

GUNNER JINGO'S JUBILEE.

DEDICATED WITHOUT PERMISSION

TO

THE PRESIDENT

OF THE

DISUNITED STATES OF GREATEST BRITAIN

BY

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LATE ROYAL ARTILLERY.

Sappers, had made a hole in the palace enclosure wall, but only large enough to admit a file of men at a time. Through this, British and Sikh soldiery streamed into the great square of the palace, where finding themselves exposed to desultory fire from all sides, they burst open the doors of buildings, where, being under cover, they could loot at their leisure. Every remnant of discipline was lost. The men knew they were in the palace of the King with fabulous treasures somewhere—but where? It was curious how little of real value was realised, though costly clothing, embroidered with gold and barbaric gems, sewn on by a hole through the stone, lay about, gorgeous chariots, banners, the paraphernalia of Oriental pageantry—all looking more like stage property than regalia of value.* There was little that was portable, and men began to destroy with reckless disappointment what they could not carry away. Mirrors, statues, furniture were smashed, silken hangings torn down, Cashmere shawls littered about, men seemed drunk with blood and plunder and thirst for vengeance.

Turning to his left after entering the hole in the wall, Jingo burst open a door with his shoulder and came headlong upon something out of the "Arabian Nights,"† a gigantic silver fish, the crest of the Kings of Oudh. It was a pleasure boat made of cedar, for the harem ladies, covered with scales of silver, each the size of a rupee though not so thick. The interior was more luxuriously fitted than we have any reason to suppose the quarters of Jonah, and there were jalousies through which the fair and dusky occupants, without being seen, could themselves look upon a city as naughty as Nineveh. Jingo would have felt like a silver Midas, but for the order to report himself to the Engineer directing the attack, who would be in the front somewhere, as Sappers always are. Jingo had seen his hand-writing on the palace wall, that little hole by which the troops had entered.

* Jingo came across gold-embroidered caps round which were sewn uncut flat oval emeralds; his lapidary education having been neglected he thought they were glass. A Sikh soldier put a cap over Jingo's helmet, with the exclamation, "Shabash Bahadur Sahib," (well done, warrior lord); this he indignantly flung off, to the surprise of Sikh, who stuffed it into his expansive dhoti with evident satisfaction.

† In the "debacle" that ensued in the capture of the Palace, Lieut. Warren who probably turned to his right, came upon a wild beast show, part of the fighting menagerie of the Kings of Oudh, which in its entirety consisted of leopards, lions, tigers, bears, elephants and a rhinoceros, for these Oriental Cæsars were wont to amuse themselves and their subjects with combats almost as barbarous as those of the arena of old Rome. Those animals kept in the Kaiser Bagh had to be shot.