"Hullo! Babu, where in the world did you get that expression from? Do you know it occurs in Homer?"

"Ho—mare, Sar, what is that? Is it the doer of an action, the dweller of a home?"

"You Banerji Chatterji or Makherji, you Bose, Ghose or Mitra, you will be the death of me one of these days!" said the lord and master with a loud guffaw, as he banged the office door for the last time, and was soon ploughing his way over the fish-teeming sea.

No. XI.

THE PERSONAL ASSISTANT;

OR,

The Indian Magister Equitum.

JUST as each Roman Dictator had a Magister Equitum, so each head of a Department has a Personal Assistant. The Roman Master of the Horse was generally chosen on account of some connubial connection with the great man—but—well, let us hope that his Anglo-Indian prototype is chosen for being a "smart" man.

With the exception of young Brutus I do not at present remember any Magister Equitum coming to grief, for he was under the special protection of the Dictator and was

allowed to have the use of the body guard, so the Personal Assistant gets promotion in spite of himself and is allowed to have the use of the office chuprassis. By coming in contact with men much his seniors and sometimes his intellectual superiors, the Master of the Horse had many opportunities of judging of life and character. He must have been a miserable nincompoop if he could not make a fairly good guess at the will of the gods without referring to the Sybilline books or the oracle at Delphi. In the same way the Personal Assistant, being behind the scenes, gets early initiated into the mysteries of red-tapeism. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! how he does try to pad these mysteries up. He is always going about as though he were heavily loaded with great State secrets, nor can he be moved by concord of sweet sounds. If you ask him what's the matter and whether his internals are troubling him, he only replies:—"My dear fellow, we must proceed with caution. This is a desperate case, and everybody's retention in the department is at stake."

If the Dictator had any unpleasant job to do, you may be sure he passed it on to the Magister Equitum, so the Personal Assistant, by dirtying his hands, soon becomes a case-hardened sinner, forgetting that he shines by reflected—perhaps, too, refracted—light he becomes full of vain conceits. There is little or no iridescence. The spectra may be contorted, but on looking carefully you will see a genuine downright selfishness mixed with bombast. The Personal Assistant speaks as familiarly of the Government of India as maids of fifteen do of puppy dogs, or as married ladies in India do of going to the hills, while their husbands are left to grill in the plains.

At this distance of time it is quite impossible to say whether the Magister Equitum called himself M.E. Any how, being a mortal, he, no doubt, felt that M.E. was one of the best words in the language, so his Anglo-Indian descendant delights in the epithet of P.A.

As society is always more interested in the present than in the past or the remote

future, the Master of the Horse was always a welcomed guest at a small tea party. He was constantly consulted with regard to the state of health of the great man. What he said and what he thought, what he ate and what he drank, whether he was bilious or not. Of course Mr. M. E. assumed a lackadaisical air, put the first finger of the right hand to his upper lip, as much as to say "Mum" is the word, and cast furtive glances at the door. In a similar manner the Personal Assistant thinks that because some interrogatives are put to him, and he is able more or less to reply to them, that on that account—sometimes on that account *only*—he can pose as a man of genius and of universal accomplishment.

When a freshman is posted to the office, the P. A. kindly interests himself on his (the freshman's) behalf. Lets the youngster have tents, crockeryware, kitchen utensils, and furniture as a favor, which have been a decade in his possession, at somewhat above their par value. In addition, Mr. Aide-de-Camp treats freshman to any amount of

advice gratis on the rules in force in the department and how to get promotion by caution. Then, as a lasting remembrance, he (P. A.) lets him (Freshman) have the grass-cutter's famine "tat" for the modest sum of rupees one hundred and fifty. If the animal, instead of pretending to be a quadruped, had been a triped, there might have been some consolation, for the freshman might have sent the "tat" to the Zoological collection at South Kensington and thus received a modicum of fame for the rest of his natural life. Unfortunately, while the animal really does possess four legs only three are fit for use. To show that there has been no deception, Mr. P. A., before an admiring audience, consisting of his servants and the purchaser, exhibits his equestrianism.

> He vaulted with such ease into his seat
> As if an angel dropped down from the clouds,
> To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
> And witch the world with noble horsemanship.

Subsequently P. A. takes freshman into *the* office, and begins to explain such abstruse details that poor freshman is bewildered,

and, no doubt, becomes firmly convinced that P. A. is a Dictator *in embryo.* Looking over the drawing of a workshop, Mr. M. E. says with charming naïveté:—"Now, how would *you* design this factory chimney?"

To which the freshman, in the utmost innocence of his heart, replies:—"Divide the vertical column into n horizontal layers, let $\rho_1 \rho_2 \ldots\ldots\ldots \rho_n$ be the densities then we have $p = {}^{k}\rho\,(1 + {}^{a}\,)$. If we require the maximum height we differentiate, put the result equal to zero, substitute in the original expression and—there we are. If I remember rightly, the result comes out in logs."

* * * *

Surely the P. A. must have felt himself euchred for once?

No. XII.

THE GUARD OF THE BALLAST TRAIN;

OR,

Thrilling Adventures.

AT home to be a Guard it is necessary that a man should be so many yards high, chest and loins so many feet in circumference, so many inches round the waist and arms, a certain color of eye, hair, and teeth, even the twist of the moustache and turn of nose is restricted, so that no possible discretion is allowed to the individual. But we manage these things better in India. When we want a Guard we let it be known through our office babu, thus saving the Government rupee. The visitor makes his appearance.

We enquire if he can read and write, he affirms. We then ask if he has ever done this kind of thing before, he denies. We then look him steadily in the face for precisely 14½ minutes. If he does not blink but returns our stare with equanimity we come to the natural conclusion that he must be respectable. The *viva voce*—I mean *vis à vis*—examination is over and we appoint him Guard in the non-pensionable establishment on a salary of Rs. 40 to 65, according to the conclusion we arrive at. Now just think how simple all this is. Very few questions asked, no fuss made, and to all intents and purposes an examination *has* been held. Might not the Duke of Cambridge take a wrinkle from our method? The difference then between the English and Indian Guardsman chiefly lies in myopia. The Guard who had a glass eye would pass in honors in India, but would perhaps fail in his examination at home. The servant girl and perambulator are represented out here by the coolie woman and railway truck. Lastly, the Englishman is famous for breaking servants' hearts,

while his Aryan brother is equally notorious for breaking people's necks.

The Indian Guardsman starts life fully equipped with a set of tools for accident, a code of rules and regulations for future study, a firm conviction of doubling his salary by overtime, no bedding, a tin of tobacco, and a light heart. After some time he begins to reflect that all these precautions are unnecessary and wearisome. He leaves the tools at home, throws the code to the winds, and finally becomes firmer in his conviction of making overtime. Either from too much smoking or from excessive exposure he is overpowered by sleep and the once light heart is depressed. Then the first accident occurs. The train runs over a sheep, a buffalo, a tiger, or a something, the engine is derailed, and somebody wounded or killed. After a good deal of hastening to and fro and telegraphic messages without end the line is cleared. The Guard does not mind, for all this delay helps to make overtime.

One of the favorite occupations of the railway Cossack is to stop the train and go off

with the driver to shoot an imaginary tiger which an imaginary villager has stated has killed an imaginary child in an unheard of spot. A brother trooper comes along the single track, and, in defiance of Euclid's axiom that two things cannot occupy the same place at the same time, insists upon seeing a telescopic action. The trucks are made into matchwood, the brake is smashed into splinters only fit for bandaging in a hospital, the engine disabled for life, a few more lives are lost, but the Guard still makes overtime.

When two Guards wish to test the respective merits of one another's train, one is allowed a start of ten minutes, then the other follows with a "tally-ho" that would make the staunchest heart quiver.

Most charming and intelligent of readers, have you ever been on an engine and seen, say, half a dozen wagons going off to all points of the compass? For if so, I think you will admit that the sensation is a novel one and that you do not wish to experience it again.

I will report a true case which occurred in Rajputana. The rains had begun and the floods were daily expected. The ballast train was away from home. My bungalow was near a river over which I was building a bridge, but meanwhile a diversion of earth had been made to pass the train. Just before daybreak I was roused by the Guard tapping at my bedroom door. He came to say that the floods were down and the diversion looked shaky, would I give him leave to cross. I replied—

"Certainly not, I will ask for orders."

"Then how, Sir, are we to get home? If the diversion goes we shall be stranded here for four months or so."

"I am sorry for you, but I certainly decline to risk my professional reputation in such a serious matter."

"Come along, Bill," said the Driver to the Guard. "We will see if we can't rush it."

I accompanied the men to the river bank, and stood there to see the train pass.

Full steam is put on, the whistle screeches uninterruptedly, apparently to deaden the

senses, down the incline rushes the engine with the speed of lightning, crack goes the bank, the engine has just sufficient strength to plough her way up the other side, for the trucks are empty. On looking back you see nothing but a yawning chasm, a maddening, frantic torrent, and you wonder how the Guard and Driver were not whirled into eternity and whether each has more than one life.

* *

Come away, come away, we will not linger by the scene. Other Guards will come and go, other accidents will take place, but the memory of the rushing torrent and the cracking bank will long haunt my steps like an unpleasant dream.

No. XIII.

De GARMIBUS;

OR,

Our Own Hot Weather.

IT was a nice tepid evening towards the latter end of August. Messrs. L., M., R. were sipping liquids, while N., who had a dose of fever, was lying on an easy cane chair suffering—only suffering. L., M., N. were engineers; R. belonged to the Telegraph. L. was the host. M., though an Oxonian, was not endowed with any brilliant quality. N. was a bit of a scientist, but the most remarkable of the four men in some respects was R. I am afraid he had not drunk deep at any Pierian spring, or, if he had done so, the

spring must have supplied mixed liquors which had helped to addle his brain. It was quite impossible to meet a man who could talk more condensed nonsense in half an hour and yet clothe that nonsense in such beautiful language that it really was a pleasure to listen to him. R. would not have the slightest hesitation in stating in public that Johnson wrote the Drapier letters, that Swift was the author of Robinson Crusoe, that Dryden penned L'Allegro, or that DeFoe composed Tristram Shandy. In my hot youth I was inclined to be argumentative and occasionally fell foul of R., for I objected to a lot of inaccurate statements being forced down my throat *nolens volens*. I remember once beginning a sentence with—

"As Milton says in the Areopagitica"——

"What!" roared R.

I collapsed, and totally forgot what Milton *did* say.

R. was sometimes most provoking in his ways. Not content with knocking the lawn-tennis balls out of court every time he touched them, when the game was over and you

sat down to a quiet peg and cheroot he would disturb your reflections with—

"The οἱ πολλοί you know."

Now I maintain that 99 out of 100 reasonable beings don't care a rap about the οἱ πολλοι when the temperature is over 105° and the day's work is over. They can only think of their own immediate miseries, consisting of mosquito bites, prickly heat, and loss of appetite.

Our Civil Surgeon was a B.A. and M.D. of Dublin, and gauged R. pretty well. There may have been a tinge of jealousy at R.'s popularity, but I shall never forget the way in which he once said behind R.'s back—

"Confound that fellow R.; I don't believe he knows the second aorist of τυπτω."

After this digression let us return, not to our muttons, but to our drinks.

Messrs. L., M., R. were sipping liquids.

Says L., vaguely, "We ought to have some rain soon."

M. adds, "Confoundedly clammy and sticky, isn't it?"

Then R., seeing his opportunity, majestically propounded this beautiful maxim—

"The air, being a chemical compound and not a mechanical mixture until the electricity of the clouds meets the supersaturated vapor of the ocean—by Ohm's law—it is impossible for us to anticipate that the portals of heaven will open and the much-needed rain descend."

Sweet reader, did you ever hear anyone talk in this way? They may have done so in the last century. Except R., I never heard anyone go on in this pedantic manner, though Bulwer Lytton would have us believe that the upper ten always carry this bombastic style about with them. Let us hope not.

Such labour'd nothings in so strange a style
Amazed the unlearn'd, but made the learned smile.

The conversation was here interrupted by the khansama saying that dinner was on the table.

The gentlemen went in. L., M., R. sat at table. N. lay down on the sofa while dinner was served. Had nothing more occurred this memoir might not have been written,

but R. was so pleased with that rounded paragraph of his containing "chemical compounds and mechanical mixtures" that he persisted in his endeavour to make the audience swallow the dose a second time.

Suddenly N. raised himself on his elbows. Glaring at L., M., R., he exclaimed, "I say, you fellows, I can't allow this, you know," and fell back prostrate.

R., like a good fellow as he was, coming up said, "Poor fellow, take a peg, you will be better soon."

L. ordered soup while M. opened a soda-water bottle. When quiet was restored, N. said, feebly—

"Will you kindly allow me to have a little atmosphere of my own. For heaven's sake let it be a mechanical mixture and *not* a chemical compound."

Here was a thunderclap, but not the one that was expected at this time of the year.

L. was shocked, for he imagined a quarrel was brewing, and pointed to the centre of his forehead, as much as to say that N. was rapidly sinking.

M. nodded assent.

R.'s fiery nature could not brook an insult to his pet theory, so lately propounded and so nobly maintained.

"What do you mean?" sneered R.

"Well," replied N., "I only wish to maintain that the air is a mechanical mixture and not a chemical compound.

"Proofs—quick."

"Yours," said N.

"Ah, I knew I got him there," grinned R., looking for approval at L. and M.

"Here they are," retorted N., jumping out of bed and rushing to the side of the table near R. as though he was throwing the proofs at him.

"Four in number—*First*, the proportion of oxygen and nitrogen in the air is not that of their atomic weights nor of any simple multiples of those weights; *secondly*, if we bring oxygen and nitrogen together in the proportion in which we find them in the air —no—rise—alteration—place—yet—gases combine——; *thirdly* ——."

* * * * *

Meanwhile L. and M. had rushed in to separate the combatants, L. saying, "This won't do—this is my house, and I am not going to allow a free fight."

In a short time the combatants had quieted down and were as great friends as before.

Need it be added that the dinner was taken away almost untouched, that the whole of that night Messrs. L., M., R. tossed about without refreshing sleep, inasmuch as the atmosphere would insist upon being, a mechanical mixture and *not* a chemical compound.

No. XIV.

THE LOCOMOTIVE POSTILION;

OR,

The Greatest of Biographers.

THE model Locomotive Superintendent is one of the most industrious labourers on behalf of science in this country. He believes that he alone knows the peculiar style of engines suited for an Indian climate. Classes A, B, C are not sufficiently comprehensive, so he determines to have a nomenclature of his own. He knocks off the tenders of two engines, turns them back to back, glues them together, and calls the combination a fairy or "Fairlie." Or he makes the axles revolve in their bearings and calls the hideous outturn

a "bogey." Or, again, he adds another arch to the fire-box, deluding himself that he can thereby save coal, and then calls this class a "Beauty" or a "Beattie."

All this is very fine till the bill reaches the Examiner of Accounts, who then asks, "By whose orders have these changes been introduced?" Mr. Steersman, though astonished, replies boldly, "By his orders and on behalf of Science."

Then comes the Comptroller's usual polite reply:—

"*Has the honour to state that the Examiner of Accounts is not aware of any Science and Art Department in this country. No doubt posterity will be indebted to the Locomotive Superintendent for these interesting experiments, but, meanwhile, the expense incurred on these experiments is debited to the Locomotive Superintendent's personal account pending receipt of orders from some superior authority.*"

After much trouble the sanction is obtained. Since the receipt of the Examiner of Accounts' letter Mr. Charioteer has ceased to be an enthusiastic admirer of science.

A change now comes over the spirit of the locomotive postilion's dream. From being gay he becomes soured. His whole object now seems to be to reduce expenditure. He imposes fines, prevents as much overtime as possible, on the slightest provocation degrades or dismisses a man, and copiously substitutes native drivers for Europeans. Such peculiar phrases and words issue from his lips that if you did not know that he was harmless you might take him to be an associate member of the Corybantes. Fancy being in the constant buzz of "priming," "cylinder cocks," "stays," "injector," "link motion," "coupling," "governor's balls," "internal tubes," "deposit" and "donkey pumps." Really some of these are quite too shocking and should be expurgated.

Besides spending his engin-uoity in the workshop, Mr. Pilot is in charge of the Carriage Department. He can tell when and where each carriage was born, who were its father and mother, and how it was brought up. How many own brothers and sisters it had, how many

step ditto, how many accidents it passed through, how many miles it ran. If it ran hot why it didn't run cold, and if it ran cold why it didn't run hot, lastly how the wagon came to its timely or untimely end. Having stuffed all this information into his pigeon-hole, the taskmaster folds his hands together, and, like little Jack Horner when he pulled out a plum, says "What a good boy am I."

When a Chief Commissioner or a Lieutenant-Governor passes up the Line, the Loco. Charioteer gets on the footboard, takes the regulator in his hand, rolls about a piece of waste, allows coaldust and soot to settle on his face and beard, pretending to like them, puts on an apron and fancies that he looks the thorough workman. Everybody, however, sees through the thin disguise, and the train is much worse driven than usual. Not content with having sufficient work to do as a recorder, in his next stage he takes to reading lessons and prayers in the goods shed and tries to put on the demeanour of a Christian philosopher. One cannot help wondering with Macaulay whether he has the calmness

of the philosopher or the meekness of the true Christian. In the last stage the master of the iron horse busies himself to establish schools for the children of his subordinates. Should he be successful, he constitutes himself secretary, treasurer, patron, and chief examiner, but seldom chief endower.

One day a Locomotive Superintendent was examining his first and, let us hope, his best class. He noticed that a suspicious looking youth was holding something in a mysterious way, by keeping his hand tightly closed. Could it be a *gelabi* or lollipop? He ordered the culprit to stand up, and under penalty of all that was horrible to open the palm of his hand. The youth obeyed. A small piece of crunched up paper fell on the floor of the compartment where the examination was being held. The patron's lips turned ashy pale and with trembling hands he read—

1. Define caloric. What are adiabatic lines?

2. Calculate approximately the value of—

* * * * *

The rest was unintelligible.

No. XV.

THE INDIAN LICTOR;

OR,

The Man of Many Wiles.

THE Khalassie is an invariable adjunct to the household of every Engineer in the Public Works Department, whether in camp or on construction.

In Moghal times a khalassie meant a tent pitcher, and as the tents were very fine and large the man was able to enjoy a good deal of umbrage too. If ever there was a Canvas Department under the British Raj it was only kept up as a tent-ative measure, and under financial pressure has been abolished, so that the lascar has to find scope for his abilities in other fields.

At a push and when his master's camp has gone astray Ram Bakhsh can convert himself into a cook, in an inconceivably short space of time producing milk, a grilled chicken, some boiled rice with country sugar, a savoury chapati mixed with dál, and also some fresh fruit—enough at least to stave off the pangs of hunger. This service is only necessary for "griffs," as seasoned blades do not permit their camps to go astray. Mr. Tentpitcher would not have the slightest hesitation in pandering to some of your other vices if you allow him, but as a rule sanction is withheld. Khuda Baksh is often a keen sportsman, he can mark down a partridge like a retriever and spot a deer with the certainty of binoculars. Thus he shares his master's good fortune, for the entrails are generally given him. I have known a khalassie beat the proverbial 1000 miles in 1000 hours, for he went over 100 miles in less than two days. I doubt if Western could beat that record if he lived on the same fare. Western, no doubt, objects to thorns, Mr. Khuda Bakhsh does not seem to do so. The Indian Lictor talks

as familiarly of châ-uns, leevils, pita and lines as we do, of making a trip to Australia or going home on three months' leave. Perhaps one of the best uses to which Ram Bakhsh's head can be put to is that it forms a good carriage for the theodolite, the pugri acting as a cushion for the instrument. Lascars have also been taught to play cricket and lawn tennis and take a relish in these pastimes. Ram Bakhsh's *fasces* consist of rolls of drawings called nakhshahs, which are put in a tin case. He carries these about with as much pride as though they were personal property and he pretends also to understand the full purport of them. When thinking of the grand old epic, one cannot help exclaiming—

> Oh! Merdan man of many wiles
> Thou great Ram Rotten's son.

For possessing all these accomplishments Ram Bakhsh gets the magnificent salary on the non-pensionable establishment of 6 rupees, or 8 shillings, per month. In England you can scarcely get a labourer to do as much work for a single day. Some masters are very hard on their khalassies, they expect that

these men will dance attendance on their lordships' pleasure for the whole twenty-four hours continuously, and they expect to buy the man's body, soul and spirit when they engage him. If Ram Bakhsh is absent at the particular moment he is required he is fined. The result sometimes is, that Mr. Ram Bakhsh, in addition to giving his services free, gratis and for nothing, is obliged to pay the paternal Government for his apprenticeship.

The Roman lictors, when accompanying a triumphal procession, were permitted to carry *laurelled* fasces. The Indian representation of this scene will be met when you come across a survey party, for you will notice a dozen lascars or so carrying "jhandis" or poles with flying banners.

Besides all the duties mentioned, Ram Bakhsh has to carry letters to unknown individuals, make arrangements for his master's camp in unknown villages, and do all manner of unknown works at unknown times. Occasionally one is compelled to entrust large sums of money and cheques to his care, yet the frauds that occur are few and far between.

As soon as a set of khalassies has been chosen, rivalry commences among them as to which one is to become his master's *confidant.* In a short time you will see that intricate matters of State requiring caution and secrecy are alone entrusted to one, while petty jobs are allotted to the others. The favored one soon rejoices in the soubriquet of "Jemadar" or "Tîndâl." If a Hindu, the suffix "ji" is added, if a Mussalman, "khân." All desirous of intercourse with his master invariably address the factotum with respect. Perquisites flow into the coffers of this *chargé d'affaires,* and after a time he puts on the appearance of a distinguished foreigner, which he copies from the Personal Assistant.

Ram Bakhsh's changes of raiment now become frequent, he carries about a pocket mirror into which he constantly peeps, one of the other khalassies cooks his food, fills his hookah and generally assists him in performing his ablutions, lastly, his bedstead is of the best nawar and his hair is well greased.

Alas! alas! Must I make a revelation? The sentiment in my composition rebels from making further disclosures, but stern duty as a historian compels me to brush aside the sentiment. In the final state you will notice that Ram Bakhsh takes to, first, breeches, then a coat, and lastly patent leather boots, in a word, he has thrown off the Spartan simplicity and become a Roman citizen.

Lascars consider themselves entitled to the same table of precedence as their masters. The khalassies of a Superintending Engineer sneer at those of an Executive Engineer, while these latter look with sublime contempt upon the men engaged by the Assistant Engineer.

Some wags tell us that when the British are kicked out of India, the only signs of their greatness which will remain will be the number of beer bottles. At any rate, let us hope that the shadow of Khuda Bakhsh will long continue as the fag-end of the paramount power which could convert a tent pitcher into so useful and ornamental a member of society.

No. XVI.

THE STAFF CORPS OFFICER;

OR,

A Carefully Arranged Disorder.

ABOUT half a century ago the paramount power came to the conclusion that a military despotism was not alone sufficient to save India, that civil administration was absolutely indispensable. Only military men being available, a draft was sent into the Police and Post Office, a company into the Forests and Surveys, a few selected ones became magistrates, while a contingent was reserved for the Public Works. The necessary and sufficient conditions for equilibrium, as we say in Mathematics, for any department were—

(*a*) The rudiments of the vernacular.

(*b*) A threat of a future examination in the particular branch selected, which threat was not always carried out.

(*c*) A nomination by a member of Council or Lieutenant-Governor.

Certainly it was possible for any member of this phalanx to lay the foundation of future eminence, but did he choose to do so ? It is possible that the blue coat, shining epaulettes, gold lace, and crested paper were to blame. Perhaps the coming K.C.B. made his eyes water, or perhaps he was too old and too proud to learn.

When a fellow of this fraternity was ushered into any Civil Department there were great rejoicings at his expense and the usual flourish of Military tom-toms. The initiated one soon found that he had obtained that bourne for which we all long, or, as we call it in India, a *baithne ka jagah*, in other words, his post was a sinecure. Besides receiving the Civil pay he obtained a certain proportion of Military batta for the up-keep of the gold lace and epaulettes which did not exist.

I once asked one of the shining lights of this "Cabal" if he always carried about his Staff uniform. He replied in the most brazen-faced way—

"Certainly not. I had one for several years, but it got too small for me. Since then I have not purchased another."

"How do you manage to attend the levées at Government House?"

"I always avoid them."

"Do you consider," I said, "that your conduct is honorable? You are paid for having a uniform which you freely admit you do not possess."

"What's that to you," he growled.

As he got up to go away I fired a parting shot. "Considering that we are brother-officers, that probably my education cost double yours, that you get more pay than I do for the same work, that your pension is in sterling when mine is in rupees, it is only natural I should take considerable interest in the state of your health. Moreover, I hereby offer to feed you on pistachio nuts as long as you will eat them in my presence."

That satrap went away very sick and no doubt behind my back has spread the report that I am a low fellow of the baser sort. There may be geniuses among the Staff Corps officers. I can only state that the men I have come across are quite mediocre in ability, and, in addition, extremely timid in bearing responsibility. Yet these men are paid more than Civil Engineers, who are always willing to carry their fair share of burdens.

The Staff Corps officer who joined the P. W. D., like Ulysses with the Sirens, at once resolved to repel all attacks to rob him of his post—and to a very great extent he succeeded. To do so it was necessary to encase himself in a pachydermatous hide. After being a short time in the department this is easily acquired. He was very fond of being addressed by the ladies as Captain Fitzdoodle or Major Artaxerxes and entirely ignored his departmental rank. How fond he was of these magic letters—

Bo. S. C.
M. S. C.
B. S. C.

What could they mean? Surely not Bore of the School of Cheltenham, Member of the Star Comedy, or British Security Company?

In the old days Captain Fitzdoodle's first duties consisted in collecting coolies in his verandah or compound and teaching them to break ballast, screen surkih, or scarf wood. His next attempt seems to have been to find out rates for projects which were never sanctioned. These attempts gave rise to a series of problems which could only be solved by higher Algebra known as Indeterminate Fractions. The problems may have been interesting, but they were certainly intricate as they involved few known and many unknown quantities. Take an example—

I can hire a woman for 2 annas a day, and a woman can grind so many square feet of pucca plaster per diem, how many women do I require? What shall I have to pay? Is it not possible for me to get her to grind more? What is the limit of her grinding powers?

As long as Major Artaxerxes restricted himself to these innocent recreations not much

harm could be done. A time, however, came when he had to design barracks and build bridges. Now, he found to his disgust that the barracks tumbled down. Then he elaborated a lovely theory and proved by *reductio ad absurdam* that his design was on the most approved principles, and that either his barrack was still standing or that every other barrack must eventually topple over.

The bridge being completed, to commemorate the event, Major Artaxerxes put into the parapet a handsome tablet, giving his name in all the majesty of capital letters followed up by those mysterious terminals, so that any one who drove along the bridge might read. The name of contractor and cost were omitted, as these statements are two vulgar for eyes polite. When the bridge was washed away a new gorgeous theory was hatched, which showed that it was impossible to calculate or that practice had not yet empirically determined the frictional resistance of the soil or the adhesion of mortar.

Finding that the department did not give

sufficient scope to his talents professionally, Captain Fitzdoodle determined to sparkle socially, or, at any rate, to obtain notoriety. One went about in shabby clothes and a dirty shirt, a second might be heard spouting Voltaire. I myself have seen a third on his knees in camp with the purdahs of his tent open at 8-30 A.M. when he should have been in the field. No doubt His Highness was thanking the Almighty that he was not as other men were, that his lot had been cast in pleasant places, and that he had a goodly heritage. Perhaps the greatest monomaniac of this league was the man who had the hardihood to appear on all occasions out of doors without a hat—even on the Mall at Mussoorie.

Let us take the most charitable view. The Staff Corps officer perhaps was not to blame after all, for instead of climbing up from the bottom rug of the ladder he was pitchforked into the centre of the department, where his promotion was kept up as a credit to his military rank. However, the Government of India has wisely determined to reserve his

sphere of usefulness to the political area, where, let us hope, he will flourish.

E'en I must raise my voice, e'en I must feel
Such scenes, such men destroy the public weal.
Altho' some kind censorious friend will say,
What art thou better, meddling fool, than they?
And every brother rake will smile to see
That miracle—a moralist in me.

No. XVII.

MAJOR RISKIT, R.E.;

OR,

The Model Manager.

ABOUT 14 years ago, when it was necessary to open the first State Railway, the Government of India began to look about for men with long heads, stout hearts, and angelic dispositions. Such a man was found in Major Riskit.

> Genteel in personage,
> Conduct and equipage,
> Noble by heritage,
> Generous and free.

If Major Riskit were entrusted with the duties of a Chief Commissionership, Politi-

cal Agency, and Governor-General in Councilship, bottled-up and condensed, he would discharge them all and not grumble. Naturally he would also like to be paid for doing so. Will man serve Government for naught?

The story of Major Riskit's promotion runs thus.—He was a Junior Executive Engineer in Sind, and one evening fell asleep in his long arm chair after dinner while his legs were cocked up. He dreamt that a redbearded man in loose flowing pyjamas was beckoning him.

"Whither," said Major Riskit.

"To Rajasthan," replied the shade.

"What for?"

"To be Manager."

"Thanks, much obliged. I will accept the job."

Major Riskit rubbed his eyes, when, lo! and behold, a red-bearded man was holding an official letter in his hand. This letter contained the very appointment.

Dear reader, that was quite a coincidence, wasn't it? The only difference between the

substance and the shadow was, that the substance did not wear loose flowing pyjamas.

I may as well take this opportunity of drawing the notice of the Public to the fact that if you are a C.S. or an K.E. in India, you have intelligence enough to hold any appointment. You can be an Accountant-General, Conservator of Forests, Political Agent, Lord High Admiral, or Inspector-General of Police. If, however, you happen to be a C.E. or a B.A., you don't possess any brains at all. You are only fit to be chemist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon or 'pothecary, ploughboy, thief.

The Traffic, Locomotive, and Engineering Departments first of all claim Major Riskit's attention. The Traffic with its Superintendents, station masters, guards, clerks, ticket-collectors, and small fry is always wanting something it cannot have or doing something it ought not to do.

The Locomotive Department is constantly wishing to make experiments in "Bogies" or "Fairies," to start schools, keep biographies, or preach sermons in goods sheds. While the

Engineers are invariably wrangling for promotion, staff quarters, and flood openings. To keep them quiet, Major Riskit allots to each Department a certain sum of money per quarter. When **It**—with a big **I**—wants more, **It** must send in a special requisition.

If a washaway occurs, the Engineers repair the damage and blame the Traffic and Loco. The Traffic demonstrates to its own satisfaction that the engines must have been exceeding the regulation speed and that the Engineers, as is their wont, gave a bad road. The Loco. believe that the Engineers out of sheer vindictiveness ordered the floods, and that the station-master, as per usual, was asleep. This paper warfare would go on *ad infinitum*, when the Manager puts his foot down and stops it.

Meanwhile some gubernatorial swell or badshah has been deprived of his pomphlets or the English Mail has been delayed, then Major Riskit comes in for some wholesale abuse in the papers. "Victim" calls him a pickpocket, "One who was there" says that the Manager is not fit for the post. All the

crimes that can be committed together with a few that cannot be committed are attributed to his negligence and want of foresight. Major Riskit, however, bears up philosophically and smiles in his sleeve, as *that* man always does, who knows that he has done his duty faithfully.

The Banias, the outside Public, and the Examiner of Accounts next disturb the Manager's peace of mind and would rob him of his self-respect. The Banias either in single file or in battalions inundate Major Riskit with petitions demanding a reduction of rates. With or without provocation claims are sent in for damages, which the Banias attribute to the elements and fervent heat, to water, earth, or heaven, to the Wrath of Durga, to good or bad fortune, to robbery or misdemeanour, to the will of the gods or to gun-cotton and other explosives. The outside Public demands a free pass because he is a poor man, and will ever pray for Major Riskit's long life and for his prosperity, or, he is a nautch-girl and has a special invitation to a certain nawab. Or he is ill with

cholera, fever, or snake-bite, and requires a coffin, ice, or kaskas tatties. Or, lastly, that he (the outside Public) has the ladies of the zenana with him, and must have a special in less than no time in order to prevent being gazed at by inquisitive eyes.

But the man, however, who harrows up Major Riskit's bones and brings the iron to his soul is the Comptroller of Accounts. In utter despair the Manager gives the Examiner an interview and says:

"The principle on which I work is this. If I have £100 and spend £99 I am happy, but if I spend £101 then I ought to be miserable."

To which old Sundries calmly replies, "My dear fellow, the case is not so simple as all that. Bless my soul, don't you see that profit and loss, exchange, refunds, and miscellaneous advances come into the question."

What *can* Major Riskit do but shrug his shoulders or yawn?

In addition to all these duties, the Manager must act as Commandant of the Volunteers, provide theatres, billiards, and dances

for subordinates, refreshments and drinking-water for passengers, and consult with other Managers.

Major Riskit's cup of agony is not yet full, at 2 A. M. his rest is disturbed by a telegram.

FROM SIGNALLER, JANGALPUR. TO MANAGER, AKLABAD.

Tiger jumping about station platform, pointsman afraid to go too near points. I am on the roof top and cannot reach instrument. Please arrange sharp.

No. XVIII.

THE EUROPEAN SUBORDINATE;

OR,

The Anglo-Indian at home.

EUROPEAN Whippers-in were first imported for special jobs and for a specified time. Those who gave satisfaction were enrolled permanently on the staff and had to do a number of things for which they were quite unfit. For example, how could a carpenter or a mason be expected to survey? Some, however, succeeded so well that they were made officers, but the services of the majority were dispensed with. The Government of India then resolved to give European soldiers an engineering educa-

tion in one of the Indian Colleges so as to fit them for all reasonable requirements in the P. W. D.

The line of demarcation between the upper and lower crust is strongly marked in India. This line is "unconformable," as geologists would say, the superimposed resting on the upturned edges of the lower strata. Still cases of intrusion do occur, for we now have an honorary rank which has given satisfaction to some deserving men.

The duties of subordinates consist chiefly in keeping muster sheets of labour employed, daily reports of receipts and issues, and measurements of materials at site. This being a daily routine, is no doubt irksome, and requires that a man should be constantly on the *qui vive* to prevent errors. We are all liable to fall, so does Mr. Thomas Atkins. When picked up and wigged, he becomes ill or goes out shooting or neglects his work. The blackest mark, however, that can be brought across him is that he is sometimes intemperate in his habits. I am afraid it is a case of *facile est descensus averni*, and the

cause is not far to seek. Man is a gregarious animal, and when away from companionship for a long time, fits of depression seize us all, how then can we expect that Tommy should be free from them? I am glad, however, to bear witness that we have lately begun to get a better set of men, intelligent, sober, and reliable.

It is true that a European subordinate can get through more work than a native while he is at it, but he is so seldom at it that the consensus of opinion is in favor of the native. This equerry-in-waiting is not always thankful for the protecting ægis of the Assistant or Executive Engineer When he tries to work without this shield, he finds that the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune (promotion) are not so easy to bear.

The relation between officers and men would certainly be more cordial than it often is, if the former would always remember that—

> Men should be taught as if you taught them not,
> And things unknown proposed as things forgot.

When a soldier joins the P. W. D. he is apt

to imagine that he is freed from all restraint, in other words, that it is not necessary for his shoulders to carry braces any longer. He soon finds out his mistake, and that man is the happiest who does not err twice in the same offence.

The European vassal can seldom afford to go home, so he marries out here. In former times, in a fit of melancholia, like the gentleman who was annoyed with his Amy, he was liable to cry aloud, "I will take a native woman, she shall rear my dusky race." One is glad to find that this is the exception now.

The amusements of Tommy Atkins in the jungles are necessarily few, and these few savour of the world, the flesh, and the ——, I mean are of the earth—earthy. Sometimes very earthy indeed, but why hurt his feelings by dilating on them?

It is at the subordinates' dance that the Indian bailiff distinguishes himself. Here the pent up energies of years of jungle life assert themselves. The Line has been completed, and Major Sniggles gets permission

from Government to have a subordinates' dance. Matters are soon brought to a crisis and the evening appointed. All the subordinates' relations, whose name is legion, are permitted to come. An especial excursion train is run to pick up his cousins, nephews, sisters, and aunts. His step-fathers, and step-mothers, and the stranger that is within his gates. The dance is unique of its kind. Tommy does not care for the valse *à trois temps* or *à deux temps*. He much prefers a romping lancers or quadrilles, a rollicking schottische, or a knock-me-down polka.

The glare and music are sometimes too much for the employés' feelings.

"So you are Mr. Pension, are you?" says a jolly engine-driver to an officer.

"That's my name," replies Pension. "Can I do anything for you?"

"Ye—es, ye ca—an af—words not now—you're a vé popla má—vé nice gem'an—vé ní gem'an in-deed——KISS ME."

Mr. Pension makes a hasty retreat from the refreshment bar to the ball-room and

mentally ejaculates that he is willing to go pretty far on such festive occasions, but really *this* exceeds the bounds of decency.

> Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife,
> To all the dancing world proclaim,
> One crowded hour of glorious life,
> Is worth an age without a name.

In the good old days the programme used to consist of two square dances and one round one. Just before the square dance you will notice that there is a great rushing about and bending of shoulders, if some bachelor's buttons don't fly kindly let me know. When the rush has subsided, you will notice that a number of pocket handkerchiefs are lying about the floor of the ball room. The floor looks very pretty with these variegated decorations, some with bank of England notes on the corner, others with Union Jacks, and others again with frill borders showing the work of taper fingers. If you are not initiated into the mysteries of pocket handkerchiefs,*

* The pocket handkerchiefs are intended to mark the spot where each couple will dance.

you must pay the penalty by losing that dance. Now to lose the grand chain with its stampede is to lose something which everybody does not care to. It is not the ball room etiquette to ask a couple to be your hopposite *vis-à-vis*, but having your hopposite *vis-à-vis* you make the most of the hopportunity.

One of the masters of ceremonies, then announces in majestic tones, "Gentlemen, please take your partners for the next dance—lancers." The gentlemen as in duty bound obey. The band strikes up. Paddy O'Leary —a pucca Paddy—with the raven-haired Miss Macartney, rushes off to the place where his handkerchief is lying. His hopposite *vis-a-vis* appears, and Paddy intends to enjoy himself thoroughly in the intricacies of the maze. Suddenly the burly DaSouza in white trousers and a shooting coat, leads up the portly Mrs. MacDermot in an emerald corsage, lemon coloured jupe, carnation trimmings, iridescent with jewels. This couple place their back to Paddy and his partner, entirely obliterating them, and, what

is certainly irritating, begin to dance with Paddy's hopposite *vis-à-vis*. O'Leary is at first so dumbfounded that he can scarcely speak, but the Irish temper soon bubbles over. DaSouza being in a delicious state of entrancement declines to notice Paddy, who has been trying to catch his eye. Mr. Pension, who has been sitting behind and has been an observer of the scene, advises Paddy to retire, as he looks foolish. Before doing so Paddy pulls DaSouza's coat—not tails, for he has none, but the hinder part of his garment—and says,—

"Look ye here, my fine fellow, don't ye do this yere again, or by the Blessed Virgin I will chuck ye out of the winder, so that when ye come back ye may bring a better colour with ye."—*Tableau.*

* * * *

There is a rush of masters of ceremonies, one catches Paddy by the arm, another by the scruff of the neck, a third stands in front of him, and all say, "This is a respectable

company, you must behave yourself or go out." O'Leary appeals to Mr. Pension, who takes his part, and Paddy is let go with the severe reprimand not to use such obscene language or to make such a beast of himself in the future.

Then let us sing, long live the Queen,
And Paddy, long live he,
And when he next doth dance abroad,
May I be there to see.

No. XIX.

THE CHILDREN'S TREAT;

OR,

Mrs. Sniggles' Party.

MRS. SNIGGLES was the wife of Major Sniggles, the Engineer-in-Chief of a certain State Railway. Mrs. Sniggles was about to go to the hills. Before doing so she determined to give a children's treat to all the youngsters in the station. This was a great innovation on the part of Mrs. Sniggles, for society seldom sanctions such liberties in India. However, Mrs. Sniggles liked to have her own way sometimes, and I am delighted to say was, in this instance, nobly supported by her husband, who sent

to Calcutta for toys, bon-bons, crackers, and tamashawallas, in order that the treat might pass off with success.

There was to be no distinction between officers' children and subordinates' children—all were welcome. The only restriction was that there were to be no papas nor mammas. Some of Mrs. Sniggles' lady friends acted as chaperones for the girls, while two of the railway officers were told off to look after the boys. Any boy might be admitted provided only he was clean. Even this restriction need not have been made, for all the youngsters came nicely dressed in their very best holiday attire.

The treat was timed to begin at 3 noon. Just before the time the troops might be seen coming along the only street of Moulvipur in multitudinous array. There were fair little girls and dark little girls, fair little boys and dark little boys. There were ayahs with babies and ayahs without babies. Naughty little boys who had just left off playing with mud pies and good little boys who never played with mud pies. Wicked little boys

whose knicker-bockers were always in holes at the knees and angelic little boys whose knicker-bockers were never in holes. Dear little girls, pretty little girls, and sweet little girls. Little girls are seldom naughty because they seldom play with mud pies, and they are *never* wicked because they never make holes in the knees of their—knicker-bockers. Little girls who nursed their dolls and little girls who never nursed dolls. Ayahs who were very awkward before the Sahebs and were constantly pulling their chaddars over their faces and ayahs who were as brazen-faced as Jezebel. There were bearers who were faithfully devoted to their charges and bearers who were on the eager look-out for the main chance, chuprassis, paniers, ponies, and perambulators. As the children were arriving Mrs. Sniggles sang to her own accompaniment—

> He was a little tin soldier,
> One little leg had he;
> She was a little fairy-dancer,
> Bright as bright could be.

How the little faces brightened up and seemed

to enjoy the music. One of Mrs. Sniggles' lady-friends then accompanied, while one of the aide-des-camps sang—

Oh! My!!
She look'd so sweet and dress'd so neat,
The yaller gal that wink'd at me
Oh! My!!

This fetched the youngsters immensely, and they clapped their hands in ecstacy.

When all the little men and all the little women had collected, they were allowed to walk once round the table and see all the beautiful things kind Mrs. Sniggles had provided, but——they must not touch.

What nice things they were to be sure! Spongecakes, oranges, crackers, sweetmeats, walnuts, fruits, chocolate, and then that great big cake at the head of the table!

First of all the *tamashas* were ready, and everyone must go and see them. There were snake-charmers who were not poisoned by the snakes and who made the snakes hiss—oh so creepily—monkey-performers who made the monkeys 'salaam karo,' and bear-clowns who made the bears dance. What

fun the jugglers were! Pigeons came out of bottles and pistols where they ought never to have been, bouquets of flowers came out of an old hat, orange trees were made to grow in 10 minutes and real oranges were handed round to eat. Guns went off and no one was killed, hundreds of eggs were produced from a bag which could not possibly hold more than a dozen. There were *kusti-walas* who threw one another down without doing any harm. There were men who walked on their heads on a rope in the air and little boys who turned themselves inside out. But the youngsters seem to get the greatest fun out of the putlis or marionettes. The Mem Sahib who was always saying *kapra kahân-hai?* or *baba ko khabardar karo.* The Sahib who was always calling everyone the son of an owl or the child of a pig. The dhobi, the bhisti, the chuprasi, the khansama, how real they all seemed to be!

By 6 o'clock all the *tamashas* were over. Then came the greatest *tamasha* of all—now was the time to eat. The rooms were not large enough to hold all the little men

and women. So tables had to be placed in the verandah. At last every one was seated, and all could see one another.

The first part of the entertainment consisted of solid materials, such as boys and girls both like. Then the surprises began. In the centre of a bun one would come across a práline or a little China doll. In the crackers were rings, scarf pins, dunce's caps, aprons, paniers, and masks. Every little boy who was not afraid might put on a dunce's cap or a mask, and every little girl, similarly, might put on an apron or a bib! Then how funny everybody looked to be sure. The wicked little boys, who were afraid, would begin to cry, and the good little girls would go up to them and say, "My dear, don't be afraid; there is nothing to be frightened of." Then the tears would dry up, and everybody would be merry again.

The event of the evening was the cutting of the **Great Big Cake.** There was a ladder, and a fine little fellow had to go up with a great big carving knife. What a big man he looked! One gentleman held the little fellow on the ladder, while another gentle-

man held the little fellow's hand, while *he*—the little fellow of course—cut the cake.

Then how everybody stared, even the wicked little boys stopped from crying.

Well, the cake was cut and handed round. Then what do you think was in the centre? Why, a little tin box. When the box was opened, what do you think there was then? Why, there was another box, but of wood. When this box was opened, there was a walnut, which could also be opened, and when it *was* opened, what do you think there was? Well, only a small piece of paper, on which was written Hip! Hip!! Hurrah!!! Then what a shout the infant voices raised. Then how the wicked little boys cried out, and the good little girls comforted them! Then the fun began really to be fast and furious. How can I describe it all?

At last it was time to go home, and the party began to break up. Each little girl got a work-box, or a pin-cushion, or a doll, and each little boy got a gun, or a ball, or a Noah's ark, so every little man and every little woman went home rejoicing.

I am sure Mrs. Sniggles slept all the better that night, and felt all the happier for many days afterwards, for she had thrown a gleam of sunshine over the vast ocean of uniformity of so many young lives.

Ah me! What a long time ago it does seem that all this happened! The little men and little women have grown up to be big men and big women, all of whom earn their bread, and some of whom have no doubt married. Mrs. Sniggles herself has passed away. No doubt the **Great Big Cake** is often talked about still. No doubt, too, that every phase of that party has been discussed by many infant voices, the happy little faces, the eatables drinkables and constant surprises. No doubt, too, kind Mrs. Sniggles has often been thanked for her

Children's Party.

* * * * *

The lives of good women all remind us
We should make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints in the sand of time.

No. XX.

THE POOR COOLIE;

OR,

The Tortoise which Sustains the World.

WE, the Editorial WE, with a big W, had studied the coolie from the time of our landing in India, yet we were unable to get a sermon out of him, till Sir Ali Baba taught us to do so. We thank Sir Ali Baba. We will now unfold the results of our study, and commence by defining this creature as a *gelatinous micaceous albumenoid.* Those who have consumed the midnight gas over the exact sciences will have no difficulty in grasping our definition. Lest, however, the coolie should purchase this book, and would

expect more for his money, we will elucidate. The coolie is gelatinous because he is sticky, micaceous because he shines, and an albumenoid—ahem !—well because—he has been hatched, like most of us.

The coolie is the tortoise which sustains the world, which bears the elephant that carries the shikari who shot the tiger, which surrounded the house that India built. He is the fish which recovers the books which were lost by the chuprasi who was ordered by the Babu to give to the postmaster to send to the assistant, and which contained a reminder. He is the boar which supports the tusks which killed the hunter that carried the rider who handled the spear which had the flag 'Rule Britannia.' And so on in any progression you like, arithmetic, geometric, or harmonic. Without the noble coolie there would be no need of Jo(e) Hukms and strict veracities, men of bricks and mortar, or men of floods and estimates. Without him the Secretariat would be closed, and a board would announce "To LET." The Dictator Minor would have to go without his tiffin,

the Locomotive Superintendent could have no schools, nor preach sermons in goods sheds, nor would the Examiner of Accounts have any one to worry. Lastly, if the coolie were absent from this terrestrial sphere, the Staff Corps Officer would be a right sounding brass, and the personal assistant a tinkling cymbal

There are many kinds of coolies. There is the powerful Pathan who wheels a barrow and eats meat like the Feringi. The splenetic Bengali who lives on rice, the wiry Mahratta, strong-limbed Jat, or enduring Purbeah, who lives on barley or wheat. The lazy Oords who wander about with their (h)ordes of donkeys and goats devastating the country like a flight of locusts. The fallen Brahmin, the humbled Thakur, the ruined Bania or indigent Kumar, one and all are represented. Then we must not omit the Tamil or Telingi, who has begun already to speak Pidgeon-English, and when you land in his country accosts you with :—"Mastar, wanting Portar, Sar." This albumenoid seizes all your small hand packages, leaving the heavy

trunks to take care of themselves. If you catch him a flip with your walking stick he says, "Why Mastar beating Portar, Sar." Whether the coolie is descended from the Surajbans or Chundrabans, children of the sun and moon, is now uncertain, but we are quite sure that he can be called Khakibans or "child of the dust" Ikshwanshu or Buddha do not own him, yet State Railways do and are glad, sometimes, at his numerous offspring. The Mahabharat or Ramayan has failed to notice his adventures, not so Sir Ali Baba, K.C.B., or Mr. Gury Purwar, C. (I.) E.—Civil Indian Engineer. The coolie is not always a tree and serpent worshipper, for he will kill any snake and cut down any tree—if allowed—to cook his victuals.

The simple Wordsworth who elegaised an ass tells us that "men are but children of a larger growth." This seems eminently the case with Khakibans. In youth this albumenoid grovels, rolls, wabbles, and blossoms in the dust, and in manhood the knowledge thus acquired leads him to increase the height of the earthwork pillars left for

measurement in borrow pits, in the hope that the contractor or officer will be deceived.

Smiles in his "Self Help" gives an instance of a certain baker whom Sir R. Murchison dug up among the Grampians. This treasure knew more geology and botany than the V. P. R. S. Who can say then there may perhaps be coolies who know more about Local Self-Government than Lord Ripon, about statistics than Dr. Hunter, about opium than the British Public, or about Railway stores than the Director-General?

There is one accomplishment the Indian porter has—he just *can* swear. The Irish members of Parliament could not compete with him, the notorious fishwife of Billingsgate might run level at first, but Mr. Khakibans wins "hands down" in the end. To an English lover of justice there is something very unsatisfactory about the whole show. You expect a jolly rumble-tumble, a good mouth-filling oath, and an end to the matter, but you will be mistaken. The coolie starts by 'blessing' the other man's mother-in-law, this is quite allowable, then he goes

through the whole genealogical tree and winds up with the aunt—this is unfair to the aunt if she is a maiden.

Sir Ali Baba states that if you hold up a rupee in the desert of Bikanir you will soon get a crowd of coolies. This is scarcely fair to the men—for we must all live. I will stake my professional reputation, whatever that may be worth, that if you hold up a Bawbee in Timbuctoo or start a gold mine or a diamond digging in Kafoosalem you will soon have more Scotchmen about you than you know what to do with.

As yet there are no Trade-Unions among coolies, but that a gang of albumenoids can strike in more senses than one the following facts will show :—

The platelaying of a certain railway was being done. The sub-divisional officer noticed that the estimate was being exceeded, and wigged the German platelayer, who replied :—

" Sir, will you watch the platelaying for a few hours? Perhaps your presence will frighten the men, who are very idle and will not obey orders." The officer promised to do so,

when the next train arrived at the "tip" he was present. He noticed that the coolies gave their names as present to the timekeeper and calmly began to cook their food. He ordered them to work, and represented that they would have three hours' rest during the hot part of the day, from 12 to 3. As the men would not stir he ordered their names to be struck off the lists as "absent," and said they must leave the spot or work. Some were willing, others were not. To frighten the men he took some gravel ballast and threw it among the crowds. This was the usual method of procedure in that part of India. A pebble cut a woman's cheek a little. At the sight of blood the whole gang became riotous and set on the officer. Fortunately some of the coolies and the platelayer got round their master and prevented him from being mauled much. Meanwhile, one of the mates got on the officer's horse and rode to the nearest police station. Remarkable to state, policemen were soon on the spot, the ringleaders were captured, and got from 9 months' to 2 years' imprisonment. The officer

was "chaffed" and advised to take leave, he scorned to do so. The gang gradually returned to duty, the men became obedient, and the job was done under the estimate.

The coolie woman is in some respects an Amazon as she is a man-slayer, doing more real work than her husband. She differs from the Amazon in being "full breasted" and increasing the population.

The food and clothes of the Indian workmen are often very scanty. One cannot help sometimes wondering how they manage to coagulate the fibrin, casein, and other nitrogenised hydro-carbons necessary for the conservation of energy, which is so essential for their well-being. Gastric and pancreatic juices never trouble them, as there is no food for these juices to dissolve.

I am very proud of the paragraph before the last and have much pleasure in drawing the attention of the chemical examiner to it.

The recreation of coolies consists of beating a barrel-shaped drum called a tom-tom. Also riding in a ballast train and getting quite a picnic out of the process. The

albumenoid's imagination is keen. He fancies Sri Krishna Chand will drop down suddenly and will *Bhûmi kâ bhâr utâr enge*—relieve the world of its burdens, or that the rates will be increased every time an officer comes on inspection.

Why evil, unpleasantness, or misery should exist has puzzled the greatest philosophers. Some have railed at Dame Fortune, others, like the Benthamites, have tried to find the *elixir vitæ* in the happiness of the greatest number principle. There is no doubt that the present prevailing idea, that all evils arise from *early marriages*, is the correct one.

> For just experience tells in every soil
> That those that think must govern those that toil.

The Engineer, though he cannot permanently relieve the coolie, he can in his own little sphere mitigate the evil. He can insist upon the contractors paying the men regularly, he can on the completion of a job out of his own pocket distribute a few rupees' worth of sweetmeats. When a coolie is ill he can see that he goes to the hospital and

receives attention. Lastly, he can say a few kind words to the wretched man. *Agar tum khub kâm karogé tum aisa mota ho jaiga kih tumhara ghar ka admi bhi tumko nahin pahchanega*—" If you will work well you will get so fat (by earning money) that your own people won't recognise you."

These are the seeds that can be sown upon good ground, and will assuredly bring forth one hundred-fold.

No. XXI.

DE SCIENTIS;

OR,

How to account for the Himalayas.

MESSRS. P. and Q. were two Assistant Engineers who, with other members of a Survey Party, were up in the hills to plot their work. It was a bright morning in October, such a morning as makes the heart feel glad and the soul leap for very joy.

P. came to office and found Q. looking out of the window at the snows, with an incipient sanity smile on him as though he was revelling in something very delicious.

"How are you, Q.," says P. going up to him. "Glorious morning, isn't it?"

"Very well, thanks," replied Q.

A pause.

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"Well, Q., what's the matter with you? Are you in love or are the works of Nature so majestic that they have thrilled you."

"For Heaven's sake leave me alone, I am reflecting."

"Oh you are, are you? Reflecting, indeed. Now I wonder what in the world *you* could reflect on."

"I suppose," said Q., "you think I am always the light-hearted fellow I appear, and that I never *think*. If so, you are jolly well mistaken."

"Look at now," as my Irish tutor used to say, "if your reflections are really deep you should not be so selfish as to keep them all to yourself. You should let others benefit by them, the reflections should be published, stereotyped, and circulated throughout the wide world like Buddha's ashes. How do you not know that some poor sinner may not be saved, his soul put to the credit of your account, and any amount of wickedness prevented."