

A
N A R R A T I V E
OF THE
OPERATIONS
OF
CAPTAIN LITTLE'S DETACHMENT,
AND OF
THE MAHRATTA ARMY,
COMMANDED BY
PURSERAM BHOW;
DURING
THE LATE CONFEDERACY IN INDIA,
AGAINST THE
NAWAB TIPPOO SULTAN BAHADUR.

By EDWARD MOOR,
LIEUTENANT ON THE BOMBAY ESTABLISHMENT.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

ROUTE FROM JEJOORY TO POONA—SOME ACCOUNT OF THAT CITY—ROUTE THENCE TO BOMBAY—AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE NARRATIVE.

ON leaving the pagoda we were desirous of making the customary compliment, and attempted to lay down a few rupees, but were interrupted by such a crowd pressing for the money, that the attempt was vain.—One ingenious fellow was near succeeding, by advancing with a silver stick, and announcing himself Choobdar of the pagoda; but as soon as the others saw the money, half a dozen more instantly stepped forward, urging similar authorities, and each reviling his rivals as impostors. In this embarrassed state we attempted a precipitate retreat, but the passage by which we ascended was filled with these vociferous claimants. Running round to the northern entrance, we descended hastily as possible, and were followed down a very rugged and awkward track on the back side of the hill, by a number of these troublesome attendants; and taking a circuit by the large tank, found Mr. Rae had effected his way down the eastern stairs, at the foot of which, surrounded by a troop of our sturdy beggars, we mounted our horses, and galloped briskly a mile out of the town, to a bowrie and some gardens, and waited there for our attendants and guides; before their arrival, however, we were overtaken by about twenty of these persevering creatures, women as well as men, whom we found it difficult to shake off.

Two miles from Jejoory we passed the Kurrah, which runs between two pretty large villages, half a mile from each other; the northern Quatulla, the other Dahlowrie. Six miles farther we passed Pissaury, a small village on our right, and after riding ten miles from Jejoory,

joined our party at Rajwarry, which is a town of some note, inclosed by a wall, with a tolerable good market. The country between Moorishwar and Jejoory, and thence to Rajwarry, is in general stony and barren. We were accommodated in a durrumsalla in the town, but as it was exceedingly hot, and well stored with muskeetoes, we preferred sleeping outside the town wall, where, kicking away the stones, and as usual, spreading a boat cloak upon the ground, for by this time we had no bed or bedding, our sleeping apparatus was prepared; and substituting a great coat for a pillow, we repaired to rest. In the morning we were surprised to find some one had had the address to remove the great coat, and all the things that were not actually in wear: whether this is a proof of ingenuity, or sound sleeping, we know not, but it is noticed to put travellers on their guard.

June 2d, we left Rajwarry, and passing Waggaspoor a mile from it, marched about the same distance farther, when a ghaut occurs, which is generally called the little Boor ghaut: it is not steep, nor more than half a mile in descent. Looking from the top of the ghaut, the country is quite open to the eastward, and free from hills: the range, on, or rather near, which Jejoory is situated, is seen at the distance of six miles, extending in a northerly direction, on which extremity is the fort of Mullurghur. Many villages are in sight from the ghaut, but as we had straggled from the line, and had no guide, could not learn their names. We left the party at Rajwarry, for the purpose of visiting Omla, or Oomlee, a respectable little town in a flourishing state, about a mile eastward from Rajwarry: it has a handsome pagoda and several neat buildings, and extensive gardens to the southward. Nearly a mile from the bottom of the ghaut we passed Wutree, a considerable village, and two miles farther Tarda, a small place. Leaving Tarda the road continues bad and stoney for five miles, when we came to Looney, a considerable village, and there halted. Being now so near Peona, the perambulator was packed up to avoid observation.

Had

Had we, after crossing the Kristna, proceeded to Poona by the usual route of Meritch and Tajgom*, we should have descended three ghautes, similar to that noticed on this day's march; by proceeding so far to the eastward, by Bejapoor, two of them were avoided: this may farther explain what we have remarked in another place, respecting the inclination of the plane of the upper country.

On the 3d of June we were met by Mr. Uhthoff, and conducted to Poona, where we arrived before nine o'clock; by conjecture about twelve miles from the village we left.

After so long a time spent in the unsettled scenes of a campaign, it was of course a pleasing circumstance arriving at the residence of English gentlemen; and particularly at so happy a society as we found at Poona, to which we were welcomed in the most attentive manner by Sir Charles Malet, the British resident at that court; and during our stay there, entertained with the greatest hospitable kindness. Tents were ready pitched for the reception of our sepoys and followers.

The residence of Sir Charles Malet is known by the name of the Sungum, being situated, as the word denotes, at the confluence of two rivers, the Moota and the Moola; after which mixtures of waters, their names join, and the Moota-Moola falls into the Beemah, about fifty miles to the eastward. Sir Charles's former residence was in the city, but not being a pleasant situation, he was permitted to build habitations on this spot, which until that time had no buildings of any kind, save an old neglected pagoda in ruins, still remaining in the gardens, a contrast to the neatness of the buildings erected at a great expence by him, and the gentlemen of his suite. The Sungum is a little town quite detached from the city, being divided from it by the Moota, and inhabited entirely by the gentlemen, their attendants, and two companies of sepoys, stationed here as the resident's honorary guard. Sir Charles's garden is watered by both rivers, by means of aqueducts: it produces all the fruits and vegetables of this country; here is an excellent vine-yard; apple and peach-trees thrive well, and promise to be a great ac-

quisition to the horticulture of these parts. Stately cypress and other ornamental trees, contribute to make this a charming retreat, and we readily declare, that with the advantages of society and situation, the Sungum is the most enviable residence we ever saw in India. Sir Charles's stud is elegant, consisting of forty or fifty noble animals from Arabia, Persia, &c. Several elephants on state visits compose part of the retinue; this show is requisite at Eastern courts, where there is always considerable pomp, and it is necessary for ambassadors to assume an appearance of ceremonious dignity.

Poona, the metropolis of the western Mahratta empire*, the residence of the Peshwa and his court, is situated something less than a hundred miles southeasterly from Bombay: the city is not very large, covering an extent of not more, perhaps, than two square miles, tolerably well, but not elegantly or handsomely built, and in an increasing and flourishing state. There are several houses in it apparently more elegant than the Peshwa's palace, which is a handsome, although it has not the appearance that might be expected in a royal residence. The city is very well supplied by extensive markets, and there is a long street in which are displayed a great variety of English finery, such as looking-glasses, globe-lamps, &c. The police of Poona, we have understood to be uncommonly well regulated, but cannot speak particularly on that subject.

On the northwestern side, the city is washed by the river Moota, about two hundred yards in breadth, and very shallow of water, over which it was intended to build a handsome stone bridge, and opposite the city the piles are seen, but the Peshwa who began this laudable work unfortunately died; his successor continuing it died also, from which events it was adjudged an undertaking unpleasing to the gods, and it has not since been revived. There is, we believe, a wooden bridge over the river, as it is not fordable in the rains, a little higher up, but in bad repair. The vicinity of Poona is well watered by frequent

* See note XVIII.

quent streamlets, and ornamented with groves and gardens, in which the cypress holds a proud pre-eminence.

Major Rennell in his memoir, page 208, thus speaks of this city—
“ Poonah is the capital of the western Mahratta empire, and is situated
“ about thirty miles on the east of the ghauts, a hundred road miles
“ from Bombay, and about seventy-five from the nearest sea coast. It
“ is meanly built, and not large ; and lies quite open and defenceless.
“ Pooroonder, a fortress on a mountain, about eighteen miles east-
“ south-east of Poonah, is the place of refuge in case of invasion ; there
“ the archives of government are deposited ; and there, I believe, the
“ principal officers usually reside. Whenever an invasion has happen-
“ ed, the Mahrattas never thought Poonah a place worthy of defence,
“ and have accordingly destroyed it with their own hands. In a state
“ that can conveniently exist without a great capital, no doubt but that
“ great advantages are gained, in war, by a release from such an in-
“ cumbrance. An overgrown capital full of rich inhabitants, and a
“ kind of general repository of wealth, however pleasant it may be, as
“ it respects polished society, and the elegancies of life, yet from the
“ greatness of its extent, and other circumstances, incapable of defence,
“ must be considered as a great political evil in a state : it is like a for-
“ tress that exposes its weakest part to the enemy, and points his at-
“ tacks ; and, to pursue the allegory, there may be some danger of the
“ garrison sacrificing the interest of the empire at large, in order to pre-
“ serve their own property in the hour of assault. The Scythians, who
“ were not chained to the soil, could never be conquered ; and those
“ who have no large capitals stand in the next degree of security,
“ all other circumstances taken into the case. If the question be con-
“ sidered as it concerns morals, the objections are yet stronger ; for
“ the larger the capital, the greater will be the proportion of the popu-
“ lation that is corrupted*.”

A little

* If this be admitted, and reason and experience certainly enforce the argument, what must we think on contemplating the proud city of London? that seat of elegance and luxury ! that sink of iniquity and vice !

A little to the westward of the city is a cave, excavated in the same manner as those on the island of Elephanta, but comparatively very small.

The Peshwa has a menagerie of wild animals, but it is not a large, nor a very select collection. It consists of a rhinoceros, a lion, several royal tigers, leopards, panthers, and other animals of the cat kind.—An extraordinary camel is by far the most curious creature in the collection: it is of that species called, we believe, the Bactrian camel, and has two humps of such unwieldy dimensions, that when lying down it cannot easily rise, from their enormous weight: it is quite white, with very long hair, a characteristic of its species, about its head and neck *. The animal is of course a *lusus natura*. It was, as well as the rhinoceros, we learned, a present from Scindia. The lynx is a delicate animal, called in India and Persia, from its black ears, *seeah-goosh*. Sir Charles Malet has all these animals, with others, represented in clay by a Bramin, who has great merit in his modellings: the placid serenity of the camel, and the ferocious confidence of the tiger he is happy in hitting.

On the 8th of June, being quite refreshed by so long a halt, we reluctantly took leave of Sir Charles Malet, and the gentlemen by whose attentive kindness, and envied society, our stay at Poona had been rendered so agreeable, and marched to Tulgom, an inconsiderable town about eighteen miles northwesterly from Poona. This town is generally called Tullygom, or Tillegom, and is well known to the Bombay army;

* Before we saw this camel, which is the first of that species that came under our observation, we had been at some loss to understand how the raiment of St. John the baptist was made, as camels in general have no hair at all fit for that purpose.

"And the same John had his raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey."—St. Matthew, chap iii. verse 4th. The commentators were doubtless right in supposing the locusts of the Evangelical Historian to mean, not the *insect*, but the fruit of a tree so called. They grow the size of a finger, and to the length of a foot, quite black when ripe, and of a sweet rich taste. We have frequently ate them on the march in this country; but should by no means, unless in a case of great necessity, care for adopting them as a food, as they are of a strong cathartic quality.

army, which on an expedition against Poona in 1778, penetrated as far as this neighbourhood, where an action was fought with the Mahrattas and the Bombay army—marched back again.

There is a large tank on the southern side of Tullgom, which supplies extensive gardens with water. Our society was now reduced to three: Mr. Harvey, Mr. Rae, and the writer of this narrative:—Mr. Uhthoff remained at Poona on business, and Mr. Emmitt for the re-establishment of his health, to which rest was required, after such unremitting attention to his laborious professional pursuits.

We left Tullgom the next morning, and after a rugged and tedious march, reached the head of the Boor Ghaut, and halted near Coondallah, a small village, we believe, for we did not see it, near the ghaut's summit. The last four or five miles of the road is very rugged, with a considerable declivity; and is thickly stored with a spontaneous shrub, bearing a very pleasant fruit called corinder, or cooroonda, not unlike our smaller cherries. Sir Charles Malett's hospitality, we found, extended beyond his own mansion; he had furnished us very abundantly with necessaries and luxuries for the remainder of our journey. Leaving Coondallah the next morning, we descended the Boor Ghaut, which, although very rugged and steep, is not so much so as the Ambah pass, by which Captain Little's and Colonel Frederick's detachments, as already noticed, ascended to the upper country. Soon after leaving Coondallah, we passed a deep horrid chasm close to the road side; the sun had not yet affected the condensed clouds, which rolling to and fro in this abyfs, intercepted the sight to the bottom, and surely did, if aught on earth can produce that effect, convey to the mind a perception of some supernatural chaos.

Most writers on subjects in which the peninsula was the scene, have enriched their works by a description of these stupendous mountains. Scenes, of the sublimity with which these strike the imagination, are noble to behold, and when described by a masterly hand, doubtless furnish the mind with delectable sensations; but whether these sensations arise