NARRATIVE

OF A

JOURNEY OVERLAND FROM ENGLAND,

BY THE

CONTINENT OF EUROPE,

EGYPT, AND THE RED SEA,

TO

INDIA;

INCLUDING

A RESIDENCE THERE, AND VOYAGE HOME,

IN THE YEARS 1825, 26, 27, AND 28.

BY MRS. COLONEL ELWOOD.



IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1830.

162 c 33. (2) 1278

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Overland.

STAATSBIBLIOTHEK PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ

LONDON TO SUEZ.

All was over at last. The hurried weeks of preparation and farewells had speeded by, the Christmas Feast had been kept, though swelling hearts and tearful eyes were round the Holy Table and the home fireside, and the next day's sad and silent journey was accomplished. The last and hardest parting was over, and the forms dearest on earth had faded out of sight in foggy distance, as the steamer ploughed her dreary way across the channel, and left harbour and pier and the "white cliffs" behind.

It was a rough and squally afternoon and mercilessly cold. I was far too pre-occupied to be ill, but we were scarcely out of harbour before the usual miseries began. Some young ladies who had been chattering volubly of Christmas gaieties made a hasty retreat to the ship's side, and spoke no more; and I was soon surrounded by such sights and sounds, that I could only wrap myself up, mentally and bodily, as close as possible, and lie on one of the benches, with eyes resolutely fixed upon the darkening sky and gloomy rolling sea. Soon after, the light on Cape Grisnez became visible, the wind ahead increased in fierceness, and the spray dashed over us in showers.

Going below, however, was not to be thought of, and I kept my ground, well fenced from cold by the huge Canadian wrapper of a fellow-passenger, but somewhat disquieted by the prevalent idea that we should miss the train and not reach Paris till the morning.

However, when Boulogne was gained at last, and smoother water had enabled the sick and weary passengers to stumble up the companion and find their tickets, and struggle in dishevelled hurry through the usual crowd of spectators on the quay, we had the great relief of finding omnibuses waiting to convey us to the station, and even the unexpected comfort of time to get well warmed and enjoy a cup of coffee before the train moved off.

Once in motion, with no further anxiety for the present, and enjoying the warm, well-cushioned carriage all the more from the contrast it presented to the discomforts of the previous hours, time passed rapidly enough in letter-writing, with brief intervals of sleep; and it was scarcely a welcome change from the snug compartment to the large, bitterly cold hall into which we were all authoritatively turned on arriving at the capital. French railway regulations do not afford one the English *privilege* (?) of fussing about after one's luggage; and it was sufficiently irritating and cheerless to pace up and down this dismal fireless place at midnight, till I caught sight of a friend's face peering through the window, and knew that my hasty note had been received, and that I was sure of comfortable quarters for the rest of the night. Moreover, his long French experience stood me in good stead, and the luggage was passed with very nominal examination. A long drive through the streets of Paris, a blazing fire and welcome supper below, and a blazing fire and still more welcome rest above, awaited me; and after adding postscripts to my letters, I

thankfully drew the eiderdown over me, and lay watching the lights and shadows of the crackling logs, till sleep carried me back to home again.

The morning dawned foggy and raw, and there was little time to see anything of the capital before the starting of the inexorable mail-train, but the first part of the southward route was very pleasant. The fog soon cleared away, and Fontainebleau especially looked very lovely in its winter dress. A thick hoar frost had gathered on all the trees, and they stood out in dazzling beauty against the clear blue sky; the golden brown of the oak underwood contrasting well with the deep rich tints of the various sorts of fir, and the feathery lightness of the naked birches.

From thence to Dijon the scenery was very uninteresting, and nothing was more noteworthy all the way than the uninhabited look of the country as compared with England. We passed no towns of any size, few villages, and none of the solitary houses or cottages that dot our fields so pleasantly, no passengers about the roads and lanes, and only here and there a few labourers in the bare vineyards; indeed, except the magpies, which we started everywhere in twos and threes, or saw congregated in numbers on the leafless shrubs, there was scarcely a living creature to be seen.

We left Dijon about half-past three, and evening soon closed in, with an intensity of cold rarely felt in England. Hot-water tins and wrappers were vain against it, the windows were soon thickly frozen, and the bitter air at every opening of the door swept in with searching force. We were thankful to stop at Lyons for supper, and spend three-quarters of an hour in a well warmed and lighted room, but the rest of the night was utterly miserable. Notwithstanding all the comforts of the carriage, the cold would penetrate, and the more I tried to shut out

thought and forget everything, the more wakeful I grew. Never in my life did I feel so utterly sick and wretched as when the sea began to be visible in the grey morning light as we neared Marseilles. But the stopping of the train was an imperative call for exertion, and as soon as the usual weary waiting for the luggage was over, I secured a conveyance and began a jolting transit through the steep streets of this most foreign looking port. There was another tedious interval while the drawbridge leading to the quay was opened for some boats to pass; and then on, past lines of noble shipping, till we reached one larger and handsomer than the rest, and I read "Mongolia" on her stern, and saw the luggage weighed, and stepped on board.

It was almost the first voyage of this splendid steamer, and ill and weary as I was, I could not but admire her size, and the delicate finish everywhere visible. The tables in the saloon were laid for breakfast, with vases of flowers and pots of greenhouse plants at intervals, and the handsome bronze frames of the suspended lamps wreathed with Christmas holly and evergreens. The fluted partitions that form the sides of the saloon, dividing it from the sleeping cabins, were delicately painted and corniced with elaborate gilding; handsome curtains hung across every doorway, and thick carpets covered the floors. Altogether the effect was striking and elegant even to sorrowful and sleepless eyes, and it was still more satisfactory to find myself sole occupant of one of the best cabins. There was just time for a hurried and much needed toilette before the captain took his place at the head of the breakfast table, and we all emerged to claim our seats. Sixty or seventy passengers, the majority of them gentlemen, were at table, and the breakfast an excellent one. I do not care to be a chronicler of viands, though meals are apt to become the

great events of life during a long voyage; so I will just say, once for all, that whatever ground there may be for the general denunciation of Peninsular and Oriental fare, those must have been fastidious indeed, who could find anything to decry either as to profusion, variety, or quality, during that Mediterranean passage. Fish, flesh, and fowl in various forms, delicious bread, butter, and eggs, fruits and preserves, and fresh salads of every kind, covered the tables daily at the three chief meals. The only bad things were the tea and coffee, and certainly these were no exception to the general vileness of such beverages at sea. Why they should always be detestable it is difficult to say—certainly it is from no niggardliness with the material—but any benevolent purser who could effect a reform in this particular, would be well entitled to the gratitude of his suffering fellow-creatures.

Of suffering, however, no one seemed to think that morning. The vessel still lay anchored at the quay, and it was not till some time after breakfast that her preparations were complete. Gradually everyone found his way on deck, when the sun was bright and the air clear and pleasant; and one by one the fellow-passengers to whom I had introductions found me out and came with kind offers of service. It was no small comfort throughout the voyage that these introductions placed me at once on friendly terms with some of the best people on board.

At last the loading was completed, the band stationed themselves and began a lively strain, and off we started. I had dreaded this moment from my Folkestone recollections; but it was soon evident there was no cause for fear. The Gulf of "Lions," for once in a placid mood, was as different from the tossing Channel as the "Mongolia" from the wretched little boat that had been the scene of so much misery. Our stately vessel moved as

quietly and with as little effort as a swan; no one had the best excuse for being ill, and accordingly no one accepted it. The sea lay like a lake, the sky was almost cloudless, the air cold but dry, and we coasted along the Gulf with quite a panorama of beauty all the way, a chain of white rocky islets rising one behind the other and one after the other out of the waves, near enough for us to catch all their varying effects of light and shade.

After luncheon we came up on deck again, and I had a long and interesting conversation with one of my new friends. Though still a young man, he had held one high appointment in the Civil Service, and had returned to England to qualify himself for other posts by reading for the Bar; and while thus occupied had found time to work an enormous London district in connection with some society for the Relief of Destitution. He was now on his way out again with his wife and their beautiful infant; and the apparent chance which gave me an introduction to them and made me a member of their party throughout the voyage, was by no means one of the least blessings of the way.

The day wore on rapidly till the four o'clock dinner. Then came another promenade on deck, with the band playing in the twilight, then tea, and an interval of journal and letter writing, and I was glad to go early to my cabin and make up for nights of broken rest.

When the stewardess woke me with the early cup of coffee, Corsica lay before the cabin window in the dim morning light, and I soon roused myself, anxious to lose nothing of the scenery. Day broke rapidly, and I opened the window and stood before it, hardly able to turn for a moment from the exceeding beauty of the sight. This side of the island is abrupt and rugged, apparently of the same rock as the islets passed before;

and there are some lofty hills. Across the breast of these lay a long strip of white cloud, and below rocks looked cold and grey, but above it their crests caught the rays of the unrisen sun, and were flushed with a crimson haze that made them beautiful exceedingly. Mile after mile the island floated by with... than one white town nestling at its base; but by time I was ready to go on deck it had passed away. Sardinia lay alongside, much larger, but not nearly so beautiful. We were coasting along it nearly all day, the weather perfect and the sea as calm as if no storm ever broke over it. Flocks of sea-gulls appeared at intervals; their white breasts glancing in the sunshine as they darted down for food, or rose into the air; and we passed one or two distant sails.

After breakfast a missionary clergyman arranged to have daily service in the saloon at ten o'clock, and there was a large attendance of passengers throughout the voyage. Even those who would not have cared to go to church on shore, were glad of the break in the monotony of the day, and the sound of the bell was always the signal for a very general abandonment of deck-chairs, and novels, and needlework, and even of cigars. Prayer-books and Bibles were ranged along the tables by the stewards, a reading-desk extemporised from some cushions covered with the Union Jack, and by the time the clergyman had donned his surplice a considerable congregation had generally assembled. There was always to me a great charm and appropriateness about those morning services, the daily gathering of a company of travellers bound for distant lands, and unknown trials and perils, round the throne of the "Eternal Lord God, Who alone spreads out the heavens and rules the raging of the sea;" and the constant prayer that we might "return in safety to enjoy the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our

labc[illegible]s and with a thankful remembrance of His mercies," must have found an echo in many a heart still bleeding from the wrench of recent parting.

In every respect this Mediterranean voyage was delightful beyond all expectation. The perfect rest and change after weeks of trial and fatigue, the pure, invigorating air, the pleasant companions, and the novelty, and beauty, and interest of everything, seemed to inspire new life, and hours were spent every day in delightful exercise of mind and body. Every one said it was little less than a miracle to have such a voyage at the time of year, and the atmospheric effects were singularly striking and beautiful.

At sunrise the next morning we were just approaching Sicily, and again I had a vision of glory never to be forgotten. The island lay before us, a panorama of rock and mountain as far as the eye could reach, and the sea between was truly "a sea of glass, mingled with fire." Right in front of the vessel, the sun was rising in cloudless splendour, melting sea and sky into one flood of dazzling light, and we seemed steering straight into the glory. Behind us rose a grand rocky islet towering from the waves, and clothed from base to summit with a crimson haze; while above it lay *heaps* of rose-coloured cloud glowing like fire against the still blue of the sky.

About nine o'clock that evening we were summoned on deck to see the lights of Malta, which we were rapidly nearing. The ship sent up rockets and fired a gun,—a startling surprise to those who were unprepared for the discharge. It was answered by a rocket from the harbour, and we steered in—the island and town rising before us under the full moon, almost as clearly as by daylight. It looked very white and fairy-like, as the steam was turned off and we glided gently to the

entrance of the quarantine harbour. The other harbour lay to the left, and just in front rose the citadel and the church built by Queen Adelaide. As soon as we stopped, a shoal of feluccas came off, their coloured lights sparkling like glowworms on the water, and most of the gentlemen went ashore, but it was too cold and too late for ladies, and at last we went below. It was difficult, however, to prevail upon oneself to go to bed. The scene was too dream-like in its loveliness, the white buildings and fortifications glistening in the full moonlight, and the sea reflecting it like a mirror. I did not go to sleep till long after the ship's lights were out; and when morning broke, every trace of the beautiful vision had vanished. The only memorials of it remaining were the exquisite bunches of roses, heath, and small white narcissus which adorned the breakfast table.

The crew were all paraded on deck at ten, and the church bell began soon after. There was full morning service attended by all the passengers and most of the officers, crew, and stewards. Our missionary fellow-traveller gave us a very good sermon, and when some of us went forward afterwards with a number of tracts for the sailors, they were very thankfully received.

In the evening there was some heavy rain and a brilliant lunar rainbow, but the clouds soon parted, and we left them behind. We had service again at eight, and a very impressive sermon on the words "My times are in Thy hand." The preacher spoke solemnly about the close of the year, especially addressing those who were about to settle in foreign lands, and reminding them of their Christian opportunities and responsibilities; and after this we spent a very quiet pleasant evening. I sat up in my cabin till the new year, and thought of all who would then be remembering me. The sea was much rougher than it had been before, the waves breaking in

. white foam as far as the eye could reach, and look-
ry lovely in the clear moonlight, but heaving close
he vessel in long ridges with deep troughs between.
held on her way almost unmoved, and there was
hing in her steady course "walking in brightness,"
by a hidden force and guided by an unseen
, was very cheering and full of strength and
.. It was blessed to think of all who at that time were meeting round the throne of grace, and realize that we were all in the same ark of safety, being carried over "the waves of this troublesome world" towards the haven where we would be.

The new year dawned but gloomily—a heaving sea and stormy sky; and the day was varied with heavy showers and magnificent rainbows. There were many absentees both from breakfast and dinner, but I was able to put in an appearance at both, and enjoyed a long walk with the friend above mentioned. He told me about a fearful outbreak of cholera that had occurred in his district, sweeping away one-third of the European inhabitants in a single fortnight. His w'fe and children were away at the hills, and he opened h house as a hospital to all who liked to avail themselves of it, turning the large dining and drawing-rooms into regular cholera wards, besides visiting the sick at their own homes. The great point was to combat the excessive panic which the disease inspired, especially among the natives. Sometimes when summoned to a case, he found the man writhing in agony and all his family sitting round afraid to touch him, till at length he set the example, by himself rubbing the extremities and trying to restore circulation. Many died within three or four hours from the commencement of the attack.

Nothing occurred to vary the monotony of this day and the next, except the after-dinner speeches which

were made as usual on the last occasion of sittin
together. Col. —— as senior among the passeng
proposed the health of the captain and officers, than
them for their polite attentions during the voyage
the captain duly responded amid loud applause.
rest, it was too wet and windy to sit on deck
even under the awnings, so the passengers who
enough to leave their cabins spent the time accord
their several tastes—in reading, writing, talking, or playing
chess, or other games. The pilot was already on board,
a picturesque old fellow, with a white turban, grey beard,
and Turkish dress of blue cloth. The navigation into
Alexandria is said to be dangerous on account of shift-
ing sand banks. Almost every one was busy in the
evening, finishing letters to be posted before the follow-
ing day.

Our seventh and last day in the Mediterranean was decidedly the worst, the sea being so rough in the early morning that one had to hold on with one hand and dress with the other, and it seemed decidedly more prudent to have some tea and dry chicken on deck than to descend to breakfast.

After service there was a general repacking of port-manteaux and carpet-bags, and before long Alexandria came in sight; its harbour full of fine vessels, and the Pacha's palace and summer-house reminding us by their very oriental architecture that we had bidden farewell to Europe. Both were light and pretty, but looked far more like cardboard models than real buildings. Palm-trees grew near, and a row of nearly one hundred windmills dotted the long line of the sandy shore. We glided in among a host of vessels, large and small, under the ener-getic direction of our Arab pilot, passing, among others, a fine steamer of the Austrian Lloyds', two vessels of the P. and O. Company, two large Turkish men-of-war, their

boats rowing to and fro, filled with soldiers and musicians, some fine Liverpool ships, and a crowd of Egyptian boats, with boatmen of every shade of colour and every variety of costume. Some were Nubians, almost jet black; others Lascars or Arabs of lighter hues: some with only one garment, a kind of long blue cotton skirt; others with thick, dark, blanket-like drapery, and large pointed hoods drawn over their heads: some again were in full Eastern costume, with long striped garments and huge turbans, from beneath which bright silk scarfs, striped with vivid colours and fringed with elaborate tassels, hung loosely down the back and shoulders. These brilliant "puggeries" were often combined with a European coat and trousers of blue cloth and a red fez, and as yellow always predominates in their colouring, they added a striking effect to the costume.

After an early dinner we said farewell to our beautiful vessel and its pleasant captain, and embarked on the steam tender which was to take us to the station, a horrible, dirty, flat-bottomed boat, manned by natives, and worked in the most primitive style. It was a necessary exchange, for the harbour further in was not deep enough for a large vessel, but the transit was a most uncomfortable one. There was scarcely room to sit down; the smells were horrible, and these, combined with the great swell in the harbour, made some of the passengers ill even in the short voyage to shore. However, the boat was secured alongside the quay at last, though the energetic singing of the natives as they hauled us up was an amusing contrast to their listless handling of the ropes, and the whole party was soon landed on Egyptian soil.

Our short walk to the train was attended by a crowd—volunteer coolies, eager to carry our bags and umbrellas, boys with their skirts full of fine oranges for sale, and idlers with no particular object in view. Egyp-

tian women were sitting on the ground selling oranges, the picturesque veil of the country hiding everything but their eyes; and strings of camels stalked along close to the station, mingling ancient and modern associations most incongruously. There was no purchase of tickets, the Egyptian transit being included in the passage money paid to the Company; but when the train came up there was a rush for places, every party being naturally anxious to keep together.

At last all were settled, and we started on what was certainly the most memorable railway journey in my life. Everything was novel, everything picturesque, everything incongruous in the highest degree. The carriages only excepted. They were ancient specimens of English build, in a woeful state of disrepair, and the railway seemed laid to correspond. The line was so uneven that we rocked and rolled in a way that would have been alarming had not our progress been too slow to admit of any fear. One young man of our party, after exhausting every other device to occupy his restless spirit, got out of the window, all the doors being locked, and proceeded coolly along the train to pay visits to his friends in other carriages.

Our course at first lay through a strip of low, marshy ground, with the sea on one side and a canal on the other; between us and the latter, gardens, fields, and villages in quick succession. There were palms and other trees with very dense, dark foliage, gardens full of gigantic cabbages and other vegetables, and fields of rice, sugar-canes, and cotton, with the pods still hanging. Here and there came patches or belts of the most vivid green, apparently a kind of vetch; and above the embankment of the canal rose the long tapering sheets of the lateen-rigged boats, which form so characteristic feature in pictures of Egyptian scenery. Every now and

then we passed groups of natives mounted on donkeys, or accompanying laden camels or droves of buffaloes. Some of the villages were more like mere rabbit warrens, one row of doors above another opening into the banks of dried mud, of which the dwellings were composed; others looked more like clusters of large brown bee-hives, thickly set on almost every rising ground. Just at sunset we saw a solitary Mussulman in the field kneel for his evening prayer. He was a fine tall man in flowing white garments, and as he first prostrated himself and then knelt and repeatedly bowed his forehead to the earth, the sight was very touching. It was the first time, but by no means the last, that the unaffected devotion of Mahometans or heathen gave me a pang of shame for myself and fellow Christians.

But the railway stations! No power of pen or pencil could convey more than a faint idea of their abounding and most ludicrous anomalies. The station itself was generally a square stone building, without any apparent means of light or ventilation, or sometimes of entrance; contiguous to which was a long, open shed, where groups of Arabs or Egyptians squatted smoking. Officials, in every variety of dress, from blue cotton shirt and drawers, bare legs and skull cap, up to cloth uniform and fez or turban, came to the carriage-doors with directions in singularly broken English, or rang a cracked bell as the signal for departure. At one station, which we did not reach till long after nightfall, there was a refreshment-room, but none of the ladies of our party got out, and the scene opposite our carriage was amusing and picturesque in the extreme. A long row of stalls had been erected, and at these natives were selling provisions and fruit by the light of large lanterns, holding up and proffering their goods with eager gesticulations, and dilating on their cheapness in a rapid sort of

guttural chant. A water-carrier walked up and down the train, supplying water from his goatskin bag; and imposing officials, with long striped robes and turbans and wands of office, stood in a row on the platform, which was lighted by tall, iron braziers, filled with blazing wood; the background was thick darkness, and the red glare falling on so many wild forms and unaccustomed faces, produced effects of light and shade more easily imagined than described. The unusual crowd was probably owing to the fact of some races being in progress at Cairo; owing to which, and to the consequent want of room at the hotels, we were debarred from the usual alternative of staying for the night at the capital, and had to push through to Suez.

The half-hour allowed for refreshment passed much more quickly and satisfactorily for those who remained in the train, than for those who had been tempted out by the prospect of a hot supper. Everything was as dear and as bad as possible; the coffee undrinkable, the bread sour, and the beer, though in Allsopp's bottles, apparently of Egyptian manufacture. However, what was wanting in the fare, was made up in the charge—5s. each for supper, and 2s. 6d. for a bottle of beer; and at last we were on our way again, passing one or two branches of the Nile by moonlight, and hurrying past one village after another, till we got into the desert, with its monotonous wastes of sand flats and sand hills. The night grew very cold, and we all tried, with more or less success, to wrap ourselves against the draughts of our creaky old carriage, and go to sleep.

After an hour or two of interrupted rest, our quiet was alarmingly disturbed. One of our party, who had partaken of the memorable bottle of beer at the road-side station, was seized with violent cramps and sickness—the more distressing from the impossibility of stopping

anywhere, or obtaining medical aid. Providentially a gentleman in the carriage had some spirits of camphor with him, and administered it with partial success, though both cramps and sickness returned at intervals throughout the night to a distressing degree; and when we reached Suez at six in the morning, the unfortunate invalid could scarcely walk the few yards to the hotel. Here, also, there was not a single room unoccupied, and he had to rest as well as he could, in a large public apartment, furnished all round with sofas. There was a similar room for ladies, comfortably fitted up, and hung with Landseer's familiar engravings; and here, after the great refreshment of even limited ablutions, we had coffee, and lay down to rest till the general breakfast hour.

The hotel is very comfortable, and built in a style well suited to the climate; it encloses a quadrangular court of considerable size, partly covered with an awning, under which small tables were set out, intermingled with fountains, and vases and stands of flowers. These were all bordered with ice-plants, which fell over the sides in a deep fringe of cool, vivid green, and filled with petunias, oleanders, and other greenhouse flowers in full bloom. The ground was strewn with shells from the shore, and as we looked down from the windows of the long corridor, which runs all round the building, everything bore a clear, fresh aspect under the bright morning sun. Bheesties, in scanty and tattered clothing, with bare brown arms and legs, were coming in with their goatskins full, and returning with them empty and dripping; and native servants, in full Eastern costume, were standing in groups, or hurrying to and fro.

Breakfast was a dear and pretentious meal, but the crowd of hungry travellers did full justice to it; and

after an interval of letter-writing, we went out for a ramble through the bazaars. We had been warned of the smells and of the filth we should encounter, but nothing could fully prepare an inexperienced European for either. First, there were camels' skins lying in the sun, moist and most odoriferous, in an early stage of tanning; then, everywhere in the narrow streets, an amount and variety of filth, to which few Continental towns could offer the faintest parallel. The bazaar is a perfect maze of tortuous alleys and open market-places, filled with stalls and shops of all descriptions, and with all odours equally varied. Here were "two women-grinding at a mill," sitting on the ground close together, and making one flat stone revolve upon another; and hosts of "children, sitting in the market-place," gambling with pebbles, and otherwise amusing themselves. One or two were rather pretty, but the majority dirty in the extreme, and many of them disgusting objects from ophthalmia, their eyes being covered with swarms of flies. It is very necessary here to take care that no fly settles on one's face, as this repulsive complaint, and perhaps others, may be communicated by these insects after their contact with the disease.

The view down some of the narrow streets, with goods and garments hanging overhead, and the houses nearly meeting, was very picturesque. There are no fronts to the shops, so that the goods are all exposed to view, and the proprietors generally sit cross-legged and smoking, inside. One man, in a barber's shop, was having his head shaved, full in public view, and here and there veiled women passed us; but the great majority of the passers-by were men. The general aspect of the food was certainly not inviting, but two articles looked pre-eminently disagreeable—barrels of

cookery is performed, and tubs of dates, smashed into a disgusting-looking mass, and thickly covered with the all-pervading flies. Camels lay here and there, being loaded, but donkeys seemed in general use for riding, and goats, kids, fowls, and surly, sneaking dogs walked everywhere quite at their ease. There were a few shabby French shops, but the sun was too hot for more than a hurried view of the bazaar, and we returned to rest in the shady verandah, looking over the sea, and watching the boats and boatmen below. A group of Nubians and Egyptians were sitting lazily in the sun, at the corner of the landing-place, listening to a native drum, when another very well-dressed and respectable-looking native, in long striped robes and an imposing turban, came by with a small parcel for one of the boats. He stopped and began to dance to the music, and laugh and joke with the bystanders, and we were at first amused at his antics; but when he came nearer we found, from his unsteady walk, that he was intoxicated, and as he got to the boat-side he began to abuse one of the men in the foulest broken English, with words that he had probably picked up from some of our sailors without understanding them. The remark of one of the gentlemen was an awful reproach to our nation, and it is to be feared only too true, "The first English word these fellows pick up is always a curse."

At last the glare of the sun on the water made us feel very sick and giddy, and we retreated from the verandah to the ladies' room. Here a short sleep rather refreshed us, but as we were still disinclined to face the long, hot dinner and the noise of the band which was already beginning to play below, we had some bread and fruit brought up from the table, and rested till the train from Cairo brought up the Southampton passengers who had waited there; and after they had dined we all started

together about five o'clock in the tender which was to convey us to the ship. Large vessels cannot come within a considerable distance of Suez, so they are obliged to employ these tenders, which only draw perhaps a couple of feet of water.* Ours was very crowded, though it only carried passengers and their hand baggage, but we sat down on a pile of carpet-bags, and found the transit tolerably comfortable.

We had to make a long circuit in the harbour to put some of our number on board the Mauritius steamer, so it was quite dark when we reached the "Nemesis," where the aspect of things in general were sufficiently discouraging. Nearly two hundred passengers, including forty-six young children, had to be crowded into a heavy, unwieldy, old steamer, so low in the water that it was evident we could not often look for open ports. My berth was allotted in the cabin next the pantry, and no one who has not been on board one of these large steamers, with meals going on all day, can imagine the amount of clatter and discomfort which this involves. Even these undesirable quarters were shared with three fellow-passengers, and there was not a hook or nail in the cabin where one of us could hang a single article of dress. Our portmanteaux had to be pushed under the berths, and dragged out again for everything we wanted, and the standing-space was too small for two of us ever to dress at the same time. Imagine this, with the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean in pros-

* This, and several other points were altered before my return journey. The largest vessels can now anchor by the quay at Suez; the Marseilles boat no longer touches at Malta; the railway route between Alexandria and Suez no longer passes Cairo; and the wretched old vessel which was the scene of so much discomfort, figures no more on the P. & O. list of steamers.

pect, and the dread certainty of closed windows nearly all the way!

Fortunately, however, we were at anchor for the night, and there was no noise or motion to disturb the rest we so much needed.



II

Jan. 5. The deck next morning was the theatre of a noisy scene, more interesting than satisfactory to the spectators. The boat with our baggage was alongside, and the baggage itself was being pitched on board in the most reckless manner. Portmanteaux were burst open, iron bands torn off, boxes broken, and the deck strewn with large nails forced out of packing-cases. We had to watch for the arrival of our cabin-packages and see them carried to our quarters; and one unfortunate lady, who trusted to the promised care of an officer and neglected to assure herself personally of the conveyance of her baggage to her cabin, had it all consigned to the hold, and was obliged to wear warm dresses till the next baggage-day, no representations being of any avail to open the doors of that obdurate treasure-house. Except under these uncomfortable circumstances there was nothing to complain of in these first few days on the Red Sea. The heat was moderate, and the breeze at times almost too strong for comfort. Land was visible on both sides all the first day, long ranges of sandstone rocks, often wild and beautiful in form and colour, either rising almost from the water's edge, or forming a background to plains of bare and arid sand. The shipwrecked mariner in this sea has indeed a terrible prospect before

him unless speedily discovered by some passing vessel. We had on board a large number of passengers who had recently undergone a similar experience on a coral reef off the Brazilian coast, and their vivid accounts of danger and adventure occupied many an hour of the daily promenade on deck. Altogether we soon settled into the regular routine of ship life in warm latitudes, and a very dreamy *far niente* existence it is, though its delights are few. Early in the morning the decks are too wet after the daily washing for much comfort, and the crowded cabins simply unendurable; while the heat, even under the double awning on the quarter-deck soon became overpowering, the thermometer in the companion ranging from eighty to ninety-six degrees between breakfast and dinner-time. We still had daily service at ten o'clock; and the saloon was generally occupied immediately after by a party rehearsing amateur theatricals, to whom it was ceded by tacit general consent. The rest of the passengers took books, or work, or chess up to the quarter-deck and bore the heat as best they could, reclining in their folding-chairs, and enduring with indolent and plaintive wonder the noisy gambols of the troop of children who, regardless alike of the heat and of the motion, appeared to consider the whole vessel and everything in it an institution for their special and peculiar benefit. Nurses and mammas were alike too sick or too indolent to check their uproar, and so a whole tribe of urchins of both sexes raced up and down the deck screaming and shouting at some tiny toy terriers which raced after them, adding their barking and yelping to the uproar; or played at horses, and made teams of the folding chairs with an energy and pertinacity exceedingly irritating to their suffering elders and betters. Under such circumstances writing required an almost superhuman effort; reading, except of the lightest kind, was barely possible;

and the relief was always great when the early dinner-bell summoned nurses and children below, and a temporary lull ensued. But the heat meanwhile waxed steadily more merciless, and the chief comfort of the day for those who were well enough to stir, was a cold bath before dressing for the four o'clock dinner. Those who did not venture to table stayed on deck, waited on indifferently by the busy stewardesses who had to secure their viands as they could; and if the doctor was propitious and ordered champagne, this meal was often the turning point of the day. Breakfast on board ship is too often a melancholy delusion, and tiffin little better; but if one *can* eat a dinner, its reviving and consolatory effects are speedily perceptible. Then, as the great red sun dips below the horizon, and the dazzling, quicksilvery brilliance of the heaving waters melts into a rich purple under the crimson and violet sky, comes the redeeming period of a tropical day. The breeze of evening circulates freely as the side-awnings are rolled up, the stars come out above, and are more than reflected in the dazzling phosphorescence of the waters, and the most listless of the sick and weary passengers revive. This is the time for long promenades on the crowded deck, and quiet conversations, or it may be flirtations in secluded gangways and dim corners—the time too, above all others, for home-sick musings and longings for the dear ones far away. The phosphoric light varies very much in brilliancy, and is best seen near the prow of the vessel, but at times it is wonderfully beautiful; spreading in broad streaks or flashes of silvery light along the crests of the parted waves, and melting away in the distance, while here and there balls of light, apparently as large as a small orange float singly or in glittering groups close to the vessel's side, "like fire-flies tangled in a silver braid." I once went forward under good escort to see it in perfection,

and, though the transit was unpleasant, past hen-coops and sheep-pens, and over sleeping Lascars stretched upon the deck, the sight more than repaid the exertion. The light broke in broad irregular waves from the prow, scattering in countless distinct stars which, as they floated away in the dim distance, could hardly be distinguished from the reflection of the stars above.

Next came the hour of tea, little heeded except by the fortunate individuals who possessed a private teapot, and then on fine nights the ship's lanterns were hung round the quarter-deck, the piano and the fiddler brought into requisition, and dancing began. There was plenty of space both for dancers and lookers-on down one side of the quarter-deck, as well as for the quieter members of the community on the other; and these evening hours were very enjoyable, except when the long sideways roll of the vessel grew too pronounced for comfort, and sent us, ill at ease, to try and get to sleep before worse miseries began. That going below was always a trial—down from the fresh cool air, and the soft darkness, through the glittering saloon with its array of decanters and glasses, its odours of negus and toddy, and its indefatigable card-players, into our stifling cabins, with the ports often shut, and the only ventilation derived from the saloon. I shall never forget the first night, when having gone to bed with the window open, and an occasional puff of the soft breeze fanning me in my lofty berth, I woke in total darkness and found myself half suffocated, and the port-hole closed. The ship's carpenter had been in while we were asleep, and screwed it down to keep out the rising waves; and presently, without leave asked or obtained, in he came again. I could just see by the dim light from the saloon that he was a Chinese—a sufficiently startling figure to find leaning over one in the dead of night—but he merely walked to the window, opened it with a turn of

the large screw and some heavy blows, and walked out again. We heard next morning that the sea had washed into some of the cabins, and one lady had to stay in bed because all her possessions were drenched.

So the dreamy days wore on, varied by few incidents worthy of record, though there was, as usual, a vast amount of petty gossip afloat. One day, however, just before dinner a little excitement was created by a lady passenger suddenly proclaiming that we were passing through a shoal of shrimps. Every one went to the side to see, and we found ourselves traversing a large field of floating sea weed, evidently washed up by the gale of the night before, while mingled with this, or floating apart from it in a thick scum on the surface, were shoals of what certainly looked at the first glance very like large boiled prawns, being about the same general shape and size and the same bright colour. We watched for some time, quite unable to decide what they were, till some one, keener sighted than the rest, pronounced them to be locusts. This the quarter-master confirmed, adding that large flights were often drowned in this sea; and, indeed, the number on this occasion must have been very great, for the ship was a long while getting clear of them. It brought back vividly the recollection of the "mighty strong west wind," which, more than three thousand years ago, swept their swarming myriads out of Egypt to perish in these very waters.

Sunday brought quite a novel scene at the roll call after breakfast. Instead of the English sailor-faces and uniforms, to which we were accustomed in the other ship, there was a curious array of nationalities ranged on each side of the deck for the captain's inspection. At one end stood the few European seamen in proper sailor dress, and next to them a number of Chinese similarly apparelled, except that they wore their national broad straw hats;

next came others in white blouses, wide blue trousers, and bare feet; and then a long row of Lascars, very inferior in size and appearance, but attired in like manner. On the other side of the deck were ranged two more rows of natives, those on one side in white calico, edged with scarlet, and the others in white edged with blue; their superiors and a few Sepoys being distinguished by more fanciful uniforms. At half-past ten the deck was prepared for service, the forms and deck seats placed across as in a church, and a pile of cushions covered with the Union Jack, arranged as a desk. The piano was brought into requisition to lead the hymns, and everything was done in the most decent and orderly manner, but few of us were able really to enjoy it, owing to heavy headache and drowsiness, the result of heat and sleepless nights. Evening service was held in the saloon, and we had an energetic practical sermon on the words, "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be," the preacher dwelling much upon Epiphany lessons, and on the duties of Christian residents in heathen lands.

The next two days were very rough, the ship pitching tremendously, and the sea continually getting into some unfortunate cabin. We fared no better than our neighbours—a tremendous wave dashing all over our little dormitory, drenching the sofa berth under the window, and the low one opposite, and even splashing my high shelf above. The ports were all closed after this, and the prospect of spending the night below was so unbearable, that the captain arranged for all who chose to do so, to sleep on deck. One side was accordingly set apart for ladies, and the cabin stewards having brought up our mattrasses and pillows, and ranged them on the skylights, benches, and deck, we crept up after the saloon lights were extinguished, to make ourselves as comfortable as we could. It was an infinite relief to escape from the in-

tolerable atmosphere below, for a cool breeze was blowing, and the heat was bearable. The stars were glorious, the moon having not yet risen, and it was strange in waking moments to look straight up at Orion's glittering armour. But the worst misery of all the voyage, was the relentless call at half-past four to get up, that the men might scour the decks. The stewards rolled up the mattrasses and walked off with them, and we followed, shrinking from the foul air of the close saloon, where the stewards and some of the passengers had been sleeping on and under the long tables. My cabin was worse still, for the solitary fellow-traveller who had preferred to sleep below, had opened the bull's eye to get a breath of air, and had another sea in. The whole place was full of soaked clothes and the berths piled with them, so there was nothing for it, in the dim light, but to push everything to one end, get the mattrass and pillows laid down, rolled up as they were, at the other, and then climb up and settle the chaos as well as circumstances allowed, for another fragment of comfortless slumber.

Without this daily scrubbing of the spotless planks—a remnant of barbarous red-tape tyranny that might fairly be abolished under such peculiar circumstances—we might have had good nights to help us through the daily miseries of the tropic seas, and envious glances would not have turned so often to the luxurious cabin in the centre of the deck, where the captain could breathe pure air night and day, safe from ill odours and invading waves.

Jan. 11*th.* Our seventh night on the Red Sea carried us safely through the Straits of Babelmandeb, the long-dreaded Gate of Tears, which has not yet ceased to deserve its ancient name. On the ridge of black rocks which lay on our port side at early morning, with its long, outlying chain of dangerous points above and below

the surface, the "Alma" perished in the night, and we could not watch the waves breaking wildly over them, without feeling thankful that our passage was by day. We soon got into smoother water, and at ten o'clock anchored close to Aden. Singularly enough, for it is said not to rain here oftener than once in two or three years, it poured heavily for the first half-hour, and the dark outlines of the precipitous rocks that compose this inhospitable settlement, gloomed on us dimly through a cloud of vapour.

Aden is evidently of volcanic origin, a mere mass of steep, reddish, jagged rocks, interspersed with little sandy nooks, and with not a tree or a blade of grass to be seen. There are a few buildings near the harbour, a small hotel or two kept by Parsees, who also keep open the few shops in the place, some petty official residences, and an immense coal depôt, supplied from England. The importance of the port for this purpose, may be estimated from the fact that our steamer consumed regularly from forty to sixty tons a day, and that Aden is the great coaling station for all the P. and O. vessels to Bombay, Calcutta, Mauritius, Australia, and China.

Boats soon came off to us in great numbers, manned by scantily-clad natives with frizzy heads of reddish hair, which looked strange on their dark skins. They are said to give it this tinge by artificial means, and if this is true, modern belles who are not satisfied without a tint more brilliant than nature has bestowed, do but follow the fashion set long ago by these amphibious Arabs. They are small, lithe, bronze fellows, very active and good-natured looking, and quite as much at their ease in the water as on dry land. Some brought Parsees on business, dark, comfortable looking men, with neat, white garments, and singular brown, helmet-like caps. Other boats were full of Arab pedlars, loaded with ostrich feathers, native

baskets and boxes; coral, shells, etc.; and an amusing scene began. These men went round the decks offering their goods at most exorbitant prices, and selling them after endless chaffering in fragmentary English for a tenth of the original demand. Meanwhile the divers crowded round the ship, *sitting still* in the clear green water, as comfortably as if they had some solid resting place, and clamouring for small silver to be thrown to them. Now and then, some one tossed a sixpence or a threepence far out into the water, and in a moment a dozen dusky forms turned upside down and dashed after it. The water closed over them, and for a second there was nothing to be seen but a confused crowd of brown arms and legs, and then they came up again one by one, the fortunate finder displaying the coin in triumph, before thrusting it into his cheek as the safest depository, in readiness for another dive. Some of the men had their cheeks crammed with small coins before the morning was over. Some climbed into the rigging and plunged from a height into the water, and even offered to dive under the ship and come up on the other side for a rupee, but no one encouraged them to try. Many of the passengers went off to shore as soon as possible, to escape the coaling, which is always a nuisance, but especially so at Aden, where the heat reduces much of the coal to fine, black dust, which penetrates in spite of all precaution, to every part of the vessel; but we preferred waiting for the evening, instead of venturing across the blazing sea on to the shadeless land. At last evening came, and we started in an old boat without a rudder, manned by half-a-dozen grinning, active little fellows, who rowed us to shore, using their long paddles very briskly. They had picked up just enough English to be understood, and were very voluble in their eagerness that we should have "Number 6 boat" when we wanted

to return. As they ran the boat on shore, Mr. ——, who had his beautiful little boy in his arms, called for one of them to help the ladies out, and it was absurd to see the air with which a slim, almost naked boy of apparently about thirteen, offered his hand to support a lady of treble his size and weight. Another volunteered to fetch us a carriage for four, but presently returned with the news that there were none to be had, bringing two buggies instead. For the benefit of the untravelled, it may be as well to state that the buggy, the most popular vehicle for gentlemen in India, is a large gig on very high wheels, with a head which gives it a very top-heavy appearance. The two in question were of the most dingy and dilapidated description, but there was no alternative, so we managed to climb in and pack ourselves, the driver responding to our query as to where he would sit, by slapping his thighs, with a broad grin, and declaring, "Me horse, me good as horse," which he proceeded to verify by cracking his whip and running alongside the animal, certainly equalling its speed with little apparent effort.

After a visit to the post-office and to one or two shops where everything was exorbitantly dear, we set off for a drive round the bay, which really looked pretty in the fast closing twilight. It was a novel ride, but certainly a pleasant one. The evening breeze blew softly from the sea, and the Arab drivers trotted on holding the reins, and keeping up easily with their horses along the smooth narrow road, the dark rocks bounding the view on one side, and on the other the harbour with its twinkling lights, and the innumerable host of heaven, "most calm, most bright" above. Now and then we passed a solitary Arab mounted on a camel, or a long string of the silent-footed beasts laden with fuel or fodder, then

the hungry lizards watching for insects round the dim oil lamp over some trader's door. Most of our passengers had driven out to the cantonments, which are large and well worth seeing, but we had no time for this, and were heartily glad to find ourselves safe on board again, for one can scarcely fancy a worse mishap than being left behind in this parched, rocky wilderness. The captain told us that he had once been obliged to leave five passengers ashore here, they having neglected to return at the appointed time; and in such a case they would have to live at their own expense till the arrival of the next fortnight's steamer—a lesson in punctuality that few would choose to undergo.

For the next portion of the voyage the heatwas intense, and the motion very trying. Most people slept on deck, braving the nightly inconveniences, and the early morning miseries, for the sake of even a few hours of coolness and fresh air. The forenoon and early afternoon passed in listless drowsiness, the very punkah boys going to sleep while pulling, and only roused now and then by the sepoy going round and administering a sharp box on the ears. Then they would wake up with a grin that displayed their beautiful white teeth to perfection, pull for a few minutes, and gradually drop off to sleep again. The sea in its quiet moods glowed like a mass of molten silver, heaving in white heat under the glare of the pitiless sun, and the shoals of flying fish that rose continually from the waves and flitted across the surface, soon sought refuge again from the fiery brightness. Once or twice we had a heavy storm, the rain *hissing* down into the sea with truly tropical violence; and then again came the long heaving swell that reduced both mind and body to the lowest pitch of passive endurance, and there were more drenched cabins, and closed ports became the order both of night and day.

One of the stewards died after many days of suffering

during which he was tended with womanly care and kindness by his overworked companions. Exhausted as they must have been by a day's toil, extending with little intermission from 5 a.m to 10 p.m., they came in at all hours of the night to sit with him, and render any service in their power. The clergyman was too ill to visit him except for a few minutes at a time, but my friend did all he could to supply the place, read to him, prayed with him, and sat up with him many hours, winning golden opinions from all the poor fellow's comrades. The funeral was very solemn, attended by the officers in full uniform, the stewards, and the English sailors, and as many of the passengers as chose to be present. The body, sewn up in canvas with heavy weights, and covered with the Union Jack, was carried from the forecastle to the opening of the bulwarks, preceded by the clergyman in his surplice, and rested on a stretcher covered with a flag during the service. Then as the words were spoken, "We now commit his body to the deep," the stretcher was run out to the side, the flags instantaneously withdrawn, and the heavy splash told that the ocean had him safely in her keeping till the sea should give up her dead.

The next event of consequence was the sudden and startling illness of our kind brave friend, which seemed for a few hours likely to end in death. It was very awful to see him, late so buoyant, energetic and self-forgetting, stretched helpless and apparently dying on the deck; but God was merciful in our extremity, and the strong bright life that scattered sunshine and kindness everywhere around, was spared for further usefulness.

Nothing else broke the monotony of the voyage until we reached Ceylon, except the coming off of the long expected theatricals, which were arranged with an amount of care and pains very inadequately repaid by the results.

Part of the deck was screened off for the performance, and a drop scene suspended in front, the top and the side scenes being really contrived and draped with skill and taste. The programme, too, was beautifully illuminated by one of the stewards, but the performances were two wretched farces, and the acting for the most part below criticism—all the female parts being represented by the younger gentlemen in dresses borrowed from their lady friends.

Jan. 21*st.* At last, after ten days of the Indian Ocean, we anchored late in the evening outside the port of Galle, which it is dangerous to enter in the darkness. Every one was early on deck next morning, and in high spirits at the prospect of a day on shore, and the ship was alive with Cingalese salesmen bringing jewels, models of boats, combs, and tortoiseshell ornaments for sale. They all wore long hair, twisted into a knot like a woman's behind, and kept back in front by a round comb, such as children in England sometimes wear, so that, as our incorrigible punster remarked, "It is difficult to tell the Cingalese (single hes) from the single shes." Their canoes, too, are extraordinary vessels, long and narrow, with high, straight, perpendicular sides, to one of which an outrigger is attached: that is, a heavy log of wood fastened to the top by two curved spars so as to lie parallel with the boat and steady it in the water. This strange contrivance makes it almost impossible to upset them even in the heaviest sea. The boatmen row with long paddles, and are a good-looking symmetrical race, very like statues of reddish bronze.

The harbour is a perilous one, from the numerous reefs it contains, but it is most picturesque and lovely, semi-circular in shape, and bounded on one side by heights covered with cocoa palms and other rich and vivid vegetation. These slope down gradually, still covered

with the most luxuriant green, and the rocks pierced for cannon till they terminate in a reef at the other extremity, one or two low ridges also lying within the harbour. It was on one of these that the mail steamer, which took out Lord Elgin and Baron Gros to China, was wrecked. She had just lifted her anchor, but not got up sufficient steam to be well under control, and the current drove her on the reef. The ambassadors had only time to secure their despatches, and everything else went down. The mails and specie, and most of the cargo were recovered by divers, and a gentleman who had witnessed the operation remarked how wonderful it seemed to see them handing about the heavy boxes, as if they had been trifling parcels, weight being very little felt under water.

It took about ten minutes to row to the landing stage, and from there we had only a short and shady walk to a nice hotel. Galle is truly a most lovely place, and, indeed, it scarcely needed the cool rocky shade and the roads fringed with beautiful trees to make it delightful to our sea-wearied eyes. After a breakfast, at which we first saw and tasted plantains, we started about nine o'clock in a light covered car to visit the Mission House and Orphanage at Buona Vista, the height above the harbour. It is about three miles from the hotel, along a road which first winds through rows of native shops, then through a grove of palms that skirts the bay, dotted everywhere with native houses, and finally ascends the hill so abruptly that no carriage can go up. Everything on either hand was novel and interesting. There were the long narrow bullock carts of the country, covered with fresh matting of green plaited leaves; boys with long hair twisted up, and clean white garments, on their way to school; men and women, almost undistinguishable from each other, carrying large water-pots or palm-leaf umbrellas; Buddhist priests in their yellow robes; shops full of fruit and

other commodities; and huts, where all kinds of domestic scenes were being transacted in full view of passers by. Here and there between the groups of plantains and the trunks of the tall palms we caught glimpses of the harbour, with water bluer than the sky, and ships riding at anchor; and presently the road grew steeper, till at last we were obliged to get out and walk up to our journey's end. The first thing that struck me, as we commenced the ascent, was the profuse growth of orange-coloured lantana, which covered every waste spot as thickly as brambles and nettles do in England. It is identical with the old greenhouse favourite at home, and being in full blossom, its aromatic scent was very pleasant. There were not many other flowers till we got to Buona Vista, but the vegetation was luxuriant and varied, and the scenery indescribably beautiful—every turn in the path displaying fresh glades, and ravines, and distant hills. The heat of the sun, even at that early hour, was intense, and the ascent trying; but at last we came in sight of the school, and a little higher of the missionary's house, which stands on the summit of the headland, surrounded by palms, with a clearing in front just wide enough to allow a noble view of the harbour. Here we were kindly welcomed by the clergyman in temporary charge, and spent a very pleasant day. They insisted upon our joining them at a second breakfast, after which we visited the schools. Everything seemed very satisfactory, the native female teacher very gentle and pleasant mannered, and the master an intelligent and apparently well-informed man. The girls were remarkably bright and quick, and as merry and clean as possible. It costs less than £5 a year to maintain and clothe one of them, and their dress is very neat and graceful. They learn to read and write English and Cingalese, and to embroider, and make lace, which is sold for the school. After look-

ing at their work and their copy books, we followed them to the eating-room, and saw them enjoying a plentiful breakfast of fish curry, which they all ate with their fingers, in no wise abashed by the presence of strangers.

Then we went on to the boys' school, and heard them read their Scripture portion in English, which they did quite as well as boys of the same age in an ordinary village school at home. After questioning and talking to them and to the master for some time, we returned to the house, had tiffin, and sat a long while in the shady back verandah, looking over one of the loveliest views imaginable. Behind the house the ground slopes almost as abruptly as in front, into an expanse of jungle, which, as well as the hills beyond, is thick with cocoa palms. A stream of water winds through it far below, and beyond all rises the outline of distant and lofty mountains. The foreground was a little patch of neglected garden, filled with flowers that in England would only live in greenhouse or hothouse air; splendid gardenias (Cape jessamines), oleanders, eight or ten feet high, hoyas, and brilliant blue creepers, with many others quite new to me. One, which I knew afterwards as perhaps the commonest of Indian shrubs, is a kind of hibiscus, a large, bushy shrub, with a magnificent crimson blossom, remarkable for its very prominent style and stamens; another, sometimes called the "temple flower," from its being constantly offered to the gods, grows in large bunches on a bare, almost leafless shrub, and has thick, white petals deeply tinged with yellow in the centre, and an overpoweringly sweet smell. Without walking many yards in that desolate garden, we gathered as many flowers as we could hold, most of them far more gorgeous in size and colour than an ordinary English greenhouse could supply. Then we rambled to the edge of the cliffs overhanging the harbour, half afraid of snakes or scorpions,

but seeing only splendid butterflies and magnificent ferns among the tall palms and boulders and the thickets of lantana. Some of the ferns had large palmate fronds of a texture stouter than the hart's tongue, others were delicate little spleenworts, but there were none that we could positively identify with English varieties. There were ants' nests up in the trees, made by fastening the leaves together, and looking not unlike birds' nests, though woe to the unhappy wight who should be deluded into attacking them under that mistake!

One of the native boys climbed a palm tree, and threw us down some cocoa-nuts, unripe, but containing a large quantity of cool, refreshing fluid, not yet hardened into fruit. Green cocoa-nuts are extensively sold in India, solely for the sake of this beverage, the natives opening them dexterously with a hatchet without spilling a drop, and handing the green goblet to their customer, who must be thirsty indeed if he is not satisfied with the abundant draught.

Our kind host dined early in the evening on our account; and during dinner a large porcupine, evidently a privileged pet, came in through the front-door, and went straight to a plate of boiled rice set down in a corner, erecting his quills like an angry turkey-cock when any of the servants came too near him. After dinner we said good-bye, and started to walk down the hill, by the light of a new but brilliant moon, and the shrill music of the crickets swarming in the grass and trees. Thousands of fireflies darted in and out among the underwood, gleaming like fairy lamps; but, taken separately, the light is neither so large nor so pretty as that of an English glowworm. The insect itself is a small narrow beetle, about a third of an inch in length, with wing-cases and body of a dull brown; the light proceeding, as in the glowworm, from the hinder segments.

The carriage was awaiting us at the foot of the hill, and we reached the boat and the ship in safety, thus ending a most memorable and delightful day.

We had said good-bye to our friends among the Australian and China passengers before going ashore, and when we returned their vessels were on the point of starting, so our passengers stayed late on deck, and gave them a hearty cheer as they steamed out.

Jan. 23*rd*. The next day was a miserable one for all of us. Everyone was very tired, and when the sea grew rough we were very wretched altogether. One of the gentlemen who had been trying to pick up a few Hindustani words in readiness for Calcutta, caused great amusement by a ludicrous mistake. He had been ill in the night, the consequence, probably, of partaking of the rich prawn curry, for which Galle is famed; and being terribly afraid of cholera, had the doctor summoned to his cabin. The latter very naturally asked him what he had been eating, and our friend, as is usually the case, ascribing the blame to a perfectly innocent article of diet, intended to attribute it to some bananas, which we had all tasted for the first time that day. In his fright, however, he confounded the name with another in his limited Hindustani vocabulary, and informed the doctor that he had eaten a couple of "pyjamas" (pairs of drawers)! His amused interlocutor could only tell him that if he took to such extraordinary diet he would not answer for the consequences; but the anecdote soon circulated round the ship, and originated many a covert jest at the expense of the unconscious student.

But the night was the climax of discomfort, at least as far as our immediate circle was concerned. The sea got into our cabin in the afternoon and drenched everything, so all the ports were closed, and at night we left

of the cabin, and had our beds prepared on one of the sky-lights and the adjacent benches. Our slumbers were simultaneously disturbed in the middle of the night by various dreams of getting wet, and we awoke to the consciousness that it was a dismal reality. Though we were a good way under the awning, and it was fine when we went to bed, heavy splashes of rain were driving in upon us; and it was ludicrous, in the midst of the discomfort, to listen to the sleepy incoherences of one's companions. One announced that the sea was washing over us—a piece of intelligence which was received with great incredulity; another seemed profoundly indifferent, till it occurred to her that her feet were getting wet, when she made an alarmed retreat to her cabin; while a third suggested that we should finish our slumbers under an umbrella. At last we managed to drag our mattrasses under shelter, and slept till the usual gruff summons, "Wash deck, Sir," startled us at 4.30, when we huddled our pillows, etc., together, and stumbled, sickened and faint, through the stifling saloon into our cabins. There the atmosphere at first seemed simply unendurable; but after awhile sleep re-asserted its merciful dominion, and everything was forgotten till it was time to rise. Our invalid friend then opened the bull's-eye in the port and admitted a breath of air, but scarcely had she done so when a sea broke in, drenching her little girl from head to foot. The child took it very quietly, and her mother calmly remarked, "That is the fourth wetting she has had since we went to bed last night; I did not shut the bull's-eye till the sea had been in three times."

Jan. 25th. The third day after leaving Galle we anchored at Madras soon after dawn, and dozens of natives soon came swarming alongside in their large surf boats, or on catamarans. The former are deep and wide, and sewn together with rope, the better to resist

the violence of the furious surf; the latter are tiny, narrow rafts, composed of three small logs lashed side by side, the middle one slightly depressed, and a fourth smaller one projecting from it, which forms the prow of this most primitive canoe. One, two, or even three natives man it, standing or kneeling to paddle, with the water washing over their bare limbs as it tosses in the swell. If it turns over, they just duck and come up again, right it, and resume their places, none the worse, as they have no clothes to spoil. Indeed, the old story of the African king, whose state suit consisted of a cocked hat and a pair of spurs, acquires an air of probability in these regions, where nine-tenths of the whole amount of clothing is generally swathed round the head, leaving the lithe bronze figures, with their slight rounded limbs, in full display.

The shouting and jabbering of the boatmen were incessant, and the ship was filled all morning with native salesmen, bringing worked muslins, baskets, fans, scents, shells, ices, etc. Some of the dresses, for which they asked high prices, were elaborately worked with green beetles' wings in showy patterns, others embroidered in various styles. Then came a party of jugglers and snake-charmers, who squatted on the quarter-deck to exhibit their tricks. Some of these were exceedingly pretty, and some very repulsive; their ball-play was beautiful, and similar feats with daggers instead of balls were most extraordinary. The performance altogether was more wonderful than anything of the kind in England, from the absence of clothing and other means of concealment; but some of the tricks seem to be identical with the feats of itinerant jugglers at home. For instance, they breathed out fire and smoke from throats that glowed like furnaces, sending out sparks that ignited tow, and drew out of their months interminable lengths

of silk, etc., winding them out into good sized balls of different colours. Another horrible feat was that of raising a large box from the ground, by means of strings ending in small metal disks, which the man inserted under his eyelids, and then lifted the whole weight with no other support. Then they produced a mango-stone, about four inches long, flat, and evidently very hard, and announced that they would make it grow into a tree. Accordingly, a couple of handfuls of sand were pressed together on the deck, and the stone inserted, watered, and covered with an empty basket, and other tricks proceeded for a few minutes. Then the basket was lifted, and a small bunch of delicate young leaves showed themselves above the sand. The same process was repeated three times, the second time the leaves being fully developed and green; and the third time disclosing a small but perfect mango tree with fruit upon it, real, though unripe and small, which was gathered and handed round. Then they pulled up the tree and showed the roots protruding from the nut and filled with sand. As an eager crowd of English spectators stood closely round, and every movement of the jugglers was narrowly watched, this performance was really mysterious. A snake trick, which consisted in the apparent change of a dry skin into a live cobra, which sat up at the word of command, and inflated its large head with the distinct spectacle-shaped mark which distinguishes its deadly tribe, concluded the conjuring tricks, and was startling enough.

We were anchored too far out to see anything of the far-famed surf but just the white line where it broke in foam upon the shore. The town presents a most uninteresting aspect from the sea—flat, monotonous, and glaring; and though its nearness to the sea, and also to the beautiful and healthy Neilgherries, gives it real

and great advantages over Calcutta, it is customary in the other Presidencies to look down upon it, and decry it as "benighted."

We started again in the afternoon, and after two more days of intense heat and brilliant moonlight nights, reached the mouth of the Hooghly about midnight, on Saturday, the 27th of January. Here, at the Sandheads, a pilot-ship is always moored, as no vessel can ascend the river except in charge of a navigator experienced in its dangers. Even then the shifting sandbanks make the course most intricate and perilous; we had to stop incessantly for soundings to be taken, and the shouting of the Lascars, and the noise of the steam and the screw, with the occasional sight of the floating lights flitting across the cabin windows, effectually prevented sleep.

The next morning Saugor Island lay on our left—a long, flat expanse of jungle, famed for the barbarous sacrifice of infants which was yearly practised there, till stopped by the strong arm of the British law, during Lord Wellesley's vigorous rule. The usual letter boat came off to us at Kedjaree, and we met several steam-tugs towing out large merchant vessels. Our ports were all closed, lest the ship should strike upon a sandbank, roll and fill, not an unfrequent accident about here; but we went as fast as possible under the circumstances, hoping to get up to Calcutta before night. This hope, however, was doomed to disappointment; for soon after morning service a tremendous storm of rain came on, making the atmosphere so thick that they could not see to steer. So we had to cast anchor and wait about twenty hours for high-tide and daylight combined—an unexpected and irksome delay, under which many fretted and chafed with an impatience scarcely to be wondered at. The ports were opened, so it was cool below, but very dark; and on deck the rain poured down, drenching the double

awning, and streaming along the boards so as to render it quite impassable. The thunder and lightning were incessant, but not violent; and on the whole the enforced quiet of this last Sunday, and last day on board, was felt by some among us as a welcome pause before the turmoil and anxieties of the new life on land.

We were under weigh again before noon on Monday, passed the "James and Mary," and steamed slowly up the turbid waters of the Hooghly. The scenery on both banks is very flat and uninteresting, chiefly consisting of brick-kilns and endless groves of cocoa palms, with very little variety of other foliage; but we met several fine ships outward bound. The chief excitement of the day, however, was caused by the proceedings of the custom-house officers, who came on board and instituted a rigorous search, in comparison to which the French and English customs-inquisitions are a mere farce. Captain S——, and several others, had to unpack their boxes on deck, in the midst of all the confusion, and some new electroplate, which was discovered at the bottom of one gentleman's portmanteau, formed a pretext for continuing the examination in the most annoying manner. One lady had even to open her writing-desk, and another her bag of linen; but fortunately we fell into the hands of a less pertinacious official, and had very little trouble.

At last even this disagreeable business was over, and we sat down, for the last time together, to a capital early dinner. Stewards and stewardesses were duly feed, boxes repacked for the last time, and final arrangements made, and then everyone went on deck to see the opening view of Calcutta from Garden Reach. This suburb stretches along the right bank of the river, its gardens reaching to the water's edge, with landing-steps or "ghauts" to each; but the aspect of the houses is very

disappointing. They, in common with all the buildings in Calcutta and the neighbourhood, are of brick, coated with thick white plaster, which soon acquires a discoloured and decayed appearance, from the excessive damp of the rainy season; and this blackened plaster and the faded paint of most of the houses, gives an aspect of neglect and desolation which spoils the otherwise handsome exteriors. They are all flat-roofed, and most of them with pillared verandahs to each story; and the gardens were gay with tropical plants and summer flowers. The palace of the deposed King of Oude occupies a considerable space in Garden Reach, surrounded by the numerous dwellings of his servants and wives; and his residence there has done much to lower the character of the neighbourhood and the value of property.

On the other side lie the extensive and beautiful Botanical Gardens, since terribly wasted by successive cyclones, and near them Bishop's College, founded by Bishop Middleton, for the education of Anglo-Indian and native youths for the ministry. It is a pretty and convenient building, beautifully situated; and the extreme quiet and seclusion secured by the river which flows between it and Calcutta, with the near neighbourhood of these delightful gardens, must be great advantages for the students.

We were now nearly opposite the landing-stage, and every one began to be on the look-out for friends or relatives. There was quite a little crowd of the Governor-General's scarlet liveries, and presently a boat came off and carried away one of our party in style. Next a young lady who had been educated in England, caught sight of the father and sister whom she had not seen for years, coming alongside to greet her, and she was helped down the gangway, and landed in a flutter of joyous

excitement. Then came more and more boats, all containing friends too eager to wait till the ship was moored to the landing-stage, and the deck was a tumult of happy meetings and eager inquiries; and presently a host of coolies and hotel touters swarmed on board. It moved my heartiest indignation to see how the former poor fellows were treated. People hired them to carry their luggage along the deck to boats astern, and as they followed their masters through the crowd, staggering under heavy boxes, they were pushed, kicked, and struck with hand or stick by almost every gentleman (?) in whose way they came; from the passengers and their friends down to the stewards, and even the Lascar sailors, it was all the same, and the poor fellows bore it like dumb beasts of burden, evidently accustomed to treatment that in England would be thought disgraceful if practised on a dog. I saw one heavily-laden man pushed with such violence that he staggered across the deck and fell, and no one, except ladies to whom the sight was a novel one, seemed either surprised or indignant at the wanton imperiousness of the act. Unhappily one soon gets more or less callous by custom in such matters; and it is far too much the habit among all classes in India, to speak and act towards the natives, as if they were altogether an inferior race of animals.

This was my first glimpse of what I afterwards found to be almost universal, from the highest ranks to the lowest, or rather from the lowest ranks almost to the highest. At Government House or at the Bishop's Palace, natives of high rank or distinguished attainments are received with courtesy and kindness; and occasionally one meets with Hindoo fellow Christians at the house of a clergyman or missionary, though this is far rarer than would be expected; but almost every member of the army, down to the youngest officer or lowest private,

speaks of them with unmitigated contempt and dislike; low-class Europeans insult them at every opportunity, and East Indians too often seek to repudiate their connection with the native race by displaying a double measure of rancour and disgust. I have heard a young lieutenant boast openly of the insolence he had displayed towards a native prince to whose court he was officially attached; and have known the child of a common non-commissioned officer removed from a good school, because one of the teachers, a well-educated and high-principled woman, had dark blood in her veins, and "he thought them as was white hadn't ought to be put under them as wasn't." In fact, it is scarcely too much to say, that excepting by those who recognize the Christian duty of educating and elevating the natives of India, one rarely hears them spoken of, or sees them treated, as if any tie of common humanity linked the races together.

At last my turn arrived for greetings and farewells; a host of coolies carried off the luggage, and in a few minutes we were fairly on Indian ground, and driving through the suburb of Kidderpore towards the city of Calcutta.

Inland.

I

"THE CITY OF PALACES."

THIS drive must utterly astonish any passenger, who, coming by the long sea route, is unprepared by previous experience for the eccentricities of Eastern life. Even after what we had seen in Egypt and Ceylon the scene was startling; and now, though years of foreign life have somewhat dimmed the force of first impressions, the name of Kidderpore bazaar conjures up a vivid picture of all that is most peculiar and objectionable in the native quarter of an Eastern town.

Figure to yourself a long, narrow, uneven street, or rather lane, destitute of footpaths, and bounded on each side by a filthy drain, bridged over at every few yards by a couple of feet of brickwork or a board, for the convenience of those who frequent the shops, which form a continuous line along its margin. These shops are long low huts, consisting merely of a few upright bamboos, converted into pillars by a liberal plastering of mud, and connected by walls of rough hurdle work, daubed in like manner. The walls of some are nothing but coarse matting tied together, and all are either rudely thatched with palm leaves or tiled with small cylindrical tiles

strung on bamboos: Doors there are few, windows none, the whole front above the level of the counter being left open to the street. On this counter which extends along the front, squats the seller, in the midst of his goods, generally a lean, brown, wild-looking being; naked, save for a dingy wrapper round his loins, and with his long unkempt black hair, either twisted into a knot behind, or hanging in tangled profusion round his neck. The aspect of the edible goods is anything but inviting. Heaps of sugar, dates, and various kinds of grain and native sweetmeats, are piled upon the dirty counter round the dirty man, and swarmed over by myriads of flies and wasps.

There are no butchers' or fishmongers' shops to be seen, for the climate requires all such goods to be cleared off in the early morning as soon as killed; but there are plenty of sweets and groceries, and shops filled with gaudy crockery and drapery, with fruit and vegetables, tobacco and charcoal, pipe stems gaily ornamented, and rude coloured shoes and slippers. Here and there are brokers' premises, where in shops and yards lie heaps of every kind of rubbish, old furniture, piles of rusty iron chains, anchors, gaudy pictures, figure-heads, old clothes, and other incongruous lumber, unchanged year after year, except by accumulating age and dust. Here on a spot of waste ground stands a dilapidated idol car, there an ill-painted and ill-spelt sign-board announces that Ram Dass or Gobinchunder Shaw dispenses drugs or executes repairs; but the shops are all alike, mere dirty stalls, and there is scarcely more variety among the sellers. They differ chiefly in obesity and colour, the majority being lanky and of a mahogany or chocolate hue; but some are truly disgusting objects, corpulent to the last degree, their bodies bare far below the waist, and their colour a decided yellow, the most repulsive of

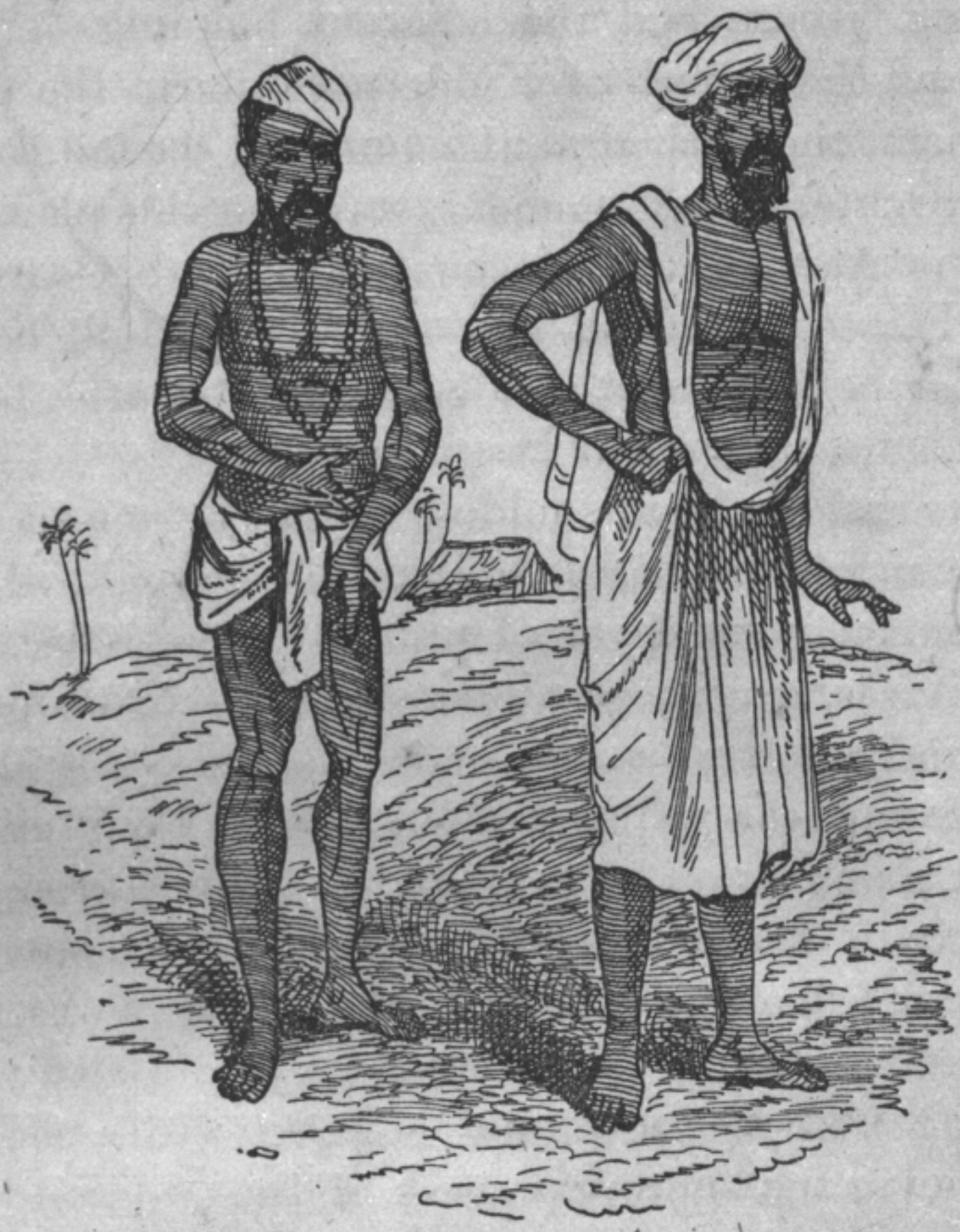


NATIVE SHOP IN KIDDERPORE BAZAAR.

all the native tints. Here and there may be seen one clothed in decent garments, consisting of a long tight-fitting shirt, open down one side of the breast, with a muslin scarf twisted over the shoulders, and another loosely swathing the hips and reaching below the knee, shoes on his stockingless feet, and a turban or tinselled skull cup on his head; but the great majority have arms, legs, and body bare, and squat upon their shopboards or their doorsteps in attitudes strongly reminding one of the monkey tribes, their knees drawn up to their chins, and their listless hands folded round their feet, except when occupied with the unfailing "hookah." This name is applied to every kind of pipe, from the costly silver stand with long crimson piping and amber mouth-piece, to the cheapest and commonest of all, a cocoa-nut shell with a trumpet-shaped pipe stuck in the top to hold the lighted tobacco, and a hole in the side through which the smoke is inhaled; but in all I believe the smoke passes through or over water, and European pipes are never seen.

The bazaar is busy and noisy enough, especially towards evening, crowded with women of the lowest classes, bare armed and bare legged, their heads and bodies loosely wrapped in coarse white calico or muslin, or in the dark blue and crimson stuffs of the country, with rows of bracelets on their dusky arms, and heavy metal ornaments upon their ankles, and generally carrying astride upon their hips black-eyed children, absolutely naked but for the rows of coloured rings circling their sleek brown legs and arms. Chinese and Lascar sailors in dark blue shirts, respectable Hindoos in apparel of every variety of colour and fashion except the European, and low East Indians in the shabbiest mockery of English dress, jostle each other in the crowded lanes. Parroquets swing and chatter overhead, and goats, dogs,

and fowls mingle in the throng, walking in and out of houses at their pleasure. They often add to the bizarre



Coolie and Baboo.

effect of the scene, by being dyed a bright magenta—a colour with which the natives delight to transfigure any creature naturally white; and the whole seems at first more like some strange phantasmagoria, the imagery of a hideous magic lantern or a bewildered dream, than like a sober, waking reality.

Presently the scene changes; a rickety bridge, spanning one of the many channels of the Hooghly, is passed, and the road begins to skirt the Maidan or plain which serves as a public park for Calcutta. It is an oblong expanse of turf of considerable extent, and as

absolutely flat as can be imagined, bounded on opposite sides by the Hooghly and the Chowringhee road, while Government House and the adjacent buildings enclose one end, and the suburb of Kidderpore skirts the other. Fort William, the Cathedral, the Jail, and the tall column called the Ochterlony Monument, stand on this plain, and the Lunatic Asylum, the Hospital, the High Court, the Bishop's Palace, the Club and the Town Hall, besides some of the best private residences in Calcutta, border it on the Chowringhee side.

The general style of building in the European quarters of the city is imposing, and the effect would be very fine but for the general discolouration before referred to. All the houses, except in streets devoted to shops and offices, stand apart in compounds planted with shrubs and trees; and the white buildings with their pillared verandahs rising story above story from the surrounding foliage, have a beautiful effect, especially by moonlight. Then their defects of colour are not so readily observed, and few under this aspect would deny to Calcutta the title of the "City of Palaces." Fewer still, perhaps, would question the appropriateness of the addition "and pig-sties," after a drive through the native portion of the town.

The squares, of which there are several, are especially pleasant. Instead of the garden which invariably forms the centre of an English square, most of the area is occupied by a large tank or reservoir, banked with grassy slopes, edged with rows of trees, and surrounded by railings or white balustrades. Broad flights of steps, more or less exposed according to the degree of drought, lead down to and into the water, and these steps are the constant resort of the native women, who come and go all day, with their large brass and earthen water-pots, and of the bheesties with their mussocks or water-skins

All around are the white compound walls and overhanging trees, that partly screen the adjacent houses; and it is easy to imagine the fairy-like loveliness of the whole scene when lit up by the intensely clear, calm radiance of tropical moonlight, with every orb of heaven reflected on the unruffled surface of the sleeping water, and the tiers of white pillars rising from the midst of graceful foliage and often wreathed with rich masses of most brilliant creepers.

A daylight drive, however, round even the best parts of Calcutta, reveals much of remaining barbarism; though so rapid is the progress of improvement, that possibly what was true twelve months ago, may be an obsolete objection now. In 1866, there was scarcely an attempt at drainage visible throughout the city, and almost every street was bordered by a stagnant open ditch, which received the outflow of stables, and was openly used by the natives for the most filthy purposes, all the refuse of European houses being carted off nightly by the Conservancy staff and thrown into the river. The obstacles in the way of any satisfactory drainage were enormous, owing partly to the want of fall, and partly to the impossibility of effectually superintending native labourers in such a work, which required unusual correctness and stability to withstand the enormous rush of water at certain seasons of the year.

The common coolies who must perform the bulk of all these undertakings, are for the most part mere beasts of burden, with just enough intelligence to spare themselves any avoidable exertion, and no thought or care for the results of perfunctory and dishonest labour. The native contractors are shrewd enough in every petty trick of trade, but they seldom appear to have the faintest glimmer of honest principle, and if they can

make or save a few rupees by bad material or imperfect workmanship, it matters little to them whether the work stand or fall. For the most part they have neither name nor character that will outweigh in their estimation the prospect of the paltriest gain, and many of their East Indian compeers bear a reputation scarcely higher. The English engineer ought to be always at his post, with a constitution that can defy heat and fatigue, an acuteness that cunning cannot baffle, and a patience that no amount of indolence or perversity can exhaust. The first instinct of the Bengal coolie is to get his rice and his hookah, the second, to lie down and sleep at every available opportunity; but beyond these two it would be difficult to make any general statement. Poor helpless creatures! God forbid that Christians should despise them, or forget the human brotherhood that makes it binding upon the higher to try and raise the lower members of the race; but it is trying and hardening in the extreme to live among them, and be hourly irritated by their ignorance and idleness, with no common tongue in which to convey any satisfactory direction or reproof; and it is to be feared that the unmistakable language of kicks and blows is too often resorted to, in default of any other.

Certainly there is something in the extreme degradation of the lowest classes that is apt to create the same sense of impatient annoyance, as some of the disgusting antics of the monkey tribe; they seem such a humiliating caricature of human nature. I shall never forget one man who had been sent to do some trifling job of carpentry in one of my rooms. He was an undersized, animal-looking fellow, with a sooty complexion not common among even the lowest natives, and like most inferior "mistaries" or craftsmen, his only clothing was an exceedingly minute waistcloth of dingy rag. In the

course of the operation he cut his finger with a chisel, and instead of hurrying away to get it tied up, he squatted on the floor, holding it up for me to see, and jabbering piteously as the drops fell on the clean new matting, with exactly the look and gesture of a wounded monkey.

Notwithstanding all these hindrances, a vast system of underground drainage has been excavated in the European portion of Calcutta, within the last few years; and if the scheme be ever carried out in its entirety, and the sewage applied to the fertilization of a barren district at some distance from the city, it will be a gigantic monument of European perseverance under difficulties.

Already water has been brought through pipes from the unpolluted stream above Calcutta, thoroughly filtered, and carried all over the town by engineering skill. There are taps at short distances along all the chief streets, so that the priceless boon of pure water has been conferred upon every inhabitant of the capital, and this alone must do away with one of the most fertile sources of disease. The lower class of Hindoos seem absolutely insensible to ill odours and foul water, so the prevalence of zymotic disease among them is scarcely to be wondered at. Often on summer nights, when the exhalations from the noisome ditches above-mentioned were most unbearable, I have seen numbers of natives who had come out of their huts for the sake of coolness, lying asleep wrapped in their sheets, upon the planks laid for footways over the abominable mud. Often, too, in driving through native quarters, I have seen women walk into a stagnant pool as dark as any English horsepond, take up two or three successive handfuls of the water to rinse their mouths, and then proceed to duck overhead repeatedly, and wash themselves and their clothes with

as much apparent satisfaction, as if the black fluid were a crystal stream.

Even in 1866, Chowringhee, and one or two of the chief streets and squares, were tolerably exempt from evil odours; but elsewhere "palaces and pig-sties," English houses and native huts, were indiscriminately jumbled together, amid stenches indescribable. Each English house stands back at some little distance from the street in its own compound, of which the road-ward side is bounded by kitchens, servants' houses, stables, etc., all under the old system discharging their drainage into the outer ditch. Footpaths there were none; and though many have been made since the closing of the drains, they are of comparatively little use; first, because they are interscected at every few yards by the carriage-drives up to the houses; and secondly, because the town authorities have planted trees at short intervals in the middle of the paths, and surrounded them by fences which effectually obstruct the way. One use, however, has been discovered by the natives, who find the public footpaths in the vicinity of their dwellings eminently safe and convenient spots for their diurnal repose. Constantly in driving round Calcutta, not in back lanes, but in the best and most public thoroughfares, one sees them, closely enveloped, head and all, in dingy sheets, reposing on charpoys, which completely block the footpath. These charpoys are bedsteads of the simplest and cheapest kind, a mere slight frame of rough wood, with coarse netting stretched across it, and so light as to be easily lifted in and out of the dwelling.

As to any delicacy about taking his siesta, or indeed doing anything in public, nothing is farther from the Hindoo mind, and it is a perpetual source of wonder and amusement to see the unembarrassed ease with which

employments of a personal nature are carried on in the most crowded streets. One can scarcely drive through the town in the forenoon without seeing people squatting by the drains and brushing their teeth with a primitive instrument of split wood; others standing near a tank and pouring water over their heads till it streams from their limbs and garments, and then deliberately drying



In Calcutta at noonday.

themselves and changing their scanty apparel in full view of all passers-by, or walking home with their drenched muslin wrappers clinging to their skins; others again seated in front of their dwellings, or under a shady tree, and prosecuting entomological researches on the heads of their companions with commendable zeal and persever-

ance. Indeed, this pursuit appears to excite a livelier interest than any other, and is one of their great resources for wiling away the time which they cannot spend in sleep.

Shaving is another operation constantly performed in the open street, and some of the modifications of the barber's art are remarkable. The respectable classes, university students, baboos and sircars, who act as clerks, accountants, etc., generally go about bare-headed, with hair unshaven, but cropped so closely that it has the appearance of black plush; and the lower work-people, coolies, etc., either have it long and twisted into a knot behind, or hanging in wild confusion; or they shave the head totally or in part, leaving a round patch on the crown, or a broad band from ear to ear behind. It is very wonderful to see them go about under a sun that would be certain death to a European, with their bare scalps shining under its rays, or with only the protection of close-cropped hair; and the more so because others appear to think it necessary to swathe their heads with as large a bundle of rags as they can muster. The genteel head-dress in Bengal is a curious, very flat turban, shaped like a small soup-plate, with a very wide, thick rim, the part that covers the head being merely a thin skull-cap. This is generally white, though sometimes scarlet, dark blue, or black, and being often crossed diagonally by bright-coloured bands, the effect is good, though not nearly so picturesque as the full white muslin turbans of Madras, and the richer head-gear of the North West and other parts. No upper servant would venture to appear in his master's presence or to wait at table without his "puggree;" respect, in India, as in other Eastern countries, being shown by covering the head and putting off the shoes.

Near Government House are a few streets, chiefly

composed of English shops, where, for prices ranging from about double those at home, one can purchase almost everything of the newest make and fashion. Some of these shops, especially for glass, china, upholstery, drapery, books, and imported groceries, rival the best establishments in any English town; but the high prices, above all for shoes and millinery, drive people of moderate means to native dealers. One narrow tortuous lane is occupied chiefly by the shops of Chinese shoemakers, who are accounted the best workmen in this line; other quarters, as the Old and New China Bazaars, are full of native warehouses and shops, where goods of various kinds are stored for sale in the midst of dirt and confusion; while Lall Bazaar and Bow Bazaar are composed almost entirely of furniture shops and the lowest public-houses, mingled with some few European dwellings of respectable size and character. The disreputable drinking dens of the former place are the notorious resort of sailors of the worst class, and of every nationality.

Government House itself is an imposing building, facing across the wide expanse of the Maidan, and bounded on other sides by some of the chief streets, its great lion-surmounted gateways guarded by swarthy sentries in a half-European, half-Asiatic uniform. A huge dome surmounts its centre, from which the four wings radiate in bold curves, the lofty pillars of the upper story carrying out the prevailing local style of architecture; and the whole, with its broad flights of steps and cannon-guarded enclosure, bearing a noble and stately aspect. But, like all the rest, it is mere brick and plaster, and gets wofully discoloured during the rains. The Cathedral is the same, plaster within and without, and wretchedly adapted for hearing, but finely situated, and surrounded by noble trees and

which wait scores of carriages while divine worship is proceeding.

Walking to church, even from the shortest distance, is a physical impossibility, except to early or late services, and even then very few attempt it. Some churches make a practice of sending round vehicles for their poorer members, who might otherwise find it impossible to come; and the same plan is followed by some of the Sunday and day-schools.

Undoubtedly the difficulty is exaggerated by indolence and by the influence of the native idea that walking is derogatory to anyone's respectability, but still it is a real and serious one. Carriages are hired by the hour, the authorized rate being about 1s. 6d. for the first hour, and 8d. for any hour or fraction of an hour beyond; and as the vehicle must wait the passenger's return, the inevitable 2s. or 2s. 6d. is a heavy tax on an ill furnished purse.

The hack carriages themselves are worthy of a brief description. The best resemble an English fly, with venetians instead of windows, and the worst are like no other vehicle under the sun, at least as far as my experience goes. Too low for a tall person to sit upright, and too narrow to be occupied by more than a couple of individuals with any comfort, they are furnished, instead of windows, with sliding shutters, which have to be pushed back to admit of ingress or egress, and which, when closed, exclude both light and air. There is no door, and one has to step into the well provided for one's legs, over the side of the vehicle, which is as high as the seat, so the discomfort of this mode of entrance and exit may readily be imagined. Below these even, there is a lower depth of shabbiness and discomfort, but as such are only used by natives, I need not waste words upon them. Superior vehicles, with decent appointments, can

also be hired, but only for the day or half-day, at extravagant rates; so the second-class gharries above described are the vehicles in general use.

The horses—for most of these delightful vehicles boast two—are miserable beyond description; small, gaunt, neglected, galled brutes, such as one would never see in England except in a gipsy's or costermonger's cart; and the harness corresponds, often consisting only of a shabby collar, and an arrangement of ropes and rusty chains. The driver may be dressed with some attempt at decency, or he may not; but the latter contingency is the more probable. In that case his whole attire will probably consist of a bundle of dirty rag twisted round his head, a piece of dingy calico thrown across his body, and another wrapped round his loins, his badge tied round his bare arm, and clumsy, peaked shoes on his feet. A familiar, in similar apparel, sits beside him on the box, or mounts guard on the foot-board behind, and not one word of English can the precious pair muster between them. The very names of streets and public buildings, and the numbers of houses, have to be translated into the vernacular before they can understand your directions; and this is no easy matter, for the native names have often no correspondence with the English ones, but are derived from some trivial or forgotten circumstance in the antecedents of the site, or the appearance of the building. Thus Elysium Row is Nautch Ghar ka Gully, because a theatre once stood there; one great public school is Panch Kotee, or the Five Houses; and another, Gaokhana, or the Cow-house, from a former use of the site; Wellesley Street is the Madrassa ka Rasti, on account of the native college; Victoria Square is Bahmun Bustee, from a Brahmin settlement once located on its site; and so on, to the utter despair of any unfortunate foreigner who finds himself adrift in a hack carriage

with no interpreter at hand. I have known strangers, starting with the fond belief that their drivers knew where to take them, driven about literally for hours in the vain endeavour to discover places within ten minutes' walk of their own door. The Old Mission Church is the Lall Girja, because at some forgotten period it was coloured red; and St. John's the Patla ka Girja, from its marble pavement, once unique in Calcutta.

The Martinière, the Panch Kotee above-mentioned, is a magnificent school, founded by the liberality of a French soldier of fortune in the "good old times." Upwards of one hundred orphan boys and seventy girls of respectable European or Eurasian descent are maintained, clothed and taught by this splendid foundation; and a still larger number of ordinary pupils, admitted at a moderate rate of payment, share the benefits of the institution, receiving an education equal to that of any middle class school in England. The noble buildings devoted to these schools, standing apart in their extensive compounds, are conspicuous objects in the Southern Circular Road; and the Doveton College, the Young Ladies' Institution, the Jesuit College, and the Loretto Convent School, rank with them among the first educational institutions in India. Besides these, the European Orphan Asylum, the Calcutta Girls' School, the Free School, and others, board and educate large numbers of English and Anglo-Indian children; and there are numerous Mission Schools for natives: so the difficulty of finding any of these Institutions is extreme, unless acquainted with the native synonym.

As for English surnames, few indeed are the servants who know those of their own masters, and fewer still those who can pronounce them intelligibly; and inconceivable annoyance, confusion, and delay often arise from

this seemingly trifling difficulty. No message, except of the very simplest character, such as an inquiry after health, can ever be sent by a servant, and this necessitates a wearisome multiplication of petty notes or "chits," which is one of the standing worries of Indian life. You are engaged with visitors, perhaps, or lying down, and a note is brought in. You take it, and send word to the bearer to wait. Another comes, and yet another, before you are at leisure for the answers, and behold, when you send down your reply, no one can tell to whom it should be given. The bearers are there, perhaps lying asleep under the stairs, or sitting in their favourite attitude in the porch; but, out of half-a-dozen, three probably have not the faintest idea who sent them, being mere coolies hired for a few pice for the single errand; and two may know their masters' names, or at any rate their directions, but cannot pronounce the former, or give any but the native equivalent for the latter. The sixth is probably a chuprassie, or badge-bearer, having his master's name or office engraved on a large brass medallion on his scarf, and with him of course there is no difficulty. As to the others, you decide as best you can, and perhaps eventually discover that two out of the five have gone wrong, and that the answer to some urgent query has been mis-sent to a distant suburb. But the petty difficulties that beset one in dealing with native servants, form too important an element in Anglo-Indian life to be treated of incidentally at the end of a chapter, so our next shall be devoted to domestic topics.

II

ENGLISH HOUSEKEEPING IN CALCUTTA.

ONE of the first necessaries in housekeeping, either at home or abroad, is, of course, a house to keep; and this in Calcutta is a serious matter, for the rents are enormous. If one can submit to live among native neighbours, in one of the noisy streets or narrow lanes that intersect the city, a good, roomy house may be obtained at a comparatively reasonable rate; but the objections on the ground of both health and comfort are very great, and most Europeans, if compelled to the alternative, would rather content themselves with a single floor in a better part of the capital, or occupy rooms in one of the large boarding houses. These, however, are also enormously expensive, ranging from £10 or £15 per mensem for a single person, with no private sitting-room, up to £60 or £70 for a suite of rooms with board and attendance. Respectable lodgings, such as abound in English towns, are totally unknown; but two or more families often compromise matters by taking a house between them; and young men engaged in business, but with no home in Calcutta, club together in like manner, so as to make one establishment answer for five or six. This is more feasible than it would be in England, from the universal employment of male domestics; and some of these "chummeries" are kept up in very handsome style.

We will take, however, for our typical householder some young professional man, of fair standing in society, but limited means; one who in any ordinary English town would take a house renting at about £40 a year, which a couple of neat maidservants could keep in perfect order. For anything like a corresponding dwelling in Calcutta, he must pay in rent and taxes about £20 a month, and the servants required are legion.

In the first place, there must be a khansamah, or steward, to buy the daily food, and see that it is properly cooked and placed upon the table. In a very small family he may condescend to fulfil the duties of cook and table servant also; but in this case a musalchee, or kitchen-man, is absolutely necessary to assist him.

It is impossible for Europeans to do their own marketing in Calcutta. In the first place, one ought to be at the bazaar soon after 5 a.m., and this bazaar is probably a mile or more from home; and in the second, no one who had once tried the experiment of going would ever wish to repeat it. The dealers in meat, fish, vegetables, poultry, eggs, etc., combine with the whole race of khansamahs against the dangerous innovations of sahibs and mem sahibs visiting their territories, and unite in asking the most exorbitant prices for every article. The noise, the confusion, the cool impudence of some of the salesmen, and the bewildering solicitations of others, with the utter impossibility of arriving at the right price of anything, would make one trial sufficient for the most strong minded of English housekeepers. Nor is it pleasant to expose oneself to the contempt of an inferior people by doing what runs counter to their strongest prejudices.

Then, again, there is a recognized principle in Bengal, and probably throughout India, called "dustoor," or custom, which fully accounts for native repugnance to European interference in such matters. It simply means

that on every article purchased in their several departments your servants have a right to levy a percentage for their own advantage. We hear something of such practices in England, but India is the country to see them in perfection. If your khansamah happens to be an honest man, he will content himself with a legitimate rate of profit; if not, he fleeces you right and left till you find him out by comparing notes with more experienced friends; and then you may either try with more or less success to keep down his charges, or part with him, and repeat the same process with another. Any way, one thing is certain, you will get neither enlightenment nor profit by trying to bargain for yourself.

The most modest establishment must therefore contain two or three servants in the victualling department—khansamah, kitmutghar, and musalchee, or bawarchee—*i.e.*, steward, table-servant, kitchenman, and cook; and all these must be Mahometans, because the religion of the Hindoos forbids their touching our food, or even the plate from which an Englishman has eaten. The duties of housemaid are divided in like manner between three individuals in a small family, or three sets of servants in a large one. The bearer dusts the rooms and attends to the lamps; the sweeper (mehtar) does the work implied by his name, and every dirty job about the house; and the durwan sits in a lodge at the gate, and admits or refuses visitors and others according to his orders.

Among these, the khansamah, head bearer, and durwan are the authorised claimants of "dustoor" in their various departments, the said dustoor, of course, really coming out of their masters' pocket. If a pedlar or embroidery seller comes to the house, and you purchase anything, he is mulcted before he leaves the premises; if you send for a hack carriage, the driver must pay dustoor

to the durwan before he drives away. It is true that the sum is often infinitesimal, the rate being about two pice (1*d.*) in the rupee, which may be reckoned at 2*s.*, but the sense of cheatery attending it makes it an irritating tax upon the buyer; and another petty imposition of the same kind is even more annoying. There is no such thing as a delivery of parcels from any shop in Calcutta, either European or native, but everything you purchase, unless conveyed home in your own carriage, is sent by coolies, whom you have to pay.

One durwan is enough in most establishments, but unless the household is a very small one, more than one bearer is required, and at least one male and one female sweeper. Europeans whose means are straitened sometimes pay the latter a small sum to attend twice in the day, instead of keeping them regularly in their service; but this is inconvenient, because, if any sudden demand should arise for their peculiar work, no other servant will touch it for fear of losing caste. A bearer may pick up shreds of paper or similar litter with his fingers, but he will on no account handle the implements of a sweeper, much less do any of his really offensive work.

Another absolutely necessary servant is the bheesty, or water-carrier, though his work in Calcutta is gradually being superseded in a great measure by the new water supply. Formerly, one or more bheesties were required for every house, to fetch water from the neighbouring tanks for bathing, washing, cooking, etc. Even a small garden requires one mallee, or gardener, and a large one several, if it is to be kept in anything like order, for grass and weeds spring up so rapidly, especially in the rainy season, that the mere keeping of the paths is work for one man; especially as it is one of their immutable customs to take two hours' leave in the middle of the day, and quit work at sunset, besides seizing every available opportunity

for going to sleep in the outhouses or investigating each other's heads.

Then the sahib must have his horse and buggy to



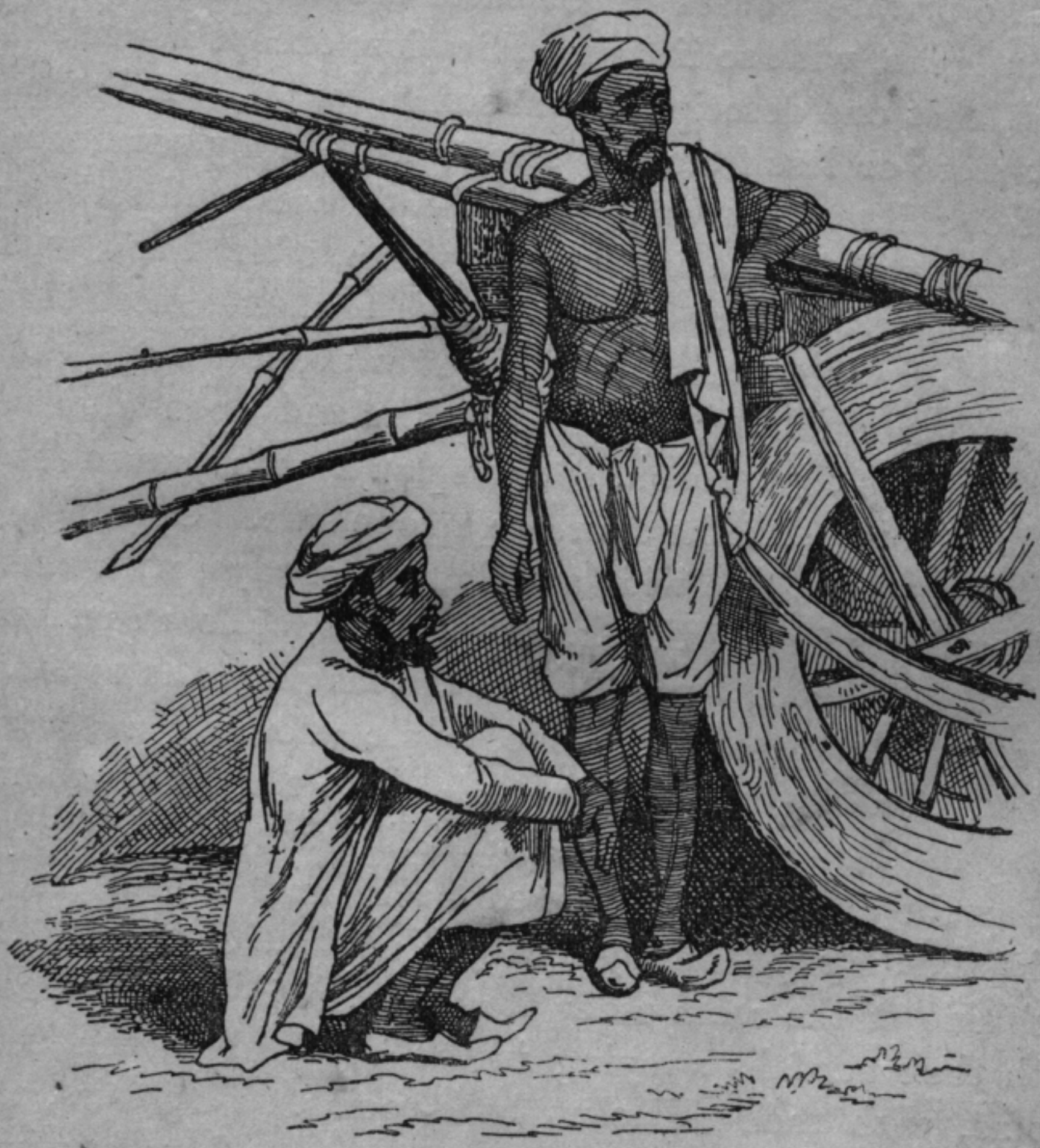
Cooks and Water-bearer.

drive to office and back, and the mem sahib her carriage and horse or horses for shopping, calling, and the never-failing evening drive. Two servants more, a coachman and syce, are indispensable for these; and if there be a child or children in the family, an ayah and an extra bearer are required; while in wealthier households each child will have its separate attendants. Hindoo men are wonderfully gentle and patient nurses, and it is curious to see these dark, mustachioed, turbaned fellows walking to and fro with unwearied patience, hushing the tiniest babes to sleep. But as the little ones grow older, the consequences of leaving them in charge of native servants.

ignorant of even the elements of Christian decency and morals, are often most deplorable. The idea of any native attempting to control an English child, except by coaxing, never enters either their heads or the parents'; so the poor little things grow up too often passionate and self-willed, accustomed to disobedience, and trained to deceit, if not to actual vice. This is one of the sorest anxieties that beset an English home in India; for a mother cannot possibly have her children always with her, and the utmost she can feel sure of in native servants is, that they will shield the little ones from outward danger.

The expense of such an establishment is fortunately not at all proportionate to its numbers, from an English point of view. Wages are considerably higher than they used to be; but even now the average pay of each servant is not above fourteen or fifteen shillings a month, out of which they keep themselves and their families. None of them, except the durwan, and perhaps a bearer and an ayah, sleep on the premises; and none, except the sweepers, who are outcasts, and glad of any leavings, would touch your food: so the expense of keeping them is limited to their actual wages, unless the master chooses to clothe any of the upper servants in a distinctive livery. Their own dress is neat and sufficient, and admirably suited to the climate, consisting, if they are Mahometans, of wide, long, petticoat-like drawers, and a kind of shirt, which fits closely to the arms and body, and is fastened on the left side of the breast, reaching below the knee, and open on both sides from the hips downwards. The flat turban above described covers the head, and a piece of muslin several yards in length twisted into a rope-like girdle is wrapped round and round the loins. The feet are always bare, so that their movements, especially when waiting at table, are singularly noiseless. A

instead of the nether garment he wears a piece of calico or muslin wrapped in a peculiar manner round the lower part of the body and reaching to the knee, and his upper vestment opens on the right instead of the left side of the breast. This clothing being all spotlessly white, contrasts well with their swarthy skins, and looks delightfully clean and cool. Many Europeans, however, adopt some modifi-



Bearer and Coolie.

cation as a livery for their servants, having their turbans and sashes twisted with some gay colour, or giving them in the cold season tunics of bright cloth or merino, and

turbans to correspond. Some of these half civilized costumes are exceedingly picturesque, and nothing can be imagined more elegant than some of the equipages that turn out in Calcutta, with two of these gaily attired servants on the box, and two more erect on the foot-board, or running at the horses' heads with long white flyflaps of Thibetian cow's tail streaming over their shoulders.

The private houses in Calcutta are all built on one general plan, with so little modification, except in size and detail, that one description will suffice for all. All stand back more or less from the street, shut in by compound walls or railings, durwan's lodge, outhouses, and stables; and almost all have a large heavy porch, often hung with masses of creepers, and wide enough to shelter more than one carriage at a time. A flight of wide, low steps leads up to large folding doors, which stand open all day, except in the cold season, and display a wide, paved hall or ante-room, with the staircase up one side. Opening on this are two or three wide and lofty doorways, with their folding doors fastened back, and purdahs, or door curtains, hung across about two thirds of the height, so as to leave a free circulation of air above, while affording a screen below. One of these probably leads to the dining-room, a large, square apartment, with folding windows the same size as the doors, also fastened back, and a measure of light and air supplied by heavy Venetian shutters. On each side of the room other doors, open in like manner, with their purdahs swaying in the air, lead to the bed-rooms, with their adjacent bath-rooms. Upstairs, the arrangements are similar—an ante-room, and a drawing-room surrounded by bed-rooms, except where it opens on a wide and lofty verandah, supported by pillars, and screened from the sun by moveable bamboo blinds. Sometimes, but not usually, there is a third story, and the flat

balustraded or battlemented roof is always reached by a narrow staircase, and affords the coolest and airiest spot for evening exercise. This is *all* in a house of ordinary size, and it is obvious at once that very little of English comfort or privacy can be looked for in such an abode. In some cases the lower story is not high enough to be used for dwelling or sleeping-rooms, its chief purpose being to keep the upper floor from damp; and dining and drawing-room must then be both upstairs.

The doors must all be open day and night; by day, for a free circulation of such air as there is, and by night, that the south breeze, which is the very breath of life in Calcutta, may blow through all the rooms: so that the bed-rooms are generally only screened from the verandah, the sitting-rooms, or each other, by Venetian doors or purdahs, and woe to the unhappy European who can only sleep in comfort with bars and bolts about him. The few servants who remain on the premises merely roll themselves in a sheet, and lie down on a mat spread wherever it may be convenient, going to the nearest tank to bathe and perform their scanty toilet; so that servants' bed-rooms find no place in a Calcutta household. Neither can there be any quiet nursery or school-room, where the children may be out of sight and hearing for a while; for even in the rare case of there being a room to spare for such a purpose, there is no keeping them to it, or shutting out the sounds of play and naughtiness, and no possibility of securing to elder children the opportunity for undisturbed study.

A good school is a far better place than most Indian homes; but even there, on the other hand, is the terrible danger of association with others who may have imbibed the worst tendencies from the influence and example of native servants. No wonder that at any cost of separation and expense Anglo-Indian parents will, if possible,

send their children to the purer moral and physical atmosphere of home.

The kitchen of an Indian dwelling is never under the same roof, for the heat and smell of the cookery would be unbearable. It is as well, perhaps, for other reasons, that it should be away; for few Europeans could relish their food if they saw anything of the process of preparation. The results, if the domestics are up to their work, are undeniably good; and both plain and made dishes, but especially the latter, would compare favourably with any cookery commonly seen in England. But as a native never uses any other implement when fingers will do, and is utterly unfettered by any of our little prejudices as to cleanliness and propriety, the less one sees or thinks of the preliminary operations the better for one's peace of mind. "Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." But these notes are intended for English readers, and one or two anecdotes may help them to appreciate home comforts, and to judge mercifully of the shortcomings of an English kitchen.

An English gentleman, strolling round his compound one evening, had the curiosity to look into the cook-room, where coffee was preparing, and was irate at finding one of his socks in use as a strainer. His hasty rebuke was received with profound apologies, the cook confessing that he had done very wrong; but indeed he would not have taken the sahib's stocking if it had not been a dirty one!

This is a current story in Calcutta, and I cannot vouch for its truth, though I can for its exceeding probability. What follows rests on the authority of a personal friend, who was staying at the time in the family where it occurred.

The lady of the house, provoked at the constant disappearance of all the cloths given out for kitchen use, had unadvisedly declared at the last issue of these articles that

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they must last a certain time, till which she should give out no others. The time had not expired, and on the day in question there was an unaccountable delay in the appearance of the pudding. After waiting till his patience was exhausted, the master rose from table and strode across into the kitchen to ascertain the cause. There he found the bawarchee in a state of nudity, even more complete than is usual with these worthies in their own domains, anxiously boiling the expected pudding in one end of his waistcloth, which he had ungirded for the purpose!

Another lady, in a colder district on the hills, retained her English taste for bread and butter puddings till she happened one luckless day to go into her kitchen at the time of preparation. The cook was seated, as usual, on the ground, one foot extended towards the fire with a lump of butter stuck on the great toe; and from this he was expeditiously spreading slices of bread to fill the dish beside him!

After facts like these, one can believe anything of a similar nature; but it is better for one's tranquillity not to suffer the imagination to dwell on such topics in India. Dwellers in far-off lands must carry out the adage, "What the eye does not see the heart does not grieve for," and judge what is placed before them on present merits rather than possible antecedents.

The fact that every dish has to be carried some distance from the cook-room to the table, and the constant use of the punkah during meals, make it necessary that everything intended to be warm should be served on hot-water plates. The servants are admirable waiters, watchful, noiseless, and deft in their movements; and as they do not profess to wait on more than their own masters and mistresses, there are always a good many in attendance when one has company. Each couple, or even each single

guest, brings his own kitmutghar, who stands behind his chair, and takes care that he is supplied—an arrangement which saves much trouble to the host and hostess, and adds considerably to the *tout ensemble* of an Indian dinner party. The long table, brilliantly lighted by massive lamps, its snowy drapery relieved by vases and epergnes loaded with gorgeous flowers, and the gay dress of the guests, backed by the spotless tunics and turbans, and the dark bearded faces of the noiseless waiters, always present an attractive aspect.

The punkah swings vigorously overhead, and through windows and doorways, open on all sides to the ground, steals in the blessed night breeze, laden with the rich odours of jessamine-scented flowers, and the shrill song of countless grasshoppers and crickets. Another and less pleasant sound comes, too, at intervals—the yell of packs of jackals beginning their nightly rounds,—perhaps the most hideous and discordant sound that startles the ear of night. Why these animals are tolerated in the European capital of India is best known to those in authority. It is said that they are too useful as scavengers to be destroyed; but surely the work might be done in a way less disgraceful to our civilization, and this *crying* nuisance swept away. As it is, the unclean beasts lodge under the lower stories of houses raised a foot or two from the ground to secure them from damp, or among the tombs in deserted burying-grounds, and come forth at night in packs to forage for offal, creeping under closed gates, and howling beneath the windows of startled sleepers with a clamour only to be compared to the most frightful uproar of dogs and cats, with a touch of the donkey's peculiar note thrown in to intensify the discord.

Elegant as are the appointments of many drawing-

finish to an English eye, chiefly arising from the absence of all unnecessary drapery, and from the walls being never papered, but washed with some cool tint, and finished off with stencilled borders. Papering would be useless, owing to the damp of the rainy season, and window curtains worse than useless, obstructing the air in calm weather, and in storms endangering every light article within reach. In bedrooms this bareness is still more striking, because the walls are often only whitened, and their great height gives them a barn-like aspect, especially as all the beams of every ceiling must be exposed to view, in order that the ravages of the white ant may be more readily detected. One seldom sees the toilet draperies dear to an English lady's eye, for the very sufficient reason that they would only serve as a hiding-place for cockroaches, centipedes, *et hoc genus omne;* and the bed stands in the middle of the room, a wide, bare couch, *minus* fringes, curtains, and valances, and often with its feet set in stone saucers filled with salt water, to prevent the invasion of all wingless insects. The defence against winged ones is very complete. Four slight posts, screwing into the corners of the bedstead, support a light frame, across which a piece of coarse, strong net is stretched, forming a complete, but transparent, tester. All round this is sewed a piece of the same wide net, which reaches below the mattrass; and when tucked in, encloses the sleeper as it were in a transparent box, effectually keeping out all intruders. If, however, the servant is careless in letting down the curtains, and allows a mosquito to remain inside, or if the occupant of the bed is not speedy and skilful in untucking just sufficient space for entrance, and instantly closing the aperture, or if there is the smallest rent in the net (three not improbable contingencies), farewell to all chance of tranquil rest! The tiny foe, no larger than an English gnat, hovers about, sounding his shrill trumpet, and

alighting incessantly wherever any exposed surface tempts his onslaught. In vain the sufferer buffets face and hands in the endeavour to annihilate the enemy, in vain determines to be philosophical and sleep—the exasperating buzz is too much for endurance; and it is only when the bloodthirsty foes have had their fill, and settle bloated and torpid into silence, that there is any hope of rest.

The floors of most Calcutta rooms are covered with a cool, pretty kind of matting, woven of a species of long, tough grass, which retains a pale green hue, and even a faint, fragrant smell, for a considerable time. In other parts of the country, a much coarser and more lasting sort is manufactured of the split covering of a kind of reed, or of whole canes the thickness of one's finger, fastened in parallel rows by string run through holes drilled through them; and in some places the floors are covered with a coarse blue and white checked cotton cloth; but carpets are very seldom seen, and, indeed, are most unsuitable to the climate. All the floors, however, require a covering of some sort, owing to their peculiar nature. Wood is not often used in their construction, except for the large beams which support the upper floors, and which are always left unceiled for the reason given above. These reach from wall to wall, at intervals of about two feet, and support small, short rafters placed about eight inches apart, and just long enough to rest on them securely. On the latter are laid strong tiles, about a foot square, fitting closely together, and, over them, a second layer, so disposed that the joins fall differently everywhere. All these being mortared in their places, a quantity of brick-dust and fragments mixed with lime is spread upon them; and the surface, being well moistened with water, is beaten with little wooden rammers into a sort of concrete, which wears well enough when protected from friction, but if

trodden when uncovered and dry, soon resolves itself into its original constituents.

All the floors, upstairs and down, as well as the roofs, are generally made of this material, sometimes dammered, or dressed with a kind of asphalt, especially on roofs, which are otherwise very liable to leakage after the fierce drought of summer. For bath-rooms it answers admirably, as the constant damp keeps it in good order; for an Indian bath-room is something very different to its English representative. The washing-stand, with all its appliances, generally stands here, instead of in the adjoining bed-room; but the bathing apparatus proper is of the most primitive description, consisting merely of one or more huge, unglazed, earthen pans of water, and a large tin mug, with which the bather pours the fluid over his body. The practice of getting into a bath is comparatively unknown in India; but one soon becomes accustomed to this native fashion, which involves far less expense and trouble, in a climate where every one must bathe at least every day. A ridge of brick-work round the bathing space keeps the rest of the floor dry, and the water drains off in one corner. There is generally a narrow flight of steps outside for the bheesty and mehtar, who can thus come up to discharge their duties without entering the house—a double benefit, as it saves their traversing the rooms, and prevents their pilfering anything by the way. Bheesties have a very indifferent character for honesty, though their scanty clothing would seem almost to preclude the possibility of their secreting anything; and they have even been detected forcing small articles into their empty mussocks, in hopes of thus carrying them off unseen. Sometimes their thefts are very daring, as when a friend of mine missed the large bathing-towel she had used an hour or two before, and sending to search the bheesty's hut immediately, recovered the stolen property.

On the whole, however, I am disposed to think that, except the very low caste people, native servants are far more trustworthy than they are generally believed to be. Of course, in this matter, as in every other, very much depends upon the masters; and the careless habits of Indo-Europeans, arising from the listlessness inevitably fostered by the climate, have much to answer for. Still, I have had Indian servants whom I never hesitated to trust under circumstances that would try the principles of many Europeans in the same class of life. I have repeatedly sent a bearer, whose monthly wages did not exceed fourteen shillings, to fetch and carry sums of money that, in his eyes, must have been enormous wealth; and have even put his fidelity to a still more trying test, by *advancing* him a quarter's wages at a time, when he took his biennial leave of absence to go to his distant up-country home. More than once the man walked to and fro some hundreds of miles, to a remote district where I certainly could not have traced him in case of defalcation, returning punctually to work on reduced pay till the debt was discharged. My poor, faithful Bowhanie! Hindoo as he was, many a so-called Christian might take pattern with advantage from him, or from his Mussulman associate, my quiet, punctual, ever watchful kitmutghar, Kaloo.

It is a painful thing to any Christian heart to be surrounded in one's very home by heathen and Mahometans, especially when one is unable to speak to them of the faith that makes us to differ; and this is more or less the case with all Europeans, except the very few who have studied the vernacular really with a missionary purpose. Even people brought up in the country, and fluent in the Hindoostani jargon which forms the general vehicle of communication with the natives, are utterly at a loss to convey any spiritual idea to their minds. They may be able to bargain, give orders, and scold, with ease, to ask questions

and understand replies on ordinary topics; but religion presents a new field altogether, with a language of its own not easily acquired. There is a society in Calcutta, which sends out native Christians to read and explain the Bible weekly to the servants of any household, for a small payment; but, unfortunately, its agents are men of the lowest caste, and this is a great hindrance to their usefulness. It may readily be supposed that even servants will not listen with much respect to a man whom they could not touch without contamination; and yet this is the literal fact. No mallee or bearer, no kitmutghar or coachman would even help to move a fallen tree side by side with a mehtar; and I cannot but think that it is a great mistake to send out men of this despised caste as teachers, except among their own people. The servants will sit and listen, or rather they will sit and do nothing, which is always an easy matter for a Bengali; and even thus, good has been done: many minds have been leavened to some extent with the rudiments of Christian morality, and some few have been savingly enlightened, even by this most unlikely instrumentality; but one would fain see Christian Hindoos of a higher class willing to under take work like this for the Lord whom they profess to follow.

The only general feature in an Indian house left to describe is the most distinctive and universal of all—the punkah. It hangs everywhere, in dining-room, drawing-room, and bed-room, church, school-room, townhall, and counting-house, singly or in pairs in private rooms, and in numbers proportioned to the size of public buildings. Sometimes it is merely a long cornice pole, with heavy corded frills of holland; sometimes an oblong frame covered with canvas, coloured to match the rooms, and edged with the same deep frill. It is hung by crimson ropes from the lofty ceilings, and pulled by cords passing over

small pulleys, and through doorways or holes in the wall, to the anteroom or verandah, where sits the bearer whose sole business is to keep it in motion. Sometimes the punkah is necessarily so arranged that he is in the same room; and one has to live for eight or nine months of the year subject to the perpetual presence of a wild, half-dressed man, who squats on the floor all day, lazily swaying to and fro as he pulls the rope that keeps the giant fans in motion. In the cathedral the punkahs hang from iron rods which cross the building at about mid height, and the bearers are partially concealed by an open screen-work that runs along the walls. The fans are everywhere so hung as barely to escape one's head, and are often very inconvenient to people above the average height. Of course for night punkahs relays of bearers have to be employed, and even then, one is always liable to their dropping asleep, so that it is best to do without them if possible. Few things are more trying to the temper than to awake stifled with heat, and find the punkah hanging motionless over head. One may call in vain "Bearer, bearer, punkah tanno!" for he is safe on the other side of the wall or door, and fast asleep; and the exertion and irritation only make one hotter than before. The usual resource for a gentleman is to get up and send some missile at his head; for a lady, to seize the punkah frill, and give it a sudden jerk, which is pretty sure to awake the sleeper, as he never lets go the cord; and this will generally rouse him for a time, but at the cost of much heat, both physical and moral, and the risk of admitting within the curtains some ever watchful mosquito, which will effectually murder sleep.

Many mechanical contrivances have been suggested, and several patented, with the object of dispensing with the nuisance of these punkah-bearers; but there seems little prospect of any substitute ever coming into general

use. More power is required than can be furnished by any machine of moderate size and expense; and human labour is so cheap in India, and this mindless toil so suited to the capacity of the people, that it seems scarcely likely ever to be superseded.

III

DAILY LIFE IN THE CAPITAL.

HAVING thus sketched the surroundings of European life in Calcutta, little remains but to give a brief description of the usual daily routine. Of course, this varies somewhat with the seasons, but we will take some twenty-four hours between March and June, that being the height of the dry season in Bengal.

At half past five or six, "chota hazree," or little breakfast, is brought to your bed-room, and you rise, dress hastily, and go out for an early drive. By seven o'clock the sun is too strong for comfort or even safety, except under a double umbrella or a carriage hood, and by eight most people are safe indoors, where a bath and a leisurely change of dress prepares them for the enjoyment of a second and enlarged edition of the morning meal. Tea and coffee, and not unfrequently Bass's or Alsopp's bitter ale, meat, fowl, or fish, broiled, curried, or cooked in some fanciful way, omelettes, mulligatawny, or kedgeree, and one or two varieties of fruit make their appearance here, with chutney and other condiments to tempt the failing appetite; for it is really important in India to have a good morning meal.

By ten or half past, all the gentlemen are off to their various offices and employments, and the ladies are left to attend to domestic and family affairs, or settle down for an

hour or two to reading or fancy work. Books, periodicals, and newspapers arrive in Calcutta within a month of their publication in England, and can be bought for cash at no very great advance upon the published price; and Calcutta itself produces two or three very fair daily papers, besides others in the vernacular, intended for native readers. Most of the needlework in families that can afford it, is done by dirzees, or native tailors, for few ladies have the health or energy to undertake what would be accomplished with ease in England; and very few female servants know how to handle a needle. These men are hired by the month for about thirteen or fourteen shillings, and some of them can work quickly and well, but they require constant watchfulness, and it is always difficult to get them to take pains with the repairs. I never saw one who could darn a stocking respectably, but their new work is upon the whole very satisfactory, and it is amusing to see them sitting on the floor of the ante-room, or verandah, holding the long seams with their toes, or stretching out their feet to pick up a thimble or a pair of scissors, almost as nimbly as a monkey.

. Embroidery of all kinds is executed by another class of men with wonderful dexterity and despatch, and may be bought from these "chickon wallahs" at the door, by any one skilled in bargaining, at a fourth or fifth of what it would cost in England. Another class called "topi wallahs" devote themselves to millinery, and will trim hats or make up the most delicate bonnets as well as any milliner, if a satisfactory pattern or direction can be given them. Indeed, almost all the needlework in Calcutta is really done by native men; for even in the ruinously expensive English shops, the European milliners and dressmakers who receive orders and try on dresses, commit the actual execution to male subor-

dinates; and it is cheaper, though it involves more trouble, to employ the dirzee or topi wallah without their intervention. Of course, there is every grade of efficiency and inefficiency to be found among them, and it is best not to trust an untried man with anything that he can spoil, but the skill of some amounts to positive genius, and their charges are not higher than the most ordinary English dressmaker. Give one of these men a well-fitting dress in any style as a pattern, and he will thenceforth make for you dresses high or low, loose or close-fitting, without once requiring the troublesome process of trying on, and their celerity is equally wonderful. In an emergency, I have even given out the material for a somewhat elaborate dress in the morning, and had it sent home ready to put on by the evening of the following day; but this again is a matter in which no native should be trusted till he has been amply tried, for want of punctuality is one of the most general and irritating grievances in India.

If there are any formal calls to make, they must also be performed during the interval between breakfast and tiffin, a most inconvenient custom, as it takes one out in the fierce heat of noon; but it is accounted for by the theory that every lady takes a siesta in the afternoon, and by the fact that everybody drives out in the evening. On further acquaintance, one often ascertains that people do not rest in the afternoon, and that these hours are consequently not tabooed with them, but a first or formal visit must always be paid about noon.

Another uncomfortable rule prescribes that new comers shall call first upon residents, instead of the contrary home practice, so that the awkwardness of making way in an entirely new society is thrown upon strangers,



BEARER, KITMUTGHAR, AND TAILOR.

who consider it an intrusion, not calling upon those who expect it, and calling upon the wrong people first—a serious matter in a country where precedence is jealously insisted on. In up country stations, offence is often given in this way, but Calcutta is large enough for a greater degree of freedom; and after leaving cards at Government House and the Bishop's Palace, it is not difficult to arrange one's other calls.

The entrée to Government House is by no means the exclusive privilege which English people would generally imagine it. All officers, all professional men, men of letters, and others engaged in educational work, are freely admitted to the Viceroy's levées, and all ladies of corresponding position, if only they can find some one already on the list to present them at a Drawing-room, are sure to be invited to concerts and garden parties, if not to the Vice-regal table.

Let us suppose that the carriage has been duly ordered, the coachman has received and *understood* his directions, and the caller has arrived at the gate of the first house on the day's list. Here, perhaps, the horses are stopped, and the durwan comes to the carriage door with the concise announcement "Darwaza bund" (literally, "The door is shut.") This is the Calcutta substitute for the polite falsehoods used in England to keep out visitors at inconvenient times, and it saves a great deal of trouble. One has only to send out this order to the durwan, and it is his duty to see that no one enters the gates. The order being a general one, no offence is taken, and the caller merely leaves a card and drives away, unless she comes by appointment, or is sufficiently intimate to write a message on the slate which the durwan generally produces in case of a parley. This of course calls forth a few words of explanation as to why visitors are not admitted, or procures an entrance. The

carriage drives in, the durwan or a bearer shows the visitor upstairs, and the coachman and syce go to sleep on the box till the call is over.

But shopping, as well as calling, has to be done in the heat of the day, for few European shops open before ten, and native ones an hour or so later, both closing soon after four, so there is generally plenty to be accomplished before tiffin. This meal is taken at one or two o'clock, and varies from a very slight luncheon to a tolerably substantial early dinner, according to the habits of the family. Though the custom of really going to bed in the afternoon is not so prevalent as it used to be, few people feel inclined, or indeed able for anything but the lightest employment after tiffin, till refreshed by the five o'clock cup of tea, which heralds the blessed time of sunset. Then the bearers go round and open the heavy sun-shutters, closed throughout the day; the south breeze from the distant sea comes in with soft, fresh breath, and every one prepares, according to native idiom, "to eat the air." Gentlemen drive home as fast as their business hacks can take them, to bathe and dress and start out again with wives and children in the coolest and freshest attire for the *one* drive of Calcutta, along the Strand. This is a broad, well-kept road along the whole river-side of the Maidan, extending from near Government House, past the Eden Gardens to the boundaries of Kidderpore; and here, evening after evening, congregate the rank, and wealth, and fashion of Calcutta. The scene is, perhaps, unique, and merits a minute description.

Let us imagine ourselves then to have joined the stream of carriages driving slowly down the Strand, with the spire of Kidderpore Church rising out of the trees in the distance before us. On the right, close to the road, the yellow Hooghly rolls its turbid waters, crowded with

merchant shipping from all parts of the world. The sun is just sinking behind the palms that fringe the horizon, and all the glory of a tropical sky, with its masses of brilliant sunset cloud, lights up the scene. At first the vessels lie so thickly moored along the strand, that you can see little beyond their forest of masts and rigging; but Government House and a long line of public buildings lie behind you on the left, and close beside you are the gay Eden Gardens, where a full military band takes its nightly station during the hour of the drive. The road is thronged with equipages of every description, from the Viceroy's carriage and four, with outriders and liveries blazing with scarlet and gold, to the third-class gharry, crammed with half-naked natives, and drawn by a miserable pony harnessed with knotted rope. Nowhere in the world, probably, are gathered so many striking equipages; for though other capitals could furnish the elegant barouches and landaus, and perhaps match the fashionable toilettes of the ladies within, they want the picturesque element furnished by the bright colours and tasteful liveries of the native drivers and running footmen. White predominates, especially, of course, in the hot season; but turbans and sashes of scarlet, blue, green, and crimson, add their brilliancy, and here and there is a gorgeous turn-out, resplendent with the jewels and bright colours of some rajah or wealthy baboo. Nothing can exceed the showiness of these people's dress. Long silk or satin tunics of the richest and most varied colours, and immense muslin or gauze turbans of vivid emerald green, sky blue, or mauve, or lemon colour, or velvet smoking caps thickly embroidered with gold, and shawls of priceless value, compose their attire; while other carriages, equally handsome, but in a more sober style, are filled with grave portly Parsees robed in white muslin and distinguished by their singular tall brown headdress

Next in the line, perhaps, is a barouche occupied by an English gentleman with his pale, delicate-looking wife, and two or three tiny fair-haired children, the youngest in the arms of an ayah, whose jet-black hair and mahogany skin contrast well with her crimson-edged *chuddar* and the infant's flaxen curls and pure complexion. A singular delicacy and refinement characterise the appearance of most European children in Calcutta. They look like plants blanched by the want of wholesome light and air; and this is scarcely to be wondered at when one reflects that the sunshine which seems to be the children's element at home, is here a deadly and forbidden thing.

Next, perhaps, comes a close hack gharry, through the open windows or sliding doors of which we see four portly low class baboos naked to the waist, or perhaps five or six native children under the care of an elderly man or woman, their bright eyes glancing under tinselled skull-caps or gay coloured chuddars, and their bare arms and legs covered with silver ornaments. And so the motley crowd streams on, three or four lines of carriages driving slowly up and down, and groups of riders cantering over the level turf of the Maidan, past the Fort with its green ramparts, and the more distant Cathedral rising white and stately from its surrounding trees, till the forest of masts grows thinner, and one catches broad glimpses of the placid stream with its background of perpetual palms parting the dark flats opposite from the clear orange-coloured sky. Then the hues of night begin to steal over all, not grey as in our northern clime, but deeply blue and clear, and the stars shine out one by one as the breeze freshens, and the last notes of the National Anthem leave a sudden stillness in the air. Every carriage lamp is then lit, and the roads across the Maidan are soon crowded with their twinkling sparks, while the

gas lamps round Chowringhee mark its boundaries with a line of light, and all Calcutta hastens home to dinner. Half-past seven or eight is the usual hour, and the evening winds up among quiet people with a lounge in the verandah or a little music. By half-past ten or eleven most are ready for bed, and the yells of jackals and the occasional discordant sounds of native minstrelsy alone break the stillness of the night.

IV

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEASONS IN CALCUTTA.

We will now turn our attention to the peculiarities of the Indian climate, and to some of the attendant circumstances which make life in Calcutta so trying to a European; and here the first thing that naturally strikes one is the division of the year into three seasons instead of four. The old familiar names of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, are never heard; but we speak instead of the hot season, the rainy, and the cold, and of these three adjectives the appropriateness of only the last can be questioned. We will begin with this—the cold season—because most people, if possible, time their voyage so as to arrive at its commencement, and because it is decidedly the prime of the Indian year.

It sets in about the beginning of November, when punkahs begin to hang idle in private rooms, and are taken down out of the churches, where they are a great obstruction both to sight and sound. The supernumerary bearers who have been employed for eight months to keep them in constant motion are dismissed from every family, and the rooms are at last free from the annoyance of their constant presence. Though the heat in the open sunshine is still nearly as great, and quite as dangerous between the hours of nine and four, as in the extremest ardour of an English summer, the mornings and evenings

begin to be chilly and often foggy, and by Christmas, even the sight of a fire is sometimes pleasant.

Few Calcutta houses, however, are furnished with a fire-place, so that Europeans have to do without this indulgence, but the natives light their fires of wood and dried cowdung outside their huts, the acrid smoke of this peculiar fuel mingling with the evening fog, and making it sometimes intensely painful to the eyes. Very little coal is used in Calcutta, wood being the general substitute for English cookery, and cowdung for native use. Nothing belonging to this sacred animal can pollute the most scrupulous Hindoo, and men who would think themselves defiled by the touch of an English hand will daub themselves with it externally, and even take it internally, both for physical and religious purification. It forms an essential ingredient in the loathsome mixture partaken of in some peculiarly sacred ceremonies, and which I believe every Hindoo woman has to swallow as part of the marriage rites, so it is not surprising that no repugnance is felt to its employment as fuel. The natives mix it into a soft paste with water, and then, taking it by handfuls, stick it in flat round cakes, each bearing the impress of five fingers, all over the walls of their huts, where they dry and adhere till wanted, forming a noticeable feature in the ornamentation of native premises.

Though the direct rays of the sun are still dangerous, and sunstroke has been known to result from imprudent exposure even on New Year's Day, the temperature in the shade is perfection, and the clear bright air a luxury to breathe. Most of our English annuals and other garden favourites flower freely at this season—mignonette, larkspur, marigolds, roses, verbenas, etc., blossoming in strange fellowship with chrysanthemums, and mingling their familiar aspect with gorgeous rivals that need stove heat to bring them to perfection here.

The poinsettia, generally seen only as a puny plant in English nhouses, grows to a tall, straggling shrub in every garden in Calcutta, lifting its whorls of long crimson bracts above the high compound walls, side by side with the scarlet and orange spikes of the graceful poinciana. The former, which is in perfection about Christmas, is one of the most conspicuous and effective features in the floral decorations of the churches; and on the hills, which are too cold for it to flourish, sprays of coffee-berries, which grow very like English holly, but much larger and handsomer, often take its place. Convolvuluses, of a size and richness and variety of colour never seen in England, flower in glowing profusion; but perhaps the most striking floral ornament of Calcutta is the Bignonia venusta, also a Christmas flowering creeper. It climbs over the tall gateways, and hangs in masses of the most vivid orange, the flowers literally piled upon each other with scarcely an intervening leaf. Later in the season comes an equally beautiful, but very different creeper—the Beaumontia grandiflora—which soon climbs from branch to branch of even the loftiest tree, hanging its bunches of large, scented, white, lily-like bells among the dark green leaves; and about the same time the silk cotton tree puts out its large star-like crimson flowers all over the leafless boughs.

Taken as a whole, Indian flowers are as inferior in perfume to our own as they are superior in size and colouring. Our own favourites give comparatively little scent out there, and the indigenous ones are either scentless, or have an overpowering sweetness. The Cape jessamine, and other single and double varieties of the same kind, are among the commonest shrubs, and the luxuriously-scented white tuberose flowers profusely in every garden—these being good representatives of the kind of perfume with which one is satiated in India. There is nothing refreshing or

wholesome in the odours, only cloying, enervating sweetness, and it is quite delightful sometimes, by way of contrast, to inhale the homely fragrance of the old English marigold and southernwood, which do contrive to retain their character out there. The former is a great favourite with the natives, who string its staring orange flowers into garlands for their gods, or wreathe them in festoons across the doorposts and gateways on Christmas Day and other festivals. It affords a great contrast to the "bale-phul," their other favourite votive flower—a very double, round-petalled, white jessamine, almost like a Banksia rose, but with the most overpoweringly rich odour. These are picked off, and strung into long white chains, to be worn in many coils round the neck and breast on holy days and other festive occasions.

The Hibiscus, or shoe-flower, has been mentioned in the description of Ceylon, but it must not be omitted here, though its magnificent flowers are too common to attract notice, except from strangers. Its varieties are endless, the commonest being crimson or rose-coloured, either single, with a conspicuous and beautiful white style, or double and as large as a fine rose. Others are very like pink or white hollyhocks, except that they grow separately but profusely on woody shrubs; and others again are of the most delicate lemon colour with a jet black centre, and with the edges of their petals finely frilled. These are commonly seven or eight inches in diameter, either single or with a rosette in the centre, and very showy and beautiful. Ixoras of every brilliant and delicate tint flourish luxuriantly, but no colour that I ever saw in nature or art matches the vivid scarlet of the double pomegranate blossom.

There is, however, little satisfaction in giving a mere catalogue of flowers which no words can adequately describe, and we will turn to the homelier subject of vegetables and fruit. Almost all the former, to which

we are accustomed in England, may be had in the cold season in Calcutta. Peas, cauliflower, cabbage, potatoes, carrots, turnips, lettuces, radishes, cucumbers, beet, and a sort of legume easily mistaken for French beans, together with a variety of vegetables of the gourd tribe, are most of them in season all the year, but especially now, and pine-apples, oranges, and plantains are the chief Christmas fruits. The first mentioned grow wild or nearly so, and are sometimes exceedingly good, though of course inferior to the best home-grown pines in England. The cold season is also the time for what are called gooseberries—a very peculiar fruit, which grows like the winter cherry, enclosed in a bladder-like calyx, and is a round, shiny, amber berry, full of tiny seeds, and making a rich preserve, though the raw fruit is at first far from palatable. A kind of plum as large as a magnum bonum, but with flesh as firm and crisp as an English apple, is also in season now, and requires a little custom to appreciate it. Many other wholesome but far from pleasant fruits come into season in the course of the year, but I shall only name those really worthy of mention.

The glorious cold season continues from the middle of November to the middle of February, the temperature decreasing up to Christmas, and increasing with the progress of the new year, but never cold enough to make a fire necessary, or to require more than one blanket. During all this time no rain falls, except as a very rare exception; but day after day brings the same sunshine, and the same clear, exhilarating air. Of course the roads become very dusty, except where they are perpetually watered, but the grass keeps marvellously fresh and green, owing to the copious dews. This is the season for picnics, bazaars, and fetes of various kinds, and the season also for public amusements in the capital. The Viceroy and all the officials and gentry who accompany

his court in its migrations, being now in Calcutta, there are reviews, races, concerts, theatricals, and even an opera company for those who care for them; besides the usual round of Government receptions and private parties, and the various school anniversaries, which it is quite the fashion to attend.

Barrackpore Park, about twelve miles by rail from Calcutta, is a favourite and really enjoyable place for picnics, and the Botanical Gardens on the other side the river are well worth visiting. Barrackpore is the Viceroy's country seat, situated on the banks of the Hooghly; and here, beneath a costly tomb, in a garden-plot overlooking the broad turbid waters, rest the remains of the lamented Lady Canning. The park is studded with magnificent banyan, peepul, and tamarind trees, and artificially undulated, so as to be a pleasant change from the unvaried natural flatness of the country. It contains also a very fair menagerie, in which the Bengal tiger may be seen to full perfection, and many a pleasant holiday may be spent within its bounds, resting under the shade of its grand old banyan till the noon-tide heat is over.

This magnificent tree has literally countless trunks, extending over a space sufficient to shelter several hundred people, and garlanded in all directions by the huge shining leaves and cord-like stems of the elephant creeper. Once, at a school picnic we found its low, shady boughs unexpectedly useful. The table-cloth had been spread, not under the tree, where the ground was trodden and dusty, but on the grass within its shadow; and the children merrily watched the kindling of the fire and the boiling of potatoes for dinner, unconscious that other bright eyes were taking keen note of the proceedings too. But no sooner had the servants begun to distribute the slices of cold beef than there was a whirr and rush of wings, and an army of kites swooped from the neighbour-

ing trees, and cleared away every scrap and crumb as if by magic. The scene was ludicrous in the extreme, for no one was at all prepared for such an onset, and the astonishment of those who thus saw their dinner vanish from before their eyes, may be imagined. Fortunately the supplies were abundant, but the cloth had to be moved under the tree, where the low boughs prevented any further depredations. This great, long-winged kite, called by the natives "cheel," from its peculiar, shrill, tremulous cry, commonly takes its prey on the wing, merely stooping to seize the food with its talons, and devouring it without a moment's pause in its rapid flight; consequently when there was not space to swoop, we were safe from rapine. Often the poor Hindoo, coming home from market with his purchases in an open basket on his head, has them snatched away without remedy by this audacious thief; and if Egyptian kites resemble their Indian congeners in boldness and rapacity, the baker's dream in Pharaoh's prison house was no wild freak of the imagination, but a mere reproduction of one of the most familiar incidents of daily life.

Even the kites, however, are not as great a nuisance as the Calcutta crows. Protected, like the jackals, on account of their usefulness as scavengers, as well as by the natural supineness of Hindoos and Anglo-Indians, these detestable birds swarm in the city, the very personification of impudence and greed. Living as one has to do for the most part with every door and window open, it is impossible to keep them out, and they constantly perch on the open shutters and hop in at the doors, their sleek grey and black plumage glistening with satisfaction, and their cunning eyes alert at any indication of an approaching meal. Let the room be left for a moment after it is laid, and they are upon the table; let a plate or dish be set aside, even with a room full of people, and

one sidles towards it cautiously, with many a knowing gesture, and is certain to get his share if it is only out of arm's reach. He is filthy, too, in all his habits, leaving traces of his presence on table-cloth and floor, perching on punkahs and bed-posts, and defiling everything, even if it does not occur to him to carry up some unclean meal and finish it upon your clean white counterpane, or stow it away behind your pillow. It would be hard to decide whether their hoarse, impudent noise, their restless thievishness, or their filthy habits, render Indian crows the most detestable; but the three combined are perfectly intolerable, and many a time is one driven to wish that they had but one neck that we might wring it and exterminate the race. The Hindoos believe that if a man steals rice, his soul at transmigration enters the body of a crow; and there is a grotesque fitness in the myth, not always obvious in their superstitions.

But these are perpetual plagues, and the one special worry of the cold season is quite sufficient for the time. This is the mosquito—never, it is true, quite absent, but now swarming up out of every ditch and tank, and giving the hapless foreigner no respite night nor day. After some seasons out, the blood gets thin and poor, and the bites no longer inflame, leaving only the tiniest red speck; but at first the irritation is intolerable. Face, neck, hands, feet and legs suffer alike, even in the daytime, but especially at evening. Thin clothing is no defence at all, and one is only safe inside mosquito curtains.

About the end of February the weather gets very hot, and early in March punkahs are again hung in the churches, and brought into constant use at home. Then the vice-regal court and offices, and most of the élite of Calcutta prepare to take flight to Simla; the hot season fairly sets in, and the capital is abandoned for eight

months to the full round of tropical discomforts. The heat is inconceivable, often reaching above 100° in the shade, and producing incessant and profuse perspiration, which however has the advantage of averting the flushed and uncomfortable feelings which often attend a lower temperature in England. Rising at five in the morning, the early drive and the cold bath afford a temporary refreshment, but before the labour of dressing is half completed, large drops are again coursing each other over the skin. Of course every article of dress not absolutely necessary is discarded, but in the lightest attire and in lofty shaded rooms one may sit at ten in the morning under the full swing of the punkah, with beads of moisture standing on every pore. Passing an open door or window on the south side of the house at noon, the air strikes in like the hot breath from an oven, and clothes fresh out of the wardrobe feel as if they had been taken from before a fire. Kid boots crack, leather covers of books curl up stiffly, and wooden boxes go off with a loud report, the bottoms splitting out, and the veneer peeling off, for scarcely any glue will stand this climate. Still, strange to say, even the rapid evaporation caused by the dry heat has no sensible effect upon the moisture of the skin. One's arm resting on the table leaves a wet smear, and long before night there is literally scarcely a dry thread about one.

The only relief is from the fresh, cool breeze that springs up regularly at sunset, blowing from the distant sea. Doors and windows are all flung open to admit it, and it sweeps through the upper rooms, especially if the house is lofty and lonely, with a soft, puffing breath, that stirs all the drapery, and brings refreshment and sleep to the most exhausted. Now and then, too, throughout the months of March and April, the heat is suddenly brought down by tremendous thunderstorms. Few who have

not witnessed these outbreaks in the tropics can imagine either their fury or the immense relief they bring. Their rising is often strangely sudden. Everything is perfectly still, and you are sitting exhausted under the punkah, in the dense, brooding heat of afternoon, when suddenly all the unfastened doors and windows in the house bang like a discharge of artillery. Bearers rush in all directions to close and fasten them; but even through closed shutters and doors comes a choking blast of fine sand, covering everything. If you look out in time, you may see it eddying along the roads from the N.W. in red wavering columns, rising sometimes to a great height; but in a moment it is upon you, and the very trees before the window are hidden from view. This whirlwind of sand lasts but a few minutes, the wind howling and beating till even the heavily-barred windows can scarcely stand the strain; and then down comes the rain, in furious pelt, laying the dust in a moment, and driving along the ground in sheets of water. The thunder roars, and the lightning plays in all directions, with a vivid splendour never seen in our quiet old country—not merely forked, but running in long, zig-zag streaks across the sky; and the rain falls in such torrents that all the spouts from the roof soon become noisy waterfalls. This lasts an hour or so, and then the freshness of the atmosphere for a while is most enjoyable, the thermometer sometimes falling twelve or fifteen degrees in an incredibly short space of time. After the drought of the previous four months, it may be imagined how these storms refresh all vegetation; but they are rare and uncertain visitants, and it is not till the middle of June that the rains really set in.

Long before this, probably, the overtasked cuticle rebels against the unreasonable amount of work it has to do; and a new nuisance sets in, in the form of prickly heat, or boils, or both. The former is happily unknown in

England, and deserves a few words of introduction. It is a red, slightly raised eruption, spreading more or less over the whole surface of the body, and causing, especially at night, a maddening irritation. Some people are reduced to such a state by it that they literally cannot bear their clothes, and lotions and other appliances are perfectly useless. I have seen English children, who arrived a few months before, models of health and beauty, transfigured by these unpleasant complaints till they were equally uninviting to sight and touch; but both evils are very capricious in their choice of victims, and some people never suffer from them at all.

About this time, the leechee, one of the most delicious fruits of India, comes into season. It grows in long, dropping bunches, on a tall, handsome tree, each fruit being about the size of a partridge's egg, and cased in a rough, red skin, which gives it at a distance some resemblance to a large, coarse strawberry. This peels off readily, disclosing a transparent, bluish white pulp, of a firm, gelatinous texture and delicious acid taste, with a brown, acorn-like stone in the middle. Now, too, the glorious poinciana regia, the very king of Indian trees, puts on its gorgeous robes. It is well named Flamboyant, or the Forest Flame; for at this season it is an almost unmingled mass of scarlet and orange blossoms, dazzling to look upon. A noble tree, with immense mimosa-like leaves of rich, deep green, its effect may be imagined when it is thus crowned and robed with regal scarlet. The bunches of blossom often measure from a foot to eighteen inches in diameter.

After the leechee comes the mango, of which some Europeans can never endure the taste or smell, but which is generally ranked first among Indian fruits. In shape a somewhat flattened oval, it varies in size from that of an ordinary pear to three or four times as large, and in colour

from dark green to rich yellow tinged with red. The pulp, which is juicy and luscious in the extreme, varies also from pale buff to deep reddish orange, and is liable to equal differences of quality. Some are full of stringy fibre, with a sweet, watery juice strongly flavoured with turpentine, and are jocularly termed sailors' mangoes, from the tar and hemp supposed to mingle in their composition; others are of the most melting texture, and a flavour richer and stronger, though far less delicate, than that of the apricot. But they are at the best a very inconvenient fruit; a large, flat stone, from which the pulp cannot be detached, lying along the centre, and allowing only a thick slice to be cut from each side, out of which the pulp is scooped with a spoon. The rest of the fruit must either be wasted, or sucked in most ungraceful fashion from the stone, the yellow juice streaming from lips and fingers.

Guavas, from which the well-known jelly is made, come into season about the same time, and are another very peculiar fruit, seldom eaten raw, though reputed very wholesome. They are not unlike an English pear in appearance, but both smell and taste are so sickly that few Europeans ever learn to like them. Indeed, taking all the fruits of Indian plains together, one would readily exchange them for such as an ordinary English garden can supply. On the hills in the north-west most of our home fruits can be cultivated; but at Calcutta there are no raspberries, strawberries, currants, gooseberries, cherries, apples, pears, apricots, or grapes; and the so-called plums, mulberries, and peaches are a mere mockery of the name. Two other fruits, however, are worthy of description, being quite unknown in England—the custard apple and the mangosteen—both of which come into season in the rains. The former, the cherimoyer of the West Indies, is in shape not unlike the round thick cone of some

species of pine, only with larger segments, each containing a hard black seed. Externally, it is green, and, when ripe, falls readily to pieces, disclosing a mass of white, custard-like pulp, from which it derives its very appropriate name. The mangosteen does not, I believe, grow in India, but is imported thither from the Straits, and is the prettiest and most delicious fruit imaginable. The husk is round, jet black, and shining, about the size of a small orange, and too hard to be cut without great difficulty, though, if the fruit is good, it yields to pressure in one direction, and splits readily enough. Inside, it is of a rich, crimson colour, and within it lies the delicate, pearly, acid fruit, divided into segments like an orange, only that they are fewer and much more distinctly moulded. It is the perfection of flavour, form, and colouring, the semi-transparent whiteness of the exquisitely shaped fruit contrasting beautifully with the crimson lining and black exterior of its shell.

The setting in of the rains may be expected in Calcutta, with almost absolute certainty, between the 15th and the 25th of June, by which time endurance seems to have reached its extremest limit. The first downpour comes like a royal boon from heaven, cooling the air, refreshing the thirsty land, and giving a wonderful impetus to vegetation; and, for a day or two, one listens to the fall of waters from the roof, and watches the steady downrushing of the rain, with intense relief and satisfaction. But in a little while the relaxing and depressing change in the atmosphere makes itself felt; the heat, lessened at first, recovers its power, but changes its character to a close, sultry, vaporous oppression. The evening breeze no longer blows, and night and day are alike breathless and enervating. "From night to morn, from morn to dewy eve," it is an incessant vapour bath, like the pitiless, damp heat of a stove-house, or the air of a great laundry

full of steaming clothes. This is the time that taxes the health and energy of Europeans to the utmost, and it lasts, with little variation, from the end of June to the middle of October. Sometimes several days pass without rain, and, after the first fortnight, it is comparatively seldom that one has to forfeit evening exercise; but through all these weary weeks the atmosphere never recovers a healthy dryness, and no breath of really fresh air comes to invigorate the health or revive the spirits.

The consequences are what might be expected. The outside of the houses grows green and black with moisture, and as very few roofs can stand this continuous rain after the baking heat, the rooms probably leak in half a dozen places; while even without extraneous moisture the indoor air is loaded to such an extent that mildew and mould soon cover every surface that is not absolutely impervious to their attacks. Silk dresses and valuable books should all be soldered down in tin before the commencement of this season, and it is next to impossible to keep kid gloves in wearable condition.

Everything, even to pillows and mattrasses in constant use, acquires a mouldy smell, and if a trunk or piece of furniture stands flat on the floor, even for only a few days, the matting under it turns black and falls to pieces. It is not astonishing that a rapid growth of mould should flourish upon boots and shoes, but I certainly was not prepared to find my purse go mouldy in my pocket, or to see the covers of my books on the side-tables gradually marbled with permanent white.

Preserves and potted meats must of course be eaten speedily or thrown away, and the general waste and loss during this season are incalculable. Insects, always a source of discomfort, are more rampant than ever; and crickets and cockroaches eat everything that comes in their way, from new tulle bonnets and muslin jackets, down

to the covers of books and the paints in one's drawing-box. Perhaps few articles would be thought less tempting in the way of diet than a cake of solid vermilion, yet I once slew in my own paint-box an infant cockroach, which had evidently been reared solely on that unpromising material. Singularly enough, vermilion and cobalt were the only two colours attacked, and these were riddled through with holes. Another odious little creature, called the fish insect, from the flat case in which it encloses itself, devotes its energies with more discrimination, solely to the destruction of apparel; but the insects form far too characteristic a feature of Indian life to be dismissed with only cursory notice, and as the rainy season is their carnival they shall have due attention now.

First in the list, because of the magnitude of its depredations, comes the white ant, into whose scientific history it is unnecessary here to enter. As with the bee, every swarm of these creatures consists of three kinds—the perfect female, of which only one, a huge living mass of eggs, belongs to every nest; the male, a large insect with four transparent wings, which rises out of the ground in clouds during the rainy season; and the neuter or worker, a tiny, white, grub-like creature, which is always unhappily at hand.

Whether they live in some mysterious fashion in the bricks and mortar of the walls, or whether they only climb them unseen in search of food, it is difficult to say; but certain it is, that few houses or rooms in Calcutta are safe from these destructive pests. They work along between the floor and the matting, till they perceive some superincumbent pressure, and then strike up at once to see if it is anything that comes within the range of their appetites. They are not fastidious, for nothing except stone and metal seems to come amiss to them; but wood, leather, cloth, paper and linen are their chief

prey, and they will attack a trunk filled with these from underneath, and eat their way in all directions through the contents before any outward indication of the mischief is visible. Working upwards in this unseen way, and carefully avoiding the outside, it needs incessant vigilance to guard against them, and they often accomplish serious damage quite unsuspected. I have seen a thick portfolio full of drawings left lying *for one day* on the floor of an upper room, swarming with them by the next, every drawing eaten into holes, and a large double handful of the disgusting little creatures shaken out to throw away. The common red ant, which is their determined enemy, soon cleared off the stragglers, so that only their hidden working protects them from extermination.

One of their most serious mischiefs is the destruction of beams of timber, which they attack whenever they can do so undisturbed, and for this cause, as has been already stated, Calcutta roofs are never ceiled. Fortunately, when they undermine these to any considerable extent, they leave a kind of earthy-looking deposit in their track, which gives warning of the inroad. Their ravages may sometimes be stopped by rubbing the affected beams with earth oil; but few years pass without its being necessary to take out some of the timbers of the upper floors, and put sound ones in their place. I have seen solid-looking beams, more than a foot in width and thickness, so completely hollowed out by these destructive insects, that a stick could be thrust through them in any direction. This most serious mischief can never be wholly prevented, but its lesser forms may be averted by having trunks, wardrobes, etc., supplied with feet to be planted in saucers or on plates of tin, by never allowing any furniture to touch the walls, and by seeing that bearers and sweepers perform their duties thoroughly.

Other kinds of ants, though not so mischievous as these, are yet sufficiently troublesome. One kind infests sugar, another bread, and neither can be wholly kept away, even though the safe in which these articles are kept stands duly insulated with its feet in saucers of water. Where they live it is difficult to say, but one constantly sees them attempting to drag insects into cracks in the plaster, or hoisting them with vast effort and perseverance up the lofty walls. The instinct that attracts them to their prey is wonderful. The room may be perfectly clean and free, not an ant visible in any direction, but if even a mosquito is killed, it is fetched away almost immediately, and they swarm with equal readiness into your cup and saucer. Indeed, no one thinks of leaving a cup or glass to stand for even a few minutes, without turning a plate over it to exclude these plagues. One night, driven to desperation by the cockroaches, I took a slipper and slaughtered five gigantic specimens, and the next morning they were solemnly gliding up the wall one after the other in ghostly funeral procession, propelled and dragged by hundreds of red ants.

Cockroaches, not the small creatures that sometimes swarm in English kitchens under the popular misnomer of black beetles, but of a different and truly giant kind, are perhaps the most general and disgusting pests of India. Their broad, brown bodies are fully an inch and a half in length, not to speak of legs and antennæ, and as they run about the room at night when the lamplight casts strong shadows, it is often difficult to distinguish them from mice. Nothing in drawers, sideboard, or wardrobe is safe from them, if there is the smallest crevice anywhere, and they communicate to every place which they infest a most distinctive and disgusting smell. In the rains they fly about in a particularly

lively manner, and when the lamps are lighted you may have half a dozen at once upon the tea-table, or promenading with delightful ease and freedom about the heads and shoulders of the guests.

The grasshoppers, flies, and crickets which in the hot season swarm in the grass and fill one's muslin skirts in walking over it, invade the house during the rains, with countless other tribes. After sunset, it is nothing but one incessant buzz, chirp, and flop, as they leap against the white walls and fall back upon the matting. Inside every fold of one's skirts, up the sleeve, inside the jacket, kicking, tickling, jerking themselves into your face, jumping into your tea, and swarming over the table-cloth, the rooms are literally alive with them, and bed is really the only place of refuge. Earwigs, beetles, mantises, flying bugs, and small green insects that run or hop sideways with a peculiarly fidgety motion, swarm on the table, and drown themselves in the nightlamp, the oil of which is often half an inch thick with these tiny green creatures alone. The mole cricket with its ugly face and strange broad claws is not an unfrequent visitor, and the praying mantis, which attains a length of from two to three inches, is a very amusing one from its singular aspect and curiously deliberate movements; while enormous spiders, and huge noisy beetles, buzzing and banging themselves against walls and ceiling are decidedly unpleasant inmates.

You hear a portentous buzz, perhaps, and see some particularly ugly and vicious-looking monster on the opposite wall, watch it for a few seconds, and congratulate yourself that it appears of sedate temperament, and walks so slowly, that at any rate it will be some time in reaching you. Lo, the next moment, it has alighted on your head, or bounced upon your writing paper, and you discover that it has wings as well as legs, and that you

are entirely at its mercy. Moreover, if you make inquiries of your native servant, you will probably hear that if it walks over you it will create bad sores, a very favourite statement, to which you may attach as little credit as you please, but which, nevertheless, does not conduce to equanimity of mind.

Really dangerous insects, such as scorpions and centipedes, are comparatively rare, though I have seen both in bed-rooms, and was once awaked by a sharp bite, and found a centipede coiled under me upon the pillow. Fortunately it was not a very large one, for when these creatures grow, as they do here, to a length of six or seven inches, their bite is terrible. But the mere abundance of insect life, even when harmless, is a greater nuisance than the dwellers in a temperate climate can conceive. Some check is of course kept upon it by the various kinds of birds, lizards, and bats, which also abound here. Some of the lizards are frightful creatures, especially the long-tailed kinds, popularly, though most inappropriately called blood-suckers; but their ugliness is amply compensated by their wholesale destruction of cockroaches and other insects. My first introduction to one was rather startling, for it suddenly made its appearance close to me on the book-desk of our seat at the Cathedral, and amused itself during the greater part of the service with careering up and down the arm-chairs just in front, the occupants of which were happily unconscious of its proximity. The face of one exquisite would have been a study for a painter, if he had caught sight of it in his new hat, which it seemed especially interested in investigating. From tip to tip, this creature must certainly have measured more than a foot, the greater part of its length, however, consisting of an extremely attenuated and tapering tail.

Subsequently, some eggs which had been turned up

in the compound were brought to me, and I kept them in a glass jar to see the result. They were about the size of a hedge-sparrow's egg, but longer, and covered with a tough white skin; and eventually five young blood-suckers emerged, which I kept for a few days, amused by their airs of preternatural wisdom. On another occasion, a similar experiment resulted in the hatching of a batch of snakes, which were more speedily disposed of.

The cast skins of these latter reptiles are often found in every large compound, and it is seldom that many weeks elapse without the creatures themselves turning up in some part of the premises; but I believe that the commonest kinds are perfectly harmless. It is very difficult, however, to arrive at any reliable information about either plants or animals in India, few Europeans taking any interest in the subject, and native statements being random in the extreme. I never saw a cobra in Calcutta, but they are common in the neighbourhood, and a full-grown one was killed under the stairs in the house of a friend of mine, who, fortunately, saw it cross the hall. The Hindoos have a strange reluctance to injure this deadly creature, which indeed they appear to hold half sacred, though its bite is inevitably fatal. A series of most elaborate and careful experiments, made in Calcutta a few years ago, by three or four of the leading surgeons, seems to place it beyond a doubt that no known remedy can save an animal bitten by a vigorous cobra. Not only were all so-called antidotes unavailing, but instant excision and cautery failed, even though a ligature had previously been placed round the limb, ready to be tightened the moment the bite was given.

One small species of lizard, very gentle and inoffensive, is the constant inmate of every Indian house. It would be impossible to exclude it even if one wished,

for it crawls like a fly in any direction: and few would desire to shut it out, for it is the sworn foè of mosquitoes, and all other insects small enough to be its prey. Often it has beguiled me into half an hour of idleness, spent in watching its nimble and sagacious manœuvres, crouching on the wall with wavering tail and rapt excitement, till some hapless cricket was near enough for a sudden spring, when the little hunter made short work with it, and was ready in a moment for another. Often, too, when safely enclosed in the mosquito curtains, I have seen it by the lamplight, careering along the transparent net, and pouncing on the mosquitoes waiting outside, athirst for blood. It is a slender pale brown creature with delicate semi-transparent skin and brilliant eyes; and judging from the numbers seen either without tails, or with those appendages truncated or evidently of recent growth, it appears to dispense with that part of its body without much inconvenience. Its eggs are just like round white comfits, and one meets with them everywhere, in table-drawers and wardrobe shelves; but scarcely any one would wish to interfere with this gentle, clean, and useful little creature.

Bats are sometimes a great pest, especially in very large and lofty bed-rooms. I have seen a dozen at a time, sweeping hither and thither for an hour together, not to be driven out by any attempt to flap or scare them; and especially if they are of the larger kinds, their presence is very unpleasant. Nor are these the only strange visitants to which one is liable in Calcutta. For a long time our bed-rooms were haunted night after night by a large kind of civet cat, too audacious and strong to be held or daunted by the most powerful trap we could procure; and I have more than once waked at midnight, and found a large owl placidly gazing at me from the top of the mosquito frame.

Bats, owls, and civet cats are all, however, abundantly useful in their proper place. It is really interesting to watch the former on some close evening in the rainy season, when the winged white ants are streaming up out of the ground like clouds of vapour. On such occasions the servants were always summoned with kettles of boiling water to pour down every hole from which they issued, but meanwhile the excitement of the bats was wonderful. Wheeling round and round in every direction, they thinned the myriad insects at each turn, filling the air with shrill cries of eagerness and triumph.

Rats and mice are of course the chief food of the owl, and of these there is no lack, the musk rat being especially common and offensive; while the civet cat and all its kind are the hereditary enemies of snakes.

One distinguished visitor which honours Calcutta with its presence only during the rains, is far too remarkable to be forgotten. This is the adjutant, a gigantic crane, standing about four feet high, with a large, heavy body, a small head, a huge bill, and wings which are said sometimes to measure twelve feet from tip to tip. A more ungainly and caricature-like bird probably does not exist, but it is useful, like the jackal and the crow, as a great devourer of refuse, and is said also to destroy rats and snakes. It certainly swallows lumps of solid bone larger than a man's fist, and it comes freely about the houses and compounds, perfectly quiet and harmless, but the most quaintly ugly creature living. Its body is grey and black, its neck red and bare, with a curious fleshy pouch dangling in front, and its huge beak the same colour, while its long legs have exactly the appearance of being covered with white stockings. Whether standing with its head buried between its shoulders, sitting on the ground with its long white legs stretched forward in the most awkward and unbirdlike attitude, flying, perching,

or hanging itself out to dry when its great black wings are saturated with rain, no words can render justice to its extravagant uncouthness.

Perhaps the most ridiculous exhibition of itself that even an adjutant could furnish, was given when one alighted from an evening flight upon the summit of a



Adjutant Crane.

lofty tree close to our windows, and there, perched upon a branch which bent and swayed beneath its weight, proceeded to swallow some young crows that were quietly reposing in their nest below. This being naturally against the views of the parent birds, they made a great disturbance, and the sight of their eccentric long-legged foe aloft on the ticklish summit, flapping his huge wings and making strenuous efforts to maintain his equilibrium, evidently considerably bothered by the uproar, but notwithstanding, diving with his great bill among the leaves, and gobbling down an

unclean little one at every dip, was absurd beyond description.

About the middle of October the rains cease, and the heat begins sensibly to abate. The shopkeepers open the cases in which all delicate goods have been carefully tinned down, and the capital wakes up and brightens ready for the Viceroy's return, and the commencement of the festive season. The Doorga Pooja holiday is duly kept—by the natives with observances to be described hereafter, and by Europeans in up-country trips, for which the railway makes liberal provision; and health and spirits alike revive with the return of weather which will make life for three months at least a luxury instead of an endurance.

We have now run the usual round of the Calcutta year, but it will be scarcely right, perhaps, to close a description of the seasons, without some reference to the awful cyclones which from time to time sweep over the districts round the head of the Bay of Bengal. Eight or nine years used to be considered the ordinary interval between these tremendous visitations; but of late they have happened much more frequently. Since the memorable one of 1864, when it was calculated that 50,000 persons perished, drowned for the most part, in the fearful storm-wave that swept over the low lands along the Hooghly, there have been two or three of less importance, and I will copy from a minute description of one of these, written at the time, the chief features of its progress.

1867

"Friday, Nov. 1st, 1867, will be long remembered in Calcutta and the neighbourhood for the wide-spread ruin and devastation it brought. We had had very strong winds from the north for two or three days, increasing in violence, and accompanied with rain on Friday; and it was thought necessary, before going to bed, to look round

and see that all the windows and sun-shutters were securely bolted. The former all open down to the floor, and are ten or twelve feet high, and four or five wide, folding back like shutters into the recess formed by the thickness of the walls. When closed, which they seldom are, except in storms, they are secured across the middle by a strong iron bar, about half-an-inch thick, and more than an inch wide. The sun-shutters are immensely strong wooden frames, with moveable venetians panelled in them, each flap being four or five inches wide, and half-an-inch thick. These are secured by strong bolts, shooting upwards and downwards at the same time; and the room doors, which are of the same size as the windows and very numerous, are composed of two very solid halves, fastened top and bottom by bolts.

"These were all looked to, and any of which the fastenings were not satisfactory, tied with ropes. The house, which is large and lofty, faces north and south; the east and west ends and the south front of the upper floor being occupied by bed-rooms.

"It soon became evident that there was no prospect of sleep, for the wind kept sweeping round in louder and louder gusts, shaking even this immensely solid building, as one may have felt a slight English house shake in a gale. Its first violence was directed against the east end, where the windows were soon obliged to be unbarred and folded back, lest the strong bars should fly and inflict some serious damage. The rain then beat in through the sun-shutters half across the room, and the eastern wing had to be abandoned to its fate, the bedding carried to the central south apartment, and the doors between the two barricaded with bedsteads, the bolts not being sufficient to hold them.

"After a while the chief fury of the storm veered to the north, where the bath-room doors, opening inward,

could not be barricaded, and slammed at every blast with a violence sufficient to shake any less solidly built house to pieces. Then the skylight in a side room was shivered, and the floor quickly strewed with glass and plaster, and drenched with rain.

"Meanwhile the servants, who had remained on the premises in case of need, were endeavouring, with small success, to barricade the lower floor against the storm; and I shall never forget the horror of one moment, when the doors that open on the landing burst open with a crash, and we saw a bearer trying to close a high staircase window, while the wind beating it against him, threatened every moment to hurl him down to the stone floor of the hall below. He was quite bewildered by the noise, and though we shouted to him to come away and leave the window to its fate, it was some awful moments before we could make him hear and understand. Glass and plaster were flying in all directions, and at last we barricaded the north doors of the large bed-room as we had done the eastern ones, and left the rest of the house to the servants and the elements.

"In the course of the night, the violence of the storm swept round to the west, which had to be abandoned in its turn, and only the long southern bed-room was left for the assembled family. Here we walked up and down, and once or twice lay down and tried to snatch a few moments of forgetfulness, but the uproar was inconceivable. The wind howled and whistled and beat against walls and windows, and now and then there was a peal of thunder; the great doors slammed at irregular intervals like discharges of artillery, and trees and walls were falling with such crashes, that it was impossible to distinguish between thunder, wind, and downfall. Occasionally some unusually loud report, followed by more banging and shivering of glass, would tell us that an iron

bar was wrenched off in one of the abandoned rooms; or noises overhead would show that the battlements of the roof were yielding to the blast.

"At last, about half-past four it gradually abated, and I fell asleep, waking at six to look out upon such a scene of desolation as it is difficult to describe. We had some magnificent trees in the compound, splendid both for height and strength, and every one was either blown down or stripped of its finest branches. Some of the limbs torn off were themselves as large as moderate sized trees, and six lofty casuarinas and two large bale trees lay uprooted on the turf. Some had fallen against the compound wall, and laid it flat for many yards in various places; and one blocked up the entrance gate, having narrowly missed crushing the durwan in his lodge. All that remained standing, both trees and shrubs, were literally stripped of every leaf, and the compound was half under water. Landings and staircase were covered with pools, and though the glass doors of the lower floor had been kept shut by heavy furniture, every pane of glass was gone, and the hall and the whole ground floor half-an-inch deep in mud and water. One or two doors were torn off, and several window-frames wrenched out of the masonry, the sun-shutters forced off their hinges, or literally blown to shivers out of their frames. One of the iron bars of the drawing-room windows had been so bent by the force of the wind that the staple would not hold it, and the other had been wrenched off, the rain driving in under an immensely wide portico, and wetting even the bookcases at the opposite side of the room.

"The solid white plaster, nearly an inch thick, which is used here both inside and outside the walls of houses, was shaken off in patches many feet square, the west end of the house especially, looking as if it had suffered a cannonade; and a covered way with a strong arched roo

of corrugated iron was completely stripped—the great sheets of metal, torn and crumpled like bits of paper, swept to the furthest corners of the compound. Many natives perished in boats, or by the fall of trees and buildings, but comparatively few Europeans suffered. A native doctor not far from us lost four of his family by the fall of his house, and our cook's father was killed. Poor Kaloo walked about all night trying to find shelter for his children, one of them an infant of only a few days old; and scarcely a native dwelling was left standing in whole districts; but owing to the absence of any storm-wave on the river, the loss of life was much less than during the last cyclone, when it was calculated that 50,000 persons perished. The Cathedral was partly unroofed and the west window blown in, while heaps of dead crows and kites lay in all the streets, fifty being found in a neighbouring compound."

On the whole, I was by no means sorry *when it was over* to have witnessed a cyclone for once, but those whose lot is cast in quieter climates may well be thankful for their exemption from such terrific and destructive visitations.

V

FAMILY LIFE AMONG THE HINDOOS.

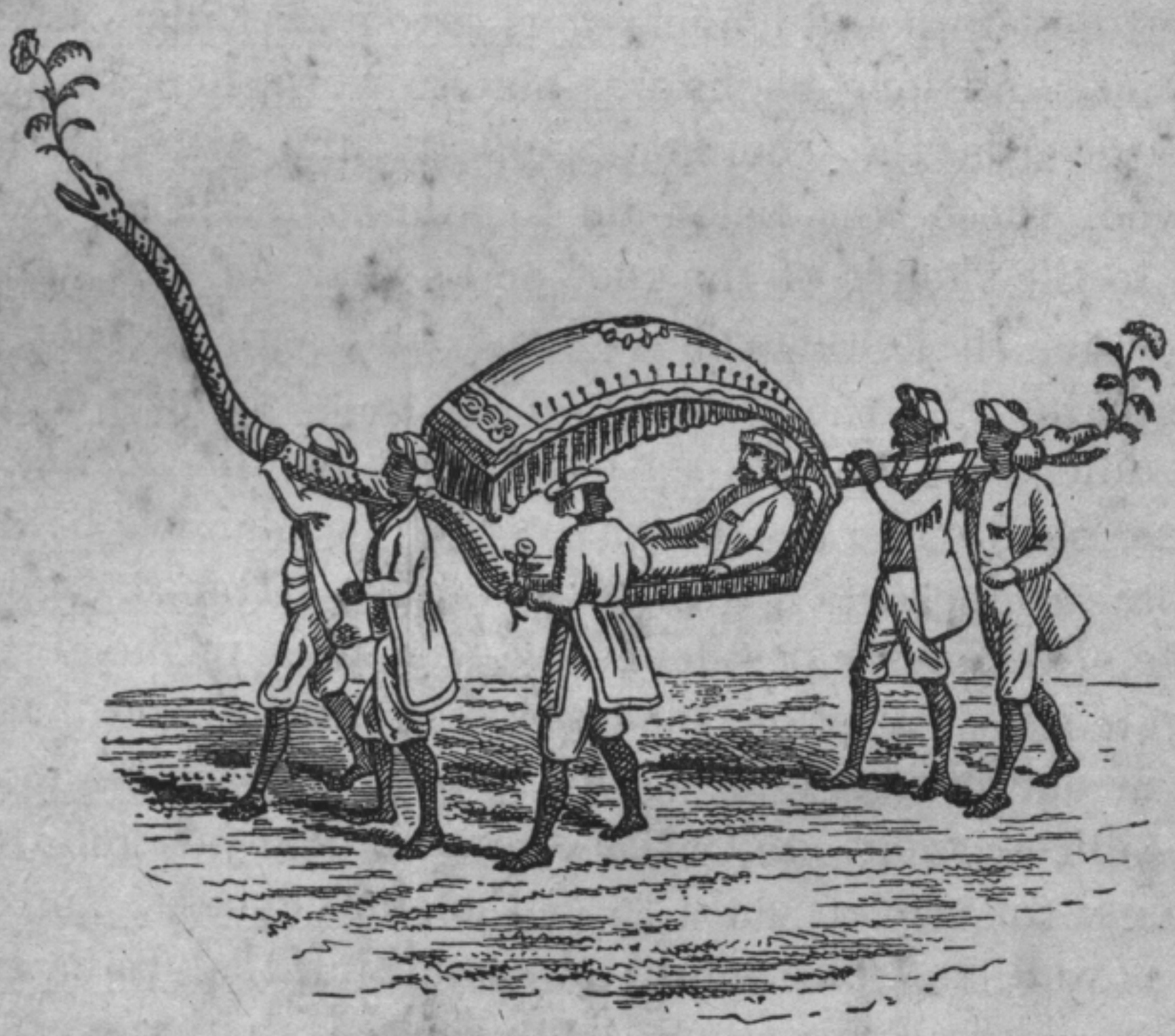
If the daily routiné and surroundings of an English family in Calcutta present much that must seem strange to a denizen of the dear old country, what shall we say of the interior of a native household? I approach this subject with diffidence for many reasons; but I am deeply anxious that my countrywomen should know something of the real state of their Indian sisters, that they may be stirred up to more effort and prayer on their behalf, and I can at least premise that I will make no statement which I have not the best grounds for believing to be strictly and literally true. For this reason it is not my intention to enter deeply into the complicated social problems of India, but simply to sketch some of their salient points as they stand out before an unprejudiced observer. Doubtless there are books which enter fully into these matters, but I never met with one, or with an untravelled English person, who had any definite ideas upon the subject. And yet, until the people of England are roused to think and feel about the needs and claims of India, there is little hope that any great improvement will be effected. No one can at all estimate the gigantic obstacles that lie in the way of her true progress without some knowledge of such fundamental peculiarities of Hindoo family life as I will now attempt to describe.

One of its most striking points is the system which keeps all the members of a family, irrespective of age or ability, in subjection to its head, and mutual dependence on each other; and this, again, is linked with the custom of early marriages, and the degradation of the female sex. To illustrate these important points, let us take the case of some Hindoo family in the middle ranks of life; for the system extends, with little modification, from the highest down to the lowest stratum of society, and a description of one will in this respect serve for all.

The first great fundamental law of family life requires that every girl, under penalty of the direst disgrace, shall be a wife before she is ten years old. The first anxiety of every parent is, therefore, to arrange for the marriage of his female children, and to prepare their dower, which frequently consists only of a variety of ornaments. By the time a girl is seven or eight years old, or even earlier, everything is generally ready, and a boy husband has been found whose parents are satisfied with the connection and with the promised dower, or the number of gold or silver necklaces, bracelets, anklets, and head ornaments with which the little creature can be decked. Of course no one dreams of consulting the children's wishes, nor, if they did, would any objection be likely to arise. The first idea instilled into the mind of a baby girl is that of marriage as the great end of life, and almost the only prayer that she is taught is one for early marriage and motherhood, with the added petition that her future husband may take no second wife. When the day comes, the children are decked in all their finery, and carried through the streets with more or less of pomp and display, discordant music, flags and garlands, and gaily dressed relatives and friends, sometimes forming quite a long procession. What ceremonies, religious or other, are performed at the bride's home, I

do not know, but there are always some days of feasting, and all classes spend sums ruinously out of proportion to their means on these occasions. For a while the little bride lives in her father's house, only visiting at intervals in her future home; but when she is ten or eleven she goes to live there altogether, and she is frequently a mother at thirteen.

Her boy husband, perhaps a year or two, probably several years, older than herself, lives, meanwhile, in his father's house, going to school or college daily with his



Palankeen used in Marriage Processions.

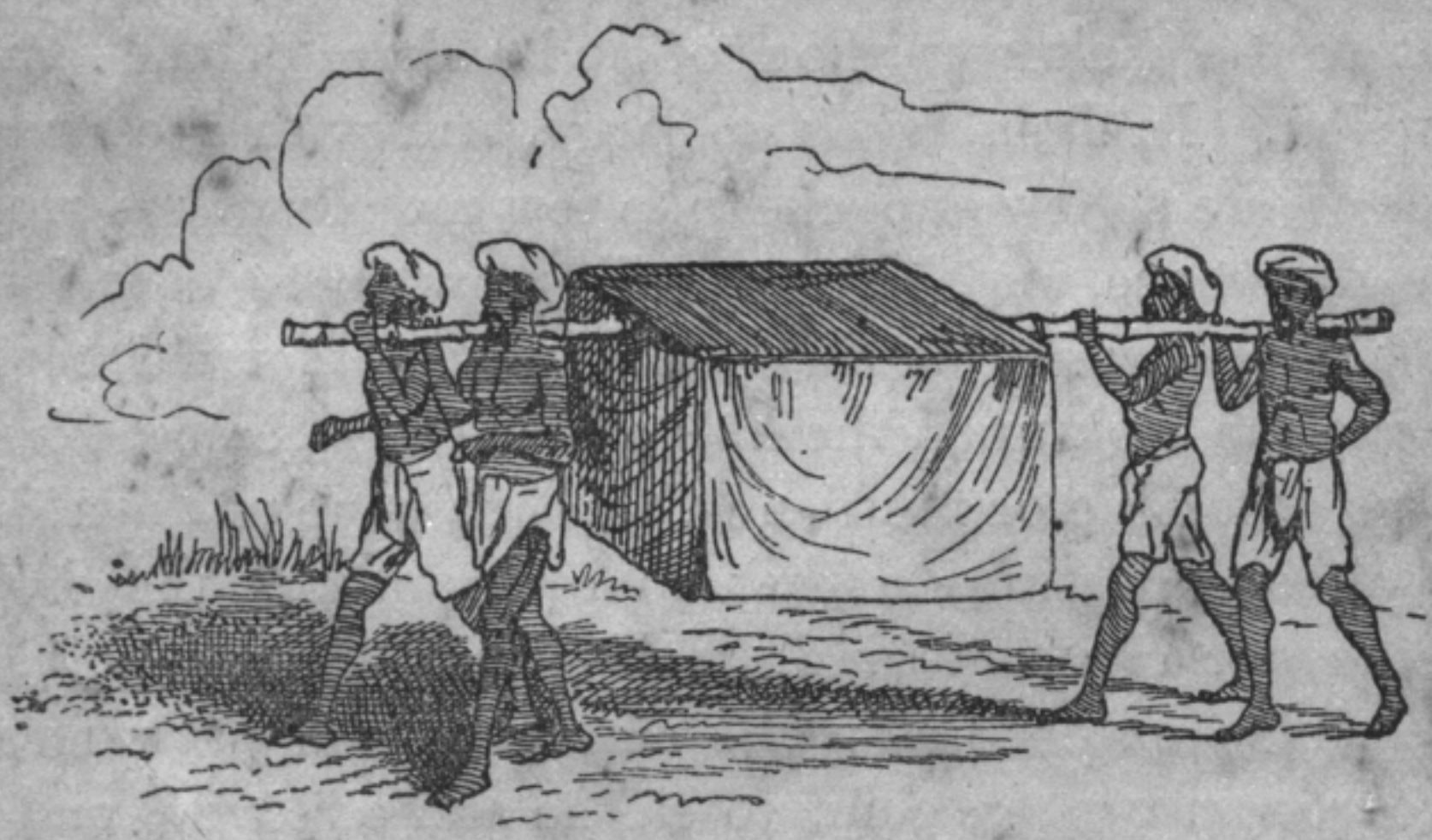
brothers, all his sisters having been drafted off in like manner to other homes; and as each boy marries, his child wife is brought in due course, and immured for life under his mother's care and absolute authority. No matter how large the number of sons, they usually all live on in the father's house, adding their earnings to the common stock; their wives inhabiting the zenana

or female apartments, together with mother-in-law, and perhaps grandmother and aunts. In course of time the elder members of the family die off, and a younger generation fills their place, and it must necessarily sometimes happen that some family division or call of interest removes one or more branches to another locality: but the system I have described is the normal family life of the Hindoo.

One good results from it, amid much evil. Family bonds are intensely strong among them, and if any member of the household dies, his wife and children are not left destitute and homeless, as is too often the case in England. As long as he was able to work, his earnings went towards the common support, and when he is removed, those who belonged to him have still an equal right to the shelter of the roof and a share of the family provision. In households so large, and with the necessaries of life so few and cheap, a few more mouths make little difference, and his sons will grow up to contribute in their turn, while his daughters will be married before any one can look upon them as a burden. Hence, except in case of famine or pestilence, there is none of the abject and piteous destitution that so often makes the heart ache in our civilized land. It is even difficult—almost impossible—except under the circumstances just referred to, to get an orphan child to clothe and educate; and so far it is well, and one might almost think that India has the best of the comparison. But, looked at in any other aspect, the picture is dark indeed, repulsive and discouraging. These early marriages are the result of an utter disbelief in womanly purity—a disbelief which is consistently manifested in all the subsequent arrangements. From the time the child wife becomes an inmate of her husband's home, she is a prisoner for life, never to be looked upon by any other man. The house may be a large and handsome one, furnished, as many of the baboos'

houses are, in lavish and gaudy style, but its spacious rooms and their conveniences and luxuries are not for the women of the family. Their rooms are built round an inner court, low, close, ill-lighted, and ill-ventilated, with no outlet to the street; and within these narrow walls the wives and mothers of India live and die.

Once or twice in their lives, perhaps, they may revisit their father's houses, or even remove with their husbands to another home, but they must do it carefully screened from public view. A palankeen is brought into the zenana, the woman gets into it, and the sliding doors are shut, and then, to prevent the possibility of any chink being left, a crimson cover is slipped on over all. Not till



Palankeen for Native Ladies.

this is done are the bearers allowed to carry their burden into the open street; and the cover is not removed till she has been conveyed in like manner into the women's apartments at her place of destination. So strict is this custom that it is recognized in English courts of law, and if any woman of the higher ranks is required to give evidence, she is either examined by a Commission, the members of which are admitted to the zenana, where they

tender the oath and receive her deposition, with a curtain drawn between her and them; or she is carried into court in her covered palkee, and the judge and counsel descend it and hear her evidence through the double screen.

The higher the rank, the closer the bondage, and to any one who knows their state, it seems only a sad mockery to call any of these poor creatures by our noble English name of lady. Even with us it is sadly abused in these days, but it still implies, at any rate, some degree of rank, wealth, or education; and if we reflect for a moment what these words mean with us, we shall see how little a title derived from them can suit a case so different.

Rank among us implies either personal achievement or generations of refinement and intercourse with civilized society; but in India every link in the ancestral chain only binds the hapless female in a closer thraldom, and restricts her from even the freedom of motion and action which the very poor enjoy. Wealth, in England, suggests surroundings that are in themselves an education, and opportunities of foreign travel and of cultivating tastes for everything beautiful and refined in nature and art. In India, it can clothe a woman with transparent drapery, and load her with jewels, furnish her with the finest tobacco for her hookah, and with abundant attar to sprinkle her garments; but it is powerless to elevate her mind, or to bridge over the immeasurable gulf that separates the mere female from the lady. And as to education —take any English child of ten or twelve years old, even from a school where a good and liberal foundation has been laid, shut her up from all society, except that of her compeers, place her under the absolute control of a totally uneducated mother-in-law, let her have two or three children of her own before she is fifteen, and never catch a glimpse of the outer world to the day of her death,— nd say what education worthy of the name can exist in

such a case. No books, no needlework, no pictures, except the vilest daubed prints from their most vile mythology, no accomplishments, except cookery, no employment, except smoking and playing with their jewels and their children, no knowledge of the grand past, or the busy present, or the eternal future! Yet this is the life—these are the homes—of the *ladies* of India.

I should not venture to draw such a picture solely from personal knowledge, necessarily limited: or even from the accounts of those who have spent years in making themselves acquainted with the customs of the country; but I can appeal to Hindoo writers of the present day in corroboration of its perfect truth. Not long ago, a series of lectures on the physical influence of their social habits was delivered in Calcutta by an educated native, and reported fully in the daily papers. I have no distinct recollection, either of the lecturer's name, or of his general drift; but one thing especially struck me. He went fully into the subject of zenana life, and condemned it to a certain extent as injurious, allowing that change was desirable; but this, *not on behalf of the women* who pass their whole lives in these confined apartments, but for the sake of the men, whose health must suffer from sleeping there, after spending their days in open shops or offices, or in the free ventilation of their own spacious rooms!

Unquestionably, there are exceptional cases, where a husband happens, perhaps, to be an only son, of liberal mind and devotedly attached to his wife, and will spend his own leisure in instructing her, and fitting her to be his rational companion. I have heard of Hindoo ladies, under these or similar circumstances, becoming deeply read in Sanscrit literature, and even going far into the profundities of mathematical science; but such instances are extremely rare. Again, a sect has lately risen among educated Hindoos, repudiating idolatry, and breaking

loose from old customs so far as to worship one God, and mix freely with Christians, and even bring wives into society, and allow them to travel by train. Of this sect, called the Brahmo Somaj, and well known in England since the visit of its eloquent apostle, Keshub Chunder Sen, more must be said hereafter. It is only necessary here to remark, that though in some sense influential, they are very few in number, and that the sum of all these exceptions forms an utterly inappreciable fraction of the women of India. The vast masses, in every rank, are condemned, from childhood to old age, to the purely animal existence described above.

It may, perhaps, be asked, "But how is it possible to find husbands for the whole female population? We know how difficult it is to get off a large family of daughters in England; and how can they manage to marry every Hindoo girl before she enters her teens?" The answer is easy. In the first place, it is well known that the balance of the sexes at birth is, if anything, in favour of the male; and if the female population of any country preponderates, it is because of the greater loss of life among men from accident or war. In India, where marriages are contracted before the age when there can be much exposure to these risks, this disproportion does not exist. Again; in England many women are left single, not because there are no men to marry them, but because marriage with us involves a separate establishment, and necessitates some amount of means. In India, owing to the family system I have described, the bringing home of a wife does not necessarily involve any appreciable expense. Even children are little burden, when they require no clothes, no nurses, and no furniture, and merely share the family provisions of curry, rice, and sweetmeats. And, once more; in England, *some* ladies have more than their fair share of husbands, and it is obvious that if they

were legally restricted in this respect, there would be a considerable number of would-be Benedicts obliged to choose wives from the single sisterhood. Such a law does prevail in India, and its consequences are far more serious than any one would at first thought imagine. Let us try to realize them as they affect both sexes; and, in order to do this, we will take no imaginary or uncommon case.

Think of a child of six or seven, trained from infancy, as I have said, to look on marriage as the chief good of life. The time has come for her to be decked in bridal finery, and affianced, it may be to a boy-husband, or it may be to a full-grown man. The ceremonies are duly performed, the days of feasting ended, and the little, bedizened creature is beginning to return to her child life again, only distinguished as a wife by the red powdered spot which every married woman wears above her forehead. She is looking forward now with mingled hope and wonder to the time when she will be transplanted to her husband's home, and begin to be a wife indeed. But one day, ill tidings come—the husband whom she has scarcely seen has been seized by disease or accident, and he is dead, and she a widow. Well may the poor child weep and rend her hair, for however little love could exist in such a case, her sun of hope and happiness is set for ever. Less than fifty years ago, that loss would have sealed her death-warrant, and she would have perished on her husband's funeral pile; but thanks to the fearless humanity of Lord William Bentinck, the horrors of suttee are rarely practised now—all persons concerned in such an outrage being amenable to English law. But still her fate is terrible. Not only is she forbidden all hope of second marriage, not only must she live and die solitary and childless, but she is looked upon by every one as a burden and a disgrace—a being who must be allowed to live, because English law is stronger even than old custom,

but who may be justly made the scapegoat of every family quarrel and misfortune. Never again must she adorn herself with the jewels so dear to the native heart, never wear any dress but the plain, white garb of mourning, never sleep upon a bed, never touch any but the simplest food. The ordinary share of household kindness is denied her, and in fasting and privation, unloved and unpitied, she must spend all the weary years that may lie between her and the funeral pile. It is little wonder that if temptation can but find a way into their prison-house, such hapless creatures fall an easy prey, and that the ranks of female vice in India, apart from the dancing-girls, who are bought in infancy and trained to a life of shame, are filled almost exclusively by widows who have escaped from this intolerable bondage.

Nor are the evils of this law confined to women; it cuts both ways, though not with equal severity. True, a man who loses his wife may marry again; but whom? Not a woman, for unmarried women there are none. He must wed a little girl, and wait till she is old enough to become the guarded inmate of his zenana. If he could marry a widow, there are numbers of suitable age who would gladly embrace such an offer of escape from misery; but it is impossible. Not that there is any authentic prohibition, even in their own ancient sacred books; but all-powerful custom is against it. They would be outcasts—and one must go to India to learn the full purport of that dreadful word. The loss of caste, to the Hindoo, is like the greater excommunication at the most servile period of the middle ages. No one will eat with him, or meet him in friendly intercourse—he is marked in life and accursed in death, and the same penalties are entailed upon his children. More than once lately, wealthy and influential natives, partly from selfish and partly from philanthropic motives, have endeavoured to break the fetters of

this cruel law. They have arranged to marry widows, and have secured the support of friends pledged to stand by them in the daring innovation; but in too many cases only misery has been the result. Not long ago, the tragic termination of one such venture attracted so much notice, that there is no breach of delicacy in commenting upon the circumstances, as they were reported in Indian and English newspapers.

The Hon. Maroba Canoba was a man of rank and education appointed by Government to the post of Judge in one of the Bombay Courts. Left a widower with a grown-up family, while still in the prime of life, sense and feeling revolted at the idea of marrying a little child, and he resolved to brave all consequences, and choose a widow of suitable age for his second wife. How the choice was made and the preliminaries arranged, I do not know—probably by means of one of the old women who act as match-makers in India, going from house to house where there are marriageable members, as tolerated and welcomed gossips, expatiating upon the beauty and endowments of female children to the mothers of boys and men, and vice versa. Any way, the arrangements were concluded, and the Judge, backed by the promised support of many influential friends, married a widow of five and twenty, who was only too glad and thankful to accept the offer.

I well remember the satisfaction with which the event was hailed by the Anglo-Indian press, and the hopes expressed that so conspicuous an example would do much to abolish prejudice and inaugurate a new era. But Eastern custom is a barrier against which men may dash themselves and die—a despotism as irrational and unfeeling as the granite walls of a prison house. All that remains to be told of Maroba Canoba and his hapless wife was ably summed up in a leader in one of the chief English

papers early in 1871. They became tenderly attached to one another, and their happiness, as English novelists say, was rendered complete by the birth of a son; but neither precaution, wealth, position, nor mutual affection could avert the curse of the outcast from their devoted heads. The grown up sons harassed their father's life with law suits and contentions, and all the petty tyrannies of daily insult and persecution made the zenana intolerable to the unwelcomed wife. They could neither endure nor escape the misery; and so one night they left their sleeping babe and walked out under the still Eastern moonlight to their death. They must have sat down on the parapet of the wide well, and deliberately tied themselves together with the husband's scarf; for they were found next morning under the deep water clasped in each other's arms; the wife, true to the traditions of her race, having arrayed herself in her costliest apparel for the sacrifice.

Before you blame them, free denizens of happy English homes, thank God for the long ages of liberty of thought and action that have made it simply impossible for you to comprehend their bondage!

VI

EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS AND RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTIES.

THOUGH the peculiar customs of India present such obstacles to the education of women, no difficulty lies in the path of men, and Government has done much, especially of late years, to encourage learning among the higher and middle ranks. It is now quite possible in Calcutta, and other towns where there are affiliated colleges, to obtain an education sufficient for a university degree at the monthly expense of only a few rupees. Scores of young men annually complete this course, in which Shakespeare and other English classics take the place occupied by Latin and Greek authors at our universities; and history, geography, astronomy, and other sciences are studied, as well as mathematics, for which the Hindoo mind has an especial aptitude.

Religion, till lately, was carefully excluded; and even now, though the prohibition is removed, I believe that no credit is given for theological marks in the university examinations. It is strange and sad to see how persistently a professedly Christian government has ignored in all its dealings with this great country that which is a nation's true crown and glory, the real secret of strength and progress. The very heathen despise and reproach us for this cowardly negation, for they see nothing in religion

understand the existence of a faith that never declares itself before men.

The result so far of this experiment of cheap and advanced secular education is anything but satisfactory or hopeful.

True, no educated man can really remain a Hindoo in religion; for this monstrous faith is so interwoven with monstrous scientific errors that it must fall before even a superficial knowledge of physical truth.* But, alas!

* One or two instances in various scientific departments will sufficiently illustrate this. They are taught that the earth is flat, having in the centre a mountain, round which the sun goes, causing day and night. Round the inhabited part of the world is an ocean of salt water, encircled by an annular continent, bounded on its outer edge by a sea of milk. Then comes another ring of land, and an ocean of butter-milk; another, and a sea of ghee; another, and one of molasses, or sugar-cane juice; another, and a sea of honey; another, and an ocean of fresh water, beyond which lies a mountainous barrier and outer darkness.

There was once a deluge which swept everything into the sea of milk, and the gods lost the amreeta drink which secured their immortality. To recover it, they and the demons churned the ocean with Mount Mandra which they rolled to and fro, using the five-headed serpent Vaysooke as a rope. The juices of all trees and flowers, and melted gold, being churned in the flood produced the desired drink, with which the gods recruited their immortality. A demon named Rahoo managed in the confusion to partake of the drink, but his theft was denounced by the sun and moon, and Vishnoo struck off his head before the immortalizing fluid had gone down his throat. His body consequently perished, but the head remained immortal and ascended to the sky, where he swallows the sun and moon whenever he can catch them, and thus occasions eclipses!

Again, as regards medical science, the following prescription is taken from a work on the treatment of children, called Balagraha Pustaka:—"Children who have reached the age of one year, one month and one day, are often seized by a goddess named Nandini. The symptoms are fever, crying in an unnatural tone, refusing the breast, swelling of the stomach and staring with a fixed upward

nothing is given to fill the void thus made—they are crammed with such knowledge as feeds the intellectual conceit which is perhaps the strongest tendency of the native mind, while the soul is left to itself, and the moral faculties uncultivated; and the result is as might be expected, that they too often take their degrees and go out into life inflated with the most ludicrous self-importance, and utterly unballasted by principle, clever mathematicians and subtle disputants, but without honesty, breadth or earnestness; aping English vices, and adding to them a sordid meanness, trickery and ingratitude most repugnant to the English character. It is scarcely possible to depend upon college examinations even as a test of scholarship, from the frequent and scandalous instances when candidates have managed to possess themselves of the questions beforehand, by tampering with employés of the Post Office or the printing press.

Instead, too, of recognizing as a boon the education

gaze. For this the offering is as follows:—Bring some earth from the two sides of a flowing stream, and form it into an image; dress it in a white cloth; offer to it white flowers, sandal powder and rice, betel nut and leaf, curds, boiled rice, a lamp fed with good oil, black beads, palmyra leaf, coins, ghee, jaggery, and three kinds of soaked grain. Then in the evening place all these things on a new tile, and put them down outside the city towards the east, and utter this incantation:—

'O goddess Nandini, to thee I make my salutation!
Come! Come!
O goddess possessing this child! Cease! Cease!'

Then offer as incense margosa leaves, chips from the horns of cattle, ghee, and hair from the child's head, and afterwards bathe the child with water drawn from five wells. Thus for three days must the goddess be appeased."

Other spirits named Sunamati, Mithuni, Marari, Kanjaki, Koukani, Alasugi, Irimbhini, Ardini, Niveshini, Archini, and Adbhúti have their favourite ages, the last being given to attacking children whose age is twelve years, twelve months, and twelve days.

so freely placed within their reach, they consider that Government by bestowing it, pledges itself to reward their scholarship with some lucrative employment; and as this expectation *must*, in the majority of cases end in disappointment, no inconsiderable element of discontent and danger is year by year infused throughout the country. The native papers are filled with the most insolent and preposterous comments on public affairs, written by men who owe their very ability for mischief to the unwise liberality of their rulers, and a great power for evil is thus rapidly growing up in India. Men, who but for this cheap and advanced education would have remained in their natural obscurity, disappointed of the public offices which are the great object of their ambition, cut loose from the anchorage of old tradition, and with no humility to ballast, or faith to guide them, are likely to become very fire-ships, scattering mischief and ruin, if once the spark of war is thrown into our Indian possessions.

Any file of Indian newspapers will furnish samples enough of this dangerous spirit, couched in language ludicrous from the combination of high-sounding words and defective grammar, and irritating from its insufferable insolence and conceit; but I will only quote one specimen in which the element of absurdity largely predominates. It is probably merely a squib from some English hand; but the native characteristics both of sentiment and language are hit off with singular felicity; and its genuineness is by no means an impossible alternative.

It was called forth by an article in one of the English newspapers which expressed surprise and disappointment that so few of the educated natives of India showed any disposition to exert themselves for the improvement of their country; almcst all preferring any petty post which allows its occupant to lead an indolent and sedentary life to the far superior appointments in the engineering service

for which natives might be peculiarly eligible, because less liable to suffer from exposure to the sun than Europeans:—

"Sir,—I had pleasure to discern the article which was made to appear in your journal anterior to some two or three weeks previously, with reference to the entertainment of native gentlemen to the superior emoluments of the Department of Public Works; and as you will indubitably delight to be made known with the considerations of a superiorly educated and matriculated native gentleman of higher order with reference to the aforesaid, I assume my foolscap and pen and ink to compose an epistle, the reception of which, if it is favourable by you (which I do not doubt it would be), you must insert in the typography of your too influential organ.

"The great motive why native gentlemen not now entering the Department of Public Works, but sooner go to dull work in Collector's Office on rupees 10 per mensem, than be in the interesting condition of D. P. W. Overseer on rs. 60, is because D. P. W. overseers have to pedestriamate or itinerate on horseback too much, and often abide in the sun till even 12 o'clock noon A.M. This is no matter for Europeans, who are strong just like coolies and vain to be so, and for low-caste men who are irrespectable; but for high-caste native gentleman it is respectable only to be weak.

"My late respected father, who departed this mortal coil some time previously, and was a Tahsildar, was thought great deal of by all peoples, except European peoples, because he could not walk far or abide in the sun; and two or four times, when assistant-collector made him come to inspect some lands was carried in palkee, while assistant-collector walk like strong common fellow; when my father doing this merasidars, and all peoples complimenting him much. How also can higher native gentleman with plenty respectful abdomen ride

many miles quickly without horsekeeper? Will he not be ill, and will not people think him common fellow if he does so? Therefore, native gentlemen will not now assume posts in D. P. W., but if they are inserted into higher posts where they can do what they like only, then some may do so, and this should be the case; for is it not now acknowledged that native gentlemen who have done go to college and learnt every knowledge are superior to Europeans which come to this country, many of which have not even matriculated? Therefore, every matriculated native gentleman, if liking, should be put in the post of Executive Engineer, and every B.A. in Superintending Engineer's post. If this justice be done, and native gentlemen Executive and Superintending Engineers allowed to live near their own villages, and give them European subordinates to do rough work in sun, then perhaps some matriculated students and B.A. will consent to enter the department, and so it will be improved.

"But present European Engineer people here don't want this. This I am acquainted with, for after perusing the article in your organ I considered how the 'mighty blank,' the Press saying native gentlemen must be put in lofty public works and telegraph posts, this will soon be done, and I went to one Superintending Engineer, and informed him I required an appointment. After a short conversation in the English dialect, in which I spoke very fine language, and told him I had matriculated and learnt everything, he wrote some questions just same like examination papers, which he presented me to answer. This I did with greater accuracy and facility, and not only so, but corrected some improper orthographies in the questions; but the Superintending Engineer would not appointment me, excusing that he had no post to suit such clever person. I informed him that I would take even 4th Executive Engineer's post; but though I press

and press, and talk very beautifully for nearly one hour, he would not give same, and in a sudden getting angry like most Europe people, he tell peon to turn me out of the office. Thus we all see that Engineer people here don't want highly educated and matriculated native gentlemen in the Department. I will now bring this epistle to a finish."

There is something almost pathetically ludicrous in this specimen of folly and conceit; but one meets continually in ~~daily~~ life with instances of insolence and meanness that make it very difficult to keep one's temper and retain any charitable feeling towards the baboos as a class. For example, I have seen a letter from one of them to an American lady who was devoting her life to the teaching of native women in their zenanas. His wife was one of her pupils, and I am not sure whether he paid anything for her lessons, but if he did it was not many shillings a month; and as Hindoo ladies never go out, their teachers not only have to drive to and fro in the mid-day heat to visit them, but have the trouble of purchasing and supplying all materials for the fancy work which they are particularly fond of learning. Some trifling article, previously procured, had been inadvertently charged at less than cost price, and another being now required, the full sum, *amounting to* $2\frac{1}{4}d.$ was charged for it. The purport of the letter, a long one, and written in very fair English, was to complain of what the husband considered an overcharge of $\frac{3}{4}d.$; and to ask, with the coolest insolence, for a list of all the prices of materials, as he was afraid they might be doubled next time!

Another baboo, a member of one of the wealthiest families in Calcutta, whose liberality in feeding hundreds of poor daily through the famine, had been duly extolled by the public press, sent one of his secretaries to arrange for a teacher to come two or three times a week to his wife; and it was only after much hesitation and chaffering

that he agreed to give eight rupees (sixteen shillings) a month to pay for her instruction; the lady teacher being all the while supported by a society in America, and obliged to keep her own horse and carriage to enable her to visit her pupils. It does, indeed, require a large amount of Christian patience to deal with such people and continue to do them good, which they so little appreciate. The women have much more generosity of disposition, and there is much that is amiable and attractive about many of them.

The foregoing remarks, though widely applicable, must not however be taken in too sweeping a sense; and especially would I guard against being supposed for a moment to imply that there are *no* native officials, or professional men of really high character. Every one familiar with Indian public life could name numbers who reflect honour on their country; but the system of secular education cannot fairly claim the credit of producing these, and it does unquestionably bring forth in shoals the men described above.

Supple, insinuating, and subservient to his superiors, and grasping and pitiless in his dealings with those beneath him, the worst vices of the Hindoo character are often most mischievously displayed by the lower officials in Government employ, especially in the collection of taxes from the poorer classes. This is placed in their hands to a great extent from the sheer necessity of the case; and there is no doubt that extortion as gross as that which made the name of Publican abhorrent to the Jew is consequently practised upon the ignorant and timid, the odium of it, falling, of course, upon the Government. Truly said the wise man, "A poor man that oppresseth the poor is like a sweeping rain that leaveth no food;" and nowhere are his words more frequently verified than in India. It is impossible to keep any satisfactory check upon unscrupulous officials of the lower

grades, and the amount of rankling disaffection kept up by their rapacity is a matter of serious anxiety to those who watch the under-currents of feeling that sway the ignorant masses of the population.

The public ceremony of conferring degrees upon the successful candidates in the Calcutta University and its affiliated colleges, is a curious and interesting sight, which takes place annually in the Townhall. The Bishop, the Chancellor, and Vice-Chancellor of the University, and all the high officials, civil and military, who are members of the Syndicate, occupy a dais at one end in their appropriate robes, and below on each side are ranged the successful candidates, almost all natives, and very few of them Christians. Almost all wear the peculiar flat, striped turban before described, which combined oddly with academic gowns and scarfs, and with the white trousers which most of them assume, at least for this occasion.

Just in front of the dais are ranged the seats for ladies, and behind these, and filling every corner of the hall, are hundreds of baboos, in all varieties of attire. Gorgeous smoking-caps, or turbans of showy colour and material adorn their heads, and vests and long upper garments of corresponding magnificence, with white scarfs folded diagonally across the breast, and white muslin drapery below, complete their array. One portly Zemindar or landowner, from a distance, was especially conspicuous on one of these occasions. Upwards of six feet high, and stout in proportion, he walked about beaming with satisfaction, a benignant son of Anak in gold spectacles, his turban green and white, of helmet shape with flaps behind, and a long robe of shot and flowered satin, in which yellow and red were the prevailing colours, enfolding his portly person.

In such a scene, with punkahs swinging overhead and attendants waving huge palm leaf fans behind the brilliant assembly on the dais, the formal English ceremony of

conferring the degrees seems not only incongruous but flat and commonplace. The Registrar and the heads of Colleges merely present their respective candidates to the Vice-Chancellor, who hands to each his diploma, the young men bowing à l'Anglaise or salaaming native fashion as they retire. The whole winds up with more or less of lengthy speech-making, and would be a cheering and hopeful spectacle but for considerations not patent to the casual observer. Some of these have been already adverted to, and we will now turn for a moment to the disastrous effect of their peculiar family life on these young men, who ought to be the hope of India.

Instead of looking forward with the healthy natural anticipation which seems an instinct of Western youth, to independent entrance on the great struggle of life, and to a home, humble perhaps, but precious because his own, and blessed by the presence of the one woman whom he hopes to win, the Hindoo youth returns to the same life that he has led from boyhood, and will probably lead, with little variation, to old age. He is married already to a child in years, who can never be a true helpmeet, because circumstances forbid her ever being more than a child in mind; and home is no true home, but rather a sort of family club, where all the male members of the household take their meals together. There is no real freedom of thought or action, and little motive for self-improvement or energy. Employed or unemployed, active or indolent, he and his may live here and take their share with the rest as long as there is property enough or employment enough among them all to keep things going.

Think of these hundreds of youths, fully sensible of the absurdity of their national religion, and despising it in their hearts, yet keeping up its outward observances because any failure in these would attract the notice of the ignorant and bigoted elders of the family; and try to

realize the case of one who has heard enough of Christianity to be mentally convinced of its truth, and seriously disquieted in conscience by its requirements. If he begins to drop any of the idolatrous observances which are interwoven with every act of daily life, to visit the missionaries or frequent their preaching, he draws down upon himself difficulties of no common order. There are too many eyes upon him for any defection to escape notice; brothers, cousins, uncles, and father are soon upon the watch, and he is questioned and cross-questioned, reproached and surrounded with a system of restraint and espionage that either checks his rising aspirations, or compels him to face at once a still sterner ordeal. If the authority of a father is powerless to bind him to the old faith, the prayers and tears of wife and mother are called in; and if these are unavailing, there remain the curse of the latter and the sternest separation from the former. Thus the very virtues of the Hindoo character, its deep affections, and the strength and sacredness of the filial bond, which are nowhere perhaps more generally acknowledged than in India, form the strongest obstacles to the progress of Christianity.† The women, necessarily ignorant and narrow-minded from their secluded position, are intensely wedded to the ancient superstitions in which they see no folly; (2) and the horror and despair with which they contemplate the apostasy of son or husband, are unfeigned, and agonizing to the last degree. Many of them, until the subject is thus brought home, have actually no idea of the existence of any other religion than their own. "What!" said the aged aunt of my pundit, when he told her something of our discussions, "is it possible that there exists a woman in the world who does not worship Gunga?" (3)

Even among those who are a degree better informed, and who are aware that there is a religion called Christianity, the wildest misconceptions prevail, and the most

unfounded calumnies are credited. The truth would be bad enough in their esteem, for no moral transgression could shock the feelings of an orthodox Hindoo like the eating of beef — and alas, in this particular, English Christians are notorious offenders; but in addition to this, all the extravagant slanders propagated by ancient heathenism against the early Christians are widely circulated, and the most atrocious crimes believed to be practised in connection with our holy faith. I knew an instance where a high-caste Hindoo of considerable literary attainments had been converted to Christianity through the influence of a venerable fellow-countryman, with whom he became acquainted while at a distance from all his family. He was thus spared all the usual hindrances, but when the news of his baptism was carried to his distant home, it produced intense dismay and indignation. His mother set out at once on the long journey to Calcutta to assure him solemnly that he should never be received, or see his wife's face again, unless he renounced his accursed faith and procured by penance and payment his restoration to the privileges of caste. The poor man carried his difficulties to his friend and teacher, and found a valuable ally where he could least have expected it. An aged aunt of the latter, who still clung to the old faith, but had been supported and kindly treated by her nephew ever since he became the head of the family, volunteered to go to the stranger and bear her testimony that she had lived for thirty years in a Christian household, and that no wickedness was done among them.

But it is rare indeed for a new convert to meet with help like this, and it requires no common steadfastness to face the fierce tide of reproach and opposition that is sure to burst upon him. There is no need to multiply instances when the whole case speaks for itself; but instead of wondering at the slow progress of the Gospel

in India, and growing impatient over the scanty roll of converts, we should rather marvel and rejoice that so many are enabled by God's grace to stand.

Nothing can put the matter in a stronger light than the touching appeal of one young Hindoo convert to the missionary who was urging him to seal his faith by baptism. "Sir," he said, "have you a wife? Is your mother living? Could you bear at once to have your wife taken from you for ever, to hear your mother curse you, and see her grey hairs in the dust at your feet? I must have strength for that before I own myself a Christian." No one who has not heard the wild wailing of these impulsive Eastern women, and seen the helpless, despairing way in which they fling themselves, face downwards, to the earth and grovel in the dust on a far slighter occasion, can realize fully the force of these words; but I think few Englishmen, with all their boasted strength of character and independence of training, could face such an ordeal calmly; and there are doubtless thousands in Bengal at this moment who would declare themselves Christians at once, but for the strength of female influence. We must bear in mind that the mother's authority is paramount with a Hindoo—even their common forms of speech bear testimony to this. A Hindoo speaking of his parents never says "father and mother," as we invariably do;—it is always "ma-bap," mother and father. Literally or metaphorically it matters not—the mother always comes first; a servant, a petitioner, a subject craving his sovereign's grace—all use the same language, "You are mother and father to me, forgive me, or grant me this boon."

Need we add more to prove that, humanly speaking, there is little hope for Christianity in India till the women can be reached, and that if only the wives and mothers could be won, the greatest obstacles to progress and to true religion would at once be swept away? Of the efforts made in this direction we must speak in another chapter.

VII

ZENANA TEACHING.

BEFORE entering upon the subject of this truly Christian work, it may be well to state distinctly, that my views o it are merely those of an outsider deeply interested in the effort, but never personally engaged in it. Perhaps this will dispose some to attach more weight to the accounts which follow than is often accorded to the regular reports of religious societies and their agents. Unfortunately, many residents in India, as elsewhere, may live for years in a place, and never care to inquire what Christian work is going on around them; and when they come home, and are questioned on the subject, their answer too often is, "Missionary work! converts to Christianity!—don't believe a word of it! Why, I lived in that neighbourhood for three or four years, and I never so much as saw a native church, or heard of a single convert being baptized!" Such people at home probably never see the inside of a hospital or a Sunday school, and know nothing of the agencies at work in lanes and alleys within sight of their own back windows; and they might just as reasonably deny the existence of Christian and missionary work in England as in Bengal; but, unhappily, their random statements are often taken for much more than they are worth. And if this is the case with regard to ordinary missions, which are necessarily attended with some degree

of publicity, how much more must it be expected when the question is of work among women in the close seclusion of a Hindoo zenana? More than once friends wrote to me from England, asking whether anything was really being done, and quoting acquaintances, who, after years of residence in India, ridiculed as utterly impossible the idea of any Christian effort for the native ladies of Calcutta. Nay, even in India, we once met the widow of a chaplain, who had lived for years in the successive stations to which her husband was appointed, and yet actually professed not to know what a zenana was!

It may not, therefore, be useless to state that within my personal knowledge, there are two mission homes in Calcutta—one in connection with the Church Missionary Society, and the other supported by an American mission fund, in which English, American, and East Indian ladies reside, devoting themselves entirely to the work of zenana teaching; besides other labourers in the same wide field, connected with the Established and Free Kirks of Scotland, and the Baptist and other denominations. From the two first mentioned, offsets have been established in many of the towns of northern India, and a similar work is also going on in and near Madras. I leave further statistics to the authorized reports of these societies, wishing to confine myself throughout these sketches strictly to matters of personal knowledge.

Many of the ladies thus engaged were my own intimate friends, and I have spent days in accompanying them from house to house. What follows is copied almost *verbatim* from letters written on the spot; for it seemed worth while to incur the risk of a little repetition, in order to make it clear that these accounts are simple and literal transcripts of facts as they fell under impartial observation:—

"Yesterday I spent in going about with Miss ——— to visit some of her zenanas, and this first day certainly

destroyed many illusions. I used to fancy that these Hindoo ladies, if they were prisoners, had gilded cages, and imagined them dressed in silk and embroidered muslin, seated on gorgeous couches, etc., etc. No such thing. All the houses we visited were inhabited by people of good caste, and one was a very large place, belonging to one of the richest baboos in Calcutta; but even here the apartment and furniture of the lady were more like the back parlour of some petty haberdasher's shop in an English country town than anything else. The lady was certainly *decently* dressed (the only one I saw who was so according to our ideas)—that is, she wore a muslin jacket and a sort of muslin petticoat, formed of a long piece twisted round her,—and she could read in 'Line upon Line,' and do simple dictation and sums, and had begun to learn to draw, and was even working a pair of slippers to send to the Viceroy—Lady Lawrence having once been to see her, which was an honour to be remembered for life. But in most of the houses the women's rooms were close and poor in the extreme, a large bed or couch, and perhaps a small table and one or two chairs, being often the only furniture. The *ladies*, naked to the waist, or with only a loose piece of muslin thrown over their shoulders, stood or sat on the floor, for there were not seats enough for all, to look at us and ask questions; children, perfectly naked, ran in and out; and I could rather have fancied myself in some spot



Native Lady.

beyond the limits of civilization than among members of the respectable middle class of a great capital. And yet there was something very interesting and nice about many of these poor young wives. Their faces were bright and intelligent, and they seemed very gentle and affectionate sitting by Miss ———, and holding her hand, and pressing her to come again. They all, especially the children, have the most magnificent eyes and eyelashes imaginable; all go barefoot, and most of them had their hands and feet dyed red with henna. As we went from house to house, stranger baboos twice asked us to visit their zenanas, and of course we complied, Miss ——— being anxious to extend her circle of pupils.

"I could neither speak nor understand, except as she interpreted; but they seemed delighted even to *see* a stranger, complimenting us repeatedly upon our fairness and good looks, and wondering exceedingly that we were not married. We went altogether into seven zenanas, and in all, except the two new ones, Miss ——— gave lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework, which were evidently full of interest for the poor, imprisoned creatures. In some houses, the mother of the family, two or three of her daughters-in-law, and some of their children, were all pupils together, besides others crowding into the room to listen and look on; and one can fancy what a beam of light from the outer world the coming of the English lady must shed in these secluded rooms. How far the light of another world may gain admittance is another and a far more difficult question—one, however, that often receives answers full of encouragement. At least, prejudices against Christianity must vanish before this friendly intercourse; and even employment for the mind and for the fingers is a priceless boon to those who, without this teaching, would spend an absolutely idealess existence. I asked one of them how they used to pass

their time before the teacher came, and she replied, 'We used to bathe and plait our hair, and cook, and eat, and sleep, and smoke, and play with our jewels, and eat and sleep again.' I believe they all cook for their husbands, though they do not eat with them; and they make a great variety of sweetmeats, of which those made of cocoa-nut are very nice.

"The whole day was very interesting, though most fatiguing. The driving about in the intense heat, and then sitting in those close crowded rooms, sometimes without a punkah, makes it very trying, and one feels so sad for these poor caged creatures. I think I never appreciated so strongly the blessings of Christianity. Looking at these Hindoo *ladies*, and then turning to my friend, Mrs. ——, whose father was reared a Hindoo, so that she is only a Christian by one generation, the change seems nothing short of a miracle, for she is as intelligent, refined, and well educated as any ordinary English lady."

The two letters following contain the account of one day's adventures in a scattered district some miles from Calcutta, which had been for some time regularly visited by members of the American Zenana Mission. They are given almost *in extenso*, because they furnish the only record of what was to me, at least, a singularly novel and interesting expedition.

"My dear L——,

"Yesterday, I accomplished my long-delayed excursion, and will now give you some account of it for the benefit of those who feel uncertain whether zenana teaching is not all a myth and an imposture. To begin at the beginning, I got up soon after five, and after a very hurried breakfast drove to the railway station, which I reached before seven. There I was joined by Mrs. ——, who chiefly carries on this mission, and her sister, I——, who has not very long been out in India, and we

were soon speeding along in the delicious freshness of the morning air towards our destination. The railway journey lasts about half-an-hour, and then we descended at a little roadside station where there is no waiting-room, and after a little delay secured a gharry. This is the general name for all vehicles here, but they are of very various degrees of excellence or the reverse, and the only one to be had that morning was decidedly at the lower end of the scale. There were neither windows nor door, only sliding shutters, between which we had to step over into a sort of well in the middle, and we ought then to have been able to close them, but they obstinately refused to move, so we were obliged to hold a large umbrella out on one side to screen us from the scorching glare. Moreover, the gharry was so low in the roof, that we could not sit upright with our hats on, and so begrimed from contact with Bengali heads, redolent of cocoa-nut oil, that we did not like to take them off, and being, moreover, excessively cramped for space, our ride was none of the most agreeable.

"I mean to write and give Lucy a description of some of our adventures, but to you I will write only of zenana and school work. The first place we visited was a school supported by the mission, at which about thirty scholars attend daily. There is a paid resident schoolmistress, but as she is not a Christian, she cannot be much depended on, and requires constant looking after. You would have been astonished to see her dress. She was a slight, prettily formed young woman, and her *only* clothing was a long piece of white muslin wound round so as to cover her nearly from head to foot, but not more than a single thickness anywhere. I had never seen any one so transparently attired before, but Mrs. —— told me that the higher the rank the thinner the dress, as a general rule, and that some of the rich baboos'

wives wear the thinnest gauzy material put on in the same way.

"The children were little, bright-looking creatures, some of them not more than eight or nine years old. wearing the red spot which distinguished them as wives, others unmarried. They read and spelt in Bengali, answered from Watts's Catechism in the same language, wrote, and did sums, and showed their needlework just like English children, but incidents occurred now and then that brought heathenism prominently forward. For instance, an old man walked into the court before the school verandah, and going up to a little insignificant plant, salaamed to it repeatedly, and then began to gather a few leaves. This salaam, which is the usual salutation to a superior, is performed by putting the hands to the forehead in a peculiar way, and bowing low, at the same time, saying, 'Salaam, salaam (Peace, peace).'† Mrs. —— told me that this plant is found about every house, and that it is worshipped, or used in almost all their prayers. She questioned the women about it, but they seemed unwilling to answer, and we could not gather positively whether they prayed *to* it, or *with* it, but they certainly salaam to it, as they would to a god or to a superior. I send you a blossom and a leaf or two, which they did not object to give us. It is apparently something of the sage kind, but I am not botanist enough to give it a name. We left Mrs. —— at this school, and went back to the burning ghaut, which I must describe to Lucy, then to two other schools, and finally to a large zenana. The other schools are also supported by the mission, but taught by pundits instead of women. In one the children said some Bengali hymns, and we tried to teach them to sing a translation of 'There is a happy land,' but, in consequence of the late festival, the attendance at all three was very small.

"When we reached the baboo's house, we took our tiffin of sandwiches and fruit, in an empty room, and then went through the intricate passages and up the narrow dark stairs that characterize the zenana precincts, to what was really our afternoon's work. In this one house there are upwards of fifty souls, including the old grandfather and grandmother, great aunts, etc., all the sons and sons' wives, and all their children and grand-



Native Ladies and Children.

children. Of course we saw none of the men, except casually outside the zenana, but the women were all very glad to see us, and some of the little children were the dearest little brown things you can imagine. Under five or six years old, they go perfectly naked, except, perhaps, a heavy silver girdle, and large silver rings on their ankles, and the plump, sleek creatures, with their splendid eyes, and pretty, demure ways, were most droll and winning. I cannot tell how many there were altogether,

but they were very quiet and good, and came to us quite fearlessly to be nursed and petted. One, just old enough to wear a saree, and whose Bengali name signified 'Immortal Maid,' sat on I——'s lap, and ate sweets from her hand, and finally went to sleep in her arms, the mother looking on, quite complacently; and yet it is but a few years since these people would have considered the touch of a European's garments pollution.

"The young wives and mothers read and repeated lessons in Bengali and English, did sums, and showed their fancy work, repeated hymns, and asked us to sing to them. They were reading a Bengali translation of 'Daybreak in Britain,' which you may have seen in the 'Sunday at Home,' and the less advanced ones read 'Line upon Line.' Then they talked, and asked us questions in very simple, child-like fashion, and when I made some remark about the children's silver girdles, they fetched out all their jewelry to show us. All these married children had their sets of ornaments—slender nose-rings, plain or with pearls; large, slight ear-rings, two or three inches in diameter, with a gold fringe round the lower half; double and triple gold bands for the head, and ~~six~~ or sevenfold strings of pearls for necklaces. Then there were gold chains for the throat, one kind of bracelet for the upper arm, and two or three for the lower; girdles of gold or silver, and curious massive rings with a fringe of silver bells, for the ankles. One of the girls amused herself with putting as many of her bracelets as were large enough on my arm, and she had nearly enough to cover her own.

"I was tired, and my head ached from being out so much in the sun, therefore we spent the afternoon here, instead of going on to any other house. You would expect that with all this profusion of jewelry, they would have, at least, comfortable furniture, but this by no means

follows. I cannot say what the men's apartments were like, but the poorest people in my old district would think themselves ill off indeed, if they had no more of the conveniences of life than these Hindoo ladies. The floor was cement, without mat or carpet; there were no glass windows, only wooden shutters; and the only article of furniture I saw was the rough wooden bench we sat on. Some sat by us, others squatted on the floor with their arms round their knees. All were barefoot, but this is partly a religious, partly a social, prejudice, like that which forbids them to wear any dress which has been cut out and sewn together. Their clothing is thus restricted to the saree, or long piece of calico or muslin, wound round the waist, so as to fall below the knee, and another thrown over the shoulders so as to form a precarious covering for the body, and be drawn at will over the head and face. When alone, I fancy they seldom wear anything above the waist, or, as the pundit expressed it in rather imperfect English, 'They have nothing *up a stair*.' Their only books were those the Christian ladies had brought; their first lessons in needlework of any kind came from the same source; and even their ideas of decency had been gradually imbibed from the zenana visitor.

"I might have gone into a dozen rich native houses in that village and found everything the same; or into 300 or 400 houses in Calcutta and met with the same welcome; and yet people even here affect to treat zenana visiting as an impossible and Quixotic undertaking. The fact is, that if there ever was a place where you may live for twenty years and not know what is going on in the next street, that place is Calcutta.

"Finally, we drove back to the station, having secured our delightful vehicle for the day, at the moderate charge of half a crown, and reached home about 6.30 p.m.,

after nearly twelve hours of incessant talk and driving about in the sun. My friends do this two or three days every week, and spend the other days teaching in the same way in Calcutta.

"It is slow and often discouraging work, but step by step it is preparing the way for the regeneration of India. It is the women of the elder generation that keep back their sons and husbands from Christianity, but by God's blessing this will not long be universally the case.

"You can judge a little by this unvarnished account of what is being done daily in scores of Hindoo homes, clans in themselves; and I think and hope that it will quicken your interest in the work."

"MY DEAR LUCY,

. . . . "I will not waste time in preliminaries, as I want to give you a true, full, and particular account of some incidents in the expedition omitted in L's. letter.

"As we were driving from the station to the first school, we passed a series of swamps by the roadside, which Mrs. —— told me were supposed to be connected with a peculiarly holy branch of the Ganges. The people consequently come from considerable distances to bathe in them, and the dead are brought there to be burnt, and the dying to die. We saw the smoke as we passed, and as I had always wished to see the ceremonies at a burning ghaut, we alighted and walked to the shade of a large peepul tree near the place. The roadside was irregularly fringed with trees and shrubs, beyond which, just here, there was a slight descent, and then a small open space between the road and the water. This is the place of burning, and though very near the road, it is so far screened by the shrubs and the descent, that any one might pass it every day and never suspect the use to which it is applied. At first, as we went down, I only

saw two smouldering fires, but in a moment my attention was called to a body wrapped in a cloth, lying with its legs in the water, and as I took another step forward to see it better, I nearly trod on another corpse stretched on the ground at my feet. My companions saw a man whom they knew standing by, and on inquiring after his uncle, an old man whom they were going to visit, found that he had died after only a day or two's illness, and that his body also was soon coming down to be burnt. Another Brahmin was pointed out to us as the brother of the corpse at our feet, but there was no one belonging to the one lying by the water. She had been brought there dying, and now her friends were gone miles away to fetch their Brahmin to officiate."

(It is well known that Hindoos are often brought down in their last moments to die by the sacred stream, from the belief that this secures their everlasting happiness; but of one horrible fact connected with this custom, I was not aware till afterwards. If any mistake has been made, and the seemingly dying person shows symptoms of returning life, he is not allowed to revive. If he did live after being solemnly carried to the Ganges, it would be as a dishonoured reprobate whom the goddess refused to receive; and so in very love and pity any appearance of returning life is soon quenched with mud and water from the river. It is impossible to tell how many are hastened out of this world by compliance with these horrible superstitions.)

"We tried to gather from the men belonging to the place when the rites would begin; but finding that, as usual, we could get nothing reliable as to time, we resolved to go on to the schools and return in three or four hours, leaving Mrs. ——, who did not share our curiosity, to teach till tiffin, and take us up on her way

we found ourselves too late for two burnings and too early for the third. The corpse of the woman still lay on the muddy bank under the scorching sun, with its legs in the water, but the old man and the other body were burning in the centre of small compact piles, kept from falling apart by stakes driven into the ground at each corner. The fires blazed furiously, and there was a thick smoke which sometimes blew towards us, but I did not perceive any peculiarly offensive odour, and for some time saw nothing of the bodies. At last, some logs from the fore part of the old man's pile fell away, and left his head and one shoulder standing out in ghastly clearness, black and shining with smoke, but horribly perfect and hideous.

"Just before this, one of the bystanders, a tall Brahmin, bare to the waist as usual, except his sacred thread, bareheaded and barefooted, came up to us, and to my surprise addressed me in very fair English, with the inquiry whether I thought burning or burying the best. As I had not then seen anything unpleasant, I told him that I thought it mattered little which, so that the soul went right; and then followed one of the most interesting discussions I ever took part in. He began by saying that he agreed with me, and that he believed in the end every one would go right. I replied that men could have no certainty on such subjects except by revelation from God; and that what we held to be God's Word gave no ground for any such idea.

"Then he went over all the old universalist arguments —that God was a merciful Father, and would never condemn His creatures to everlasting punishment; it would be only for a time, to purify them, as men were put in prison to make them better; but as he could not say that men were generally the better for imprisonment in this life, I told him I could see no hope of their reclamation after death, when the Good Spirit, whose life-long striv-

ings they resisted had departed, and they had only evil ones for companions and tormentors.

"'But,' he asked, 'how could a merciful God have made creatures for such a doom?' I answered that God never did, that He made man to be holy and happy, but that man had used his free will to choose evil rather than good; and that even then God had not left him to himself. He had made the greatest sacrifice possible even to Almighty love, in giving His Son to live and die for us; and had charged all who believe in Him to spread the knowledge of this salvation everywhere.

"Then he fell back upon the wickedness of many Christians, and I owned it; urging in reply, that if Christians were bad, they were so in spite of their religion which inculcates truth, purity, and godliness, and gives us the example of a perfectly holy Being; but that it was far otherwise with heathenism. I appealed to him whether his sacred books did not represent his gods lying, stealing, and committing every kind of folly and wickedness; and he could not deny it, but said 'That he did not believe in those gods; he belonged to the Brahmo Somaj, and worshipped One alone.'

"Then I asked him if his belief satisfied him and made him good and happy. He replied frankly, 'No, it was very hard for a man to follow always what was right.' 'Yes,' I answered, 'the only religion strong enough to make men good and happy, is the Christian. It gives a motive strong enough, the love of Jesus, and a power strong enough, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.' 'Well,' said he, 'there are Hindoo women of the old school, devotees, who scrupulously do according to their books, and their faith makes them happy. It is good for them and yours is good for you.'

"'But even granting that,' I answered, 'give some little knowledge to those Hindoo women; teach them even

the little that *you* know of science, etc., and their faith will be swept away, and their happiness with it. Here is a great difference; for the more enlightened a Christian, the surer is his hope and the brighter his faith.'

"He tried to turn this off, but I kept him to the point, and at last he was obliged to own the contrast; and I urged him not to rest in uncertainty, but to read the Gospel with earnest prayer for the Spirit's teaching. He was very unwilling to give a serious promise at first; but at last he owned the folly of treating such a matter as a mere idle question of the day, and promised that he would study it in earnest.

"It was terribly hot, and at last we dared not stand longer in the open air, though we had solah hats and umbrellas; so we went to sit down and rest in a native dispensary close by, till Mrs. ——— arrived and took us up, our Brahmin friend promising to send us word before the woman's funeral rites began.

"It was strange even then, and it seems stranger now that I am sitting quietly at home, to think of our position —English ladies, miles away from any other European, standing on a burning ghaut in that wild spot, speaking freely of the Gospel to an educated Brahmin! I wish I could give you a better idea of what passed; but I am writing in breathless haste. Much is left out, and, of course, I do not pretend to verbal accuracy; but you may be sure that nothing is added to the truth.

"We had begun our tiffin, when a messenger came to say that the officiating Brahmin had arrived; so we set off again, and were in time to see the whole. I am glad that I have seen it once, for it is well to know the truth of matters that are often enshrouded in a very flattering haze; and I must confess that at one time, dazzled by poetic descriptions of classic funeral rites, I was ready to think cremation preferable to burial; but

the recollection is one of unmitigated loathsomeness and sadness.

"A pile had been built, about four feet long by two in width and height, and the Brahmin, a coarse and evil-looking man, was squatting on the bank under his umbrella, superintending the rites, if such they could be called. Two men, of the lowest caste—for none other will touch the dead—went to the poor body, which must have been fast advancing towards decomposition, unwrapped the sheet, and lifted the corpse into a sitting posture. Another man then put something (ghee, I believe,) into the mouth, and poured a large vessel of water over the head and body. The Brahmin, meanwhile, kept his comfortable posture, chanting a few words occasionally in a loud, sing-song tone, and then the two men lifted the body to carry it to the funeral pile. They would have stripped it perfectly naked, the clothes of the dead being their perquisite, but our friend, who still stood by, called out to them in Bengali to leave some scrap of covering on our account. So this poor remnant of decency was observed; but as they laid the body on the pile, it was seen that one of the legs had been extensively gnawed by something in the water, and a pariah dog came sniffing round to try and get his share. They drove him away, but the pile was so short that they had to double up the limbs as close as possible before they heaped on more logs and packed it all in together. Meanwhile, the Brahmin chanted a few words now and then, but never stirred from his seat under the tree. There were no mourners, or, at least, none whom we could distinguish as such; but when all was ready, a man, who was said to be a relation of the dead, came forward with a wisp of dry grass, lighted it with a cinder from the Brahmin's fire, and waved it several times round the pile. Then he set fire to it near the head of the corpse, and the Brahmin,

turning to us with a horrid grin, said, 'Ho gya!' (It's all done). Neither of us felt inclined to linger, for the whole impression was revolting and loathsome in the extreme. There was not a single redeeming element—no decency, no pity, no love, no prayer—only the hard and pitiless exhibition of all that is most saddening and degrading in poor human mortality."

It is a relief, after the contemplation of a scene like this, to turn again to the efforts made to introduce a better state of things, and to be assured that there exists no natural inferiority to hinder the elevation of the native race. Repeatedly, on other occasions, I have attended examinations in various Christian schools, where native boys and girls of even the lower castes, and with the additional difficulty of studying two languages, passed the ordeal quite as satisfactorily as any school of the same class in England. In many things the females are especially apt to receive instruction; and it is impossible to overestimate the benefit that might be conferred by an extended system of zenana teaching.

But for this there needs a vast increase both of funds and teachers. The present workers are labouring to the very limits of their strength; but instruction could be at once extended to hundreds more of families, if the funds of the societies permitted an adequate increase of the staff. There is need for judgment, circumspection, faith, and patience in those who engage in such a work; but surely it is a blessed thing to be permitted to carry the light of truth and civilization into these weary prison-houses, and give their denizens something beyond mere animal employments in this life, as well as some glimmering of a better world to come. It is scarcely too much to say, that every Hindoo lady who hears of the zenana teacher is anxious for her visits; and the sordid meanness of the baboos, which only welcomes education for their wives when it comes to

them free of cost, irritating and repulsive as it is, ought not to interdict the boon. In this matter, it may be said, with fullest truth, that demand can only be produced by supply; and as education becomes the rule, instead of the rare exception, among high class Indian women, the pride of the baboos will require it for their wives, and they will pay for it as they do now for jewelry and sensual luxuries.

Indifference and selfishness may well be borne with meanwhile by those who feel that the brightest hope of real good for India lies in the Christian education of its women.

VIII

FESTIVALS AND FESTIVITIES, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL.

I DO not propose in this chapter to attempt any systematic account of the religions of India, but merely to describe some of their more striking features as they fell under my own observation. It may be necessary, however, to preface the account with just a few words about the leading deities in Hindoo mythology.

The first of these gods in rank and importance is Brahma the Creator, to whom, however, no temples are built or sacrifices offered, in consequence, according to some writers, of an abominable crime which he is said to have committed.* Still, the legends respecting him are important, because they are the origin of the caste divisions which exercise such tremendous influence upon the whole social system of India. Instead of making one man and woman the progenitors of the whole human race, and thus establishing a bond of universal brotherhood, he is said to have produced from different parts of his body the ancestors of the several castes, which are consequently forbidden to intermix. The Brahmins, destined to be priests, philosophers, lawgivers, etc., sprang from his mouth; the Kshatriyas, or warrior caste, from his arms; the Vaishyas, or husbandmen, from his thighs; and the Sudras, whose

* It is difficult, however, to accept this explanation when the monstrous and multiplied vices of his fellow-deities are no hindrance to their divine honours.

office was to serve the others, from his feet. The members of the first three castes were called twice-born, and distinguished by wearing round their necks a sacred thread, but the Sudras were distinctly excluded from all their privileges, and a Brahmin instructing one in religion would be liable to everlasting punishment. Even among the several twice-born sects, all intermarriage and social intercourse were strictly forbidden, and it is needless to remark upon the inhuman selfishness and exclusiveness to which this system gives rise. Strict Hindoos will see a fellow creature drowning or dying by the road-side, and not extend a helping hand, lest they should be polluted by contact with a man of inferior caste, such pollution entailing a considerable amount of expense and penance, as well as disgrace and odium, before it can be removed.† Some writers maintain that the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas are both extinct, and that of the three twice-born sects Brahmins alone remain; but a number of lower castes have sprung up, the members of each keeping separate and following the same occupation from father to son. Thus we hear of the writer caste, the fisherman caste, the weaver caste, etc.; but I need not enter further into this complicated subject.

The second member of the Hindoo Triad of gods is Vishnu the Preserver, generally painted blue or black, and represented with four arms, who is said to have repeatedly become incarnate to save the world, and is still expected to manifest himself a tenth and last time as a warrior mounted on a white-winged horse. His early incarnations were as a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a man with a lion's head, etc.; and his eighth avatar was as a man named Krishna, whose filthy history is said to be perhaps the most abominable part of their obscene mythology. He is also worshipped in North India under the names of Ram and Juggernaut, and his great festival the

Râm Méla, which is more observed in other provinces than in Bengal, will be described hereafter. The low standard of Hindoo morality can be no matter of surprise when even their sacred books, as is the case with his history, are too foul for literal translation; neither is it astonishing that educated and enlightened Hindoos are ashamed of such legends; and either attempt to allegorize them or reject them altogether, with all the bondage of ceremonial and prohibition, returning to the teaching of the older and purer Vedas, and engrafting upon it a good deal of the Divine morality of the Christian Scriptures. Hence has arisen the increasing and influential sect called the Brahmo Somaj, the doctrines and worship of which are scarcely distinguishable from those of western Unitarians, whose writings are indeed extensively studied by Hindoo reformers, and exercise a remarkable influence over educated thought.

The third member of the Triad, whose history and worship are said to be equally obscene, is Seeva the Destroyer; but whatever his deeds and character may be, he sinks into practical insignificance in Bengal beside his wife Kali, Doorga, Gunga, or Bowhanie, as she is variously named—the most prominently worshipped deity of the province. The river Ganges derives its purifying and saving virtues from the supposition that it is a personification of this goddess, who was induced by the astounding penances of king Bhagûratha to descend to earth in order to purify the ashes of his 60,000 ancestors.

Her great festival is the Doorga Pooja, during which, images representing her as a woman with ten arms, made of baked clay and gaudily painted, are set up in every Hindoo house. These are consecrated by a Brahmin, who places the fingers of his right hand successively on the eyes, nostrils, mouth, and breast, saying, "O Goddess Doorga, descend and dwell in this image."

She is then supposed to come down and animate it, and it is worshipped for seven days with offerings of incense, flowers, and food, prostrations, feasting, music, and dancing. All the images are then carried in procession round the city, and finally thrown into the river. The closing ceremony is still worth seeing, though immeasurably diminished from its former splendour, and less attended every year. The chief attraction is the gay crowd of natives in holiday dress; the bright yellows, reds, and greens that mingle in their costume, often edged with gold and silver tinsel, looking very dazzling under the glowing sky. It has in other points much the aspect of an English fair, except that one sees none of the intoxication that is the shame of every British holiday. Many of the men, as well as children, carry gaudy playthings in their hands, made of solah pith, and painted in bright colours to represent cockatoos, cobras, etc., and almost every individual in the crowd would be a picturesque subject for a painter. Here is a swarthy moustachioed Seikh, with a voluminous white turban, and a face and drapery worthy of Etty's colouring; there a portly zemindar, with turban of purple and yellow, and other garments of green, white, and violet; or a slim dark lad with a violet skull cap edged with silver, and a long close-fitting garment of bright green silk lined with crimson. As for the little children, they are bundles of finery, literally decked in all the colours of the rainbow.

The larger idols are carried in large fan-shaped alcoves, and are three in number, representing Doorga and her daughters. Numbers of these being brought down to the river, each one is placed on a platform resting on two boats lashed together, priests and worshippers sitting before them, playing on musical instruments and fanning the idols with large fans. These boats, with the cumbrous gaudy load of painted clay, and the living

freight of worshippers, are towed along by others, and move slowly up and down the broad river among the huge merchant vessels, watched by hundreds of spectators on the bank, till the boats are unlashed, and as they move apart, the gaudy framework, idols and all, sinks with a lingering splash, and all is over. There is no shouting, no crowding, no reverence, no enthusiasm, and perhaps scarcely a stronger proof can be offered of the decay of the Hindoo religion in Calcutta, than the general indifference to this once imposing ceremony. The festival is still kept as a holiday in deference to ancient custom, to the great hindrance of European business; but as far as one can judge from the appearance of the streets, it has entirely ceased to attract religious interest, and is more a social than a sacred festival.

The same goddess is worshipped under another name and character at the Kali Pooja, and Calcutta is said to derive its name from the Kali Ghat, where her most famous temple stands. I drove to see it, expecting something at least barbarically grand, but the expectation was far from being realized. The temple cannot be approached by carriages, so we had to dismount and walk to it through a narrow dirty passage between rows of huts. A young man, clad as is usual with the natives in their own quarters, that is, "with a 'cotton' cloth cast about his naked body," came forward and asked if we wished to see the temple, and, on my assenting, acted as our guide. He proved to be one of the Brahmins belonging to the temple, and spoke intelligible though broken English, calling me "Sir," at every turn. He pointed out the place of sacrifice in the court, and assured me that 50 or 100 goats were often offered there in a day. There are merely two iron prongs fixed upright in the pavement, over which the victim's neck is stretched by one priest, while another strikes off the head, which is

offered with the blood to Kali, the worshipper feasting on the flesh. Orthodox Hindoos never eat animal food unless the blood has been offered to this goddess, and it is to gratify her sanguinary preference for human victims that the Thugs pursue their ruthless butchery, now nearly stopped by the energetic action of the English government. It is distinctly stated in the Kălika Purana that a human victim pleases her for a thousand years.

It was not time for the doors of the shrine or inner temple to be opened, so we waited among the worshippers in an outer building, raised about six steps from the court, and open on all sides, the roof being supported by pillars. At one end a gap of a few feet wide divides it from the shrine, which only the priests are allowed to enter. It was not very pleasant waiting, owing to the proximity of so many dirty natives, and the deafening clatter of their tongues, as well as the peculiar smell of blood which pervaded the place, and I was not without some misgivings that we had acted rashly in coming without even a gentleman's escort into such a place. However, our friend the Brahmin kept the little crowd from pressing on us, and at last the lamps were lighted, and amid the sound of gongs and bells the temple doors were thrown open and revealed the goddess. The Black Mother, as she is called, is merely a hideous mask about two feet long, lighted from behind, coarsely painted black and red, and draped with crimson silk. The Brahmin told us that it was made of stone, and that the tongue and arms were gold; but it would be difficult to imagine anything more grotesquely hideous.

Another temple in Bow or Lall Bazaar contains a statue of her as large as life, as a hideous black woman with a long red tongue reaching to her waist, and a necklace of small skulls.

At the Kali Pooja, crowds of natives go about the

city for several days, carrying her image with shouts and music, and at night by torchlight with fearful uproar. The first time I saw this pageant I was alarmed with the idea that it had a political or national meaning, for she is represented as trampling on the body of a white man with most demoniac gestures of triumph, and it looked like an emblem of the victory of the native over the European race; but I soon learnt that the statues were purely religious, and commemorate a remarkable event in the history of the goddess. She and her husband Seeva were at war with a giant, and Kali one day, maddened either with intoxication or with fury, encountered her husband, and mistaking him for their foe, knocked him down and danced upon his prostrate body. This is the edifying circumstance commemorated in this great religious festival, Seeva being always represented as a white man.

The Cherruck Poojas, or swinging festivals, in honour of the same sanguinary goddess, are to a great extent suppressed by the English government, which has prohibited the barbarous custom which formed their chief attraction—the swinging aloft of devotees by hooks inserted among the muscles of their shoulders. They are still, however, observed to some extent, and like the other festivals, afford occasion for the natives to make night hideous with torchlight processions and unearthly yells and music, but their ancient splendour is among the things that were. I cannot but notice here, with very earnest protest, the utter unfairness of the tone which it is now fashionable to assume in speaking of all these festivals. Not only in secular newspapers, but in semi-religious periodicals, articles frequently appear describing the *innocent* enjoyments of Hindoo crowds in strong contrast to the brutal revelry which too often disgraces our wakes and fairs, and more than hinting that the horrors of Juggernaut and Saugor were gross exaggerations of

the early missionaries, either mere phantoms of their own fanatical and credulous minds, or purposely fabricated to draw money from their gullible supporters. Such insinuations are only too much in harmony with the so-called liberality of the age; and we need to be reminded that the atrocities alluded to are matter of stern and unquestionable history, some of them put down by the strong arm of English law after too long a period of timid toleration, and others gradually suppressed by the enlightened public feeling, due in a great measure to the maligned missionaries themselves. It is surely the climax of injustice for superficial writers to take these festivals in their present comparatively harmless state, and use them as a weapon against the character and work of those whose labours have stripped them of their worst horrors. Nor should it be forgotten that while bloodshed and torture are now prohibited by law, one of their darkest accompaniments—unbounded licentiousness—is not a matter patent to the eyes of any casual observer.

By far the most imposing, however, of the religious celebrations witnessed in Calcutta, is the great Mahometan festival which takes place on the tenth day of the month Mohurrum, in memory of Hossein and Hassan, the two murdered grand-nephews of Mahomet. The whole month is sacred, and the earlier part of it is distinguished by various curious observances, but as the great day draws near, the followers of the Prophet go about the streets at night by thousands, carrying torches and huge braziers filled with fire, beating tomtoms and making the most frightful din and uproar. For nights together sleep is almost impossible, for even across our unusually large compound, the glare of the fires and torches lighted up the rooms as the wild procession passed, and the din was enough to waken the most determined sleeper.

Anxious to see as much as possible of these strange ceremonies, I started on one occasion at six in the morning, and drove to a house where I could have a good view of the crowning procession. The sight was certainly worth an effort. I suppose there must have been at least 60,000 or 70,000 Mahometans out in the line of march, mostly on foot, though some had handsome equipages. Green is their sacred colour, and almost every one of them had some scrap of it, in honour of the murdered Imaums. Some were clothed from head to foot in green muslin of the most vivid shades, and others, enveloped half in green and half in intensely brilliant scarlet, reminded one of the plumage of the most gorgeous parrots. They poured along the wide road in dense succession for hours, carrying an extraordinary medley of objects—biers with the shape of a body covered with drapery laid on them under a canopy, Chinese-looking pagodas from three to twenty feet high, covered with tinsel and gaudy painting, elephants and horses of the most fantastic shapes and colours, and flags of various nations. As they walked they beat their breasts, shouting, "Hassan, Hossein," with hoarse, monotonous voices, reminding one vividly of the funeral procession with which the "Curse of Kehama" opens. Every now and then they halted to take breath, and then men would rush forward and execute a rough sort of cudgel play, or a fight with mock swords and shields, or a strange wild dance with long spears which they twirled and darted in the most marvellous way without injuring each other. Still the same monotonous chant, "Hassan, Hossein," and the beating of the tom-toms and cymbals, and the droning of the bagpipes went on; and when one considers that this lasted for eight or ten hours, under a sun that heated the atmosphere even of shaded rooms above 90°, and after the long fast and sleepless nights of excitement

described, it is no wonder that many are seized with fatal attacks of fever after every recurrence of this festival.

No description, however, can give more than a faint idea of the reality: the picturesque crowds in green, scarlet, and white, many of them carrying umbrellas of bright orange colour, or equally brilliant blue; the strange gaudy objects borne aloft on their shoulders; the naked, bare-headed beggars who sat by the roadside flinging their arms about wildly and asking alms; the strange stalls and salesmen posted along the streets, and the ceaseless din, combining to make it a most extraordinary and bewildering spectacle. Perhaps the most wonderful thought connected with it is, that all this frenzied excitement and clamour is raised about the deaths of two men who existed 1200 years ago, and of whom little memorable is recorded. It was also a humbling reflection that no such crowd could have gathered in England without drunkenness and vice, of which one sees nothing here; and that if our country were the seat of two utterly dissimilar religions such as Hindooism and Mahometanism, no such excited procession could throng the streets of a great town without risk of serious bloodshed. Indeed, it seems more than questionable whether the Indian government is wise in allowing these enormous crowds of excited Mussulmans to parade the capital, especially at night, with no sufficient force at hand to repress the outbreak which any trifling incident might cause among the maddened throng.

The Mahometans are far more dangerous bigots than the Hindoos, and the strictness with which they observe the rites of their religion is a cutting reproach to the indifference of most so-called Christians. Not only do they never omit the stated hours of prayer, going through their appointed prostrations and repetitions five times daily, by the tanks or in their shops, indifferent to

the presence of observers; but during their month of fasting (Ramadan) no food of any description, not even a drop of water, passes their lips from sunrise to sunset. The Mussulman servants come to their work as usual, though one sees them scarcely able to get through it, and yet no relaxation of the rigid rule is ever thought of.

Friday is the sacred day of the Mahometans, who then especially frequent the mosques and perform acts of united worship, though they do not consider ordinary work unlawful. Some of their buildings are of considerable size and pretensions, while Hindoo temples are generally very small, often admitting only two or three worshippers, and the latter have no regularly recurring day of worship and apparently no idea of united prayer. Individuals go to the river or to the temple to make their offerings of flowers, etc., or perform their pooja before the idols which are found in most Hindoo houses; and they meet in vast crowds, as we have seen, to celebrate the festivals of various gods, but these anniversaries rather resemble great pleasure fairs than gatherings of a religious character.

Both religions have constantly recurring holidays, popular no doubt with their votaries, but highly inconvenient to European residents, as they are a serious hindrance to the progress of business. During the Doorga Pooja, which generally falls early in October, public offices, banks, and law courts, as well as many of the shops, are closed, and everything is at a standstill for ten days or a fortnight. Even at the best of times the progress of building or any similar labour is irritatingly slow in India. The normal style of proceeding is for one man to work, and two to sit and look at him, and then they all three have a smoke or perhaps a nap, or an entomological study of each other's heads, and then to work again in the same fashion. Moreover, as they do not

begin work till about ten, and leave off soon after four, their progress cannot naturally be very rapid; and almost invariably when one is in a particular hurry, some native holiday intervenes and stops work altogether.

If we turn from these wild assemblies and debasing celebrations to simple Christian anniversaries among the native converts, a greater contrast can scarcely be imagined. One such gathering which I attended at Bhowanipore, the suburban station of the London Missionary Society, is perhaps worthy of a brief description here. The native chapel in which it took place was rude in the extreme. Twelve poles set in two lines down the middle supported the low sloping roof of mats and thatch, and the building was filled with natives, only about twenty Europeans being present. The chairman was a venerable native clergyman with a flowing white beard, a convert of the Church Missionary Society; and the other speakers were all ministers and catechists of the London, Baptist, and Presbyterian Missions. Not a European took the smallest part in it, except as auditor. All the speeches except one, as well as the hymns and prayers, were in Bengali, and of course I understood very little; but in fluency, appropriateness of gesture, and evident natural eloquence, these obscure speakers certainly acquitted themselves better than average Englishmen; and the solitary one who spoke in English, out of compliment to the visitors, rose decidedly above the ordinary level of the clergymen whose native tongue he employed. His language was simple and clear, his manner fervent, his quotations of Scripture singularly apt and accurate; and there was no fault of grammar or expression to stamp him as a foreigner. Some of the facts he stated might well make an English congregation blush for themselves by comparison. Every member of that little church contributes a tenth of his income to religious purposes;

and besides this, every one had recently given a full month's wages or salary towards a fund for building a larger church, and they had also contributed liberally in proportion to their means, towards the relief of the famine-stricken people of Orissa.

After the meeting was over, the Christian natives, many of whom had come up from villages many miles distant, adjourned to a long building where, according to annual custom, a supper was prepared for them by their brethren in the town. Most of the strangers being poor agriculturists, there was something very graceful and appropriate in this hospitality, and in the manner in which Brahmins and university graduates bestirred themselves to act as cooks and waiters. We watched the whole scene with great interest from a staircase, for as the place was very narrow, and lighted by oil lamps set on the ground, it was not safe for ladies to walk about below.

The visitors, about 150 or 200 in number, squatted on the ground in long rows; and the first indication of the approaching meal was the bringing in of a bundle of green plantain leaves, cut up to serve as plates—a large square piece being laid before each guest together with a cup of water. Then salt was distributed, about a table-spoonful being served out on each leaf; and then came the feast, consisting of chupatties and a large mess of savoury-smelling curry. It took some time to help all round, and the guests waited with grave decorum till a blessing was asked by the native pastor, and then set to with no lack of appetite. It was getting late, so we had to come away just at an interesting juncture; but there was something in this little anniversary among themselves, without European interference, and at which we English were mere accidental though honoured spectators, that spoke more convincingly than volumes of reports of the reality of Christian influence among the natives.

On another occasion I was present at services at a Church Missionary station near Calcutta, where there were only five white people present, including the missionary's little girl; and the few words in the communion service addressed to each individual were the only English spoken. The congregation consisted entirely of Bengalis, with the addition of two Burmese youths, nice intelligent-looking fellows, who had left their own country and come alone to Calcutta to seek instruction in the Christian religion.

Two remarkable native baptisms which I witnessed must not be omitted in the list of events interesting in a Christian point of view. The first was that of an infant descended from the highest and purest rāce of Koōlin Brahmins; men so reverenced by their countrymen for their exalted descent, that a Koolin may marry as many wives as he pleases, the honour of his alliance being sufficient to counterbalance any personal objection. Many of them live in idleness and luxury by trading on this superstitious reverence; dividing their time between their numerous wives, whose fathers are well content to support them and their children, for the sake of the connection with such distinguished sons-in-law. The infant's grandfather was one of this honoured race; but education, in his case, had paved the way for Christianity, and he was now a venerable and honoured minister of the Church of England, as well as a distinguished professor of the university. His daughters had all married Christians, either English or native, and this baby grandchild was descended on both sides from the purest Hindoo ancestry.

The ceremony took place in the chapel of Bishop's College, filled that evening with natives and East Indians. Most of the college students were of the latter mixed race, many of them darker than the natives themselves; and

were dressed in white, with the flowing veil, which is their most becoming costume, the scene, even outwardly, was very bright and interesting. There were only six Europeans among the congregation; and as we gathered round the font, and the child, descended from the most ancient and proudest race of idolaters on earth, was laid in the arms of the officiating minister, to be sealed with the cross of Christ, it was surely a sight on which angels looked down with joy. The beautiful infant, which I held at the font with feelings of such peculiar interest that day, was soon taken to behold the face of his Father in heaven; and his gentle mother, one of the most valued of my friends in India, soon followed him to rest: so that a touching interest attaches to the memories of this, the first native baptism I ever witnessed.

The other was of a very different, but equally interesting character—being that of the convert whose case is mentioned on page 141. The preliminary service was held at the same college chapel, but the rite itself was, by his own desire, performed by immersion in the neighbouring river. When the previous prayers and exhortations were completed, therefore, the native Christians, who composed the bulk of the congregation, formed in procession, and accompanied the catechumen to the river-side, singing a Sanscrit hymn of invocation to the Holy Spirit, which he had written for the occasion.

The Hooghly, with its wide border of deep and slippery mud, is not a favourable stream for the primitive administration of the rite, and it was necessary for both the officiating clergyman and the candidate to be carried to a boat moored in the stream. From this the latter stepped into water breast high; and whilst the minister repeated the solemn sacramental words, he placed his hands upon the convert's head, and bowed it three times

nesses on shore. The man's drenched white garments were then changed in the cabin of the boat, and we all returned together to the chapel for the conclusion of the service.

Strange as it may seem, even this remarkable baptism, occurring in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, was totally unnoticed by the press, and unknown to almost every one except those present. Indeed, this seems to be invariably the case; and circumstances which would excite the deepest interest among Christians at home, pass altogether ignored and unnoticed by people on the spot.

One event alone, while I was in Calcutta, excited equal interest among all classes, rousing natives and Europeans, high and low, townspeople and Mofussilites, to unwonted enthusiasm—the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh. Every incident of His Royal Highness's tour has been amply recorded; but it cannot be amiss to note here some of the brilliant scenes at the capital, which no spectator ever can forget. The Prince's landing had been anxiously anticipated for weeks before, and when he really arrived Calcutta poured forth its hundreds of thousands to greet the son of its imperial mistress with an unprecedented burst of loyalty and splendour. The route from the landing-place across the smooth, green expanse of the Maidan was kept by lines of native soldiery; and dense masses of carriages and foot-passengers formed a serried wall on either side, waiting patiently for hours to catch the first glimpse of the Prince. The scene must have been a striking one, even after the many enthusiastic welcomes that the "Galatea" and her young captain had received; but, unfortunately, it was late in the afternoon when she cast anchor among the lines of shipping on the Strand, and by the time the Prince had landed, and gone through a few introductions, the sun had set, and twilight was closing in. The crowd of ladies who occupied the reserved platform at the landing-stage had but a few

minutes to enjoy the brilliant sight; and then the splendid procession swept on its way, preceded by a body of cavalry, and followed by a detachment of artillery thundering over the turf towards Government House, which rose white and stately before it at the end of the green plain. The orange-tinted evening sky had never shed its last radiance on a brighter scene, for the very denseness of an Eastern crowd adds to its brilliancy, gay colours lighting up the prevailing whiteness till it looked like a field of many-coloured flowers. Every eye was strained in eager expectation, and when at last the Prince appeared on his slight Arab steed, riding beside the tall charger of the stalwart Viceroy, the long pent-up enthusiasm burst forth in the best attempt at cheering that native voices could produce. It was but a momentary glimpse, for the procession swept by at a rapid pace; but tens of thousands went home repaid for hours of waiting, and eager to prepare for the illumination that was to testify their welcome to the Sailor Prince.

No city in the world is perhaps equal to Calcutta in capacity for this species of decoration, and the effect was truly splendid. The white houses had their lofty pillars wreathed tier above tier with lines of light, and their battlements blazed with stars, and crowns, and other loyal emblems, while the great dome of Government House shone with concentric lines of gleaming lamps. Triumphal arches, transparencies, and Chinese lanterns shone in all directions, and if the decorations in the native quarters were often questionable in taste and execution, they certainly showed no lack of loyalty and good will. Every hut had its strings of tiny lamps, or its rows of wicks burning in little earthen saucers; and the whole city turned out to enjoy the sight. Along the broad Chowringhee Road, six or seven rows of vehicles closely packed together crept along, with frequent pauses before the more elaborate

illuminations; and in the smaller streets the crowds both of carriages and foot-passengers were scarcely less dense, but all were orderly, amused, and gratified, and the whole spectacle passed off without a drawback.

The Prince's stay, from first to last, was one round of estivities, but I will only notice two out of the number—one being the grand Durbar, at which he was invested with the Order of the Star of India, an occasion rendered historical by the grandeur of its associations, and by the magnificent pageantry which combined mediæval stateliness with oriental splendour.

It was held in a large canvas enclosure on the Maidan, across one end of which was pitched the Viceroy's grand Durbar tent, capable of accommodating more than one thousand persons. Four other immense tents, two on each side, pitched at right angles with this, so as to form three sides of a fine quadrangle, extended about half the length of the enclosure, the remaining space being lined by the sailors and marines of the "Galatea" on one side, and English and native infantry on the other. Behind these lines of soldiers were pitched twelve small tents for the Grand Master and the Knights of the Order, the silk banner of each knight set up in front of his own tent, and the whole enclosure screened by a canvas wall, within which was no admission except by ticket. From the state entrance of the enclosure to the Durbar tent was a walk of considerable length, laid down with crimson cloth, and shrubs and flowers were disposed along the turf, so as to heighten the general effect without intercepting the view of the favoured spectators. All the arrangements were perfect, the tickets admitting to the different tents corresponding in colour to flags which waved over the various entrances, so that we could see at once to which to drive, and had only to present our tickets and pass in. The back of the Durbar tent was occupied

by a great number of singers, amateur and professional, who were to take a prominent part in the proceedings; and these, of course, entered from behind, as the spectators did from the sides, and took their places without notice. But as all the official and distinguished visitors came by the grand entrance, and walked up the enclosure, there was ample occupation for the thousands of eyes in the side tents, during the hour or two of waiting for the opening of the ceremony.

The tents of the spectators were a study in themselves, as we sat, sheltered from the glow of the afternoon sun under their awnings, but with nothing to hinder the fullest view in front. Row after row of elegant European toilettes, alternating with the picturesque and costly costumes of native chiefs and gentlemen filled up the entire space, except where the sunburnt sailors in their blue shirts and white trousers, and the stalwart marines kept the line before the tents of the knights on the right hand, and the swarthy turbaned infantry and their English comrades stood in like order on the left. Every few minutes brought some fresh arrival of distinction—judges in full robes, and high officials, civil and military, with their ladies, running the gauntlet of countless curious eyes, as they walked up the centre and took their appointed seats. Meanwhile, we had all been furnished with programmes so complete that when the Royal and Vice-regal party at last arrived, every individual in the train could be recognized without difficulty.

The members of the Order, and others who had to take part in the procession retired at once to their tents to robe; so that all attention centred first on Lady Mayo, as she moved up the crimson footpath under an umbrella covered with gold, accompanied by Lord Napier the Governor of Madras, and attended by a brilliant party,

including the Chief Justice, the Lieutenant-Governor and other high dignitaries with their ladies, and the Begum of Bhopal and her suite. Then came the thunder of a royal salute, and the procession of the Order moved forward between the drooped colours to the sound of full military bands. First came spears and maces and other official attendants, two and two, and then the Companions of the Order, comprising gentlemen distinguished by services either civil or military, during the Mutiny or afterwards. Next came the Knights Commanders of the Order—Sir Richard Temple, Sir Henry Durand, Rajah Sir Dinkur Rao, Maharajah Sir Jeymangal Singh, and the Maharajah of Vizianagam—and then a still more striking part of the procession, the Knights Grand Commanders and their attendants. This was effectively arranged, each Knight Grand Commander being preceded by eight, ten, or twelve of his chief officers in gorgeous array, and a herald with his banner, while his train was borne by gay boy pages.

First came the junior G.C.S.I., the Maharana of Dholepore, eight splendid native officers preceding him, and two swarthy pages bearing his train, the star of the order glittering on his breast, and a costume of indescribable brilliancy half covered by the ample mantle of blue satin. Next eight English officers and gentlemen, the attendants of Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, the Governor of Bombay, a herald bearing his banner, and two little English boys in conventional page's dress of white and lemon colour acting as his train-bearers; then a similar group of brilliant uniforms preceded Sir W. Mansfield, the Commander-in-Chief; and then, party after party, banner after banner, came the Maharajahs of Rewah, Kuppoorthullah, Jeypore, and Gwalior, their attendants clothed in hues defying all description—scarlet, purple, green, violet, blue, orange, and lemon-colour, and their turbans flag and

glittering with gold and gems. Rewah, portly and pompous; Kuppoorthullah, handsome and splendid above all the rest; Jeypore, small and insignificant in appearance, but one of the most enlightened of the Indian rulers; and Scindiah, dark, fierce, and keen of aspect—all passed by in turn; and then came twelve English officers, naval and military, among whose decorations, those of the Bath and the Victoria Cross were conspicuous, preceding the Duke of Edinburgh in plain dark uniform, followed by pages in white and blue. But the culminating point of the procession was yet to come; and when the next twelve officers, some European and some native, had moved past, and the gorgeous banner of the Grand Master prepared the way for the Viceroy himself, his height and massive proportions displayed to advantage by his robes, and marking him out a very king of men, no one could help owning that in external dignity at least, the Majesty of England was worthily represented there. His train was borne by three tiny boys, one of them his own youngest son, and the bonny English children in their pages' suits, with rose-coloured plumes in their white caps, and rose-coloured mantles and rosettes, were a pretty foil to the Grand Master's fine proportions, and added no small beauty to the scene.*

When the procession had passed up to the Durbar tent, the National Anthem was sung, but even the great

* Little, indeed, could any one have foreseen in the midst of this splendid pageantry, that the career of the liberal and popular Viceroy, to whom it owed its magnificence, would be so soon cut short by the dagger of an obscure assassin; and that the fair boy who followed his noble father with so much childish grace and dignity that day, brightening every face into smiles and blessings, would ere long, draw tears from eyes unused to weep, as he walked in innocent half-unconsciousness of mourning, behind that father's bier.

body of singers failed to make it distinctly heard over the vast space enclosed. The Chapter was then formally opened, and the Sovereign's warrant for the investiture having been produced, a procession of officers was despatched from the Vice-regal presence to fetch the insignia of the order from the jewel tent, while another national air was sung. When they returned, bearing the various decorations on velvet cushions, the two senior knights, the Maharajahs of Gwalior and Jeypore, were directed by the Grand Master to invest the Prince with the ribbon, badge, star, and mantle, and then he knelt before the throne to receive the collar from the Grand Master himself. As Lord Mayo rose, and in the Queen's name placed it round his neck, a royal salute was again fired, and the banner of the new knight unfurled; and after a flourish of trumpets his titles were proclaimed, "The most high, the most puissant, and the most illustrious Prince Alfred Ernest Albert, Duke of Saxony, Prince of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, Duke of Edinburgh, Earl of Kent, Earl of Ulster, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, Knight of the most ancient and most noble Order of the Thistle, Knight Grand Cross of the most distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Extra Knight Grand Commander of the most exalted Order of the Star of India, and a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council," etc., etc. Another chorus was then performed, and after a few more formalities the Grand Master dissolved the Chapter. Then under the thunder of a third royal salute, and the strains of a stirring march, the procession left the tent in the same order as before, the Prince's banner being now carried before him, and his train borne by pages.

As the procession comprised about 150 individuals, walking two and two at ample intervals, all gorgeously apparelled, and most of them personally distinguished,

its length and splendour may be imagined; and whatever may be the value of such pageants in civilized countries it is unquestionable that few surer means could be devised to excite and strengthen the loyalty of our ceremonial-loving Eastern fellow-subjects. No one, indeed, could gaze without deep interest on such a scene, where governors and sovereign princes from the remotest parts of a vast empire had met to do honour to our Queen in the person of her son; while the mere material magnificence was such as to eclipse almost any other imaginable spectacle.

Another scene which struck me as possessing special interest, was an "At Home" at the Episcopal Palace, where the Prince was brought face to face with as curiously miscellaneous and representative a host of British subjects as could anywhere be gathered. These "At Homes" were begun by the lamented Bishop Cotton, and carried on by his benevolent successor, with the truly liberal and Christian object of drawing together in friendly intercourse not only representatives of the various Christian communities in Calcutta, but distinguished Hindoo and Mahometan residents, as well as strangers from distant parts; and whatever may be their result in more important aspects, few arrangements could be more productive of easy and informal enjoyment. With no unnecessary expense or parade, the large suite of rooms and spacious verandah are filled for two or three hours with a most brilliant and motley throng—English, Hindoo, Greek and Armenian Christians, Mussulman lawyers, Parsee merchants, Oude princes, and Burmese, Nepaulese, and Affghan strangers. The guests come and go as they like between the hours of nine and twelve, coffee, ices, etc., being provided in one of the rooms; and after the cordial greeting of the host and hostess, all are left to find enjoyment as they will, in

music, or conversation, or amused observation of the brilliant scene. A band plays in the garden below, and the wide verandah becomes a crowded promenade, where friend meets friend, and missionary and chaplain snatch a few hours of relaxation, while doorways and rooms are filled with glittering groups of many nationalities, and stately turbaned Rajahs and Greek priests sit by to watch the ceaseless stream of rank and beauty and resplendent dress. The rooms are lighted by large chandeliers, and their light flashes back in every direction from gold and jewels. For one Englishman there are, perhaps, five natives in gorgeous apparel, dotted here and there with most amusing incongruities. A few are so far civilized as to wear white kid gloves, while many on the other hand, show their respect by coming shoeless, their feet covered only with striped stockings, and their legs encased in trousers of tight-fitting silk. Many of the head-dresses are of gold filagree work, encrusted with jewels and surmounted by feathery gold aigrettes; and the upper garments of velvet, satin, and silk cloth of gold, are rendered still more gorgeous by long strings of pearls and emeralds wound round and round the neck and breast. Others wear Cashmeres of every hue, white, blue, and orange predominating; and big stately Affghans, mountains of costly drapery, surmounted by large turbans, jostle small and supple Bengalis with simple black or white tight-fitting tunics, or Parsees with brown helmet caps and white muslin robes made exactly like an old-fashioned lady's dress, with crossed short-waisted fronts and full long skirts. Here is a Burmese clad in gay silk robes, with national features not to be mistaken; there the keen face and plain dress of a well-known leader of the Brahmo Somaj; here a handsome showy Mahometan advocate; there the becoming white veil and simple costume of a Hindoo

Christian lady, side by side with an aide-de-camp's smart uniform, or an Englishwoman in full dress. There is a very Babel of tongues—English, Arabic, Hindi, Bengali, Burmese, and languages remoter still. Once I had been watching a brilliant group of native princes, including more than one useful ally in the awful crisis of the Mutiny, who were eagerly discussing some topic of engrossing interest, when a native professor who had joined in the argument, left the group and asked me to guess what they were talking of. It was the last subject that would have seemed likely to come up in such a scene—they were discussing the doctrine of original sin!

Another time I was leaving early, and just as the carriage was called up, a splendid equipage drove in. "Look," said my companion, "I daresay you never saw a Jehu in a crown before;" and this was the literal fact. The carriage was filled with a group of native princes, and one of them in full state array, gold head-dress and all, was sitting on the box to drive!

On the occasion of the Prince's visit, however, every one was in good time, and long before the arrival of the Vice-regal party there was scarcely standing-room for the hundreds who were enabled by the Bishop's kind hospitality to have a nearer view of the long talked of Prince. His frank and sailor-like bearing made a most favourable impression; while, on the other hand, few more singularly varied assemblies could ever have presented themselves even to his travelled eyes. God grant that the enthusiastic loyalty evoked by the sight of an English Prince may never have cause to falter, either at home or in the vast Eastern empire that then offered its eager homage to the son of Queen Victoria!

IX

A HOLIDAY EXCURSION IN THE PLAINS.

THE first excursion we made in Bengal was so peculiar in all its circumstances that it deserves a minute description. Trivial and often annoying as many of its incidents were, they furnished us with endless amusement even at the time, and have often awakened hearty laughter since; and nearly everything was so foreign to English ideas that I cannot but think my readers will appreciate a photographic minuteness of detail.

Worn out with work and responsibility, and exhausted by the oppressive monotony of the rainy season in Calcutta, I gladly accepted an invitation to join a party of zenana teachers who were spending their well-earned holiday at Monghyr. No one who has not tried it can imagine how wearying is the daily life of an earnest labourer in this department of the mission field; or how gladly the tired teachers avail themselves of the Doorga Pooja festival which stops all zenana visiting for the time, to get away if possible for a month's total rest and change. Not that their studies are abandoned, or their work forgotten. I can bear testimony to the zeal with which Bengali was studied, and to the hours spent in preparing fancy needlework for absent pupils; but it was a genuine relief to cease the daily drive through stifling

heat and noisome smells, and to spend day after day in free and equal intercourse with educated ladies.

But there were many difficulties in the way, for a month's "out" in India is by no means the simple matter that it is in England. Here a few hours' journey in any direction brings one to some pleasant inland or seaside watering place, where lodgings are plentiful and accommodation cheap; but in India, lodgings are unknown, hotels and boarding-houses few and exorbitantly dear, and missionary purses far from well supplied—a missionary or chaplain's pay being often inferior to that of an engine-driver or skilled mechanic. So after much discussion, it had been decided by my friends to take an empty house for a month at Monghyr, about 300 miles from Calcutta. Great as this distance seems, there was no nearer town where we could hear of suitable accommodation, and at Monghyr were kind friends to the mission cause, who volunteered at once to do all they could to make us comfortable by sending in old furniture, etc., for our use. Eleven of the party were already there, and I was to follow with two younger workers as soon as we could get free, taking with me a bearer and a table servant, and as much of bedding and smaller necessaries as we could conveniently convey. Rent and other expenses were to be equitably shared according to our respective means, and we were all forewarned that the ordinary conveniences of life would be at a premium, and that we must be prepared to make the best of scanty furniture and irregular provision, and lead, in short, a kind of picnic life in our temporary home.

The winding up of our engagements was a time of no small excitement and fatigue; and it was with somewhat mingled feelings that we turned our backs upon Calcutta and its cares, and found ourselves in the ferry steamer on the early morning of September 14th. This ferry from

Calcutta to Howrah is still the first stage in every journey by the East Indian railway, though many schemes have been proposed for spanning the Hooghly with some sort of bridge, and thus avoiding a great source of inconvenience as well as loss of life. The scene was very striking to a stranger. After a night of storm approaching hurricane pitch, it was a fresh and lovely morning, and the broad yellow Hooghly looked its best, with its shore lined with noble merchantmen, and the motley shoal of native boats plying in all directions. There were two or three European passengers on board the steamer, but the great mass were natives of various classes, from the portly baboo with spotless muslin garments and calico shirt over all, to the mob of lower degree, whose only covering was a filthy rag round the loins, and a bundle of filthy rags on the head. The gabble, as usual in a Hindoo crowd, was terrific; and the jostling when we had crossed at last and the steamer was moored to the jetty, was anything but pleasant; but we secured a ladies' compartment in the train, and the journey was as comfortable as could be expected: for, opening out of our carriage was a tiny dressing-room supplied with water, which we found a great convenience and refreshment.

For a few hours the travelling was really enjoyable, owing to the great storm of the night before. The soft breeze puffed in our faces almost too strongly, but its cool breath seemed to sweep away care and anxiety, and everything wore the brightness of an unwonted holiday. The smell of the country after the long rains was almost as sweet as in England, and the country itself not unlike the flattest parts of the midland counties. There were avenues of trees with verdant glades between, almost park-like in their smoothness, and the various kinds of palm did not predominate so decidedly in the landscape as we

got further from Calcutta. In some places, one might almost forget that balmy morning that we were under tropical skies. The verdure was richly English, and the roadside ponds covered with white water-lilies might have belonged to some home scene, though not so the swarms of black urchins bathing there, up to their chins in mud. The lines and telegraph posts were intensely English, but any momentary illusion was at once put to flight by the sight of vultures instead of sparrows making them their perch, and most resplendent kingfishers sitting on every line of wire. During the whole journey, we hardly passed a telegraph post without seeing one at least of these beautiful birds on the intermediate wire; and as the line is bordered by continuous ponds the whole way, they probably look upon the telegraphic system as a benevolent provision of nature, for their convenience in pouncing on their prey. They are as large as a pigeon, but more slender, with head and body of a bright red brown, and wings and tail of the most brilliant blue, with just a little black to enhance their loveliness. Sitting they are not remarkable for beauty, but flying, the sheeny glory of their resplendent wings and tail is wonderful. These, with the little, jet black, king crows and some smaller kingfishers were the only birds that seemed to prefer the wires as a resting place; but below were flocks of starry winged minas, and snow-white heron-like paddy birds, standing like sentinels among the rice fields, with here and there a huge adjutant or other giant crane, or a large kite with white body and red-brown wings. Animals we saw none, except now and then a pariah dog, or a herd of dirt-coloured buffaloes rolling their unwieldy bodies in some muddy pool; and once an elephant quietly eating his fodder in a station yard startled us with a sudden sense of incongruity. The only crop, with the exception of a little Indian corn and sugar-cane, was rice

in various stages of growth, and a large proportion of the land was ankle-deep in water.

At Burdwan we looked in vain for any glimpse of the church or mission-house so long associated with the honoured name of Weitbrecht; and by this time the heat had become almost unbearable. We bathed our hands and faces perseveringly, but in vain; and spreading our bedding on the seats, tried, but with small success, to sleep away the sultry hours.

About three o'clock we reached Rajmahal, when the scenery rapidly changed, and wooded hills took the place of the former monotonous plain, to the great delight of my companions, neither of whom had ever seen a rising ground before. Still the heat continued without abatement, and as evening drew in there was none of the delightful breeze that springs up at sunset at Calcutta, and makes the nights endurable. The sun went down, and the stars came out, but the night was as stifling as ever, and our only consolation was in calling to the water-bearer, who at every station passed along the train with his mussock slung across his back. The mussock is the skin of an animal, probably a large goat, with only the legs and head taken off, and it holds several gallons of water. As the bearer goes along the platform he is summoned incessantly by loud cries of "Bihistee! O bihistee!" from all the passengers. This word, which means "a blessed one," or dweller in paradise, has become the common name of water-carriers, from the blessing which those are supposed to earn who carry water to the thirsty.

As night drew on we had a little sleep, but it was uneasy and unrefreshing; and when we reached Monghyr at half-past nine, after fourteen hours' journey, we were all well-nigh exhausted. There was no one to meet us as we had expected; but we got as much of our luggage

as possible loaded in and on an exceedingly minute hack carriage, and getting coolies to carry the rest under my bearer's charge, we crushed ourselves into the carriage, and set out in search of our resting-place. Here an unexpected difficulty encountered us. Our native drivers in vain attempted to identify the name of Southgate House, by which alone it was known to us; and no distinctness of pronunciation, or attempts at an equivalent in the vernacular, were of any avail. After prolonged delays, and various unsatisfactory colloquies, a gleam of light seemed to flash upon them, and they drove us a long distance across a broad, grassy plain, and under an avenue of trees, to the gates of a large house. We hoped that our difficulties were ended; but when a servant appeared in answer to the driver's summons, we discovered, alas! that it was an hotel. "Where was Southgate House?" He did not know. "Where was his master, or mistress?" In bed. Fancy forlorn and tired out travellers in such a plight!

At last we bethought ourselves of asking for the house where a good many mem sahibs from Calcutta were staying, and this solved the difficulty. We were driven off in a new direction under the clear moonlight to another house, of which, however, even the outer gates were shut and secured for the night. After some difficulty, we obtained an entrance, and, after still further delay, a light; and then our friends, in various degrees of deshabille, turned out one by one to welcome us. They had made up their minds that it would be quite impossible for us, under the circumstances, to get off by the day train, and so did not expect us till the morning. The best bedroom had been reserved for us; but as it was utterly empty, without even table, chair, or bedstead, the immediate prospect was not cheering. We had brought, one a camp bedstead, and the other a cork mattrass, as well as

sheets and pillows; so my servants were left to get the beds ready, while we had some tea, not procured without delay, as, of course, there was no fire. However, it was a very lively and refreshing meal; but when we at last retired for the night, we were amused to find that the servants, true to their native instinct of caring only for their own mem sahib, had not only set up my camp bedstead in the middle of the room, and rigged my mosquito curtains, but had spread all the bedding of the three upon it, including even the cork mattrass of one of my companions. When this property was restored, and my own blanket and sheets spread upon the sacking, it was discovered that the bedstead of the third had been left behind at Calcutta; so she had to join one of the other ladies in sleeping on a table in the sitting-room.

We were too tired to stay long awake, though the heat was still intense; but just as I was dozing off, a sudden exclamation from my companion apprised me that she had seen a large musk rat running about the room, a matter of some moment to her, as her mattrass lay unprotected on the floor. Musk rats are not pleasant neighbours, but in India one has to be philosophical: so she threw something at it, and went to sleep.

In the morning we found fresh need for patience and philosophy, as seven of us had to use one bath-room in succession, with frequent intervals of waiting for the bheesties. Our "chota hazree" was therefore taken in desultory fashion, sitting on the floor or on boxes; and as soon as we could escape from the hot room we were glad to take our Bibles out into the verandah for quiet and fresh air. All the scanty and heterogeneous furniture in the house, except what we and our friends had brought, had been sent in for our use by the kind people of the town; crockery, tables, chairs, a sofa, washing utensils, etc., having all been furnished by this truly Indian

hospitality on the part of people to whom we were utterly unknown except by a solitary letter of introduction.

The house was prettily situated on the bank of the Ganges, and built partly on the south wall of the old fort, the verandah on that side looking straight down into what used to be the moat. Just opposite was the little barrack-like settlement of the native Christians, with their church in the compound, and in front of our abode a small garden opened on a common shaded by fine trees. The house, like almost all in the place, was of only one story, surrounded by a wide verandah tiled and thatched, so as to afford a double security against heat and rain. It was raised about a dozen steps from the ground, and all the rooms opened into each other, screened only by such extemporized curtains as we could provide; so, as we were a party of fourteen ladies, besides servants, it may well be imagined that very little quiet or privacy was attainable.

As I was sitting in the verandah before breakfast, I was startled by a beautiful bulbul perching on my shoulder, and readily transferring itself to my finger and allowing itself to be caressed. It belonged to one of the party, and another had a young one, which she had brought here to train and educate. This bird, sometimes called the Indian nightingale, is very handsome, rather smaller than a thrush, with a long black tail tipped with crimson and white, and a pretty black crested head. The upper part of the body is black, faintly sprinkled with brown below, with a bright crimson patch under the tail. It is easily tamed, and can then be trusted to fly quite freely, and its pretty pert ways are very amusing.

We had prayers and breakfast about ten, and then, for the first time, saw all the party. They are widely scattered now, some driven by failing health to their distant American or English homes, some married, and

some continuing their labours; but if these pages should meet the eye of any of the circle, they will call up many a bright memory of that interval of relaxation. Only hearty workers can thoroughly enjoy a holiday, and none can need one more than those whose sphere of labour lies in the trying atmosphere of Calcutta zenanas, so though we were all too weary to *do* much, we were just in the mood heartily to enjoy every trivial incident of our very novel situation. At breakfast the bulbul, having mutely pleaded with his mistress for some rice, settled the matter by flying on the dish as the man handed it round, and helping himself, regardless of the merriment provoked by his audacity; and afterwards, when books and needlework were produced, he evinced the liveliest interest in all our pursuits, examining the patterns and playing with the wools. Reading aloud began at twelve, and dinner was ordered for two, but the cook was bewildered by the number he had to provide for, and by the limited kitchen accommodation, and it did not appear till long after four.

All day long, and every day after, a succession of box wallahs came to exhibit their wares—inlaid ebony boxes and desks, chains, and bracelets, and straw mats and baskets; and as we really wanted many things to send home, this idle time was an excellent opportunity, for bargaining with a native is not a matter soon disposed of. He never thinks of asking the fair value of his goods, but starts with a purely fancy price, calculated on the probable degree of his customer's inexperience, and ranging from four to ten times what he will eventually take. Raw Europeans offer some trifling abatement and buy at once, and one such success encourages the dealers to persevere in their exorbitant demands. Time is of little consequence to them, and they will hold out for hours in the hope of some trifling extra profit. The process is somewhat as follows. The box wallah produces

some article, and you ask the price. He says, perhaps, "Eight rupees." You utter an exclamation of surprise and disgust, and tell him to be off. He asks, insinuatingly, what you will give, and you offer, perhaps, two or three. This he emphatically rejects, but makes a large abatement from his original demand. Again you repeat your offer, and on a second refusal walk away, and sit down to read or work with an air of sublime indifference to the whole business; while he opens a variety of other wares, and offers them to the company in general, interjecting various modifications of the original demand to you: till at last, when he sees that you are quite resolved, the article is laid down before you with the monosyllable, "Take," and you get it at your own price, probably finding afterwards that you have been cheated after all.

One of the confraternity very much amused us by a naïve admission, due to his ignorance of our tongue. He had asked an unusually exorbitant price for something, and one of the party jestingly inquired, "Tum ke pas kuch *conscience* nay hai? (Have you no conscience?)" in reply to which he gravely shook his head, and responded, "Nahin, mem sahib, kuch nahin, (No, ma'am, not any)" an unconscious truth, not only for himself, but for the whole brotherhood throughout India.

In the evening we started in detachments of three or four for a walk, our party choosing the road to the river side. The Ganges here is of a width which defies the eye, and some large islands lie just opposite the town. To the left stretches a distant chain of hills, and to the right a pretty undulating and wooded reach of country, the whole European town lying within the walls of the old fort, which must have been of considerable extent, for the houses are a long way apart, surrounded by trees and gardens, and an extensive common occupies the centre. The massive walls of the jail, which are said to

be very ancient, border part of the green ; and farther on the banks of the river are faced with walls, of which the semi-circular turrets are accessible by steps from the land, and furnished with seats, where one can enjoy the air and the view. Farther still we descended a flight of steps, leading through a deep archway to the river, and found a Hindoo temple of considerable size facing the stream. Entrance was forbidden, but the attendant Brahmin said that in the morning it would be open, and we could see the inside from without, and sketch it if we pleased. An early expedition was accordingly planned, and we returned to a late tea, but found it terribly hot, as there were no punkahs in the house. After tea, therefore, we adjourned with books and work and a lamp to the verandah, and I read aloud till interrupted by a sufficiently unpleasant incident. Feeling some small creature creeping up my arm, I put the other hand outside the sleeve, and took hold of the intruder, probably with no very gentle pressure. The immediate result was a most overpowering and disgusting odour, which drove away every one from my vicinity, and could only be subdued by instant washing and sprinkling with Eau de Cologne. These creatures, which resemble a small black ladybird, swarmed on the table every night when the lamps were lit, and woe to the hapless individual who wittingly or unwittingly offends them. Another kind of flying bug, a large flat creature, found both here and in Calcutta, can be smelt in the air for a considerable distance.

We were all very tired, and went to bed early, but not to sleep. The heat was tremendous, untempered by the pleasant night breeze which makes Calcutta habitable, and the musk rats held perfect carnival in our room. To make matters worse, the night lamp went out, and the squeaking and scuffling increased to such an extent that

we could bear it no longer, and had to wake our companions in the next room to get some matches, after which there was comparative quiet, but very little sleep. We got up at five o'clock, and walked to the Hindoo temple. It was a very animated scene, for the shallow edge of the river was crowded with bathers, men and women washing themselves and their clothes, and the latter were of the gaudiest description. Bright reds and yellows were the predominating colours, and under the morning sun, with the white temple in front, overhung by a magnificent old tree, the effect was very gay. The bank was too muddy to sit down, and there was not even a stone that could serve as a seat, so we had to make our sketch standing, and found it fatiguing and unsatisfactory. The natives crowded round us, and took a lively interest in the proceeding, but were perfectly well behaved: very much more so, I am sorry to believe, than a London crowd would be if they saw two Hindoo ladies in national costume sketching in front of St. Paul's.

After drawing the outside we went up the steps and looked at the interior, not venturing however to cross the threshold. The hideousness of the gods was beyond description. Three immense and most frightful masks, with perfectly flat painted faces, just like the rude outlines street boys scrawl with chalk, were ranged on the wall opposite the entrance, on a background of crimson drapery, edged with tinsel. There was no attempt at representing bodies, but solid brass hands stood out from the drapery between the hideous faces, and on the right side was a group of images. Juggernaut held a chief place, and among the smaller deities were Lutchmee with six arms, Krishna with a black face, and Hanumân the monkey-god, with a long tail. The head Brahmin of the temple, a pleasant, intelligent looking man, answered all our questions with great politeness.

He spoke no English, and it makes one feel terribly the want of a common language to be brought into contact with these pleasant natives, and only be able to ask them the baldest questions, with a very imperfect comprehension of their replies. Bengali, the tongue which my companions had studied for their Calcutta work, was not understood, and we had to use the mongrel Hindostani, which is only employed to one's servants in Bengal, and which few people care to acquire correctly.

In the priest's house on the other side of the archway was a sort of shrine set out with little gods and goddesses, and outside was a small idol car, the upper part of what was once one of the monster vehicles, under the wheels of which devotees used to be crushed to death. These things and their associations cast a terrible shadow over the brightness of that sunny morning, and made us long for the time to come when the knowledge of the true God should overspread this glorious land, and utterly abolish idols and their devilish rites.

We got home to an early breakfast, and found in the verandah two ladies who were come to invite our whole party to a pic-nic on the following day, at a beautiful place a few miles from the town. Of course we accepted gladly, and after prayers and breakfast every one settled down to study, needlework, or letter writing. Some of the party were most diligent in pursuing their Bengali reading, but it was truly diligence under difficulties. It may readily be imagined that among so many ladies, most of them young, there was a good deal of both talking and laughing; and the pet birds which were allowed to fly and hop about at their pleasure were sad wasters of time; while the box wallahs furnished a perpetual distraction.

So passed the day, and most of the party went early to bed, as we were to start at five the following morning.



HINDOO TEMPLE AT MONGHYR.

I sat up some time longer to write up my journal, sorely tormented by the fragrant insects above described, and by grasshoppers and crickets innumerable hopping over the table and into the lamp, and jerking themselves into my face. All tea time they kept drowning themselves in our cups, and now that this means of self-destruction was removed, they roasted themselves excruciatingly inside the chimney of the lamp, and the noise they made leaping against the walls and matting was like the ceaseless patter of a heavy shower of rain.

At last I retired to bed, which I had had placed in the south verandah, in hope of a breath of air. But the hope was vain. A wooded knoll which rose just beyond the Christian settlement intercepted any faint breeze that might have been stirring, and heat, dense and suffocating, reigned everywhere. Sleep was effectually banished till about one o'clock, when a slight wind sprung up. Alas! at half-past three came the unwelcome summons to rise—for situated as we were an hour and a half was very short allowance for the bathing and dressing of the whole party. It was truly "a haggard thing" to rise and dress that morning by the dim flicker of the night lamps; and the climax of misery was reached when I went round parched with thirst, and could not even get a drop of drinking water. The wells at Monghyr are impregnated with mineral poisons, and the only water fit to drink is brought from hot springs four or five miles away, so that any negligence in keeping up the supply is fraught with serious inconvenience. I did take a mouthful of Monghyr water that morning, but the taste was so metallic that I dared not swallow it; and one of the party who incautiously ventured on a draught suffered severely from its effects.

The carriages sent by our kind friends came for us a little before five, and we drove to one of their houses which had been named as the general rendezvous, starting

from thence in a procession of eight barouches and phaetons. The day was just beginning to show in the eastern sky, and the stars were glorious, while the soft cool air out on the open road, was fresh enough to revive even our exhausted frames.

We drove through a large native bazaar, very Eastern, dirty and picturesque, with people sleeping on their charpoys outside the doors all the way, and then through some very pretty country, hilly, wooded, and richly verdant. After a few miles the procession of carriages stopped and we began to ascend on foot. The road wound round the hill, giving splendid views of the Ganges and the near and distant hills. In one place some distant peaks were pointed out to us as a spur of the Nepaul Himalayas, and in the foreground was a singular ridge of dark rugged rocks, perfectly bare of vegetation. At last we came in front of the house, a really beautiful country seat, belonging to a wealthy native, by whose permission it was open during the absence of the family, to any neighbouring English gentleman who might apply for leave to take a party there.

Our friends had made ample provision of every kind, and we all brought servants; so while chota hazree was preparing we went up to the roof to enjoy the magnificent and wide spread prospect. The house stands on the very brow of the hill, which is almost too steep on that side to climb, and the air sweeps freely to it from the river and the distant mountains. Down below, about half a mile away, nestles a large native village with its neat thatched roofs looking quite pretty among the clustering trees, and within the broad shadow of some fine peepuls, in the foreground, is a large and handsome tomb which we afterwards visited. The house itself was spacious and convenient, and surrounded by a fanciful arcaded verandah of distinctly Moorish character.

It may readily be imagined how welcome was the summons to early breakfast, and never did a party more thoroughly enjoy that meal than did the thirty or forty individuals assembled at Peer Pahar that day. Good tea, with delicious creamy milk, and fresh bread, butter, and cakes, refreshed us wonderfully; and the absence of gentlemen, which at first struck us as singular in so large a party, not only proved no drawback to our enjoyment, but turned out eventually to be rather a fortunate circumstance.

After chota hazree we sat a little, and then I took my butterfly net and strolled up to the summer-house with one or two companions, attended by Kaloo and their Madras servant, who both took a lively interest in our pursuit. Thence we clambered down the hill-side to a heath-like plain below, which, except for the heat, reminded us of many an English scene. But the sun was now getting dangerously high, and, though we were all provided with solah* hats, we thought it wiser to give over the net and specimen boxes to the two men, and take to umbrellas instead. So, after sitting awhile in the shade near the top of the hill, to enjoy the breeze, we sauntered back to the house, and amused ourselves in various ways till the second breakfast was announced. It was truly a goodly meal, a noble turkey, tongue, fowls, ducks, ham, and meat pies, jellies, cake, and fruit being only some of the items to which we did ample justice. The repast was spread on a long table, flanked by smaller ones, in the large dining-room; and as our friends had brought table linen, cutlery, and silver, it was a comfortable and cheery sight, contrasting with the makeshifts of our scantily furnished abode.

* These hats, made of the thick pith of a kind of reed, glued together and covered with thin silk or alpaca, are a great protection against sunstroke, and very light and comfortable. They are used by all classes of Europeans, both military and civil.

After a merry meal, we dispersed again into the verandah and the various rooms, in one of which a very noisy and unscientific game at billiards was soon organized by some of the juniors, while others exhausted all the conversational games they could think of, or proceeded with needlework or drawing. At last, to our great joy, the sky grew cloudy, and the wind blew cool; and with one consent all, except the seniors of the party, put on their hats, and started by twos and threes for a long ramble. Our division descended the hill by a steep, winding road, and went to see the tomb mentioned above. It is to the memory of the native wife of an English officer, and an elaborate specimen of a peculiar style of architecture, as large as a good-sized room, and not in any respect like a Christian burying-place. An arched doorway admits of entrance, and within, on a slab let into the masonry, are simply the words, "Be still—she sleeps," with only name and date below.

While we were examining this, and gathering wild flowers near, a few heavy drops of rain began to fall, and we hastened to take shelter in the verandah of a native house close by. It was fortunate that shelter was at hand, for the rain, which had not visited this part for weeks before, soon began to come down in a heavy storm, the thunder rolling and echoing in the hills. It poured so tremendously that the wet soon found its way through the thatched and tiled roof of the verandah, and we were driven into the dwelling, where two passively civil natives accorded us a tacit hospitality till the clouds began to break. We took advantage of the first pause in the downpour, and then ran as if for our lives, for it was evident that there was more to come. Our friends above could see us from the verandah, and they waved to us anxiously to hurry on; so we panted and toiled up the steep face of the hill, between ferns, and shrubs, and

crags, and reached the summit only just in time, scarcely able to stagger into shelter. It was well worth the exertion, for rain in India is no trifle, as some of our companions found. Five of them came in presently, literally drenched to the skin, every article of clothing absolutely dripping; and, of course, there was no change to be had. Fortunately, one of our friends had chosen to come on horseback, and had brought towels and a change of dress in the carriage, that she might have the refreshment of a bath after her ride; so the victims were rubbed dry, and wrapped, one in the habit, others in door curtains taken down for the purpose, and in such articles of clothing as we could take off for them. A more ridiculous set of scarecrows can scarcely be imagined; but in time they were all pinned up in their motley garments, and the dripping clothes hung in the verandah to dry, as, of course, there were neither fires nor fire-places in the house. Then came dinner, which the unfortunates enjoyed as best they might in a side room; and by this time the rain was over, and everything delightfully fresh and sweet. So some of us started, nothing daunted, to explore a great well near the house, which was excavated at great cost, and then proved useless. It was a round shaft, of immense depth and circumference, cut or blasted in the solid rock, and approached by a long flight of wide, shallow steps opening in the rocky hill-side, which towered like a giant wall on either hand. There was some depth of water when we saw it, but it was apparently only rain that had drained in, for there was no indication that any spring had been reached before the costly undertaking was abandoned.

By the time we returned, it was necessary to think of getting to the carriages, and at this juncture new difficulties arose. None of the drenched clothes were dry, and of course we could not carry off the baboo's curtains;

so there was a fresh demand for such contributions of inner and outer apparel as would fit our hapless companions to walk down the hill. Barefooted they necessarily were, for their boots were not in a state to be got on; and when we had done our best for them, the sole attire of one consisted of a table-cloth and a black lace shawl!

However, we all got to the carriages without accident, and arrived at home in time for tea, fairly tired out. Great was the astonishment of the rest of the servants, who were assembled in the verandah to witness our return, when they saw the singular group which emerged from one of the carriages; but in this climate there is little risk of cold, and no ill consequences resulted from the adventure.

Another evening we wandered out at sunset, and ascended the flight of steps leading to the Mahometan burying ground. A respectable-looking native, who seemed to be the guardian of the place, followed us, and objected to our entering the principal tomb, a chamber of some size, unless we put off our shoes, which we declined to do. He informed us that it was the tomb of a great saint, who lived many hundred years ago; and we looked in and saw the stone under which the body rested, decked like a dressing table, with a white muslin cover over pink. The effect was very droll, especially as the custodian went on to tell us the most outrageous stories about the buried worthy, who seemed, by his account, to have been a sort of Mussulman St. Patrick. He said that the country was infested ages ago by great wild beasts, and this saint exterminated them, and buried them all under a large black stone, which he pointed out. He added that the rain which ran from the roof of the tomb was holy, curing all sorts of diseases, and generously offered to give us some, an offer which we politely declined.

Another time some of our party visited the same spot, and heard more wild legends on the subject. The origin of the fort is ascribed to this illustrious saint. The rajah had vainly tried to build one here, no erection ever prospering, when the holy man stepped forward, and promised to provide the desired fortress if the rajah would undertake to build him a tomb in return. The prince accepted the condition, and the present fort immediately rose of itself. As it is two or three miles in circumference, and has evidently been of immense strength, surrounded by earthworks, massively faced with brick and stone, and by a very deep and wide moat, his act of piety was signally rewarded.

It is much to be regretted that the holy man's zeal for the extermination of wild beasts did not extend to the musk rats, which swarmed in our rooms every night. As neither inner nor outer doors could ever be shut because of the heat, there was no restraint upon their antics. One night, lights being scarce, and chairs at a premium, we were sitting on the ground in our bed-room, listening to a chapter read aloud by our next neighbours, when suddenly there was a shriek from inside the purdah, and a huge rat rushed out of their room almost over us, and made good his escape through the bath-room door. Cats also infested the place, but unfortunately they left the rats alone and devoted themselves to nocturnal raids upon our viands, for which we had no sort of safe; so if anything had to be kept through the night the only way was to suspend it in a basket on the punkah pole. Once we were roused at midnight by a heavy fall, the sequel of some mysterious feline manœuvres. "Down came" basket, mutton, "and all," and when we called out to inquire what was the matter, the Madras boy's reply, "Cat run away with one meat," sent us, hot and sleepy though we were, into peals of weary laughter.

After all there was no great cause for mirth, for this catastrophe had robbed us of the main part of our breakfast, and Tommy's English was far better than our Hindostani. The gravity which the servants preserve while the most outrageous mistakes are made in their native tongue is wonderful. One evening, four of us chose to have our tea on the roof, where it was cooler and quieter than below, and the lady who gave the necessary directions to the servant, told him to bring plenty of bread and butter, *for we were all mad.* She meant we were all *hungry*, but the change of a single vowel made it into the former extraordinary statement. The man turned away quickly, and must surely have laughed to himself, but these Easterns either have no sense of the ridiculous, or keep their risible muscles under enviable control. On another occasion a member of the party, whose knowledge of the language bore no proportion to her kindliness of heart, meaning to ask a man if his father and mother were dead (moorghya), inquired in a tone of commiseration whether they were moorghy—*i.e.*, fowls!

Even this was not so bad as a similar mistake made by a missionary, who preached his first sermon in the vernacular on the words, "I am the light of the world." He indulged the fond belief that he had got through pretty fluently, till he found, from the wondering remark of a native hearer, that by misplacing an accent on the word for "light," he had converted it through all the sermon into "potato," with results as bewildering and irreverent as can well be imagined. One great difficulty in Bengali arises from the fact that each consonant becomes a new letter when followed by an aspirate; one being sounded *daw*, another *dhaw*; one *gaw*, another *ghaw*, etc. Thus, *khana* is one word, *kana* another; and yet no one can distinguish the sounds without long practice, or unusual quickness of ear.

One day, besides the usual run of box wallahs we had some travelling merchants with beautiful Delhi jewelry, exquisite filagree work in gold and silver; and another time some bird-catchers with an assortment of doves, parrots and mocking-birds, and a number of tiny jewel-like creatures for which there is no English name. Among them was a chameleon, a wonderfully eccentric and ugly creature which was added to our list of pets, as well as a number of birds. A whole cageful of exquisite little creatures only cost a shilling; and my kitmutghar made the most expensive purchase of the party, investing three or four times as much in a mocking-bird which he proposed to train, expecting to realize a high price for it in Calcutta.

When we asked the man what the chameleon ate, he replied concisely "Cockroaches and mutton" as if they were two quite ordinary and analogous articles of diet; and added the information that if it had nothing to eat for eight days, twelve days, it did not mind. Truly it did not seem to mind anything, for a more immoveably lethargic creature I never beheld. It was of a bright emerald green with a rough dry skin, covered with little tubercles, and a mouth so large and so peculiarly hinged that whenever it opened the head seemed to be coming in two. Its body had the appearance of being secured against such a possibility by being neatly sewed all down from throat to tail with coarse white stitches; but the most singular part about it was its eyes. They were large green balls of the same rough skin as the rest of the body, except a small round spot in the centre, the size of a pin's head, which was bright and brown with eyelids of its own, and was of course the real organ of vision, though not an eighth part of the size of a mouse's eye. The whole green ball twists in every direction, so that the creature can see before, behind upwards, or downwards, without moving its head, and the effect is very singular, as the two

eyes are often turned in totally different directions. It was provokingly sluggish in all its movements, generally taking some seconds to stretch out a limb, and often pausing for half an hour with one extended claw. Its change of colour seemed limited to the coming and going



Chameleon.

of a dark grey cloud which flushed its delicate green skin whenever it was alarmed or angry.

One incident of our stay, a visit to the little Christian settlement just opposite, was very interesting, notwithstanding our imperfect means of communication. In one house the family consisted of an old man, very venerable and nice looking, his mother, his wife, and three grown-up sons and their wives, besides some younger children. No one who has not seen both can imagine the contrast between these people and their heathen compatriots. Not only did the women look neat and pretty in their white petticoats and veils, but their very faces were

different, and their whole look and manner dignified and superior. There was an intelligence and modest self-possession about all the family that would not have ill become any circle of civilized society.

As for ourselves, we were fast losing the habits of civilization, and it would have amused any of our friends at home to see the shifts we were put to in our camp-like life. The first thing in the morning was to decide who should bathe first; and the time of waiting was sure to be diversified by lively conversation in mixed Hindostani and English between the temporary manager and the servants, varied by energetic exclamations from one or another about some startling incident — everything being audible from one room to another. Sometimes half the party would dress hastily and go out for an early walk, returning in time to bathe before the late breakfast, and emerging one by one into the verandah which was the quietest and airiest place for our early reading. There some of the teachers steadily prosecuted their Bengali studies, aided by the kind visits of a veteran missionary; and when the verandah grew too hot and the south doors had to be shut at noon, we even extemporized a punkah by hanging palm leaf mats along the pole—a piece of ingenuity which made the dining-room far more endurable for the rest of our stay.

In our sitting-room every one's work, books, and writing materials had to lie perpetually on the table, because no such article of furniture existed in the bedrooms, and there was no available space even on the floors. Add to this miscellaneous assortment, a butterfly net, and various entomological boxes and specimen cases, an extensive collection of pet birds in and out of cages, and an incredible scarcity of table and bed-room appliances, extending to a total absence of such trifling vanities as looking-glasses, and one will have some faint idea of our not very luxurious ménage.

It was quite a change to spend an evening in ordinary civilized fashion at the house of one of the chief inhabitants of the station, a most gentlemanly and liberal-minded man. His dwelling was the prettiest and most hómelike I had seen in India: the walls of each sitting-room, instead of being merely washed, as usual, with some pale tint, being exquisitely painted with groups of flowers in panels, on a pretty neutral ground. It was all done by a German missionary, who thus obtained a handsome sum for his society while following the natural bent of his genius. There were also a number of fine water-colours and chromo-lithographs, and the furniture of white and rose-coloured tabinet, was exactly like that of the old drawing-room at home. A splendid revolving stereoscope, with a beautiful selection of European views, and some really good singing and music, helped to render it a truly English evening. Indeed, nothing could exceed the general kindness and hospitality which must always associate the name of Monghyr with pleasant memories.

Another evening never to be forgotten, was spent literally in a tomb, which was the regular dwelling of the friends who asked us to tea. Some of the Mahometan tombs in other parts of the country are really magnificent buildings, but this was originally one large square room with walls seven feet thick. It was changed into an octagon at a considerable height by solid arches springing out of the walls and cutting off the corners, and terminated in a dome. There were no windows of course, in the original erection, except very small openings beneath the dome; but a doorway on each side let in sufficient light, and six rooms had been added—one front and back, and two on each side—so that altogether it was a good-sized and comfortable dwelling, the centre room being especially well secured against the heat of the sun. This was the dining-room; and drinking tea in a tomb

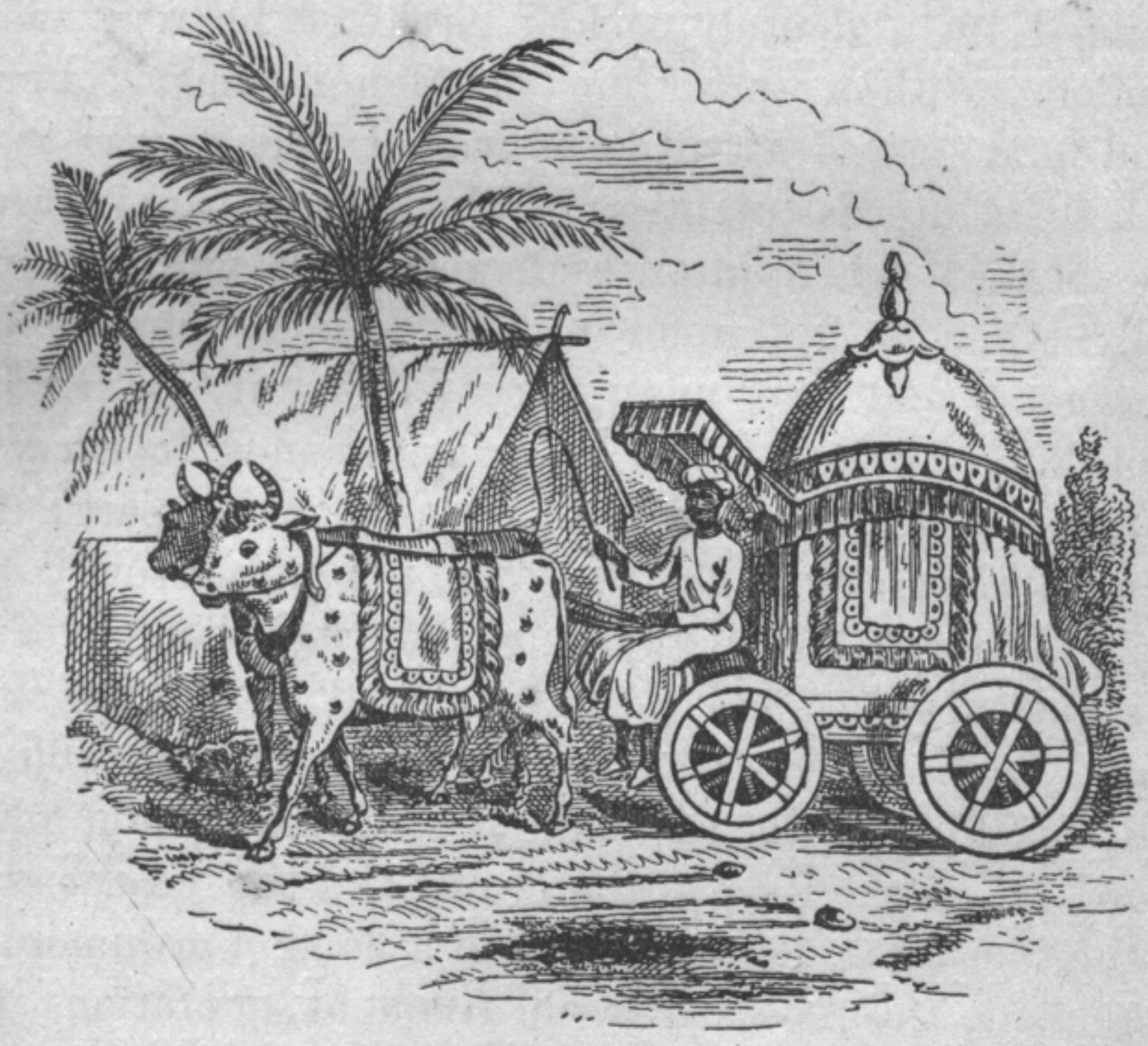
with the ashes of a Mahometan saint probably reposing under the table, was certainly a circumstance novel enough to be remembered.

But the crowning event of our visit was the Râm Melâ, a great annual religious fair, in honour of Râm, one of the incarnations of Krishna, who is the favourite deity in this part. The melâ commemorates the victory he won, assisted by an army of monkeys, over the giant king of Ceylon who had taken away his wife. It had already lasted a week before we went down to see it; for it so often rained in the evening that we were hindered till the last and greatest day, when three or four of us started as soon as the sun was low enough.

We passed out at the south gate of the fort, and turning into a fine avenue of peepul trees which border the high road for some distance soon began to meet indications of the fair. Men, women, and children were coming along in their gayest clothes, carrying fairings, just like a holiday crowd in England, except that there were no tipsy men, and that instead of sombre English clothing, every one was habited in the brightest colours—one wrapped from head to foot in yellow, another in scarlet, another in crimson or white, or in rich red silk flowered with yellow; most of the women having their foreheads plastered with vermilion.

At last we reached the open plain on the east side of the fort, and there opened upon us a scene which I despair of adequately describing. The extent of the ground was considerable, and it was literally a sea of human beings. Above them floated triangular flags of all colours, and here and there large painted and gilded erections were carried about on men's shoulders to receive the homage and offerings of the throng. They were mostly fan-shaped, with three niches, each filled by a hideous deity. Besides these, there

strosities of huge size filled with fireworks; large oxen, with their horns painted in alternate rings of bright red and green, and their bodies dyed with eyes like those on a peacock's tail, drawing gay ekkas or country carriages with crimson hangings and fringes; and here and there an elephant with a gaudy saddle-cloth, or a horse with scarlet and green trappings, and bridle trimmed with coloured fringe. Everywhere the surging sea of white and red and yellow was crested with flaunting bannerets,



Native Carriage.

bounded by house-roofs crowded with gazers, or by the deep moat and massive wall of the fort, and canopied by the stormy glory of a threatening sunset sky.

By skirting the moat we managed to make our way to the spot where a missionary was preaching in Hindostani to the crowd; and one thing must not be forgotten in passing. Though the majority of these people

had probably never seen an English lady before, and though there were not a dozen Europeans among the whole crowd, we threaded our way through without meeting the slightest incivility of any kind. The people looked at us, and sometimes bestirred themselves to get their huge animals out of our way, but there was none of the rude staring and jesting, and none of the unpleasant sights that one would encounter in a similar crowd at home.

We stood for some time behind the preacher, who was posted on a stool near one of the flags, and surrounded by a densely packed circle of hearers, chiefly Hindoos, with a sprinkling of Mahometans. Perfect good-humour and attention prevailed, and I was struck with the acuteness of many of the faces turned towards the speaker—keen, interested, and often amused, especially when a bystander preferred some objection or argument, and the missionary parried it, or retorted upon him. In such cases he always seemed to carry the audience along with him, and they looked particularly amused when any of the objectors got an unusually hard rap. I never heard anything like the fluency of the missionary, who had been employed in this work for many years. Never pausing, except to hear an objector, and speaking with an energy that made him plainly heard above the roar of the crowd and the ceaseless din of the tom-toms, he poured forth a flood of argument and statement, interspersed with frequent quotations from their own poets, and passages from Christian hymns. Some of the listeners dropped off, and others took their places, but some stood the whole time we were there; and it was deeply interesting to see men with caste marks on their foreheads, and necklaces of yellow flowers assumed in honour of a heathen festival, listening to the solemn truths of judgment and eternity, and the story of the Cross. Of course we could only gather the gen-

purport of the address, but the whole scene was a striking refutation of the current arguments against such missionary efforts.

At last it began to rain, and the clouds round the sinking sun assumed the most glorious colours, while a perfect rainbow arch spanned the heavens in front of us. It needed no very vivid fancy to accept it as the bow of hope for India just at this evening hour of the world's day; and memory still recalls it as the appropriate setting of one of the most remarkable scenes I ever witnessed.

We went home through the fort as our shortest way, and just as we got inside the gate, heard the rush of fireworks, and saw the rockets shooting up. Unwilling to miss the sight, and sure of a kind reception, we turned into the nearest compound, and made our way through it to the ramparts, where a lady and some children were sitting. The rain soon ceased, and she had seats brought for us; so we sat and talked in the twilight till all the fireworks were done, and the great crowd dispersed. Then we made the best of our way home to a late tea, and had another quiet hour or two on the roof, talking and singing hymns.

The morrow was Sunday—a perfect day, bright, and not too hot, and peaceful and beautiful as heart could wish. Of course, "not too hot" does not imply that it was possible to *walk* to church in the forenoon; but under punkahs it was comfortable and cool. The service was again held in the circuit house, the church being in ruins; and as we sat waiting, the view through the open doors over a pretty tank among the trees was very pleasant and refreshing. The service seemed especially soothing and beautiful, and the hymns and chants were nicely sung, a lady playing the harmonium.

The evening walk to church was most delightful, a soft, cool breeze blowing across the undulating plain, and

cuit house, we found ourselves too early; so we sat down on a mound on the other side of the tank, and enjoyed the air and the view. Opposite, on a rising ground, stood the white pillared building, with its sloping roof hidden by great trees. On the right was the high, crumbling wall of the fort, scarcely distinguishable from the earthworks which it skirted, pretty ridges and hollows running down from it to the water; and over all glowed a lovely sunset sky, purple, and gold, and crimson, and pink, and snow-white clouds piled against the blue. The air was as cool and balmy as even in dear old England, and the service and singing were again very sweet, as was also the walk home, and another moonlight ramble on the green. Altogether, I had not spent so happy and home-like a Sunday in India before; and it was with real regret that we looked forward to the dispersion of our party after only two more pleasant days together.

Before leaving, we went another early walk all round the fort, skirting the river which bounds one side, and completing the circuit outside the walls and moat. One part was very pretty, the moat being there quite a broad stream, bathing the foot of a steep wooded hill. In it were some washermen performing their business after the usual fashion. Clothes are never rubbed here, but soaped, and then taken up with both hands, and beaten with the full swing of the arm, against stones or ridged boards fixed for the purpose in the water. It seems a wonder that they survive this treatment; but the truth is, that, owing probably to the absence of washing powders and other destructive compounds, and perhaps also to the fact that clothes in India are not boiled, they really last longer than in England.

Only one of my companions was to return with me by the night train, the others being able to prolong their stay a little; but even our packing was no light matter,

what with luggage, bedding, and extra packing-cases filled with our purchases. It poured with rain when we started, and there was great difficulty in stowing ourselves and our goods in the exceedingly small hack vehicle that came for us. We were told that the train did not start till 3.45, but, most fortunately, we deter-



Dhobi, or Washerman.

mined to be in good time, and accordingly reached the station a little before 3. Our dismay was great when the ticket baboo at once informed us that the train then getting up its steam was ours, and that it would start in a few minutes. My servants, who were walking, had not arrived, neither had the coolies with the heavy luggage, and when, after an interval of anxious waiting they did

appear, it was by no means easy to settle everything satisfactorily. It is one of the delightful peculiarities of Indian railways to have no regular porters; consequently, one is beset by a host of naked men and boys, who consider every article of luggage a lawful means of extorting pice, and they drive one almost to distraction, especially when in wild hurry and in pouring rain, as we were. However, I knew something of the language now, and the case was not so desperate as on a former occasion. Then, seeing a cooly making off with one of my packages in a wrong direction, I had pursued him along the platform, calling out "Chup, chup!" the only word that occurred to me in the emergency; and as this imperative monosyllable signifies "Hold your tongue!" my conduct must have struck the bystanders as eccentric, to say the least of it.

The beginning of the journey was very pleasant. We passed a pretty range of hills, stretching for miles beside the railway, high enough for the clouds to hang below their summits, with here and there some curious burnt-looking rocks; but as twilight drew in, the hills fell off into the distance, and we felt sadly that we must resign ourselves again to the changeless flats of Bengal. Soon after dark it began to thunder and lighten, and the storm raged furiously till early morning, when, as we reached Burdwan, it began to clear.

Unfortunately, the washing arrangements in our carriage were out of order, so that we could not even bathe our weary eyes, and seldom have more forlorn-looking travellers emerged from a railway carriage. At Howrah we had again to contend with the besetting coolies, and then came the ferry, and another battle on the Calcutta side. At last, however, we got safely into a gharry, with all our possessions; and in due time reached home, which we certainly entered with a new appreciation of its spaciousness, order, and comparative coolness.

Upland.

I

MADRAS TO THE SHEVAROYS.

My first visit to the Indian hills was made, as is usually the case, under the pressure of ill health. Unwonted anxiety and labour had been forced upon me during the hot season, and as soon as the temporary refreshment of the first weeks of rain was over, it became obvious that I could not support the intolerable oppression of the steaming atmosphere that succeeded.

Fortunately, I had friends living in the beautiful district of the Shevaroys, west of Madras; and friends also in the southern capital itself, with whom I could rest a little before proceeding inland: and my kind physician hoped much from the voyage, as well as from the hill climate. His expectations were, however, far from being realized in the first particular, and I reached Madras in a state of miserable prostration. Let no one think that they know the full misery of sea-sickness till they have experienced it under a temperature of 90°, when every effort calls forth streams of perspiration, and the liver is in no condition to recover its proper tone. The four days spent in the city were a time of utter wretchedness. Weak, depressed and labouring under perpetual nausea, that prevented the taking of necessary food, I was in no

condition to enjoy the park-like grounds that surrounded the house where I was staying, or even the pleasant evening drives.

Madras possesses many advantages over Calcutta in the latter respect. Instead of a single uninteresting country drive, it has many pretty roads, well kept, and shaded by fine trees, among which the Poinciana regia or Flamboyant, long out of flower in Calcutta, was in full splendour, glorious beyond description. It has been already described above, but no language can do justice to its beautiful, dark, feathery foliage, or to the wealth of vivid scarlet blossom that makes it like a pile of glowing fire. Besides this, and only thrown into comparative insignificance by its marvellous splendour, there are many other handsome flowering trees, and altogether, a far greater variety of foliage than prevails round Calcutta, where palms much more decidedly predominate.

Then again, instead of the fashionable drive in Calcutta along the Strand, by the flat banks of the Hooghly, the people of Madras have the beach for their evening resort, where the fresh sea-breeze seems to bring health and revival on its wings, and the roar of the thundering surf rolls a deep accompaniment to the music of the band. It was already dusk one evening, when we drove down; and as the long waves came sweeping in, capped with snowy foam, they strewed the beach with phosphorescent creatures that shone like glow-worms in the darkness. We left the carriage and stood for some time at the water's edge, drawing back as the waves broke, to escape the swirling waters, and enjoying the roar, and the breeze, and the fresh smell of the dashing spray. A finger drawn along the wet sand was followed by a track of sparks, and we could even pick up the tiny lights, and see them shining among the sandy particles between our fingers.

For a little while I could almost have fancied myself upon an English shore, but the relief was very temporary. The nights were terrible, even after my bed was carried up to the roof for the sake of air. It would have been scarcely prudent, perhaps, to sleep quite unsheltered from the sky, but there was a room upon the housetop with a thatched verandah round it, under which my couch was spread, so as to be sheltered from the night dews, and yet accessible to every breath of air. It might have been very pleasant, had I been in a state to enjoy anything; but sick, weary, and sleepless, not even the calm beauty of the tropical night could bring me any comfort. The roof was really a splendid promenade, very long, and unbroken by any obstacle from end to end; surrounded by a balustrade of sufficient height for safety, but with a free view over the extensive and richly wooded grounds: and here I wandered many a restless hour, or sat and watched "the new moon with the old moon in her arms." The calm break of dawn always found me waking, and sent me down, more miserable than ever, to begin another day of nausea and wretchedness.

Altogether, the time then spent in Madras stands marked in gloomy colours among my Indian reminiscences. I should not have stayed so long but that my friends were themselves going to the Shevaroys for change, and it seemed safer as well as pleasanter to wait and make the journey under their escort.

The heavy luggage was all sent off the day before we started, under charge of a servant, who was specially enjoined to have breakfast ready for us at the termination of our railway journey; and we drove to the station after a busy and unsettled morning, and took our places in an empty railway carriage some time before the departure of the afternoon train. We had a good many packages to

arrange, as is usual in Indian travelling, where it is quite customary to take pillows and even mattrasses for a journey of any length; and I was much struck with one scene that occurred in the interval. A lady was determined, contrary to all rules, to take in the carriage with her a box too high to go under the seat, and the station-master had to be called in to insist on its removal. He was a handsome and refined looking native, in an elegant costume with a turban of white and gold, and his behaviour was certainly admirable. The lady grew very hot, physically and morally,—she *would not* part with her box. He kept as cool and suave as possible—she must excuse him—he must do his duty; the baggage must all be weighed, and the objectionable box must go in the luggage van. She declared that it should not leave the carriage, supporting her determination with arguments palpably false and ridiculous—"it contained things she required for the night."—"Then she might take them out;" but this she flatly refused to do. "He might as well want to take her hand-bag and her jacket and weigh them," to which angry fling he did not condescend to reply. The man kept his temper beyond all praise, never varied for a moment in the perfect courtesy of his voice and manner, did just what he had a right to do, and had everything brought back except the prohibited box. I could not help painfully contrasting this turbaned Hindoo with the caste mark upon his delicate forehead, with the flushed and choleric dame, on whose brow had been traced the sign of a far different consecration.

At last we were off, through a country nearly as flat as Bengal, but not so monotonous. There were high hedges along the line, not unlike free-growing hawthorn hedges in England, and pretty houses scattered here and there among the trees. Instead of the invariable flat

several thicknesses of rounded tiles, which make a thick cool, grooved roof that carries off the water very satisfactorily. Evening and night closed in without much abatement of the heat; and as our journey lasted till nearly six o'clock the next morning, the hours of darkness passed wearily enough. Our road lay past Arcot and Vellore and other places of historic interest, but of course we saw nothing of them; and night travelling is very dreary for those who cannot sleep at will. When we reached the Shevaroy Hills station, expecting to find breakfast ready, not only was there no refreshment-room, but the servant, who had been sent on chiefly for the purpose of providing, declared that he had been unable even to procure hot water. There was no help for it, no house, either native or European being near; for the situation just at the foot of the hills is so unhealthy that even the officials do not live there—the station-master coming by the first train in the morning and leaving at night. On the return journey, a European who happened to be waiting at this station, enlarged to me feelingly on the horrors of the fever peculiar to this district, "If it catches holt on you, you just lie down and wish you was dead."

My friends took a glass of wine each, but I dared not venture on it; there was nothing left from our over night's provision, so fully had we reckoned on breakfast being prepared: and the only eatable thing at hand was a pine-apple from the stock for hill consumption. Imagine breakfasting on a slice of half-ripened pine-apple and *nothing else*, after a night's travelling, and with five hours of hill journey before us!

The bearers were waiting according to arrangement, and at six we started. Our vehicles were simply old cane-backed arm-chairs, each with two stout bamboos lashed to its sides to serve as carrying poles, and each

had eight bearers who relieved each other at intervals; the lighter part of the luggage, which we took up with us, employing ten or twelve additional men.

The view as we left the station was very lovely, little as we were able to enjoy it. The road lay at first through a wide ravine, on each side of which rose hills clothed with trees to the very summit. It was very much like part of the scenery at Bettws y Coed, only on a grander scale; and the trees, instead of being all young larches, were well grown forest trees of various kinds, wreathed and dripping with creepers. Here and there the furrowed grey rock cropped out on the hill tops, or sheets of water streaming over distant slopes gleamed like looking-glasses set in the mountain side. Patches of cultivated ground lay beside the path, sprinkled with trees and thickly strewed with boulders. Any one who knows the finest Welsh passes can fancy the scenery by simply magnifying what he recollects, but the procession should have been seen to be properly realized. I led the van, carried by four bearers, four others near, ready to relieve them, and a troop of coolies with bags and boxes on their heads; then my friend and her tribe of attendants, and then the ayah, also in an arm-chair, shivering though she had wrapped herself in blankets; whilst Mr. S. brought up the rear, occasionally taking her place when tired of walking. Altogether we formed a considerable procession, and the coolies, loaded as they were, kept up a fair rate of speed. They are athletic, though not large men, naked except a narrow strip of calico round the loins, and a larger piece twisted round their heads, one end of which they shift from shoulder to shoulder to ease the pressure of the bamboos.

At every descent they quicken their pace to a trot; and if they kept step, the motion would not be unpleasant; but as they have no idea of this, and my chair

was dislocated in all its joints, the effect of their rapid movement was almost as bad as riding a hard trotting horse. All the while they kept up a monotonous, guttural chant, sometimes repeating the same syllables in unison for a quarter of an hour together, "Angoke! angoke! angoke! angoke!" and so on; sometimes one of them pronouncing words, and the others responding with a deep grunt, "Ugh! ugh! ugh!" The effect is very odd, especially when every now and then they vary it with a sudden hearty "Ha! ha!" at the full power of their voices. How they could find breath to keep this up as they did for nearly five hours, much of which was very steep climbing, it is difficult to imagine; but so it was, and they brought us to our journey's end with a noisier chant and a harder trot than ever.

After a while we left the ravine, and the ascent of the ghaut began in earnest. This word "ghaut," which English people apply exclusively to the mountain chains in Southern India, signifies literally a flight of steps, and is applied indiscriminately to stairs leading down to a tank or river, and to mountain passes. The road began to wind round the side of the hills, and narrowed till it was only wide enough for two, and sometimes afforded scarcely a footing for both; rough, too, at every step, with fragments of rock protruding from the soil, or washed down by the rains; but the coolies, though barefooted, never faltered or made a false step. The ascent was indescribably and most variously beautiful. Sometimes we looked sheer down the almost perpendicular hill-side, hundreds of feet, among trees, rocks, and boulders; sometimes could see nothing but the dense foliage above and around us; sometimes the path wound round the mountain for a mile or so without interruption; and sometimes turned in sharp, almost perpendicular zigzags every few yards. In one part we traversed a forest of bamboos,

their slender stems rising in graceful curve to the height of forty or fifty feet, and the small willow-like leaves that clothe their slender sprays shining with drops of rain. They are not only one of the most useful, but also one of the most graceful forms of vegetation; and for miles the slopes of the hills are covered with them, springing, like osiers, in large clumps from a single root. As we got higher they disappeared, and forest trees took their place, mingled with flowering shrubs and creepers. The ferns, too, were very lovely, and so was the flat branching moss so common in English green-houses, which grows here in great profusion. Higher up, a small but delicately white passion-flower literally covered everything with its spirit-like flowers and masses of vivid and tender foliage. We learned afterwards that this plant, introduced into the district by a lady who admired its beauty, 'is one of the worst pests of these hills. It is not only most troublesome and mischievous in the coffee plantations, where its rapid growth overpowers and chokes the young plants; but its heavy masses of decaying fruit and foliage, during the rainy season, render the atmosphere unhealthy, and are said to be the cause of a fever which sometimes prevails in the district.

After two hours and a half or three hours' travelling, the scene rather changed, as we came to cultivated parts. The road widened again, and we began to see cleared patches on the slopes below, where young coffee trees were growing among charred stumps. Those we first saw were small, spreading shrubs with glossy leaves, the green berries clustering round the extremities of the branches like sprays of holly; and the resemblance is heightened later in the season, when the berries turn a brilliant red. In one part we could look down from the bearers' shoulders straight to the bottom of a ravine,

boulders, shaded by tree ferns, with tall trunks and fronds seven or eight feet long.

Farther on, as we were winding round the rocky summit of a hill, we came suddenly upon a view of startling beauty. Before us, the hills fell away in long files on either side, and the plain lay outspread in front, with the illimitable stretch of some broad ocean prospect seen from the summit of a commanding cliff. But there was no time for admiration. The road was good, and the bearers trotted and shouted faster than ever, till it felt as if everything inside and outside one must give way. I called to them to go slower; but as they understood neither Hindostani nor English, and the Madras servant, who might have interpreted, was far behind, this was of little avail; and I must have fainted, but for the fresh, pleasant wind, which kept me up till we reached my friend's hospitable door. There, the kind welcome, and an immediate cup of tea, rather revived me; but distressing nausea and headache soon returned, and prevented any attempt to swallow solid food. The thirteen miles' jolt, breakfastless, after a night's travelling, was too much for any one in a low state of health; and the rest of the morning passed in a kind of stupor, with little consciousness, except of utter misery.

At last, my friend, who had long been regarded quite as a medical authority in the district, insisted on taking my case into her hands. I had little faith in the homœopathic dose of ipecacuanha which she administered; but the effect was miraculous. Before night, I was freer from nausea than I had been for many days; and I woke the next morning, weak, but comparatively well.

The next few days passed in a kind of semi-torpor, the intervals between meals being filled up with almost incessant sleep; and then by degrees, with reviving strength, came back the capacity for active enjoyment so

long suspended. Even without stirring from the house, there was a continual feast outspread, for eyes long wearied with the monotonous flats of Bengal.

It was a roomy, one-storied erection of simple cottage-like design, but planned by one whose whole-hearted devotion to higher subjects had not made him insensible to home comfort, or to the beauty with which God has clothed our earthly dwelling place. An earnest missionary among the tribes both of the hills and plains, he had built this home for his family towards the close of his career, and lived there in happy and successful labour till God called him to his rest. Part of his work was now being carried on by his son-in-law; and his widow, whom I was visiting, still kept up the warmest interest in her late husband's people.

The house stood on a terraced plot of ground, partly natural, partly artificial, very near the summit of one of the hills of the Shevaroy chain. Behind it was just space enough for a little poultry yard and orchard, while before was a narrow terraced garden terminating in a little sloping lawn, parted by a sunk fence from the coffee grounds in front. These sloped steeply downward, and on either side a rocky spur of the range of hills shut in the view, leaving the plains in front outspread like a map, mile after mile away. From the verandah of our lofty cottage nest we could distinguish five or six ranges of lower hills, some of them of very bold irregular outline, stretching one beyond the other across the plain; the far off Neilgherries walling in the horizon, blue as their name implies. Many a time the white fleecy clouds lay far below us spread along the slopes, or drifted across the little garden and filled the house with their peculiar vapoury presence.

So much for our distant prospects, while the near ones were equally pleasant in their way. Round three

sides of the house ran a narrow slip of flower border, where roses and jessamine peeped in at the low casement windows, and violets, mignonette, clarkia, and other English flowers, were in full bloom and perfume. Just opposite my bed-room was a tree of wonderful beauty, as large as an orchard apple tree and covered with bunches of flowers about twice the size of ordinary greenhouse geraniums, which they much resembled. Over this hovered incessantly the most gorgeous butterflies, with wings of velvet black and yellow, or black and blue, five or six inches across from tip to tip; and near it stood a tree of equal size, loaded with huge orange globes, a kind of pumelo or shaddock. Guavas and loquats, a mulberry, and a number of large pear trees filled a little orchard at the back; and on the lawn in front, oranges more delicious than one ever sees in England were ripening fast on handsome trees. Low hedges of plumbago and French honeysuckle, covered with blossom, parted the little garden from the drive, and here and there stood a large datura shrub, perhaps the most striking object of all. Down in the plains, or on rich ground, this shrub grows rank and coarse, with a profusion of common looking foliage and comparatively few blossoms; but up on this poor rocky soil its leaves are rather scanty, and it is profusely hung with huge white trumpet-shaped blossoms seven or eight inches long. In this state it has a ghostly, spirit-like beauty, especially in the twilight, such as no other shrub can equal.

It was a delightful home-like change after the restraint imposed by the deadly heat of Calcutta, to stroll out after breakfast and dinner into the little poultry yard, and feed the chickens and ducklings, while the beautiful petted pigeons crowded and hustled each other in the grain basket, and fed eagerly from our outstretched hands. Even the English pigs were honoured with an occasional

visit; as indeed they might well be, for surely never did members of the porcine race make a more distinguished entry on a new sphere of existence. On their arrival by train from Madras, whither they had been conveyed by a friendly ship's captain, they had to be carried up the ghaut in large boxes, and appeared at their new residence in state, attended by twelve bearers!

Then as I grew stronger there were splendid walks in all directions, and excursions after ferns and wild flowers almost as free and fearless as if we had been in our own dear land. It was some time before I could push my way among ferns and boulders without dread of snake or scorpion, or take a long hill ramble without some tremor, especially at dusk; but though tigers are sometimes killed on this range of hills, and cheetahs or leopards are not uncommon, while pythons are occasionally seen in some secluded parts, wriggling their hideous length along the rocks, we never met with anything dangerous to life or limb.

There were a few scattered houses within a mile or two, and a tiny church where twenty or thirty people composed an average congregation; also a pleasant parsonage, usually inhabited by some clergyman up from the plains on a month's sick leave, who ministers here and at one or two other little services in the neighbourhood, while regaining strength for more arduous work below. It was now occupied by the friends who came up with me, and who were thus near enough to join in our more extensive rambles.

II

MOUNTAIN RAMBLES.

My first expedition was taken after early breakfast one lovely morning, on the back of a sedate old pony, which carried me safely at a slow walk to a little hill farm, a couple of miles away. The road was very good, though undulating, and the views, both near and distant, exquisitely lovely. Large fruit trees, chiefly orange, pear, and loquats, overhung the road, and in some parts it was bordered by hedges of roses and passion-flower growing in the wildest luxuriance. The former were not our single dog rose, but double crimson, or pink China roses. Bright major convolvuluses twined among the bushes or lay in matted carpets on the ground; and zinnias of the most brilliant colours covered large patches of the hill side with sheets of dazzling bloom. African marigolds grew like common weeds; and lovely golden and silver-backed ferns, such as we only see in greenhouses at home, clustered along the banks or nestled round the great grey boulders.

Here and there we passed one-storied houses clothed with creepers, standing on little terraces cut out of the hill side, and all the lower slopes were covered with the shining green of the coffee plantations. The sun was bright and the morning air pure and exhilarating, as fresh and sweet as the well remembered breezes that

sweep round the Malvern Hills. We met troops of hill coolies wrapped in dark blankets, and herds of slate-coloured buffaloes; and at last reached the farm-house where we did our business, and watched the mistress making up the morning's butter. Owing to the scarcity of grass up here, cows give but little milk, and butter costs about three shillings a pound—an exorbitant price, especially when compared with that of most other articles of food. After resting awhile and enjoying some delicious coffee and bread and butter, all ~~the~~ produce of the farm, we started home, my companions taking their turns with the pony, while I walked. Besides the flowers named above, the pale lavender-coloured agaranthum grows plentifully wild, and the pretty buff thunbergia, with its dark eye, climbs the fences or trails along the ground. I saw one splendid crimson passion-flower, besides numbers of others which pass my skill to name.

Mid-day was passed in rest indoors, and in the early evening some of us walked to a bold rock near, from which there was a splendid view. After a little scrambling about, searching for small, single-flowered orchids, with pure white, long-spurred blossoms, which grow here and there in damp nooks on the mossy rock, we sat down; and I rested my head in my friend's lap, and listened to her touching stories of missionary life, while the sun set behind the hills, and the soft mists stole over their distant outlines, and the watchfires of the shepherds began to twinkle in the plains below. They are necessary on the low grounds to keep the cheetahs from the folds, but the hills, at least in this part, are wonderfully free from noxious creatures. Except a tiny scorpion, which I captured one day on my bed-room wall, I saw scarcely anything, during the whole visit, to awaken a moment's fear.

The next morning we planned, and partly carried out, a fernery in a shady corner of the

coolies fetched the stones, and set them up under our direction, the only drawback to our enjoyment being the fear lest they should imagine that we wanted them for idols, and that I was teaching my friends a new kind of worship. Here, where any rude block of stone set up under a tree, with a daub of red paint upon it, becomes at once a swami or god, there was some ground for uneasiness on this score, and we could only hope that the explanation given would prevent the suspicion of idolatry from attaching to our new pursuit. Eleven beautiful kinds of fern were found close round the garden, some of them the silver and golden-backed varieties so much admired at home.

Other mornings were spent entirely in the open air, lying in wait beneath the shade of flowering shrubs, for the most gorgeous and tantalizing butterflies that ever tormented an entomologist, possessed of more enthusiasm than adroitness. A magnificent blue one, five or six inches wide, once kept me on the watch a whole morning, and escaped me at last. It came at intervals, sauntering, so to speak, up the valley, visible far away; then hovered a few moments over a tree close to me, always out of reach; and then mounting upward like a bird, it retraced its way through the clear sunlight down the sloping coffee ground. Tantalizing, however, as was the repeated disappointment, my watch was anything but dull. Smaller, but exquisitely beautiful butterflies were fluttering round the shrubs, and numbers of humming-bird moths darted with their peculiar, jerky, swirling flight over the marigolds and zinnias on the rocks. Instead of the sober colouring of the English species, their bodies are of a vivid green, banded with other colours, and their wings partly transparent. Tiny birds came almost within arm's length, creeping along the boughs, and sucking honey from the flowers with long, curved, slender bills.

Some were green and yellow, others a deep, flashing, glossy blue, and when they fluttered round the blossoms, it was impossible, at the first glance, to distinguish them from butterflies. Then there were bulbuls, rather smaller, darker, and slighter than an English thrush; a sharp, moveable, jet-black crest upon their heads giving them a particularly knowing look. Flocks of minas were continually flashing by, the large white spots on their plumage showing with dazzling distinctness; and once a great white eagle-like bird, with a brown head and wings, came sailing up and alighted on the rock behind me, where he stalked about within a stone's throw. These birds and the great Brahminee kites, which are also not uncommon here, do much mischief among the poultry. The little green long-tailed parroquets, of which I saw many during these pleasant morning hours, are very destructive to fruit, and show themselves especially partial to my friend's English apple trees. Other bright green birds, much the size and shape of a thrush, were plentiful, nor were quadrupeds and reptiles wanting.

Tiny Indian squirrels with their grey coats marked with three distinct, black, longitudinal stripes came chasing each other within a few feet of my post, scurrying over the low stone wall with tails erect, and darting up and down the trees with amusing celerity; and the lizards were by no means behind them in restlessness. One common sort is grey, mottled with black, and rather pretty; another very coarse and evil looking, with a thick head and leathery black skin, enlivened by a bright yellow stripe along each side. When full grown, both sorts are eight or ten inches long, but I once found one in my bed, apparently just hatched, not much more than an inch in total length. Grasshoppers and their allied tribes are very numerous, and some of them very hand-

some, with black heads, crimson bodies, and black wings spotted with opaque yellow. Our clerical friend, who was also seized with an entomological mania, captured a specimen one day, which in size and general shape, was not unlike a half-grown frog. Unfortunately, its delicate emerald green hue changed after death to a dull brown, and thus, like many of these wonderful foreign insects, its chief beauty vanished.

One evening, we climbed the hill above the parsonage, not a long ascent, but rather an arduous one; as there was no path, and we had to press upwards through ferns, prickly wild dates, and boulders large and small. The view from the top, however, amply repaid us. From that summit as a centre, we looked east, west, north, and south, across ravines, and valleys, and ridge after ridge of hills, some green, some bare and grey, and others mantled with the soft evening haze or clothed with the sunset glow. Far in the distance shone a broad reach of the river Cauvery, and a steep ridge of abrupt and rugged ironstone rocks formed a striking feature in the foreground.

Another pleasant ramble, fern-hunting, took us downward to a little native burying ground. It was a lovely walk, partly through high jungle of flowering plants, partly along a pretty shaded road, till we turned aside to a secluded spot that must have been beautiful indeed before it was chosen as a place of graves. Owing to the great difficulty of hollowing deep pits in the rocky soil, bodies had time after time been so slightly buried, that jackals had dragged them forth, and held hideous carnival; so that the place was strewed with bleached bones, skulls with the teeth perfect, and vertebræ, and thigh and shoulder bones, in terrible preservation. There had been no recent burials when we visited the spot, but a gentleman, to whom we mentioned it, told us

that he had once been assailed in passing, by a fearful odour, and had seen the body of a native lying on the surface half devoured.

One side of this little natural enclosure descends abruptly to a shallow stream, overhung with forest trees. Here, on mossy stones and banks, the loveliest greenhouse ferns flourish in delicate beauty and profusion. I never saw anything so exquisite as some of the rocks thus clothed; and tree ferns were also abundant and beautiful; but, perhaps, the pleasantest novelty, after the perpetual caution inculcated at Calcutta, was the being able to dig and rout about among this tropical foliage with scarcely more fear of anything noxious than would be felt in England.

The most important of our expeditions was a day spent in the woods, where we had a picnic breakfast, dining at the house of a native Christian, the owner and cultivator of a small coffee plantation near. As the spot fixed for the picnic was some few miles away, we had to engage bearers for one or two chairs; and take turns in walking, being carried, and riding the ponies. It was a charming morning, and a new and lovely walk, past a fine lake and a sacred wood, and then scrambling over huge rocks and down almost perpendicular paths among jungle and fern. Then the road wound round the edge of steep declivities, opposite to which hills clothed with foliage rose in silent grandeur, and past a Malayali village, the houses of which bore a striking resemblance to large beehives. A circle from ten to twenty feet in diameter is formed of stakes about a yard high, wattled with split bamboos; and others, rising to a steep cone in the centre, are fastened to them to support the roof. This is made of thick thatch

way, just high enough for the inhabitants to creep under. There are no windows to these primitive habitations, and fires for cooking, of course, have to be kindled out of doors.

After passing this curious little settlement, the road lay chiefly through cultivated land, till we arrived at the wood, where breakfast was preparing beside a little brook. The table-cloth was spread upon the ground, and the usual picnic fare laid out upon it, together with some first-rate coffee and plantains, sent down by Manicum, our native friend. When the party were all assembled, we had prayers and sang a hymn under the forest shade, and then proceeded to do full justice to the excellent meal provided. It was terminated in less orderly fashion by the appearance of some gorgeous butterflies flitting along the brook. Two of us were provided with nets, and four others were hastily improvised, armed with which the more active members of the party started up in chase; but as the ground was very difficult, including a brook to be crossed by very unsteady stepping-stones; with a steep ascent on either side, and coffee plantation or jungle everywhere, the butterflies had decidedly the best of it. They came sailing up one after another, hovering for a moment here and there round the flowering creepers that overhung the brook—truly regal creatures, attired in velvet black and blue, or black and yellow, and measuring fully five inches across the wings—every one dashed at them in turn, and then—they soared away. The chase was really exciting for a time, but this invariable termination at last rather damped our ardour; and we gave it up, and started in a body for the waterfall which was the ostensible object of our excursion.

It was a grand walk, reminding me very much of some of the loveliest Welsh scenery, though on a much finer scale. The waterfall was really a magnificent descent,

though with only the merest thread of water, dissipated into spray long before it reached the bottom. We sat on a broad rock at the summit, and looked sheer down a perpendicular height of above three hundred feet. Huge blocks of stone seemed piled upon each other from base to crest; and when we rolled fragments over the brink, they sprang in frantic leaps from point to point, dashing themselves to pieces long before they reached the depths of the ravine. On its opposite side, the hill rose almost as abruptly, but clothed with jungle to the very crown; and behind us was a rocky background, higher still, with the little stream trickling quietly over mossy shelves, and resting in cool, shallow basins before its tremendous plunge. In the rainy season, when there is a good body of water, it is really a fine cascade.

After a long rest, we returned to the spot where we had breakfasted; and then found our way up to Manicum's little abode, passing a whole troop of long-tailed monkeys, racing along the ground and up and down the trees. They were as large as a retriever, and are very mischievous, coming down in great gangs to steal coffee and fruit. Some of the coffee trees here were eight or ten feet high, and loaded with berries. The blossom is white and very delicate, and the sprays of ripe berries form a handsome Christmas decoration.

When we reached Manicum's thatched dwelling, we found the rest of the party awaiting us in the verandah, and were introduced to our host and his wife Rayal. He could speak English pretty well, she very little; but they both gave us a hearty welcome and a very good dinner, at which she could not be persuaded to join us, though he sat down and ate with his guests. Native women are so accustomed to a life of inferiority and seclusion, that even Christianity does not at once restore them to their

true position: and they often shrink painfully from intercourse with strangers.

After dinner, Manicum, who is really an excellent and simple-minded Christian man, called in some of his poorer neighbours; and the missionary who was with us held a little Tamil service for them, in which it was deeply interesting to join, though the language was an unknown tongue to most of our party. Soon after this we parted from our kind host; having arranged, much to his satisfaction, for the establishment of a Christian school upon these hills; and reached home about dusk, after a fatiguing but most pleasant excursion.

Another day three men came up from one of the outlying villages formerly under the charge of my friend's husband, to ask her to recommend a wife for one of them, for which purpose they had walked sixty miles! The meeting between them and the widow of their late pastor was a very interesting and joyful one—their gratification at being recognized after some years of absence finding excited and voluble expression. One was a remarkably intelligent-looking middle-aged man, a convert baptized by her husband, and the others had been brought up in one of his schools. Since his death, this school, both for boys and girls, had been discontinued, so the young man could not find a wife with any education among his own people. He was but a poor cultivator, with a few fields of his own, and, like all the rest, was clothed in country cloth, bare-legged and bare-footed; but he wanted not only a Christian wife, but one who could read; and had made this long journey in search of one.

Mrs. L—— ordered them coffee, and after resting awhile they came in at her invitation, seated themselves on the floor, and began to give her all the news of their district. Squatting on the ground, it may be remarked, *en passant*, is the attitude most natural to all these East-

ern people, in whom it argues some considerable degree of European civilization to be able to sit comfortably upon a chair. Of course the conversation was carried on in Tamil, but whenever it grew particularly animated I got an interpretation *sotto voce* from another member of the family sitting beside me at work. Once they were entreating her to come down and stay among them, now that there was no settled teacher, and she told them jestingly that if she came now they would have to keep and feed her. It was touching to hear their eager response to this, and to see the keen face of the elder man light up with the earnestness of his assurance how very gladly they would do it. Then he went on to speak of her husband, and of all he owed to his teaching, and grew so excited that little Minnie, the missionary's grandchild, who was playing in a corner of the room, called out, "Paisāde! Paisāde!" (Silence! Silence!) It was interesting to see the warmth of their enthusiasm about their late pastor; but the chief object of their visit was unfortunately unattainable. There was but one Christian girl of suitable age about the place, and when she was sent for, ostensibly to give her some directions, but really that she might be looked at, the would-be bridegroom, though himself a singularly plain and gawky fellow, decided that she was not young or good-looking enough, and they took their leave disappointed.

The idea of taking a journey in search of a wife is by no means an unusual one in India. Any young Christian artificer or schoolmaster, if there is no suitable girl in his own neighbourhood, gets a letter of recommendation from his pastor to the managers of some female orphanage, and is allowed to select a wife from among the elder pupils. Two or three are sent into the room in succession, till he sees one who he thinks will suit him

seldom indeed, if ever, that a girl refuses to marry under such circumstances; and it is so difficult to provide for females safely in India except by marriage, that the managers of native schools are always glad to give their orphans to any husband who comes with testimonials of good character. Even in European and Eurasian charity-schools the same procedure is adopted to some extent; and there are many establishments of no small pretensions where, only a few years ago, any young man might present himself, and, with the sanction of the lady superintendent, select a wife from among her pupils. Of course in these cases the young ladies were allowed the option of refusal, and had opportunities of satisfying themselves as to the prospects of the candidate for matrimony.

One Sunday we had a sample of the occasional discomforts of Indian housekeeping. Seetān, the chief house-servant, had taken a long-promised fortnight's leave to go and get married; another left without notice; the boy was ill with earache and fever; and the taniketch, or water-carrier, took herself off for some unknown reason; so when the time came for breakfast, there was not even a drop of water in the house. Layal, the household factotum, had gone as usual to the early Tamil service, so nothing was ready; and though the ladies of the family set to work at once, it was a regular scramble to get to church in time.

When Seetān returned after the expiration of his leave, he looked very thin and jaded, and petitioned for a few days longer and a little advance of pay, to enable him to wind up the feast and send away his wife's relations. It is the custom for some of these to spend a fortnight or three weeks of rejoicing at the bridegroom's house, which is a heavy tax on the poor fellow, and often loads him with debt for months to come. Seetān's wed-

ding finery consisted merely of an immense turban of chocolate-coloured muslin with a gold stripe, the rest of his dress being much as usual; but he brought a number of curious wedding bouquets to present to us, each consisting of a small lime stuck on a splinter of wood, and surrounded by a densely-packed border of small pink roses.

Among our regular morning employments was the churning of the butter for the day's consumption in a large wide-mouthed bottle. Though many cows were kept, they only gave sufficient milk for our use, and not always enough to provide us with butter. A pint of milk is a fair yield, and even a cupfull is not to be despised; all calves being reared, because the manure is valuable for the fertilization of the scanty soil. Once a pretty, week-old creature excited some amusement by gravely mounting the verandah steps, and finally walking into the study, where it manifested a lively interest in its novel surroundings.

One lovely morning we started, while the white fleecy clouds lay below us like steam wreaths in the valley, to climb a steep cone near the church. It was almost too windy for us to keep our feet, but the views on every side were exquisite. The mists came rolling up the hill-sides, and white clouds crowned the bald Shevaroyon, the "King of Strength," from which this range takes its name; while at intervals we had the loveliest peeps into the sun-lighted valleys and plains below.

We found a singular kind of white orchid, with a spur four or five inches long, and saw masses of a very pretty creeper, which appears to be a species of bryony. The blossom resembles a large jessamine, with a number of fibres spreading from the edges of the petals, and making the flower nearly two inches in diameter. It is of pure

white, and the effect of this delicate halo-like network among the dark foliage is singularly beautiful. There were also numbers of curious horny insects, about as large as the first joint of one's finger, which rolled themselves like woodlice into shining brown and yellow balls; and huge millepedes, three or four inches long, were equally common. The whole surface of the hill was little more than a sheet of boulders, some deeply bedded in the soil, others looking as if the first rush of rain would sweep them down. They vary in size from a stone that a child could lift, to a mass eight or ten feet square, and lie so close together that it is generally easier to climb from one to the other than to step between them. Any one who has not seen similar hills can scarcely imagine their singular appearance, completely covered with these smooth grey masses, round which cluster wild dates and ferns, with here and there a shrub or stunted tree, and flowering creepers in abundance. How they got there is a geological problem that I should like to see satisfactorily solved.

Immediately after breakfast a box wallah or hawker made his appearance. These men are always hailed with satisfaction in remote districts, for they bring all sorts of useful articles; and though their goods are not first-rate or very fresh, they are much cheaper than can be got in shops, besides saving the inconvenience of having to send a hundred or a hundred and fifty miles. This man had two coolies to carry his packs, which contained salad oil, ribbons, sauces, buttons, jams, ink, tea, soap, and miscellaneous haberdashery and stationery. Of course he asked much more than he intended to take, and the bargaining was a matter of time, but it ended in our buying a considerable quantity of things at nearly English prices. There are such continual sales by auction, at the large ports, of unclaimed consignments, etc., that these

men can stock themselves and get a fair profit, often at less than English retail prices. The only shop of any description in this neighbourhood is about a mile away and contains a curious medley of very inferior goods. The next nearest is thirteen miles distant, and its contents are scarcely more satisfactory. For anything beyond, one has to send to Madras, so that between the difficulty of the transit, and the carelessness of native servants, one's supplies, especially in the way of crockery, are often reduced to a very primitive footing.

Time would fail to tell of all the lovely walks in this delightful region, and words can give no adequate idea of their varied beauty. Some of the lower roads might have been English country lanes, but for the dense hedges of double roses and passion-flowers, and the white evening primroses that studded the roadside grass instead of daisies.

The common monthly rose appears quite as manageable for hedges as hawthorn, and can be kept down to any height while still flowering profusely; so it seems strange that it is never tried for this purpose in large grounds at home. Here the young shoots are merely cut into foot lengths, and stuck into the ground diagonally cross-wise, when they soon form a hedge of wonderful beauty.

Many of the woodland patches are quite English in character, the trees magnificent, unmixed with palms or plantains, or any foliage that strikes one as distinctively tropical. Only the course of streamlets down the ravines is generally marked by the feathery branches of the large tree ferns, which lift their heads quite to the level of the low jungle trees.

Two evening walks still stand out clear in memory, and at the risk of what may seem like repetition I must try

led us across a wide common, covered with yellow flowering shrubs, up a steep hill, from which we looked down on an undulating stretch of verdure far below, valley and hill so thickly clothed with trees as to give them a rich, soft, mossy look, while here and there a cleared patch of the most vivid green relieved the view. Beyond these spread the vast panorama of plain and distant mountains that opens here at every point where one attains a little elevation. We sat on the top ledge of rock, with our feet upon another, below which the descent was as perpendicular as a wall; and enjoyed the fresh breeze, while the sun set cloudily behind the distant mountains, pouring floods of golden light from behind masses of dark vapour, and literally bathing the hills in glory. Halfway across the plain we could see the rain marching along in columns and passing hill after hill. We comforted ourselves in our shelterless and umbrella-less condition with the idea that it was passing on one side of us, but a few sharp drops soon dissipated the illusion, and we commenced our descent with more haste than dignity. It was well there were no spectators of our precipitate scramble over rocks and ferns, but we managed to get in before the storm broke, and the escape was worth the effort.

The other time the goal of our pilgrimage was a place called Pagoda Point, and the first part of our walk was a broad good road winding among the plantations or bordered by jungle. In one place we found a splendid white lily, a single flower upon a tall stem, twice the size of the common English garden lily, and with a wonderfully rich strong perfume, which, as we bore it in triumph, refreshed us all the way. It is useless to attempt to describe the scenery—the undulating coffee-grounds, the majestic timber trees, the orange avenues, the rose hedges, the near hills covered with jungle or rugged with grey

boulders, and the spots of open ground where jessamine, evening primroses, and other flowers grew wild. It would only be a repetition of mere words that could give no idea of the constantly varying scene. Towards the end of our walk, fields rudely enclosed and filled with various grain crops gave quite an English look to the view; and then an interval of abrupt climbing, up and round a rocky hill, brought us within sight of the pagodas from which the spot takes its name. They are simple erections of unhewn rough stone, square and tapering very gradually to a point—perhaps about sixteen feet high, and six wide at the base. There is no opening, though they are said to contain images, and round them are a few "swamy" or idol-houses, ordinary thatched dwellings with walls so low that we had to stoop almost on hands and knees to peep in. The only one we saw open contained two wooden figures like clumsy rocking-horses, coarsely painted red and black, and gilt. A little further on was a broad rough stone altar, with a small rude figure upon it, apparently intended for a kneeling bull; and behind this image was inserted a wooden post rudely carved, from the top of which projected four curved iron spikes, "the horns of the altar."

A few more steps brought us to the brink of the hill, which commands a view of rare beauty even for this neighbourhood. The slope was abrupt, over jutting blocks of stone, among which bright flowering trees and shrubs found footing here and there, and zinnias, balsams, marigolds, and ferns spread their bright carpet wherever an inch of soil could be found. Below, in the rich valley, were cultivated patches and beds of plantains, displaying every soft and vivid shade of green, and beehive-like villages nestling under the shelter of splendid trees; while ranges of hills crossed the prospect, some clothed with trees to the summit, and others bare and grey. The

far-off plains were spread before us like a map, the lines of road dotted with rows of trees, and gleaming sheets of water showing how abundant had been the recent rainfall.

We had clambered down a little way to gather some choice ferns, when we were startled by the sudden apparition of some natives just above cur heads. One was an elderly man, apparently a teacher or priest, and the others younger, all wrapped in the dark brown rugs or blankets commonly worn up here; and, after standing a few moments, the elder man knelt down, and bowed his forehead to the ground repeatedly, before the idol I have described. Then he rose, and the others gravely and reverently followed his example; after which, they seated themselves at the brow of the hill, and seemed to admire the prospect, the elder man discoursing to them all the while, apparently on some religious topic. It made one's very heart ache to see these intelligent-looking men bowing down amid such glorious works of the Creator's hand to idols so utterly degraded and contemptible; and one longed to be able to speak their tongue, so as to tell them, as Paul told the Athenians, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." Nowhere is the wretched effect of the confusion of tongues more felt than in India, where there are so many distinct languages in one peninsula and under the same government. Urdoo, Hindi, Bengali, Ooriya, Tamil, Teloogoo, Malayali, Guzerati, and Canarese are only some of the multitudinous tongues heard in various parts; and, in Madras, the very titles given to domestic servants are all different to those used in the northern provinces. Instead of kitmutghars, bheesties, etc., one hears of mateys, toties, and taniketches; while the master and mistress, instead of being sahib and

mem sahib, rejoice in the more euphonious appellations of doré and dorésanie.

By the time we turned to descend the hill, the evening breeze blew fresh and cool, and the moon had just risen; and long before we reached home it would have been dark but for her radiance. The stillness of coming night was only broken by the croaking of innumerable frogs, a loud, but by no means unmusical sound. Now and then we met a few natives, and once passed three Europeans; but, for the rest, the road was absolutely lonely, with only a dwelling here and there in sight. It seemed strange to be walking by moonlight miles away from home, and totally unprotected, in a wild district of India; but no one seems to think of danger, except in the dark, when cheetahs, and even tigers, might be abroad.

III

BACK TO THE PLAINS AGAIN.

At last this pleasant sojourn on the hills came to a close; and strengthened and invigorated, but with many regrets, I prepared for my return to the stifling atmosphere of the plains. The evening before I left, we paid a last visit to the little Hindoo burying-ground, chiefly in order to get some ferns for transplanting to Calcutta. It looked lovelier than ever after the recent rains, and the little brook at the bottom was quite a roaring torrent. We got some beautiful specimens, including a young tree fern, which I left as a parting gift to the flourishing fernery, receiving in return a fine root of English violets to add to my treasures; and, after packing them carefully, we went early to bed, in order to rise at five, the time fixed for my downward journey. Breakfast was soon over, and I had said good-bye, kissed little Minnie in her rosy sleep, and been packed in my chair, furnished with fruit and provisions for the way, before the clock struck six.

The hills seemed to put on all their loveliness that parting morning. Those glorious hills! How I wish that words could convey any adequate idea of their ever-varying loveliness! For the first few miles the road was smooth and well kept, and swept down hill very gradually, past the broad, peaceful lake, slumbering among the wooded heights, past the sacred wood, and by a sacred

hill; then down through coffee plantations, by the deep dingle full of tree ferns, before the steep descent began. It was the same ghaut by which I had been carried up; but the descending views were far the finest, from the broad, lovely glimpses of the low country, which had been behind us during the ascent. The bearers did their work beautifully, keeping fairly in step; and though my heavy trunk had been sent on before, we formed quite a procession. First went the coolies: one, a woman, bearing on her head a load that few Englishmen would have volunteered to carry for a mile; and the other, a man, carrying a stout packing-case filled with plants, which weighed eighty-six pounds. Then came I, seated in my arm-chair, borne aloft on the shoulders of four men, with the pockets of my old English waterproof crammed with sandwiches and fruit, and the whole shaded by an umbrella which I had much ado to manage, as it was frequently necessary to hold myself in the chair by both hands; the road being so perpendicular that even with a board for my feet it was difficult to keep from slipping.

The other four bearers, with the head man, kept near, carrying small articles, and changing places with their comrades as they found it convenient. We never paused a minute the whole thirteen or fourteen miles, and they scarcely intermitted their peculiar song. The hire of the eleven, including the return journey of one of them with the chair, was but fourteen shillings; and people trust themselves and their property unreservedly in the hands of these wild people, travelling alone by night and day, through forests where they may not see another face for miles. Their honesty is absolutely unimpeachable, and shames that of civilized nations. Goods that have to be sent down a ghaut like this are simply put into their hands, and sent miles beyond one's reach, without even an inquiry as to their names and dwelling-place, and

though they are commonly paid beforehand, no instance has been known of any breach of trust.

By the time we reached the foot of the ghaut it was nearly nine o'clock, so the sun was very powerful, and the three miles of flat road were intensely hot. Swarms of white butterflies hovered round the shrubs, mingled with gorgeous swallow-tails, clad in black, crimson, and white, and other kinds marbled with various colours, or white with vivid scarlet tips. The strangest form of vegetation here was displayed by the cactus tribe—real trees of ten or twelve feet high, with a thick trunk, rising to a considerable height before the branches began to part. These were not in blossom, but another flat-leaved variety with yellow flowers was fully out, and the blossoms crowded with rose-spotted moths. The beauty of the red crags which reared themselves against the blue sky, near the entrance of the ghaut, was another feature in the landscape not to be forgotten.

For some miles the railway was bordered by the hills, and though they gradually fell back towards the horizon, they were never fully out of sight all day. During more than half the journey one might almost have fancied oneself travelling through English or Welsh scenery, the only distinctively foreign objects being the thick hedges of aloe and cactus which bordered the line—as sure a protection against trespass, as could be devised—the thick lanceolate leaves of the former, and the fearful prickles that arm the latter, being well adapted to keep off man and beast. The candelabra-shaped flower stems of the aloe stood ten or twelve feet high, and the cacti were covered with purplish fruit as large as a good-sized pear.

Great part of the land was divided into fields, and covered with grain crops of various kinds, all unlike English cereals—one with a globular head of grain, and

another similar in growth to wheat, but with ears as large as bulrush heads. The rain had made the verdure most rich and lovely, and the dragonflies and butterflies were splendid, but the heat and dust extremely trying.

Once or twice we passed groves of palm, if those can be rightly called groves, which afforded scarcely more shade than so many congregated lamp-posts. The tall, bare stems taper very rapidly from the base, often swelling out again in ungainly protuberances about halfway up, and crowned with little bristling tufts, very different to the graceful cocoa palms most abundant in Bengal, which impart to all the scenery there a character so richly oriental. These on the other hand, are a species of fan palm, and have as little of the beautiful or picturesque about them as can well be imagined.

Herds of uncouth, mouse-coloured buffaloes were wallowing in the roadside pools, up to their eyes in mud and water; their long horns, which often curve in very eccentric directions, or lie back on their shoulders, giving them a peculiarly wild and vicious look. They are, however, very inoffensive, and their milk is richer than that of the cow, though not so nice or wholesome.

We stopped two or three times in the day for half an hour, and the Babel on the platform was astonishing. Every native talks at the top of his voice, so there is ten times the noise, if not half the business, of an English station. There were probably not twenty Europeans in the train all day, but the native carriages were packed like sheep pens.

As we neared Madras, the line was bordered by rice grounds, each little plot surrounded by a neat embankment a few inches high, and so perfectly levelled, that about an inch of water would cover it. This was supplied by a primitive bamboo lever acting as a lift, and a similar, but more complicated, arrangement worked by

two or three men is in almost universal use in Madras for drawing water—pumps and windlasses being, as far as I saw, equally unknown. Rice is beautiful when growing, being of an intensely brilliant yellow green, and one might see it in various stages of growth in contiguous plots, one being a bare sheet of water, while the next had a crop a few inches high, and the growth in another reached, perhaps, a couple of feet.

As evening closed in, the hedges were literally alive with fireflies, of which there are two kinds about here, one much larger than the other. Both are narrow dusky beetles, the smaller not above half an inch long, the light proceeding from three or four of the hinder segments of the body. A solitary firefly is perhaps not so pretty as an English glowworm, the light being yellowish instead of the lovely green hue of our wayside sparkler; but the effect of the swarms of dancing lights that flicker over low shrubby grounds in India is indescribably beautiful.

The long day's journey, combined with the sudden change of temperature from 65° or 70° to 90°, was very trying, and my first day at Madras was spent in helpless lassitude. We went for an evening drive in the park, where I was struck by the inferiority of the equipages to those in Calcutta; some of the people even having the bad taste to put their coachmen into English dress, which looks mean and ridiculous beside the graceful costume of the natives. Nothing can be more unbecoming to a Hindoo, either male or female, than any assumption of Western apparel; the dark garb which suits an English gentleman, and the hat or bonnet of an English lady, being equally unsuitable to the features, complexion, and gait of our Eastern fellow-subjects.

Among the oddities of Madras are the tiny vehicles used by the lower class of natives, and called "sigram

po," which literally means "quickly go"—little close wooden carriages, like a miniature cab, into which three or four natives will crush themselves, sitting with knees and noses crammed together, with the greatest apparent satisfaction and complacency.

Most houses here are not more than one story high, and the compounds are very large, so that one would rather imagine oneself living in some country suburb than in the midst of a capital. Except in the Black Town and in one line of houses on the beach, there is scarcely anything that looks like a city; and this arrangement, though pleasant and healthy, has its inconveniences, the chief being the great distance one has to traverse for either calling or shopping. The rents are however very moderate, a comfortable house with compound, stabling, and other outbuildings being attainable for about £4 a month, less than one would give for a good flat in Calcutta. On the other hand, the shops are immeasurably inferior and very dear.

In the church we attended I first saw "kuskus tatties" employed for refreshing the air. They are light lattice-work frames, made to fit into the open windows, and intertwined or stuffed with the fibrous roots of the kuskus grass, which are kept moist by water continually thrown upon them from outside. This not only cools the air by its rapid evaporation, but gives out a delightful faint odour like that of sandal wood.

In one of our drives we passed a little tope or grove, all alive with the shrill cries of the flying foxes. These are a large species of bat, about the size of a crow, and may readily be mistaken when abroad in the evening twilight for home-going rooks; till the shorter wings and heavier build draw attention to the bat formation behind. They are great plunderers of all kinds of fruit, and some of the natives consider them good eating. By day they

hang all over the trees in the shady topes which they frequent, looking like black rags suspended from the branches.

Once also during this visit we experienced another of the occasional inconveniences of Indian housekeeping. We were kept waiting for dinner by some callers, till the roast beef was nearly cold, and the moment it came under the lamp we saw that the dish was swarming with minute red ants. These creatures are the special plague of Madras, where they infest everybody and everything; and though their sting is very trifling, the irritation of having them about one is a great annoyance. Three times the dish was taken away before the meat was satisfactorily cleared of them, and the gravy was thick with their bodies. The servants had neglected to set the dish, while waiting, on a stand insulated in a pan of hot water, which would have been a safeguard against invasion.

Another time in the early morning, when a piece of bread and a glass of milk were brought for my chota hazree, I took a mouthful or two, imagining it to be brown bread, before I discovered that the dark hue was caused by every crevice being filled with these tiny ants.

A very pleasant surprise brightened the close of this stay at Madras—the arrival of an old friend from England, who had come out to engage in zenana work, accompanied by another lady proceeding to a mission station in the north-west. Both were hospitably received by my friends, and as bed-room accommodation was scanty and they both found the heat very oppressive, they elected to share my quarters on the roof, by far the pleasantest and coolest spot on the premises. Our moonlight walks in this airy dormitory were most delightful, the large compound with its majestic trees sleeping in the still radiance around us, as if under some fairy spell, and the voluptuous breath of the heavily blossomed creepers

wafted to us with every stir of the night breeze. The quisqualis, one of these creepers, common both here and in Calcutta, deserves especial mention for its profuse blossom and voluptuous fragrance. It is a strong, woody, wildly luxuriant climber; and its flowers, which grow in large loose bunches, change their colour from pink to white or white to pink, while still in perfect bloom, and absolutely load the night air with their luscious odour.

Our mattrasses were spread on the roof and the mosquito nets ingeniously secured above them; but we were roused in the middle of the night by a sudden change of weather. The wind had risen fiercely, and dark clouds covered the sky; the lightning which had been playing in harmless beauty all the evening now looked stormy and wild, and there were a few low growls of thunder. No time was to be lost, for I knew better than my companions the hurrying fury of a tropical storm. We bundled up our bedding as quickly as possible, and beat a hasty retreat—not a second too soon, for large drops were already falling, and in a few minutes the roof was a sheet of water. We had to spread our belongings where we could, and finish the night in an atmosphere that seemed all the more sultry in contrast to our former airy resting place.

Next morning the gardeners brought in a snake seven feet long, which they had killed in the hedge, and concerning which an extraordinary belief prevails. The end of the tail is extremely thin, and the natives assert that when the creature has bitten anything, it instantly whips this extremity into the wound, and *thus* poisons it fatally. It was useless to inquire whether any one had ever witnessed this singular performance; but the belief in it is common in Bengal as well as in other parts of India.

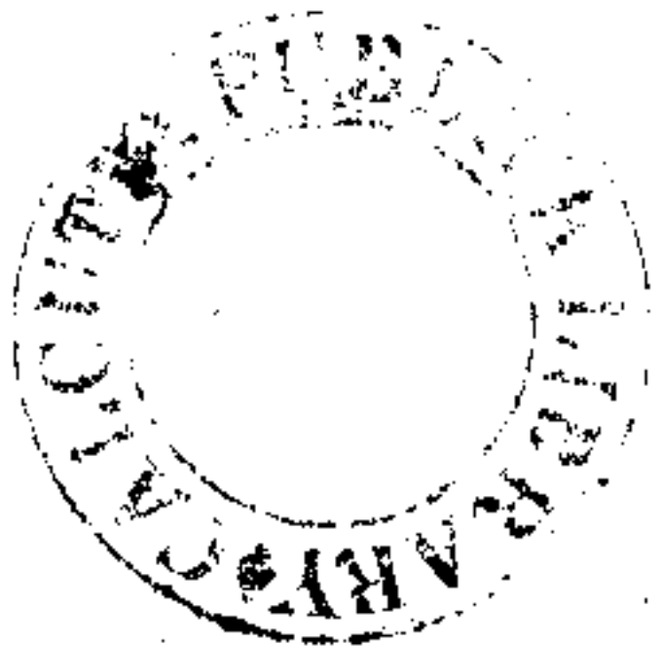
Our transit to the vessel which was to convey us to Calcutta was a very noisy and exciting one. Woe to the

unhappy unprotected female who has to land, or embark at Madras! She is instantly surrounded by a gang of boatmen or coolies, who possess themselves of her property and of herself, shouting and jabbering to a deafening extent, and demanding six or seven times their lawful hire. However, we were fortunate enough to have a gentleman's escort, and by steadily referring everything to him, we managed to get ourselves and our goods all together into a boat. These boats, made expressly for passage through the surf, are large and clumsy, sewn together, and leaking profusely; but no English boat could endure what they do. A rude awning is put up at one end, and a floor laid for the passengers, all the rest of the bottom being full of water, which keeps two or three of the crew incessantly employed in baling. The sides stand nearly a yard out of the water, and across the very top are fixed a number of spars for the boatmen to sit on and rest their feet against. About fourteen men are required, who keep up a wild song as they row with their long paddles. It is by no means an easy matter to embark or disembark at the Madras pier, where the swell of the surf alternately lifts and lowers the boat to an extent very trying to the nerves of an irresolute traveller; and the motion in the harbour is quite enough to upset any one not proof against sea-sickness.

There was nothing worthy of remark on the return voyage, except the temporary unpleasantness of finding oneself among strange company at the saloon table. The vessel was very crowded, and some of the first-class passengers had assuredly not been accustomed to sit at a civilized board; their use of knives and forks being as indiscriminate as their ideas of English grammar were hazy. Our lot was cast at first among quite a knot of these people, probably artisans, engineers, etc., whose passage had been paid by Calcutta firms or given them

by the company. Workmen of this class, engine-drivers, plate-layers, and overseers of various works, earn large salaries in India, and begin at once to emulate the dress and equipages of their betters, doing very much to lower the standard of Europeans in the estimation of the natives. In a land where the aristocracy of colour prevails more, perhaps, than in any other, every white person being a "sahib" or "mem sahib," the results of this state of things are increasingly deplorable.

An appeal to the purser secured us from inconvenience for the rest of the short voyage; and the fourth day saw us safely landed at Calcutta, with grateful recollections of beauty and kindness associated for ever in our memories with the Shevaroy hills.



IV

A PLEASURE TRIP TO A SACRED MOUNTAIN.

It was the 7th of May, the thermometer standing at 98° in the shade, and the punkah barely making existence endurable, when the casual suggestion of a friend suddenly brightened the weary prospect, and opened out a vista of unforeseen enjoyment.

I had heard before of Parisnath, a sacred hill, situated in what is called the Switzerland of Bengal, and had more than once planned to escape to its breezy heights for a short breathing time; but the difficulties of the journey, and the uncertainty both of accommodation and provision, had hitherto nipped such projects in the bud. Now, a party of friends were about to proceed thither; and, furnished with ample information for the journey, gained by their inquiries, and certain of a share of shelter and provision on arrival, I determined to summon up courage for the journey.

It may be asked, why I could not accompany my friends, and what could be the difficulty or danger of a journey of less than one hundred and fifty miles? But the answer to these questions, so easily put, involves considerable explanation. In the first place, nearly fifty miles of the journey lay beyond railway limits; and the only mode of performing that portion of the route was to

that is, to provide a vehicle and relays of horses along the road; and as the resources of the agency did not extend beyond providing for the two vehicles required by my friends, my journey was necessarily deferred till they were safely housed at Parisnath.

The other difficulties arose from the circumstance that the sacred mountain was far away from any European neighbourhood, and that neither attendance nor provision, except of the rudest description, could be procured up there. Shelter there was, for the mountain had once been tried as a military sanitarium; and, though abandoned for that purpose since many years, the government buildings remained, and the use of them was freely granted on the application of any respectable party. But as the only furniture left in this mountain refuge consisted of a few rude bedsteads, clumsy tables, and dilapidated chairs, the visitors must either content themselves without the appliances of civilized life, or carry up with them everything that they deemed essential to existence.

This of course rendered the journey both a toilsome and an expensive one, and one which few ladies would undertake alone. Indian railway charges for luggage are very heavy, and when the conveyance of servants, bedding, cooking utensils, crockery, and provisions, had to be added to one's own personal expenses, the total formed a heavy charge for ten days' or a fortnight's holiday. Now, however, freed by the kind hospitality of my friends from the greater portion of the burden, I arranged to start a few days after them, taking with me a young friend and my trusty bearer Bowhanie, with only lighter articles of bedding and table furniture, and a few contributions to the stock of provision.

For the dawk journey alone, going and returning, I had to pay £6, the railway fares being comparatively moderate. For a considerable distance the line was the

same as that described in the previous journey to Monghyr. By the roadside were the usual rice grounds, now as bare as ploughed fields; the usual stagnant pools, some green, some yellow, some red, owing to various-coloured duck-weed scums, with men and women as usual bathing in them and washing their clothes, or fishing for large fresh-water prawns; the usual jungle and fringe of palm-trees on the horizon, and the usual paddy-birds and kingfishers, buffaloes and adjutants, which are almost the only living creatures visible on a journey in Bengal. Only at Burdwan and one or two other places was anything like a gentleman's house visible near or far. No towns or villas, nothing but bare rice-plains and mud villages, the round thatched huts of which much resemble small hay-ricks, as they cluster together half-hidden by the overshadowing palms.

At seven in the evening, after about nine hours' journey, we reached Barrakur, the railway terminus, and found to our dismay that there was no refreshment-room or means of getting even hot water for tea. The guard, however, was very civil, and finding that we were going to travel all night, made us some tea himself in the only cups to be found in the place, and sent a bearer to pull the punkah over us meanwhile. At the same time our luggage was got out, and packed in and on the dawk gharry, which, according to orders, was awaiting us.

It was an oblong, box-like carriage, considerably longer and more angular in build than an English cab; and when a board was fitted between the seats, the cushions and our quilts and pillows made a tolerably comfortable bed for two. The larger luggage was stowed on the top, and the smaller at our feet and under the board, while a net above received hats and umbrellas. Altogether there seemed good cause to be satisfied with the prospect of comfort, so we got in and lay down, with the

sliding doors wide open; Bowhanie mounted the box by the driver, and the vehicle started. The moon had not risen, and it was too dark to distinguish objects clearly; but the horse and driver seemed to know their work, and for the first stage or two all went well. The stages are but five miles in length, and at the end of each a fresh horse was waiting by the roadside with a syce, or running footman, who harnessed him, and ran by his side the whole of the next stage, occasionally mounting the gharry if the animal seemed pretty capable. The next halting-place reached, his charge ended, and another syce and horse took up the service, the same driver officiating all the way. The road was pretty good, being the trunk or main road from Calcutta to Benares, and on across the country; and till the railway diverted the traffic, it was a very busy scene. Now, however, all is changed, and except a few bullock-carts and the mail-gig, we met nothing the whole night long.

The moon soon rose, and though but young, gave a fair light; so about ten o'clock, while they were changing horses, we resolved to get out and walk. It seemed strange, when we reflected on it for a moment, to find ourselves alone in the dead stillness of the night on a high road, many miles away from any other European; and yet almost more fearless than we should have had cause to be under similar circumstances at home. The starlight was brilliant, and altogether we enjoyed the little change; but when the gharry came up after a considerable delay, Bowhanie protested strongly against our doing so again, for fear of tigers, and we submitted with discretion.

Now, however, we soon began to find that we had had the best of our journey. The agent probably keeps two tolerable horses for the first stages, on purpose to put travellers into good spirits; for after this every horse was

worse than his predecessor; and so we plodded on our miserable, sleepless way, through the whole weary night, the wretched animals now and then coming to a full stop, and only kept up to a walking pace by incessant shouts and blows.

At last, about four in the morning, matters came to a crisis. One tired beast was taken out of the shafts, but the other could not be put in. He was ill, they said; and knowing how little compassion Hindoos ever show to animals, we could not urge them to attempt it. So there we were on the silent highway, in the midst of a little native village, where every one was fast asleep. Dawn was just beginning, but our dilemma was one from which even daylight would not deliver us. What was to be done? Of course there was no other horse to be had, for these animals are comparatively seldom seen, except in large towns; and bullocks, even if we could get them, would have been slower still. At last the coachman, evidently used to such emergencies, suggested that they should go and hunt up coolies to pull and push the carriage through the next stage. So he went on his quest, and we waited as patiently as we might, tormented by thirst, for the heat was as great as in Calcutta, and the restlessness had made us feel it more. Water we dared not ask for, for the Bengalis will drink out of any filthy ditch, and we could not have ventured on what they might bring; but we asked the men, who now stood round the gharry, if there was any milk to be had. No, there were no cows. Could we get goats' milk? Of this they seemed doubtful; so Bowhanie went on a tour of investigation through the village, knocking up the people remorselessly in the prosecution of his search. We waited anxiously, but in vain. Not a drop was to be had; and there we lay, in the grey light of the summer morning, weary, parched, and comfortless, without the smallest

idea how or when we should be able to proceed with our journey.

At last the driver returned with eight men, the shafts were taken off, and a couple of stout bamboos attached across the front of the carriage. Three men pulled at each, and the other two pushed in the rear; and once in motion, we went on considerably faster than the horses had brought us. The mountains were already showing themselves in the distance, and presently one steep pull succeeded another in the road, with only short intervals of level ground. We got out to walk up one or two, when the load seemed too much for the men; but were soon obliged to give in and return to the carriage, owing to our thirsty and fasting condition. The hills gradually closed in on each side, and the scenery grew very pretty—the road running on straight between them steeper than ever. At last the short stage was done, the next horse stood waiting in his place, and the men unyoked themselves and prepared to depart. Of course the contractor was bound to pay them for that stage, but we did not like to dismiss the poor fellows without something; and they went away well pleased with a rupee between them. Threepence each was not an extravagant gratuity for the stage they had performed.

One stage more, and we reached Tope Chauncy, a "dawk bungalow," that is to say, a sort of post-house of very limited accommodation, maintained by Government. In these places any traveller may halt, and get bed, bath, or meal, of course in very primitive style, by paying a trifling fee for the accommodation, and giving a small gratuity to the native servants in charge.

It was now seven o'clock on Whit Sunday morning, the time when we were due at Parisnath; but now, thanks to these miserable delays, there was nothing for it but to rest a little, and try to gain strength to go on.

So the trunks were unloaded, and we got out a change of clothing; bathed, breakfasted on eggs, chupatties, and tea —furnishing the latter ourselves—had a little quiet time in the shady verandah, and in two hours started again. The heat was soon intense on the road, but we felt much refreshed. The halt, the baths, and the breakfast for two, including fees to the cook and three other servants, cost only about four shillings.

The road became increasingly pretty as we advanced; but, alas, the horses manifested no improvement. Once, before we actually reached the halting place, the driver broke out into a sharp fire of remonstrance and abuse at sight of the animal awaiting him; and as he had said nothing about the previous wretched brutes, we felt no little interest as to the special demerits of this new specimen. All the information we could obtain, however, was the vague assurance that he was a notorious "budmash" (*i.e.*, villain), and that he would be very wicked for a long time, and then go well. The moment the coachman wanted him to go, the nature of his delinquencies became sufficiently apparent. Two or three men and boys, who evidently knew him of old, and were attracted to the spot by the prospect of some fun, stationed themselves at the wheels, and when the word of command was given, laboured with all their might to turn them, evidently anxious to delude him into the belief that he had a very easy load to draw. He was not to be so beguiled. Not a step would he stir for any persuasion or endearment, and the coachman was clearly afraid to try other means. There was a steep descent of a few feet on each side of the road, down which a sudden plunge would have rolled the carriage, so there was ample reason for his caution. He shouted and shook the reins, and the bystanders all shouted and tugged at the horse and at the wheels; but no—he stood like a horse of stone. The



DAWK GHARRY DRAWN BY COOLIES.

scene was ludicrous in the extreme, as well as annoying. In England, one would have got out and walked the five miles, but under this deadly sun, it would have been madness to attempt it. At last the driver got out of patience, and down came a blow on the horse's back; but the same instant brought the sharp sound of his hind hoofs on the front of the gharry, while his fore feet were planted on the ground more doggedly than ever. After one or two repetitions of this, one of the men tried another plan. A rope was slipped over one foot and dragged it by main force off the ground, while the driver whipped, another man poked him in the ribs with a stick, and the volunteer auxiliaries laboured at the wheels. This succeeded, and at last we were off, but as the whole road was a succession of small ascents, interspersed with bits of level, and this performance was repeated at every rise, our circumstances were decidedly unfavourable to the cultivation of a Sabbatic state of mind.

After passing above half the stage in this manner, the brute suddenly changed his mind, and almost galloped the rest of the way, thus fulfilling in every respect the driver's prediction. The scenery was more like England than anything I had seen in India. On the right were the hills, already rising near and grand, clothed with trees to the summit; but it was not here the resemblance lay. On the other side, considerably below us, spread a broad and rather flat expanse, bounded by low hills just like the Cotswolds, and dotted with rows and clumps of trees. Cattle were feeding in the fields, and there were no palms of any kind to break the charm. The trees might have been English trees, and the view was such as one might see almost anywhere in the midland counties in the course of a few miles' drive. It brought on a fit of home sickness that overpowered me with a rush of

irrepressible tears, and it was long before the sudden burst of yearning could be quieted again.

About eleven o'clock the last bungalow was reached, and as we had been repeatedly assured that bearers and dandies would be waiting for us there, we did not want even to drive up to the door ; but the proverb which tells of the blessedness of him who expects nothing is certainly pre-eminently true in India. The dandies, our new conveyances, were visible enough in the verandah, but not the coolies to carry them ; and we were reluctantly obliged to admit the necessity of going into the house to wait for them.

This, not being a regular dawk bungalow, was a most wretched place. One little room half filled by a filthy bedstead and an old table, was the whole extent of the accommodation, besides a dark bath-room perfectly empty. The only other articles of any description were two old chairs; and when we came to make inquiry about the coolies we found that they lived about two miles off, and were all probably scattered at their work in the fields. Moreover it was so hot that we were advised not to start till evening, even if they could be got together.

Assuredly it was very trying to patience. We could just see the bungalow whither we were bound, on the ridge of the hill, perhaps not above a mile or two away as the crow flies, but six miles as we should have to go ; and yet we were compelled to stay in the dense brooding heat below, instead of breakfasting in the fresh, pure, mountain air as we had hoped to do. There was but one consolation—the only one for lesser as well as greater disappointments—the thought of Whose will orders all these seeming misadventures; and so we resigned ourselves to make the best of it.

We could only get water to drink, and that not very good, but we had plenty of biscuits and cheese; so we made a tolerable meal and then rested and read. Before

long I noticed a heavy cloud gathering over one of the hills on the southern horizon, and the wind began to blow in a manner very suggestive of a storm. Gradually the cloud seemed to come down in heavy, distant rain, and swept round to the west, leaving the south hills clear; and we had some hope that it was spent, as far as our neighbourhood was concerned. Soon however the whole sky darkened, and such a dust storm set in that it took the united efforts of three men to hold and bolt the door. The clouds gathered a second time over the western hills, and came down evidently in dense torrents with a few rolling thunder-peals; but, alas! instead of clearing off, they drove round again to the south and on to the east, drawing nearer and nearer across the plain. We ran out into the little verandah, and saw them drift on till they wrapped the head of Parisnath in fleecy masses: we could even see them sweep into the little bungalow; and then in a few moments the whole mountain was as completely hidden from view as if a curtain had been dropped between. Torrents of rain rushed hissing down, sheets of water swept across the parched ground, and filled the dry bed of the stream in front; and the temperature sunk so suddenly that we opened our trunks again, and put on warm inner and outer garments. This was accomplished under difficulties, for there was no glass to the window of the bungalow, and the wind lifted the strong wooden plates of the venetian shutters as if they had been paper, and drove the rain straight across the room. Moreover, in a very few minutes the roof was soaked through, and the water began to drip upon us everywhere. Bag and baggage had to be heaped up on the old bedstead, and we were driven out into the north verandah, which, being less exposed to the storm, still gave a shelter. Here we sat watching the pelting rain, and speculating on our prospects for the night. The alternatives were four—

that the rain should cease; that we should attempt the ascent in it; that we should stay where we were, and sleep as best we could, living on biscuit and cheese and water till it abated; or that we should send to the only other house in the place and ask hospitality. All these possibilities, except the first, were sufficiently intolerable, and the second would have been madness. However, after about an hour and a half of extreme violence the storm ceased, and we prepared to start at once, the coolies having been sheltering for some time in the out-house ready.

But the conveyances—how shall I describe them? Each consisted of a stout double piece of sacking, about eight feet long and four wide, roughly plaited at each end into a thick leather binding, and then attached to an iron ring slipped on a strong bamboo, so as to form a sort of hammock; and in these we made ourselves as comfortable as we could, with cloaks and pillows. Besides the four men to carry each, there were four more to relieve them in turn, and four more to carry our luggage, so we formed altogether quite a procession.

The road was at first level, winding through jungle; and then the ascent began, climbing the hillside in very zigzag fashion. The whole mountain is clothed with trees of the brightest green, and covered with masses of rock of every size and shape. Sometimes the path led for a considerable distance along a ledge cut in the steep rocky side; and as the bearers always seem to prefer the outer edge of the road, we were often literally swinging over the sheer descent. Here and there a singular creeper, with a brown stem twelve or fourteen inches in circumference, wound its bare length round and round some forest tree for twenty or thirty feet, like a huge snake; or another with beautiful leaves and bunches of hydrangea-like blossom, flung its long shoots thirty or

forty feet from tree to tree, and swathed great plots of jungle into one rich mass. Then again great rocks towered above us, and in some places overhung the path, so that we had to mind our heads; and fresh *folds* of the grand mountain faced us at every turn. This word seems to express the shape of Parisnath better than any other. It is not one mountain peak, but an irregular ridge, falling as it were in folds to the plain, so that we had to double and wind up the mountain paths, never facing the same way for many minutes together. It is difficult to understand how such a road could ever be surveyed.

Alas, before we had gone a quarter of the way the rain set in again, not fiercely, but in a heavy penetrating drizzle. An umbrella soon did more harm than good, by dripping into pools that penetrated even so-called waterproof; but eventually the rain cleared off, and we performed the latter part of the journey in comparative comfort. Now and then we caught sight of the bungalow, sometimes apparently just above our heads, and sometimes in quite a different direction; and at last we could even see our friends out on the terrace watching for us, and were right thankful to leave our cramping conveyances and meet a hearty welcome.

Inside the pretty little bungalow a blazing fire awaited us, and was a very cheering sight; and after a change of dress and a welcome cup of tea, we sat round the fire and talked till the late dinner was announced. We had been just three hours coming the six miles up the hill, and for carrying us the bearers were satisfied with sixpence each, while those who conveyed our baggage only charged us threepence.

V

PICNIC LIFE ON PARISNATH.

THE party we had come to join consisted entirely of ladies and gentlemen engaged in missionary work, who had escaped, like us, for a brief holiday from the sultry atmosphere of the plains. One, no less distinguished for his extensive travels and literary researches than for his steady advocacy of native rights, and his resolute championship of the oppressed, had spent many years in acquainting himself with the peasant population of Bengal, and was now preparing an important work for educational use amongst them; another had brought to this secluded height arrears of correspondence and business papers that it was hopeless to attempt amid the incessant interruptions of Calcutta public life; and a third, the youngest member of the party, had been lately sent out on a special mission to educated Hindoos. The ladies had their own various studies and employments for the mid-day hours; and morning and evening united us all in extensive mountain rambles.

As before stated, the furniture of the pretty but somewhat dilapidated abode was of the coarsest and scantiest description; the only article in our bed-room being a bedstead, and in the bath-room an old tin footpan and some native chatties. Our sleeping accommodation would hardly have satisfied a Sybarite, for we had neither

bed nor mattrass, and the wooden bars of the bedstead made themselves painfully felt through the quilts and blankets which were all we had to interpose: but we were too weary not to rest and be thankful; and we woke the next morning, fully prepared to enjoy our mountain life, despite its eccentric surroundings. Our friends were already up and out, before we had overcome the difficulties of bathing and dressing under such novel circumstances; but it was not long after six when we started to follow them, fortified for the walk by a cup of tea and a biscuit.

The only places where walking was possible were the narrow zigzag paths up and down and round the various peaks of the mountain. These were very rough, not only with imbedded and protruding rock, but with smaller fragments rolled down by the rains, and we could only walk in single file. Still, the surpassing beauty of the scenery made up for all. Everywhere long, wavy ridges, clothed with trees and jungle, sloped down to the plain, which lay before us in distant panorama, the main road a straight line, and the two rivers Damooda and Jamuna, two wider streaks of frequent curve, doubling upon themselves in flashing brightness. The heights of Hazareebagh were visible in the distance, and many isolated hills rose at intervals from the plain, but the nearer beauties of Parisnath soon riveted all our admiration. Abrupt rocky peaks, uprearing against the sky, bare precipices, winding gorges, and steep descents clothed with long grass, ferns, and trees, and rich masses of creepers, met the eye in every direction; while the pure mountain air seemed to infuse new life at every breath. Birds were singing just as in an English wood, and nothing could surpass the vivid green of the foliage, which in the distance looked like soft bright moss, but nearer opened into jungle trees.

This mountain is the sacred place of the Jains, a

peculiar Bhoodhist sect, who number many thousands. They believe that communion with the Deity is unattainable by ordinary men; and that only twenty-four favoured saints have ever been admitted to this incommunicable blessing. These twenty four, of whom Parisnath, "Lord of the World," was the chief, are all believed to have ascended to heaven from this mountain, and there are twenty-four shrines scattered on its various peaks, marking the spots where their feet are believed to have last rested. Some of these are of white marble, the slabs which form their sides exquisitely perforated in a sort of diaper pattern; others of common stone, but all of the same general shape, and approached by several steps. They are not above six or seven feet high, and one has to kneel to see the inside, which is empty, and exactly alike in all. The floor is a flat slab of stone or marble, with an inscription and a pair of footprints sculptured upon it—the latter slightly raised, and intended to mark the spot whence the saint ascended.

It was to one of these, on the top of a high peak, that we wended our laborious way, having caught glimpses of our companions from below. When we did reach the summit, the prospect was most glorious, but language would fail to give any impression of it. We were about 5,000 feet above the sea level, and more than 3,000 above the plain immediately around; and the top of the peak where we stood was so small that it made one giddy to look down, even while leaning on the ledge of the shrine. Two Hindoo boys of twelve or fourteen were squatting on the steps with a little iron incense pot, and a vessel containing powdered sandalwood. With the former they had been fumigating the shrine, and with the latter, mixed with water, they had painted the footprints, by putting a round dot like a yellow wafer on each toe, and

to go round to the shrines, or to a certain number of them, daily to perform this worship. One of the boys, a little half-naked fellow, was a Brahmin, and received seven rupees a month for his services, while the other, being only a lower caste servant, was content with three.

We sat down on the shady side of the peak, and had a long talk about missionary prospects with one of the gentlemen, while the rest of the party read, worked, or sketched. Then, as the sun grew hot, we walked slowly back to the bungalow, and by that time were quite ready for our second meal of coarse Scotch porridge, served with milk and sugar—a novel diet to several of the party, but which we all soon learned to relish. Then we had prayers, also out in the verandah, and after a short interval of conversation, and a vain attempt at writing, we travellers retired to lie down and make up for lost sleep. At twelve came the third meal, a sort of compound of breakfast and tiffin, and we all found ourselves ravenously hungry, thanks to Parisnath air. I had not cared to eat anything for weeks before, but now it seemed as if I could not get enough of either food or sleep. Another attempt to read failed signally, and we were roused from a long nap by the summons to afternoon tea—a light repast, preparatory to the evening walk. This led us to quite a different point of view, where the rocks formed a commanding precipice, as abrupt as some of the Cornish cliffs. Here we sat and read in the sweet evening breeze, while the song of birds came softly up the valley; and the gentlemen amused themselves by rolling over large stones and hearing them pitch and strike again and again, as they bounded down the hill, till sound was lost in distance. Then back again, tired and hungry, to sit in the verandah in the moonlight till dinner was announced, and thoroughly enjoyed, amid such a cross fire

of puns and jokes, good, bad, and indifferent, as only workers out for a hard-earned holiday would ever think of perpetrating.

One standing jest was the sportsmanship of one of the party, who never went out without his rifle, and lived in daily disappointed expectation of bagging a tiger, or at least a few wild deer. Another fruitful source of merriment was found in the deficiencies of our equipment; for besides our own low folding seats there were only five chairs in the house, and every one had to carry his own from room to room. Even of these some wanted a leg, or were so infirm in their lower joints that they could be only used with great tenderness and discretion; and some of the gentlemen always sat on packing cases at table. Our friends had brought a lamp and plenty of candles; but candlesticks were wanting, and bottles had to do duty in their stead, while the deficiencies in the bill of fare were still more serious. No groceries, no vegetables, no butter, and no bread could be procured in that wild region, where the only purchasable articles of food were rice, milk and eggs, wretched half-grown chickens, and now and then a kid. Chickens we got at the rate of eight for a rupee, and found afterwards that we had been unmercifully cheated, the proper rate in that district being from eighteen to thirty for the same money. We had preserved meats and other groceries in ample store, but it was necessary to dispense with the more perishable articles; doing without butter altogether, and supplying the place of bread with coarse chupatties, which every native of Bengal can make.

After dinner we again sat out on the terrace, or walked up and down in the moonlight till summoned to coffee, the sixth and last meal; after which we were not long in retiring to rest, and thus ending a day of mental

rest and bodily exercise and refreshment, as thorough as could well be imagined.

The next morning, after a hurried breakfast, we all started for a long walk to the Jain temple, which stands in a lovely hollow among the hills, with bold peaks rising behind, and ridges falling away on each side so as to allow in front a broad view of the plains below.

Near it flowed a little spring, by which a bed of mint and a solitary rosebush flourished, like a bit of English kitchen garden dropped there by mistake. The temple itself stood on a platform, with a paved court in front for the worshippers; on which opened a small verandah, with three doors into the temple. We were not allowed to enter, but could see it all from the verandah. It was a rough, plain, square building, without windows, and its only furniture a wooden bench; but opposite to the door were five shell-like niches in the wall, each containing a statue, nearly life-size, sitting cross-legged, with folded arms. The centre one was of black marble, the other four white, all with the same cast of placid ugliness, rendered more striking by staring glass eyes, one of which was missing from every figure except central one. My bearer informed us gravely that this figure was not made by human hands, but that the other four were of earthly workmanship; and certainly they none of them did credit to their makers. Some of the gentlemen questioned the priest, an intelligent-looking Brahmin, with his face covered with yellow religious marks, as to how he, a Brahmin, could act as priest to a set of heretics like these Jains? He did not attempt to deny that he thought them and their worship altogether wrong; but said, with a shrug and a grimace, "What could he do? a man must get his living."

It was now the time for worship, and the rites began. A low caste man, with a broad bandage tied over his

nose and mouth, in order that his breath might not pollute the idols, carried in the incense and the musical instruments, and the priests fumigated the gods, and then began their worship, in which three or four took part. One sang, or rather shouted, another beat a loud tom-tom, and one or two clashed cymbals like madmen. We stood and listened for some time, but at last we could bear it no longer. The dim light in the temple, the incense, the hideous idols, and the awful din had an effect that can only be fitly characterized as devilish. It seemed as if to stand there longer would stifle us, so we came out into the court, and waited till it was over, and while the gentlemen tried to extract some information from the priests about their religion, of which, however, they appeared to know very little. In a shrine just above the temple are five pairs of sculptured footmarks, apparently referring to the apotheosis of the five saints whose images are worshipped below.

By the time we got back we were all very thoroughly tired, and sleep usurped most of the intervals between our meals that day. Our evening walk did not extend beyond the nearest peak, rather below the level of the bungalow, where we sat among the rocks to read and sketch. Our little abode made a very pretty subject, nestling on its narrow terrace against the bold peak behind.

One of two young officers, who had come up on a shooting trip, and occupied some of the other rooms, having gone down to the plain, the other was invited to join our party at dinner. He was a quiet, gentlemanly young man, and took little part in the animated conversation at table, which ranged over an immense variety of topics—social, political, philanthropic, and amusing. We were all glad to go to bed, and even a long night's rest scarcely removed the effects of the day's fatigue. No one appeared till nearly

eight o'clock next morning, and the forenoon was passed chiefly in quiet literary work, very pleasant in the uninterrupted calm and comparative coolness of our elevated abode. There was one great nuisance, however, from which Calcutta is exempt—an exceedingly minute creature, called from its habits the eye-fly. It never settles or bites, but hovers incessantly in front of the eye, tormenting exceedingly by its restless nearness; and one can neither catch it nor drive it away. The ladies were busy with their Bengali studies, and interesting questions cropped up from time to time between them and the gentlemen, so the hours flew by both fast and pleasantly. One of the missionaries was working up into practical use a large collection of national proverbs gathered during many years of extended travel, and I subjoin a few, which especially struck me, either by their quaint force or their resemblance to our own wise saws. For instance, the well-known warning not to look a gift horse in the mouth, has as its equivalent in Badaga, one of the Indian tongues, "If any one offers you a buffalo, do not ask if she gives milk;" and the Malayali rendering of a "A burnt child dreads the fire," is identical with the corresponding French proverb, "A scalded cat fears cold water," while the Hindi version is very picturesque and characteristic—"He whose father was killed by a bear is afraid of a black stump."

Again, we say, "If you send an ass on its travels it will not come back a horse," which in Tamil runs, "You may decorate an ass, but that will not make it a horse;" and another dialect expresses nearly the same idea by the sententious adage, "A donkey may grow, but he will never be an elephant." The European proverbs that "No man is a hero to his valet de chambre," and that "Familiarity breeds contempt," are tersely and pic-

cat does not fear the idol." The Malayalis reprove a boaster who glories over the unfortunate with the pithy remark, "Any one can leap a fallen tree;" and their proverb, "Running up and down the boat does not bring one sooner to land," is a keen rebuke to those who chafe and fret under circumstances of forced inaction; while the sacred warning, not to cast pearls before swine is aptly paraphrased by the question, "What is the use of reading the Vedas to a wild buffalo?"

A few more Tamil sayings seem well worthy of notice. "The tears of the oppressed are sharp swords," reads like a sentence from the proverbs of Solomon; and "The flower out of reach is dedicated to God," is surely a most graceful statement of the futility of day dreams of service and sacrifice in the pathless future. "The ant, measured by its own hand is eight spans long," expresses, with superior elegance and force, the gist of more than one English proverb; and "A black cow may give white milk," is an adage admirable for terseness and point, even if doubtful in morality.

There is much shrewdness in the Servian proverbs, "Speak the truth, but come away quickly after," and "When an old dog barks, then see what the matter is"; and volumes of truth and beauty are summed up in the simple saying, "The sun goes over unclean places but is not defiled." Of how many bright and holy lives spent in labour among vice and misery, might this proverb be taken as the fittest motto!

Russian proverbs present a remarkable combination of sound common sense, deep religious feeling, and pithy, almost coarse expression. A few taken almost at random will illustrate all three. "Measure your cloth ten times, for you can only cut it once." "A fool can cast a stone into the sea, but a hundred wise men cannot get it out." "If you knew where you would fall, you could

put down straw." "Pray to God, but row towards shore." "With God go over the sea; without God cross not the threshold." "A mother's prayer saves from the depths of the sea." "Fear not the rich man's frowns, fear the beggar's tears." "Love me when I am black, when I am white every one will love me." "We cannot go to church for the mud, but we may get to the tavern." "Fleas do not bite each other." "No need to plant fools, they grow of themselves." "Ask a pig to dinner, and she will put her feet on the table."

After early tea we started as usual for a walk, but it is vain to attempt a description of all these lovely rambles. One most delightful accompaniment of them was the singing of the birds in the depths of the wood, which was often like a concert of thrushes on an early June morning in England. Once we came suddenly upon a solitary Christian tomb, on a steep hillside above the soldiers' barracks, and I copied the brief inscription, which ran as follows :—

Sacred

TO THE MEMORY OF

* * * * *

Assistant Surgeon, 23rd Regiment,

WHO DIED

On the 18th August, 1865,

Aged 23 Years and 3 Months.

ERECTED BY

THE OFFICERS, NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS,

AND MEN OF THE

PARISNATH SANITARIUM.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."—Rev. xiv. 13.

There was something inexpressibly touching in the thought of this poor young fellow, probably the darling of some English home, lying here alone, thousands of

miles from all his kin; and unspeakable grandeur and consolation in the closing words.

There are great numbers of deer of various species in these hills, as well as tigers, baboons, and tiger cats, but they all keep out of the way in the daytime; though he would be a bold man who would venture down hill after dark. We once saw a large baboon quite near, and often heard their cry: and one night a tiger cat carried off some of the young officers' stock of fowls, and our larder was also robbed of the remains of a kid which had only appeared that day at dinner—rather a serious loss, considering the difficulty of procuring provisions. Another time, after a night of rain we found the tracks of a large leopard round the bungalow, after which, I must confess that I felt some interest in the security of our fastenings.

The next day was extremely sultry, and as the afternoon wore on, the heat grew intolerable, and there was every sign of an approaching storm. We could hear the distant thunder echoing among the far-off hills and valleys, and see the clouds gathering and coming down in rain miles away. Presently a white cloud drifted up the gorge, and a sharp shower began and lasted for some time, cooling the air to a wonderful degree. It had passed off, and we were sauntering up and down the terrace, enjoying the fresher air, and wondering whether it would be safe to start off for a walk, when the chowkedar in charge of the place came hurriedly to tell us that there was a "tuphan" (typhoon or hurricane) coming up, and that he must close the house. In a very few minutes his prediction was verified, and I only wish I could convey any idea of the spectacle presented to us. One of the party, who had been in India more than twenty years, frankly confessed that he had never wit-

In order at all to realize the scene, the reader must understand that the little terrace on which the house is situated projects at an abrupt angle from the side of one of the mountain peaks, one edge looking north, and the other east. Immediately opposite the angle, and only separated from us by a narrow valley, rose another ridge, dividing our prospect, as with a wall, into two distinct halves, a broad expanse of distant plain lying to the right, and a narrower stretch to the left, both running up towards us into steep wooded gorges between the folds of the great rocky hill. Up these two plains the storm was now marching like an embattled host to surround us, a dense brown cloud above, and rolls of white vapour below moving steadily on like a slow charge of cavalry. Then the chill wind made itself felt as it swept with gathering velocity up the narrow gorges, and in a few seconds everything was blotted out from view. Plain, hills, and clouds were gone, and we were in a sea of thick brown vapour that cut off everything beyond the brink of the little terrace; while the thunder roared below us, and the lightning flashed, and the wind howled round, till we had literally to cling to the pillars of the verandah and dart in as best we could, through the one door left open for us, which was instantly bolted and secured by a strong iron bar. It was almost dark, and we could only sit still or walk up and down the empty rooms, scarcely able to hear each other's voices above the roar of the elements. The storm swept clear round the house, attacking every side in turn, the back only being screened by the peak behind. Suddenly there was a tremendous crash, as the large passage door, half glass, was burst in by the wind, the heavy iron bar which closed it breaking into three pieces. The clatter of glass and iron was very startling, and the walls rocked perceptibly as we leaned against them. But the Lord

on high is mightier than even these, His great voices of storm and tempest; and though the thunder and rain and wind continued most of the night, we laid us down and slept in safety.

It was too wet along the hill paths for a morning walk next day, so we reserved ourselves for the afternoon, and then took an unusually long one to the highest peak at the other extremity of the range. The whole party turned out together, even little Eddie being carried by a coolie, and my bearer bringing up the rear; so that winding in Indian file along the mountain paths, we made quite a long procession. When we reached the point immediately below the last ascent, we sat down round its little shrine to rest and admire the prospect. The temple before described lay at our feet, divided from us by a steep descent clothed with trees, and looking like a little model that might stand upon the table; and yet again very far below, stretched the broad expanse of jungle bordering the plains. On every side rose craggy heights, clothed almost to the peak with trees and long jungly grass; and from this spot we could see twenty-two out of the twenty-four shrines with which the Jains have consecrated these hills. They profess to hold them in perpetual possession under a charter of the great emperor Akbar; and one reason why Government hesitates to sell the now useless bungalows, or to give grants of land up here, is the fear of coming into collision with their fanaticism. At certain times in the year thousands of pilgrims come from long distances and visit these shrines in succession, doing pooja and making offerings. One feature in their religion is their peculiar abhorrence of taking animal life. Some of the strictest of them always wear a cloth tied over mouth and nostrils, for fear that some small fly or other insect might be drawn in and perish.

Having rested awhile, we descended from our elevation, and mounted the highest and certainly the steepest of all. Eddie was left behind with his coolie and my bearer; who though usually ready to go anywhere, apparently saw no reason for perilling his neck or limbs after the example of the padres and mem sahibs. One of the gentlemen rather put us on our mettle by declaring that ladies could not do it; and I began to doubt the steadiness of my head before we had gone very far. However, by resolutely looking neither behind nor sideways, but only at the rocks immediately in front, we all got safely up. It was a very perpendicular ascent, and we had to use hands as well as feet all the way; but the projecting rocks were a great help, and in some places masonry had been built out to make the climb easier. The chief danger was that of stepping on an insecure stone, for a sprained ancle would have been serious here. The top once gained, the prospect was magnificent indeed, bringing at once to mind the words of Heber:—

> "O God! O Good beyond compare!
> If thus Thy meaner works are fair,
> If thus Thy glories gild the span
> Of ruined earth and sinful man,
> How glorious must the mansions be
> Where Thy redeemed shall dwell with Thee!"

We sat till the sun had set, and then, with little difficulty accomplished our descent, catching by the way some curious grasshoppers, with underwings coloured like those of a butterfly. It was a lovely moonlight evening, and before we reached home we had the questionable gratification of hearing the roar of a tiger in the jungle.

The next day was Trinity Sunday, and as I stepped out into the little verandah, I was greeted by a vision of surpassing glory. No ideal of poet or painter could

surpass the loveliness of the clouds *on which I looked down* from the edge of the terrace, so close that a single step would have plunged me into their pure depths. They filled the valleys with a perfect sea of billowy light, just the soft, white cumuli one often sees on the horizon, but here outspread below in rolling waves of glory; the sun shining down upon them, and tinting them with every hue of radiant, changeful beauty, and the green mountains standing out like islands from their foam-like depths.

Surely our noble hymn for the day was never said or sung in more appropriate scenes, than when its notes rose above this sea of almost celestial glory—

"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty,
All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth, and sky, and sea;
Only thou art holy, there is none beside Thee
Perfect in Power, in Love, and Purity!"

We spent the morning very happily, the beautiful Church Service bringing us into near communion with fellow-worshippers in all parts of the world, as well as in our own distant land.

The two young officers, who were going down in the evening, came in after breakfast to say good-bye. Both were mere lads, full of life and spirit, and it was strange to think that each, within two days, had narrowly escaped a sudden and terrible death. One, while below, had slept in an open verandah, with a parrot's cage upon a table close beside him; and a venomous snake had got into the cage and gorged the parrot in the night, and then, being too big to pass through the bars again, was found and killed in the morning. The other had fallen over a precipice with his loaded rifle in his hand, which had gone off and been broken in the fall, the bullet whistling past him; and yet he had escaped with only a few trifling bruises.

We went out a little in the afternoon, but had to turn back, alarmed at the threatening clouds, and were only just in time to see the advance of another "tuphan," not so violent as the one on Friday, but still a tremendous burst of wind, and rain, and thunder. It cleared off for a while at dinner, and we walked on the terrace, and sat in the verandah till late, singing hymns; but it rose again in the night, and roared, and howled round the house, shaking doors and windows, till it rendered sleep all but impossible.

The next afternoon had been fixed for our friends' departure, and the morning was far too blustering for the farewell walk which they had meditated; so we sat quietly and read in the verandah, for the wind outside was almost enough to take a strong man off his legs. We had a sort of breakfast dinner at twelve, and then the packing began. Our friends had brought up, not only their own bedding and ample stores, which were now wellnigh exhausted, but plates, dishes, etc., etc., and even cooking utensils, so the packing was no small matter. We could not travel with them, for the reason given before; but they left us some cooked provisions, and a couple of plates and dishes, and cups and saucers, together with a tea-kettle and tea-pot. So, as we had knives and silver, and plenty of tea, and biscuit, and candles; we were fairly provided for the couple of days that we should have to stay behind. They offered to leave us their cook, but we preferred managing for ourselves; as another outsider on our carriage would only have prolonged the miseries of the dawk journey. As soon as their things were cleared out of the room which the ladies had occupied, we moved in, because it opened into the smaller sitting-room, and we could then shut the door of communication with the rest of the house, and have the two apartments snugly to ourselves. Moreover, the left

us a brass chillumchee—a sort of flat washing basin, which would enable us henceforth to perform our ablutions in a civilized manner.

They were to start at three, and quite an army of coolies came up early in the morning, sixteen for the two dandies, and about twenty for the baggage. They lay about the verandahs and slept most of the day, making the atmosphere in their neighbourhood anything but agreeable; for, owing to the scarcity of water, the hill people are very filthy. In the course of the day, a female pilgrim from Guzerat came up to the house to speak to the padre. She was a decidedly unprepossessing-looking individual, habited in crimson from head to foot, and very loud and voluble. The day before, three or four Jain priests had come to see the "burra padre" (great clergyman); so he had an opportunity of doing a little missionary work even out here.

About half-past one clouds began to appear in the distance, and it soon became evident that we must expect another "tuphan." The experience of the previous days was exactly repeated, and we had about three hours of terrific thunder, rain, and wind, greatly to the dismay of the travellers. They were obliged to go that evening, because their dawk was laid, the coolies who were to draw them waiting at every stage, so we watched the progress of the storm with great anxiety. At last, about five o'clock, all was ready. The baggage had been distributed among the coolies with infinite noise and gesticulation; the ladies got into their dandies, the gentlemen prepared to walk, farewells were said, and we watched the long procession winding down the mountain paths, till it looked like a file of ants; and then went in and made our arrangements for the night. Our party was now reduced to our two selves and my bearer, the chowkedar in charge, and the hill people who fetched water

and performed a few other servile offices about the house. It was strange for us to sit down to our solitary tea, after the merry party of the last nine days, and stranger still to have to reach out our provisions, put them away, and wash up our plates and cups for ourselves. It was then that I began to realize the extent of my mistake in bringing a bearer instead of a table servant, for the utmost he could do was to light a fire and supply hot water; and then stand by, looking very foolish and embarrassed while his mistress did the work. I believe he would have fought for me if necessary, and he never objected to any amount of fatigue; but touching our plates and dishes was a very different thing. Moreover, there was nothing to wash up in but the chillumchee above mentioned; and the dilemma was rather amusing, though we had quite enough of it before our time expired.

The comfort of our breakfast was further diminished by the discovery that there was no sugar, and the milk was too sour to be brought to table: but we had a pleasant morning, lunching at twelve and dining at three; for though the necessity of washing up after a meal is some drawback to its enjoyment, the calls of hunger in that mountain region were not to be gainsayed. We had a cup of tea at five, and then went for a ramble up the peak behind the bungalow. The air was delightfully fresh; indeed it blew so strongly round the heights as to necessitate great caution as we crept round the narrow ledges, holding by the wall of rock. It is difficult to give any idea of the boldness of the crags which crest some of these peaks. Many of the upright blocks of stone are from twelve to twenty feet in height, and of the most abrupt and eccentric form. I felt quite the old exhilaration of spirits that reminded me of Malvern days, and only longed for the friend whose society had lent to those rambles their special charm. We stayed till the moon

rose, and then picked our way carefully down, under Bowhanie's vigilant escort.

The wind rose furiously in the night, and there was another wild "tuphan" next day, so we began to hope that the rains had set in exceptionally early, and that we should find the plains cooler on our return. Our last night on the hills was really so cold as to hinder our sleeping, and we felt little disposed to rise early and prepare for our departure. The coolies had been waiting since the previous evening, and by the time our packing was done, and the hill servants paid, it was nearly nine o'clock. We got into our dandies very reluctantly, and began the descent, gazing with lingering eyes at the wooded heights to which we were bidding a long farewell. The journey down was accomplished in about two hours, without difficulty or inconvenience, except from the intense heat, which soon began to make itself felt; and we found ourselves again at the wretched little bungalow where we had passed so many hours before. Our dawk was ordered for three, but it had been necessary to come down early to avoid the full power of the sun, and the hours of waiting were diversified by another furious hurricane, wind, rain, thunder, and the largest hailstones I ever saw. We started in a temporary lull, but there was the greatest difficulty in getting the horse to draw us over the bit of soft ground in front of the bungalow. I rather pitied him at first, for it was really heavy work, but he was just as bad on the hard road, standing still, kicking, trying to roll us over, then going a few paces, and repeating the same round of performances, in spite of the utmost exertions of the driver, Bowhanie, and the syce. At last he came to an obstinate pause, on such a slope that the carriage would roll back, in spite of stones behind the wheels, and we got out and walked up the hill, notwithstanding the wet; preferring damp feet to



DESCENT FROM PARISNATH.

the risk of broken limbs. Almost every fresh horse favoured us with similar performances, so we walked at intervals till night fall, when Bowhanie again interposed with convincing arguments about the wild beasts. So we yielded, and thenceforth bore the vagaries of the successive steeds as best we might..

We stopped to try and get tea at Tope Chauncy, but there was no fire lighted, and the man was so long making ready that we dared not wait, feeling that we must allow a wide margin for possible delays with the horses, as it would not do to miss the one train of the day. So we were soon on the road again, and the tedious night journey began.

Except for the heat it would have been very pleasant, for the moonlight was almost as clear as day, and the scenery of the first part of the journey very beautiful; but the heat was stifling, and of course we felt it all the more intensely after the delightful atmosphere we had left.

It was about four in the morning when we reached the Barrakur river, and a number of coolies immediately surrounded us, and unharnessing the horse, proceeded to push our carriage along a very insecure tramway into a large ferry boat. As this was something quite unexpected, we required an explanation, and found that the rains in the hills had swelled the river so suddenly as to carry away the bridge. Upon the whole it was a pleasant change, for we got out of the gharry in the ferry boat, and sat enjoying the moonlight on the water. Then they unshipped us again, and, with tremendous exertion, pushed the carriage up a steep sandy bank. For all this, including a vast amount of noise, the charge was eight annas (a shilling) between them.

We were now not far from the Barrakur Station, where we unloaded, undressed and bathed, and then,

rather refreshed, but still very weary, spread our pillows and bundles on the floor of the waiting-room, and tried to get a nap before the train started.

We were not off till half-past six, before which we managed to get hot water for a cup of tea, to help us through the miseries of the day. But the rest of the return journey was simply wretched. The heat was inconceivable, literally soaking everything we wore; and the only refreshment to be had, except at one station, where we got some plantains, was water of very questionable quality.

Utterly worn down at last, we spread some pillows on the seat, and slept the sleep of sheer exhaustion; but the longest day wears to a close, and at last we reached Howrah. Then came the rush to the ferry steamer, the loading our possessions on a gharry on the other side, and the slow drive home, which we reached with very weary bodies and very thankful hearts.

So ended my only visit to any of the northern hills; for Darjeeling and Simla, the two usual places of resort, were both too far away and too expensive to suit my engagements or my means. I never even saw the snowy range of the Himalayas; but their beauties are comparatively well known; while few, even among old residents in Calcutta, have any idea of the delightful atmosphere and scenery that lie so much nearer to them at Parisnath. I have heard since that the bungalow is fast falling to decay, so there is now no shelter for an English visitor in the wild recesses of the sacred mountain; but its memory will be "a joy for ever," among the pleasant party whose adventures I have briefly chronicled.

Overland Home Again.

I

CALCUTTA TO SUEZ.

At last, after some years of varied experience in India, all was settled for my return; and the hour so long dreamed of by day and night arrived. At 8.30 A.M., January 18th, 187—, I went on board, after many a sad farewell. A large party of friends had assembled to see me off; and bright as was the homeward prospect, it was not without many regrets that I watched the crowd of familiar faces grow dim in the distance as the ship swung round. Bishop's College claimed a last look for the sake of many pleasant memories, as it stood out bright and clear under the morning sunshine; and when all was out of sight, except the flat banks of the Hooghly, I began to realize, as I had never done before, the parting of many ties that had wound themselves very closely round me.

Happily, I had introductions to a large family party on board; and their frank kindness saved me from the sense of loneliness which is one of the most trying parts of a long voyage among strangers.

Contrary to expectation, we just missed getting over the bar the first day, and had to lie at anchor till morning. The pilot left us at the Sandheads about noon, and the ship stopped for some time, and lay heaving on

the gleaming sea to the extreme discomposure of many of the passengers. After dinner, however, things were better; and deck croquet was introduced, and kept up with spirit until dusk, when it gave place to the usual round of promenading on deck, and chess and card-playing below.

The next day was tolerable, but the fourth was one of utter misery, all the ladies and most of the children ill; and we were heartily rejoiced to cast anchor at Madras before breakfast the next morning. It was terribly hot, but otherwise the absence of motion was a great relief; and as I knew quite enough of this delightful town, I withstood all invitations to go ashore. The usual army of petty traders came on board with embroidered muslins and tussa silks, ices, baskets, shells, sea-horses, and other curiosities; besides snake-charmers and jugglers, who performed for the benefit of the children: but these have been already mentioned in the outward voyage.

After dinner, the ship was dressed with flags in honour of the nabob of Arcot, who was coming on board with some of his wives, to go with us to Suez on their way to Mecca. There was also a grand ceremonial on shore at his departure; and the captain was officially requested to arrange that the three ladies might be embarked in their palankeens secure from prying eyes. Accordingly the cargo gangway was opened, and most of the passengers ranged themselves along the side of the ship to witness the novel spectacle.

First came one of the droll little catamarans for which Madras is famous, consisting simply of three narrow logs of wood tied together with cocoa-nut rope. Upon this rude raft, about eighteen inches wide, a single man kneels and paddles along, with his legs doubled under him. Generally he wears a sort of fool's cap of oilskin, in which he carries letters or parcels, it being the only dry

place about him; and sometimes the raft is larger and holds two. On this occasion, however, it was a small catamaran which acted as outrider, carrying a tiny flag stuck up in front. Next came a large surf boat with about fifteen boatmen, containing a palankeen shut up, and closely covered with crimson drapery. A stout rope was tied round it, and into this the hook used in hoisting cargo was inserted; and so the luckless lady within was swung into mid air, and got on board, where she was carried, still shut up, to her cabin. Another followed, and then another; and those who know what the swell is in Madras roads may imagine what must have been the sensations of these unfortunate women, enduring it in stifling darkness, with the aggravation of the final swinging in mid air.

A host of attendants scrambled on board after the palankeens; then came the port boat, with two English officials and the nabob himself, accompanied by some of his relations, and a number of gaily dressed followers. He was helped out, and they swarmed up the gangway ladder after him, clinging and climbing like so many monkeys. Indeed, it was no easy matter in the swell to effect the transit from boat to ship.

The nabob was a stout, coarse-looking man, dressed in a red fez, wide sea-green silk trousers, and a muslin dress with a short-waisted plaited bodice, such as our grandmothers used to wear; the full skirt reaching to his feet, which were encased in peaked yellow slippers. Two others were similarly attired, but a third, who spoke English, and said he was a relation of the nabob, took pains to point out our distinguished fellow traveller and introduce him to us.

He soon went down to look at the accommodation provided for his family, and then came back to say farewell to those of his suite who were about to return on

shore. Their parting salutation was very droll. Each man, in turn, came to him as he stood on deck, and bent horizontally till his head touched the nabob's waist; then the latter leaned over him in what was supposed to be an attitude of benediction, but the effect was decidedly ludicrous. When the leave-taking was over, the prince took his seat on the quarter-deck, and we entered into conversation with him. He talked English very fairly, and seemed pleased to do so, and to accept our offer to visit the ladies when they were prepared to see us. The rest of the evening was spent as usual, and we had a quiet night in the harbour, waiting for the mails.

Next day was Sunday, but the morning was a very bustling one, owing to the preparations for starting, the shipping of the mails, and the departure of such of the prince's attendants as were not required to accompany him further. Some performed the same reverence as their companions had done the previous evening, others stooped to kiss his feet, and some he embraced, literally falling on their necks and kissing them. At last, however, the leave-taking was over; and as soon as we were off, the bell rang for service, which was read by one of the officers, as we had no clergyman on board.

Later in the day I went with two other ladies to see the Mahometan princesses, but it was not a satisfactory visit. I trusted to my companions' knowledge of Hindostani, but soon found that they knew little more than myself; and there was reason to fear that, after all, our visit might be attributed rather to idle curiosity than to any real interest or kindliness. The principal begum sat on the side of her berth, looking sick and miserable; a second was fast asleep in another berth, and there were one or two attendants also in the cabin, and about the

door, so we were decidedly *de trop*. The chief lady was an interesting-looking woman, with fine melancholy eyes, not young, and evidently anything but comfortable in her first day on the "black water." For us, upon the whole, it was far more Sabbatical than might have been anticipated from the morning's bustle and the general tone of the society on board, which included some noisy and disagreeable individuals.

After one more day of general sea-sickness and discomfort, the shores of Ceylon became visible early on Tuesday morning; and we anchored, about 10 A.M., in the beautiful but unsafe harbour of Galle. Here we were to remain about thirty hours, and I intended going ashore in the course of the day with some of my friends, but a heavy squall of rain came on just as they were starting; and this, together with the subsequent heat and glare ashore, and the comparative coolness and shade of the ship, decided me to postpone my expedition to Buonavista till early on the morrow. The day was idly spent in listening to the bargaining of others with the tortoise-shell and jewel merchants who came on board; for they asked such exorbitant prices, and required so much beating down, that I really had not the energy to cope with them.

None of the ladies felt disposed to accompany me next morning in the long drive to the orphanage which I had visited on my outward route; so I started alone, about half-past seven, in a boat which the chief officer kindly secured for me. There are two kinds of boat in use here—one the ordinary shape, large enough for several passengers, and the other a most peculiar craft, long and narrow, and standing fully two feet out of the water, with perpendicular sides just wide enough for one's legs, the seats projecting beyond. It looks a most "tippy" structure, but two curved bamboos project from the top on one side, and

support a log of wood which lies on the water, and so balances this extraordinary vessel as to secure it against the possibility of upset.

The boat I started in was an ordinary wide one, and the owner was very unwilling to set off with a single passenger. The officer's orders were, however, peremptory; and I was particularly enjoined not to give the boatman more than sixpence, his legitimate fare. Scarcely had we started, however, when he began, in very imperfect English, to demand exorbitant payment—two, four, six rupees, etc. I answered, once or twice, that I should give what was right; and then, as he reiterated his demands with increasing boldness, said, "Chup," and took no further notice till we got to the landing place. When I was safely on shore I gave him the sixpence, which he immediately tossed into the sea with a gesture of the utmost insolence; and followed me, demanding more. I told him I should not give another pice, and called a carriage, but the impudent fellow instantly jumped on the back seat, and continued his demand as the carriage rolled along.

I was determined not to be frightened into yielding; so on passing a native policeman, I stopped the carriage, and asked him to interfere; explaining the case in the best Hindostani I could muster. He detained the man while the carriage drove on; but he soon managed to overtake it, and sprang up behind again, with a most vindictive expression of countenance. I really began to fear I should never get rid of him; but at last we drove under an archway, where, to my great joy, there stood an English sentry or policeman on guard. When he heard the case, he explained that as I came in the large boat alone, the proper fare was a shilling: so I got him to give me change, and bestowed upon my tormentor the

tion that he had thrown half his fare away, and had all his trouble for nothing.

The policeman kept him from following farther; and the drive, freed from his haunting presence, was a truly delightful one, the fresh morning breeze, the clearness of the air, and the lovely scenery being doubly welcome after the miseries of the steamer. The Ceylon carriages are very pleasant, like a low, light dogcart, with an awning over the top, and each has a boy attendant, as well as the driver. Mine happened to be a very intelligent sprite, and only needed very slight encouragement to chatter all the while in very fair English, pointing out everything that he thought interesting. He told me, among other information, that he was a Wesleyan, and that most of the people in his village were also Christians. The governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, had lately made a progress round the island, and pretty arches, made of bamboo, and tastefully decorated with young palm leaves, were still standing at the entrance of the different roads.

After a drive of perhaps a couple of miles, I had to leave the carriage and walk up the hill, taking the boy as guide. No language can describe the series of lovely views that opened at every turn of the steep zigzag path. The undulations of hill and valley, clothed with the richest vegetation, were endless; and over all shone the intense brilliancy of the tropical sun, while the waters of the harbour below were of the deepest sapphire blue. On we went past the schools, up to the padre's house, where the brother of my missionary friend was duly installed; and the mention of my former visit with him procured me a cordial welcome from both the clergyman and his wife. After a while we had breakfast, and then a long and interesting talk over missionary and schoolwork in various parts of India.

At tiffin, I tasted, for the first time, the very perfection

of curry—curry, refined and idealized into veritable ambrosia, chicken and breadfruit, stewed in cocoa-nut milk with spices. Afterwards we went over the schools, and looked at the lace and embroidery made by the orphan girls. About thirty Cingalese children were thus employed, all looking clean and happy, and the embroidery was beautifully neat. Then we descended the hill, gathering wild flowers and ferns among thickets of lantana and wild rhododendron, the former growing in troublesome profusion all over this part of the island.

We just looked into the boys' school, but did not stay; as I was anxious about getting down to the steamer in time, and it is always necessary in India to allow a large margin for unforeseen delays. Fortunately, nothing untoward happened, and I reached the landing place safely; paid off my civil driver and boy (four shillings and sixpence for six hours and a half), and embarked in one of the strange little outriggers above described. There was only just room to sit, but one felt perfectly safe, though the little vessel danced up and down upon the waves in a rather exciting manner. When I got on board people were still driving their endless bargains for tortoise-shell combs, brooches, and chains, and my enormous bunch of flowers created quite a sensation. Some of the tortoise-shell chains were very pretty, of a pure, bright amber colour, but for these a high price was maintained. After all, we did not start till dinner-time, and then a long walk on deck, and some games at chess closed a very pleasant day.

The next was one of unmitigated misery till the late dinner, which, as usual, revived most of the invalids. The ship had begun to roll in the night, so all the ports had to be shut; but it was pleasant, after sunset, to sit in the gangway in the cool breeze, and watch the phosphorescent insects gleaming in the water like fallen stars.

The whole of the next week passed much in the same way, varied only by the Sunday muster of the motley crew, and by occasional visits to the doctor's cabin, where he exhibited some of the phosphorescent animalculæ through a capital microscope. One unpleasant incident, however, must not be passed over, because it is a specimen of conduct only too common among our countrymen abroad.

The poor Mahometan ladies, who, though first-class passengers, were close prisoners to their cabins, expressed a wish through their husbands to see the general saloon, and the captain accordingly made arrangements for them. About half-past nine in the morning, when all the gentlemen were smoking or walking on deck, he gave orders that the passages leading to their cabins, which were all forward, should be cleared of men, and that when the ladies had entered the saloon, the stewards should guard the doors till they retired. Most of the English ladies came down to receive them, and were pleased to answer their questions; while it was, of course, a great treat to the poor imprisoned creatures to have a little exercise and a sight so novel as the large saloon, with its pretty gilded cornices and curtained doorways. But one or two of the *gentlemen*, hearing what was going on, out of sheer mischief and insolence, insisted upon their right to enter the saloon at any time, and forced their way in, in spite of the remonstrances of the stewards on guard. One contented himself with walking through to his wife's cabin, but the other sat down and refused to stir. Fortunately the nabob's family had retired; and there was only in the saloon the pretty, bright, young wife of a rich Arab merchant and ship owner, with her husband, children, and attendants. The husband went up to the intruder and politely asked him to retire for a few minutes, while his wife, who was then looking at the ladies' baths, passed out. The Englishman

flatly refused, and blustered loudly in Hindostani and English, while the Arab stood entreating him, with clasped hands, not to inflict upon him such a dishonour. The indignation of the ladies present only added to the fellow's dogged rudeness; and finally the stewardesses managed to hold up a long curtain, and screen the exit of the Arab lady by a side door. The husband evidently felt the insult deeply; and was really grateful for the courtesy of the English ladies, who accompanied his wife back to her cabin, and admired her children and her jewels there. Though so young and pretty she had five children, the eldest a slim intelligent-looking boy of eight or ten years old.

This episode occurring in a first-class passenger ship, where all the weight of public opinion was against the offender, gives one some idea of the lengths to which Englishmen may go in secluded districts of India, where no such restraint is felt. If native ladies of rank and position, travelling as first-class passengers, could not leave their cabins under the protection of the captain's word, without being subject to what was in their eyes one of the grossest insults, there is surely reason to fear that deadlier offences still too often disgrace our countrymen in remote up-country stations.

Another day, the nabob, who usually had his meals prepared by his own attendants, and served in his cabin, came down to dinner, and sat next to me. He seemed pleased to be talked to, but ate nothing, except cheese and pastry, informing us that it was unlawful for a Mussulman to partake of animal food, unless it had been slaughtered in the name of God.

The seventeenth day of the voyage brought us to Aden, where we were saluted by great guns from the fort. It was curious to watch the smoke curling away before the report was heard, and pretty to see the tall

fountains thrown up by the ricochet shot with which they were practising at another battery. Numbers of ringleted Arabs came on deck, even before breakfast; and before the morning was over, they had disposed of scores of ostrich feathers, and considerable quantities of the pure white coral which is common here. A shoal of divers, as usual, crowded round the ship; and if the smallest piece of money was thrown overboard, there was an instantaneous plunge of a dozen after it, and a moment's confusion of legs and upturned feet at various depths in the clear water, terminating in the triumphant reappearance of the fortunate diver, and the clamours of the whole group for another trial.

The morning was spent mostly in watching them, and in bargaining, and after tiffin I went ashore with some of my friends. It was terribly hot the little way we had to walk before we could get a carriage; and when we did secure one, it was an extremely antiquated vehicle, with a tilt, and leather curtains to roll up all round. We went, of course, to the post-office, and then to the cantonments, which are about five miles away. The road skirted the shore by the different coal depots, and the sea looked very lovely, with its deep blue just broken by a few rocky islets and some steamers lying at anchor. On the other side of the road, the bare, dark peaks of curiously jagged and honey-combed rock rose almost perpendicularly, reflecting a scorching heat; though the breeze blew cool and fresh from the sea. Nothing can exceed the arid bareness of this terrible place. We did not see a blade of grass in a drive of ten miles; and literally the only green thing, or trace of vegetation, except at the tanks, was wild mignonette, which grew in large tufts here and there on the channelled surface of the rocks.

The road is very good, but a little steep in one or two places; and just as we got to the foot of the hill which

leads to the cantonments, one of our wheels came to utter destruction. The accident might have been serious, for it would have been highly dangerous for us to attempt to walk in the sun: but fortunately another hack carriage was behind; and the occupant, a Parsee, who truly deserved the name of gentleman, gave it up to us, and walked up the hill himself. His courtesy, to absolute strangers of an alien race, struck us the more by contrast to the English insolence described above. The carriage was even smaller than our own had been; so, as soon as we reached the top, the gentleman who was with us secured a gallant little black donkey, which he bestrode for the rest of the excursion, being fortunately provided with a solah hat.

The entrance to the fortifications is by a strong arched gateway across the foot of a narrow pass, cut through rock forty feet high. The gorge is fine, and the shade delightful; and on the other side there is an extensive view down a steep decline, and over the cantonments to the background of wild rocks that shuts them in on every side. The cantonments, native and European, form altogether quite a town; and beyond them lie the tanks, which are very ancient, some say of Roman, and some of Arab construction, but lately restored by the English. They form a system of reservoirs, paved and lined with cement, and the rain, *when it falls*, is conducted to them by low walls, which serve to guide the water down the slopes of the cliffs. But at the time of our visit it had not rained for more than twelve months, and there was not a drop of water in the tanks. Men were drawing it from immensely deep wells for the trees and shrubs which are planted round the reservoirs, each with a large hollow round it to retain the moisture; and thus cared for, they flourish well.

We sat some time in the shadow of a rock, and then drove down again another way, passing through some

long tunnels cut through the surrounding peaks, which form the entrance to the artillery position. The whole post appears absolutely impregnable, at least to unprofessional eyes; and we were well satisfied with our expedition, though not sorry to find ourselves again on board. The fortress and district of Aden were obtained from the local Arab ruler in 1839, partly by force and partly by payment; and the population now exceeds 20,000, much of the trade of other Red Sea ports having been transferred to it, in consequence of the greater freedom and security arising from British protection.

Four days afterwards we passed the island of Shadwan, the scene of the "Carnatic's" disaster, and saw where divers were searching for its remains. The island is a bare mass of reddish rock, absolutely destitute of vegetation, and, even apart from any danger of marauding Arabs, holds out a fearful prospect to the shipwrecked passenger.

II

SUEZ AND CAIRO.

EARLY in the morning of Feb. 10th we saw land on both sides, and anchored at Suez about 8. The water was, however, too low to admit of our landing till about two o'clock, when the ship was brought up to the main quay so that we could walk ashore. The morning was of course a time of great bustle and excitement. The nabob came out in magnificent style, a wonderful contrast to his every day costume, which consisted of smoking cap, loose shabby silk trousers, with a shirt worn outside, and a woollen knitted jacket overall, bare legs and yellow slippers. Now he were shoes and stockings, new silk trousers, a long tunic of pale lavender moiré antique, delicately embroidered with gold thread, and a magnificent shawl turban stiff with gold embroidery. As we were waiting on deck, he expressed great admiration of some showy wool work on which one of my friends was employed, and she asked him if his ladies ever did anything of that sort. His answer was a contemptuous negative, adding that they knew nothing but to eat and sleep. He shook hands with us all at parting, and gave the captain a handsome shawl in recognition of his courtesy.

At last after tiffin we got off, amid such a confusion of children and luggage as one seldom sees. We had

about a hundred yards to walk to the train, and considerable difficulty in stowing ourselves and our goods for the short journey which brought us almost to the doors of the Suez hotel.

Meaning to stay the night, I at once engaged a room, the coolness and quietude of which were a great comfort. The other ladies had to sit in the pretty, but hot, court in the midst of ceaseless confusion, or to go up to the common sitting-room, which was made almost unendurable by the noise of the children, and the insolent bravado of our insufferable fellow-passenger. He had taken it into his head to persecute one or two of the ladies with most offensive attentions, and if any one took no notice of him, he had a stereotyped formula of remonstrance after this wise—"Why won't you talk? Why don't you like me? I am stronger than most men; I have read more and seen more of life, and travelled more than most. I have picked up scoriæ on the slopes of Vesuvius, trod the resurrectionized streets of Pompeii, and heard high mass at St. Peter's at Rome. I could lick any man in the ship at billiards or at chess, and the 'Saturday Review' says that any one who can play well at both must be in a sound state of mind and body," and so on, repeated *ad nauseam*. We were very glad when the dinner-bell relieved us of his presence, and soon after dinner the preparations for departure commenced.

I went down to the train with my friends who were bound for Brindisi; my own intention being to proceed the next day to Cairo, in order to see something of Egypt. We had to wait a long time, pestered by Arab orange boys, pipe-sellers, fez merchants, etc., etc., but at last the train came up, and we parted with many regrets. I went back in the chill of the evening to my lonely room, sadly missing the bright companions of the last

few weeks, and spent the rest of the time in writing letters to precede me home.

The train for Cairo started soon after seven the next morning; and at the station there was no one who could speak an intelligible tongue. I tried English and French, and in despair even resorted to Hindostani, alike in vain; but by dint of persistence I got myself and my baggage settled at last, in the same carriage with an elderly gentleman who had come with us from Ceylon, and three Americans who were evidently "doing Egypt" regardless of expense. We sat, without the chance of a moment's change, from eight o'clock till nearly two; and the glare of the sandy desert, through which part of our route lay, was very trying. The fresh-water canal ran by the side of the line for a considerable distance, and we could see the great Suez Canal, and the Bitter Lakes, with steamers on them at a distance, the water looking most intensely blue. Just bordering the fresh water was a fringe of vegetation, chiefly tamarisks and reeds; but the desert expanse of drifting sand is indescribably dreary after the first novelty is over. The only living creatures visible were locusts, which flitted about in considerable numbers, even in districts where there did not seem to be a blade of grass or a green leaf. After about four hours' journey, we got into the Nile valley, which with its rich and vivid colouring was a delightful change.

About two we stopped at Zagazig to have some refreshment, and then changed trains for Cairo—our American companions leaving us at Ismalia to proceed by steamer through the great canal. When we started again, there was a curious mixture of nationalities in the compartment. Two Arab merchants, a pretty Spanish actress accompanied by an Italian gentleman, an Englishman from Australia, an Englishwoman from India, and a

Scotch doctor settled in Egypt, who was returning to his home in Cairo, composed the oddly assorted company.

We reached that city about five, and after some delay, with the luggage, my fellow-traveller and I found ourselves in the omnibus bound for the Hotel du Nil, which had been strongly recommended to me. If this had not been the case, we should probably have turned back in disgust at the unfavourable approach. All the Cairo streets are narrow, but at last we turned into a narrower still, and then arriving at a *narrowest*—a gully not wide enough for even a single carriage—had to proceed on foot, with oar baggage borne by clamorous natives down a steep unpaved passage, crowded with donkeys and children, and then pass under two low archways to the entrance. Once inside we found the hotel not unlike the old Bras d'Or at Trouville, only considerably larger; built as a quadrangle round a large court full of palms and other tropical plants, with a small reading-room in the middle.

We were just in time to dress for the half-past six o'clock dinner at the table d'hôte, where I happily made the acquaintance of some delightful people, whose society subsequently proved one of the greatest advantages I enjoyed at Cairo. Finding that we had mutual friends in Calcutta, they invited me to their room for the evening coffee, and this was the first of many pleasant hours. As they had been already a fortnight in Cairo, and were quite at home at the Hotel du Nil, their directions as to sight-seeing, etc., were very valuable, and we visited together some of the most interesting places.

The regular hours of the hotel were as follows:—Early breakfast at 7.30 consisted of capital coffee, bread and butter, and eggs cooked in various ways; and a second most substantial breakfast at noon, and a capital

for which, with lights, attendance, and a comfortable bed-room, the charge was twelve shillings a day.

At nine the next morning Mrs. V—— came to my room, and arranged for me to accompany them to the museum at Boulac, where there is a choice collection of Egyptian antiquities, beautifully arranged. The excursion was performed on donkeys, the almost universal mode of transit in Cairo, where the streets are so narrow, dirty, and crowded, that driving is in many parts impossible, and walking far from pleasant. Many are not wide enough for a single carriage, and the archways too low for a man on horseback; but a donkey can go almost anywhere.

But how shall I attempt to describe these indescribable Cairo streets? with their tall houses shutting out the sun, and in some places overlaid with boards from roof to roof, so as to cover in the thoroughfare; their dingy little shops like cupboards in the walls; their curious carved casements put on any how outside the houses; and the swarming population below—Egyptians, Turks, Jews, Syrians, Greeks, Abyssinians, Arabs, and Franks—men in fezes, men in turbans, men in hats, men in trousers, men in petticoats, men in baggy Greek nether garments—with bare legs, with boots, and with peaked red or yellow slippers—richly dressed officials, on handsomely caparisoned horses, ragged donkey-boys, and strings of camels. The latter are very troublesome to pedestrians, they follow one so noiselessly, and walk over one so unconcernedly; whereas donkeys show some degree of consideration, and carriages are generally preceded by running footmen to clear the way. Footpaths there are none; so this precaution is an absolute necessity. The women of the upper classes wear wide trousers, yellow leather stockings, and black shoes, with a large shapeless

the eyes; and those of lower rank are wrapped entirely in dark blue cotton, with a frontlet like a set of brass thimbles between their eyes. Inconvenient and disfiguring as are these disguises, it is quite refreshing, after a sojourn in India, to see respectable women enjoying any liberty of locomotion at all.

Then the museum was so full of incredible things! Tools handled by masons who lived before Joseph were sold here; a palette with the colours still distinguishable that were spread while Abraham was a living man; and mythological emblems full of deep spiritual truth, that seemed to pierce farther into the abyss of futurity than even Hebrew prophets dived, strangely mingled with the relics of debasing superstition.

We had only time to go through two rooms, as my friends were no cursory students, and it was necessary to return to breakfast. After this, we started for another expedition, through a long series of quaint, narrow streets, up to the citadel, which is said to have been founded by Saladin in 1176. It contains the mint and arsenal, one of the pacha's palaces, a deep well called Joseph's well, and a grand mosque built by Mehemet Ali. The latter is a magnificent specimen of a gaudy, meretricious style, built almost entirely, as well as paved, with yellow-veined marble, and effective in size and proportion, as well as in material and workmanship. It is nearly square, the roof one great central dome, surrounded by four large half domes, with smaller whole ones in the corners, all gorgeous with tracery in dark enamel and gold, and rich with colour. The old chief's tomb is in a splendid square chapel in one corner, covered with the richest and stiffest gold embroidery. Outside are two slender minarets, and a large court also paved with marble and surrounded by a kind of cloisters. Devotees were washing at a central

their foreheads to the ground, and repeating their invocations inside.

From the outer court there is a fine view of the city with its countless domes and minarets, and the pyramids in the distance; and close by is the enclosure where the hapless Mameluke chiefs were trapped and shot down. One leaped his horse over the battlements at a spot pointed out to us—a sheer and terrible descent—and effected a truly miraculous escape.

The Pacha's palace, which we also visited, is in thoroughly French taste, but one of the rooms struck us as singularly cool and pretty. It was lined and ceiled with dark-green satin, and the blinds painted with groups of white water-lilies, floating among their leaves. Another was all amber satin; and the great man's bath-room was floored and fitted entirely with yellow marble.

Our ascent to this commanding citadel had been by a circuitous road; but in returning, we rode our donkeys down a long flight of steps, and continued the descent, by some narrow lanes, out towards the tombs of the Mamelukes. These form quite a city of sepulchres, but in a shamefully neglected state. Some were richly carved, others bore only the usual Mahometan sign—the fez or turban carved on the headstone. Near was a mosque-like building, containing the tombs of the Pacha's family, where we were admitted on putting slippers over our boots, the usual compromise when foreigners are allowed to enter these sacred buildings.

There were, perhaps, twenty or thirty tombs in this building, most of them in the gaudiest taste, carved and painted with staring wreaths of immense pink roses and other flowers; but that of Ibrahim Pacha was really splendid in its way. It is a great altar-shaped tomb in three tiers, the highest being as large as an ordinary

tomb, with high head and foot stones, the former surrounded by a gigantic head-dress; but the splendour consists in its being entirely covered with rich, dark blue enamel, crusted all over with thick characters and devices in gold.

I was very tired before we got back to the hotel, and glad to lie down for an hour before dinner, and read Miss Whately's interesting account of "Ragged Life in Egypt." After dinner, I wrote up my journal, much tormented by the fleas, which are the ever-present plague of Egypt, and which literally hopped about my book as I sat writing. It would be an unpardonable oversight to dismiss these creatures with only cursory notice. Most travellers in Northern Africa take the precaution to provide themselves with a supply of vermin powder; but though this may diminish the evil, nothing can abolish it. As to pursuing the enemy, it is a wild and futile waste of time, for no amount of slaughter seems to have any effect upon their numbers, and there is nothing for it but stoical philosophy. The current statement that Egyptian fleas are strong enough to kick one's hand open when captured, may be safely dismissed as hyperbolical; but assuredly they deserve to rank among the most notable productions of a land fertile in wonders.

The next day, being Sunday, we went to church at the Hotel Neuf, where a large ecclesiastical-looking room is rented for the purpose, there being no English church at Cairo. We walked, on principle, though it is rather a precarious mode of transit for the reasons given above; but it was very pleasant that lovely morning, and so was the reverent reading of the beautiful service, after the three Sundays on board. The hymns and chants were accompanied by a good harmonium, well played by the Consul's wife, and were sung with taste and spirit.

so, perhaps, because there was no sermon, the clergyman being probably a new arrival and unprepared.

Going home, amid the usual confusion of bipeds, camels, horses, carriages, dogs, and donkeys, of which last there are said to be 20,000 in the city, we met an extraordinary funeral cortège. First a car, on which stood a coffin, of which the pall was blazoned with a large yellow cross, with women in an ecclesiastical uniform as pall-bearers; and then a numerous procession of men, marching four or five abreast, and singing at the full power of their voices. It was good music, evidently from some mass, and the effect in that narrow street was very fine. We learnt afterwards, that it was the funeral of an actress, belonging probably to the opera company; who after a previous ineffectual attempt at suicide had at last succeeded in throwing herself from her window.

Directly after breakfast on Monday morning, I started to see the Coptic and other churches. The Copts are the descendants of the early Egyptian Christians, who preserve their ancient faith, overlaid with much superstition; and a benevolent attempt, made by the present Bishop of Calcutta on his way out, to establish fraternal relations with their Patriarch, was completely frustrated by the dense ignorance of the latter prelate. Their quarter is not particularly picturesque, and as I went alone, with a donkey boy who spoke but little English, my facilities for acquiring information were but small; but I was much interested in a ceremonial which was proceeding in the church. All the principal doors were shut, but we found an entrance leading to a little chapel included in the main building, but complete in itself, with doorways and window places in its walls. Round it was a narrow space where the worshippers stood, one side being screened off with close lattice-work for the women. Inside the chapel were only the priest and his attendants—

the former a fine looking man, wearing a beautiful white turban, and a violet silk mantle over a white garment embroidered with coloured flowers. His subordinates were in ordinary dress with fezes or turbans.

On a large altar, which took up most of the middle space was an oblong pix, and I found afterwards that a mass was being celebrated for the patriarch lately deceased. The priest opened the pix with much ceremony, and took out a kind of thick bun, which he seemed to be manipulating a long while, muttering and chanting, while the people responded loudly at intervals, with every appearance of devotion. After this had gone on for some time, he partook of it himself, and gave it to the attendants, putting it into their mouths as they stood before him. Then he elevated it in front of the people, to whom he had hitherto turned his back, and they all bowed. He afterwards carried it into the women's part, where I could not see what was done, and finally brought it back and finished it himself, rubbing his fingers round and round the plate, and sucking them assiduously. Next he took the cup, with the contents of which he had previously moistened the cake, and administered the wine to himself and his attendants with a spoon. He also drank from the cup, and two babies being brought to the door of the chapel, he dipped his finger in the wine, and allowed them to suck it off. I am not sure whether he carried the cup also outside; but, at all events, he emptied it himself, and then rubbed his fingers repeatedly round it, disposing of the sacred moisture in the same primitive fashion. Water was next poured in, and he rinsed both cup and spoon, drinking the water, and giving some to his companions. This was repeated several times, and water then poured from the cup into the plate, which was washed in like manner, and the water drunk. Lastly, an attendant poured water

over his hands, and he took a handful, and threw it up into the air with a loud exclamation, after which the people crowded up to the door of the chapel, and he patted them on the cheek with his wet hands. This salutation seemed to be much prized, and formed an appropriate conclusion to one of the most extraordinary religious services I ever witnessed.

My astonishment was great when the friends to whom I minutely described the ceremony, told me that it scarcely differed from some of the Ritualistic performances introduced into the Church of England during my years of absence.

I inquired in vain of several people whether I could see the church, but the want of common language was an insuperable barrier, till I met with a young man who spoke a little English, and took me in. It was a large, bare-looking building, with a rude picture of the Mother and Child, and one of St. Mark, a very high pulpit, and a throne for the Patriarch, which was placed with its back to the pulpit, facing towards the picture, an arrangement which had a very singular effect. All round the church, at a considerable height was a latticed gallery for the women, and my guide informed me that after confession, any one might receive the communion in both kinds. To my great astonishment he refused to accept a gratuity, from which unprecedented circumstance I could only conjecture that he was a gentleman, and thanked him accordingly, bestowing the money instead on a group of blind beggars at the church door. In countries where the style of dress is so different to our own as to afford no clue to the wearer's rank, and where ignorance of the language precludes any judgment on that score, one is occasionally liable to embarrassing mistakes of this kind.

After I had seen the church, my polite guide took me to visit the schools, which were held within the same

precincts. In the first room were some thirty or forty good sized boys learning the geography of Africa in English from an English map; in another were double the number of little children learning their Coptic alphabet; and in a third a large intermediate class, writing, etc. Altogether, I was very much interested and pleased.

Then I remounted my patient steed and went to the Greek church, where also the doors were closed; but some one to whom I applied took me to a large room near, where two ecclesiastics in black gowns and high caps were sitting, to one of whom I was presented as the archbishop. He spoke French, and on my explaining that I was an English stranger and wished to see the church, he courteously gave directions that some one should take me round. If my memory serves me rightly, it is nearly square, supported by columns, and hung with stiff and peculiar pictures all round the walls. But the most striking objects is the screen which shuts off the chancel. This is perhaps fifteen or twenty feet high, of rich brass or gilt work, with large paintings of the Apostles, the Annunciation, etc., let into the front, each with a small copy of itself just below. Besides these there were several very singular pictures, only the faces and hands of which were painted; the draperies, glories, backgrounds, etc., of chased gold and silver, fitting round them. Over the central opening in the screen hung a head of the Saviour, in this style, apparently very ancient, and the doorway was closed by a tapestried screen representing some scriptural subject. The attendant drew this aside, and I was allowed to go up and look in. There were several altars and pictures, but nothing very striking; and immediately opposite the opening, where one would expect the high altar to be, was the throne of the Patriarch.

When I got back after this visit to the churches, I

found that Captain V—— had obtained an order from the consul to admit us to El Azhar. This is a most interesting mosque, as old as Cairo itself, and famed in the earlier part of the middle ages as the great university of the East. It used to be a very rich foundation, supporting students from all parts of the world, and paying large salaries to its staff of teachers; but Mehemet Ali confiscated the funds, and now the poor scholars are only privileged to live in the outer courts of the mosque, and receive a small daily or weekly dole of food, while the professors teach for nothing, and support themselves by other employments.

When we saw it, the mosque and its courts must have contained more than a thousand people sitting in circles on the ground, each class round the ulema or holy man who was expounding the Koran. The students were not entirely young—a large proportion being middle-aged men, who were probably attending the classes as a religious duty. They were very attentive, each with his ink horn at his girdle, and a sheet of tin on which he made notes of the lectures. A few years ago the intrusion of Christians, and especially of females into this sacred spot, would have raised a whirlwind of fanatical rage; and even as it was we should not have been safe without a cavass, or policeman, a tall, fine-looking fellow sent by the consul, and armed with a whip, who cleared our way majestically. My companions took off their boots, but I preferred putting slippers over mine, it being necessary to do either the one or the other, to avoid defiling the holy places. I had also borrowed a veil, so as not to intrude the abomination of the Moslems—an unveiled female face—before them; but putting it up in a moment of forgetfulness, a little excitement arose. The people began to hustle us, and one or two small fragments of stone were thrown, rather contemptuously than spitefully; but as soon as it was

put down these manifestations ceased, and we walked through the crowd quite at ease. There is no beauty about El Azhar. It is simply an immense court, where crowds were sitting and lying about, sleeping or studying, and then a large flat-roofed building supported by rows of pillars, neither lofty, massive, nor impressive, but a most interesting sight nevertheless. I am afraid it would be long before fifty or sixty English professors would lecture on their religion daily for many hours gratis, supporting themselves meanwhile by other toils.

After El Azhar, we rode out again to Boulac, and spent some hours in going carefully through the funeral slabs and jewels, and some of the other rooms; and after our return, the reading of some most interesting unpublished letters from Egypt finished a busy and instructive day.

The next morning, I made arrangements early to start for the petrified forest, Captain V—— kindly going with me to engage an intelligent donkey-boy, and giving him full directions where to take me. To my dismay, when I summoned him an hour after, he refused to go, alleging that the Bedouins were down in that part, and had robbed an English gentleman, and it was not safe to take a lady alone. Others corroborated the story, but I was most unwilling to give up the expedition; and finally, at the landlord's suggestion, engaged the sheik of the donkey-boys to be my escort. He was not afraid to go, and certainly, in case of need, he would have been a better protection than one of his lads, being a tall, stalwart man. He spoke no English, but a little tolerably comprehensible French; so we got on pretty well.

The road lay through the tombs of the caliphs—quite a city of the dead—then among low rocks and sand-hills, and past some quarries out into the desert. This is not here a flat expanse of sand, but a series of ranges of

rounded, rocky hills, with sandy flats between them. The sand, in some parts, was loose and yielding; in others, as firm as a hard sea-beach, which, indeed, it much resembled, being thickly strewn with pebbles of cornelian, and shells of the flat snail which feeds on the few thorny plants about.

After a few miles, we began to see traces of the singular phenomenon of which I was in search. Blocks of fossil wood lay here and there, and the sand was strewn for a long distance with chips, like the floor of a workshop, the grain and texture of the wood being still perfectly distinct. I dismounted and collected a number of specimens, and even wandered quite out of sight of my steed and his driver, to the top of one of the ranges, whence there was a pretty glimpse of green fields and part of the city in the distance. Except this, of which I soon lost sight, there was not a trace of human presence anywhere; and I never felt so utterly alone as in those few moments in the sandy waste. The sun was hot, but the air delightfully fresh and pure; and the only signs of life were an occasional locust rustling through the air, and a few little sand-coloured lizards darting swiftly from stone to stone.

Presently I rejoined my Arab, and remounting, plodded on till I grew very hot and tired, and began to long for the spot where I had been promised a lovely view of the Nile valley, and pleasant shade for rest and luncheon. Alas! I soon found that my guide knew nothing of the locality, and could not find any place where fossil trunks of trees lay in sufficient numbers really to deserve the name of a petrified forest. He said it lay to the left, over a distant white hill, and thither we trudged, noting by the way a mysterious, distant object which somewhat alarmed me, but which proved as we got nearer to be a carriage and four with attendants. We passed it at a considerable distance, but when we reached the white

ridge, and my guide had to confess his ignorance and turn back, it was standing directly in our road. I would gladly have avoided the proximity, for, truth to tell, I felt anything but an object for civilized inspection—hot, tired, and dusty, with a hat on to which sun and spray had done their worst; an old English waterproof that had been travelled in and slept in, and gnawed by fish insects through all my Indian journeys; and a skirt on which Cairo donkeys and camels, and the Egyptian population in general, had trodden, till I sometimes doubted whether any fragments of it would survive. However, there the carriage stood, indubitably awaiting our approach; and when we came up to it, a tall, elderly, aristocratic-looking man stepped out, and accosting me in French with the most deferential politeness, informed me that the lady within would be delighted if I would honour her with my company back to the town. As for himself, he would be charmed if I would permit him to ride my donkey, and then we could have the carriage quite to ourselves.

I need not say how welcome was the former part of the proposition at such a moment; but the sheik demurred to the latter clause, on the ground that the animal in question was too tired. So I was soon seated behind four horses, beside a voluble Russian lady, with the gentleman, who proved to be a distinguished Greek officer, as my *vis-à-vis*. The sheik, who was a much heavier man, mounted the donkey himself, as soon as he saw us seated, and coolly rode it all the way back to town.

French was our only medium of communication, and after we had compared our geological specimens and our experiences of Cairo, and the lady found that I had come from India, she was unwearied in her questions about the country, climate, customs, religion, arts, etc.; so we kept up an animated conversation for the couple of hours or so

that the drive lasted. They not only drove me to the hotel, but accompanied me in for a prolonged call; and I found that they had travelled through Upper Egypt, and were going to spend a fortnight in Cairo: after which the lady intended visiting Syria, Greece and Constantinople, returning home by the Black Sea, and starting next year for Italy, Spain, Algiers, and perhaps India and Cochin China.

She was certainly an enterprising and intelligent woman, and I much regretted that my limited time forbade my returning her call, as she pressed me to do. Altogether it was a most amusing and unexpected *rencontre*.

When I was sitting afterwards in the garden with a book, a coffin was carried downstairs, containing the body of a foreign gentleman, who had been staying some time in the hotel. It was enclosed in a sarcophagus like outer coffin, with gilt feet and a large gilt cross on the lid, round which hung a deep frill of lace, and a festoon of flowers.

I spent a very pleasant evening with my friends, who were about to start for a long tour in the desert on the morrow, and it was settled that as they intended pitching their tent for the first few days under the shadow of the Pyramids, I should take advantage of their hospitality to spend a long day in seeing the wonders of that mysterious spot.

The early morning of the next day was spent in a long visit to Miss Whately's most interesting schools, which are much less known than they deserve to be. This lady, one of the gifted daughters of the late Archbishop, has devoted many years to independent missionary efforts chiefly among the women and children of Cairo and its neighbourhood; and much success has attended her labours in this singularly unpromising field. She has

now upwards of 200 boys and girls in her schools, comprising Arabs, Copts, Greeks and Syrians, whose bright faces and intelligent answers bear their own testimony to the Christian love and patient care that have opened to them a way from the depths of ignorance and degradation into the light and freedom of Christ's glorious gospel.

After breakfast, having secured an intelligent donkey-boy with more knowledge of English than most of his fraternity, I started for Old Cairo. It was a long ride, past Mehemet Ali's great aqueduct and the Pacha's palace and gardens, through fields of sugar-cane and a large plantation of huge cacti, cultivated for their figs, into a quarter meaner, narrower, dirtier and quainter than anything I had seen in the more modern city. My first visit was to the old Coptic church, where a droll little girl, deeply marked with the small-pox, showed me strange antiquated pictures and carvings, and I groped my way by the light of a candle down a narrow flight of steps under a low doorway, to a passage-like crypt, with seats hollowed in the wall and marked with square crosses, where tradition says that the Virgin and Child were concealed during their stay in Egypt. Singularly enough all parties seem to hold this spot sacred; Copts, Greeks, Jews, and I believe two or three other religions having places of worship only a few yards apart.

The Greek church is an extraordinary place. We turned in as usual at a low doorway in a dead wall, and found ourselves in a filthy court, where we waited till some one came with a primitive wooden key and opened a door. Then we went in and out, up one flight of steps after another, through passages, past bed-rooms and living rooms, shelves of bread, and people cooking, into a little chapel with a quaint carved shrine, inside which a lamp hung burning before an eccentric painting of St. George,

ones they call him here, St. Gorg, slaying the dragon. Then the door communicating with the church was thrown open, and displayed the usual chancel screen and indeed the whole interior, hung with extraordinary and uncouth pictures. There were nine large paintings of apostles, and St. Gorg again in a variety of forms—one large picture of him surrounded by a framework of little ones representing some twenty scenes of his life. There were also a number more, out of which the only name I could distinguish was that of St. Onofrio, framed like St. Gorg in a series of their own deeds. Altogether it was exceedingly quaint and curious, and would have been very interesting, had I had any satisfactory medium of communication with my guide. As it was, I had to put my questions in English to my Arab donkey-boy, who interpreted them in his own tongue to the attendant priest, who I think answered in Greek, which was again rendered into very imperfect English by the lad. So upon the whole I had to depend mainly upon my own eyes.

Last I went to the synagogue, which two poor old Jewish hags showed me. What language they spoke I have no idea, but the utter poverty and desolation of the little sanctuary were eloquent enough. They had nothing to show but the sacred rolls of the law in their mystic cases, a treasure indeed, and faithfully, though ignorantly guarded; but their abject poverty went to my heart, and I gave them the largest backsheesh I had bestowed that day.

I did not get back till after one, hot and tired, and the public breakfast was over, but a very satisfactory private edition was obligingly furnished and quickly spread. As this was my last day at Cairo, I was anxious to see all I could of the wonderful old city, so I started again after a short rest to see the two grand ancient mosques of Tooloon and Sultan Hassan. The former is

very different to any other we had seen. It is the oldest building in Cairo, said to have been founded by Tooloon, a governor of Egypt in the middle of the ninth century. There is no cupola, and I think no minaret, or at least I noticed none. The building consists of several parallel naves, divided by flat pillars and round arches, sculptured with genuine Moorish carving. In the side walls were open-cut stone windows, many of them of very beautiful and delicate workmanship, the interstices only just large enough to admit a little light. The place seemed totally deserted, and is apparently never used for worship. The walls were scribbled over in many places with rude charcoal drawings, and women accompanied me in—the first I had seen in any mosque. They chattered freely, and evidently felt none of the reverence I did for the grand old temple. Attached to it is a large court, round which great numbers of poor are allowed to live; and neither here nor in the mosque itself was I required, as usual, to take off or cover my boots. In fact, the women seemed chiefly anxious lest I should soil my dress on the dusty floor; but one grows indifferent about this in Cairo, which is the place of all others for getting one's clothes trampled and torn.

Sultan Hassan's mosque is just below the citadel—a magnificent, and I should think, ancient pile, which struck me as being far loftier than any other. It looks as massive as the living rock, and I should have thought that nothing short of an earthquake could have rent such walls, but some tremendous cracks show that there is something seriously wrong. It is said to be built of blocks taken from the Pyramids, and probably old Father Time resents the spoliation of his elder children, and has taken this method of marking his displeasure.

The entrance is up a steep flight of steps and through a lofty entrance-hall, passing which, Hassan routed out a

pair of basket slippers from behind a door, in which I put my feet, and managed to slide along into the court. Here again was splendour in solitude and decay. A grand square court of large extent, paved entirely with marble mosaic work, beautiful still, though broken and uneven; and the central fountain desolate and dry, but exquisitely domed and arched, carved and inlaid. One solitary worshipper was at his devotions Meccawards, and some one came forward to let us into the mosque itself, which struck me far more impressively than any of the others. Built of dark-reddish stone and very lofty, the walls and roof are almost bare of ornament, except where an inscription in gigantic letters is carved round about midway up the walls, proclaiming that there is but one God and Mahomet his prophet; and where the four corners of the roof at the junction of the square with the dome melt into fretted caves of wonderful rugged beauty.

The four mosques I saw in Cairo are all widely different. Mehemet Ali's gorgeous and glittering; El Azhar only interesting from its ancient fame and its crowd of attendants and worshippers; Tooloon majestic with a certain stern, grave beauty even in decay, and Sultan Hassan's gloriously grand, the most solemn and touching of them all. I think that any one living in Cairo might well come here to pray.

Going home, I rode very slowly through the streets, thoroughly enjoying them for the last time. No description can do justice to these Cairo thoroughfares. A few of the best are as wide as the thoroughfare of a back street at home, but many will not admit even a single carriage, and in some not even a horseman could pass. The houses are lofty, and in the older quarters have projecting upper stories, from which again project the windows, like flat wooden boxes of delicately-carved lattice work. These are stuck on any how, large and small,

up and down, sometimes window upon window, square-curved, edged with projecting carved work or capped with pagoda tops, and they meet and interlace overhead in most picturesque confusion. Between them here and there the gleams of sunshine fell upon such wealth of colouring as perhaps no other city in the world can show. Red fezes, surmounting deep blue garments, or white turbaned Arabs with their broad striped mantles, and richly dressed and mounted Turks, choke the narrow streets, mingled with camels and donkeys laden with every kind of vegetable produce. On each side, in little shops about eight feet square recessed in the walls, sit the traders, among goods even more brilliant in colouring than the passers by. Each trade has its own bazaar or street—one full from end to end of bright red and yellow shoes, another of gay stuffs, a third of confectionery, and a fourth of crimson donkey pads and other gaily tasseled saddlery.

Overhead hang long streamers of coloured stuff, and here and there boards laid across from house to house roof in the streets for long spaces, and make a cool deep shade. Every third man one meets would be a good study for a painter, and the women's costume is amusing from its very ugliness. The middle and upper classes go about with a freedom which is enviable as compared with India, but they are all wrapped in hideous face-veils which only display their eyes, and, in fact, are mere shapeless bundles of dark silk drapery, displaying as they bestride their donkeys in masculine fashion, only their odd-looking yellow leather stockings and black shoes. Now comes a syce with his long wand, bare legs, short full white skirts and sleeves, Albanian jacket and skull cap, to clear the way before a gaudy carriage; then a long string of camels with their ugly heads swaying from side to side

d Greeks; then an interminable succession of
oad[illegible] with sugar-canes or vetches, and urged
id drivers. Incessant cries of "Shemalak,
Sh[illegible]glak, Reglak" (Mind your foot, keep to
the l[illegible] muggled with Arab objurgations to the
peopl[illegible] O white umbrella! O sweetmeat
man! O lady! [illegible] the left!" Every one seems
good-tempered in the general crush, and even if an
unexpected turn brings one's knees full tilt against
a load's breast, he never looks fierce or growls at
the inadvertence. The tawdriness, the bright colouring, the general picturesqueness neglect and decay, alternating with spasmodic newness, and the extraordinary variety of costume, form a tout ensemble that can neither be imagined nor described. The total length of the city is about three miles, by about one and a half, and within this area a most heterogeneous population of above 300,00[illegible] souls is congregated.

One of the strangest and most unpleasant sights is the swarms of flies on the faces of many of the poor, especially children. They commonly settle in a fringe round the eyelids, and no one seems to care even to drive them away. This doubtless communicates and aggravates ophthalmia in many cases.

III

THE PYRAMIDS.

I HAD the pleasure of Miss W——'s company in my next day's drive to the great Pyramids of Gizeh. We started about half-past seven in a comfortable phaeton, but had to wait a long while at the Nile bridge, which had just been opened for a long string of dahabiahs or passenger boats to pass through. When the Pacha is staying at his palace near here, this bridge is kept shut in the most arbitrary way if he is even likely to drive over it, and the Nile boats have to wait many hours at a time.

Once over the river, we drove along a pleasant shaded road for several miles, and at last turned desertwards, and came in sight of the Pyramids. Close beside them the Pacha has built a little cockney villa, and an hotel after the same fashion is springing up near, but happily, it is only in the approach that one sees these glaring incongruities, as they fall gradually behind a rising ground. We drove towards the Sphinx as agreed, and there stood the little tent of our friends, with the Union Jack flying by way of signal. Mrs V—— came out to welcome us, and I could not have imagined so much comfort in a tent of about ten feet diameter, as their little abode exhibited. The two narrow camp beds and some portmanteaux and campstools furnished seats, and a curtain made a little dressing-room, while a small camp table sufficed for all our meals.

Captain V—— was sketching the excavated temple in front of the Sphinx, and we went down above to see it. It is curious, from the large size of the blocks of granite with which it is entirely built, but has little beauty except that of light and shade. The pillars are mere rough monoliths, and there is no roof, but we explored some dark passages on one side with candles, noting the glitter of the large grained granite overhead, and the yellowish alabaster of the floor. Out of these passages came many of the sarcophagi and images now at Boulac.

Presently we returned to the tent to breakfast, and Bedawee, the dragoman, managed to give us a very creditable repast, cooked in and near a tiny tent beside our larger one. Afterwards we looked over Miss W——'s beautiful Nile sketches, and then strolled down with a donkey laden with drawing materials, etc., to some trees at a little distance, where she and Mrs. V—— proposed to sit and sketch. On the way we noticed a variety of beautiful little wild flowers springing in the sand, trefoils, small yellow chamomiles, mesembryanthemums, and tiny, but very fragrant purple stocks; and one of the party told us that fifteen or sixteen species of wild flowers may be gathered at some seasons within a few yards of desert ground. How they live is wonderful. It reminded one of Mungo Park, and the desert flower that saved him from despair.

The sketchers soon chose their point of view, and took their post under a sycamore fig-tree, looking over the desert to the Nile valley, brilliant with green and yellow; a mud village and a grove of palms in the middle distance, and the cliffs of the Mokhatten range, and the white roofs and minarets of Cairo beyond. This was the view they chose, but to the left lay the Pyramids with the Sphinx in front, so softened by distance as

really to look grand, and enable one to judge of what she must have been when perfect. The raptures of some travellers over the mutilated face are comprehensible from this point of view, but I could not by any effort bring myself to admire the Pyramids. Even their size does not affect one as might have been expected, and they seem simply huge monuments of tyranny and wrong, scarcely more picturesque than a group of huge brick kilns. It was only when Captain V—— and I left the sketchers and rode up to them that I even began to take in their size. Looking up from the base, and seeing the great kites wheeling round the summit, which pierced the air like a mountain top, one could realize that they were indeed the loftiest buildings ever reared by man, but even this consideration failed to render them sublime.

The total height of the Great Pyramid—that of Cheops—is 480 feet, and it occupies an area of nearly twelve acres. The second, that of Cephrenes, is much smaller, though nearly as high, and very difficult to ascend, as its casing still remains, while that of the Great Pyramid has been stripped off, leaving a series of gigantic steps, up which travellers sufficiently enterprising and ambitious can be dragged and propelled by clamorous Arabs. The third, supposed to be the joint work of Mycerinus and Queen Nitocris, is less than half the height of the others, and only 354 feet square; and the six smaller ones are of very moderate dimensions. The Sphinx is said to be 172 feet long, hewn from the natural rock, eked out with stone casing; but only the head and part of the neck are visible, the body being buried deep in sand.

There are other groups of pyramids at Sakkhara, Aboo Seir, Shahsoor, and many other places; but one must visit Karnak and Luxor, the remains of ancient Thebes, which I had no opportunity of doing, to form

any just idea of the grandeur of old Egyptian art. There are the marvellous avenues of columns, and of sphinxes, that have defied the power of time for tens of centuries; there Rameses III. still triumphs over conquered kings; and the name of Judah stands in the list of tributary nations, corroborating the evidence of Scripture story. There, in the great palace hall, upwards of one hundred and thirty giant columns are still standing, some seventy feet in height and twelve feet in diameter; and the Memnonium, or Ramesium, on the western bank of the river, is the great palace-temple of Rameses II., containing his colossal statue. This wonderful work, now prostrate and sorely mutilated, the benighted natives having used his face as a quarry for their mill-stones, was sixty feet high, and computed to weigh nearly nine hundred tons, hewn from a single block of red granite, which must have been transported from Syene, a distance of nearly one hundred and forty miles! Half a mile away stand the two well-known Memnons, also giant monoliths, the seated figures forty-seven feet high, with pedestals that add another twelve feet to their altitude. Surely, with all our modern engineering science, and all the power that steam can give, we are but dwarfs beside the old world sculptors, who could plan and carry out such works as these.

But to return to our day at the Pyramids. We went first to a tomb near the great Sphinx, first explored by General Vyse, the plan of which is very singular. A deep rectangular trench is cut in the solid rock, just as one would dig out the foundation of a house, only to a far greater depth. It made one giddy to stand at the edge and look into the perpendicular cutting, not above two or three feet wide, but several yards in length, which forms each side of the enclosure. In some places tombs were hollowed out in the sides of the rocky wall, and sarcophagi are visible, probably those of the great man's

family. Within this singular enclosure, the rock had been left untouched, except just in the centre, where a single tomb was hewn as deep as the encircling trench; and looking over the brink, we could see the black marble sarcophagus, with its perfect and impassive features, looking up straight to the sky, a far more interesting and impressive sight, at least to me, than the Pyramids beside it. It was surely a triumph of pre-historic engineering skill, this rock-hewn grave, cut to such a depth through difficult material with perfect accuracy of shape and size.

We rode round one of the smaller pyramids, and then dismounted and crept into some of the less important tombs, which are plentiful here, cut into every rocky mound. One has only to descend a few steps, and pass under a low, square doorway, on the rounded topstone of which the inmate's name is inscribed in hieroglyp carving, and then sit down on the cool sand inside, to look at pictures still fresh, but older than the book of Exodus. It is inconceivable, but true. Painted in rows upon the walls, you see the old Egyptians cooking, feasting, fighting in boats, performing all the duties of husbandry, making offerings to their gods, dying, and burying their dead. The paint is clear yet, and some of the animals spirited and true to life. Furnished with lighted candles, you creep on and on through passages far too low to admit of an upright posture, till the history is spelt out, and you emerge to upper da

Without, the rocks tell their own ory. They are the tombs of countless millions older sti.. The beautiful white tufa, of which they consist, is a perfect conglomerate of tiny fossil shells, and the large petrified sea-urchins, which the Arabs dig out of the sand, corroborate the theory that all the desert ha en sea.

By the time we had ridden round two sides of the Great Pyramid, we had acquired a more respectful idea

of its magnitude; and the Bedouin guide then proposed to me to dismount and climb a path which led to the entrance, too steep and narrow even for the donkeys. Captain V——, who was lame from a recent accident, remained below, and I followed the Arab alone along the face of the stone mountain till we came to a high closed arch in the side, nearly forty feet above the base. Within this was a low, square [illegible] the Bedouin lighted a candle, and beckoned me [illegible] him into. The passage was not quite four feet high, little more than a yard wide, so neither of us could stand upright; and I found the sloping slabs of fine white limestone that paved the drain-like passage painfully slippery. It was easier for my barefooted companion; but I had to steady myself with my hands against the sides, while he crawled on first, candle in hand, now up, now down, now climbing with hands as well as feet, now hurrying along a straight passage, till I began to feel that I could not proceed much longer in that constrained position. The passage must be about one hundred yards long, and only the last half dozen yards of it are high enough for upright standing. At last we reached a roundish chamber, about eighteen feet square and twenty high in the middle, and, lo! we were under the apex of the pyramid. This is called the Queen's Chamber, and is perfectly empty, the King's Chamber, which lies above it, and is approached by a loftier passage branching off not far from the end of the other, containing the celebrated coffer or sarcophagus which has been of late the subject of so much learned dissertation. Unfortunately I did not remember at the moment all these important disquisitions; and having had enough of dark and stifling passages, I declined to prosecute the exploration further. So, after a few moments' rest, we recommenced our slippery march, and at last emerged, hot and breathless, on the cool side of the great stone

mountain, where Captain V—— was patiently waiting in the shade below.

The Arabs, three of whom had accompanied us, were clamorous for backsheesh, but a rupee between them settled the matter, and after sitting some time with the sketchers we returned to the tent to dinner, a very merry and enjoyable meal, notwithstanding some slight foretastes of desert privation. The water was some days old, and the water, though from the vaunted Nile, so muddy, that thirsty as I was, I did not fancy tasting it, till its colour was disguised with raspberry vinegar. Such little *contretemps* are far less annoying abroad than at home, because where one necessarily depends much on native servants or dragomen, they reflect no discredit on the entertainers and produce no embarrassment. At last came the inevitable end of this happy day—the parting with friends whose society had added an unexpected charm to this brief pause in my homeward journey—and a delightful drive back to Cairo in the clear stillness of the closing night.

The next morning was occupied with packing, and after the mid-day breakfast I started to say good-bye to Miss W——, *en route* for the station. By the way I had another brief experience of the inconvenience which the curse of Babel entails upon the hapless traveller. The hotel waiter who saw me off had given the necessary instructions to the driver, but he either misunderstood or forgot them, and suddenly stopping in a street quite unknown to me, intimated that this was the place. In vain I repeated to the best of my ability the formula which I had been told to give as Miss W——'s address, and in vain appealed to one passer-by after another for information. No one understood, and I sat forlorn in the carriage, beginning to despair of seeing my kind friend again, when I saw an Arab boy pass, and was struck by

the brilliant thought that he might know about the school though his seniors were ignorant. Fortunately the conjecture was correct, and he directed the driver to the house.

Notwithstanding this delay there was still a long waiting at the station, owing to the delightful uncertainty of the Egyptian trains, the starting of which is never sure within an hour or two.

IV

ALEXANDRIA TO SOUTHAMPTON.

THE first part of the journey was pleasant, our road lying through the fertile Nile valley, with its rich fields, where here and there a group of camels or buffaloes with their picturesque drivers enlivened the prospect with some glimpses of oriental life. Night closed in before we reached Alexandria, and I was heartily glad to find myself safe at the Peninsular and Oriental Hotel with all my baggage, which had been a considerable trouble to me in the transit.

Seldom has a night's rest been more welcome than that which awaited me in that extremely rambling and in some respects uncomfortable establishment, which however enjoys the advantage of being on a broad public place, planted with trees and furnished with shady benches.

Alexandria is indeed far more like a French than an Egyptian town, as I found when, after a nine o'clock breakfast at the table d'hôte, I started on a solitary exploring expedition. The first thing was to inquire at the Peninsular and Oriental office the probable time of the steamer's departure; and as I found that she was not yet in, and not expected to start till the morrow afternoon, there seemed ample time to look about the town.

The first place I visited was the Greek church, a [illegible] building externally, but internally very cos[illegible] The

whole area was empty, except for the pulpit, and a number of immense candlesticks, and was divided into a nave and side aisles by slender lofty pillars and round arches. At the east an immense marble screen stretches across the church, reaching nearly to the roof, and surmounted by a crucifix and figures of St. John and the Virgin—not statues of course, they being forbidden in Greek churches, but pictures cut out so as to present as nearly as possible the same appearance.

Below these was a large eye surrounded by gilded rays, and lower still row after row of pictures framed in the marble, with eleven large lighted lamps of massive silver, suspended in front from doves of the same metal. The only openings in the screen were the central doorway and one at each end, over which hung screens of tapestry, which when drawn aside displayed large tomb-like altars, backed by cut-out figures like those above the screen. Among the pictures were several of the same photographs kind as I had noticed at Cairo, with draperies and backgrounds of chased gold and silver, and only the hands and faces painted; and in front of others hung silver models of hands, eyes, limbs, and babies, given as thankofferings for cures, etc.

These had a curious and tawdry effect, but the interior as a whole was rather fine.

Then I went rambling on, past several large mutilated statues which stood in the streets uncared for, with their massive fragments lying around them, to a height whence I hoped to get some general idea of the city, so as to be able to steer towards the Needle or the Pillar. Here I found an unexpected hindrance in half a dozen surly Egyptian dogs, which were lying in the sun, and came round me furiously, till a bare-legged lad drove them away, and guarded me to the top of the mound which formed part of the fortifications. Here I got a satisfactory

view, including the distant obelisk; and, passing a florist's on my way down, went in and enjoyed once more with intense pleasure the sight of European flowers. Stocks, phloxes, roses, and mignonette were all in full bloom, and the proprietor, a Frenchman, seemed really gratified by my appreciation of their beauty and perfume. It was still a long walk to the quay, where, in a stone-mason's yard, stands the famous Cleopatra's Needle, the height and whole appearance of which were so far below my anticipations that I could scarcely believe it to be really the far-famed obelisk.

A round through the fish and poultry market brought me back in time for tiffin, at which meal I made the acquaintance of a newly-married couple outward bound, who, knowing some of my Indian friends, invited me to accompany them afterwards in a drive to Pompey's Pillar and the Catacombs. Near the former, which is finely situated, and much more striking than the obelisk, lie some interesting remains of ancient statues, perfectly unprotected, and exposed to any wanton mutilation. A boy was actually offering for backsheesh pieces chipped from Pompey's Pillar! Near the pillar are some curious remains of an ancient Christian church, lately disinterred, with a few traces of sculpture, and of paintings of saints and angels, with the gilded glories still faintly showing.

After exploring these, we had a long drive by the canal, and then back to the hotel, where we were greeted with the intelligence that the Southampton boat had arrived, and the passengers were required to be on board by five. As it was already half-past four, there was just time to repack hastily and get off, the other passengers having already departed, in the omnibus and steamer provided for them. But the ship was not reached without a sharp contest with driver, coolies, and boatmen, to say nothing

of a dragoman, who rode down to the quay on the box of my conveyance, without leave asked or obtained, and expected to be paid for doing so.

The only way to manage these people is to ask at the hotel, or of some reliable person, what is the proper fare, and then steadily refuse to give a farthing beyond; otherwise, a lady travelling alone is considered a fair mark for extortion. In this case, coolies and dragomen followed me into the boat, and the latter coolly seated himself, while the others pressed round me with noisy and exorbitant demands for merely carrying my luggage from the road to the boat. I gave them a fair payment; and when they saw it was useless to expect more, they slowly departed. Then the dragoman, a respectable-looking individual in a sort of uniform, who had sat by with folded arms and left me to manage for myself, had the effrontery so ask what I should give him. I replied unhesitatiingly, "Nothing," reminding him that he had ridden down on my carriage without leave, and rendered me no service whatever. He was disposed to be insolent; but, finding me resolute, at last abandoned the field, leaving me alone with the boatmen, who instantly began their demands, refusing to row me to the ship unless I agreed to pay what I knew was far beyond the regular charge. By this time I was almost out of patience; so I settled myself comfortably in the boat, and told them that there was no hurry, and I could sit there as long as they liked, but I would neither get out nor pay anything till we reached the ship, when they should have what the officer said was right, and no more. This emphatic statement at last prevailed, and thus characteristic was my first glimpse of Egyptian life and manners. Unblushing extortion from all who can be cheated or frightened into submission is the native rule alike in Egypt and in India; and it was with real pleasure and relief that I

stepped upon the deck of a home-bound ship, and found myself among Englishmen once more.

The first night, however, brought me into unpleasant contact with a vice more disgusting and degrading than any I had encountered abroad. Among the passengers was "an officer and a gentleman," a young man of good position and refined appearance, whose habits of nightly intoxication made him a nuisance to the whole saloon and all the passengers in the adjoining cabins. The first evening, while still a stranger to all on board, I was fortunately warned by the noises in his cabin that I had an unpleasant neighbour; but as no keys or bolts are allowed on board ship, there seemed no precaution available. I took the only possible safeguard by fastening the cord of my trunk across the door, and it was well that the idea suggested itself; for he wandered out of his cabin in the middle of the night, and mistaking the doors on his return, tried to open mine, and fell down against it, in a state of helpless intoxication. But for my precaution he would have fallen into the middle of my cabin—a pleasant predicament truly for an unprotected lady!

After this adventure, of which the captain was necessarily informed, I did obtain a key; but the unhappy man continued to be a nightly source of anxiety and discomfort to every lady on board, and it certainly seemed hard that no restraint was put upon his ceaseless consumption of intoxicating drinks. The rule at that time on the Peninsular and Oriental steamers, was to charge an inclusive fare for all, ladies and gentlemen, abstainers and drunkards alike, so that sober passengers were actually taxed to pay for the indulgence which made others a general pest, but this is happily now altered, the passage-money being considerably lowered, and wine and spirits charged as extras.

The passage between Alexandria and Malta was

very rough one, the third night really awful, the ship pitching, rolling, and straining, with tremendous crashes at intervals. One of the boats was stove in, and one of the hatchways carried away; and we heard afterwards of a ship not far from us being driven ashore and wrecked; and learned that prayers for those at sea were said in the churches of Malta through all that stormy night.

We reached the island early in the morning of the fifth day, and went ashore as soon as possible. As far as we could judge, it is a bare-looking spot, but Valetta itself is a picturesque town, the streets literal flights of stairs, and the houses covered with projecting windows painted green. The Cathedral is rich with a costly but not impressive magnificence, full of gilding, inlaid floors, and huge monuments to the Knights and their Grand-Masters. After a hurried survey of these, we took one of the little open country cars and drove to the Franciscan convent, which is remarkable for the custom of disinterring the deceased monks after a year's burial, and setting them up in niches round the walls, the soil being antiseptic in its properties, and causing the corpses to assume the character of mummies. They are merely clothed in the brown habit of the order, and placed upright in the niches, a bar across the front breast high, preserving them from falling. It was a strange weird sight, the half-lighted passages with the gaunt mummies standing round, waiting till the bones should fall apart, when they would be consigned to another place. Over each is put the date of death, but I did not notice any very old. They stood in various attitudes, some with hands folded on the breast, others stiffened in less peaceful postures, some leaning forward, with their brown shrivelled faces full in view, the teeth painfully prominent between the shrunk lips, others almost hidden in the

coarse hoods of their sackcloth garments; and the monk who guided us moved among them stolid and unconcerned, apparently untouched by any thought of the time when he too should stand there, the unconscious object of idle curiosity to any passing traveller.

It was strange to emerge from this charnel house and wander through the gay shops of Valetta, rich in curiosities, gold and silver filagree work, and lace; but the loveliest things we saw that day were the bouquets of bright and sweet-scented flowers with which itinerant venders beset us in the streets, and which lighted up our cabins all the way home.

From Malta to Gibraltar the weather was beautiful, though cold, and so calm that there was little suffering from sea sickness. Ships were constantly passing, and the coast of Africa was seldom out of view. We reached Gibraltar on the eighth day of the voyage, and anchored for a few hours. The rock is very grand from the Mediterranean approach, rising almost perpendicularly from the sea; but on the harbour side it slopes all the way, and winding footpaths lead up to the top. We passed a fine rock on the African side, which I supposed must be the other pillar of stout old Hercules, but could learn no better name for it than Ape's Hill, though I have since found that the conjecture was correct. It is said to swarm with these animals, and from their occasional sudden appearance at Gibraltar in great numbers, some believe in the existence of a subterranean passage, but this appears exceedingly problematical.

The rest of the voyage was miserable in the extreme, cold and very rough; and when at last we neared the shores of dear old England, I was the only lady patriotic enough to face the bitter wind and drizzling rain that greeted our arrival. But it would have needed a deadlier chill to freeze the warm current of gratitude and gladness

upspringing at the sight of these longed-for shores, and I must leave my readers to picture to themselves the home-coming that crowned and ended my "Inland, Upland, and Overland" experiences.

If their record awakens in any heart a deeper feeling of gratitude for home mercies and comforts, and a more active interest in the condition of our Indian fellow subjects, it will not have been written in vain.

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