



ducing a sort of funnel, under which a water cask was put. Other birds now collected about the ship—the enormous white albatross, harbinger of storms, almost always on the wing, though it sometimes settled on the water astern of the ship in search of food; also some small birds, about the size of a duck, called Mother Cary's chickens, from some traditional stories of the sailors.¹

These changes denoting our approach to the tempestuous latitudes of the Cape of Good Hope, all hands were employed in putting the ship in the best condition for encountering the gales we might soon expect. The principal sails were taken down, and replaced by others—newer, smaller, and stronger. The long-boat, and yawl over it, placed between the main and foremasts, and the spars,—that is, spare timber for making new yards, booms, etc., arranged by the sides of the boats,—were made more fast by additional ropes. The important tiller rope for steering the ship was changed, and the great dining-table and other furniture were lashed down more strongly. Taking a hint from these precautions, I revised the state of my own concerns, repacking my things in my lockers, and strengthening the cords which held my great trunk to the deck. I also changed my canvas, putting by the light dresses I had lately worn, and taking out warmer clothing.

We soon had reason to see the expediency of these preparations, for after running a few hundred miles more to the south-east, which was now our course, we experienced suddenly, in the night, a very violent storm. I was awakened from my sleep by an unusual noise upon deck, and felt the ship pitching and straining very hard, being at the same time very much over on her larboard side. The gunner's mate, who came with a lantern to see that the port opposite my berth was properly secured, said "there was foul weather." Indeed the plunging of the ship, the whistling of the wind through the shrouds, and the bustle upon deck announced a heavy gale.

¹ See *Poor Jack*, Captain Marryat.



I heard the Captain's orders reiterated with impatience to the men in the tops to take in the sails. The ship, however, continued to labour a good deal; the gale was evidently increasing. The rain beat down the steerage, which was also illuminated from one moment to another by vivid flashes of lightning. Suddenly, the Captain came to the top of the companion ladder, not far from the door of my cabin, and putting down the end of his trumpet, called out three times, with a voice louder each time, "All hands upon deck!" "All hands upon deck!!" "All hands upon deck!!!"

This order, limited to urgent occasions, and the impressive tone in which it was delivered, might well inspire some uneasiness; but so insensible was I then of all danger at sea that I felt no alarm. As, however, every person was included in the command, I quitted my cot, hurried on my clothes, and made my way as fast as I could to the ladder, which I found crowded with persons hurrying upon deck. On reaching the top I witnessed such a night as I had never seen before. The violence of the wind seemed irresistible, the rain fell in torrents, and the lightning threatened the masts. All hands, sailors and passengers without distinction, were employed in executing the Captain's commands, the former in going aloft to furl, or reef, or send down the yards, the latter in working upon deck, manning the clue-lines, or halyards, or weather main-brace, to brace the main-yard to the wind; tasks in which I willingly took my part. The active exertions of the sailors succeeded in putting the ship in as safe a position as was possible, as far as respected the sea and wind, but the lightning increased, and became truly terrific. The Captain, seeing this, ordered the chain conductor to be brought from below, and carried to the main-topmast head, which operation, difficult and dangerous as it was "in an hour so rude," and in the intervals of perfect obscurity which succeeded the lightning, the sailors executed. The chain, descending along the rigging, was carried over the ship's side into the



sea. This was the only time I ever saw this expedient resorted to.

The storm continued all night, and the greater part of the following day, but as soon as the ship was put in as safe a situation as possible, the doctor, purser, passengers, and others not wanted any longer upon deck, were allowed to go below to change their wet things, and return to their beds. The Captain in this rough night, as well as on every similar occasion during our voyage round the Cape, displayed great energy and resolution. He walked the deck in the heaviest rain with apparent unconcern, refusing all covering not enjoyed by his officers and crew, and fully sharing their hardships and fatigues. A vigilant, active, hardy, undaunted seaman, he seemed indeed more formed for the bustle and dangers of a storm than for the quieter operations of fair weather.

A few days after we had another opportunity of observing the Captain's presence of mind and activity. Having, while at dinner, where his seat was in the middle of the table, fronting the head of the ship, observed several of the crew run to the side, it struck him that a sailor was overboard. In an instant he seized one of the knives, sprang—somewhat corpulent as he was—across the table, in the midst of the dishes, ran upon the quarterdeck, thence upon the poop, then aft to the stern, and cut away the life-buoy that was there suspended. With equal promptitude he ordered the ship to be brought-to, and the jolly-boat to be lowered and manned with an officer and four men. But, alas! though all this was done with extraordinary quickness, the unfortunate man went down before the boat could reach him, leaving his hat at the spot. As there were many albatrosses about, it was supposed that they had struck him with their immense beaks and made him sink. The loss of one of our number, of our family as it seemed, in such a way affected me much; indeed, it caused a most painful sensation throughout the ship. There seemed to be some reason for thinking that the man's death was



not accidental, some of the crew being of opinion that he had lowered himself down by a rope from the leeward bow. In any case, much credit was due to the Captain for his active and humane endeavours to save the man. The wind was so fresh and the ship going so rapidly through the water when he ordered her to be stopped that there was risk of the upper masts going overboard; and so high was the sea that it was considered dangerous for the boat to go out, and the sixth officer, who was selected to go in her, even showed some hesitation till he again received peremptory orders from the Captain. Indeed, she was so tossed about and apparently so overwhelmed by the waves as she was rowing about in search of the man that much anxiety was felt on board till she returned to us, bringing with her the life-buoy and the sailor's hat. I reached the stern soon after the Captain, and witnessed all this painful spectacle. The man seemed to be so near the buoy that I thought he would be saved; but the roughness of the sea probably prevented his seeing it.

Soon after this distressing event, having been more than two months at sea, we reached the longitude of the Cape, thus accomplishing the first great division of our voyage. Our thoughts and calculations had hitherto been confined to *this* point. We now began to think and talk of *India*, and to calculate our probable arrival at Madras, our first port, where the ship was ordered to stop on her way to Bengal. Since leaving the Bay of Biscay my time had been passed much in the same way: the greater part of the day in studying the Persian language, the evenings upon deck. I also applied part of my time to algebra, to which I was then partial, and to the reading of some of the many books with which my friends had provided me.

We passed the Cape nearly in the latitude of 45° , much too far to the south to be able to see it, the southern extremity being $34^{\circ} 23'$. We kept thus far to the south to get the westerly gales which prevail there, as well as to avoid the easterly current found near the land. Our course was now due east, the ship



being impelled at an extraordinary rate by a continued gale of wind from the west accompanied by a tremendous sea. We had scarcely any sail set but the foresail, or double-reefed foretop sail, with the forestay sail, which, though adding little to the progress of the ship, was useful in keeping her steady and in preventing her *broaching-to*, that is, turning into the *trough*, or hollow of the sea with her side to the wind and waves. This *running before the wind*, as it was called, though it advanced us most rapidly, was on that account not exempt from danger, it being difficult to keep the ship out of the perilous position above mentioned, in which there would be a great chance of her suddenly upsetting. In this rapid course it required four men at the wheel to steer her, and with all their exertion it was impossible to keep her in a straight line. She went *yawing* and rolling from one side to the other, her head varying many points from her true direction, as might be observed by the compass, or by the stars at night. A heavy sea striking her quarter, as she was then lying diagonally across the waves, might bring her head *farther* round and place her in the perilous trough so much apprehended. There was also danger of the immense waves which followed us *pooping the ship*—breaking over the stern, tearing away the poop, driving in the stern lights, and sweeping away everything from the upper deck—wheel, boats, spars, and often many of the crew.

But the spectacle which these gales presented was truly sublime. I thought so when it was before me, and my recollection often recurs to it with undiminished interest. The prodigious height and bulk of these waves—the Alps of the marine world—their varied form, the quantity of spray scattered in the air by the force of the wind, the dark sky on which no sun was seen for many days together, nothing but the white albatross screaming in her flight, the dangerous rapidity with which the ship pursued her course, *seeking* these tempestuous regions, turning the elements of destruction to her advantage—all this presented a scene of awful grandeur, indescribably impressive,



and such as is allowed to be peculiar to the storms of the Cape of Good Hope.

After *scudding* thus before the gale for several days and nights, at the rate of nine, ten, and eleven knots an hour, the winds became more moderate, allowing us to set more sail and occasionally to open our ports. One evening, soon after we had experienced this agreeable change, our attention was excited by the singular manner of the two Newfoundland dogs. Some unknown cause seemed to agitate them extremely. They ran about the ship with a degree of restlessness quite unusual, raising their noses and snuffing the wind. This, like every incidental circumstance, caught the Captain's eye, and suspecting at once the cause, he ordered a man to the main-topmast head to look out for land. The man was soon at his post, but his report could not be distinctly heard upon deck, where much curiosity prevailed. The Captain took his trumpet and desired the sailor to "*sing out louder*," when we understood him to say that he saw nothing. He was then ordered to "*take a good look all round*" and come down. The Captain observed, that though no land was visible, he had some reason to think that the dogs were right, since we were not far from Prince Edward's Islands as laid down in his chart, though some navigators doubted their existence.

The idea of being *near land*, particularly land whose position did not seem to be accurately ascertained, produced, as usual, considerable uneasiness on board. The purser, an old seaman, and very respectable man, who had accompanied the Captain in all his voyages and was much attached to him, evinced particular anxiety; and the night approaching and the ship making much way, he at length came to the friendly resolution of entreating the Captain to alter his course, or at least to shorten sail till morning. This well-meant and judicious counsel instantly gave great offence to the Captain, whose imperious and impetuous temper could neither adopt nor excuse any suggestion respecting the ship. He addressed the old man in very harsh and im-



proper terms, paced the quarterdeck in much ill-humour, and neither took in sail nor altered his course. We saw nothing; but there was a general impression that land was not far off. A look-out was accordingly kept, and but for the good old purser's friendly hint, it was probable that the Captain, who was not disposed to omit any proper measure, *when left to himself*, would have adopted other precautions.

The conduct of the dogs, which had led to so much uneasiness and trouble, gave rise to some interesting stories, from which it appeared that instances had occurred in which these animals had discovered land at a great distance and even where it was not previously known to be, thus preventing, probably, fatal accidents.

The remainder of the voyage presented no incident of novelty or importance. Some outward-bound Indiamen, particularly such as were destined for Bombay, sloped off to the north-east after passing the Cape, shaping their course between the coast of Africa and the island of Madagascar, called the Mozambique Channel. It was by this channel that Vasco da Gama, after he had, with an intrepidity which they alone who have followed him through these seas can duly appreciate, cleared the Cape of Storms, as he called it—*el cabo de las tempestades*—pursued his adventurous course to India, keeping along the African coast; and thus, it is singular, leaving Madagascar to be discovered by his countryman, Tristan da Cunha, eight years after. In consequence of some accidents which have happened of late, particularly the total loss of the *Grosvenor*, Indiaman, and, nearly at the time of my voyage, the shipwreck of the *Winterton* on the island of Madagascar, this passage has been almost entirely abandoned.

Having passed Madagascar and the isles of France and Bourbon, a serener sky, a more genial temperature, and smoother water announced our arrival at that spot in the Indian seas, where,



To them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mosambic, oft at sea north-east winds blow
Sabeian odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the bless'd ; with such delay
Well pleas'd, they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.

Although a diagonal line to the Bay of Bengal would now have traced a shorter course, we continued to the east, with very little northern variation, for nearly 1500 miles farther, when we were not far from the two small islands called St. Paul and Amsterdam, and not more than 1000 miles from the western coast of New Holland. We thus ran down our longitude in a southern parallel, for the sake of preserving, as long as possible, a westerly wind, and of avoiding the calms of the tropical latitudes. The albatross had not followed us beyond the gales of the Cape, but we saw numerous shoals of porpoises of a large size. They seemed to be always going with the ship, though, at some distance from her, and in a line parallel to her course. Sometimes, however, they came under the bows, keeping just before us, without apparent exertion, although we might be going at the rate of seven or eight knots an hour. The sailors endeavoured to strike them with their harpoons, but I never saw but one taken. It was an ugly monster, looking almost as like a pig without legs as a fish. There was only a small part of it that the sailors eat—I believe the liver. Some bonitos also, a fish about two feet long, came under the bowsprit, and were occasionally harpooned.

Arrived nearly as far as the longitude of Calcutta, we steered once more towards the equator, and passing the southern tropic, experienced the same incidents as when advancing towards the line in the Atlantic Ocean. The winds became light, with occasional calms, and great heat. Sharks of a great size again came about us. In another fortnight we re-entered the northern hemisphere. We now continued our course in the direction of the island of Ceylon, the Taprobane of the ancients, distant



about 400 miles, and in a few days saw the Friar's Hood, a high rounded point, apparently not distant from the eastern shore. This was the first land we saw since leaving Trinidad. The sight of it was very satisfactory to the Captain, enabling him to rectify and establish his reckoning previously to arriving upon the Coromandel coast.

This island is about 300 miles in length, by 100 in breadth. The interior is covered with mountains in which elephants of a small race are said to be numerous. Trincomalee, which we passed, is considered the best port in India. It belonged to the Danes. Under the native princes, Candy, situated nearly in the centre of the island, was the capital, but the conquests of European nations—the Portuguese, Dutch, and English—have transferred the seat of government to Colombo, on the south-west coast, a position more favourable to external commerce. Christianity is said to have been preached in this island by the disciples of St. Thomas. Between it and the continent is a reef of rocks called Adam's Bridge, to which various traditions are attached, both European and Indian. In the same part is the Bay of Condatchy, so celebrated for its pearl fishing, the most valuable, it is said, that exists. The divers are trained from their early youth, and are said to be able to remain five or six minutes under water. They descend with nets suspended round their necks, into which they put the pearl oysters, pulling a string when they desire to be raised. They dive thus fifty to sixty times in the course of the morning. Numbers of them are said to be taken off by sharks. If such be the fact, and it probably is, there seems to be great cruelty on the part of the authority which employs these poor people, or allows them to be employed in such an occupation. Pearls, cinnamon, and ebony are the chief articles of exportation.

Having at length entered the Bay of Bengal, we inclined a little to the west, and in a few days more, in the afternoon of the 30th July, joy spread through the ship when "Land, land on the larboard bow" was proclaimed by the sailor at the main-



topmast head ; and shortly after that memorable moment of my life arrived when I saw India for the first time. My impressions at that instant were such as I cannot describe, though they are still fresh in my memory. Nor shall I forget the feelings of curiosity and delight with which, as the ship advanced, I gazed upon the long extent of Indian shore, fringed with a line of lofty palm trees :

Cedar and pine, and fir, and branching palm.

It was an enchanting sight at which the length and inconveniences of the voyage were at once forgotten or remembered without regret.

Così di naviganti audace stuolo
Che mova a ricercar estranio lido,
E in mar dubbioso e sotto ignoto polo
Provi l' onde fallaci e 'l vento infido ;
S' alfin discopre il desiato suolo
Il saluta da lunge il lieto grido,
E l' uno all' altro il mostra, e instantly oblia
La noja e 'l mal della passata via.¹

The part of the coast which we first made was a few miles to the south of Pondicherry, a French settlement which we passed soon after. It was here that began the influence of the French in India, in 1749, which ended in 1761 by the capture of the fort by the English, under the command of Colonel Coote. It was restored to the French at the peace, 1763, was again taken from them in 1778, and once more restored at the conclusion of the American War in 1783. During the night we followed the line of the coast at a greater distance.

On the evening of the next day, the 31st July, the anchor, which had remained on the ship's bow since it was heaved in

¹ If they who leave their native land,
To sail in quest of India's strand,
All dangers, and long dulness o'er,
At length behold the far-sought shore ;
With ecstasy the impatient crew
Descry it to each other's view :
Then all unite in joy, and cast
Oblivion o'er their sufferings past.



the Downs, was let go a few miles to the south of Madras Roads. The next morning we weighed and stood in, the Captain having observed with his glass that a certain flag was hoisted which intimated that we might approach the coast with safety; for at some seasons, and particularly during the changes of the monsoon, or periodical wind, which blows for six months up and six months down the bay, this straight open shore is extremely dangerous, and then the flag is not hoisted.

The ship had scarcely anchored before I saw for the first time a native of the country. He came paddling towards us on a katamaran, a small raft composed of three pieces of wood of about five feet long tied together, the middle piece somewhat lower than the other two, forming a sort of keel beneath, and above a hollow for the man to sit in. The appearance of this man at a distance, when, no support being visible, he almost seemed to be walking in the sea, was extremely curious. Having arrived alongside by aid of a short paddle which he used first on one side of his little raft and then on the other, a rope was thrown to him, when he nimbly mounted the ship's side and came upon deck, saluting us in the Indian manner by lifting his right hand to his forehead. All his covering consisted of a cloth round his middle, and a small cap made of leaves or grass, but which fitted so closely that in a fold or sort of false bottom it contained he was able to carry a few letters perfectly dry, although completely covered by the waves in passing through the surf. He delivered some of his despatches to the Captain and officers. They consisted apparently of applications from native merchants and agents desiring to be employed in the business of the ship. Other boats soon surrounded us, bringing fruits, fish, and vegetables for sale; all differing from the productions of Europe. One boat of a superior description brought some natives of a higher order, handsomely dressed in white robes of muslin with turbans on their heads. I was greatly struck with the dignified and graceful manners of these most respectable-looking men. They



were, I was informed, dobashes or merchants who came to make proposals for buying the captain's or officers' private cargo or investment; some on their own account, some on account of the European houses of business at Madras.

The fort having returned the salute the *Ponsborne* had fired on coming to anchor, the purser engaged one of the boats that were alongside to take him ashore with the despatches he had for the Madras Government. When we left England, war subsisted between the British Government in India and Tippoo Saib, Sovereign of Mysore, and caused considerable uneasiness at the India House. It was, therefore, with much pleasure that we heard from the natives who boarded us that peace had been restored, and that Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General of India, having returned from before Seringapatam, Tippoo's capital, had proceeded to Bengal.

Early in the afternoon of this day a katamaran came on board, and taking off his little cap, drew from it a note which he delivered to the Captain, who, to my surprise, handed it to me. I found it was from Mr. George Parry, son of my good friend and benefactor, Mr. Thomas Parry, the East India Director, who had given me my appointment to India. Mr. George Parry having heard that I was coming to India in the *Ponsborne*, had not lost a moment after he knew of the arrival of that ship to send me a most kind invitation to stay at his house during the time I might be detained at Madras. I lost no time in accepting an offer so welcome, and soon had an opportunity of leaving the ship in one of the country boats which had been engaged to take some of the passengers.

These boats are large, deep, and pointed at both ends. Their planks being sewed together, and not nailed, they are pliant in some degree, and yielding, a quality indispensable to their being able to pass through the three lines of tremendous waves which break upon the Coromandel shore, and which would overwhelm a *stiff* European boat of greater strength. The boatmen, about ten in number, began to sing a peculiar song as soon as we came

near the external range of breakers, accelerating or retarding the measure, according as the particular operation to be performed required more or less celerity. Thus, having begun slowly, they sang faster and faster, and louder and louder, on the approach of each of the immense waves, and united in a general and hurried chorus, crying "Yelly, yelly, yelly"—"yelly, yelly, yelly," as the sea raised the boat and dashed it forwards. Three such manœuvres, executed with great judgment and skill, took us within the third and last line of surf; and here the water was not much agitated till we reached the shore, upon which there were again some high breakers, which often curl over the stern of the boat while its prow is raised upon the beach. We expected this usual wetting, but escaped it, there being several natives on the shore who surrounded the boat as soon as it came within their reach and dragged it quickly beyond the range of the last wave. There are times, however, when the surf upon this coast is not passable without danger, and even when it is quite impassable. It is not surprising therefore that the number of lives lost before Madras should be considerable. Some of our boatmen wore medals which had been bestowed for their having saved the lives of persons. But nothing manifested more the violence and danger of the surf than the fact which I witnessed, that the large long boats and pinnaces of Indiamen remained beyond its influence, not daring to venture into it, but putting their passengers or goods into the *country boats*, as the boats of the natives were called.

Upon landing, I walked towards the water gate of the fort, not more than fifty yards from the sea, and passing through it, came to an open space between the water and inner wall. Here I stopped to look at a number of natives assembled together. Some of them seemed to be attracted to the spot by curiosity to see the passengers as they landed; others to be engaged in business. Nearly in the middle of these numerous groups was a carriage of singular appearance. In its form it seemed to be an imitation of an ancient English chariot, but the pair of slight

long-tailed horses attached to it was quite Indian, and an Indian, in a long white dress which descended to his feet, and a turban of great circumference, sat most erect upon the box. Presently a European got into this vehicle, when the capering little horses drew it off at a quick pace; a second Indian, in a white robe and turban, standing behind, and two others, similarly dressed, running by the side of the horses. There was something singularly theatrical in the whole character and movement of this Asiatic equipage.

Here, too, for the first time, I saw palanquins of various forms and degrees of elegance moving about in different directions, the natives, whom I was surprised to see carrying them with such agility, uttering a kind of song, apparently to give uniformity to their step, and calling out to the persons before them to make way. The slight but elegant and well-proportioned forms of the natives, their picturesque dresses, their quiet and graceful manner, their salaams, varying according to the degree of acquaintance or difference of rank subsisting between the parties; the palanquins, the immense chatahs—large painted umbrellas, six or eight feet long, carried by servants over the heads or by the side of the palanquins of their masters, to keep off the sun,—such were the objects of this scene, so full of novelty, interest, and amusement. Having remained to observe it for some minutes, I procured a native to show me Mr. Parry's house. He took me through the inner gate of the fort, and by some low white buildings to a large enclosed square, having low houses or rooms on three sides, and on the fourth a large building, which I afterwards found was the council-house, where the business of the Government was transacted. At the south-west angle of this square was Mr. Parry's house, or rather the apartment he occupied when he came into the fort to attend his office in the council-house, for, like most of the English gentlemen, he lived in the country, about four miles from Madras. Mr. Parry not being at his rooms, but expected there soon, I walked about on the shady side of the square, and then went and sat down



under a small tree not far from Mr. Parry's steps, where I could see the natives pass to and from the square by a large gateway.

Here, while ruminating upon the sights which that eventful day had discovered to me, my attention was called to an occurrence which, however trifling, made some impression upon my mind at the time. A *crow* flying over the opposite buildings of the square seemed to direct its course towards me, and in fact, without being disconcerted by my presence, came to the tree under which I was sitting, and perched upon a branch just over me, looking at me for some time without any symptom of fear. There was something in the unlooked-for appearance of the bird of old acquaintance, and in its familiar manner, which struck me amidst the new objects which surrounded me. I did not expect that a *crow* would be the first bird to greet me, as this seemed to do, on my arrival in India. A vulture or pelican would have surprised me less.

After I had remained under the tree about half an hour Mr. Parry arrived, and received me in the kindest manner. As soon as the sun was nearly down he walked with me to the house, not far distant, of his relation, Mr. Thomas Oakes, who had formerly known my family in England, and who also gave me a most friendly reception, ordering a room and bed to be prepared for me. Here then I slept, and had the first specimen of the luxurious or effeminate ways of an Indian life, some of the servants who were ordered to attend upon me laying hold of my sleeves to pull off my coat, while others unbuttoned my knees, and in spite of all my resistance began to pull off my stockings; when others brought a large bright brass vessel and washed my feet, pouring cold water upon them from black porous jars. The room was very lofty. The floor was covered with a fine mat, the walls with a fine shining plaster, without any ornament of pictures or glasses. The furniture was extremely simple, the chairs and sofa having merely cane bottoms, without cushions or covering of any kind, nor were there curtains to the spacious lofty windows, which moreover were not glazed, but consisted



of movable green blinds, opening as folding doors from top to bottom. This simplicity which I observed in all the houses was not with any view to economy, for there was no appearance of *that*, but was suited to the climate, promoting coolness, and preventing the accumulation of dust and insects, of mosquitoes particularly, of which I this first evening began to feel the tormenting annoyance, and lizards, of which I saw several running up and down the smooth walls of my chamber with extraordinary swiftness. I watched their motions as my attendants undressed me, but as they did not notice them, or looked at them with unconcern, I concluded they were harmless.

A traveller in a new country observes everything with interest, but of course the objects most interesting to him are the inhabitants. Even in these Indians of inferior station, so assiduously employed about my person, there was much to notice. They differed of course from the inhabitants of Europe, but scarcely less from those which I expected to see in India. I did not, indeed, expect to find a resemblance to the grotesque representations which I had seen on the London stage; but neither was I prepared for such a total absence of all barbarity and coarseness, for complexions which had nothing repulsive, for features and limbs as delicate as those of women, and manners as gentle. The dress of these men consisted principally of turbans, scarfs, and robes, all beautifully white, but varying in their disposition, according to their caste or personal rank amongst themselves, or to the nature of their employment as superior or subordinate. Having undressed me and washed my feet, I expected my release, when the chief of the party proceeded to replace the habiliments of which he and his assistants had deprived me by slipping on me a pair of large loose trousers made of the fine fabric of Madras, called long-cloth. They were very thin and light, and descended to my feet, being tied round my waist by an elegant silk band made of delicate network, the long ends, which hung down before me, terminating with handsome tassels ingeniously worked with golden thread.



My bed partook of the general simplicity and convenience, and suitableness to the climate. It consisted of a hard mattress, covered with a sheet, and another folded at the bottom, that I might draw over me if I pleased. It stood in four small vessels of water, that ants and other insects might not crawl up the posts, and was surrounded by mosquito curtains, or rather by *one* curtain which encircled it all round, for there was no opening at the sides, two men lifting it up at the bottom to let me in, flapping their cloths at the same time to drive away the mosquitoes, and putting it down quickly as soon as I had crept into my cage. As the weather was too hot for me to make use of the upper sheet, I found the convenience of the light drawers, and slept, as indeed was the general custom, in a similar dress ever afterwards.

After an excellent night's rest the same attendance was ready for me at a very early hour in the morning; for at the break of day one of the guns of the fort fired, and this, it appeared, was the signal for the greater part of the European population to rise, and take a ride on horseback, or some other exercise, till the sun was visible a little above the horizon, when it was customary to return home, wash with cool water, perhaps put on other things, if in the hot weather, and sit down to breakfast.

At this meal the first morning I was surprised to see fried fish, in addition to the tea and coffee, and some plates containing, I thought, a sort of sausage, until it was recommended to me as a pleasant fruit, called the plantain.

After dinner to-day some of the celebrated jugglers were sent for, for my amusement, and much surprised me by their extraordinary dexterity. One of them threw a heavy stone nearly as high as the ceiling, and then stepping under it, caught it, without seeing it fall, on the back of his neck, where it lodged. It was however an unpleasant exhibition, as the man must have been seriously injured had the stone fallen upon his head, as seemed very possible. A prettier trick followed. Some



powder being sprinkled upon the bare arm of one of the performers instantly assumed another brilliant colour. One man supported a small dome or cupola upon several sticks, about fourteen inches long, converging to his chin, removing them one after another till two alone were left, upon which the dome remained balanced. Another introduced a blunted sword, eighteen inches long, down his throat. There certainly was no deception in this performance, which was indeed attended with pain, or inconvenience at least, for the man showed unequivocal symptoms of distress, and was obliged to withdraw the instrument after a few seconds. He could not speak while the sword was in his throat, but put his finger to the pit of his stomach, to indicate that the point was there. The exhibition of these and numerous other tricks concluded by my having a few of the coins of the country put into my hand, and being desired to squeeze them hard, which I did, until the head of a snake forced itself between my fingers, to the great amusement of the company.

The following day I moved to Mr. Parry's country-house. It was a flat-roofed building of moderate size, consisting of two or three small rooms on each side of a dining-hall, the whole raised about four feet above the ground, and approached by a flight of steps to the verandah before the hall. The situation was solitary, no other European habitation being in sight; but the many large trees which were near it, whose new and rich foliage I much admired, rendered it an agreeable residence, and a grateful retreat to Mr. Parry after the business and heat of the day. He went to his office in the fort every morning, and returned about five in the afternoon, and such nearly was the routine of all the European inhabitants of the Choultry Plain. I frequently accompanied Mr. Parry in the morning, each of us in a palanquin, and as we approached a bridge, leading over a small stream a short distance from the fort, it was a pleasing sight to see the number of palanquins, European and native, which converged across the plain to the same point, each surrounded by a picturesque group of attendants.

At a short distance in front of Mr. Parry's house was a small garden, resembling an English kitchen garden, many of its productions being English, such as cabbages, carrots, and potatoes. The latter were very indifferent. But the thing in this garden that I thought most curious was the machine for raising water. It consisted of a long beam having a heavy stone as a weight at one end, and a bucket attached to a rope at the other, balanced across the top of a very high post, or trunk of a cocoa-nut tree, placed a few feet from a well.

A black man was placed upon the transversal beam, at the point where it rested upon the perpendicular one, and, supported on one side by a light bamboo rail, depressed the bucket into the well by walking a few steps forward, and raised it again, full of water, by returning as far as was necessary towards the extremity charged with the stone. When this end was at the lowest point of depression, and the water emptied into the trough placed to receive it, the beam on which the man stood became almost perpendicular, and it required considerable effort for him, although aided by pieces of wood nailed as steps across the beam, to regain the centre and depress the other end. The window of my room looking towards the garden, I saw this poor man walking backwards and forwards in the sun for many hours together, and sincerely pitied his oppressive task.

I went one morning to breakfast with Dr. Anderson, the celebrated chief botanist of Madras, who had charge of the Company's botanical garden, and was no less distinguished for his active philanthropy than for his science. He was an elderly man, and somewhat infirm, but cheerful and unreserved. Besides a very polite reception, he gave me a very good breakfast in his official residence, pleasantly situated in the middle of the garden, and when it was over desired his deputy to show me everything. I spent some time in this delightful "wilderness of sweets," wandering

Through groves of myrrh
And flowering odours ;

for there, too, were numberless aromatic trees, shrubs, and



flowers, the productions not only of the interior of the peninsula, but of Ceylon, of the islands in the Straits of Malacca, and of China. Amongst the fruits were the great and refreshing pummel-rose, something like an orange in its conformation and flavour, but larger than a melon, the strong jack-fruit, the delicate papaw, the luscious custard-apple, the delicious and abundant mangoe in its choicest varieties, the Chinese leechee, and the loquat, another fruit of China, grateful to the eye and taste. All these were quite new to me, and the doctor allowed me to appreciate their excellence, for in this paradise there seemed to be no forbidden fruit.

Madras did not exactly correspond with the ideas I had formed of it, there being no *city* nor *town* of that name, but only the fort already mentioned, called Fort St. George, a very extensive and strong fortress, very near the sea, and a large town a mile farther to the north, called the black town, from its being originally occupied almost entirely by natives, the English in the early periods of their settlement living within the walls of their fort, though afterwards, as their power and security increased, extending themselves in detached houses over the wide sandy plain to the west, called the Choultry Plain. Here the more respectable part of the European population, such particularly as was engaged with the Company's affairs, civil or military, resided. Their houses I thought very handsome, and their situation, surrounded by trees and gardens, extremely pleasant. They seldom exceeded one storey in height, and often, as in Mr. Parry's, had the ground floor alone. Their flat roofs, surrounded by a light colonnade, and the beautiful shining plaster which covered the lofty pillars of the spacious verandahs, gave to these elegant villas a delightful appearance.

It was near one of the great roads branching across the plain from the bridge in front of the fort that the Governor, Sir Charles Oakley, lived; but all the offices of Government, as well as the counting-houses, stores, warehouses, etc., of the European merchants were in the fort.



The first time I went out of the fort, and passed along the edge of the wide but shallow stream which separates it from the plain, I saw a native fishing with a cast-net with extraordinary dexterity. He was walking up to his knees in the water, with his white net carefully folded upon his left shoulder. When about to make a cast he stopped, turned towards the stream, and without apparent effort covered an extent of surface that surprised me, for the extreme delicacy of the net had concealed its unusual dimensions before it was unfolded. No casts could be more true and elegant than those which were repeated, as he advanced, by this simple Indian fisherman.

I found the inhabitants of the plain in high spirits at the successful conclusion of the war, for their defenceless position beyond the reach of the guns of the fort subjected them to incursions by the cavalry of Tippoo, a much dreaded enemy, whose rapid approach from a distant point afforded no time for resistance or retreat. Hyder Ally, Tippoo's father, twice approached Madras not many years before.

Amongst the principal persons of the settlement to whom I was introduced was Colonel Close, who had accompanied Lord Cornwallis throughout the late war, and was considered one of his most influential and able advisers. He was esteemed the best Persian scholar at Madras, and had the goodness to express his satisfaction with the little progress I had been able to make in that language during the voyage. The events of the war just concluded were the common subject of conversation at this period, and the remarks and relations of Colonel Close and other officers engaged in these proceedings interested me extremely.

After the important capture of Bangalore, one of the principal fortresses in Tippoo's country, and of numerous droogs, forts situated upon the summits of hills, often of a conical form, the British army reached the vicinity of Seringapatam early in the preceding year, 1791. Lord Cornwallis hoped to be able to possess himself of Tippoo's capital, and terminate the war then; but the state of the army, reduced by the fatigues of a most



difficult march, and by the heat of the climate, the approach of the rainy season, and above all the impossibility of ensuring an adequate supply of provisions, discovered the painful necessity of falling back to Bangalore. Here the army remained till September, when military operations were recommenced by an attack on the two celebrated forts, Nundy-droog and Severn-droog. The former is situated upon a hill 1700 feet high, perfectly inaccessible, excepting on one side, which was defended by cannon of large calibre. Some years before, when occupied by the Mahrattahs, this fort had resisted the attacks of Hyder Ally during three years. After great exertions, in which the Bengal Artillery was much distinguished, it was taken by assault.

Severn-droog is described as a mountain of rock of many miles in circumference. The upper part of its lofty summit presented a perpendicular face on every side, defended further by walls and cannon. Its strength was described to me by an artillery officer of the besieging corps, who said there was difficulty in pointing the guns with effect on account of the great elevation of the walls above the ground of attack. It was, however, taken by assault after a siege of short duration. These preliminary operations, the object of which apparently was to remove the enemy from the rear, and preserve a communication with the Carnatic, being concluded, and the supplies of grain which had been collected in the Company's territories being arrived, the main army, under the command of Lord Cornwallis, again marched towards Seringapatam, and having defeated Tippoo in a general night attack upon his positions before his capital immediately began its siege. When the trenches had been carried to within 600 yards of the walls, Tippoo sued for peace; and after various difficulties and delays the conditions were signed on the 23rd February of the present year, 1792. By these stipulations, sufficiently circumspect and rigorous as they appeared to me, though I now heard them rather reproached for their excessive moderation, Tippoo ceded half his dominions



to the British and their allies (the Nizam and the Mahrattahs), engaged to pay three crores and thirty lacs of rupees (three millions and a half sterling) in different instalments, and to deliver up his two eldest sons as hostages for his execution of these conditions.

Tippoo showed great unwillingness to fix a day for the surrender of his sons.¹ When at length this was named, Lord Cornwallis omitted no measure calculated to diminish the distress both of the Sultan and of the Princes. He instructed the vaqueels, who had conducted the negotiation, to inform Tippoo that he intended to pay a visit to his sons as soon as they should reach the tents provided for them. The Sultan, affected by this kindness of the Commander-in-chief, signified his wish that his sons should go at once to his lordship's tent, and as a mark of his entire confidence in his lordship's honour, be delivered into his hands.

On the 26th February the two Princes left the palace of their father to proceed to the headquarters of the British army. A great part of the population of Seringapatam and the Sultan himself were upon the ramparts. The Princes were saluted by the fort on their leaving it, and by the British artillery on their reaching the encampment, where part of the troops were under arms to receive them. They were seated on a silver howdah upon an elephant richly clothed. Their father's vaqueels followed upon other elephants. The officers of the palace and a considerable number of other persons, horse and foot, also attended them. Lord Cornwallis, surrounded by his staff (Colonel Ross, Colonel Close, Colonel Skelly, Colonel Haldane, Colonel Scott, Colonel Doveton, Colonel Apsley, Colonel Kyd, Dr. Laird, Mr. Cherry,² etc.), met them at the entrance of his principal tent,

¹ It has always appeared to me that there were two occasions on which Tippoo, with all his faults, appears in a favourable point of view; on one amiable, great on the other. The first is, where he thus with reluctance and sorrow parts with his sons; the second, where some few years subsequently he fought and died in the breach in defence of his capital. Compare this end of the Asiatic with the "impotent conclusion" of the European tyrant.

² All of these I knew.



and after embracing them in the most affectionate manner, led them in, one in each hand. Their dress was most splendid and costly, being ornamented with a profusion of pearls, diamonds, and other precious stones. After remaining a short time with his lordship, receiving the honours of princely guests, they were consigned to the friendly care, rather than to the custody, of Colonel Doveton, a distinguished officer of the Madras army, and conducted to their quarters, where all the conveniences that a camp could afford were placed at their disposal. With this extraordinary and unprecedented event may be said to have concluded the Mysore war. For the camp before Seringapatam now broke up, the victorious army retraced its steps across the elevated level of the Mysore country, descended the famous defiles called the Ghauts, and re-entered the plains of the Carnatic, when the Bengal and Madras divisions separated, each proceeding to its respective presidency. The princes accompanied Lord Cornwallis to Madras.

4th August.—This forenoon, wishing to obtain some information respecting the sailing of the *Ponsborne* for Bengal, I went to Fort St. George. I always had much pleasure in passing in my palanquin over the well-constructed drawbridges, and through the long subterraneous passages of this fort. My bearers ran with more than usual good-humour and agility over these smooth ways, while the deep arches of the noble gateways, and the vaulted roofs under which we passed, resounded with their cheerful and cheering song. On these occasions I had an opportunity of observing the construction of this fine fortress, the great extent and massive strength of its defences, and the symmetry and order of its interior arrangement. I saw several guns upon the walls, both towards the sea and plain, and was told that they were capable of receiving upwards of 500. The works had been much improved of late years, particularly since the capture of the fort by the French under General Bourdonnaye in 1744.

The extension and improvement of the settlement beyond



the walls appeared to have been equally great. The black town, an inconsiderable native village not many years previous, had now acquired the extent and population of a city, it being more than three miles in length, and containing above 300,000 inhabitants, no longer natives alone, but English, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Armenians.

Walking through the streets of this town one afternoon, followed by my palanquin, I perceived an Armenian printing-office. My curiosity leading me into it, the chief or superintendent received me very civilly, and showed me his little establishment, containing two presses, one of which was at work. He put into my hand some books he had printed. They contained parts of the Scripture, prayers, and religious discourses for the use probably of the Armenian Church established in the town. He was so obliging on my coming away as to give me a printed sheet as a specimen of his work.

But the late extension and improvement of this presidency were perhaps most visible on the Choultry Plain, in the number and elegance of the villas which covered this, and in the excellence of the roads which led to it. These villas, formerly very limited, both as to number and convenience, now amounted to more than 200, remarkable for their beauty and taste. It seemed probable that the increased security resulting from the favourable issue of the late war would give a further impulse to the increase and splendour of these habitations.

I had concluded that the country around Madras belonged to the East India Company, but found that this was not the case. This country, called the Carnatic, belonged to a nabob, an independent prince, as far, at least, as a native sovereign could be considered independent who lived under the muzzles of the Company's guns. The Carnatic, thus circumstanced, seemed to be the esplanade of Fort St. George. I was not, therefore, surprised to hear that the Company had long coveted the administration of the Nabob's possessions, but without having been able to obtain their cession by amicable means, and



their justice and moderation had hitherto prevented their having recourse to any other. How long these virtues might prove a barrier between the Company's strength and the Nabob's weakness, the history of human nature from the time that the wolf and lamb met at the same stream seemed to make very uncertain. A slight transgression or unguarded imprudence on the part of the Nabob, the perfidious insinuation of an enemy, flattering the known wishes of the Company, might be fatal to the existence of the Carnatic as an independent state.¹

8th August.—Colonel Doveton having very obligingly offered to introduce me to the young Princes, the Captain of the *Ponsborne* expressed a wish to accompany me. On our entering their rooms they seemed quite glad to see us, asked us, through Colonel Doveton, to sit down, inquired whether we had breakfasted, our names, and many other questions. There is not much difference in their size. The youngest, named Mirza, is the most pleasing. He is fair, with large, handsome eyes. He was very cheerful and polite; talked a great deal to us, and very sensibly, though not eight years of age. When he heard that we should see Lord Cornwallis, he desired, with tears in his eyes, to be remembered to him. "Tell Lord Cornwallis that he is always with me." Mr. Smart, a miniature painter, who told me to my surprise that he had taken my mother's picture, was taking their likenesses. They are to be sent, when finished, to Tippoo Saib; for Lord Cornwallis having asked him if he would like to have his sons' pictures, "Yes," said he, "provided they be accompanied by Lord Cornwallis's."

The Princes gave us some beetel-nut and some very fine attar of roses. They have a charming house inside the fort, and

¹ Subsequently the Indian Government *did* take possession of the Nabob's country on the plea of having discovered amongst the archives of Seringapatam traces of a connivance between the *father* of the reigning prince and Tippoo Saib. The whole of this proceeding presents, I regret to say, one of the most painful transactions of our Indian history.

The Nabob had a magnificent palace a few miles from Madras, to which, some years after, he invited me to a splendid entertainment, to meet Admiral Rainier, Lord Bentinck, and Sir Arthur Wellesley.



everything in great style. They have their own servants, and some of Tippoo's vaqueels, very venerable old men. A handsome stage has been built for them that they may see the ships in the roads.

I had now been ashore eight days, receiving the most hospitable attentions from Mr. George Parry and his friends, and much satisfaction from this first specimen of an Indian life, when blue peter once more called me to the narrow limits of my cabin.

The monsoon, though near its change, being still favourable, a few days took us to the entrance of the small gulf called Balasore Roads, situated at the north-west angle of the Bay of Bengal, and leading to the mouth of the Ganges, or, strictly speaking, of the Hoogley branch of that river.

An old seaman does not consider his voyage over till his ship is safe in port; but *I* concluded that ours was now terminated. I soon found, however, that the most dangerous part of it was before us, the mouth of the Ganges being obstructed, and rendered extremely intricate by numerous sands and shoals which run a considerable distance into the sea. As we approached the angle of the bay, where these dangers begin, the wind became variable and squally, and the weather altogether very threatening. On each side of us was a dangerous shore, and the *sandheads*, as they are called, were before us. A current, or tide, was always running with great rapidity. In case of foul weather in the night, without a pilot on board, our situation might become very critical. We were too, it appeared, just at the worst season for this part of our voyage, it being "the breaking up," as it was termed, of the southerly monsoon, when amidst an apparent conflict between opposite winds and contending storms, this great periodical current of air, one of the most marvellous and providential phenomena of the globe, shifts to the opposite point of the compass.

Our brave Captain now showed more anxiety than I had



ever seen him discover, even during the worst of the storms we had encountered. Shoals, currents, and *land* are the dread of an experienced seaman, and here we had all these. It so happened, moreover, that both the captain and his principal officers were strangers to this difficult navigation, their voyages having always been to China. He was therefore very impatient to fall in with a pilot, and loudly declared his disappointment and displeasure at not meeting with one so soon as he had expected. To enter the Ganges *without* a pilot was quite impossible for so large a ship, particularly at this season, and was besides contrary to the regulations of the Company's service, as well as to the rules of insurance.

Having stood to the west, and made the coast, about Point Palmiras, as we supposed, and thus verified our situation, we stood off again, sailing towards the usual cruising ground of the pilot vessels. As the evening advanced, the weather became more and more threatening, and the Captain more and more uneasy. A man was kept aloft to look out for a pilot, but could see nothing. The lead was kept going from the main chains, and the depth of water "sung out" at each cast.

The Captain walked up and down the quarterdeck with his telescope in his hand, and expressing his ill-humour in no measured terms; stamping when the sailor in the look-out answered that no sail was in sight, or the leadsman proclaimed a diminished depth of water. At length night closed upon us.

The Captain's displeasure now became extreme. He looked ahead of the ship in the direction of the pilot-ground through his night glass, a telescope contrived for seeing objects almost in the dark.¹ The sailor had descended from the main-topmast head; but the lead was continued to be cast without intermission. We kept on our course under shortened sail, but still, no pilot appearing, doubts began to be entertained of the correctness of our reckoning. The land we had seen might not have been Point Palmiras, or the tides might have set the ship

¹ It is difficult to catch the objects with this glass. They are seen inverted.



out of her supposed direction. The Captain, however, had so much confidence in his calculation that he would not admit any error on his part. His denunciations, therefore, continued to be directed against the pilot. His vociferations were terrific in the darkness and stillness which prevailed; for nothing was heard in the ship but his voice, and the song of the leadsman. His activity, however, seemed to increase with his anger and uneasiness; no precaution to ensure the safety of the ship during the night was omitted. The casts of the lead followed in quicker succession, the anchor was ready to be let go, and all hands were prepared to *put the ship about*, or *bring her to*, upon the word being given. It seemed the most prudent course to put about at once, and stand to the south, in order to get deeper water and more sea-room, and there *lie on and off* till morning. But prudence and caution, or even the rational portions of these, entered less than other good qualities into the character of the Captain. His courage was made of sterner stuff. Rough, bold, resolute, he was rather disposed, in situations of difficulty, to seek safety by overcoming danger than by receding from it.

We accordingly went on, dark as it was, every now and then firing an 18-pounder, and burning lights. At last a light was seen right ahead. More guns were fired, yet no answer was made, and we shortly after saw no light, yet kept a good look-out and went on. It was an hour or two before we saw the light again. We now supposed it was a pilot, and yet did not get nearer, though we had been sailing after it several hours. The Captain was very much vexed with them for leading him, as he said, such a "wild-goose chase," and *swore* he would let go an anchor. However, at last we came up to the ship, which *was* a pilot's. We sailed close to him, when the Captain with his biggest trumpet, instead of hailing him in the usual courteous manner, called him all the names he could think of for not coming on board of us. There was something awful in hearing the Captain with his loud voice swearing at the pilot through



the trumpet in the dark. Everything else was silent as he spoke. Even the pilot seemed frightened, and undoubtedly was astonished. We sent our boat for him, and were all most glad to get him on board, for it was a dangerous place without a pilot acquainted with the currents and sands. The former were so strong against us that though we had plenty of wind we were all the night in getting up with the ship, only a few miles ahead, and which the pilot declared was at anchor all the time.

So far we had a fair wind, and pretty good weather, though threatening to blow, and we expected to reach Diamond Harbour, where the Indiamen lie, in two days; but the next morning the wind changed, and blew strongly against us. However, by tacking about we got on a little. We came to an anchor at night, and the next morning it blew a perfect gale of wind, and there was an immense sea running. I believe nobody on board ever experienced such weather as we now had. We pitched most heavily. The sea came quite over the head of the ship, and even up to the sprit-sail yard. One anchor and cable would not hold us; we therefore veered away another cable, and even then drove so fast towards the sands that we were obliged to let go another anchor. We now had two anchors and three cables out; but even these would not hold the ship. She rode so hard, and pitched so violently and deep that one of our cables, which was quite new, snapt, and we lost the anchor and whole cable. We let go another anchor before the ship had time to drift far, and the gale being fortunately rather abated, the two now held her. We were, however, unable to move from our critical situation, the sands being all round us, and remained here tossing about two days longer, when the wind coming more to the south we made sail, and crossed some very dangerous sands, called the Braces, and steered for the French flats.

All this was a very anxious and painful time to the Captain, who never left the deck. Besides the pilot we had on board,



his vessel, with another pilot on board her, and also a second pilot vessel, which, seeing our distress, had come to our assistance, went before us to sound, and show us the way. We also sounded every minute—a measure of such importance that the pilot had brought his own man and line on board to sound for him. Indeed we went entirely by sounding, and had nothing else to direct us through this most dangerous navigation, for we could see neither the land nor the sky, and the sands were all under water. We saw some buoys, but could not trust to them, as it was probable they had drifted in the gale or moved with the sands themselves, for these are liable to move in such storms, a circumstance which of course adds much to the danger. Our situation would have been desperate without a good pilot. The two vessels which went ahead were also extremely useful, for after every heave of their lead they waved a flag over the stern to tell us the depth of the water.

That night we anchored on the French flats, close to the two vessels which had conducted us, the sea running very high and all of us pitching very heavily. Our guides, the two pilot schooners, were comparatively light and drew but little water, but the *Ponsborne* was a large heavy ship with a cargo on board. As the current was at the time very strong, there was a great strain upon her cable, upon the strength of which our safety mainly depended. It blew dreadfully hard all night, and there was a good deal of anxiety on board. At length the accident so much apprehended took place. At an early hour in the morning we parted from our anchor. We were now in a very dangerous situation, for if we had not been prepared to make sail we should certainly have been upon some of the sands, and then it would have been all over with us. We however made sail *immediately* the cable broke, and happily cleared the sands, and that morning got into the Ganges. The next morning, Friday the 17th, we weighed anchor for the last time, and in the afternoon reached Diamond Harbour after having escaped many dangers.

Our passage from the Downs had been four months and a

half. I felt on this occasion that few moments are more impressive than that in which we enter port after a long voyage. I also felt the thankfulness and gratitude which every humble and reflecting mind must feel on such an occasion, and returned my sincere acknowledgments to the divine Providence which had watched over so many lives in so long a course across the fathomless and pathless deep.

Soon after our arrival a ship with scarcely any sail set came in from sea and passed close to us with extraordinary rapidity, impelled by the violence of the wind and tide. Her destitute and crippled state manifested her extreme distress. I ran to the gunwale and saw her shoot by. Her captain and crew were upon deck, but seemed helpless, for, as we perceived, she had lost her anchors. While looking at her and dreading her fate, there seeming no possibility of bringing her to, we saw her turn suddenly towards the shore, as intending to run against it, but instead of stopping there she sailed, as it were, across the country. She had entered a small nullah that was full nearly to its banks, so that her hull was seen above them. Her appearance as she went winding along, high over the fields, was very singular. Her course became gradually less rapid, and at last we had the satisfaction of seeing it arrested without apparent accident; her masts, which we expected to see overboard, remaining upright over the land. The preservation of this vessel was evidently owing to the intelligence of her pilot, who skilfully ran her into this small creek with which he was acquainted, although it was very little wider than herself.

On Wednesday the 22nd August I left the *Ponsborne* with the Captain and some other passengers for Calcutta, about sixty miles higher up the river. This, as we advanced, became narrower, but still remained a wide and noble stream. The tide being with us and carrying us rapidly along, we proceeded smoothly in the middle of the stream with but little assistance from our oars till the tide turned in the afternoon, when we came to during the ebb, anchoring our budgerow, as our hand-

some covered boat was called, a few yards from the bank, that she might not be left dry as the water fell. We set off again with the head of the flood, and the next morning passed through Garden Reach, a long reach running east and west a few miles below Calcutta. Handsome villas lined the left or southern bank, and on the opposite shore was the residence of the superintendent of the Company's botanical garden. It was a large *upper-roomed* house not many yards from the river, along the edge of which the garden itself extended. The situation of the elegant garden houses, as the villas on the left bank were called, surrounded by verdant grounds laid out in the English style, with the Ganges flowing before them, covered with boats and shipping, struck me, as it does everybody who sees it for the first time, as singularly delightful. These charming residences announced our approach to the modern capital of the East, and bespoke the wealth and luxury of its inhabitants. Turning suddenly to the north, at the end of this reach, the "City of Palaces," with its lofty detached flat-roofed mansions and the masts of its innumerable shipping, appeared before us on the left bank of the Ganges; and on the same side, in the foreground of this beautiful perspective, were the extensive ramparts of Fort William. Passing this elegant fortress, we had on our right the even, verdant plain, properly the esplanade of the fort, which separates it from the city. A range of magnificent buildings, including the Governor's palace, the council-house, the supreme court-house, the Accountant-General's office, etc., extended eastward from the river, and then turning at a right angle to the south, formed, on two sides, the limit both of the city and plain. Nearly all these buildings were occupied by the civil and military officers of Government, either as their public offices or private residences. They were all white, their roofs invariably flat, surrounded by light colonnades, and their fronts relieved by lofty columns supporting deep verandahs. They were all separated from each other, each having its own small enclosure, in which, at a little



distance from the house, were the kitchen, cellars, storerooms, etc., and a large folding gate and porter's lodge at the entrance.

No part of the city occupied by the *natives* was perceivable, it being higher up the river, as well as more inland, to the east, extending a great way in both directions. Our boat having cleared the esplanade and a part of the city, arrived opposite the old fort, the first military work of the Company in Bengal, and whose diminutive size and inferiority in every respect as compared with Fort William, which we had just passed, strikingly exhibited the subsequent rapid and vast extension of the Company's military power in these countries. It was now entirely dismantled, and its casements appropriated to the reception of the goods of the Company, and the merchandise of the custom-house, the direction of which was within its walls. Upon the custom-house wharf, extending from one end of the fort to the other, I saw immense piles of goods of various sorts, imports and exports. Along the shore in front of the wharf, and to the north as far as I could see, were a great many ships, all manned with native sailors, but commanded principally by English captains, and chiefly belonging either to these captains or to British houses of trade established in Calcutta. These vessels, called "country ships," were employed in the Indian seas exclusively, principally between Bengal, China, and Bombay, never going, nor being allowed to go, beyond the Cape of Good Hope, unless by a specific license from the East India Company, who possessed, by their charter, a monopoly of the trade to Europe. I was told that most of these ships were constructed of teak, a wood more durable for marine purposes than oak, it possessing an oil that prevents the corrosion of the nails and iron bolts—a great advantage, which the oak has not.

I quitted the boat at a spacious sloping ghaut or landing-place, close to the north-west angle of the old fort. The lower part of the slope went some way into the water, and was crowded with natives, men and women, bathing with their clothes, or rather *cloths* on, and which they dexterously con-

trived to change under water, without embarrassment to themselves or the bystanders. Having walked along under the northern wall of the fort, and passed the north-east angle, I came to a large area or square, the middle of which was occupied by an extensive tank surrounded by substantial brick masonry and an exterior palisade, and having a flight of wide steps at each end, east and west. Numbers of natives were descending these steps to fill their water jars and other vessels. Some, instead of jars, had pig-skins slung at their backs, and which, when filled, had rather a ludicrous appearance, exhibiting the form of the animals from which they were taken. The skin being submerged in the water, was filled at a small aperture left unsewed at the end of the neck, and when full this opening was tied up with a piece of leather, which being loosened to the degree necessary, the water spirted out, in a greater or smaller stream, according to the pressure of the man's hand, into the jars of his customers, or the pots of the people who met him in the streets. All this was done, from the filling to the emptying, without unslinging the skin, the carrier merely bearing it forward over his side when discharging the water, much as an organ-player in the street does his organ. I saw several of these people branch off with their singular burthens into the numerous wide streets leading from the square.

Many young women also, with large circular earrings in their ears, and broad bracelets on their wrists, descended and mounted the steps, holding with one hand a jar or pitcher upon the head. Nothing could be more elegant and picturesque than the attitude and whole appearance of these delicate well-formed females, with their light white dress, consisting of one long piece of cloth, which, descending from the head, encircled the waist, and fell in graceful folds nearly to the ankle, not straight, but sloping, leaving one leg more exposed than the other. Strongly did the scene before me recall to my mind the beautiful picture of the *ancient* manners of the East, where the daughter of Bethuel is represented with *her* "large earrings" and "heavy

bracelets" as *she* "went down to the well with her pitcher, and came up again."

At the angle by which I entered the tank square, as the great area was called, stood an obelisk in a neglected ruinous state. As it was only a few yards out of my way, I went up to it. From my very early years few things had filled my mind with more horror than the very name of the Black Hole of Calcutta, although the exact history of its tragic celebrity was unknown to me. With peculiar force was this impression revived, when, on deciphering an almost obliterated inscription, I found that the column which I beheld was the monument which had been erected to the memory of the victims of that horrible massacre. A native who accompanied me pointed to the part of the fort south of the principal gate in which the fatal dungeon itself was situated.

I now continued my way along the north side of the square, having on my right the palisades which surrounded the tank, and on my left a row of handsome houses, extending nearly the whole length of the square, called "the Writers' Buildings." Passing next, down the eastern side of the square, I quitted it at the south-east angle, and after a few streets, very evenly paved with red brick, arrived at the house which the respectable old purser, who had left the ship on her reaching Diamond Harbour, had taken for the captain.

Here I sat down in an outer room, considering what I should do next. Although my father's unremitting zeal had procured me several letters to persons living in Calcutta, there was no one amongst them whom my family knew personally, or to whose house I could go at once. It was necessary therefore that I should establish myself somewhere before I could begin to deliver my letters, and I knew not where to go in the first instance. In any other country the easy and obvious course would be to go to an inn. But I was told that there were no inns in Calcutta, or such alone as were not considered reputable. In this respect therefore it seemed that the City

of Palaces was not a convenient city for a friendless stranger to arrive at.

Whilst occupied with these considerations the great gates of the enclosure opened, and a palanquin, such as I had not seen before, it being upright like a sedan chair, entered, escorted by several servants handsomely dressed with white, flowing tunics and turbans, and bearing large shining badges inscribed with Indian characters upon the long roll of linen which encircled their waist. The palanquin being put down at the edge of the verandah, a respectable-looking old gentleman, dressed in black, with a powdered long-tailed wig, and a large cocked hat in his hand, got out of it, and entered the house, where he was received with a degree of politeness and condescension very different from what I had been accustomed to see on board the ship, and from which it was evident that the Captain had already laid aside the imperious action of the quarterdeck and resumed his shore character, in which, however, some professional consequence was visible, but associated with an air of sincerity and frankness, of resolution and intelligence, that gave a just idea of his many excellent qualities.

Such a reception of the stranger confirming the opinion which his numerous retinue had given me of his importance, I was induced to inquire who he was, when I was told that he was the head of the Bengal marine establishment. After conversing some time with the Captain in the great hall, an order to have his palanquin ready, and the bustle of the servants, announced his departure, when, as he was returning through the room in which I was sitting, some circumstance, I knew not what, directed his attention to me; and coming up to me, he addressed me with singular kindness, asking me how long I had been on shore, what I thought of the appearance of India, what I meant to do, what friends I had in Calcutta? In reply to the last question I said that I had no friends in Calcutta, but that I had some letters of introduction, "and one, sir," I added, "is, I believe, for you." "A letter for me?" said the old gentleman, "and

from whom pray, may it be?" I replied, "From Mr. William Bensley of London." "A letter to me from Mr. Bensley! Come, come, my young friend, you must come with me." He gave orders to his attendants for another palanquin, and this being ready, I at his desire got into it, and accompanied him, much surprised at the situation in which I so suddenly and unexpectedly found myself. We proceeded along at a quick pace, my palanquin by the side of his, his attendants around both.

We entered the great square, with the tank in the middle, and continued along its southern side,—that is, the side opposite to the one on which I had traversed it previously,—and in a few minutes more arrived at the enclosure of a large white flat-roofed mansion standing near the Ganges, a little below the point at which I had landed not two hours before. Upon getting out of my palanquin, which my nimble bearers had carried up the steps and put down at the bottom of the grand staircase, the old gentleman said that that was his house, and *my* future home. Ascending, then, the great staircase, he led me through some rooms of vast dimensions, and leaving me on a sofa in one of them for a minute or two, returned with his lady and daughter and introduced me to them. After many most friendly expressions from them all they held a short consultation together, at the end of which the kind old gentleman conducted me to a magnificent apartment, which he placed entirely at my disposal, desiring me to command freely whatever I wanted. He said that his lady and daughter would procure such servants as I should require, and in a few hours I found myself surrounded by a group of ten men, who respectfully saluted me as their master and desired to receive my orders,—the head man of the party offering me a few pieces of coin upon a folded white cloth as a present; nor could he be satisfied till I accepted it.

This memorable incident attending my first landing in Bengal was as important as unexpected. It was a great and



auspicious event in the outset of my life; it removed at once every difficulty of my situation; it gave me a most comfortable home in a most respectable family; introduced me to the best society in Calcutta; and had a valuable future influence on my success by enabling me to avoid the expenses and embarrassments so frequently attendant upon the first arrival and settlement of a young man in India.

I must therefore ever feel that, of the many friends I have had the good fortune to meet with in my *journey* through life, one of the greatest certainly was Captain Cudbert Thornhill, the oldest European inhabitant of Calcutta; the same gentleman who, being at Judda in the Red Sea when Mr. Bruce the Abyssinian traveller arrived there, under much difficulty, rendered him very essential service,—as acknowledged by Mr. Bruce,—manifesting towards him that same active benevolence for which he was always distinguished.

With the sincerest gratitude and affection shall I ever revere the memory of this most kind and excellent man. I understood that before he knew of my having an introduction to him, my youthful and friendless appearance had disposed him to offer me his protection.

NOTE 1.—LORD CORNWALLIS

Amongst my numerous other friends I can never forget my obligations to Lord Cornwallis (the Governor - General), and Colonels Ross, Haldane, and Skelly, his lordship's aides-de-camp, Sir William Jones, Sir John Murray, etc., etc.

My notes say :—“ I dine *very* often with Lord Cornwallis, and am invited to *all* his entertainments. At his levees he never fails to address me in the kindest manner.” Measures of public utility, unambitious and just, and a deportment dignified, without pride or ostentation, had caused his administration to be very popular, and himself much beloved. He was tall and somewhat corpulent. His countenance expressed the benevolence of his disposition. There was something in his manner that reminded me of my father's particular friend, Mr. John Hingeston.¹

¹ It might be said of Mr. Hingeston, as of Lord Cornwallis, that *he* was especially “blest with plain reason and with sober sense.” Let me here ac-



NOTE 2.—COLONEL SKELLY

It was during this summer (1793) that I had to lament the death of a most gentlemanly, accomplished man, from whom I had received much kindness during my stay in Calcutta — Colonel Skelly, aide-de-camp, as I have said, and particular friend of Lord Cornwallis, under whom he served with much reputation in the war against Tippoo. He particularly distinguished himself by a very gallant defence of the Sultan redoubt, near Seringapatam, when re-attacked by Tippoo, from whom it had been taken a few hours previously, in the general assault of his lines. The Colonel's death was a great shock to Lord Cornwallis.

There was every probability that his talents and family interest (he being related to the Duke of Gordon) would eventually raise him to the post of Commander-in-chief. I had been introduced to this excellent man by Mr. Nathaniel Davison, formerly British Consul at Nice, and of late years tenant to my father in his house at Twickenham, which he covered, during his residence in it, with a beautiful *dolichos*. My father used to be much pleased with Colonel Skelly's letters to Mr. Davison, and with his admirable sketches of scenes in the Mysore campaign. How much more would he have been pleased with Colonel Skelly himself, whose polished mind and fascinating conversation and manners were singularly congenial with his own.

*Both formed by nature happily to steer,
From grave to gay, from lively to severe ;
Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
Intent to reason, and polite to please.*

Mr. Davison had the Colonel's portrait in the Twickenham house. The amiable Consul has since followed his friend to the grave.

NOTE 3.—SIR WILLIAM JONES

In the hot season of this year (1794) India deplored the loss of one of the most distinguished men that had ever visited her shores ; and I lost, in that event, one of my kindest friends. Sir William Jones died at Calcutta of the liver complaint, after a short

knowledge my many obligations, in my early days, to this virtuous, unaffected, generous man. Often did I receive the "good he did by stealth," when I was a boy at school. The practice of boys receiving money from any person but their parents I think a very unworthy one, though there was a time when I was far from being of this opinion ; but the custom existing, this sincere and liberal gentleman never shirked it—he was sure to be in the way the last day of the holidays.

illness. His death was deeply lamented by all classes, European and native, and was indeed a public misfortune, interrupting literary labours for which it was scarcely possible to find another individual uniting similar qualifications—such a knowledge of the Asiatic languages, so refined a judgment, and such indefatigable zeal. All his time, public and private, when on the bench as a judge, or when, amidst the Bramins of Nuddea, he “explored the vast extent of ages past,” was devoted to the public good. His private hours, at the time of his death, were employed upon a translation of the *Institutes of Menu*, a work as important as curious, being the Justinian code of Hindoo law.

Sir William meant to return to England as soon as the work should be completed, proceeding, it was said, first to China, thence to Bencoolen and Bombay, and so up the Red Sea and overland to Europe. Lady Jones had left India the year before. Sir William Jones was buried at Calcutta, and on his tomb was placed the following epitaph, written by himself :—

Here was deposited
the mortal part of a man
who feared God but not death ;
and maintained independence
but sought not riches ;
who thought none below him
but the base and unjust ;
none above him but the wise and virtuous ;
who loved his parents, kindred, friends, and country ;
and having devoted his life to their service,
and the improvement of his mind,
resigned it calmly,
giving glory to his Creator,
wishing peace on earth
and goodwill to all his creatures,
on the 27th April
in the year of our blessed Redeemer 1794.¹

¹ Sir William Jones was only forty-eight years of age at the time of his death, having been born in London in the year 1746.



PART II

FROM SANTIPORE TO DEHLI

SANTIPORE *was* a large and flourishing town, two miles from the left bank of the Ganges, sixty miles above Calcutta. It possessed an industrious, peaceful, and happy population of 70,000 inhabitants, entirely Hindoos, and was the centre of a great manufacturing district. The industry of ages had brought its muslins to the highest degree of perfection. They were amongst the choicest productions of India, and were exported in large quantities to Europe. The East India Company consequently had one of their principal factories here, under charge of Edward Fletcher, Esq., whose deputy I was.

This factory and the prosperity of Santipore have since ceased to exist; the calicoes and muslins of India, even for Indian use, having been supplanted by the steam-looms of Manchester.

The rains having set in before the 20th June (1794), and the rivers having been considered open soon after, I had, since the end of that month, been expecting to hear that the Commander-in-chief, whom I was to accompany in his voyage up the Ganges, had left Calcutta. I was, however, informed from time to time that the business of Government still detained His Excellency at the Presidency. At length I heard of his departure, and in the evening of the 17th July a man whom I had upon the look-out returned to say that his boats were coming to for the night, a few miles only below Santipore.



The same evening therefore I took leave of Mr. Fletcher and went on board my budgerow¹ stationed at the ghaut² at which I had landed on my first arrival from Calcutta in the preceding year.

I rose early the next morning to make the necessary preparations; had the pegs and shore-ropes loosened, and the sails unfurled, and everything ready for my joining the General on his passing. At the hour of sunrise the ghaut presented the usual spectacle of such a place when within the reach of an extensive Hindoo population. Hundreds of the peaceable inhabitants of Santipore of both sexes and of all ages, of every condition, of every shade of caste, from the expounder of the Shastah to the industrious Tauttee,³ or Ruffagur,⁴ had left their homes at the break of day to bathe in the waters of the Ganges. Amongst the crowd were many of my personal acquaintances, who seemed pleased to have this opportunity of repeating their expressions of attachment, and their good wishes for the success of my voyage and my safe return. The servants of my establishment whom I did not mean to take with me, and some of the officers of the cooty,⁵ came on board to bid me farewell. Of this number was my mild and amiable teacher, the Bramin Rhadanant. He repeated the regret he had all along expressed at not accompanying me, dwelling upon the duty he should discharge, and the satisfaction he should consequently experience in seeing for once in his life the waters of the "Great River"⁶ and the holy city of Casi.⁷ The group which surrounded my boat was increased by the relations of my attendants. Many of these expressed a desire to accompany their friends, but the number of such requests made it impossible for

¹ A budgerow is a large pleasure boat, having two spacious rooms (a sitting and a sleeping room) surrounded by venetian blinds. It is contrived for sailing or rowing, having a high mast (for mainsail and topsails) and from twelve to sixteen oars.

² Quay.

³ Weaver of the fine muslins.

⁴ Finisher of the fine muslins.

⁵ Factory.

⁶ The *real* Ganges, of which the Calcutta stream is only a branch.

⁷ The sacred name of Benares.



me to comply with them. One of the throng in particular attracted my notice, as well by her youthful appearance as by the apparent fervour of her distress. It was a pretty¹ young woman of about fifteen, who sat near the edge of the water, upon which she gazed with a strong expression of sorrow through the opening in the light muslin which fell from the top of her head and almost covered her face. Upon my inquiring who she was, and what was the cause of her trouble, the young man whom I had engaged as cook made his way through the circle, and approaching me said she was his wife; that having been but recently married her sorrow at their separation was great, but that she would be taken care of by her parents till his return. I said she would apparently be more satisfied under his own care, and that he had better therefore remain at home with her. He replied that he had a great desire to accompany me, but confessed that the principal consideration which had led him to separate himself from his wife so soon after their union was a desire to visit Casi. Perhaps then, I said, the best way would be for your wife also to visit Casi. The poor fellow's countenance brightened at this suggestion. I desired him to make the proposition to his wife, and she, receiving it with great satisfaction, rose from her doleful position and went on board her husband's boat amidst the congratulations of her friends.

18th July.—The sun had risen about an hour when I perceived the first boats of the Commander-in-chief's fleet coming round the point of land to the south. Soon after some of the pinnaces and budgerows came successively into view, and amongst the former I observed two fine vessels considerably larger than the rest, and which I concluded to belong to the

¹ This epithet applied to a woman of Bengal will hardly accord with European ideas, and yet in no part of the world perhaps are the features of women more regular and delicate than in India. The young bride here mentioned was an instance of this fact. As to colour, *that seems to be a matter in which preference is determined by habit. Our fancy paints a certain personage black, and the Hindoos make him white.*

General. In a quarter of an hour all the fleet was in sight, coming towards me under full sail. The two large pinnaces with their lofty masts were imposingly conspicuous, and the appearance of the whole, consisting of more than forty sail, spread from one side of the river to the other, was very beautiful, and drew forth expressions of admiration from the people collected near my boats. They declared they had never seen so splendid a sight. I remained at the shore while the principal boats passed. The first was a handsome two-masted pinnace, the sleeping-boat of Sir Robert Abercromby. It was followed by another considerably larger, resembling in form and splendour the boat of state of the Goldsmiths' Company on the Thames, but with the masts and rigging more adapted for sailing. This vessel was for the reception of the General's company at dinner or on other occasions. The boats of the suite, consisting of smaller pinnaces and budgerows, next followed, without particular order, and the line was closed by a number of boats of various sizes, some carrying the detachment of sepoy forming the General's guard, others the baggage of His Excellency and of his staff, others sheep, goats, poultry, wines, and stores of all kinds. In addition to the boats above mentioned belonging to the Commander-in-chief was a considerable number belonging to merchants, who were glad to avail themselves of the secure protection afforded by the General's fleet. As soon as the pinnaces and budgerows had passed me I cast off from the shore and setting sail at the same time took my station in the rear of this division, my horse-boat and the cooking-boat falling in amongst those of a similar description. I had already settled a few signals with the manjirs or commanders of my two small boats, so that, amongst other things, I could order my horse to be got ready, or either of the boats to come alongside my budgerow.

We soon passed before the high bank on which I had been in the habit of spending a quarter of an hour with the Resident of Santipore in our evening rides, and a little farther entered a



long reach of the river inclining towards the north-west. This change of direction bringing the wind nearly upon our beam, the budgerows and all the other round-bottomed boats had some difficulty in keeping up with the pinnaces, which, having keels and jibs, were able to sail nearer the wind. Indeed, some of the boats would have been driven over to the leeward shore if part of their crew had not jumped overboard with the towing-line and swam to the windward bank, near to which they held the head of the boat while the wind drove her along. Finely situated at the end of this reach was Calwa, a large and flourishing village, having a considerable commerce in grain; and near it were some indigo works and a bungalow¹ belonging to a Frenchman. We gradually resumed our direction more to the north, which, bringing the wind astern, the fleet again moved forward under full sail. The boatmen now having little to do, I hoisted a signal for one of my small boats to join me, and sent one of my chuprasses² with a note to the Secretary of the Commander-in-chief, requesting him to take an opportunity of informing His Excellency of my having joined the fleet, and of my desire to avail myself of the first occasion he might find it convenient to name for paying my respects to him. Some time after one of the long beautiful rowing-boats attendant upon the pinnaces for the purposes of communication brought me an answer, saying that His Excellency hoped to see me at dinner on board the large pinnace, when the fleet should come-to for the night.

We soon passed on our left the Mirzapore Nullah,³ the spot which I had fixed upon for the establishment of a distillery on the Company's account, and such observation as I now had an opportunity of making confirmed my opinion of the practicability of that undertaking. The country along the banks of the nullah, and for some distance to the north, appeared particularly healthy and pleasant.

Some way farther we passed another large village on our

¹ A thatched house. ² Running footmen. ³ Small river or stream.



left, where there was a considerable manufactory of sugar, which I once visited with the Resident of Santipore.

A little after sunset the General's pinnace shortened sail, steered towards the western shore, and dropped anchor within a few feet of the bank, to which ropes were carried out and made fast to strong pegs driven into the ground. The large dining-pinnace took up her station close by, and the other boats placed themselves astern of these, preserving nearly the order in which they had sailed during the day. Sentinels were placed on the shore opposite the General's boats. The fleet extended a considerable way along the bank, and the operations of driving in the pegs, carrying out the ropes, securing the boats, furling the sails, etc., presented an animated scene.

The cook of each boat now landed with his pots and utensils, and cleared and swept clean a piece of ground opposite his boat suitable to the preparation of dinner for the crew. The little space thus selected was considered sacred, and no one belonging to any other boat, and no one, more particularly of any other caste, would have thought of intruding upon it. There are many countries in which these appropriations, which were really of some importance for the time they were to last, would hardly have been made by so many persons, strangers for the most part to each other, without scrambling and contention, or consequences more serious; but here there was not the least disorder, no quarrelling or dissatisfaction, not a word between the different crews, although in the selection of ground some would be worse off than others.

Observing that the officers composing the General's staff were assembled on the bank not far from the great pinnace, I quitted my boat and walked towards them, when Colonel Palmer, whom I knew, introduced me to Colonel Auchmuty, who introduced me to such officers as were assembled, and to others as they arrived. A servant announcing that dinner was ready, all went on board the great pinnace, where I was received in the politest way possible by the Commander-in-chief, whom

I now saw for the first time. The party consisted of Sir Robert Abercromby, Commander-in-chief of the Forces in India, of Colonel Auchmuty, Colonel Scott, Colonel Murray, Colonel Dyer, Colonel Palmer, Dr. Laird, Major Hall, and Captain Palmer, aide-de-camp to his father, Colonel Palmer. There were also the ladies of Colonels Murray and Dyer. After a dinner of great sumptuousness some of the company retired to the top of the pinnace to enjoy the cool breeze from the water; some took a turn upon the shore, where the crews of the fleet were now taking their principal meal of the day in a way which may be thus described. The curry and rice composing this humble repast were served out in small red earthen plates, or in larger ones when three or four friends agreed to mess together. The cook having made the division, these contented men sat down in groups, some upon the shore, some upon the decks of the boats, helping themselves from the plates before them with the fingers of the right hand. Their only drink was water from the Ganges.

After a short interval, the tables in the dining-room being removed, the company re-assembled to take coffee and play at cards or form parties in conversation. The General being fond of good coffee, that which was prepared upon these occasions was of peculiar excellence, being made with the finest mocha by a man whom the General had brought from the western coast of India for that purpose, for he had nothing else to do. Well do I remember this man and his high-peaked turban as well as his excellent coffee. In dress and physiognomy he was unlike any native of India I had hitherto seen. He was very fair, and had a dignity of deportment far above his occupation. A long robe of flowered muslin, secured round his waist by a long fold of the same material, descended nearly to his feet. His turban was wound up high in a conical form, like the spiral shells placed upon chimney-pieces. In religion he was a Parsee, or worshipper of the sun, being a follower of Zerdusht, corrupted by European philology into Zoroaster.



This sect has a particular veneration for fire as the emblem of the chief object of their adoration.

Before the party broke up at night the General came up to me and said he should always expect to see me at dinner, and understanding that I had brought a cooking-boat with me, observed that I should have no occasion for it, and requested me to dismiss it. On going ashore with the rest of the party I found a great number of lanterns, brought by our servants to conduct us to our respective boats. The General retired to his private pinnace a few yards ahead.

Sir Robert Abercromby was tall, upright, strong and active, fond of exercise, particularly of walking, and capable of walking great distances without fatigue. His features, though national, were mild, his conversation easy and unaffected, his manner, in public and private, at his levees and at his table, most dignified and polite. He was of an ancient Scotch family, and brother of Sir Ralph Abercromby, who distinguished himself so much in the conquest of the French possessions in the West Indies in the beginning of the war which followed the French revolution, and afterwards fell gloriously in the battle which decided the expulsion of the French from Egypt. Sir Robert had served in America in the war which preceded the separation of the American colonies from England, and often referred to some of the events of his campaign in that country. He was subsequently Commander-in-chief at Bombay, and commanded the Bombay army sent to co-operate with Lord Cornwallis in the war against Tippoo. His demeanour towards the officers of his staff who accompanied him up the Ganges was particularly kind and friendly, and, young as I was, when his daily guest he treated me with equal attention, often taking me aside and talking with me for half an hour together in the course of the evening. Some of the subjects of these conversations I still remember, as I do with undiminished gratitude the numerous instances of kindness which I received so early in life from this most amiable and gentlemanly man.



Colonel Auchmuty was Secretary to the Commander-in-chief, had been his companion in America, and was now his friend and confidential adviser in India. To a powerful mind, improved by an excellent education and polished by literary pursuits, he joined a great knowledge of the world, the fruit of his extensive travels. His manner, notwithstanding, was rather of the old school, his address being formal, his conversation serious and reserved. Unfortunately many persons mistook for pride what was merely a peculiarity of habit, and this misconception prevented his being a favourite with the army, or at least with officers who had business at headquarters. The Colonel resembled one of those highly-finished pictures which require a close examination to appreciate their merit. It was they alone who had the advantage of being admitted to some degree of intimacy who could be duly sensible of his superior attainments and feel his numerous claims to esteem. Colonel Auchmuty was subsequently raised to the rank of General and to the title of Baronet, and commanded at the taking of Buenos Ayres—a difficult service, in which he obtained much credit. He was afterwards Commander-in-chief at Madras, and finally Commander-in-chief in Ireland, in which situation he died suddenly, falling from his horse in an apoplectic fit. I never think of the many agreeable days I spent in this officer's company, and of his great kindness to me, without regretting my having never seen him after my return from India.

Colonel Scott was an officer in the East India Company's service, in which he had obtained high distinction by his abilities, and particularly by his literary qualifications. He was esteemed one of the best Persian scholars in India, and had acquired reputation as the translator of several Persian works. He was afterwards appointed Ambassador to the Court of Lucknow, but perhaps the best evidence of his merit was the esteem in which he was successively held by Lord Cornwallis, whom he accompanied to Seringapatam, and by the present Commander-in-chief.