(contd.)

Monkeys, being held sacred by the Hindoos, are allowed to remain in the towns and villages unmolested, doing pretty much as they please. Sometimes they swarm in such numbers that eternal vigilance alone keeps them from devouring the fruit, grain, and other eatables displayed for sale in front of the shops. When they get to be an insufferable nuisance, although the pious Hindoos would suffer from their depredations even to ruin rather than do them injury, they offer no objections to being relieved of their charges by the government officials, so long as the measures taken are not of a sanguinary nature. Sometimes the monkeys are caught and shipped off in car-loads to some point miles away and turned loose in the jungle. The appearance of a car-load of these exiles, however, always excites the sympathies of the pious Hindoo, and instances have been known when they have been stealthily liberated while the train was waiting at some other town.

An effectual remedy has been recently discovered in cleaning out colonies of the smaller varieties of monkeys and inducing them to remove somewhere else, by introducing into their midst a certain warlike and aggressive variety from somewhere in the Himalaya foot-hills. This particular race of monkey, being a veritable anthropoidal Don Juan among his fellows, when turned loose in a village commences making violent love to the wives and sweethearts of the resident monkeys. The faithless fair, ever ready for coquetry and flirtation, flattered beyond measure by the attentions of the gallant stranger, forsake their first loves by the wholesale, and bask shamelessly in the sunshine of his favor. The result is that the outraged males, afraid to attack the warlike libertine so rudely introduced into their peaceful community, gather up their erring spouses, giddy daughters, and small children and betake themselves off forever.

Not far from Kurnaul I overtake an interesting party of gypsies, moving with their bag and baggage piled on the backs of diminutive cows led by strings. Numbers of the smaller children also bestride the gentle little bovines, but the rest of the party are afoot. The ruling passion of the Romany, the wide world over, asserts itself at my approach; brown-bodied youngsters with sparkling, coal-black eyes race after the bicycle, holding out their hands and begging, "pice, sahib, pice, pice."

Facsimile in cry and gesture almost, and in appearance, are these Hindostani gypsies of their relatives in distant Hungary, who, fifteen months before, raced alongside the bicycle, and begged for "kreuzer, kreuzer." Many ethnologists believe India to have been the original abiding place of the now widely scattered Romanies; certain it is that no country and no clime would be so well adapted to their shiftless habits and wandering tent-life as India. Their language, subjected to analysis, has been traced in a measure to Sanscrit roots, and although spread pretty much all over the surface of the globe, this strange, romantic people are said to recognize one another by a common language, even should the one hail from India and the other from the frozen North. Certain professors claim to have discovered a connecting link between the gypsies of the Occident and the Jats of the Punjab.

A boy tending a sacred cow undertakes to drive that worshipful animal out of my way as he sees me come bowling briskly down the road. The bovine, pampered and treated with the greatest deference and consideration from her earliest calfhood, resents this treatment by making a short but determined spurt after me as I sweep past. Whether the sacred cows of India are spoiled by generations of overindulgence, or whether the variety is constitutionally evil-tempered does not appear, but they one and all take pugnacious exception to the bicycle. Spurting away from a chasing Brahmani cow is an every-day experience.

Mr. D has kindly telegraphed from Kurnaul to Nawab Ali Ahmed Khan, a hospitable Mohammedan gentleman at Paniput, apprising him of my coming. More ancient even than Kurnaul, Paniput's vast antiquity is reputed to extend back to the period of the great Pandava War described in the Mahabharat, and supposed to have been fought nearly four thousand years ago. The city occupies a commanding position to the left of the road, and is rendered conspicuous by several white marble domes and minarets.

The nawab and another native gentleman, physician to the Paniput Hospital, are seated in a dog-cart watching for my appearance, at a fork in the road near one of the city gates. The nawab's place is a mile and a half off the main road, but the smooth, level kunkah leads right up to the fine, commodious bungalow, in which I am duly installed. A tepid bath, prepared in deference to the nawab's anticipation of my preference, is awaiting my pleasure, and from the moment of arrival I am the recipient of unstinted attention. A large reclining chair is placed immediately beneath the punkah, and a punkah-wallah, ambitious to please, causes the frilled hangings of this desirable and necessary piece of furniture to wave vigorously to and fro but a foot or eighteen inches above my head. A smiling servant kneels at my feet and proceeds to knead and "groom" the muscles of the legs. Judging from the attentions lavished upon my pedal extremities, one might well imagine me to be a race-horse that had just endeared himself to his groom and owner by winning the Derby.

An ample supper is followed by a most refreshing sleep, and in the morning, when ready to depart, my watchful attendants present themselves with broad smiles and sheets of paper. Each one wants a certificate showing that he has contributed to my comfort and entertainment, and lastly comes the nawab himself and his bosom friend, the hospital doctor, to bid me farewell and request the same favor. This certificate-foible is one of the greatest bores in India; almost every native who performs any service for a Sahib, whether in the capacity of a mere waiter at a native hotel, or as retainer of some wealthy nabob—and not infrequently the nabob himself, if a government official—wants a testimonial expressing one's approval of his services. An old servitor who has mingled much among Europeans must have whole reams of these useless articles stowed away. What in the world they want with them is something of a puzzler; though the idea is, probably, that they might come in useful to obtain a situation some time or other.

South of Paniput the trees alongside the road are literally swarming with monkeys; they file in long strings across the road, looking anxiously behind, evidently frightened at the strange appearance of the bicycle. Shinnying up the toddy-palms, they ensconce themselves among the foliage and peer curiously down at me as I wheel past, giving vent to their perturbation in excited cries. Twenty-five miles down the road, an hour is spent beneath a grove of shady peepuls, watching the amusing antics of a troop of monkeys in the branches. Their marvellous activity among the trees is here displayed to perfection, as they quarrel and chase one another from tree to tree. The old ones seem passively irritable and decidedly averse to being bothered by the antics and mischievous activity of the youngsters. Taking possession of some particular branch, they warn away all would-be intruders with threatening grimaces and feints. The youthful members of the party are skillful of pranks and didoes, carried on to the great annoyance of their more aged and sedate relatives, who, in revenge, put in no small portion of their time punishing or pursuing them with angry cries for their deeds of wanton annoyance. One monkey, that has very evidently been there many and many a time before on the same thievish errand, with an air of amusing secrecy and roguishness, slips quickly along a horizontal bough and thrusts its arm into a hole. Its eyes wander guiltily around, as though expectant of detection and attack—an apprehension that quickly justifies itself in the shape of a blue-plumaged bird that flutters angrily about the robber's head, causing it to beat a hasty retreat. Birds' eggs are the booty it expected to find, and, me-thinks, as I note the number and activity of the freebooters to whom birds' eggs would be most toothsome morsels, watchful indeed must be the parent-bird whose maternal ambition bears its legitimate fruit in this monkey-infested grove. In me the monkeys seem to recognize a possible enemy, and at my first appearance hasten to hide themselves among the thickest foliage; peering; cautiously down, they yield themselves up to excited chattering and broad grimaces.

Peacocks, too, are strutting majestically about the greensward beneath the trees, their gorgeous tails expanded, or, perched on some horizontal branch, they awake the screaming echoes in reply to others of their kindred calling in the jungle. In the same way that monkeys are regarded and worshipped as the representatives of the great mythological monkey-king Hanumiin, who assisted Kama, in his war with Havana for the possession of Sita, so is the peacock revered and held sacred as the bird upon which rode Kartikeya the god of war and commander-in-chief of the armies of the Puranic gods. Thus do both these denizens of the jungle obtain immunity from harm at the hands of the natives, by reason of mythological association. English sportsmen shoot them, however, except in certain specified districts where the government has made their killing prohibitory, in deference to the religious prejudices of the Hindoos. The Rajput warriors of Ulwar used to march to battle with a peacock's feather in their turbans; they believe that the reason why this fine-plumaged bird screams so loudly when it thunders is because it mistakes the noise for the roll of war-drums. Large, two-storied passenger-vans, drawn sometimes by one camel and sometimes two, are now frequently encountered; they are regular two-storied cages, with iron bars, like the animal-vans in a menagerie. The passengers squat on the floors, and when travelling at night, or through wild districts, are locked in between stages to guard against surprise and robbery.

CHAPTER XV.

DELHI AND AGRA.

From the police-thana of Rai, where the night is spent, to Delhi, the character of the road changes to a mixture of clay and rock, altogether inferior to kunkah. The twenty-one miles are covered, however, by 8.30 a.m., that hour finding me wheeling down the broad suburban road to the Lahore Gate amid throngs of country people carrying baskets of mangoes, plantains, pomegranates, and other indigenous products into the markets of the old Mogul capital. Massive archways, ruined forts and serais, placid water-tanks, lovely gardens, feathery toddy-palms, plantain-hedges, and throngs of picturesque people make the approach to historic Delhi a scene long to be remembered.

Entering the Lahore Gate, suitable accommodation is found at Northbrook Hotel, a comfortable hostelry under native management near the Moree Gate, and overlooking from its roof the scenes of the most memorable events connected with the siege of Delhi in 1857. Letters are found at the post-office apprising me of a bicycle-camera and paper negatives awaiting my orders at the American Consulate at Calcutta, and it behooves me to linger here for a few days until its arrival in reply to a telegram. No more charming spot could possibly be found to linger in than the old Mogul capital, with its wondrous wealth of historical associations, both remotely antique and comparatively modern, its glorious monuments of imperial Oriental splendor and its reminiscences of heroic deeds in battle.

A letter of introduction to an English gentleman, brought from Kurnaul, secures me friends and attention at once; in the cool of the evening we drive out together in his pony-phaeton along the historic granite ridge that formed the site of the British camp during the siege. The operations against the city were conducted mostly from this ridge and the intervening ground; on the ridge itself is erected a beautiful red granite monument memorial, bearing the names of prominent officers and the numbers of men killed, the names of the regiments, etc., engaged in the siege and assault. Here, also, is Hindoo Rao's house, and ancient obelisks.

East of the Moree Gate is the world-famed Cashmere Gate—world-famed in connection with the brilliant exploit of the little forlorn hope that, on the morning of September 14, 1857, succeeded, in the face of a deadly fusillade from the, walls and the wicket gates, in carrying bags of gunpowder and blowing it up. Through the opening thus effected poured the eager troops that rescued the city from ten times their own number of mutineers and turned the beams of the scale in which the fate of the whole British Indian Empire was at the moment balanced. Perhaps in all the world's battles no more heroic achievement was ever attempted or carried out than the blowing up of the Cashmere Gate. "Salkeld laid his bags of powder, in the face of a deadly fire from the open wicket not ten feet distant; he was instantly shot through the arm and leg, and fell back on the bridge, handing the port-fire to Sergeant Burgess, bidding him light the fuse. Burgess was instantly shot dead in the attempt. Sergeant Carmichael then advanced, took up the port-fire, and succeeded in firing the fuse, but immediately fell, mortally wounded. Sergeant Smith, seeing him fall, advanced at a run, but finding that the fuse was already burning, flung himself into the ditch."

Difficult, indeed, would it be to crowd more heroism into the same number of words that I have here quoted from Colonel Medley, an eye-witness of the affair. Between the double archways of the gate is a red-sandstone memorial tablet, placed there by Lord Napier of Magdala, upon which is inscribed the names, rank, and regiment of those who took part in the forlorn hope. All is now peaceful and lovely enough, but the stone bastions and parapets still remain pretty much as when the British batteries ceased their plunging rain of shot and shell thirty years ago.

Not far from the Moree Gate is the tomb of General Nicholson, one of the most conspicuous and heroic characters of that trying period, and generally regarded as the saviour of Delhi. Enshrined in the hearts of the brave Sikhs no less than in the hearts of his own countrymen, his tomb has become a regular place of pilgrimage for the old Sikh warriors who fought side by side with the English against the mutineers.

It has been my good fortune, I find, to arrive at the old Mogul capital the day before the commencement of an annual merrymaking, picnicking, and general holiday at the celebrated Kootub Minar. The Kootub Minar is about eleven miles out of Delhi, situated amid the ruins of ancient Dilli (Delhi), the old Hindoo city from which the more modern city takes its name. It is conceded to be the most beautiful minar-monument in the world, and ranks with the Taj Mahal at Agra as one of the beautiful architectural triumphs peculiar to the splendid era of Mohammedan rule in India, and which are not to be matched elsewhere. The day following my arrival I conclude to take a spin out on my bicycle as far as the Kootub, and see something of it, the ruins amid which it stands, and the Hindoos in holiday attire. I choose the comparative coolness of early morning for the ride out; but early though it be, the road thither is already swarming with gayly dressed people bent on holiday-making. The road is a worthy offshoot of the Grand Trunk, not a whit less smooth of surface, nor less lovely in its wealth of sacred shade-trees. Moreover, it passes through a veritable wilderness of ruined cities, mosques, tombs, and forts the whole distance, and leads right through the magnificent remains of the ancient Hindoo city itself.

The Kootub Minar is found to be a beautifully fluted column, two hundred and forty feet high, and it soars grandly above the mournful ruins of old Dilli, its hoary wealth of crumbled idol temples, tombs, and forts. The minar is supposed to have been erected in the latter part of the twelfth century to celebrate the victory of the Mohammedans over the Hindoos of Dilli. The general effect of the tall, stately Mohammedan monument among the Hindoo ruins is that of a proud gladiator standing erect and triumphant amid fallen foes. At least, that is how it looks to me, as I view it in connection with the ruins at its base and ponder upon its history. A spiral stairway of three hundred and seventy-five steps leads to the summit. A group of natives are already up there, enjoying the cool breezes and the prospect below. In the comprehensive view from the summit one can read an instructive sermon of centuries of stirring Indian history in the gray stone-work of ruined mosques and tombs and fortresses and pagan temples that dot the valley of the Jumna hereabout almost as thickly as the trees.

Strange crowds have congregated on this rare old historic camping-ground in ages past. It was a strange crowd, gathered here for a strange purpose, on that traditional occasion, when Rajah Pithora, in the fourth century of the Christian era, had the celebrated iron shaft dug up to satisfy his curiosity as to whether it had transfixed the subterranean snake-god Vishay. There is a strange crowd gathered here to-day, too; I can hear their shouting and their tom-toming come floating up from among the ruins and the dark-green foliage as I look down from my beautiful eyrie on top of the Kootub upon their pygmy forms, thronging the walks and roads, brown and busy as swarms of ants.

It is a vast concourse of people, characteristic of teeming India; but they are not, on this occasion, congregated to witness pagan rites and ceremonies, nor to encourage iconoclastic Moolahs in smashing Hindoo gods and chipping offensive Hindoo carvings off their temples; they are a mixed crowd of Hindoos, Sikhs, and Mohammedans, who, having to some extent buried the hatchet of race and religious animosities under the just and tolerant rule of a Christian government, have gathered here amid the ruins and relics of their respective past histories to enjoy themselves in innocent recreation.

Descending from the Kootub Minar, I am resting beneath the shade of the dak bungalow hard by, when a gray-bearded Hindoo approaches, salaams, and hands me a paper. The paper is a certificate, certifying that the bearer, Chunee Lai, had performed before Captain Somebody of the Fusileers, and had afforded that officer excellent amusement. Before I have quite grasped the situation, or comprehended the purport of the tendered missive, several men and boys deposit a miscellaneous assortment of boxes and baskets before me and range themselves in a semicircle behind them. The old fellow with the certificate picks out a small box and raises the lid; a huge cobra thrusts out its hideous head and puffs its hooded neck to the size of a man's hand. It then dawns upon me that the gray-bearded Hindoo is a conjurer; and being curious to see something of Indian prestidigitation, I allow him to proceed.

Many of the tricks are quite commonplace and transparent even to a novice. For example, he mixes red, yellow, and white powders together in a tumbler of water and swallows the mixture, making, of course, a wry face, as though taking a dose of bitter medicine. He then calls a boy from among the by-standers and blows first red powder, then yellow, then white into the youngster's face. I judge he had small bags of dry powder stowed away in his cheek. He performs his tricks on the bare ground, without any such invaluable adjunct as the table of his European rival, and some of them, viewed in the light of this disadvantage, are indeed puzzling. For instance, he fills an ordinary tin pot nearly full of water, puts in a handful of yellow sand and a handful of red powder, and thoroughly stirs them up; he then thrusts his naked hand into the water and brings forth a handful of each kind, dry as when he put them in. A simple enough trick, no doubt, to the initiated; but the old conjurer's arm is bared, and the tin is, as far as I can discover, but an ordinary vessel, and the trick is performed without any cover, table, or cloth. After this he expectorates a number of glass marbles, and ends with a couple of solid iron jingal balls that he can scarce get out of his mouth. There is no mistake about their being of solid iron, and the old conjurer opens his mouth and lets me see them emerging from his throat. From what I see him do as the final act, and which there is no deception about, I am inclined to think the old fellow has actually acquired the power of swallowing these jingal balls and reproducing them at pleasure.

After a number of tricks too familiar to justify mentioning here he covers his head with a cloth for a minute, and then reappears with brass eyeballs, with a small hole bored in the centre of each to represent the pupils; and his mouth is rendered hideous with a set of teeth belonging to some animal. In this horrible make-up the old Hindoo tom-toms on a small oblong drum, while one of his assistants sings in broken English "Buffalo Gals." He then openly removes the false teeth, and taking out the brass eyeballs, he casts them jingling on the gravel at my feet. They are simply hemispheres of sheet-brass, and fitted closely over the eyeballs, beneath the lids. The conjurer's eyes water visibly after the brass covers are removed; and well enough they might; there is no sleight-of-hand about this—it is purely an act of self-torture.

In most of the conjuring tricks the conjurer would purposely make a partial failure in the first attempt; an assistant would then impart the necessary power by muttering cabalistic words over a monkey's skull.

A mongoose had been tethered to a stake at the beginning of the performance, and the little ferret-like enemy of the snake family kept tugging at his tether and sniffing suspiciously about whenever snakes appeared in the conjurer's manipulations. He bad promised me a fight between the mongoose and a snake, and before presenting his little brass bowl for backsheesh he holds out a four-foot snake toward the eager little animal at the stake. The snake writhes and struggles to get away, evidently badly scared at the prospect of an encounter with the mongoose; but the man succeeds in depositing him within his adversary's reach. The mongoose nabs him by the neck in an instant, and would no doubt soon have finished him; but the assistants part them with wire crooks, putting the snake in a basket with several others and the mongoose in another.

While watching the interesting performances of the Hindoo, conjurers I have left the bicycle at a little dak bungalow near the old entrance-gate. From the commanding height of the Kootub-one could see that the Delhi road is a solid mass of vehicles and pedestrians (how the people in teeming India do swarm on these festive occasions!). It looks impossible to make one's way with a bicycle against that winding stream of human beings, and so, after wandering about a while among the striking and peculiar colonnades of the ancient pagan temples, paying the regulation tribute of curiosity to the enigmatic iron column, and doing the place in general, I return to the bungalow, thinking of starting back to Delhi, when I find that my "cycle of strange experiences" has attracted to itself a no less interesting gathering than a troupe of Nautch girls and their chaperone. The troupe numbers about a dozen girls, and they have come to the merry-making at the Kootub to gather honest shekels by giving exhibitions of their terpsichorean talents in the Nautch dance.

I had been wondering whether an opportunity to see this famous dance would occur during my trip through India; and so when four or five of the prettiest of these dusky damsels gather about me, smile at me winsomely ogle me with their big black eyes, smile again, smile separately, smile unanimously, smile all over their semi-mahogany but nevertheless not unhandsome faces, and every time displaying sets of pearly teeth, what could I do, what could anyone have done, but smile in return?

There is no language more eloquent or more easily understood than the language of facial expression. No verbal question or answer is necessary. I interpret the winsome smiles of the Nautchnees aright, and they interpret very quickly the permission to go ahead that reveals itself in the smile they force from me. Eight of the twelve are commonplace girls of from fourteen to eighteen, and the other four are "dark but comely"—quite handsome, as handsomeness goes among the Hindoos. Their arms are bare of everything save an abundance of bracelets, and the upper portion of the body is rather scantily draped, after the manner and custom of all Hindoo females; but an ample skirt of red calico reaches to the ankle. Rings are worn on every toe, and massive silver anklets with tiny bells attached make music when they walk of dance. They wear a profusion of bracelets, necklaces of rupees, head-ornaments, ear-rings, and pendent charms, and a massive gold or brass ring in the left nostril. The nostril is relieved of its burden by a string that descends from a head-ornament and takes up the weight.

The Nautch girls arrange themselves into a half-circle, their scarlet costumes forming a bright crescent, terminating in a mass of spectators, whose half-naked bodies, varying in color from pale olive to mahogany, are arrayed in costumes scarcely less showy than the dancers. The chaperone and eight outside girls tom-tom an appropriate Nautch accompaniment on drums with their fingers, the four prettiest girls advance, and favoring me with sundry smiles, and coquettish glances from their bright black eyes, they commence to dance.

An idea seems to prevail in many Occidental minds that the Nautch dance is a very naughty thing; but nothing is further from the truth. Of course it can be made naughty, and no doubt often is; but then so can many another form of innocent amusement. The Nautch dance is a decorous and artistic performance when properly danced; the graceful motions and elegant proportions of the human form, as revealed by lithe and graceful dancers, are to be viewed with an eye as purely artistic and critical as that with which one regards a Venus or other production of the sculptor's studio.

The four dancers take the lower hem of their red garment daintily between the thumb and finger of the right hand, spreading its ample folds into the figure of an opened fan, by bringing the outstretched arm almost on a level with the shoulder. A mantle of transparent muslin, fringed with silver spangles, is worn about the head and shoulders in the same indescribably graceful manner as the mantilla of the Spanish senorita. Raising a portion of this aloft in the left hand, and keeping the "fan" intact with the right, the dancers twirl around and change positions with one another, their supple figures meanwhile assuming a variety of graceful motions and postures from time to time. Now they imitate the spiral movement of a serpent climbing around and upward on an imaginary pole; again they assume an attitude of gracefulness, their dusky countenances half hidden in seeming coquetry behind the muslin mantle, the large red fan waving gently to and fro, the feet unmoving, but the undulating motions of the body and the tremor of the limbs sufficing to jingle the tiny ankle-bells. On the whole, the Nautch dance would be disappointing to most people witnessing it; its fame leads one to expect more than it really amounts to.

Before starting back to Delhi, I take a stroll through the adjacent village of Kootub, a place named after the minar, I suppose. The crooked main street of the village of Kootub itself presents to-day a scene of gayety and confusion that beggars description. Bunting floats gayly from every window and balcony, in honor of the festival, and is strung across the street from house to house. Thousands of globular colored lanterns are hanging about, ready to be lighted up at night. The streets are thronged with people in the gayest of costumes, and with vehicles the gilt and paint and glitter of which equal the glittering wagons and chariots of a circus parade at home.

The balconies above the shops are curtained with blue gauze, behind which are seen numbers of ladies, chatting, eating fruits and sweetmeats, and peeping down through the semi-transparent screens upon the animated scene in the streets. On the stalls, choice edibles are piled up by the bushel, and busy venders are hawking fruits, sweets, toddy, and all imaginable refreshments about among the crowds. Vacant lots are occupied by the tents of visiting peasants, and in out-of-the-way corners acrobatics, jugglery, and Nautch-dancing attract curious crowds.

The incoming tide of human life is at its flood as I start back to Delhi by the same road I came. Here one gets a glimpse of the real gorgeousness of India without seeking for it at the pageants of princes and rajahs. Small zemindars from outlying villages are bringing their wives and daughters to the festivities at the Kootub in circusy-looking bullock-chariots covered with gilt and carvings, and draped and twined with parti-colored ribbons. Some of these gaudy turn-outs are drawn by richly caparisoned, milk-white oxen, with gilded horns. Cymbals and sleigh-bells galore keep up a merry jingle, and tom-toming parties make their noisy presence known all along the line.

Still more gorgeous and interesting than the gilded ox-gharries of the ordinary zemindars are miniature chariots drawn by pairs of well-matched, undersized oxen covered with richly spangled trappings, and with horns curiously gilded and tipped with tiny bells. These are the vehicles of petted young nabobs in charge of attendants: tiny oxen with gorgeous trappings, tiny chariots richly gilded and carved and painted, tiny occupants richly dressed and jewelled. Troupes of Nautchnees add their picturesque appearance to the brilliant throngs, and here and there is encountered a holy fakir, unkempt and unwashed, having, perchance, registered a vow years ago never more to apply water to his skin, his only clothing a dirty waist-cloth and the yellow clay plastered on his body. Long strings of less pretentious bullock-gharries almost block the roadway, and people constantly dodging out from behind them in front of my wheel make it extremely difficult to ride.

Several days are passed at Delhi, waiting the arrival of a small bicycle-camera from Calcutta, which has been forwarded from America. Most of this time is spent in the pleasant occupation of reclining in an arm-chair beneath the punkah, the only comfortable situation in Delhi at this season of the year. Nevertheless, I manage to spin around the city mornings and evenings, and visit the famous fort and palace of Shah Jehan.

In the magnificent—magnificent even in the decline of its grandeur —fort-palace of the Mogul Emperor named, British soldiers now find comfortable quarters. This fort, together with modern Delhi (the real Indian name of Delhi is Shahjehanabad, after the emperor Shah Jehan, who had it built), is but about two hundred and fifty years old, the entire affair having been built to gratify the Mogul ambition for founding new capitals.

Although so modern compared with other cities near by, both city and palace have gone through strangely stirring and tragic experiences, and events have happened in the latter that, although sometimes trivial in themselves, have led to momentous results.

In this palace, in 1716, was given permission, by the Emperor Furrokh Seeur, to the Scotch physician, Gabriel Hamilton, the privileges that have gradually led up to the British conquest of the whole peninsula. As a reward for professional services rendered, permission to establish factories on the Hooghly was given; the Presidency of Fort William sprung therefrom, and at length the British Indian Empire. Twenty years after this, the terrible Nadir Shah, from Persia, occupied the palace, and held high jinks within while his army slaughtered over a hundred thousand of the inhabitants in the streets. When this red-handed marauder took his departure he carried away with him booty to the value of eighty millions sterling in the value of that time. Among the plunder was the famous Peacock Throne, alone reputed to be worth six million pounds. This remarkable piece of kingly furniture is said to be in the possession of the Shah of Persia at the present time. It is very probable, however, that only some unique portion of the throne is preserved, as it could hardly have been carried back to Persia by Nadir intact. This throne is thus described by a writer: "The throne was six feet long and four broad, composed of solid gold inlaid with precious stones. It was surmounted by a canopy of gold, supported on twelve pillars of the same material. Around the canopy hung a fringe of pearls; on each side of the throne stood two chattahs, or umbrellas, symbols of royalty, formed of crimson velvet richly embroidered with gold thread and pearls, and with handles of solid gold, eight feet long, studded with diamonds. The back of the throne was a representation of the expanded tail of a peacock, the natural colors of which were imitated by sapphires, rubies, emeralds, and other gems." This Peacock Throne was the envy and admiration of every contemporary monarch who heard of it, and was undoubtedly one of the chief elements in exciting the cupidity of the outer world that finally ended in the dissolution of the Mogul Empire.

Less than ten years after the departure of Nadir Shah, Ahmud Khan advanced with an army from Cabool, and took pretty much everything of value that the Khorassani freebooter had overlooked, besides committing more atrocities upon the population. At the end of another decade an army of Mahrattas took possession, and completed the spoilation by ripping the silver filigree-work off the ceiling of the Throne-room. Not long after this, yet another adventurer took a hand in the work of destruction, tortured the members of the imperial family, and put out the eyes of the helpless old emperor, Shah Alum. Here Lord Lake's cavalcade arrived, too, in 1803, and found the blinded chief of the royal house of Timour and his magnificent successors, who built Delhi and Agra, seated beneath the tattered remnants of a little canopy, a mockery of royalty, with every external appearance of misery and helplessness And lastly, here, in May, 1857, the last representative of the great Moguls, a not unwilling tool in the hands of the East India Company's mutinous soldiery, presided over the butchery of helpless English women and children.

It is difficult to realize that Delhi has been the theatre of such a stirring and eventful history, as nowadays one strolls down the Chandni Chouk and notes the air of peace and contentment that pervades the whole city. It seems quite true, as Edwin Arnold says in his "India Revisited," that Derby is now not more contentedly British than is Delhi. Whatever may be the faults of British rule in India, no impartial critic can say that the people are not in better hands than they have ever been before. One of the most interesting objects in the city is the Jama Mesjid, the largest mosque in India, and the second-largest in all Islam, ranking next to St. Sophia at Constantinople. Broad flights of red sandstone steps lead up to handsome gateways surmounted by rows of small milk-white marble domes or cupolas. Inside is a large quadrangular court, paved with broad slabs of sandstone; occupying the centre of this is a white marble reservoir of water. The mosque proper is situated on the west side of the quadrangle, an oblong structure two hundred feet long by half that many in width, ornamented and embellished by Arabic inscriptions and three shapely white marble domes. Very elegant indeed is the pattern and composition of the floor, each square slab of white marble having a narrow black border running round it, like the border of a mourning envelope. Very charming, also, are the two graceful minarets at either end, one hundred and thirty feet high, alternate strips of white marble and red sandstone producing a very pretty and striking effect.

In the northeastern corner of the quadrangle is a small cabinet containing the inevitable relics of the Prophet. Three separate guides have accumulated at my heels since entering the gate, and now a fourth, ancient and hopeful, appears to unravel, for the Sahib's benefit, the mysteries of the little cabinet. Unlocking the door, he steps out of his slippers into the entrance, stooping beneath an iron rail that further bars the entrance.

From an inner receptacle he first produces some ancient manuscript, which he explains was written by the same scribes who copied the Koran for Mohammed's grandson. Putting these carefully away, the Ancient and Hopeful then unwraps, very mysteriously, a handkerchief, and reveals a small oblong tin box with a glass face. The casket contains what upon casual observation appears to be a piece of bark curling up at the edges; this, I am informed, however, is nothing less than the sole of one of Mohammed's sandals. Putting away this venerable relic of the great founder of Islam, the old Mussulman assumes a look of profound importance and mystery. One would think, from his expression and manners, that he was about to reveal to the sacrilegious gaze of an infidel nothing less than the Prophet's fifth rib or the parings from his pet corn. Instead of these he exhibits a flat piece of rock bearing marks resembling the shape of a man's foot—the imprint of Mohammed's foot, miraculously made. To one whose soulful gaze has been enraptured with an imprint of the first Sultan's hand on the wall of St. Sophia, and the mosaic figure of the Virgin Mary persistently refusing to be painted out of sight on the dome of the same mosque, this piece of rock would scarcely seem to justify the vast display of reverence that is evidently expected of all visitors by the Ancient and Hopeful.

But perhaps it is on account of the place of honor it occupies immediately preceding what is undoubtedly a very precious relic indeed, a relic that fills the worthy custodian with mystery and importance. Or, perchance, mystery and importance have been found, during his long and varied experience with the unsophisticated tourist, excellent things to increase the volume of importance attached to the exhibited articles, and the volume of "pice" in his exchequer. At any rate, the Ancient and Hopeful assumes more mystery and importance than ever as he uncovers a second tin casket with a glass front. Glued to the glass, inside, is a single coarse yellow hair about two inches long; the precious relic, which has a suspicious resemblance to a bristle, is considered the gem of the collection, being nothing less than a hair from the Prophet's venerable mustache. Mohammedans swear by the beard of the Prophet, just as good Christians swear by "the great horned spoon," or by "great Caesar's ghost," so that the possession of even this one poor little hair, surrounded as it is by a blue halo of suspicion as to its authenticity, sheds a ray of glory upon the great Jama Mesjid scarcely surpassed by its importance as the second-largest mosque in the world. The two-inch yellow hair is considered the piece de resistance of the collection, and the Ancient and Hopeful stows it away with all due reverence, strokes his henna-stained beard with the air of a man who has got successfully through a very important task, steps into his slippers, and presents himself for "pice."

Pice is duly administered to him and his three salaaming associates, when, lo! a fifth candidate mysteriously appears, also smiling and salaaming expectantly. Although I haven't had the pleasure of a previous acquaintance with this gentleman, the easiest way to escape gracefully from the sacred edifice is to backsheesh him along with the others. These backsheesh considerations are, of course, small and immaterial matters, and one ought to feel extremely grateful to all concerned for the happy privilege of feasting one's soul with ever so brief a contemplation of the things in the cabinet, and more especially on the bristle-like yellow hair. These joy-inspiring objects, ramshackled from the storehouse of the musty past, fulfil the double mission of keeping alive the reverence of devout Mussulmans who visit the mosque, and keeping the Ancient and Hopeful well supplied with goodakoo.

My camera having duly arrived, together with a package of letters, which are always doubly welcome to a wanderer in distant lands, I prepare to resume my southward journey. The few days' rest has enabled me to recover from the wilting effects of riding in the terrific heat, and I have seen something of one of the most interesting points in all Asia. Delhi is sometimes called the "Home of Asia," which, it seems to me, is a very appropriate name to give it.

Neatly clad and modest-looking females, native converts to Christianity, are walking in orderly procession to church, testaments in hand, as I wheel through the streets of Delhi on Sunday morning toward the Agra road. Very interesting is it to see these dusky daughters of heathendom arrayed in modest white muslin gowns, their lithe and graceful forms freed from the barbarous jewellery that distinguishes the persons of their unconverted sisters. Very charming do they look in their Christianized simplicity and self-contained demeanor as they walk quietly, and at a becoming Sabbath-day pace, two by two, down the Chandni Chouk. They present an instructive comparison to the straggling groups of heathen damsels who watch them curiously as they walk past and then proceed to chant idolatrous songs, apparently in a spirit of wanton raillery at the Christian maidens and their simple, un-ornamented attire. The fair heathens of Delhi have a sort of naughty, Parisian reputation throughout the surrounding country, and so there is nothing surprising in this exhibition of wanton hilarity directed at these more strait-laced converts to the religion of the Ferenghis. The heathen damsels, arrayed in very worldly costumes, consisting of flaring red, yellow, and blue garments, the whole barbaric and ostentatious array of nose-rings, ear-rings, armlets, anklets, rupee necklaces, and pendents, and the multifarious gewgaws of Hindoo womankind, look surpassingly wicked and saucy in comparison with their converted sisters. The gentle converts try hard to regard their heathen songs with indifference, and to show by their very correct deportment the superiority of meekness, virtue, and Christianity over gaudy clothes, vulgar silver jewellery, and heathenism. The whole scene reminds one very forcibly of a gang of wicked street-boys at home, poking fun at a Sunday-school procession or a platoon of Salvation Army soldiers parading the streets.

Past the Queen's Gardens and the fort, down a long street of native shops, and out of the Delhi gate I wheel, past the grim battlements of Firozabad, along a rather flinty road that extends for ten miles, after which commences again the splendid kunkah. Villages are numerous, and the country populous; tombs and the ruins of cities dot the landscape, pahnee-chowkees, where yellow Brahmans dispense water to thirsty wayfarers, line the road, and at one point three splendid, massive archways, marking some place that has lost its former importance, span my road.

Hindoos are now the prevailing race, and their religion finds frequent expression in idol temples and shrines beneath little roadside groves. The night is spent on the porch of a dak bungalow just outside the walls of Pullwal, a typical Hindoo city, with all its curious display of hideous idols, idolatrous paintings, and beautiful carved temples with gilded spires. The groves about the bungalow are literally swarming with green parrots; in big flocks they sweep past near my charpoy, producing a great wh-r-r-r-ring commotion with their wings. A flock of parrots may be so far aloft as to be well-nigh beyond the range of human vision in the ethery depths, but the noise of their wings will be plainly audible.

A two hours' terrific downpour delays me at the village of Hodell next day, and affords an opportunity to inspect an ordinary little Hindoo village temple. The captain of the police-thana sends a tall Sikh policeman to show me in. The temple is only a small tapering marble edifice about thirty feet high, surmounted by a gilded crescent, and resting on a hollow plinth, the hollow of which provides quarters for the priest. One is expected to remove his foot-gear before going inside, the same as in a Mohammedan mosque. A taper is burning in a niche of the wall; mural paintings of snakes, many-handed gods, bulls, monsters, and mythical deities create a cheap and garish impression. In the centre of the floor is a marble linga, and grouped around it a miniature man, woman, and elephant; before these are laid offerings of flowers. The interior of the temple is not more than eight feet square, a mere cell in which the deities are housed; the worshippers mostly perform their prostrations on the plinth outside. The villagers gather in a crowd about the temple and watch every movement of my brief inspection; they seem pleased at the sight of a Sahib honoring their religion by removing his shoes and carefully respecting their feelings. When I descend from the plinth they fall back and greet me with smiles and salaams.

The rain clears up and I forge ahead, finding the kunkah road-bed none the worse for the drenching it has just received. Hour by hour one gets more surprised at the multitudes of pedestrians on the road; neither rain nor sun seems to affect their number. Some of the costumes observed are quite startling in their ingenuity and effect. One garment much affected by the Rajput women are yellowish shawls or mantles, phool-karis, in which, are set numerous small circular mirrors about the circumference of a silver half-dollar; the effect of these in the bright Indian sun, as the wearer trudges along in the distance, is as though she were all ablaze with gems. Whenever I wheel past a group of Rajput females, they either stand with averted faces or cover up their heads with their shawls.

The road-inspector's bungalow at Chattee affords me shelter, and an intelligent native gentleman, who speaks a misleading quality of English, supplies me with a supper of curried rice and fowl. Hard by is a Hindoo temple, whence at sunset issue the sweetest chimes imaginable from a peal of silver-toned bells. My charpoy is placed on the porch facing the east, and soon the rotund face of the rising moon floats above the trees, and the silvery tinkle of the bells is followed by a chorus of jackals paying their noisy compliments to its loveliness. My slumbers can hardly be said to be unbroken to-night, three pariah dogs have taken a fancy to my quarters; two of them sit on their haunches and howl dismally in response to the jackals, while number three reclines sociably beneath my charpoy and growls at the others as though constituting himself my protector. Some Indian Romeo is serenading his dusky Juliet in the neighboring town; flocks of roysteriug parrots go whirring past at all hours of the night, and a too liberal indulgence in red-hot curry keeps me on the verge of a nightmare almost till the silvery tinkle-tinkle of the Brahman bells announces the break of day.

Cynics have sometimes denounced Christians as worse than the heathens, in requiring loud church-bells to summon them to worship. Such, it appears, are putting the case rather thoughtlessly. Mohammedans have their muezzins, while both Christians and idolaters have their chiming bells. Neither Christians, nor Mohammedans, nor heathens need these agencies to summon them to their respective worldly enjoyments, so that, taken all in all, we are pretty much alike—cynics, notwithstanding, to the contrary, we are little or no worse than the heathens.

A loudly wailing woman with her head covered up, and supported between two companions who are vainly trying to console her, and a party conveying two cassowaries, a pair of white peacocks, and a kangaroo from Calcutta to some rajah's menagerie up country, are among the curiosities encountered on the road the following day. Spending the afternoon and night in the quarters of the Third Dragoon Guards at Muttra Cantonment, I resume my journey early in the morning, dodging from shelter to shelter to avoid frequent heavy showers.

It is but thirty-five miles from Muttra to Agra, and notwithstanding showers and heat, the distance is covered by half-past ten. Wheeling at this pace, however, is an indiscretion, and the completion of the stretch is signalized by a determination to seek shade and quiet for the remainder of the day. Once again the sociable officers of the garrison tender me the hospitality of their quarters, and the ensuing day is spent in visiting that wonder of the world, the Taj Mahal, Akbar's fort, and other wonderful monuments of the palmy days of the Mogul Empire.

Finer and more imposing in appearance even than the fort at Delhi, is that at Agra. Walls of red sandstone, seventy feet high, and a mile and a half in circuit, picturesquely crenellated, and with imposing gateways and a deep, broad moat, Complete a work of stupendous dimensions. One is overcome with a sense of grandeur upon first beholding these Indian palace-forts, after seeing nothing more imposing than mud walls in Persia and Afghanistan; they are magnificent looking structures. The contrast, too, of the red sandstone walls and gates and ramparts, with the white marble buildings of the royal quarters, is very striking. The domes of the latter, seen at a distance, seem like snow-white bubbles resting ever so lightly and airily upon the darker mass; one almost expects to see them rise up and float away on the passing zephyrs like balloons.

Passing inside over a drawbridge and through the massive Delhi Gate, we proceed into the interior of the fort, traversing a broad ascent of sandstone pavement. Everything around us shows evidence of unstinted outlay in design, execution, and completion of detail in the carrying out of a stupendous undertaking. Everywhere the spirit of Akbar the Magnificent seems to hover amid his creations. One emerges from the covered gateway and the walled corrugated causeway, upon the parade ground. Crenellated walls, a park of artillery, and roomy English barracks greet the vision. Sentinels—Sepoy sentinels in huge turbans, and English sentinels in white sun-helmets—are pacing their beats. But not on these does the gaze of the visitor rest. Straight ahead of him there rises, above the red sandstone walls and the bare parade ground, three marble domes, white as newly-fallen snow, and just beyond are seen the gilt pinnacles of Akbar's palace.

We wander among the beautiful marble creations, gaze in wonder at the snowy domes supported on marble pillars, mosaiced with jasper, agate, blood-stone, lapis-lazuli, and other rare stones. We stand on the white marble balustrades, carved so exquisitely as to resemble lace-work, and we look out upon the yellow waters of the Jumna, flowing sluggishly along seventy feet below. Here is where the Grand Mogul, Akbar, used to sit and watch elephant fights and boat races. There are none of these to be seen now; but that does not mean that the prospect is either tame or uninteresting. The banks of the Jumna are alive with hundreds of dusky natives engaged in washing clothes and spreading linen out in the sun to bleach. The prospect beyond is a revelation of vegetable luxuriance and wealth, and of historical reminiscence in the shape of ruins and tombs.

One's eyes, however, are drawn away from the contemplation of the picturesque life below, and from the prospect of grove and garden and crumbling tombs, by the mesmerism, of the crowning glory of all Indian architectural triumphs, the famous Taj. This matchless mausoleum rests on the right-hand bank of the Jumna, about a mile down stream. The Taj, with its marvellous beauty and snowy whiteness, seems to cast a spell over the beholder, from the first; one can no more keep his eyes off it, when it is within one's range of vision, than he can keep from breathing. It draws one's attention to itself as irresistibly as though its magnetism were a living and breathing force exerted directly to that end. It is the subtlety of its unapproachable loveliness, commanding homage from all beholders, whether they will or no.

We turn away from it awhile, however, and find ample scope for admiration close at hand. We tread the marble aisles of the Pearl Mosque, considered the most perfect gem of its kind in existence. One stands in its court-yard and finds himself in the chaste and exclusive companionship of snowy marble and blue sky. One feels almost ill at ease, as though conscious of being an imperfect thing, marring perfection by his presence. "Quiet as a nun, breathless with adoration," one enthusiastic visitor exclaims, in an effort to put his sentiments and impressions of the Moti Mesjid into words. Like this adoring traveller, the average visitor will rest content to be carried away by the contemplation of its chaste beauty, without prying around for possible defects in the details of the particular school of architecture it graces. He will have little patience with carping critics who point to the beautiful screens, of floriated marble tracery, and say: "Nuns should not wear collars of point lace."

From the Moti Mesjid, we visit the Shish Mahal, or mirrored bath-rooms. The chambers and passages here remind me of the mirrored rooms of Persia; here, as there, thousands of tiny mirrors are used in working out various intricate designs. My three uniformed companions at once reflect not less than half a regiment of British soldiers therein.

From the fort we drive in a native gharri to the Taj, a mile-drive through suburban scenery, plantain-gardens, groves, and ruins. In approaching the garden of the Taj, one passes through a bazaar, where the skilful Hindoo artisans are busy making beautiful inlaid tables, inkstands, plates, and similar fancies, as well as models of the Taj, out of white Jeypore marble. These are the hereditary descendants and successors of the men who in the palmy days of the Mogul power spent their lives in decorating the royal palaces and tombs with mosaics and tracery. Nowadays their skill is expended on mere articles of virtue, to be sold to European tourists and English officers. Some of them are occasionally employed by the Indian Government to repair the work desecrated by vandals during the mutiny, and under the purely commercial government of the East India Company. One curious phase of this work is, that the men employed to replace with imitations the original stones that have been stolen receive several times higher pay than the men in Akbar's time, who did such splendid work that it is not to be approached, these days. Several months' imprisonment is now the penalty of prying out stones from the mosaic-work of the Taj.

This lovely structure has been described so often by travellers that one can scarce venture upon a description without seeming to repeat what has already been said by others. One of the best descriptions of its situation and surroundings is given by Bayard Taylor. He says: "The Taj stands on the bank of the Jumna, rather more than a mile to the eastward of the Fort of Agra. It is approached by a handsome road cut through the mounds left by the ruins of ancient palaces. It stands in a large garden, inclosed by a lofty wall of red sandstone, with arched galleries around the interior, and entered by a superb gateway of sandstone, inlaid with ornaments and inscriptions from the Koran in white marble. Outside this grand portal, however, is a spacious quadrangle of solid masonry, with an elegant structure, intended as a caravanserai, on the opposite side. Whatever may be the visitor's impatience, he cannot help pausing to notice the fine proportions of these structures, and the massive style of their construction. Passing under the open demi-vault, whose arch hangs high above you, an avenue of dark Italian cypress appears before you. Down its centre sparkles a long row of fountains, each casting up a single slender jet. On both sides, the palm, the banyan, and feathery bamboo mingle their foliage; the song of birds meets your ears, and the odor of roses and lemon-flowers sweetens the air. Down such a vista, and over such a foreground, rises the Taj."

Of the Taj itself, fault has been found with its proportions by severe critics, like the party who regards the Moti Mesjid "nun" as faulty because she wears a point-lace collar; but the ordinary visitor will find room for nothing but admiration and wonder. It is hard to believe that there is any defect, even in its proportions, for so perfect do these latter appear, that one is astonished to learn that it is a taller building than the Kootub Minar. One would never guess it to be anywhere near so tall as 243 feet. The building rests on a plinth of white marble, eighteen feet high and a hundred yards square. At each corner of the plinth stands a minaret, also of white marble, and 137 feet high. The mausoleum itself occupies the central space, measuring in depth and width 186 feet. The entire affair is of white Jeypore marble, resting upon a lower platform of sandstone: "A thing of perfect beauty and of absolute finish in every detail, it might pass for the work of a genii, who knew naught of the weaknesses and ills with which mankind are beset. It is not a great national temple erected by a free and united people, it owes its creation to the whim of an absolute ruler who was free to squander the resources of the State in commemorating his personal sorrows or his vanity."

Another distinguished visitor, commenting on the criticisms of those who profess to have discovered defects, says: "The Taj is like a lovely woman; abuse her as you please, but the moment you come into her presence, you submit to its fascination."

"If to her share some female errors fall, Look in her face, and you'll forget them all."

Passing beneath the vaulted gateway, we find a sign-board, telling that the best place from which to view the Taj is from the roof of the gateway. A flight of steps leads us to the designated vantage-point, when the tropic garden, the fountains, the twin mosques in the far corners, the river, the minarets, and, above all, the Taj itself lay spread out before us for our inspection. The scene might well conjure up a vision of Paradise itself. The glorious Taj: "So light it seems, so airy, and so like a fabric of mist and moonbeams, with its great dome soaring up, a silvery bubble," that it is difficult, even at a few hundred yards' distance, to believe it a creation of human hands. While gazing on the Taj, men let their cigars go out, and ladies drop their fans without noticing it.

Descending the steps again, we pass inside, and again pause to survey it from the end of the avenue. An element of the ridiculous here appears in the person and the appeals of an old Hindoo fruit-vender. This hopeful agent of Pomona squats beside a little tray, and, as we stand and feast our eyes on the sublimest object in the world of architecture, he persistently calls our attention to a dozen or two half-decayed mangoes and custard-apples that comprise his stock in trade.

We pass down the cypress aisle, and invade the plinth. Hundreds of natives, both male and female, are wandering about it. The dazzling whiteness of the promenade is in striking contrast to the color of their own bodies. As the groups of women walk about, their toe-rings and ankle-ornaments jingle against the marble, and their particolored raiment and barbarous gewgaws look curiously out of place here. The place seems more appropriate to vestal virgins, robed in white, than to dusky Hindoo females, arrayed in all the colors of the rainbow. Many of these people are pilgrims who have come hundreds of miles to see the Taj, and to pay tribute to the memory of Shah Jehan, and his faithful wife the Princess Arjumund, whose mausoleum is the Taj. Two young men we see, leading an aged female, probably their mother, down the steps to the vault, where, side by side, the remains of this royal pair repose. The old lady is going down there to deposit a rose or two upon Arjumund's tomb, a tender tribute paid to-day, by thousands, to her memory.

We climb the spiral stairs of one of the miuars, and sit out on the little pavilion at the top, watching the big ugly crocodiles float lazily on the surface of the Jumna at our feet. Before departing, we enter the Taj and examine the wonderful mosaics on the cenotaphs and the encircling screen-work. This inlaid flower-work is quite in keeping with the general magnificence of the mausoleum, many of the flowers containing not less than twenty-five different stones, assorted shades of agate, carnelian, jasper, blood-stone, lapis lazuli, and turquoise. Ere leaving we put to test the celebrated echo; that beautiful echoing, that—"floats and soars overhead in a long, delicious undulation, fading away so slowly that you hear it after it is silent, as you see, or seem to see, a lark you have been watching, after it is swallowed up in the blue vault of heaven."

We leave this garden of enchantment by way of one of the mosques. An Indian boy is licking up honey from the floor of the holy edifice with his tongue. We look up and perceive that enough rich honey-comb to fill a bushel measure is suspended on one of the beams, and so richly laden is it that the honey steadily drips down. The sanctity of the place, I suppose, prevents the people molesting the swarm of wild bees that have selected it for their storehouse, or from relieving them of their honey.

The Taj is said to have cost about two million pounds, even though most of the labor was performed without pay, other than rations of grain to keep the workmen from starving. Twenty thousand men were employed upon it for twenty-two years, and for its inlaid work "gems and precious stones came in camel-loads from various countries."

The next morning I bid farewell to Agra, more than satisfied with my visit to the Taj. It stands unique and distinct from anything else one sees the whole world round. Nothing one could say about it can give the satisfaction derived from a visit, and no word-painting can do it justice.

CHAPTER XVI.

FROM AGRA TO SINGAPORE.

A couple of miles from the cantonment, and the broad Jumna is crossed on a pontoon bridge, the buoys of which are tubular iron floats instead of boats. Crocodiles are observed floating, motionless as logs, their heads turned up-stream and their snouts protruding from the water. The road is undulating for a few miles and then perfectly level, as, indeed, it has been most of the way from Lahore.

Pilgrims carrying little red flags, and sometimes bits of red paper tied to sticks, are encountered by the hundred; mayhap they have come from distant points to gaze upon the beauties of the Taj Mahal, the fame of which resounds to the farthermost corners of India. They can now see it across the Jumna, resting on the opposite bank, looking more like a specimen of the architecture of the skies than anything produced by mere earthly agency.

A partly dilapidated Mohammedan mosque in the middle of a forty-acre walled reservoir, overgrown with water-lilies, forms a charming subject for the attention of my camera. The mosque is approached from an adjacent village by a viaduct of twenty arches; a propos of its peculiar surroundings, one might easily fancy the muezzin's call to prayer taking the appropriate form of, "Come where the water-lilies bloom," instead of the orthodox, "Allah-il-allah."

Villages are now rows of shops lining the road on either side, sometimes as much as half a mile in length. The entrance is usually marked by a shrine containing a hideous idol, painted red and finished off with cheap-looking patches of gold or silver tinsel. In the larger towns, evidences of English philanthropy loom conspicuously above the hut-like shops and inferior houses of the natives in the form of large and substantial brick buildings, prominently labelled "Ferozabad Hospital" or "Government Free Dispensary." A discouraging head-wind blows steadily all day, and it is near sunset when the thirty-seven miles to Sbikarabad is covered. A mile west of the town, I am told, is the Rohilcund Railway, the dak bungalow, and the bungalow of an English Sahib. Quite suitable for a one-mile race-track as regards surface is this little side-stretch, and a spin along its smooth length is rewarded by a most comfortable night at the bungalow of Mr. S, an engineer of the Ganges Canal, a magnificent irrigating enterprise, on the banks of which his bungalow stands. Several school-boys from Allahabad are here spending their vacation, shooting peafowls and fishing. Wild boars abound in the tall tiger-grass of the Shikobabad district and the silence of the gloaming is broken by the shouting of natives driving them out of their cane-patches, where, if not looked after pretty sharply, they do considerable damage in the night.

A curious illustration of native vanity and love of fame is pointed out here in the case of a wealthy gentleman who has spent some thousands of rupees in making and maintaining a beautiful flower-garden in the midst of a worthless piece of sandy land, close by the railway station. Close by is an abundance of excellent ground, where his garden might have been easily and inexpensively maintained. Asked the reason for this strange preference and seemingly foolish choice, he replied: "When people see this beautiful garden in the midst of the barren sand, they will ask, 'Whose garden is this?' and thus will my name become known among men. If, on the other hand, it were planted on good soil, nobody would see anything extraordinary in it, and nobody would trouble themselves to ask to whom it belongs."

Youthful Davids, perched on frail platforms that rise above the sugar-cane, indigo, or cotton crops, shout and wield slings with dexterous aim and vigor, to keep away vagrant crows, parrots, and wild pigs, all along the line of my next day's ride to Mainpuri. In many fields these young slingers and their platforms are but a couple of hundred yards apart, the range of their weapons covering the entire crop-area around. Sometimes I endeavor to secure one of these excellent subjects for my camera, but the youngsters invariably clamber down from their perch at seeing me dismount, and become invisible among the thick cane.

To the music of loud, rolling thunder, I speed swiftly over the last few miles, and dash beneath the porch of the post-office just in the nick of time to escape a tremendous downpour of rain. How it pours, sometimes, in India, converting the roads into streams and the surrounding country into a shallow lake in the space of a few minutes. Hundreds of youths, naked save for the redeeming breech-cloth, disport themselves in the great warm shower-bath, chasing one another sportively about and enjoying the downpour immensely.

The rain ceases, and, with water flinging from my wheel, I seek the civil lines and the dak bungalow three miles farther down the road. Very good meals are dished up by the chowkee-dar at this bungalow, who seems an intelligent and enterprising fellow; but the lean and slippered punkah-wallah is a far less satisfactory part of the accommodation. Twice during the night the punkah ceases to wave and the demon of prickly heat instantly wakes me up; and both times do I have to turn out and arouse him from the infolding arms of Morpheus. On the second occasion the old fellow actually growls at being disturbed. He is wide-awake and obsequious enough, however, at backsheesh-time in the morning.

The clock at the little English station-church chimes the hour of six as I resume my journey next morning along a glorious avenue of overarching shade-trees to Bhogan, where my road, which from Delhi has been a branch road, again merges into the Grand Trunk. Groves of tall toddy-palms are a distinguishing feature of Bhogan, and a very pretty little Hindoo temple marks the southern extremity of the town. A striking red and gilt shrine in a secluded grove of peepuls arrests my attention a few miles out of town, and, repairing thither, my rude intrusion fills with silent surprise a company of gentle Brahman youths and maidens paying their matutinal respects to the representation of Kamadeva, the Hindoo cupid and god of love. They seem overwhelmed with embarrassment at the appearance of a Sahib, but they say nothing. I explain that my object is merely a "tomasha" of the exquisitely carved shrine, and a young Brahman, with his smooth, handsome face fantastically streaked with yellow, follows silently behind as I walk around the building. His object is evidently to satisfy himself that nothing is touched by my unhallowed Christian hands.

Seven miles from Bhogan is the camping ground of Bheyo, where in December, 1869, an English soldier was assassinated in the night while standing sentry beneath a tree. His grave, beneath the gnarled mango where he fell, is marked by two wooden crosses, and the tree-trunk is all covered with memorial plates nailed there, from time to time, by the various troops who have camped here on their winter marches.

Twenty-eight miles are duly reeled off when, just outside a village, I seek the shade of a magnificent banyan. The kindly villagers, unaccustomed to seeing a Sahib without someone attending to his comfort, bring me a charpoy to recline on, and they inquire anxiously, "roti? pahni? doctor." (am I hungry, thirsty, or ill?). Nor are these people actuated by mercenary thoughts, for not a pice will they accept on my departure. "Nay, Sahib, nay," they reply, eagerly, smiling and shaking their heads, "pice, nay." The narrow-gauge Rohilcuud Railway now follows along the Grand Trunk road, being built on one edge of the broad road-bed. Miran Serai, a station on this road, is my destination for the day; there, however, no friendly dak bungalow awaits my coming and no hostelry of any kind is to be found.

The native station-master advises me to go to the superintendent of police across the way; the police-officer, in turn, suggests applying to the station-master. The police-thana here is a large establishment, and a number of petty prisoners are occupying railed-off enclosures beneath the arched entrance. They accost me through the bars of their temporary, cage-like prison with smiles, and "Sahib" spoken in coaxing tones, as though moved by the childish hope that I might perchance take pity on them and order the police to set them at liberty.

A small and pardonable display of "bounce" at the railway station finally secures me the quarters reserved for the accommodation of English officers of the road, and a Mohammedan employe about the station procures me a supply of curried rice and meat. The station-master himself is a high-caste Hindoo and can speak English; he politely explains the difficulty of his position, as an extra-holy person, in being unable to personally attend to the wants of a Sahib. Upon discovering that I have taken up my quarters in the station, the police-superintendent comes over and begs permission to send over my supper, as he is evidently anxious to cultivate my good opinion, or, at all events, to make sure of giving no offence in failing to accommodate me with sleeping quarters at the thana. He supplements the efforts of the Mohammedan employe, by sending over a dish of sweetened chuppaties.

On the street leading out of Miran Serai is a very handsome and elaborately ornamented temple. Passing by early in the morning, I pay it a brief, unceremonious visit of inspection, kneeling on the steps and thrusting my helmeted head in to look about, not caring to go to the trouble of removing my shoes. Inside is an ancient Brahman, engaged in sweeping out the floral offerings of the previous day; he favors me with the first indignant glance I have yet received in India. When I have satisfied my curiosity and withdrawn from the door-way, he comes out himself and shuts the beautifully chased brazen door with quite an angry slam. The day previous was the anniversary of Krishna's birth, and the blood of sacrificial goats and bullocks is smeared profusely about the altar. It is, probably, the enormity of an unhallowed unbeliever in one god, thrusting his infidel head inside the temple at this unseemly hour of the morning, while the blood of the mighty Krishna's sacrificial victims is scarcely dry on the walls, that arouses the righteous wrath of the old heathen priest—as well, indeed, it might.

Passing through a village abounding in toddy-palms, I avail myself of an opportunity to investigate the merits of a beverage that I have been somewhat curious about since reaching India, having heard it spoken of so often. The famous "palm-wine" is merely the sap of the toddy-palm, collected much as is the sap from the maple-sugar groves of America, although the palm-juice is generally, if not always, obtained from the upper part of the trunk. When fresh, its taste resembles sweetened water; in a day or two fermentation sets in, and it changes to a beverage that, except for slightly alcoholic properties, might readily be mistaken for vinegar and water.

Every little village or hamlet one passes through, south of Agra, seems laudably determined to own a god of some sort; those whose finances fail to justify them in sporting a nice, red-painted god with gilt trimmings, sometimes console themselves with a humble little two-dollar soapstone deity that looks as if he has been rudely chipped into shape by some unskilful prentice hand. God-making is a highly respectable and lucrative profession in India, but only those able to afford it can expect the luxury of a nice painted and varnished deity right to their hand every day. People cannot expect a first-class deity for a couple of rupees; although the best of everything is generally understood to be the cheapest in the end, it takes money to buy marble, red paint, and gold-leaf. A bowl of pulse porridge, sweet and gluey, is prepared and served up in a big banyan-leaf at noon by a villager. In the same village is one of those very old and shrivelled men peculiar to India. From appearances, he must be nearly a hundred years old; his skin resembles the epidermis of a mummy, and hangs in wrinkles about his attenuated frame. He spends most of his time smoking goodakoo from a neat little cocoa-nut hookah.

The evening hour brings me into Cawnpore, down a fine broad street divided in the centre by a canal, with flights of stone steps for banks and a double row of trees—a street far broader and finer than the Chandni Chouk—and into an hotel kept by a Parsee gentleman named Byramjee. Life at this hostelry is made of more than passing interest by the familiar manner in which frogs, lizards, and birds invade the privacy of one's apartments. Not one of these is harmful, but one naturally grows curious about whether a cobra or some other less desirable member of the reptile world is not likely at any time to join their interesting company. The lizards scale the walls and ceiling in search of flies, frogs hop sociably about the floor, and a sparrow now and then twitters in and out.

A two weeks' drought has filled the farmers of the Cawnpore district with grave apprehensions concerning their crops; but enough rain falls to-night to gladden all their hearts, and also to leak badly through the roof of my bedroom.

My punkah-wallah here is a regular automaton—he has acquired the valuable accomplishment of pulling the punkah-string back and forth in his sleep; he keeps it up some time after I have quitted the room in the morning, until a comrade comes round and wakes him up.

For three days the rains continue almost without interruption, raining as much as seven inches in one night. Slight breaks occur in the downpour, during which it is possible to get about and take a look at the Memorial Gardens and the native town. The Memorial Gardens and the well enclosed therein commemorate one of the most pathetic incidents of the mutiny—the brutal massacre by Nana Sahib of about two hundred English women and children. This arch-fiend held supreme sway over Cawnpore from June 6, 1857, till July 15th, and in that brief period committed some of the most atrocious deeds of treachery and deviltry that have ever been, recorded. Backed by a horde of blood-thirsty mutineers, he committed deeds the memory of which causes tears of pity for his victims to come unbidden into the eyes of the English tourist thirty years after. Delicate ladies, who from infancy had been the recipients of tender care and consideration, were herded together in stifling rooms with the thermometer at 120 deg. in the shade, marched through the broiling sun for miles, subjected to heart-rending privations, and at length finally butchered, together with their helpless children. After the treacherous massacre of the few surviving Englishmen at the Suttee Chowra Ghaut, the remaining women and children were reserved for further cruelties, and the final act of Nana's fiendish vengeance. From the graphic account of this murderous period of Cawnpore's history contained in the "Tourists' Guide to Cawnpore" is quoted the following brief account of Nana's consummate deed of devilment.

But the Nana's reign of terror was now drawing to a close, though not to terminate without a stroke destined to make the civilized world shudder from end to end. He was now to put the finishing touch to his work of mischief. The councils of the wicked were being troubled. Danger was on its way. Stories were brought in by scouting Sepoys of terrible bronzed men coming up the Grand Trunk Road, before whose advance the rebel hosts were fleeing like chaff and dust before the fan of the threshing-floor, Futtehpore had fallen, and disaster had overtaken the rebel forces at Aoung. Reinforcements were despatched by Nana in rapid succession, but all was of no avail—on came Havelock and his handful of heroes, carrying everything before them in their determination to rescue the hapless women and children imprisoned at Cawnpore. About noon on July 15th a few troopers came in from the south and informed Nana that his last reinforcement had met the same fate as the others, and reported that the English were coming up the road like mad horses, caring for neither cannon nor musketry; nor did these appear to have any effect on them. The guilty Nana, with the blood of the recent treacherous massacre on his hands, grew desperate at the hopelessness of the situation, and called a council of war. What plans could they devise to keep out the English? what steps could they adopt to stay their advance. The conclusion arrived at in that council of human tigers could have found expression nowhere save in the brains of Asiatics, illogical, and diabolically cruel. "We will destroy the maims and baba logues," they said, "and inform the English force of it; they will then be disheartened, and go back, for they are only a handful in number!"

How the unfortunate innocents were butchered in cold blood in the beebeegurch where they were confined, by Sepoys who gloried in trying their skill at severing the ladies' heads from their bodies at one cut, in splitting little children in twain, and in smearing themselves with the blood of their helpless victims, is too harrowing a tale to dwell upon here. On the following morning "the mangled bodies of both dead and dying" were cast into the well over which now hovers the marble representation of the Pitying Angel. When the victorious relieving force scattered Nana's remaining forces and entered the city, two days later, instead of the living forms of those they had made such heroic efforts to save, they looked down the well and saw their ghastly remains.

In this lovely garden, where all is now so calm and peaceful, scarcely does it seem possible that beneath the marble figure of this Pitying Angel repose the dust of two hundred of England's gentle martyrs, whose murdered and mutilated forms, but thirty years ago, choked up the well into which they were tossed. While I stand and read the sorrowful inscription it rains a gentle, soft, unpattering shower. Are these gentle droppings the tender tribute of angels' tears. I wonder, and does it always rain so soft and noiselessly here as it does to-day?

No natives are permitted in this garden without special permission; and an English soldier keeps sentinel at the entrance-gate instead of the Sepoy usually found on such duty. The memory of this tragedy seems to hang over Cawnpore like a cloud even to this day, and to cause a feeling of bitterness in the minds of Englishmen, who everywhere else regard the natives about them with no other feelings than of the kindliest possible nature. Other monuments of the mutiny exist, notably the Memorial Church, a splendid Lombard-Gothic structure erected in memoriam of those who fell in the mutiny here. The church is full of tablets commemorating the death of distinguished people, and the stained-glass windows are covered with the names of the victims of Nana Sahib's treachery, and of those who fell in action.

Cawnpore is celebrated for the number and extensiveness of its manufactures, and might almost be called the Manchester of India; woollen, cotton, and jute mills abound, leather factories, and various kindred industries, giving employment to millions of capital and thousands of hands.

A stroll through the native quarter of any Indian city is interesting, and Cawnpore is no exception. One sees buildings and courts the decorations and general appearance of which leave the beholder in doubt as to whether they are theatre or temple. Music and tom-toming would seem rather to suggest the former, but upon entering one sees fakirs and Hindoo devotees, streaked with clay, fanciful paintings and hideous idols, and all the cheap pomp and pageantry of idolatrous worship. Strolling into one of these places, an attendant, noting my curious gazing, presents himself and points to a sign-board containing characters as meaningless to me as Aztec hieroglyphics.

In one narrow street a crowd of young men are struggling violently for position about a door, where an old man is flinging handfuls of yellow powder among the crowd. The struggling men are aspirants for the honor of having a portion of the powder alight on their persons. I inquire of a native by-stander what it all means; the explanation is politely given, but being in the vernacular of the country, it is wasted on the unprofitable soil of my own lingual ignorance.

Impatient to be getting along, I misinterpret a gleam of illusory sunshine at noon on the third day of the rain-storm and pull out, taking a cursory glance at the Memorial Church as I go. A drenching shower overtakes me in the native military lines, compelling me to seek shelter for an hour beneath the portico of their barracks. The road is perfectly level and smooth, and well rounded, so that the water drains off and leaves it better wheeling than ever; and with alternate showers and sunshine I have no difficulty in covering thirty-four miles before sunset. This brings me to a caravanserai, consisting of a quadrangular enclosure with long rows of cell-like rooms. The whole structure is much inferior to a Persian caravanserai, but there is probably no need of the big brick structures of Shah Abbas in a winterless country like India.

Interesting subjects are not wanting for my camera through the day; but the greatest difficulty is experienced about changing the negatives at night. A small lantern with a very feeble light, made still more feeble by interposing red paper, suffices for my own purpose; but the too attentive chowkee-dar, observing that my room is in darkness, and fancying that my light has gone out accidentally, comes flaring in with a torch, threatening the sensitive negatives with destruction.

The morning opens with a fine drizzle or extra-heavy mist that is penetrating and miserable, soaking freely into one's clothes, and threatening every minute to change into a regular rain. It is fourteen miles to Futtehpore, and thence two miles off the straight road to the railway-station, where I understand refreshments are to be obtained. The reward of my four-mile detour is a cup of sloppy tea and a few weevil-burrowed biscuits, as the best the refreshment-room can produce on short notice. The dense mist moves across the country in big banks, between which are patches of comparatively decent atmosphere. The country is perfectly flat, devoted chiefly to the cultivation of rice, and the depressions alongside the road are, of course, filled with water.

Timid youngsters, fleeing from the road at my approach, in their scrambling haste sometimes tumble "head-over-heels" in the water; but, beyond a little extra terror lest the dreadful object they see coming bowling along should overtake them, it doesn't matter—they haven't any clothes to spoil or soil. Neither rain nor heat nor dense, reeking, foggy atmosphere seems to diminish the swarms of people on the road, nor the groups bathing or washing clothes beneath the trees. Some of these latter make a very interesting picture. The reader has doubtless visited the Zoo and observed one monkey gravely absorbed in a "phrenological examination" of another's head. With equal gravity and indifference to the world at large, dusky humans are performing a similar office for one another beneath the roadside shade-trees.

Roasted ears of maize and a small muskmelon form my noontide repast, and during its consumption quite a comedy is enacted down the street between a fat, paunchy vender of goodakoo and the shiny-skinned proprietor of a dhal-shop. The scene opens with a wordy controversy about something; scene two shows the fat goodakoo merchant advanced midway between his own and his adversary's premises, capering about, gesticulating, and uttering dire threats; scene three finds him retreating and the valorous man of dhal held in check by his wife to prevent him following after with hostile intent. The men seem boiling over with rage and ready to chew each other up; but, judging from the supreme indifference of everybody else about, nobody expects anything serious, to happen. This is mentionable as being the first quarrel I have seen in India; as a general thing the people are gentleness personified.

Several tattooed Hindoo devotees are observed this afternoon paying solemn devotions to bel-trees streaked with red paint, near the road. Many of the trees also shelter rude earthenware animals, and hemispherical vessels, which are also objects of worship, as representing the linga. The bel-tree is sacred to Siva the Destroyer, and the third person in the Hindoo Triad, whom Brahma himself is said to have worshipped, although he is regarded as the Creator. In the absence of Siva himself, the worship of the bel-tree is supposed to be as efficacious as worshipping the idol direct.

Soon I overtake an individual doing penance for his sins by crawling on his stomach all the way to Benares, the Mecca of the Hindoo religion. In addition to crawling, he is dragging a truck containing his personal effects by a rope tied about his waist. Every fifty yards or so he stands up and stretches himself; then he lies prostrate again and worms his wearisome way along the road like a snake. Benares is still about a hundred miles distant, and not unlikely this determined devotee has already been crawling in this manner for weeks. This painful sort of penance was formerly indulged in by Hindoo fanatics very largely; but the English Government has now all but abolished the practice by mild methods of discouragement. The priests of the different idols in Benares annually send out thousands of missionaries to travel throughout the length and breadth of India to persuade people to make pilgrimages to that city. Each missionary proclaims the great benefits to be derived by going to worship the particular idol he represents; in this manner are the priests enriched by the offerings presented. Not long since one of these zealous pilgrim-hunters persuaded a wealthy rajah into journeying five hundred miles in the same manner as the poor wretch passed on the road to-day. The infatuated rajah completed the task, after months of torture, on all-fours, accompanied the whole distance by a crowd of servants and priests, all living on his bounty.

Many people now wear wooden sandals held on the feet by a spool-like attachment, gripped between the big and second toes. Having no straps, the solid sole of the sandal flaps up and mildly bastinadoes the wearer every step that is taken.

Another night in a caravanserai, where rival proprietors of rows of little chowkees contend for the privilege of supplying me char-poy, dood, and chowel, and where thousands of cawing rooks blacken the trees and alight in the quadrangular serai in noisy crowds, and I enter upon the home-stretch to Allahabad.

In proof that the cycle is making its way in India it may be mentioned that at both Cawnpore and Allahabad the native postmen are mounted on strong, heavy bicycles, made and supplied from the post-office workshops at Allighur. They are rude machines, only a slight improvement upon the honored boneshaker; but their introduction is suggestive of what may be looked for in the future. As evidence, also, of the oft-repeated saying that "the world is small," I here have the good fortune to meet Mr. Wingrave, a wheelman whom I met at the Barnes Common tricycle parade when passing through London.

There is even a small cycle club in quasi existence at Allahabad; but it is afflicted with chronic lassitude, as a result of the enervating climate of the Indian plains. Young men who bring with them from England all the Englishman's love of athletics soon become averse to exercise, and prefer a quiet "peg" beneath the punkah to wheeling or cricket. During the brief respite from the hades-like temperature afforded by December and January, they sometimes take club runs down the Ganges and indulge in the pastime of shooting at alligators with small-bore rifles.

The walks in the beautiful public gardens and every other place about

Allahabad are free to wheelmen, and afford most excellent riding.

Messrs. Wingrave and Gawke, the two most enterprising wheelmen, turn out at 6 a.m. to escort me four miles to the Ganges ferry. Some idea of the trying nature of the climate in August may be gathered from the fact that one of my companions arrives at the river fairly exhausted, and is compelled to seek the assistance of a native gharri to get back home. The exposure and exercise I am taking daily is positively dangerous, I am everywhere told, but thus far I have managed to keep free from actual sickness.

The sacred river is at its highest flood, and hereabout not less than a mile and half wide. The ferry service is rude and inefficient, being under the management of natives, who reck little of the flight of time or modern improvements. The superintendent will bestir himself, however, in behalf of the Sahib who is riding the Ferenghi gharri around the world: instead of putting me aboard the big slow ferry, he will man a smaller and swifter boat to ferry me over. The "small boat" is accordingly produced, and turns out to be a rude flat-boat sort of craft, capable of carrying fully twenty tons, and it is manned by eight oarsmen. Their oars are stout bamboo poles with bits of broad board nailed or tied on the end.

Much of the Ganges' present width is mere overflow, shallow enough for the men to wade and tow the boat. It is tugged a considerable distance up-stream, to take advantage of the swift current in crossing the main channel. The oars are plied vigorously to a weird refrain of "deelah, sahlah-deelah, sahlah!" the stroke oarsman shouting "deelah" and the others replying "sahlah" in chorus. Two hours are consumed in crossing the river, but once across the road is perfection itself, right from the river's brink.

Through the valley of the sacred river, the splendid kunkah road leads onward to Benares, the great centre of Hindoo idolatry, a city that is more to the Hindoo than is Mecca to the Mohammedans or Jerusalem to the early Christians. Shrines and idols multiply by the roadside, and tanks innumerable afford bathing and purifying facilities for the far-travelled pilgrims who swarm the road in thousands. As the heathen devotee approaches nearer and nearer to Benares he feels more and more devotionally inclined, and these tanks of the semi-sacred water of the Ganges Valley happily afford him opportunity to soften up the crust of his accumulated transgressions, preparatory to washing them away entirely by a plunge off the Kamnagar ghaut at Benares. Many of the people are trudging their way homeward again, happy in the possession of bottles of sacred water obtained from the river at the holy city. Precious liquid this, that they are carrying in earthenware bottles hundreds of weary miles to gladden the hearts of stay-at-home friends and relations.

At every tank scores of people are bathing, washing their clothes, or scouring out the brass drinking vessel almost everyone carries for pulling water up from the roadside wells. They are far less particular about the quality of the water itself than about the cleanliness of the vessel. Many wells for purely drinking purposes abound, and Brahmans serve out cool water from little pahnee-chowkees through window-like openings. Wealthy Hindoos, desirous of performing some meritorious act to perpetuate their memory when dead, frequently build a pahnee-chowkee by the roadside and endow it with sufficient land or money to employ a Brahman to serve out drinking-water to travellers.

Thirty miles from Allahabad, I pause at a wayside well to obtain a drink. It is high noon, and the well is on unshaded ground. For a brief moment my broad-brimmed helmet is removed so that a native can pour water into my hands while I hold them to my mouth. Momentary as is the experience, it is followed by an ominous throbbing and ringing in the ears—the voice of the sun's insinuating power. But a very short distance is covered when I am compelled to seek the shelter of a little road-overseer's chowkee, the symptoms of fever making their appearance with alarming severity.

The quinine that I provided myself with at Constantinople is brought into requisition for the first time; it is found to be ruined from not being kept in an air-tight vessel. A burning fever keeps me wide awake till 2 a.m., and in the absence of a punkah, prickly heat prevents my slumbering afterward. This wakeful night by the roadside enlightens me to the interesting fact that the road is teeming with people all night as well as all day, many preferring to sleep in the shade during the day and travel at night.

It is fifty miles from my chowkee to Benares, and the dread of being overtaken with serious illness away from medical assistance urges upon me the advisability of reaching there to-day, if possible. The morning is ushered in with a stiff head-wind, and the fever leaves me feeling anything but equal to pedalling against it when I mount my wheel at early daybreak. By sheer strength of will I reel off mile after mile, stopping to rest frequently at villages and under the trees.

A troop of big government elephants are having their hoofs trimmed at a village where a halt is made to obtain a bite of bread and milk. The elephants enter unmistakable objections to the process in the way of trumpeting, and act pretty much like youngsters objecting to soap and water. But a word and a gentle tap from the mahout's stick and the monster brutes roll over on their sides and submit to the inevitable with a shrill protesting trumpet.

Another diversion not less interesting than the elephants is a wrestling tournament at the police-thana, where twenty stalwart policemen, stripped as naked as the proprieties of a country where little clothing is worn anyhow will permit, are struggling for honor in the arena. Vigorous tom-toming encourages the combatants to do their best, and they flop one another over merrily, in the dampened clay, to the applause of a delighted crowd of lookers-on. The fifty miles are happily overcome by four o'clock, and with the fever heaping additional fuel on the already well-nigh unbearable heat, I arrive pretty thoroughly exhausted at Clarke's Hotel, in the European quarter of Benares.

Of all the cities of the East, Benares is perhaps the most interesting at the present day to the European tourist. Its fourteen hundred shivalas or idol temples, and two hundred and eighty mosques, its wonderful bathing ghauts swarming with pilgrims washing away their sins, the burning bodies, the sacred Ganges, the hideous idols at every corner of the streets, and its strange idolatrous population, make up a scene that awakens one to a keen appreciation of its novelty. One realizes fully that here the idolatry, the "bowing down before images" that in our Sunday-school days used to seem so unutterably wicked and perverse, so monstrous, and so far, far away, is a tangible fact. To keep up their outward appearance on a par with the holiness of their city, men streak their faces and women mark the parting in their hair with red. Sacred bulls are allowed to roam the streets at will, and the chief business of a large proportion of the population seems to be the keeping of religious observances and paying devotion to the multitudinous idols scattered about the city.

The presiding deity of Benares is the great Siva—"The Great God," "The Glorious," "The Three-Eyed," and lord of over one thousand similarly grandiloquent titles, and he is represented by the Bishesharnath ka shivala, a temple whose dome shines resplendent with gold-leaf, and which is known to Europeans as the Golden Temple. Siva is considered the king of all the Hindoo deities in the Benares Pauch-kos, and is consequently honored above all other idols in the number of devotees that pay homage to him daily. His income from offerings amounts to many thousands of rupees annually: there is a reservoir for the reception of offerings about three feet square by half that in depth. The Maharajah Ranjit Singh, Rajah of the Punjab, once filled this place with gold mohurs; many wealthy Hindoos have from time to time filled it with rupees.

The old guide whom I have employed to show me about then conducts me into the "Cow Temple," a filthy court containing a number of pampered-looking Brahman bulls, and several youthful bovines whose great privilege it is to roam about the court-yard and accept tid-bits from the hands of devotees. In the same court-yard-like shivala are several red idols, and the numerous comers and goers make the place as animated as a vegetable market at early morning. Priests, too, are here in numbers; seated on a central elevation they make red marks on the faces of the devotees, dipping in the mixture with their finger; in return they receive a small coin, or a pinch of rice or grain is thrown into a vessel placed there for the purpose.

In many stalls are big piles of flower-petals which devotees purchase to present as offerings. Men and women by the hundred are encountered in the narrow streets, passing briskly along with baskets containing a supply of these petals, a dish of rice, and a bowl of water; one would think, from their business-like manner, that they were going, or had been, marketing. They are going the morning round of their favorite gods, or the gods whose particular services they happen to stand in need of at the time; before these idols they pause for a moment, mutter their supplications, and sprinkle them with water and flower-petals, passing from one deity to another in a most business-like, matter-of-fact manner. Women unblessed with children throng to the idols of Sidheswari and Sankatadevi, bestowing offerings and making supplication for sons and daughters; pilgrims from afar are flocking to Sakhi-Banaik, whose office it is to testify in the next world of their pilgrimage in this. No matter how far a pilgrim has come, and how many offerings he has bestowed since his arrival, unless he repair to the shivala of Sakhi Banaik and duly report his appearance, his pilgrimage will have been performed in vain.

Everywhere, in niches of the walls, under trees, on pedestals at frequent corners, are idols, hideously ugly; red idols, idols with silver faces and stone bodies, some with mouths from ear to ear, big idols, little idols, the worst omnium gatherum imaginable. Sati, nothing visible but her curious silver face, beams over a black mother-hubbard sort of gown that conceals whatever she may possess in the way of a body; Jagaddatri, the Mother of the World, with four arms, seated on a lion; Brahma, with five eyes and four mouths, curiously made to supply quadruple faces. Karn-adeva, the handsome little God of Love (the Hindoo Cupid), whom the cruel Siva once slew with a beam from his third eye—all these and multitudinous others greet the curious sight-seer whichever way he turns. Hanuman, too, is not forgotten, the great Monkey King who aided Kama in his expedition to Ceylon; outside the city proper is the monkey temple, where thousands of the sacred anthropoids do congregate and consider themselves at home. Then there is the fakirs' temple, the most beautifully carved shivala in Benares; here priests distribute handfuls of soaked grain to all mendicants who present themselves. The grain is supplied by wealthy Hindoos, and both priests and patrons consider it a great sin to allow a religious mendicant to go away from the temple empty-handed.

Conspicuous above all other buildings in the city is the mosque of Aurungzebe, with its two shapely minarets towering high above everything else. The view from the summit of the minarets is comprehensive and magnificently lovely; the wonderful beauty of the trees and shivalas, the green foliage, and the gilt and red temples, so beautifully carved and gracefully tapering; the broad, flowing Ganges, the busy people, the moving boats, the rajahs' palaces along the water-front, make up a truly beautiful panorama of the Sacred City of the Hindoos. From here we take a native boat and traverse the water-front to see the celebrated bathing ghauts and the strange, animated scene of pilgrims bathing, bodies burning, and swarms of people ascending and descending the broad flights of steps. How intensely eager do these dusky believers in the efficacy of "Mother Ganga" as a purifier of sin dip themselves beneath the yellow water, rinse out their mouths, scrape their tongues, nib, duck, splash, and disport; they fairly revel in the sacred water; happy, thrice happy they look, as well indeed they might, for now are they certain of future happiness. What the "fountain filled with blood" is to the Christian, so is the precious water of dear Ganga to the sinful Hindoo: all sins, past, present, and future, are washed away.

Next to washing in the sacred stream during life, the Hindoo's ambition is to yield up the ghost on its bank, and then to be burned on the Burning Ghaut and have his ashes cast adrift on the waters. On the Manikarnika ghaut the Hindoos burn their dead. To the unbelieving Ferenghi tourist there seems to be a "nigger in the fence" about all these heathen ceremonies, and in the burning of the dead the wily priesthood has managed to obtain a valuable monopoly on firewood, by which they have accumulated immense wealth. No Hindoo, no matter how pious he has been through life, how many offerings he has made to the gods, or how thoroughly he has scoured his yellow hide in the Ganges, can ever hope to reach Baikunt (heaven) unless the wood employed at his funeral pyre come from a domra. Domras are the lowest and most despised caste in India, a caste which no Hindoo would, under any consideration, allow himself to touch during life, or administer food to him even if starving to death; but after his holier brethren have yielded up the ghost, then the despised domra has his innings. Then it is that the relatives of the deceased have to humble themselves before the domra to obtain firing to burn the body. Realizing that they now have the pull, the wily domras sometimes bleed their mournful patrons unmercifully. As many as a thousand rupees have been paid for a fire by wealthy rajahs. The domra who holds the monopoly at the Manikarnika ghaut is one of the richest men in Benares.

Two or three bodies swathed in white are observed waiting their turn to be burned, others are already burning, and in another spot is the corpse of some wealthier person wrapped in silver tinsel. Not the least interesting of the sights is that of men and boys here and there engaged in dipping up mud from the bottom and washing it in pans similar to the gold-pans of placer-miners; they make their livelihood by finding occasional coins and ornaments, accidentally lost by bathers. A very unique and beautifully carved edifice is the Nepaulese temple; but the carvings are unfit for popular inspection.

The whole river-front above the ghauts is occupied by temples and the palaces of rajahs, who spend a portion of their time here preparing themselves for happiness hereafter, by drinking Ganges water and propitiating the gods. On festival occasions, and particularly during an eclipse, as many as one hundred thousand people bathe in the Ganges at once; formerly many were drowned in the great crush to obtain the peculiar blessings of bathing during an eclipse, but now a large force of police is employed to regulate the movements of the people on such occasions. Formerly, also, fights were very frequent between the Mohammedans and Hindoos, owing to the clashing of their religious beliefs, but under the tolerant and conciliatory system of the British Government they now get along very well together.

A rest of two days and a few doses of quinine subdue the fever and put me in condition to resume my journey. Twelve miles from Benares, on the East Indian Kail way, is Mogul Serai, to which I deem it advisable to wheel in the evening, by way of getting started without over-exertion at first. Two English railroad engineers are stationed at Mogul Serai, and each of them is a wheelman. They, of course, are delighted to offer me the hospitality of their quarters for the night, and, moreover, put forth various inducements for a longer stay; but being anxious to reach Calcutta, I decide to pull out again next morning.

My entertainers accompany me for a few miles out. Mogul Serai is four hundred and twelve miles from Calcutta, and at the four hundred and fourth milestone my companions bid me hearty bon voyage and return. Splendid as are the roads round about Mogul Serai, this eight-mile stone is farther down the road than they have ever ridden before.

Twenty-five miles farther, and a sub-inspector of police begs my acceptance of curried chicken and rice. He is a five-named Mohammedan, and tells me a long story about his grandfather having been a reminder of a hundred and fifty villages, and an officer in the East India Company's army. On the pinions of his grandparents' virtues, his Oriental soul soars ambitiously after present promotion; on the strength of sundry eulogistic remarks contained in certificates already in his possession, he wants one from myself recommending him to the powers that be for their favorable consideration. He is the worst "certificate fiend" that I have met.

Near Sassaram I meet a most picturesque subject for my camera, a Kajput hill-man in all the glory of shield, spear, and gayly feathered helmet. He is leading a pack-pony laden with his travelling kit, and mechanically obeys when I motion for him to halt. He remains stationary, and regards my movements with much curiosity while I arrange the camera. When the tube is drawn out, however, and pointed at him, and I commence peeping through to arrange the focus, he gets uneasy, and when I am about ready to perpetuate the memory of his fantastic figure forever, he moves away. Nor will any amount of beckoning obtain for me another "sitting," nor the production and holding aloft of a rupee. Whether he fancied the camera in danger of going off, or dreaded the "evil eye," can only be surmised.

The famous fleet-footed mail-carriers of Bengal are now frequently encountered on the road; they are invariably going at a bounding trot of eight or ten miles an hour. The letter-bag is attached to the end of a stick carried over the shoulder, which is also provided with rings that jingle merrily in response to the motions of the runner. The day is not far distant when all these men will be mounted on bicycles, judging from the beginning already made at Allahabad and Cawnpore. The village women hereabouts wear massive brass ankle-ornaments, six inches broad, and which are apparently pounds in weight.

A deluge of rain during the night at Dilli converts the road into streams, and covers the low, flat land with a sheet of water. The ground is soaked full, like a wet sponge, and can absorb no more; rivers are overflowing, every weed, every blade of grass, and every tree-leaf is jewelled with glistening drops. The splendid kunkah is now gradually giving place to ordinary macadam, which is far less desirable, the heavy, pelting rain washing away the clay and leaving the surface rough.

Not less than four hours are consumed in crossing the River Sone at Dilli in a native punt, so swiftly runs the current and so broad is the overflow. The frequent drenching rains, the lowering clouds, and the persistent southern wind betoken the full vigor of the monsoons. One can only dodge from shelter to shelter between violent showers, and pedal vigorously against the stiff breeze. The prevailing weather is stormy, and inky clouds gather in massy banks at all points of the compass, culminating in violent outbursts of thunder and lightning, wind and rain. Occasionally, by some unaccountable freak of the elements, the monsoon veers completely around, and blowing a gale from the north, hustles me along over the cobbly surface at great speed.

Just before reaching Shergotti, on the evening of the third day from Benares, a glimpse is obtained of hills on the right. They are the first relief from the dead level of the landscape all the way from Lahore; their appearance signifies that I am approaching the Bengal Hills. From Mogul Serai my road has been through territory not yet invaded by the revolutionizing influence of the railway, and consequently the dak bungalows are still kept up in form to provide travellers with accommodation. Chowkeedar, punkah-wallah, and sweeper are in regular attendance, and one can usually obtain curried rice, chicken, dhal, and chuppatties. An official regulation of prices is posted conspicuously in the bungalow: For room and charpoy, Rs 1; dinner, Rs 1-8; chota-hazari, Rs 1, and so on through the scale. The prices are moderate enough, even when it is considered that a dinner consists of a crow-like chicken, curried rice, and unleavened chuppatties. The chowkeedar is usually an old Sepoy pensioner, who obtains, in addition to his pension, a percentage on the money charged for the rooms—a book is kept in which travellers are required to enter their names and the amount paid. The sweepers and punkah-wallahs are rewarded separately by the recipient of their attentions. Sometimes, if a Mohammedan, and not prohibited by caste obligations from performing these menial services, the old pensioner brings water for bathing and sweeps out one's own room himself, in which case he of course pockets the backsheesh appertaining to these duties also.

A few miles south of Shergotti the bridge spanning a tributary of the Sone is broken down, and no ferry is in operation. The stream, however, is fordable, and four stalwart Bengalis carry me across on a charpoy, hoisted on their shoulders; they stem the torrent bravely, and keep up their strength and courage by singing a refrain. From this point the road becomes undulating, and of indifferent surface; the macadam is badly washed by the soaking monsoon rains, and the low, level country is gradually merging into the jungle-covered hills of Bengal.

The character of the people has undergone a decided change since leaving Delhi and Agra, and the Bengalis impress one decidedly unfavorably in comparison with the more manly and warlike races of the Punjab. Abject servility marks the demeanor of many, and utter uselessness for any purpose whatsoever, characterizes one's intuitive opinion of a large percentage of the population of the villages. Except for the pressing nature of one's needs, the look of unutterable perplexity that comes over the face of a Bengali villager, to-day, when I ask him to obtain me something to eat, would be laughable in the extreme. "N-a-y, Sahib, n-a-y." he replies, with a show of mental distraction as great as though ordered to fetch me the moon. An appeal for rice, milk, dhal, chuppatties, at several stalls results in the same failure; everybody seems utterly bewildered at the appearance of a Sahib among them searching for something to eat. The village policeman is on duty in the land of dreams, a not unusual circumstance, by the way; but a youth scuttles off and wakes him up, and notifies him of my arrival. Anxious to atone for his shortcomings in slumbering at his post, he bestirs himself to obtain the wherewithal to satisfy my hunger, his authoritative efforts culminating in the appearance of a big dish of dhal.

The country becomes hillier, and the wild, jungle-covered hills and dark ravines alongside the road are highly suggestive of royal Bengal tigers. The striped monsters infest these jungles in plenty; during the afternoon I pass through a village where a depredatory man-eater has been carrying off women and children within the last few days.

The chowkeedar at Burhee, my stopping-place for the night in the hill country, is a helpless old duffer, who replies "nay-hee, Sahib, nay-hee," with a decidedly woe-begone utterance in response to all queries about refreshments. A youth capable of understanding a little English turns up shortly, and improves the situation by agreeing to undertake the preparation of supper. Still more hopeful is the outlook when a Eurasian and a native school-master appear upon the scene, the former acting as interpreter to the genial pedagogue, who is desirous of contributing to my comfort by impressing upon my impromptu cook the importance of his duties. They become deeply interested in my tour of the world, which the scholarly pedagogue has learned of through the medium of the vernacular press. The Eurasian, not being a newspaper-reader, has not heard anything of the journey. But he has casually heard of the River Thames, and his first wondering question is as to "how I managed to cross the Thames!"

My saturated karki clothing has been duly wrung out and hung up inside the dak bungalow, the only place where it will not get wetter instead of dryer, and my cook is searching the town in quest of meat, when an English lady and gentleman drive up in a dog-cart and halt before the bungalow. Unaware of the presence of English people in the place, I am taken completely by surprise.

They are Mr. and Mrs. B, an internal revenue officer and his wife, who, having heard of my arrival, have come to invite me to dinner. Of course I am delighted, and they are equally pleased to entertain one about whose adventures they have recently been reading. Their ayah saw me ride in, and went and told her mistress of seeing a "wonderful Sahib on wheels," and already the report has spread that I have come down from Lahore in four days!

A very agreeable evening is spent at Mr. E 's house, talking about the incidents of my journey, Mr. E 's tiger-hunting exploits in the neighborhood, and kindred topics. Mr. R devotes a good deal of time in the winter season to hunting tigers in the jungle round about his station, and numerous fine trophies of his prowess adorn the rooms of his house. He knows of the man-eater's depredations in the village I passed to-day, and also of another one ahead which I shall go through to-morrow; he declares his intention of bagging them both next season.

Mrs. R arrived from Merrie England but eighteen months ago, a romantic girl whose knowledge of royal Bengal tigers was confined to the subdued habitues of sundry iron-barred cages in the Zoo. She is one of those dear confiding souls that we sometimes find out whose confidence in the omnipotent character of their husbands' ability is nothing if not charming and sublime. Upon her arrival in the wilds of Bengal she was fascinated with the loveliness of the country, and wanted her liege lord to take her into the depths of the jungle and show her a "real wild tiger." She had seen tigers in cages, but wanted to see how a real wild one looked in his native lair. One day they were out taking horseback exercise together, when, a short distance from the road, the horrible roar of a tiger awoke the echoes of the jungle and reverberated through the hills like rolling thunder. Now was the long-looked-for opportunity, and her husband playfully invited her to ride with him toward the spot whence came the roars. Mrs. R, however, had suddenly changed her mind.

Mrs. R was the first white lady the people of many of the outlying villages had ever seen on horseback, or perhaps had ever seen at all, and the timidest of them would invariably bolt into the jungle at her appearance. When her husband or any other Englishman went among them alone, the native women would only turn away their faces, but from the lady herself they would hastily run and hide. Here, also, I learn that the natives in this district are dying by the hundred with a malignant type of fever; that the present season is an exceptionally sickly one, all of which gives reason for congratulation at my own health being so good.

It is all but a sub-aqueous performance pedalling along the road next morning; the air is laden with a penetrating drizzle, the watery clouds fairly hover on the tree-tops and roll in dark masses among the hills, while the soaked and saturated earth reeks with steam. The road is macadamized with white granite, and after one of those tremendous downpourings that occur every hour or so the wheel-worn depressions on either side become narrow streams, divided by the white central ridge. Down the long, straight slopes these twin rivulets course right merrily, the whirling wheels of the bicycle flinging the water up higher than my head. The ravines are roaring, muddy torrents, but they are all well bridged, and although the road is lumpy, an unridable spot is very rarely encountered. For days I have not had a really dry thread of clothing, from the impossibility of drying anything by hanging it out. Under these trying conditions, a relapse of the fever is matter for daily and hourly apprehension.

The driving drizzle to-day is very uncomfortable, but less warm than usual; it is anything but acceptable to the natives; thousands are seen along the road, shivering behind their sheltering sun-shields, from which they dismally essay to extract a ray of comfort. These sun-shields are umbrella-like affairs made of thin strips of bamboo and broad leaves; they are without handles, and for protection against the sun or rain are balanced on the head like an inverted sieve. When carried in the hand they may readily be mistaken for shields. In addition to this, the men carry bamboo spears with iron points as a slipshod measure of defence against possible attacks from wild animals. When viewed from a respectable distance these articles invest the ultra-gentle Bengali with a suggestion of being on the war-path, a delusion that is really absurd in connection with the meek Bengali ryot.

The houses of the villages are now heavily thatched, and mostly enclosed with high bamboo fencing, prettily trailed with creepers; the bazaars are merely two rows of shed-like stalls between which runs the road. In lieu of the frequent painted idol, these jungle villagers bestow their devotional exercises upon rude and primitive representations of impossible men and animals made of twisted straw. These are sometimes set up in the open air on big horseshoe-shaped frames, and sometimes they are beneath a shed. In the privacy of their own dwellings the Bengali ryot bows the knee and solemnly worships a bowl of rice or a cup of arrack. The bland and childlike native of Hindostan falls down and worships almost everything that he recognizes as being essential to his happiness and welfare, embracing a wide range of subjects, from Brahma, who created all things, to the denkhi with which their women hull the rice. This denkhi is merely a log of wood fixed on a pivot and with a hammer-like head-piece. The women manipulate it by standing on the lever end and then stepping off, letting it fall of its own weight, the hammer striking into a stone bowl of rice. The denkhi is said to have been blessed by Brahma's son Narada, the god who is distinguished as having cursed his venerable and all-creating sire and changed him from an object of worship and adoration to a luster after forbidden things.

The country continues hilly, with the dense jungle fringing the road; all along the way are little covered platforms erected on easily climbed poles from twelve to twenty feet high. These are apparently places of refuge where benighted wayfarers can seek protection from wild animals. Occasionally are met the fleet-footed postmen, their rings jangling merrily as they bound briskly along; perhaps the little platforms are built expressly for their benefit, as they are not infrequently the victims of stealthy attack, the jingle of their rings attracting Mr. Tiger instead of repelling him.

Mount Parisnath, four thousand five hundred and thirty feet high, the highest peak of the Bengal hills, overlooks my dak bungalow at Doomree, and also a region of splendid tropical scenery, dark wooded ridges, deep ravines, and rolling masses of dark-green vegetation.

During the night the weather actually grows chilly, a raw wind laden with moisture driving me off the porch into the shelter of the bungalow. No portion of Parisnath is visible in the morning but the base, nine-tenths of its proportions being above the line of the cloud-masses that roll along just above the trees. Another day through the hilly country and, a hundred and fifty miles from Calcutta, the flourishing coal-mining district of Asansol brings me again to the East India Railway and semi-European society and accommodation. Instead of doughy chuppatties, throat-blistering curry, and octogenarian chicken, I this morning breakfast off a welcome bottle of Bass's ale, baker's bread, and American cheese.

My experience of hotels and hotel proprietors has certainly been somewhat wide and varied within the last two years; but it remains for Rannegunj to produce something entirely novel in the matter of tariff even to one of my experience. The cuisine and service of the hotel is excellent, and well worth the charges; but the tariff is arranged so that it costs more to stay part of a day than a whole one, and more to take two meals than to take three. If a person remains a whole day, including room and three meals, it is Rs 4, and he can, of course, suit himself about staying or going if he engages or pays in advance; but should he only take dinner, room, and chota-hazari, his bill reads: Dinner, Rs 2; room, Rs 1, 8 annas; chota-hazari, rupees 1; total, Rs 4, 8 annas, or 8 annas more than if he had remained and taken another square meal. The subtle-minded proprietor of this establishment should undoubtedly take out a patent on this very unique arrangement and issue licences throughout all Bonifacedom; there would be more "millions in it" than in anything Colonel Sellers ever dreamed of.

And now, beyond Rannegunj, comes again the glorious kunkah road, after nearly three hundred miles of variable surface. Level, smooth, and broad it continues the whole sixty-five miles to Burd-wan. Notwithstanding an adverse wind, this is covered by three o'clock. The road leads through the marvellously fertile valley of the Dammoodah, an interesting region where groves of cocoa-nut palms, bamboo thickets, and thatched villages give the scenery a more decidedly tropical character than that north of the Bengal hills. Rice is still the prevailing crop, and the overflow of the Dammoodah is everywhere. Men and women are busily engaged among the pools, fishing for land-crabs, mussels, and other freshwater shell-fish, with triangular nets.

As my southward course brings me next day into the valley of the Hooghli River, the road partakes almost of the character of a tunnel burrowing through a mass of dense tropical vegetation. Cocoa-nut and toddy-palms mingle their feathery foliage with the dark-green of the mango, the wild pomolo, giant bamboo, and other vegetable exuberances characteristic of a hot and humid climate, and giant creepers swing from tree to tree and wind among the mass in inextricable confusion.

In this magnificent conservatory of nature big, black-faced monkeys, with tails four feet long, romp and revel through the trees, nimbly climb the creepers, and thoroughly enjoy the life amid the sylvan scenes about them. It is a curious sight to see these big anthropoids, almost as large as human beings, swing themselves deftly up among the festooned creepers at my approach—to see their queer, impish black faces peering cautiously out of their hiding-place, and to hear their peculiar squeak of surprise and apprehension as they note the strange character of my conveyance. Sometimes a gang of them will lope awkwardly along ahead of the bicycle, looking every inch like veritable imps of darkness pursuing their silent course through the chastened twilight of green-grown, subterranean passageways, their ridiculously long tails raised aloft, and their faces most of the time looking over their shoulders.

Youthful lotus-eaters, sauntering lazily about in the vicinity of some toddy-gatherer's hamlet, hidden behind the road's impenetrable environment of green, regard with supreme indifference the evil-looking apes, bigger far than themselves, romping past; but at seeing me they scurry off the road and disappear as suddenly as the burrow-like openings in the green banks will admit.

Women are sometimes met carrying baskets of plantains or mangoes to the village bazaars; sometimes I endeavor to purchase fruit of them, but they shake their heads in silence, and seem anxious to hurry away. These women are fruit-gatherers and not fruit-sellers, consequently they cannot sell a retail quantity to me without violating their caste.

My experiences in India have been singularly free from snakes; nothing have I seen of the dreaded cobra, and about the only reminder of Eve's guileful tempter I encounter is on the road this morning. He is only a two-foot specimen of his species, and is basking in a streak of sunshine that penetrates the green arcade above. Remembering the judgment pronounced upon him in the Garden of Eden, I attempt to acquit myself of the duty of bruising his head, by riding over him. To avoid this indignity his snakeship performs the astonishing feat of leaping entirely clear of the ground, something quite extraordinary, I believe, for a snake. The popular belief is that a snake never lifts more than two-thirds of his length from the ground.

From the city of Hooghli southward, the road might with equal propriety be termed a street; it follows down the west side of the Hooghli River and links together a chain of populous towns and villages, the straggling streets of which sometimes fairly come together. Fruit-gardens, crowded with big golden pomolos, delicious custard, apples, and bananas abound; in the Hooghli villages the latter can be bought for two pice a dozen. Depots for the accumulation and shipment of cocoa-nuts, where tons and tons of freshly gathered nuts are stacked up like measured mounds of earth, are frequent along the river. Jute factories with thousands of whirring spindles and the clackety-clack of bobbins fill the morning air with the buzz and clatter of vigorous industrial life. Juggernaut cars, huge and gorgeous, occupy central places in many of the towns passed through. The stalls and bazaars display a variety of European beverages very gratifying from the stand-point of a hot and thirsty wayfarer, ranging from Dublin ginger ale to Pommery Sec. California Bartlett pears, with seductive and appetizing labels on their tin coverings, are seen in plenty, and shiny wrappers envelop oblong cakes of Limburger cheese.

For a few minutes my wheel turns through a district where the names of the streets are French, and where an atmosphere of sleepy Catholic respectability pervades the streets. This is Chandernagor, a wee bit of territory that the French have been permitted to retain here, a rosebud in the button-hole of la belle France's national vanity. Chanderuagor is a bite of two thousand acres out of the rich cake of the lower Hooghli Valley; but it is invested with all the dignity of a governor-general's court, and is gallantly defended by a standing army of ten men. The Governor-General of Chandernagor fully makes up in dignity what the place lacks in size and importance; when the East India Railway was being built he refused permission for it to pass through his territory. There is no doubt but that the land forces of Chandernagor would resist like bantams any wanton or arbitrary violation of its territorial prerogatives by any mercenary railroad company, or even by perfide Albion herself, if need be. The standing army of Chandernagor hovers over peaceful India, a perpetual menace to the free and liberal government established by England. Some day the military spirit of Chandernagor will break loose, and those ten soldiers will spread death and devastation in some peaceful neighboring meadow, or ruthlessly loot some happy, pastoral melon-garden. Let the Indian Government be warned in time and increase its army.

By nine o'clock the bicycle is threading its way among the moving throngs on the pontoon bridge that spans the Hooghli between Howrah and Calcutta, and half an hour later I am enjoying a refreshing bath in Cook's Adelphi Hotel.

I have no hesitation in saying that, except for the heat, my tour down the Grand Trunk Road of India has been the most enjoyable part of the whole journey, thus far. What a delightful trip a-wheel it would be, to be sure, were the temperature only milder!

My reception in Calcutta is very gratifying. A banquet by the Dalhousie Athletic Club is set on foot the moment my arrival is announced. With such enthusiasm do the members respond that the banquet takes place the very next day, and over forty applicants for cards have to be refused for want of room. For genuine, hearty hospitality, and thoroughness in carrying out the interpretation of the term as understood in its real home, the East, I unhesitatingly yield the palm to Anglo-Indians. Time and again, on my ride through India, have I experienced Anglo-Indian hospitality broad and generous as that of an Arab chief, enriched and rendered more acceptable by a feast of good-fellowship as well as creature considerations.

The City of Palaces is hardly to be seen at its best in September, for the Viceregal Court is now at Simla, and with it all the government officials and high life. Two months later and Calcutta is more brilliant, in at least one particular, than any city in the world. Every evening in "the season" there is a turn-out of splendid equipages on the bund road known as the Strand, the like of which is not to be seen elsewhere, East or West. It is the Rotten Row of Calcutta embellished with the gorgeousness of India. Wealthy natives display their luxuriousness in vying with one another and with the government officials in the splendor of their carriages, horses, and liveries.

Mr. P, a gentleman long resident in Calcutta, and a prominent member of the Dalhousie Club, drives me in his dog-cart to the famous Botanical Gardens, whose wealth of unique vegetation, gathered from all quarters of the world, would take volumes to do it justice should one attempt a description. Its magnificent banyan is justly entitled to be called one of the wonders of the world. Not less striking, however, in their way, are the avenues of palms; so straight, so symmetrical are these that they look like rows of matched columns rather than works of nature. Fort William, the original name of the city, and the foundation-stone of the British Indian Empire, is visited with Mr. B, the American Consul, a gentleman from Oregon. The glory of Calcutta, its magnificent Maidan, is overlooked by the American Consulate, and one of the most conspicuous objects in the daytime is the stars and stripes floating from the consulate flag-staff.

On the 18th sails the opium steamer Wing-sang to Hong-Kong, aboard which I have been intending to take passage, and whose date of departure has somewhat influenced my speed in coming toward Calcutta. To cross overland from India to China with a bicycle is not to be thought of. This I was not long in finding out after reaching India. Fearful as the task would be to reach the Chinese frontier, with at least nine chances out of ten against being able to reach it, the difficulties would then have only commenced.

The day before sailing, the bicycle branch of the Dalhousie Athletic Club turns out for a club run around the Maidan, to the number of seventeen. It is in the evening; the long rows of electric lamps stretching across the immense square shed a moon-like light over our ride, and the smooth, broad roads are well worthy the metropolitan terminus of the Grand Trunk.

My stay of five days in the City of Palaces has been very enjoyable, and it is with real regret that I bid farewell to those who come down to the shipping ghaut to see me off.

The voyage to the Andamans is characterized by fine weather enough; but from that onward we steam through a succession of heavy rain-storms; and down in the Strait of Malacca it can pour quite as heavily as on the Gangetic plains. At Penang it keeps up such an incessant downpour that the beauties of that lovely port are viewed only from beneath the ship's awning. But it is lovely enough even as seen through the drenching rain. Dense groves of cocoa-nut palms line the shores, seemingly hugging the very sands of the beach. Solid cliffs of vegetation they look, almost, so tall, dark, and straight, and withal so lovely, are these forests of palms. Cocoa-nut palms flourish best, I am told, close to the sea, a certain amount of salt being necessary for their healthful growth.

The weather is more propitious as we steam into Singapore, at which point we remain for half a day, on the tenth day out from Calcutta. Singapore is indeed a lovely port. Within a stone's-throw of where the Wing-sang ties up to discharge freight the dark-green mangrove bushes are bathing in the salt waves. Very seldom does one see green vegetation mingling familiarly with the blue water of the sea—there is usually a strip of sand or other verdureless shore—but one sees it at lovely Singapore.

A fellow-passenger and I spend an hour or two ashore, riding in the first jiniriksha that has come under my notice, from the wharf into town, about half a mile. We are impressed by the commercial activity of the city; as well as by the cosmopolitan character of its population. Chinese predominate, and thrifty, well-conditioned citizens these Celestials look, too, here in Singapore. "Wherever John Chinaman gets half a show, as under the liberal and honest government of the Straits Settlements or Hong-Kong, there you may be sure of finding him prosperous and happy."

Hindoos, Parsees, Armenians, Jews, Siamese, Klings, and all the various Eurasian types, with Europeans of all nationalities, make up the conglomerate population of Singapore. Here, on the streets, too, one sees the strange cosmopolitan police force of the English Eastern ports, made up of Chinese, Sikhs, and Englishmen.