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the surface of the bay. He thought of Davis Anderson and his Company.

"Gone into liquidation," he murmured.

He tried to feel pity for Anderson, but his heart was light. He knew now that he had loathed the lorry: its noise, its smell, its appearance and everything about it. It had marred the peaceful beauty of Motuvera; and now Motuvera had drowned it. He sang softly to himself as he limped along the road towards his house, leaning on Tuanui's shoulder.

So the 'coach' of the

Motuvera Transport Company entered its last sphere of usefulness. Anderson made no attempt to recover his property, declaring that it was a good riddance, and that this was the last effort he would make to rouse Motuvera from its native lethargy. To-day the long inlet at the west end of the island is the most popular bathing-place in the lagoon. And there the youths and maidens resort in the cool of the evenings and think with gratitude (when they think of it at all) of the Motuvera Transport Company. For theirs is the only bathing-place in Motuvera to possess a diving-raft.

POLO IN GILGIT.

BY W. E. F. TREVELYAN.

I.

Polo was played in Persia about the time of Alexander's invasion and was even introduced into India at an early period. But it is a strange fact that it completely disappeared for some centuries except in the little Hindu Kush States around Gilgit and Chitral and in Manipur—two parts of the world where the natural difficulties of terrain would appear to be greatest. The original game survives in both places, and Hurlingham and Meadowbrook owe their existence to the spirit with which these mountaineers have maintained it.

In the Gilgit Agency polo is undoubtedly the national

game and is played by every one who owns a pony. The smallest children play a dismounted form—a sort of hockey without rules—all day and every day. Every little village has its polo ground, ranging from 150 to 250 yards long and 25 to 50 yards in width. Near the top of the Kilik Pass in Hunza is surely the highest ground in the world, roughly 13,500 feet above sea-level. It is not often used, which is fortunate for the local ponies, but the Mir of Hunza's shepherds do play there when two sides can be raised.

Our ponies are Badakshis from Northern Afghanistan and are ideal for the game we play.

Small and handy, they have plenty of bone and remarkable stamina, and, if they have not the pace of the bigger ponies playing elsewhere, the game is, nevertheless, as fast as one could hope for on these miniature grounds. The majority of ponies are stallions and a stand-up fight frequently adds to the excitement of a chukker. Until recently a good pony could be bought for two hundred rupees (fifteen pounds), but the requirements of the Afghan cavalry have caused a shortage which has affected the local market, and to-day one pays double this amount.

Sticks are made locally with heads of wild almond or mulberry. They are short in the handle and heavy in the head, and are used from the wrist, the ball being hit farther away from the pony than in our game. British officers prefer their own sticks, but the natives will not look at these, although they like our bamboo shafts. Bamboo-root balls are much preferred when they can be obtained, but any rough substitute is used, from a well-shaped piece of willow in the village game to a round stone by the youthful enthusiast.

In Gilgit we play half-hour chukkers, most of the locals playing the same pony in a second chukker after one chukker's rest. The real game, however, is to nine goals, and this is played in the Jalsah tournaments. The lack of width in the ground is made up for by stone walls on each

side, and off these there is much play. One can have any number a side, but six is the rule at Jalsah and five or six a side is usual in Gilgit. The standard of play, of course, varies, and is highest in the small States of Nagar and Punial. A game between these teams is a truly marvellous spectacle, hard and reckless riding and wonderful stick work (of their own fashion) being the rule throughout, and the frenzy of excitement of the spectators, who are backed by numerous pipe and drum bands, cannot but impress the most blasé.

The game itself is our own polo, but eliminating all the rules making for safe play and adding several features of its own. Crossing is not forbidden, but accidents on this account are rare owing to the wariness of the ponies. You can hook an opponent's stick in literally any fashion and from any position you please, and you can take the ball in front of or between his pony's feet. There is, naturally in such a game, a good deal of scrumming and mêlée on the wall, the worst feature of the game. But though hard play is the rule, rough and dirty play is rare and is immediately dropped on.

Of the features peculiar to the local game, perhaps the most interesting is the 'Tambak.' When a goal is scored, a player, generally he who hit the goal, takes the ball in his hand and gallops with it to the centre of the field, where he throws it forward and, whilst

it is still in the air, hits it with all his might towards the opposing team's goal (ends being changed after each goal as in our polo). A good player, the Raja of Punial, for example, will frequently score a goal from his 'Tambak.' To see it well done is a very pretty sight, the ball soaring high up in the air and falling over or between the goal-posts.

Another distinctly peculiar rule is that which permits the ball to be caught in the hand; any player can catch it and ride with it or throw it through his opponents' goal. The opposing side can prevent him from doing so in any way, such as by seizing his bridle or his person, and his own side can assist him by baulking their opponents. Tremendous and gory wrestling matches are frequent and that the spirit of the game suffers in no way from this says much for the local players. When caught, the ball can be passed or thrown to one's own side, and the best teams make use of this to show remarkable organisation and team work, each trying to ride his man and the ball being passed from hand to hand until it reaches, perhaps, an unmarked member of their own side. Usually the ball is caught on rebound from a wall and there is much play against the wall with this object in view. If the player is unhorsed with the ball in his hand, he must drop it and let play proceed in the ordinary manner.

In the original game the ball had to be touched down by the scorer after he had hit a goal, much as in Rugby football. This led to many accidents, as the methods of preventing it by the other side were various and often dangerous. This game is not now played at Gilgit or when British officers are present, but in Nagar they play it regularly when by themselves.

It is still the local custom for the defeated team to dance before their victors, though fortunately not enforced when British officers are amongst the vanquished. This is done with great goodwill, only a few of the more highly-born considering it beneath their dignity. Drums beat early in the morning on polo days to warn the players, and drums and pipes play throughout every game, rising to a crescendo when their own side scores or their own man hits a 'Tambak.' In Gilgit we play every Sunday and Thursday, British officers, local Rajas and Scouts officers having two chukkers to themselves and two or more being provided for the rest, amongst whom are possibly one's own cook and other servants. Play is slow and confined when compared to the civilised game, but, considering the difficulties that have to be contended with, I do not see how it could be improved. It is a robust and manly game and has done much to maintain the hardy character of the local inhabitants.

II.

Jalsah, which happens every March, consists of a Durbar held by the Political Agent on behalf of the Imperial Government and the Maharajah of Kashmir, a polo tournament, inspection of the Gilgit Corps of Scouts and various sports and games.

The Durbar differs little from other Durbars. Of chief interest to the English observer are the Mirs and local Governors and Rajas, resplendent in silks and brocades from Central Asia, sitting in a large semicircle in front of the dais occupied by the Political Agent and the British and Kashmir officers. Behind each Mir or Governor are a dozen or so of his more important relatives, Wazirs and the like. All, having paid their homage, receive presents—saddlery, binoculars and firearms being the most popular. The Mir of Hunza, the outstanding figure of the Agency and a wise and kindly despot, sits nearest the Political Agent. Next to him is the Mir of Nagar, a handsome and refined man in advanced middle age, with his equally handsome and debonair sons behind him. Then come the Governors of Punial, Yasin, Kuh-Ghizar and Ishkoman, each seated with his entourage, and beyond again the lesser chiefs.

But the Polo Tournament is everyone's first interest. The Political Agent, the British officers and their wives, the

Kashmir officials, and all the local notabilities watch from a dais, completely enclosed by wire netting and closely resembling an aviary—a very necessary protection when the local game is being played 'all out.' The entire population of Gilgit and neighbourhood, and every man or boy from the outside districts who can find his way in, sit massed on the walls, the surrounding trees, and every point of vantage within sight. Numerous bands, who have accompanied teams, play wildly from the beginning to the end, leaving one's head in a whirl and nerves grating for weeks afterwards.

To-day the entertainment opens, not with polo, but with mounted sports such as popinjay and archery. The latter—called 'Tir Andazi'—is of great interest as being another survival from an ancient Persian sport which has died out in its own country. It consists simply in riding full gallop down the ground and shooting an arrow at an egg or similar mark placed on a small pile of earth. After half an hour or so of such spectacles polo commences. I have spoken of the good spirit in which the game is played, but this does not always apply to the spectators, amongst whom, every now and again, a head is broken. This worries nobody except the sufferer, and the police, sup-

plied by the Kashmir regiment and the Corps of Scouts, soon settle the disagreement by somewhat forcible methods, whilst the removal of the casualties on stretchers causes the greatest amusement to the onlookers on the wall. This year, however, Hunza and Nagar meet each other, and local feeling is too strong for even the traditions of the national sport. They have been rivals, not too friendly, for centuries, and what Hunza gained on the battlefield Nagar can generally avenge on the polo-ground. One of each team have been enemies for years; Sarwar, a swaggering Nagri with the dash and conceit of a rough-riding sergeant, and Imamyar Beg of Hunza, less dashing in appearance but no less tough in a scrap. To-day Sarwar, in an unfortunate lapse, follows

through with a back-hander full into Imamyar's face. The latter, spluttering teeth and threats, is hauled before the Political Agent together with his antagonist, and the game is stopped. Sarwar is held to blame and leaves the field, possibly fortunately, as Imamyar states he would have killed him had he remained, not necessarily an empty threat. Nagar, though short of a man, go on to win the game and later the tournament. They have been the outstanding rivals of Punial—the winners for the last three years—and they defeat this team handsomely in the final. Their victory is rumoured, however, to be not unconnected with the present to Nagar of Punial's best pony, a gift made necessary in order to settle a dispute about a lady.
