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MEMORIES OF SEVEN CAMPAIGNS

A RECORD OF THIRTY-FIVE YEARS' SERVICE
IN THE INDIAN MEDICAL DEPARTMENT IN
INDIA, CHINA, EGYPT, AND THE SUDAN, BY
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LATE PRINCIPAL MEDICAL OFFICER, PUNJAB FRONTIER FORCE

With an Introduction by
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CHAPTER XII

I return to India in 1870 and am appointed to the 2nd Native Infantry—We go by train to Sahibgunge, cross the Ganges by steamer, and march to Julpigoree—Description of the station—I am appointed to the medical charge of the civil establishments there—The rainy season at Julpigoree—Snakes—Hunting excursions in the cold weather—The commander-in-chief inspects the regiment—I apply for civil employ and am appointed civil surgeon of Shahabad—I am relieved of my duties at Julpigoree and proceed to Arrah—Description of the town and district—Indian hospitality—My duties as civil surgeon and superintendent of the district jail—employment of the prisoners—Jail manufactures—Municipal work—Police cases—Quarrels and fights among the peasantry.

AFTER spending nine or ten months at home in recruiting my health and paying visits to sundry relatives and friends, I found it expedient for me to return to India and go to work again. My wife remained at home in charge of our children, and, after bidding them farewell, I proceeded to Southampton and embarked in the P. and O. steamer *Ripon* on November 26th, 1868. I had a pleasant and prosperous voyage, and at Malta I visited some of my relatives who were wintering in the island. I arrived at Alexandria on December 12th, travelled by railway to Suez, and there embarked in the *Surat* for Calcutta, where I landed on the 8th of January 1870, and reported my arrival to the military and medical authorities in the usual manner. After a few days' stay at Calcutta, I was appointed to the medical charge of the 2nd Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, which was under orders to proceed, in the ordinary course of relief, from Calcutta to Julpigoree in Northern Bengal. This regiment was raised, in 1796, as the 31st Bengal Native Infantry, and had served with distinction throughout many

northward the climate became more humid and the vegetation more luxuriant, and we caught sight of ferns and mosses on all sides. Long sheds for the cultivation of pepper plants were frequently seen. On the 29th we reached Titalya, where we quitted the Darjeeling road, and, turning eastward, marched towards Julpigoree by a rough unmetalled road, which passed through a rather wild and jungly country thinly inhabited.

We arrived at Julpigoree on the 1st of February, and occupied the empty barracks and houses which had been tenanted by our predecessors. The station was situated on the west bank of the Teesta, a large river coming from the Sikkim Himalaya, and at that time it consisted of the lines of the native regiment stationed there, the houses of the officers, the courts of justice, jail, police lines and hospital, and the houses of the civil officers of the district. Colonel Haughton, C.S.I., the commissioner or chief civil officer of the Cooch Behar Division, resided at Julpigoree and held his court there. The station was divided into two parts by a considerable stream, which joined the Teesta at a point nearly opposite the regimental mess house, and was crossed near its junction by a wooden bridge. The dwelling-houses of the residents, as well as the Sepoy lines and hospital, and all the other public buildings, were at that time of the most primitive description, being simply huts built of wood and bamboo, with walls of matting, and roofs thatched with grass. They were all raised several feet from the ground on account of the excessive rainfall and the danger of inundation from the swollen rivers during the rainy season.

To the best of my recollection there was not at that period a single brick building in Julpigoree. By far the best house in the place was that of Colonel Haughton, upon which a good deal of money had been spent. It had glass windows, wooden doors, cloth

plunging into the river to secure the drifting logs and thus provide themselves with firewood gratis. The river water almost reached the top of the broad embankment which protected the station from being inundated, and sometimes it seemed as though the swollen river would overpass this barrier. Had it done so, not only the station but much of the surrounding country would have been submerged. The rain came down in torrents and no less than forty-two inches fell during the month of June. The ground was nearly everywhere a sheet of water, even under our houses, and it was impossible to go anywhere without getting wet. During this season we endured great discomfort owing to the houses being unfit to resist such weather. If we closed every opening we were in darkness, and if a door or window were opened to admit light, the violent wind immediately burst in, bringing the rain with it and making the house almost uninhabitable.

Of course the heavy rainfall soon brought the snakes out of their holes, and they sought the houses as the only dry places left. We were obliged to carry lanterns at night when going to mess or proceeding on any duty, and it was quite a common thing on these occasions to find snakes of various kinds lying on the drier parts of the path we were pursuing. Most of these reptiles were harmless, but sometimes we came across the cobra (*Naja tripudians*), krait (*Bungarus cæruleus*), and Russell's viper (*Daboia Russellii*), all of them exceedingly venomous and deadly.

When the rains were ceasing towards the end of September we began to get magnificent views of the snowy range of the Himalaya. The great mountain Kinchinjunga near Darjeeling, upwards of 28,000 feet high, was especially remarkable, being nearer than the others, and it almost seemed to overhang the plains. In November the cold weather commenced and the climate of Julpigoree became very pleasant. We made up shoot-

ing parties from time to time, as the surrounding country abounded with game, especially towards the east and north, in which directions were immense plains covered with grass ten feet high, which afforded cover to the tiger, buffalo, rhinoceros, wild boar, and deer of various kinds. We used the commissariat elephants in our hunting excursions, as it would have been impossible to traverse this heavy grass jungle in any other way; indeed even when mounted on the elephants we sometimes found the grass above our heads.

Hardly a mile from the station there was a piece of swampy ground covered with high grass and reeds, and intersected by watercourses; this was the abode of a very wary and sagacious tiger who preyed upon the cattle of the neighbouring villagers, but never ventured far from his stronghold. Many a time we pursued him, and sometimes fired a hurried shot at him as he disappeared in the high grass, but though his tracks were always to be found we very rarely got even a glimpse of him, and we never succeeded in killing him. We had some exciting hunts after buffalo and rhinoceros, and on one occasion my elephant was charged and put to flight by a rhinoceros I had fired at and wounded, but not disabled.

In the beginning of 1871 Lord Napier of Magdala, then commander-in-chief of the Indian army, visited Julpigoree with his staff, and made an inspection of the regiment, after which they dined at the mess as our guests, in accordance with the general custom in the Indian army on such occasions. I did not remain much longer in military employ. I had previously sent up an application for civil employ in Bengal, considering that a settled appointment would now suit me better than regimental duty, and in April I was offered and accepted the civil surgeoncy of Shahabad, a district in the province of Behar. It did not take me long to