

FROM EDINBURGH TO
INDIA & BURMAH

BY

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Kings of Scotland," etc.

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CHAPTER XXX

30TH JANUARY 1906.—Fog—6 o'clock a.m.—half daylight, and the anchor chain comes clanking on board—a cheery sound, the steady clink clank of the pall-pin in the winch—a comforting sound, and bit of machinery to anyone who has hauled in anchor overhand—what say you Baldy—or McIntyre, do you remember Rue Breichnich or Lowlandman's Bay, before we got a winch, and the last three fathoms out of green mud?—and the kink in the back before breakfast, and the feeling you'd never stand straight again in your life?

We barely have the anchor up and fast and have steamed less than ten minutes when we run into a fog bank set cunningly across the stream by some river Nat. The bell rings, "Stop her"—and plunge goes the anchor with the chain rattling out behind it, and we lie still again in the silence of the fog. Sea swallows come out of the mist and give their gentle call and flit out of sight, they give a regular flavour of the sea; the mist hangs on our clothes and drips from the corrugated iron roof of the flat, and our iron lower decks are shining wet.

9 o'clock.—The mist very gently rises off the river and wanders away in the tree-tops and climbs the distant mountains slowly, and the warm sun comes out to dry everything. The anchor is up again and its "paddle and go,"—the leadsman is at his chant again. All the way up from Rangoon to Mandalay and from Mandalay here, two of the crew, one on either side of the bows, takes sounding with a bamboo, alternately singing out the feet in a

to the pagoda on the hillock, and up the narrow flight of steps. It is not in very first-class repair, the river is eating away its base. To obtain merit the Burman prefers to build anew rather than to restore, and this one has done its turn. We saw several bronze and marble Buddhas under a carved teak shed; some fading orchids lay before them. Two men were making wood carvings very freely and easily in teak. Miss B. and G. coveted a little piece of furniture in brown teak, covered with lozenges of greeny-blue stone. It looked like a half-grown bedstead, the colour very pretty. If we had had an interpreter, we might have saved it from the ruin. What I carried away was a memory of the blue above, the gliding river below, hot sun and stillness, and the hum of a large, iridescent black beetle that went blundering through scarlet poinsettia leaves into the white, scented blossoms of a leafless, grey-stemmed champak tree.

I am told there are barking deer and jungle fowl within an hour of the ship, elephant, rhinoceros, sambaur, and much big game within thirty miles, but we are on the move again, and my heart bleeds.—I cannot try for these for I have neither battery, guides, nor camp equipment.

At Tagaung, stopping-place for the ruby mines, we tie up for the night—a charmingly wooded country.

In "Wild Sports of Burmah and Assam," by Col. Pollock and W. S. Thom, published in 1900, you read that "some of the best big game shooting in the world, with the least possible trouble and expenditure, can be had in Upper Burmah, and this is the place to set out for it—from Mandalay, some seventy-seven miles. Mercifully, I did not read this till after we had left Burmah, or I'd have felt frightfully unhappy passing it all. Even now, as I read their descriptions, I feel vexed, to a degree, that I did not know more about the possibilities of sport in Upper Burmah before starting North. The above book must be invaluable to any keen sportsman who goes to Burmah; but keen he must be, and prepared to *hunt* for his quarry; game is not driven up to him, the jungle is too dense.