

A FLY ON THE WHEEL,

OR

HOW I HELPED TO GOVERN INDIA.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. THOMAS H. LEWIN,

AUTHOR OF "WILD TRIBES OF THE SOUTH-WESTERN FRONTIER,"  
"HANDBOOK OF THE TIBETAN LANGUAGE,"  
ETC. ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE,  
PALL MALL S.W.

1885.

(All rights reserved.)

and dragged this weary tail after us for nearly a fortnight, until the Government Surveyor decided that his instruments could be conveyed no farther, and, as food was running short, and he had succeeded in mapping a very considerable extent of hitherto unsurveyed country, he determined to return to Demagree.

On the 17th of December 1872 I parted company from my companion and plunged joyfully into the pathless solitudes of the primeval forest, the home of the tiger, the rhinoceros, and the wild elephant. Once we lost our way, and our food supply ran dangerously low ; once a tiger steadily followed our small party for two days and two nights, mewing round the camp in the darkness like a gigantic cat, but not otherwise molesting us.

Christmas Day dawned upon us through the gleam of interlacing branches and tangled underwood, seven days' journey at least from any human habitation. My Christmas dinner consisted of boiled rice and spring water, with sundry unknown roots and berries; my tobacco fortunately held out, or I should have indeed deemed my lot a hard one, for there is no slavery like that of the votary of nicotine.

We marched one hundred and fifty miles through absolutely unknown country: here and there we met with great cleared spaces in the jungle, the elephant's parlour, pillared by enormous forest trees, and the ground as smooth and well-beaten as a threshing-floor. Here Behemoth had made his sport, for hard by, great trees were uprooted and crushed, the branches being thrown hither and thither as by a gale of wind, while the earth showed great tusk marks and the print of huge rolling sides.

One morning, as we marched along, a large rhinoceros trotted playfully in front of us for some distance, and on another occasion a monster snake, full twenty feet long and as thick as my thigh, slid his slow gleaming bulk across our path.

We slept on the ground every night under the trees, and a very hard bed Mother Earth afforded. In camping out thus, I generally found it impossible to sleep later than three or four in the morning; either the increase of cold at that hour, or the turning of night towards day, brought back consciousness, and one sat up and gathered together the embers of the dying fire, shuddering at the dense sea of mist and darkness and the unknown unknowable forest that beleaguered us round.

Sometimes in our day's march, which averaged about twenty miles, we had to pass along the edge of, or to scale, precipices, where a downward look meant vertigo and destruction, and at evening we had only our rice and roots to comfort us; but at length the journey was successfully accomplished, and that portion of the frontier roughly demarcated.

We reached our southernmost outpost at Chima, in the Bohmong's country, and thence to Gordon's head-quarters on the Sungu river, arriving very worn and ragged, with prodigious appetites. After inspecting Gordon's posts, and arranging matters with him, I returned by river, *via* Chittagong, to Demagree as fast as possible, and settled down once more to my work there.

The Lushais now resorted in crowds to the small bazaar which had been established at Demagree.