

# COLONEL TIMLER'S DIARY IN INDIA.

The annexed is a continuation of Colonel Timler's diary as given by the *Pioneer*:—"Calcutta consists of the city of that name, with a population exceeding 400,000 inhabitants, and of suburbs which contain 250,000 more souls. The first in no way differs from any well-built European town, for its streets are wide, are lit up with gas, are well watered, cleanly kept, and many of them are also laid down with lines of tramway. But amongst the number of the chief advantages which Calcutta enjoys is a copious supply of filtered water. This supply is pumped up from the River Hughli by means of machinery, at a point distant 16 miles above the town, into six large reservoirs, and in these the water is allowed to remain for a space of 36 hours, during which the sediment in suspension in the water has time to settle. After this the water is passed through eight filters, and from these it flows out on to a marble platform, whereon the degree of purity of the water can be observed. After it has been ascertained that the water is sufficiently pure, it is allowed to enter the feeding pipes. These pipes can supply the town with 8,000,000 gallons of filtered water daily. In addition to this there has been provided a special pipe for the supply of water to clean and damp the streets and to meet other requirements. Throughout the town, too, there are sewage pipes for carrying off every impurity, and all the sweepings of the streets and dwellings are removed in the trucks of a municipal line of railway to the so-called salt marshes.

"In a sanitary sense all these arrangements are called for by real necessity, since both cholera and fever still continue to claim their victims, although these fell diseases are not of so virulent a type as in other parts of India. This is shown by the fact that the average daily mortality from diseases of all kinds in Calcutta is expressed by the low figures 30·4 per mille.

"Amongst the places in Calcutta worthy of a visit is the Museum, a building which, though only raised twenty years ago, now possesses a very rich and varied collection; its specimens of mineralogy and of archaeology being especially worthy of attention.

"Many people hold the opinion that Indian skill and native industries generally are gradually falling into decay, and that for this state of things the English are chiefly to blame. If, as regards Indian skill, the notion is just to a certain extent, the second part of the belief is open to doubt and is extremely complex. India, it must be remembered, has passed through many important phases of her existence, which could not but affect her inner life and the several branches of the industry of the country. Mussulman invasions, for example, which destroyed the ancient memorials of India, not by tens but by hundreds at a time, and which also raised up in their places structures of quite a different character and style, could not but influence the very latest development of architecture and of science generally throughout Hindustan. In support of this statement we may point out that, in the Punjab, which was the province that was the most subjected to the invasions of the several conquerors of India, Persian influence has acted in a striking manner on the different manufactures of the country. Thus it has come about that, with the gradual development of English dominion and with the fall of the Court of the Great Moghul and of the courts of other Indian potentates which served as centres of Asiatic splendour in all its brilliancy, the various productions which satisfied the requirements of any particular time, finding no sale later on, gradually fell into decay and, in some instances, altogether disappeared. As one instance amidst many we may point to the following fact. In the seventeenth century, during the reign of the Emperor Jehangir, Dacca was famous (it is so still) for its muslins. Entire pieces of this web, measuring some 16 yards long and one yard in breadth, but weighing only  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb., used to be made for the sum of Rs. 40; whereas now the same piece would weigh twice as much and would cost only ten rupees. Muslins of the kind above described were for ordinary use, but as an *article de luxe* they manufactured special kinds called by such names as "Dew of the Evening" and "Running Water," because, as the web was being spun either on the wet grass or in the water, it could not be seen whilst in process of manufacture. Now, however, such manufactures are mere tokens of an historic past, and these and many others are now only preserved in the museums as rare specimens of costly and superior workmanship.

"Certain of the manufactures of India have undoubtedly fallen off, in respect of quality, because of the extension of the markets, the greater sales for all classes of goods, and the larger demand for manufactures of an inferior description and at cheap prices. Under such circumstances it is, of course, more advantageous to the manufacturer to study quantity rather than quality, and to do so at a sacrifice of careful and conscientious workmanship, so that he may the sooner receive his money.

"It is known that decorative art existed in India in the depth of antiquity, and at the present day, without speaking of the temples and other public buildings, carvings are met with on the balconies, doors, and windows of private dwelling-houses; this fact, therefore, proves that wood-carving still flourishes amongst, and is a speciality of, Hindoos. For instance, in the Calcutta Museum there are to be seen models of decorative art of natural size, different articles of carved furniture, as well as smaller goods which are quite striking, because of the finish and fineness of their workmanship. Then there are articles manufactured out of various metals and lacquers; such goods are prepared throughout India in immense quantities for domestic use and to meet religious requirements. Some of such ware are remarkable for the originality of their form and for the chasteness and fineness of their design. Notwithstanding, too, that India is now a peaceful country, weapons made of cold steel have, in respect of manufacture and quality of material, been brought to a high degree of artistic workmanship. Various smaller goods, too, made of ivory and of buffalo horn, are also distinguished for their high finish. Moreover, in no country in the world do women wear such an amount of personal adornment as they do in India. Look, for example, at the nose of any old woman you may chance to meet on the road, and you will probably find that it has been pierced with a ring strung with several pearls of great value. The gold and silver articles which are exhibited in the Calcutta Museum are not, of course, of great value, but we saw at the shops of some native merchants at Benares very costly articles of jewellery set with precious stones.

"After finishing our inspection of the Museum we went on to the topographical section of the Survey Department, which is in charge of the Trigonometrical, Topographical, and Revenue Surveys of the Peninsula, and whence issue various kinds of maps and charts. This section of the administration plays a very important rôle in India, and, being on a very sound footing, it is of immense use to the country. Englishmen hold firmly to the opinion that, by plotting a given line of country on a map, and by adding thereto a written description, they thereby arrive at a very valuable document of which use can be made when they begin fresh annexation. It may, indeed, be boldly asserted that the 'officer topographer' plays an important part in the conquests of the English. Thus, after the occupation of Burmah survey operations were at once pushed forward notwithstanding that the country was in a state of chaos, and that the dacoits were shooting from behind every bit of cover. To Gilgit, a place which lies to the extreme north of India, a special mission was despatched, and to it also was attached a survey officer. Again, the three officers of the Survey Department who formed part of the *personnel* of the Afghan Boundary Commission surveyed the country to the west of Quetta as far as Kashan, a distance of 767 English miles. The same officers, too, carried out the triangulation and a topographical survey of the country between Nashki and Kwai-Ali, and, finally, they surveyed the valley of the Helmund, as we learn from the official report of the Surveyor-General of India for the year 1895. In addition to all this, in the space of one year, the English have completed topographical operations in the various provinces of India, with a view to filling up the blank spaces on their maps, and they have brought to a conclusion cadastral determinations as well as special forest surveys. In addition to the large money grants to the topographical section of the Survey Department, to enable it to successfully fulfil all the demands made upon it, it possesses a number of native employes who constitute a gigantic working power. Thanks to the method and patience which these persons display, they become excellent sketchers, and judging by the drawings which were shown to us, their handiwork seems to be very largely made use of. As we know, the English set great store on statistics. Now, maps furnish substantial material for the correct valuation of statistical data, and, therefore, whenever it is convenient to do so, the English attach maps to all their reports, by means of which the text can be read with the greater degree of interest. The placing under one head of topographical and revenue operations cannot be regarded as the very height of centralisation, but from the results attained thereby in India it must be concluded that the working of these two distinct sections can be excellently carried on under one general guidance.

"After we had made ourselves acquainted with Calcutta, we received from the Maharajah Nripendro Narain Bhup of Cooch Behar an invitation to go out shooting. As the other remaining repre-

sentatives of the foreign mission had already started off on their several expeditions to see the country—the Italians southwards towards Madras and the Frenchmen northwards, in the direction of Central India—it seemed that the invitation in question was only intended for us Russians. It should here be observed that, as soon as the official receptions were over, all the representatives of the foreign mission desired to obtain for themselves complete freedom of action, in order that they might visit such parts of India as they might fancy in the capacity of ordinary travellers; but the Indian Government very skilfully prevented their doing so by declaring that, so long as foreigners remained within the limits of Indian territory, they were the guests of the Queen and could not refuse the hospitality tendered to them. If such friendliness made it more possible for the foreign guests to enjoy the services of official personages and so, to a certain extent, relieved them of private travelling expenses, it, on the other hand, greatly interfered with their liberty of action. Thus the foreign guests had to adopt one of two alternatives; they must either decline the friendly invitation offered to them altogether and return home at their own expense, or they must take advantage of it, and place themselves under its declared conditions. The majority of the bidden guests accepted the latter alternative, finding, not without reason, that such an opportunity for making themselves acquainted with a country like India would not occur again. A specially appointed officer attended each party of foreign officers in their journeying about India, with us Russians Colonel U. remained.

"Before joining the shooting party to which we had been invited we had to supply ourselves with guns and rifles and with sundry other things. On our visiting a shop for this purpose, we were extremely surprised when the proprietor addressed us in broken Russian and proved to be a Jew from Berdicheef who had come out to Calcutta some years previously. He seemed to have prospered in his new country, because his shop was evidently on a sound basis. Upon our paying this shop a second visit we received an invitation from the good man's wife to partake of Russian hospitality, an offer which we declined by means of a polite and well-found excuse. We may remark *en passant* that there are only a very few Jews in India, and those there are are grouped together in the principal centres.

"The shooting party which we had been invited to join was in the semi-independent State of Cooch Behar, which is situated on the plains of Lower Bengal and at the foot of some spurs that run down from the Himalayan range.

"Having completed all our preparations for the shooting expedition, we started off by railway for a distance of 90 kilometres and then entered a carriage that had been sent to meet us, and during this part of the journey we accomplished the passage over rivers by the following original methods; on an elephant, in a boat, twice by means of a raft, and, finally, on the shoulders of Hindoos.

"On the evening of the day after our departure from Calcutta we arrived at the capital of the Cooch Behar State, a town with a population of about 10,000 inhabitants. We passed the night in the Maharaja's palace, and started off early the next morning for the place appointed for the meet of the shooting party, a distance of some 20 kilometres.

"On arrival at our destination we found a large camp pitched on the bank of a river, but the Maharaja and his guests were out shooting. A double-poled tent with partitions had been pitched for every two guests, an allotment which provided ample accommodation, and between the double walls of the tent baths had been placed. Two large tents in the centre of the camp were also provided, and were used by the guests as dining and sitting-rooms respectively. At one end of the camp were the servants' tents, and outside these the elephants and horses were picketed. At another end, but outside the actual limits of the camp, there were sheep, calves, fowls, and all kinds of provisions. Lastly, in another part of the camp there was a tent in which the skins were removed from the slaughtered game. The close neighbourhood of this tent was not altogether convenient, as sometimes the wind wafted therefrom in the direction of the dwelling tents odours of an extremely unpleasant kind; besides which vultures and jackals collected about this tent, and raised insufferable shrieks and howls in expectation of their prey. In the evening the whole of the company returned to camp, and we then made the acquaintance of the guests of the Maharaja—the Maharaja's acquaintance we had already made during the Delhi manoeuvres. Young and well-built and dressed in European costume, the Maharaja of Cooch Behar looks like a perfect English gentleman, the colour of his skin alone revealing his native origin. Besides Prince E., the Austrian representative on the foreign mission and a well-known sportsman, and us Russians, the remaining members of the shooting party were all experienced Indian sportsmen: for instance, our Colonel U. had been present at the death of 75 tigers.

"Big-game shooting in India constitutes not merely a sport, but in some localities it is rather a strife on the part of man with beasts of prey. Railways and the spread of cultivation throughout India have made several kinds of big game take themselves off to the more secluded parts of the country, but still the number of wild beasts is far from falling off. The lion alone, which at one time was found in considerable numbers in the Province of Gujerat, but which is now only to be seen in the mountains of Gir, in Kattywar, or the Province in the north-west part of the Bombay Presidency, is gradually dying out. The Indian species is, however, smaller and of a lighter colour than the African.

"Amongst the Indian beasts of prey the first place must be given to the tiger, which is, so to speak, the King of Indian wild beasts, and is found in considerable numbers along the foot of the Southern Himalayas in the province of Bengal, also in Central India and in the Bombay Presidency. Although every year about 15,000 tigers are killed, the number of these beasts does not appear to be lessening.

"The leopard, which is met with everywhere throughout India, is much more dangerous than the tiger, because of its greater blood-thirstiness and of the daring with which it will attack a man without waiting to be fired at. We did not, however, come across a single leopard during our stay in India. Another specimen of big game found in India is the **rhinoceros**, of which there are four distinct sorts: two with one horn and two with two horns on the top of the snout. In the country where we went to shoot there roams the one-horned species, an animal which stands six feet high, and which is covered with a thick hide like armour that is not everywhere penetrable, and then only by the bullets of large bore rifles or by shells or explosive bullets. Sometimes, for instance, a bullet, having struck the animal on the back, will cause a flow of oil, not of blood, and, therefore, in order to kill a **rhinoceros** with one shot, aim must be taken between the eyes so as to reach the animal's brain. Some English sportsmen have rifles of 4 or 8 bore, made especially for **rhinoceros** shooting. Of course rifles with the bore first named are very heavy, and in order to reduce the recoil of these weapons a thick layer of *gutta-percha* has to be affixed to the butt of the rifle. Another kind of big game which affords sport in India is the wild buffalo. This animal is much larger than the domestic specimen, and it is, moreover, very fierce. It has short wool of a black colour and carries large straight horns. Wild buffaloes graze in herds which even a tiger will not face: when, therefore, a buffalo becomes the prey of a tiger he must have been attacked unawares and alone.

"Our time whilst in the camp of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar was thus divided: at 7 a. m. the Maharaja's band (a fairly good one) woke us all up by playing a march of some kind; at 8 o'clock we assembled at the breakfast table: at 9 we moved in the direction of the elephants, and then, on a given signal, we got up into our allotted places on the *howdah* and left the camp. The first drive or beat for game usually took place at a distance of from four to five miles from camp, and in two hours' time a halt was called for a second breakfast. A carpet was then spread, and those present seated themselves down on it in a circle. After partaking of a light repast, the beat was continued, and very often camp was not reached again until after sunset. Dinner was then announced, and afterwards there were rubbers of whist, or those who preferred to do so looked over the papers, and it was not till a late hour that we separated for the night. Towards evening one felt thoroughly tired, and one's back ached from the effects of an unaccustomed jolting on an elephant; but by the next morning, after a sound and healthy sleep, all such sensations had passed away."