Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—I.

BY G. BESTE.

PROBABLY there are no places in India of which Englishmen, who have resided in that country, will bear pleasanter recollection than of Simla, Mussouri, and Nynee Tal. The Madras and Bombay Presidencies have also their hill stations, but it is doubtful whether any of these can vie with the above-named resorts for agreeable climate, pleasant society, general comfort, scenery, and above all, that great desideratum of sportsmen—game, and ease in reaching it. In this latter respect Mussouri easily bears the palm. Simla is more fashionable and gayer, has better houses and a grander club, but these are attractions which tend to make it much more expensive, and, consequently, not so great a favourite with the junior and less well paid of Her Majesty's servants. For a quiet, lovely, and very hospitable place, let me recommend Nynee Tal. It is difficult to imagine anything lovelier—in a quiet, unobtrusive way—than the hill-enclosed, lake-filled valley, on one edge of which stands the small native village and larger European settlement of Nynee Tal.

VIEW NEAR NYNEE TAL.

After the dreary journey through the plains, passing through the wild and notoriously unhealthy Teraï Jungle, and after a long, toilsome ascent of a very bad bridle-path, one quite suddenly catches a glimpse of the "promised land" within hailing distance. Debarred from a view of it by thickly jungled hills, and seemingly endless dark fir-woods, until within a few hundred yards of the village—one step more, as it were, discloses a small valley formed by high hills, at the foot of which lies a clear, dark, and evidently deep lake, on the very edge of which are a cluster of villas, a church steeple, and some native huts, backed, of course, by the overtopping dark woods. The goal is reached! Then, turning round, one sees the high, dark, fir-clad hills forming the valley, dotted here and there with peeping cottages and pretty white houses. It is a lovely scene. Filling up the whole valley, with the exception of the small spot of ground on which rests the village, is the lake, or Tal, of Nynee, "the white goddess." So completely, indeed, does the lake fill up what would otherwise be a deep and uneven valley, that some difficulty was experienced in making a practical roadway round the water's edge. As it is, one side of the lake only has a narrow road fit for pony-carriages, and even this, in many places, has been built on ground gained from the lake by precipitating in it rocks and earth cut away from the steep hill-side. On the other side there is only a narrow footpath, barely passable to clever ponies. The lake is in parts very deep; in the centre its depth has not yet been ascertained, although a line many hundred fathoms long has repeatedly been cast in it from a boat; and the superstitious natives, of course, declare that a large hole in the centre goes through to the other side of the earth!

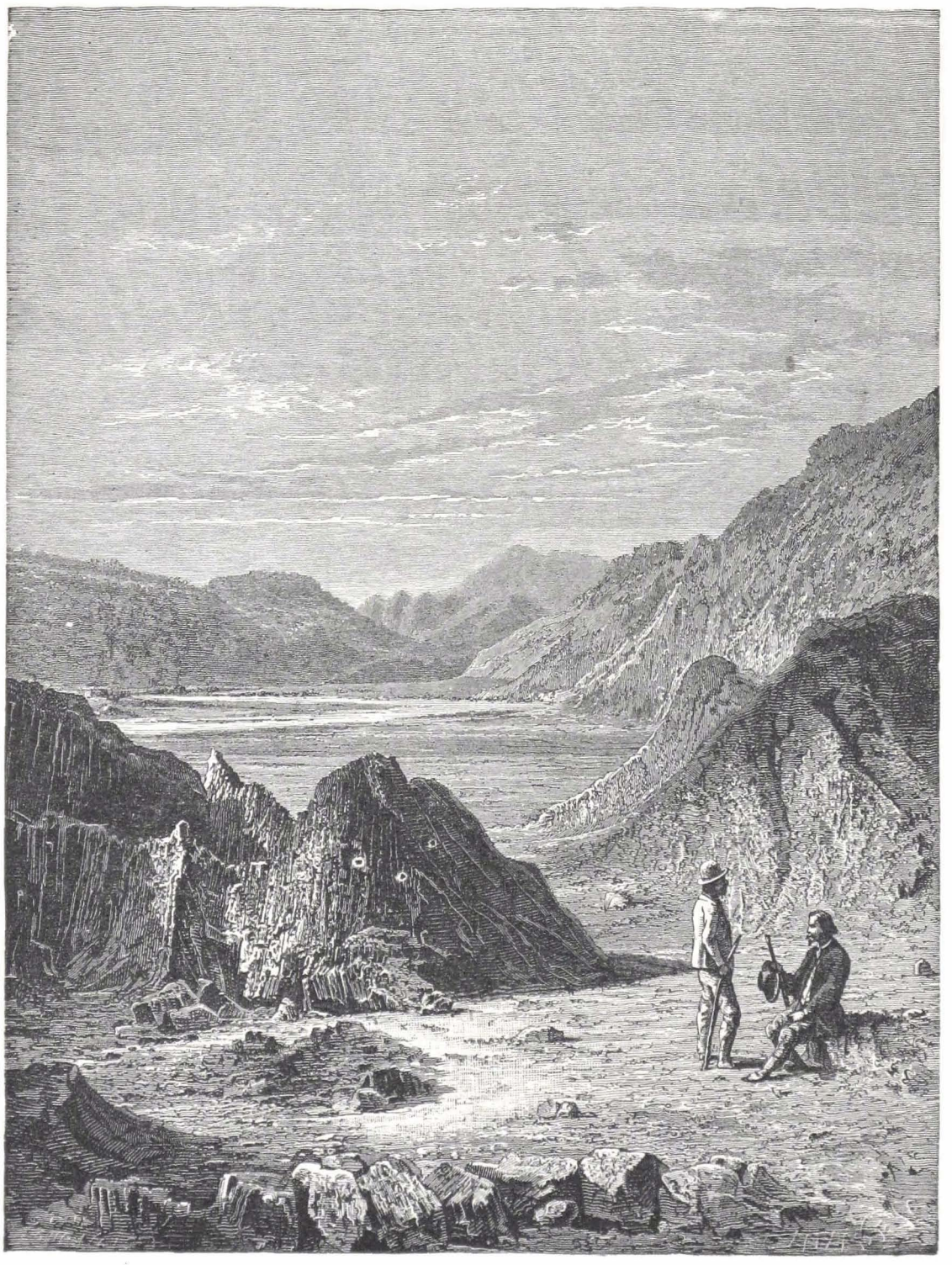
In not a few respects the Königsee near Salzburg strikingly reminds me of Nynee Tal, and I have heard others express the same opinion. The former lake, like the latter, is surrounded by steep hills, in many places thickly wooded, and round the whole circumference of both lakes, in one place only is there a flat surface available for building. At Nynee Tal this has been used for the European settlement; on the Königsee we see one or two small Bavarian inns, a few cottages, the inevitable carved wood shops, and the boats drawn up on the beach. The principal characteristics of each lake are its clear, deep water, and the dark frowning shadows cast into it by the steep mountain-sides, giving a certain air of mourning and dismalness to the scene. There is certainly great similarity in the two places; a person having seen the

OUR COOLIE PORTERS.

took with us. We had resolved to be as comfortable as it was possible to be under the circumstances; and our train of coolies and personal servants, like our quantity of stores, were altogether disproportionate to the campaign we intended to wage against bear, deer, chamois, and leopard. Genuine sportsmen would not dream of hampering their movements with more than one-half of the number of men who were to accompany us, nor more than one-third, or at the most one-half of the provisions, and would be quite content to live in a great measure on the poor produce of the country and the result of their sport, merely supplemented by the luxuries carried for them by coolies.

When I say that only two out of the six guns or rifles we had were breech-loaders, I think men in England will turn up their noses. But I am writing of nearly six years ago; and six years ago breech-loaders were not so plentiful in India as they were at that time in England. In fact, I should say that even at the present day there are more head of game knocked over with muzzle than with breech loaders in India by Englishmen. At all events, at that time, although no longer objects of curiosity, breech-loading smooth-bores and rifles were not so very common in India as to make our mixed armament appear antiquated, as it would certainly now in England. And if old-fashioned, our rifles were trusty and well-tried. One of them had been the means of breaking fourteen bottles running at 120 yards. I had a double-barrelled muzzle-loading rifle (Enfield bore); a single-barrelled muzzle-loading two-grooved rifle, carrying a conical ball weighing rather over two ounces; and a breech-loading fowling-piece (14-bore). My companion, two double-barrelled rifles of rather light bore, one of which was a breech and the other a muzzle loader; and a very old "Egg" gun, to which he attributed almost supernatural powers, and which he would certainly not have exchanged for the best breech-loader going.

Our shelter consisted of a small hill tent, measuring about seven feet by nine, to which was added a pâl tent, the roof of which was the same size as that of the hill tent, and which it was our custom to pitch close to, in fact touching the hill tent, and so making one largish tent of the two in fine weather, which of course was almost constant, and which we threw over the hill tent if it rained, as it did on several occasions, or if the wind was very high. The poles unscrewed each into three pieces, something like a fishing-rod. Three men could carry the tents, whilst another carried the unscrewed poles, the pegs, spare rope, and a small basket of charcoal.



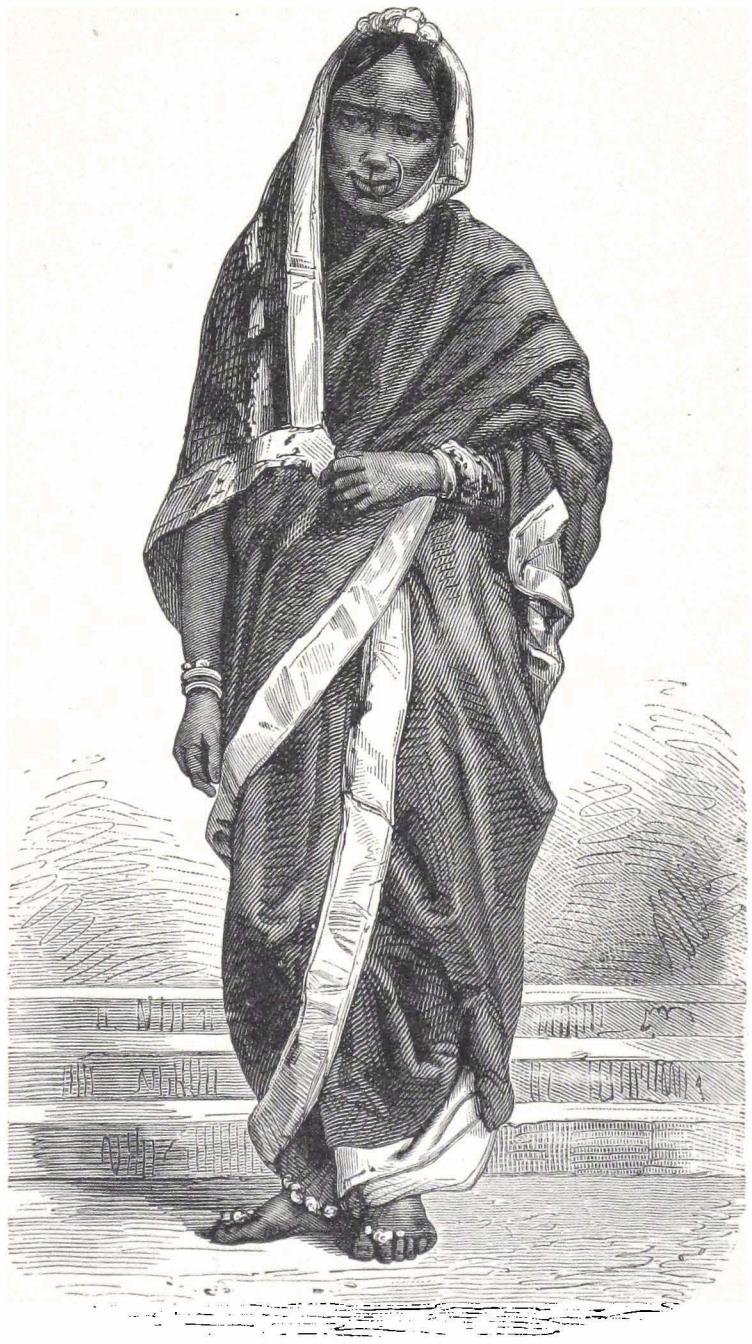
VIEW IN THE HIMALAYAS.

We started with twenty-six coolies, but before long got into the habit of taking one or two others from village to village. Besides the coolies we had seven servants, thus divided: a cook and his assistant, two "bearers" or valets, a water-carrier, a man originally a "chuprassie" or messenger, but whom I turned into a gun-cleaner, and a low caste native ready to do anything.

We had not collected the coolies ourselves, but entrusted the task to an old coolie, who made himself for the occasion a species of contractor. All the coolies' pay passed through his hands. He was not expected to carry anything, but undertook to superintend the others; and his pay, which was exactly the same as they received, was bail for their good behaviour. If any coolie ran away, or broke down, or fell sick, the contractor was bound by the agreement he entered into to find another from any village we passed through. He turned out to be an invaluable fellow. The pay of each coolie was four rupees, or eight shillings, a month. We gave each of them a coarse black wool blanket before starting, and promised half a

month's wages as bucksheesh at the end of the trip to every man we were satisfied with. Before starting, we allowed each man one rupee in advance for his family, but arranged that for the future they should all be kept one fortnight in arrear of pay. This was done to ensure their good behaviour, and to prevent any leaving without proper reason and permission. They all proved themselves capital men, bearing great fatigues without a murmur, always ready to do anything beyond their ordinary carrying work, and often showing great interest in our sports. Each man was bound to carry sixty pounds weight, besides his own provisions; but we allotted only fifty pounds per man, thereby ensuring longer marches, and, above all, quicker pace; as there is nothing so annoying as to have to wait a couple of hours, after a long day's work, before the men with the tea-things arrive, or the tent, if it is very cold. Some of them were small, ill-made, weakly-looking fellows, apparently unable to carry anything besides their own bodies; but to our great astonishment—or rather to mine—they walked as well as the rest. Naturally we picked out the best men for the most important loads, such as tea and the cooked provisions.

The Shikharee, Mounyah by name (let me recommend him strongly to any one passing that way), lived at a village three marches away, but accidentally heard that some Sahibs were preparing for a march in the interior, and came, loaded with "chits" or characters, to offer himself. He was a very short but wonderfully strong man, knit together like a gladiator, and as active and sure-footed as a chamois. His eye, too, was extraordinarily quick; not that it looked so ordinarily, but when looking for game it lit up wonderfully, as if his whole soul was bent on the thing he was doing, and influenced the organ. I have sometimes watched him; and when, walking carelessly along, he has suddenly seen either an animal in the thick jungle, or something unusual moving the branches or twigs, I have seen him stop as if struck, and his eye would then shine out like a huge brilliant. Many a time walking close to him in places where it was most unlikely to expect game, have I seen him thus stop, with both hands up to exact silence; then quietly point to some place in the jungle beneath or above us, and gradually become more excited if I failed to see the object or game he was pointing at. Literally he could pick out an animal's eye in the jungle twenty or thirty yards off, when there has been no other part of the animal visible, or, perhaps, not more than a few inches of its head. The eye of a deer watching you under such circumstances, if you come suddenly into sight, is very large and very bright with fear; but to pick it out of jungle, as Mounyah would do, to the right and left and in front of him, often seemed marvellous to me. I have far from a slow or bad sight, but still I must own that at times I was a long time seeing that one little spot among branches and leaves, and Mounyah's silent anxiety and almost painful suspense were very amusing. Then, if I missed my aim, he would beat his chest with both his open hands, and bewail *his* fate, and for some minutes really presented a piteous sight. That was his one great fault, of which I never succeeded in breaking him—he was unpleasantly demonstrative and overcome if you made a bad shot.



HINDOO WOMAN.

In addition to our own tents were a couple of very small ones, not unlike French *tentes d'abri*, for our servants. The two could be easily carried by one man as a supplement to a light load. We took no bedsteads, but that was a mistake; we used instead a large mackintosh thrown over clean straw, if it was to be procured, and over the mackintosh were four or five blankets. Light wooden bedsteads would be far preferable.

Firewood can be found almost anywhere, and in many villages the inhabitants have a winter store of fuel in the shape of large bricks, made of a mixture of cattle-dung and chopped straw, and which makes a fair substitute for wood in cooking, and improves even a large wood fire. Nevertheless, it is not a bad plan to lay in a stock of charcoal, say fifty or sixty pounds weight, or the load for one man. A little of it goes a long way, and is very useful where fuel is scarce or the wood damp. It is usual for coolies and servants in such expeditions to find all their provisions where food is procurable in the villages, but considering the scantiness of their pay, we determined to feed entirely our own servants, and to allow half-rations free to the coolies. Contrary to our expectation and to general experience, they proved themselves thankful for the boon, and said so when they left us.

Altogether we laid in at the start a six days' stock of flour for all hands, besides potted and preserved meats, rice, jams, potatoes, beer, brandy, tea, sugar, and dessicated milk for ourselves; also some candles and lanterns, a small table, two

camp-stools, and a few books, together with some wretched specimens of English cutlery and knick-knacks, as presents to hospitable and agreeable heads of villages, and as rewards for good information respecting the haunts of game.

Our armoury was under the special care of a servant I had brought up from the plains for the purpose, as being the best hand, whether European or native, at cleaning a gun I ever saw.

I have been thus particular in naming the stores we took, without going into details of amount, that readers may the better understand how completely we were leaving civilisation behind us after quitting Mussouri. Indeed, the very first march from that place separated us from our base of supplies, and for the next two months we were dependent on the stores we took with us, and a few scanty supplies, here and there, of eggs, honey, and flour in the villages. Indeed, once out of Mussouri we did not expect to meet, except by chance, a single European, and from the time we left civilisation to the time of our return to it, which was uncertain, we were to be separated from society, shops, and the barest necessaries of life.

Before the actual start we procured a *purwannah*, or general order from the commissioner of the district in which we were about to travel, to the head men of all villages in that district, to afford us aid and assistance, under terrible penalties in case of refusal or disobedience. Without this precaution, and in case of sickness among the coolies, or shortness of provisions, or other unforeseen accident, we might be in a difficult strait; but with this passport—for in many particulars it resembled our Foreign-office documents—we were certain of obtaining any aid that was procurable.

Every preparation being now made, the day for our start was decided on, and our first camping-ground settled. It was then arranged that the coolies should call for their closely-packed "kiltas" at five o'clock in the morning. The first march was to be a very short one, only four miles, so that it would be very easy to send back for such things as it might be looked upon as certain we had forgotten. It would have been more convenient for us to send the coolies and servants on to prepare breakfast for our arrival later in the morning, but on the first day we determined to watch over every arrangement with a "master's eye," and thereby provide for future emergencies. So the day was fixed, and all things being ready, on a cold and dark morning we started, full of expectation of much enjoyment and great sport. That we were not altogether disappointed, the next chapter will show.

A Doctor's Life among the North-American Indians.—I.

BY R. BROWN, PH.D., ETC.

I HAVE read in missionary journals, and in some others by no means missionary, that if a traveller wants to get along swimmingly with any savage people among whom he may be sojourning he should by all means possess a knowledge of medicine, and, by inference, be practising his medical skill on the unfortunate barbarians who are for the time being his neighbours. So often do I hear this that if there be any truth in what everybody—or nearly everybody—says, then this, among other plausible doctrines, must be received into the same category as Holy Writ. I don't want to be disagreeably sceptical about any such wholesome doctrines, only, unfortunately, my experience, so far as it goes, is rather in opposition to this. I don't for a moment doubt that a good knowledge of surgery may help a traveller. Surgery the most obtuse savage can see the effects of, and know that in this department he can do little or nothing. I will even allow that after one has been long resident among any body of people his knowledge of pure medicine may gain him their confidence. But at first he had better keep clear of all amateur doctoring, especially if there happen to be a native medical faculty. And this there almost invariably is, whether under the name of obi-men, medicine-men, or sleight-of-hand necromancers generally. A savage views the newcomer with all the dogged, sullen suspicion of an ignorant people living to and by themselves. His medical knowledge is looked upon with equal scepticism, and even contempt. Accordingly, when a savage is sick he will apply to the recognised medicine-man, or sorcerer, of his tribe or village, to cure him by the incantations and foolery which time-honoured tradition has hallowed in his eyes. If he ever applies to the pale-faced traveller, it will only be when he is just at his last gasp, and has lost belief in his own medicine-man; the chances then are that he will die in spite of the best physicians in Europe. Now it is that the cunning medicine-man—whose professional jealousy has been roused—will work on the credulous suspicious minds of the natives, and as he has the infinite advantage over you in knowing the language and the modes of thought of his countrymen, the chances are that he will do you mischief. Here's the way he reasons:—"The patient was on a fair way to recover, he had caught the little devil that caused the sickness; once he had slipped through his fingers, but he would have been sure to have caught him the second time, and either burnt or drowned him, when this ignorant fellow, whom nobody knows anything about, and may be, for all we know, anxious to introduce small-pox or other terrible white men's disease into our people, interferes, and you see the result." The argument is not very convincing to the reader, but it is decidedly so to the relatives of the dead man who is lying in that savage village; and it is just about that time that the unfortunate philanthropist wishes that he had never known anything about purgative pills, or the virtue of any drug whatever. If he only gets kicked out of the village, or sent on his way with anything but blessings on his head, he may think himself remarkably well out of the scrape. I very nearly came to a much worse fate.

I was very young when I first set out on my travels, and endowed with very much more philanthropy towards my savage brother than I happen to possess just now. I had not only been instructed in the principles of medicine, but had received a regular medical education, so that I could not be called a mere dabbler in physic. I was, of course, continually told that

edifices which bear evident traces of Roman workmanship. We know that in this part of Syria, as elsewhere, Islam signalised its triumph by converting the straight street into a crooked lane, and by erecting formless hovels, not only upon but with the ruins of Roman splendour. On the fall of the Eastern Empire, the towns of the Arabian province must necessarily have undergone, only in a somewhat less degree, the same transformation which befell more famous cities, such as Damascus and Constantinople. We read of no general massacre or emigration following upon the Saracenic conquest, and the numerous mosques prove of themselves that the land did not suffer any sudden depopulation. In default of any more direct evidence, the natural inference to be drawn from these facts would be, that while some of the ruder buildings may have been the homes of the poor in Roman times, a large portion of them were erected under the Mohammedan empire. All doubt as to the correctness of such a conclusion is, however, removed by the fact, that a close inspection of any number of these stone cottages leads to the frequent discovery of fragments of classical inscriptions and ornament built up into their internal walls. Mr. Porter admits that every house which contains such fragments must have been "rebuilt or repaired" by Mohammedans; he is persuaded, however, that they executed their repairs after "an old plan." This plan he supposes to have been supplied by the Rephaim, to whom he accordingly attributes any building which does not contain internal evidence to the contrary of the most palpable kind. Thus, by his candour in admitting that there are no essential differences between the work of Amoritish and Saracenic architects, he finds himself forced to maintain that the latter people—ignoring, with a facility only equalled by his own, all intervening times—copied with Chinese accuracy the architecture of a race which had perished two thousand years previously.

We have now seen, on Mr. Porter's own showing, that houses containing every peculiarity which he considers characteristic of primeval times and a gigantic race, have been built by Romans and Saracens. We are, therefore, in a position rightly to estimate the importance to be attached to such peculiarities, as proofs of an architectural theory which no architect has as yet been found publicly to credit or support.

There is still one place of refuge in which the firm believers in the existence of pre-Israelitish architecture in the Hauran have lately shown a disposition to seek shelter. We allude to the possible line of retreat, of which a hint has already been thrown out, in the suggestion that, whatever else is Roman, there are still "subterranean chambers easily overlooked by a superficial observer" which are certainly "primeval." If Mr. Porter adopts this new position, we shall be happy to be able at last heartily to agree with him. We have no disposition to deny the possible existence of some cotemporary record of the king Moses overthrew in Bashan—probably some of the materials, possibly some of the foundations, made use of by later builders, were originally collected or put together by men of an Amoritish race. Whether this is the case or not is, however, wholly beside the point at issue. Up to the present time Mr. Porter has always claimed to have discovered not the cellars but the cities of the Rephaim. If he now feels disposed to limit his claim for primeval antiquity to certain underground caves or substructures, he must perforce give up all arguments founded on gigantic gateways and colossal doors, and look out for evidence of an entirely new character. By admitting that traces of pre-Israelitish handiwork may yet be brought to light in the Hauran, we in no way weaken the force of our assertion that Mr. Porter has as yet altogether failed to indicate them. Etruscan remains undoubtedly exist in Italy, but we should not on that account believe an author (if one could be found) who assured us that the houses of Pompeii were Etruscan. In conclusion, the more we have examined, both at home and on the spot, the details of this question, the clearer has become our conviction that it is only a mistaken enthusiasm for the illustration of the Bible which has for a time been allowed to obscure the truth. Those who continue to assert the stone houses of the Hauran to have been built by the Rephaim have, we are convinced, no better grounds for their statement than the Arab who points out a ruined aqueduct in the same country as "Pharaoh's Bridge."

The vague belief with which Mr. Porter starts, that these buildings may be of any age "from Ham to Mohammed," proves, when put to the test, to be founded on an utter disregard of all architectural evidence; the positive conclusion at which he so soon arrives, that they are as old as Moses, can only be accounted for as the result of the strong impulse (evident elsewhere in his writings) which induced him to force every incident or discovery of travel into an illustration of some Scripture text.

Writers on Syria would do well always to bear in mind the wise caution of Dean Stanley: "Those who visit or describe the scenes of sacred history expressly for the sake of finding confirmation of Scripture, are often tempted to mislead themselves and others by involuntary exaggeration or invention." Attempts, however well-intentioned, to provide buttresses for the Bible by means of mythical discoveries, such as that which has been now discussed, cannot fail to injure the cause they are intended to serve, and to discredit the progress of real research.

Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—II.

BY G. BESTE.

THE determination to make the first march a short one was prudent in some respects: it allowed us to procure many a little luxury, and even necessary, which in the hurry of departure had been overlooked. But it was also attended with some drawbacks. For instance, our friends, in their complimentary zeal to see as much as possible of us, declared their intention of coming out in force to take luncheon with us. And this, in fact, they did, with such hearty appetites, and with so many toasts to the success and pleasure of the expedition, that all our stores, especially the liquids, suffered such a serious diminution that we sent in half-a-dozen coolies and the head *Khitmutghar* to lay in a fresh stock. It was, in reality, a capital

pic-nic. Rather a one-sided affair, as our friends omitted to provide themselves with anything but good wishes, but it was a merry afternoon; and when the whole party, ladies and gentlemen, turned their backs on us, with much waving of handkerchiefs and shouting, we felt very much as soldiers do who are embarking for foreign service, or as emigrants leaving harbour, with the last glance of friends on the pier-head. The expedition we had marked out for ourselves included a march over a range of hills considerably higher than their neighbours, and which ran parallel to and separated the rivers Jumna and Ganges, to a sporting-ground on the banks of the former river, celebrated for the number of bears in the neighbourhood. We then intended recrossing the same chain of hills, for the purpose of striking the Bahgeeruttee or Ganges, and following up the course of that river to its source at Gungoutri—a very holy spot to which thousands of pilgrims go yearly, both to wash away a lifehood of sin, and also to carry away tiny bottles full of the holy river taken at its source, and which they would sell again to sinners in the plains, either too old, or too lazy, or too much occupied with the things of this life to have leisure for such a pilgrimage. I have often thought that were such pilgrimages the fashion in more civilised regions, the traffickers in holy water there would not give themselves the trouble of a month's hard toil to obtain water at a particular spot, but would very soon fall into the habit of procuring it at the first convenient place, and then label and stamp it, and cover it with a multitude of "genuine" seals and signatures, and sell it at a very remunerative rate, without troubling their conscience in the least with thoughts of fraud or deceit. It speaks well for these wretched and ignorant men that, although they will cheat their neighbour and friend in almost any dealings, and over bargains the most trifling or the most important, when dealing with this holy water from Gungoutri, they will not even think of deceit, but pluckily carry their heavy load day after day, through cold and weariness and hunger, when it would be perfectly easy for them to fill their tiny bottles anywhere, with no chance of detection. On our way we passed several strings of these men, and were not sorry to have it in our power to assist some with a timely dose of quinine or brandy.

We calculated that our trip to Gungoutri would occupy six weeks at least, and formed no plans for the return journey, but agreed to be influenced by the success we might have on the way there. During the first four or five marches we did not anticipate much sport; not anything, indeed, beyond a stray shot at a kakur, or barking deer, or a few pheasants and jungle fowl. And, in point of fact, we were right, for the first week we met scarcely anything. The country had been too effectually shot over by residents of Mussouri, and also by natives, whose proximity to a station gave them facilities for obtaining any old rusty gun thrown aside as useless by a European.

Our practice was to get up early, and after a bath and rapid toilet, to eat breakfast, which had been prepared by our very early-rising servants. The morning was generally passed in rifle-shooting at a mark, or sketching, or a ramble to explore some cavern or torrent. Sometimes we tried ground which looked likely to contain a few jungle fowl or pheasants; and my friend, who was an enthusiastic botanist, was wont to improve his collection of Hill plants and flowers. In the afternoon, after early lunch, we started for the next march, generally arriving at the camping-ground just before dusk, or rather dark, for there was no twilight. Our servants and coolies had preceded us, and our first sight of the camp usually was a huge fire just in front of our tent door. The bracing air and good walk always prepared us for a hearty meal, after which we sat and smoked round the fire, forming plans for the next day. About a hundred yards off there were always about a dozen smaller fires, and round each small fire a knot of two, or three, or four men, also looking after their supper. There was no such thing as a general mess for the servants; differences of caste precluded any such arrangement. Altogether, our camps in the evening—with the large fires, and just sufficient cold to make us enjoy the blaze; with the cheery grog and soothing pipe; with the dogs stretched out in front of us; and the beautiful star-lit nights; and the Great Bear reminding us of home—were as pleasant and cheery as it is possible for anything to be. I am writing now of our first days, when the sport was almost nil and the work light; for later on we were as a rule pretty well fagged out at the end of the day's work, and generally made the sitting a short one. But before I pass to those days, and to an account of our real sport, I think it proper to state something about the country in which we were travelling, and, above all, to give a brief description of the inhabitants. Like intelligent travellers, who make it a point to study beforehand the peculiarities, the history, and the topography of the scenes they are about to visit, we shall quickly glance at the manners and customs of the Hill tribes of Bawur, of Jounsar, and Ghurwal.

If the reader will look at a map of the North-west Provinces of India, showing a part of the Himalayan range, he will perceive that, roughly speaking, the Dhoon forms the base of an irregular triangle, of which the other two sides are the river Jumna to the north-west, and the river Ganges, here called Bahgeeruttee, to the south-east. Before going any further, I will briefly remark, as an example of the sacredness with which that celebrated river is looked upon by the natives, that when the Great Ganges Canal was being built in the north-west of India, the natives used to laugh at the engineers superintending its construction, and say that it was labour lost, for when the proper time came to divert the waters of the Ganges into the canal at Hurdwar, they would find that the sacred river refused to be turned to serve the ends of impious and unbelieving Feringhees, and would calmly continue to flow in its old bed, contemptuously disregardful of sluices and gates. The contrary fact, however, came about of course; and there is little doubt but that the success of the undertaking—especially as the point of junction of the river and canal was Hurdwar, the most sacred spot in all India in Hindoo eyes—was one of the first important steps which helped to break down the native veneration for caste. The railway, with its consequent close herding together in one compartment of different castes, which hitherto refused to amalgamate in any way, is another step in that direction, but the successful opening of the Ganges Canal was the first important one. To return to the Hills: the country included within the triangle I have just described was the scene of our adventures in bear shooting, and it is with it we have more particularly to do now. In many respects, it is the most interesting part of the entire Himalayan range. This applies more particularly to the population, which possesses curious characteristics not seen in any other part of it, and in few other portions of the globe.

As to the architecture—if that term applies to buildings scarcely better than Irish hovels—it differs little from that seen in any other part of the Himalayas. The vegetation varies, of

course, more with the altitude reached than it does with the latitude or longitude, and the crops met with in the hilly parts of Cashmere, to the north, vary little from those growing in the region towering over Assam, in the south. But the inhabitants certainly are peculiar, or, at least, are endowed with peculiar notions. In appearance they are *chétif*, of short stature and poor physique. At thirty a Hill man is wrinkled and looks worn, and at forty years of age he is an old, grey-haired, and used-up man; whilst the women, though often pretty when young—that is, up to sixteen or seventeen—and with a complexion, in youth, not darker than many a Spaniard or Italian, rapidly become hideous hags. With increasing years their light shade turns to deeper and darker tints, and they end by becoming, if it be possible, even more repulsive and dirty than their sisters of the plains. The usual dress of the men consists of a sort of tunic of dark and coarse woollen stuff, reaching nearly to their knees, and a very short pair of trousers of the same material. Over the shoulders and back is generally thrown a thick shawl or coarse blanket, the whole costume being kept in its place by long skewers of wood, instead of buttons. The richer folk use brass or even silver skewers (they cannot be termed pins), and that constitutes almost the only difference between the dress of the extremely poor and the comparatively wealthy. They spin the yarn of which these garments are made during the long summer days, whilst watching their flocks; and in the winter, with rude loom and shuttle, weave it into blankets. As covering for the head they have a small skull-cap, made of bright chintz, but which very shortly assumes a dark and greasy hue. The women are regular bundles, especially in the morning, until the sun has dissipated the mists rising from the valley. Until noon it would be difficult to analyse the component parts of a Hill woman's dress: it appears to consist of a series of blankets, very inartistically adjusted over the whole body, until they present a ball-like and sacky appearance—comfortable, perhaps, but not becoming. Later in the day, when the outer covering has been cast off, it is possible to see that, like the remainder of the female population of the globe, they indulge in petticoats—very scanty ones, though, and quite innocent of crinoline or panier. The younger ones have a calico cloth over the head and shoulders; the grandmothers and old ladies allow their scanty grey locks to float untrammelled in the breeze. Like the females of the plains, they wear bracelets and leglets welded on their limbs; also ear and nose rings. All ornaments are, as a rule, made of polished brass, and the quantity worn is considerably less than is the fashion in lower altitudes, as becomes the comparative poverty of Hill people.

OLD PEASANT OF KUMAON.

The time has now come for me to tell a little story, founded on fact, I believe, and the tradition of which is well preserved in those districts of which I am writing. Once upon a time, many generations ago, when the Hill tribes were both richer and more important than they are in these days, and when real kings and princes held real courts in places long since gone to ruin, or destroyed by the Ghoorka invader—once upon a time there dwelt in the Jounsar district a popular king, who gave a great archery entertainment, to which he drew competitors from far and near by promise of an unusually magnificent prize to the archer who should prove himself the best shot of all the competitors. To this meeting went five brothers, all princes, who on starting agreed to share equally the great prize, if either of them should be so lucky as to win it. They were all good bowmen and true, and felt tolerably confident of carrying away the great prize—the nature of which, by the way, it is well to mention, the king had not stated. The eldest of the princes (their family name was Pandava) was successful, and to him the king presented, as the greatest prize he could offer, his daughter Draupadi, who was no doubt astonished to learn that, according to the terms agreed on, she was the property of all the brothers, and, consequently, a wife with five husbands. The five brothers and their one wife lived for many years at their castle of Bairath, only a few marches distant from Mussouri; and the site of which is pointed out to the present day, though not one stone remains to mark the spot, so completely was it destroyed by the Ghoorkas, in one of their periodic invasions.

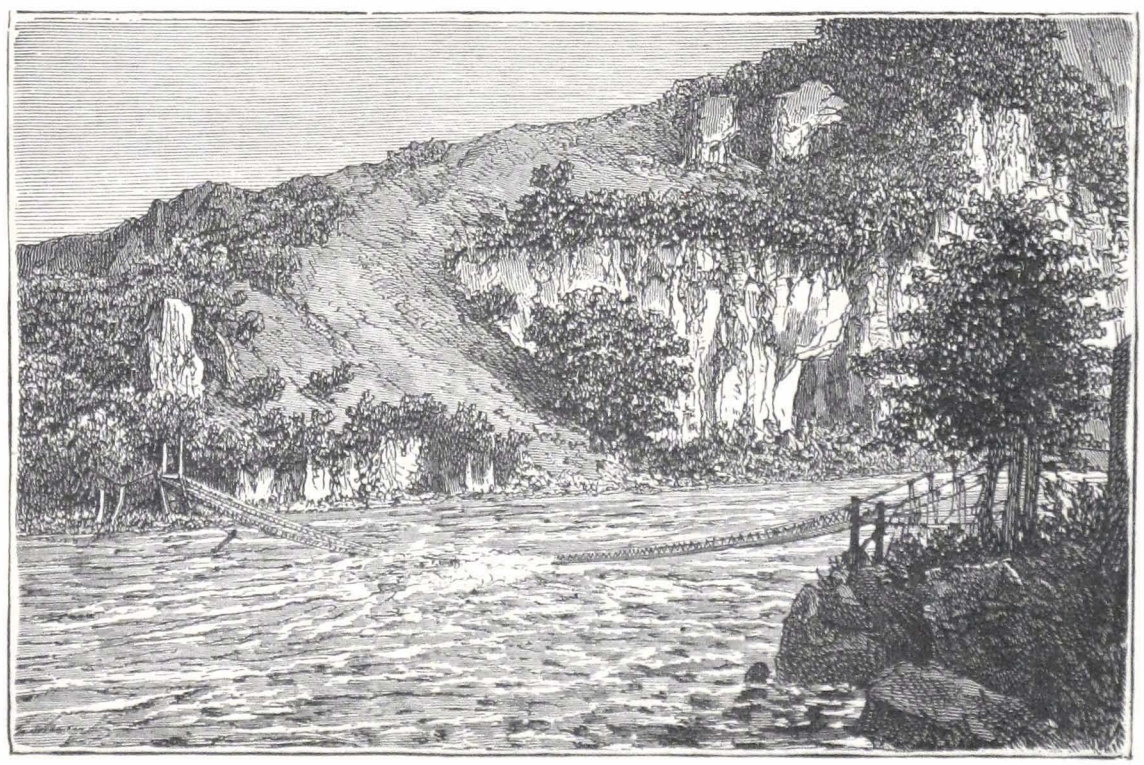
This story, according to tradition, is the first mention made in that part of the world of the custom of polyandry, which now prevails there; for it seems that the courtiers of those days, very much like their compeers of present times,

considered imitation the truest form of flattery, and immediately followed the example set them by the five brothers. And the custom has grown and flourished, and exists in the districts we are writing of even now. Such, at all events, is the story told one on the spot.

Polyandry, or marriages in which one wife is permitted to have several husbands—being the exact antipodes of polygamy—exists among several tribes living on the banks of the Upper Jumna and Upper Ganges. But it appears to be a strictly local institution, for in the adjoining provinces of Ghurwal and Kumaon not only does it not exist, but its reverse, polygamy, is the order of the day.

What is no less remarkable is, that Nature seems to adapt herself to this unnatural state of things after it has existed in any district for a few generations; for in the polyandrical districts of Bawur and Jounsar, without recourse to infanticide, as far as we could learn, the number of male children was greatly in excess of that of female children—the proportion, in fact, suiting itself to the peculiar needs of society in those parts; whilst it is well known that in Kumaon, and other places in which polygamy prevails, female children greatly predominate over male. And although it is well known that infanticide is, or was, a common crime in the plains of India, I have reason to believe it is not practised in any part of the Hills, or, if at all, only in very isolated cases. Through our servants we made minute inquiry on the spot, having had our attention drawn to the curious state of things before we started; and the result of our researches was to convince us that the proportion between males and females, curiously adapted to the prevailing custom, was due to natural causes only.

GIRL OF NORTHERN INDIA.



BRIDGE IN GHURWAL.

In the districts where polyandry is the rule, when the eldest brother marries, the woman becomes the wife of all the other brothers also; but the children are by courtesy and *de jure* called the children of the eldest, or of that brother who contracted the marriage, if it happen not to be the eldest. And in families of brothers where there exists a considerable difference between the ages of the eldest and youngest, the woman becomes the wife of as many of the brothers as are of a marriageable age. For instance, in a family of six brothers the three eldest may be of age to marry before the three junior brothers have reached the age of puberty. In this case the woman is the wife of the three eldest; but when one of the younger brothers marries, his wife becomes the wife of the eldest brothers also—in fact, the two women are equally the wives of the six brothers, the children being nominally the children of the two contractors. This is a subject which might furnish material for a large volume of philosophical inquiry, and as such I recommend it to the notice of Mr. Hepworth Dixon, who might write a companion history to that remarkable book, "Spiritual Wives."

As might be expected, though the men have all the title of husbands, they are in reality servants; the custom, curiously enough, occasioning the only example in the East of woman's supremacy, or even equality. Strange to say, there is no quarrelling or disagreement in such families. My bearer, a Mohammedan, was most severe in his strictures on this custom, as he naturally tended to quite another order of ideas; but though I made him learn all he could concerning it, he did not even hint at disagreement or jealousy among the spouses.

The greater number of Hill villages belong to the Rajpoot caste. There are some pure Brahmins, and many others who call themselves so, but who, through intermarriages with other castes, have really lost their distinctive character of religious aristocracy. Even the pure Brahmins of the Hills, and the next to this exclusive class, the Rajpoots, are much less puritanical than their brethren of the plains. In fact, both these castes do not hesitate to keep and handle poultry, which is an abomination in the eyes of even low caste Hindoos in India. Those men who can neither lay claim to the Rajpoot nor to the Brahmin caste are called Halees, or Dôms, and are, in reality, the serfs of the two upper castes. Our Government does not recognise the footing on which the Dôms are really held—slavery. In law-suits, or in any cases brought for decision in our Indian courts, their claim to equality is invariably allowed; but, notwithstanding, their real position is bondage and serfdom. It is supposed they are the descendants of prisoners taken in wars and raids many generations before we occupied the country, and they are probably descended from tribes inhabiting other parts of the range.

Besides the Brahmins, the Rajpoots, and their servants, the Dôms, there is a distinctive class, from which springs all the artificers and artisans of the Hills, such as the blacksmiths, carpenters, &c., and also a caste called Bazghee, entirely devoted to the menial services in the temples, and to the profession of itinerant musicians, singers, and dancers. Both males and females of this class are nominally impressed to the service of the temples, and as accessories in other religious ceremonies; but, in fact, the men gain a livelihood by singing and playing, and the women are nothing less than the concubines of the fat, lazy, insolent fakhirs, who wander from pilgrimage to pilgrimage, naked and dirty, and generally covered with yellow mud.

In the days of John Company, a false notion of religious tolerance caused the directors to make annual grants to the temples. These grants—of land, not of money—were always sublet by the priesthood to other Hill proprietors, as their servants, the Bazghees, knew nothing of agriculture, and the money thus obtained was always applied to meet the expenses of the female portion of the Bazghee caste, which, as I have before said, were the mistresses of the lazy, licentious fakhirs; so that the East India Company indirectly supported a worse form of the social evil than any existing in Europe. This evil has been stopped of late years, and the priests have to find elsewhere the funds with which to keep up their temples and to clothe their dancing women.

In the Hills more than in any other place, and especially with reference to the villages, does the saying that "distance lends enchantment to the view" hold good. At any distance from a mile to a quarter of a mile a Hill village looks picturesque enough. Generally built on the slope of a hill, or on its summit, the situation tends to improve the general appearance; but as one comes near, all the senses, and the eyes and nose in particular, revolt against the favourable opinion formed when farther away. The upper parts of the villages are always inhabited by the wealthier members of the community, and their houses are generally built of rough stone, and roofed with large rough slabs of slate, kept in position by stones. Outside they present a tolerably decent appearance, being whitewashed, but the yard and the approach to the door is always filthy to an extreme.

In these houses the dwellers usually give up the ground floor to the domestic animals—to the cattle, and swine, and poultry, if any is kept—and they themselves inhabit the upper storey, which is reached either by a succession of rude stones let into the wall, or by a very crazy and worm-eaten staircase. In entering the cabin, or cottage, or hut, one is generally struck by perceiving at each corner of the lower division a large hive; for, instead of building separate dwellings for their bees, as is usual everywhere else, the inhabitants of the Hills prefer to give up a part of their own shelter. The houses built lower down, and peopled by the poorer classes, are filthy beyond description. The single street running down the village, and the yards or the approaches to the houses, are never swept. It is needless to say sewers are unknown, and precautions usually observed by the most primitive people in every other quarter of the globe, are quite ignored here. Nothing but the exceptionally pure air and healthy climate of the Hills prevents a constant epidemic reigning in these filthy localities. In no village in the Hills have I seen a house in which a European would care to pass the night.

With the exception of occasional visitations of the small-pox, at very rare intervals, the natives of the hills immediately north of Mussouri appear to be almost free of the ills flesh is generally heir to. Ague, and a form of intermittent fever, and rheumatism are the only complaints they suffer from. Mild cholera, also, sometimes visits them, but never, so far as I could learn, with the severity seen lower down. But all sportsmen who intend shooting in those districts should be well provided with quinine and brandy, in which split pepper-pods have been steeped. Every European who shows himself is sure to be besieged at every village by applicants for the celebrated "white powder;" and men suffering from diarrhœa or cramp of the stomach will be brought out to undergo the healing art of the Belatee Sahib. For these cramps, to which Hill natives seem very liable, I found nothing so good as a very small dose—say forty or fifty drops—of this pepper-brandy, in an equal quantity of water. It had always a magical effect.

None of the villagers we spoke to could remember that the *maha-murree*, or great plague, had visited any part of the hills in which we travelled, though all had heard of the frightful devastation it caused in Kumaon in 1852. Medical men now assert that the *maha-murree* is exactly similar in all symptoms, and in its diagnosis, to the black plague of Egypt. Like the plague which raged in former generations on the banks of the Nile, the *maha-murree's* appearance was always announced, wherever it showed itself, by the sudden and unaccountable death of domestic animals—cats, and dogs, and rats especially, falling in great numbers a few days or a week before the inhabitants were struck with it. The European medical men appointed by Government to take measures to check its spread in 1852, when it broke out so virulently in some parts of the Hills, vainly used their drugs in attempting to cure people who were already smitten with the disease. The most they could do was to prevent its spread among the adjoining populations, by the rigid enforcement of a few sanatory measures. This, however, was prevention only. No cure for the plague was found until some officers travelling in the Hills tried their hand at stopping the ravages it was committing among their own coolies, by means of wet sheets and cold water packing. Their hydropathic system answered admirably. Since that

time the cold water cure has invariably been applied to natives attacked by *maha-murree*, and it has almost invariably proved successful, being, I think, the only authenticated case in which hydropathy actually effected a cure of anything more than a fancied or imaginary illness.

A few words more about the general appearance and topography of the country, and I shall pass on to our own doings in it. Though the main chain of the Himalayas is nearly 30,000 feet high, or over five miles above the level of the sea, there is indubitable proof that in the past ages it must have been below its surface. The general formation is granite, it is true, but stratified rocks, in which layers of marine fossils are found, are common enough. At the height of 15,000 feet above the present sea-level, plenty of specimens of sea-shells and marine fossils have been found, clearly proving the statement just made. How infinite, then, must have been the subterraneous power by means of which such a mass was raised to such a height!

Down in the valleys corn and other grain is readily grown; peas, beans, and other vegetables, and pumpkins, are raised in abundance. The inhabitants turn their attention to the production of honey, the innumerable mountain flowers which embellish favoured valleys furnishing abundant food for bees. In some of the more sheltered spots, sugar-cane of an inferior quality is grown, more as a winter stock of food for cattle than for the purpose of extracting sugar. Often enough did we see in the villages, when passing through them, all the old crones sitting together in a sunny corner, each one with a bundle of sugar-cane by her side, cutting up each stick into pieces three inches long, to be garnered and stored for the cattle's use in winter months, when pasture was no longer obtainable. It appeared to us the principal occupation of these old ladies consisted in cutting up sugar-canes, and making bricks out of a certain unsavoury mess I have already mentioned. When the traveller leaves the valleys and ascends to greater elevations, first the sugar-canes, then the corn, then the vegetables disappear, until he gradually reaches an altitude where cultivation is not attempted, but where excellent pasture is found in the summer months.

At this height, *i.e.*, from 8,000 to 9,000 feet, according to the aspect of the hill-sides, snow remains on the ground for at least six months of the year, and the flocks are sent down to the valleys, only two or three cows being retained in each village for the sake of their milk.

I have so often spoken of villages that the reader may fancy the Hills are thickly populated, and that wherever the traveller stands he will have three or four hamlets in sight. But the fact is that to meet more than one village in a day's march, or even in two or three days' march (unless one makes it a point to follow a road expressly leading from village to village), is the exception rather than the rule. It would be difficult to state, even approximatively, the number of inhabitants in these districts to each square mile; the best notion I can give the reader of the numbers of the population is to say that, as a rule, villages lie at the distance of one day's march from each other, except in the lower valleys near Mussouri, where one may go through three or four small hamlets in the course of a single day; and that a village of a thousand inhabitants is there considered a very large one. The population of each village varies from 300 to 600 inhabitants generally. As one nears the perpetual snows, of course, habitations become rarer.

There are no roads; in many places no distinct footpath, the track generally consisting of trodden grass, or merely marked by the larger stones being pushed aside. It is almost impossible to walk in any given direction for a whole day without coming to a precipice, or some place along which it is necessary to pass, and which would surely make the flesh creep or unsteady the nerves of a dweller in the plains. The landscape is most varied; though hill succeeds hill, and valley follows valley, there is no approach to monotony—the changes are so abrupt, and often so totally unlike anything one expected. The traveller tops a hill, and expects to find a descent similar to the ascent he has just accomplished—perhaps smooth grass, dotted with pines—on the contrary, he finds his course suddenly arrested by a wild precipice, or yawning chasm, or foaming torrent. Instead of the onward course he expected, he must, perhaps, make a three hours' circuit to clear the obstacle, and instead of being six miles further on to the top of a certain pine-clad hill he has marked, he may not be 100 yards in advance, in a direct line, from the place whence he began the indirect course.

Smooth, round, flowery hills are succeeded by rocky ascents, covered with huge boulders, and split in two, perhaps, by a roaring, rushing torrent, or gaping abyss. Jungle succeeds grass, and pine-trees follow rhododendrons; broad valleys, watered by calm and barely moving streams, and backed by a precipice on one side and a gentle grassy slope on the other, are entered through a deep and dark overhanging chasm, through which rushes a leaping torrent—the very picture of destruction and force. The traveller never knows what scenery an hour's walk may lead him to, and in truth may say he knows not what a dozen steps may bring forth.

The Climbing Palm-tree.

TRAVELLERS, in describing the forests of tropical countries, always speak of the peculiar appearance imparted to them by the profuse growth of woody climbers, which hang from the branches, spring from bough to bough, or bind tree to tree with their strings of living cordage. In English colonies and possessions, these vegetable growths are known by the name of bush-ropes; the French term them *lianes;* the Spaniards, *lianas;* and the Portuguese of Brazil, *sipós.* It is probable that in no part of the world are these productions so numerous and varied as in the humid forests of Eastern Tropical America. Three features may be said to distinguish these regions of woodland from those of Europe—the sprinkling of palms amid the masses of forest trees, the great diversity of species of trees, and the climbing and parasitic plants. The strangeness of the

implicated in the murder of a colonist, named Taillard, at Houagap, to which I shall again have occasion to refer, and was put into prison. Three times he broke his chains and escaped, and three times he was re-captured. At last he was sent on board the advice-boat, *Fulton*, on which I happened to be at the time, to be conveyed to Nouméa. Poor fellow! he was worn to a mere skeleton, and in the efforts he had made during his confinement to break the iron manacles which fastened his hands and feet, he had cut and torn his flesh to the bone, and in these open wounds mortification had already set in.

"He recognised me at once, and I went up to speak to him, and asked him what I could do for him. 'Give me some tobacco for myself and my companion,' was his reply. I hastened to comply with his request, and also took care that he should be provided with better food than as a prisoner he would naturally have had given him. But the surgeon on board said to me, 'Your old chief will not last long.' And he was right, for he died a few days after we reached Kanala.

"His guilt had not been proved, and he had been arrested merely on suspicion. The man inspired me with such interest that subsequently I made particular inquiries into the affair, the result of which proved that he was innocent of the charge which had been brought against him, and owed his arrest to the hatred of one of his own countrymen, named Aïlé, the petty chief of a tribe formerly at war with him. This man, who cherished a spirit of revenge against him on account of past defeats, had pointed him out to the French at Houagap as one of the accomplices in the murder of Taillard. I spoke to Aïlé myself about my poor old friend Onine, and he said, 'Onine bad man; long time he kill father, after that eat him.' Whether this was true or not I had no means of knowing. The part Aïlé had played was not such as to make me put any confidence in his word, and my sympathy for his victim remained unchanged."

Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—III.

BY G. BESTE.

We met with absolutely no sport for a week; our attention was turned rather to making good headway at first than to shooting or specimen-gathering. The season was already far advanced, and we had no time for dawdling if the intention of reaching Gungoutri was to be persevered in; consequently for the first week we simply got over as much ground as possible. In the afternoon, after the day's march, we were far too tired to care for additional exertion; and the chance of bagging a jungle-fowl or partridge was far too remote in the country we were traversing to tempt from their comfortable fireside seats the two weary and footsore pilgrims.

Our first two or three marches had been too severe—we had wilfully neglected the golden rule, especially so applicable to travellers in hilly country, of walking only three hours the first day, four the next, and daily increasing the length of the march by one hour, until reaching the maximum. Consequently, our complete want of training made itself painfully apparent on the third morning from the start, that is, after the first genuine day's march (the first day being a mere picnic promenade), and for the following days we had to struggle on, stiff and sore, until broken-in to the unusual exercise.

Of larger game, the district we were passing through was completely denuded. In the early mornings, before the march, the prospect of a six or seven hours' steady up-and-down-hill tramp before we could reach the next bivouac, was sufficient to cool any enthusiasm; besides, there is nothing so depressing to a sportsman as starting with the almost perfect certainty of not obtaining a single shot. So long as there is the remotest hope that he may obtain a fair bag, a sportsman is buoyed up against much disappointment, and even against his own bad shooting; but as hour after hour and mile after mile are left behind, and he sees neither fur nor feather, something akin to disgust changes his hope into despair. So we troubled neither the beast of the fields nor the winged denizens of the woods, and our rifles lay idle in their waterproof covers.

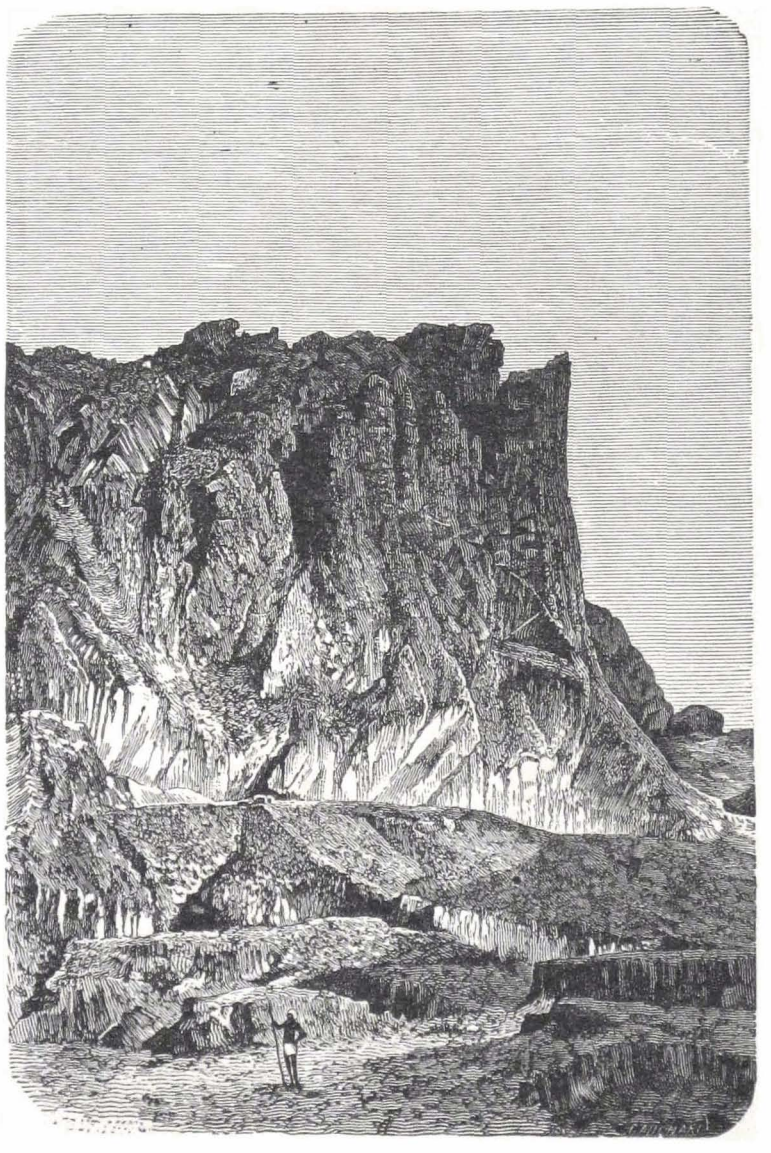
It was on the sixth morning's march from Mussouri, I think, as we were laughing out loud at the mishap of one of the coolies, that a kakur, or barking deer, suddenly crossed the path, not thirty yards in front of us, and disappeared in the jungle. It was the first deer or four-footed wild animal we had seen since the start. The coolie, whose mishap had spoilt the slight chance we might otherwise have had of knocking the deer over with a chance shot, had been trying to reach a bees' nest, resting in the crevice of a rock, overhanging a steep grass slope; but the heavy *kilta* the man was carrying made him awkward, and the result was a slip, a slide, and bumping roll down the declivity, until stopped by some low trees and jungle. He was pulled up again with the assistance of some other coolies—a very lucky escape, as the place at which he fell was almost the only one in the whole day's march where the precipice on the edge of which ran our path was not a sheer and perpendicular descent, varying from fifty to two hundred yards. When we engaged Mounyah, at Mussouri, he had promised we should kill a bear within eight days. As day after day passed by, and we neither saw an animal of the sort nor met with recent traces of their passage, our faith in him grew less. When a week had gone by, and a single pheasant, with a few small birds shot for stuffing, were the only entries in our game book and diary—the stock of fresh meat, too, was becoming low; for reasons innumerable, a bear's ham would have been a welcome addition to the *chuppattie* and egg-laden breakfast table—we had given up expecting to see the realisation of Mounyah's promise, and but for a certain air of confidence ever present on his face, and the merry twinkle of his eye when questioned on the subject, we should have been disposed either to "make

tracks" in an opposite direction, or supersede him by a local *shikaree*. On the eighth evening, counting from the start, and after a very long march, whilst we were sitting outside the tent before a roaring log fire, each of us on the opposite side of a camp table bearing our rough tea-set and a box of cigars, both of us being rather inclined to grumble and wish ourselves in the comfortable quarters we had so lately left, Mounyah, contrary to his usual custom, walked up, and, with a great air of mystery, asked permission to take away the rifles, so that he might see they were in a proper condition. At the same time, he said it would be well to remain in the same quarters for a day or two, and that on the morrow he hoped to show us the promised bears. This roused us up at once. I, much more than Smith, had begun to doubt the man; yet, if his account for the morrow turned out true, he would only be one day behindhand. Later on the same evening we learnt that he had paid a visit to the village near which we were encamped, and had obtained valuable *cubber*, or information, respecting the haunts of some bears who infested the district and created much alarm, besides doing some mischief in the neighbourhood. Mounyah was well aware we were in the vicinity of good bear country; in fact, he had come to this particular place on information received on the second day's march, but he had never shot over it, and therefore engaged a couple of villagers to lead the way. Our encampment was within a mile of the Jumna, near a small village about ten miles distant from Motlee, itself a larger village on the left bank of the Jumna. For the past three days we had been steadily ascending, following in some measure the course of the Jumna, in a valley which ran parallel to the river, but separated from it by a moderately high chain of mountains. On this, the eighth day, we had reached the head of the valley, and, after some pretty severe climbing, had reached a small table-land, or, to speak more correctly, a plain, half table-land, half valley. On one side, that looking towards the river, was a very steep, almost perpendicular precipice; on another the valley sloped gradually away in a series of terraces leading to the long valley whose course we had followed for the past day or two; whilst on the two sides opposite there were some gently sloping hills, very thickly wooded, in parts with pine only, in others with pine and brushwood, and rhododendrons in full bloom—as will be imagined, a very pretty picture. So that in one direction the flat ground on which we were encamped, and which altogether measured about one hundred acres in extent, was bounded by uprising hills, and in the opposite direction the plain itself towered above the surrounding country. It was among the brushwood and in some rocky ravines intersecting the hills that Bruin made his quarters.

The following plan for the morrow had been prepared by Mounyah without consulting us, but as it was evident he was most anxious we should have as good sport as the country afforded, no exception was made to his arrangements, although my friend—who, by the way, I may as well call Smith—a veteran at the sport, considered them faulty. Himalayan bears never charge *up*-hill, but, if wounded or otherwise exasperated, they are not altogether disinclined to charge any one posted on a lower level than themselves. The coolies knew this well, and, as we afterwards learnt, the coolies we had engaged from the village especially declined to run the risk of an encounter with Bruin, and stoutly stood out for the plan of campaign which should give them the vantage-ground. Personally, neither Smith nor I objected. We were quite confident in our resources for summarily stopping the most resolute bear's charge. But the objection to the plan was that if the ground about to be beaten contained seven or eight bears, we might consider ourselves lucky to get each three shots at some of them as they came rambling and rolling downhill in their awkward but far from dilatory fashion. Whereas, if they were driven uphill towards us, we should have ample time to fire, and load and fire again at the same bear, if necessary, besides sparing a shot or two for Mrs. Bruin and the cubs, or grandpapa Bruin and the uncles, if the family extended so far. A bear labouring uphill is a very different animal to one charging down. In the former case he is as awkward and slow and stupid an animal as you may wish to fire at—the goutiest and most aldermanic of old gentlemen would have time to get out of his way if necessary, or to keep up a regular file-firing as he approached; but *down*-hill it is quite another animal you have to deal with; then Bruin is still awkward, certainly, but uncommonly nimble and quick, notwithstanding his awkwardness. Another habit of bears is to go out late in the evening to seek for what they may devour. They return to their haunts very early in the morning, generally at the first streak of dawn, and remain there during the rest of the day, sleeping steadily through the hot part of the twenty-four hours.

Our bivouac fire was not allowed to go out; at two a.m. we were roused, and found hot coffee and *chupatties* ready for us. I remember the morning well—a very raw and bleak one—nor have I forgotten the half-dozen scrambling searches, in the half light cast by the fitful flames, for the forgotten powder-flask and missing cartridge-belt. Then, at the last moment, my select store of rifle-shells were, of course, nowhere to be found. So while Smith sat coolly smoking, his preparations having all been made over-night, both I and Mounyah, and also half the servants, were busy upsetting every article and searching every corner for the necessary ammunition. Fifteen minutes of valuable time were thus lost, but lost on that occasion only, for the experience gained then stood me in good stead during the remainder of the trip. A start was at last effected; the two villagers leading, Smith in their wake, I in his footsteps, and Mounyah, with three men carrying the guns, bringing up the rear. It was intensely cold; the night was at its darkest. The path was abominable—covered with sharp flints more irregular than a German verb, and strewn with jagged boulders. How I cursed those holes and inequalities! I am rather blinder than the blindest at night, and stumbled first over a stone, then into a hole; one moment I was down on both knees, and next, in getting up with a struggle, I would run full tilt against a huge rock in the middle of the so-called road. In very truth, no man ever before trod such a path. I wished myself miles from it. Involuntarily, I weighed the advantages of another three hours under the blankets against the trials of this breakneck path. Matters became still worse when we left the open plain, and we had to force our way through thick brushwood and briary jungle, regardless of thorns and stinging cuts from twigs, in addition to shins broken against angular stones, and ankles sprained in two-foot holes. Now I cannot help laughing as I remember the feeling of utter woe and martyrdom with which I followed the placid Smith on that never-to-be-forgotten occasion. Whether from habit, luck, or skill, he never made a false step, but, with seeming ease, held on

the even tenor of his way. Nothing but pride kept me up at first; afterwards I was driven forward by the knowledge that it would be as difficult to retrace my steps as to go on, and the cold precluded all thoughts of stopping for daylight. Added to the evils I have named was yet another. Notwithstanding all the precautions I had taken before starting, I felt some leeches crawling under my stockings, and I knew that if I felt one or two there were probably as many dozen. It was some consolation to learn that Smith, the imperturbable, was attacked in the same way. I do not think I have mentioned that in the Himalayas every person walking in the early morning and evening, and even during the day in sheltered places not reached by the sun, is liable to be attacked by leeches, who, notwithstanding every possible precaution taken against them, manage by some means or other to find their way to the pedestrian's legs and ankles, the latter particularly, as the tenderest parts are sought out with peculiar exactness. The time of the year in which leeches appear in greatest numbers is on the first appearance and during the fall of the rain, though they are to be met with in lesser numbers in almost every month of the year, with the exception of the three winter months. It is quite impossible to guard one's legs altogether from this novel plague. No matter how careful one may be, some few leeches are sure to wander up his trousers, down his socks and stockings, and gorge themselves to repletion long before their presence is even suspected. Their bite is scarcely perceptible, but the irritation caused by it afterwards, when the small wound begins to heal, is very troublesome. They also have a strange fancy for fixing themselves into the nostrils of both horses and dogs, causing a tickling which forces the wretched animal to rub his nose constantly against the manger in the former case, with his paw in the latter. When a leech has effected a lodgment in the nostril of either animal, it is impossible for either dog or horse to get rid of the intruder; neither is it an easy matter for a master to rid his animals of their presence. In a very few days loss of blood strangely reduces the horse or dog in whose nostril one or more leeches have entered. The master wonders what occasions such a falling off, and may not find out the cause for weeks. The method followed for getting rid of them is rather cruel to either dog or horse, but is the only successful one. After the afflicted animal has been kept away from water for at least twenty-four hours, the master, armed with a pair of tweezers or pincers, stands close by at the moment that a pail of water is offered to the animal. The leech is certain to make its appearance at the sight of the water; then is the moment to pull it off, notwithstanding the dog's howl of pain, caused by the leech sticking to the tenderest part of his nose.



HAUNT OF THE BLACK BEAR.

There was an end to our abominable walk at last. After an hour's progress we reached a ravine, down the irregular sides of which we scrambled with as little noise as possible. Smith, one of the villagers, and Mounyah crossed over a very narrow and shallow streamlet, a mere thread of water; whilst I, with the remaining guide and my gun-bearers, posted myself at what appeared to be the foot of a gigantic rock. In his anxiety to reach the ground in good time, Mounyah had caused us to start more than half-an-hour too soon. So, shivering, miserable, bruised, and lame, I stood uttering curses not loud but deep, and wishing myself anywhere else. In India there is no twilight or dawn, the first streak of light is the signal and advanced guard of a full blaze. With the first light, therefore, our position stood revealed before me. We were looking straight down a narrow ravine, both sides of which for 300 yards were very precipitous in every spot but one. It was at that place we had scrambled down. What in the darkness I had taken for a gigantic rock was merely the straight side of the ravine, arranged in sharp ledges, on which grew a few stunted bushes. Just behind me there was a large opening in the bank, apparently going in to some distance—in fact, a cavern. A small stream ran down the centre of the ravine, not unlike the gutter which occupies the centre instead of the side of a street in badly-built towns. At 160 or 180 yards before and behind us the ravine took a sharp turn right and left, so that it was impossible whilst standing there to form an opinion of its features higher up or down.

Standing at the foot of the opposite side of the ravine, close to a large gaping cleft in the rock (the opposite side was almost all rock), was Smith and his followers. We were not more than sixty yards apart. It seems the bears were expected from one direction only—from the direction we were facing, of course. To shield me from observation there was a convenient mound projecting beyond the side of the precipice, and on it grew a stunted bush, just affording sufficient shelter for three or four men. Smith, on the other hand, stood half in and half out of the cleft in the rock above mentioned, and was further protected by some brushwood hastily gathered together. I am

rather particular in this description of the ground, in order that what follows may be properly appreciated and understood. I must further add that the ground we stood on and all the bottom of the ravine, as far as we could see it, was tolerably level. The general appearance of the ravine was not unlike a very deep railway cutting, with this exception, that the two sides of the ravine were much deeper than any railway cutting, and that whilst it is possible with some exertion to climb a steep railway embankment, the nimblest climber would have failed to scale the sides of the ravine in any place but the one difficult spot by which we descended; on Smith's side, in fact, the precipice slightly overhung. It was impossible for me to judge of Smith's feelings: he appeared as calm and unconcerned as ever. Daylight brought me some comfort — I had also brought a little with me in my pocket—so that, although very cold, and with many doubts whether I should be able to pull the trigger, I felt easier and more reconciled to the position than I was half an hour before daylight appeared. At that time it would have needed little inducement to have made me forswear shooting for ever. With daylight something of the old enthusiasm and the excitement of anticipation returned. The scene is as vivid before me at this moment as it was half an hour after its enactment. I was looking up the ravine, that is behind me, when I felt a hand quickly put on my shoulder, and, turning round, I saw the village guide, with his eyes half out of their sockets, and drawing back his body behind the shelter, but craning forward so as to see something in front. Of course I looked too, at the same time noiselessly cocking my rifle. A large bear had just turned the corner, and was coming up the ravine, with his head and nose close to the ground. At short intervals he rubbed his nose with his paw, as he very slowly and leisurely rolled forward. He had scarcely turned the corner on my side of the small rivulet, when first another came in sight, also on the same side, and then a small cub on the other side. The bear which first came in sight was a very large one. I at once determined to reserve my first shot for him, and also not to fire until he was within twenty paces, if he would come so near; but that I feared he would not do. All three were coming steadily towards us—the two full-grown ones and the cub—but they had scarcely advanced sixty yards from the spot on which we first saw them, when round the opposite corner came first another cub, and then another full-grown bear—the mother; so there we were, confronting three full-grown bears, in a place impossible to escape from should the necessity arise. Fortunately they gave us no time for thought, otherwise the excitement of waiting might have spoilt my aim. Nothing could do that for Smith. When the two foremost bears had arrived at that part of the precipice down which we had made our way, they both grunted, threw their heads about, and showed unmistakable signs of uneasiness. It was evident they either smelt us at that distance, perhaps forty yards, or they picked up the scent at the spot we had passed. It was an exciting moment. The guide, who had first seen them, made urgent signs to me to fire at once. This I was reluctant to do; until the animals actually turned tail, I knew there was a chance they might come nearer. Besides, they were both directly "end on" to me; whereas I wanted a shot at, or rather behind, the shoulder. I had no time to see what Smith was doing, he had quite passed from my memory and attention; but I afterwards learnt that he was the whole time holding up his hand as a signal not to fire. He feared that, in my inexperience at large game, I might dislike to let so good an opportunity pass, and fire at once without waiting for a better one. Meanwhile the bears were behaving in a most extraordinary manner. At any other time it would have been highly amusing. Almost directly after the first grunt or signal of alarm, the mamma Bruin's only care seemed to be to get the cubs as near herself as possible. They, on the contrary, saw no occasion for this; one, however, she managed to get behind her, and her attention was partly given to keep it back and to draw the more advanced cub's attention to the "rocks ahead." The two bears on my side (I think I have said that the mother and cubs were on Smith's side of the ravine, and consequently his proper shots) neither advanced nor retired for some moments; they stood close to each other, one swaying from side to side, and occasionally poking with his nose the other bear in the shoulder and ribs, as if to awaken him to a sense of their position; whilst the other looked up and down, sniffed on all sides, grunted and showed the most marked signs of uneasiness. However, the

PEASANT WOMAN OF NORTHERN INDIA.

situation could not last for ever. I was thinking of firing at the first good opportunity, that is, as soon as the largest bear exposed his flank fairly and openly, when, grunting more than ever, and with signs of still greater uneasiness, both the bears on my side slowly advanced. I don't know whether the reader has understood that the cavern behind me and the fissure in the rock near Smith's position were simply the abodes of the bears, and that they were returning home after a night passed in foraging and prowling. In this fashion they advanced perhaps ten or twelve yards nearer, and then their disquietude became so extreme that it was apparent another moment would see them beating a retreat. I decided to fire. At that moment the big one turned his flank towards me as he looked up the side of the ravine. I aimed just behind his shoulder and pulled the trigger. Immediately after firing, without pausing an instant to ascertain the effect of my shot, and as soon as I could cover the other bear, I fired again, so that there was only an interval of two or three seconds between the two reports—Smith's rifle ringing clear almost immediately after the first shot.

Then ensued the most ludicrous scene I ever witnessed. At all times I think a bear is an uncouth, strange, ridiculous animal, whose every movement is mirth-stirring; but on this occasion this was especially the case. Both my shots had told, the big bear being very badly hit; but yet both were able to stagger up and make a movement to the rear, and in doing so they attacked each other with the utmost fury that their desperate condition would allow. I had heard of such scenes before (I have witnessed them since), and I knew at once each bear thought his sufferings and wounds were due to his comrade. How they accounted for the noise I don't know; and it seems they had sufficient instinct to move in a direction opposite to the place whence came the noise, attacking each other as they moved in a furious manner, and intermingling their grunts with shriller sounds. As soon as I saw the state of affairs, instead of taking the ready-loaded single rifle from the bearer's hands, I immediately loaded the double-barrelled rifle I had just used, putting in two shells similar to the two I had just fired. Then, without moving from the spot, and resting my rifle on the projecting mound, I fired again at the hinder bear, the smaller one, and then issued from my hiding-place and loaded as I went. In another second I had an opportunity of putting a shell into the big bear—right through, or rather right into the head, where the spinal column joins the lower part of the head at the back. He fell dead on the spot. The small bear was sprawling on the ground; I did not waste another shell on him, but, calling for the single rifle, I put a two-ounce bullet into his head, *à bout portant*. This seemed to revive him for a moment, and I was glad enough to snatch the double-barrel, in which there was still one charge. However, Bruin only staggered for a couple of steps, and Smith, coming up at the moment, dealt him his *coup de grace* with a hunting-knife.

Smith, on his side, had killed the she-bear and one cub; the other got off scot free. Not a bad ten minutes' work—three full-grown bears, one of them a very large one (Mounyah declared it was the largest he had ever seen). But the last animal killed, if it be anything approaching full size, is always called the largest animal seen or shot during the season. However, I was highly pleased. No more thoughts of bruises or falls occupied my attention; I would there and then willingly have gone through the same disagreeable preface for another such successful end.

Mounyah was simply extravagant in his manifestations of delight. He had promised us one bear on the eighth day; here were no less than three on the ninth—we did not count the cub. It was well worth waiting twenty-four hours for such a reward as this. On examination of the bodies I was astonished to find how very small were the apertures made by the shells; I expected something much more destructive in appearance than the small hole no larger than an ordinary bullet-wound which both bears showed in flank and head. When they were skinned, however, we saw how effective a shell can be. The lead had opened out and spread, presenting a very jagged, flat surface, larger than the palm of a large hand; small pieces of lead had also broken loose from the principal piece and taken directions of their own, away from the main wound. Altogether, the effect was very terrific, and quite accounted for the animal's sudden death; for a bear is most tenacious of life, and will take six or seven, or even ten bullets, and then get away on ground favourable for escape.

But there was no time to waste; the latter part of our programme had to be carried out. This was a *hankwa*, or beat; and as the coolies, ignorant of our good fortune, would not delay, it behoved us to be at our stations in readiness for their advance. So, hastily dragging the four carcases to one side, placing a few branches and twigs over them, we at once ascended the steep ravine side, and walked in good spirits towards our stations. I was anxious to explore both the cavern and the cleft in the rock, to learn something of Bruin's domestic arrangements, but there was no time for it; I therefore made a mental note to return in the afternoon or next day. I am sorry to say I never did so.

The remainder of our day's sport needs no lengthened description. The morning's work was exceptionally good; we could not expect such good fortune throughout the day. Perhaps, elated with our unexpected success, we were not so careful as the occasion demanded. On leaving the camp, Mounyah's intention of waiting for the bears' homeward return was considered a mere accessory to the day's sport; but now that our expectations had been so far exceeded, the *hankwa* was considered the accessory.

The scene of the early morning's encounter was the extreme right of the low-lying wood-covered hills which, I have said, bounded the plain on two sides. Whilst we were marching to it, our own coolies, aided by a dozen or more villagers, were walking in an opposite direction, so as to gain the summit of the hills to the extreme left, at a place where the two largest hills enclosed a small valley, which ended in a few small ravines, or the beds of disused mountain torrents. It would be difficult in a small space to give an exact idea of the *terrain*. The advantages that it possessed for us were that it needed very few men to beat it effectually, and that, driven as it was about to be driven, any animals lying in it at the time would be forced in our direction towards a place where the valley gradually narrowed, so that the coolies, commencing the *hank* at the top of the hills, where they were posted, as it were, on the outer edge of a gigantic fan, would drive the game towards us as we anxiously waited for it at the narrow part or handle of the fan—with what success my readers will learn in the next chapter.

Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—IV.

BY G. BESTE.

It will be remembered that the last chapter ended with a description of the positions ourselves and our beaters had taken up previous to commencing the *hankwa*. There were altogether about three dozen beaters at the start, but as the experience I had gained in the plains warned me that number might wonderfully dwindle down before the work was over, I put into practice a plan I had often followed before, and gave each strange coolie a gun-wad of a particular colour before starting,—or, rather, on this occasion, as the start was to be at such an early hour, I gave the head man over-night a number of wads equal to the number of men from his village he proposed bringing into the field. Lazy coolies have a custom of appearing at the start, and again at the end of the day's shooting, when the pay is being distributed. It is even common in the plains for strange men, who have beaten neither bush nor briar, to join in towards the end of the day, when they think the beloved *pica* are about to be distributed. To thwart these gentry, I established a system which I put into practice on this occasion, though it turned out there was no need for the precaution, Hill men apparently being more honest than the villagers of the Oudh plains. I therefore gave the head man a wad for every villager who had promised to accompany him, and, of course, one for himself. At the end of the first *hank*, when all the coolies were around us, I asked every man to produce his wad, and to every one so showing it I gave a gun-cap. Later in the day, at a similar opportunity, I gave every possessor of a wad and cap a wad of a different colour, and at the end of the day's work only those coolies who could show the two wads and the gun-cap were entitled to the regular pay—two annas, or threepence. The first occasion on which I tried this plan in the plains, I merely distributed a gun-wad to every man who appeared at the end of the first beat; I gave none at the start, and I paid every man who at the end of the day could produce his wad. But I then found that many of the wads had been split in two, and also that many of the men who had received their wad after the first beat would disappear during the following ones, turning-up, however, with clock-like regularity as the sun went down and pay-time came. All sorts of dodges are resorted to by Plain coolies to shirk their work. They will muster in force at the start, and again in the evening, but during the heat of the day many and many a time have I failed to muster more than a quarter of the number who would present themselves for payment. The plan of distributing wads or other articles not likely to be among the ordinary possessions of villagers occurred to me; and when I found myself baffled by their ingenuity in splitting the wads, so that one would do duty for two or three men, I adopted the method of distributing at irregular intervals some other articles, such as gun-caps, steel pens, or revolver bullets, and only paid the men who could produce every article so distributed as a voucher for his presence at every roll-call. Many a time it saved me a rupee or two, which would otherwise have been given to idle vagabonds who had passed the day sucking their *hubble-bubbles*, and inwardly grinning at the thought of "doing" the *sahib*. On pig-sticking days, especially when three or four hundred men are employed, this form of insurance against idlers is invaluable. A friend of mine, of course an Irishman, greatly admired the plan, and on one occasion, when he had come out without wads or caps, as he was using a breech-loader, he distributed instead a *pice* to every man at the start, and later in the day a *cowrie*. Naturally, at the end of the day even the poorest villagers in the district came with their *pice* and *cowries* as vouchers, and my friend was sorely aggravated when he found a crowd five times larger in the evening than had started with him in the morning. He could not repudiate his own arrangement, and paid five or six rupees more than his beaters were entitled to at the wildest computation. This is a long digression, but not altogether uninteresting, as showing in its truest colours the character of the natives of India. I am not sorry to be able to say that on this particular occasion, as on many subsequent ones, the Hill men proved themselves quite honest; no one shirked his work, and I afterwards discontinued my distributions, trusting entirely to their honesty and love of sport.

It had been settled that the *hank* should begin at seven o'clock punctually; the distances were too great to allow of intercommunication between ourselves and the beaters, so ample time was given them wherein to compass the six or seven miles' circuit to their places, and to form line. It was necessary we should be in our own stations a few minutes before that hour; and, as we had a good two miles' walk to reach them, we stepped out briskly, as soon as the bears had been carefully placed in a safe spot, and well sheltered from observation. I hinted above that our luck did not last throughout the day. There is no need to relate in detail the result of each drive. Smith shot a goorul. I did not even have a shot; but the beaters saw two bears, which broke through the line at the commencement of the first *hank*. We made a note of the circumstance, to try for them next day.

Towards noon there seemed to be so little large game afoot that we determined to give up that sport, and have some partridge-shooting in cultivated fields near the village. My notes do not state the exact numbers we killed, but I remember the birds were very plentiful, and though we shot badly, we bagged between us from fifteen to twenty brace of black partridge. There are several kinds of partridges in the Himalayas, the principal being the black partridge, a most beautiful bird. Its breast is quite black, the wings dark-red, marked with light grey and white, with the game-mottle on its back. It is a larger bird than our English partridge, and bears some resemblance to the blackcock. Its flesh is most delicious eating—gamy, yet delicate. It is seldom met with in the plains. The natives imitate its call very exactly, by passing a knotted horsehair through a small puncture in a piece of parchment, tightly stretched over a brass thimble with both ends open, or stretched over a large and thick ring. Besides this partridge, there are the *chickor*, the *peura*, and the snow partridge. The grey partridge is not often met in the Hills at any altitude over 4,000 feet above sea-level. The chikor is very like the French red-legged partridge, and, like it, it is a great runner. Of the other game-birds, such as the jungle-

fowl, and the *moonal*, *koklass*, *kaleej*, *cheer*, *hunyal*, and Argus or *loongee* pheasants, I propose writing in the next chapter.

Smith was fortunate in getting a goorul in so easy a spot, for, like the Swiss chamois, of which it is the Himalayan counterpart, it is seldom found in such places. It loves to skip about the steepest and most inaccessible hills; and to follow them to their dizzy abodes is a fair test of a sportsman's nerves and head. They are very like small grey-goats; they skip about with the utmost facility and unconcern in the most dangerously situated places imaginable, and if pursued in such a manner that their retreat is cut off, they throw themselves without hesitation from enormous heights. Their flesh is gamy and tender, if kept a little while. Neither their skin nor their two short horns are so pretty as that of most mountain deer, and they are not so valued in consequence; but the man who can follow and shoot them may be considered a first-rate walker and expert rifleman.

It is needless to say we gave the head man his promised quinine, but he begged very hard for a few charges of powder in addition. This request we felt forced to refuse, on principle, though the principle might be a selfish one. The extraordinary diminution of the quantity of game in the Himalayas of late years has often been remarked by men who shot in the Hills fifteen or even twelve years ago. This diminution is much more due to the increased facility with which the natives obtain arms and powder, than to the periodical visit of English officers and civil service men; for the former take unfair advantages repudiated by the latter, such as tracking animals in the snow, and also poaching the whole year round, utterly regardless of seasons. It is true Englishmen do follow certain animals by their footprints in snow, and when shooting in the regions of perpetual snow this becomes an absolute necessity; but in the lower valleys Englishmen do not pursue game in the season of falling or fallen snow.

Natives are utterly remorseless in their pursuit of game. Their extraordinary patience, good powers of climbing, and numerous tricks and stratagems, such as the employment of calls, nets, traps, and gins of many kinds, would enable them, if better armed, to exterminate the game in a very few years. The only thing which at all keeps up the equality of the contest is the worthless nature of the guns and ammunition used by natives. To destroy this equality is not to the interest of Englishmen; their vast sporting-ground would soon feel the fruits of their mistaken generosity. Selfish and "dog-in-the-mangerish" as it may seem, therefore, it is best for Himalayan sportsmen not to supply natives with ammunition except in extreme cases, where a little powder is the only thing (valued far more than money) which will tempt native *shikarees* to point out the haunts of game. Above all, no sportsman should be induced, at the end of a successful trip, to present a *shikaree* with whom he is pleased, with any old, worn-out, or despised gun or rifle. English guns, however bad, are so infinitely superior to those in common use with Hill natives, that many such presents would greatly tend to spoil the donor's own sport on a future occasion. The maxim I preach may sound very selfish, but it is a generally acknowledged one in India.

For persons in England who wish to obtain without toil or trouble complete sets of the Himalayan game-birds, the best plan to follow is to order them from Mr. Wilson, the well-known "Mountaineer" of Indian sporting literature. By ordering the birds (stuffed) through Messrs. H. G. Scott, of Mussouri, who are Mr. Wilson's agents, all trouble is saved, and they will arrive in due course. By ordering the birds in this manner, without taking the vulgar trouble to shoot them, the purchaser enjoys the credit of considerable sporting experience, without being put to the trouble of earning it; like those "parlour" mountaineers whose sole and only glimpse of the Matterhorn or Monte Rosa is that gained by a careful study of their ready-stamped alpenstocks, purchased at Zurich or Berne. Mr. Wilson, who has now lived in the Himalayas over twenty years, at an altitude of 13,000 feet above the sea-level, and seven or eight marches away from any European habitation but his own, first came out to India as a trooper in a regiment of dragoons. He was sent to Landour on sick leave, and there acquired such an inclination for a sportsman's life that when subsequently discharged from his regiment, in Yorkshire, he worked his passage out to Calcutta, and from thence walked to Mussouri. He then marched into the interior of the great range, and finally settled down near the sources of the Ganges and Jumna. The Rajah of Teree subsequently gave Mr. Wilson some land near Gungoutri; he built a house for him, and has always treated him in a friendly manner, and very hospitably.

Since his first arrival in the Himalayas, Mr. Wilson's days have been devoted to shooting and trapping birds and wild animals, in which occupation he has acquired an Indian reputation; and to any one contemplating a tour in that part of the Himalayan range no advice could be so valuable as that given by "Mountaineer." He can be communicated with in the manner indicated above; and any one writing on the subject of Mr. Wilson's hobby, sport, is certain of receiving a full and valuable reply. We did not see his house, though at one of our halts we were only one long or two short marches from it. Our servants—that is, the Hill coolies and *shikarees*—spoke in the highest terms of the *belatee sahib's* ingenuity, of the good he had done to the villagers near him, and the pains he had taken to improve the path leading from Mussouri to Gungoutri. What a strange life is his! but, as he is generally reported to have accumulated a handsome independence by the sale of bird and animal skins, and by barter with the natives of Thibet, it must be supposed that he prefers it to any other. No doubt, what would be oppressing monotony and retirement to others is only agreeable quiet and calm to him. Certainly, the life he leads would only be possible to a man perfectly adapted to it, and there are probably not more than half a dozen Englishmen in twenty-five millions who would willingly follow his example. The monks at the convent on Mount St. Bernard are gay and fashionable men of the world, in comparison with Mr. Wilson. There are twelve or fifteen of them together, so that the interchange of thought is possible, and they can also go down to the plains among their own people; besides, they enjoy the privilege of a bi-weekly post, even in the depths of winter, whilst in summer there is a constant flow and change of visitors at the convent. But Mr. Wilson seldom sees a European from one year's end to the other, except the members of his own family; and instead of being surrounded by snow for three months of the year only, as at St. Bernard, Mr. Wilson has it about nine months out of every twelve. Certainly, it is a strange life!

The method followed by the natives to trap game in winter is as follows:—In November, when the snow begins to fall, pheasants and other game are driven southward from the higher ranges; the natives, therefore, in anticipation of this

yearly migration, have prepared long hedges—to which they add every year, so that some of them are seven, eight, and nine miles long, extending across valleys, and from spur to spur of mountain ranges—just sufficiently high to tempt the game which is on the move to pass through small openings purposely left at intervals in the hedges, instead of taking the trouble of flying or jumping over. Of course, at each of these gaps there are nooses, placed in such a manner that an animal passing through the gap will probably entangle himself firmly in it. The nooses are securely fastened to bent branches or saplings, so that the struggles of the ensnared animal will set free a trigger which previously retained the sapling in a bent position, and the trigger once set free, the sapling to which the noose is fastened will dart back to an erect position, or as nearly erect as the weight of the animal will allow. Of course, the thickness of the noose-string and the strength of the sapling or branch are proportioned to each other, and also to the size of the gap in which they are set. Thus, a small hole, which will admit the passage of nothing larger than a pheasant or small kakur deer, requires only a small and light tackle, but a larger gap, through which a fine stag might pass, is set with a stout cord; and if no sapling or strong branch is sufficiently near, a spring stake can be driven into the ground. There is no need that the animal should strangle itself to death, the purpose being only to arrest its farther flight, so that it may be dealt with at the trapper's convenience. And it is extraordinary how slight a tackle will arrest even a large deer; for, instead of exerting its strength all in one direction, a deer turns and twists in fifty different directions without straining the trap, and the more constant the movement the more tiring is the opposing strain. There is much cruelty exhibited in the use of these hedge-traps by the natives, for, on account of their length and number in different directions, they cannot be visited in their whole length more than once in two or three, or even four days. Bad weather or some particular employment may also detain the setter of the traps at home, and he only visits them when he has spare time for doing so. The consequence is that ensnared animals often die of thirst or hunger, or are killed and carried away by leopards.

NATIVE OF MUSSOURI.

Another plan followed by natives for securing game struck us as being even more poaching and unfair than the last. In the beginning of winter, when the snow falls gradually, at the average rate of four or five inches in a night, the animals of all descriptions inhabiting the highest ranges move gradually towards the warmer and snow-free valleys, where they may hope to find food through the winter. But when a very heavy fall occurs early in the season, and when, as sometimes happens, a single shower leaves a depth of three or four feet of snow on the ground, these animals are caught in a trap, because it would be starvation to remain where they are, and to pass through this belt of fresh-fallen and soft snow is a labour of extraordinary difficulty and slowness to the small-footed and spindle-shanked deer, who can only advance laboriously by continued short jumps. The goorul and kakur deer in particular fall victims to this barbarous mode of stalking. Their little feet and slight legs are ill adapted for travelling over deep snow, and their strength is sometimes so thoroughly exhausted that it becomes a matter of no difficulty whatever for a native to follow and catch them on foot, and to secure them alive. Larger deer make a better struggle for life and liberty, but even they sink so deep, if the snow lies thick, that their only mode of progression is by a succession of jumps which cover little ground and are very exhausting. If discovered in this plight by the village *shikarees*, they are invariably followed, and when come up with, dispatched with a hatchet, or with a musket at the convenient distance of fifteen or twenty yards.

We were having very good mixed shooting. The mornings we generally gave up to stalking; or, if we could collect a sufficient number of villagers, and the ground appeared adapted to it, and, above all, if the reports we received spoke favourably of the quantity of game, we sometimes had a *hankwa*, or great beat. Towards two or three o'clock in the afternoon, unless the big game we had been pursuing seemed very plentiful, or unless in following up a wounded deer or bear we had walked a long distance away from our camp, it was our custom to hand our rifles back to the gun-bearers, and with our shot guns and the dogs to proceed to some spot in which during the day's work we had marked many birds. This generally happened to be some cultivated fields near a village, in which a few black partridges were always to be found, or else some

small detached pieces of jungle, or an isolated patch of fir-trees or pine, not far away from cultivation, which often held some pheasants or a few jungle-fowl. The villagers generally knew the haunts of every kind of game-bird in the neighbourhood, and, with few exceptions, they would point them out to us, either for a trifling sum of money or for one of the cheap presents which we had brought with us for that very purpose, or, again, for half a box of Holloway's pills, half a dozen grains of quinine, or a glass of pepper brandy. We seldom came back to our tent without from six to fifteen brace of birds between us, obtained, with very little walking, in a couple of hours. This division of the day's shooting—*i.e.*, big game in the morning and winged game in the afternoon—reduced to a minimum the temptation we sometimes felt of trying a right and left shot at a brace of pheasants when out stalking. For sometimes, when following up a deer by a track to me quite invisible, or creeping slowly to a bear's possible resting-place, it became a trial of self-restraint to withstand the temptation of blazing at a promising shot right before me. In fact, the proverb of "a bird in the hand and two in the bush," &c., was often placed practically before me, and it was difficult to oppose the inference offered by the proverb. So we made it a rule not to shoot at any winged game when on the track of four-footed animals, or when out for the purpose of circumventing them in any way. Usually our evenings, before dinner, were given up to skinning the animals we had shot during the day, sometimes in setting traps for game under Mounyah's direction. We were very fortunate in having among our followers several men who thoroughly understood preparing the skins and heads of animals in the first stages. When we had a dozen skins or thereabouts ready for the currier, it was our practice to send in three men with them to Deyrah, where there was a very good native currier; and the men always returned with a great load of necessaries, meeting us at a pre-arranged rendezvous. The return of the coolies was always a moment of great excitement, as they generally brought back a large number of letters, and also articles which possibly we had long been in sore need of, but which it was impossible to procure nearer than Mussouri. The short time in which they sometimes performed these journeys was very surprising. Four or five days after the killing of our first bears, we dispatched three men with the skins, three bear hams, and as much of the grease as we could collect, into Mussouri and Deyrah, from a place which we calculated to be at least seven good marches from the former place by the nearest path, and directed them to meet us at a certain village we intended to pass through on our return voyage from Gungoutri, if we ever reached that place. A few days after the coolies had started our plans were changed; we gave up the expedition to Gungoutri, and determined to remain in a district which we found to be very well stocked with game. We dispatched a coolie to the village previously marked out as the rendezvous, and the messenger, who reached the place just ten days after the other coolies had started for Mussouri, found them waiting for us: they had arrived that very afternoon—that is, a week earlier than we expected to see them. They were lightly loaded, and, under promise of good pay, had made extraordinary marches.

VIEW ON THE UPPER COURSE OF THE JUMNA.

The principal reasons for altering our plans, and for giving up the expedition to Gungoutri, were, in the first place, the lateness of the season, the reluctance of our coolies to go so far from home, and also our good fortune in finding game in great numbers where we were. The season was not actually so far advanced as to prevent our reaching the sources of the Ganges, but to do so it would have been necessary to leave off shooting, and to march steadily in that direction, and to give up our occasional halts and détours. This of itself would have turned a pleasure into a work of toil and hardship, inconsistent with our views when starting; and, besides this reason, we daily saw growing signs of reluctance among the coolies to undergo the additional cold and toil of a march through the upper regions. Our Plain servants, also, clearly did not relish the idea of three or four days or more spent in the midst of ice and snow. And so, rather than face the daily annoyance of forcing our coolies and servants

in a direction they wished to avoid, we gave up the plan, and immediately made preparations for a long halt on a sheltered spot on the banks of the Ganges. The reader will remember it was our intention at starting to cross a range of hills running parallel to the rivers Ganges and Jumna, to work up by the side of the latter river, to recross the range, and then to follow the course of the bed of the Ganges, but against the current, until we reached its source at Gungoutri. Our first success among the bears occurred on the banks of the Jumna, and our programme had so far been faithfully fulfilled that we had crossed the range of hills, worked up the Jumna, recrossed the range, and now were encamped on the banks of the Ganges. But at this point our plans were modified; for, instead of ascending the Ganges valley towards the head of the river, we proposed remaining where we were for a week, the shooting being particularly good, and then descending gradually towards the Plains by following the river's course to Hurdwar. The spot we were now encamped on was one of the loveliest and the most characteristic of Himalayan scenery that it is possible to imagine.

Since visiting these scenes I have somewhere seen in print remarks on Himalayan scenery of a highly unfavourable nature. Their author dwelt particularly on the monotonous character of the scenery in the great range, said everything was on so large a scale the eye had nothing to rest upon, and that its chief characteristic was mere *hugeness*, one large mountain succeeding another, which again was succeeded by a similar gigantic and rounded monster. Now the fact is, nothing could be more incorrect, more positively untruthful than such a statement. There is immense variety and a wonderful abundance of striking details in every part of the Himalayan range I ever visited. This last encampment of ours immediately rose to my remembrance when reading the above-mentioned remarks. How I longed for a good photograph, or, better still, a truthful water-colour drawing of the scene as I remember it! I would require no better witness, and if further testimony was needed it would only be necessary to obtain other sketches from almost any part. Why, from our tent door a painter would have made six sketches, and not a soul could have told they were taken from the same spot, so different would have been their character and even their colouring.

In a few years a journey to the Himalayan range will become quite an ordinary holiday trip, and then we shall hear very different accounts of its scenery. I can wish no lover of mountain scenery a better treat than a few weeks in the Himalayas, north and north-east of Mussouri. As the facilities of travel increase now-a-days, it is not improbable that before the end of the decade people with a three or four months' holiday may spend a month or six weeks of it in the neighbourhood of Simla, Mussouri, or Nyne Tal. Nothing would more conduce to this end than a continuance of disturbance on the Continent.

I mentioned that we had some dogs with us; they were spaniels. We had four when we started, but an untimely accident happened to one of them two or three days after we arrived in the last encampment I have mentioned. As the accident was a very strange one, and highly characteristic of the wild country in which we were travelling, I shall give an account of it. Our tent was pitched in a small opening in a wood which ran almost down to the river's edge. At the back of our tent, and on the right and left sides, trees and brushwood grew to within seven or eight paces of the canvas, but the tent itself was of course pitched on smooth ground, and in front of it was a small piece of turf, so smooth and clear of brushwood that we used to call it our "lawn;" it sloped down to the water's edge, and was considerably wider at the bottom than it was near our tent. In front of the tent door was a large log fire. Our servants' bivouacs were nearly at the bottom of the lawn, on the right, and on the left there was the carcass of a bear we had shot during the day, fastened to a stout pole driven deep into the ground. This was set as a bait for a leopard we had heard several times in the neighbourhood during the day. The bear was fastened to the pole so strongly, that the leopard would not be able to carry it away sufficiently rapid to prevent one of us having a shot at him from the tent door, if he made the attempt whilst we were sitting near the fire before going to bed.

I am particular in giving the position of the tent, the fire, and the servants' bivouacs, to show the extraordinary boldness of wild animals under some circumstances. I must also add that, as a rule, leopards shun man's approach with the greatest care; they move with cat-like noiselessness and stealth, so that it is very rare to meet with one even when in a district in which they abound. Leopards are immensely powerful; one has been known to kill a cow with a single blow of his paw, and to carry her off, thrown over his back, with apparent ease. They never, under any circumstances, attack man first, and even when wounded slink away, unless brought to bay in a place from which there is no escape. Three of our dogs were with the servants, chained to pegs on the ground, but one of the four, which was particularly timid, and much attached to me, was allowed to sleep nominally at the foot of my bed, being fastened by a collar and chain to a peg driven in the ground. But on this occasion our beds were of a more substantial nature than usual, on account of the longer stay we intended to make; they were formed of a thick layer of straw, retained in its place by planks and four large logs of wood. Round one of the side-logs Jessie's chain was passed, and, following her usual custom, when I was asleep she had quietly crawled on to the bed, and was lying on the blanket not far from my chest.

We had had a good day's sport, and gone to bed earlier than usual. But our servants, who knew there was to be no marching on the morrow, were at the time we went to bed still talking, cooking, and eating, with the apparent intention of keeping it up late into the night, as is often the custom with Indian servants. Tired with the day's work, which included a long tramp after a wounded bear, I fell asleep immediately, and slept on very soundly until, without knowing exactly why, I started up with a bound, and woke uttering a piercing shriek, which of course woke Smith also. In what appeared to be only the hundredth part of a second, and as if everything had happened at once, I felt a heavy weight on my chest, smelt some oppressive and disgusting odour, heard a dog yell, felt a tug across the bed, and woke myself up with a loud involuntary shriek. I sat up in bed, but I did not know what had happened, I only knew that for some reason or other I had just called out, and that the sensations I have described had a moment before been felt by me. Smith called out to know what had happened, and at the same time we both heard a dog yelling as if in great pain, and the natives shouting, and then in another second we saw through the canvas half-a-dozen lighted sticks being waved about and others being thrown in

the air. At the same time the other dogs set up a frightful discord of howls and moans, and the servants rushed all in one direction, shouting, and flaring their impromptu torches. Some of them rushed into our tent, and then the mystery was cleared up. A leopard had just passed within a dozen paces of some of the servants as they sat at their fires, and by the glare they saw he was carrying off a dog. Next we looked for poor Jessie, and she was missing; a short piece of her chain snapped clean off was all that was left.

An examination of the bed and the marks about the tent explained all. My bed, formed, as I said before, of logs and straw, was close to the side of the tent, so that, had I chosen to do it, it would have been quite possible for me, whilst lying down, to reach with my hand outside the tent, the centre of my bed being not more than two feet from the tent wall. The side of the tent next to my bed seemed to have been less carefully pegged down than usual that evening, and the leopard, with extraordinary boldness, no doubt caused by hunger, must have passed his head and shoulders inside the tent. The dog was probably in its usual position, curled up on the blanket near my chest; the weight I felt in my sleep was the leopard's paw, and the disgusting smell was his breath near my face. Leopards at all times emit a disgusting smell, so much so that a place in which they have been lying will retain a very unpleasant odour for many hours after, and on this occasion our tent was filled for half an hour after with a very miasma of stench, the result of the animal's brief visit. The leopard's approach was no doubt very slow and stealthy, and probably until the moment of snapping his jaws on the sleeping dog his movements were very circumspect and deliberate, but the act of catching up the dog, backing out of the tent, and breaking the chain in doing so, was probably the work of a quarter of a second. The great weight which I felt was no doubt caused by the leopard's pushing back to break the chain, which offered unexpected resistance, and as his paw was on my chest I felt the full power of his exerted strength. The sudden noise appeared to have disconcerted the hungry animal, otherwise, instead of passing in full view of the servants seated round the fires, he would have retired by the way he probably came —the woods at the back of the tent. All the natives, especially the *shikarees* and the Hill men, were greatly astonished at the leopard's boldness; such an instance of audacity on that animal's part had never come to their knowledge, and they did not know how to account for it. Dog is, doubtless, their favourite tit-bit, but they are not in general very bold in their attempts to obtain it; and although Mounyah declared hunger only could nerve a leopard to such an unprecedentedly bold feat, he could not imagine why the larger and more easily obtained *morceau* fastened to the stake before the tent door had not been removed in preference to a small dog, and at such risks. At all events, its occurrence startled us all thoroughly, and it was a long time before I was quite rid of the unpleasant shock my nerves had been subjected to. For several nights immediately following the event I was troubled with bad dreams and nightmare.

Every one has a story or two which he hesitates to tell, lest they should be discredited by his audience. Comparative strangers will listen to these stories with due attention, but the narrator knows they laugh at him when he is out of sight, and that ever after they will think he is given to exaggerate and to drawing the long bow; whilst his intimate friends will coolly laugh in his face, and beg him next time "tell it to the marines." And for no better reason than this, many a good story and true has been religiously kept close, the hero of it fearing to endanger his reputation for veracity by relating some extraordinary or improbable incident, where he has no eye-witness or other testimony to support him. This has been my case until now with the incident I have just written, and some others. To no mortal soul have I breathed before my adventure, or, rather, my unfortunate dog's adventure, with a leopard, and I know I only do so now to be discredited. But no matter; Smith, if you're alive, tell them it's true.

A Bird-nesting Expedition in a North African Swamp.—II.

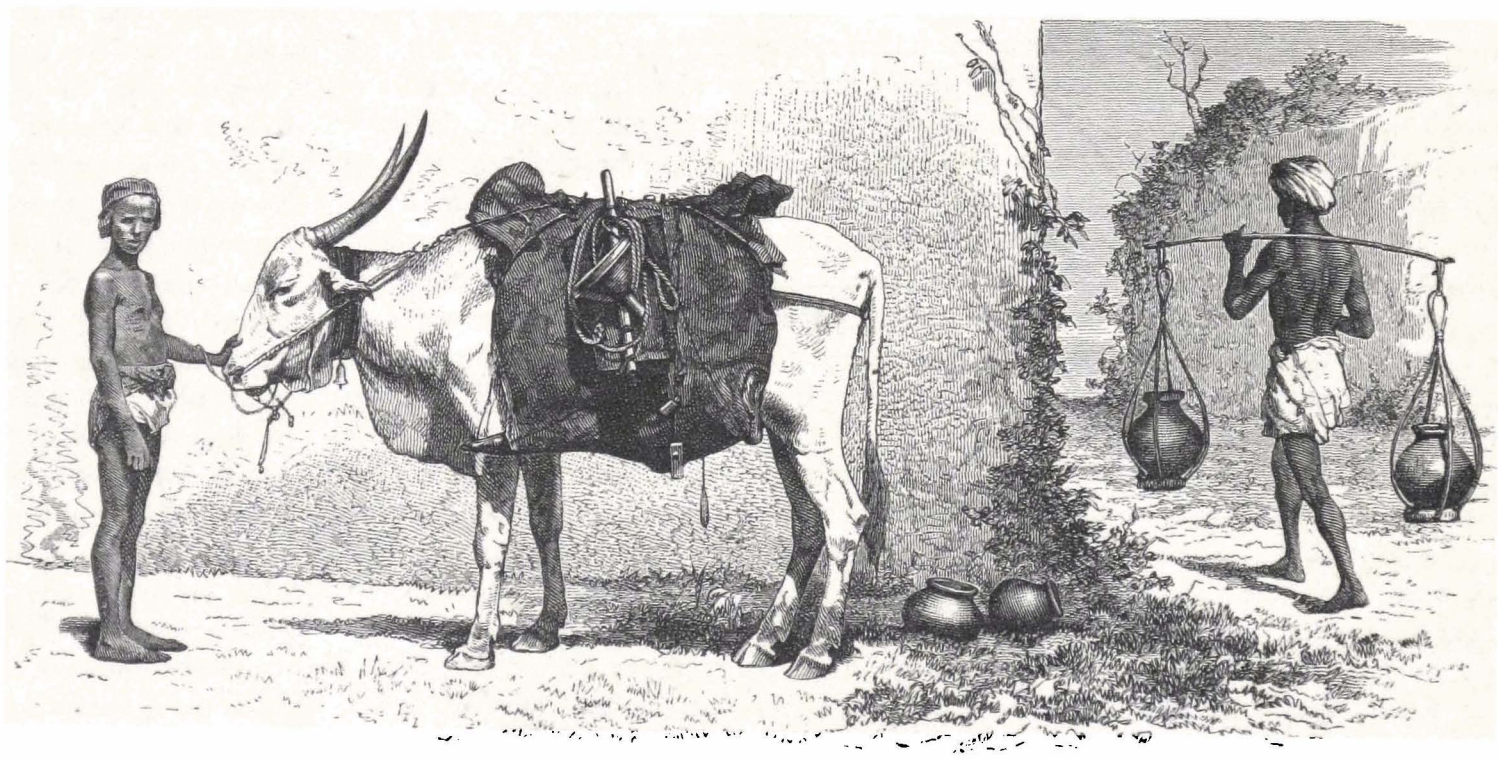
BY THE REV. H. B. TRISTRAM, LL.D., F.R.S.

It was now dark, and having subscribed a portion of my provisions to the common stock, I supped with the sergeant and corporals, and obtained a holiday for my Zouave friend, that he might accompany me in the morning. Before turning in I spread in the camp among the convicts an announcement that for all nests brought me, with the bird snared and alive, within the next three days, I should pay at the rate of one sou per egg.

As I lay in the corner of my tent, wrapped in my burnous, I was kept awake for some time by a party of Zouaves, whose political discussions were too amusing to suffer me to sleep. The debate turned on the necessity of enlarging the boundaries of France. "Annex Spain," said one; "the Spaniards cannot fight unless the English help them." "Three regiments of Zouaves could overrun Spain," added another. "But what would our English allies say to it?" interrupted a third. "Bah! let the English send two regiments of Écossais and take Portugal for their share." "We will spare them that," replied the first. "France is omnipotent, the army is France, and we are a match for all the rest of the army," was then the *idée fixe* of every Zouave—alas, how strangely and swiftly dissipated since that day!

Before dawn my new acquaintance was by my side in fatigue dress, and after a hasty cup of coffee and a glass of quinine (a very necessary precaution) we are in the tamarisk grove. A little bird, something like a hen redstart in appearance, glides through the bushes. "What is that?" "*Becfin passerinette.*" At length my companion brings him down. It is a prize indeed—the first *Sylvia subalpina* I have seen, and well shot. Soon we come on a little flock of them, restlessly

twisted in the form of a screw, the wood of which is black and the bark white—hence its name, *Melaleuca*. The fruit and the leaves yield by distillation an essential oil of a greenish colour, very aromatic, and very much resembling the cajeput-oil which is distilled from the *Melaleuca leucodendron*, and is such a valuable remedy for acute rheumatism and gout. A careful analysis should be made of the oil of the niaouli, for if it possesses the same properties as the cajeput-oil it would be a rich source of revenue to the island, the quantity of oil contained in the leaves being very considerable, and the cost of distilling, comparatively, exceedingly small. Like so many things in nature, this tree must therefore not be judged by appearances, for under its rough and unattractive exterior are hidden many precious qualities. It has no beauty, either of form, foliage, or blossom; its outward characteristics being a twisted, knotted trunk, of a dirty-whitish hue, bare and scanty branches, small leaves of a dark and ugly green, and greenish flowers, emitting a most disagreeable odour; and the only living creatures ever seen among its boughs are the repulsive-looking vampires, of tawny colour, that come down in flocks at sunset to feed on the seeds. The olive-trees in Europe bear some analogy to the niaouli; but they have a strange, indescribable beauty which makes them dear even to an artist's eye, and which no one can attribute to the Kanak's friend.



BAGGAGE-ANIMAL, INDIA.

Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—V.

BY G. BESTE.

After leaving our pleasant encampment on the Ganges, we journeyed down towards Teree, where we intended remaining a week. Our road or path ran parallel with the river, in a valley now broad, now narrow, but always picturesque, and conveniently well stocked with villages. We found, too, that the nearer we stuck to the river the more plentiful was the game; the bears and deer especially seemed to favour the milder climate of the valleys and the more abundant verdure. The only objection to this plan of following strictly the course of the Ganges was the constant necessity for crossing the river. Sometimes, after walking several hours on comparatively level ground, which in the Himalayas becomes a positive pleasure, we found our further course arrested on the side we were on by the river running for one or two miles under precipitous cliffs many hundred feet in height. In such a case there was always a bridge of ropes to enable the traveller to cross over to the opposite side, where there almost certainly was a piece of flat and low ground, as a contrast to the precipitous banks over the way. But these bridges were such rickety, crazy concerns, apparently so unsafe, and, besides, so very difficult to cross upon, that we generally preferred to strike half a day's journey into the wild jungle, to walk over very steep and difficult ground parallel to the river's course, but some distance from it, and then return to its bank, when the cliffs, or whatever obstacle had turned us out of our course, had been evaded and passed. As to the bridges, we used them once or twice when less formidable than usual, but when I say that in the whole period of our ten weeks' trip in the Hills we did not find a single bridge over which our dogs could have crossed on foot, their insecure nature and our reluctance to use them will be at once understood.

Their construction depended naturally on the breadth to be spanned over. For bridging narrow streams the primitive engineers of the district contented themselves with felling a conveniently handy tree, in such a manner that it fell across the chasm or torrent to be spanned. A few slices roughly taken off the upper part with an axe completed the structure. In no instance do I remember meeting with a wooden handrail until

we had reached the lower Himalayas, where, at an elevation of 3,000 or 4,000 feet, only, above the sea, villages and paths were more frequent. A sort of bridge we often met, but which we only crossed once, to save a day and a half's journey, was appalling in its simplicity. The place over which was stretched the "suspension bridge" to which I allude, was formed by the two nearly perpendicular banks of the Ganges, through which the stream, narrowed to about eighty feet, dashed and whirled at a frightful pace. To readers who have had the good fortune to journey down the Danube, and to pass through the "Iron Gates," I may mention that this place was very like (only narrower) the worst part of the Iron Gates, where the stream is fastest, the rock steepest, and the height dizziest. Our coolies, who knew the kind of bridge we were coming to, and who were anxious we should pass it, as they wished to reach Teree, towards which we were journeying, in time for a native festival, gave us no particulars about the nature of the structure, merely saying that it was made of rope, and that other sahibs had passed that way. When, therefore, in advance, with Mounyah and a gun-bearer, we reached the river, and found one thick, coarse rope stretched across from side to side, so loosely as to be swinging, we naturally asked for the bridge. Our amusement on learning that this one rope, stretching from banks about one hundred feet apart at the top, was the suspension bridge we had to cross, was intense. We looked upon the possibility of getting across *over* such a bridge as so absurd that it was not until later, when we learnt it was really proposed that our whole party should cross over, with the assistance of a single loop running loosely over the rope, that we were struck with amazement and dismay. The rope was as thick as a stout hawser, but, instead of flax, it was made with horsehair, coarse wool, fibrous grass, and spun cotton; in fact, *every* material, except that used in civilised countries, seemed to enter into its composition. Whilst we were examining it, Mounyah and the coolie were busily engaged in tightening "the bridge," with the assistance of some loops purposely made in it, and some handspikes; so that when they had finished their operation the rope was tolerably "taut." Over the edge of each bank, where the rope would have otherwise chafed, there were placed some small boughs of trees, in such a manner that the bridge did not come into actual contact with the rock and sharp stones. At a first sight of it we had naturally supposed that the manner of crossing the bridge consisted in simply walking across the rope *à la* Blondin, with perhaps a smaller rope stretched across to serve as a handrail; and even then the first man to venture across would have had to dispense with that slight additional security. The thing seemed absurd to us; the idea of our heavily-laden coolies, of our dogs, and especially of our timid Plain servants, gracefully tripping over a tight-rope, stretched across a roaring torrent fifty or sixty feet below, and in the midst of which there just peeped a sharply-pointed rock, to make one's fate still surer in case of a *faux pas*, was nothing short of ludicrous. And nevertheless, in less than an hour and a half, ourselves, our coolies, our baggage and stores, our servants and our dogs, were safely across. Even the reader cannot be more surprised than we were when the feat had been performed, and we took a parting look at the place before proceeding on our journey. Smith, as soon as we were across, sat down to make a sketch of the operation; I much wish I had it still. The plan followed was this:—I have already said there was a loop or ring over the rope; there were two, one at each end, made of the same material, only not so thick, as the bridge itself. Fastened to these loops was a large piece of smooth wood, very like an empty reel of cotton; the loop passed through the reel, which, when it was about to be used, was placed *on* the "bridge." The loop was large enough to admit of a full-sized man's body. Our bank was a foot or two higher than the opposite side; so that when the bridge was fairly "tautened," and the loop properly adjusted, with the large reel uppermost, resting on the rope, it (the loop) would run down nearly to the opposite side. It being impossible to stretch the rope quite straight, there was a slight dip or bend, which would prevent the loop running quite as far as the other side. These preliminaries being explained, it is only necessary to mention that the active mountaineers, used to that mode of crossing rivers, placed themselves into the loop, back undermost, and, with their legs and arms curled round the rope, gently slid down to nearly the opposite side, and finished the journey by pulling themselves on with their feet and hands! All

HINDOO GIRL.

the coolies, excepting those who were carrying the tent and other large, awkward loads, shot across with their bundles strapped to their backs, merely taking the preliminary precaution of securing the loads rather better than ordinary. Smith and I were made additionally safe by being fastened to the loop in such a manner that even if we had lost our heads or fainted we should not have fallen.

We then separately and successfully made the trip, "working our passage" for the last ten feet or so, amidst the cheers of the coolies. Our Plain servants were similarly fastened, and, in addition, were pulled across by a rope made fast to the loop, as they seemed to doubt their ability to "shin up" the last bit. The dogs were carried across on men's backs; the heavy and awkward luggage was fastened to the loop and pulled across: and so, in rather under two hours, our whole party of over thirty men had managed to get across what appeared at first a ridiculously impossible place.

Even when the details of the bridge arrangement were explained to us, and its feasibility understood, I think we would have taken the long way round, notwithstanding the shikarees' and coolies' many statements of Sahib so-and-so, who had ventured across, if it had not been for the promptings of curiosity, which inclined us not only to see but to experience the novel mode of transit. One of our coolies remembered hearing of a party of English sportsmen, with whom was a lady, passing that very bridge. Some relations of his accompanied the party as coolies, and they declared the *mem-sahib* (English lady) had crossed without more assistance than being fastened as we were. But that story needs confirmation, especially as I think the man told it before we had crossed, in order to decide us to give up the half-formed plan of going round.

We saw several more bridges of this description, but this was the only one we crossed. I should add that on the opposite side (on which we landed) there was an artificial mound, about four feet high, with a stout post. Travellers crossing *from* that side could shift the rope from its usual situation to the mound, and fasten it to the post, and by that means bring their end of the bridge to a level slightly higher than the opposite bank, and slide down to the other side, instead of working their way *uphill* the whole way across. Similarly, a party crossing from the side we had arrived at, and finding the bridge-rope fixed at an inclination disadvantageous to themselves, would only have to wait until two men had crossed to replace the far end of the bridge to the natural low level. Altogether, the bridge, considering its great simplicity, was really very ingenious; and to the Hill men, accustomed to similar rough contrivances, it no doubt appeared a convenient and adequate construction, but in reality it needed a good head and strong nerves for any one not a sailor to use it without danger. I doubt whether any person introduced to this form of bridge without a previous course of Hill walking, and scrambling on the very edge of precipices and mountain-torrents, could be induced to use it, except to save dear life.

At Neree, a village situate near the Bahgeruttee, where the river first takes a general south-east course—its direction previously having been almost due south-west—we came upon the encampment of three English travellers returning to Mussouri, after an ineffectual attempt to reach Gungoutri. They had had nearly a week's start of us, we therefore congratulated ourselves on our decision not to persevere. According to them, some heavy falls of snow had occurred in the higher regions; and a party of belated pilgrims had suffered fearfully, leaving five of their number dead behind them. One of the travellers was suffering from a frightful mauling from a bear, which he had wounded, and which charged him, knocking away his gun, and hugging him furiously. He owed his escape from certain suffocation and crushing to the *sang-froid* and good shooting of a brother officer, who had the nerve to fire at the bear whilst the heads of hugger and huggee were less than six inches apart. He was standing exactly thirty-seven yards off—it was measured afterwards—and dreaded the consequences of delay, as the bear was furious, and doing its best to utterly extinguish and annihilate its captive; so, instead of running forward for a nearer shot, and thus wasting a few seconds of precious time, he raised his rifle, and taking scarce more than a snap-shot, sent a two-and-a-half-ounce short spherical bullet clean through the bear's head, the bullet entering half-way between the eye and the orifice of the ear, and coming out through the orifice of the opposite ear. The animal fell dead on the spot. A very lucky shot. The man who was being hugged tried to cry out to his friend to fire, but the pressure and pain were so great he could gather no breath to speak. All he could do was to look in his direction, and his look was understood. But the time his friend was aiming seemed endless to him, although it probably was only two seconds—certainly less than three. He afterwards said that the possibility of his friend's missing the bear altogether, or increasing the animal's fury by wounding it slightly, or, what would have been even worse, the chance of being hit himself, never struck him; his only thought was—his only wish—that his friend might shoot quickly and rid him of his embracer. I think there are not many men who would take such a shot without a single moment's hesitation. It must be a very trying experience, and, in my opinion, the killer of the bear deserved much more credit for his prompt, unhesitating decision to fire, and his quickness in putting his decision into effect, than for the wonderful precision of the shot.

In addition to some ugly scratches down one side of his head and ear and face, from a blow of the bear's paw, the sufferer's body was bruised all over, from his shoulder down to his loins, and his arms, especially from the shoulder to the elbow, were as if painted with large patches and streaks of black, blue, and brown. He could only walk slowly. We were glad to be able to spare them ten or twelve brace of partridges and jungle-fowl, as they were running short of stores.

I have given no list or numbers of the different animals we killed during our trip, now drawing to a close. A mere enumeration of the game killed on any occasion is very uninteresting to me, and is not the slightest criterion of the sport one has met with, and, above all, of the enjoyment one has had. Taking it all round, we had very good sport, and very great luck; we shot specimens of every bird and animal generally found in the middle Himalayas, being particularly fortunate in the number of deer, of different sorts, and black bear which we secured. The only animals missing from our list were the Hill tiger, which is rarely found; the great wild goat—a very shy animal, which is becoming scarcer every year in Ghurwal; and the wild dog, which we saw, but did not care to shoot.

We sent down to Dehra four separate detachments of coolies, laden with the skins and heads of animals we had shot. Twice we sent three men, once four, and once five men, besides

taking a goodly quantity of bears' grease, deers' heads, martin, chamois, and bear skins with us, when we descended the hills to Hurdwar. Indeed, the number of skins, heads, and horns, besides the very perfect specimens of pheasants and other birds stuffed by Mounyah, which we obtained, was so great that, had we been so inclined, we could readily have disposed of our spoils of the chase at a price which would have amply covered all our expenses during the two months and a half we were in the Hills. Reflecting on the fact lately, I have been surprised that more men do not go for a three months' shooting excursion to India. The expense of the journey to Bombay is much less than it was ten years ago. From Bombay to the Himalayas the cost of travelling is infinitely less per mile than any European travelling, and, considering the number of one's followers in the Hills, the expenses are ridiculously slight. If the sportsman, or rather sportsmen, have moderately good luck, are careful to have the skins, heads, &c., of the animals they shoot properly preserved, and do not object to selling them—in England they will get the best price—they will in that manner cover one-fourth of the expenses of the trip. However, figures are more satisfactory. Here they are:—Southampton to Bombay, £75; Bombay to Mussouri or Simlah, £18; two weeks at either of these places, whilst organising the "expeditionary forces," collecting coolies, &c., £10; stores for a four months' trip, £25; and about £1 a month for extra flour, &c., whilst in the Hills, say £5 for the whole trip; servants, coolies, &c., £17 a month; return journey, Simlah to London, £95—or total for a single person, just under £300; and that includes his whole expenses for six months, on a very liberal scale. But if, instead of going alone—a bad plan, expensive, and unsociable—he is accompanied by two friends, who will share the very slightly-increased expense of coolies, servants, and stores, the total expense for the three will be £700, and each man's share, of course, only £235. Unless the party is composed of very bad shots indeed, or unless they are pursued by execrable luck, the skins and heads of animals they shoot will fetch at least £100 (double that amount would be a very moderate estimate, but I am satisfied to name the lower sum), and thus reduce each man's total expense, during a six and a half months' absence from England, to £200. Which simply means that any bachelor, with an income of £500 a year, and not tied down by a profession or other hindrance, can enjoy a trip to the "glorious East," and four months of first-rate shooting, amidst the grandest scenery imaginable, and in a delicious climate.

The very day after leaving the homeward-bound party from whom we had learnt the savageness of wounded bears, whilst we were returning home, after having had some very good sport in a small jungle, well stocked with woodcock, we suddenly came on two bears, feeding on a deserted honeycomb. We had only shot-guns with us, loaded with No. 7 shot. Smith's gun-carrier was carrying a leather bag, divided into compartments for ammunition, and in one of the pockets found a few spherical rifle-bullets. Smith drew his charge—it will be remembered he always used an old-fashioned "egg" gun—and slipped down in each barrel one of the bullets, secured in a thick cloth wad. We were above the bears, and it was evident they wished to pass us, to reach their caverns, or usual dwellings, probably not far behind us, and where it was also probable some young cubs might be lying. We at once dispatched the younger gun-bearer for our rifles, not more than three-quarters of a mile away in camp, and amused ourselves throwing stones at the bears, who seemed most reluctant to leave the spot. As the hill we were on was rather steep, and we were above the bears, we felt tolerably safe, but Smith could not succeed in getting nearer than ninety or one hundred yards from them, at which distance it would have been absurd to fire with a smooth-bore gun. The only thing we could do was to keep the bears well in sight until our rifles arrived, and also to keep our vantage-ground above the bears, and not allow them to reach some rocks behind us, where they surely had a cavern, from which it might be very difficult to smoke them out. It was good fun at first, the movements of the uncouth animals were so very risible; the impatience of the female bear was especially amusing to watch. She would grunt and start, first to one side, then to the other, and then plant her fore-paws on the ground and rock from side to side, like a horse "weaving," uttering a lamentable sound all the while; then, suddenly leaving off this movement, she would run at the male, and ram her head against his side, as if to express her anger at the difficulty he had led her into. Affairs began to get worse, when, in answer to the grunt of both animals in front of us, there appeared in the distance behind us, a couple of little hairy black balls, toddling about in the most ludicrous manner, and uttering the sharp noise made by the small bear-cubs. The old ones could not see them, but they heard them plainly enough, as we saw by their excitement. At one moment I thought they would escape, as they started off for a long circuit to our left; and Smith was about to fire, in order to wound one if possible, or, at all events, divert them from their intention of going the whole way round, which would bring them above us, and quite alter the relative security of the parties, when, of their own accord, they stopped, and the she-bear turned short round and advanced towards us. But the hill was too much for her, and she turned off again. Her last movement had brought her much nearer to us, and the cubs were also approaching. We were open to the danger of the big bears charging us when we were next to undefended; and to the nuisance of seeing the cubs pass us and reach their parents. Every minute we looked at our watches, and we began to fear the men with the rifles would miss us, as we had moved a considerable distance away from the place whence the gun-bearer had been dispatched. Our impatience was misplaced, the three men came running up bathed with perspiration, and unable to speak from having made such haste. As soon as our rifles were loaded, the four natives, including Mounyah, set to work catching the cubs, and after a little dodging and running they secured one, which they held and caused to squeak until the old bears approached near enough for our purpose. I hid behind a tree, and after Smith had had his first shot at the male, I ran forward to the she-bear, who was coming slowly nearer. When I was within eighteen or twenty yards I fired, and killed her with a single shell—a thing which very seldom happens; for, although shells are much more destructive and deadly than ordinary bullets, bears are so tenacious of life, they have so few vital points, that even a shell must burst exceptionally well, and just at the right distance after penetrating, to cause a bear's instantaneous death. It is the only case I know of a bear being killed by a single shot.

The cubs (the other was captured later) were taken away by our men, and sold by them on our arrival at Teree.

"Tömös" leading into Kronstadt, are the principal. Most of the passes are either along the banks of or close to mountain torrents that have worn a passage through the rocks. The river Alt pierces through the mountain chain near the Red Tower pass, and part of the road is hewn in the rock along its banks; and not far from the Vulkan pass the river Szill rushes through the Zurduk gorge, between perpendicular walls of rock. These water passages provide natural means for the construction of lines of communication between the two countries, which will some day be taken advantage of, and roadways, if not railways, constructed along their banks. At present, the passes exist only as rude tracks over the mountains, forming a tedious and, in winter, almost impassable roadway. These passes have frequently been the scenes of daring feats of arms between the invading Turks and defending Hungarians, and have invariably proved practicably impregnable. In 1848 the Russian army was baffled at the Red Tower pass, and the "Tömös" pass, near Kronstadt, was held for a considerable time by the patriot General Kirs, with only 4,000 men, against a whole Russian army. But, unmindful of loss, the Russian troops pressed forward, while the Cossacks, used to climbing and crossing steep mountains, were, in the end, able to outflank their enemies, and the defile was forced—not, however, without fearful and disproportionate loss on the part of the invaders. In this case, however, the odds in numbers and discipline were very great. With anything like a fair number of men, and good batteries, these defiles across the Carpathians could be successfully defended against any army. To attempt crossing the Carpathians by any other way than the passes would be futile, the precipices are too steep, the gorges and ravines too deep, the ground too rough, and the forests too dense. I paid a visit to one gorge not far from the Zurduk, through which the Szill flows, and anything more wild and impassable could hardly exist.

This range of mountains will ever form a natural barrier against the invasion of enemies from that side, unless the passes are sold by treachery, or their defences shamefully neglected; and as regards the construction of lines of railway over them, the attempt would be hopeless were it not for the breaks in the chain through which the waters collected in the valleys of Transylvania flow to empty themselves in the Danube. It seems as if these valleys must formerly have been vast inland lakes, the waters of which have, in course of time, worn a passage through the rocks forming their southern boundary. The Szill valley, which is about twenty miles long, has only one such outlet, namely the Zurduk gorge, and through this the river Szill flows. The valley is closed in at both its extremities, and from either end the collected waters run towards its centre, where they meet and form the stream which passes through the gorge. The basin—probably the ancient bottom of the lake—is formed of recent Tertiary deposits lying on the old formation of the Carpathians, and extending only a few hundred feet on either side above the present level of the river.

The difficulty of constructing the line of railway into the valley has been very great, and has involved deep cuttings and tunnels, but the difficulties of getting out, and gaining the Roumanian plain are very much less, owing to this natural cutting through the rock, which at any rate indicates a way, if it does not provide a road. From the summit of the range where I was perched I could estimate the possibilities, as well as the importance, of such an undertaking. It was impossible to gaze on the immense fertile and populated plain on the south, extending, on both banks of the Danube, almost to the shores of the Black Sea—one of the richest grain-producing districts in Europe, with plenty of produce to dispose of, and necessaries to import—without seeing the advantage of some more complete intercommunication than that afforded by the Danube. In the plain of Wallachia, the people, in winter, are in the habit of burning dried cattle-dung and straw, and yet within a few miles there are deposits of coal capable of supplying, not only the wants of their households, but the requirements of a large industry. The known existence of such wealth must lead eventually to its development and distribution over the neighbouring country, and the result of this will most probably be the creation of an industry at present unknown in the country. As before said, the Carpathian hills abound in mineral wealth—which, however, is of small practical value without the necessary adjunct of coal. At present there is literally no employment for the population beyond tending cattle. The people know of no luxuries, and have few necessities, and those they provide in the rudest and simplest manner. The women spin coarse wool and weave coarse cloth, and the men prepare their plum-brandy, or slievovitz, in a most primitive manner. We came across one of their stills in our rambles, and it was of the roughest possible character. However, it answers the purpose, and the liquor produced, though peculiar in flavour, is not to be despised, particularly by footsore travellers among the wild and desolate peaks of the Carpathians.

Black Bear Shooting in the Himalayas.—VI.

BY G. BESTE.

At Okla, a village still nearer Teree, we killed a "reech," or red bear. It is called red, but its colour is more of a russet-brown. The reech has a reputation for great fierceness; but we came on this one suddenly, and after a shot from Smith, which broke its fore-leg, or arm, it made no show of fighting, although it had us at a disadvantage so far as position went. Our object in going to Okla, which stood out of our line of march, was to look up some musk-deer, which we learnt had lately been seen in the neighbourhood. We had come down to an altitude of only 6,000 feet above sea-level; but as Okla stands at an elevation of over 8,000 feet, some little distance from the river, we had a long walk. We did not take a guide from the neighbourhood, and consequently missed our way, and got among such a labyrinth of ravines and dried-up mountain torrents, that it was only after nightfall, and with the utmost difficulty, we reached the top of the flat hill on

which the village rests. The villagers, by the way, declared their habitations were all but within 10,000 feet above sea-level. They named several other places we know to be about 10,000 feet, and declared Okla stood at a similar height. This I have had no means of testing, but it was very cold there. We engaged a shikaree for the morrow; he pointed out a hill behind the village, and nearly 1,000 feet higher, on which the musk-deer had been last seen. Its whole surface was covered with large boulders and loose stones. We agreed that it was a most undesirable haunt for our destined quarry to seek. As the whole mountain-side was bare of vegetation, and could not have shown more than seven and a half blades of grass, it would have been difficult to assign a reason for the deers' choice of the locality, unless, perhaps, it was a preternatural knowledge of the object of our visit, and a determination to lead us a dance for their skins and musk-bags, in which we might ourselves break our legs or necks. Their instinct availed them not. We had a terrible three hours' walk before coming up with them, but when we did it was with every advantage in our favour—against the wind, well hidden behind a projecting rock, and on the same level as the deer. We had taken the precaution, before starting in the early morning, of posting our most intelligent coolie, with an extemporised flag and a telescope, on the open near the village, whence he could survey the whole side of the mountain, and indicate to us by flag-wavings and pantomime the direction taken by the deer as they moved about.

When we took a peep at the deer, without showing ourselves, it was evident they were uneasy, without having the faintest notion we were so close to them—under eighty yards. The herd consisted of five—one male, three full-grown females, and a fawn. They kept tossing their heads, first to the right, then to the left; then all moved half-a-dozen steps, and immediately stopped again. There was no grazing, consequently their whole attention was directed to the indistinct danger their keen sense of smell told them was somewhere at hand. Immediately behind them there was a ravine, quite sufficient, we supposed, to stop their retreat; in which case the only means of escape left them consisted either in dashing close past ourselves, or down a very steep part of the mountain. Up they could not go; the ground would not permit of it. When we fired, my shot was a large female; the male, a very fine one, was on Smith's side. I aimed behind the shoulder, and struck the very spot I wished; but the deer, as I expected, dashed past within eighteen or twenty yards of the place where I stood. I put in the other bullet within an inch of the same place, but from a different alignment. She dropped dead. Smith had aimed in the very centre of the buck's chest. As he was facing him, and standing end on, he expected the bullet to rake him fore-and-aft, and produce almost instantaneous death. Quite the contrary; the animal wheeled round, went straight at the ravine, which we had considered impracticable, and cleared it without apparent effort. But, on landing, he came on his knees, and nearly rolled over. This showed he was very badly wounded, and another shot actually did bring him down. But he was up again, and off; and Smith did not secure him until he had tracked him for two hours, and put a bullet into his heart, as he lay panting his life away, two miles from the spot where he was first wounded. When he was skinned, it appeared the first bullet had gone perfectly true, and was only spent after traversing the chest, intestines, and loins, and was lodged in the inside part of the rump. The second bullet had entered high on the left shoulder, and come out at the neck; and yet the deer gave a two hours' chase! His head was a remarkably fine specimen; the musk-pod weighed two ounces and a quarter, which is a very unusual size.

There is a great peculiarity in the hair of the musk-deer, which needs pointing out. The musk-deer is an inhabitant of the snow regions; it is only occasionally that it leaves the snows for milder climes. It constantly sleeps on the surface of snow, when the temperature is below freezing-point; and it is enabled to do so without losing animal heat, or without feeling the numbing influence of its bed, through the kindly provision of Nature, which has supplied it with a coat of very thick hollow hairs outside, whilst next the skin is a downy coating of beautifully soft, close, heat-retaining wool. All hairs are hollow—there is nothing peculiar in that—but musk-deer hairs are very thick, and the hollow so large that it is plainly visible to the naked eye when broken off; so that, when the animal lies down, whether on the snow or elsewhere, it rests on a thick coat of tubings, forming a constantly-present air-cushion, under which is the warm woollen jersey, if the expression may be allowed.

The pod, as it is technically termed, though better known as the musk-bag, is the size of a small egg, and lies under the skin, between the orifice of the urethra and the testes. Of course, the male animal only has the musk-pod. When cut open, it is found to contain a quantity of pill-like objects—that is the musk: it is sold for from 30s. to £2 per ounce.

The two other full-grown deer and the young one bolted past me also; but my attention was given to the largest one, which I shot. When I had fired at and killed her, and was loading again, I just caught sight of the group scampering out of sight, down a dip in the mountain-side. Leaving Smith and Mounyah to look after the buck, with my telescope I attended to the signal-man's wavings, and then started after the deer.

In a very short time I came in sight of them, positively gracefully jumping and skipping towards the scene of their late friends' disaster. I was anxious to rejoin Smith, to assist in securing the buck, which was worth twenty of the others. I therefore took a long shot, and missed, and they turned off again. As I was returning homewards, more than an hour afterwards, having failed to hit off the track or find Smith, I saw the patient flag-man waving in a frantic manner. It turned out I was again within a hundred and fifty yards of the deer. After a long stalk, I shot and secured another.

Notwithstanding our exertions and deviations from the right path, the climb to Okla repaid us well. We—that is, I—shot a *kakur* at the foot of the great hill on the summit of which Okla stands, on our return towards the river.

Two days after we reached Teree, where we were again in comparatively civilised regions. The mountain-path from Nynee Tal to Mussouri passes through Teree, and there is a Government dâk bungalow there, but with no servants; still we had a real roof and wooden floor over and under us during our stay there, after two months of tent life, and *charpoys* to sleep on, if we chose to use them. But we *did not* choose; they had been very "promiscuously" used, we fancied, and we preferred a day or two more on the floor to an acquaintance with the probable occupants of the bungalow charpoys.

The rajah heard of our coming, and sent out some head officials and personal attendants from his court to meet us,

bearing a plate-full of gold mohurs. They also brought two kids, and any quantity of fruit, vegetables, and sweetstuff. We touched the gold mohurs and kids, and accepted the fruit and vegetables. We inquired when we might offer our respects in person to the rajah, and, in accordance with the hint we then received, we called next day at noon. He informed us that in former times an English "resident," or ambassador in miniature, lived at his court, but since the Mutiny he had been withdrawn. This he felt very severely. At Teree we dismissed Mounyah and the other shikarees, well rewarded with money and everything in our possession which they could desire, except guns or ammunition. To our principle we stuck firmly: I trust all future travellers in those parts will act similarly. We also dismissed all the coolies, engaging as many as were necessary to carry our remaining stores and skins to Hurdwar.

We had thoroughly enjoyed our trip, had met with no serious *contretemps;* and, after entering the Hills a sallow and sickly-looking pair, we emerged the pictures of robust and healthy mountaineers. Our bear-hams were much appreciated, and undoubtedly were delicacies. A great quantity of sugar was used in curing them, which perhaps accounted for their sweetness and delicacy, far surpassing any Indian-cured pig-hams. I had other journeys in the Himalayas in following years, but I never enjoyed any so much as our black bear expedition.

BAY OF ST. VINCENT, NEW CALEDONIA.

Some Account of New Caledonia.—VII.

ONCE the sandal-wood tree (*Santalum album*) grew everywhere in New Caledonia, even in the most unproductive soils, but that was long before the French took possession; now you may walk in every direction through the plains, and on the hill-sides, and find scarcely one full-grown tree, nothing but old stumps and young offshoots. The Kanaks killed their goose with the golden egg in those days when they were still masters of the soil and its fruits; for when they found how high a value was set on the wood by the English traders visiting their shores—so high that for a cargo of it they could get in exchange from them such precious things as firearms, ammunition, pipes, tobacco, and cloth of all kinds—they felled the trees recklessly, floated them down the rivers, and carried them on board the strangers' vessels, and in a very short time not a tree remained standing. Fortunately for the present proprietors of the land, the roots remained, these they had not taken the trouble to dig out, and from them young trees are now springing up. In twenty or thirty years a sandal-wood tree is big enough to bear cutting, its rate of growth being very nearly analogous to that of the common oak in France.

At Port de France sandal-wood costs at the present time rather less than tenpence per pound, and the demand is always greater than the supply. As the tree grows readily in dry stony places, and on the bare shore where little else will flourish, and does not need any care or watching, the propagation of it by seed could not fail to be a profitable undertaking. It has somewhat the appearance of a large myrtle, with stiff and smooth branches, shining, spear-shaped leaves, each about two inches long; the flowers grow in clusters, small and red, and are succeeded by berries about the size of peas. The wood is yellowish, hard, and close-grained, and is imported into Europe in logs or short pieces, chiefly as a perfume or for the manufacture of ornamental articles—the deeper the colour the more intense is the perfume. In China, when cut into large planks, it is sometimes made into coffins for the grandees of the land; and such coffins are said to resist the effects of air and moisture