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WINTER DAYS
IN
INDIA AND ELSEWHERE

BY
WILLIAM GEORGE BLACK

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our host's very large bed-room, which was given up to us, with a bath-room for my wife on the same level, and my bath-room at the foot of an interior staircase. Opposite our room was our host's room. The verandah in front is very high, and the roof projects over the steps and far out so as to take carriages under its wide sweep. Around is cleared ground, with a level lawn-tennis ground duly laid out, and beyond is a vegetable garden. At the sides and back are numerous subsidiary buildings, such as the kitchen, etc. Two long-legged, broad-winged adjutant birds stood nearly all day on a roof, and there were two monkeys, each with a pole of his own, and a sort of box home on the top of the pole. Tea bushes meet the eye at a reasonable distance in front of the house, and beyond that is thick wooding, and yet further, as a matter of fact, is impenetrable virgin jungle, not the scrubby, shrubby jungle of Central India, but the real article of boys' story books, with wild elephants at large, and tigers and leopards "all proper." There are dusty roads, half mud with a day or two of welcome rain (no rain had fallen since October). There are many gardens like this in the neighbourhood, and there is a village and bazaar which is filled on Sundays by traders from all the country round.

The household was thoroughly well ordered, and we got better cooked food and much more appetising than in any hotel in India. The life seems an ideal one for a strong healthy man with all his wits about him and his gun always ready at his hand. As we were only three-quarters of a mile from the station, one never knew when a guest might arrive, for in Assam all passers-by must call. Assam is quite unlike any other part of India we visited, and the people are as different from the Thibetans as the Thibetans are unlike the Bengali, or the Bengali unlike the warlike Rajpoots or fierce Afghans. At Titabur we were some 70 miles from China.

Wild elephants are a serious nuisance in Assam, but we only saw one elephant here, and that belonged to the Forest officer. Tigers, jackals, and elephants and leopards are plentiful, and rhinoceros is shot lower down the Brahmaputra.

One day a conjuror performed in front of the verandah. As one of Robert's house servants afterwards said, "it was true magic." To learn such magic one goes to the country of Gora, where there are no men, only women; men who go there become sheep during the day, and at night they learn magic. They cannot get away, because if they start in the night they always find in the