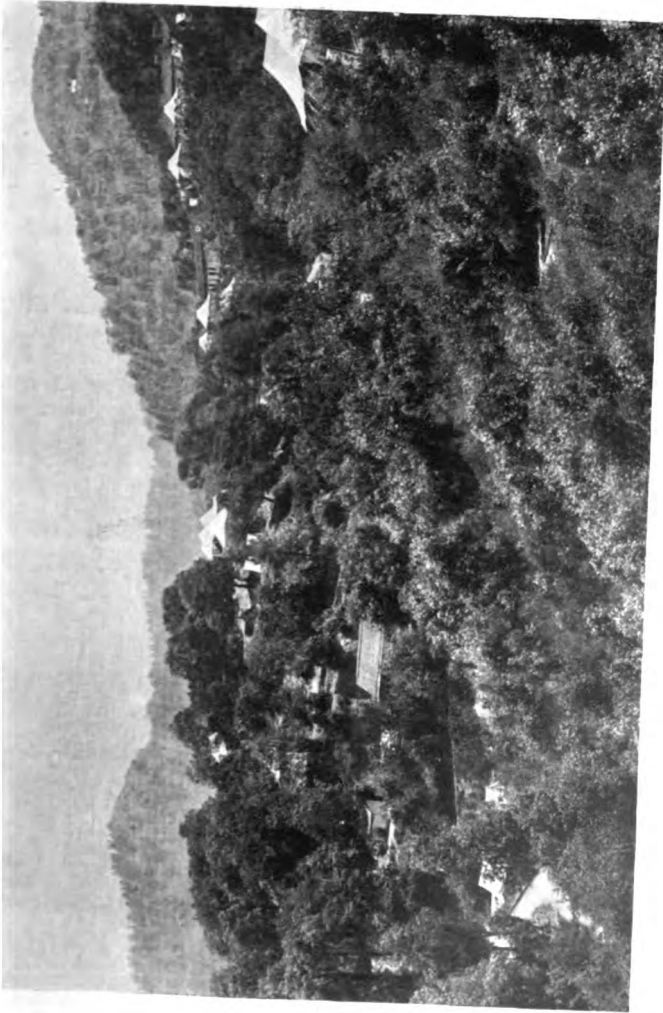
on were waiting ; and after having breakfasted and changed into riding things, we started off to ride to that night's destination—Mahmool.

Do not, I advise you, follow this example, nor be so weak as to start at the hottest time of day, and ride continually, up and up, by a narrow, stony path, rocks, scrub, stones, on either side, off which the sun blazes without mercy, and every stone radiates hot air like an oven.

We rode—at a walk—hour after hour, climbing steadily. The last thing a woman ought to have ridden on was a side-saddle, which is invariably uncomfortable for herself and her horse uphill. Mine slipped on the Arab pony continually, until at last, from sheer discomfort, I rode on it crossways.

The bungalow at Mahmool dawned upon a frizzled and short-tempered party. It was a lovely spot half-way up the hills, but it was not until much "shut eye" had been indulged in, until dinner had been laid out-of-doors in the evening, that the place was appreciated.

The next morning breakfast in the verandah, and a ride along a shady, winding path up to Dalhousie, has only pleasant recollections. We were under trees, crossing streams where the ponies wallowed their heads in the ice-cold water, and at every turn had views of the great blue plains far below us. Our *ayah* swung along in an extemporised *dhooli* ; Ruffles, an invalid Irish terrier, had another all to himself, borne by two natives ; the luggage was carried up on coolies' backs. We stopped for tiffin half-way, brought in a basket



DALHOUSIE.

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by a native; the ponies cropped at the edge of the path while we sat in the shade.

Up and ever upwards we still climbed for the rest of the afternoon, until at last the long-expected Dalhousie, and Strawberry Bank Cottage, our own special destination, was before us. Narrow roads—*malls*—dissect Dalhousie; which *malls* have bungalows on either hand, above and below, whenever the *khud*—the slope—has a level spot. The *malls* are too narrow and dangerous for driving, or even for fast riding, on account of the corners and precipices. Most of the womenkind appeared to enjoy themselves in dandies—chairs carried by four natives—and we met them as one meets the same people at the seaside, day after day, paying rounds of calls.

Tea parties, picnics, dinner parties, all run to riot in hill stations, where every one feels more energetic than they have for months past; I suppose the life appeals to the Anglo-Indian who has just been through a hot season: it is *impossible* for it to appeal to any one fresh from home, with Scotland possibly in his mind's eye by way of comparison.

No doubt after stewing on parade and grilling in a dark bungalow all day it is a foretaste of Paradise to see grass and ferns, snows in the distance, and even to luxuriate in front of a fire of pine logs in the chilly autumnal evenings; but unless a hill station *is* looked on from this point of view it is nothing less than a great disappointment.

To begin with, the country itself is so very

by a native; the ponies cropped at the edge of the path while we sat in the shade.

Up and ever upwards we still climbed for the rest of the afternoon, until at last the long-expected Dalhousie, and Strawberry Bank Cottage, our own special destination, was before us. Narrow roads—*malls*—dissect Dalhousie; which *malls* have bungalows on either hand, above and below, whenever the *khud*—the slope—has a level spot. The *malls* are too narrow and dangerous for driving, or even for fast riding, on account of the corners and precipices. Most of the womenkind appeared to enjoy themselves in dandies—chairs carried by four natives—and we met them as one meets the same people at the seaside, day after day, paying rounds of calls.

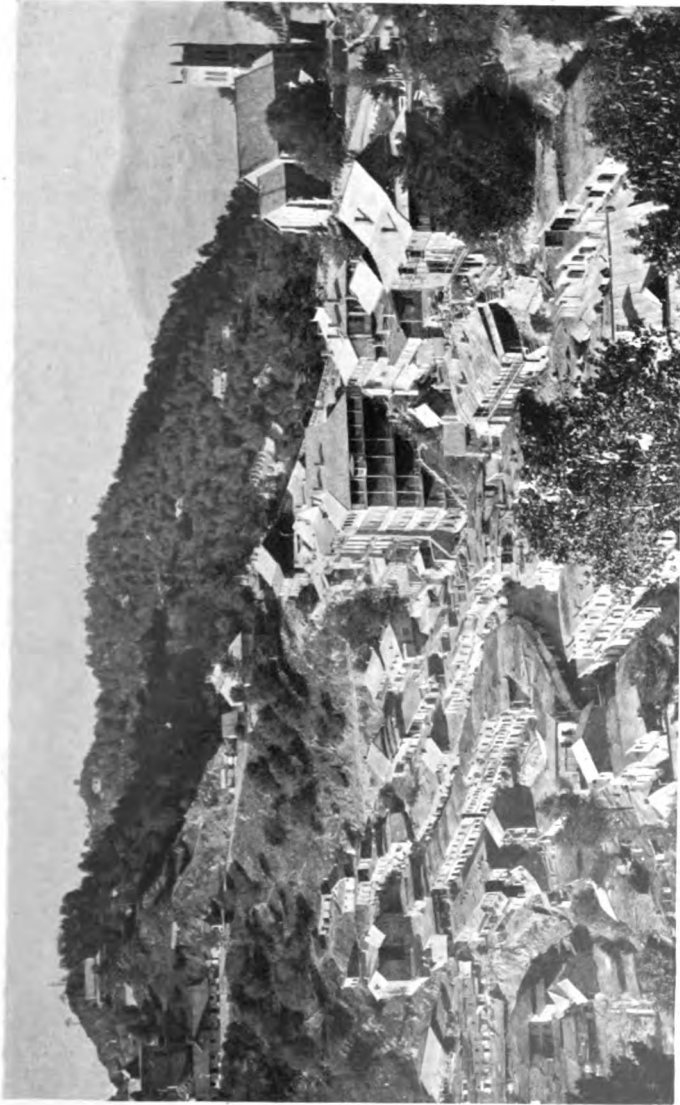
Tea parties, picnics, dinner parties, all run to riot in hill stations, where every one feels more energetic than they have for months past; I suppose the life appeals to the Anglo-Indian who has just been through a hot season: it is *impossible* for it to appeal to any one fresh from home, with Scotland possibly in his mind's eye by way of comparison.

No doubt after stewing on parade and grilling in a dark bungalow all day it is a foretaste of Paradise to see grass and flowers in the distance, and luxuriate before a fire of pine logs in autumn; but unless a hill station on a point of view it is nothing but a comfortable beginning of a country is so very

“impossible.” The *khuds* are so steep that it is no amusement to climb up them or tumble down through tangled undergrowth and fir-trees. Consequently, walks and rides are limited to the few stony paths, and grow monotonous in a week. Except for tennis, there is nothing to do: at Dalhousie there was a small sized polo-ground where three a-side could play. There is practically no shooting.

Of Society I grant there is no end—many sweet variations; but after all Society is to be had at home, and I believe the ordinary globe trotter would lose little by making it a rule to avoid hill stations like the plague, and to spend his time—say in Kashmir—where there is riding and shooting to be had to the heart’s content, camping and marching day after day ever to pastures new, exploring a magnificent country where unless you wish you need meet no one. Dalhousie has, however, some points over Murree, for instance: the native province of Chamba, not far off, is wild and little known, and capital shooting is, with the Rajah’s leave, to be had there. This we had in view.

At home we do not take enough advantage of fine weather: away in the Himalayas we lived out of doors. Riding out the first thing in the morning two or three miles, to breakfast on some wild hill shaded with great deodars and carpeted with fern, we would find a quiet corner in the winding path, moss to lie upon, steep rock rising sharply behind us, and in front of us vistas of tree-tops and undergrowth half hidden down the precipitous hillside.



[Page 8a.

MURREE.

Across the valley below we looked on to the mountains topped with snow, dazzling in the early sunlight.

Suddenly the welcome sounds of breakfast. Lal Khan and our Portuguese cook, who had a magnificent name with a thousand titles, and whom we always called "The Commander of the Portuguese Army," emerged from behind some rocks farther down the path, and appeared with a cloth and all the civilised adjuncts, followed by tea and coffee, fried fish and a steaming omelette, *dal* and rice, porridge, scones and jams, fruit, etc. It is a truism to say that there are no dining-rooms like Heaven's own halls, no keener appetiser than the morning air.

Afterwards we fell back upon our books, papers, and pencils, and lay looking up at the dense, vibrating roof of leaves, and through its chinks into the blue beyond. The place was full of meanings and suggestions: an uncongenial companion would have jarred bitterly. One with the inanities of custom, to be borne with in the stupefying atmosphere of wall-papers, carpets, and furniture, he would hardly have been in a suitable environment here. Language is a poor bull's-eye lantern wherewith to show off the vast cathedral of the world, and there come times in our noisy, bustling little lives when it is superfluous, and we realise that "Speech is of time, silence of eternity." A trivial remark breaks such a silence, and our souls tell us that the Divine Gates are closing.

The forests immediately round Dalhousie consist

chiefly of ilex, tree-rhododendrons, and deodars; they must once have been full of panthers and bears, but it is difficult to get them now, though dogs were frequently carried off by panthers, close to Dalhousie, at dusk.

We had goats tied up at various places, and at last one day received *khubr* (tidings) of one having been killed at a little place close to Dalhousie—Jun-dragat. This was great news; lots were drawn as to who should sit up and wait for the *chítá*, and S. was the lucky man. The same animal is called most indiscriminately panther, leopard, or *chítá*; but the hunting leopard or *chítá*, as distinguished from the panther, has a foot more like a dog, which fits it for running down its prey at immense speed; its claws also are only semi-retractile.

However, all three of the large spotted cats stalk their prey and kill it by suddenly springing on it from some hiding-place. The largest are eight feet long or more, and are sometimes nearly as powerfully made as a small tiger, preying upon full-grown cattle, horses, and even buffaloes. These large panthers generally carry a light-coloured coat, with rose-shaped spots, rather sparsely distributed; the ground-colour of the skin forming a centre to each spot. The smallest panthers, or leopards, as they would be called, are not more than five or six feet in length, their skins are usually of a much darker hue, with the spots smaller and clustered more closely together. Fierce, destructive brutes, they are sly and cunning to the

last degree, and have been known, though rarely, to become man-eaters. The wounds they inflict, even apparently harmless scratches, have proved mortal owing to their very poisonous nature.

The sheep-dogs in the hills are often furnished with heavy, iron-spiked collars to protect them against leopards, which always haunt the neighbourhood of sheepfolds, and splendid beasts they sometimes are, capable of killing a leopard single-handed in a fair fight. This has been known ; but as a rule they come to an untimely end through being taken unawares and sprung upon from behind. Common as leopards really are, it is curious how comparatively few are shot by Englishmen, except in certain favourable localities. The *shikari* who has sent home a dozen tiger-skins has only two or three panthers to show at most ; while a black panther's or a snow leopard's skin is one of the most precious trophies a hunter can possess.

The cunning cats have an extraordinary faculty for concealing themselves in the most scanty cover, their beautiful spotted skins harmonising with rock and reed and grass alike ; besides which they lie in caves and holes or thick cover through the daytime and prowl about at night. Most of those which are killed are shot at night or in scant daylight over the carcasses of animals which they have destroyed ; but sitting up for them is a work of patience, for they often will not return the first, nor second, nor even the third night, by which time the body of their victim is putrid, and

even the keenest subaltern is inclined to think the game hardly worth the candle.

We, however, were all agog ; and S. was started off about tea-time with a basket containing sandwiches and drink and everything which would go towards a cold supper. He rode to Jundragat, sent the pony back, and was walked off down the *khud*, into the jungle, by the native *shikari* who had brought the *khubr*. The goat had been killed—there was no doubt about that ; and a village *charpoy*, or bed, had been fastened up in a tree close to the kill. It made a capital seat, well concealed and screened with boughs, and quite long enough even to lie down on ; a rug made it most comfortable.

S. was perched up by five o'clock, and the work of patience began. It grew dusk slowly ; he sat till it was pitch dark. Unfortunately, there was no moon at all, which made it, as he said, " much less enjoyable and much more haphazard " ; but he trusted to seeing something at the first break of dawn. At last, about 9.30 in the evening, and when the cold supper was a thing of the past, he heard a very slight rustle, and shortly afterwards a loud crunching of bones. It was quite impossible to see the body of the goat, the tree, or anything. Nothing but pitch darkness. However, S. knew the direction, and there remained nothing else but to fire. With every nerve tingling, he blazed off both barrels of his eight-bore duck-gun, loaded with slugs. There was a rustle, then all was quiet. But in about ten minutes' time, to his utter astonishment,

the crunching began once more. It went on steadily ; and again, praying fervently for luck, S. fired both barrels into the darkness. Like the last time there was a rustle, and then all was quiet.

Feeling doomed to disappointment, S. lay down and was soon asleep. About four o'clock in the morning he woke—*surely* they were not sounds of eating going on *still*? They were. It was black as ink all round even then. Oh for light! The maddening part of it was that there were no more cartridges of the slugs left, and to have fired a bullet in the dark would have been absurd. Who would have thought that slugs would have been wanted? There was nothing for it but to sit on tenterhooks, adjuring the dawn to break and the panther to remain. However, the aggravating cat was too cunning. He ate for at least an hour, steadily, making an immense noise, crunching and munching, going every now and then to the pool in the nullah and drinking, then bringing a bone, evidently, and coming and sitting right under the very tree, purring loudly, with S., scarcely daring to breathe, over his head. It was tantalising to a last degree, and all that prevented S. from firing a chance bullet with his rifle was the hope of being able to see something if he waited.

At last the blackness appeared less dense, and straining his eyes through it, S. thought he could just make out a dim shadow, even then, crossing the nullah. His rifle was up in an instant for the moment when it should reappear among the trees ;

but that moment never came : “one loving darkness rather than light” knew the signs of dawn.

All was silent. By-and-by, when the trees and rocks began to grow faintly visible, conceive the astonishment and joy with which S. made out one leopard lying dead beside what was left of the goat's body! He was shot with the slugs in the head—a lucky fluke indeed in the dark, and one which one would probably not repeat once in twenty times. Whether there were only two leopards altogether, or three or four, or whether they were all leopards at all, it is impossible to say. Anyhow, on a night without a moon, such luck was indeed unexpected and proportionately acceptable!

No wonder that the southern slopes of the Himalayas are fertile : go through the rains once, you will not forget them. They begin in June, and they last through August and September. We had a fore-taste, the *chota barsât*, before we left Dalhousie. When it was not actually deluging with rain, we lived in an atmosphere of perpetual *cloud* ; open the window—and the room filled at once with white mist, everything in it becoming damp and clammy.

Log fires kept us fairly warm : then an interval came ; the sun broke through the clouds, and everything out of doors—vegetation lush and verdant—sprang up in rank, heavy luxuriance, as though in a hothouse. Out we went, every leaf wet and shining, the dripping deodar trunks stained darker than ever, covered with lichen and sodden with moisture ; the

khuds literally *steamed*; the pine-needles and that never-to-be-forgotten scent of the hills filled the damp air. "The sound of an infinite number of rivers came up from all round. After this deluge of rain the springs of the mountains were broken up; every glen gushed water like a cistern; every stream was in high spate and had filled and overflowed its channel. It was solemn to hear the voice of them in the valleys below, now booming like thunder, now with an angry cry."

It is the greatest rainfall in the world which pours down in torrents upon the southern sides of the Himalayas. At Cherra Púnjí five hundred and twenty-three inches of rain fall annually, while in an exceptional year eight hundred and five inches were reported. The yearly rainfall in London is about two feet; at Cherra Púnjí it is forty feet, or enough to float the largest man-of-war; while in *one* year *sixty-seven feet of water* once fell from the sky, or sufficient to drown a high three-storied house. Just imagine more than three feet of water falling in June alone, when in a whole year here at home only two feet fall!

When the rains began to set in we had thunderstorms on a large scale. We, in the innocence of the uninitiated, began by trying to time a peal of thunder, but when it had lasted over half an hour, gave it up. Storms were on all sides, one long, rolling peal crashing and vibrating among the distant mountains for hours. At night the lightning was extraordinary,

forking across the sky in lurid streaks, shimmering on and on in white sheets, and entirely illuminating my bedroom, so that I undressed by no additional light. Byron's storm at Chimeri could not have surpassed this.

Far along

From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
 Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
 But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
 And Jura answers through her misty shroud
 Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!
 And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!

The rugged Himalayas are a source of food and health to the Indian people, for they collect and store up water for the hot plains below. Throughout the summer vast quantities of moisture are exhaled from the distant tropical seas. This moisture gathers into vapour and is carried northward by the monsoon, or regular wind, which sets in from the south in the month of June.

The awful heat in the plains has been growing daily more unendurable; driven almost to the last extremity by depression, the Englishmen from bungalows and barracks gaze out into the burning compounds, searching the sky for one sign of coming rain, while with famine staring them in the face the natives call upon their gods. And when at last the first drops actually fall, every window and door is thrown open to hear

the patter of the rain, parched skins cease to irritate, the clouds of dust are licked up, the country expands like a sponge, the tension is snapped at last,—thank God, the rains *have come* !

The monsoon has driven the masses of vapour northwards, before it, across the length and breadth of India, sometimes in the form of long processions of clouds, which a native poet has likened to flights of great white birds ; sometimes in the shape of rain-storms, which crash through the forests and flood the fields. The moisture which does not fall as rain over India is at length dashed against the Himalayas—The Abode of Snow, as the name in Sanscrit means.

One hardly realises what an immense region these mountains form which shut out India from the rest of Asia. Switzerland and the Alps are a little playground ; the Himalayas are a world of their own. Glaciers sixty miles in length, leagues upon leagues of eternal snow, peaks higher than any upon the face of the globe, it follows that this impenetrable region is almost unknown to man, barring a few bold parties of traders, who, wrapped in sheepskins, force their way across passes eighteen thousand feet and more above sea-level, leaving time after time only their bones, and those of many a worn-out mule and *yák*, relics of overwhelming snowstorms.

Little or no rain crosses the great mountain barrier ; all which reaches the heart of the snows becomes snow itself, and can never be blown across to “The Forbidden Land,” as Mr. Landor called Thibet—that

bleak table-land, sixteen thousand feet above the sea, where rain is practically unknown, and where an icy wind takes the skin off any exposed surface.

Upon their Indian slopes the Himalayas are covered with forests, which spring up wherever there is any depth of soil. Thickets of tree-ferns and bamboos, tracts of tree-rhododendrons which blaze red and pink in the spring, luxuriate beside the deodars in dark and stately masses. The very branches of the trees are grey with lichen, green with moss, and glowing with flowering creepers and orchids.

In the autumn crops of red and yellow millet and barley run in ribbons of brilliant colour down the hillsides, and are grown on terraces made with much labour upon the slopes of the *khud*. The Himalayas produce little else, except timber, charcoal, and honey. In the forests round Dalhousie we often met, along the narrow paths, charcoal-burners and wood-cutters; the hardworking women generally laden with pine-stems and conical baskets of grain. They say that the solitary, rough life has a strange fascination in it, and that a hillman will be a hillman to the end of his days. The chains woven by such a country are not brittle.

We only stayed a few weeks in Dalhousie before preparing for an expedition into Chamba for the purpose of shooting tahr and red bear.

It was a two days' march to the borders of this native state; and knowing that we should have to rough it, walking a great part of the way when we

got up into the shooting-ground, we left our *ayah* behind, and took with us one boy belonging to S., his bearer, who did duty as valet to the party.

Having sent on our modest luggage with coolies, we left Strawberry Bank Cottage soon after breakfast, one morning, and rode off by a winding path which led to Kudjiar. Dalhousie once left behind, we met no Europeans till we came back again: they none of them wandered far afield, and seemed quite content to spend their leave quietly in the hill station.

What we *did* meet with, as we rode along through the thick ilex and tall pine-trees, were monkeys, troops of them. Suddenly the branches cracked and vibrated, the leaves shook and rustled violently, and a great monkey would swing across our path from one branch to another, followed by a whole party, old and young. On the side of the *khud* they sprang through the air into space, as it seemed, down to the tree-tops below, with a vast bound alighting on some branch far beneath our path, clinging tight and swinging to the four winds with the rebound. They were handsome fellows in point of colour—the Rhesus or Bhunda monkey, their olive-green and yellow colour relieved by warmer tints of a very bright chestnut almost amounting to orange. Some of the old gentlemen had grey whiskers and beards, others had an auburn halo round their faces.

For cool impudence and audacity these hill-monkeys stand unrivalled: they would slip into the bungalows at Dalhousie, and carry off anything from the breakfast- or tea-table if the room was empty, springing from

tree to tree, from house to house—sometimes a mother, with two young ones clinging to her, a loaf of bread in one hand, a bunch of bananas in her mouth, which she had just “sneaked” from a dining-room. The care they take of their young is most touching.

Few men can shoot a monkey. I saw one fired at once, with small shot, to drive an obstinate flock of them off a tea plantation. Feeling it had been hit, it rushed straight towards me, stopped, put its paw to the wounded spot, and then held it out to me to see, covered with blood. I was so much grieved that it left an impression never to be effaced.

Of course monkeys *are* very troublesome in plantations. We met an Englishman who was trying to protect his sugar-cane patch with a great trench and a palisade covered with nails. All to no purpose. He walked down to it one morning to find a row of monkeys seated on the palisade, who, directly he came within reach, spit his own sugar-cane into his face, then climbing down, strolled off, leisurely munching. Such things were not to be borne: our friend chased a flock into a tree, he felled the tree, and caught four or five young monkeys. The parents waited near, in great consternation, anxiously watching while their infants were painted from head to foot with treacle and tartar emetic. Allowed to go, they rushed off into the fond and welcoming arms, and were instantly carried up into the woods, and there assiduously licked clean from top to toe by their affectionate parents. The expected effects followed; and the



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pitiable appearance of the old monkeys can scarcely be imagined. That patch was never rifled again.

In the district of Cooch-Bahar a very large tract of land is actually considered to belong to a tribe of apes which live in the neighbouring hills. When the natives cut the various grain, they always leave about a tenth part behind, piled in heaps, for the monkeys, who, as soon as their portion is marked out, troop down from the hills in large bodies and carry back their tithe, storing it under and between rocks, to prevent vermin destroying it. On this grain they largely live; and the natives assert that, if defrauded of their due portion, they would not, another year, allow a single grain to ripen, but would destroy the entire crop when green.

Devout Hindus, of course, worship the monkey together with the cobra. The more savage and fierce the monkey, the higher is its caste. Two British officers once lost their lives in a popular tumult through causing the death of a monkey.

I remember General M.'s charming chimpanzee, who when asleep would often stretch himself on his back and side, at full length, using one hand as a kind of pillow; never sleeping, like other monkeys, in a squatting position. He would sit down to table like a man, open his napkin, and use it always after drinking. He would take up a glass with instinctive care, clasping it with both hands, and setting it down so softly and carefully as never to break anything. He would pour out wine and clink glasses. He used a spoon and

fork, and in eating only took as much as he could hold with the thumb, fore, and middle finger. He slept on a little bed of his own, covering himself up in an orderly manner. He would offer people his arm and walk with them. He dearly loved General M.'s little niece, and would run to meet her when she came into the room, embrace and kiss her, take her hand and lead her to a sofa, where they would play most happily. But supposing that strange children came into the room and began to romp, Bobby would bite their legs, shake them, seize their jackets, and box their ears, seeming to think he was merely joining in their fun and noise.

When General M. was writing, Bobby would often seize a pen, dip it in the ink, and scrawl across sheet after sheet of paper. He was fond of cleaning the windows ; it was amusing to see him squeeze up the cloth, breathe hard upon the pane, and then rub it vigorously, passing quickly from one place to another. He took tea and cocoa in the morning and evening, and a mixed diet in between meals, such as fruit, sweet-meats, red wine and water, and sugar. To keep him out of mischief he lived, when the General was busy, in a cage ; on one occasion he stole the key, which was hanging on the wall, and hid it in his little coat-pocket. Later in the day his master put him back into the cage and closed the door, which locked itself. Directly General M. was out of sight, Bobby unlocked his door and walked out. He knew how to use a gimlet ; he would wring out wet clothes ; he blew his nose with a handkerchief.

When at last he caught cold, and was laid low with pneumonia, his actions were almost human. He put his arms round General M.'s neck, kissed him twice, then lying back on his pillow, he stretched out his arm, took the General's hand, and died. Such cases seem to lessen the great gulf which separates the highest class of apes from mankind, and they bring home to us Huxley's perfectly valid statement, that a wider gulf separates the lowest tribe of monkeys from the highest class of apes than that which exists between the highest class of apes and human beings.

Bobby does not compare ill with the Australian aborigines, who can hardly be said to possess even a rudimentary soul, and whose brutal instincts leave upon us a grisly impression of their bestial natures and deep degradation. At the same time it seems impossible that man can be descended from any of the species of monkey now living; and it is more probable that both apes and man have been produced from a common ground form of which there remains now no trace, but which is strongly expressed in the structure of young specimens. Childhood is less advanced, and the young ape stands infinitely nearer to the human child than the adult ape does to the man.

We rose gradually up a steep hillside with a tremendous drop on the left, which was scantily protected in places by posts and rails; a little wooden cross at one of the worst corners marked the spot where, a few years before, a subaltern and his pony had been found dead at the bottom. A goat or a monkey,

possibly a falling stone, had made the pony shy, and both had gone straight over the precipice together.

At the top we came to an opening in the forests, the woodsheds, where huge quantities of timber were stored, sawdust carpeted the turf, and great stacks of logs and planks reached to the tree-tops. Echoes resounded through the silent woods. We watched, as Walt Whitman says, "the limber motion of brawny young arms and hips in easy costumes, and the butter-colour'd chips flying off in great flakes and slivers."

We had sent servants on ahead from Dalhousie with lunch ; and leaving the ponies with them, we walked off our stiffness in an inspection of the forest bungalow two or three miles off : then back to a picnic near the woodsheds. A man in the Woods and Forests Department must lead a lonely life in such a place, buried in the jungle, with its beasts and their ways and a few natives by way of variation ; but for a sportsman and a lover of Nature, for one who has been overmuch jostled by the world, what better fate?

We reached the little forest bungalow by tiny, winding paths, slippery with fir-pins, dark with overhanging boughs, very suggestive of a bear or two, and a leopard. At last a clearing showed us daylight and a low building in the middle, out of which emerged a couple of dogs and a bearer. Sheltered by forest on three sides, an opening had been made upon the fourth, and a panoramic view of sixty or seventy miles connected the bungalow and the eternal snows.

Late that afternoon, after more riding, we found

ourselves at Kudjjar, than which in all India it would be hard to find a more lovely spot. We turned down the steep, pine-clothed hill into a small valley enclosed by forests and mountains, sheltered from every storm on all sides, a little oasis rich in emerald-velvet, lawn-like grass. A hollow in the centre contained a tiny, rush-encircled lake, said to be without bottom. The regal deodars were mirrored in its transparent depths, straight as an arrow, rich yellow and green fungus enveloping their trunks; paludas and firs filled up the spaces between them. The soft lawns round the pool lay warm in sunshine and quiet in long, solemn shadows cast by the dense jungle which surrounded them, draping the gaunt nullahs, and forming the abode of hordes of *chítá*, black bear, pine martens, foxes, and many more. The *dák* bungalow where we were to put up stood a little above the margin of the lake.

Tea in the shade ended, we lay on the turf, with a great sense of calm and rest. The ponies, each with his *syce*, grazed close by contentedly; the slanting sun added fresh beauty every hour; the blue gloom of the pines grew more dense; the strange *sough* of gusts moving among the tops of the deodars was unearthly.

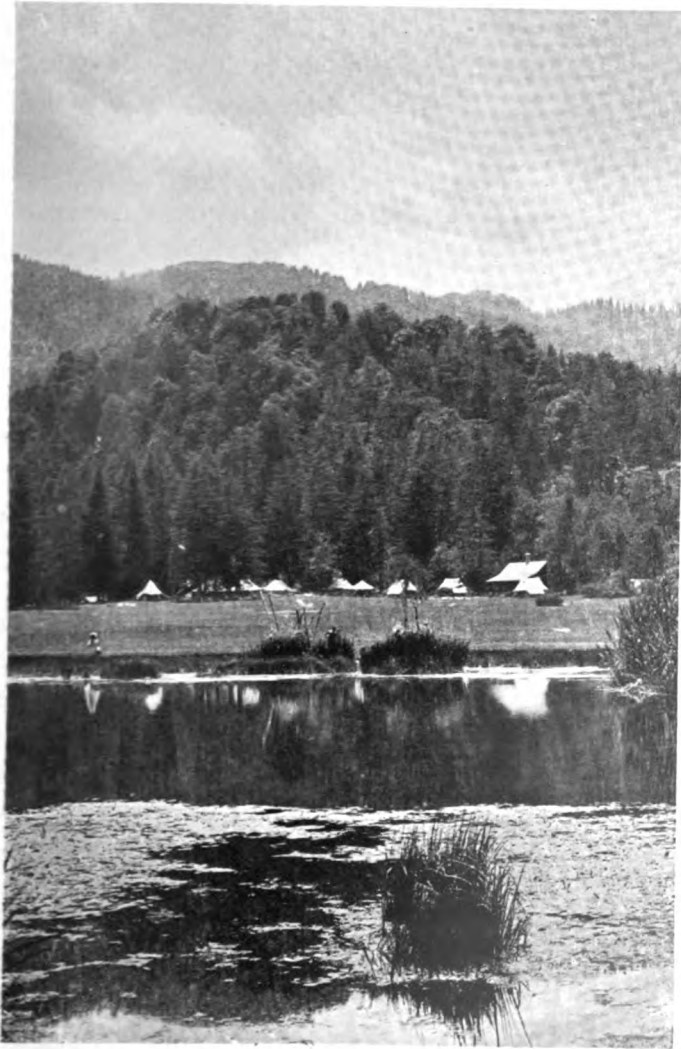
Kudjjar is "a lodge in some vast wilderness for which one sighs when in the midst of bustle at once sordid and trivial." It satisfied. And soon over it all flooded "the yellow gold of the gorgeous, indolent, sinking sun, burning, expanding the air." It sank quickly, and left the pine-hung promontories

rich masses of blue tone, stained on the upper heights with rose, deepened below into purple. The far-off snow summits were pink ; blue, red, and orange tints coloured the still waters of the lake.

An hour later, and a moon, nearly full, a radiant circle, wheeled up into the flushed sky. The sunset had passed through every stage of beauty, through every glory of colour, through riot and triumph, through pathos and tenderness, into a long, still rest, followed by the profound solemnity of the moonlight and the stillness of the huge and thoughtful night, broken only by breezes in the aromatic forests and the night cries of its inhabitants.

We left Kudjjar next morning by 6 a.m. ; going steadily down hill as we were, it would probably be very hot below in the middle of the day, which an early arrival would avoid. The path became stony and monotonous, and we began to feel the heat before we reached the Ravee, a greenish-coloured torrent which borders the native state of Chamba. Chamba seemed, as far as I could see, to consist chiefly of mountains ; and before us lay its native town, built in the only flat spot, and with the Rajah's palace in the middle dwarfing the little mud houses round it.

A smart suspension-bridge overhung the Ravee, and had been carpeted with red cloth ; elephants and a mounted guard and various officers were waiting at the farther end ; in fact, the town seemed *en fête* in our honour. Dismounting and walking across,



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we were met half-way and welcomed by Bhuri Singh, brother of the Rajah, some of the ministers of the state, the Commander-in-chief, etc. Two elephants, dazzling in gold and scarlet embroidery, were ready for us, and we climbed into their gilded howdahs, and were carried in state into the city, and up a long, wide stretch of lawn, an ideal polo-ground, to the gates of the Guest House itself. The military band was drawn up outside, and on our arrival struck up "God Save the Queen." It sounded homelike in that company of Orientals. We stood up and returned the salute, only to subside into the bottoms of the howdahs, for the elephants unexpectedly knelt down for us to dismount! The Rajah himself was waiting in the Guest House, which he had provided with servants and with every comfort for our reception. After his call was over, and breakfast in a great, cool, octagonal-shaped room had come to an end, washed and changed, we spent the rest of the day in the finest verandah I have ever seen in my life: it was built of great wooden beams with deep eaves, upon the first floor, was broad as an ordinary room, and overhung the Ravee, which tossed and tumbled with a sleepy roar below.

Towards evening we went out again; the General and S. had to return the Rajah's state call, while M. and myself called upon the Rānee. The army of the state and our guard of forty sowars had by this time been withdrawn; we walked down the beautiful green *maidan* with its smooth turf, accompanied only by the

Rajah's *vakeel* and two native policemen with yellow trousers, who, preceding us, conducted us in state to the palace, a large building perched up above the green, with a courtyard and lovely fountains surrounding it.

Here we found the band again ; there was more playing, royal salutes, etc. The General and S. were then conducted to a long reception-room, decorated in a heavy, ornate style, with gaudy hangings, where the Rajah received them. They were seated upon a large velvet and marble throne at one end of the hall, the ministers of the state approached one by one, and salaaming to the General, walked away backwards. They also offered him, as a compliment, rupees ; which it is customary to accept, touch, and then return. It is not intended that they should be kept.

Meanwhile, myself and M. were invading the sacred seclusion of the Rānee. The Rajah himself took us to her rooms, up two staircases, and in a quiet, private end of the palace. The Rānee, who was sitting on a sofa in the principal room, got up, and came and shook hands with us in silence ; the Rajah then suggested that we should sit down, and left us alone.

Now, in those early days of our travels my Hindustani was *very* limited. I could ask for certain things to eat, I could say "very good" and "very bad," I could count up to twelve, I knew the names of a bear, leopard, tiger, and a few more animals, and the word for "gun," also I could tell the time ; but

this went a very short way towards sustaining a conversation. The Rānee knew no English, and sat speechless. I began, therefore, to admire her jewels, which were wonderful.

She wore a nose-ring with a gigantic emerald in it, as big as my finger-nail, and set round with brilliants; a buckle with a great ruby in the centre, surrounded with smaller rubies and diamonds. Her wrists and arms were loaded with dazzling bracelets and bangles of emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, strung together and set in lavish profusion. She had on every finger several beautiful rings; the largest of all was on her thumb. Ropes of great pearls and necklaces of precious stones lay round her neck and hung down to her waist. She wore a diamond and emerald tiara, and a magnificent diamond star hung down upon the middle of her forehead. Immense earrings, of a multitude of various stones, bunches of them, hung in and round either ear. Her hair was parted and oiled, polished and black as jet; partly covering her head she wore a marvellous, gold-embroidered shawl; from her waist two strips, almost like stoles, hung down to her feet, wonderfully worked with a bold and striking design; her entire robes were encrusted with gold lace and smaller jewels. Her slippers alone were curiosities, turning up at the toes into a sharp point, pale blue edged with scarlet and shining with gold work.

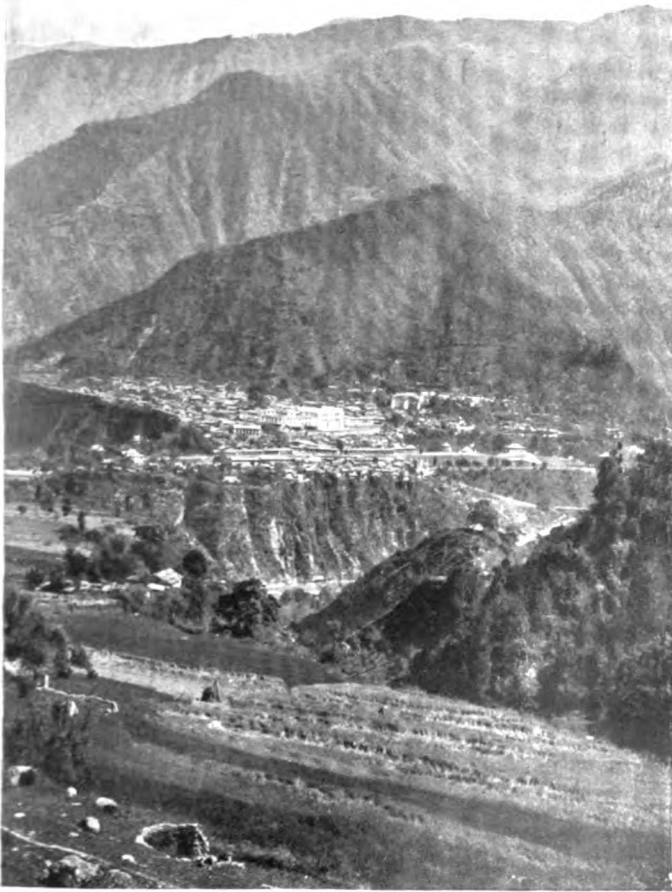
Anything more Oriental, more childish, than such a display upon a single mortal I have never seen.

She was a sight to behold ; and I repeated fervently again and again : "Very good—very good ; very nice—very nice." She was evidently delighted to show off everything, and lifted her arms and put back her shawl to display to advantage her bracelets and earrings.

However, this could not last for ever, and I was soon at a loss. . . . A long and painful silence followed. I tried some English with a few gesticulations ; but whatever it was which she answered was in Hindustani and was Greek to me. Another deadlock was inevitable. At last, when the pause was becoming solemn beyond words, in a sudden inspiration I noticed a flat parcel, which looked like work, and which the Rānee was carrying under her arm.

I touched it, and asked what it was. It was instantly thrust into my hands, and I divined, to my horror, that I had forestalled a present which she was intending to offer me. There was nothing to do but to graciously accept it ; and I was able to cover quite five minutes in expressing my thanks and in looking at it. It was her own photograph, resplendent in all her jewels ; it was folded in two handkerchiefs, worked in Chamba, in the most flaring colours, representing a boar-hunt, with men on horseback, spears, and all complete ; inside was a third handkerchief of pink silk.

Praises and thanks having really reached a climax, I resolved to take my leave on the top of the "seventh wave" with flying colours, nor face another pause.



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The little Great Lady conducted us to the head of the stairs, and after solemn hand-shakes we parted.

Out in the courtyard we found the others inspecting the Rajah's menagerie, which had some interesting animals in it, and possessed two fine, fat, white cats.

There was more band-playing. On our way back to the Residency we walked into some most interesting old Hindoo temples (*mundas*), containing grotesque and fearful images, with curious offerings of flowers, feathers, and bits of ribbon and rag. Bells and gongs, which were being continually beaten, hung all round the entrances, and they smelt strongly of incense.

On the *maidan* quite a *tomasha* was going on ; we had some chairs brought outside our gates and looked on. Some performing red bears were excellent—great, muscular, heavy fellows, with huge, shaggy coats, very different from the poor, starved wretches whom one sees dragged round England. These Chamba bears looked quite “bobbery,” and did their tricks with plenty of spirit, dancing energetically on their hind feet, and salaaming to us—kissing our feet.

After them a native juggler came to the fore. He was a marvel to talk—in fact, never *ceased* ; he did the basket-trick and the mango-trick right under our very noses, and mystified us completely, jabbering volubly. Last of all he produced a cobra, handling it in such a way that it was impossible for him to be bitten, and making it sit up and move in regular revolutions. At the same time—whatever he said—there is no doubt that its fangs had been carefully

extracted first. I am afraid I have lost my faith in snake-charmers, and believe them to be only arrant humbugs.

One fine day, fresh out from home, one finds a little cobra close to one's bungalow, and suspecting it to be only one of a large family, sighs for a snake-charmer, who would—so the servants vehemently assert—eradicate the brood. Miraculously the prayer is granted; a man appears clutching a bagpipe, and is soon piping lustily all over the compound. Suddenly he stops before the wall, and pipes more alluringly than ever: then you see him dart—two or three lightning-like shots—at an enormous cobra in the brickwork, which is half striking at him and half trying to escape.

At the third shot the snake-charmer has him by the tail, and instantly running his other hand up to his neck, he holds the cobra close to the head, making it impossible for him to wriggle round and bite. The snake-charmer then proceeds to force a little piece of stick into the snake's mouth, in order to break down the fangs. Fangs, I must tell you, of which there are eight, lie right back on each side of the palate, concealed in a membrane called the "gingival fold," but in the act of striking they become erect, the fold is pushed away, and the keen, white, hard, enamelled teeth are driven deep into the flesh. Below and behind the eye is the poison reservoir, in the cobra about the size of an almond. Each tooth is hollow, and is practically the tube of a syringe, through

which the powerful muscles of the cheek squirt the poison, which comes out at a tiny slit in the very tip of the fang and is forced right into the bottom of the wound.

Taking the stick out of the snake's mouth, the charmer next makes it catch a bit of his turban in its teeth. The man pulls steadily at the turban till the teeth give way, and the poison-fangs and yellow fluid come away with the rag. Then he pronounces the snake harmless, and puts it into his basket to exhibit in future. You feel you will well reward him ; but the next thing he does is to catch the cobra's mate.

This he does carelessly, and gets bitten. A terrible scene ensues : the snake-charmer alone is calm. You recall a never-to-be-forgotten afternoon, when your Hindoo *punkah* coolie, who was asleep in the verandah, turned over and rolled against a cobra, which bit him in the shoulder instantly. How you dosed the poor fellow with brandy ; how he complained of giddiness, but was able to speak and was quite calm ; how in half an hour's time he was in great agony ; his legs gradually became paralysed ; he grew speechless ; convulsions followed ; how at last the doctor appeared and injected ammonia ; how in one hour and five minutes after being bitten your servant was cold and stiff !

But the snake-charmer has produced a tiny black stone, reassuring the circle of terrified servants ; he calls it a snake stone, presses it on the bitten place,

and the stone sticks to the wound, which ceases to bleed. He says it is a certain cure. By-and-by he takes the stone off and says he is perfectly well. The wound looks quite healthy. With deep thankfulness and gratitude you dismiss the man, and are lavish in the matter of a tip.

My dear madam ! your snake-charmer arranged the tiny cobra for you this morning, and had just turned out the two large ones before you came into the compound ; their fangs were extracted properly months before.

Our man would have gone on with his performances all night. We emptied our pockets, and finally went into the Guest House to dress. Native bagpipes came and performed through dinner, and we could hardly hear ourselves speak.

Later on in the evening we had a long and most interesting interview with Bhuri Singh in reference to our shoot. He had practically made the whole *bundobust*, and we were to be sent right up into the mountains, to the Rajah's own preserves, provided with tents, servants, *shikaris*, provisions, and everything we could want—all at the Rajah's own expense.

It would certainly be hard to find warmer hospitality than we met with in India ; and Bhuri Singh spared no pains to make our expedition an unqualified success. I remember so well his warning us that there would be a great deal of rough climbing, and that farther up and into the hills it would be quite impossible to ride. He evidently thought it rather strange that women

should care to embark on such an expedition at all. I don't think we altogether accepted all his statements; and perhaps had we done so, one calamitous accident would never have happened. But who could foretell?

Deciding, therefore, that in order to save time it was *imperative* we should ride as far as possible, we elected to take two ponies; the General returned to Dalhousie, leaving me his charger "Sphai," a chestnut waler, to ride myself. As my own pony "Vesta" had a rooted dislike to steep descents and *khuds*, whereas Sphai possessed plenty of *sangfroid*, I was glad of the exchange.

S., M., and myself made all our arrangements overnight and packed our kits. It was most necessary to travel light, in order to save carriage and time. We reduced our little all to a minimum: a roll of bedding and a bag each, which one coolie could carry. This done, we retired to roost, an early start before us on the morrow, leaving the doors of our rooms open on to the verandah, to the fresh air, and to the sleepy roar of the Ravee.

CHAPTER IV

CHAMBA INTO KASHMIR

**Unexplored Mountains—Our First Red Bear—A
Narrow Escape—Tahr—Difficult Climbing—Our
Bag—A Sad Accident.**

CHAPTER IV

CHAMBA INTO KASHMIR

Ere the moon has climbed the mountain, ere the rocks are ribbed
with light,
When the downward-dipping tails are dank and drear,
Comes a breathing hard behind thee, *snuffle-snuffle* through the
night—

It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear!
On thy knees and draw the bow; bid the shrilling arrow go;
In the empty, mocking thicket plunge the spear;
But thy hands are loosed and weak, and the blood has left thy
cheek—

It is Fear, O Little Hunter, it is Fear!

RUDYARD KIPLING.

OFF at last! Delightfully independent we felt
as we rode out of the Residency about
7.30 a.m., our faces set towards the “back of
beyond.” There is no feeling like it! To be in
your oldest of old clothes, to feel you are going out
of the reach of letters, telegrams, and the faces of
the civilised world; free to go and to do exactly
as the spirit of the moment moves you; only your-
self to answer to: time is of no object; you may
wait or hurry, eat where you like, sleep where you
like. It is the *only* life—the only life worth living
for we mortals who have been born with the necessity
of change rooted in our beings.

Gradually we left the town of Chamba far behind, and wound up into the mountains; the path became rougher and more stony, climb after climb loomed in front of us. We were obliged to get off and drive the ponies before us; it was much too steep to tempt them out of a walk. We toiled upwards; the sun grew insufferably hot, and glowed off the open, rugged hillsides, and the stony path tired our feet considerably. We stopped at the top of one cliff, up the side of which we had zigzagged backwards and forwards, and finding a hut and a spring, the breathless ponies and ourselves all had a good drink. A shepherd up there was playing with a marmot skin made into a bag, which he offered for sale at four annas.

The country was bleak and rocky, mountains all round; the path we followed took us continually up and down, but ever higher by degrees. The stones became worse than before; and the two polo-ponies grew more and more disgusted and lazy, and must have wondered where on earth we were taking them. This sort of work might so easily strain them that finally M. and I alternately rode Sphai, whenever the path allowed, and S. walked, the two little Arabs climbing painfully along in front of him. We all went, of course, in single file. Bhuri Singh had sent a Jemadar with us to show us the way—for once really a “delightful” native, tall and spare, equal to clambering anywhere. He was mounted on a chestnut pony, and rode a little ahead of us.



IN THE HIMALAYAS.

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Our kit was all on the backs of coolies, and we soon passed the long, perspiring string of them, resting for a moment by the edge of the path, groaning over their loads, as they always do. There were twenty of them, carrying tents, provisions, clothes, etc. Near them walked a little party, consisting of the cook—a huge, bearded man—his mate, our own bearer Māmdīn, and later on the Jemadar, three *syces*, and two *shikaris*. We were amused at the big umbrellas each man walked underneath to shield himself from the sun.

We reached our first *dāk* bungalow at Musround in the very middle of the day, baked with heat. We had done what is reckoned as one march, thirteen miles, at the rate of two and a half miles an hour, and not always that. There was a verandah in front of the empty bungalow, with an expansive view of the opposite side of the valley. We pulled three *charpoys* (beds) out on to it, and lay down on them. The natives in the village, roused by the Jemadar, brought us up a great brass bowl of milk, which was most acceptable.

About an hour and a half later the servants and coolies turned up with our supplies, and having lit a fire, tea was brought us by Māmdīn—eggs, cold chicken, and sardines. Then we broke it to our appalled retinue that we intended doing another march before nightfall. S. sent back the two ponies and their *syces*, keeping Sphai with a man's saddle for either of us to ride, as he seemed able to get along without much difficulty.

Sitting in the verandah, we watched our sorrowful followers and Sphai's grumbling *syce* wind down into the valley and begin struggling up the opposite side, knowing we should pass them only too soon. That march was rather a trial ; it was still blazing hot, and the path got worse as we went along—thirteen miles of it, turning interminable corners, hoping that every one would be the last and would disclose the longed-for *dāk* bungalow. Darkness came on, and still we stumbled along on our weary legs, with an occasional lift on our steed.

At last, about 7.30, the Jemadar announced we were there, and the Kulel bungalow was before us. Sphai's *syce* took him off to some outbuildings ; and later on S. found the boy weeping on account of the long march. A diet of rice and butter does not produce fine physique, and the ordinary servant is lazy, flabby, muscleless. It thoroughly disgusts one to see men behaving like children.

M. and I slept inside the bungalow, which was hot even with all doors open. As usual it was provided with a great zinc bath, and as soon as the servants had arrived and lit a fire, we had a good supply of hot water. These tin tubs, two *charpoys* to sleep on, and two chairs, with a table, complete the furniture provided by Government for *dāk* bungalows. If rough, it is, with one's own bedding, quite comfortable, and we were too tired to feel anything else as we lay down. S. had his camp-bed put together on the grass, and slept under the stars.

The next march on the following day was even hotter ; we were shut in by precipitous gorges and immense heights on either side. The sun glowed down ; and it was hard work, following on the day before. We dipped our heads over the ears in every stream we crossed. Even sitting upon Sphai, the perspiration trickled down all over one, so it may be imagined that walking along the mountain-sides was severe, climbing up the steep side of one valley, only to struggle down another and then toil up again, and so on, *ad lib.*

The coolies were left miles behind, and the servants, big umbrellas and all, were not much better, a great deal of hookah being smoked by every stream. The last ascent to Tisah was almost worst of all ; but as we laboured up the mountain we had at least the satisfaction of seeing our goal in the distance. We were more than five hours on this march ; and after the servants were in I shudder to think how many quarts and quarts of tea we drank ! We went to bed at seven that night ; there happened to be what the servants called a stick-waller in the bungalow too (a Woods and Forests officer), and there was not much room left for us.

After having retired so early, we rose without difficulty at 4 a.m. in the dark, dressed by a candle-end, had *hazri*, and got through our march before the heat of the day. We saw the sun come up over the peaks, and turn all the snows ablaze with pink. It was a great deal cooler ; we were still climbing

upwards, and for the first time seemed to be getting really near the snow mountains. The scenery was becoming grander. We met very few natives, chiefly shepherds with herds of goats and bullocks.

All our butter now was made of buffalo's milk in an untempting fashion ; we had little unleavened cakes instead of bread, yeast not being procurable ; but on the whole Bhuri Singh's cook did us royally, and mutton, chickens, eggs, and sardines never failed. The poor man was always on the march, too !

Alwas, our last *dāk* bungalow, was at last reached. Beyond this it was quite impossible for any horse to go. Sphai was therefore left behind with his *syce*, to be picked up again on our return journey. He had indeed come wonderfully well, climbing over almost incredible places and creeping round hair-curling corners which were not pleasant to cross upon one's own feet. On some ground, where it was particularly bad, we led him ; but he was to be trusted almost anywhere, in spite of being really too big for such work.

Alwas was a perfect spot. The isolation of those magnificent wilds appealed to one strongly, and the lonely little bungalow, right down in a sheltered glen beside a torrent which tumbled through a precipitous nullah between mountains no longer bare and open but clothed with forest and crowned with snow, was a striking example.

A rough wooden bridge was thrown over the stream upon gigantic boulders, which cut the torrent into

foaming waterfalls ; on one of these plateaux of rock a hut had been built, and the water guided by means of a narrow cut along the floor of the hut, inside which it turned a rude wheel and ground a little corn into flour. The hut was also the dwelling-place of a primitive family. They were much interested in us, and produced a bowl of milk from their goats. Trees and undergrowth half hid the bungalow, and were a joy, after the bare nullahs, to look upon.

Every day our march had been a finer one than the last ; the higher we climbed, the more beautiful was the scenery and the cooler it became. The stream thundered in caves and hollows worn in the rock ; the sun dropped early behind the overhanging mountains ; it was a superbly peaceful evening.

Two *shikaris* belonging to the Rajah met us at Alwas, and after tea had a long consultation with S. Asked where Jamouni lay, and where our camp was really to be, the Jemadar invariably pointed up at the snows far above our heads, and remarked, "*Oōper*" ("above"). There was the prospect of a good deal of *oōper* for the following morning.

S. was up and away next day by four o'clock with his rifle and the *shikaris*, hoping by making a *détour* to come across a red bear, or snow bear as some people call them. M. and I followed at six o'clock, going up the most direct way. It was a climb, and we took five hours to get up six miles. There was no path of any sort or kind, and we simply clambered up the face of the forest ; and since the coolies managed

it too, with all our kit on their backs, we began to respect them. The reason it was hard work was on account of the rarefied atmosphere ; we were climbing between fourteen and fifteen thousand feet above sea level, and until you have grown used to this altitude breathing is laborious. The Jemadar and Māmdīn gave us both a hand now and then. After a spurt of this sort—panting—we were allowed a rest, till Māmdīn came up and said sternly, “*Chel !—chel ! Mees Sahib*” (“get up!—get up!”). We meekly rose to renewed efforts. Whenever we asked how much farther, the answer was invariably, “*Oōper.*”

At one time we had to ford a loud-tongued, rollicking stream of ice-cold water, in which immense pine-logs had gone aground, not to be floated off till the next *spate*. When one saw the white planks also far below in the distance, strewn the bed of a rather dried-up stream, they reminded us of a train of spilt lucifer matches.

There was a blaze of sunshine everywhere, a universal glitter which I never saw till I came to India ; this, together with the elasticity of the air, banished every feeling of weariness and gave one spirit for anything. The mountains rose like castellated and embattled walls round us, skirted and crowned with dark pines, which occasionally parted to show some snow-slashed peak beyond, rising into the intense, unclouded blue sky. The forests were full of stumps and roots left by woodcutters, and we came across smooth funnels worn in the steep mountain-side, where trunks and logs

were evidently shot down into the streams below, to be floated off as felled timber.

Breathlessly we clambered on. About midday we got up to short grass and open space, with a good many tree-rhododendrons growing near. Having been allowed by the Jemadar and bearer to sit down, we were surprised at a camp-bed being suddenly brought us. Again our want of the vernacular in the absence of S. was trying; however, it was soon explained, in limited English, that this actually *was* Jamouni. So here we were—probably the first European women who had ever penetrated as far into Chamba. The tents were put up in an incredibly short time, and we had tiffin. It was a magnificent spot—such a view!

We strolled about by ourselves the rest of the afternoon, and found ourselves upon snow in a short time. The nullahs were full of it, frozen, directly the sun sank, hard as iron and slippery as glass; in middle day the top more or less slushy.

We had not gone very far before Māmdīn came rushing, breathing heavily, after us: "Dis countree verree jungley, Mees Sahib. *Bhālū!*" We promised him we would not be eaten up by bears, and at last persuaded him to leave us.

Once in some thick undergrowth we heard a heavy animal moving, but it was not clear enough to allow us to see. No doubt plenty of bears were about, and we began to wish we had brought a rifle with us. These red bears, (*lal bhālū*) are only to be found

near the snows. In the sixties the country was literally swarming with them, and people were afraid to go from one village to another after dark; they have been shot more of late years, and those palmy days are no more.

The red bear always hibernates, retiring to some cave at the beginning of winter, and reappearing in April or May, when the snows begin to melt. Absurd stories are told of their sucking their paws and subsisting during these months on their own fat; but as their retreats are buried under many feet of snow, and there is no clue to their whereabouts, I can't verify the fact! They are generally—like a dormouse—thin and weak when they first show themselves; but their hair is longest at this season and the hide itself freest from grease, and therefore more easily cured.

We got back to our little camp, and were just beginning to feel tea-inclined, when the *shikaris* and S. appeared. He had shot a bear, some distance off, and had left him there to fetch the next day. They had had a long tramp.

Leaving Alwas, they followed a rugged and ill-defined path up a steep incline for about four miles, and at last saw a couple of red bear on the grassy slopes ahead of them. They were a long distance off and some way apart—one being far up the hill, and the other below them, nearer a river. They determined to try for the one on higher ground first, and accordingly went after him. Just as they were getting within long shot, he moved off for some reason best

known to himself, as he could neither have seen nor smelt them. S., who was very keen, foolishly fired at him as he was moving fast; the bullet hit, but apparently too high, for the *bhāla* went steadily on.

Meanwhile, the other bear was still feeding contentedly down by the stream, the noise of which had probably prevented him from hearing the shot. It was not easy to get within range of him; but after some circumvention, on looking over a rock, S. saw him digging up roots about thirty yards below him. A bullet behind his shoulder tumbled him over, and he rolled down the bank, roaring and howling considerably, on to the very water's edge, where he seized hold of a branch in his teeth and hung on for a few moments.

S. rushed down the hill and was about to fire again, when the bear dropped into the water and was carried a little distance down stream, where he contrived to slip from behind rock to rock, and finally escape altogether in a dense patch of cover which skirted the actual forests.

Much disappointed, S. and the *shikaris* climbed the hill and began searching for traces of the first bear. They walked a good distance with no result, and finally sat down about midday, waiting in hopes of something coming out to feed in the afternoon. It was cold work; but about three o'clock a very light-coloured bear emerged from the forest and began feeding. A deep ravine separated him from S., and he took a deliberate aim; but though the bear rolled

over, he soon scrambled up again and began to ascend the ravine.

S. and the *shikaris* climbed down and across it, and followed as quickly as they could, occasionally seeing the bear, but never getting within shot. Time went on, and very little daylight remained; the hillside was open, and they found themselves with another ravine full of snow lying between them and the bear, who was under a sort of cliff. The only chance lay in crawling across, which they eventually did, and in the end S. rolled the bear over, stone dead. Clambering back over the frozen snow and ice was hard work, but the *shikaris* were a tower of strength.

That night the Jemadar came to us full of a tale he had heard of some bears which had attacked a whole family of charcoal-burners in the jungle farther on and rather below our camp. They seem to have been coming home at night and to have met some old bears and their cubs; the old bears turned upon the men, who took to their heels, fortunately little the worse, except for a claw-mark or two. They were anxious we should visit a cave, which the bears were said to live in, that night, and smoke them out by moonlight; but our prudent *shikaris* strongly advised waiting for daylight, and after all we had had a tiring day, and were not sorry to get to bed early.

Next morning we were called before it was anything approaching light, and proceeded to walk to this bears' den. The stars were almost dazzling, and it was freezing hard; the snow shone ashen white

in the moonlight ; the ground crackled crisp under our feet.

The *chota shikari* carried M.'s rifle, a 500-Express, and the *shikari* walked behind S. Not a word was spoken. At last we came to a steep cliff in the middle of the jungle ; deodars grew on its almost perpendicular face wherever there was the least crevice and lodgment of soil for the roots to find foothold. Here and there were patches of thick bushes, and again smooth walls of rock. It was in one of these last that an immense fissure had opened, forming an entrance apparently to dark recesses beyond, which wound into the heart of the mountain-side. Bushes hung down from above and partially concealed the opening, while in front of it for a few yards the ground was comparatively level.

By signs the *shikari* intimated that this was actually the spot ; he motioned M., myself, and the *chota shikari* to hide ourselves behind a couple of huge deodar trunks, while he himself and S. crouched in a rhododendron bush. It was an eerie spot, and as the wind moaned and the branches rustled, the imagination conjured up all sorts of sights and sounds in the impenetrable shadows.

Day broke before very long, and henceforward our eyes were glued upon the entrance to the cave ; it was growing quite light when the *shikari* gripped my arm : a large and tawny body emerged from the ramifications of the rock and came out of the shadow on to the patch of grass outside the cave. He was

followed by another and another and another, five in all.

Number four was the old female, and she carried two baby cubs in the long fur of her shoulders, which she put down and allowed to play about round her, like a couple of little Skye terriers. Some of the party began feeding on the young sprouts of grass, while the others turned over the stones for the beetles and other insects to devour. The old bear sat on a stone.

The whole group were so uncouth and grotesque in their movements that we, watching them, were positively holding our sides and aching with suppressed laughter. Needless to say, we were well to leeward of them; bears have extraordinarily acute powers of scent, but they are very blind animals, and care need only be taken to avoid giving them the wind.

In spite of the nudges and impatient whispers on the parts of the two *shikaris*, either gun was loath to fire the first shot and to disturb the happy family. However, we could not wait all day. S. made a signal, and putting up his gun, aimed at the old bear on the stone; while M. almost at the same moment put a bullet into a female that was grazing.

The old bear toppled off his rock, fell on to one of the others, and they both rolled downhill together. Seeing that M.'s female was lying apparently dead, we ran down the face of the descent as fast as we were able. The old bear, growling furiously, was stumbling about at the bottom. S., who was down first, rolled him over with his death-warrant.

We saw the back of the other bundling away as fast as he could move. The old bear had an unusually fine skin, nearly white, the hair being about eight inches long; he measured two inches short of seven feet from snout to tail; his arms and claws were admirably adapted for digging, enormously muscular, the claws being very strong, slightly curved, and three or four inches long. We left him below to be fetched to our camp, and toiled up towards the cave once more to look at M.'s "bag."

We had just reached the top when a large form loomed over the edge, and the resurrected bear charged right down upon us! . . . There was absolutely no time to act!—no time to think! Though severely wounded, she sprang at M., who was nearest her, was on her hind feet in a second, making for M.'s face and striking at it with her strong arms. My blood froze!—it was a horrible sight, and so totally unexpected! Thank Heaven! the *chota shikari* was a plucky man and rose to the occasion. He dashed forward, and thrust M.'s rifle into her hands and into the bear's face. Which of them pulled the trigger it would be hard to say; the great body fell forward almost upon them—dead as a stone. No one had the heart to shoot the mother and cubs, or I do not think it would have been difficult to have followed them up.

After these thrilling moments, feeling the need of breakfast, we called up our tiffin coolie, who had been valiantly watching our movements from the branches

of a tree, and emerging into open country, we sat on some rocks in the sun and despatched sandwiches, biscuits, and cold tea with a will.

We then set off to try and see more red bear ; but whether any turned up or not, it was worth anything merely to be *alive* in such a country : the dazzling blue sky above us ; the white, glittering snow-peaks around ; here and there a frozen nullah or a snow-slope to cross ; the crisp grass under our feet ; the grey crags ; the cold, sparkling streams at which we drank ; the warm sun we basked in through midday ; the intoxicating air : what a life it was to lead—alone upon the roof-tops of the world !

It was not till quite late, and after much clambering, that we came across two bears lying asleep upon a flat rock. We stalked them for a mile with great patience ; but on getting within range they moved and began feeding down a slope. After much stalking we managed to get within eighty yards of them, and M. rudely aroused the larger of the two with a bullet which must have shaved the hair on his shoulder. Unfortunately, it did nothing more ; and S. missed the other—a running shot. This was bad luck or bad shooting ! We followed the bigger and the darker of the two, who had made over a nullah, and struggled after him, backwards and forwards, for miles—seeing him and making fresh efforts ; losing sight of him and coming across him again, always out of shot. Finally, we were obliged to give it up and to leave our *bhala* to his native fastnesses, ourselves tired out. The



TAHR.

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long march back to camp in the dark was hard, and we got in almost beyond a meal; but a blazing fire outside did wonders, and a long night was a cure for all ills.

The next day there was the skinning of three bears to superintend. Scraping the thick fat off the hide was a work of time, but at last they were all pegged out in the sun. About midday we struck our camp and made off in a westerly direction to Mougli, which was within reach of the best tahr ground. We sent our kit on early and followed ourselves later.

As we were crossing a nullah, slowly, for it was ice-bound and very slippery, the inevitable fate which follows sportsmen befell us. There was a roar above our heads, and a shaggy red bear came bundling down the gorge straight to us. With loud growls he pulled up, not thirty yards from where we stood, and remained there—broadside on—a perfect picture and a perfect mark! S. rushed for his gun, which he had just handed to a *shikari* while he steadied M. across a bad place. The man had, of course, walked on! By the time a couple of bullets were rammed into the rifle, the bear's back and his rough, tawny coat waving and tumbling was the only thing to be seen rapidly disappearing down the nullah. S. fired twice at the retreating object; and then made a solemn vow that he would never let his rifle out of his hands again.

That night found us at Mougli, and two or three mornings later we had some great expeditions after tahr.

What a good feeling it is to be fit and well : to have your nerves steady and your head cool ; to awake every morning revelling in the almost fizzing air ! Such was life up on those mountains in our little khāki tents, perched on the somewhat steep, rocky slope (a bit of level ground was never easy to find). At all distances around only peak after peak of snow was to be seen ; gorgeous and solemn mountains to the tops of which no man ever has been, or ever will go ; which are therefore steeped in the senses with the glamour of the “un-get-at-able”—that “un-get-at-able” which, as long as man lives, always has and always will constitute the Heart’s Desire.

The Himalayas are full of memories—memories which bring those which have been born there up from the plains back to the hills to die : back to the land of storms and sunsets ; to the dear, damp smells of wet moss and scented fir-pins and rotting undergrowth. It cannot be told why ; either it is born in a man or it is not. He knows.

I could never stand the plains—
 Think of blazing June and May,
 Think of those September rains
 Yearly till the Judgment Day !
 I should never rest in peace,
 I should sweat and lie awake ;
 Rail we, then, on my decease
 To the hills—for old sake’s sake.

Women do not shoot with their husbands and brothers nearly as much as they might do, provided



THE LEDGES, AFFORDING SCANT FOOTHOLD,
SANK ABRUPTLY INTO ROUGH, PERPEN-
DICULAR PRECIPICES FAR BELOW.

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they are the right sort of women. Of course, there are *women* and *women* ; but in the present day, when so many of them care for a free life, I wonder that the majority of those should still live a conventional one.

Soon after we were fairly camped up at Mougli, one "parky" morning at 5 a.m., fortified with some coffee and biscuits, we set out, S. and M. with their rifles, and two *shikaris*, to explore for tahr. As we tramped over the rough ground and climbed gradually up the craggy hillsides, the sun rose. It is idle to describe a sunrise over snow mountains ; paradoxical though it sounds, it *is* "a light that never was on land or sea."

It was a hard task labouring up those steep ascents in the rarefied atmosphere. One must have a good head, too, to get round some of the corners, where the rock above bulged out in a most awkward way, and where the ledges, affording scant foothold, sank abruptly into rough, perpendicular precipices far below. M. handed the *shikari* her rifle, and we held on with our eyelids.

Almost as bad were the steep slopes of rocky shale which we had to cross. As we carefully moved over them, the loose lumps of rock rolled under our feet at every step and leapt over the edge, the long interval before the sounding crash at the bottom suggesting an unpleasant "drop."

We wore thick, indiarubber-soled shoes ; they are noiseless, and in climbing through forests do not

slip on the pine-needles. We tried grass-shoes at first ; but a pair were done for in a day, and they made the toes sore where the grass-rope passes between. We had been climbing for some time, and at last sat down to scan the ridges which were now apparent. Nothing to be seen yet. A little later, and one of the *shikaris* sighted two male tahr through a glass. They had finished feeding, and were evidently slowly making their way up to the heights for a midday sleep among the rocks. They looked a long way off ; and with what interest did I not examine them through my glasses !

The sight of the big grey goats more than compensated for every yard of the distance we had toiled up from Chamba. Their light ash-colour deepened to brown-black on the head ; their long, shaggy hair on the necks and shoulders caught the sun as they walked ; their great, grey beards almost reached their knees ; and I could just see their short, curling horns. We sat down and discussed mutton sandwiches and cold tea, and then set forth on our stalk, the tahr having gone just out of sight.

We had an awkward ravine to cross to start with, and I must confess to not appreciating it. S. went first, M. second, a *shikari* third, myself fourth, and the other man last. In many places footholes had to be cut to enable us to get along at all. One slope I did not like—it broke off below where we crossed into an abrupt precipice, hundreds of feet sheer descent. S. was cutting footholes, and having gone

over with M., I prepared to follow, with the *shikari* just in front.

Meanwhile, the other *shikari*, in a superior way, thought to get across himself higher up. Suddenly, he lost his balance and slipped, and came sliding—gliding—down the slope straight on to me, in spite of all his efforts to stop himself with his finger-nails and stick. Over I was knocked, and falling on the top of him, partly, stopped his headlong career in a small degree ; but we should both have slipped on and slid into eternity, had not the first *shikari* saved us. Using all his strength, and with extraordinary grip of the insecure foothold, he caught us and stopped us till we had regained our balance. But it was an uncomfortable moment.

We crept up at last, with infinite caution, to the ridge the tahr had crossed as they disappeared from view. There they were again—*joy!*—three hundred yards off and still moving on, and looking for a select corner. They were fine, big fellows through the glasses, and once more we watched them vanish ; when to our disgust a female appeared just above where the males had crossed, and was evidently on the look-out. She had chosen her stand so well that if we even put our heads above the rocks she *must* see us. She was now about eight hundred yards away. It was very provoking, but the only thing to be done was to go back and put this ridge between ourselves and the astute sentinel.

This we did, and climbing the dividing ridge got

round the flank of the tahr ; then dropping below, out of sight of the female, worked towards the place where the males should be. The task was a formidable one indeed. We began the toilsome ascent with the sun literally blazing on our backs ; on we persevered, up and up, across some bad ground, always thinking that surely at last this *was* the top of all things, only to find a still higher platform of cliff.

At last the summit was reached. We were hot before ; now we were to be frozen, for the northern slope was one vast sheet of snow ; it was soft, and we sank in often up to our knees—slow, toilsome work ! My fingers ached with cold ; my feet were numb. We began climbing down again ; and now the greatest possible precaution was needed, for it was impossible to know exactly where the tahr were : that they were quite close was certain ; but whether to the right, or to the left, or below, we had no idea.

We trod as silently as experienced burglars ; once, crossing a slaty ridge, the rock under my feet gave way, and down the slates went, with a terrible rattle which must have been heard a mile off ; but I remembered with comfort that hill game are not disturbed by noises of this sort. Now that we were getting close it was nervous work for those who were going to shoot—moments painfully strained and propitious for making flagrant misses.

We halted ; the others crept on to try and locate the tahr. I watched them pass out of sight. A



AN OLD GREY GOAT GOING HIS BEST PACE.

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quarter of an hour's nervous tension followed, and then the *shikari* reappeared and beckoned to me. I stole down as noiselessly as possible, and then followed to where the others crouched behind a rock.

Silently we drew ourselves up and looked over—a sight one could never forget; culminating points stamp themselves indelibly on the memory. Below us lay our *raison d'être*. Quite at home, on a small patch of sloping grass about a hundred yards off, across a small ravine—there were the tahr. How can I describe our feelings when we suddenly saw them leap up and rush off like the wind! . . . The disappointment and shock were so great that neither of us fired; besides, they were out of sight in a twinkling.

We were off, too. It was impossible that they could have been disturbed by us; therefore within the bounds of probability that, not having seen us, they might come round and give us a shot. S. took the left; M. the right; and what we had faintly hoped for came to pass. S. had two easy shots, and killed with his second barrel. Meanwhile, M. ran and climbed, helped here and there by the *shikari* in front; suddenly he dropped, and cried, "Shoot!" Over his shoulder M. saw an old grey goat going his best pace, and up with her rifle and had a snap-shot at him. The result was a brilliant fluke; he rolled over like a rabbit. We were too jubilant for words, and the *shikari* was beside himself; M. had now a reputation to which to live up!

Thoroughly pleased with such luck, we partook of some tiffin; after which we climbed to the place where we had first seen the tahr lying down, and from claw-marks and little tufts of hair lying about gathered that probably a leopard had jumped down among them. Also S. thought he saw something; but it all happened in such a flash.

The sky by this time was darkening over, and it became very evident we were in for a bad storm. Down came snow-clouds, mist and sleet, like a solid white wall. One of the *shikaris* knew of a filthy little lean-to used in the summer by goat-herds, to which he led the way. We huddled into a corner of it which leaked less than the rest of the roof, glad to get into shelter at all. It snowed and sleeted hard for a bit, and then, to our relief, cleared off as quickly as it came on; the great masses of cloud driving away before the wind on our left, and the sun beginning to stream over everything on the right.

We left the two tahr's heads to be fetched later, and ourselves walked off and upwards to new ground. From point to point we swept the country with our glasses, but the desolate crags stretched away from us untenanted by life of any sort—no living creature moved upon the slopes. The storm had driven everything, like ourselves, into shelter. So be it. We descended.

If the mountain had been bad to get up, it was a thousand times worse to get down. We were just resting, after a bad bit, when we caught sight of some

tahr actually in the direction of our camp; had the storm not driven us down, we must have missed them. They were on a spur, grazing close to a large white stone, which made a capital mark to guide the stalker.

In a bee-line they were a mile off; but to reach them it was necessary to go down to the bottom of the valley, over the stream and up again, across some very impracticable-looking precipices. With such an incentive we positively rushed down to the bottom, and luckily finding a goat-track up the other side, we got into the right position just about an hour after we first saw the tahr, finding the white stone a great assistance.

S. and M. separated. One tahr was lying under the stone, another was more to the right. M. was to get as near as possible to the former, while he stalked the latter. By dint of excessive caution, she and myself and one *shikari*, advancing about an inch at a time, crept to within about fifteen yards. Leaning forward, we could see the shaggy old goat through a fissure in the rock.

It was the easiest shot in the world, except that the earth we stood on crumbled considerably, and M. was not very steady. She waited some moments to give S. time—moments to hear the heart thump! thump!—then raising the rifle, took a long aim and pulled the trigger. Great goodness!—missed him! The second barrel followed as he bounded off, and apparently missed him again, as he went out of sight

over the cliff. M. looked more like suicide than anything, and the *shikari's* pity was so many coals of fire.

S. had wounded the other tahr; he was hard hit; we followed him up, found him in a corner, and despatched him. Three head in one day was not bad; we regained our spirits, only to send them up mountains high when, on crossing M.'s line of fire, we came on blood marks. Then, after all, she *had* hit him, with her second barrel! Farther on was more blood; then traces of his having rolled to the edge of a steep drop on the cliff side. Kneeling down and stretching over, there we saw him, dead at the bottom. He must have been hit fair; but his own impetus carried him on, and he disappeared from our view before he actually rolled over. One horn was broken off short, but it was found later on; the lower jaw was missing, too. The sun was setting, and we had a bad time getting down over the fast freezing slopes before we eventually reached the somewhat mutilated body of the fallen tahr.

It is hard to imagine anything more grateful and comforting than reaching one's own little tent after a hard day's work; such glorious exercise is worth a caravan-load of doctor's stuff, and does give one an appetite! We had left our tea-bottle in the goat-shed, and had had nothing since to drink except frozen snow—not much of a substitute. In the now sunless ravine it was freezing sharp; we had a big fire of birch logs, which were rather damp, and inclined

to pour volumes of smoke into our tents when a capricious gust set that way. But still it looked very cheery, and threw ruddy gleams into the shades and hollows of the ghostly mountain side on which we were camped.

We had our evening meal inside my tent. In order to keep warm these freezing evenings, the most scratch kit imaginable was raised. Recollect we had marched as light as possible. We slept in all our clothes ; and as we sat down to our meals at night wore woollen gloves, caps, and flannel coats which went over everything.

Thus arrayed, we sat at a little rough camp-table, upon such a slope that we each of us tilted over in our chairs once, before we had learnt the "lay" of things. No cloth on the table, but a large tin teapot, three great teacups, a tin plate, knife and fork each, a cup with butter in it, a cup of sugar, a saucer of salt and another of mustard, and a whisky-bottle. A couple of bedroom candles supplied our light ; these Māmdīn stuck upright on to the table in a pond of their own grease to keep them firm.

But our dinner itself was *recherché* to a degree. As everybody has heard, native cooks can work miracles, producing passable dinners under quite hopeless conditions : so to-night we had mulligatawny soup ; a capon and a hump followed—a really good Bengal hump is hard to beat ; next the inevitable chicken cutlets ; next curried mutton and rice, with (*poppadums*) thin wafers, only seen in the East, and

excellent. A blancmange followed a savoury of sardines, and we wound up with biscuits and cheese.

We sat round the camp afterwards, well wrapped up, talking of our adventures to-day and to-morrow's plans. One of the best parts of travelling consists in all that it gives one afterwards to look back upon.

So with the friends whom death hath spared,
When life's career is done,
We'll talk of the dangers we have shared
And the trophies we have won.

Talking about carelessness and slackness over shooting, almost the same thing which had happened to S. happened to M. while after tahr. She was toiling along, lazily allowing the *shikari* to carry her rifle, when suddenly an ibex appeared on the skyline only about eighty yards from her. He stood perfectly motionless and had a good look. *Tableau!* As he nipped round and was off like a flash, M. dashed at her rifle and had two shots at him. The moral is obvious; but, *cui bono?* As long as human nature lasts the same thing will happen.

I have often wondered how one would define a real sportswoman, and I think any definition should include an appreciation of the free camp life—such as ours. It might run thus: “a fair shot, considering others, and never doing an unsportsmanlike action, preferring quality to quantity in a bag, a keen observer of all animals, and a real lover of nature.”

As we left Chamba we picked up Sphai on the third

or fourth day, and rode him wherever the ground would allow, dismounting and leading him when it became too bad. We went up and down some dangerous and difficult places, and time was apt to breed contempt. One no longer realised how dangerous it was. Many of the paths were barely three feet wide in places, with a cliff above on one side, and a precipice below on the other; they were the roughest tracks, and one came to vast rocks and had to follow a sort of staircase up them, with no proper footing for a horse at all.

It was very nervous work at first, but, as I said, we grew used to it. Descending a steep ravine, I remember, as I rode over a little bridge at the bottom, loosening my short skirt, which had caught up under the saddle. S. was in front, out of sight, with M. Slowly Sphai clambered up the path on the other side until we were nearly at the top. The last little bit was much steeper; on the left a wall of rock rose perpendicularly above our heads, on the right the narrow path broke off into a sheer precipice down to the gorge far below.

Making an effort up the last steep bit, Sphai dug his willing toes into the rock and broke into a jog; at the same time he turned a little across the path, inwards, which, of course, threw his quarters outwards. With one of his hind-feet he loosened a rock at the edge, and his foot went over with it.

It is almost impossible to describe such scenes, even though this one will remain in my memory as long

as I live. *Instantly*—there was no time to think—I felt him turn outwards still more, and *both* his hind-legs were over. In the selfsame moment I threw myself off the saddle on to the path. I do not know—I never shall know—how I did it. I kept hold of the reins, and for a second of time, kneeling on the path, clung to them, Sphai's head on a level with me, his two poor great fore-legs clattering hopelessly on the path, while with his strong hind-quarters he fought for a minute for life, trying to dig his toes into some crevice in the precipice. *It was only for a second.* I was powerless to hold him up. There was not even time to call to S. Right over, backwards, he slowly went, with a long heave. I saw the expression in his poor, imploring eyes. . . .

Picture what it was like to stand there, powerless to help in any way! I rather wished I had gone over too. A hideously long silence—such a *dead* silence—and then two sickening crashes, as he hit rock after rock. A pause, . . . and a long resounding roar from all the rocks and pebbles at the bottom of the gorge.

The shock of what had happened stunned me beyond expression. The whole scene has been a nightmare many a time since. Sphai lay, literally smashed to pieces, down below; and but for the facts that I had just happened to pull out my skirt, and, being on a man's saddle, slipped off at once, the rocky gorge would have held us side by side.



I WAS POWERLESS TO HOLD HIM UP ; RIGHT OVER HE SLOWLY WENT.
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S. went down and afterwards examined with glasses the face of the precipice. The unfortunate horse must have twice struck rocky projections before the fearful and final smash, a short distance from the stream. The perpendicular height was not less than three hundred yards.

I am little tempted to linger over such a scene.

All is over! This is death!
And I stand to see thee die,
Brave old horse!

Rest, old friend! Thy day, though rife
With its toil, hath ended soon;
We have had our share of strife,
Tumblers in the mask of life,
In the pantomime of noon
Clown and pantaloons.

Thou hast fallen to thy rest—
And thy fall is best!

CHAPTER V

KASHMIR

From Dalhousie to Kashmir—Our Start from Gulmerg—Baggage, Caravan, and Retainers—Magnificent Scenery—The Zoji La Pass—Mountaineering in Kashmir—Ascent of the Silver Throne—Glaciers—A Near Shave.

CHAPTER V

KASHMIR

The East is as warm as the light of first hopes,
And Day, with his banner of radiance unfurled,
Shines in through the mountainous portal that opes,
Sublime, from that Valley of Bliss to the world.

MOORE.

Surging sumptuous skies,
For ever a new surprise,
Clouds eternally new,—
Is every flake that flies,
Widening wandering skies,
For a sign—Farewell, Adieu ?

ROSSETTI.

A FEW weeks later, leaving Dalhousie, S. and myself went on to Murree, a spot in which I trust my lines may not fall again ; it is a typical hill station—calls, dances, dinner-parties, day after day, and there is no getting away from one's fellow-man.

In our mind's eye we had long had *Kashmir* as a goal, having been steadily working things towards that end ; and the very thought of leaving Murree in the rains, where we spent most of the day indoors in a thick fog watching the streaming downfall, was almost too good to be true. However, it came at last ; we had made all arrangements with Mr. Dhanjiboy's carrying

agency to take us into Kashmir by *tonga*, the ponies had been sent on ahead, and we had packed all our own effects. Sunday, July 24th, saw us start (the better the day, the better the deed) at 9.30 a.m., in torrents of rain, for our Eldorado, "The Happy Valley."

No traveller in India should miss seeing Kashmir. True, it is said to be spoilt ; it is said not to be what it once was ; but in spite of this it is still one of the most fascinating and most beautiful kingdoms in the world. It is large enough not to be in the least degree over-peopled by the many Europeans who now go in on leave every summer. There are hundreds of places up in the valleys, out of the beaten track, where one might camp for months unmolested by a single fellow-countryman. It is a country which, like everything which is worth caring for at all, grows upon one ; the longer a man is there, the more part of himself it becomes, the harder it is to leave, and the dearer grow those memories which time does not succeed in effacing.

At every stage, that is about six miles, we changed ponies, and our *tonga* rattled into Kohala for tiffin in the *dāk* bungalow. The route into Kashmir follows the valley of the Jhelum, that classical Hydaspes which formed the eastern limits of the conquests of Alexander the Great. He is said to have embarked on it to descend to the Indus.

We first came in sight of the Jhelum at Kohala ; it was very hot down there, after Murree, and quite fine ; a *punkah* was acceptable at tiffin. We were soon

off again, and over the bridge which lands one fairly in the Rajah of Kashmir's dominions.

Only a few weeks before, Mr. Talbot, son of the Resident in Kashmir, Sir Adalbert Talbot, was, at Kohala, bitten by a dog presumably mad. Mr. Talbot had come out from Magdalen College, Oxford, to spend part of the Long Vacation with his people ; but the only thing to be done after this unfortunate catastrophe was for him to return to Europe at once, travelling direct to Paris, and there to undergo the Pasteur treatment.

Rabies is rife in India among the swarms of unclaimed and wild mongrels who act as scavengers in every native village and town, sleeping through the day in dark corners, to emerge at dusk and prowl around all night. The difficulty, after being bitten, is often to get hold of the dog and ascertain whether he is mad or not.

We drove on, stopping at Dulai for tea, and sleeping the first night at Garhi, a hot and steamy place.

The next day we breakfasted at eight, got off at once in our *tonga*, lunched at Uri, and arrived at Baramoula, the entrance of Kashmir, that evening. The drive had been an uneventful one, a hundred and twenty-five miles from Murree ; at first, between brown mountains, the scenery was tame, but as we got higher up it became grander. Now we had heard the last of the *tonga* horn, blown by our driver, as we cantered full tilt round the sharp corners, for many a long day.

Kashmir is an elevated and enclosed valley in the Himalaya Mountains, north of the Punjab. It is surrounded by lofty hills with one opening on the west, at Baramoula, by which flows out from the valley the River Jhelum. In an old Sanscrit history, a copy of which was presented to Akbar when he invaded Kashmir, it is stated that the valley was formerly a lake, and that it was drained by one of the sons of Brahma cutting the gap in the hills at Baramoula.

In the existing physical condition of the country we may see some ground for this story—waterworn pebbles are to be found in the clay and sand, and the ancient name from which Kashmir is derived, “Kasyapa-púr,” is connected with the draining of the lake. The low, level floor of the vale is about eighty-four miles long and twenty-four miles broad ; its mean height is six thousand feet above sea-level.

Much has been said and written about the beauty of the Vale of Kashmir. Spring encircles a fresh, green, smiling valley with a noble belt of glistening, snow-capped mountains. Autumn fills the eye with the wonderful riches of the gloriously coloured foliage. At all times, from end to end of the vale, flows on the quiet, glassy river, reflecting the groves and avenues upon its banks, the craggy hills and the far-off mountains. There is no place, no season, which has not its beauty : the rapturous praises of the Mohammedans, the romances of Moore, may be extravagant ; but, after all, few will dare to deny that fiction is not surpassed by fact.

The climate is one of Kashmir's attractions, for it has not the periodical "rains" of India. The south-west monsoon is shut off by the Pir Panjal range, and rain falls irregularly, chiefly in the spring. Snow hardly falls at all in the valley, and it is never insufferably hot.

The *dāk* bungalow at Baramoula was close to the river; it reminded us of Henley—a great, placid expanse of water. From Kohala to Baramoula the Jhelum is an unnavigable torrent—green waves flecked with foam tumble among boulders and sweep in rapids between high gorges; but above Baramoula its character changes, and on the eighty miles of river in the flat valley there is much boat traffic.

We were beset by natives at every turn, owners of house-boats, anxious to take us up to Srinagar. The river bank was lined with these *kishties*—some smart, big boats, and some of an inferior native pattern. The owners, the *kishty-wallers*, were the greatest curse imaginable. No doubt it is delightful enough to live in a house-boat on the Jhelum, paddled silently along, loafing all over the Vale of Kashmir, into its beautiful lakes and up the smaller rivers; but we turned away at present from *dolce far niente* towards the higher valleys and the mountains. Reason was a thing which the *kishty-wallers* could not see, and they pestered and followed us to such an extent that we were at last driven to pelting them with stones from the river bank, which had an excellent effect.

The next morning S. and I rode off on the ponies,

early, to Gulmerg, high up above Baramoula ; sending our kit by coolies, with whom walked Sala Bux, our own servant, and two *syces*. I had had great doubts before leaving Murree as to whether an *ayah* would be necessary or not ; I was thankful afterwards not to be hampered with one. An *ayah* cannot walk ; she is bound to ride. Supposing you wish to go over country which is impracticable for mules, coolies will carry your kit ; but it is annoying to be obliged to have four extra coolies to carry a servant. Moreover, as one is travelling with little or no luggage to speak of, an *ayah* is not wanted to pack and unpack. In a tent, what is there for her to superintend ?—dust ? My own experience of one on a march was that she was always behind or in difficulties on the road ; that she arrived at night tired, grumbling, and useless ; and was, in fact, out of temper from the time she left our own compound until the evening we arrived back again.

Sala Bux did all I wanted, as far as getting hot water and calling me went ; he made my bed, brushed my clothes, cleaned my boots, and packed my bedding. His head was filled with something other than brains, certainly ; but he was a well-intentioned fool.

We left the central vale behind, and began climbing the slopes of the mountains which immediately shut it in on the south-west. Below, the green, flat expanse stretching into the distance looked like a ready-made hunting-country, and after brown Murree the fresh verdure of the crops, the grass, little trees and hedges,

were refreshing beyond words. It looked, as it is, the land of fruit—a land in whose rich soil you have only to plant your walking-stick for it to grow.

The sleepy, blue Jhelum wound through it like a ribbon laid upon the flat. All round the valley were mountains, grey and wooded up to a certain line, and above that line white, dazzling snow. In the afternoon we reached Gulmerg by a path through the forests—a steady ascent from Baramoula ; we had come up into the clouds, too, and it was raw and chilly. Our path eventually opened out into an open space or *merg*, and here it is that the English in Kashmir yearly congregate, when the valleys below are supposed to be hot and full of mosquitos, living in wooden huts, or in tents, round the edge of the *merg* under the pines.

It is an odd little settlement. Soft, short turf—in colour positively a *poisonous* green, it was so vivid—carpeted this little basin in the forest, two or three paths intersected it, an ugly church in the middle a good deal spoilt it, on one side was the polo-ground and club, on the other the golf-links, and all round, under the trees at the edge, were the little huts, where everybody was living a picnic life, with their ponies tethered outside. The Resident's house was at one end, the wooden hotel at the other, to which we went, for tents did not look inviting in the mist and rain.

We had bad weather at Gulmerg. We were not golfers ; it was too wet to get much polo ; and consequently the place palled more than it ought to have done, considering how hospitable everybody was. We

had a dance and concert at the hotel, we dined out and attended tea-parties, and we went in for a gymkana and a horse show ; after which festivities we repaired to the native bazaar, and, seated on a packing-case with paper and pencil, spent an afternoon buying stores, cooking-pots, and crockery (enamelled tin), bargaining over everything with an exorbitant native, till we were supplied with the necessaries of camp life. Our outfit ready, and having had a last dinner with Captain and Mrs. Fred Davies in their hut, we left one morning with many adieus to all our kind friends at the hotel.

We rode straight down to the vale, into warmth and sunshine, leaving damp and verdant Gulmerg, buried in its mists and forest, two thousand feet above us. Across the vale we made our way to Soper, on the Jhelum once more, and arrived at the *dāk* bungalow about 6.30 p.m. We had a long, weary wait (with nothing to eat) for our kit, the coolies being slow ; and when at last they arrived, Sala Bux was still behind with the keys of the padlocks on the leather kilters in which all our rations were stored. His reception was sultry. Finally, we had a scratch meal in the dark, outside the bungalow in which we slept—cocoa, tinned soup, tinned sausages, and stewed peaches. The mosquitos down by the river were not so bad as might have been expected, but it was hot. This was, however, our last night under a roof for many weeks.

We engaged a cook and a *shikari* at Soper. The cook was a big, bearded, capable-looking fellow ; the

shikari Lalla proved to be a plausible old villain. Kashmiris are not show-specimens among mankind: lazy, cunning, liars; if they constitute, as people say, remnants of part of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, who would be an Israelite? They are certainly Jewish-looking—dark, with hooked noses.

We were inundated with competitors for the two posts; but the cook we chose, and Lalla, had both of them better *chits* than the rest. Natives have the most extraordinary faith in *chits*—that is, written testimonials as to character from old masters. Dismiss a man, cut his pay, punish him as you like, but—*give him a chit*. Though he cannot, probably, read a word of what you have written, he looks upon it as a talisman. A native handed us a *chit* from a former master, a Captain-sahib, with immense pride; it ran thus: “This man surpasses all other Kashmiris for rascality and cunning.”

By law of the State, no European can buy land and build himself a house in Kashmir, consequently travellers all use tents or house-boats, or rent a log hut in a place like Gulmerg. The admission of British visitors used to be limited, and permission was granted to military officers by the Government of India. In like manner more than eight hundred years ago, as we learn from Arabic histories, the passes used to be watched, and few outsiders admitted.

Connected with this long-cherished exclusiveness is the non-existence of roads of any sort. Picture a country in which there are nothing but paths and

foot-bridges, and in which, consequently, the whole of the transport is done either by coolies or mules. A mule carries a hundred and sixty pounds, and can manage two tents; whereas it takes two coolies to carry one. Coolies are four annas a march, ponies are twelve; consequently mules or ponies are cheaper and also much quicker; we hired them from the villages whenever we could. Marches average from ten to twelve miles a day.

Next day we were off, with our caravan, consisting of three eighty-pound tents, one of which was for the servants; leather kilters containing cooking-pots and pans, tinned meats, soups, flour, raisins, biscuits, cocoa, tea, jams, etc.; a table, chairs, beds, tin bath, gun-cases, cartridge-boxes, our own two trunks, bedding, and etceteras, among which must not be forgotten a kerosene oil-tin. Who has ever been seen upon a march without one? The track of the Britisher across the East is marked by soda-water bottles and kerosene oil-tins. Servants will pack your most cherished possessions in these tins: they become bread-pans, cake-boxes, *all* your hot water is boiled in them, milk is kept in them, your trunks are patched, your carts are mended, your rotting sheds are roofed, all with pieces of this ubiquitous friend.

Our object was to go up the Sind Valley to the Zoji La Pass; and two days' march round the Wular Lake found us at Manasbal, near the mouth of the valley. We left the "road to Gilgit" on our left, which history has made so familiar; the name alone conjures

up visions of the Chinese frontiers, of the Hindu Kush, the Pamirs and Turkestan.

It was hot riding along down below, and we found the apples and pears we picked in dozens on the edge of the path a great blessing. We each selected the drink we would like to summon—I forget what—but it was something very long and sparkling, with ice tinkling in the glass. All day long we skirted the Wular Lake, an unruffled green stretch, marsh and water, perhaps ten miles long and six broad, covered with water-lily and lotus leaves, rather like the Norfolk Broads. The sunset over the leaves, the reflexions, and the crimsons and saffrons on the oily water, were something to remember.

The Sind Valley quite fulfilled all our expectations : the trees were luxuriant ; giant planes—the chenar—with trunks the size of small houses, poplars, willows, cypresses, walnuts, apples, pears, quinces, apricots, cherries, mulberries ; there were acres of saffron, with its beautiful purple light flowers, grown in fields ; higher up we were among deodars, hazels, birches, virburnum, junipers, roses. And beneath all these trees the path wound, close to the beautiful, rocky Sind River, which rose far away up among the snow.

At Kangan, our next camp, S.'s *syce*, a Madras boy named "Mary," suddenly appeared with a fine lamb in his arms, which he suggested we should buy and have for dinner in two hours' time ! It was purchased for half a crown and slain, and was acceptable after incessant ducks and chickens—these are to be

bought from any village at twopence or fourpence each. Our cook made us *chupattis* of Indian corn, which were not bad hot; Mary proved to be quite a laundress: altogether our staff might have been worse; Lalla was chief counsellor and guide, and was very anxious to be off shooting.

As we neared the top of the valley the scenery grew more grand, and our last day's ride was one series of glories and surprises, wild, fantastic views opening up continually. A steady ascent among rocks and pines led us to a narrow gorge—ridges of grey crags towering above each other in similar construction on either side, deodars growing from every crevice in the walls, range above range dark with pines and topped with threatening peaks of everlasting snow.

Our camp that night was at Sonamerg, once a great summer resort for English people, but now deserted in favour of Gulmerg. No longer a narrow gorge, the Sind Valley suddenly opens out into broad, rolling meadows enclosed by mountains of grand outline. *Sonamerg* means *Golden Meadow*; and in the spring yellow crocuses thickly stud the pasture. Rivulets pour down from the surrounding snows and keep the broad *merg* green and fresh through the summer heat, and knee-deep in grass and flowers.

We had for days been gradually ascending, and were now 8,650 feet above sea-level, which is, I suppose, the pleasantest midsummer elevation in Kashmir. The air was soft, the vegetation luxuriant;



SONAMERG.

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it was a land of pastures and woods below, of snow, rocks, and ice above. The hillsides were covered with blue, yellow, and purple blossoms, tossing their heads in the breeze; higher still, above the tree-zone, glittering glaciers were wedged between the barren crags, and the long, gaunt ribs of the mountains sustained fields of snow.

Our tents were soon up, at the edge of this mountain-locked *merg*; our unpacking quickly done. Having probably found our set of teacups in my long boots, a cake of soap hidden in a coat-sleeve, and my collars wrapped round a cream cheese which we got in Gulmerg (such were the vagaries of Sala Bux), we had guns often to look to, perhaps something to sketch, always diaries to be written up, while we lounged in the shade—those lazy afternoons. . . . Home letters had to be written—"Home," which 'plays such a large part out in India, and is the final goal of every Englishman's hopes and plans. Even we idle globe-trotters could not forget, and could realise a little that it might be possible to write—

Oh the toil that knows no breaking!
Oh the *Heimweh*, ceaseless aching!
Oh the black dividing sea and alien plain!

As soon as the servants had it ready, we dined on our camp-table under the trees, and afterwards strolled about, watching the sun sink behind the desolate ridges outlined by a long, thin saw-edge of black fir-tree. For a brief half-hour the cold snows were crimsoned,

and then night was upon us, for there is no twilight. Back to the camp and the bright fire, by which the servants appeared to sit murmuring and talking all night.

To avoid the trouble of light, and with a view to making early starts, we went to bed about eight in the evening. Those who only know what it is to sleep under a roof between four walls, think of the night as a thing apart from themselves—comfortless, dark, and to be avoided; they have yet to learn what it is to be *of* it and *in* it—to sleep, as the French so happily put it, “*à la belle étoile.*”

Lie in your tent with the flap tied back; look straight out into the country, restful, comforting darkness all round, the black, shadowy tree-trunks standing up like dark ghosts, caught sometimes by the fitful flicker of the camp-fire; a tree-beetle drones occasionally; an apple falls with a thud on your tent; overhead the beloved stars of your far-off home, the Plough and the Pole-star, gleam brightly. One is never “alone”: all around is “a voiceless yearning that is surely prayer; life’s strange, dumb cry to Nature in her pain.” The silence is full of sound . . . the immediate world, breathing close at hand, is only part of that great world which sleeps, toils, and sorrows from the east unto the west.

Once and once only in the night Nature awakes, as all those who have lived with her know. About two o’clock in the morning the cocks crow, the birds chirp, the ponies and cows stray round the camp,

rub against the tent-ropes and munch a little, the sheep and goats on the hills change their ground. Nature rouses up, turns over, and falls asleep again. And you yourself sleep, until you wake to find a wan light breaking over everything, and a shivering breeze stirring the grey grass—dawn! Dawn, and a cold freshness everywhere and dew on everything!

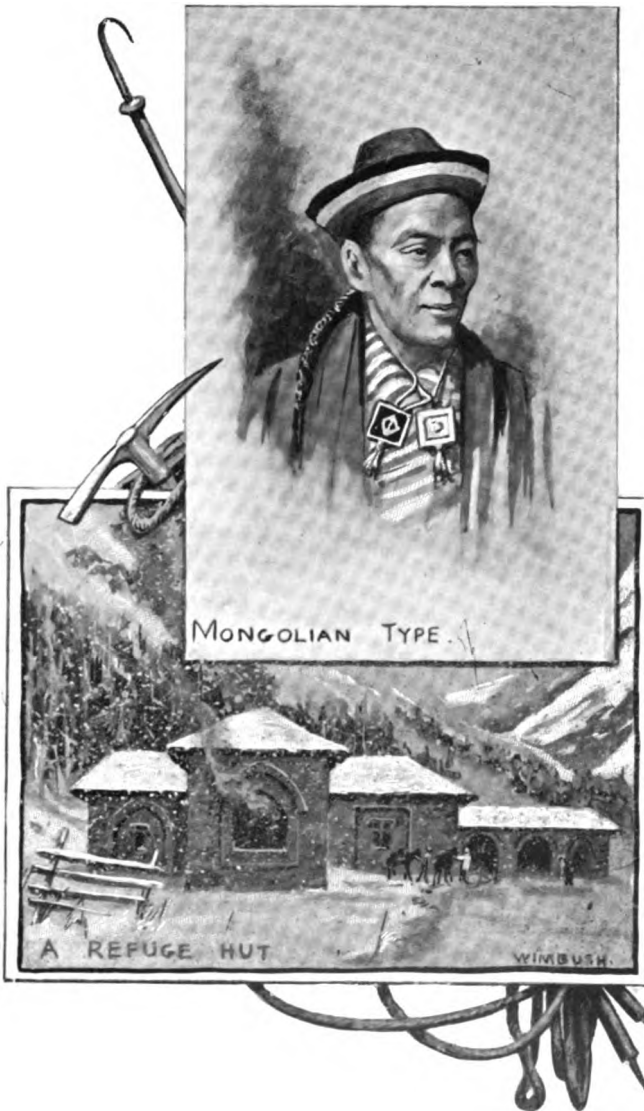
We decided to spend a day in going over the Zoji La Pass, which is some miles beyond Sonamerg; and on the following morning, making an early start, rode up the valley, past the picturesque little native village of Sonamerg, following the banks of the Sind River, cantering over the soft turf. We crossed the river continually by the well-known Kashmir bridges, which are only a few feet wide, with no hand-rails, and generally full of holes. Rope-bridges are largely used; but when anything is wanted strong enough for a mule, the Kashmiris have built from time immemorial on the cantilever system—that is to say, in their rough and narrow bridges of a single span the supporting timbers project one over another from the bank, their shore ends being weighted down with masonry. They are of great antiquity, and are said to have suggested the Forth Bridge.

A certain amount of mystery and reverence surrounds the name alone—*Zoji La*; though only 11,500 feet high, it has a bad reputation for icy gales and sudden snowstorms. Last winter this treacherous pass was responsible for three hundred mules and drivers, who were overtaken and perished in the

deadly cold. The Zoji La is a sort of gate in the vast range of the Western Himalayas, which includes Nanga Parbat (26,620 feet high) ; it is a gigantic step—over two thousand feet—by which one rises from Kashmir up on to the table-lands of Thibet. It divides the dominions of the Rajah of Kashmir into two nearly equal portions, in which the climate is different, and the race and religion of the inhabitants are different. On the one side sunny Kashmir, the Aryan race and the Mohammedan religion ; on the other the bleak wastes of Central Asia, the Mongolian race and the Buddhist religion.

The valley of Sonamerg ends in Baltal, at the foot of the pass. Baltal, a collection of three or four rough stone huts clustered together, forms a refuge for *dák-wallers*, and for the Ládákis and Dards bringing droves of baggage-mules across the pass. English sportsmen, too, cross over every year into Ládák directly the pass is practicable, and many a one has known what it is to be snowed up at Baltal. Game, in these bad days, is only to be found within reduced areas in Kashmir, and so one is driven farther afield in search of the much coveted *márhór*, *ovis ammon*, *ovis poli*, *yák*, etc.

It was sleeting a little, and we went into the largest hut, where there was a fire on the mud floor of damp birch logs, and a suffocating smoke in which we coughed and wept. Some stunted Dras coolies or the ugly Mongolian type were squatting round it. Outwardly they compare to disadvantage with the



MONGOLIAN TYPE.

A REFUGE HUT

WIMBUSH.

handsome Kashmiris ; but there is no question which are the better men of the two.

The storm clearing off, we were only too glad to get out of the "man-stifled" hut and, leaving our own ponies behind, to begin our climb up the pass. There is a summer and a winter route across the Zoji La : the first zigzags up the valley, a long and tedious climb, at first through birch-trees and flowers, giving place to deodars and rhododendrons, and ending in bare crags ; the second route lies straight up the gully on vast snow glaciers, and is dangerous in the summer ; the swollen torrent below wears away great tunnels and cavities, above which the gradually decreasing snow roof becomes very treacherous, and if ventured upon, a risk is run of falling through to inevitable death.

We clambered slowly up the zigzag path, and met a great "caravan" of *yáks* carrying salt and wood. Exports from Ládák are small ; but the transit trade is a large one. Everything from the Punjab, Afghanistan, and Kashmir—cotton, skins, silk, and tea—has to pass through Leh, the capital of Ládák, on its way to Eastern Turkestan and Chinese Thibet ; while raw silk, silver, gold, *charas*, and horses come back in return from Turkestan to India—a trade which, registered at Leh, averages £134,000.

The whole of it is carried by coolies, *yáks*, or ponies, over the Zoji La and other more difficult passes, often eighteen thousand feet high ; and it is further hampered by the exclusive policy of China and Russia.

The *yâk* is an extraordinarily sure-footed beast, and can be ridden, or will carry transport, over ground which even a mule could not cross. He is about fourteen hands, or rather less as a rule, has black, shaggy hair, which hangs in heavy masses nearly to the ground, so that one can hardly see daylight under an old bull in his winter coat. His bushy tail is much prized in India for switching away flies. He has a thick, muscular neck, high withers like a hump, a broad, massive forehead, and finely curved horns, short, thick legs, and large hoofs. He has been immortalised thus :—

As a playmate for children remember the *yâk* ;
 You will find him exactly the thing.
 He can carry and fetch ; you can ride on his back,
 Or lead him about by a string.

The Tartar who lives on the plains of Thibet,
 A desolate region of snow,
 Has for centuries made him his nursery-pet—
 And *surely* the Tartar should know.

So ask your papa where a *yâk* may be got,
 And if he be *awfully rich*
 He will buy you the creature—or else he will *not* ;—
 I cannot be positive which !

It grew distinctly colder as S. and I steadily struggled upwards, and when at last we were well in the funnel of the pass the wind *whistled*. The barren region beyond the Zoji La is fascinating to an extraordinary degree. Central Asia, with its desert wastes, its freezing blasts and burning sun, has indeed a fitting entrance in that sunburnt and sorrowful pass. The

desolate outside pines we had climbed through, stripped of their bark and blanched by the weather, were a fit foreground to a scene that can hardly be surpassed in solemn grandeur.

Wastes of stone and sand surrounded us ; far in the veiled distance must lie "The Forbidden Land," and the impenetrable Lhasa which has beckoned many a traveller, like the Lorelei of old. Around us were heights unnoticed, unnumbered, unnamed ; neither were we drawn to explore these prehistoric lumps ; no earth or grass covered the naked skeletons ; the vastness and nakedness of the piles of *débris*, the shattered rocks, the ice-worn stones, formed one of earth's saddest pictures.

No wonder that mountains have been, and are still, worshipped as gods which are "too great to appease, too high to appal, too far to call." For, after all, Nature is "the true quickener of emotion, the awakener of thought, the background and abode of man, the analyser of the human mind, and the vehicle or subject of human intercourse."

We walked on through the pass until we came to the point where the streams ran away from us toward Thibet. We were beyond the roof-ridge. The descent on the other side was scarcely noticeable, for Ládák and Balti lie very high. The climate there is intensely dry, the sun's rays very hot, and the afternoon winds are piercingly cold, while, except in summer, it freezes every night. It is a barren, dreary country.

The Ládákis, Baltis, and Dards are hardy, simple, clumsy people, dirty (washing, it is said, once a year, but not regularly), and fond of social gatherings; they play polo. They are beardless, with rather flat noses. In Ládák polyandry is general.

The widespread prestige of China is curiously illustrated by the fact that tribute, though disguised as a present, is paid to her for Ládák by the Rajah of Kashmir. It must be understood that the actual Valley of Kashmir is only a *small* part of the whole State, which includes Gilgit, Baltistán, Kishtwar, Jamu, and Ládák.

We waded through two ice-water streams, cold beyond all description, which tumbled down from the snows above; and we clambered over a great glacier many tens of yards thick. A stream ran underneath the glacier, and we stood in the cave formed by it as it went in, a cool cavern, a real "ice-house," with its shining, shingly floor, its blue-green sides and roof, ribbed and polished and wet—the coldest place in the world. In the shades at the end of the cavern, by tortuous windings where the torrent had eaten its way, it boiled along, thundering to itself far away in the heart of the glacier, after it had disappeared in the sinuosities of the walls,—

Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.

The wind outside was deliciously dry and bracing, even if it *was* cold. As Euripides said of the Athenians,

so were we "ever delicately treading through most pellucid air." All idea of distance was most curiously lost by the atmospheric effect, and mountains eighty miles away might actually be taken for hillocks forty yards off, and *vice versa*. It was extraordinary.

Time was getting on, and with regret we had to turn our backs upon Ládák, and set our faces once more towards the valley of Kashmir. Thousands of feet beneath us lay the green slopes of Sonamerg, dotted with cattle: there were deodar forests, black and gloomy, bounding waterfalls and tranquil pools; it was indeed "a glorious upper world," in which one found more than one had ever dared hope for.

We were tempted to camp longer at Sonamerg and explore some of the mountains; but had not sufficient time. Colonel and Mrs. M. and two friends of theirs were doing exactly what we *should* have done, near Haramuk; and a short account of one of their days, told me by Mrs. M., of an expedition up a peak, illustrates another of the resources of Kashmir.

The little mountaineering party consisted of two men and two women. Three of them had climbed more or less in the Alps, and one of their servants, a Ghoorka, "Chowry" by name, was almost equal to a guide.

"We had two tents carried up to the south-east of Haramuk, to the west of the Sind Valley, and pitched about nine thousand feet high on a barren but sheltered little plateau before a steep cliff. A couple of natives cooked for us, and another two kept going backwards

and forwards to the nearest village for supplies. Of course we had our own commissariat too—tinned meats, tea, coffee, chocolate, raisins, soup tablets, condensed jelly, and so on. We all wore "*puttoo*"—thick woollen Kashmir homespun : a long coat and knickers are the only suitable and *safe* garments for women to climb in, whether shooting ibex or anything else on the mountains. It was bitterly cold, and water froze inside our tents.

"We had a great fright one night after a fall of snow. About midnight we were suddenly awakened: there came from far aloft a tremendous explosion, followed by a second or two of dead quiet. A great mass of rock must have split off and was thundering down towards us. Some one started up, wringing his hands and crying 'O my God! we are lost!' We heard it coming, mass after mass pouring over the precipices, bounding and rebounding from cliff to cliff, great rocks in advance smiting one another. It seemed close; it was probably some distance off.

"Early one morning, before the sun had risen, we started on an expedition, fortified with some hot coffee under the cold stars, which we drank standing round the camp-table. Its legs were frozen to the grass outside my tent, our usual rendezvous; feeling at that early hour rather cross and very much 'martyrs,' we set forth.

"To-day was reserved for the ascent of the 'Silver Throne'—a peak christened by G., a poetical lady; it

was one of the highest within our reach, and singularly beautiful amongst the ocean of mountains around us. The peaks were soft and sharp as the sun rose ; even the shadowed parts were radiant with reflected light more brilliant than man could depict. The sunlight, as it moved along, revealed the delicate ripple of lines which marked the waves of drifted snow and the concealed crevasse.

“ It was another of those cloudless mornings ; in our sunless, misty climate in England it is difficult to realise the influence which persistent fine, cold weather exercises on the spirits. We followed a goat-track for some time, but quitted it when it bore away to the east, and struck off across the moraine.

“ It was a desolate waste of gigantic rocks, hard work to climb across ; but ‘ *toil and pleasure,*’ says Livy, ‘ *in their nature opposite, are yet linked together in a kind of necessary connection,*’ and we clambered on across this fringe of the edge of the great glacier above us. Now and again between the *débris* of rock we looked down into a fissure filled with the blue-green light of ice, and showing what lay below the moraine.

“ Leaving it altogether, we struck out across the glacier itself. Here we decided that it was advisable that we should be roped. As events showed, it was by no means a needless precaution ; we none of us knew the country, and though our two “menkind,” H. and F., were experienced mountaineers, it is not like having a local guide. H. went first, G. second, Chowry third, myself fourth, and F. fifth. Thus the female

element was divided by our clever little Ghoorka servant, and we had a good man last. The chief thing to recollect, when roped, is to keep it taut between each person ; they should be at intervals of about fifteen feet apart.

“ We had each brought into Kashmir with us an ice-axe and an alpenstock, or more. Our climb began now, and we followed each other in a straight line up the centre of the glacier. We did no talking, keeping our mouths shut to stave off thirst. Suddenly I heard an exclamation, and saw, to my horror, the last of G. disappearing through a little rotten place in the ice, headlong into a hidden crevasse.

“ The strain came upon H. and Chowry, and they met it as one man. G. was soon hauled out. Our efforts to peer into the gloomy cleft were baffled by the curvature of the smooth, polished ice-walls of the fissure, which sank into the bowels of the glacier. Thank Heaven, we had been roped !—the crust of ice over which H. and G. had walked was indeed thin.

“ By-and-by we turned on to a steep bank of snow, frozen hard on the top, up which we slowly zig-zagged—very slowly, for H. had to cut steps in it the whole way, and it was not the sort of place to be careless on. As we rose higher and higher and turned some corners, a slip on that glassy slope from one of us would probably have dragged the whole party to destruction. I often think it is unwise to be roped in places of this description.

“ We were by this time a great height up, and could



A MOUNTAINEERING PARTY NEAR HARAMUK.

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at last see Nanga Parbat ; it was a grand view upon a grand day. Beneath our feet the glacier swept proudly from us in beautiful and satisfying curves, turning corner after corner, then draping itself in its dark moraine and vanishing in the distance. Blue, fringed icicles hung in fantastic forms from the ice-bound rocks around us ; the black ribs of the mountain piercing the snow were singularly decorative.

“ Mountain-climbing grows strangely upon one. You may hardly care for it at first ; but if the fascination ever comes, it will last with your life. The scenery responds to your every mood. It is, to begin with, the acme of repose, and repose is one of the greatest latent forces in the world ; it is also the expression of form and line in their most soul-satisfying sense ; and it is, in Asia at any rate, far removed beyond the reach of man to spoil.

“ The solemn heights embody the strong and the abiding—those ‘ everlasting hills ’ ; the weird crags are peopled by the ghosts of fancy ; the quiet wastes of snow speak with unearthly voices. Here, at last, the still, sad music of humanity can never weary, nor the sordid stream of life stain.

“ Five little black dots in the midst of leagues and leagues of snow and ice, we continued our climb, till we were at the top of a ridge. To reach our peak we had to make a sharp descent, then bear away to the right over a level plateau, and finally ascend the west side of our peak by an *arête*.

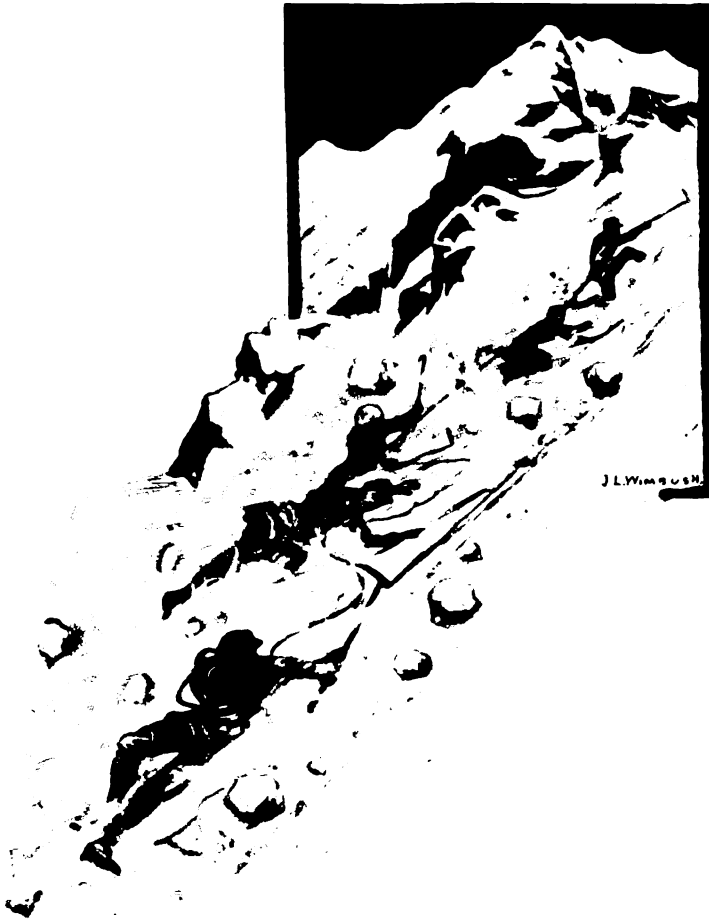
“ Our shortest way lay down a snow *couloir*—that is,

nothing more nor less than a gully partly filled with snow, often a most useful institution, and the joy of the mountaineer. *Couloirs* look prodigiously steep when seen from the front, but snow does not actually lie steeper in them than in other places ; this one was like a half section of a sloping chimney, grooved with the passage of stones down it.

“A daring leader is a dangerous thing. F. pronounced our best way to lie down the *couloir*, and taking H.'s place, cut footholes for our descent. It certainly was steep. We were going cautiously, moving one at a time, when suddenly we heard ‘*Crack!*’ and all our hearts stood still. H., just above me, said quietly, ‘We’re done for!’ The snow had cracked across just above us, at first only a gape of half an inch ; but now the crust of the lower half was slowly beginning to slide downwards, and away we went on it.

“‘Stop!’ we all shouted instantaneously, dashing our axes into the underlying ice. They slid over the hard surface fruitlessly. ‘Stop!’ thundered F., again and again hewing at the ice. But there was no stopping. Slowly at first, faster and faster every moment, we flew down the *couloir* on our avalanche, driving up clouds of snow in front of it. *Was this the end?*

“The *couloir*, however, turned a corner before it reached the bottom, where a wide terrace ended in a precipice. We all saw that our only chance lay in the angle, and shouting ‘Jump!’ we all threw ourselves,



WE FLEW DOWN THE *COULOIR* ON OUR AVALANCHE,
DRIVING UP CLOUDS OF DUST IN FRONT OF IT.

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or sprang, or fell, off the moving snow, against the rocks, into the corner; while on rushed the young avalanche—a mad glissade—down the *couloir*, across the flat, and over—out of sight—below—where we might easily have been lying. . . .

“Having waited till we were steady, we turned into the *couloir* once more, and reaching the flat terrace, we left it on our left. The next snow-field was soon crossed; and then followed the last bit and the worst bit—a steep, rocky *arête*. Here F. led again, followed by Chowry, and they literally hauled G. and myself up after them. The ridge was completely shattered by frost into nothing more than a heap of piled-up fragments. It was always narrow, and where it was narrowest it was also most unstable and most difficult. We could not ascend it by keeping below the crest, because it was too steep, and if we had sent down one stone, all those above would have tumbled down too; we were therefore forced to keep to the crest of the ridge, and, unable to deviate a single step either to the right or to the left, we were compelled to trust unsteady masses, which trembled under our tread, settled down, and grated in a hollow and ominous way, seeming as though a little shake would send the whole crumbling down in an awful avalanche.

“But the top was not far off now. We came to a block which was poised across the ridge, with a gap beyond. We climbed the block, finding it very unsteady, and were faced by a broadish jump to the

top of the next crag, which would evidently sway horribly. There was no shame in allowing we were beaten. We went back, and eventually managed to creep round beneath both rocks ; but it was the hardest bit of climbing that day.

“ At last the rocks were left behind ; we all stood, panting, at the top ; then almost a run up an easy slope of snow to the summit of all things, and the Silver Throne was ours ! Around us and beneath us and on every side were sombre, solemn mountain-peaks, glittering walls, turrets, pinnacles, pyramids, domes, cones and spires of ice and snow, ‘ every combination that the world can give, and every contrast that the heart can desire.’ We could not linger long, hard though it was to leave. Having eaten some kola biscuits and chocolate, we began to descend by a different route. It proved to be more difficult than the other way, and, worse still, we had no time to spare to come very slowly.

“ The rocky *arête* gave place to an ice-slope tully a thousand feet long, across which we moved, as quickly as H., who was once more in front, could cut steps. To save time we managed with as few as possible, and I, for one, fully expected an accident. It came ! The nails in H.’s boots had grown rounded and smooth ; he suddenly slipped and went flying forwards. I wildly embraced a handy little knob, and the rest clung somehow—somewhere—with axes and finger-nails. Taut came the rope with an awful strain—it was an unpleasant moment. We were heading

diagonally across the slope, and as we held H. by the rope, he swung to and fro like a pendulum, and finally came to anchor, spread-eagled against the icy face.

“He was quite cool—kept hold of his axe, cut himself footholes, and got back into his place once more. A short time after we were safely off the slope, to our horror a mist came over the mountains, and quickly thickened, blotting out all traces of our whereabouts. It was impossible to go on. O ye immortal gods! where were we?”

“However, only a quarter of an hour was passed in despair; shapes began to loom in front of us, and the clouds blew off. Taking to our feet once more, we began to surmount the second ridge; it proved to be slippery rock, and our advance was slow and tedious. The heat at the end of the long afternoon was growing unbearable; there was plenty of air up above, and now and then a refreshing puff quickened us for the moment into life, but for the most part we seemed to be in complete aerial stagnation.

“Was life worth living then? It seemed intolerable. We sucked ice to allay our thirst, and only grew more thirsty.

“I longed to cast away my alpenstock, to abandon everything, as I mechanically struggled on, caring for nothing, observing nothing, only dimly conscious of the gloomy depths below, floored by cold, hard glaciers, rent with fathomless crevasses. In a dull dream one pictured the ice-steps giving way, and speculated in

which crevasse, after falling—falling—falling, one would find oneself.

“Thank Goodness! the breezy summit brought a reaction, and with the wind in our faces we prepared for the last descent. Putting our ‘best foot’ foremost, we hurried down the slope and over the crisp ice, having unroped. Unexpectedly we came across some awkward corners, which had to be circumvented with care.

“I recollect so well, once, on much the same sort of day, we were almost running down the last mile or so into camp, when a bit of bad ground was encountered. I held on to the rock with my right hand, and with my left prodded at the snow with the point of my alpenstock, until I had made a fairly good step. Getting carefully round the rock and standing on the one step, I began to do the same for my other foot, and so on.

“The other members of the party were, one following me, the other crossing higher up. Suddenly, in trying to pass the extreme point of the corner, the snow-steps gave way—I slipped and fell. It was upon a steep snow-slope that this took place, at the head of a long, narrow gully. The gully ended in a couple of buttresses leading down to the valley—a great drop—below.

“Of course I was whirled down the snow-slope at once, fully thinking that the end had come. All sorts of little, trivial thoughts came into my head, I lost my stick and pitched on the head of the gully, then



THE LAST GREAT BOUND SPUN ME THROUGH THE AIR THIRTY FEET.

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tumbled off the edge of it, bounding down the slope in great leaps. Luckily it was snowy, and not very hard falling. But the last great bound spun me through the air thirty feet, and landed me at full length on my left side, half buried in snow, on a spot where the slope was less steep, but uncomfortably near the edge of the gully and the precipice. I believe I fainted at that point. At any rate, it was a useful lesson, and not forgotten on the present occasion.

“As we tramped downwards, glorious lights and colours were playing upon that most beautiful of mountains—Haramuk. We longed to turn round, to linger, and to enjoy. The sun set behind the gap at Baramoula, sending its brilliant light sweeping over the Wular Lake and bathing Haramuk in glory. Our long shadows hurried before us apace, as though they would hasten towards the wondrous East. Gradually the valley was steeped in purple shadow, the snows lost their fiery tinge, and night came on apace.

“Was that the blue smoke of our camp-fire? Not long, and we were back in our tents, realising, as one does at the end of a real hard day, such content as is given to few, and to them but seldom in any lifetime.

“And over those drinks which are reserved for the faithful, we vowed that Kashmir is the country to visit, that mountain-climbing is a game worth the candle.”

CHAPTER VI

FOURTEEN THOUSAND FEET HIGH

**Yem Sar Pass — Marmots — In a House-boat —
Srinagar—Suffering Moses—Shalimār Bāgh —
Woman as a Traveller—In Camp Again—Native
Servants—Black Bears—NoLuck—Pine-martens.**

CHAPTER VI

FOURTEEN THOUSAND FEET HIGH

The glaciers creep
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slowly rolling on ; there, many a precipice
Frost and the sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled—dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of gleaming ice.

SHELLEY.

ALL this time S. and I were getting no shooting, one of the reasons for which you will find in Colonel Ward's book on Kashmir. Against July, August, and September it is written that these months are the worst three in all the year for sport in that country, there being little else but bears to be had. There was just a chance of a *bara singh*, too. We decided to get away westward, back into the country near Soper, taking on our way Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir. Having come up the Sind Valley, we should see fresh country by going back down the Lidder Valley, and it was possible to cross from the head of the one to the other by the pass over Yem Sar, but this route is not to be recommended to any inactive individual.

We left Sonamerg on September 1st, and rode

down the Sind Valley to Koolan, where we found the vast paraphernalia of the Resident's camp. Sir Adalbert Talbot and party were on their way up to Sonamerg, and, luckily for us, happened to have come up the Lidder and across by the Yem Sar Pass; thereby making things plain sailing for us, every inch of the road having been doctored religiously in view of the advent of so *élite* a party. Their great camp itself, under the chenars, looked more like an imposing fair than any other spectacle, with its tents of all shapes and sizes, and of all hues. There were tents to sleep in, to breakfast in, to sit in, and to dine in. As for their colossal caravan of mules and baggage, it seemed endless, and, beginning to meet the vanguard at Sonamerg, we continued to pass it on the path for several miles, and at last left the rearguard behind not far from Koolan. It blocked our little transport considerably, and one of our poor mules, laden, was pushed over the edge of the path and thrown into the river below in trying to pass the string of mules coming up, which were also laden.

After the baggage we got into the stream of personal servants, and met mounted flocks of beridged and befrilled *ayahs* astride on mules, accompanied by apathetic males in gorgeous uniforms, carrying their hookahs and chattering of "*pice* and rice"—the sole topic of native conversation (money and food). These were followed by cooks, cooks' mates, *bhittis*, sweepers, servants of every caste. Last of all we met Sir

Adalbert and the two Misses Talbot, with three or four other English people, bearing a supply of cameras, and with heaps of information for us about the road. We should find it almost impracticable from this side, was the gist thereof. In view of this, we sent our own ponies straight on to Srinagar by the Sind route, with their *syces*—Mary, Jorm, and Sedju; ourselves hiring *tats* from Koolan to go up to Yem Sar and across to Lidderwat.

We camped at Koolan, and the next morning had tents and all packed by 6.30 a.m. on nine ponies, and had started on the great ascent. It took us four hours to do seven miles, which gives some idea of the steepness of the path. It was not only steep, but terribly slippery with rain, and riding was quite out of the question. I held on to my pony's long, grey tail, and she towed me up a great part of the way; the baggage had several times to be taken off the ponies, and carried for some distance by panting, sweating coolies.

We topped the Sind Valley at last; deodar forests, moss, and muddy channels were left behind; we struck out across open mountain. Clouds kept coming round us, and showers of rain. Our camp that night at Yem Sar was in a memorable spot. I see inscribed in my diary, "Opened a bottle of brandy." (I remember it *was* cold.) We were close to a little snow-water tarn, steel-blue, reflecting the glaciers and rocky peaks, which rose abruptly in sheer walls of shale and ice from the water's edge. We were up at a height of about

fourteen thousand feet, and we warmed our backs with satisfaction at a great wood fire outside the tents, a wonderful moon glimmering over the white wastes.

Next morning we had a heavy business getting all our baggage-ponies safely over the ridge above the tarn ; but it was done at last, and the rest of the march, downhill all the way to Lidderwat, was simple enough—some of the finest country too, in Kashmir. Wandering up on these heights possesses a fascination not to be met with in marching through the valleys.

By the boulders of the glacier torrents we came across numerous *burra chuars* (big rats—as the natives call marmots). They live high up in the snowy regions of the mountains, generally preferring exposed cliffs or stony expanses, whence they may have a clear view of approaching danger.

The first thing we heard was a piercing whistle, shrill and uncanny, and looking about, at last discovered a marmot seated on the top of a rock over his own burrow. He was about three feet long, and had reddish brown fur with a black stripe down his back ; he sat up on his hind-legs at 'tention, acting sentinel, while his relatives were basking in the sun or else running actively about in search of food. His shrill and impertinent little whistle told us we had been seen, and directly we tried to get closer he whisked into his burrow. Marmots live on roots and leaves, seeds and berries ; like squirrels, they eat with their paws. For their winter quarters they make a large round burrow,



MARMOTS.

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to the great glacier across the moraine. Here again we found a huge ice-cavern formed by the Lidder as it rushes from beneath the glacier ; we stood in the cave—it would be hard to say how many yards of solid ice above our heads.

The mountain Kolohoi, as seen from the head of the Lidder, is exceptionally grand—an abrupt peak, with one immense glacier dividing it from the main range. Lovely as Lidderwat was, we could not afford to stay there long, and we were soon on the march again down the valley.

Our next camp, Pailgam, was much warmer, the elevation being considerably less : it was a pretty little place, quite an English settlement, every one living in log huts or tents in the pine-woods. The Lidder Valley, as compared with the Sind Valley, may be upon a small scale and less grand, but it is quite as beautiful in its way—silver birches covering the mountain-sides, and stretching over the river from either bank. But the wretched goat-herds, the *bukri-wallers*, have much to answer for in the Lidder Valley : it is a sin and a shame to see the branches lopped and the naked, ruined trunks, all for the sake of the foliage as fodder for their miserable goats.

From our camp every evening S. and Lalla went out regularly and sat in the *mucky* (Indian cornfields) watching for bears. Though the Kashmiris' crops generally bore traces of these nightly marauders, all their efforts were fruitless.

From the last camp they made a longer expedition,

with but one entrance, and ending in a sleeping-place thickly padded with dry grass.

Here often from ten to fifteen marmots pass the winter, all lying closely packed together, until the spring. On awaking, hungry with their long fast, they remove the hay with which they stuff up the doors of their burrows, and begin again their watchful, active lives. In the early summer a pair will have from four to six young ones. We were rather anxious to shoot one, but had nothing with us except a bullet which would have blown a *burra chuar* into fragments. So the little sentinels sat up and whistled unmolested.

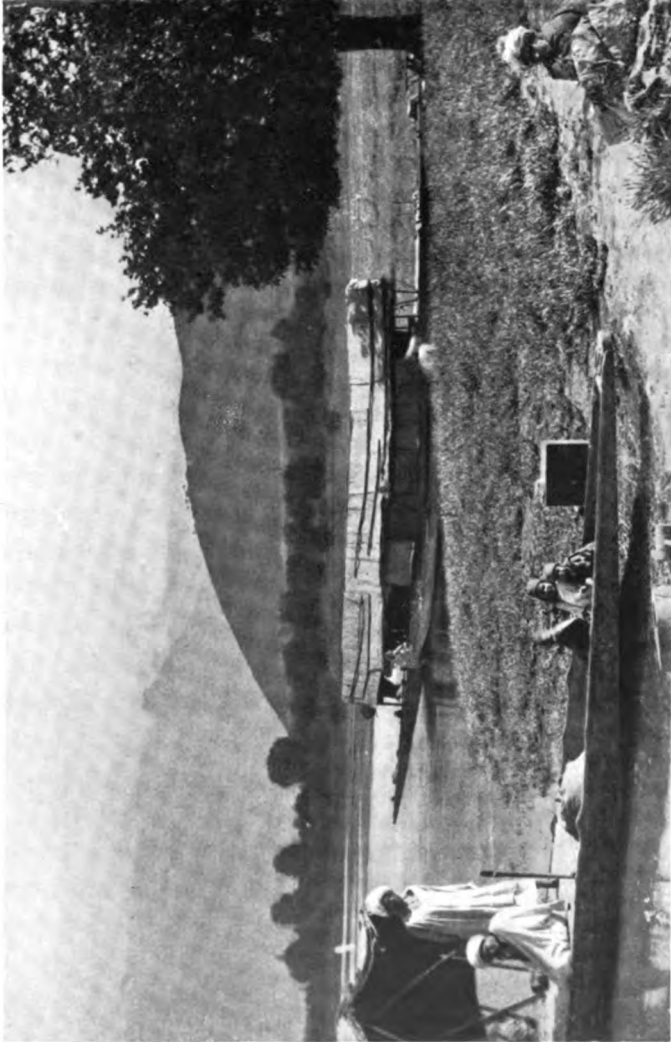
Into Lidderwat was a long and steep descent of several miles; at last we were right down in the Lidder Valley, and selecting for our camping-ground by the river the spot which the Resident and his retinue had evidently occupied only four nights before. Why they always left all their tent-pegs behind we wondered; but they came in most usefully as firewood, collected in bundles by the servants from each camp.

We found Captain Molyneux, 12th Bengal Cavalry, hard at work painting on the banks of the river. Not long before he had been awarded the Viceroy's gold medal at the Simla Exhibition for the second time, and he was now collecting more material for some large oils.

S. and I encamped three nights at Lidderwat, riding one day with Captain Molyneux up to the head of the valley, as far as it is possible to march, right on

funniest of boats ever seen. Our *doongha* was something like a house-boat, but too rough to be dignified by such a name. It was really more like a very long, big punt, filled up with stout, rough poles tied together in a sort of framework with rope and straw, upon which was hung grass matting to form a roof and protection from the sun. Matting hung down at the sides, but could be rolled up and tied with a string, so that one might have an uninterrupted view of the country as one sat in the *doongha* and floated along. The boat was divided by matting into little compartments: in the first we sat, with our two camp-chairs and rugs, and made ourselves very comfortable; in the second, push aside the matting, and one stepped into a little rough compartment in which my camp-bed was put up and I slept; in the third, behind another bit of matting, S. slept; and at the extreme end of the boat sat a couple of Kashmiris silently working us along with a paddle each—a thing only about four feet long, and heart-shaped at one end. The boatmen's families were in another *kishty* of the same sort, together with Sala Bux, Lalla, Armudneera, the *bhisti*, cook, and sweeper. They followed us at a respectful distance.

We left Islámábád that evening, and were soon gliding silently between banks covered with flowers, through the still, warm air. An hour later and the servants' *kishty* was paddled up alongside; dinner was ready. It had been cooked over an extraordinary little clay fireplace in the bottom of the punt. Sala Bux



DOONGHIA.

proceeded to hand us in, from their boat on to the floor of ours, hot plates; soup followed; then a roast leg of mutton with potatoes and tomatoes; next *rumble-tumble*—as natives always call buttered eggs; lastly stewed pears and custard. Finally, plates were removed, the servants' *kishty* fell back behind us, and we paddled along.

When it grew dark, a light was fastened ahead, and we passed several other *doonghas*, some of them singing weird chants—natives evidently. We drifted under dark, wooden, ghostly-looking bridges; the moon rose; the land seemed all asleep; and the drip and gurgle of our paddles in the water was the only sound.

In our own camp-beds we had a real, long, lazy night, and a true *Europe* morning, for breakfast came off at ten o'clock!

All night long the rhythmical sound of the paddling lulled one to sleep. I awoke once or twice to hear S. cursing the lazy boatmen, who had stopped working altogether and were just allowing us to drift. Renewed efforts followed, and the *doongha* glided through the water faster than ever, until, I expect, we were both asleep again.

I lay in bed hours after the sun had risen, and rolling up a bit of the matting by my side, stretched my arm out and dabbled in the warm water. It was an odd little place to tub and to dress in. S. took a header off the punt and had a few minutes' swim.

The Jhelum recalls vividly the Thames near Staines, except that everywhere in the distance we could see

mountains, covered at the tops with snow. Indeed, we could see little else above the river banks, the vale was so flat. One might, as I have said before, easily spend a summer in this way on the Jhelum and its tributaries, mooring the *doongha*, and making expeditions up into the hills from any place which took one's fancy, such as Manasbal and a thousand others.

If only impecunious friends at home could be transferred to this land of plenty, of ideal climate, of ideal scenery, and ideal bills! Our first week's expenses for living, for two people, are worth recording. We were said to have got through six chickens, one goose, one duck, and one leg of mutton; pears and apples for cooking every day, as many eggs and vegetables every day, and as much butter and milk every day, as we could possibly consume; the whole of this, together with firewood and little etceteras, cost us not quite nine shillings. Add to this the trifling hire of a *doongha* and the small pittance of wages to two or three servants; take a tent, some books, sketching materials, and a gun; and one might roam over the Vale of Kashmir, and into its glorious mountains, from April to November, living upon a mere nothing and thoroughly enjoying the life.

This time in our *doongha* was a capital one for writing letters and for reading newspapers; but the day soon passed, and the hill close to Srinagar, our destination, known as Takht-i-Sulimán, grew nearer and nearer, until at last we found ourselves in a wide reach of water, gaily painted house-boats moored on

either side underneath the great, shady chenars, and upon the banks tents of every shape and kind.

This, then, was the European quarter of Srinagar ; the native city lay beyond. There are various camping-grounds—the Chenār Bāgh, the Nishāt Bāgh, the Munshi Bāgh, the Shalimār Bāgh, etc., some near and some far from the native city.

We took up a central position on Topa, a semi-island, which had the advantage of being near the polo-ground, the post office, and the agency. Our tents were soon up ; and as we were sitting down to tea, the familiar face of Mary beamed upon us with the two *syces* and three ponies. Mary had “lost count” of his age ; but he could not have been more than twenty years old, though he had a wife and a son down in Madras. He always reminded me of a monkey, wearing a little loose white shirt, *very* tight, white trousers, and a small blue turban. He had bow legs and long, bare feet. He always spoke in the present tense, coming up every morning and saying to S., “What time master wanting ponies?” He was an excellent groom, a real honest boy.

The little Arab ponies were wonderfully quiet and childlike, removing flies on the march off their ears with a hind hoof, and walking casually across the narrowest plank. They were apt to catch up branches in their long tails, when I would make the pony I rode tread on the branch and release them of it.

A game of polo was going on, and we strolled across after tea to find all our old Gulmerg friends, who had,

in the course of the last month, migrated to serener climes at Srinagar, where the temperature was much higher. Four weeks in camp seemed to have done a good deal in their eyes to weather and to sunburn us.

The next morning, hiring a small *kishty* and a couple of natives to paddle us, we went off down the river into the city. Lazily reclining on cushions, it was rather like being in a gondola in Venice once again, and if Srinagar had a little more gorgeous colouring it *would* be a second Venice. Perhaps the mountain ranges round the vale and the chenars on the banks made up for that.

The city is supposed to have been built in the sixth century. It is a somewhat confused mass of houses, overhanging either side of the wide river and the smaller canals, which in many places form the only streets. The wooden houses, of rough-hewn timbers, stained and weathered into rich tones of grey and brown, are picturesque to a degree, with balconies and carved lattice windows, and projecting upper stories propped on carved poles. There are no less than seven bridges across the river, built of beams laid on timber and stone piers. There is the Rajah's Palace, and several small Hindu temples in the city, with two chief mosques. Above Srinagar rises its landmark, the hill known as Solomon's Throne, Takht-i-Sulimán, with an old Hindu temple at the very top. Because every one told us that we must not miss the violent climb and the view from the summit on any account, we carefully avoided it.

Kashmir always calls up to the mind visions of shawls; and the annual tribute of the Maharajah, presented in token of the supremacy of the British Government, is still, as the treaty reads: "*One horse, twelve perfect shawl-goats of approved breed, six male and six female, and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.*" A few years ago a quarter of the inhabitants of Srinagar were shawl-weavers, but the reduced demand for shawls has lessened the proportion.

We were paddled downstream under several bridges to a skin-curing native, who lived in the midst of many ramifications among the wooden houses. We unearthed his room at last, and arranged with him to cure roughly any skins we might get, before sending them home to England. After much haggling, I bought rather a curious leopard-skin rug, and a marmot skin was thrown in as backsheesh. We saw some rather fine heads and a snow leopard skin—a beautiful trophy—shot that spring.

From this gentleman we went to the shop of Suffering Moses, well known to every visitor in Srinagar. He had already visited our camp that morning and had left his card, which bore the following inscription:—

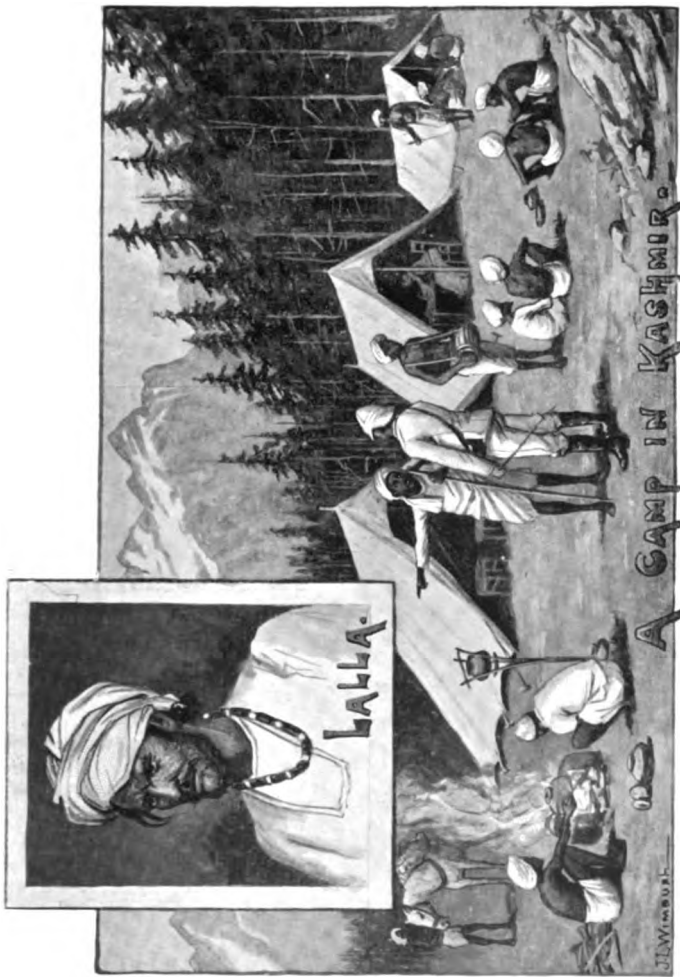
M. H. SUFFDUR MOGOL.
SUFFERING MOSES.
PAPIER MACHI MAKER AND WOOD CARVER.
NEW BAZOR. SRINAGAR.

Suffering Moses, as he is always called, and now calls himself, no sooner caught sight of us on the river, than he was into a *kishty* and after us. At last, personally conducted to his own bazaar, we were invited to sit down and given tea, of a sort, out of a curious brass teapot, and some very trying little yellow biscuits to eat, while the Sufferer, an old bearded man, who, after the manner of the East, had dyed his beard bright red, and wore a skull-cap and a long garment trimmed with fur, displayed his *papier maché* and ornamental painted woodwork, his carved wood and copper tables, and his silver and silver-gilt bowls, goblets, candlesticks, photo-frames, boxes, and what not. From a vast selection we made various choices, to be packed then and there and sent direct to England. This he fulfilled to the letter.

We next visited a shop for *puttoo*, where I bought a *puttoo* hat and some extra warm garments; lastly, we spent some time buying more stores and groceries for the next two months in camp up the passes.

On our return to our tents on Topa we were pestered once more with natives selling jewelry, silks, silver, lacquer-work, etc. A carpenter, tailor, and washerwoman soon turned up, and the two first were presently sitting cross-legged under the trees, mending and patching our torn, worn, and broken effects. Our bedding hung all over the apple-trees airing; and it was altogether a funny scene for a luncheon party we gave that afternoon.

India is a very poor country for fruit; Kashmir,



at the right season, is not, and immense baskets of great yellow pears and peaches were brought us at all times of the day for the sum of a few coppers. Cooky laid in stores of vegetables.

We spent the afternoon with a party from the Residency in an expedition in boats across the Dhal Lake, with a view to picnicing in some of the old gardens on its banks, our boats racing each other at spasmodic intervals, dictated by the impulse of the Kashmiris who paddled us. A canal leads into the Dhal Lake—an immense stretch of the calmest of water, covered in places with great lotus leaves and their heavy pink blossoms, while in every open reach our boats cut into the reflexions of the snow mountains.

In some places, upon sheets of the broad water-lily leaves, a shallow layer of soil is actually upheld, and grows vegetables in abundance. These floating gardens are secured by an occasional "punt" pole to the bottom of the lake, which prevents their drifting hither and thither; they were covered with tomatoes, grapes, peaches, cauliflowers, potatoes, etc.

We were paddled across, in the course of an hour or so, to the Shalimār Bāgh, one of the old pleasure-gardens of the Moguls, where we all scrambled out. The crumbling, grey stone steps up from the water's edge, the green terraces, the cool, thick plane-trees, the stone walks, and the fountains were all redolent of the old luxurious Mogul race, of moonlight, music, and wine, of the sensuous and aromatic East. We

had, however, a very up-to-date tea on one of the shadiest lawns.

An extraordinary dust-storm came on quite suddenly the next day in the middle of a luncheon party at the Chenār Bāgh—the bachelors' quarters. Everything we were eating in a few minutes tasted of dust, and *was* dust, and nothing else : it lasted for half an hour.

S. played polo that afternoon, and more snow fell on the mountains, which augured ill for us later on, if we got up to high altitudes. A wonderful sunset lit up the fresh snow like pink fire. We dined at the Residency ; and next day made final arrangements for leaving Srinagar in the evening, providing ourselves with *chuplies*, among other things (the Kashmir sandal and leather sock), most comfortable on the march.

Before we left, Captain and Mrs. Davies (guides) had a paper-chase on horseback, to which we sent the ponies ; and paddling across the Dhal Lake, we all met at their camp at the Nishāt Bāgh. Quite a party inhabited this camp, a little colony of tents, and we had a real "meet" under the chenars, though it was an odd time of day for a hunt. Captain S. (9th Lancers) and Captain Davies carried the scent in bags across their backs ; Mrs. Davies rode with them. We gave the hares ten minutes' start, and stood talking till our huntsman called "Time!" when every one jumped on their ponies and galloped off for all they were worth.

We got out of the grass fields of the camping-

ground by a ditch, which half of the ponies, who had never been jumped before, refused ; the scent lay thick across the next field, which had been ploughed for sowing, and it was nice, soft going. We jumped over a small hedge into a buckwheat field, and here it was as hard as iron. The scent was rather "catchy"—either a big handful strewing the ground thickly, or an interval without any ; and we were sometimes cantering all over the field, to find, perhaps, that the hares had turned sharp up a hedgerow, and were away on our right or left, as it might be.

S. got into a bog after we had gone across a rice field, and the pony came over on his side, but they were none the worse. We ran on well till we came to a small canal with an awkward place to ride under or over, and a very narrow bridge beyond. Some of the hounds led their ponies under, others over, others were low enough to squeeze underneath without getting off. We tailed over the bridge with much pushing and jostling, and getting into the field, spread out fanwise over it, hunting for the scent, which stopped dead after twenty or thirty yards—never a sign,—

Into the middle of the field, and further was there none !

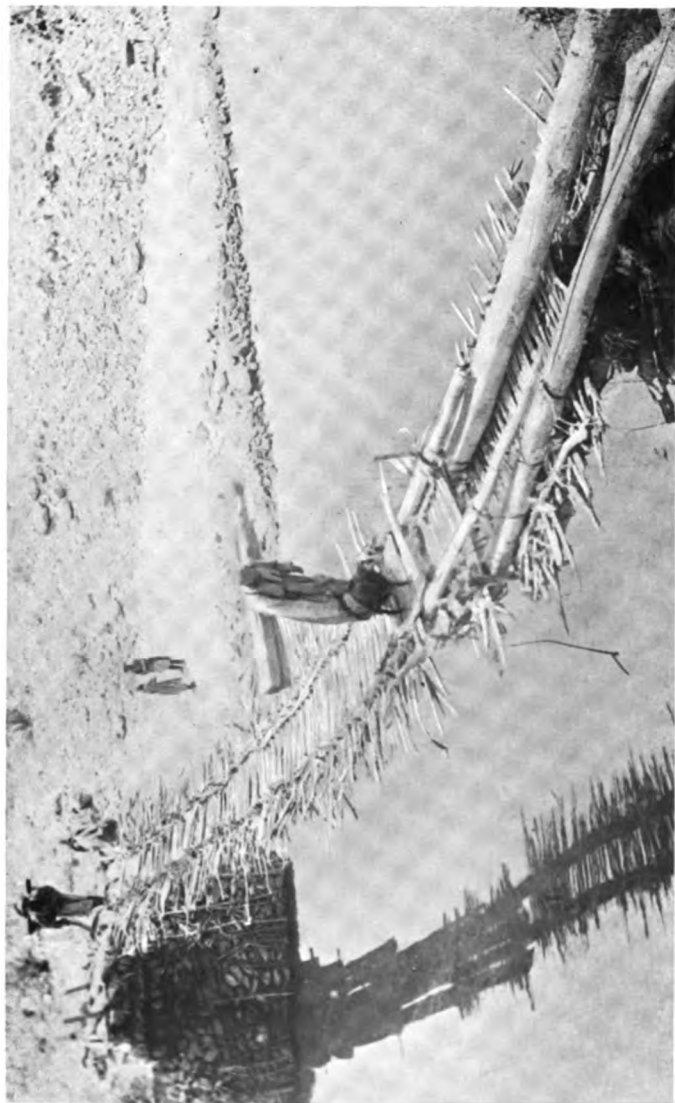
Suddenly a halloo back !—the cunning hares had doubled under again by the canal, and were, no doubt, by this time speeding away across the vale. We squeezed and clambered back over the canal, and got on the line again right-handed, galloping all we knew.

From this time until the end of the hunt, which brought us back once more to the Nishāt Bāgh, the proceedings resolved themselves into a race; there was a burning scent and the country was very negotiable—banks and ditches, practically nothing more. We crossed maize field after field, and rather hard going they were; finally we got on to some grass, and encountered an infant brook with a single plank over it, across which a very clever pony or two walked, but I think most of the field preferred a fling at the open water.

Then clumps of chenars in the distance: had they not a suspicious look of the Nishāt Bāgh about them? And where, in the name of fortune, were those precious hares? Harden your hearts and *race* for the camp! Every hound laid his legs to the ground, but the proverbial sheet would hardly have covered the pack, which stretched over half a mile of country! Down a lane we split, across the sound turf we rattle, tents come into sight, and the last five hundred yards end in a masterly “finish.” There are the three good hares, bearing every trace of having been more or less pressed, deep in long whiskies-and-sodas, swearing that they had been at least five minutes “in cover.”

We hounds were fairly beaten! Tea and liqueurs, for which the Shiny is so justly renowned, followed; let us hope the ponies' legs were none the worse! We were paddled back again, and joined a cheery dinner party later on at the Chenār Bāgh.

Such is life at Srinagar. We were off next morning.



A BRIDGE, KASHMIR.

It was colder, and rained steadily. Striking tents in wet weather is rather a miserable business, and we were considerably damped, mentally and externally, by the time Lalla brought up a couple of boats below our island, and had had all our stores and baggage stowed away in the driest places these *kishties* can boast of.

The particular specimen he had selected for us was very second-rate, and we only accepted it at all to save time. It was farewell to the ponies for a long while; as they could not stand snow and rough marches, we sent them back through Murree and Rawal Pindi to Mian Mir by road. I forget now how many weeks it took them to cover the distance, but we found them safely arrived on our own return.

Picture us once more afloat in a *doongha*, making the best of our way down the Jhelum to Soper. Even Kashmir is not all milk and honey, and we tasted of the seamy side on this occasion. The matting which covered the *doongha* hung down low and dark; it was only possible to stand upright in the middle; the front end was open, and the rain and wind beat in. It was, in fact, like sitting in a funnel, bitterly cold. We covered ourselves with all the available rugs and blankets we possessed, and sat and shivered. A dirty rag and some matting divided this part of the boat from another dark place in our rear, in which I slept. Beyond my partition, and behind a second rag and matting, slept the boatmen, their wives and children. S. lay down in the place we sat in.

As soon as possible we cut short such a wretched day by going to bed. The whole boat was infested with mice, which were scurrying over the floor, among the matting, and across my bedclothes all night. There was no room or place to unpack or wash either, in these very confined quarters. I lay down, minding the mice less than the boatmen's families, who were in painfully close proximity, and who grunted and snored—peal after peal—the whole night long. In vain I shouted at them. If they awoke, and for ten minutes there was silence, they began again after that lapse of time, as surely as does night follow day.

Morning dawned with a bright sky, the matting was rolled up, and we sat at breakfast in warm sunshine, the river banks, valley, and mountains looking more lovely than ever. A few hours and we were at Soper. The servants in their *kishty* seemed to have recovered their spirits, though Sala Bux complained bitterly of fever, and consumed many capsules of phenacetin with which we provided him. It need never be feared that a native will endure the least discomfort in stoical silence.

Both of us were very well satisfied to be starting on a shoot again. Sight-seeing palls, the most enchanting country after a time loses its first keen attraction, and needs a *souffçon* of adventure and of action, behind which it can sink into its own natural position of a beautiful background. Many people are quite content to journey across the Indian Ocean, to find their pleasure solely in Anglo-Indian society, and in seeing

Delhi, Agra, and a few more places which the horrors of the Mutiny surround with a morbid interest.

It is unkindly said that the gentler sex are shipped across to the East, provided with costly trousseaux, for the mere purpose of meeting gallant captains and prosperous chief commissioners, noble Benedicts who for many years have run the gauntlet of the pick of the very limited ladies' society up country, coming unscathed out of the fire, and are only destined now to fall before the latest coiffure from home.

I am afraid this old wives' tale no longer holds water, and that the palmy days for the women have followed in the wake of other "good old days." It is so easy to run home on three months' leave—every subaltern does it; it is so easy to run out from England—every wife and every sister does it; and thus it comes to pass that there is nothing new under the sun; that matrimony cannot pose as an unknown and intoxicating Paradise; in short, familiarity and close inspection betray the copper through the Sheffield plate.

But time has changed the Mem-sahib, too—more of that presently; suffice it to say that there are, every year, women who come out, and who travel over the globe, with the object of seeing other sides of that interesting individual, man, other corners of the world, other occupations, and other sports—women, in short, who will enjoy a little discomfort for the sake of experience.

To rove about in gipsy fashion, meeting with trifling

adventures from time to time, is a complete change for an ordinary English girl; and it is very easy to find every scope for developing self-control and energy in many a "tight corner" if such occasions are sought for. Englishmen are supposed to possess an insatiable desire for *slaying* something; a healthily minded woman has invariably a craving to *do* something. She is fortunate if she satisfies it.

Vain dreams, again and again retold,
 Must you crowd on the weary brain,
 Till the fingers are cold that entwin'd of old
 Round staff and trigger and rein,
 Till stayed for aye are the roving feet,
 Till the restless hands are quiet,
 Till the stubborn heart has forgotten to beat,
 Till the hot blood has ceased to riot?

Srinagar and our marches through the valleys, though charming, were welcomely exchanged for a more adventurous month, upon which we could look back afterwards, and feel that we had put in a chapter of stirring life, and had played the game a little.

We slept one night at Soper. Who does not know the thrill of feeling with which one starts upon the unknown, those great expectations which are half the battle? The day called us about five—a beautiful morning it was, a westerly wind still blowing strong, but the clouds all blown away to China.

Our line of coolies, stooping under the burden of the tents and kilters, was at last under way; and piloted by Lalla, S. and I followed, with a small

tat to ride between us. The saddle would have astonished some of the frequenters of the Row. It was a fearful and wonderful wooden arrangement, a square-shaped peak at the back, a slanting rise in front, and a native blanket over all. The bottoms of the stirrups were solid, round pieces of wood, like saucers. But really it was not at all uncomfortable for rough, scrambling work, and I could be on and off in a moment.

We left the Jhelum at our backs and struck up the valley of the Pohru. It was good to see the thick forests growing nearer, to hear talk of bears, and after the *doongha* to be out in the country, once more "on the open road." The song of the open road is, as it has been said, one of Nature's spiritual ditties not yet set to words or human music, except by Walt Whitman. It is an air which must have haunted the ears of the gipsies—"the invitation to the road"—and to whose inspiration our own nomadic forefathers must all their days have journeyed. To be out in the air!—to be under the sky!—how much it all implies!

The lungs with the living gas grow light,
 And the limbs feel the strength of ten,
 While the chest expands with its maddening might,
 God's GLORIOUS OXYGEN.

By the evening we were duly encamped at Netanissa, right on the banks of the Pohru, and in a green, quiet orchard, which fringed the great jungles. We

had leave from Sir A. Talbot to shoot here—one of the Rajah's private preserves.

Everything was flourishing down in this valley: tomatoes grew abundantly, also curious little plum-cherry things, and big pears, apples, mulberries; above all, walnut-trees—such gigantic, gnarled old trunks, leaves and walnuts lying thick on the ground under them. These are no travellers' tales; believe me, vegetarians would lose their heads in Kashmir.

Sala Bux, recovered from fever, was as annoying as usual. As S. put on his coat that evening, he found one of the buttons missing. Now, I had seen dear Sala Bux sewing at the coat before tea, and I wondered—a foolish wonder—that he had not noticed the button. S. called him up and spoke severely to him, and Sala Bux retired to grovel about on his hands and knees in S.'s tent, hunting for it in an aimless way.

S. put the coat on, and as he did so, felt something hard in the place where the button should have been. He looked—Sala Bux had evidently, when I noticed him, been sewing it firmly on to the wrong side of the coat—*inside*, in spite of the fact that there were all the remaining buttons on the outside to guide him. We asked him to explain why he had not shown us this. He would give no reason, no answer, but only salaamed with clasped hands. Natives have no capacity for seeing jokes; they never laugh. Their eyes have been described as two unseeing, unfathomable pools, at which one gazes and gazes,

speculating upon what may be at the bottom, below that unreadable surface—as to whether, indeed, there *is any* bottom?

Being by this time quite hardened, I never began by assuming that a native was speaking the truth. It is a weary platitude to say that there are exceptions; but I well remember my *ayah*, the best servant I had, and whom I considered irreproachable, having a large extra box put upon one of our *tongas* above and beyond her allowance of luggage, and when an aide-de-camp told her it must come up afterwards in a bullock-cart, he informed me that she promptly replied, “Oh! it *must* go—some of the Miss Sahib’s things in it.” I need hardly say I was not in the habit of allowing my things to be packed in a native’s box.

Our camp outfit soon began to suffer in the hands of the coolies again; things ought to be made of cast-iron to survive. Our teapot lid was wrenched off at the hinges, our galvanised iron bath had three holes knocked in it, our table was broken, our camp-stool smashed, etc. But we had an excellent servant in Cooky, and as we had provided only the bare necessities of cooking, we had no right to grumble at his primitive methods.

I did not, however, appreciate seeing him get out brown sugar for our tea from a paper packet in his fingers, and then pat it down into an old cigarette box—our sugar-basin. I inadvertently saw the milk-jug being cleaned one day—merely a dirty rag stuck on to a stick and thrust into the jug. Our com-

missariat was often badly packed, too—cake being saturated with sardine oil, having been packed cheek to cheek with an open sardine-tin. This was a trifle.

I remember Sala Bux once forgot to pack S.'s mackintosh. He gave it, therefore, to a coolie to carry. At the end of the march he brought it to us, and it was necessary to hang it up at once, spread out in the open, when several crows promptly appeared, and perched, pecking, upon it, as they do upon sheep at home.

It was a silent and thickly wooded jungle which closed around us at our backs at Netanissa ; the river was deep, flowing without a sound ; and the country, appearing to be little inhabited, should be exceedingly likely for bear.

The Himalayan black bear is essentially a forest-loving animal, and seldom ascends above twelve thousand feet ; he does not, like the red bear, delight in digging for roots on the grassy slopes immediately below the snow-line. He is a larger and heavier animal than the Indian bear, and occasionally, certainly, he proves a formidable antagonist.

Colonel Kinloch says in his well-known book : " I have known more than one British officer killed by black bears, while one constantly meets with natives who have been terribly mutilated in encounters with one of the species ; but these accidents have usually occurred when the animal has been attacked or suddenly met with in thick cover, where the bear had every

advantage." Little as we expected it, we were unfortunately destined to meet with a bear under these aspects.

The black bear is a thorough gourmand, and shifts his quarters so as to be within easy reach of the delicacies of the season, whatever they may be. In the jungle he will put up with roots, berries, scorpions, ants, acorns, or such other trifles as he may meet with during his wanderings ; but as the various cereals and fruits ripen in the vicinity of the villages, he takes up his abode in some well-wooded ravine or tangled copse within easy reach of the fields and orchards, and plunders them regularly every night. Maize and buckwheat among grains, apricots and walnuts among fruits, are his favourite food, and he is partial to mulberries, clambering up the trees, devouring and shaking down the ripe fruit. At times he likes to vary his usual vegetarian diet, and takes to killing sheep, cattle, and ponies. Like the rest of his race, he has a passion for honey.

The next day was, I believe, one of the longest I ever spent, and one of the most delightful, albeit devoid of any great excitement. It merits description, however, for it must be borne in mind that it is not every day, nor indeed in one day out of seven, that success crowns the sportsman's efforts ; there must perforce be many " blank " occasions, which should be chronicled if any true idea is to be given of what shooting bigger game means.

We were called by Sala Bux at 4.30 a.m., and were

sitting outside at breakfast by 5 o'clock, the grass covered with dew, and grey dawn just stealing over the country. There was an air of suppressed excitement at that hour when starting was so near, and the morning before us might contain so much of the unexpected. Preparations were being made all round, and one of the most important items in the shoot, the beating of the jungle, had to be arranged.

The headman of the district had been interviewed beforehand, and arrangements made between him and Lalla for natives to beat for us. We had about a hundred and fifty this time; they were all made to sit down outside our camp, squatting in a great circle. The noise which those natives made it would be hard to describe—such a jabbering, vociferating, clamouring, shouting. Lalla and the servants patrolled the circle inside and tried to keep order with switches.

Each of the coolies was given a scrap of initialed paper, which they had to show at the end of the day before they were paid; otherwise many defaulters, who have not borne the burden and brunt of the beats, will creep in with the rest, towards evening, and try to get equal pay. As far as possible, we chose out only strong and younger men, for old ones are worse than useless. But Lalla, as usual, allowed a greybeard or two to creep in.

The beaters wore nothing beyond a loincloth and a *puggaree*; they hid their pieces of paper in one or the other, or often one of them took charge of half a dozen and tied them carefully up into a corner of his

waistcloth. Each was provided with a good stout stick ; but a stick is, after all, remarkably poor protection against the charge of any big animal, and perhaps it was small wonder that they beat very badly, keeping together in twos and threes instead of spreading out singly. Three were provided with rough drums—tom-toms—which might be heard miles off.

The whole hundred and fifty were arrant cowards, and nothing but the lure of annas (for which a native would sell his soul) would have induced one of them to come with us. Certainly the roll of natives who have been injured and killed when beating is a long one ; but as a rule they suffer entirely from their own want of proper caution and lack of common sense.

S. and I had a couple of *tats*, and rode along at a walk to the scene of the first *honk* (beat), our army of beaters going on before us. Before we were quite in the jungle they were all sent on ahead in two parties with the headman and another native. S. and I left the ponies ; and preceded by Lalla and the *chota shikari*, we crept and scrambled along by tiny paths through the undergrowth, now forcing our way under branches, now scaling slopes which the pine-needles made slippery as ice.

Lalla had, of course, had *khubr* (tidings) beforehand that a bear had been seen going into this particular patch. He pointed out the tracks of one in some soft mud along the path : “ *Hārpat!* ” (“ Bear ! ”) It was really a most *human* footmark, exceedingly like a very much enlarged native’s.

At last we reached a clear space on a sort of ridge, which cut across the jungle, running all down the side of the hill on which we were. By standing in a position which commanded the backbone of the ridge, S. could get a shot along it on either side ; had there been three guns instead of one, any bear crossing the ridge should be a dead one ; as it was, there was a good deal of luck about it. S. and I sat down in the shade, waiting until the beaters began ; Lalla close to us, eagerly scanning the hillside with glasses ; and the *chota shikari*, with our bottle of cold tea and the spare eight-bore duck-gun, crouched in some bushes.

It was a grand spot to wait and watch in—trees, flowers, birds, mountains, and the valley round us. All at once, far away in the distance, broke a long cry, as of many voices, a pow-wow-wow—it might *almost* be hounds running ; but a quarter of an hour later, as it came nearer, the tom-toms dispelled that illusion. No ; it was our hundred and fifty coolies, who had begun the *honk* and were beating in our direction. All was at attention in a moment.

I slid out of sight behind a big deodar trunk ; S., taking up his 500-Express, knelt down with Lalla, where some long grass concealed most of them ; and there was an intense, strained silence. The distant shouts were gradually coming nearer, and after some time had elapsed, resolved themselves into noisy cries, now louder, now fainter ; the tom-toms thumped as with one voice and echoed again ; the rattle of sticks became distinguishable.



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BEATERS.



Lalla was by this time wrought up into the highest pitch of excitement ; indeed, it was quite impossible to be an inert spectator, and I prayed that something, at least, might appear. But no ; the “ watched pot ” never boiled ! On came the war-cries, nearer and nearer ; still there was nothing.

At last the straggling line of coolies began to appear ; alas ! there was no *hārpāt* in that beat. It was peculiarly irritating, and exactly like natives, that the nearer they got to us, and even when they were within a few yards, the louder they yelled and shouted ; we were obliged to pelt them with a pebble or two to induce them to cease their maddening noise.

One thing was clear at least, that they beat extremely badly, ten or twelve of them going together in a clump, and never properly beating out a nullah at all. The headman was harangued and rated on this point ; and then we walked off to have another *honk*.

Again we found ourselves on high ground, and after half an hour's wait the beaters began. We were hidden, waiting in perfect silence for twenty minutes, perhaps, listening to the tom-toms and the shouts rising and falling, when all in a moment they changed into a piercing clamour, and a yell arose from a hundred and fifty throats. “ *Hārpāt ! hārpāt !* ” we could almost distinguish.

Lalla and the *chota shikari* could hardly contain themselves. We waited five minutes, perhaps, and then, straight in front of us, bundling up the slope, came a great shaggy *red* bear, not a black one ; he

was making right in our direction, when he altered his course and turned left-handed. Lalla and S. ran along to intercept him when he crossed open ground ; but the *hārpāt* was extraordinarily quick : he dodged behind a tree or two, passed some rocks, and never gave a chance of a fair shot. Finally, he slipped across the open space ; S. fired twice, and both bullets whistled harmlessly by him, as he went out of sight in the depths of the forest on the other side.

It was altogether a very bad piece of luck.

Honk number three was not more fortunate. We got on our *tats* again and rode as far as possible, until we had to ascend a long ravine. It was sunless, and after the now burning hillside, almost like going into an ice cavern. The sun, directly it had risen, became scorching, for we were comparatively low down ; black bear, as I said, like warmth. It was a toil, walking and climbing into the positions for *honking*.

Now in this deep, cold nullah the sun's rays could not be felt. Deodars, spruces, and pines almost met from either side across it, and hid every glimpse of sky. Little birches and stunted bushes grew thick, moss carpeted the ground, clumps of maidenhair fern flourished in green profusion, a small stream trickled among the wet, lichen-covered rocks, dew still hung on everything ; it was gloriously cool. Having come out at the top at last, we made for a little wood, bordering on Indian corn fields. A Kashmiri had brought *khubr* to the effect that a bear had been seen going into the plantation at daybreak.

We proceeded with the greatest caution, and concealed ourselves at one corner of the wood, a little distance from it, the beaters all walking off to the other end. As we sat down in the long grass, we could hear a sound inside the wood, rustling and scratching, and suddenly a stout mulberry-tree top began to shake to and fro, and vibrate with the weight evidently of some heavy animal up in its branches. A *hārpāt* !

It was the most tantalising thing in the world to sit there and to see this going on. We could only hope the beaters would drive him out our way. It would have been useless to have run across the open, for the bear was probably clambering down then, and would soon have been out of sight in the tangle of forest ; whereas if he broke in our direction, there was a chance of getting a good shot.

The beating began ; and when the natives, as far as we could judge by the noise, had got about half-way through the wood, frantic shouts and beatings as though the tom-toms were possessed proclaimed that the *hārpāt* had broken back. However, he did not seem to have gone through the line, and judging from the sound, he was being seen from time to time, and was coming in our direction. We were all hope.

And then a large black form crashed out of the farther corner of the wood away from us, and set off lumbering across the fallow. It was a very long shot. S. steadied his rifle all he could, but sheer excitement made things more against him. Bang!

and we, straining our eyes, saw the ground kick up just over the bear's back. Bang! again, and the brown earth scattered just behind him this time. Still he ambled along, getting farther and farther out of shot; and two more bullets were as useless as the first. S. sat down, bewailing his luck.

We both had a drink of cold tea. It was poor comfort that even a miss is better than no shot at all; but at any rate, one sees and feels, which is a step out of the dead level.

With hope still in our breasts, we went off in a different direction for the fourth *honk*. Another good tramp, hotter this time, another long wait, until the coolies gave tongue, and an interval of deep excitement resolved itself into doubt; doubt turned to disappointment; disappointment read Blank.

By this time we were beginning to feel that we had had a good deal of exercise; and the beaters apparently thought the same, for without question or word of any sort, they lay down, Lalla with them, and went to sleep under the trees; some sat murmuring together. We had more cold tea, and stretched ourselves on our backs on the fir-pins looking up into the thick branches. An hour in the middle of the day having passed, we set to work again.

It would be tedious to describe the four *honks* that afternoon. Each one only resulted in a blank. Once, as we climbed a hill, we suddenly came on a pair of pine-martens up in a tree, but for fear of disturbing the place S. would not shoot.

They were soon out of sight, but we had time to see them well. They were agile, graceful little animals, and climbed like monkeys ; they would measure, as far as one could guess, from head to tail thirty inches. Their fur was rich brown, varying to a yellow breast-spot and reddish grey underneath. Their skins would have been handsome. Though called "pine-martens," they do not appear to have any special preference for coniferous trees, except that, inasmuch as pine-trees constitute the greater proportion of the forests of the countries which martens inhabit, they are oftener met with in them than in any other trees.

The pine-marten, the Asiatic sable, and the American sable are all three species so much alike that it is difficult to distinguish between them. They live in woods and rocky places, and spend most of their time in trees, coming down in quest of prey, which consists, as a rule, of birds, birds' eggs, squirrels, hares, rabbits, moles, mice, snakes, lizards, and frogs ; but they are said also to eat berries and other fruits. They belong, of course, to the sable, polecat, and weasel family, but pine-martens have no unpleasant odour. They occurred, once upon a time, in the British Isles, the latest specimens being killed in Lincolnshire in the present century.

Our eighth *honk* finished, still with the same spell of bad luck hanging over us, we walked back into camp. It was six o'clock, and since breakfast at five o'clock in the morning we had been going on a bottle of cold tea. Dinner was therefore more than ordinarily

acceptable. But S. paid the coolies first, which was always a trying business.

Once more the noisy circle was arranged. We stood over them with sticks ; each man produced his ticket, and as this had been a long day, received four annas in return ; we seldom gave them more than two, but their pay was doubled for every bear. At last the hundred and fifty were got rid of, the camp was once more a scene of quiet and order, and we sat down to eat in peace.

I must reserve for the next chapter a beat which was full—too full—of incident.

CHAPTER VII

BLACK BEARS

**Two Bears in one Beat—a Coolie Mauled—After
Badrá Singh—Road to Gilgit—Tragbal Pass—
Gurais—Gaggai Nullah—Snowed up—Quit the
Passes—Nanga Parbat—Snow-line Left Behind.**

CHAPTER VII

BLACK BEARS

But you've no remorseful qualms or pangs
When you kneel by the grizzly's lair :
On that conical bullet your sole chance hangs,
'Tis the weak one's advantage fair,
And the shaggy giant's terrific fangs
Are ready to crush and tear ;
Should you miss, one vision of home and friends,
Five words of unfinished prayer,
Three savage knife stabs ; so your sport ends
In the worrying grapple that chokes and rends :—
Rare sport, at least, for the bear.

LINDSEY GORDON.

THE next day was spent in marching to Keypoor, still down in the Valley of the Pohru ; and we had a restful afternoon wandering about its banks. Our tents were again put up in a grassy orchard ; and towards evening a whole troop of monkeys came out of the forest, walked across the shallow river, picking their way over the stones, and invaded our orchard. They swarmed up the apple- and mulberry-trees not far from us, shaking the boughs and tumbling down fruit into the arms of the leery old ones waiting underneath.

Khubr was brought us that evening, and very

encouraging *khubr* too. Lalla had secured plenty of coolies for the next morning, and we went early to roost with renewed hope.

Damp and chilly dawn saw the faithful band leaving their camp shrouded in white river mist, picking their way across pastures and through a field of Indian corn dripping with dew, and thence disappearing into the jungle. Lalla and S. were walking first, myself on the *tat* came third, and the *chota shikari* brought up the rear. The coolies had been divided into three bands, and sent on some miles from where we were eventually to take our stand.

The dim light of the morning as yet barely penetrated the gloom of the jungle; deodars towered over our heads, and on either hand formed masses of impenetrable depths, suggestive of containing much of the unknown. Silently we trod, avoiding stepping on a branch or anything which might betray our presence.

I soon had to leave the *tat* behind, tied up to a tree, where I hope he enjoyed himself more than I should have done under similar circumstances. To be left behind alone was one of the last things one wished, and I crept and climbed and scrambled assiduously, keeping my breath for the time when it would be wanted, and often gratefully accepting a tow from the *chota shikari* with his stick.

It was very hot as well as very silent work. We were following a small stream, and coming to a



BLACK BEAR.

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deepish pool in one place, Lalla, after peering over the wet soil round it, whispered in an awed and triumphant voice, with many gesticulations, "*Hārpat's* bath"—pointing to the large, unmistakable track ending in a sharp claw-mark; there were even splashes all over the rocks and drops on the ground, showing where the bear had shaken himself. So there in that dark hollow, among the thick jungle grass and in the little, clear tank, a bear must actually have been within the last half-hour. This was distinctly encouraging; after all we had gone through, "fought for, and wrought for," a tangible prize really lay somewhere at the end of the struggle.

More silently than ever we crept on, the two *shikaris* moving with the greatest care and very slowly, "tracking" on either side of the path for more traces of the *hārpat*. Every sign pointed to his being still ahead of us. We walked and climbed in this way for some time, until the jungle began to open a little and show a clearer space, where one could at least see to shoot between the tree trunks, the undergrowth having disappeared. By gesticulations Lalla showed us we were to stop; and he and the *chota shikari* then proceeded to break off and bend back any twigs which they seemed to consider it was possible might come in the way across the line of fire.

Here, then, we were to take up our stand; and here was to be—success or failure. The inevitable cold tea bottle was brought up to the fore, and we both had a drink. It sounds uninviting, but anything is

better than stimulants in a hot climate ; and after all, it was just as well on these occasions to be cool and clear-headed. And so we stuck to cold tea.

The *shikaris* chose a bank sparsely covered with deodars to stand on, to the left of us a small nullah, in front of us the jungle sloped gradually away into the distance.

The beaters, as I said, had been sent on some miles ahead—in fact, to the extreme limit of this patch of jungle. One party was to start from there in line, beating towards us ; the second contingent was to act as stops, standing at intervals, on one side lining the country between ourselves and the beginning of the beat, in order to try to turn any bear which should try to break sideways, instead of coming straight on ; the third party was distributed as stops opposite the second party.

We had a long wait—long enough to cool the most “jumpy” nerves when once they had grown accustomed to that unbroken silence, which is apt to become almost painful.

The slightest rustle ! one sees visions and dreams dreams ! Once a great red fox stole by, with a brush almost as big as himself. And a picture he was ! In the mind of the fox-hunting sahib rose recollections of a marshy ride, of a whip at the corner of the cover waving his cap, of the long, mournful, and withal heart-stirring cry, “For-r-ad—aw-aaay.” We saw a pig with a pair of curling tusches ; and then after that again dead silence.

At last, far away, the well-known vibration of tom-toms, the yells of the natives ; the beaters are coming, the beat has begun. Now is the time to harden the heart against disappointment, or to be ready to face any emergency. Two of the big deodar trunks hid us all four completely. Alert, straining every nerve to see and to hear, curbing every wish to move and rustle, to breathe almost, we crouched, kneeling, waiting.

The tom-toms and cries gradually got nearer and nearer, louder and louder ; it seemed a long time—too long—to be in such a state of tension. I was just beginning sadly to think that this *honk* had nothing in it either, when unexpectedly came, as it always comes, the supreme moment, and the present was alive with reality. Lalla's sinewy back in front of me was stiffened with excitement ; I caught the gleam of his eye as he turned, and the *chota shikari* hissed "*Hārpāt*" into my ear.

We were all ready to move in a second, and there, coming quickly towards us, was a great black form, which now emerged into the open, now disappeared behind a tree. The bear suddenly turned off to the left, and was passing our stand without seeing us, when at that moment the *chota shikari* moved and cracked a stick under his foot. The bear turned and growled savagely ; but a shot rang out almost simultaneously, and a thick smoke hid what followed. Hit or not, the bear had gone on.

We rushed after him. Whatever happened, I knew

that I must keep up with the rifle, and I did my best, hauled along by the *chota shikari*. But through such tangled jungle it was no joke moving fast, and a difficult matter to get through some places at all. Left behind once or twice, at last, to my joy, we caught Lalla and S. up, hurrying down into a nullah. In the gloomy shadows it was difficult to see far ; there seemed no traces whatever of the bear.

By this time the shouting and the tom-toms sounded quite close, the sticks rattled, the beaters could be heard pushing through the bushes. Suddenly, above the yells of the coolies, rang out another cry—a shriek of alarm—which was instantly taken up on all sides ; the jungle echoed with shout after shout.

We turned round and saw at once, on the other side of the nullah, another and much larger bear coming along the top. He turned off sideways ; and we saw, to our horror, that one of the “stops” was right in his path. He was unfortunately an old man too, and could not spring quickly aside. Lalla was an idiot to have allowed him to beat.

What followed was the work of an instant. To shoot would have been even chances on killing the bear or the native. With furious growls the bear sprang towards the half-naked coolie, and springing up at once erect on his hind-feet, he hit the man on the top of the skull a buffet with one great forepaw, with the other he struck the man's up-raised arm, and at the same time bit him in the chest. With agonising shrieks the poor native was



HIS GALLANT CHARGE WAS ENDED BY A BULLET BEHIND HIS EAR.
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thrown upon the ground ; the bear left him, and as he moved away from him S. fired. It was a long and, I suppose, difficult shot. . . . Gracious heavens—he has missed him !

The bear turned in an instant, saw us, and rushed down the nullah straight at us. It was a moment to turn one a little pale. This “glorious hour of crowded life” seemed likely to be overcrowded. Lalla and the *chota shikari* shouted and yelled for all they were worth, in the last extremity of terror, but no cries would deter this *hārpāt* from his purpose—he must be on us in a moment.

I remember thinking of getting hold of the spare gun, but saw with the corner of my eye that the *chota shikari* was “shinning” up the nearest tree, and the eight-bore lay at the bottom. I stuck to S., which was the only thing to do, and hoped for the best.

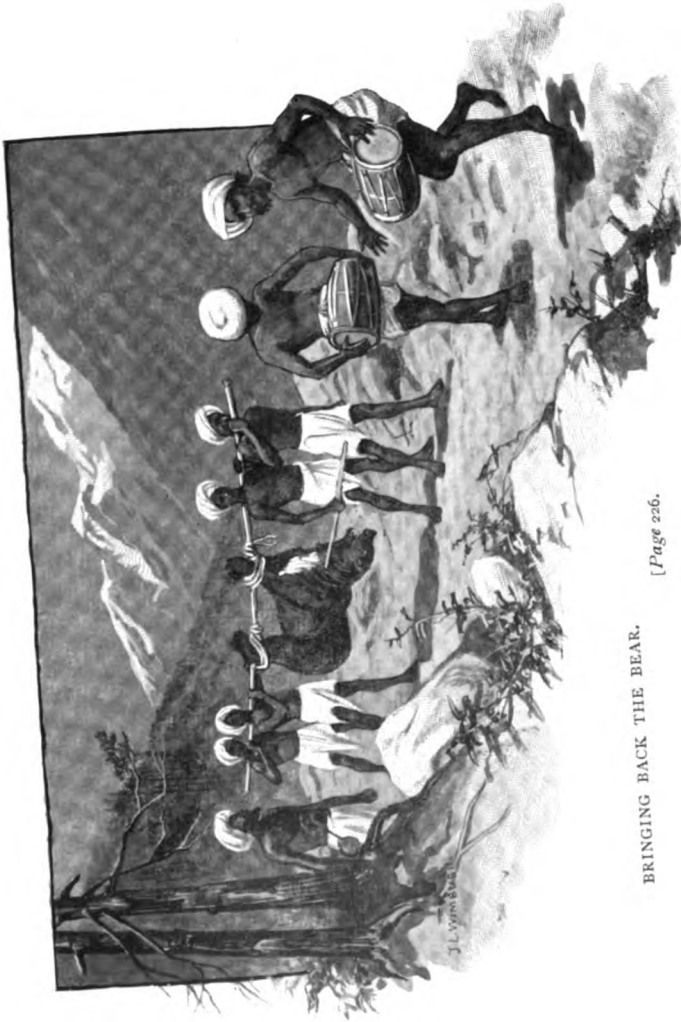
On the old bear came, in far less time than it takes to read this, growling with rage ; S., with his last barrel, waited to make it a dead certainty ; but the *hārpāt* was most appallingly close, not farther than four yards at the longest estimation, when his gallant charge was ended by a bullet behind his ear. His body rolled over and over to the bottom of the nullah. It was certainly with a sense of relief that we looked at each other, for a bear who will charge in this way is *not* usual, and we were unprepared for quite such an emergency.

We ran across to the poor native, who was soon surrounded by a sobbing throng ; his scalp was lacerated,

his wrist broken, and his chest mauled. A native doctor was either fetched or appeared from somewhere. We asked him what he would do. He replied, "Give him medicine." We asked, "What medicine?" "Oh! he would buy something down in the village bazaar," he said. Any one who has ever walked through a filthy little native bazaar will understand why we took the patient out of the doctor's hands, got him into a *dhoolie*, and sent him off to Soper hospital, two days' journey, under the care of Sala Bux and relays of coolies.

Lalla said to S., "We'll carry him to the camp, and when we get there, we must get some pins, and pin his head up." So much for the primitive Kashmiri surgery! It turned out that the man's skull was slightly fractured; but he recovered, and left the hospital in six weeks' time. S. went to visit him there, after a letter from the surgeon-in-charge, in odd English, in which he said, "If you will come and visit him here, his sickness will be half."

Meanwhile the great black bear, an old male, measuring six feet three inches, with worn-down teeth, and a rusty coat, was worth examining. He had the usual white crescent-shaped mark on the chest, and a white lower lip. His head was particularly short and round, but very broad and massive, with its cruel, piggy little eyes. His claws were unusually long and sharp, better adapted for climbing than for digging. He must have stood up to the beater seven feet in height quite.



BRINGING BACK THE BEAR.

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It still remained to have a last look for Bear No. 1. Searching carefully, blood was seen on the ground; and, tracking his marks warily, we at last came on him, stone dead, in the open, shot through the side. He was a smaller bear, with a better coat, a deep, glossy black.

I left S. still arranging about the poor native, and with a coolie as a guide I went back and found my *tat* and rode to the camp. Later on a tremendous noise resounded up the valley, and by-and-by into our orchard wound a triumphal procession, headed by tom-toms thumping wildly and natives dancing and capering, while around the two bodies of the bears, borne upon poles, a shouting throng jumped and cheered.

The paying of the beaters followed. At last they all cleared off, alternating between weeping like children over the recollection of the accident, and screaming and dancing with joy over the successful issue of the *honk*.

We sat down to a soothing meal, while Lalla and Co. skinned the two *härpätis*; after which the skins were carefully stretched and secured by numerous pegs along their margins, powdered alum was thickly sprinkled on and thoroughly rubbed in, and some parts were well anointed with arsenical soap. The next day, rolling the skins up with the hair inwards, we sent them straight off on the back of a coolie to Srinagar to be roughly cured by our skin-man, before despatching them home to Rowland Ward. On

skinning the big bear they found he was literally stuffed with mulberries.

As an example of what natives are, after having skinned the bears they never troubled to bury the bodies, but left them both in the sun, and in the wind's quarter. Though late in the afternoon, the smell which blew into the camp was quite unbearable ; however, the servants were unconscious of it, and would, I am sure, have lived next the carcasses cheerfully for the rest of the autumn.

Having had such luck with bears, we thought that we could not do better than march away farther afield and higher up, and try for a *bára singh* (twelve horns), by which name the Kashmir deer is generally known among *shikaris*. He is almost identical with the red deer in Scotland ; but he is, alas ! gradually being banished from many hills where he once abounded by the vastly increased herds of cattle, especially buffaloes. Not only so, but the deer are massacred almost wholesale by the natives, with dogs, in the snow in winter. Gurais was once a favourite locality, and in this direction we turned our faces.

From Keypoor we marched by degrees to Imbresilwara, where we were in camp all among fir-trees. From there we marched to Alsoa, along a ridge, with a magnificent view of the Lolab Valley stretched out below us on our left. We saw Nagmerg in the distance ; and then descending from this high ground, we came down—down—to Alsoa, almost on the borders of the Wular Lake.

Lalla selected a spot under some willows for us to camp ; I should call it a mosquito-stricken swamp. We moved a little way off ; but there was no escape—we were bitten all the evening and all night. Even mosquito-curtains were useless ; their great time was while one was sitting in a bath. Next day we had torrents of rain, which partly accounted for the mosquitos being so unusually troublesome.

I sat in my tent as long as I could stand it, and was then driven out into the deluge, and we beat through dripping jungle and steaming nullahs ; but no signs of any kind of game were to be seen. We were up early on these mornings, being generally called at 3.45 a.m., almost before the owls had left off hooting, or the tree-beetles finished their nightly droning ; breakfast was served by candle-light and a lantern, on our camp-table, out in the open, under the stars.

Arrived at Bandipore, we posted our letters. And now the road to Gilgit lay in front of us, winding up into the mountains, a road we meant to follow as far as Gurais. This excellent Government highway has been made by the British, a feat of engineering, to replace the old path ; we are told that before it was made, "dark were the gorges and perilous were the roads. Sometimes the traveller had to pass by light cords, sometimes by loose stretched and plaited twigs. There were ledges hanging in mid-air, there were flying bridges and leaps to be made across abysses, elsewhere paths cut with the chisel, or a rude footing for the toe, in the face of the rock."

Nowadays two mules might walk abreast along many parts of the way. A Political Officer lives as British Resident at Gilgit all the year round, snowed up throughout the winter months, the many miles of telegraph wires alone forming a communication with the outer world. The Dards occupy the Gilgit basin—a cheerful, bold, independent people, caring little for human life, but not bloodthirsty. Men and women dress entirely in woollen—trousers and *choga* (a long robe). Their caps are characteristic, being merely long woollen bags, rolled up at the edge till they fit close to the head. The feet are wrapped in leather, with long strips as binders. They abhor the cow, and will not drink its milk nor eat its butter nor burn cow-dung. Polo is a favourite game throughout Dardistán, as in Balti, which is its home, or one of its homes. Wherever Baltis or Dards live, the polo-ground may be looked for.

It was, then, the road to Gilgit along which we were now marching. The post office, telegraph office, and Government warehouses were all left behind at Bandipore, together with most of the signs of civilisation; the Happy Valley lay farther and farther below, as we zigzagged up the abrupt ascent to the Tragbal Pass; and henceforth we met with no one, except an occasional string of mules with transport on its way to Gilgit, or a few Dards driving along baggage-ponies. In nine miles we had ascended four thousand feet; a few miles farther, and we reached the rest bungalow on the top of the Tragbal.

After the rank, green vales we had been wandering through, where in the narrow paths Indian corn met over our heads in its luxuriance, and where the sun streamed down on us from morning till night, this country was a great contrast. We were up in clouds, in rainy, white mist.

However, it was a great luxury to be within four walls under a roof for one night; the little rest-house might be draughty and have no glass in the window, but the fireplace was soon glowing with a pile of burning logs, and we spent a most snug evening.

Higher up a good deal of fresh snow had fallen, and the next morning Haramuk, that somewhat toad-shaped mountain, looked almost unearthly in its new snowfall, gleaming in the sunrise, glistening with glaciers, grey and ghostly chasms breaking the snow-fields and winding upwards, "gulfs foreshadowed and straits forbidden."

At Kanjalwan one morning S. was called at 3 a.m., and after he had had breakfast, I heard Lalla being soundly admonished, for he had come up afterwards and quietly said that five o'clock would be time enough to start. Eventually they went off right up the mountain-side. I stayed below and spent the day sketching down by the Kishenganga River. Then in the evening, after some tea, to keep warm, I collected a grand supply of sticks and wood from the jungle, which made a capital fire outside our tent, by which we dined when S. came in. He had seen the tracks

of a small *bárá singh*, but nothing else. He had been up between fifteen and sixteen thousand feet, where I should have found the climbing hard and the elevation trying.

Several more days brought us to Gurais, a village of flat-roofed houses down by the river in the middle of the valley, mountains on either side, and the Gilgit road vanishing away at the end, shortly to cross the Burzil Pass. Gurais boasts of a post office, a fort, and a house belonging to the road engineer. The log huts which constitute the village were built of pine-tree trunks laid lengthways one on top of the other, and dovetailing at the corners; no plaster of any sort being used, one could easily see into them. There were no chimneys, and in most of the huts no windows. The door was merely a square space sawn in the logs; glass, chairs, beds, tables, are unknown to these Kashmiris. I saw a cow and a calf lying down inside the "room" with a woman and two children. Hens and cocks lived inside, of course. The families themselves were clothed in a long woollen garment each, of a dingy yellow mud-colour; dirty is too mild a word for their faces and bodies; the children went about naked.

The few little fields round the villages can be cultivated with little trouble, the soil is so rich. The climate in the sheltered valleys is never extreme, consequently without effort this lazy, filthy population lives on from generation to generation in their wooden pigsties, built all huddled together, anyhow, surrounded



GAGGAI NULLAH.

by gutters and dung-heaps, with the produce of their fields often stacked up on the tops of the flat roofs.

From Gurais we marched down the valley of the Kishenganga River, and I think our marches were almost the most beautiful of any in Kashmir. The autumn colouring every day grew more magnificent—such crimsons and yellows in the forests; while we followed the course of the river, itself the deepest green-blue. Picture, if you can, the boulders and the white foam, the clear, deep pools; on either side trees turning golden and red; above, the rocky cliffs of the gorge; then the deodar forests and jungles, which at last leave the bare mountain-sides, whose lonely heights culminate in waste after waste of snow.

Finally we encamped in Chota Gaggai Nullah. We were on the banks of a stream, in the wildest scenery. Any chance of *bárá singh* lay in getting up to about sixteen thousand feet, where it would be utterly impossible for ponies or, indeed, laden coolies to get along at all, the path, or what was called "path," being difficult enough for a man to climb without a load.

I was therefore left below for two nights in our camp, while S. took up a tent just long enough and broad enough to lie down in, and which exactly covered the valise bed on which he slept upon the ground. Sala Bux went up with him too, as well as Lalla and the *chota shikari*; they took provisions with them.

The "beastie" (*bhisti*), as the water-carrier is called, was told off to wait upon me; but conversation on these days was very limited. I was called "Huzoor"

or else "Gurrapore," which means Protector of the Poor.

I was out sketching one day by the Kishenganga, when suddenly a voice said "Good morning," and a sahib jumped down into the bed of the river where I sat on a stone. He explained that he had been camping up Burra Gaggai Nullah, and had heard of us. He was in The Guides, and we found many subjects in common, as well as *shikar*. He had only seen one *bárá singh*, and after two hours' stalk found it was too small to shoot. Six years ago Gaggai was a sportsman's paradise, but it has been shot out. This good Samaritan left a batch of old papers, which were very welcome.

The afternoon turned to heavy rain, and I was obliged to sit in my little tent ; the evening hours were, however, greatly cheered by the arrival of Armudneera, dripping from head to foot, with a fine bundle of newspapers, letters, etc., from Bandipore. It had been growing colder than ever all day, and I had put on everything I possessed. Kashmir red wine with hot water made a warming drink, and some cherry brandy was a luxury. The beastie cleared away my evening meal, scudding backwards and forwards through the drenching rain ; both he and Cooky came up once or twice to the tent door, saying, "*Burruff! Huzoor—burruff!*" I had not the faintest idea what *burruff* meant ; but thanking Heaven that the tent did not leak, so far, wrapping myself up from head to foot to keep out the piercing cold, I went to bed. In the

night a strange, crunching, rumbling sound above us and around us woke me, and continued to go on till I was again asleep.

About five o'clock I awoke, bitterly cold, to find the top of the tent bulging down and pressing on to my bed. I tried to push it upwards, but it was very heavy and I could not stir it, and *very* cold. Gradually the truth dawned upon me—*snow*. Jumping up and peering through the flap, I beheld a world of white and the air thick with great flakes falling fast. This, then, was *burruff*.

Bed being the best place, I stayed there till late ; the servants from time to time scraped the snow off the tents. I looked out now and again—the earth was flat with snow, and throughout that day it snowed harder than it had ever snowed before, if one might guess at it ; the leaden depths of the sky descended like a mine turned upside down on us.

In the middle of the day S. appeared, drenched to the skin. The path up had been bad, and over some ground it was all he could do to get on at all. It crossed the stream in many places, where they waded up to their knees ; and for some distance, when there was no room in the rock for a track at all, they waded along up the bed of the stream.

The first day they heard a *bárd singh* towards evening. The second day, late in the afternoon, they saw what were probably three red bears on a hill about two miles off, but even with glasses could not be quite certain ; they climbed for three-quarters of

an hour to get a nearer look, but the three objects moved on. The next day was very wet. S. shot a brace of *rām chakōr*, a sort of large pheasant, grey with red legs—handsome birds and very good to eat. Early in the afternoon the snowstorm came on. It was freezingly cold; after waiting up the mountain for it to get better—which it did not—they returned to the little tent soaked to the skin. Sala Bux had prepared something hot; the little tent was fairly waterproof; and S. lay down, while the servants huddled round a tree, against which they piled and platted some fir-tree branches as a shelter. All the air was thick with snow. In the middle of the night water and snow came in under the edge of the tent, and S. awoke wet through. He got his two gun-cases, laid them side by side, and slept on them as well as he could for the rest of the night.

In the morning there was a foot of snow everywhere, and it was snowing hard. They all set off to come down to me; the actual distance was six miles. Sala Bux and the coolies, with baggage, were seven hours over it. Wading through the snowy torrent must have been cold work.

The remainder of that day S. and I sat in my tent, shivering with cold. Towards evening Lalla came in to say that it was more than probable that our tent-poles would break in the night from the weight of snow. It was an uncomfortable picture in such weather! I packed, and I slept in all my clothes, even to my boots; for, of course, if the bamboos had

snapped, everything would have been buried in snow and under fallen canvas ; but with clothes on I could not hurt, after I had been duly extricated from the ruins.

All through that day, and all night long, avalanches were falling continually up in the mountains and round us with a crunching, roaring sound like thunder. After all, the tents did *not* come down, and we awoke to a beautiful sunny morning, the sky having resumed its delicious blue and the valley its unrivalled beauty. Everything was buried under a glittering shroud of snow. The babble of the stream was bound by fetters of ice. No branches creaked in the still air, no birds sang, no one passed us. There, in unspeakable solitude, lay our little camp.

Rejoicing in the sun, we spent the morning in drying our things and generally straightening up ; while Lalla went off to try and arrange for coolies to carry our transport. Snow having once set in, the sooner we moved down the better. I shall never forget that day—everything wreathed and buried in white (for there were two feet on the level), the strange, fantastic shapes, the dazzling icicles, the deodar branches weighed down under white feather-beds, the great rolling, curling snow-drifts ; it was the whitest world I have ever seen.

Near my tent the servants scraped a circle in the snow, and, as well as they could with the damp wood, lit two little fires. They squatted round the fires, with the two kilters, which contained all our

provisions and their pots and pans. It is *dastur* that a Kashmiri cook should rise to the occasion; and, following "custom," ours cooked for us there in the snow as he never had in the warm valleys. At lunch, in my tent, appeared mutton chops, chip-potatoes, and apple tart, all hot; again for dinner, excellent soup, mixed pie of pheasant, etc., poached eggs, and plum pudding, all out of this circle in the snow! Sala Bux was ill all day with fever, after his night out with S.

We went for a walk in the afternoon, floundering along so slowly that we barely got a mile; but in the rarefied, intoxicating air it was grand exercise, and the limitless shroud of white over the whole world, as it seemed, was a wonderful sight—light, powdery, sparkling like diamonds. Down in the river, in a little black pool broken among the ice and snow, we came upon a brace of teal, which S. shot, and later on a pair of pigeons, all a useful addition to our larder. Our anxiety about getting down out of these regions was set at rest that night by Lalla returning with a band of coolies he had raised from the nearest village.

Towards evening it froze intensely, with the stars as bright as jewels, the earth spread out in lustrous twilight, and a profound solemnity, an unbroken stillness. The full moon rose over the top of the nullah as a patin of pure silver, casting on the snow long shadows of the great mountains and the pine-trees, the burdened rock, the shaggy foreland. In the great white desolation distance was a mocking vision; hills looked near and nullahs far, when hills were far and

nullahs near. And the misty breath of frost, piercing through the deepest water, striking into the ground, lay in our tents and froze stiff everything round us. I took off none of my clothes, and lay wrapt in my bedding, trying to keep warm.

Next morning, in bright, dazzling sunlight, the tents were taken down and all our baggage loaded on the coolies. We got them off with all possible speed. Our little camp-table was left till last, and while the tents were being packed, we sat at breakfast out in the snow. It was strange how accustomed one grew to it, being always in it. The table was then folded and tied to the back of the last coolie, and we set off.

It was hard work walking, and we were soon wet to our knees. The pony, which we rode between us, kept its feet and made its way through the drifts ; but it was so bitterly cold sitting and riding it, that we both chose rather to walk until from very weariness we were forced to accept a lift for a time. Food, on these marches, we ate as we walked ; it was too cold to stop.

Crossing the Kishenganga River was a work of difficulty. Once we got over by an immense pine-tree trunk which had fallen across it and had been lopped of all its branches. Even a plain tree trunk is not the bridge one would select of all others ; but covered with more than a foot of snow, it was "blind" going, slippery and perilous. We went over on our hands and knees, and the pony

forded the thick, muddy river. We had to ford ourselves many small streams.

Another narrow, swinging, log bridge was bad crossing. Of course, it had no handrail of any sort, and the great gaps between the loose logs, added to the swinging of the whole frail structure, makes it a matter of wonder to me now that not only our whole party, but the pony also, reached the other side. Those hill *tats* possess marvellous instinct, creeping over bridges in our footsteps like a cat, apparently able to snuff holes and loose logs, moving very slowly indeed, but without the slightest alarm. October 8th saw us arrived at Gorai rest-house, with only one more march before we should reach once more the Tragbal *dak* bungalow.

After our time of camping in the snow, it is hard to picture the absolute *luxury* which we felt in that Gorai rest-house. True, it was only the roughest *dak* bungalow, with a couple of bare rooms, bare brick walls, bare boarded floor, bare fireplace, table, and framework for beds. But it seemed Heaven. A fire soon blazed; and what it was to sit over it—to dry our frozen and soaked boots and stockings, etc.! . . . What it was to have a dry floor to sit upon, and rafters over our heads! There was no window, and the door had to be kept open to light the room; but when our transport turned up, we got out a pair of candles and felt almost overburdened with comfort. Our faces and hands had been badly chapped with cold, and blistered with

the light of the sun on the snow. Before we got down into the Happy Valley once more, we lost most of the skin. Neither vaseline nor glycerine was of any use.

The number of small things which one wants out in camp are most difficult to recollect and to provide at short notice. Such things as sticking-plaster, wax matches, quinine, chlorodyne, green goggles, scissors, string, rope, needles, thread, arsenical soap, powdered alum, penknives, cotton wool, dusters for servants, toilet soap, stationery, a few favourite books, a measuring tape, a portable, waterproof, folding bath, a leather water-bag, lantern, candles and candlesticks and wind-guards, a hatchet, butcher's knives and a steel, a spring weighing-machine to weigh up to one hundred pounds, common soap for washing clothes, dubbin for greasing boots—this gives an idea. We suffered greatly from the want of green gauze or goggles all this time when we were marching across snow.

With regard to head-dress, *solâ topis*, or helmets of some description, must be worn when down in the valleys on the march, though in the higher mountains a tweed cap out stalking is sufficient. But it all depends on the sun, the day, etc. I wore a broad helmet from first to last. Nothing is more suitable for clothes than *puttoo*, a strong woollen homespun made in Kashmir. It is soft, warm, durable, and usually of exactly the right colour—a sort of brownish grey.

Bad weather and the scarcity of dry fuel proved the convenience and excellence of tins of soup and preserved meat, also consolidated tea and coffee, tins of cocoa and preserved milk. Compressed vegetables, too, are among very useful stores, tins of carrots, of ginger, syrup, etc. I would advise travellers against taking Worcestershire and Harvey sauce, for when once that bottle is opened, every course served up will be deluged with its contents by the native cook. Some bottles of whisky, cherry brandy, and even the local red wine, add considerably to comfort.

The *chokidar*, the native who looked after the rest-house and kept the key, lived in a room at one end; at the other end our servants had a room. The wood fire smoked violently, but that was a small evil. The moon was again so brilliant that we could plainly see the great, distant snow mountains, and we could have read or have written by its light with the greatest ease.

The rats at night ran riot in our rooms. They scuttled across the floor, squeaking loudly, and shuffling among my clothes, which I had taken off. Then there was a race, apparently from S.'s room to mine, through a great hole in the wall. It may be said that the rattle of their feet over the boarded floor was deafening! I lit my candle, and they were a little less noisy, but in the corners of the room long dark bodies were still rustling and moving, and for a time kept me awake.

The next day we had the Tragbal Pass before

us. Everything was frozen hard as nails when we got up, and the first five miles was an arduous, slippery climb. However, we were now on the Gilgit road, though at present it was a mere track marked by the passage of a *dak* coolie or two. Higher we rose up over the pass, where a cutting wind would have taken the skin off a rhinoceros. The glare of the snow was most painful to the eyes, and they grew blood-shot and sore. The sun sparkled on the edges, glittered on the icicles, shone on the heights, illumined the depths, till all was one vast radiance, and our dazzled eyes ached again.

The bleak mountains at the top, over which our path lay, were more than ever desolate and solemn—as far as the eye could see, and beyond that, as far as the mind could think, stretched waste upon waste of snow! From the summit we turned to look back at Nanga Parbat, and again and again we turned before the slope on the other side brought us too low down.

The third highest mountain in the world, 26,620 feet, we had seen it often and often during our stay in Kashmir, whenever we were up at any considerable elevation. In one's imagination Nanga Parbat grows to be more than a mountain—it becomes invested with a personality. Far above all other ranges anywhere near it, its splintered, snow-white crest rears itself into the sky; the first sunlight of early dawn, the last of the sunset, belong to Nanga Parbat, and

long after the rest of the world is shrouded in the greys of twilight, the lonely peak is stained in crimson glory.

The whole mountain is haunted by pixies, and no native *shikari* will venture into its nullahs. They call the glacier, or the ice peak on its summit, "*Shal-batte-kot*," and a *shikari* is said to have once climbed up to it, and to have found therein countless snakes. If any man doubts this, they add, let him go there and bring down word, that all may know the truth.

But those heights, which defied even Mummery and which are now his grave, keep their secret. We could see the great shoulder of the mountain, up which it was his intention to work his way, and the gigantic glacier down its south-west front; but I suppose we must have been fifty miles from it. I have seen the sun glinting on its ice-fields at a distance of a hundred miles in a bee-line.

No descriptions give any idea of its beauty. "In a hundred ages of the good, I could not tell the glories of Nanga Parbat. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Nanga Parbat."

For a long time we gazed. Uplifted above love and hate and storms of passion, calm amidst the eternal silences and unknown of man, bathed in living blue, a great peace rested on the sad and lonely peak on that bright day. I said "Good-bye." I have never seen it again.

The descent from this point was considerable ; every turn in the path brought us many tens of feet below the last. It grew warmer. The next stage brought us into a thaw ; and on the more southerly side the Tragbal was running with water. We waded through half-frozen snow and slush, and by-and-by through seas of mud.

The ending of the snow-line was most curious in its very abruptness. The green on the mountain-sides, the grass, the tree tops, to our eyes dazzled with the snow-glare and accustomed for days to nothing but a sheet of radiant whiteness, had an extraordinary appearance. Everything looked *black*, and all wrong. And it was some time before our vision became normal and we could appreciate the greenness. And now the Happy Valley spread out below us, with the calm Wular Lake, and every step brought us down into greater warmth and sunshine. It seemed as though spring ought to be coming on !

At the Tragbal rest-house we ate some tiffin, sitting in the verandah, and then made our way down the zigzag road to Bandipore, where we camped by a stream close to the Wular. It had been a long march of twenty-five miles ; but coolies with our tents had left Gorai at 4 that morning, and so we found them on our arrival really pitched. The cook, however, and the rest of our baggage were hours behind us, and we had a lengthy wait before getting anything to eat.

And now our stay in Kashmir drew to a close. Leave also was limited ; our associations with the mountains were to become only a memory. A week later we were in a *doongha* on the Jhelum, making our way to Baramoula. I tried not to realise that it was my last journey in the beautiful vale, my last sight of Haramuk and the Pir Panjal range, never again to live in quite the same way, face to face with Nature.

As we paddled along, our last evening, the country said its farewell in one of its most gorgeous sunsets. The stately pines on the Tragbal stood out, one beyond another, in a medium of deep, quiet violet, while the grey, bleached summits, peaked and snow-slashed, above them, gleamed with amber light. Watching them, in their unearthly fascination, the scene changed every moment. The river, through whose oily surface we cut, long remained a sheet of burnished gold ; the sky and the mountains, transformed by the after-glow, passed through a carnival of colour—indescribable.

At last the jewelled peaks became wan as the face of death, and only a cold, golden light lingered in the west. Night had come with its eeriness. Still in our open *kishiy* we paddled along, until about 11 p.m. Baramoula drew near : there was the opening in the mountains, there the grey, mysterious bridge and shadowy houses. It was bitterly cold by this time. Mooring, we walked up to the *ddk* bungalow. All was dark ; but on a bench near the door was huddled

up a tall lump of rags, like a dejected fowl roosting. Doubtfully S. addressed it. "*Chokidar?*" It unwound, arose, and was. It lit us fires in two rooms, and we slept like stones.

The next morning, going to the *tonga* office, we booked all our effects to follow by bullock-cart to Pindi station, nearly two hundred miles. Our own luggage, strapped on the sides of a *tonga*, we packed in. Many and profound were the salaams from Cooky, Lalla, Armudneera, Beastie, and Sweeper as we drove off.

That day we drove eighty miles, and slept at Domel. As a rule, people take three days to drive out of and into Kashmir, but it is such a dull way of spending time that we resolved to do it in two. It was extremely tiring, owing to the jolting of the *tonga*. We changed ponies every six miles. What always struck me was that one tumbled out of the *tonga* to stretch one's legs, only to find that, far from walking, one's keen desire was to sit down at once from sheer weariness.

We got up at six o'clock the next morning, and drove for three hours before breakfast to Kohala; after which thirty miles entirely uphill brought us to Murree; and then a last forty miles took us down to Pindi. Leaving Murree, the Illimitable Plains lay idealised in the evening light, "their baked, brown expanse transfigured into the likeness of a sunset sea rolling infinitely in waves of misty gold."

Nay, come up hither. From this wave-washed mound
Unto the farthest flood-brim look with me ;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drowned.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues, *there are more plains.*

And now our road began to grow dusty and also much hotter. At each stage down we cast garment after garment, and the air lost all its old exhilaration and become more oppressive.

With a last bump and a last jolt the *tonga* pulled up at Rawal Pindi station, and with the weariness of a ninety-mile drive in a cart without springs upon us, we walked into the busy station, crowded with the familiar Indian native, and the first train we had seen for six months.

Dinner in the refreshment-room, and we then made ourselves comfortable in our reserved carriage on a siding. I hardly remember when the mail train picked us up ; but at ten o'clock next morning we reached Lahore, and found the Orderly Gunga Sin and a brougham there to meet us. It was too hot to drive up to Mian Mir in an open carriage.

As we drove, the dismalness of a level land, after Kashmir, came over one—the flat stretches of sand, the dusty tamarisk-trees, the glaring white artillery lines, the cavalry lines, passed one after the other. We were down in the plains, down in cantonments again. The sun scorched, the air was alive with the sound of distant bugle calls ; in the evening we should

hear the band playing at the Bedford mess, and the sleepy creak and groan of the water-wheel in the garden all day—everlastingly.

Here at last was the bungalow and its quiet, dark rooms. The spotless servants, and my own *ayah* in white and a scarlet coat, and half a dozen ear-, nose-, wrist-, ankle-, and toe-rings and bangles and chains glittering about her, stood salaaming on the doorsteps, welcoming us back to the civilised world.

It seems superfluous to enlarge upon a subject on which competent authorities have written ; but before I close this chapter I cannot resist adding a short note to the many and forcible lines which have been penned by other writers, of deep regret that Kashmir should ever have been allowed to pass out of British hands.

In the earliest days Hindu kings reigned in Kashmir. They were conquered and succeeded by Mohammedan rulers. In 1588 the country fell into the hands of the Moguls. The Afghans gained possession of it in 1756. It was wrested from them by Rangit Singh, the Sikh monarch of the Punjab, in 1819. When the Sikhs in 1846 were defeated by the English, they were unable to pay the one and a half millions sterling which we demanded, and, as equivalent to part of it, they ceded to us a large territory of hill country, which included Kashmir. But our Governor-General, Sir Henry Hardinge, considered it expedient to make over *Kashmir* to the Jāmu chief, securing his friendship, while the British Government was occupied in administering the Punjab.

Such is its history. This may have been a diplomatic move, an expedient one, in those turbulent days ; and yet it would have been worth a great effort to have kept Kashmir in our hands. As a sanatorium for our troops it would have been invaluable, its climate surpassing any of our hill stations, and besides which there is *room*. Added to this the country, properly cultivated, would be a great source of revenue, instead of its fertile valleys being wasted on a degraded, lazy, good-for-nothing people.

CHAPTER VIII

TIGER-SHOOTING

Down to the Deccan—A Tiger Shoot—The March—*Khubr*—Into Position—A Tree-climbing Tiger—A Merciful Escape—A Splendid "Great Cat"—Heat and Famine—We walk a Tiger up for the First and Last Time—Death of Beater—Return to Civilisation.

CHAPTER VIII

TIGER-SHOOTING

TIGER !—TIGER !

What of the hunting, hunter bold ?

Brother, the watch was long and cold.

What of the quarry ye went to kill ?

Brother, he crops in the jungle still.

Where is the power that made your pride ?

Brother, it ebbs from my flank and side.

Where is the haste that ye hurry by ?

Brother, I go to my lair to die.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

IF one could look down upon India from a balloon, one would see that it was more or less divided into three regions. The first is the Himalayas, of which we have seen something ; the second is the plains, where the last chapter left us ; the third is the Deccan, a great three-sided table-land which covers the southern half of India. It slopes upwards from the plains, and its northern wall and buttresses stood in former times as a vast barrier of mountain and jungle between Northern and Southern India, greatly increasing the difficulty of welding the whole into one empire, until at length pierced by road and rail. The eastern and western sides of the Deccan are known as the Ghâts, a name applied to a flight of steps up

a river bank. In the Bombay Presidency the Ghâts rise in magnificent precipices and headlands almost out of the ocean, and truly look like "colossal landing-stairs" from the sea. The Eastern and Western Ghâts meet at an angle near Cape Comorin at the southern extremity of India, and so complete the three sides of the table-land.

I think the Deccan fulfils more than the Punjab does the rooted conception of "the land of Ind," as fostered by pictures of the East from one's childhood, and as carried out with him from home by every globe-trotter. The black soil of the Deccan, proverbial for its fertility, grows every kind of fruit-bearing palm, bears rich successions of crops and heavy rice harvests—that is, unless the monsoons fail. Vast masses of forests, ridges, and peaks constitute the highlands of Southern India, broken by cultivated valleys and high-lying plains. Parts of the Deccan are covered with magnificent vegetation; in old days it was buried under forests; and even now ebony, teak, and other great trees still abound. But tillage has driven the jungle back to the hilly recesses; wheat, millet, tobacco, cotton, sugar-cane, and pulse fields spread over the country.

The people store the monsoon rains in wells, tanks, and artificial lakes, and flood their crops at will. Their food consists chiefly of small grains and millets; and if the rains fail, thousands die of famine. As from the railway the traveller sees the flat stretch of rice fields, fringed round with evergreen masses of bamboo

cocoa-nuts, areca, and other coroneted palms, each hamlet hidden among its own grove of plantations and wealth-giving trees, he feels this is in truth more the India of his imagination, and if his travels take him into the great jungles and up the rocky hills, he will feel some distance from Europe.

Such, then, is the Deccan. And it is these highlands of India which are specially connected in the mind with tigers and tiger-shooting—a theme which, I venture to hope, is not, from a woman's point of view, yet worn threadbare.

The subject is not treated here scientifically, but only as it struck a well-known Mem-sahib who has taken part in almost every variation of sport in India. It is simpler to use her own words, and I can vouch for the truth of them, at the same time gently reminding the unbelieving critic that the wildest fiction never yet eclipsed fact.

We left Bangalore one day in the middle of last April, J. and myself, in answer to a wire from Captain F. at Secunderabad, "*Arrangements for shoot complete,*" which meant getting leave from the forest authorities, police authorities, and a thousand-and-one minor details.

From Secunderabad a night journey got us to Warungal station at two in the morning. We spent the rest of the night uncomfortably in the waiting-room, and as soon as it grew light were only too glad to set off. I would impress upon every woman

following our example the necessity of taking every precaution against the heat. Not only wear a large *solá topi*, but have a spine pad sewn inside the coat, which should be of thin green *shikar* material. I had a second pad hooked on outside. I often kept a wet rag on my head, inside my pith helmet; and I wore dogskin gloves, minus half the fingers, which enabled one to hold the burning barrels. The temperature was 104° in the shade in our tents, and later on 115°.

Our caravan really formed a most imposing train as we set off from Warungal station. Fifty-one pack-bullocks with panniers carried one hundred and sixty pounds each, which consisted of guns, ammunition, tents, beds, chairs, table, clothes, food and drink enough to last the three of us for eight weeks, corn for our ponies and the ponies of our two head *shikaris*, filters, cash-box, etc., etc. Our own luggage had gone straight through from Bangalore to Warungal with our boy. It was twenty-six maunds over weight—that is, two thousand and eighty pounds! It blocked up the platform and alarmed the guard considerably.

Our whole party consisted of our three selves, our own boy for each of us, a *syce* for every pony, a cook, a *mati* (or scullery-boy), a *peon* for supplies, letters, etc., ten *shikaris*, and four bullock-men to look after the bullocks. So we formed quite a camp. When on the march, we started off our fifty-one pack-bullocks at three o'clock in the morning, following ourselves at six o'clock, marching from fifteen to twenty miles

a day. According to this plan, bullocks and all of us reached the new camp much about the same time ; the tents were all put up ; and we avoided being out in the hottest time—from twelve to four o'clock.

Up to our third camp out of Warungal we did nothing at all ; we were unlucky, for at all three places we were, through some mistake, preceded by a party of the 19th Hussars, who had left Secunderabad a fortnight before. We sent on to them, and they arranged to branch off to the left, so that our next camp was on unbeaten ground.

It *was* hot on the march. I made my *syce* carry a large kettle of cold tea or coffee wherewith to refresh myself, and J. and Captain F. supplied themselves also with something cold. The *syces* carried our guns, too, after the first day, when we saw a lot of jungle-fowl and a splendid peacock, which we would fain have shot, for they are excellent eating ! Since then we stalked several when we got into camp, but they were too cunning.

Every day, as soon as the bullocks were unloaded, they were driven down to water, and there they *wallowed*, covering themselves with mud, and often only showing just their noses above the mud and water. Whenever the camp was in a likely place the *shikaris* tied up bullocks for the tigers to kill the same evening, and we went and saw what had happened the next morning. For the first two or three marches, as I said, we had no luck, and went on at once, instead of staying in one camp a week or so, as we did later on.

Our marches were all through jungle, sometimes really thick with fine trees, occasionally rough scrub and steep, rocky hills. The track was always rough and very stony, a mere path, and in many places would have been quite impossible for the roughest bullock-cart. We rode all of it at a walk, and the *syces* followed on foot.

At last we had *khubr* (news) of a tigress and two large cubs; and, full of elation, having reached the camp, six bullocks were tied up that same evening.

Next morning we started about half-past six and went out to see what had happened. We rode, two *shikaris* walking with us, till we were about half a mile from the tie-up; then, dismounting, we left the ponies with the *syces*, and crept with infinite caution up to the spot, for if the tiger has killed the bullock, he generally only drags the body a few hundred yards, and having hidden it, lies down somewhere within reach. Of course, it seems cruel to the unfortunate bullock; but, as a matter of fact, if you kill the tiger in this way, you save the lives of a number of other bullocks, for a cattle-killing tiger devours an enormous number in a year, and, in occasional cases, may take to killing men too.

Besides, how else is a tiger to be found at all? Roaming the country-side and hunting all night, they cover an enormous range of ground, and in a wild, rough scrub and jungle country, extending for hundreds of miles, without any clue to the tiger's sleeping-place during the day, one might beat perhaps for weeks and weeks, and see nothing at all.



TIGER.

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Judged by the standard of the greatest good to the greatest number, the laws of humanity justify the working of a tiger shoot, to my mind.

Bullocks are tied up in the most likely places—always near water. The tiger, delighting in thick cover near streams, visiting the spot on his nightly beat, kills the bullock, drags the body away a few hundred yards, and hides it under a bush, or somewhere where the vultures will not see it. He makes a large meal at once, drinks at the stream, and then lies down for twelve hours or so in cool shade somewhere near at hand. If undisturbed he will sleep during the day, and returning to the carcase at night, continue his meal. One bullock will last him three or four nights.

Therefore, upon visiting cautiously in the early morning the tie-up, and finding that the bullock has been killed and dragged off, the odds are greatly in favour of the tiger's being somewhere close at hand. He is, so to speak, *located*.

And now it is worth while having a beat. And here a really good *shikari* is absolutely necessary—a first-rate man, who knows all the ground, understands exactly the right places to beat, and how to beat them, and where to post his guns.

The extraordinary, intuitive knowledge which a few *shikaris* possess, makes it almost a dead certainty as to which path a tiger will come along in a beat, and has made sportsmen complain that tiger-shooting is a well-planned, preconceived, cut-and-dried *battue*.

And as for danger! I have heard it compared with shooting a mad dog from the top of an omnibus. Read the rest of the chapter.

On the morning of which I speak we crept up to the first bullock and found it still unharmed; but we could track plainly where one of the tiger cubs (they were nearly full-grown) had walked up to it, and right round it, but had not seen fit to kill. We sent the reprieved bullock to water and back to camp, and crept on about a mile and a half to the next.

It was gone! We stole up to the stake. The rope was broken off short, and in the dust, close to the stake, was an enormous scratch-mark, with all the marks of the nails imprinted sharply, exactly like a gigantic cat at home might make. There was a broad trail where the body had been dragged off.

As the tiger might be lying down close to the body, it is better never to follow this up. No one who values his life should walk up to a tiger. Every one has heard how tigers which have been mortally wounded have struck down men even in their dying agonies, and almost every year some fatal accident occurs to add to the warnings, but they are still unheeded. Other animals may be dodged and avoided; but if a tiger *does* charge home, death is nearly inevitable.

Leaving two *shikaris* to arrange the general idea of the beat, we went back to camp, four miles off. While we had breakfast, and coolies were collected for the beat, a concentrated excitement seemed in the very air.

It is best not to begin to beat till eleven or twelve o'clock ; by that time the tiger is probably asleep, and is less likely to be disturbed too soon. Even should this happen, the sun and the rocks are by that time so scorchingly hot, that he is very reluctant to leave his cool sanctuary. From fifty to a hundred coolies are wanted for a beat ; on this occasion we had eighty. Their pay was one rupee to eight coolies—that is barely twopence each ; but it was doubled if a tiger was shot. As Furreed, the head *shikari*, remarked, “it takes very clever business” to arrange skilfully a good beat.

We beat a long nullah (a valley) on that first day, two miles long and half a mile wide. Most of the coolies and *shikaris* were sent to one end, the guns were posted at the other ; but besides this, stops had to be placed all along the sides, at any point where the tiger is likely to break out. The coolies who act as stops all climb up into trees, and if they see the tiger coming their way with the idea of breaking out, they snap a twig or two, which invariably turns him back at once.

Besides this, we had brought with us about ten rolls of broad, white cloth stuff, each piece a yard wide and twenty yards long, and called “stopping cloth.” This was fixed on to trees or bushes along the edge of the beat, at places where the tiger was known by the *shikaris* to be particularly likely to break out—all this with the same idea of keeping him in the desired direction of the guns, of course.

We three guns were posted in trees, seated each in a *machān*, which is, as a rule, a stout, hard, stuffed leather cushion, with straps and buckles, or else ropes, on the four corners, by means of which it is fastened up in the branches, about fifteen feet from the ground. The *machān* is reached by a little, rough ladder; and having climbed up into your perch, your gun-bearer with your second gun standing or sitting on some branch near you, your *chāgul* (leather water-bottle) slung below, you sit, still as death, perhaps for as long as two hours, while the beat goes on.

No. 1 place was the likeliest and best, and No. 2 second best. We changed numbers every day; and so astute are the *shikaris*, that out of seven tigers six came past No. 1.

The first morning, much to our disappointment, the tigress was never found at all. But, partly because it was the first time and all so new, it was *most* exciting; in fact, the excitement was so intense that in my heart of hearts I felt almost glad when it was all over. The *shikaris* did not think the tigress had gone far.

The next morning we had another beat, and though J. saw the tigress, he did not get a shot at her. She came back in the night and ate more of the dead body, and the *shikaris* said she was in some long, thick elephant-grass beyond either of the two preceding beats. We were up in *machāns* on one side, and by-and-by could hear her move. They set alight to one end. It did not burn very well; but after a bit, the fire and the yells of the coolies, and the blank cartridges

which they kept letting off, made her move at last. She sprang up with a loud roar ; but instead of coming out near any of the guns, as we hoped, she rushed off down through the grass right-handed, and I only saw her striped back for one second, only that and her tail, about sixty yards off in the grass, not enough to fire. She went right off. For more than ten miles the *shikaris* tracked her, still travelling on, and then they gave it up.

Leaving this camp, we reached that day a place called Tarwai, where we met with the first actual and sad signs of the famine, which was prevalent. We had passed across waste after waste, which should have been rice, paddy, and other grain, but lay now all uncultivated, owing to the *non est* of water.

In all the villages so far they had had rice left from last year, sufficient for a miserable pittance for this year ; but at Tarwai the wailing, walking skeletons crawled up to us—heart-stirring spectacles ! They clamoured for rice—with their shrunken little ones in their arms—and of course we spared them all we could, and gave them a little money to send and buy more. But it was terribly little we could do for the starving, hollow-eyed, weary supplicants, who, after we had distributed the rice, clustered over the ground where it had lain, like ants by spilled honey, searching for another grain.

The heat throughout this time could not be pictured at all by any one at home. It cannot be realised by those who have not felt it, and it gives the ordinary Britisher no adequate idea whatever to read that it

was 104° in the shade. When there was any wind at all, it was generally a sort of burning, furnace-like blast. Of course, we streamed with perspiration all day and most of the night. The only cool moments were for an hour just before dawn. Captain F. and J. always slept outside, with nothing over them but their pyjama suits. The rocks would grow so hot in the sun that we could feel them all burning to our feet through boots. However, it was a healthy, dry heat, which was a blessing, and none of us were the least ill.

At last, after several days of inaction, we met with our first real excitement, and at the same time I shot my first tiger. He was well known, for three gunners who were in the same place last year had three beats after him—ineffectual beats. He was fond of killing bears—a very uncommon thing; and the villagers told us he had been seen to climb a tree after a bear which scrambled up it to get out of his clutches. He managed to reach the bear, and attacked him. Both fell out of the tree on to the ground, when the tiger promptly killed the bear.

This we did not at the time believe; it is most rare for a tiger to climb trees—in fact, almost unheard of. But it proved to be true. He was what they call a very *bobbery* (pugnacious) tiger, the first news we heard of him being that he had killed and eaten another bear six miles from our camp. We went out and had a beat, and found the remains of poor Bruin; the tiger was in the beat, but he broke out through

the stops on one side without being fired at. However, the following night he killed one of our tie-ups, close to camp, and he made off it his last meal in this world.

The next morning found all three of us up in our respective *machāns*. Captain F. and myself were about eighty yards apart. The tree which he was in was not quite upright; it leaned slightly, and it had several branches at intervals up the trunk, the *machān* being fastened upon one of them. I sat on my little seat with feelings so intense and so mixed that they were absolutely painful; the strain and excitement great enough to suggest a blessed relief when all should be over. Occasionally Captain F. and I looked across at each other, as we sat, keenly alive to every leaf stirring in the dry scrub, while down upon the burning sands and rocks blazed the relentless sun.

Suddenly there was a sound—monkeys trooping through the jungle, high in the trees, grasping the pliant branches and shaking them with rage! A tiger *must* be in the neighbourhood. Another second—the jungle-grass waved and crackled, and out into the open emerged and advanced slowly—a picture of fearful beauty. A tiger seen in the Zoo gives no faint idea of what one of his species is, seen under its proper conditions. Beasts in captivity are under-fed, and have no muscle; but here before us was a specimen who had always “done himself well,” was fit as a prize-fighter, every square inch of him developed to perfection. On he came, his cruel eyes lazily blinking in

the sun. His long, slouching walk, suggestive of such latent strength, betrayed the vast muscle working firmly through the loose, glossy skin, which was clear red and white, with its double stripes, and the W mark on the head.

The sight of such consummate power, as he swung majestically along, licking his lips and his moustache after his feed, was one of those things not soon to be forgotten, and while it had a bracing effect on the nerves, at the same time struck rather a chilling sensation.

The tiger moved on. I sat with my rifle at full cock, but he went straight up to Captain F.'s tree, looked up, saw him, gave a fierce growl, and then stood still about ten yards off. A loud detonation followed; but Captain F. must have made a poor shot—he hit him behind, much too far back, the bullet going down almost to his hock. The tiger looked magnificent still—he stood on a little knoll, lashing his tail and looking vindictively up into the tree.

At one and the same moment Captain F. and myself fired; somehow or other we both missed him. This was rather too much. In one moment, like a flash, the tiger darted round, deliberately galloped at the tree, sprang about half-way up into its lowest branches, and, assisted by the natural oblique inclination of the trunk, swarmed up to the *machán* as quickly and easily as a cat. It was a terrible moment, one of those of which we pray that they may be



WITH MY LAST BARREL I FIRED.

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few and far between ; most of us can lay a finger on two or three such moments in our lives.

Poor Captain F., both barrels fired, and helpless, had in desperation sprung to his feet, his hand on the side of the *machân*. Either the tiger's teeth or his claws tore his finger all down the back of it to the bone, but the whole action took place with such lightning speed that it was hard to say which.

In my mind's eye, as the great body flew up the tree, I pictured a ghastly struggle, a heavy fall, and a sickening death ; at the same instant a moment's intuition suggested a difficult but not impossible shot at the tiger's back as he clasped the tree. With my last barrel I fired. There was no time for a long and steady aim ; but as the smoke cleared away—what relief!—the tiger had dropped to the ground. With nine lives—cat-like—he was not dead ; he walked off and disappeared.

We dared not look for him then and there, dying and savage in such rough and dangerous cover ; but next morning we found him cold and stiff. He was a magnificent male, very large and heavy, enormous paws and moustache—a splendid “great cat.”

Anybody would have admired the country we were now in had it been less dry and burnt up ; but one day we were in a considerably larger nullah than usual, running down into the great Godáviri River, which rises in the mountains overhanging the Bombay coast, and traverses the whole breadth of the central table-land before it reaches the ocean on the eastern

shores of India. Here there were springs; the sides of the nullah were very steep and most beautifully green and fresh; it looked *quite* lovely after the baked and brown appearance of the rest of the country, and we feasted our eyes upon the moss and wet rocks. It was very like a Yorkshire beck or a Scotch burn, and in the rains the waterfalls there must have been grand spectacles for the bears and tigers.

The Godāvāri is an extraordinary river—a thoroughly Indian river. The first I saw of it was from the top of a high hill, and it lay about thirty miles in the distance. The *shikari* pointed it out with great pride. Its average width there was, I suppose, about two miles; but at that time of year the river-bed was dry, and almost the whole of the two miles was sand like the sea-shore, the water being barely two hundred yards across. We rode over it easily—it was fordable anywhere; and finally we camped on the banks.

There were enormous fresh-water prawns in the stream about six inches long, exactly like an ordinary prawn; a native *zemindar* sent us twelve as a present, and eight potatoes, which last were considered most valuable. The prawns struck us as being a little “cold-blooded” at first, but curried afterwards they were excellent.

I suppose that in the rains the whole bed of the Godāvāri is full, and it must then be a most lovely sight; near our camp it was quite four miles across from bank to bank. We had two of the most appalling thunderstorms I have ever seen, while we

were by the river—indeed, I cannot remember anything approaching them.

We were trying to shoot “muggers” (crocodiles) one evening. The beasts were too wily, and directly we got anywhere within shot, slid off the hot rocks, where they lay sunning themselves, and disappeared in deep water. So we sat down by the edge of the river, waiting in case one might show himself again.

After a time one of us noticed, far away down the valley, an enormous cloud of yellow dust, nothing more than the sand in the river-bed driven along in front of an awful squall of wind right up the river. On it came—a thousand miles an hour! We watched the water in the distance, lying smiling, calm, blue, in the sun, suddenly turn a sort of *black-green* before it, and then, in an *instant*, the storm burst upon us. The river was turned into a leaping, boiling mass; we were right in the tempest. Fortunately, our camp was only a hundred yards away, for the wind was awful to struggle against, and the dust and sand were almost blinding. We were hurled this way and that.

The servants had seen it coming and had secured our tents, but both the poles of mine went smash, broke short off under the strain. Struggling out of the *débris*, I rushed into J.'s tent; my own things did not get very wet, as the tent, of course, lay over them, and was fairly waterproof.

A terrific thunderstorm was meanwhile going on over Bustar. It was a wonderful sight to watch, as it crept over the sky nearer and nearer to us. The

clouds soon roofed us in, as black as night, torn every moment by immense, great, jagged cracks of violet lightning, which went right down the black sky from top to bottom, making the river-bed as light as day. (It was seven o'clock, and was just growing dark.) Every rock and stone in it was lit up as though with a search-light. The crashing peals of thunder suggested the breaking up of the entire upper world. And then hail and rain began—the skies poured sheets of water. A poor native who was going from one village to another was killed. They said that the hail-stones, which were for two or three moments very large, killed him; but it was more probably merely the fright—natives are killed by shock again and again, dying of fright in a hopeless way, for no reason at all. The storm lasted about an hour, at the end of which time the drought-stricken plain was a sheet of water.

We had just finished breakfast one morning, when some excited natives came running up to tell us that a man near their village had been mauled by a tiger. We asked for the man. "Oh!" they answered, "he is dead—quite dead. How can *he* come before your honour!"

The same thing appeared to have happened before, and possibly an old man-eater was in the neighbourhood. Where a tiger cannot get game or cattle, or when he has become too old to stalk them easily, for some reason or other, he *may* take to killing natives; but, unless provoked, he rarely attacks men.

We set off promptly for the village, Cherla, about four miles off. It consisted of about half a dozen thatched huts with the cowsheds belonging to them ; there were two or three small fields of maize ; and for several hundred yards on either side there was a level and tolerably open expanse of grass, with a few clumps of cardamums, high reeds, and bushes scattered here and there. On approaching the village, we saw the inhabitants clustering on the roofs and at the doors of their houses, and we were assured that the tiger was still somewhere quite close, though it was not known exactly in what part of the cover it then was. The guide who had brought us pointed exultingly to the marks in the grass, which showed unmistakably where the tiger had, in the dusk the evening before, seized upon the poor native within not more than a hundred and fifty yards from his own hut, while a broad trail, by which he had been dragged away, was still visible.

Afterwards during our beat we had to explore one particularly thick piece of long grass which actually extended to the margin of the village, and in this we found indications showing that the tigers went up to the very doors of the houses ! So much for habit—second nature ! People living in the vicinity of tigers soon cease to be afraid of them.

But this seizure of one of their own number had struck home, and they all seemed paralysed with terror. As usual, the sight of a " Miss Sahib " risking her life in such hazardous adventures filled them

with amazement. What object *could* I have? What pleasure *could* I hope to find? They one and all begged me to stay behind with them in the village while the sahibs—also inexplicable beings—went forth to do battle; and were more mystified than ever when I turned a deaf ear to their entreaties.

The *shikaris* having arranged to beat the supposed "lie" of the tiger, we set off. I was right-hand gun this time, and the beat had begun about ten minutes by the watch in my wrist-strap. I was watching some jungle-sheep—delightful little animals—trotting past on my right, and had rather neglected my left for a moment; when "*Bagh!*—*bagh!*" whispered my gun-bearer from his perch on a branch near my *machān*. Glancing round, the stirring sight of Stripes himself appeared before my eyes, going at a great rate through the underwood.

I had just time to fire both barrels, and to see that the first, at any rate, had missed him. He galloped off, roaring angrily; though, talking of *roaring*, the word is rather out of place—the sound heard at night is more a kind of moan than a roar, and when a tiger charges it utters a series of loud, furious sort of grunts or growls; however, "roar" is the word in use.

Much disgusted, when the beaters came up, I climbed down. But on searching we found traces of blood, and then, farther on, marks where he had dug his claws deeply into the ground. The *shikaris* declared that he must, after all, have been badly hit, and would probably in half an hour or so be dead.

J. and Captain F. both agreed with them, and after a consultation we sat down and had tiffin. A *shikari* picked up my first bullet, so that I must have hit him, as he disappeared, with my second shot. We sent the beaters home, and having given the tiger two hours, by which time we felt sure he would be dead, we proceeded with three or four *shikaris* to follow up the trail. The two others did try to persuade me not to come, but it was hardly likely that I should fall in with their views.

There are places, I believe, where tigers may be shot on foot with comparatively little risk ; there are men who have made a practice of shooting them thus ; but still more have paid the penalty of their rashness, and those who have survived will usually be *among the first* to point out the danger.

Therefore here I may remark that our action was that of fools. Expecting to find a corpse, we followed the tracks quietly for about two hundred yards, and then came upon a place where the tiger had evidently lain down and lost much blood. They cling to life with extraordinary tenacity. Again we followed the tracks, and in the marshy ground the fresh *pugs* (foot-marks) had water still oozing into them. We stole in line through the trees and grass up to some tall reeds—when our hearts stood still.

There was a spring : with an infuriated roar, and bounding through the cover with open mouth, his tail lashing his sides, his whole fur bristling, the tiger charged straight at us !

Heavens! what an unlooked-for moment!

I could see before me nothing but a shadowy form, owing to the lightning speed of his movements—a shadowy, striped form, with two large lamps of fire fixed upon us with an unmeaning stare, as the beast rushed upon us. Such was the vision of a moment. The trees were so thick that I dared not shoot till he was close, and I dimly recollect, even then, thinking that *everything* hinged upon keeping cool and killing him if possible. On he came. I fired straight at his chest at about fifteen yards distance without moving at all; and then instinctively, almost miraculously, I sprang to the left, as the tiger himself sprang *past* us—so close that I found his blood splashed over my gun-barrels afterwards.

Captain F. had fired a shot sideways which knocked out the tiger's teeth; J. had hit him fair on the shoulder, we found afterwards; my bullet was nearly in the centre of the chest. It would have been difficult to have placed two bullets better than J.'s and my own. Does not this point to the uncertainty of ever dropping a tiger on the spot, however straight the aim may be? For our friend was by no means dead; he had gone on.

But we had learnt our lesson, and were now imbued with a wholesome fear of this tiger. It was getting dark, so we retired and rode back to Cherla, where a bevy of excited natives met us. We gave orders for water-buffaloes to be collected, and next morning started off about seven o'clock with a pack of over a



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hundred of them. We drove them into the place where the tiger had disappeared, and very soon they began making a fearful bellowing and uproar. We watched, and could see no signs of him ; we left our *machāns*, and running down, drove the buffaloes off. They were snorting near his dead body.

He was only about a hundred yards from the place where he had charged us last night, and he must have died soon afterwards. He was a very heavy old male, measuring exactly nine feet nine inches in length. And so the poor native's death was avenged ! We found out then, of course, where our bullets had hit him ; his first wound was through him, behind the shoulder, but too low.

We looked at his massive paws : a tiger can with one blow of his paw stun an ordinary-sized bullock, or crush its skull. Those long white teeth, too ! Like a cat he springs upon a man, seizing the shoulder in his mouth, while his teeth penetrate right through chest and back to the lungs, at the same time tearing the man's head with his claws. We had had no ordinary escape.

Captain F. superintended his skinning ; we had some lunch, paid the coolies, and then about four o'clock J. and I went out alone for a stroll with one village *shikari*. We climbed a steep, rocky hill about a mile behind Cherla ; it was a "tigerish" spot, and of course we carried guns. Tigers are met with so unexpectedly that it is wise never to walk in jungles frequented by them without a loaded gun or a rifle

in one's hand ; a shot in the nick of time will very probably either stop or turn a charge.

We were walking very quietly along the side of the hill, and about thirty yards above us, almost at the top of the hill, were some steep rocks. Under one of these, in the cool shade, sitting in a recess which he had partly grubbed out for himself, the *shikari*, who was in front, suddenly saw, looking at us, a large boar. From his expression he wanted but slight provocation to induce him to charge. No animal exceeds the pig in ferocity, nor equals him in courage and determination. Once roused, nothing upon this earth will stop him, and he will boldly charge the largest elephant who may have disturbed him without further provocation. This boar was an enormous brute ; if only one could have had him on an open plain, where, with a good horse and spear, we might have had a fair fight !

The *shikari*, of course, stopped, whispered, and pointed. We were right below the pig, and dare not fire from there, for we should have had to shoot right uphill and straight at his head, and supposing he was only wounded or missed altogether, he would to a certainty have charged down upon us—and a charging tusker is no fun. Pretending, therefore, not to have seen him, and half retiring, we climbed sideways up the hill, till we were almost at the top, about twenty yards above the pig, and fifty yards on one side of him. Still he sat on, perfectly indifferent, not caring twopence, and now giving an

easy sideways shot. J. fired, and he sprang out, falling dead, at the same moment ; but such was the impetus of his spring, and so steep was the hill, that he went off, hurtling down end over end like a hoop, and would most certainly have gone straight to the bottom had he not fetched up against a tree. There he lay, behind a broad trunk.

He had a fine and most formidable pair of tushes, sharp as razors, protruding nearly three inches from his great jaw, the remaining two-thirds being imbedded in the jaw itself. We left him there and walked back to Cherla ; then sent the *shikari* and six coolies to bring him home. The pork we distributed among the villagers.

About this time it became very much hotter than hitherto, and until the end of our two months the heat really was intense ; 115° in the shade in our tents was the highest, and I assure my readers that sometimes it was awful. There was often a strong wind, but it was so burningly hot that it only made matters worse. At one camp we built a little hut with thatched straw sides, and made coolies pour water over the straw every hour, keeping them soaking wet ; and then, as the wind blew through, it got cooled and was quite fresh inside, though the cool, damp air attracted hordes of insects. I used to soak a handkerchief in water and put it in the crown of my *topi*, resoaking it at every pool of water we ever came across, even though it was very far from cold.

All our drinks were either hot or tepid. The only food the country supplied was eggs, chickens, and an occasional sheep, of all of which we grew exceedingly weary. For the rest, we lived entirely on our tinned provisions.

There is one great objection to this sort of shooting : namely, that there is so very little to do on the off days when there is no kill and no beat. During the first six weeks we three shot twelve head—that is, seven tigers, one panther, two bears, one sambur, and one pig. Six weeks seems a long time to give to shooting four head—not an animal a week !

As we only had beats on *two* occasions on which we did not find anything at all, and as only *twice* did we see something in a beat but not kill anything, it is to be gathered that there were a very large number of days on which we had no beats. Of course, a certain number of days were employed in marching ; but as we always marched in the cool, early morning, and never reached our camp later than ten o'clock, there remained even of that day a long succession of fruitless hours to be lived through.

Now, if we could have strolled out into the jungle every evening from four to seven o'clock with a rifle, and have come across deer of various sorts, here and there having a shot at a fine stag, one would never have been at a loss for something to do. As it was, we might walk for miles and never see a living animal. It is only in the last forty or fifty years that the jungles of Central India have been

practically denuded of game, and it is a thousand pities.

In Mysore there are strict game laws, but in Central India there are none, and the native village *shikaris* are rapidly ruining the country. These *shikaris* shoot simply for food ; and as they kill hinds, does, young, etc., indiscriminately, there are no deer left. They avoid tigers, panthers, and bears, as a rule, partly because their guns would seldom kill them and they themselves would run considerable risk, partly because these animals are of little use for eating purposes.

The endlessly long days of inaction and of furious heat were trying to all our tempers ; and though we were not as bad as a party I knew, who, after being for some time not on speaking terms with each other, threw up the expedition altogether, and went their various ways, yet we had several somewhat strained situations. Weeks after our shoot was over, I was much amused with J.'s and Captain F.'s diaries. In the latter I read :

“I was glad we got the tiger, but consider it a great shame of J. to shoot him when he was sixty yards off, as he would certainly have walked right under my tree.”

J.'s interested me more :

“On my return to camp surprised to find Edith both rude and bad-tempered ; she is becoming a perfect bore with her fits of temper. F. before the beat was almost insulting, and told me that if I fired

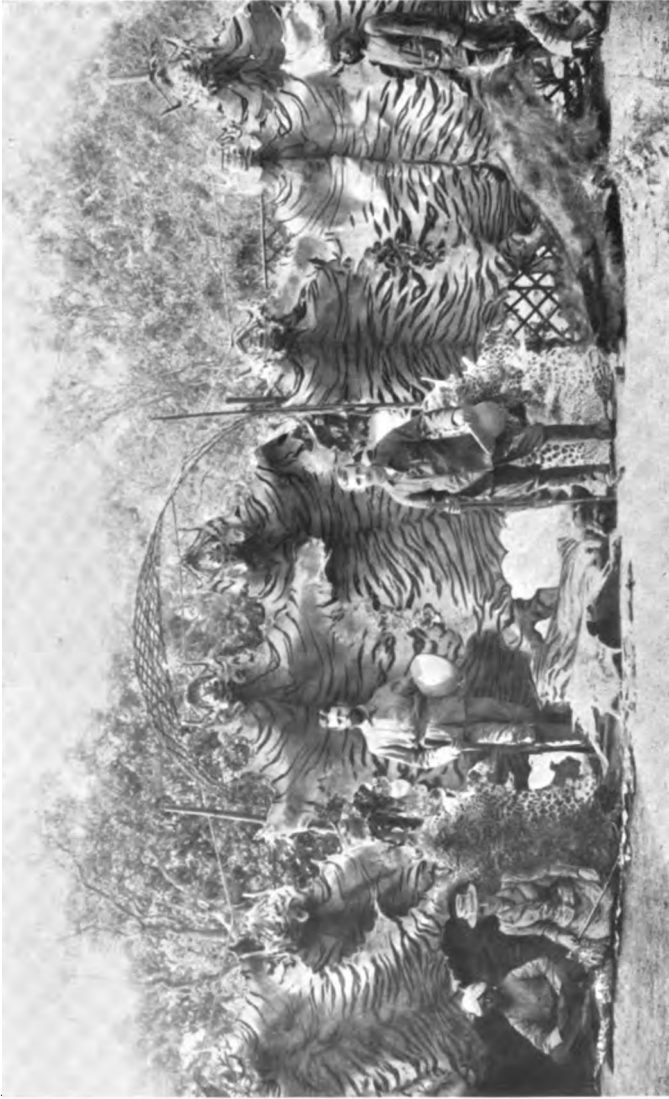
to the left of a red ant-heap he would consider it cribbing his shot."

(N.B.—Heat and flies are an excuse for writing anything.)

I shot my third tiger under the following circumstances. We were each up in our *machāns* ; and the beaters were working towards us, trying to drive out a tiger, who was evidently in a cool, damp spot, where he wished to remain. Instead of waiting to fire the tall, dry grass, or else sending buffaloes in, either of which expedients generally moves a tiger, the beaters, with the careless *sangfroid* which is so characteristic of them, plunged on through the reeds and must have got too close to him.

Suddenly, only two or three feet away from one terror-stricken wretch, up leapt the tiger ! "*Bagh !—bagh !*" resounded on all sides, and every man was shinning up a tree in a moment for all he was worth. It would have been a funny sight to watch the whole jungle, apparently, vibrating under eighty or more black bodies scurrying up like monkeys into the branches ; but, fearing a catastrophe, we sat straining our eyes, fully expecting the cry which ensued.

None of us actually saw what happened ; but I gather that, as the tiger pounced, the native sprang towards a tree. Where is a man, when matched against that lithe, powerful body ? One dart, one crunch, and the tiger dashed back at a gallop farther into the jungle, while the poor coolie subsided on to the ground, bitten through the thigh. We



TIGER SHOOT—A TROPHY.

bathed him, bound him up, and sent him off at once in a *dhoolie* with twenty-four men to carry him in relays, to a hospital about forty miles off, at Yellandu station. He died just before reaching it—of blood-poisoning probably. It was the one sad accident which spoilt our expedition.

Tigers' bites are often very poisonous, and even a mere scratch-wound has been known to result in lockjaw. After this experience the *shikaris*, not, alas! "wise in time," collected a herd of bullocks and drove them into the tiger's stronghold.

J. was not far from me, in his *machan*. I saw him put up his gun; we were about eighty yards apart, and half-way between us ran a very shallow nullah, with some evergreens over it. J. must have seen the tiger. *Would* he come out on his side or on mine? No one who has not been in a similar situation could understand the excitement of those moments, or how I hoped against hope. For another fifteen minutes there was a great clamour amongst the beaters.

Again J. put up his gun; the tiger was moving down our little nullah, but still some distance off. I saw him! He disappeared from us both under the evergreens, and then, *to my joy*, he emerged from cover and came out upon my side, having crossed over at the bottom. He walked slowly up the edge of the nullah; and when he was abreast of me and about forty yards off, I took a long, steady aim, and pulled the trigger.

He gave a huge leap into the air, and I fired again,

and at the same time J. fired too. He squirmed round on one side and glared up at my tree, seeing me distinctly, and then rolled over dead. My first shot, which of course had been a very easy one, was just right—straight through his heart; my second had hit him behind; J. did not hit him. As we generally fired from different sides, it was not hard to tell to whom a shot belonged.

This was the finest of my three, only exceeded in size by one of Captain F.'s, which had a longer tail. Enormous beasts they look, as they lie dead; their muscle, especially in the forearm, is colossal. This skin was beautifully marked; a lovely head with a great, sprouting moustache; he had a large yellow ruff all round his neck; the joint at his wrist measured twenty-six inches round.

These three tigers were all which fell to my own bag in the Deccan. J. shot five and Captain F. four in our two months. We returned to civilisation, two of us bearded like the pard, all burnt mahogany colour, much lighter in weight, and quite fit. Alas! to be back in "the man-stified town" again, after that life in the jungle which defies all description. There is so much connected with it which one never forgets, and yet which is hardly worth describing, which sinks into one's being and becomes part of oneself—a precious part.

Do not set out on a tiger shoot without being prepared for a great deal of discomfort. Your temper, your personal comforts, will all be trodden under

foot, and every annoyance must be borne under circumstances which amount sometimes almost to purgatory. Unless a woman is physically strong, it would be foolhardiness to spend eight weeks under such conditions.

But, after all, it is worth it, and a high price has to be paid *because* it is worth it.

CHAPTER IX

SNAKES.—DELHI

Experiences with Snakes—Cobras—An Inevitable Death—Delhi—The Ridge—Mutiny Days—John Nicholson—Palace of Great Moguls—A Native Pageant—Kutab Minar—A Deserted City.

CHAPTER IX

SNAKES.—DELHI

City of tall façades of marble !
Proud and passionate city—mettlesome, mad, extravagant city !

Pale, silent, stern, what could I say to that long accrued retribution ?
Could I wish humanity different ?
Could I wish the people made of wood and stone ?
Or that there be no justice in destiny or time ?

WALT WHITMAN.

INDIA is, in the minds of a certain class of people, connected indissolubly with snakes ; but as a matter of fact, the ordinary Englishwoman, out there for a year or so, is quite likely never to meet with one in the whole of her visit. To most people that would be no disappointment. “Those lithe and elegant beings,” as Rymer Jones calls them, are not appreciated in one’s bath-room and in inconveniently dark corners.

A snake, if one considers it, is really a wonderful animal. Without arms or legs, it is able to catch its prey. It can swallow an animal twice the size of its own head. It can leap its own length upwards or sideways, though again it is without limbs of any sort. It can lie under water happily for half

an hour. It has been known to fast for a year and eleven months, taking no harm from so doing. And last of all, one little puncture, from the fang of some of the species, in the healthiest man, and nothing in this world can save him.

My only wonder is that more natives do not die of snake-bite, considering how little they are protected ; a boot and a gaiter has saved many a European. My sister-in-law was walking quickly round her verandah one evening ; she went forward in the twilight to meet her husband, and suddenly felt her ankle wrapped round in the folds of a snake, across which she had, without seeing it, walked. She was a woman of some presence of mind, and she instantly trod with all her weight upon what she felt to be part of the snake under her foot. As luck would have it, that part was the head of a cobra ! She killed it ; whereas, had it been its tail, she would have been a dead woman.

It is more the *exception* than otherwise to meet with snakes in the verandahs and rooms of bungalows, but every now and then it occurs, as many tales have testified. A cobra will come in in search of food : of such things as rats and mice, or of kittens (at an early stage), they are fond. Your chicken-house will attract them, with its eggs and young chickens. The pipe which carries off waste water from your bath-room makes a capital way into a bungalow ; and finding himself inside, the cobra instinctively hides in some hole, a fissure in the walls being a

favourite retreat ; failing that, within the bed, in the folds of a quilt, or down in the bottom of an earthenware pot, a snug retreat may be found. Up in the roof is another favourite place, the thatch affording excellent cover.

But the cobra is by no means aggressive, and when he gets timely warning of the approach of man, he will always endeavour to get out of his way ; it is only when he is trampled upon inadvertently, or otherwise irritated, that he attempts to use his fangs.

And yet no snake is the cause of greater loss of life than the *cobra di capello*, or *naga*, as he is called. Unluckily, the species is very common, and out of all those snakes which, after inflicting a wound, have been killed or otherwise identified, the proportion of cobras is enormous. In Bengal alone, in one year, the number of persons who died of snake-bite amounted to 6,219. In the whole of India it is estimated that more than twenty thousand deaths occur annually from snake-bite, and it has been shown that fully one-half may be attributed to the cobra.

A cobra generally grows to a length of about five feet, and with the exception of the markings on the head, is of a uniform brown colour above, and bluish white underneath ; sometimes he has a pair of very conspicuous white, black-edged, spectacle-like marks on the expansible portion of the neck called the *hood*. When the cobra is irritated or excited, it spreads its hood, raising the first third of its body from the ground, gliding along with

the last two-thirds, and holding itself ready to strike forwards or sideways.

Cobras are most active at night, though sometimes found on the move during the day ; as a rule, however, they are curled up under logs of wood, in holes in walls and ruins, etc. They lay from eighteen to twenty-five eggs, and leave them to hatch in the sun ; they are much like a pigeon's egg.

Snakes are so awe-striking, creeping, sudden, and dreadful, that the Egyptians, Hindus, Mexicans, Japanese, and Chinese, may be pardoned for including them among other terrifying phenomena as objects of worship. There is hardly an Egyptian sculpture to be found without a serpent. Now, in India, only low-caste Hindus will kill snakes—a striking example of a superstitious religion baffling the march of civilisation. The Indian Government has offered a small reward for the head of each poisonous snake, and large numbers of cobras have been killed ; but by natives in general they are regarded with superstitious reverence as a divinity, powerful to injure, and therefore to be propitiated. Often when found in their dwellings this snake is allowed to remain, and is fed and protected—a dreadful joy ! Perhaps an inmate is bitten and dies ; then, in some cases, the snake will be most tenderly caught, deported to some field, and there released and allowed to depart in peace.

The horrors of death by snake-bite are a dark page in Hindu history. It has been well said : “ Under any

circumstances, even when excision is immediately resorted to, settle any affairs you have to settle in this world as quickly as possible, if bitten by a full-grown cobra or *tik-polanga*.”

Snake poison is essentially a neurotic ; and when it takes full effect it kills by annihilating in some unknown way the source of nerve force. The poison enters the circulation, and so reaches the nerve-centres. If it finds entry by a *large* vein life may be destroyed in a few moments ; as a rule it is a case of from two to four hours. The blood itself appears to be affected by the poison, which is also an irritant and causes violent inflammation.

A man in the vigour of life is stricken down in a moment, and his life ebbs away. A thick cord, about twice as thick as a lead pencil, is wound and tied round the limb as tightly as it can be fastened, *above* the bitten place ; at the same time, the tiny wound itself is burnt with a hot iron or lanced, in order to promote bleeding. The patient must *never* be allowed to lie on his back, nor to sleep, nor eat ; he should keep moving as long as possible. But in spite of the ligature and cauterisation, the poison works its way ; choking in the throat and terrible pains follow, the eyes grow dim, and then, happily, unconsciousness usually ensues. Breathing becomes more difficult, and convulsions precede death.

Such is the extraordinary effect of the poison. The blood, after one little injection of it, assumes an absolutely inky hue. Speaking of the “little injection,”

we have all heard people in the snake-house at the Zoo say to each other, when watching the snake dart out its tongue : " That's its sting ! Just one little touch of that, and you're a dead man ! "

The tongue of a snake is *not* its sting. A snake has no sting at all. Moles and mice have their quick sense of smell to guide them, cats their whiskers, insects their antennæ ; snakes have tongues for the same purpose, and the function of this ever busy, ever vigilant member is to explore, while it barely touches, every surface within reach. By night and by day the tongue conveys all necessary information to the brain. It is kept in a sheath, and its activity is so rapid, that when alarmed it moves with almost lightning-like speed. A snake never *licks* its prey ; its tongue is only intended as a nerve-guide.

The way in which a cobra *does* inject poison is as follows. It has eight poison-fangs in the upper jaw, teeth which are artfully contrived by some diabolical freak of nature as pointed tubes. At the extreme point of each tooth is an aperture like a tiny slit cut in a quill. A little bag behind the eye, about the size of an almond, contains the poison, which can be forced through a passage, down the hollow teeth, and out at the extreme tip right into the base of the wound.

The cobra darts, or *strikes*, and supposing it to strike home, its teeth will just penetrate through the skin, and will leave behind them two or three tiny punctures on the bitten limb. But if, as it bites, it

is able to thrust its fangs in up to the roots, it will fasten upon the bite and will not easily let go its hold ; it must be shaken or jerked off. Again, punctures will be found as though made by a needle, and probably the wound will bleed slightly.

A snake, it must be remembered, has nothing else to trust to except his teeth—they must be paws, claws, nails, and talons, and unless he wants his food to escape, they must never loose their hold for a moment. Cobras, which belong to the first class of snakes, kill their prey by poison. The second class comprises snakes which kill their prey by means of constriction or smothering it in their coils. The third class kill by swallowing their prey, or suffocation. Supposing that a snake were to open its mouth for a moment for the purpose of what we call *biting*, its prey would escape ; but its teeth do not inflict wounds, they merely hold and move the food, and its jaws work almost like *hands* in guiding the food. Long, conical, curved, claw-like instruments, the arrangement of the teeth is like that of a mousetrap, easy enough to enter, but impossible to escape from.

A man whom I knew well in India, who was an old *Qui Hai*, told me that a cobra once got through a chink in his hen-house, and ate so many eggs from under a sitting hen that it was much too large to escape through the same exit, and it remained half in and half out, where it was discovered the next morning in a surfeited condition. On killing it and opening its body, the eggs were all found unbroken and warm.

They were replaced under their mother, and in due time hatched, none the worse for their strange incubation.

At first sight it is puzzling to see how any animal can swallow whole a body, such as an egg, considerably larger than its own head. The reason is that the bones of the head and jaws are loose, and can be enormously stretched and distorted.

The head-bones of higher animals are, of course, consolidated; but in the case of snakes, these bones are united by ligaments so elastic as to enable them to separate and to allow of the snake swallowing an animal twice the size of its own head.

The snake has four jaws above and 'two below, and its teeth are recurved—that is curve inwards—down the throat. To begin with, the two bones which form the lower jaw separate widely and move independently; then the bones in the roof of the mouth do the same; lastly, the four upper jaw-bones, all furnished with long, fine, recurved, close-set teeth, adapted for grasping and holding like fish-hooks, not for dividing or mastication in any way, come apart also, and the mouth itself can be opened horizontally as well as vertically. The teeth once hooked in their prey, the action is continuous, the throat going on with the work begun by the teeth, which grasp and work the food in with a movement so gradual as to simulate suction.

Thus a cobra will swallow a young chicken—and the working arrangements of its jaws are worthy of

consideration. Having caught and held the body, "one jaw is then unfixed, by the teeth of that jaw being withdrawn and pushed forward, when they are again unfixed farther back upon the prey. Another jaw is then unfixed, protruded, and reattached. So with the rest in succession, this movement of protraction being almost the only one of which they are susceptible while stretched apart to the utmost by the bulk of the animal encompassed by them. Thus by their successive movements the prey is slowly introduced into the gullet."

A snake can have hardly any sense of taste, for hair, feathers, fur, and dust must all alike be swallowed, completely disguising whatever flesh they cover. Perhaps it is because feeding is so little pleasure to the snake that he feeds but seldom, and when he troubles to do so, does it very thoroughly, in order that his meal may last a long time. He has no beak nor claws to divide his food and enable him to taste, but he abundantly coats it with saliva, his mouth watering over it, and thus lubricates the uncomfortable coating of fur or feathers.

If any apology should be needed for writing at such length upon snakes, I must remind my readers that, having been brought into contact with certain animals, it follows, as a matter of course, that one learns something of their ways. For instance, I heard of a pony one morning which had stepped upon a *krait*. It struck him upon the upper part of the foreleg. A ligature was put on at once above the

mark of the bite, binding the limb with very great pressure. The poison began to tell in a few moments. The pony reeled about, breathing heavily, and evidently suffering greatly. In a quarter of an hour it fell down, and lay on the ground struggling so pitiably that an end was put, with a gun, to such a painful scene. The snake had struck a large vein.

One more sad experience and I have done. My brother-in-law, at Derajat, had a grass-cutter named Jahm, a healthy young man, twenty-two years old. One morning he was taking his pipe out of a hole in the stable wall, and as he reached in his hand, felt a sudden, sharp bite—a snake had darted at his middle finger. My brother-in-law was fetched, and saw him ten minutes after it happened, by which time the servants had already put a ligature tightly round the finger. The mark of the bite was so slight as to be almost hard to see—two little punctures alone were visible; and there was hardly any pain in the finger.

The man himself had only caught sight of the end of the snake, and unfortunately it had darted back into the wall, with no hopes of being able to find it again and kill it. Judging from the absence of pain, my brother-in-law concluded that it was a non-venomous snake; but Jahm himself, from the glimpse he caught of it, thought it was a bis-cobra. If this were the case, his days were numbered. My brother-in-law put on a second ligature at once, higher up, round the man's arm; and still the only pain he felt

was from the great swelling and pressure of the two ligatures. At the same time an escharotic was applied. About an hour after he was bitten, Jahm said he felt intoxicated, his eyelids began to droop, and he staggered when walking. He was kept moving by my brother-in-law, but he began to speak with difficulty, being inclined to choke. Ammonia was injected into his left arm, and at first it roused him wonderfully ; but pain was by this time shooting up the right arm and extending all over the body. His pulse beat steadily, and he was perfectly conscious. His relations were all sent for. The paralytic symptoms increased, and he could no longer walk, however much he was helped. Choking became worse, and it was impossible for him to speak. My brother-in-law injected a second dose of ammonia, but it roused him less ; after which his legs became paralysed and his breathing more difficult. Artificial respiration was resorted to. The poor fellow died four hours from the time he was bitten.

But snakes are not *all* evil, and they fill an important place in the animal world. Out in India their beautiful shape helps them to penetrate into dense and noisome morasses where no other flesh-eating animal could find footing, and they clear miles upon miles of jungle, bog, and swamp of swarms of lesser vermin which would otherwise die and produce pestilences ; while they are themselves food for badgers, weasels, rats, hedgehogs, hogs, and goats.

A snake belonging to Mr. Thomas Bell, F.L.S.,

F.G.S., shall leave my readers with a pleasant impression of the species. It has been questioned whether snakes will drink milk. His own tame python on May 6th laid fifteen eggs, one after another. She collected them all and arranged them in a cone-shaped pile, and rolled herself round them so as to completely hide every one. Her temperature rose largely, and for a snake, which is a cold-blooded animal, she was quite warm. (Snakes do not breathe with short, regular inspirations, which would warm the blood, but when they respire they take in a supply of air to last them for some time.) Covering the eggs entirely, her head was at the summit of the cone. She had eaten in the preceding February six or seven pounds of raw beef and a live rabbit. While incubating the eggs she drank milk out of a basin five times. Indeed, owing to her rise of temperature, her want of water was so great that she evinced uneasiness to Mr. Bell, and permitted him to move and turn her head so that she could dip the end of her muzzle into the basin.

On July 2nd the eggs hatched. The mother, on the 3rd, ate six more pounds of beef, after her long fast. The little ones were changing their coats for the first fourteen days, during which time they drank and also bathed themselves; they then ate some little sparrows, throwing themselves upon them and constricting them like grown-up pythons.

The cobra-worshipping Hindus were in the habit of placing eggs for their gods, which are, as a rule,

terrible robbers of hen-roosts, returning again and again. In sending off cobras from India to the Zoo, egg-boxes filled with hens' eggs are always packed with them and despatched by the cobras on the journey.

A repulsion towards snakes is ingrained, naturally, in the heart of man, and yet they are worthy of admiration. Huxley used to say that the most beautiful piece of anatomy he knew was the vertebra of a snake. In some species there are four hundred joints in a snake's spine ; each one fits with a ball and socket into the next, and every joint therefore can move in every direction—the utmost pliancy of motion. Each joint supports a pair of ribs, which are connected with the scales. These are formed of folds of skin, and they move *with* the ribs. Think of four hundred little joints and four hundred pairs of little ribs ; contemplate it reverently.

Snakes seem to have three different modes of progression : on smooth, plane surfaces by means of their rib legs ; through high grass by rapid, almost invisible, sinuous, onward movements like swimming ; and in climbing straight walls by creating a vacuum with the ventral scales.

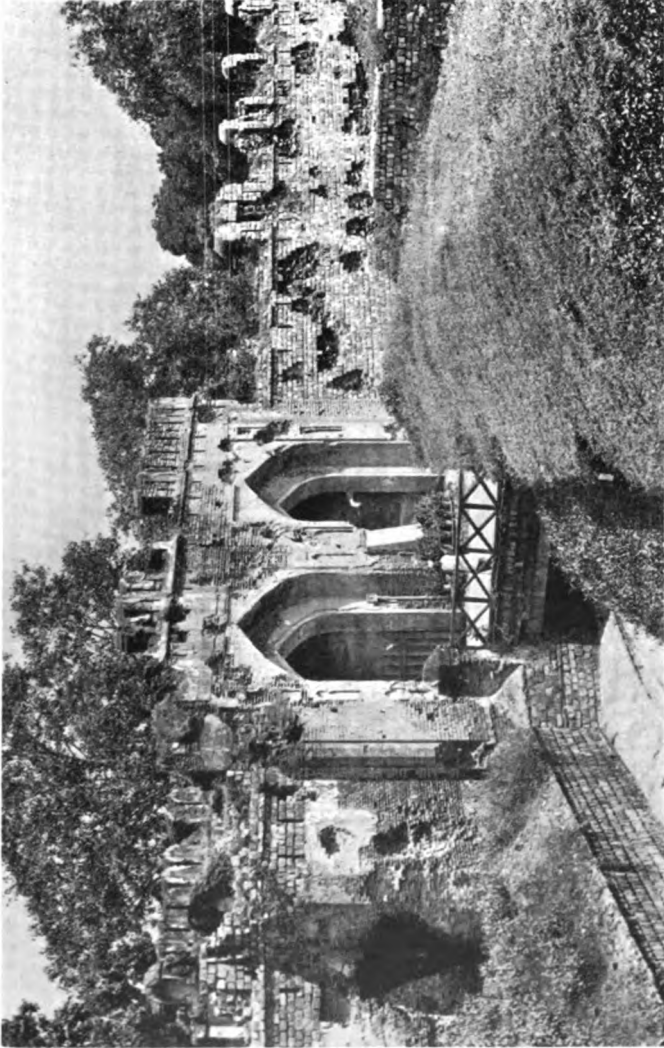
A snake as a rule moves along the ground in a *serpentine* way ; but it can proceed most quickly by arching its body off the ground, and a large snake will advance at an immense speed in an undulating form. It can out-climb the monkey, out-swim the fish, out-wrestle the athlete, leap its own length

upwards or sideways, kill and devour animals double the size of its head, without arms or talons or feet.

But I have lingered long enough over one of India's oldest inhabitants, and, interesting though they are, deeply as the subject impresses itself upon one's notice during a stay in the East, we have paid sufficient attention and respect due unto its name, and must return to our own travels.

Leaving Mian Mir at 5 p.m. on October 22nd, General Sir George Wolseley, B., and myself went off by train to Delhi *en route* for the south of India. We left in the evening, had breakfast at some station on the way next morning, and arrived about 10.30 a.m. We drove straight to Laurie's Hotel, where we found letters waiting for us, and a comfortable set of rooms. Having tubbed, and got through some writing and reading, we set out in a carriage, for the hottest part of the day was nearly over. Laurie's Hotel lies outside the city, and all the morning I had been looking at the great stone walls and the gates, picturing Delhi on that memorable day in May only forty-four years ago.

Walking through those very streets which were once crowded with an infuriated, fanatical Eastern mob, and stained with our own countrymen's blood, one meets many an old, wizened native, and looking at them one feels, "that very man probably saw it all"; that in those Mutiny days he may have stood by at the butchery of our ancestors and our friends. Most of us have heard at one time or another of connections of Mr. Fraser (the Commissioner), of



KASHMIR GATE, DELHI.

Mr. Hutchinson (the Collector), of Captain Douglas (the Commandant of the Palace Guards), of the Rev. Mr. Jennings (the Residency Chaplain), who besides officers, their wives and families, civil and non-official residents whose houses were within the city walls, were one and all massacred by the natives in Delhi.

The dark faces of the Sepoys belonging to the native infantry regiment, which, with one wing of a European regiment stationed within the fort, usually makes up the garrison, were typical of the vast lines of rebel soldiery, variously estimated at from fifty thousand to seventy thousand disciplined men, who must have surged up and down these very thoroughfares, after they had shot down all their own English officers and had thrown all restraint to the winds.

The Mutiny and the occupation of Delhi fell as a thunderbolt upon India. Warning after warning sent in to headquarters by the collectors and other civil authorities, suspicious circumstances, such as the passing of the *chupatties* (the sowing of the wind), were alike unheeded, and the English residents in Delhi were left to reap the whirlwind. What the exact motives were to which the Mutiny can be assigned never have been, and never will be, precisely known, simply because between the white man and the black man racial laws have fixed a great gulf, and a European can no more enter into the workings of an Oriental's brain than an Oriental could understand a North American Indian chief.

It is probable that the natives were disturbed by the

repeated British annexation of native states, also by the spread of education, and by the appearance of the steam-engine and telegraph wires. The Bengal Sepoys especially, all of them men of high caste, thought they could see into the future further than the rest of their countrymen, and they dreaded what they put down as *denationalising*. The influence of panic in an Oriental population is greater than might be supposed ; it spreads like fire. Natives readily believe the wildest stories, and act upon their fears.

The numerous dethroned princes, their heirs, and their widows, systematic and intriguing wire-pullers, with everything to gain by a revolution, having money in abundance with which they could buy the assistance of skilful spies and plotters, took advantage of any spirit of disaffection. In this critical state of affairs, of which the Government had no *official* knowledge, a rumour was circulated through the cantonments of the Bengal army that cartridges had been served out greased with the fat of animals unclean alike to Hindu and Mohammedan.

After this nothing could quiet the minds of the Sepoys ; officers were insulted by their men, and all confidence was gone. The storm burst.

As we drove up to Delhi its great wall of solid stone confronted us, constructed more than two hundred years ago by Sháh Jehán, and subsequently strengthened by the English at the beginning of the present century by a ditch and *glacis*. Those improvements cost us dear.

Delhi lies upon the right bank of the River Jumna, and the eastern side, where the city extends to the bank, is the only part of it without wall ; even here the high bank is faced with masonry. The circuit of the actual wall round the city is five and a half miles, and it has ten gates. It was interesting to see the long, white, straight road which leads to Meerut, and was watched with such eager anxiety by our few English survivors from the Flagstaff Tower for days after the Mutiny had broken out.

It was at Meerut that the Sepoys first revolted. Having shot down their English officers on parade, the die was cast, and in a mad frenzy they rushed off to the jail, breaking it open, and releasing all the prisoners. Running through cantonments, they cut down every European whom they met. Then they streamed off in a body to the neighbouring city of Delhi, to stir up the criminal population of that great " Babylon," to disaffect the native garrison there, and to place themselves under the authority of the discrowned Mogul Emperor, who was then living in the Palace of Delhi, with a pension of a hundred and twenty thousand pounds a year, and exclusive jurisdiction over the building itself—though the city was under British administration.

Along that very road the mutineers rushed. But meanwhile Meerut was the strongest military station in India, for it possessed a large European garrison of foot, horse, and guns, sufficient to overwhelm the mutineers before ever they reached Delhi. What did the

general in command do that night and the next day ? Simply nothing at all. Oh for a John Nicholson at that moment !

Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn !

No one was more astonished than the natives in Delhi that no help came from Meerut; and finding this to be the case, the native troops in cantonments, consisting of three regiments of native infantry and a battery of artillery, threw in their lot with the mutineers, shot down their officers, and the whole Mohammedan population of Delhi rose. So runs the history of the Mutiny.

Leaving the city on our right, we drove up first on to the famous Ridge, and along it to the Flagstaff Tower. The country is a good deal overgrown now with small thickets between the Ridge and the city, but we made out the positions of the guns when the city was finally shelled and taken.

It must have been a weary sojourn on the Ridge for the little British force, who were encamped upon it for three long months, until sufficiently reinforced to take the city. All that they could do was to hold the position until the arrival of the siege-train and reinforcements; their sufferings from the heat, and afterwards the rains, from cholera and sunstroke, dysentery and enteric, and from the daily attacks of the rebels, must have been great.

Along the top of the Ridge runs a road, and from

it we had a view of the whole position. There, from their encampment upon the Ridge, the survivors of the massacre, the little band of besieged, rather than besiegers, lay overlooking the city, so close to it that the clamour and everlasting hum of its huge native population, now swelled by sixty thousand rebel Sepoys within its walls, must have been heard day and night. The little overworked handful of Europeans, Sikhs, and Gurkhās, fought pitched battles and skirmishes time after time with the mutineers, and as often repulsed them with heavy loss.

Their general died of cholera in July, and hope had sunk low indeed by the time reinforcements and siege-artillery began to arrive. Even then it was long before it was decided to make the assault. Three months looking at the city had had the effect of making it appear more impregnable than ever. The British force upon the Ridge never exceeded eight thousand men, while the rebels numbered six or seven times that amount. But a god was at hand, and his mere presence proved more valuable than the reinforcements which he brought with him in August to the hard-pressed, weary watchers on the Ridge.

John Nicholson saved the situation. Upon the frontier this man had been literally worshipped by the natives; a rugged, great soul, he had "more resolution in the heart of him, more light in the head of him, than other men," and he "grappled like a giant face to face, heart to heart, with the naked truth of things." The times—dead, dry fuel, waiting for the lightning—

called him forth. He came ; and all blazed round him when he had once struck upon it, into fire like his own.

Carlyle says there is "a certainty of heroes being sent us," and that it is our faculty, our necessity, to worship heroes when sent. A man born to lead, a man with an extraordinary personality such as John Nicholson's—there was no question of *his* adequate recognition. Delhi must be taken, and taken at once, before fruitless skirmishes, heart-sickness born of hope deferred, fever and ague, had rotted and sapped the strength of the forces.

The Kashmir Gateway and the long face of northern wall fronted us as we stood upon the Ridge. Nicholson had his heavy batteries planted before them, and after five days' ceaseless cannonading, a practicable breach was reported. On the morning of September 14th the assault was delivered, the points of attack being the Kashmir bastion, the water bastion, the Kashmir Gate, and the Lahore Gate. The assault was thoroughly successful, and after six days' desperate fighting in the streets, Delhi was retaken, but at the cost of 66 English officers, 1,104 men, and John Nicholson.

The Mutiny Memorial at one end of the Ridge deserved a better architect, but it would be a hard thing to design well, and, at any rate, it serves to commemorate one of the fiercest struggles England has ever known. A great contrast is the plain grave between the Ridge and the city, with its simple headstone and sole inscription, "John Nicholson."

We drove down to the old Kashmir Gate, battered with the cannonade of that September, the walls riddled and torn with shells. Just in front of the gate is the little bridge, under the shelter of which crouched the plucky bugler Hawthorne who sounded the regimental call of the 52nd. And the gate itself—what memories does it not recall!—of the three sappers who one after another, as man after man was shot down, rushed up to light the fuse which was to blow in the gate—rushed forward to certain death as they stooped, match in hand, an easy mark for the enemy through the loopholes above.

As we drove in through the gateway, upon our left was the great breach in the walls—the scene where our brave fellows planted their scaling-ladders and positively *fought*, Lord Roberts says, for the glory of being first man over the edge of the parapet, although the first two or three men were absolutely certain to be shot through and through, falling backwards one after another, the instant they showed over the edge of the breach. But over their dead bodies, and into the thick of the Sepoys on the other side, our men gallantly poured.

Down one little street on our right Nicholson himself fell, at the head of a storming party, cheering and leading on his men, who had momentarily hung back in the face of a “tight corner.” Shot through the body, he lingered for a fortnight, and had the satisfaction of knowing that Delhi had been retaken.

Again upon our left we passed the Delhi magazine.

It was at the time of the Mutiny the largest magazine in the north-west of India, and enormous accumulations of munitions of war were stored up there. It was under the charge of Lieutenant Willoughby, with whom were two other officers and six non-commissioned officers. The Meerut mutineers arrived at Delhi early in the morning of May 11th; and the magazine was defended to the last by the little band, who could hardly *believe* that succour from our strong European garrison at Meerut was not already upon its way. With what bitter anxiety they must have watched the long white road! . . . Further defence being useless, and faithful to the last, however faithlessly headquarters treated them, they fired the magazine. Five of the nine were killed by the explosion, and Lieutenant Willoughby died of his injuries; the remaining three succeeded in making their escape.

Delhi is full of such memories as these. "We won India by force, and we must ever be prepared to keep it by this stern yet unavoidable luxury"—an expensive luxury, Clive might have added.

A great part of the city is taken up now by a large open space, laid out and planted, known as the Queen's Gardens, where carriages can drive; but in the days of the Mutiny, from wall to wall Delhi was a seething, murmuring hive of over a hundred and fifty-two thousand Mohammedans and Hindus; the narrow, tortuous streets, ending often in *culs de sac*, and the busy bazaars, *swarmed* with this vast black population.

But after the retaking of Delhi had cost six days of desperate fighting and horrible house-to-house butchery throughout the dense native quarter, we find, when that week was over, the city presenting another scene. One of the leading officers writes : "That march through Delhi in the early morning light was a gruesome proceeding. Our way from the Lahore Gate through the Chāndi Chauk led through a veritable city of the dead : not a sound was to be heard but the falling of our own footsteps ; not a living creature was to be seen. Dead bodies were strewn about in all directions, in every attitude that the death-struggle had caused them to assume, and in every stage of decomposition. We marched in silence or involuntarily spoke in whispers, as though fearing to disturb those ghastly remains of humanity. The sights we encountered were horrible and sickening to the last degree. Here a dog gnawed at an uncovered limb ; there a vulture, disturbed by our approach from its loathsome meal, but too completely gorged to fly, fluttered away to a safer distance. In many instances the positions of the bodies were appallingly lifelike. Some lay with their arms uplifted as if beckoning ; and indeed the whole scene was weird and terrible beyond description. Our horses seemed to feel the horror of it as much as we did, for they shook and snorted in evident terror. The atmosphere was unimaginably disgusting, laden as it was with the most noxious and sickening odours.

“It is impossible to describe the joy of breathing the pure air of the open country after such a horrible experience ; but we had not escaped untainted. That night we had several cases of cholera.”

Can Englishmen be blamed for showing little mercy ? It was the women called for vengeance, and when have British soldiers not rushed to that cry ? The native population was expelled the city, acres of it were cleared of slums, gardens and so on being substituted. Later on, Hindus were readmitted, but Mohammedans were rigorously excluded for years. At the present time Delhi is a prosperous commercial town and a great railway centre.

We passed the Bank and the Commissioner's house, a pleasant-looking white bungalow, standing in a garden, where, alas ! his wife and daughters were murdered by the mutineers, and those in the Bank shared their fate.

Farther on we were pointed out some old trees : there the two native princes from the Palace had Europeans and Eurasians strung up, watching them being killed after they had been hunted down and caught.

Then we turned into the principal street in Delhi—*the* street par excellence in all India for beauty and for good things well made, the Chāndi Chauk, or Street of Silver, which leads from the fort to the Lahore Gate, and is three-quarters of a mile long and seventy-four feet broad. All down its centre, on both sides of its raised path, stand up a double row of the sacred

pipal and nim-trees, shading the street and the gay, picturesque bazaars on either side. Delhi silver-work is of the most beautiful design; the Kashmir shawls and the *phulkaris* (wall-hangings), the woven stuffs and the embroideries with gold thread running through them, charm the rich merchants, while the quaint old native armour and the interesting native jewelry would gladden a collector's heart.

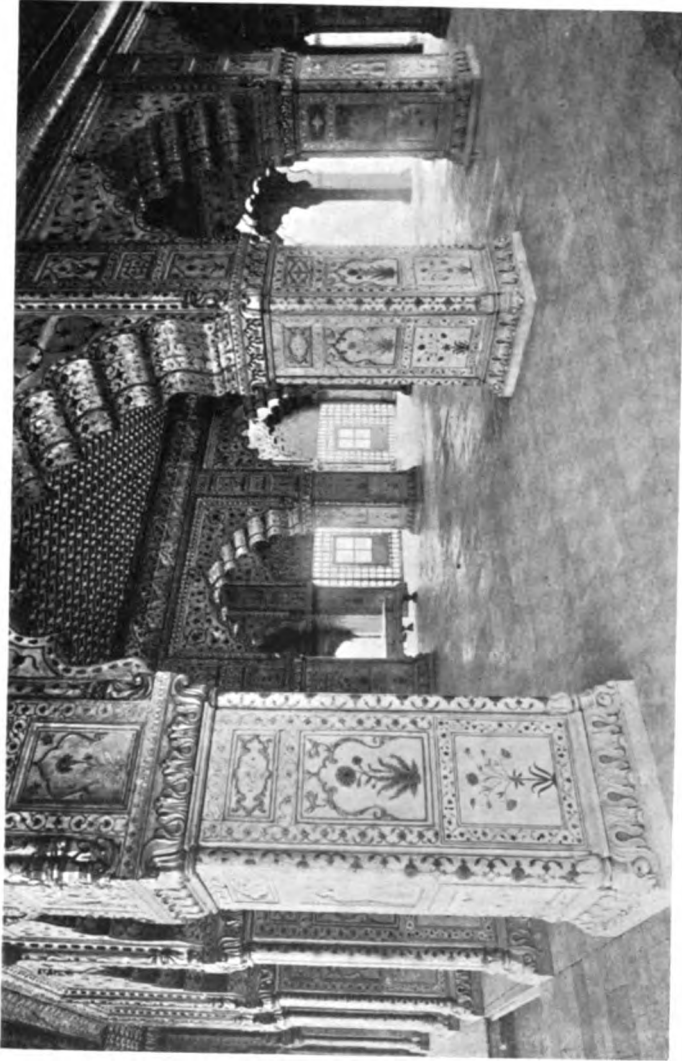
Above and beyond its other memorials, Delhi has its Jamá Masjid, the great mosque. It stands out boldly from a small piece of rocky rising ground, and is one of the most impressive buildings of its kind in the whole of India. It was begun by the Mogul Emperor Sháh Jehán (who also built the Taj) in 1632, and it was finished six years later. We climbed the forty steps to its gateway—immense steps, each a hundred and fifty feet long—to find ourselves in a vast courtyard four hundred and fifty feet square, entirely paved with granite inlaid with marble.

From the courtyard we looked down upon the whole of the busy city which stretched below and around us; outside the walls the backbone of the Ridge showed, lying solemn and quiet in the evening light, and like the city, almost too matter-of-fact, too peaceful, to ring in the imagination with the sounds and sights of the Mutiny, to be peopled by the ghostly troops of fancy. We walked over the granite courtyard, surrounded by the usual Mogul cloister or colonnade; the blocks of sandstone in the roof of the cloister were enormous—fifteen feet long.

The mosque itself is a splendid oblong structure, two hundred and sixty-one feet in length, and approached by a magnificent flight of stone steps. The old Moguls knew how to build fitting temples for worship! Three domes of white marble rise from the roof, with two tall and graceful minarets at the corners in front. The mosque is paved throughout and lined and roofed with white marble. It holds at least ten thousand Musalmáns on a Friday, who prostrate themselves each on a pattern on the marble floor.

There was still light enough to visit what was once the palace of Sháh Jehán, where, at the time of the Mutiny, the old King of Delhi, Bahadur Sháh, his sons and his wives, were all living in Eastern magnificence and luxury. His court steeped in intrigue, the old king was no more than a puppet in the hands of the princes and his wives. Directly the Mutiny broke out he was proclaimed Emperor, and his sons appointed to various military commands; but when Delhi was taken, he fled and took refuge in Humāyun's tomb, outside the city, and was brought in as prisoner by Hodson, the intrepid leader of a corps of irregular horse, who with his own hand shot down the two princes; Bahadur Sháh, the last of the Moguls, was banished to Rangoon.

The gateway of the palace, the Lahore Gate, is supposed to be one of the finest gateways in the world: three sides of the palace are walled in by an imposing battlemented wall; the fourth abuts directly



KING'S PALACE, DELHI.

on the river. Since the Mutiny a great part of the palace has been demolished in order to make room for English barracks.

We drove in under the great archway. Where are now the Harem Court, the Burj-i-Shamali, the Mitiaz Mahal, the Nanbat Khana, the Golden Mosque, and the fountains and gardens, which all once formed part of the most magnificent palace in the Old World? Many beautiful buildings have been preserved intact, but without the courts and corridors connecting them, they lose all their meaning and more than half their beauty. We walked through hall after hall, room after room, rich, in the past, with a vast pomp and splendour difficult for a European to conceive. What embroideries and gorgeous curtains hung once upon the old disused hooks in the marble walls! what heavy Persian carpets doubtless deadened the footfall in those gilded halls!

Once already, attention has been drawn in an early part of this volume to the wonderful and beautiful Hall of Private Audience—the Diwán-i-Khás—where runs again and again the inscription written in Arabic, in gold letters upon white marble, "*If there is an Elysium on earth, it is this, it is this, it is this.*" Wall after wall reiterates it, and it must have been a heaven in the Oriental eyes, for it embodied the triumph of opulence and lavish splendour, the acme of a bizarre glory, such as the old race of Moguls, and none since them, only knew.

Time saw the silver ceiling looted from the length

and breadth of the Diwán-i-Khás, the ceiling which once reflected the soft light of a hundred perfumed hanging lamps. The gorgeous Peacock Throne, of which I have spoken before, gleaming and flashing with rubies, diamonds, and emeralds, a thing itself which was beyond value, is now no more ; but these were looted long ago by Nádír Sháh, who, the reader will recollect, carried off money amounting at the lowest conception to eight or nine millions sterling, other spoil which amounted to several millions more, and above and beyond all, jewels of which no man can tell the value. But even now the empty courts, with their wonderful painted marble walls, and their beautiful pillars and ceilings, carved and coloured with an imperious grace, richly decorated, and yet with the detail lost in the whole quiet effect, are striking to a degree. An unobtrusive splendour exceeds all other splendour.

Perhaps because they live in a land of sun and of glare, the Oriental management of light is almost instinctive. Open to the fresh air and with its many colonnades and arches, there was yet a sense of rest throughout the palace, owed in great degree to the arrangement of the quiet light, which is thrown off the sheeny surface of marble, polished and mellowed to a pale ivory with age.

After dinner that evening we repaired again to the native quarter of the city ; it is hardly ever devoid of interest. A festival of sorts was going on, I forget now what, but processions of natives were

patrolling the cramped, winding ways—bullock-carts and cars, decked with flowers, carrying masked figures. It was a weird and gorgeous spectacle in the midst of the darkness; the houses were burning coloured lights, and blue and gold flame curled up the streets, while here and there a bright flare from a pot of resinous stuff gleamed upon the moving sea of dark faces and bright garments.

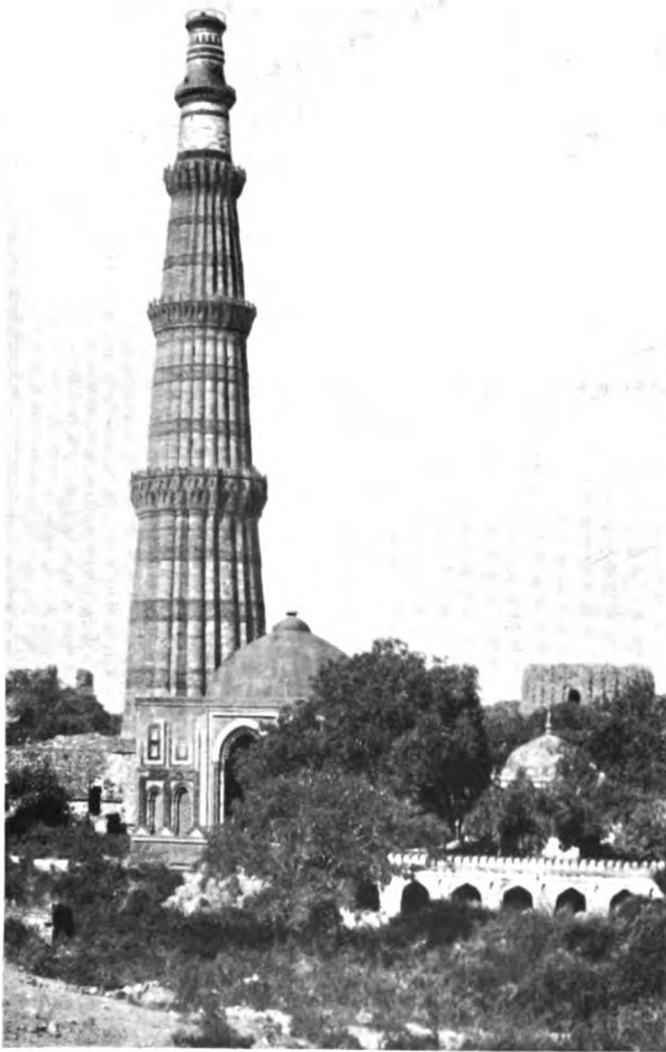
Before one low house the crowd had come to a standstill; it was gorgeously illuminated, and native music was thumping wildly from the roof-top. A curtain was drawn aside, and a rough stage revealed half-way up the front of the house. The play was in dumb show; the masks were grotesque, the dresses simple. The spectacle might have been interpreted in many ways. It was full of meaning, both obvious and obscure; but the surroundings lent themselves to heighten the effect, and the whole scene not only demanded much from the imagination, but *supplied* it as well. There was about it a mysticism which seems somehow to belong to Hindus and Mohammedans, to all Orientals alike; an unreality woven round their lives which makes them beings apart from Europeans, and occasionally sheds a glamour about their inexplicable ways.

A show of this nature in London by Cockneys would have been a painful fiasco, falling absurdly flat; but here in Delhi it was in perfect keeping with the incomprehensible old Eastern race, and its crudities, its garish lights, its bizarre colours, were only

heightened by the rude simplicity of the arrangements, by the weird music, by the flaring street under the quiet stars, by the impressed throng, and by the strenuous demand upon the imagination. The whole scene might have been a dream inspired by the marble buildings, by the tall minars, and by this ant-heap of humans swarming round their wood and mud houses—a murmuring, gesticulating, seething welter of inflammable emotions and passions.

The next morning we drove out nine miles from Delhi to see two of the most interesting monuments left in India. One is the famous Kutab Minar, a tapering round tower, like a pencil set upright on one end; the other is a solid shaft of some wrought metal of which the actual nature is unknown; twenty-five feet are above ground, twenty-two are below. It stands sunk in stone, and bears a Sanscrit inscription in six lines recording the history of one Rajá Dháva.

As we drove out of Delhi along hot and dusty roads shaded by tamarisks, stony, sandy soil on either sides, cultivated only through careful irrigation, we were making our way across what was evidently a land of ruins. Empty tombs and cracked walls, crumbled domes and shattered pillars, broke the monotonous stretches on either side the road; here and there a few trees testified to what had once been a well-watered garden, while a ruined gateway and marble pavement suggested a bygone home. Small wonder when it is known that the *débris* of ancient buildings around Delhi covers an area of



KUTAB TOWER (BEYOND DELHI).

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forty-five square miles. Imagine London spreading down to Oxford!

Delhi has been the site of a city from time immemorial, long before Christianity was heard of, possibly when the Aryans first spread over India; tradition, at least, has it so. The name Delhi is first met with about a hundred years before Christ, but by that time the city, which in the Dark Ages was by the river, had spread, or moved itself, nine miles beyond, to the spot where the Kutab Minar now rears itself. Another blank . . . and the carved metal pillar just described is a memorial of the third century after Christ.

Delhi appears at last in *history* in A.D. 736, and from then up to the Mutiny it seems to have been the scene of continual conflict, and every fresh conqueror appears to have founded a fresh city a few miles removed from the last.

The last great Hindu ruler of Delhi was attacked in 1191 by the Mohammedans, overthrown, and the city became henceforth the capital of the Mohammedan Indian Empire, Kutab-ud-dīn building a great mosque and the Kutab Tower on the Hindu ruins. Three dynasties rose and fell; the Pathān kings had been content with the ancient Hindu capital, altered and adorned by each of them, but the fourth ruler built a new capital four miles to the east, called Taghlakābād; the ruined streets, lanes, and fort of the long deserted city are plainly visible.

Once more, Feroz Shāh Taghlak transferred the



capital to yet a new site, which he chose a few miles off, and to which he gave his own name Ferozābād. A tall, thin pillar made out of a single piece of stone is called Feroz Sháh's *kotela*, and it may have been part of one of his buildings. Others say that it is of immense antiquity, and call it a Buddhist *lat*.

Later on the capital was removed to Agra. Then again Baber invaded India, killed the monarch, and rebuilt Delhi. But peace there was none. His son was in his turn defeated and expelled. Once more the usurper entirely rebuilt the city. However, Persia came to the rescue, the usurper was overthrown, and the rightful ruler reinstated. Again Delhi is built, enclosed, and fortified afresh!

Next upon the scene comes the great Emperor Akbar. Delhi once more fell into decay, deserted in favour of Agra. Sháh Jehán, his son, however, rebuilt it, almost in its present form.

Later on we find civil wars breaking out, and Hindu chiefs sacking Delhi. Then followed the invasion of the Persians and a terrible massacre. Civil wars ran rife. Finally we find the Hindus being overthrown by the English under the walls of Delhi, and Lord Lake in 1803 undertaking to protect the king.

From that time until the Mutiny it was a case of "protection"—an illustration of the way England won India, at the point of the sword, *but* with the help of the native tribes and native princes themselves, to whom she became a necessity, without whom the natives could no longer maintain their position, on

whom they came thankfully to depend, and whose aims and aspirations are growing their own. Consider, compared with any city in Europe, the life which Delhi has seen ; its ancient history is even more interesting than its Mutiny history.

Meanwhile we were nearing the Kutab Minar ; our driver now and then pointed out the tomb of some minister or other, a star in one of the ancient dynasties who had built his memorial. Sometimes it was but half finished ; always it was overgrown and uncared for, but preserved more or less intact from past ages in a climate which has little effect upon the solid masonry of the ancients. At last we drew up close to the Kutab : actually a *dhak* bungalow in sight. We ordered tiffin under the trees.

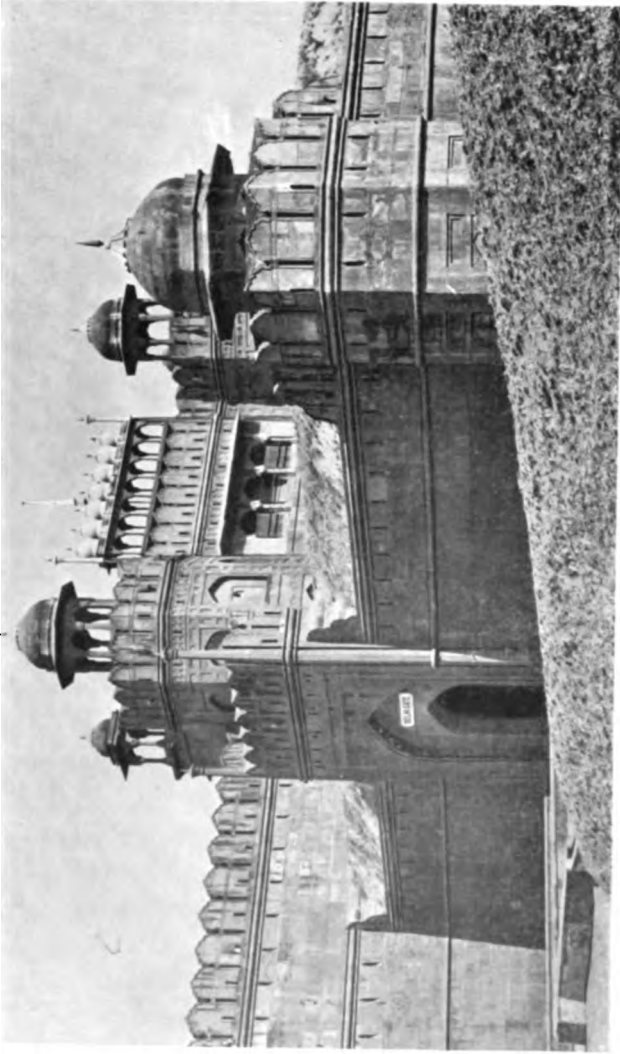
To begin with, we visited Kutab-ud-dīn's ruined mosque, and even now we could trace the old Hindu remains below it, and forming part of it, showing the use the Mohammedan conqueror had made of a Buddhist temple. He must have built a magnificent mosque, for it had covered evidently an enormous acreage. In the courtyard outside is the curious carved metal pillar with the Sanscrit inscription ; very little is known about the pillar, which has been put down as wrought iron, but is actually an alloy. Last, and best of all, was the Kutab itself.

The two others proceeded to ascend it by a spiral staircase which runs from top to bottom ; now and then they came out on to a balcony and rested. I forget its actual height and number of steps. At last two little

figures were silhouetted against the sky, waving pocket-handkerchiefs the size of postage stamps. The Kutab is in shape like a stalk of asparagus standing up on its thick end. It is a wonderful architectural feat as regards its height, its red sandstone is fantastically carved and moulded, and it stands up proudly against the sky, to be seen all over the country. As to its meaning, it is said to have been built by Kutab-ud-dīn in order that he might worship the rising sun from its summit; it had once an ornamental top, but now there is only a railing round it.

It was a very hot day, and we had a warm drive on to the ruined and deserted city which the house of Taghlak built (one of the *many* deserted cities). It was an interesting but a sad and dreary sight. The country round was barer than ever, rocks and sand and stone as far as the eye could see; and there, in the middle of it all, this lonely city wall, no living creature near it, left as though some plague had fallen upon the city, and every inhabitant had deserted it. Through the sun-smitten, broad stone wall, which hid everything within it completely, we climbed by means of a breach and an old gateway, and there, as we stood inside it, lay before us the embodiment of desolation.

Streets were still visible and the remains of houses. Stone is too common, I suppose, for its removal elsewhere to be worth while. The sun glared down upon the broken walls and beat off the great blocks of sandstone. Here were gateways; there was a courtyard; there again the dome of a mosque. Eight



DELHI GATE.

hundred years have come and gone since a throng of natives gave life and colour to this deathly silent spot, and yet there are their very doorsteps, window-ledges, and pavements where they lay and smoked their hookahs. It might have been eight months since the city was alive, instead of eight centuries.

One thing we were careful of, and that was snakes. These stones were just *the* most likely places, hot in the sun, but with cool, dark holes, winding retreats, and comfortable cracks. We did not, therefore, prod among the ruins, but leaving the silent city of desolation, we drove back by way of Humāyun's tomb, which is near the southern gate of the present Delhi.

It was here that the last Mogul, the old king, took refuge when he fled from the palace after Delhi was assaulted and taken by the British. It was upon the steps of this tomb that the next day Major Hodson, in search of the two princes, found them and shot them, with his own hand. Hodson has been blamed for the act. Lord Roberts said: "My own feeling on the subject is one of sorrow that such a brilliant soldier should have laid himself open to so much adverse criticism. Moreover, I do not think that, under any circumstances, he should have done the deed himself, or ordered it to be done in that summary manner, unless there had been evident signs of an attempt at a rescue."

On the other hand, it must be remembered that Major Hodson was outside the city, with a small body of horse, in a country swarming with enemies.

The two princes had spared neither men, women, nor children in Delhi at the time the Mutiny broke out. They had helped to capture about fifty Europeans and Eurasians, nearly all females, who were trying to escape from the city on that fatal morning. For fifteen days these Englishwomen were confined in the palace in a stifling chamber, they were then brought out and massacred in the courtyard.

Should the two ringleaders place in further jeopardy more lives? Hodson took the bull by the horns, and the mutineers, half ready to make a stand round their two princes, fell back terror-stricken at the sight of his smoking revolver and the two prostrate bodies.

Humāyun's tomb is very like the tombs of all Oriental magnates—very large, very cool, and very dark. It was covered by the usual immense dome; it was floored and lined, also as usual, with marble. In the dim light in the centre, exactly beneath the centre of the dome, stood the marble sarcophagus, in which lies all that remains of Akbar's father. An old man (there is always an old man), though the tomb was open and any one could enter it, took us inside, and afterwards prostrated himself before us for small coin. Around the tomb was the usual garden, but other building of any sort there was none. They stand strangely alone, these silent, monumental cairns.

Our stay in Delhi was but short, and on the following morning we railed down south *en route* for Ootacamund.

CHAPTER X

OOTACAMUND AND ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE

From Delhi to Ootacamund—The Nilgiri Hills—
Tropical Vegetation—The Todas—Anglo-Indian
Life—Reasons why Natives so Impoverished
though India Itself Wealthy Country.

CHAPTER X

OOTACAMUND AND ANGLO-INDIAN LIFE

Grey dusk behind the tamarisks—the parrots fly together—
As the sun is sinking slowly over Home :
And his last ray seems to mock us, shackled in a lifelong tether
That drags us back howe'er so far we roam.
Hard her service, poor her payment—she in ancient tattered raiment—
India, she the grim stepmother of our kind.
If a year of life be lent her, if her temple's shrine we enter,
The door is shut—we may not look behind.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

THIS, I am afraid, is about to be a dull chapter. I must ask my readers' kind patience while I first of all describe Ootacamund, the finest hill station in India ; then secondly, sketch briefly ordinary Indian life down in the plains ; and conclude with a short discussion upon the question why, in a country of such natural wealth as India, the lower classes should have lived for the last four thousand years in a state of sheer ignorance and poverty.

It is a far cry from Delhi to Ootacamund, and we were five consecutive nights rattling down there in the train, and four long, weary days. Fain would we forget the hurried meals at the railway stations, either all crammed into a few hours or else with gaps of

three-quarters of the day between. There is no choice. What outrage to the digestion! How the twelfth repetition of curried chicken becomes like a quail to an Israelite! Such are the joys of travelling!

The days themselves passed more quickly than might be expected; it was intensely hot, and the best thing to be done was—nothing; to lie on the dusty seats with the sun-blinds down to keep out the glare, to pretend to read and not to sleep, lulled by the jolting of the train, to drink an occasional generous cup of hot tea, “which saves the veins of the neck from swelling inopportunately on a warm night.”

We stopped long enough at one junction to have a hot bath—a bright spot in those five days. The nights were fairly cool and endurable, but for the mosquitos. Who ever appreciated that exasperating sing-song in a minor key? The mosquito who comes to bite you, and bites you without more ado, is not so execrable as the mosquito who comes to bite you and keeps you waiting while it sings its *Nunc Dimittis*.

The country we passed was at first singularly uninteresting; then came the Deccan, and it grew, especially in the evenings, almost beautiful. The weird-shaped, volcanic-looking hills were flushed with rose-colour, the wet rice fields steamed, the tall palms nodded like funeral plumes against the sunset. Farther south the train ran along through fields of rice, high, waving crops of sugar-cane and castor-oil, thickets of copper-coloured croton, clumps of large feathered bamboos, groves of little feathered tamarinds, gold-



AN AWKWARD CORNER.

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dropping laburnums, forests of cocoanut and palmyra trees.

Now and again we crossed the sandy bed of a great river, miles upon miles of sand, and somewhere in the centre of it all a little rill of water. It was hard to conceive the contrast when the rains should come, and in a few hours the rill be changed to a roaring torrent, and the roaring torrent to a yeasty flood, crawling, hissing, over the thirsty sand, swelling and whitening from far bank to far bank, preceded by a wall of chocolate-coloured water, and at last, freed from all guide-lines, spreading in a mad tumult, like a sea, to the horizon.

At 5 a.m. on the fifth day we arrived, masked in dust from head to foot, at the station of Mettapollium, which must in April, I should think, be one of the hottest places in the world. The *tongas* awaiting us were at last packed, and, thankful to leave our two reserved compartments, we rattled off on a thirty-two-mile drive up to Ootacamund.

To begin with, the road was level and the heat stifling ; but it was not a *dry* heat, which accounted for the wonder of vegetation. Words fail me to describe the scenery at the foot of the Nilgiri Hills, up which we began to climb. Nature had indeed run riot ; heat and humidity had stimulated the soil into an extraordinary activity, resulting in dense forests, stupendous undergrowth, marvellous insects, and innumerable parasites and reptiles.

The air was still and heavy with perfume and

throbbing, passionate, tropical life; the silence was unbroken except for the screech of the parrots, or the crashing of a troop of monkeys among the branches. Soft, plummy groves of palms, tall cocoanuts, areca-nuts, sagos, every variety of fruit-bearing tree, luxuriated; the pepper-vine clung to the huge timber trees among ropes of rattan, and almost every bough was wreathed in creepers of purple and blue, yellow and white. Thick fronds of fern, masses of strange foliage, formed a dense undergrowth, while the whole scene *weltered* in a haze of glowing, bizarre colour, shed from gorgeous orchids above and around.

Marvellous butterflies and strange insects danced among this triumph of vegetation. If with it all, these glorious tropical forests had not been endowed with the climate of a forcing-house, what an earthly paradise would they not be! As it is, their very beauty is violent, and the analogy follows that their drawbacks are exaggerated too.

The great gouts of thunderous, tropical rain strike the broad, receptive surface of the huge, fleshy leaves with almost a *shriek*, which can be heard some distance off. The insects and reptiles are awe-inspiring; the natives talk of an eight-foot, four-foot, and six-foot snake, nor do they refer to the *length* of the beast—but to the distance any unfortunate person bitten by that particular snake can walk before he drops down dead.

Tavernier tells us that in old days these dense forests were inhabited by innumerable wild beasts and

monkeys ; and in classic Indian times the monkeys on one side of the road were so hostile to those upon the other side, that none would venture to pass from one to the other without a risk of being strangled.

It is only natural among such scenery to find the inhabitants overawed by Nature, ignorant, superstitious, their religion inspired by terror, their imaginations inflamed by vague and uncontrolled impulses. There were temples everywhere : the tall towers of Siva, "the god of the sensuous fire that folds all Nature in forms divine" ; and of Vishnu ; most of all we came across the gods of the ignorant masses, images of demons, snakes, horses, elephants, distorted horrors,—

This I saw when the rites were done,
And the lamps were dead, and the gods alone,
And the grey snake coiled on the altar stone,
Ere I fled from a fear that I could not see,
And the gods of the East made mouths at me.

On other little wayside shrines were strewn rose-leaves ; sometimes the marble was stained with goats' and cocks' blood ; look where you would there was rank superstition,—

The nations have builded them temples, and in them have imaged their gods,
Of the temples, the nature around them has fashioned and moulded the plan,
And the gods take their life and their being from the visions and longings of man.

The road soon began to wind upwards ; we crossed



a river, fed by ice-cold mountain torrents, flowing down into the plains. Driving along through the chequered shade, the scenery grew grander as the road wound higher ; the great gorges, clothed with wood, glistened here and there with little waterfalls ; clumps of gigantic tree-ferns and the crimson flowers of the wild rhododendron filled every crevice of the ravine.

With each turn of the zigzag road the air became cooler and more invigorating, gradually the tropical nature of the country was entirely lost, until we could almost imagine ourselves among the mountains and hills of Cumberland and Westmorland. Instead of palms and bamboos there were pines and firs, roses and honeysuckle grew on the stone walls at each side of the road, the river tumbled and foamed over its boulders through shrubberies of wild raspberries, a cool, fresh breeze bent the ilex woods ; nothing reminded one of India until one *looked back*, and there, far below, in a different world, lay the plains, blinking in the heat of noon.

Many times we changed ponies, and still steadily climbed upwards towards the tops of the Nilgiri Hills. At an elevation of four thousand feet the coffee plantations came into sight, and terraces of neatly planted little green bushes, with their manager's bungalow, packing-houses, and coolie lines, covered the slopes. At last the summit of the gorge was reached, and we stopped at Coonoor for tiffin ; then passing the Wellington *depôt*, we found ourselves in an elevated, open country, like Exmoor or the Cheviots, without

trees or bushes, but green downs on each side. Ten miles drive, with the air getting damper and colder every mile, mists and clouds occasionally enveloping us, constant scuds of rain sweeping along on the breeze, and we dropped down upon *the* hill station, bar none, in all India—sheltered and wooded Ootacamund.

“*Dear old Ooty*” is quite up on the tops of the Nilgiris, in the centre of a plateau many hundreds of square miles in size, where a pack of hounds may be kept, where one can go out on long shooting expeditions into the wildest of jungle, and where one might gallop on for hours on end over sound turf, or picnic at some fresh place every day in the week.

Ooty nestles picturesquely round a calm, shining lake, among the slopes of a country like the Sussex Downs ; till a sharp-peaked mountain in the distance recalls the Highlands. *Try* to believe you are in India. It is difficult. The cold, bracing air sweeps over the charming landscape of downs and woods, and you feel it is very good to be up in this cloudland, seven thousand feet above the sweltering plains.

We drove to Woodside. Each bungalow in Ooty seemed to lie in a hill of its own, distinctly private, its own green tennis lawns, its own pine and eucalyptus groves, its marvellous flowers. Every ditch and marshy spot was filled with rank clumps of arum lilies, thrusting their great, snowy flowers up to the heavens ; the very hedges were made of scarlet geraniums and of heliotrope ; the whole of Ooty smelt

like one vast cherry-pie blended with essence of violets ; roses, dahlias, fuchsias, camellias, orchids—nothing in the world in the way of a plant but would grow in glory there.

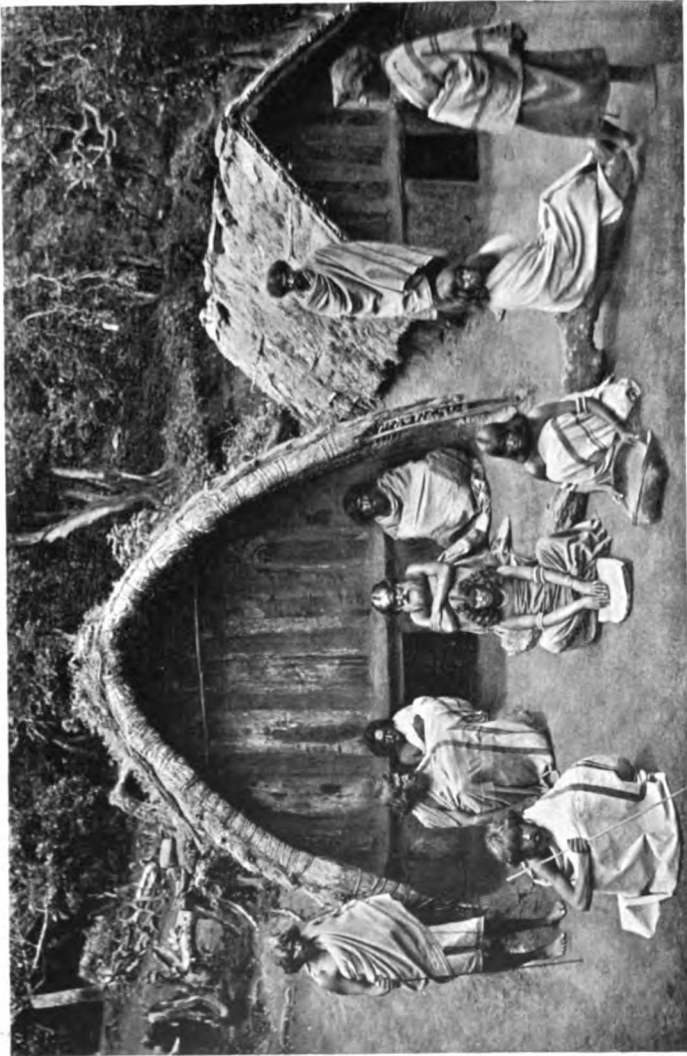
The ever-varying and never-ending bowers recalled Tennyson's lines,—

Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
The brooks of Eden mazily murmuring,
And bloom profuse and cedern arches
Charm.

Ootacamund ought to be a first-rate place for sport ; and while there is none of the "horrid grind" of life in the plains, yet it need not be, as in most hill stations, equally divided between a dawdle and a doze.

There is hunting : the *sholas* (rocky ravine and jungle on the edge of the downs) are hard to draw, impossible for horses to get through, consequently half the pack may be running jungle sheep and half jackal ; but after a while a jack breaks cover, and there is a merry ten or twenty minutes' burst across the downs to a neighbouring *shola*, with lots of excitement at the boggy bottoms between the hills—pitfalls to the unwary who do not know the country. It takes a fast horse to get up and down the hills with hounds.

As for shooting, the *sholas* hold sambur, spotted deer, pig, black buck, cheetah, and bison, and even tigers have been killed close to the station ; but



A GROUP OF TODAS.

it is much in the hands of the planters, who always get the *khubr* before any one else, and the ordinary visitor must go farther afield, in the Kundah. The tea and coffee planters are a great set in Ooty; two hundred coffee estates are open now, valued at something like a million sterling, and employing thirteen thousand labourers. The life is one of ups and downs, but pays under careful management.

Coupled with the name of the Nilgiri Hills is the far-famed race of Todas—the aborigines. Whence they came or whither wending no man can tell; but they are totally dissimilar in all respects, physical and moral, to the rest of the races of India. Their origin is said to be Jewish, also Greek, also Arabic, also Italian—opinions differ; but there they are to this day, herdsmen, still considering themselves lords of the manor on the Blue Mountains, and their claims upheld by British rule.

They are a striking race, tall and athletic, with fair, pale complexions and masses of black hair, in men and women alike hanging down upon their shoulders. Their dress is quite peculiar, and consists for one and all of a single woollen mantle wrapped round them, once white; as, like its owners, it is never washed, it assumes a dun-coloured hue. I walked out from Ootacamund one afternoon on purpose to see this interesting race.

A few miles brought us to a sheltered spot among the downs, backed by a *shola*, which held a *mand* or Toda settlement. Down upon the grass were

built three or four oval-shaped huts, without stick or garden round them ; a Toda or two sat on the turf on their haunches and on a big rock close by. The huts were innocent of windows or of proper doors, and the only way in or out was by a square hole, not quite a yard high, cut in the front of each hut and closed from the inside by a solid, sliding block of wood. It was a hands-and-knees business to get in.

The pale faces, blue eyes, and black, waving hair rather suggested Greeks ; then again the hooked noses and retreating foreheads looked more like a degraded Jewish type. We could not get much out of them, though they took small coin with avidity. One hut, looking empty, I boldly ventured inside, crawling gingerly through the doorway. Standing up and seeing as best one could by the feeble light, there seemed to be nothing at all except a raised platform or sleeping-place, covered with buffalo skins and a coarse mat or two ; it looked filthily dirty. There was a fireplace with a stone slab upon which to cook, but no chimney ; the reed and rattan roof arched over our heads. I looked round for pots or pans of any sort, and other interesting relics, but nothing of the kind was forthcoming.

Todas are evidently dirty and indolent ; cattle-herding and dairy work their only occupation. We came across large herds of buffaloes under the perfect control of one boy. Each cluster of huts has its own dairy, which was evidently looked upon as the temple of the

settlement, where buffaloes were objects of worship, and a deity called "the Hunting God." Todas believe that after death the soul goes to Oru-now, "the great or other country," and they are full of superstitions. Polyandry is practised, a woman marrying all the brothers of a family. It is an interesting race, but rapidly becoming extinct; milks, curds, *ghee* (rancid butter) and a few grains, scarcely constitute a stimulating diet calculated to produce a thriving population.

None of the many cairns found on the Nilgiris and opened by indefatigable archæologists have produced more than funeral urns, vases of burnt bones, weapons and images. So the veil is unlifted from Toda history. They themselves say that their ancestors were Autochthones.

The history of the Blue Mountains is only one of raids by various chiefs from the plains, who controlled and taxed the hill tribes for a time. The first Englishmen to explore them were Mr. Keys and Mr. MacMahon of the Survey Department; they were enchanted at the climate and the beauty of the tableland. Following them, in 1821, a collector built the first English house on the plateau, and suggested the Nilgiris to Government as a much-needed sanatorium. Such was the birth of Ooty, now the headquarters of the Madras Government for six months, and the headquarters of the Madras army and Commander-in-Chief throughout the year.

In May and June there is a constant round of balls, theatricals, dinners, races, gymkhanas, polo, tennis,

cricket, etc., but people may live as quietly as they please, giving themselves up to an outdoor life of hunting, shooting, and fishing.

Life at Ootacamund is not a study of Anglo-Indian life ; a truer example is met with down in the plains in an ordinary military station.

There one is struck first of all with the deadly monotony of the place : why were all the roads ruled with such withering precision and with such ultra-correct angles?

Cantonments must have come into being upon the face of an open, empty plain, planned purely on utilitarian lines as opposed to the beautiful. But the art of warfare is not a beautiful one—it is only useful from a barbarous point of view ; consequently, in the nature of things a military station should be a cut-and-dried settlement. Not only are the roads cruelly straight and far removed from “the galloping track” loved of wayward nature, but “the walrus and the carpenter” would have broken their hearts over the sand and dust.

An eminent general once asserted that could all sand and dust, which, in his opinion, were the great agents in breeding and disseminating fever and other germs, be swept from the face of cantonments, Tommy Atkins would be another lad. Quite so. And if the clouds were invaded in balloons and stirred up to rain at convenient periods . . . and if wishes were horses . . . Unfortunately, the world is worked on a present tense, not a subjunctive mood, system.

“The white dust in the highways and the stench in the byways” are a very present evil; with the flies, mosquitos, weary heat, and endless glare, they swell the items in the long bill which the white man pays for serving his grim step-mother country.

Life in the jerry-built, ramshackle bungalows on either side of the road must be looked upon as more or less of a picnic: doors do not fit, but curtains generally supply their places; not two of the creaking cane-chairs, upholstered in faded cretonnes, match one another; the uneven floors are hidden by an assortment of jail-made, striped rugs; glass-studded *phulkaris* nailed upon the walls apologise for the absence of wall-papers, and hide the stained and peeling white-wash.

The rooms are invariably dark, and almost always bristle with a hundred terrible little Indian, Kashmir, and Burmese tables, stools, and screens. Wherever a screen or a stool or a table affords standing-room, there will be found, in uniform, on horseback, in ball-gown, a thousand family photographs, also Indian silver, also curiosities from the bazaar. Strewn draperies obstruct progress as effectually as barbed wire. Light in the bedrooms, by-the-by, is so arranged that, as a rule, no woman of high ideals sees to do her hair properly from the time she sets foot in an Indian bungalow to the time she leaves it.

Now a great deal of rubbish has been written about the *mem-sahib*. A beautiful, weary figure lounges through tradition, clothed in Indian shawls and bangles.

From her sofa, when she drops her handkerchief, she murmurs, "*Boy*." An old, wizened man, in answer to the listless whisper, creeps noiselessly in, restores the fallen property, vanishes more softly than any cat, and resumes his cross-legged attitude in the verandah, to await the next summons. Nature, "so careless of the type," has allowed this species to lapse, together with the old *Qui hai*—Jos Sedley—curry-and-cheroots—dyspepsia-and-liver individual.

The *mem-sahib* of the nineteenth century is an energetic, tennis, Badminton, calling and riding—sometimes sporting—creation. She has a plethora of books from the club, but there is not time, or it is too hot, to read much; besides, she lives beneath the curse of *chits*.

As native servants are incapable of delivering a message, and would turn every *politesse* into an insult, inquiries and replies must be written. These incessant *chits* arrive from daybreak to bedtime; eventually the habit of sending them becomes a disease.

I, myself, a visitor in the place, am deluged with *chits* from certain kind ladies in the station, who write "how sorry they are not to have been able to call at present, that I must have *wondered* at it, and *thought*," etc., etc. Now I *never* "think."

The rulers of Ind are to be met with high up in the precedence list.

Who are the rulers of Ind? to whom shall we bow the knee?
Make thy peace with the women, and the men shall make thee L. G.

Few and far between there are to be found women who will make a big splash in the future, who have started circles in quiet tarns which are widening still.

To affect deep interest in things native is incorrect. A lady was asked what she had seen of the people since she came out. "Oh! nothing," said she. "Thank goodness, I know nothing at all about them, and don't wish to; really, I think the less one sees and knows about them the better. As for Hindustani, I should never *dream* of trying to learn it!"

India is the paradise, neither of young girls nor married women, but of the middle-aged man. London to women, Paris to girls, fling open the golden gates; but in India it is the middle-aged man who wears the crown.

Penniless youth, making or marring its fortune, is little accounted of; the omnipotent god in India is the everlasting rupee, and by their rupees ye shall know them (or not know them). At the age of forty or thereabouts it is "*high in the service*," or, "*has had rapid promotion*"; such a thing as "*the wrong side of forty*" is not breathed. It is then that Society beckons and hails the fortunate individual as a "young man," and invitations to dinners and moonlight picnics positively romp in.

A couplet runs,—

It is not wealth, nor rank, nor state,
But get-up-and-git that makes men great.

But greatness in India depends upon one book—a

book wherein every man's pay, age, and position are printed ; by this book each individual stands or falls. It is the cookery-book of that supreme chef, *Society*, whereby she fakes her dishes, and judges whether it be possible to introduce the person of that ordinary little vegetable the wife of Lieutenant Jones, drawing only — rupees a month, into the same dinner-party which includes such a *recherché* savoury as Sir Roebuck Robinson, K.C.S.I.

Whether any one really cares a fig for the Society before whose shrine they lay their lives is a moot point. Consider the clubs and their paralysing *ennui* ; consider the horror of meeting the selfsame people every day, riding with them before breakfast, finding them at the polo-ground in the afternoon, discussing together the same tea and cakes, the same gossip, the same tennis and Badminton ; when it grows dark the same drive to the same club-rooms, the same newspapers, the same liqueurs ; last of all, a dinner party at a neighbouring bungalow with the same guests, the same courses, and as a climax, *the same lady* first met with on horseback in the early dawn, and with whom the polite usages of Society decree that the running must now be made. No wonder that there is no such thing as conversation ; that the sickening monotony of it begets tempers, spite, gossip ; that the appearance of a new hat or frock is welcomed as a fresh topic.

But what else is to be done? Not sit in a dark bungalow all day? not drive the eternal round of

the straight, dusty roads? At least Society is refreshingly open and naïve: every one knows that Captain Tompkins is head over ears in love with Miss Jimmy, and Mr. Golightly with Miss Fortescue, and that neither of them possess anything but debts. Miss Jimmy's parents require her presence at home; Miss Fortescue's papa is sent for to Simla, and departs *en famille*. There is a tacit understanding throughout the station to,—

Beware the man who's crossed in love,
 For pent-up stream must find its vent;
 Step back when he is on the move,
 And lend him half the continent.

If it were possible to visit and help the poor in India, organising work and recreation for them; if bungalows were homes to live in, instead of lodgings to be left in a year or so when the owners should be ordered elsewhere; if gardening were a case of anything except sowing and planting for an unknown successor; if there were good concerts, good picture-galleries, good theatres, good Church services, good lectures to attend; and if the climate were less enervating, women would do more than fritter time away. There are none of these things. A dearth of mental food, second-rate parsons, amateur art in all its branches, form a sickly substitute.

I once met some very pious children born of English parents high up in the Civil Service. They came to tea, after which my hostess unearthed seductive picture-books. "No," said the little boy—"no; we would

rather have a Bible." Unfortunately, there was none in the room ; however, a Prayer Book was presented to them to keep them quiet.

Our tea party was soon interrupted by the little boy, who read aloud in stentorian tones the Lord's Prayer. "Kneel down," he said reprovingly to his sister, proceeding with the Confession, which he begged us to repeat after him. But mine hostess had borne enough, and she removed the pair—though, to do them justice, they were perfectly serious and reverent.

Later on the little boy had some chicken for supper. "Oh, mother," he said, "what a beautiful grave this chicken will have!" "Where?" "In my body." I asked the little girl where her other brothers were. "Tom's at school, and Arthur's in Paradise ; he's flying about with wings like a vulture."

It is a vast mistake to imagine that Society in India has a whit deeper shades than London Society. Life in India, lived in the light of a thousand eyes, is above-board ; London is a well-arranged *kāla jagah* (dark corner), and the play is conducted under the rose.

In trifling matters, such as women indulging in cigarettes, a practice as harmless as it is common, no Anglo-Indian would think it worth while to utter the sentiment of a certain lady in town : "*As I am neither fast nor fashionable, I do not smoke.*" Foreigners must be amused at our insular prejudices in this case—against a digestive and a sedative, which conduces to a quiet half-hour, and is therefore worth encouraging in an age of which it is complained that life moves too

fast. When the Albert Docks are left behind, and faces turn eastwards, some of the old shackles drop off, and a more simple and independent spirit takes the place of the false and conventional one.

However, to return to the Sunshiny Land. Recognised as full of mysticism and superstition, one meets with incidents which are inexplicable.

The following account is perfectly true. My friend Mrs. l'E. was dressing one night for dinner, and saw reflected in her looking-glass the figure of an *ayah* standing with a note in her hand.

“What do you want? Is that note for me?” There was no answer. Mrs. l'E. turned round and looked at the figure, which without speaking retired from the room, through the curtain. Seeing that it was not her own *ayah*, no doubt the woman belonged next door, and a native's conduct is often inexplicable; but Mrs. l'E. could not quite understand why none of her own servants had seen the woman; they denied all knowledge of her.

Mrs. l'E. demanded an explanation from her neighbour, whom she met at dinner that evening. “Why,” exclaimed the lady, “you've seen the ghost!” She went on to say that an old tale belonged to the bungalow of its being haunted by the figure of an *ayah* carrying a note.

On several occasions afterwards Mrs. l'E.'s little boy called to her from his bed, “Mother, do send away that *ayah* standing by the door!” Colonel l'E. also saw her once, again with a note, and again she vanished.

The Psychological Society took the matter up, and it was established as a fact that a figure had appeared to certain people without their having foreknowledge of the same.

A word now about natives. Lay to heart that—

It is not good for the Christian's health to hustle the Aryan
brown,
For the Christian riles, and the Aryan smiles, and he wears the
Christian down ;
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white, with the end
of the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear, "*A fool lies here who tried to hustle the
East.*"

It *tires* one to see the fixedness, the apathy, the lifelessness, of a great population which should by rights be up and stirring, trading and organising. There is a strange mingling in the Oriental of impassiveness and childishness, of fierce passions and primitive ideas; there is also in him an entire lack of truthfulness.

I met a lady who had been carried up to the hills part of the way in a *dhoolie*. The natives who were carrying her, finding themselves alone with her, stopped and put her down in the middle of a wild scrub country, making her understand with gesticulations of horror that a tiger was coming, but that they would brave all danger and boldly carry her on for more money.

Alive to the native nature, she said quietly, "*Let the tiger come,*" and lay comfortably back in her *dhoolie*. The servants disappeared, and she was left entirely

alone. Whatever her feelings were, she showed a supremely indifferent front, and after about an hour the men reappeared, and without further explanation picked her up and went on.

Another time, however, in a bullock-cart with her *ayah*, on the banks of a river too flooded to cross late at night, she really *was* abandoned by her native servants, and fierce-looking Pathāns, armed with knives and matchlocks, came down upon the bullock-cart. The *ayah* behaved manfully, spending the night walking round and round the cart, and waving off the ruffians angrily as they peered curiously inside, till in the morning the servants reappeared.

Every creature in India appears to be eaten up with laziness; even my pony pretends she is too fine to switch off her own flies with her own long tail, and turns her head round to order her *syce* to flip them away.

Captain — shoots a Monāl pheasant out in camp, and tells his “boy” to look after it, as he wants its skin. Of course the “boy” leaves it out in the sun all day. When we return at night the bird is useless. We spend the evening rocking with laughter at the sight of Captain — rushing round and round the tents, clutching the pheasant by the neck, the boy fleeing before him, and being hit over the head with the pheasant’s body whenever opportunity affords.

I remember an old Colonel’s exasperation over natives in general. He said: “I asked in the club for brandy one evening. A fellow brought me every

conceivable liqueur under the sun, one after another, in spite of my repeating '*Brandy!*' every time. My temper rose. I explained volubly. The man disappeared; reappeared. I saw him coming up the room, and on a tray a bottle—labelled *cherry brandy*. He advanced upon his doom, walked into the jaws of death all unconsciously. . . . It was a case of boot and broken bottle.

"I remember up in King's office one day a native spat on my wife's dress—a dirty little beast with nothing on but a pair of blue cotton trousers. Think of it! on a nice muslin frock. I pommelled him in the face till I was sick of it. He went downstairs; it was a sight to see those blue trousers move—there was no after-thought. He was like a dog who's had a stable-brush thrown at him."

Natives are exceedingly practical. A sahib accidentally shot a boy one day when he was out in the jungle. The next morning he received a deputation from the man's relatives, who handed him a written document in the form of a valuation of the deceased's life, soliciting payment for the same, to which was appended a receipt for the amount demanded. It ran in this form :

To CAPTAIN F.

To one bloody murder committed. Five Rupees.

Contents received on the — day of —, 18—.

Visits from natives are rather a trial. Well-to-do tradesmen would call upon Commissioners. The interviews I was present at were rather in this style :

Native : "Salaam! Great Chief."

Englishman : "Salaam."

Native : "Your Excellency is my father and mother."

Englishman : "I am obliged to you."

Native : "Your Excellency, I have come to behold your face."

Englishman : "Thank you. Have you anything more to say to me?"

Native : "Nothing, Great Chief."

Englishman : "Neither have I anything to say. So good-morning. Enough for to-day."

Native : "Enough. Good-morning, your Excellency. Salaam! Great Chief."

India is a land of the *contretemps*; few sojourners out there have met with none. Now the following happened to a young couple I met, in Government Service.

They had been sent upon an expedition to find *dacoits*, who had been making disturbances; were camping out, and had sent on all extra luggage to a small military station which they expected to reach next day. Through the night a lamp burnt in the tent; their clothes lay on chairs. On getting up the next morning, where in the name of fortune were those same clothes? The young pair each taxed the other with having played a stupid joke. It became exasperating. The servants

knew nothing whatever of them ; they had vanished. Next morning two weird figures, wrapped in a pair of sheets and a couple of coloured blankets, were reported to have arisen on the astonished horizon of — station, to have dropped off their ponies and slunk into the *dāk* bungalow ; while a *dacoit* roamed the country in a pair of corsets, some embroidered silk stockings, and a gentleman's tie.

Was this in—

The State of Kot-Kumharsen where the wild *dacoits* abound ?

And the Thakurs live in castles on the hills ?

Where the *bunnia* and *bunjara* in alternate streaks are found,

And the Rajah cannot liquidate his bills ?

Where the agent Sahib Bahadur shoots the black buck for his larder,

From a *tonga* which he uses as *machān* ?

'Twas a white man from the west came expressly to investigate the natural wealth of Hindustan.

The question is worth asking, why in a country of such natural wealth as India the lower classes should wallow in ignorance, degradation, and poverty ? The reasons—to go the root of the matter—are twofold : the climate, and the fertility of the soil. A hot climate incapacitates men for arduous work, and enforces a food which requires little labour. A fertile soil will grow rice and return an average of at least fifty-fold.

Abundant food means an abundant population ; an abundant population means abundant labour ; and abundant labour means low wages. If wages are low and the labouring class wretchedly poor, it follows that



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the leisured class must be proportionately rich, because wealth can only be divided between those who labour and those who do not.

To look only at the vast and costly remains of the ancient buildings in India is to see into what degradation the lower classes had fallen. The Taj, for example, employed twenty thousand workmen every day for twenty-two years before it was finished—a mere tomb for a king's wife—the cost of which no wealth could have met had the labourers been fairly paid. Meanwhile, the upper classes were rolling in unlimited wealth and ostentatious prodigality, instanced by the old Mogul Palace in Delhi, and the treasure, amounting, it is said, to *twelve million pounds sterling*, which Nádír Sháh looted from its walls.

Unequal distribution of wealth was, then, the first great result of the cheapness and abundance of the national food. It followed that, on the one hand, poverty provoked contempt, and the lower classes were condemned by the physical laws of their climate to a degradation from which they have never escaped; while, on the other hand, wealth produced power, and bred luxury, intoleration, and despotism.

The great body of the people derived no benefits from the national improvements; hence, the basis of the progress being narrow, the progress itself was insecure, and when a race of kings died out, the nation could not reconstruct itself; unfavourable circumstances arising from without, as a matter of course the whole system fell.

Even before their invasion the old civilisations decayed ; their conquest was easy by reason of their decay. Records in India two and three thousand years old point back to a state of things similar to the present day. Then, as now, wages were low, and interest and rent were high. Nine hundred years before Christ the lowest legal interest was 15 per cent., the highest 60 per cent. In the present century it varies from 36 to 60 per cent.

Then as regards rent. In England and Scotland the cultivator pays, in round numbers, for the use of the land about one-fourth of the gross produce ; in France it is about one-third ; but in India it is estimated at one-half. If interest, rent, and profits (which vary according to the rate of interest and rent) are high, it follows that wages must be low, wages being the residue left to the labourers out of the wealth of a country, after interest, rent, and profits have been paid.

Physical causes have not only governed the distribution of wealth in India, they have governed the intelligence of her people. In Europe the tendency of advancing civilisation has been, in continual contention with the difficulties of a colder climate, to develop the reasoning faculties of the inhabitants. Their imaginative powers have been allowed little scope.

But in the East the reverse is the case : the imagination of the Oriental tramples on his reason, and is continually stimulated by physical agents, in the shape

of tempest, earthquake, famine, pestilence, devastations of wild animals, interminable jungle, impassable rivers, terrible heat, and sudden death.

The ancient literature of India is a tissue of exaggerated tradition, glowing and poetical, but purely imaginative as opposed to reasonable. The mythology of India is based upon terror ; rank superstition stands in the path of civilisation and progress ; the rights and dignity of woman are utterly ignored ; life is of little value ; bloody human sacrifice has been rife ; there is no comprehension of such a virtue as truth.

How is it that civilisation—in Europe, as far as analogy can guide us, seemingly unlimited—should in this old world have been so long apparently stationary ? The reason lies in the fact that Nature's powers are limited. That is to say, that physical agents come into play before any others, and they quickly produce a civilisation and a population, such as spread over Asia and Egypt, long before the energy of man has turned less favourable climates and soil to his use. But physical agents only serve up to a certain point : they have—in the shape of climate and soil—produced a vast population, they rule that population, it is dependent upon them ; enslaved by reason of them, it stands in awe of their effects.

On the other hand, the energy of man, which has slowly triumphed over a cold climate and scarcity of food, only turns more and more physical powers to his own use year after year ; there is no end to the

resources at his command. Nature is a good servant but a bad master.

Salvation for Asia lies in the increase of knowledge, since "the totality of human actions are, from the highest point of view, governed by the totality of human knowledge"—knowledge, particularly in the branch of physical science, which strikes at the root of superstition, and induces scepticism; and toleration. This fact, it is reassuring to see, is being brought home to the missionaries in India: they are learning that religion, literature, and legislation are but secondary agents in civilisation; the progress of knowledge comes first, and the all-important possession is the number of truths which the human intellect possesses, together with the extent to which those truths are diffused.

Until knowledge is widespread, there will still ring in our ears the cry of the Purdah women, there will still rise before our eyes revolting sights, and two hundred and eighty millions of degraded humanity will still walk God's earth.

CHAPTER XI

FROM AN ELEPHANT *KHEDDER* TO A CROCODILE TANK

In Camp Again—An Elephant *Khedder*—a Memorable Night—The Elephants Pass the Rubicon—Guests of the Rajah of Mysore—Seringapatam—Tippoo's Summer-house—The Cholera Bungalow—Guindy—Crocodiles—A Horrible Experience—The Priest and the Crocodile—Crocodile Tank at Kurachie—Native Letters.

CHAPTER XI

FROM AN ELEPHANT *KHEDDER* TO A CROCODILE TANK

Elephant—

- "I will remember what I was. I am sick of rope and chain.
I will remember my old strength and all my forest affairs.
I will not sell my back to man for a bundle of sugar-cane :
I will go out to my own kind, and the wood-folk in their lairs.
- "I will go out until the day, until the morning break—
Out to the wind's untainted kiss, the water's clean caress—
I will forget my ankle-ring and snap my picket-stake,
I will revisit my lost loves, and playmates masterless!"

RUDYARD KIPLING.

When ye say to Tabaqui, "My Brother!" when ye call the
hyena to meat,
Ye may cry the full truce with Jacala—the belly that runs on
four feet.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

I HAD always been anxious to see an elephant *khedder* (an enclosure where the great game is entrapped), and when we were in Madras some of our party were able to avail themselves of an opportunity which afforded itself. Out in India one has plenty of riding upon elephants—at receptions into native States, on shoots arranged by the Rajahs, or on' tours through the streets of native cities; and I often visited the battery elephants in their high, open

stables in the lines. Immense animals they are—in fact, *the* largest living land animal, weighing as much as three tons. The biggest elephant in Madras to-day is owned by the commissariat stud, and stands nine feet ten inches at the shoulder. It may be taken as a general rule that twice round an elephant's foot gives its height; the circumference of the forefoot of the average elephant is about fifty-four inches. The renowned Jumbo stood about eleven feet two inches, and measured five feet six inches round his forearm, but he was an African specimen.

However, I must away to a description of one of the most exciting scenes ever witnessed—the entrapping of these wild monarchs of the jungle. Indian elephants are most valuable as beasts of burden, and hundreds of them are employed in Government service. From time immemorial man has exercised his ingenuity in capturing them alive, but it remained to Mr. Sanderson to introduce into India the most successful kind of *khedder*, in connection with which his name will ever be associated.

Mysore is not a long journey from Ootacamund, and there our party established themselves in camp near the village of Chamraj-Nugger, close to the foot of the Billiga-rungun Hills. In the thick scrub and wild jungle which clothe these heights there were elephants in plenty, travelling about, as is their custom, in herds, under the guidance of a single leader, whom they implicitly follow. Should an elephant leave the herd to which it belongs, it is not allowed



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to join any other, but becomes a solitary wanderer for the rest of its life. Soured in temper, exceedingly ferocious, and attacking without provocation whatever comes in its path, it is known as a rogue elephant.

At last, at daybreak one morning, the little camp was roused to activity by a note from Captain Z. to say that all things were ready, and that he would expect a party of four to return with the bearer of the note, while the rest of the camp might follow in three days to be present at the culminating and most exciting feature in the whole *shikar*.

The four select ones were soon ready to obey the summons. It was a case of roughing it for a few nights ; they duly prepared for the same. The limited kit allowed to each went on ahead on coolies. The two ladies and two men themselves rode—a long and tiring ride, principally through jungle and by stony beaten tracks ; but at last the rendezvous was reached ; there stood Captain Z. in the distance, waving a welcome.

Under the thick trees in the jungle, with a small clearing in front, a couple of little tents had been put up ; some yards away, up against a bank, the servants were cooking ; a big kettle singing over the fire was pleasantly suggestive of tea. Everybody gathered round the camp-table beneath the shadiest tree, rugs spread on the ground, camp-stools, and the visions of a tray brought by the blackest Madrasi in the whitest of white garments, composed a picture which breathed content.

Meanwhile Captain Z., who had been hard at work all day, enlarged upon the proceedings up to the present moment. To begin with, a herd of wild elephants had been found and located, and might be said to be, with probable truth, within four miles of the tea party. About four hundred natives had been collected, and under the superintendence of Captain Z. and two or three friends of his, the herd had been driven into a thick patch of jungle; by about twelve o'clock that day they were all safely in cover.

The natives, meanwhile, had spread out into a huge circle surrounding the herd—a circle covering five or six miles of ground; and about two o'clock in the afternoon the word was passed that the herd was safely in the centre.

Then began the very considerable task of putting up a fence of bamboo round the whole of the circle, strong enough to prevent the great game from breaking through. It was no easy feat to accomplish; there was but an insufficient supply of tools, time was precious, and the men had to work with their finger-nails and pointed sticks. Captain Z. could spare only a few moments, and tea over, he was off to see how the work was progressing, taking his four visitors with him. A few minutes' walk brought them to the sound of picks and axes and much chattering, leading on to a scene where the natives, working really hard for once in their lives, were throwing up a bank and erecting a stockade as though they thoroughly entered into the excitement of the undertaking.

Indeed, there was no time to be lost; diplomacy and good management alone could effect the capture. A herd of elephants needs dealing with promptly and courageously, or disaster and failure follow. Riding round the entire circle, Captain Z. advised his various "aides," whom he left in command at different points, with a certain amount of the palisade to superintend and so many natives, who were perspiring profusely and working like grim death. The herd in cover could be plainly heard; they were evidently very uneasy and consequently noisy, the males making a continuous thundering sound with their trumpeting.

Elephants are suspicious beasts, exceedingly shy of anything in the way of a structure, regarding it as a snare or pitfall of some sort. It was therefore unnecessary to build an abnormally stiff stockade; though until a fair-sized fence was up round the entire circle, it was an anxious time. However, the herd remained singularly quiet. About 7 p.m., for those who could spare half an hour, a sumptuous dinner was ready in camp, to which the occupants of the two little tents did ample justice.

The sun had set, and darkness trod upon his heels—darkness soon to be lit up by a lurid glare for miles around. The air by this time was beginning to be charged with excitement. Around the whole of the stockade, at intervals of thirty yards, bonfires were burning, and every soul not already there was soon in the midst of the excitement. By midnight the welcome word was passed that the stockade was

more or less complete, and defence against possible attack from the herd inside was now the principal anxiety.

It is hard to depict the scene throughout that night. Few slept; the silent jungle was waked again by the shouts of the excited watchers; the glare of the bonfires played upon the great tree trunks, making the impenetrable shadows yet more gloomy; the tawny flames, crackling, and shooting up to the stars, lit up the black figures hurrying hither and thither, and accentuated their wild gesticulations.

In the background more watchers were waving flaring torches and uttering weird cries; while inside this brilliant fringe of flame and glare and action, deep in the heart of the black centre, the dense jungle was resonant with the trumpeting of the giants of the forests.

At one thrilling moment a tusker appeared, a huge form loomed through the gloom and charged straight at the stockade. Long before he reached it, he was met by a tumult of cries and showers of missiles and fire-brands; his gleaming tusks and his height, exaggerated in the fitful glare, was the climax of a never-to-be-forgotten scene. He turned and disappeared once more into the shadow.

Those who were not actually useful went round the circle carrying cheroots to the indefatigable watchers. Bed was the last thing to be thought of; and the night passed rapidly. Two other elephants threatened the stockade on the opposite side, and their thunderous

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trumpeting was incessant. There was not a moment which was not alive with sensation.

Day broke at last—"Thank goodness!" from Captain Z.—and that so all-impressive vigil became only a fascinating memory. Cold and grey at first, a generous sun soon beat almost too kindly over the dead ashes of the memorable night's orgies. How many elephants were secured? The natives said sixty, Captain Z. thought he had seen thirty; the real number ultimately turned out to be fifty-seven.

So far so good; they were safe and sound, and would all day probably remain invisible. The bands of natives round the palisade continued to strengthen and complete the bamboo fence, making themselves little wattled booths in which alternate parties slept and watched throughout the day. Meanwhile, a long sleep and a late breakfast to follow was welcome to the little party who had been overseers and spectators since the sun set.

That afternoon saw still a lively scene and plenty of hard work; the palisade stood up complete and solid, and most important of all, the *khedder* itself was begun. It was four days before this last great work was complete. At last it was ready. Picture a pound about a hundred yards in diameter, with an opening left on one side which faced the largest track made by the elephants when driven into cover, palisades having been built to guide the herd to this opening.

The pound itself was enclosed by a ditch nine feet wide at the top, a yard wide at the bottom, and nine

feet deep ; outside the ditch a stout fence, braced and supported, was erected, about twelve feet in height. The opening in the *khedder* facing the elephant-run was about twelve feet wide ; it had been arranged to come just between two tree trunks, which served as gate-posts.

The gate itself was planned like a portcullis, and was made of three tree trunks fastened transversely, slung by means of chains. It was hauled up to a considerable height between the two trees, and fastened by a rope, which was to be cut and the gate lowered directly the herd were inside the *khedder*.

The evening before the eventful day Captain Z. and his party saw most of the herd drinking in a pool about sunset, somewhere on the outskirts of their retreat in the cover. A most formidable battalion they looked ; would take some tackling before all was over ! Early morning saw all things in readiness ; a platform had been built near the *khedder*, well protected, from which standpoint people could see the whole proceedings, and the rest of the Mysore camp flocked in in good time.

The beat began. Four or five hundred beaters surrounded the cover on all sides except at the *khedder*, and began slowly to advance with the object of driving the herd in that direction. They came on with wild shouts, rattling of sticks, and beating of toms-toms ; some sent up rockets at intervals, others fired blank cartridges. Far away the tumult began—a faint roar ; nearer and nearer it resounded, developing

into a grand, wild clamour reverberating through the jungle. The air positively *rocked* with sound; above the shouts thundered the furious trumpeting of the elephants, and the rush and tread of heavy bodies being forced along in the direction desired. Finally, with a crashing prelude, the whole herd, a terrified throng, rushed into view.

At the sight of the palisade and group of on-lookers the great beasts came to a stand—fifty-seven of them, half-mad with terror and excitement, strong and wild enough to have carried the whole *khedder* away before them like a sheet of newspaper. On came the beaters, redoubling their shouts, the rockets, and the shots; but still the herd stood immovable—only a leader wanted, and then a desperate charge.

In the leading ranks stood a female and her calf. At this moment the little calf sprang forward towards the corner of the *khedder* where Captain Z. had taken up his position in front of the platform, beyond the rails. The mother, with only a thought of defending her young, dashed nobly after it, and seeing her enemies before her, she charged straight at Captain Z.

It was an alarming moment; the beaters' lives were worth very little purchase, to say nothing of those of the party on the platform, if the herd stampeded, as they were on the brink of doing, and charged after the female. There was a loud detonation, and Captain Z. floored her with an eight-bore Greener and ten drams; she fell almost at his feet. It was a sad sight and a deplorable occurrence, but there was no

alternative. The little calf rushed off, screaming wildly, with its tail erect and its ears distended. One of the party gave chase, and it was secured at last and tied up to a tree with a native's waistcloth.

Meanwhile, the herd had retreated; the beaters, alarmed by what had happened, were temporarily disorganised. However, after a short delay the herd was again beaten out towards the gate, and forced to proceed by blank cartridges and firebrands in the direction of the *khedder*. Nearer and nearer they rush—then stand—then rush on again—then pull up once more. They are coming—will they, or will they not?—it still hangs in the balance. Another advance; there is no choice now. Hustled on by the fifty-five behind him, the first elephant passes the Rubicon.

Like a reservoir which has burst its dam the whole herd leap forward in a tumult, surging through the gate, the forlorn hope in a desperate assault. Will they ever get through? No;—yes. A coolie perched on a light branch overhead cuts the rope; the gate jangles down into its place; cheer follows cheer as fifty-six elephants are secured to the Madras Government—a valuable prize!

Once inside, the great throng rushed wildly about in hopes of finding a means of escape. When completely exhausted they sought the centre of the enclosure, and there awaited motionless the progress of events.

By-and-by several tame elephants, each ridden by

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his own *mahout*, were marched into the *khedder*, mingling freely with the wild captives, and gradually separating them one by one from the rest of the herd, thus enabling the *noosers* to slip off the tame elephants on to the ground, and to pass ropes and chains round the hind-legs of the captives, who are thus picketed until they are reduced to subjection.

The process of training occupies a comparatively short time with the sagacious co-operation of tame elephants. These may generally be dispensed with after two months, and the captive ridden by the *mahout* alone. After three or four months he may be completely trusted—though elephants vary in temper.

Thus ended a most interesting experience ; elephants have been friends of mine ever since.

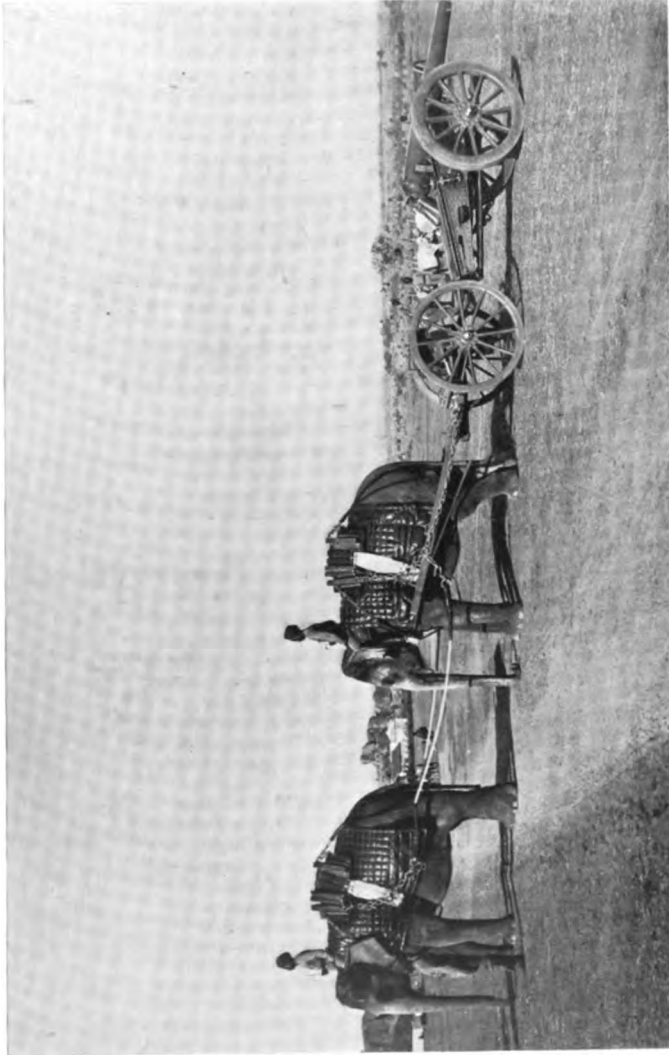
Joe, belonging to a civilian in Madras, was extraordinarily intelligent : he would draw a cork from a bottle of claret and drink the contents without spilling a drop. One morning he let himself in by the back gate, warning the bungalow of his presence by trumpeting. His master came out, and asked him what he wanted. There was a pitcher at hand with a little water in the bottom ; Joe poured it on the ground, attempting to sip with his trunk. His master gave him the desired water, and having told him to go back, followed to bolt the gate. But Joe had already not only shut and bolted it, but turned the bolt in the slot. He had a healthy appetite, and was partial to figs, palms, bread-fruit, wood-apples, sugar-cane, pine-apples, and water-melons. He would break a cocoanut by rolling

it under his foot. He always picked a switch with which he kept off flies.

As long ago as the time of Pliny elephants were observed studying their lessons; he tells us that one which performed badly in the day and was punished, was observed at night endeavouring to practise its tricks. The trainer of the Barnum herd once peeped into the elephants' pen at night and found one of the young ones trying to stand on his head—a lesson he was then being taught. After several attempts he succeeded.

The Duke of Devonshire's tame elephant used to take a broom and sweep the garden paths and grass; he would also carry a great water-can and follow the gardener round while he watered his beds.

Elephants are invaluable to the Government. Hundreds of them are, as is well known, employed in lumber-yards, going through a regular daily routine, knowing their hours for work and recreation as well as the foreman himself. At the sound of the morning bell they leave their stalls, assemble in the yards, and take up their work left from the day before, rolling the great logs and carrying the beams with their trunks to the piles, where two of them will take up each length of wood and hoist it into its place, walking round afterwards and adjusting the work like a man with a plumb-line. When the bell rings for leaving off work, nothing will induce them to go on, and it is said that they will not be taken in by ringing the bell late.



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The excitement of the *khedder* over, we returned to Mysore, where we were royally entertained by the Maharajah in the Guest House—as fine a building as any in India. Our great bedrooms were cool and luxurious, and a magnificent hall, furnished as a sitting-room, one side open to the drive-up, and park and gardens beyond, was delightful to sit in.

Our party now consisted of General Sir G. Wolseley, Colonel Neville, Major Eveleigh, Mrs. Borton, her black poodle, Miss Caldwell, my brother, and myself; we had the Guest House to ourselves. The Maharajah, a boy of thirteen, was away, but several officers and his own English tutor had been deputed to do the honours—most hospitable and cheery they were.

Mrs. Borton, Miss Caldwell, and myself paid a State call upon the Maharanee, a small, dark individual with wonderful jewels and embroidered garments; she talked little, and gave us each as a souvenir a small bottle of otto of roses when we withdrew.

The palace was interesting, though *French* and modern; for example, the extraordinary collection of clockwork toys—this included a bed which played tunes under the mattress directly anybody lay down on it. There was a phonograph, which repeated a speech of Mr. Gladstone's; and there was a truly magnificent collection of gems and jewelry. Though for the most part uncut, or indifferently cut, the enormous size of the stones was staggering, and I revere the individual intrepid enough to wear them.

The Zoo in Mysore is worth several visits. They had some rare animals, several fine tigers, and quite the largest panther any of us had ever seen—a savage brute which dashed against the iron bars of its cage whenever one went near. Fat and sleek, well fed, the animals were a striking contrast to those in our own Zoo at home, where it is perhaps expensive and difficult to provide great quantities of their natural food, the lack of which, together with the difference in climate, preys upon their health.

The next day, Sunday, was reserved for seeing Seringapatam. We were up at 5.30 a.m., and after a hurried *chota hazri*, started at 6 a.m. on a ten-mile drive to one of India's oldest and most interesting cities. The country was well cultivated and wooded, and the River Cauvery, broken by rocks and protecting Seringapatam, made a memorable picture. Rāmānuja, the Vishnuite apostle of 1454, who named it the city of Srī Ranga, or Vishnu, knew what he was about when he selected the little island three miles long and one mile broad, with the wide Cauvery washing round it, and its natural rock walls—a practically impregnable position.

Seringapatam is chiefly famous for the fortress which figured so prominently in Indian history at the close of the eighteenth century. Of its two last Rajahs, Hyder Ali and Tippoo Sultān, Tippoo's name is familiar to all on account of his horrible treatment of English prisoners, his arrogance, despotism, and the slippery character of all his dealings. At the same time, Tippoo

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must have been a fine fellow to have held Seringapatam, and three times to have sustained a siege against English troops ; his subjects fought like the pluckiest devils, up to the last.

The fortress must have been a hard nut to crack ; as we stood on its ruins we were immensely struck with its vast strength. When the river had been crossed, the entrenchments and ramparts climbed, the great rock and battlemented wall won, a deep moat faced the English besiegers, inside all, before the actual fort was reached. Across this moat there lay, at the final storming by Lord Cornwallis and Colonel Wellesley, afterwards Duke of Wellington, a single plank, left there by the sheer carelessness of Tippoo's soldiers. Over the plank the English storming party—one man at a time—rushed, and took the fort, with cold steel.

We saw the spot where Tippoo himself was killed by an ordinary soldier, for the sake of a marvellous necklace of jewels which he wore ; and we went down into the gloomy dungeons . . . the scene of the depths of a native's cruelty.

Having been over the ruined fort, we walked to the Lāl Bāgh, or Red Garden, which belongs to the magnificent tomb built by Tippoo Sultān over the remains of his father, Hyder Ali, and in which Tippoo himself was buried. A long walk, shaded by trees and glowing with flowers, led to this mausoleum. As a mark of respect there stood ready to meet us at the gate a native with a gigantic umbrella, which he

proceeded to hold over the General and Mrs. Borton, walking behind them down the path, while two natives marched on either side of this umbrella-bearer, fanning the pair with palm-leaf fans. A band of tom-toms thumped energetically.

Tippoo Sultān's white-and-black marble sarcophagus lay strangely peaceful under that cool dome in the green garden, almost within earshot of his last great battle, fought among walls wet with his cruelty. R.I.P.

From Tippoo's tomb we drove to his summer-house, the Daulett Bāgh, a charming spot afterwards occupied by the Duke of Wellington.

Breakfast was by this time more than ordinarily acceptable, and the usually empty bungalow bore signs of the Maharajah's arrangements for us. The hall, one side of which was again entirely open to the garden, with steps running along the length of it, made an airy breakfast-room. In the building and decorations of this bungalow-palace summer-house, the natives showed a sense of the fitness of things. Entirely without glass in the windows, or doors, not even a curtain prevented the warm, scent-laden air from circulating in the rooms; the walls and ceilings were fantastically decorated with simple washes of scarlet and gold, while round the outside ran a curious and gaudy fresco, a huge painting representing the siege of Seringapatam. The rooms were few, the building solid.

In England such a summer-house would have con-

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stituted a shrieking protest against good taste ; but under the glowing Eastern sun, in a garden where tuberoses were growing like daisies, making the air languid with scent, where the shrill Indian birds were screaming in the boughs, where the great trees seemed abnormally cool and shady, the well-watered, open lawns a giddy flare of hot sunlight, those scarlet-and-gold walls, daring, glaring though they were, struck the same key, and were true to nature, and therefore good.

The spirit of Tippoo Sultān, of his opulent, intriguing, and luxurious court, was surely somewhere in those few debonair acres, not upon the ruined bastions of the fort where he had died, nor under the silent marble dome to which his body was consigned.

Breakfast over, we drove to one more interesting "memory" in Seringapatam, Colonel Scott's bungalow. Years and years ago this man went away on service, and when he came back to his bungalow he found his wife and his children all dead of cholera. He went straight away, back to England, leaving everything behind him, and never turned eastwards again. The Governor of Seringapatam issued an order that the bungalow should be left as it was, untouched, for ever and a day.

We walked up the mossy, overgrown drive, through a neglected compound—scarcely to be recognised as such—now a small jungle of bamboos and palms, into the deserted bungalow beyond, which stood open, as Scott had walked out of it, a lifetime since. The

tattered arras clung to the walls ; the faded, ant-eaten carpets lay rotting on the floors ; the fabric of the curtains scarcely hung together ; dusty furniture filled the rooms ; there were big, old-fashioned, four-post beds, with mouldering mosquito-curtains still clinging to them ; even a few knick-knacks lay about undisturbed ; and I saw an old pair of boots.

Beyond the bungalow stretched down to the banks of the Cauvery a wilderness of a garden ; from the garden, worn stone steps led down to the river ; and upon a hot rock in the middle of the water lay a great crocodile basking in the sun. Some half-worn, childish initials, cut deep into the bark of an old, mossy tree trunk, "T. S." and "W. H. S.," were infinitely touching. The bungalow was indeed a derelict. Were we living *now* or *then*? "Is civilisation a failure? And is the Circassian played out?" Morbid tendencies cannot live in juxtaposition with the native, however. For example, we trained back from Seringapatam to Bangalore, and at one station where we stopped for tiffin great efforts in the decoration line had evidently been made. At each end of the table we were faced by vast letters composed of small yellow seed, upon the cloth, "W.C." This stood for *Welcome*.

I hope it may never be my lot to travel on such a slow line again. A distance of eighty miles took us from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. to accomplish—ten miles an hour. We had, however, the consolation of plenty of space—a reserved carriage for the ladies and

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poodle, another for the General, and a third for his staff.

Government House, Guindy, outside Madras, is a striking type of the best Indian houses, and a short visit we paid there was a most enjoyable one.

Having trained to Madras, we drove out seven miles to Guindy. The Madras climate is shocking—there is no other word for it. A gentle perspiration was every one's perpetual state; the *punkahs* at Guindy never had a quiet half-hour. Sir Arthur and Lady Havelock were most hospitable, and the large garden party which I recollect they gave impressed itself on the memory by reason of the gallant show of top-hats and frock-coats in such a temperature.

Guindy Park reminded one forcibly of a park at home. Six miles in circumference, well wooded, and rather overstocked, if anything, with spotted deer and antelope, there are plenty of hares, snipe, and quail as well. Mr. Adam used to say: "You have a charming house out of which you can walk and shoot snipe; you have a swimming-bath outside your door, a cricket-ground in your park, a racecourse at your gates, and your own pack of foxhounds meets close to you twice a week: what more can a man want? In fact, Guindy is an ideal residence *for six weeks in the year bien entendu.*" For a longer period the climate drowns the most energetic life in enervating languor, and undermines the strength.

Guindy consists of three garden houses, each two stories high, and all three connected by long corridors,

so arranged that every breath of air which stirs finds its way through the open verandahs into the lofty rooms. The walls of this airy palace are faced with a material made of sea-shells and mortar, locally known as *chunam*. It takes an extraordinarily high polish, and in a clear atmosphere it maintains a most perfect whiteness—a purity which is only equalled by the Taj.

Guindy is a snow palace amidst tropical heat, the whitest house in the world. Green lawns and terraces stretch round it, themselves masses of endless varieties of beautiful creepers, begonias, thunbergias of different sorts, yellow allamanders, pink antigonum, passion-flowers, clematis, stephanotis, blazes of bougainvillier, and more flowers than would fill a chapter.

Madras City is not built upon either of the three great rivers, the Krishna, the Godáviri, or the Cauvery, which drain the southern table-land of India, and the want of a river is more or less felt. Not that Indian rivers suggest, like the Thames, boating, picnics, and painted barges: visions of a thousand *dhobies* washing countless garments, acres of the banks hidden by linen drying in the sun; visions of turtles appearing and disappearing in the River Jumna below the Taj walls; visions of muggers (crocodiles) asleep on the rocks of the Cauvery,—such are the connections of Indian rivers.

And the impression left by muggers outweighs all others. It is more an impression than a reality—for even if one shoots a crocodile, few are easily secured,

because they sink at once in deep water, and therefore, however many tiger skins upon the wall savour of fact, one's boots of crocodile skin and chairs of crocodile leather exist only in the imagination.

Neither is it very easy to kill a crocodile. Only two points are immediately fatal—the first behind the eye, and the second exactly through the centre of the shoulder, which will pass straight into the lungs. The only rifle of much use is .577; the .450 solid bullet is always fatal. How long S. used to sit, waiting for muggers to show themselves on the banks of the Godávári! how cunning and astute they grew! and when he had turned away from the river, how they would appear like floating logs upon the surface, emerge, and sun themselves upon its mud banks!

The crocodile is a distinctly *shudderous* animal, and will always be connected in my mind with a sad accident which happened on one of many *shikar* expeditions.

Camping out in the jungle by a large river in the Deccan, sitting in one of the tents in the cool of the evening, the shooting party were electrified by one of the *syces* rushing unceremoniously in, casting himself upon the ground, and clutching Colonel P. round the legs in a state of terrified excitement. Recovering his breath, he burst into tears and gasped out, "*Syce—syce* gone! taken away from my side by crocodile now this minute! We wash clothes—crocodile come!" "*Syce—what syce?*" said Colonel P. "There are half a dozen *syces*." "Brother!—my brother!" the man

cried. "*Syce* belong to Toby pony. We wash clothes together down in river, not deep at all—deep near; suddenly big, big crocodile—jump like tiger—catch my brother by waist—dash away—very *bobbery* crocodile—drag him into deep—water all boiling—down below. Come quick!" Alas! what avail! The river was soon reached at a run. On the bank lay the wet, half-washed clothes; there was the shallow with a ripple on it where the men had stood; down below, the oily surface of the deep water lay calm and unruffled in the stillness of a fine night, as peaceful as though it had never been disturbed. The man who had lost his brother sat down and sobbed. One of the best *syces* was indeed gone for ever.

A crocodile can keep under water for ten minutes. As a rule, it holds its prey beneath the surface till it is drowned; then taking it to its favourite hiding-place, devours it. Though fish is, in the ordinary course of things, its food, it occasionally attacks man, and bathing in tropical rivers known to be full of muggers is therefore unsafe. As the poor *syce* described it, a crocodile's dash at his prey is instantaneous, like a steamboat cutting through the water, faster than the fastest swimmer, more like a gigantic fish.

The largest mugger ever known in India—though not having seen it myself, I cannot vouch for the measurements—was said to be thirty feet long and thirteen feet in circumference, its head alone weighing three hundred pounds. On opening the body it was found to contain, besides other parts of a horse,

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its three legs entire, torn off at the haunch and shoulders.

Some friends of ours heard of a young girl of about thirteen years of age who was washing clothes, like the *syce*, in a river little inhabited by crocodiles, with some companions. As the evening closed in, the other women retired to the bank to wring out and pack up the garments; the girl, however, rather despising their warnings against crocodiles, washed on, boasting that she had often done it before, and that there was no danger. Suddenly a scream and cry in the vernacular, "Lord, have mercy upon me!—mugger's caught me!" apprised her horrified companions that she had been carried off. The next morning there was a general search for the amphibious monster; on the second day it was successful. He was hunted down and killed; two carts were lashed together, and his body, seventeen and a half feet long, was tied upon them, and taken to the village. The remains of the victim, including a bracelet, were in his stomach.

But I knew one really amusing occurrence in connection with crocodiles. Three men were out shooting by the Cauvery; they separated, agreeing to return to camp at their own sweet will. Two turned up in the course of the evening; the third, a priest, never appeared. A search was instituted with the help of lanterns. At last the river banks were reached, and through the darkening thickets, in answer to their shouts, a distant "Hallo!" was heard.

Eventually they came upon the priest, secure, up in the branches of a tree, a crocodile crouched in a bush close at hand waiting for his descent. Having despatched the brute with their rifles, the two companions heard the description of the pursuit of the priest by the crocodile: how the monster had suddenly appeared on the river bank, making for the sportsman, who fired and missed him; how the crocodile gave chase, pursuing the priest by a succession of leaps, jumping rapidly with back crooked like a frightened cat. Providentially, a tree was at hand with low branches, up which the priest flew.

The sight must have been a nightmare to him for years; for even in captivity a crocodile is repulsive, with its sixty-eight immense teeth specially made for seizing, and which interlock after the manner of a rat-trap, from which there is no escape; the two longest teeth in the lower jaw actually penetrate through corresponding holes and appear above the top of the upper jaw.

Muggers are supposed to live to a great age, surpassed only by the tortoise. There is one in the garden at Mutwal, Colombo, known to have been there for a hundred and fifty years; its age when it was first caught is a mystery.

Crocodile's tears were an ancient myth, for we find an old chronicler writing: "There are not many brute beasts that can weep, but such is the nature of the crocodile that to get a man within his danger, he will sob, sigh and weep as tho' he were in extremity,

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but suddenly he destroyeth him." Even Shakespeare says,—

The mournful crocodile
With sorrow snares relenting passengers.

A sight not to be missed, if one is in the north-west of India and near Kurachie, is the crocodile tank at that place. I grant that it is possibly a loathsome sight, but it is certainly an interesting one.

In the first place there is a great swamp; this in former times was infested with crocodiles who lived there and roamed about the neighbourhood at will, seeking what they might devour; in fact, so great was the havoc they made, that the natives built a wall round the swamp, which effectually kept them within bounds.

The swamp itself is caused by hot springs, the medicinal virtues of which, known from early times, have always been attributed to the sanctity of a Mohammedan's tomb which lies close by—a most holy spot. The crocodiles are sacred to this Mohammedan.

One can count over two hundred reptiles in the tank. There are about a hundred and fifty by eighty yards of green, slimy, stagnant water, and in this solid ooze the huge, uncouth monsters move sluggishly about, so tame *in a sense* that it is necessary to poke them with a stick before they will move.

The following tale of the crocodile tank I am assured is perfectly true; I give it for what it is worth.

One year the swamp was exceptionally dry. Time of day—after dinner. *Dramatis persone*—a party of

young subalterns playing the fool. At last one youthful idiot performed the feat of slipping over the wall, and ran across a corner of the morass, unharmed. Still more elated, he proposed a crocodile ride; was laughed to scorn; stuck to his suggestion; large bets were made; he ran off with his mind made up, and shortly after reappeared, bringing with him a fowl tied to a long piece of rope, and carrying in the other hand a large steel fork. He lashed the rope securely to a palm-tree, the fowl being within easy reach of the water.

Such a tempting bait was not long in drawing a monster out of the morass—a real saurian, every inch of him, some twenty feet long. The mugger made for the fowl, took the bait, and finding it caught, set to work to pull until the palm-tree vibrated again, while he shook his head and lashed his great tail violently. Meanwhile, the gay young subaltern, jumping down the wall, now much to consternation of his brother officers, proceeded to approach the great beast from behind, running quickly up to it, and seating himself like an elephant-driver on its thick neck. The vertebræ of a crocodile's neck bear upon each other by means of rib-like processes, the neck being thus deprived to a great extent of its mobility; hence crocodiles have a difficulty in turning.

The instant the reptile, unaccustomed to carry weight, felt the foolish youth upon his back, he sacrificed the fowl and ran off with his rider towards the water. On his way, however, he slackened his speed

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and stopped, then began a wriggling, zigzag course, doing his best to get his unwieldy head round and bite his rider. The boy promptly rammed the prongs of the steel fork well into the crocodile's neck, and set him going again. Just as he was about to plunge into the water, his jockey sprang actively up, leapt on one side, and just escaping a terrific lash from the great tail, ran back safely to the wall, having a second time been saved from a fate which he almost deserved.

Buffaloes have never been attacked by the inhabitants of this tank, but any other animals are seized at once. Not that buffaloes are by any means exempt, for I remember the case of a poor bullock which was seized by a large mugger when it was in the act of drinking, and dragged into deep water. The struggling beast was a terrible sight to see; its head was held firmly under water, and it gradually disappeared until only its tail, which twisted and writhed convulsively in the air like a snake, was left above the surface. A few minutes, and the whole body floated—drowned; while at its side a long snout and a pair of malicious, triumphant eyes obtruded themselves above the surface.

In the dry season muggers bury themselves in the mud and remain dormant until the return of moister conditions. They can exist thus without food for many months; and there was a well-known case of a sahib who, camping out one night upon a little island in the Ganges, was disturbed by a strange motion of the

earth beneath his bed ; explained on the morrow by the final upheaval of the dry mud, and the emergence of a crocodile !

The carelessness of natives, their foolhardiness in connection with danger of all sorts, is incredible ; it must arise from crass stupidity quite as much as from the spirit of *Kismet*, in which they blindly live. The following is a last example connected with a subject which must begin to pall upon my readers.

It was reported upon the Jumna that a crocodile had been seen, but the servants belonging to a camping party ridiculed the idea of danger even if this were so, either could or would not believe their word, and calmly proceeded to ford the river, most of them splashing across it in a shallow place lower down ; all except one man, who, to save himself the trouble of riding on another fifty yards, proceeded to plunge through in a deeper place. He reached the middle of the stream, looked round, laughed at the cavalcade wading across down below, . . . the laugh died upon his lips—a crocodile was upon him with a gigantic spring ! Its teeth met in the saddle, which it literally tore off the horse's back ; the horse stood paralysed with fright. The man, in some inexplicable way, had escaped the great jaws, and was now positively hurling himself through the water towards the bank. Another instant, and the crocodile dashed after him. But Providence had ordained that the sahib should be carrying his rifle ; a bullet turned the crocodile, he swam back into deep water, and vanished as suddenly as he had

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appeared, the saddleless horse meantime making its way down-stream and rejoining the others.

My experiences with muggers in India must end with a quotation from that great authority Sir Samuel Baker, in the shape of a description of his which has always struck me.

“The largest crocodiles I ever saw were of such extraordinary dimensions that I could scarcely believe the reality, although within only a few yards of our canoe. I had a life’s experience among these creatures, but I never had the faintest conception that such monsters were in existence.

“We were travelling up a river bordered upon either side by lofty papyrus and sombre forests, when we observed a small island, a portion of the area being overgrown with the very graceful but mournful-looking rush. This had taken root in a shallow soil; hard granite formed the basis of the isle.

“The bare, grey granite shelved gradually towards the water and exposed a clear surface of about sixty feet. Upon this were large, round bodies resembling boulders of rock which had resisted the process of gradual disintegration.

“The canoe drew near, and when within about twenty yards the great boulders of granite began to move! I could not believe my eyes! Great masses began to unfold, and in a few seconds resolved themselves into two vast forms, each as thick as the body of a hippopotamus and of enormous length. These two antediluvian monsters glided slowly and fearlessly

along the gently sloping granite, and when half beneath the water they exposed a breadth of back which was the most extraordinary sight I have ever seen in my long experience of crocodiles. I did not wish to proclaim our presence to the tribes by the report of firearms.

“I would not presume to estimate the length of these extraordinary creatures ; but the deep and broad river, flowing silently through one of the oldest portions of the earth, suggested, by the exhibition of these mighty forms, that no change in the inhabitants of the stream had taken place since the Original Creation.”

An Englishman in the Civil Service, who was for some years a Commissioner in the Bombay Presidency, has forwarded me some specimens of letters which he received from time to time from natives, soliciting his favour in various ways. Some idea of the native mind may be formed from them.

Application from office subordinate for promotion.

“MOST RESPECTED AND BENEVOLENT SIR,

“As a calf seeks earnestly its Mother when strayed in the Forest, so we seek for you. As Your Honour attain a high position now, I humbly beg that my case for promotion be considered,” etc., etc.

*Reply from a man to whom I had offered a
chuprassie's place.*

“RESPECTED SIR,

“In reply to your favour of yesterday for the offer of a place of a Belt to me under your Honour,

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I beg to bring to your Honour's notice I am willing to serve under your Honour and would have accepted the boon offered to me favoured by your Honour, "if my family" [that is, wife] "who had just now delivered up a child, were not sick," etc., etc.

From my butler, bringing up my heavy kit by sea on my transfer from Ratnagiri to North of Bombay.

"MY MASTER,

"I beg to inform that I have just reached to Bombay from Ratnagiri from where I have sailed to a [native boat] on the 29th last, but owing the storm and heavy rains I was obliged to make different ports: your furniture are on good terms, but two Boxes unimportant are little wet," etc., etc.

Petition for an appointment.

". . . By your graciously extending this humane bounty towards a fallen, crushed and miserable young man, you will bestow on him a marked and substantial boon. Boon which will always be vivid on the tablet of your insignificant servant's heart, and will fail not out of gratitude to elicit constant and unceasing prayers to the Divine majesty for your and family's longevity and prosperity, until he is a guest of this nether world," etc., etc.

Advertisement of a toy. Indiarubber snake toy.

“A very strange and singular Toy for Joke. Being too exact and similar like a Snake, no eyes can evade its dread.”

From the Headmaster's report of the — school.

“. . . I have gathered many of the natural products of the earth for the School Museum which is worth to be seen. The Educational Authorities have acquired newly a place for Boys to play their plays on, in hours of leisure. There is a gymnasium in the school which also falls short of some of its necessary instruments.”

Application for a clerkship.

“MOST HONOURED SIR,

“With every mark of respect and due humility, I beg to lay the few following lines before your Honour, a bright dazzling sunshine to scatter the heavy clouds impending all around.

“I beg to say that philosophic saying of days of yore and of modern theologian based on best truths to the effect that the sunshine and storms of life go hand in hand, are but theoretical and negative to me alone, since my introduction to the sphere up to the present stage. I am journeying through the vale of life with none to help and none to free me from the cruel jaws of chill penury though possessed of minions of splendour. Nevertheless I am, which keep up my feelings of patience, and to stand on firm foot amidst

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the heart rending difficulties by the phantoms of melancholy. Notwithstanding, big with these reflections by being buoyed up by hope, a guide in the thorns of life, I have made known my humble petition to your Honour," etc., etc.

*Bill of fare written out by my butler for a dinner party,
with translation of the same.*

BLIF.

Lakes Kroot befour soop.

Kaleer Mullochdani.
Amen soop.

ENTRES.

Chicken oleef freengee wit musrom.

Pigan patees cold.

JANT.

Rosht gunifool and Sausit.
Motton rost alla Soobi.
Hami.

SECAN COSE.

Paregras. Klear sace.

SAVRI.

Espises Quil.

Hort Plampteen nice.
Appal Sufli.
Clarat Jaley wi Krim.

Chakelet Krim ice.

BILL OF FARE.

Lax croût before soup.

*Clear mulligatawny.
Almond soup.*

ENTRÉES.

Chicken olives fringed with mushrooms.

Pigeon patties.

JOINT.

*Roast guinea-fowl and sausages.
Mutton roast à la Soubise.
Ham.*

SECOND COURSE.

Asparagus. Clear sauce.

SAVOURY.

Spiced quail.

*Hot plum-pudding. Nice!
Apple soustée.
Claret jelly with cream.*

Chocolate cream ice.

Report as to the health of the infant son of the Nawab of Sachin, ill from "teething," forwarded to me as a Political Agent.

" . . . He feels better to-day. By the grace of God the grinders have already come out. He, greedily, takes milk of couji, recommended of the Doctor," etc., etc.

With entrance fee for race.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Although my horses are sick yet my son wishes to take them to racecourse, if you would kindly agree to it please take the fee. I have two horses, white and red, by name Mirbux and Oomerbux. My boy Syed Zane will ride on. He is with blue dress boarded with white rebin," etc., etc.

Telegram to me when Collector of Salt Revenue from salt trader wanting to know when certain salt would be available.

"Will find salt and what rate or no find or when find reply prepaid."

Self and a man were both studying Gujarati.

"It has of late come to my knowledge that your Honours are prosecuting a Gujarati study, and I in consequence with feelings of deep gratitude and heartfelt respect, beg to apprise your kind Honours

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that I feel highly willing to impart a Gujarati Tuition, as a matter of interest, to such men of parts as your Honours, with a sanguine hope that your Honours will not fail to grant me my request, for I am very fain to have a company of such gentlemen of merits as you. In case your Honours grant my request, I shall of my own accord spare an hour per diem for your Honours.

“I remain,” etc., etc.

If any of my readers have waded thus far through this multifarious correspondence, I owe it to them to ask for their indulgence over a last and longest epistle, which personifies “*cringing*” and “*toady-ism*,” is full of unconscious humour—in fact, flattery is laid on with creation’s shovel.

Letter written in English from a native subordinate holding a responsible position, who was trying to worm himself out of the Service to avoid being dismissed.

“MOST RESPECTED SIR,

“I beg to open this letter by offering my sincerest respects to you, with an apology for the intrusion.

“You may be aware that the Deputy Commissioner’s order to appear myself before him, left me no time to follow my intentions, the first of which was to visit you on my way hither. I regret I was not able to wait on you on account of your absence at headquarters, though it was my duty to have done so in token of

my high sense of gratitude for all past favours. Indeed you have always evinced towards me such a merciful regard in the exercise of that authority which God has rested in you, that I feel quite unable to repay it by any other means than by a mere grateful recollection of those days I passed under you as so many brightest sparks of my life. If I may speak out candidly I can assure you with confidence and without fear of being charged with flattery, that I have chanced to see very few gentlemen in my life so good in heart, so sound in judgment, so full in knowledge, and above all so exemplary in manners as your noble self, qualities very rarely met with in men of high ranks.

“ When you last conducted the Revenue Settlement, I had a beautiful opportunity of testing all these praiseworthy qualities in you, and whenever I came in contact with you in the course of my duties, it was always my secret pleasure to mark the masterly grace and facility with which you responded to the callings of your office.

“ Such abilities combined with various other singular accomplishments as you possess, could not fail to astonish me and heighten the admiration of a servant of my insignificant stamp.

“ Allowing for my limited experience of the political part of the world, I conceive that I am not far incorrect in supposing that if Nature ever stored all the high gifts of mankind in the formation of one person, it was undoubtedly in you that I found them to exist in their perfection. Such being my unfeigned impression,

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I could no longer hide telling you that I am attached, or rather I love you, both as an energetic officer of the Commission and as an exemplary model of a thorough Gentleman.

“I should have been exceedingly happy to remain some time longer in your service, had I not been forced to retire by a domestic affliction which overtook me all of a sudden, and which was too strong for me in my old age to bear.

“I am therefore resolved to seek consolation in devoting the remainder of my days to the happy contemplation of the mysteries of the Most High, free from all cares and trouble,” etc., etc.



CHAPTER XII

IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

**Home—Reminiscences—The Imperishable Legacy—
The East no More—Advantages and Disadvan-
tages of Travel—Honour to those who Stay at
Home**

CHAPTER XII

IMPRESSIONS OF TRAVEL

IN CABINED SHIPS AT SEA.

The sky o'erarches here, we feel the undulating deck beneath our feet,
We feel the long pulsation, ebb and flow of endless motion,
The tones of unseen mystery, the vague and vast suggestions of
the briny world, the liquid-flowing syllables,
The perfume, the faint creaking of the cordage, the melancholy
rhythm,
The boundless vista, and the horizon far and dim are all here,
And this is the ocean's poem.

WALT WHITMAN.

HOME! As the months go on the old ties pull yet more strongly. The East is said to call; but surely no voice was ever so imperative in its demands upon man or woman as that of Home.

The last month of my year in India, spent in Bombay, went all too quickly: not that I think Bombay, of all places, one to linger in for long, but that, as the last four weeks come to days, it is borne regretfully in upon one that this is not an ordinary good-bye, but a good-bye to a country, to a race, as different from our own dear, damp, foggy England and our hard-working, stolid Britons as a bull-dog is different from a lanky, yellow pariah.

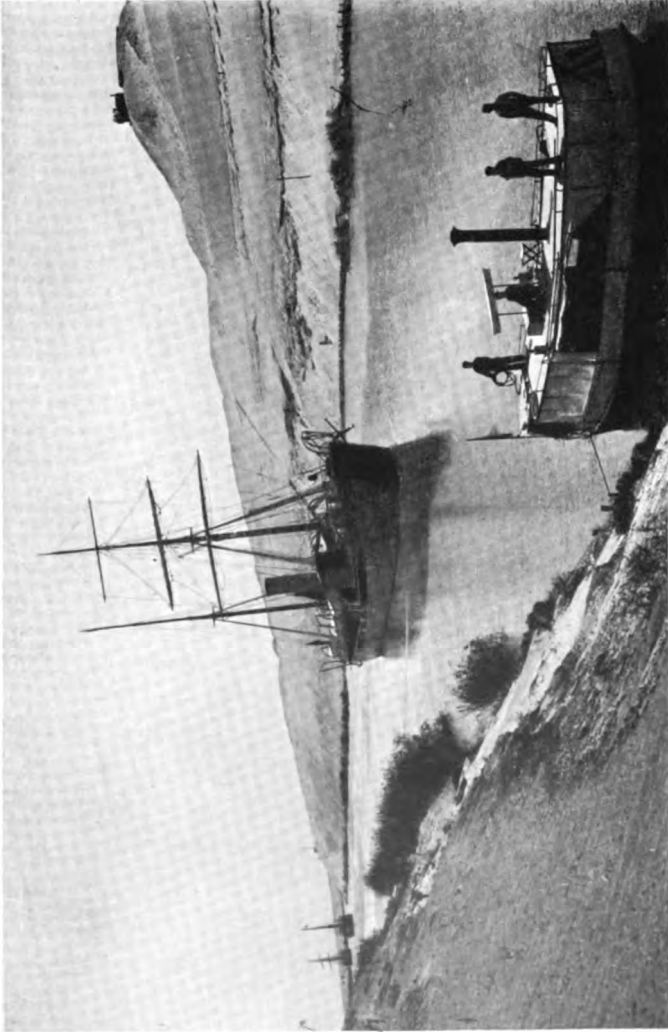
Down at the Yacht Club in Bombay something akin to a halo attaches to anybody known to be going home—soon to be actually in the streets of London, and seen and heard no more on this side the globe.

Eight days before departure, and a thin line of smoke on the horizon of the Indian Ocean heralds the in-coming mail, the sound of the big gun at the fort booms up to Malabar Hill, for the great weekly link with England is coming in. Until the following Saturday the steamer lies up in dock, being generally overhauled, not provisioned, for she carries out from London sufficient supplies for the return voyage.

Saturday morning, . . . and I say farewell to the white bungalow, to my own especial fat *ayah*, to the pressing group of thin, angular, beady-eyed servants, cook, *dhobie* and all assembled unabashed for expected tips ; good-bye to the cool garden with broad plantain leaves round a quaint well, to the shady porch filled with green maidenhair fern.

Down Malabar Hill we wind ; the blue bay spreads below us, a few white yachts float idly in a dead calm, the picturesque native boats lie pulled up on the beach, right away in the distance is the long black hull of the great steamer which in a few hours will actually be on her way to England. Even now it is hard to realise that India will this evening be a thing of the past.

We drive along by the shore, where the polo-ponies are brought by their *syces* to stand in the sea every morning, where on the wet sand we have had many a merry gallop. In the road we meet the usual string of Parsee



THE SUEZ CANAL.

carriages with the best horses to be had in Bombay. In the full, blistering glare of the sun stands a native sweetmeat seller, with wicker stand on his arm, and tray on his head, heaped with a sticky, half-melted colour-scheme in the shape of fearsome sweetmeats. Various officials tramp along the pavement in white drill, which enhances yet more the chocolate hue of their complexions. We pass occasional and bewitching groups of natives in brilliant greens and dazzling scarlets, vivid purples and orange yellows, with oiled locks and blackened eyes, their silver necklets, earrings, and anklets jingling musically as they walk, chewing betel-nut meanwhile and spitting occasionally.

The Bombay cab-horse passes us, with a white solar *topi* on his hot head. Badham and Pile's shop, overrun by off-hand Eurasian attendants, fades from view, where proudly flaunt the fashions of last year, pale with dust, stiff with the pride of an extortionate price.

The bountiful, beautiful buildings of bumptious, bureaucratic Bombay will soon bristle no more upon the vision; fancy lingers tenderly over the Yacht Club and its inviting marble hall, its green terrace and broad expanse of ocean beyond, its comfortable wicker-chairs, round tables, pots of tea, and brown bread-and-butter, to be enjoyed in the shade.

Is the water lapping now against that same broad terrace—the stone balustrade we leaned upon? Does the *élite* of Bombay still trail its skirts across the turf evening after evening, among the coloured lights, to the fiddles of the Government House band?

The Apollo Bunder landing-stage is reached at last. I recognise my luggage. We are on a small steamer paddling energetically across the bay out to the ocean liner. I shall never see India again!

No more white *kunka* roads with dilapidated *ekkas* and bony *tats* jingling past, nor great, comfortable, white oxen with painted horns and blue-and-white cowrie necklaces lying unyoked in the shade of their carts patiently chewing the cud; no more khāki-clad Tommies, nor parade *maidans* with trim rows of barracks among avenues of tamarisk- and babul-trees; no more naked, black-eyed children of large stomachs, nor low mud villages with hideous buffaloes wallowing in marshy swamps.

The cool, marble mosques and palaces, bleaching in a glowing haze, the bungalows with their dark, high rooms, and noiseless servants gliding barefoot, the sleepy, complaining sound of the rhythmical creaking of the water-wheel in a corner of the compound, resolve themselves into a memory.

But, dearer than all recollections, the Himalayas *insist* most strongly,—

Spirit of Nature! here!
 In this interminable wilderness
 Of worlds, at whose immensity
 Even soaring Fancy staggers. . . .
 Spirit of Nature! Thou,
 Imperishable as this scene,
 Here is thy fitting temple.

We forget relations and friends—perhaps even our

parents—but those stainless peaks and wastes of silent snow we never forget ; they become part of our souls, and we care for them with a love which is far removed from “ all passionate wind of welcome and farewell.”

The grim, dark deodars mass themselves, in imagination, on the mountain slopes, carpeted with Nature’s own pine-needle carpet, older than any Persian loom ; the solid roof of grey-green fir-pins and gaunt branch rafters is fitfully creaking, moaning, tossing overhead—“ the wind with its wants and infinite wail.”

Far above all, serene in the sunlight, can I not see the dazzling, splintered crest of the White Mountain rising in worlds we know not of, luring the traveller, like the Lorelei of old, to climb and to find a grave among its solemn crags.

If the magical East has ever cast her spell over us at all, it is not Society life in India, nor hairbreadth escapes, nor the fierce excitement of the *burra shikar*, to which a candle is lit in our memories. The wax is melting at another shrine, and the Spirit of the East which calls us, reigns in the mountains, lives in the dusty, hot plains, fascinates in the weird, primæval jungles, and peoples the ruined cities with ghosts. It is our own dear possession, this “ never-ending Shadow,” bound up with the Unspoken and with all which is truest and best in our lives ; the only imperishable legacy travel can ever give. A rolling stone may gather no moss ; I do not want your moss.

That we should regret the days of our travels is perhaps a sign of the spark which occasionally troubles

our finite clods ; the regret is known to many, and even those who never leave England feel the trammels of conventionalities and shams, have longed to be for a space entirely *themselves*, rid of appearances, in some—

Waste and desert places, where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see is boundless,
As we wish our souls to be.

Is this infinite want in man the result of that so seldom satisfied demand which is eternally made upon human nature?

Where forlorn sunsets flare and fade
On desolate sea and lonely sand,
Out of the silence and the shade,
What is the voice of strange command
Calling you still as friend calls friend
With love that cannot brook delay,
'To rise and follow the ways that wend
Over the hills and far away?

Hark ! in the city, street on street,
A roaring reach of death and life,
Of vortices that clash and fleet
And ruin in appointed strife.
Hark to it calling, calling clear,
Calling, until you cannot stay,
From dearer things than your own most dear
Over the hills and far away.

Out of the sound of ebb and flow,
Out of the sight of lamp and star,
It calls you where the good winds blow,
And the unchanging meadows are :

From faded hopes and hopes a gleam,
 It calls you, calls you night and day,
 Beyond the dark into the dream,
 Over the hills and far away.

(W. E. HENLEY.)

The voyage home has little of the glamour of the footlights about it. No one likes the angle of their rooms to be on a slope of twenty or thirty degrees; no one appreciates the smell of warm oil and cookery; the decks for exercise are limited; reading is difficult under the circumstances; "sweeps" upon the run of the ship lose their interest; life resolves itself into three solid meals a day, and if possible, beef-tea at eleven and tea at five.

India fades on the horizon; for the first few days, beyond being monotonous, the voyage is not aggressive. The oily stretches of the Indian Ocean bask in a placid smile unbroken by a ripple. As Kipling describes it,—

The Injian Ocean sets an' smiles
 So soft, so bright, so bloomin' blue;
 There ain't a wave for miles and miles
 Excep' the jiggle from the screw.
 The ship is swep', the day is done,
 The bugle's gone for smoke and play;
 An' black against the settin' sun
 The Lascar sings "*Hum deckty hai!*" *

Until we reached Port Said India seemed still with us in the glory of the sunsets. Evening after evening we sat up in the bows and watched where the sun

* "I'm looking out!"

was setting over home. Straight into the west the *Shannon* cut her way, the sharp bows dividing the quiet water and throwing back on either side two great, curling waves flecked with foam; behind her a widening track of bubbles and broken water stretched across the calm waste to the very horizon.

Orange and scarlet, crimson and golden, the sun dips into the sea; Europe has never seen such a sky, such pure, unearthly colour. We steam steadily ahead into a world of water and air, into masses of quiet violet, into reaches of stainless gold. The masts stand up against an opal sheen, the long bowsprit is set upon the spot where the red ball dropped, the bowsprit swings slightly as we hurry on into the kingdom of the sunset.

After Port Said—a great change! The look of “the East” is gone for evermore; grey banks of cloud lie on the horizon; there is a general bleakness to be felt; thenceforward, as each old, familiar landmark in the Mediterranean turned up, colder grew the conditions under which we sighted them, for it was the last week in a chilly February. It blew a gale; for the rest of the voyage the “fiddles” were oftener than not on the tables.

No longer—

Through the endless summer evenings
On the lineless, level floors,

but—

Through the yelling Channel tempest
When the siren hoots and roars,

the *Shannon* made her way, across a well-ploughed wintry sea. We learnt what the lift of the great Atlantic combers means. The bay was a grand tonic ; the sea scours the mind together with the body. Lulled to sleep by its rough cradling and salt breezes, incantations rose to—

The mother of mutable winds and hours,
Cold and clean as her faint, salt flowers.

The most intrepid spirit may well flinch before London on Sunday, at the hour of 7 a.m. ; but the P. & O. Company decree that the ordeal must be gone through. And so we were back once more, and trod the sloppy pavements and breathed fog ; and who can wonder if there arose a yearning “ beyond the sky-line where the strange roads go down ” in exchange for this “ man-stifled town ” ?

The desire grows with years : is it true that we drag at each remove a lengthening chain ? Perhaps the longer human nature—given to idealise—looks through Time’s telescope, the brighter grows the vision at the other end ; the discomforts connected with travelling sink into the shade, its pleasures heighten in tone.

Travel has many advantages, of course ; nothing appeals to mankind like “ change,” or better satisfies the restlessness felt at some time or another by every human being. It does not come natural to “ sit tight ”—it means an effort of will. As children we begin by exploring under the dining-room table among the

footstools ; as we grow older we alter the horizon a little, that is all. And in return for our trouble we learn experience, which no courses of reading, however well they may stock our minds with knowledge, can supply.

I have felt stands for more than *I can imagine what others have felt*. Experience means a variety of things : it includes the development of the perceptive powers, dependence upon self, and a wider knowledge of self ; it inculcates generous views ; it causes, in short, a great mental expansion.

Self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control,
Are the three hinges of the gates of life
That open into power.

To see more is to feel more ; and to feel more is to think more. Travel teaches us to see over our boundary fences, to think less intolerantly, less contemptuously of each other. It teaches us to overlook the limitations of religions and morality, and to recognise that they are relative terms, fluctuating quantities, husks round the kernel of truth. Travel dismisses the notion that we are each of us the biggest dog in the kennel.

The majority of men who are desirous of finding out the truth about any matter must, to do so, travel, and travel independently, not as the mouthpiece of a newspaper, which necessarily ties them—as in the case, for example, of war correspondents.

One of the very few benefits which accrue to man

through the agency of that deplorable evil, war, is that it brings two widely separate nations into juxtaposition. A. fights and conquers B., and is obliged to stay with and see something of B. B. discovers that A. is not a bad fellow after all, and that the only reason for which they never fraternised before was that A. possessed a sense of national dignity for which B. had never given him credit.

If Ireland had been travelled over to the same extent that Scotland has, there would have been as little alienation, as few misunderstandings with England, as there are now between Scotland and England. If the Chinese had travelled as did the old Venetians, China might have produced a Bellini, a Titian, a Tintoretto, or a Paul Veronese, instead of stagnating in pigtailed and grinning idols. How much of Dr. Johnson's blind obstinacy and narrow prejudice, of Scott's feudalism and Toryism, would have vanished had they emigrated or travelled!

Applied to case after case, infinite are the advantages of going abroad; and yet there is much to be said for the other side, although book after book upon the subject proclaims the virtues and urges the necessity of travelling. What made England? Not entirely our great explorers and our sailors: Spain possessed a Cortés, a Pizarro. England has produced the greatest nation in the world; and her backbone has been and is the strong, patient character forced to stay at home and work.

As a rule, it is the light character who travels; the

solid nature, having found its place, stays there, makes home worth living in, and contributes towards making a nation. He does not go to meet adventure nor foreign lands and men ; content to wait, *his day comes*, and all nationalities upon earth travel to England in order to see the result of the blood of John Bull.

It is only a sophism to argue that without having travelled, a man is necessarily narrow and prejudiced ; the "best things," happily, "are nearest him, lie close about his feet" ; life teaches him that lesson, if it teaches him nothing else.

Though young blood must have its course, and every dog his day, yet—

When all the world is old, lad,
 And all the trees are brown,
 And all the sport is stale, lad,
 And all the wheels run down,
 Creep *home* and take your place there,
 The spent and maimed among :
 God grant you find one face there
 You loved when all was young.

Travel is in part a superstition. The leisured class in England says to itself, "I must travel, or it will be said of me that I am doing nothing" ; thus it fosters its luxuriant, vagabond habits, and wilfully turns its back upon a useful sphere. Travel is apt to induce an idle life and an inordinate love of change, which grows with years and in time effectually paralyses more solid impulses : for such travellers do little good as they hurry over continent after continent ; the view they

take is but a cursory one—barely a view of things at all; they pass their days between a lounge and a siesta.

What, I should like to know, have they found out about a country, who rush across it, without giving its natural features, its people, its politics, more than a cold, casual stare, whose thoughts run in the line of their own amusement, own comfort, own weariness, own inconvenience at hotels?

The club trains to the Riviera carry a multitude abroad in a luxurious fashion. How much do they notice of the change in the lie of the land, in the type of roof and window, of the demarcation between the chestnut and beech zone, and the pine and larch zone? Have they any idea of the experiences to be had through distance, and through difficulties surmounted? What Stevenson calls, "*Nature's spiritual ditty, 'The Invitation to the Road,' an air continually sounding in the ears of gypsies, and to whose inspiration our nomadic fathers journeyed all their days,*" is to them unknown; there is, in short, something supremely selfish in their mode of travelling.

It has been well said that, "In manly hours we feel duty to be our place. The soul is no traveller: the wise man stays at home, or, if he travels, is at home wherever he goes, and makes men feel it by his face; that he goes the missionary of wisdom and virtue, and visits cities and men like a sovereign, not like a valet or an interloper."

Too often travelling is a Fool's Paradise. I am

miserable ; I want to get out of myself ; I want to leave home. *Travel!* I pack up my trunks, say farewell ; I depart. I go to the very ends of the earth ; and behold, my skeleton steps out of its cup-board and confronts me there. I am as pessimistic as ever, for the last thing I can lose is myself ; and though I may tramp to the back of beyond, that grim shadow must always pursue me.

After all is said, only a small percentage of English men and women have either the leisure or the means to travel. That the nation is a great gainer through their experiences, that on their own parts they benefit themselves thereby, is certain. But with all its far-reaching delights, travel need not blind our eyes. The "light that never was on land or sea" is—

*Always shining ; if but mortal eyes
Had strength of vision for realities
That lie beyond the things that seem to be !*

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