

RECOLLECTIONS

OF A

LUCKNOW VETERAN

1845-1876

BY

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by them. He *would* have it this was the correct way! On returning from leave, which he had spent in England, he told us with great glee that one day, being in London, and not knowing where to go for luncheon, he asked a policeman, who directed him, and when he arrived at the place he found all the knives and forks chained to the table! At Julpesh we used to amuse ourselves by throwing a round shot. W——, in order to try if he could beat the best throw, would practise half through the night by himself, and on one occasion nearly managed to injure himself severely by trying to carry this shot whilst swimming across a small stream that ran close by.

In the month of October orders came for us to go to Buxa, where another expedition was being got ready against the Bhooteahs. From there we marched into the hills, and came to a halt at a place called Tabzee, and then commenced making a road towards the capital, Punakha; but when we had made it as far as Meercham, about ten miles, work was stopped, as the Bhooteahs had given in. At times the weather at Tabzee was unpleasant to a degree, cold and miserably wet.

I was amused one day at hearing a conversation between two sepoyys regarding the telegraph wire that was being laid. The end had been buried in the ground close to the spring where we obtained our water. One wanted to know why it was taken there; the other said: "Why, of course, to

let the Sahib Logue know if the water is good or not".

A comical mistake was made by M—— while we were in camp. I had a cork bed that I found very serviceable in the damp weather; it folded up very compactly, so that it could be carried in the hand, and took up very little or no room. M—— wished for one like it, and wrote to Calcutta for a cork *mattress*. In due course three coolies came staggering up the hill with a load as big as a house; it was about eight feet long, and four broad. *N.B.* A bed is not a mattress!

There was a large number of monkeys in the forest, and one day a party had rather an unpleasant experience. If there is one thing a monkey hates more than another it is to have a small dog barking and yelping at him. On the occasion referred to some dogs were with the party, and they were walking on a path on one side of which was a deep precipice and on the other a high mountain. Some monkeys appeared above them, and the dogs began barking as usual. The monkeys disappeared for a time, but, going a little farther, the party was assailed by a volley of stones, and had to beat a hasty retreat.

I can remember another case where they avenged themselves on a small dog that annoyed them. It was in a small tope (grove), and the dog, seeing the monkeys in the trees, set up an incessant barking. There were, on one of the lower branches, two old

monkeys who bore it for some time, till at last one came quietly down, on the opposite side to where the dog was, slipped round, caught hold of him by the scruff of his neck, and was up the tree again like lightning. Then these two old monkeys cuffed him soundly, and when they thought he had had enough let him drop to the ground.

Once while out sketching in the hills at the back of our camp at Tabzee, I saw a troop of monkeys pass among the tree tops, leaping from branch to branch, and I noticed that all selected the same branch to alight upon as the leader.

Another story of the Bundur Log (monkey people) I may as well relate here ; it occurred at Mooltan soon after we occupied the fort. We were then living in some dome-roofed rooms that were built round three sides of the square. Two of them had been knocked into one to form a mess room for the Artillery ; in the room adjoining a monkey belonging to one of the officers had been tied up ; he was a vicious brute, and his temper was made worse by the mess servants, who teased him as they passed, offering him food and then taking it away. But he had his revenge. He began quietly to undermine the partition wall, taking out the bricks one by one until he had a hole large enough ; and then he watched his opportunity. The next time the servants came to lay the table he opened fire, throwing brick after brick as hard and fast as he could straight down the table, smashing the glass

and crockery that was on it, and putting the servants to flight. At Tabzee a very eccentric officer, who had charge of the sapper mess, told me with great glee one evening that he had ordered monkey for the dinner. *N.B.* He was dining out himself!

An incident showing how sagacious the elephant is occurred while at Tabzee. A shooting expedition was got up to search the jungle at the foot of the hills, with the possibility of getting a rhinoceros, which the commanding officer succeeded in doing. While the elephants were beating through the high grass, one of the sportsmen, a doctor, in pulling out his handkerchief, pulled with it a fifty rupee note, which fluttered away. Search was made without success, but on their return later in the day one of the elephants suddenly stopped. The mahout spoke to him ; he then stretched out his trunk, lifted from the bottom of the grass a piece of paper and gave it to the driver. This turned out to be the fifty rupee note.