

Twenty-One Days in India; and, the Teapot Series eBook

Twenty-One Days in India; and, the Teapot Series by George Robert Aberigh-Mackay

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Page 1

WITH THE VICEROY

[August 2, 1879.]

It is certainly a little intoxicating to spend a day with the Great Ornamental. You do not see much of him perhaps; but he is a Presence to be felt, something floating loosely about in wide epicene pantaloons and flying skirts, diffusing as he passes the fragrance of smile and pleasantry and cigarette. The air around him is laden with honeyed murmurs; gracious whispers play about the twitching bewitching corners of his delicious mouth. He calls everything by "soft names in many a mused rhyme." Deficits, Public Works, and Cotton Duties are transmuted by the alchemy of his gaiety into sunshine and songs. An office-box on his writing-table an office-box is to him, and it is something more: it holds cigarettes. No one knows what sweet thoughts are his as Chloe flutters through the room, blushful and startled, or as a fresh beaker full of the warm South glows between his amorous eye and the sun.

"I have never known
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of twaddle so divine."

I never tire of looking at a Viceroy. He is a being so heterogeneous from us! He is the centre of a world with which he has no affinity. He is a veiled prophet. [He wears many veils indeed.] He who is the axis of India, the centre round which the Empire rotates, is absolutely and necessarily withdrawn from all knowledge of India. He lisps no syllable of any Indian tongue; no race or caste, or mode of Indian life is known to him; all our delightful provinces of the sun that lie off the railway are to him an undiscovered country; Ghebers, Moslems, Hindoos blend together in one indistinguishable dark mass before his eye, [in which the cataract of English indifference has not been couched; most delightful of all—he knows not the traditions of Anglo-India, and he does not belong to the Bandicoot Club, St. James's Square!]

A Nawab, whom the Foreign Office once farmed out to me, often used to ask what the use of a Viceroy was. I do not believe that he meant to be profane. The question would again and again recur to his mind, and find itself on his lips. I always replied with the counter question, "What is the use of India?" He never would see—the Oriental mind does not see these things—that the chief end and object of India was the Viceroy; that, in fact, India was the plant and the Viceroy the flower.

I have often thought of writing a hymn on the Beauty of Viceroys; and have repeatedly attuned my mind to the subject; but my inability to express myself in figurative language, and my total ignorance of everything pertaining to metre, rhythm, and rhyme, make me rather hesitate to employ verse. Certainly, the subject is inviting, and I am surprised that no singer has arisen. How can any one view the Viceroyal halo of scarlet

domestics, with all the bravery of coronets, supporters, and shields in golden embroidery and lace,

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without emotion! How can the tons of gold and silver plate that once belonged to John Company, Bahadur, and that now repose on the groaning board of the Great Ornamental, amid a glory of Himalayan flowers, or blossoms from Eden's fields of asphodel, be reflected upon the eye's retina without producing positive thrills and vibrations of joy (that cannot be measured in terms of *ohm* or *farad*) shooting up and down the spinal cord and into the most hidden seats of pleasure! I certainly can never see the luxurious bloom of the silver sticks arranged in careless groups about the vast portals without a feeling approaching to awe and worship, and a tendency to fling small coin about with a fine mediaeval profusion. I certainly can never drain those profound golden cauldrons seething with champagne without a tendency to break into loud expressions of the inward music and conviviality that simmer in my soul. Salutes of cannon, galloping escorts, processions of landaus, beautiful teams of English horses, trains of private saloon carriages (cooled with water trickling over sweet jungle grasses) streaming through the sunny land, expectant crowds of beauty with hungry eyes making a delirious welcome at every stage, the whole country blooming into dance and banquet and fresh girls at every step taken—these form the fair guerdon that stirs my breast at certain moments and makes me often resolve, after dinner, "to scorn delights and live laborious days," and sell my beautiful soul, illuminated with art and poetry, to the devil of Industry, with reversion to Sir John Strachey.

How mysterious and delicious are the cool penetralia of the Viceregal Office! It is the censorium of the Empire; it is the seat of thought; it is the abode of moral responsibility! What battles, what famines, what excursions of pleasure, what banquets and pageants, what concepts of change have sprung into life here! Every pigeon-hole contains a potential revolution; every office-box cradles the embryo of a war or dearth. What shocks and vibrations, what deadly thrills does this little thunder-cloud office transmit to far-away provinces lying beyond rising and setting suns! Ah! Vanity, these are pleasant lodgings for five years, let who may turn the kaleidoscope after us.

A little errant knight of the press who has just arrived on the Delectable Mountains, comes rushing in, looks over my shoulder, and says, "A deuced expensive thing a Viceroy." This little errant knight would take the thunder at a quarter of the price, and keep the Empire paralytic with change and fear of change as if the great Thirty-thousand-pounder himself were on Olympus.—*Ali Baba*.

No. II

THE A.D.C.-IN-WAITING

AN ARRANGEMENT IN SCARLET AND GOLD

[Illustration: *The A.D.C.-In waiting*—"An arrangement in scarlet and gold."]

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[August 9, 1879.]

The tone of the A.D.C. is subdued. He stands in doorways and strokes his moustache. He nods sadly to you as you pass. He is preoccupied with—himself, [some suppose; others aver his office.] He has a motherly whisper for Secretaries and Members of Council. His way with ladies is sisterly—undemonstratively affectionate. He tows up rajas to H.E., and stands in the offing. His attitude towards rajas is one of melancholy reserve. He will perform the prescribed observances, if he cannot approve of them. Indeed, generally, he disapproves of the Indian people, though he condones their existence. For a brother in aiguillettes there is a Masonic smile and a half-embarrassed familiarity, as if found out in acting his part. But confidence is soon restored with melancholy glances around, and profane persons who may be standing about move uneasily away.

An A.D.C. should have no tastes. He is merged in “the house.” He must dance and ride admirably; he ought to shoot; he may sing and paint in water-colours, or botanise a little, and the faintest aroma of the most volatile literature will do him no harm; but he cannot be allowed preferences. If he has a weakness for very pronounced collars and shirt-cuffs in mufti, it may be connived at, provided he be honestly nothing else but the man in collars and cuffs.

When a loud, joyful, and steeplechasing Lord, in the pursuit of pleasure and distant wars, dons the golden cords for a season, the world understands that this is masquerading, skittles, and a joke. One must not confound the ideal A.D.C. with such a figure.

The A.D.C. has four distinct aspects or phases—(1) the full summer sunshine and bloom of scarlet and gold for Queen's birthdays and high ceremonials; (2) the dark frock-coats and belts in which to canter behind his Lord in; (3) the evening tail-coat, turned down with light blue and adorned with the Imperial arms on gold buttons; (4) and, finally, the quiet disguises of private life.

It is in the sunshine glare of scarlet and gold that the A.D.C. is most awful and unapproachable; it is in this aspect that the splendour of vice-Imperialism seems to beat upon him most fiercely. The Rajas of Rajputana, the diamonds of Golconda, the gold of the Wynaad, the opium of Malwa, the cotton of the Berars, and the Stars of India seem to be typified in the richness of his attire and the conscious superiority of his demeanour. Is he not one of the four satellites of that Jupiter who swims in the highest azure fields of the highest heavens?

Frock-coated and belted, he passes into church or elsewhere behind his Lord, like an aerolite from some distant universe, trailing cloudy visions of that young lady's Paradise of bright lights and music, champagne, mayonnaise, and “just-one-more-turn,” which is situated behind the flagstaff on the hill.

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The tail-coat, with gold buttons, velvet cuffs, and light blue silk lining, is quite a demi-official, small-and-early arrangement. It is compatible with a patronising and somewhat superb flirtation in the verandah; nay, even under the pine-tree beyond the *Gurkha* sentinel, whence many-twinkling Jakko may be admired, it is compatible with a certain shadow of human sympathy and weakness. An A.D.C. in tail-coat and gold buttons is no longer a star; he is only a fire-balloon; though he may twinkle in heaven, he can descend to earth. But in the quiet disguises of private life he is the mere stick of a rocket. He is quite of the earth. This scheme of clothing is compatible with the tenderest offices of gaming or love—offices of which there shall be no recollection on the re-assumption of uniform and on re-apotheosis. An A.D.C. in plain clothes has been known to lay the long odds at whist, and to qualify, very nearly, for a co-respondentship.

In addition to furnishing rooms in his own person, an A.D.C. is sometimes required to copy my Lord's letters on mail-day, and, in due subordination to the Military Secretary, to superintend the stables, kitchen, or Invitation Department.

After performing these high functions, it is hard if an A.D.C. should ever have to revert to the buffooneries of the parade-ground or the vulgar intimacies of a mess. It is hard that one who has for five years been identified with the Empire should ever again come to be regarded as "Jones of the 10th," and spoken of as "Punch" or "Bobby" by old boon companions. How can a man who has been behind the curtain, and who has seen *la premiere danseuse* of the Empire practising her steps before the manager Strachey, in familiar chaff and talk with the Council ballet, while the little scene-painter and Press Commissioner stood aside with cocked ears, and the privileged violoncellist made his careless jests—how, I say, can one who has thus been above the clouds on Olympus ever associate with the gaping, chattering, irresponsible herd below?

It is well that our Ganymede should pass away from heaven into temporary eclipse; it is well that before being exposed to the rude gaze of the world he should moult his rainbow plumage in the Cimmeria of the Rajas. Here we shall see him again, a blinking *ignis fatuus* in a dark land—"so shines a good deed in a naughty world" thinks the Foreign Office.—*Ali Baba*.

No. III

WITH THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

[August 16, 1879.]

At Simla and Calcutta the Government of India always sleeps with a revolver under its pillow—that revolver is the Commander-in-Chief. There is a tacit understanding that this revolver is not to be let off; indeed, sometimes it is believed that this revolver is not loaded.

[The Commander-in-Chief has a seat in Council; but the Military Member has a voice. This division of property is seen everywhere. The Commander-in-Chief has many offices; in each there is someone other than the Commander-in-Chief who discharges all its duties.

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What does the Commander-in-Chief command? Armies? No. In India Commanders-in-Chief command no armies. The Commander-in-Chief only commands respect.]

The Commander-in-Chief is himself an army. His transport, medical attendance, and provisioning are cared for departmentally, and watched over by responsible officers. He is a host in himself; and a corps of observation.

All the world observes him. His slightest movement creates a molecular disturbance in type, and vibrates into newspaper paragraphs.

When Commanders-in-Chief are born the world is unconscious of any change. No one knows when a Commander-in-Chief is born. No joyful father, no pale mother has ever experienced such an event as the birth of a Commander-in-Chief in the family. No Mrs. Gamp has ever leant over the banister and declared to the expectant father below that it was “a fine healthy Commander-in-Chief.” Therefore, a Commander-in-Chief is not like a poet. But when a Commander-in-Chief dies, the spirit of a thousand Beethovens sob and wail in the air; dull cannon roar slowly out their heavy grief; silly rifles gibber and chatter demoniacally over his grave; and a cocked hat, emptier than ever, rides with the mockery of despair on his coffin.

On Sunday evening, after tea and catechism, the Supreme Council generally meet for riddles and forfeits in the snug little cloak-room parlour at Peterhoff. “Can an army tailor make a Commander-in-Chief?” was once asked. Eight old heads were scratched and searched, but no answer was found. No sound was heard save the seething whisper of champagne ebbing and flowing in the eight old heads. Outside, the wind moaned through the rhododendron trees; within, the Commander-in-Chief wept peacefully. He felt the awkwardness of the situation. [He thought of Ali Musjid, and he thought of Isandula; he saw himself reflected in the mirror, and he declared that he gave it up.] An aide-de-camp stood at the door hiccupping idly. He was known to have invested all his paper currency in Sackville Street; and he felt in honour bound to say that the riddle was a little hard on the army tailors. So the subject dropped.

A Commander-in-Chief is the most beautiful article of social upholstery in India. He sits in a large chair in the drawing-room. Heads and bodies sway vertically in passing him. He takes the oldest woman in to dinner; he gratifies her with his drowsy cackle. He says “Yes” and “No” to everyone with drowsy civility; everyone is conciliated. His stars dimly twinkle—twinkle; the host and hostess enjoy their light. After dinner he decants claret into his venerable person, and tells an old story; the company smile with innocent joy. He rejoins the ladies and leers kindly on a pretty woman; she forgives herself a month of indiscretions. He touches Lieutenant the Hon. Jupiter Smith on the elbow and inquires after his mother; a noble family is gladdened. He is thus a source of harmless happiness to himself and to those around him.

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If a round of ball cartridge has been wasted by a suicide, or a pair of ammunition boots carried off by a deserter, the Commander-in-Chief sometimes visits a great cantonment under a salute of seventeen guns. The military then express their joy in their peculiar fashion, according to their station in life. The cavalry soldier takes out his charger and gallops heedlessly up and down all the roads in the station. The sergeants of all arms fume about as if transacting some important business between the barracks and their officers' quarters. Subalterns hang about the Mess, whacking their legs with small pieces of cane and drinking pegs with mournful indifference. The Colonel sends for everyone who has not the privilege of sending for him, and says nothing to each one, sternly and decisively. The Majors and the officers doing general duty go to the Club and swear before the civilians that they are worked off their legs, complaining fiercely to themselves that the Service is going, &c. &c. The Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster-General puts on all the gold lace he is allowed to wear, and gallops to the Assistant-Adjutant-General—where he has tiffin. The Major-General-Commanding writes notes to all his friends, and keeps orderlies flying at random in every direction.

The Commander-in-Chief—who had a disturbed night in the train—sleeps peacefully throughout the day, and leaves under another salute in the afternoon. He shakes hands with everyone he can see at the station, and jumps into a long saloon carriage, followed by his staff.

“A deuced active old fellow!” everyone says; and they go home and dine solemnly with one another under circumstances of extraordinary importance.

The effect of the Commander-in-Chief is very remarkable on the poor Indian, whose untutored mind sees a Lord in everything. He calls the Commander-in-Chief “the Jungy Lord,” or War-Lord, in contradistinction to the “Mulky-Lord,” or Country-Lord, the appellation of the Viceroy. To the poor Indian this War-Lord is an object of profound interest and speculation. He has many aspects that resemble the other and more intelligible Lord. An aide-de-camp rides behind him; hats, or hands, rise electrically as he passes; yet it is felt in secret that he is not pregnant with such thunder-clouds of rupees, and that he cannot make or mar a Raja. To the Raja it is an ever-recurring question whether it is necessary or expedient to salaam to the Jungy Lord and call upon him. He is hedged about with servants who will require to be richly propitiated before any dusky countryman [of theirs, great or small,] gets access to this Lord of theirs. Is it, then, worth while to pass through this fire to the possible Moloch who sits beyond? Will this process of parting with coin—this Valley of the Shadow of Death—lead them to any palpable advantage? Perhaps the War-Lord with his red right hand can add guns to their salute; perhaps he will speak a recommendatory word to his caste-fellow, the Country-Lord? These are precious possibilities.

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A Raja whom I am now prospecting for the Foreign Office asked me the other day where Commanders-in-Chief were ripened, seeing that they were always so mellow and blooming. I mentioned a few nursery gardens I knew of in and about Whitehall and Pall Mall. H.H. at once said that he would like to plant his son there, if I would water him with introductions. This is young 'Arry Bobbery, already favourably known on the Indian Turf as an enterprising and successful defaulter.

You will know 'Arry Bobbery, if you meet him, dear Vanity, by the peculiarly gracious way in which he forgives and forgets should you commit the indiscretion of lending him money. You may be sure that he will never allude to the matter again, but will rather wear a piquant do-it-again manner, like our irresistible little friend, Conny B——. I don't believe, however, that Bobbery will ever become a Commander-in-Chief, though his distant cousin, Scindia, is a General, and though they talk of pawning the 'long-shore Governorship of Bombay to Sir Cursinjee Damtheboy.—*Ali Baba*.

No. IV

WITH THE ARCHDEACON

A MAN OF BOTH WORLDS

[Illustration: *The archdeacon*—"A man of both worlds."]

[August 23, 1879.]

The Press Commissioner has been trying by a strained exercise of his prerogative to make me spend this day with the Bishop, and not with the Archdeacon; but I disregard the Press Commissioner; I make light of him; I treat his authority as a joke. What authority has a pump? Is a pump an analyst and a coroner?

Why should I spend a day with the Bishop? What claim has the Bishop on my improving conversation? I am not his sponsor. Besides, he might do me harm—I am not quite sure of his claret. I admit his superior ecclesiastical birth; I recollect his connection with St. Peter; and I am conscious of the more potent spells and effluences of his shovel-hat and apron; but I find the atmosphere of his heights cold, and the rarefied air he breathes does not feed my lungs. Up yonder, above the clouds of human weakness, my vertebrae become unhinged, my bones inarticulate, and I collapse. I meet missionaries, and I hear the music of the spheres; and I long to descend again to the circles of the everyday inferno where my friends are.

"These distant stars I can forego;
This kind, warm earth, is all I know."



I am sorry for it. I really have upward tendencies; but I have never been able to fix upon a balloon. The High Church balloon always seems to me too light; and the Low Church balloon too heavy; while no experienced aeronaut can tell me where the Broad Church balloon is bound for; thus, though a feather-weight sinner, here I am upon the firm earth. So come along, my dear Archdeacon, let us have a stroll down the Mall, and a chat about Temporalities, Fabrics, "Mean Whites," and little Mrs. Lollipop, "the joy of wild asses."

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An Archdeacon is one of the busiest men in India—especially when he is up on the hill among the sweet pine-trees. He is the recognised guardian of public morality, and the hill captains and the semi-detached wives lead him a rare life. There is no junketing at Goldstein's, no picnic at the waterfalls, no games at Annandale, no rehearsals at Herr Felix von Battin's, no choir practice at the church even, from which he can safely absent himself. A word, a kiss, some matrimonial charm dissolved—these electric disturbances of society must be averted. The Archdeacon is the lightning conductor; where he is, the leaven of naughtiness passes to the ground, and society is not shocked.

In the Bishop and the ordinary padre we have far-away people of another world. They know little of us; we know nothing of them. We feel much constraint in their presence. The presence of the ecclesiastical sex imposes severe restrictions upon our conversation. The Lieutenant-Governor of the South-Eastern Provinces once complained to me that the presence of a clergyman rendered nine-tenths of his vocabulary contraband, and choked up his fountains of anecdote. It also restricts us in the selection of our friends. But with an Archdeacon all this is changed. He is both of Heaven and Earth. When we see him in the pulpit we are pleased to think that we are with the angels; when we meet him in a ball-room we are flattered to feel that the angels are with us. When he is with us—though, of course, he is not of us—he is yet exceedingly like us. He may seem a little more venerable than he is; perhaps there may be about him a grandfatherly air that his years do not warrant; he may exact a “Sir” from us that is not given to others of his worldly standing; but there is nevertheless that in his bright and kindly eye—there is that in his side-long glance—which by a charm of Nature transmutes homage into familiar friendship, and respect into affection.

The character of Archdeacons as clergymen I would not venture to touch upon. It is proverbial that Archidiaconal functions are Eleusinian in their mysteriousness. No one, except an Archdeacon, pretends to know what the duties of an Archdeacon are, so no one can say whether these duties are performed perfunctorily and inadequately, or scrupulously and successfully. We know that Archdeacons sometimes preach, and that is about all we know. I know an Archdeacon in India who can preach a good sermon—I have heard him preach it many a time, once on a benefit night for the Additional Clergy Society. It wrung four annas from me—but it was a terrible wrench. I would not go through it again to have every living graduate of St. Bees and Durham disgorged on our coral strand.

From my saying this do not suppose that I am Mr. Whitley Stokes, or Babu Keshub Chundra Sen. I am a Churchman, beneath the surface, though a pellicle of inquiry may have supervened. I am not with the party of the Bishop, nor yet am I with Sir J.S., or Sir A.C. I abide in the Limbo of Vanity, as a temporary arrangement, to study the seamy side of Indian politics and morality, to examine misbegotten wars and reforms with the scalpel, Stars of India with the spectroscope, and to enjoy the society of half-a-dozen amusing people to whom the Empire of India is but a wheel of fortune.

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I like the recognised relations between the Archdeacon and women. They are more than avuncular and less than cousinly; they are tender without being romantic, and confiding without being burdensome. He has the private *entree* at *chhoti hazri*, or early breakfast; he sees loose and flowing robes that are only for esoteric disciples; he has the private *entree* at five o'clock tea and hears plans for the evening campaign openly discussed. He is quite behind the scenes. He hears the earliest whispers of engagements and flirtations. He can give a stone to the Press Commissioner in the gossip handicap, and win in a canter. You cannot tell him anything he does not know already.

Whenever the Government of India has a merrymaking, he is out on the trail. At Delhi he was in the thick of the mummary, beaming on barbaric princes and paynim princesses, blessing banners, blessing trumpeters, blessing proclamations, blessing champagne and truffles, blessing pretty girls, and blessing the conjunction of planets that had placed his lines in such pleasant places. His tight little cob, his perfect riding kit, his flowing beard, and his pleasant smile were the admiration of all the Begums and Nabobs that had come to the fair. The Government of India took such delight in him that they gave him a gold medal and a book.

With the inferior clergy the Archdeacon is not at his ease. He cannot respect the little ginger-bread gods of doctrine they make for themselves; he cannot worship at their hill altars; their hocus-pocus and their crystallised phraseology fall dissonantly on his ear; their talk of chasubles and stoles, eastern attitude, and all the rest of it, is to him as a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing. He would like to see the clergy merely scholars and men of sense set apart for the conduct of divine worship and the encouragement of all good and kindly offices to their neighbours; he does not wish to see them mediums and conjurors. He thinks that in a heathen country their paltry fetishism of misbegotten notions and incomprehensible phrases is peculiarly offensive and injurious to the interests of civilisation and Christianity. Of course the Archdeacon may be very much mistaken in all this; and it is this generous consciousness of fallibility which gives the singular charm to his religious attitude. He can take off his ecclesiastical spectacles and perceive that he may be in the wrong like other men.

Let us take a last look at the Archdeacon, for in the whole range of prominent Anglo-Indian characters our eye will not rest upon a more orbicular and satisfactory figure.

A good Archdeacon, nobly planned
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit gay and bright,
With something of the candle-light.

ALI BABA.

No. V

WITH THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

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[August 30, 1879.]

He is clever, I am told, and being clever he has to be rather morose in manner and careless in dress, or people might forget that he was clever. He has always been clever. He was the clever man of his year. He was so clever when he first came out that he could never learn to ride, or speak the language, and had to be translated to the Provincial Secretariat. But though he could never speak an intelligible sentence in the language, he had such a practical and useful knowledge of it, in half-a-dozen of its dialects, that he could pass examinations in it with the highest credit, netting immense rewards. He thus became not only more and more clever, but more and more solvent; until he was an object of wonder to his contemporaries, of admiration to the Lieutenant-Governor, and of desire to several *Burra Mem Sahibs*[A] with daughters. It was about this time that he is supposed to have written an article published in some English periodical. It was said to be an article of a solemn description, and report magnified the periodical into the *Quarterly Review*. So he became one who wrote for the English Press. It was felt that he was a man of letters; it was assumed that he was on terms of familiar correspondence with all the chief literary men of the day. With so conspicuous a reputation, he believed it necessary to do something in religion. So he gave up religion, and allowed it to be understood that he was a man of advanced views: a Positivist, a Buddhist, or something equally occult. Thus he became ripe for the highest employment, and was placed successively on a number of Special Commissions. He inquired into everything; he wrote hundredweights of reports; he proved himself to have the true paralytic ink flux, precisely the kind of wordy discharge or brain haemorrhage required of a high official in India. He would write ten pages where a clod-hopping collector would write a sentence. He could say the same thing over and over again in a hundred different ways. The feeble forms of official satire were at his command. [He could bray ironically at subordinate officers. He had the inborn arrogance required for official "snubbing." Being without a ray of good feeling or modesty, he could allow himself to write with ceremonial rudeness of men who in his inmost heart he knew to be in every way his superiors.] He desired exceedingly to be thought supercilious, and he thus became almost necessary to the Government of India, was canonised, and caught up to Simla. The Indian papers chanted little anthems, "the Services" said "Amen," and the apotheosis was felt to be a success. On reaching Simla he was found to be familiar with the two local "jokes," planted many years ago by some jackass. One of these "jokes" is about everything in India having its peculiar smell, except a flower; the second is some inanity about the Indian Government being a despotism of despatch-boxes tempered by the loss of the keys. He often emitted these mournful "jokes" until he was declared to be an acquisition to Simla society.

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Such is the man I am with to-day. His house is beautifully situated, overlooking a deep ravine, full of noble pine-trees, and surrounded by rhododendrons. The verandah is gay with geraniums and tall servants in Imperial red deeply encrusted with gold. Within, all is very respectable and nice, only the man is—not exactly vile, but certainly imperfect in a somewhat conspicuous degree. With the more attractive forms of sin he has no true sympathy. I can strike no concord with him on this umbrageous side of nature. I am seriously shocked to discover this, for he affects infirmity; but his humanity is weak. In his character I perceive the perfect animal outline, but the colour is wanting; the glorious sunshine, the profound glooms of humanity are not there.

Such a man is dangerous; he decoys you into confidences. Even Satan cannot respect a sinner of this complexion,—a sinner who is only fascinated by the sinfulness of sin. As for my poor host, I can see that he has never really graduated in sin at all; he has only sought the degree of sinner *honoris causa*. I am sure that he never had enough true vitality or enterprise to sin as a man ought to sin, if he does sin. [Of course a man ought not to sin; and the nobler sort try to reduce their sinning to a minimum; but when they do sin I hold that they sin like men. (I have heard it said that a man should sin like a gentleman; but I am much disposed to think that the gentleman nature appears in the non-sinning lucid intervals.)] When I speak of sin I will be understood to mean the venial offences of prevarication and sleeping in church. I am not thinking of sheep-stealing or highway robbery. My clever friend's work consists chiefly in reducing files of correspondence on a particular subject to one or two leading thoughts. Upon these he casts the colour of his own opinions, and submits the subjective product to the Secretary or Member of Council above him for final orders. His mind is one of the many dense and refractive mediums through which the Government of India looks out upon India.

From time to time he is called upon to write a minute or a note on some given subject, and then it is that his thoughts and words expand freely. He feels bound to cover an area of paper proportionate to his own opinion, of his own importance; he feels bound to introduce a certain seasoning of foreign words and phrases; and he feels bound to create, if the occasion seems in any degree to warrant it, one of those cock-eyed, limping, stammering epigrams which belong exclusively to the official humour of Simla. [In writing thus, the figure of another Secretariat official rises before me with reproachful looks. I see the thought-worn face of that Secretary to whom the Rajas belong, and who is, in every particular, a striking contrast with the typical person whose portrait I sketch. The Secretary in the Foreign Department is a scholar and a man of letters by instinct. Whatever he writes is something more than correct and precise—it is impressed with the sweep and cadence of the sea; it is rhythmical, it is sonorous.]

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[But let us return to the prisoner in the dock] I have said that the Secretary is clever, scornful, jocose, imperfectly sinful, and nimble with his pen. I shall only add that he has succeeded in catching the tone of the Imperial Bumbledom; and then I shall have finished my defence.

This tone is an affectation of aesthetic and literary sympathies, combined with a proud disdain of everything Indian and Anglo-Indian.

The flotsam and jetsam of advanced European thought are eagerly sought and treasured up. "The New Republic" and "The Epic of Hades" are on every drawing-room table. One must speak of nothing but the latest doings at the Gaiety, the pictures of the last Academy, the ripest outcome of scepticism in the *Nineteenth Century*, or the aftermath in the *Fortnightly*. If I were to talk to our Secretariat man about the harvest prospects of the Deckan, the beauty of the Himalayan scenery, or the book I have just published in Calcutta about the Rent Law, he would stare at me with feigned surprise and horror.

"When he thinks of his own native land,
In a moment he seems to be there;
But, alas! Ali Baba at hand
Soon hurries him back to despair."

ALI BABA.

No. VI

H.E. THE BENGALI BABOO

[Illustration: THE BENGALI BABOO—"Full of inappropriate words and phrases."]

[September 13, 1879.]

The ascidian[B] that got itself evolved into Bengali Baboos must have seized the first moment of consciousness and thought to regret the step it had taken; for however much we may desire to diffuse Babooism over the Empire, we must all agree that the Baboo itself is a subject for tears.

The other day, as I was strolling down the Mall, whistling Beethoven's 9th Symphony, I met the Bengali Baboo. It was returning from office. I asked it if it had a soul. It replied that it had not, but some day it hoped to pass the matriculation examination of the Calcutta University. I whistled the opening bars of one of Cherubini's Requiems, but I saw no resurrection in its eye, so I passed on.

[I have just procured an adult specimen of the Bengali Baboo (it was originally the editor of the *Calcutta Moonshine*), and I have engaged an embryologist, on board wages, to examine and report upon it.

I once found George Bassoon weeping profusely over a dish of artichokes. I was a little surprised, for there was a bottle close at hand and he had a book in his hand. I took the book. It was not Boccaccio; it was not Rabelais; it was not even Swinburne. I felt that something must be wrong. I turned to the title-page. I found it was a poem printed for private circulation by the *Government of India*. It was called "The Anthropomorphous Baboo subtilised into Man."]

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When I was at Lhasa the Dalai Lama told me that a virtuous cow-hippopotamus by metempsychosis might, under unfavourable circumstances, become an undergraduate of the Calcutta University, and that, when patent-leather shoes and English supervened, the thing was a Baboo. [This sounds very plausible; but how about the prehensile tail which the Education Department finds so much in the way of improvement, which indeed is said to preclude all access to the Bengali mind, and which can grasp everything but an idea, even an inquisitorial schoolmaster? “Hereby hangs a tail” is a motto in which Edward Gibbon had no monopoly.]

I forget whether it was the Duke of Buckingham, or Mr. Lethbridge, or General Scindia—I always mix up these C.I.E.’s together in my mind somehow—who told me that a Bengali Baboo had never been known to laugh, but only to giggle with clicking noises like a crocodile. Now this is very telling evidence, because if a Baboo does not laugh at a C.I.E. he will laugh at nothing. The faculty must be wanting.

[The Raja of Fattehpur, Member of the Legislative Council, and commonly known as “Joe Hookham,” says that fossil Baboos have been found in Orissa with the cuckoo-bone, everything that a schoolmaster could wish. Now “Joe” is a palaeontologist not to be sneezed at. This confirms the opinion of General Cunningham that the mounted figure in the neighbourhood of Lahore represents a Bengali washerwoman riding to the *Ghat* to perform a lustration. Because unless the os coccyx were all right it would be as difficult to ride a bullock as to get educated by the usual process.]

When Lord Macaulay said that what the milk was to the cocoanut, what beauty was to the buffalo, and what scandal was to woman, that Dr. Johnson’s Dictionary was to the Bengali Baboo, he unquestionably spoke in terms of figurative exaggeration; nevertheless, a core of truth lies hidden in his remark. It is by the Baboo’s words you know the Baboo. The true Baboo is full of words and phrases—full of inappropriate words and phrases lying about like dead men on a battlefield, in heaps to be carted away promiscuously, without reference to kith or kin. You may turn on a Baboo at any moment and be quite sure that words, and phrases, and maxims, and proverbs will come gurgling forth, without reference to the subject or to the occasion, to what has gone before or to what will come after. Perhaps it was with reference to this independence, buoyancy, and gaiety of language that Lord Lytton declared the Bengali to be “the Irishman of India.”

You know, dear Vanity, I whispered to you before that the poor Baboo often suffers from a slight aberration of speech which prevents his articulating the truth—a kind of moral lisp. Lord Lytton could not have been alluding to this; for it was only yesterday that I heard an Irishman speak the truth to Lord Lytton about some little matter—I forget what; cotton duty, I think—and Lord Lytton said, rather curtly, “Why, you have often told me this before.” So Lord Lytton must be in the habit of hearing certain truths from the Irish.

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It was either Sir Andrew Clarke, Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, or Sir Some-one-else, who understands all about these things, that first told me of the tendency to Baboo worship in England at present. I immediately took steps, when I heard of it, to capitalise my pension and purchase gold mines in the Wynaad and shares in the Simla Bank. (Colonel Peterson, of the Simla Fencibles, supported me gallantly in this latter resolution.) The notion of so dreadful a form of fetishism establishing itself in one's native land is repugnant to the feelings even of those who have been rendered callous to such things by seats in the Bengal Legislative Council. [I refuse to believe that the Zoological Society has lent its apiary to this movement. It must have been a spelling-bee your informant was thinking of.

Talking of monkey-houses reminds me of] Sir George Campbell, who took such an interest in the development of the Baboo, and the selection of the fittest for Government employment. He taught them in debating-clubs the various modes of conducting irresponsible parliamentary chatter; and he tried to encourage pedestrianism and football to evolve their legs and bring them into something like harmony with their long pendant arms. You can still see a few of Sir George's leggy Baboos coiled up in corners of lecture-rooms at Calcutta. The Calcutta Cricket Club used to employ one as permanent "leg." [The Indian Turf Club used to keep a professional "leg," but now there are so many amateurs it is not required.]

It is the future of Baboodom I tremble for. When they wax fat with new religions, music, painting, Comedie Anglaise, scientific discoveries, they may kick with those developed legs of theirs, until we shall have to think that they are something more than a joke, more than a mere *lusus naturae*, more than a caricature moulded by the accretive and differentiating impulses of the monad[C] in a moment of wanton playfulness. The fear is that their tendencies may infect others. The patent-leather shoes, the silk umbrellas, the ten thousand horse-power English words and phrases, and the loose shadows of English thought, which are now so many Aunt Sallies for all the world to fling a jeer at, might among other races pass into *dummy soldiers*, and from dummy soldiers into trampling, hope-bestirred crowds, and so on, out of the province of Ali Baba and into the columns of serious reflection. Mr. Wordsworth and his friends the Dakhani Brahmins should consider how painful it would be, when deprived of the consolations of religion, to be solemnly repressed by the *Pioneer*—to be placed under that steam-hammer which by the descent of a paragraph can equally crack the tiniest of jokes and the hardest of political nuts, can suppress unauthorised inquiry and crush disaffection.

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At present the Baboo is merely a grotesque Bracken shadow, but in the course of geological ages it might harden down into something palpable. It is this possibility that leads Sir Ashley Eden to advise the Baboo to revert to its original type; but it is not so easy to become homogeneous after you have been diluted with the physical sciences and stirred about by Positivists and missionaries. "I would I were a protoplasmic monad!" may sound very rhythmical, poetical, and all that; but even for a Baboo the aspiration is not an easy one to gratify.—ALI BABA.

No. VII

WITH THE RAJA

[September 20, 1879.]

Try not to laugh, Dear Vanity. I know you don't mean anything by it; but these Indian kings are so sensitive. The other day I was translating to a young Raja what Val Prinsep had said about him in his "Purple India"; he had only said that he was a dissipated young ass and as ugly as a baboon; but the boy was quite hurt and began to cry, and I had to send for the Political Agent to quiet him and put him to sleep. When you consider the matter philosophically there is nothing *per se* ridiculous in a Raja. Take a hypothetical case: picture to yourself a Raja who does not get drunk without some good reason, who is not ostentatiously unfaithful to his five-and-twenty queens and his five-and-twenty grand duchesses, who does not festoon his thorax and abdomen with curious cutlery and jewels, who does not paint his face with red ochre, and who sometimes takes a sidelong glance at his affairs, and there is no reason why you should not think of such a one as an Indian king. India is not very fastidious; so long as the Government is satisfied, the people of India do not much care what the Rajas are like. A peasant proprietor said to Mr. Caird and me the other day, "We are poor cultivators; we cannot afford to keep Rajas. The Rajas are for the Lord Sahib."

The young Maharaja of Kuch Parwani assures me that it is not considered the thing for a Raja at the present day to govern. "A really swell Raja amuses himself." One hoards money, another plays at soldiering, a third is horsey, a fourth is amorous, and a fifth gets drunk; at least so Kuch Parwani thinks. Please don't say that I told you this. The Foreign Secretary knows what a high opinion I have of the Rajas, and indeed he often employs me to whitewash them when they get into scrapes. "A little playful, perhaps, but no more loyal Prince in India!" This is the kind of thing I put into the Annual Administration Reports of the Agencies, and I stick to it. Playful no doubt, but a more loyal class than the Rajas there is not in India. They have built their houses of cards on the thin crust of British Rule that now covers the crater, and they are ever ready to pour a pannikin of water into a crack to quench the explosive forces rumbling below.

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The amiable chief in whose house I am staying to-day is exceedingly simple in his habits. At an early hour he issues from the zenana and joins two or three of his thakores, or barons, who are on duty at Court, in the morning draught of opium. They sit in a circle, and a servant in the centre goes round and pours the *kasumbha*[D] out of a brass bowl and through a woollen cloth into their hands, out of which they lap it up. Then a cardamum to take away the acrid after-taste. One hums drowsily two or three bars of an old-world song; another clears his throat and spits; the Chief yawns, and all snap their fingers, to prevent evil spirits skipping into his throat; a late riser joins the circle, and all, except the Chief, give him *tazim*—that is, rise and salaam; a coarse jest or two, and the party disperses. A crowd of servants swarm round the Chief as he shuffles slowly away. Three or four mace-bearers walk in front shouting, “Raja, Maharaja salaamat ho; niga rakhiyo!” (“Please take notice; to the King, the great King, let there be salutation!”) A confidential servant continually leans forward and whispers in his ear; another remains close at hand with a silver tea-pot containing water and wrapped up in a wet cloth to keep it cool; a third constantly whisks a yak’s tail over the King’s head; a fourth carries my Lord’s sword; a fifth his handkerchief; and so on. Where is he going? He dawdles up a narrow staircase, through a dark corridor, down half-a-dozen steep steps, across a courtyard overgrown with weeds, up another staircase, along another passage, and so to a range of heavy quilted red screens that conceal doors leading into the female penetralia. Here we must leave him. Two servants disappear behind the *parda* with their master, the others promptly lie down where they are, draw the sheets or blankets which they have been wearing over their faces and feet, and sleep. About noon we see the King again. He is dressed in white flowing robes with a heavy carcanet of emeralds round his neck. His red turban is tied with strings of seed pearls and set off with an aigrette springing from a diamond brooch. He sits on the Royal mattress, the *gaddi*.^[E] A big bolster covered with green velvet supports his back; his sword and shield are gracefully disposed before him. At the corner of the *gaddi* sits a little representation of himself in miniature, complete even to the sword and shield. This is his adopted son and heir. For all the queens and all the grand duchesses are childless, and a little kinsman had to be transplanted from a mud village among the cornfields to this dreamland palace to perpetuate the line. On the corners of the carpet on which the *gaddi* rests sit thakores of the Royal house, other thakores sit below, right and left, forming two parallel lines, dwindling into sardars, palace officers, and others of lower rank as they recede from the *gaddi*. Behind the Chief stand the servants with the emblems of royalty—the

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peacock feathers, the fan, the yak tail, and the umbrella (now furled). The confidential servant is still whispering into the ear of his master from time to time. This is durbar. No one speaks, unless to exchange a languid compliment with the Chief. Presently essence of roses and a compound of areca nut and lime are circulated, then a huge silver pipe is brought in, the Chief takes three long pulls, the thakores on the carpet each take a pull, and the levee breaks up amid profound salaams. After this—dinner, opium, and sleep.

In the cool of the evening our King emerges from the palace, and, riding on a prodigiously fat white horse with pink points, proceeds to the place of carousal. A long train of horsemen follow him, and footmen run before with guns in red flannel covers and silver maces, shouting “Raja Maharaja salaamat,” &c. The horsemen immediately around him are mounted on well-fed and richly-caparisoned steeds, with all the bravery of cloth-of-gold, yak-tails, silver chains, and strings of shells; behind are troopers in a burlesque of English uniform; and altogether in the rear is a mob of caitiffs on skeleton chargers, masquerading in every degree of shabbiness and rags, down to nakedness and a sword. The cavalcade passes through the city. The inhabitants pour out of every door and bend to the ground. Red cloths and white veils flutter at the casements overhead. You would hardly think that the spectacle was one daily enjoyed by the city. There is all the hurrying and eagerness of novelty and curiosity. Here and there a little shy crowd of women gather at a door and salute the Chief with a loud shrill verse of discordant song. It is some national song of the Chiefs ancestors and of the old heroic days. The place of carousal is a bare spot near a large and ancient well out of which grows a vast pipal tree. Hard by is a little temple surmounted by a red flag on a drooping bamboo. It is here that the *Gangor*[F] and *Dassahra*[F] solemnities are celebrated. Arrived on the ground, the Raja slowly circles his horse; then, jerking the thorn-bit, causes him to advance plunging and rearing, but dropping first on the near foot and then on the off foot with admirable precision; and finally, making the white monster, now in a lather of sweat, rise up and walk a few steps on his hind legs, the Raja’s performance concludes amid many shouts of wonder and delight from the smooth-tongued courtiers. The thakores and sardars now exhibit their skill in the *manege* until the shades of night fall, when torches are brought, amid much salaaming, and the cavalcade defiles, through the city, back to the palace. Lights are twinkling from the higher casements and reflected on the lake below; the *gola*[G] slave-girls are singing plaintive songs, drum and conch answer from the open courtyards. The palace is awake. The Raja, we will romantically presume, bounds lightly from his horse and dances gaily to the harem to fling himself voluptuously into the luxurious arms of one of the five-and-twenty queens, or one of the five-and-twenty grand duchesses; and they stand for one delirious moment wreathed in each other’s embraces—

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While soft there breathes
Through the cool casement, mingled with the sighs
Of moonlight flowers, music that seems to rise
From some still lake, so liquidly it rose,
And, as it swell'd again at each faint close,
The ear could track through all that maze of chords
And young sweet voices these impassioned words—

“Ho, you there! fetch us a pint of gin! and look sharp, will you!”

For who, in time, knows whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gain of our best glory shall be sent,
To enrich unknowing nations with our stores!
What worlds in the yet unformed Orient
May come refined with accents that are ours!

But, dear Vanity, I can see that you are impatient of scenes whose luxuries steal, spite of yourself, too deep into your soul; besides, I dread the effect of such warm situations on a certain Zuleika to whom the note of Ali Baba is like the thrice-distilled strains of the bulbul on Bendemeer's stream. So let us electrify ourselves back to prose and propriety by thinking of the Political Agent; let us plunge into the cold waters of dreary reality by conjuring up a figure in tail-coat and gold buttons dispensing justice while H.H. the romantic and picturesque Raja, G.C.S.I., amuses himself. Yet we hear cries from the gallery of “Vive M. le Raja; vive la bagatelle!”

So say we, in faint echoes, defying the anathemas of the Foreign Office. Do not turn this beautiful temple of ancient days into a mere mill for decrees and budgets; but sweep it and purify it, and render it a fitting shrine for the homage and tribute of antique loyalty—“that proud submission, that subordination of the heart which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom.” With tail-coat and cocked-hat government “the unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise is gone.”—ALI BABA.

No. VIII

WITH THE POLITICAL AGENT

A MAN IN BUCKRAM

[Illustration: THE POLITICAL AGENT—“A man in buckram.”]

[September 27, 1879.]



This is a most curious product of the Indian bureaucracy. Nothing in all White Baboodom is so wonderful as the Political Agent. A near relation of the Empress who was travelling a good deal about India some three or four years ago said that he would rather get a Political Agent, with raja, chuprassies,[H] and everything complete, to take home, than the unfigured "mum" of Beluchistan, or the sea-aye-ee mocking bird, *Kokiolliensis Lyttonia*. But the Political Agent cannot be taken home. The purple bloom fades in the scornful climate of England; the paralytic swagger passes into sheer imbecility; the thirteen-gun tall talk reverberates in jeering echoes; the chuprassies are only so many black men, and the raja is felt to be a joke. The Political Agent cannot live beyond Aden.

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The Government of India keeps its Political Agents scattered over the native states in small jungle stations. It furnishes them with maharajas, nawabs, rajas, and chuprassies, according to their rank, and it usually throws in a house, a gaol, a doctor, a volume of Aitchison's Treaties, an escort of native Cavalry, a Star of India, an assistant, the powers of a first-class magistrate, a flag-staff, six camels, three tents, and a salute of eleven or thirteen guns. In very many cases the Government of India nominates a Political Agent to the rank of Son-to-a-Lieut.-Governor, Son-in-Law-to-a-Lieut.-Governor, Son-to-a-member-of-Council, or Son-to-an-agent-to-the-Governor-General. Those who are thus elevated to the Anglo-Indian peerage need have no thought for the morrow what they shall do, what they shall say, or wherewithal they shall be supplied with a knowledge of Oriental language and occidental law. Nature clothes them with increasing quantities of gold lace and starry ornaments, and that charming, if unblushing, female—Lord Lytton begs me to write “maid”—Miss Anglo-Indian Promotion, goes skipping about among them like a joyful kangaroo.

The Politicals are a Greek chorus in our popular burlesque, “Empire.” The Foreign Secretary is the prompter. The company is composed of nawabs and rajas (with the Duke of Buckingham as a “super”). Lord Meredith is the scene-shifter; Sir John, the manager. The Secretary of State, with his council, is in the stage-box; the House of Commons in the stalls; the London Press in the gallery; the East Indian Association, Exeter Hall, Professor Fawcett, Mr. Hyndman, and the criminal classes generally, in the pit; while those naughty little Scotch boys, the shock-headed Duke and Monty Duff, who once tried to turn down the lights, pervade the house with a policeman on their horizon. As we enter the theatre a dozen chiefs are dancing in the ballet to express their joy at the termination of the Afghan War. The political *choreutae* are clapping their hands, encouraging them by name and pointing them out to the gallery.

The government of a native state by clerks and chuprassies, with a beautiful *faineant* Political Agent for Sundays and Hindu festivals, is, I am told, a thing of the past. Colonel Henderson, the imperial “Peeler,” tells me so, and he ought to know, for he is a kind of demi-official superintendent of Thugs and Agents. Nowadays, my informant assures me, the Political Agents undergo a regular training in a Madras Cavalry Regiment or in the Central India Horse, or on the Viceroy's Staff, and if they have to take charge of a Mahratta State they are obliged to pass an examination in classical Persian poetry. This is as it ought to be. The intricacies of Oriental intrigue and the manifold complication of tenure and revenue that entangle administrative procedure in the protected principalities, will unravel themselves in presence of men who have enjoyed such advantages.

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When I first came out to this country I was placed in charge of three degrees of latitude and eight of longitude in Rajputana that I might learn the language. The soil was sandy, the tenure feudal (*zabardast*, [I] as we call it in India), and the Raja a lunatic by nature and a dipsomaniac by education. He had been educated by his grandmamma and the hereditary Minister. I found that his grandmamma and the hereditary Minister were most anxious to relieve me of the most embarrassing details of government, so I handed them a copy of the Ten Commandments, underlining two that I thought might be useful, and put them in charge. They were old-fashioned in their methods—like Sir Billy Jones; but the result was admirable. In two years the revenue was reduced from ten to two lakhs of rupees, and the expenditure proportionately increased. A bridge, a summer-house, and a school were built; and I wrote the longest “Administration Report” that has ever issued from the Zulmabad Residency. When I left money was so cheap and lightly regarded that I sold my old buggy horse for two thousand rupees to grandmamma, with many mutual expressions of good-will—through a curtain—and I have not been paid to this day. But since then the horse-market has been ruined in the native states by these imperial *melas* [J] and durbars. A poor Political has no chance against these Government of India people, who come down with strings of three-legged horses, and—no, I won’t say they sell them to the chiefs—I should be having a commission of my *khidmatgars* [K] sitting upon me, like poor Har Sahai, who was beaten by Mr. Saunders, and Malhar Rao Gaikwar, who fancied his Resident was going to poison him.

I like to see a Political up at Simla wooing that hoyden Promotion in her own sequestered bower. It is good to see Hercules toiling at the feet of Omphale. It is good to see Pistol fed upon leeks by Under-Secretaries and women. How simple he is! How boyish he can be, and yet how intense! He will play leap frog at Annandale; he will paddle about in the stream below the water-falls without shoes and stockings; but if you allude in the most distant way to rajas or durbars, he lets down his face a couple of holes and talks like a weather prophet. He will be so interesting that you can hardly bear it; so interesting that you will feel sorry he is not talking to the Governor-General up at Peterhoff.

[But I feel that an Agent to the Governor-General is looking over my shoulder, so perhaps I had better stop; though I know two or three things about Politicals.]—SIR ALI BABA, K.C.B. [L]

No. IX

WITH THE COLLECTOR

[October 4, 1879.]

Was it not the Bishop of Bombay who said that man was an automaton plus the mirror of consciousness? The Government of every Indian province is an automaton plus the mirror of consciousness. The Secretariat is consciousness, and the Collectors form the automaton. The Collector works, and the Secretariat observes and registers.

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To the people of India the Collector is the Imperial Government. He watches over their welfare in the many facets which reflect our civilisation. He establishes schools and dispensaries [for their children], gaols [for their troublesome relations and neighbours], and courts of justice [for the benefit of their brothers who can talk and write]. He levies the rent of their fields, he fixes the tariff, and he nominates to every appointment, from that of road-sweeper or constable, to the great blood-sucking officers round the Court and Treasury. As for Boards of Revenue and Lieutenant-Governors who occasionally come sweeping across the country, with their locust hosts of servants and petty officials, they are but an occasional nightmare; while the Governor-General is a mere shadow in the background of thought, half blended with “John Company Bahadur” and other myths of the dawn.

The Collector lives in a long rambling bungalow furnished with folding chairs and tables, and in every way marked by the provisional arrangements of camp life. He seems to have just arrived from out of the firmament of green fields and mango groves that encircles the little station where he lives; or he seems just about to pass away into it again. The shooting-howdahs are lying in the verandah, the elephant of a neighbouring landowner is swinging his hind foot to and fro under a tree, or switching up straw and leaves on to his back, a dozen camels are lying down in a circle making bubbling noises, and tents are pitched here and there to dry, like so many white wings on which the whole establishment is about to rise and fly away—fly away into “the district,” which is the correct expression for the vast expanse of level plain melting into blue sky on the wide horizon-circle around.

The Collector is a bustling man. He is always in a hurry. His multitudinous duties succeed one another so fast that one is never ended before the next begins. A mysterious thing called “the Joint” comes gleaming after him, I believe, and completes the inchoate work.

The verandah is full of fat black men in clean linen waiting for interviews. They are bankers, shopkeepers, and landholders, who have only come to “pay their respects,” with ever so little a petition as a corollary. The chuprassie-vultures hover about them. Each of these obscene fowls has received a gratification from each of the clean fat men; else the clean fat men would not be in the verandah. This import tax is a wholesome restraint upon the excessive visiting tendencies of wealthy men of colour. [Several little groups of] brass dishes filled with pistachio nuts and candied sugar are ostentatiously displayed here and there; they are the oblations of the would-be visitors. The English call these offerings “dollies”; the natives *dali*. They represent in the profuse East the visiting cards of the meagre West.

Although from our lofty point of observation, among the pine-trees, the Collector seems to be of the smallest social calibre, a mere carronade, not to be distinguished by any proper name; in his own district he is a Woolwich Infant; and a little community of

microscopicals,—doctors, engineers, inspectors of schools, and assistant magistrates, look up to him as to a magnate.

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They tell little stories of his weaknesses and eccentricities, and his wife is considered a person entitled “to give herself airs” (within the district) if she feels so disposed; while to their high dinners is allowed the use of champagne and “Europe” talk on aesthetic subjects. The Collector is not, however, permitted to wear a chimney-pot hat and gloves on Sunday (unless he has been in the Provincial Secretariat as a boy); a Terai hat is sufficient for a Collector.

A Collector is usually a sportsman; when he is a poet, a co-respondent, or a neologist it is thought rather a pity; and he is spoken of in undertones. Neology is considered especially reprehensible. The junior member of the Board of Revenue, or even the Commissioner of a division (if he be *pukka*)[M], may question the literal inspiration of Genesis; but it is not good form for a Collector to tamper with his Bible. A Collector should have no leisure for opinions of any sort.

I have said that a Collector is usually a sportsman. In this capacity he is frequently made use of by the Viceroy and long-shore Governors, as he is an adept at showing sport to globe-trotters. The villagers who live on the borders of the jungle will generally turn out and beat for the Collector, and the petty chief who owns the jungle always keeps a tiger or two for district officers. A Political Agent’s tiger is known to be a domestic animal suitable for delicate noble Lords travelling for health; but a Collector’s tiger is often [believed to be almost] a wild beast, although usually reared upon buffalo calves and accustomed to be driven. [Of course the tiger which the Collector and his friends shoot is quite an inferior article; a fierce, roaming creature that lives upon spotted deer when it can get them, but is often quite savage from hunger.] The Collector, who is always the most unselfish and hospitable of men, only kills the fatted tiger for persons of distinction with letters of introduction. Any common jungle tiger, even a man-eater, is good enough for himself and his friends.

The Collector never ventures to approach Simla, when on leave. At Simla people would stare and raise their eye-brows if they heard that a Collector was on the hill. They would ask what sort of a thing a Collector was. The Press Commissioner would be sent to interview it. The children at Peterhoff would send for it to play with. So the clodhopping Collector goes to Naini Tal or Darjiling, where he is known either as Ellenborough Higgins, or Higgins of Gharibpur in territorial fashion. Here he is understood. Here he can bubble of his *Bandobast*,[N] his *Balbacha*[O] and his *Bawarchikhana*:[P] and here he can speak in familiar accents of his neighbours, Dalhousie Smith and Cornwallis Jones. All day long he strides up and down the club verandah with his old Haileybury chum Teignmouth Tompkins; and they compare experiences of the hunting-field and office, and denounce in unmeasured terms of Oriental vituperation the new sort of civilian who moves about with the Penal Code under his arm and measures his authority by statute, clause, and section.

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In England the Collector is to be found riding at anchor in the Bandicoot Club. He makes two or three hurried cruises to his native village, where he finds himself half forgotten. This sours him. The climate seems worse than of old, the means of locomotion at his disposal are inconvenient and expensive; he yearns for the sunshine and elephants of Gharibpur, and returns an older and a quieter man. The afternoon of life is throwing longer shadows, the Acheron of promotion is gaping before him; he falls into a Commissionership; still deeper into an officiating seat on the Board of Revenue. *Facilis est descensus, etc.* Nothing will save him now; transmigration has set in; the gates of Simla fly open; it is all over. Let us pray that his halo may fit him.—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. X

BABY IN PARTIBUS

[October 11, 1879.]

The Empire has done less for Anglo-Indian Babies than for any class of the great exile community. Legislation provides them with neither rattle nor coral, privilege leave nor pension. Papa has a Raja and Star of India to play with; Mamma the Warrant of Precedence and the Hill Captains; but Baby has nothing—not even a missionary; Baby is without the amusement of the meanest cannibal.

Baby is debarred from the society of his compatriots. His father is cramped and frozen with the chill cares of office; his mother is deadened by the gloomy routine of economy and fashion; custom lies upon her with a weight heavy as frost and deep almost as life; the fountains of natural fancy and mirth are frozen over; so Baby lisps his dawn paeans in soft Oriental accents, wakening harmonious echoes amongst those impulsive and impressionable children of Nature that masque themselves in the black slough of Bearers and Ayahs; and Baby blubbers in Hindustani.

These Ayah and Bearer people sit with Baby in the verandah on a little carpet; broken toys and withered flowers lie around. They croon to Baby some old-world *katabaukalesis*, while beauty, born of murmuring sound, passes into Baby's eyes. The squirrel sits chirruping familiarly on the edge of the verandah with his tail in the air and some uncracked pericarp in his uplifted hands, the kite circles aloft and whistles a shrill and mournful note, the sparrows chatter, the crow clears his throat, the minas scream discordantly, and Baby's soft, receptive nature thus absorbs an Indian language. Very soon Baby will think from right to left, and will lisp in the luxuriant bloom of Oriental hyperbole. [Presently, when Baby grows a little older, Baby will say to the Bearer, through his sweet little nose, "Arreh! Ulu ka bacha, tu kya karta hai?" Which being interpreted, is, "Ah! Child of night's sweet bird, what dost thou now?" Afterwards Baby will learn to say many other things which it is not good to repeat here.]

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In the evening Baby will go out for an airing with the Bearer and Ayah people, and while they dawdle along the dusty road, or sit on kerb-stones and on culvert parapets, he will listen to the extensile tale of their simple sorrows. He will hear, with a sigh, that the profits of petty larceny are declining; he will be taught to regret the increasing infirmities of his Papa's temper; and portraits in sepia of his Mamma will be observed by him to excite laughter mingled with dark impulsive words. Thus there will pass into Baby's eyes glances of suspicious questionings, "the blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised."

In the long summer days Baby will patter listlessly about the darkened rooms accompanied by his suite, who will carry a feeding bottle—Maw's Patent Feeding Bottle—just as the Sergeant-at-Arms carries the mace; and, from time to time, little Mister Speaker will squat down on his dear little hams and take a refreshing pull or two. At breakfast and luncheon time little Mister Speaker will straggle into the dining-room, and fond parents will give him a tidbit of many soft dainties, to be washed down with brandy and water, beer, sherry, or other alcoholic draught. On such broken meals Baby is raised.

The little drawn face, etiolated and weary-looking, recommends sleep; but Baby is a bad sleeper. The Bearer-in-waiting carries about a small pillow all day long, and from time to time Baby is applied to it. He frets and cries, and they brood over him humming some old Indian song, ["Keli Blai," or "Hillu Milli Pania"]. Still he turns restlessly and whimpers, though they pat him and shampoo him, and call him fond names and tell him soothing stories of bulbuls and flowers and woolly sheep. But Baby does not sleep, and even Indian patience is exhausted. Both Ayah and Bearer would like to slip away to their mud houses at the other end of the compound and have a pull at the fragrant *huqqa* and a gossip with the *saices*;[Q] but while *Sunny Baba* is at large, and might at any moment make a raid on Mamma, who is dozing over a novel on a spider-chair near the mouth of the thermantidote, the Ayah and Bearer dare not leave their charge. So *Sunny Baba* must sleep, and the Bearer has in the folds of his waist-cloth a little black fragment of the awful sleep-compeller, and Baby is drugged into a deep uneasy sleep of delirious, racking dreams.

Day by day Baby grows paler, day by day thinner, day by day a stranger light burns in his bonny eyes. Weird thoughts sweep through Baby's brain, weird questions startle Mamma out of the golden languors in which she is steeped, weird words frighten the gentle Ayah as she fondles her darling. The current of babble and laughter has almost ceased to flow. Baby lies silent in the Ayah's lap staring at the ceiling. He clasps a broken toy with wasted fingers. His Bearer comes with some old watchword of fun; Baby smiles faintly, but makes no response. The old man takes him tenderly in his arms and carries him to the verandah; Baby's head falls heavily on his shoulder.

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The outer world lies dimly round Baby; within, strange shadows are flitting by. The wee body is pressing heavily upon the spirit; Baby is becoming conscious of the burthen. He will be quiet for hours on his little cot; he does not sleep, but he dreams. Earth's joys and lights are fast fading out of those resilient eyes; Baby's spirit is waiting on the shores of eternity, and already hears "the mighty waters rolling evermore."

The broken toys are swept away into a corner, a silence and fear has fallen upon the household, black servants weep, their mistress seeks refuge in headache and smelling salts, the hard father feels a strange, an irrepressible welling up of little memories. He loves the golden haired boy; he hardly knew it before. If he could only hear once more the merry laugh, the chatter and the shouting! But he cannot hear it any more; he will never hear his child's voice again. Baby has passed into the far-away Thought-World. Baby is now only a dream and a memory, only the recollection of a music that is heard no more. Baby has crossed that cloudy, storm-driven bourn of speculation and fear whither we are all tending.

A few white bones upon a lonely sand,
A rotting corpse beneath the meadow grass,
That cannot hear the footsteps as they pass,
Memorial urns pressed by some foolish hand
Have been for all the goal of troublous fears,
Ah! breaking hearts and faint eyes dim with tears,
And momentary hope by breezes framed
To flame that ever fading falls again,
And leaves but blacker night and deeper pain,
Have been the mould of life in every land.

Baby is planted out for evermore in the dank and weedy little cemetery that lies on the outskirts of the station where he lived and died. Those golden curls, those soft and rounded limbs, and that laughing mouth, are given up to darkness and the eternal hunger of corruption. Through sunshine and rain, through the long days of summer, through the long nights of winter, for ever, for ever, Baby lies silent and dreamless under that waving grass. The bee will hum overhead for evermore, and the swallow glance among the cypress. The butterfly will flutter for ages and ages among the rank flowers—Baby will still lie there. Come away, come away; your cheeks are pale; it cannot be, we cannot believe it, we must not remember it; other Baby voices will kindle our life and love, Baby's toys will pass to other Baby hands. All will change; we will change.

Yet, darling, but come back to me;
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XI

THE RED CHUPRASSIE

OR, THE CORRUPT LICTOR[R]

[October 18, 1879.]

The red chuprassie is our Colorado beetle, our potato disease, our Home ruler, our cupboard skeleton, the little rift in our lute. The red-coated chuprassie is a cancer in our Administration. To be rid of it there is hardly any surgical operation we would not cheerfully undergo. You might extract the Bishop of Bombay, amputate the Governor of Madras, put a seton in the pay and allowances of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, and we should smile.

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The red chuprassie is ubiquitous; he is in the verandah of every official's house in India, from the Governor-General downwards; he is in the portico of every Court of Justice, every Treasury, every Public Office, every Government School, every Government Dispensary in the country. He walks behind the Collector; he follows the conservancy carts; he prowls about the candidate for employment; he hovers over the accused and accuser; he haunts the Raja; he infests the tax-payer.

He wears the Imperial livery; he is to the entire population of India the exponent of British Rule; he is the mother-in-law of liars, the high-priest of extortioners, and the receiver-general of bribes.

Through this refracting medium the people of India see their rulers. The chuprassie paints his master in colours drawn from his own black heart. Every lie he tells, every insinuation he throws out, every demand he makes, is endorsed with his master's name. He is the arch-slanderer of our name in India.

[He is not an individual—he is a member of a widely ramified society.] There is no city in India, no mofussil-station, no little settlement of officials far up country, in which the chuprassie does not find sworn brothers and confederates. The cutcherry clerks and the police are with him everywhere; higher native officials are often on his side.

He sits at the receipt of custom in the Collector's verandah, and no native visitor dare approach who has not conciliated him with money. The candidate for employment, educated in our schools, and pregnant with words about purity, equality, justice, political economy, and all the rest of it, addresses him with joined hands as "Maharaj," and slips silver into his itching palm. The successful place-hunter pays him a feudal relief on receiving office or promotion, and benevolences flow in from all who have anything to hope or fear from those in power.

[Illustration: THE RED CHUPRASSIE—"The corrupt lictor."]

In the Native States the chuprassie flourishes rampantly. He receives a regular salary through their representatives or vakils at the agencies, from all the native chiefs round about, and on all occasions of visits or return visits, durbars, religious festivals, or public ceremonials, he claims and receives preposterous fees. The Rajas, whose dignity is always exceedingly delicate, stand in great fear of the chuprassies. They believe that on public occasions the chuprassies have sometimes the power of sicklying them o'er with the pale cast of neglect.

English officers who have become de-Europeanised from long residence among undomesticated natives, or by the habitual performance of petty ceremonial duties of an Oriental hue, employ chuprassies to aggrandise their importance. They always figure on a background of red chuprassies. Such officials are what Lord Lytton calls White Baboos.



[Mr. Whitley Stokes, in his own artless way, once proposed legislating against chuprassies, I am told. His plan was to include them among the criminal classes, and hand them over to Major Henderson, the Director-General of Thuggee and Dacoity; but this functionary, viewing the matter in a different light, made some demi-official representation to the Legal Member under the pseudonym of "Walker," and the subject dropped.]

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A great Maharaja once told me that it was the tyranny of the Government chuprassies that made him take to drink. He spoke of them as “the Pindarries of modern India.” He had a theory that the small pay we gave them accounted for their evil courses. A chuprassie gets about eight pounds sterling a year. He added that if we saw a chuprassie on seven rupees a month living overtly at the rate of a thousand, we ought immediately to appoint him an *attache* or put him in gaol.

I make a simple rule in my own establishment of dismissing a chuprassie as soon as he begins to wax fat. A native cannot become rich without waxing fat, because wealth is primarily enjoyed by the mild Gentoo as a means of procuring greasy food in large quantities. His secondary enjoyment is to sit upon it. He digs a hole in the ground for his rupees, and broods over them, like a great obscene fowl. If you see a native sitting very hard on the same place day after day, you will find it worth your while to dig him up. Shares in this are better than the Madras gold mines.

In early Company days, when the Empire was a baby, the European writers[S] regarded with a kindly eye those profuse Orientals who went about bearing gifts; but Lord Clive closed this branch of the business, and it has been taken up by our scarlet runners or verandah parasites, in our name. Now, dear Vanity, you may call me a Russophile, or by any other marine term of endearment you like, if I don’t think the old plan was the better of the two. We ourselves could conduct corruption decently; but to be responsible for corruption over which we exercise no control is to lose the credit of a good name and the profits of a bad one.

[Old qui-hyes tell you that there are three things you cannot separate from an “Indian”—venality, perjury, and rupees. Now I totally disagree with the old qui-hyes. In secret I am a great admirer of the Indian, and publicly I always treat him with respect. I have such a regard for him that I never expose him to temptation. I pay him well, I explain to him my eccentric opinions about receiving bribes, and I remind him of the moral and electrifying properties of the different species of cane which Nature has so thoughtfully provided nearly everywhere in India. The consequence is that my chuprassies do not soil their hands with spurious gratifications, and figuratively describe me as their father and mother.]

I hear that the Government of India proposes to form a mixed committee of Rajas and chuprassies to discuss the question as to whether native chiefs ever give bribes and native servants ever take them. It is expected that a report favourable to Indian morality will be the result. Of course Raja Joe Hookham will preside.—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XII

THE PLANTER

A FARMER PRINCE

[Illustration: THE PLANTER—"A farmer prince."]

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[October 25, 1879]

The Planter lives to-day as we all lived fifty years ago. He lives in state and bounty, like the Lord of Burleigh. He lives like that fine old English gentleman who had an old estate, and who kept up his old mansion at a bountiful old rate. He lives in a grand wholesale manner; he lives in round numbers; he lives like a hero. Everything is Homeric about him. He establishes himself firmly in the land with great joy and plenty; and he gathers round him all that makes life full-toned and harmonious, from the grand timbre of draught-ale and the organ-thunder of hunting, to the piccolo and tintinnabulum of Poker and maraschino. His life is a fresco-painting, on which some Cyclopaean Raphaelite has poured his rainbows from a fire-engine of a hundred elephant-power.

We paltry officials live meanly in pen-and-ink sketches. Our little life is bounded by a dream of promotion and pension. We toil, we slave; we put by money, we pinch ourselves. We are hardly fit to live in this beautiful world, with its laughing girls and grapes, its summer seas, its sunshine and flowers, its Garnet Wolseleys and bulbuls. We go moping through its glories in green spectacles, befouling it with our loathsome statistics and reports. The sweet air of heaven, the blue firmament, and the everlasting hills do not satisfy our poisoned hearts; so we make to ourselves a little tin-pot world of blotted-paper, debased rupees, graded lists, and tinsel honours; we try to feed our lungs on its typhoidal effluvia. Aroint[T] thee, Comptroller and Accountant-General with all thy grisly crew! Thou art worse than the blind Fury with the abhorred shears; for thou slittest my thin-spun pay-wearing spectacles, thrice branded varlet! [There is a lily on my brow with anguish moist and fever-dew, and on my cheeks a fading rose fast withereth too, and for these emblems of woe thou shalt have to give an answer.]

Dear Vanity, of course you understand that I do not allude to the amiable old gentleman who controls our Accounts Department, who is the mirror of tenderness. The person I would impale is a creation of my own wrath, a mere official type struck in frenzied fancy, [at a moment when Time seems a maniac scattering dust, and Life a Fury slinging flame].

Let us soothe ourselves by contemplating the Planter and his generous, simple life. It calms one to look at him. He is something placid, strong, and easeful. Without wishing to appear obsequious, I always feel disposed to borrow money when I meet a substantial Planter. He inspires confidence. I grasp his strong hand; I take him (figuratively) to my heart, while the desire to bank with him wells up mysteriously in my bosom.

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He lives in a grand old bungalow, surrounded by ancient trees. Large rooms open into one another on every side in long vistas; a broad and hospitable-looking verandah girds all. Everywhere trophies of the chase meet the eye. We walk upon cool matting; we recline upon long-armed chairs; low and heavy punkahs swing overhead; a sweet breathing of wet *khaskhas* grass comes sobbing out of the thermantidote; and a gigantic but gentle *khidmatgar* is always at our elbow with long glasses on a silver tray. This man's name is Nubby Bux, but he means nothing by it, and a child might play with him. I often say to him in a caressing tone, "*Peg lao*";[U] and he is grateful for any little attention of this sort.

It is near noon. My friend Mr. Great-Heart, familiarly known as "Jamie Macdonald," has been taking me over the factory and stables. We have been out since early morning on the jumpiest and beaniest of Waler mares. I am not killed, but a good deal shaken. The glass trembles in my hand. I have an absorbing thirst, and I drink copiously, almost passionately. My out-stretched legs are reposing on the arms of my chair and I stiffen into an attitude of rest. I hear my host splashing and singing in his tub.

Breakfast is a meal conceived in a large and liberal spirit. We pass from dish to dish through all the compass of a banquet, the diapason closing full in beer. Several joyful assistants, whose appetites would take first-class honours at any university or cattle show, join the hunt and are well in at the beer. What tales are told! I feel glad that Miss Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Mary Somerville, and Dr. Watts are not present. I keep looking round to see that no bishop comes into the room. It is a comfort to me to think that Bishop Heber is dead. I gave up blushing five years ago when I entered the Secretariat; but if at this moment Sir William Jones were to enter, or Mr. Whitley Stokes with his child-like heart and his Cymric vocabulary, I believe I should be strangely affected.

The day welters on through drink and billiards. In the afternoon more joyful Planters drop in, and we play a rubber. From whist to the polo ground, where I see the merry men of Tirhoot play the best and fastest game that the world can show. At night carousals and potations pottle deep. Next morning sees the entire party in the *khadar*[V] of the river, mounted on Arabs, armed with spears, hunting Jamie Macdonald's Caledonian boar. These Scotchmen never forget their nationality.

And while these joyful Planters are thus rejoicing, the indigo is growing silently all round. While they play, Nature works for them. So does the patient black man; he smokes his *huqqa* and keeps an eye on the rising crop.

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You will have learnt from Mr. Caird that indigo grows in cakes (the ale is imported); to his description of the process of manufacture I can only add that the juice is generally expressed in the vernacular. You give a cake of the raw material to a coloured servant, you stand over him to see that he doesn't eat it, and your assistant canes him slowly as he squeezes the juice into a blue bottle. Blue pills are made of the refuse; your female servants use aniline dyes; and there you are. If any one dies in any other way you can refuse him the rites of cremation; fine him four annas; and warn him not to do it again. This is a burning question in Tirhoot and occasions much litigation.

Jamie Macdonald has now a contract for dyeing the Blue ribbons of the Turf; Tommy Begg has taken the blue boars and the Oxford Blues; and Bobby Thomas does the blue-books and the True Blues. It may not be generally known that the aristocracy do not employ aniline dyes for their blue blood. The minor Planters do business chiefly in blue stockings, blue bonnets, blue bottles, blue beards, and blue coats. For more information of this kind I can only refer you to Mr. Caird and the *Nineteenth Century*.

Some Planters grow tea, coffee, lac, mother-of-pearl, pickles, poppadums and curry powder—but now I am becoming encyclopaedic and scientific, and trespassing on ground already taken up by the Famine Commission.

Fewer Planters are killed now by wild camels who roam over the mango fields, but a good deal of damage is still done to the prickly pear-trees. Mr. Cunningham has written an interesting note on this. Rewards have still to be offered for dead tigers and persons who have died of starvation. "When the Government will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian."—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XIII

THE EURASIAN

A STUDY IN CHIARO-OSCURO

[Illustration: THE EURASIAN—"A study in chiaro oscuro."]

[November 1, 1879.]

The Anglo-Indian has a very fine eye for colour. He will mark down "one anna in the rupee" with unerring certainty; he will suspect smaller coin. He will tell you how he can detect an adulterated European by his knuckles, his nails, his eyebrows, his pronunciation of the vowels, and his conception of propriety in dress, manner, and conduct.



To the thorough-bred Anglo-Indian, whose blood has distilled through Haileybury for three generations, and whose cousins to the fourth degree are Collectors and Indian Army Colonels, the Eurasian, however fair he may be, is a *bete noir*. Mrs. Ellenborough Higgins is always setting or pointing at black blood.

And sometimes the whitey-brown man is objectionable. He is vain, apt to take offence, sly, indolent, sensuous, and, like Reuben, “unstable as water.” He has a facile smile, a clammy hand, a manner either forward or obsequious, a mincing gait, and not always the snowiest linen. [In very dangerous cases he has a peculiar smell.]

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Towards natives the Eurasian is cold, haughty, and formal; and this attitude is repaid, with interest, in scorn and hatred. There is no concealing the fact that to the mild Gentoo the Eurasian is a very distasteful object.

But having said this, the case for the prosecution closes, and we may turn to the many soft and gentle graces which the Eurasian develops.

In all the relations of family life the Eurasian is admirable. He is a dutiful son, a circumspect husband, and an affectionate father. He seldom runs through a fortune; he hardly ever elopes with a young lady of fashion; he is not in the habit of cutting off his son with a shilling; and he is an infrequent worshipper in that Temple of Separation where *Decrees Nisi* sever the Gordian knots of Hymen.

As a citizen he is zealously loyal. He will speak at municipal meetings, write letters about drainage and conservancy to the papers, observe local holidays in his best clothes, and attend funerals.

The Eurasian is a methodical and trustworthy clerk, and often occupies a position of great trust and responsibility in our public offices. He is not bold or original, like Sir Andrew Clarke; or amusing, like Mr. Stokes; but he does what work is given him to do without overstepping the modesty of nature.

[Most Eurasians are Catholics; but some belong to the small Protestant heresies and call themselves Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and what not. To whatever creed they attach themselves, they are faithful and devoted; but the pageantry, the music, the antiquity, and the mystery of the ancient Church, draw forth, with the most potent spells, the fervour of their warm, emotional natures. They are never sceptical: the harder a doctrine is to believe the more they like it; the more improbable a tradition is the more tenaciously they cling to it. They are attracted by the supernatural and the horrible; they would not bate a single saint or devil of the complete faith to rescue all the truths of modern science from the ban of the Church.]

The Eurasian girl is often pretty and graceful; and, if the solution of India in her veins be weak, there is an unconventionality and *naïvete* sometimes which undoubtedly has a charm; and which, my dear friend, J.H——, of the 110th Clodhoppers (Lord Cardwell's Own Clodhoppers) never could resist: "What though upon her lips there hung the accents of the tchi-tchi tongue."

A good many Eurasians who are not clerks in public offices, or telegraph signallers, or merchants, are loafers. They are passed on wherever they are found, to the next station, and thus they are kept in healthy circulation throughout India. They are all in search of employment on the railway; but as a provisional arrangement, to meet the more immediate and pressing exigencies of life, they will accept a small gratuity, [or engage themselves in snapping up unconsidered trifles]. They are mainly supported by

municipalities, who keep them in brandy, rice, and railway-tickets out of funds raised for this purpose. Workhouses and Malacca canes have still to be tried.

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Bishop Gell's plan for colonising the Laccadives and Cocos with these loafers has not met with much acceptance at Simla. The Home Secretary does not see from what Imperial fund they can be supplied with bathing-drawers and barrel-organs; but the Home Secretary ought to know that there is a philanthropic society at Lucknow of the disinterested, romantic, Turnerelli type, ready to furnish all the wants of a young colony, from underclothing to Eno's fruit salt.

A great many wise proposals emanate from Simla as regards some artificial future for the Eurasian. One Ten-thousand-pounder asks Creation in a petulant tone of surprise why Creation does not make the Eurasian a carpenter; another looks round the windy hills and wonders why somebody does not make the Eurasian a high farmer. The shovel hats are surprised that the Eurasian does not become a missionary, or a schoolmaster, or a policeman, or something of that sort. The native papers say, "Deport him"; the white prints say, "Make him a soldier"; and the Eurasian himself says, "Make me a Commissioner, or give me a pension." In the meantime, while nothing is being done, we can rail at the Eurasian for not being as we are.

"Let us sit on the thrones
In a purple sublimity,
And grind down men's bones
To a pale unanimity."

There is no proper classification of the mixed race in India as there is in America. The convenient term *quadroon*, for instance, instead of "four annas in the rupee," is quite unknown; the consequence is that every one—from Anna Maria de Souza, the "Portuguese" cook, a nobleman on whose cheek the best shoe-blackening would leave a white mark, to pretty Miss Fitzalan Courtney, of the Bombay Fencibles, who is as white as an Italian princess—is called an "Eurasian."

"Do you know, dear Vanity, that it is not impossible that King Asoka (of the Edict Pillars), the 'Constantine of Buddhism,' was an Eurasian? I have not got the works of Arrian, or Mr. Lethbridge's 'History of the World' at hand, but I have some recollection of Sandracottus, or one of Asoka's fathers or grandfathers, marrying a Miss Megasthenes, or Seleucus. With such memories no wonder they call us 'Mean Whites.'"—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XIV

THE VILLAGER

"Venio nunc ad voluptates agricolarum, quibus ego" (like the Famine Commissioners) "incredibiliter delector."

[November 8, 1879.]

I missed two people at the Delhi Assemblage of 1877. All the gram-fed secretaries and most of the alcoholic chiefs were there; but the famine-haunted villager and the delirium-shattered, opium-eating Chinaman, who had to pay the bill, were not present.

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I cannot understand why Viceroy and English newspapers call the Indian cultivator a “riot.” He never amounts to a riot if you treat him properly. He may be a disorderly crowd sometimes; but that is only when you embody him in a police force or convert him into cavalry. The atomic disembodied villager has no notion of rioting, *ca-ira* singing, or any of the tomfooleries of revolution. These pastimes are for men who are both idle and frivolous. When our villager wants to realise a political idea, he dies of famine. This has about it a certain air of seriousness. A man will not die of famine unless he be in earnest.

Lord Bacon’s apothegm was that *Eating maketh a full man*; and it would be better to give the starving cultivator Bacon than the report of that Commission (which we cannot name without tears and laughter) which goes to work on the assumption that *writing maketh a full man*—that to write over a certain area of paper will fill the collapsed cuticles of the agricultural class throughout India.

When [Sir Richard Temple] first started the idea of holding famines, I proposed that he should illustrate his project by stopping the pay and allowances of the Government of India for a month. But he did not listen to my proposal. People seldom listen to my proposals; and sometimes I think that this accounts for my constitutional melancholy.

You will ask, “What has all this talk of food and famine to do with the villager?” I reply, “Everything.” Famine is the horizon of the Indian villager; insufficient food is the foreground. And this is the more extraordinary since the villager is surrounded by a dreamland of plenty. Everywhere you see fields flooded deep with millet and wheat. The village and its old trees have to climb on to a knoll to keep their feet out of the glorious poppy and the luscious sugar-cane. Sumptuous cream-coloured bullocks move sleepily about with an air of luxurious sloth; and sleek Brahmans utter their lazy prayers while bathing languidly in the water and sunshine of the tank. Even the buffaloes have nothing to do but float the livelong day deeply immersed in the bulrushes. Everything is steeped in repose. The bees murmur their idylls among the flowers; the doves moan their amorous complaints from the shady leafage of pipal trees; out of the cool recesses of wells the idle cooing of the pigeons ascends into the summer-laden air; the rainbow-fed chameleon slumbers on the branch; the enamelled beetle on the leaf; the little fish in the sparkling depths below; the radiant kingfisher, tremulous as sunlight, in mid-air; and the peacock, with furred glories, on the temple tower of the silent gods. Amid this easeful and luscious splendour the villager labours and starves.

Reams of hiccupping platitudes lodged in the pigeon-holes of the Home Office by all the gentlemen clerks and gentlemen farmers of the world cannot mend this. While the Indian villager has to maintain the glorious phantasmagoria of an imperial policy, while he has to support legions of scarlet soldiers, golden chuprassies, purple politicals, and green commissions, he must remain the hunger-stricken, overdriven phantom he is.

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While the eagle of Thought rides the tempest in scorn,
Who cares if the lightning is burning the corn?

If Old England is going to maintain her throne and her swagger in our vast Orient she ought to pay up like a—man, I was going to say; for, according to the old Sanscrit proverb, “You can get nothing for nothing, and deuced little for a halfpenny.” These unpaid-for glories bring nothing but shame.

But even the poor Indian cultivator has his joys beneath the clouds of Revenue Boards and Famine Commissions. If we look closely at his life we may see a soft glory resting upon it. I am not Mr. Caird, and I do not intend entering into the technical details of agriculture—“*Quid de utilitate loquar stercorandi?*”—but I would say something of that sweetness which a close communion with earth and heaven must shed upon the silence of lonely labour in the fields. God is ever with the cultivator in all the manifold sights and sounds of this marvellous world of His. In that mysterious temple of the Dawn, in which we of noisy mess-rooms, heated courts, and dusty offices are infrequent worshippers, the peasant is a priest. There he offers up his hopes and fears for rain and sunshine; there he listens to the anthems of birds we rarely hear, and interprets auguries that for us have little meaning.

The beast of prey skulking back to his lair, the stag quenching his thirst ere retiring to the depths of the forest, the wedge of wild fowl flying with trumpet notes to some distant lake, the vulture hastening in heavy flight to the carrion that night has provided, the crane flapping to the shallows, and the jackal shuffling along to his shelter in the nullah, have each and all their portent to the initiated eye. Day, with its fierce glories, brings the throbbing silence of intense life, and under flickering shade, amid the soft pulsations of Nature, the cultivator lives his daydream. What there is of squalor, and drudgery, and carking care in his life melts into a brief oblivion, and he is a man in the presence of his God with the holy stillness of Nature brooding over him. With lengthening shadows comes labour and a re-awaking. The air is once more full of all sweet sounds, from the fine whistle of the kite, sailing with supreme dominion through the azure depths of air, to the stir and buzzing chatter of little birds and crickets among the leaves and grass. The egret has resumed his fishing in the tank where the rain is stored for the poppy and sugarcane fields, the sand-pipers bustle along the margin, or wheel in little silvery clouds over the bright waters, the gloomy cormorant sits alert on the stump of a dead date-tree, the little black divers hurry in and out of the weeds, and ever and anon shoot under the water in hot quest of some tiny fish; the whole machinery of life and death is in full play, and our villager shouts to his patient oxen and lives his life. Then gradual darkness, and food with homely joys, a little talk, a little tobacco, a few sad songs, and kindly sleep.

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The villages are of immemorial antiquity; their names, their traditions, their hereditary offices have come down out of the dim past through countless generations. History sweeps over them with her trampling armies and her conquerors, her changing dynasties and her shifting laws—sweeps over them and leaves them unchanged.

The village is self-contained. It is a complete organism, protoplasmic it may be, with the chlorophyll of age colouring its institutions, but none the less a perfect, living entity. It has within itself everything that its existence demands, and it has no ambition. The torment of frustrated hope and of supersession is unknown in the village. We who are always striving to roll our prospects and our office boxes up the hill to Simla may learn a lesson here:

Sisyphus in vita quoque nobis ante oculos est
Qui petere a populo fasces saevasque secures
Imbibit et semper victus tristisque recedit.
Nam petere imperium quod inanest nec datur umquam,
Atque in eo semper durum sufferre laborem,
Hoc est adverse nixantem trudere monte
Saxum quod tamen e summojam vertice rusum
Volvitur et plani raptim petit sequora campi.

In this idyllic existence, in which, as I have said, there is no ambition, several other ills are also wanting. There is, for instance, no News in the village. The village is without the pale of intelligence. This must indeed be bliss. Just fancy, dear Vanity, a state of existence in which there are no politics, no discoveries, no travels, no speculations, no Garnet Wolseleys, no Gladstones, no Captain Careys, no Sarah Bernhardts! If there be a heaven upon earth, it is surely here. Here no Press Commissioner sits on the hillside croaking dreary translations from the St. Petersburg press; here no *Pioneer* sings catches with Sir John Strachey in Council. But here the lark sings in heaven for evermore, the sweet corn grows below, and the villager, amid these quiet joys with which the earth fills her lap, dreams his low life.—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XV

THE OLD COLONEL

[Illustration: THE OLD COLONEL—"Ripening for pension."]

"Kwaihaipeglaoandjeldikaro"—*Rigmarole Veda*.

[November 15, 1879.]

The old Indian Colonel ripening for pension on the shelf of General Duty is an object at once pitiful and ludicrous. His profession has ebbed away from him, and he lies a

melancholy derelict on the shore, with sails flapping idly against the mast and meaningless pennants streaming in the wind.

He has forgotten nearly everything he ever learnt of military duty, and what he has not forgotten has been changed. It is as much as he can do to keep up with the most advanced thoughts of the Horse Guards on buttons and gold lace. Yet he is still employed sometimes to turn out a guard, or to swear that “the Service is going,” &c.; and though he has lost his nerve for riding, he has still a good seat on a boot-lace committee.

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He is a very methodical old man. He rises at an early hour, strolls down to the club on the Mall—perhaps the Wheler Club, perhaps some other—has his tea, newspaper, and gossip there, and then back to his small bungalow, [where he turns out his servants for swearing parade. Each one gets it pretty hot; and then breakfast]. After breakfast he arrays himself for the day in some nondescript white uniform, and with a forage cap stuck gaily on one side of his head, a cheroot in his mouth, and a large white umbrella in his hand, he again sallies forth to the Club. An old horse is led behind him.

Now the serious business of life again begins—to get through the day. There are six newspapers to read, twelve pegs to drink, four-and-twenty Madras cheroots to smoke, there is kindly tiffin to linger over, forty winks afterwards, a game of billiards, the band on the Mall, dinner, and over all, incessant chatter, chatter, old scandal, old jokes, and old stories. Everyone likes the old Colonel, of course. Everyone says, “Here comes poor old Smith; what an infernal bore he is!” “Hulloa, Colonel, how are you? glad to see you! what’s the news? how’s exchange?”

The old Colonel is not avaricious, but he saves money. He cannot help it. He has no tastes and he draws very large pay. His mind, therefore, broods over questions relating to the investment of money, the depreciation of silver, and the saving effected by purchasing things at co-operative stores. He never really solves any problem suggested by these topics. His mind is not prehensile like the tail of the Apollo Bunder; everything eludes its grasp, so its pursuits are terminable. The old Colonel’s cerebral caloric burns with a feeble flicker, like that of Madras secretariats, and never consumes a subject. The same theme is always fresh fuel. You might say the same thing to him every morning, at the same hour till the crack of doom, and he would never recollect that he had heard your remark before. This certainly must give a freshness to life and render eternity possible.

The old Colonel is not naturally an indolent man, but the prominent fact about him is that he has nothing to do. If you gave him a sun-dial to take care of, or a rain-gauge to watch, or a secret to keep, he would be quite delighted. I once asked Smith to keep a secret of mine, and the poor old fellow was so much afraid of losing it that in a few hours he had got everybody in the station helping him to keep it. It always surprises me that men with so much time on their hands do not become Political Agents.

Sometimes our old Colonel gets into the flagitious habit of writing for the newspapers. He talks himself into thinking that he possesses a grievance, so he puts together a fasciculus of lop-sided sentences, gets the ideas set straight by the Doctor, the spelling refurbished by the Padre, and fires off the product to the *Delhi Gazette* or the *Himalayan Chronicle*. Then days of feverish excitement supervene, hope alternating with fear. Will it appear? Will the Commander-in-Chief be offended? Will the Government of India be angry? What will the Service say?

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The old Colonel is always rather suspicious of the great cocked-hats at head-quarters. He knows that to maintain an air of activity they must still be changing something or abolishing something, and he is always afraid that they will change or abolish him. But how could they change the old Colonel? In a regiment he would be like Alice in Wonderland; on the Staff he would be like old wine in a new bottle. They might make him a K.C.B., it is true; but he does not belong to the Simla Band of Hope, and stars must not be allowed to shoot madly from their sphere. As to abolishing the old Colonel, this too presents its difficulties, for Sir Norman Henry and all the celebrated cocked-hats at home and abroad look upon the Indian Staff Corps as Pygmalion looked on his Venus. They dote on its lifeless charms, and (figuratively) love to clasp it in their foolish arms. [Now the old Colonel is the trunk of this Frankenstein—to change the scene. So we must not abolish the old Colonel.]

It is better to dress him up in an old red coat, and strap him on to an old sword with a brass scabbard, that he may stand up on high ceremonials and drink the health of the good Queen for whom he has lived bravely through sunshine and stormy weather, in defiance of epidemics, retiring schemes and the Army Medical Department. It is good to ask him to place his old knees under your hospitable board, and to fill him with wholesome wine, while he decants the mellow stories of an Anglo-India that is speedily dissolving from view.

The old Colonel has no harm in him; his scandal blows upon the grandmothers of people that have passed away, and his little improprieties are such as might illustrate a sermon of the present day. [A rabbit might play with him if there were no chutni lying about.]

But you must never speak to him as if his sun were setting. He is as hopeful as a two-year-old. Every Gazette thrills him with vague expectations and alarms. If he found himself in orders for a Brigade he would be less surprised than anyone in the Army. He never ceases to hope that something may turn up—that something tangible may issue from the circumambient world of conjecture. But nothing will ever turn up for our poor old Colonel till his poor old toes turn up to the daisies. This change only, which we harshly call “Death,” will steal over his prospects; this new slide only will be slipped into the magic lantern of his existence, accompanied by funeral drums and slow marching.

Soon we shall hardly be able to decipher his name and age on the crumbling gravestone among the weeds of our horrible station cemetery—but what matters it?

“For his bones are dust,
And his sword is rust,
And his soul is with the saints, we trust.”

ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XVI

THE CIVIL SURGEON

“Throw physic to the dogs, I’ll none of it.”

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[November 22, 1879.]

Perhaps you would hardly guess from his appearance and ways that he was a surgeon and a medicine-man. He certainly does not smell of lavender or peppermint, or display fine and curious linen, or tread softly like a cat. Contrariwise.

He smells of tobacco, and wears flannel underclothing. His step is heavy. He is a gross, big cow-buffalo sort of man, with a tangled growth of beard. His ranting voice and loud familiar manner amount to an outrage. He laughs like a camel, with deep bubbling noises. Thick corduroy breeches and gaiters swaddle his shapeless legs, and he rides a coarse-bred Waler mare.

I pray the gods that he may never be required to operate upon my eyes, or intestines, or any other delicate organ—that he may never be required to trephine my skull, or remove the roof of my mouth.

Of course he is a very good fellow. He walks straight into your drawing-room with a pipe in his mouth, bellowing out your name. No servant announces his arrival. He tramples in and crushes himself into a chair, without removing his hat, or performing any other high ceremonial. He has been riding in the sun, and is in a state of profuse perspiration; you will have to bring him round with the national beverage of Anglo-India, a brandy-and-soda.

Now he will enter upon your case. “Well, you’re looking very blooming; what the devil is the matter with you? Eh? Eh? Want a trip to the hills? Eh? Eh? How is the bay pony? Eh? Have you seen Smith’s new filly? Eh?”

This is very cheerful and reassuring if you are a healthy man with some large conspicuous disease—a broken rib, cholera, or toothache; but if you are a fine, delicately-made man, pregnant with poetry as the egg of the nightingale is pregnant with music, and throbbing with an exquisite nervous sensibility, perhaps languishing under some vague and occult disease, of which you are only conscious in moments of intense introspection, this mode of approaching the diagnosis is apt to give your system a shock.

Otherwise it may be bracing, like the inclement north wind. But, speaking for myself, it has proved most ruinous and disastrous. Since I have known the Doctor my constitution has broken up. I am a wreck. There is hardly a single drug in the whole pharmacopoeia that I can take with any pleasure, and I have entirely lost sight of a most interesting and curious complaint.

You see, dear Vanity, that I don’t mince matters. I take our Doctor as I find him, rough and allopathic; but I am sure he might be improved in the course of two or three generations. We may leave this, however, to Nature and the Army Medical

Department. Reform is not my business. I have no proposals to offer that will accelerate the progress of the Doctor towards a higher type.

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Happily his surgical and medicinal functions claim only a portion of his time. He is in charge of the district gaol, a large and comfortable retreat for criminals. Here he is admirable. To some eight or nine hundred murderers, robbers, and inferior delinquents he plays the part of *maitre d'hotel* with infinite success. In the whole country side you will not find a community so well bathed, dressed, exercised, fed and lodged as that over which the Doctor presides. You observe on every face a quiet, Quakerish air of contentment. Every inmate of the gaol seems to think that he has now found a haven of rest.

If the sea-horse on the ocean
Own no dear domestic cave,
Yet he slumbers without motion
On the still and halcyon wave;
If on rainy days the loafer
Gamble when he cannot roam,
The police will help him so far
As to find him here a home.

This is indeed a quiet refuge for world-wearied men; a sanctuary undisturbed by the fears of the weak or the passions of the strong. All reasonable wants are gratified here; nothing is hoped for any more. The poor burglar burdened with unsaleable “grab” and the reproaches of a venal world sorrowfully seeks an asylum here. He brings nothing in his hand; he seeks nothing but rest. He whispers through the key-hole—

Nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto.

Look at this prisoner slumbering peacefully beside his *huqqa* under the suggestive bottle tree (there is something touching in his selecting the shade of a *bottle* tree: Horace clearly had no *bottle* tree; or he would never have lain under a strawberry (and cream) tree). You can see that he has been softly nurtured. What a sleek, sturdy fellow he is! He is a covenanted servant here, having passed an examination in gang robbery accompanied by violence and prevarication. He cannot be discharged under a long term of years. Uncovenanted pilferers, in for a week, regard him with respect and envy. And certainly his lot is enviable; he has no cares, no anxieties. Famine and the depreciation of silver are nothing to him. Rain or sunshine, he lives in plenty. His days are spent in an innocent round of duties, relieved by sleep and contemplation of [Greek: to on]. In the long heats of summer he whiles away the time with carpet-making; between the showers of autumn he digs, like our first parents, in the Doctor's garden; and in winter, as there is no billiard-table, he takes a turn on the treadmill with his mates. Perhaps, as he does so, he recites Charles Lamb's Pindaric ode:—

Great mill!
That by thy motion proper



(No thanks to wind or sail, or toiling rill)
Grinding that stubborn-corn, the human will,
Turn'st out men's consciences,
That were begrimed before, as clean and sweet
As flour from purest wheat,
Into thy hopper.

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Yet sometimes a murmur rises like a summer zephyr even from the soft lap of luxury and ease. Even the hardened criminal, dandled on the knee of a patriarchal Government, will sometimes complain and try to give the Doctor trouble. But the Doctor has a specific—a brief incantation that allays every species of inflammatory discontent. “Look here, my man! If I hear any more of this infernal nonsense, I’ll turn you out of the gaol neck and crop.” This is a threat that never fails to produce the desired effect. To be expelled from gaol and driven, like Cain, into the rude and wicked world, a wanderer, an outcast—this would indeed be a cruel ban. Before such a presentiment the well-ordered mind of the criminal recoils with horror.

The Civil Surgeon is also a rain doctor, and takes charge of the Imperial gauge. If a pint more or a pint less than usual falls, he at once telegraphs this priceless gossip to the Press Commissioner, Oracle Grotto, Delphi, Elysium. This is one of our precautions to guard against famine. Mr. Caird is the other.

[I was once in a very small station where our Civil Surgeon was an Eurasian. He was a pompous little fellow, but a capital doctor, gaoler, and metereologist.

“Omnis Aristippum decint, color et status, et res.”

We liked him so much that we all got ill; crime increased, the gaol filled, and no one ever passed the rain-gauge without either emptying it or pouring in a brandy-and-soda. With women and children he was a great favourite; for he had not become brutalised by familiarity with suffering in hospitals. His heart was still tender, his voice soft, and he had a gentle way with his hands. I never knew anyone who was so unwilling to inflict pain; yet he was not unnerved when it had to be done. But, poor little physician! he was not able to cure himself when fever laid her hot hand on him. He tried to go on with his work and live it down; but the recuperative forces of Nature were weak within him, and he died. “The good die first, and those whose hearts are dry as summer dust burn to the socket.” Our cow-buffalo doctor is still alive, I fear.]—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XVII

THE SHIKARRY

[November 29, 1879.]

I have come out to spend a day in the jungle with him, to see him play on his own stage. His little flock of white tents has flown many a march to meet me, and have now alighted at this accessible spot near a poor hamlet on the verge of cultivation. I feel that I have only to yield myself for a few days to its hospitable importunities and it will waft me away to profound forest depths, to the awful penetralia of the bison and the tiger. Even here everything is strange to me; the common native has become a Bheel, the

sparrowhawk an eagle, the grass of the field a vast, reedy growth in which an elephant becomes a mere field mouse. Out of the leaves come strange bird-notes, a strange silence broods over us; it is broken by strange rustlings and cries; it closes over us again strangely. Nature swoons in its glory of sunshine and weird music; it has put forth its powers in colossal timber and howling beasts of prey; it faints amid little wild flowers, fanned by breezes and butterflies.

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My heart beats in strange anapaests. This dream world of leaf and bird stirs the blood with a strange enchantment. The Spirit of Nature touches us with her caduceus:—

Fair are others, none behold thee;
But thy voice sounds low and tender
Like the fairest, for it folds thee
From the sight, that liquid splendour;
And all feel, yet see thee never,
As I feel now

Our tents are played upon by the flickering shadows of the vast pipal-tree that rises in a laocoon tortuosity of roots out of an old well. The spot is cool and pleasant. Round us are picketed elephants, camels, bullocks, and horses, all enjoying the shade. Our servants are cooking their food on the precincts; each is busy in front of his own little mud fireplace. On a larger altar greater sacrifices are being offered up for our breakfast. A crowd of nearly naked Bheels watch the rites and snuff the fragrant incense of venison from a respectable distance. Their leader, a broken-looking old man, with hardly a rag on, stands apart exchanging deep confidences with my friend the Shikarry. This old Bheel is girt about the loins with knives, pouches, powder-horns, and ramrods; and he carries on his shoulder an aged flintlock. He looks old enough to be an English General Officer or a Cabinet Minister; and you might assume that he was in the last stage of physical and mental decay. But you would be quite wrong. This old Bheel will sit up all night on the branch of a tree among the horned owls; he will see the tiger kill the young buffalo tied up as a bait beneath; he will see it drink the life-blood and tear the haunch; he will watch it steal away and hide under the *karaunda* bush; he will sit there till day breaks, when he will creep under the thorn jungle, across the stream, up the scarp of the ravine, through the long grass to the sahib's camp, and give the word that makes the hunter's heart dance. From the camp he will stride from hamlet to hamlet till he has raised an army of beaters; and he will be back at the camp with his forces before the sahib has breakfasted. Through the long heats of the day he will be the life and soul of the hunt, urging on the beaters with voice and example, climbing trees, peeping under bushes, carrying orders, giving advice, changing the line, until that supreme moment when shots are fired, when the rasping growl tells that the shots have taken effect, and when at length the huge cat lies stretched out dead. And all this on a handful of parched grain!

[Is this nothing?
Why then the world, and all that's in't, is nothing;
The covering sky is nothing, Ali Baba's nothing.]

My friend the Shikarry delights to clothe himself in the coarse fabrics manufactured in gaol, which, when properly patched and decorated with pockets, have undoubtedly a certain wild-wood appearance.

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As the hunter does not happen to be a Bheel with the privileges of nakedness conferred by a brown skin, this is perhaps the only practical alternative. If he went out to shoot in evening clothes, a crush hat, and a hansom cab, the chances are that he would make an example of himself and come to some untimely end. What would the Apollo Bundar say? What would the Bengali Baboo say? What would the sea-aye-ees say? Yes, our hunter affects coarse and snuffy clothes; they carry with them suggestions of hardship and roughing it; and his hat is umbrageous and old.

As to the man under the hat, he is an odd compound of vanity, sentiment, and generosity. He is as affected as a girl. Among other traits he affects reticence, and he will not tell me what the plans for the day are, or what *khabbar*[W] has been received. Knowing absolutely nothing, he moves about with a solemn and important air, [as if six months gone with a *bandobast*[X]]; and he says to me, "Don't fret yourself my dear fellow; you'll know all about it time enough. I have made arrangements." Then he dissembles and talks of irrelevant topics transcendently. This makes me feel such a poor pen-and-ink fellow, such a worm, such a [Famine-commissioner, such a] Political Agent!

With this discordant note still vibrating we go in to breakfast; and then, dear Vanity, he *bucks* with a quiet, stubborn determination that would fill an American editor or an Under-Secretary of State with despair. [His lies are really that awful (as the Press Commissioner would say) which you couldn't tell as what he was joking, or inebriated, or drawing your leg.] He belongs to the twelve-foot-tiger school; so, perhaps, he can't help it.

If the whole truth were told, he is a warm-hearted, generous, plucky fellow, with boundless vanity and a romantic vein of maudlin sentiment that seduces him from time to time into the gin-and-water corner of an Indian newspaper. Under the heading of "The Forest Ranger's Lament," or "The Old Shikarry's Tale of Woe," he hiccoughs his column of sickly lines (with St. Vitus's dance in their feet), and then I believe he feels better. I have seen him do it; I have caught him in criminal conversation with a pen and a sheet of paper; bottle at hand—

A quo, ceu fonte perenni,
Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis.

In appearance he is a very short man with a long black beard, a sunburnt face, and a clay pipe. He has shot battalions of tigers and speared squadrons of wild pig. He is universally loved, universally admired, and universally laughed at.

He is generous to a fault. All the young fellows for miles round owe him money. He would think there was something wrong if they did not borrow from him; and yet, somehow, I don't think that he is very well off. There is nothing in his bungalow but guns, spears, and hunting trophies; he never goes home, and I have an idea that there

is some heavy drain on his purse in the old country. But you should hear him troll a hunting song with his grand organ voice, and you would fancy him the richest man in the world, his note is so high and triumphant!

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So when in after days we boast
Of many wild boars slain,
We'll not forget our runs to toast
Or run them o'er again;

And when our memory's mirror true
Reflects the scenes of yore,
We'll think of *him* it brings to view,
Who loved to hunt the boar.

ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XVIII

THE GRASS-WIDOW IN NEPHELOCOC CYGIA

[Illustration: THE GRASS WIDOW—"Sweet little Mrs. Lollipop."]

Her bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne?

[December 6, 1879]

Little Mrs. Lollipop has certainly proved a source of disappointment to her lady friends. They have watched her for three seasons going lightly and merrily through all the gaieties of Cloudland; they have listened to the scandal of the cuckoos among the pine-trees and rhododendrons, but they have not caught her tripping. Oh, no, they will never catch her tripping. She does not trip for their amusement: perhaps she trips it when they go on the light fantastic toe, but there is no evidence; there is only a zephyr of conjecture, only the world's low whisper not yet broken into storm—not yet.

Yes, she is a source of disappointment to them. They have noted her points; her beauty has burned itself into their jealousy; her merry laugh has fanned their scorn; her bountiful presence is an affront to them, as is her ripe and lissom figure. They pronounce her morally unsound; they say her nature has a taint; they chill her popularity with silent smiles of slow disparagement. But they have no particulars; their slander is not concrete. It is an amorphous accusation, sweeping and vague, spleen-born and proofless.

She certainly knows how to dress. Her weeds sit easily and smoothly on their delightful mould. You might think of her as a sweet, warm statue painted in water-colours. (Who wouldn't be her Pygmalion?) If she adds a garment it is an improvement; if she removes a garment it is an improvement; if she dresses her hair it is better; if she lets it fall in a brown cascade over her white shoulders it is still better; when it is yet in curl-papers it is charming. If you smudge the tip of her nose with a burnt cork the effect is irresistible; if



you stick a flower in her hair it is a fancy dress, a complete costume—she becomes Flora, Aurora, anything you like to name. Yet I have never clothed her in a flower, I have never smudged her nose with a burnt cork, I have never uncurled her hair. Ali Baba's character must not go drifting down the stream of gossip with the Hill Captains and the Under-Secretaries. But I hope that this does not destroy the argument. The argument is that she is quite too delightful, and therefore blown upon by poisonous whispers.

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Her bungalow is an Elysium, of course; it is a cottage with a verandah, built on a steep slope, and buried deep in shrubbery and trees. Within all is plain, but exquisitely neat. A wood fire is burning gaily, and the kindly tea-tray is at hand. It is five o'clock. Clean servants move silently about with hot water, cake, &c. The little boy, a hostage from papa in the warm plains below, is sitting pensive, after the fashion of Anglo-Indian children, in a little chair. His bearer crouches behind him. The unspeakable widow, in a tea-gown dimly splendid with tropical vegetation in neutral tints, holds a piece of chocolate in her hand, while she leans back in her fauteuil convulsed with laughter. (It is not necessary to say that Ali Baba is relating one of his improving tales.) How pretty she looks, showing her excellent teeth and suffused with bright warm blushes, [which, I beg leave to explain, proceed from drinking hot tea and indulging in immoderate laughter, not from listening to A.B.'s improving tales!] As I gaze upon her with fond amazement, I murmur mechanically:—

Mine be a cot beside the hill;
A tea-pot's hum shall soothe my ear,
A widowy girl, that likes me still,
With many a smile shall linger near.

I have been asked to write a philosophical minute on the mental and moral condition of delightful Mrs. Lollipop's husband, who lives down in the plains. I have been requested by the Press Commissioner to inquire in Government fashion, with pen and ink, as to whether the complaisant proprietor of so many charms desires to have a recheat winded in his forehead, and to hang his bugle in an invisible baldrick; whether it is true in his case that Love's ear will hear the lowest cuckoo note, and that Love's perception of gossip is more soft and sensible than are the tender horns of cockled snails. Towards all these points I have directed my researches. I have resolved myself into a Special Commission, and I have sat upon grass-widowers *in camera*. If I sit a little longer a Report will be hatched, which, of course, I shall take to England, and when there I shall go to the places of amusement with the Famine Commission, and have rather a good time of it. Already I can see, with that bright internal eye which requires no limelight, grim Famine stalking about the Aquarium after dinner with a merry jest preening its wings on his lips.

But what has all this talk of country matters to do with little Mrs. Lollipop? Absolutely nothing. She thinks no ill of herself. She is the most charitable woman in the world. There is no veil of sin over her eye; no cloud of suspicion darkens her forehead; no concealment feeds upon her damask cheek. Like Eve she goes about hand in hand with her friends, in native innocence, relying on what she has of virtue. Sweet simplicity! sweet confidence! My eagle quill shall not flutter these doves.



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Have you ever watched her at a big dance? She takes possession of some large warrior who has lately arrived from the battle-fields of Umballa or Meerut, and she chaperones him about the rooms, staying him with flagons and prattling low nothings. The weaker vessel jibs a little at first; but gradually the spell begins to work and the love-light kindles in his eye. He dances, he makes a joke, he tells a story, he turns round and looks her in the face. He is lost. That big centurion is a casualty; and no one pities him. "How can he go on like that, odious creature!" say the withered wall-flowers, and the Hill Captains fume round, working out formulae to express his baseness. But he is away on the glorious mountains of vanity; the intoxicating atmosphere makes life tingle in his blood; he is an [Greek: aerobataes], he no longer treads the earth. In a few days Mrs. Lollipop will receive a post-card from the Colonel of her centurion's regiment.

MY DEAR MRS.

Lollipop, dic, per omnes
Te deos oro, Robinson cur properes amando
Perdere? cur apricum
Oderit campum, patiens pulveris atque solis.

Yrs. Sincy.

HORACE FITZDOTTREL.

Ten to one an Archdeacon will be sent for to translate this. Ten to one there is a shindy, ending in tea and tearful smiles; for she is bound to get a blowing up.

After what I have written I suppose it would be superfluous to affirm with oaths my irrefragable belief in Mrs. Lollipop's innocence; it would be superfluous to deprecate the many-winged slanders that wound this milk-white hind. If, however, by swearing, any of your readers think I can be of service to her character, I hope they will let me know. I have learnt a few oaths lately that I reckon will unsphere some of the scandal-mongers of Nephelococcygia. I had my ear one morning at the keyhole when the Army Commission was revising the cursing and swearing code for field service.—(Ah! these dear old Generals, what depths of simplicity they disclose when they get by themselves! I sometimes think that if I had my life to live over again I would keep a newspaper and become a really great General. I know some five or six obscure aboriginal tribes that have never yet yielded a single war or a single K.C.B.)

But this is a digression. I was maintaining the goodness of Mrs. Lollipop—little Mrs. Lollipop! sweet little Mrs. Lollipop! I was going to say that she was far too good to be made the subject of whisperings and innuendoes. Her virtue is of such a robust type that even a Divorce Court would sink back abashed before it, like a guilty thing surprised. Indeed, she often reminds me of Caesar's wife.



The harpies of scandal protest that she dresses too low; that she exposes too freely the well-rounded charms of her black silk stockings; that she appears at fancy-dress balls picturesquely unclothed—in a word, that the public sees a little too much of little Mrs. Lollipop; and that, in conversation with men, she nibbles at the forbidden apples of thought. But all this proves her innocence, surely. She fears no danger, for she knows no sin. She cannot understand why she should hide anything from an admiring world. Why keep her charms concealed from mortal eye, like roses that in deserts bloom and die? She often reminds me of Una in Hypocrisy's cell.

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I heard an old Gorgon ask one of Mrs. Lollipop's *clientele* the other day whether he would like to be Mrs. Lollipop's husband. "No," he said, "not her husband; I am not worthy to be her husband—

"But I would be the necklace
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom
With her laughter or her sighs;
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasped at night."

That old Gorgon is now going through a course of hysterics under medical and clerical advice. Her ears are in as bad a case as Lady Macbeth's hands. Hymns will not purge them.—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XIX

THE TRAVELLING M.P.

THE BRITISH LION RAMPANT

[December 13, 1879.]

There is not a more fearful wild fowl than your travelling M.P. This unhappy creature, whose mind is a perfect blank regarding *Faujdari*[Y] and *Bandobast*,[Z] and who cannot distinguish the molluscos Baboo from the osseous Pathan, will actually presume to discuss Indian subjects with you, unless strict precautions be taken.

When I meet one of these loose M.P.'s ramping about I always cut his claws at once. I say, "Now, Mr. T.G., you must understand that, according to my standard, you are a homunculus of the lowest type. There is nothing I value a man for that you can do; there is nothing I consider worth directing the human mind upon that you know. If you ask for any information which I may deem it expedient to give to a person in your unfortunate position, well and good; but if you venture to argue with me, to express any opinion, to criticise anything I may be good enough to say regarding India, or to quote any passage relating to Asia from the works of Burke, Cowper, Bright, or Fawcett, I will hand you over to Major Henderson for strangulation, I will cause your body to be burnt by an Imperial Commission of sweepers, and I will mention your name in the *Pioneer*."

In dangerous cases, where a note-book is carried, your loose M.P. must be made to reside within the pale of guarded conversation. If you are wise you will speak to him in the interrogative mood exclusively; and you will treat his answers with contumelious laughter or disdainful silence.

About a week after your M.P. has landed in India he will begin his great work on the history, literature, philosophy and social institutions of the Hindoos. You will see him in a railway carriage when stirred by the [Greek: oistros] studying Forbes's Hindustani Manual. He is undoubtedly writing the chapter on the philology of the Aryan Family. Do you observe the fine frenzy that kindles behind his spectacles as he leans back and tries to eject a root? These pangs are worth about half-a-crown an hour in the present state of the book market. One cannot contemplate them without profound emotion.

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The reading world is hunger-bitten about Asia, and I often think I shall take three months' leave and run up a *precis* of Sanskrit and Pali literature, just a few folios for the learned world. Max Mueller begs me to learn these languages first; but this would be a toil and drudgery, whereas to me the pursuit of literary excellence and fame is a mere amusement, like lawn-tennis or rinking. It is the fault of the age to make a labour of what is meant to be a pastime.

Telle est de nos plaisirs la surface legere;
Glissez, mortels, n'appuyez pas.

The travelling M.P. will probably come to you with a letter of introduction from the last station he has visited, and he will immediately proceed to make himself quite at home in your bungalow with the easy manners of the Briton abroad. He will acquaint you with his plans and name the places of interest in the neighbourhood which he requires you to show him. He will ask you to take him, as a preliminary canter, to the gaol and lunatic asylum; and he will make many interesting suggestions to the civil surgeon as to the management of these institutions, comparing them unfavourably with those he has visited in other stations. He will then inspect the Brigadier-General commanding the station, the chaplain, and the missionaries. On his return—when he ought to be bathing—he will probably write his article for the *Twentieth Century*, entitled “Is India Worth Keeping?” And this ridiculous old Shrovetide cock, whose ignorance and information leave two broad streaks of laughter in his wake, is turned loose upon the reading public! Upon my word, I believe the reading public would do better to go and sit at the feet of Baboo Sillabub Thunder Gosht, B.A.

What is it that these travelling people put on paper? Let me put it in the form of a conundrum. Q. What is it that the travelling M.P. treasures up and the Anglo-Indian hastens to throw away? A. Erroneous, hazy, distorted first impressions. Before the eyes of the griffin, India steams up in poetical mists, illusive, fantastic, subjective, ideal, picturesque. The adult *Qui Hai* attains to prose, to stern and disappointing realities; he removes the gilt from the Empire and penetrates to the brown ginger-bread of Rajas and Baboos. One of the most serious duties attending a residence in India is the correcting of those misapprehensions which your travelling M.P. sacrifices his bath to hustle upon paper. The spectacted people embalmed in secretariats alone among Anglo-Indians continue to see the gay visions of griffinhood. They alone preserve the phantasmagoria of bookland and dreamland. As for the rest of us:—

Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight:
Baboos and Rajas and Indian lore
Move our faint hearts with grief, but with delight
No more—oh, never more!

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It is strange that one who is modest and inoffensive in his own country should immediately on leaving it exhibit some of the worst features of Arryism; but it seems inevitable. I have met in this unhappy land, countrymen (who are gentlemen in England, Members of Parliament, and Deputy Lieutenants, and that kind of thing) whose conduct and demeanour while here I can never recall without tears and blushes for our common humanity. My friends witnessing this emotion often suppose that I am thinking of the Famine Commission.

[I am an Anglo-Indian cherishing many a burning Anglo-Indian prejudice, and I should be sorry if from what I have written here it does not sufficiently appear that I cherish a burning prejudice against the British Tourist in India, who comes out to get up India and to do India; not against the tourist who comes out to shoot or to play the fool in a quiet unostentatious way.]

As far as I can learn, it is a generally received opinion at home that a man who has seen the Taj at Agra, the Qutb at Delhi, and the Duke at Madras, has graduated with honours in all questions connected with British interests in Asia; and is only unfitted for the office of Governor-General of India from knowing too much.—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XX

MEM-SAHIB

“Her life is lone. He sits apart;
He loves her yet: she will not weep,
Tho’ rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

“For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.”

[December 20, 1879.]

I first met her shepherding her little flock across the ocean. She was a beautiful woman, in the full sweetness and bloom of life. [The mystery of early wifehood and motherhood gave a pensiveness to her soft eyes; but her voice and manner disclosed the cheerful confidence of perfect health and a pure heart.] Her talk was of the busy husband she had left, the station life, the attached servants, the favourite horse, the garden, and the bungalow. Her husband would soon follow her, in a year, or two years, and they would return together; but they would return to a silent home—the children would be left behind. She was going home to her mother and sisters; but there had been changes in

this home. So her thoughts were woven of hopes and fears; and, as she sat on deck of an evening, with the great heart of the moon-lit sea palpitating around us, and the homeless night-wind sighing through the cordage, she would sing to us one of the plaintive ballads of the old country, till we forgot to listen to the sobbing and the trampling of the engines, and till all sights and sounds resolved themselves into a temple of sentiment round a charming priestess chanting low anthems. She would leave us early to go to her babies. She would leave us throbbing with mock heroics, undecided whether we should cry, or consecrate our lives to some high and noble enterprise, or drink one more glass of hot whiskey-and-water. She was kind, but not sentimental; her sweet, yet practical "good-night" was quite of the work-a-day world; we felt that it tended to dispel illusions.

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She had three little boys, who were turned out three times a day in the ultimate state of good behaviour, tidiness, and cleanliness, and who lapsed three times a day into a state of original sin combined with tar and ship's grease. These three little boys pervaded the vessel with an innocent smile on their three little faces, their mother's winning smile. Every man on the ship was their own familiar friend, bound to them by little interchanges of biscuits, confidences, twine, and by that electric smile which their mother communicated, and from which no one wished to be insulated. Yes, they quite pervaded the vessel, these three little innocents, flying that bright and friendly smile; and there was no description of mischief suitable for three very little boys that they did not exhaust. The ingenuity they squandered every day in doing a hundred things which they ought not to have done was perfectly marvellous. Before the voyage was half over we thought there was nothing left for them to do; but we were entirely mistaken. The daily round, a common cask would furnish all they had to ask; to them the meanest whistle that blows, or a pocket-knife, could give thoughts that too often led to smiles and tears.

Their mother's thoughts were ever with them; but she was like a hen with a brood of ducklings. They passed out of her element, and only returned as hunger called them. When they did return she was all that soap and water, loving reproaches, and tender appeals could be; and as they were very affectionate little boys, they were for the time thoroughly cleansed morally and physically, and sealed with the absolution of kisses.

I saw her three years afterwards in England. She was living in lodgings near a school which her boys attended. She looked careworn. Her relations had been kind to her, but not warmly affectionate. She had been disappointed with the welcome they had given her. They seemed changed to her, more formal, narrower, colder. She longed to be back in India; to be with her husband once more. But he was engrossed with his work. He wrote short letters enclosing cheques; but he never said that he missed her, that he longed to see her again, that she must come out to him, or that he must go to her. He could not have grown cold too? No, he was busy; he had never been demonstrative in his affection; this was his way. And she was anxious about the boys. She did not know whether they were really getting on, whether she was doing the best for them, whether their father would be satisfied. She had no friends near her, no one to speak to; so she brooded over these problems, exaggerated them, and fretted.

The husband was a man who lived in his own thoughts, and his thoughts were book thoughts. The world of leaf and bird, the circumambient firmament of music and light, shone in upon him through books. A book was the master key that unlocked all his senses, that unfolded the varied landscape, animated the hero, painted the flower, swelled the orchestra of wind and ocean, peopled the plains of India with starvelings and the mountains of Afghanistan with cut-throats. Without a book he moved about like a shadow lost in some dim dreamland of echoes.

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Everyone knew he was a scholar, and his thoughts had once or twice rung out to the world clear and loud as a trumpet-note through the oracles of the Press. But in society he was shy, awkward, and uncouth of speech, quite unable to marshal his thoughts, deserted by his memory, abashed before his own silences, and startled by his own words. Any fool who could talk about the legs of a horse or the height of the thermometer was Prospero to this social Caliban.

He felt that before the fine instincts of women his infirmity was especially conspicuous, and he drifted into misogyny through bashfulness and pride; and yet misogyny was incompatible with his scheme of life and his ambition. He felt himself to be worthy of the full diapason of home life; he desired to be as other men were, besides being something more.

[Greek: *Kakon gynaikes all' homos, o daemotai,
Ouk estin oikein oikian aneu kakou.
Kai gar to gaemai, kai to mae gaemai, kakon.*]

So he married her who loved him for choosing her, and who revered him for his mysterious treasures of thought.

There was much in his life that she could never share: but he longed for companionship in thought, and for the first year of their married life he tried to introduce her to his world. He led her slowly up to the quiet hill-tops of thought where the air is still and clear, and he gave her to drink of the magic fountains of music. Their hearts beat one delicious measure. Her gentle nature was plastic under the poet's touch, wrought in an instant to perfect harmony with love, or tears, or laughter. To read aloud to her in the evening after the day's work was over, and to see her stirred by every breath of the thought-storm, was to enjoy an exquisite interpretation of the poet's motive, like an impression bold and sharp from the matrix of the poet's mind. This was to hear the song of the poet and Nature's low echo. How tranquilising it was! How it effaced the petty vexations of the day!—"softening and concealing; and busy with a hand of healing."

*Tale tuum carmen nobis, divine poeta,
Quale sopor fessis in gramine, quale per aestum
Dulcis aquae saliente sitim restinguere rivo.*

But with the advent of babies poetry declined, and the sympathetic wife became more and more motherly. The father retired sadly into the dreamland of books. He will not emerge again. Husband and wife will stand upon the clear hill-tops together no more.

Neither quite knows what has happened; they both feel changed with an undefined sorrow, with a regret that pride will not enunciate. She is now again in India with her husband. There are duties, courtesies, nay, kindnesses which both will perform, but the

ghost of love and sympathy will only rise in their hearts to jibber in mockery words and phrases that have lost their meaning, that have lost their enchantment.

“O love! who bewailest
The frailty of all things here,
Why choose you the frailest
For your cradle, your home, and your bier?



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"Its passions will rock thee
As the storms rock the raven on high;
Bright reason will mock thee
Like the sun from a wintry sky.

"From thy nest every rafter
Will rot, and thine eagle home
Leave thee naked to laughter
When leaves fall and cold winds come."

ALI BABA, K.C.B.

No. XXI

ALI BABA ALONE

THE LAST DAY

"Now the last of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest, and the last is dead,
Rise, memory, and write its praise."

[December 27, 1879.]

How shall I lay this spectre of my own identity? Shall I leave it to melt away gracefully in the light of setting suns? It would never do to put it out like a farthing rushlight after it had haunted the Great Ornamental in an aurora of smiles. Is Ali Baba to cease upon the midnight without pain? or is he to lie down like a tired child and weep out the spark? or should he just flit to Elysium? There, seated on Elysian lawns, browsed by none but Dian's (no allusion to little Mrs. Lollipop) fawns, amid the noise of fountains wonderful and the parle of voices thunderous, some wag might scribble on his door, "Here lies Ali Baba"—as if glancing at his truthfulness. How is he to pass effectively into the golden silences? How is he to relapse into the still-world of observation? Would four thousand five hundred a month and Simla do it, with nothing to do and allowances, and a seat beside those littered under the swart Dog-Star of India? Or is it to be the mandragora of pension, that he may sleep out the great gap of *ennui* between this life and something better? How lonely the Government of India would feel! How the world would forget the Government of India! Voices would ask:—

Do ye sit there still in slumber
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number



Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine—
And so kept alive and fine.

Sometimes I think that Ali Baba should be satisfied with the oblivion-mantle of knighthood and relapse into dingy respectability in the Avilion of Brompton or Bath; but since he has taken to wearing stars the accompanying itch for blood and fame has come:—

How doth the greedy K.C.B.
Delight to brag and fight,
And gather medals all the day
And wear them all the night.

The fear of being out-medalled and out-starred stings him:—

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[Consimili ratione ab eodem saepe timore Macerat invidia, ante oculos ilium esse polentem, Illum aspectari, claro qui incedit honore, Ipsi se in tenebris volvi caenoque queruntur Insereunt partim statuarum et nominis ergo.]

Thus the desire to go hustling up the hill to the Temple of Fame with the other starry hosts impels him forward. If you mix yourself up with K.C.B.'s and raise your platform of ambition, you are just where you were at the A B C of your career. Living on a table-land, you experience no sensation of height. For the intoxicating delights of elevation you require a solitary pinnacle, some lonely eminence. Aut Caesar, aut nullus; whether in the zenith or the Nadir of the world's favour.

But how much more comfortable in the cold season than the chill splendours of the pinnacles of fame, where "pale suns unfelt at distance roll away," is a comfortable bungalow on the plains, with a little mulled claret after dinner. Here I think Ali Baba will be found, hidden from his creditors, the reading world, in the warm light of thought, singing songs unbidden till a few select cronies are wrought to sympathy with hopes and fears they heeded not—before the mulled claret.

To this symposium the A.-D.-C.-in-Waiting has invited himself on behalf of the Empire. He will sing the Imperial Anthem composed by Mr. Eastwick, and it will be translated into archaic Persian by an imperial Munshi for the benefit of the Man in Buckram, who will be present. The Man in Buckram, who is suffering from a cold in his heart, will be wrapped up in himself and a cocked hat. The Press Commissioner has also asked for an invitation. He will deliver a sentiment:—"Quid sit futurum eras fuge quaerere." A Commander-in-Chief will tell the old story about the Service going to the dogs; after which there will be an interval of ten minutes allowed for swearing and hiccuping. The Travelling M.P. will take the opportunity to jot down a few hasty notes on Aryan characteristics for the *Twentieth Century* before being placed under the table. The Baboo will subsequently be told off to sit on the Member's head. During this function the Baboo will deliver some sesquipedalian reflections in the rodomontade mood. The Shikarry will then tell the twelve-foot-tiger story. Mrs. Lollipop will tell a fib and make tea; and Ali Baba (unless his heart is too full of mulled claret) will make a joke. The company will break up at this point, after receiving a plenary dispensation from the Archdeacon.

Under such influences Ali Baba may become serious; he may learn from the wisdom of age and be cheered by the sallies of youth. But little Mrs. Lollipop can hardly be called one of the Sallies of his youth. Sally Lollipop rose upon the horizon of his middle age. She boiled up, pure blanc-mange and roses, over the dark brim of life's afternoon, a blushing sunrise, though late to rise, and most cheerful. Sometimes after spending an afternoon with her, Ali

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Baba feels so cheered that the Government of India seems quite innocent and bright, like an old ballerina seen through the mists of champagne and limelight. He walks down the Mall smiling upon foolish Under Secretaries and fat Baboos. The people whisper as he passes, "There goes Ali Baba"; and echo answers "Who is Ali Baba?" Then a little wind of conjecture breathes through the pine-trees and names are heard.

It is better not to call Ali Baba names. Nothing is so misleading as a vulgar nomenclature. I once knew a man who was called "Counsellor of the Empress" when he ought to have had his photograph exposed in the London shop-windows like King Cetewayo, K.C.M.G. I have heard an eminent Frontier General called "Judas Iscariot," and I myself was once pointed out as a "Famine Commissioner," and afterwards as an expurgated edition of the Secretary to the Punjab Government. People seemed to think that Ali Baba would smell sweeter under some other name. This was a mistake.

Almost everything you are told in Simla is a mistake. You should never believe anything you hear till it is contradicted by the *Pioneer*. I suppose the Government of India is the greatest *gobemouche* in the world. I suppose there never was an administration of equal importance which received so much information and which was so ill-informed. At a bureaucratic Simla dinner-party the abysses of ignorance that yawn below the company on every Indian topic are quite appalling!

I once heard Mr. Stokes say that he had never heard of my book on the Permanent Settlement; and yet Mr. Stokes is a decidedly intelligent man, with some knowledge of Cymric and law. I daresay now if you were to draw off and decant the law on his brain, it would amount to a full dose for an adult; yet he never heard of my book on the Permanent Settlement. He knew about Blackstone; he had seen an old copy once in a second-hand book shop; but he had never heard of my work! How loosely the world floats around us! I question its objective reality. I doubt whether anything has more objectivity in it than Ali Baba himself. He was certainly flogged at school. Yet when we now try to put our finger on Ali Baba he eludes the touch; when we try to lay him he starts up gibbering at Cabul, Lahore, or elsewhere. Perhaps it is easier to imprison him in morocco boards and allow him to be blown with restless violence round about the pendant world, abandoned to critics: whom our lawless and uncertain thoughts imagine howling.

[Ali Baba! I know not what thou art, but know that thou and I must part; and why or where and how we met, I own to me's a secret yet. Ali Baba, we've been long together through pleasant and through cloudy weather; 'tis hard to part when things are dear, bar silver, piece cloth, bottled beer, then steal away with this short warning: choose thine own winding-sheet, say not good-night here, but in some brighter binding, sweet, bid me good morning.]—ALI BABA, K.C.B.

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EXTRACTS FROM SERIOUS REFLECTIONS AND OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS.

BY "OUR POLITICAL ORPHAN."

The Bombay Gazette Press, 1881.

No. XXXIV

THE TEAPOT SERIES

SOCIAL DISSECTION

[January 5, 1880.]

GOSSIP I.

MY DEAR MRS. SMITH,

I cannot understand why Mrs. Smith, with her absurd figure—for really I can apply no other adjective to it—should wear that most absurdly tight dress. Some one should tell her what a fright it makes of her. She is nothing but convexities. She looks exactly like an hour-glass, or a sodawater machine. At a little distance you can hardly tell whether she is coming to you, or going away from you. She looks just the same all round. People call her smile sweet; but then it is the mere sweetness of inanity. It is the blank brightness of an empty chamber. She sheds these smiles upon everyone and everything, and they are felt to be cold like moonshine. Speaking for myself, these *eau-sucre* smiles could not suckle my love. I would languish upon them. My love demands stronger drink. Mrs. Smith's features are good, no doubt. Her eyes are good. An oculist would be satisfied with them. They have a cornea, a crystalline lens, a retina, and so on, and she can see with them. This is all very satisfactory, I do not deny, as far as it goes. Physiologically her eyes are admirable; but for poetry, for love, or even for flirting, they are useless. There is no significance in them, no witchery, no suggestiveness. The aurora of beautiful far-away thoughts does not coruscate in them. Her eyelids conceal them, but do not quench them. They would be nothing for winking, or tears. If she winked at me, I should not jump into the air, as if shot in the spine, with my blood tingling to my extremities; my heart would not beat like a side-drum; my blushes would not come perspiring through my whiskers. Her winking would altogether misfire. Why? Because her winking would be physiological and not erotic. If you ever learnt to love her, it would not be for any lovelight in her eye; it would never be the quick, fierce, hot, biting electric passion of the fleshly poets, it would be what a chemist



might call the “eremacausis” kindled by habit. Mrs. Smith’s tears are quite the poorest product of the lachrymal glands I have ever seen. They are simply a form of water. They might dribble from an effete pump; they might leak from a worn-out *mashq*.^[AA] I observe them with pity and regret. Their drip has no echo in my bosom; it produces no stalactites of sympathy in my heart.

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I have often been told that her nose was good—and good it unquestionably is—good for blowing; good for sneezing; good for snoring; good for smelling; a fine nose for a catarrh. But who could play with it? Who could tweak it passionately, as a prelude to kissing? Who could linger over it tenderly with a candle, or a lump of mutton fat, when cold had laid its cruel hand upon it? It is not tip-tilted like a flower; it is not whimsical with some ravishing and unexpected little crook. It is straight, like a mathematical line. But it has no parts. Her cheeks are round and fair. Each has its dimple and blush. They are thoroughly healthy, Mrs. Smith's digestion is unexceptionable. You might indicate the contour of these cheeks with a pair of compasses; you might paint them with your thumb. Poor Mrs. Smith's talk, or babble rather, is of her husband, her children, her home. It is a mere purring over them. She never cuts them to pieces, and holds them up to scorn and mockery. She never penetrates their weaknesses. She does not even understand that Smith is a common-place, stereotyped kind of fellow, exactly like hundreds of other men in his class. She does not appear to notice the ghastly defects in his education, tastes, and character, which gape before all the world else. She does not see that he is without the *morbidezza* of culture; that he finds no *appogiatura* in art; that he never rises at midnight, amid lightning and rain, to emit an inarticulate cry of aesthetic anguish in some metrical construction of the renaissance period. She does not miss in him that yearning after the unattainable, which in some mysterious wise fills us with a mute despair; which has in it yet I know not what of sweetness amid the delirious aspirations with which it distracts us. She cannot know, with her base instincts dragging her down to the hearth-level of home and child, the material gracelessness of her husband, equally incapable of striking an Anglo-Saxon, or a mediaeval attitude; and with his blood flushed, healthy face unable to realize in his expression that divine sorrow which can alone distinguish the man of culture from ordinary Englishmen, or the anthropoid apes. She will never know what vibrates so harshly on us—the want of feeling for colour which is displayed in the coarse tone of his brown hair. So in regard to her children, the mind of Mrs. Smith is quite uncritical. Look at that baby, like a thousand other babies you see every day. It has not a single idiosyncrasy on which anyone above the intellectual level of a *cretin* could hang an affection. Its porcine eyes twinkle dimly through rolls of fat; it splutters and puffs, and its habits are simply abominable. What a gross home for that life's star, which hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar! The star is quenched in fat; it has exchanged the music of the spheres for a hideous caterwauling! Yet Mrs. Smith loves that child, and gobbles over it, descending to its abysses of grossness.

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Her house is one of many in a long unlovely street; it is furnished according to the most corrupt dictates of bestial Philistinism—that is, with a view to comfort. There are no subtle harmonies in the papers and chintzes; there are no hidden suggestions of form and tone in the cornices and bell handles; all is barren of proportion, concord, and meaning. Still, this poor woman, with her inartistic eye and foolish heart, loves this wretched shelter, and would pour out her idiotic tears if she were leaving it for Paradise.

But if we descend from our aesthetic heights to the lowly level of the biped Smith, we may see Mrs. S. in a totally different atmosphere, and certain lights and shadows will play about her with a radiance not altogether without beauty. She is a single-minded woman, anxious to make her husband and children comfortable and happy in their home,—and dreaming of nothing beyond this. She is full of homely wisdom; a hundred little economies she practises with forethought and unwearying assiduity tend to make her husband and children love her and regard her as a paragon of domestic policy. Her husband's affection and her children's affection are all the world to her; music and painting and poetry, Mr. Ruskin, Phidias, Praxiteles, Holman Hunt, and Mr. Whistler pale away into shadows of shadows in presence of the indications of love she receives from that baby. And this intense single-minded love elevates her within its own compass. She sees in that baby's eyes the light that never was on sea or land, the consecration and the mother's dream. She broods over it till she effects for it in her own maternal fancy an apotheosis; and round its image in her heart there glows a bright halo of poetry. She sees through the fat. The grossness disappears before her rapt gaze. There remains the spirit from heaven:—

Sweet spirit newly come from Heaven
With all the God upon thee, still
Beams of no earthly light are given
Thy heart e'en yet to bless and fill.
Thy soul a sky whose sun has set,
Wears glory hovering round it yet;
And childhood's eve glows sadly bright
Ere life hath deepened into night.

So with the husband; so with the home; a glory gathers round them, which she alone, the intense worshipper, sees; and this unaesthetic Mrs. Smith, altogether unsatisfactory to the artistic eye, most practical, most commonplace, carries within her some of the Promethean flame, and is worthy of that halo of homely joy and affection with which she is crowned.

No. XXXV

SAHIB

[February 19, 1880.]

I first met him driving home from cutcherry in his buggy. He was a fat man in the early afternoon of life. In his blue eyes lay the mystery of many a secret salad and unwritten milk-punch; but though he smoked the longest cheroots of Trichinopoly and Dindigul, his hand was still steady and still grasped a cue or a long tumbler, with the unerring certainty of early youth and unshaken health.

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Of an evening he would come over to my bungalow in a friendly way; he would “just drop in,” as he used to say, in his pleasant offhand fashion, and he would irrigate himself with my brandy and soda, amid genial smiles and a brandishing of his long cheroot, playfully indicating his recognition of a stimulant with which he had been long acquainted.

As he began to glow with conversation and brandy, he would call for cards and play ecarte with me, until the room gradually resolved itself into one of the circles of some Californian Inferno, with a knave of spades digging the diamonds out of my heart and clubbing my trumps.

He would leave me throbbing with the eructation of oaths and the hollow aching of an empty purse, and uncertain whether to give up cards and liquor for hymns and Government paper or whether to call him back and take fortune by storm. But he had gone off with a resolute “good night” that tended to dispel illusions; he had gone to his own No. 1 Exshaw and his French novels, which he read as he lay on his solitary bachelor couch.

Yes,—his bachelor couch, for he was not married. He had loved much and often. He had loved a great many people in different stations of life, but they did not marry him. He was, upon the whole, glad that they did not marry him; for they were often married to other people, and he would have been lonely with one, dissatisfied with two, and embarrassed with more; so he continued his austere bachelor life; and always tried to love unostentatiously somebody else’s wife.

He loved somebody else’s wife, because he had no wife of his own, and the heart requires love. It was very wrong of him to love somebody else’s wife, and to sponge thus on affections which belonged to another; but then he had nothing puritanical or pharisaical in his nature; he was too highly cultivated to be moral, and arguing the point in the mood of sweet *Barbara*, he had often succeeded in persuading pretty women that he did right in loving them, though their household duties belonged to another.

I have said that he was too highly cultivated to be religious. He was exceedingly emotional and intellectual; and the procrustean bed of a creed would have been intolerable torture to him. Life throbbed around him in an aurora of skittles. The world of morality only raised a languid smile, or tickled an appetite pleased with novelty. An archdeacon, or a book of sermons delighted him. He would play with them and ponder over them, as if they were old china, or curious etchings. But he was never profane, especially before bishops, or children, and he always went to church on Sunday morning.

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He went to church on Sunday morning, because it was quaint and old-fashioned to do so, and because he loved to see the women of his acquaintance in their devotional moods and attitudes. There was hardly any mood or attitude in which he did not love to see a woman, partly because he was full of human sympathy and tenderness, and partly for other reasons. I suppose he was a student of human nature, though he always repudiated the notion of being a student of anything. He said that life was too short for serious study, and that every kind of pursuit should be tempered with fooling; while to prevent fooling becoming wearisome it should always be dashed with something earnest, as the sodawater is dashed with brandy, or the Government of India with Mr. Whitley Stokes.

Nigrorum memor, dum licet, ignium,
Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem:
Dulce est desipere in loco.

But besides being a man of pleasure and a capital billiard player, he was a Collector in the North-Western Provinces—a man who sat at the receipt of custom under a punkah, and read his *Pioneer*. The Lord High Cockalorum at Nynee Tal, Sir Somebody Thingmajig,—I am speaking of years ago—did not like him, I believe; but nobody thought any the worse of him for this; and although he continued to be a Collector until the shades of evening, when all his contemporaries had retired into the Dreamland of Commissionerships, he still loved and was loved; and to the very last he read his French novels and quoted Horace, sitting peacefully on the bank while the stream of promotion rolled on, knowing well that it would roll on *in omne aevum*, and not caring a jot whether it did, or did not. What was a seat at the Sadr Board[BB] to him, a seat among the solemn mummies of the service? He would not object to lie in the same graveyard with them; but to sit at the same board while this sensible warm motion of life still continued was too much; this could never be. He belonged to a higher order of spirits. As a boy he had not bartered the music of his soul for Eastern languages and the Rent Law; and as an old man he would not sit in state with corpses faintly animated by rupees.

To the last he mocked promotion; he mocked, till the dread mocker laid mocking fingers on his liver, and till gibe and laughter were silenced for evermore. So the Collector died, the merry Collector; and “where shall we bury the merry Collector?” became the last problem for his friends to deal with. I was in far away lands at the time with another friend of his—we mourned for the Collector.

We would have buried him in soft summer weather under sweet arbutus trees, near the shore of some murmuring Italian sea. The west wind should whisper its grief over his grave for ever:—

“Thou who didst waken from his summer-dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay

Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers."

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Blue-eyed girls have bound his dear head with garlands of the amorous rosemary. The echoes of sea-caves would have chanted requiems until time should be no more. Embalmed in darkness the nightingale would nightly for ever pour forth her soul in profuse strains of inconsolable ecstasy; by day the dove should moan in the flickering shade until the sun should cease to roll on his fiery path:—

“Where through groves deep and high,
Sounds the far billow,
Where early violets die under the willow.
There, through the summer day,
Cool streams are laving;
There, while the tempests sway,
Scarce are boughs waving;
There thy rest should'st thou take,
Parted for ever,
Never again to wake: never, O never!”

With tender hand we would have traced on his memorial urn some valediction—not without hope—of love and friendship.

It was otherwise. He was buried during a dust-storm in a loathsome Indian cemetery. No friend stood by the grave. A hard priest reluctantly pattered an abbreviated service: and people whispered that it was not well with the Collector's soul. He is now forgotten.

But, dear friend, thy memory blossoms in my heart for ever, thy merry laugh will still sound in my ear:—

“Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.”

No. XXXVIII

THE GRYPHON'S ANABASIS

[March 29, 1880.]

For some days the moustaches had been assuming a fiercer curl; more and more troopers had been added to the escort; the Lord whispered in the unreluctant ear softer and softer nothings; the scarlet runners bowed lower and lower; and it was rumoured that the Lord had given the Gryphon a pot of his own club-mutton hair-grease. It would be a halo. This development of glory must have a limit: a feeling got abroad that the Gryphon must go.

The Commander-in-Chief would come up to him bathed in smiles and say nothing; at other times with tears in his eyes he would swear with far resounding, multitudinous oaths to accompany the Gryphon. One day Wolseley's pocket-book and a tooth-brush would be packed in tin; next day they would be unpacked. The vacillation was awful; it amounted to an agony; it involved all the circles; the newspapers were profoundly moved.

The Gryphon starts. Editors forget their proofs; Baboos forget Moses; mothers forget their cicisbeos. The mind of Calcutta is turned upon the Gryphon.

A thousand blue eyes and ten thousand black focus him. He takes his seat. A double-first class carriage has been reserved. The Superintendent-General of Balloons and Fireworks appears on the platform: the Gryphon steps out, takes precedence of him, and then returns to his carriage. The excitement increases. Pre-paid telegrams are flashed to Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, and Lahore; the engine whistles "God save the Queen-Empress and the Secretary to the Punjab Government;" and the train pours out its glories into the darkness.

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My Lord is deeply stirred. He believes the Asian mystery has been solved. He returns to Government House and gives vent to his overwrought feelings in smoke—Parascho cigarettes; then he telegraphs himself to sleep. Dreams sweep over him, issuing from the fabled gates of shining ivory.

Meanwhile the Gryphon speeds on, yearning like a god in pain for his far-away aphelion in Kabul. Morning bashfully overtakes him; and the train dances into stations festooned with branches of olive and palm. A *feu-de-joie* of champagne corks is fired; special correspondents in clean white trousers enliven the scene; Baron Reuter's ubiquitous young man turns on rapturous telegrams; and a faint smile dawns darkly on the Gryphon's scorn-worn face.

Merrily shrieks the whistling engine as the Punjab comes sliding down, the round world to welcome its curled darling. It spurns with contemptuous piston the vulgar corn-growing provinces of Couper; it seeks the fields that are sown with dragon's teeth; it hisses forward with furious joy, like the flaming chariot of some Heaven-booked Prophet. Already Egerton anticipates its welcome advent. He can hardly sit still on his pro-consular throne; he smiles in docketts and demi-officials; he walks up and down his alabaster halls, and out into his gardens of asphodel, and snuffs the air. It is redolent with some rare effluvium; pomatum-laden winds breathe across the daffadown dillies from the warm chambers of the south. A cloud crosses His Honour's face, a summer cloud dissolving into sunshine. "It is the pomade of Saul:—but it is our own glorious David whose unctuous curls carry the Elysian fragrance." Then taking up his harp and dancing an ecstatic measure, he sings—

"He is coming, my Gryphon, my swell;
Were it ever so laden with care,
My heart would know him, and smell
The grease in his coal-black hair."

The whole of the Punjab is astir. Deputy Commissioners, and Extra Assistant Commissioners, and Kookas, and Sikhs, and Mazhabi-Sikhs crowd the stations; but the Gryphon passes fiercely onwards. The light of battle is now in his eye; he is in uniform; a political sword hangs from his divine waist; a looking-glass poses itself before him. Life burns wildly in his heart: time throbs along in hot seconds; Eternity unfolds around her far-receding horizons of glory.

The train emits telegrams as it hurls itself forward: "the Gryphon is well:—he is in the presence of his Future:—History watches him:—he is drinking a peg:—the *Civil and Military Gazette* has caught a glimpse of him:—glory, glory, glory, to the Gryphon, the mock turtle is his wash-pot, over Lyall will he cast his shoe."

Earthquakes are felt all along the line from Peshawar to Kabul. Strings of camels laden with portmanteaus stretch from the rising to the setting sun. The whole of the Guides

and Bengal Cavalry have resolved themselves into orderlies, and are riding behind the Gryphon. Tens of thousands of insurgents are lining the road and making holiday to see the Gryphon pass.

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Kabul is astir. Roberts, with bare feet and a rope round his neck, comes forward, performs *Kadambosi* and presents the keys of Sherpur to the Gryphon, who hands them graciously to his Extra Assistant Deputy Khidmatgar General. The wires are red hot with messages: "The Gryphon is taking a pill; the Gryphon is bathing; the Gryphon is breakfasting; the Gryphon is making a joke; the Gryphon has been bitten by a flea; the wound is not pronounced dangerous, he is recovering slowly:—Glory, glory to the Gryphon—Amen, amen!"— YOUR POLITICAL ORPHAN.

No. XXXIX

THE ORPHAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS

[June 8, 1880.]

Part I.—Persons I will try to avoid.

" II.—Things I will try to avoid.

" III.—Habits I will try to avoid.

" IV.—Opinions I will try to avoid.

" V.—Circumstances I will try to avoid.

* * * * *

PART I.—BAD COMPANY.

PERSONS I WILL TRY TO AVOID.

1.

He has a villa in the country; but his place of business is in town; somewhere near Sackville Street. Vulgarity had marked him for her own at an early age. She had set her mark indelibly on his speech, his manners, and his habits. When ten years old he had learned to aspirate his initial vowels; when twelve he had mastered the whole theory and practice of eating cheese with his knife; at seventeen his mind was saturated with ribald music of the Vaudeville type.

Reader, you anticipate me? You suppose I refer to one of Mr. Gladstone's new Ministers, or to one of Lord Beaconsfield's new Baronets?

You are, of course, mistaken. My man is a tailor; one of the best tailors in the world. He has made hundreds of coats for me; and he has sent me hundreds of circulars and bills.

Now, however, he has lost my address, and there seems a coolness between us. We stand aloof; the scars remaining.

His name is Sartor, and I owe him a good deal of money.

2.

He is always up to the Hills when the weather is unpleasant on the plains. Butterfly-collecting, singing to a guitar passionate songs of love and hate, and lying the live-long day on a long chair with a long tumbler in his hand, and a volume of Longfellow on the floor, are his characteristic pursuits. It is needless to say that he is the Accountant-General, and the last man in the world to suppose that I have given myself ten days' privilege leave to the Hills on urgent private affairs,—*affairs de coeur*, and *affairs de rien*, of sorts.

3.

His head is shaved to the bone; his face, of the Semitic type, is most sinister, truculent, and ferocious; his filthy Afghan rags bristle with knives and tulwars. He carries five or six matchlocks under one arm, and a hymn book, or Koran, under the other. He is in holy orders—a Ghazi! A pint, or a pint and a half, of my blood, would earn for him Paradise, with sharab, houris, and all the rest of it.

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4.

He was once an exceedingly pleasant fellow, full of talk and anecdote. We were at school together. He was captain of our eleven and at the head of the sixth form. I looked up to him; quoted him; imitated him; lent him my pocket money. Afterwards a great many other people lent him their money too, and played *ecarte* with him; yet at no period of his life was he rich, and now he is decidedly poor. Still the old love of borrowing money and playing *ecarte* burns hectically in his bosom, and with years a habit of turning up the king has grown upon him. No one likes to tell him that he has acquired this habit of turning up the king; he is so poor!

5.

She was rather nice-looking once, and I amused myself with fancying that I loved her. She was to me the summer pilot of an empty heart unto the shores of nothing. It was then that I acquired that facility in versification which has since so often helped to bind a book, or line a box, or served to curl a maiden's locks. She, learned reams of those verses by heart, and still repeats them. Her good looks and my illusions have passed away: but those verses—those thrice accursed verses, remain. How they make my ears tingle! How they burn my cheeks! Will time, think you, never impair her infernal memory?

6.

I lisp a little, it is true; but, thank goodness, no longer in numbers. I only lisp a little when any occasion arises to utter sibilant sounds; on such occasions this little girl, the only child of her mother, and she a widow, mimics my infirmity. The widow is silly and laughs nervously, as people with a fine sense of humour laugh in church when a book falls. This laugh of the widow is not easy to bear; for she is pretty. Were she not pretty her mocking child would come, I ween, to some untimely end.

7.

My Lord is, more or less, admired by two or three young ladies I know; and when he puts his arm round my neck and drags me up and down a crowded ball-room I cannot help wishing that they were in the pillory instead of me. I really wish to be polite to H.E., but how can I say that I think he was justified in finessing his deficit and playing surpluses?

How can I agree with him when he says that Abdur Rahman will come galloping in to Cabul to tender his submission as soon as he receives Mr. Lepel Griffin's photograph neatly wrapped up in a Post Office Order for two lakhs of rupees? And then that Star of India he is always pressing on me! As I say to him,—what should I do with it?

I can't go hanging things round my neck like King Coffee Calcalli, or the Emperor of Blue China.

But soon it will not be difficult for me to avoid my Lord: for

"Sic desideriiis icta fidelibus
Quaerit patria Caesarem."

8.

He still smiles when we meet; and I don't think any the less of him because he was called "Bumble" at school and afterwards made Governor of Bombay. Men drift unconsciously into these things. But when I happen to be near him he has a nervous way of lunging with his stick that I can't quite get over. They say he once dreamt that I had poked fun at him in a newspaper; and the hallucination continues to produce an angry aberration of his mind, coupled with gnashing of the teeth and other dangerous symptoms.

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9.

He is a huge gob of flesh, which is perhaps animated dimly by some spark of humanity smouldering filthily in a heart cancerous with money-grubbing. His whole character and mode of life stink with poisonous exhalations in my moral nostrils. Nature denounces, in her loud commination service, his clammy hand, his restless eye, his sinister and bestial mouth. Why should he waken me from the dreams of literature and the low music of my own reflections to disgorge from the cesspool of his mind the impertinent questions and the loathsome compliments which form his notion of conversation? He has come to “pay his respects.” I abhor “his respects.” He is rich:—What is that to me? He is powerful with all the power of corruption: I scorn his power, I figuratively spit upon it. He is perhaps the man whom the Government delights to honour. More shame to the Government! A bully at home, and a tyrant among his own people, on all sides dastardly and mean, he is a bad representative of a gentle and intellectual race, that for its heroic traditions, its high thoughts, its noble language and its exquisite urbanity has been the wonder of the whole world since the dawn of history.

10.

A cocked hat, a tailcoat with gold buttons and a rapier:—“See’st thou not the air of the court in these enfoldings? Hath not his gait in it the measure of the court? Receives not thy nose court-odour from him? Reflects he not on thy baseness court-contempt?” Observe how mysterious he is: consider the secrets burning on his tongue. He is all asides and whispers and winks and nods to other young popinjays of the same feather. He could tell you the very brand of the pills the Raja is taking: he receives the paltriest gossip of the Nawab’s court filtered through a lying vakeel. Ten to one he carries in his pocket a cipher telegram from Simla empowering him to confer the title of Jee[CC] on some neighbouring Thakor. Surely it is no wonder that he believes himself to be the hub of creation. Within a radius of twenty miles there is no one even fit to come between the wind and his nobility. If he should ever catch hold of you by the arm and take you aside for a moment from the madding crowd of a lawn-tennis party to whisper in your ear the arrival of a complimentary *Kharita* and a pound of sweetmeats from the Foreign Office for the Jam of Bredanbatta you should let off smiles and blushes in token of the honour and glory thus placed at your credit.

11.

All Assistant-Magistrates on their first arrival in this country, stuffed like Christmas turkeys with abstracts and notes, the pemmican of school-boy learnings, are more or less a weariness and a bore; but the youth who comes out from the admiring circle of sisters and aunts with the airs of a man of the world and the blight of a premature *ennui* is peculiarly insufferable. Of course he has never known at home any grown-up people beyond the chrysalis stage of undergraduatism,

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except to receive from them patronising hospitalities and little attentions in the shape of guineas and stalls at the opera, such as good-natured seniors delight to show to promising young kinsmen and friends. Yet his talk is of the studio, the editor's room, and the club; it is flavoured with the *argot* of the great world, the half world and Bohemia; he flings great names in your face, dropping with a sublime familiarity the vulgar prefixes of "Mr." and "Lord," and he overwhelms you with his knowledge of women and their wicked ways. Clever Ouida, with her tawdry splendours, her guardsmen, her peers, her painters and her Aspasia's, and the "society papers," with their confidences and their personalities, have much to answer for in the case of this would-be man of the world.

No. XL

SOME OCCULT PHENOMENA

[October 21, 1880.]

There were thirteen of them, and they sat down to dinner just as the clock in the steeple chimed midnight. The sheeted dead squeaked and gibbered in their graves; the owl hooted in the ivy. "For what we are going to receive may the Secret Powers of Nature and the force of circumstances make us truly thankful," devoutly exclaimed the domestic medium. The spirits of Chaos and Cosmos rapped a courteous acknowledgment on the table. *Potage a la sorciere* (after the famous recipe in Macbeth) was served in a cauldron; and while it was being handed round, Hume recited his celebrated argument regarding miracles. He had hardly reached the twenty-fifth hypothesis, when a sharp cry startled the company, and Mr. Cyper Redalf, the eminent journalist, was observed to lean back in his chair, pale and speechless. His whole frame was convulsed with emotion; his hair stood erect and emitted electro-biological sparks. The company sat aghast. A basin of soup dashed in his face and a few mesmeric passes soon brought him round, however; and presently he was able to explain to the assembled carousers the cause of his agitation. It was a recollection, a tender memory of youth. The umbrella of his boyhood had suddenly surged upon his imagination! It was an umbrella from which he had been parted for years: it was an umbrella round which had once centred associations solemn and mysterious. In itself there had been nothing remarkable about the umbrella. It was a gingham, conceived in the liberal spirit of a bygone age; such an umbrella as you would not easily forget when it had once fairly bloomed on the retina of your eye; yet an everyday umbrella, a commonplace umbrella half a century ago; an umbrella that would have elicited no remark from our great-grandmothers, hardly a smile from our grandmothers; but an umbrella well calculated to excite the affections and stimulate the imagination of an impulsive, high-spirited, and

impressionable boy. It was an umbrella not easily forgotten; an umbrella that necessarily produced a large and deep impression on the mind.

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All present were profoundly moved; a feeling of dismay crept over them, defacing their festivity. Tears were shed. Only from one pair of damp eyes did any gleam of hope or comfort radiate.

A distinguished foreigner, well known in the uttermost spirit-circles, wiped from his brow drops of perspiration which some dream had loosened from his brain. He felt the tide of psychic force beating upon the high shores of his heart. He was conscious of a constitutional change sweeping like a tempest over his protoplasmic tissue. He felt that the secret fountains of his being were troubled by the angel of spirit-rapping, and that his gross, unbelieving nature stepped down, bathed, and was healed. The Moses of the spirit-wilderness struck the rock of his material life, and occult dynamics came welling forth from the undiscovered springs of consciousness. His mortal statics lost their equilibrium in a general flux of soul. A cyclone raged round his mesmeric aura. He began to apprehend an epiphany of electro-biological potentiality. The fierce light that never was in kerosine or tallow dawned round him; matter melted like mist; souls were carousing about him; the great soul of nature brooded like an aurora of clairvoyance above all; his awful mediumhood held him fiercely in her mystic domination; and things grew to a point. From the focus of the clairvoyant aurora clouds of creative impulse gathered, and sweeping soulward were condensed in immaterial atoms upon the cold peaks of Purpose. Thus a spiritual gingham impressed upon his soul of souls a matrix, out of which, by a fine progenitive effort, he now begets and ejects a materialized gingham into a potato-plot of the garden without.

The thing is patent to all who live above the dead-level of vulgar imbecility. No head of a department could fail to understand it. Indeed, to such as live on the uplands of speculation, not only is the process lucid in itself, but it is luciferous, illuminating all the obscure hiding-places of Nature. It is the magic-lantern of creation; it is the key to all mysticism, to the three-card trick, and to the basket-trick; it sheds a glory upon thimble-rigging, a halo upon legerdemain; it even radiates vagabond beams of splendour upon pocket-picking and the cognate arts. It explains how the apples get into the dumpling; how the milk comes out of the cocoanut; how the deficit issues from the surplus; how matter evolves itself from nothing. It renders the hypothesis of a First Cause not only unnecessary, but exquisitely ludicrous. Under such dry light as it offers to our intelligence the whole epos of Christianity seems a vapid dream.

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But I anticipate conclusions. We must go back to the dinner-party and to Mr. Cyper Redalf, who has been restored to consciousness, and who still is the object of general sympathy; for it is not until the disturbance in the distinguished foreigner's nerve aura has amounted to a psychic cyclone that the company perceive his interesting condition, and begin to look for a manifestation. The hopes of some fondly turn to raps, others desire the pressure of a spirit hand, or the ringing of a bell, or the levitation of furniture, or the sound of a spirit voice, the music of an immaterial larynx. Dinner is soon forgotten; the thing has become a *seance*, hands are joined, the lights are instinctively lowered, and the whole company, following an irresistible impulse, march round and round the room, and then out into the darkness after the soul-stirred foreigner, after the foreigner of distinction. Is it unconscious cerebration that leads them to the potato-plot, or is it the irresistible influence of some Supreme Power, something more occult and more interesting than God, that compels them to fall on their knees, and grub with their hands in the recently manured potato-bed? I must leave this question unanswered, as a sufficiently occult explanation does not occur to me: but suffice it to say that this search after truth, this burrowing in the gross earth for some spiritual sign, appears to me a spectacle at once inspiring and touching. It seems to me that human life has seldom had anything more beautiful and more ennobling to show than these postmaster-generals, boards of revenue, able editors, and foreigners of distinction asking Truth, the Everlasting Verity, for a sign and then searching for it in a potato-field. In this glorious quest every circumstance demands our respectful attention. They search on their hands and knees in the attitude of passionate prayer; they search in the dark; they seize the dumb earth with delirious fingers; they knock their heads against one another and against the dull, hard trunks of trees. Still they search: they wrestle with the Earth: she must yield up her secrets. Nor will Earth deny to them the desired boon. Theirs is the true spirit of devout inquiry, and they are persons of consideration in evening-dress. Nature will unveil her charms. Earth with the groans of an infinite pain, a boundless travail, yields up the gingham umbrella.

We will not intrude upon their immediate rapture as they carry their treasure away with loving hands; but it is necessary to note the means taken to prove, for the satisfaction only of a foolish and unbelieving world, the supernatural nature of the phenomenon. The umbrella is examined under severe test conditions: it is weighed in a vacuum, and placed under the spectroscope. It is found to be porous and a conductor of heat; but it is not soluble in water, though it boils at 500 deg. Fahr. To demonstrate the absence of trickery or collusion everyone turns up his sleeves and empties his waistcoat pockets. There is no room for sleight of hand in presence of this searching scientific investigation. The umbrella *is* certainly *not* a supposititious animal; yet it is the umbrella of Mr. Cyper Redalf's boyhood. No one can doubt this who sees him clasp it in a fond embrace, who sees him shed burning tears on its voluminous folds.—THE ORPHAN.

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ELUCIDATIONS

No. 1

WITH THE VICEROY

The late Edward Robert Bulwer, First Earl of Lytton (1831-1891), Viceroy and Governor-General of India from April 12, 1876, to June 8, 1880, is here depicted from the superficial point of view of his character as a man, a poet, and a statesman generally current at the time.

Lord Lytton was thoroughly unconventional in all his manners and moods, and in his methods of conducting the affairs of his great office.

As a boy of seven he was already scribbling verses; and he wrote a poem, "The Prisoner of Provence," which turns upon the famous story of the Man in the Iron Mask, only two or three months before his death. In fact, all through Lord Lytton's distinguished career, as his father had done before him, he found recreation in change of employment. As forcibly and eloquently stated by his daughter, Lady Betty Balfour, in her introduction to the 1894 edition of his *Selected Poems*, "The minds of both were ceaselessly active, and they turned without a pause from one kind of thought and business to another as readily as they turned from either to easy, disengaged conversation. Had the rival calls of his many-sided intellect been at variance, the poet in my father would always have had the preference."

Ali Baba, it may be taken for granted, did not intend to characterise as "a flood of twaddle" the whole of Lord Lytton's verse. Poetry which, as far as published up to 1855, called forth from Leigh Hunt warm praise for its beauties and mercy for its defects, in these words embodied in a letter to Mr. John Forster, the friend and biographer of Charles Dickens.—

"I have read every bit of Owen Meredith's [his now well-known pseudonym] volume, and it has left me in a state of delighted admiration. He is a truly musical, reflecting, impassioned and imaginative poet, with a tendency to but one of the faults of his contemporaries and that chiefly in his minor pieces—I mean the doing too much, and the giving too much importance and emphasis to every fancy and image that comes across him, so that his pictures lose their proper distribution of light and shade, nay, of distinction between great and small. On his greatest occasions, however, he can evidently rid himself of this fault."

During Lord Lytton's Indian career, those who were on political or self-interested grounds opposed to his policy—and there were many such—were wont, as recorded by his daughter, to attempt to discredit the statesman by reiterating that he was a poet.

As a matter of fact, Aberigh Mackay's acquaintance with Lord Lytton's poetry was mainly, if not entirely, based upon a volume edited by N.A. Chick, and published in Calcutta in 1877, quaintly entitled: "The Imperial Bouquet of Pretty Flowers from the Poetical Parterre of Robert Lord Lytton, Viceroy and Governor-General of India."

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Our Author's knowledge of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration was necessarily based upon the views—*pro* and *con*—expressed by the daily newspaper writers of the period, who wrote, of course, uninitiated in political affairs as a rule, and without those full expositions now embodied in many notable recent publications, official and other, foremost among which we would cite Lady Betty Balfour's History of his Indian Administration, published in 1899, and her edition of her father's personal and literary letters, issued in two vols. in 1906.

Verily "Time tries All," and an impartial and notable summary of Lord Lytton's services to his country, written by the Reverend W. Elvin, is engraven on the monument to his memory in the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, which was designed and partially carried out by the sculptor, Mr. Gilbert.

+HE WAS A DIPLOMATIST RICK IN THE QUALITIES, OFFICIAL, AND SOCIAL, BY WHICH AMITY WITH FOREIGN NATIONS IS MAINTAINED.+

+A VICEROY INDEPENDENT IN HIS VIEWS, RESOLUTE IN ACTION, LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE.+

+A POET OF MANY STYLES, EACH THE EXPRESSION OF HIS HABITUAL THOUGHTS.+

+A MAN OF SUPERIOR FACULTIES HIGHLY CULTIVATED BE LITERATURE, ARDENT IN HIS AFFECTIONS, TENDER AND GENEROUS IN ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE, LAVISH IN HIS COMMENDATION OF OTHERS, AND HUMBLE IN HIS ESTIMATE OF HIMSELF.+

As a good example of Lord Lytton's independent views, and tenderness and generosity in all the circumstances of life, the following incident may be quoted:—

Among many changes in Indian administration which he initiated, and which were severely decried at the time, but the benefits of which experience has amply vindicated, was the amalgamation of Oudh with, or rather annexation to, the North-Western Provinces, the final arrangements being completed at the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi on January 1 1877, with the concurrence—which he had sought previously—of all the principal Talukdars of Oudh there assembled.

The great pageant at Delhi (which formed the subject of Ali Baba's first contribution to *Vanity Fair*, and which he attended officially as the Guardian of the Raja of Rutlam), so far from being a mere empty show, as then decried by his political foes, enabled the Viceroy to settle, promptly and satisfactorily by personal conferences, a great many important administrative questions. All as recorded by him in his narrative letter of December 23, 1876, to January 10, 1877, to her late Majesty Queen Victoria, which embraced events at Delhi, Pattiala, Umballa, Aligurh, and Agra.

Among the Oudh officials who were dispossessed of their appointments in 1877, some of them with but scanty compensation, was the late Mr. (afterwards Sir) E.N.C. Braddon, a kinsman of the novelist, who held the appointment of Superintendent of Stamps, Stationery, and Registration at Lucknow. Mr. Braddon was an uncovenanted servant of comparatively short service, and eligible for a very moderate compensation. Lord Lytton, unsolicited, took up his case, overruled various objections, obtained liberal terms for Mr. Braddon by which he was able to resign his appointment and proceed to Tasmania, where he entered political life, rising to be Premier and afterwards Agent-General for that Colony in London, and ultimately obtaining, in 1891, his K.C.M.G.

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It was to Lord Lytton's personal action—in the face of would-be obsequious apathy in certain quarters—that Aberigh-Mackay, the youngest on the list, was nominated a Fellow of the Calcutta University in 1880, an honour usually reserved for officials of high standing. He then availed himself of that status to bring about the affiliation of the Rajkumar College at Indore to the same University, with, as a matter of course, the concurrence of the Syndicate.

No. 2

THE A.-D.-C.-IN-WAITING

We have here an admirable summary of the highly important personal duties of a tactful A.D.C. to an Indian Viceroy. Not the least important being the superintendence of the Invitation Department. It was in this very connection that an A.D.C. to an Indian Governor, fresh from a West Indian appointment and Society somewhat on “Tom Cringle’s Log” conditions, by issuing invitations to a *Quality Dance*, gave rise, in Southern India, to a social commotion which reacted very unfavourably as regards the efficient working of various departments of his Chief’s general administration.

In pre-Mutiny days in India an officer who could not carve meat and fowl well had a very poor chance of such an appointment. Happily the institution of *a la Russe* fashions in the service of the table has or many years past rendered such qualifications unnecessary.

To the regret of a very wide circle, the “loud, joyful and steeplechasing Lord”—the late Lord William Beresford—alluded to by Ali Baba, died in England in 1900. From 1875 to 1881 he was A.D.C. to Viceroys of India, and it was in the “distant wars” of the Jowaki expedition, 1877-8, in the Zulu War, 1879, where he gained the Victoria Cross, and in the Afghan War, 1880, that his military career was spent.

From 1881 to 1894 Lord William Beresford very ably served Viceroys of India as their Military Secretary. Services which were admirably summed up by a speaker on Dec. 30, 1893, when he was entertained at a farewell dinner at the Town Hall, Calcutta, by 180 friends, who declared that “he had raised the office to a science, and himself from an official into an institution, and acquired a reputation absolutely unique.”

The voluminous and noteworthy annals of Indian sport can show no keener sportsman and successful rider of steeplechases and polo player. He won the Viceroy’s Cup six times and many other principal events at race-meetings in India.

In 1894 Lord William retired from India, and in England maintained a renowned racing stable, being in addition one of the first to own American horses and employ American jockeys.

No. 3

WITH THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

An exceedingly important change affecting the power and functions of the Indian Commander-in-chief, together with various other reforms in the military administration of India, were all anticipated, foreshadowed, and—it is believed—largely helped on by this very paper, and others under the general heading of *Things in India*, contributed by Ali Baba to *Vanity Fair* during 1879.

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Ali Baba, unlike some others that might readily be cited, would doubtless have been foremost in according most generous acknowledgments to the services in the cause of Indian Army reform, rendered in past days by many great Commanders-in-Chief in India.

Chief among such men might be cited Sir Charles James Napier (1782-1853), the conqueror of Scinde, who in 1849 returned to India, nominated by the Duke of Wellington to deal with the crisis caused by the Sikh campaign. Arriving in Calcutta on the 6th May, he at once assumed the command, the term of service of Lord Gough, who had brought the campaign to a successful end, being concluded. Napier's too short administration of little over eighteen months was rather judicial than military, but he effected many reforms on the parade ground and in cantonments.

The newspapers of the day eagerly chronicled the records of the proceedings in which he vigorously combated the vices of intoxication, gambling, insubordination, and other crimes and misdemeanours, both in officers and men of the Queen's and Company's forces alike.

It was during his command that separate barrack-room accommodation was provided for married soldiers. The state of affairs hitherto prevailing may well be imagined by an inspection of the barrack life pictures and caricatures of artists such as Ramberg, Gillray, Rowlandson, and others.

He also founded Soldiers' Institutes, and encouraged soldiers in the Queen's army to rear such pets as monkeys and parrots by regulations for their transport on route and transfer marches, which afforded material for many humorous sketches and paragraphs in the pages of *The Delhi Punch*. Wise and considerate regulations which are continued in the existing concessions as to the carriage of "soldiers' pets" by troop trains and homeward-bound Indian transports.

Colonel R.H. Vetch (*Dictionary of National Biography*) admirably sums up Napier's character by recording of him that "his disregard of luxury, simplicity of manner, careful attention to the wants of the soldiers under his command, and enthusiasm for duty and right won him the admiration of his men. His journals testify to his religious convictions, while his life was one long protest against oppression, injustice and wrongdoing. Generous to a fault, a radical in politics, yet an autocrat in government, hot-tempered and impetuous, he was a man to inspire strong affection or the reverse, and his enemies were as numerous as his friends."

Altogether a very different character from that which all and sundry are warned to avoid by the—to a great extent—satirical word-picture recorded by Ali Baba.

No. 4

WITH THE ARCHDEACON

In this article Ali Baba has portrayed with infinite skill and geniality the many-sided character of the late Joseph Baly, M.A., who was Archdeacon of Calcutta from 1872 until he retired from India in 1883. Appointed to the Bengal Ecclesiastical establishment in 1861, Mr. Baly served as Chaplain at Sealkote, Simla, and Allahabad until 1870, when, while on furlough in England, he acted as Rector of Falmouth until 1872. In 1885 he was appointed chaplain at the church in Windsor Park, built by Queen Victoria, in which appointment he died in 1909, aged eighty-five.

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From the commencement of his Indian career the Reverend gentleman interested himself in that burning question of the employment of the Anglo-Indian and Eurasian community of India; a large indigenous and permanent element in the population, the disposal of which is still a question of very great public importance, and its practical solution a pressing necessity. The Archdeacon had this question, paraphrased by Ali Baba as that of the “Mean Whites,” greatly at heart, and the conclusions he arrived at and suggestions made by him from time to time, ably and vigorously summarized in a paper he read before the Bengal Social Science Association on May 1st, 1879, in Calcutta, were productive of considerable good.

Archdeacon Baly’s predecessor was the Venerable John Henry Pratt, an attached friend of Aberigh-Mackay’s father, to whom his book, *From London to Lucknow*, published in 1860, was “affectionately inscribed.” Certain traits in the character of this Archdeacon known to Ali Baba by tradition are portrayed in the concluding portion of the paper.

No. 5

WITH THE SECRETARY TO GOVERNMENT

This article is of a composite nature. At the time it was published in 1879, the foreign policy of Lord Lawrence was a burning question, and in connection with the Afghan War then running its course, renewed attention was directed to the two essays, “Masterly Inactivity” and “Mischievous Activity,” first published in *The Fortnightly Review* in December 1869, and March 1870, respectively, by a comparatively young Bengal Civilian, the late J.W.S. Wyllie, C.S.I. (1835-1870). Beyond the fact that these essays and certain other papers by the same brilliant author on the subject of the policy of the Indian Government with independent principalities and powers beyond the bounds of India were probably in Ali Baba’s mind, the character of the supercilious Secretary was very remote from that of Mr. Wyllie.

The typical person held up to derision by Ali Baba has been oft times decried as one very detrimental to good government in India, where a personal and absolute rule must needs obtain for some time to come. By none more pointedly than by the present Secretary of State for India when addressing his constituents at Arbroath on October 21, 1907, when he informed them that “India is perhaps the one country—bad manners, overbearing manners are very disagreeable in all countries—India is the only country where bad and overbearing manners are a political crime.” Or, as a prominent Mohammedan in India very well said, “When the English govern from the heart they do it admirably; when they try to be clever, they make a mess of it.”

In the restored passage on p. 35 there is delineated a Secretary in striking contrast to the other. The Secretary in the Foreign Department referred to was the late Mr. le Poer Wynne, under whom Aberigh-Mackay had worked at Simla in 1870.

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No. 6

H.E. THE BENGALI BABOO

Ali Baba avowedly treats the Bengali Baboo merely as a being “full of inappropriate words and phrases ... and the loose shadows of English thought.” Such being the case, it must never be forgotten that he is the product, in every sense of the word, of British modes of purely secular education. Modes which, eminently at the present time, are being gravely called in question.

All of which has been more lately elaborated by “F. Anstey,” *i.e.* Mr. Thomas Anstey Guthrie, in the persons of “Baboo Jabberjee, B.A.” and “A Bayard from Bengal.”

The broad results of purely secular and mainly literary education might in fact be quite fairly summed up in the reproachful words of Caliban—

“You taught me language; and my profit on’t
Is, I know how to curse.”

Aberigh-Mackay devoted his life in India to counteract the effects of purely literary instruction, which he persistently deprecated; and the last thirty years have undoubtedly witnessed many advances in the same direction, tending to the material progress of India.

Ali Baba trembled for the future of Baboodom, that its tendencies as he depicted them might infect others who might pass, through various stages, into “trampling, hope-bestirred crowds, and so on, out of the province of Ali Baba and into the columns of serious reflection.”

No. 7

WITH THE RAJA

In this article we have a vivid picture—mainly—of a type of Indian Noble it was Aberigh-Mackay’s aim and life’s work in India to avoid creating. That too from the beginning of his career, but more especially in the training, and that not merely in book-learning, he initiated and earned on up to the last days of his life within and without the Residency College at Indore. To paraphrase the language of the then recently appointed Agent to the Governor-General for Central India—Sir Lepel Griffin—in his first Administrative Report, that for 1880-1881, the happy effects of the training some of the leading Chiefs of Malwa received under Aberigh-Mackay were visible in the improved administration of their States. The most notable instance, the Governor-General’s Agent points out, being observable in Rutlam. His Highness the “Rajah Saheb having conducted the

Government with such ability and success as would do credit to the ablest administrators.”

It is well worthy of special notice that the Rajah of Rutlam had been, from a period several years antecedent to Aberigh-Mackay’s coming to Indore, his special ward.

Most effectually did Aberigh-Mackay, one of the best all-round sportsmen that Modern India ever saw, counteract the “prodigiously fat white horse with pink points” tendencies of any of his *alumni*. The description of the kingly cavalcade in this article, *vide* p. 52, calling forth from John Lockwood Kipling (*Beast and Man in India*, p. 196), a most competent and discriminating authority, the following eulogy:—

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“The late Mr. Aberigh-Mackay (Ali Baba of *Vanity Fair*), one of the brightest and most original, as well as one of the most generous spirits who ever handled Indian subjects, has drawn a picture in his *Twenty-one Days in India* of a Raja and his Sow[=a]ri [Cavalcade] which could not be bettered by a hair’s breadth.”

Aberigh-Mackay in his earliest writings—e.g. when, in describing *The Great Native Princes* in his “Handbook of Hindustan,” published in 1875, he enters the “Remark” against the Nawab of Bahawalpur, “A smart boy of fourteen; a good polo-player”—laid great stress on the desirability of training all Indian noblemen’s sons in horsemanship of all kinds. That his efforts in this direction were crowned with an abiding and ever-increasing success is well borne out by the testimony contained in an article, by Lieutenant E.R. Penrose, 23rd Bengal N.L. Infantry, accompanying his pictures of “Incidents in the Career of a Polo-Pony,” which appeared in *The Graphic*, April 10, 1886. Lieutenant Penrose then wrote:—

“Polo is such an institution now in this country, that even in the remotest station a couple of enthusiasts may be found who will work heaven and earth to get a game of some sort. I have lately been stationed at Indore, where there is a collegiate school for the sons of native Princes and gentlemen. The head of the college was Mr. Aberigh-Mackay, the author of that popular book ‘Twenty-one Days in India.’ He was a keen polo-player, and quite imbued his pupils with his ardour, so that, though he is now dead, his memory is green throughout the whole of Central India. The impetus he gave the game has lasted, and consequently, with a few of the senior boys in the school, and some of the men of the troop of Central Indian Horse (who begin to play almost as soon as they can sit a horse), we could always get up a game. Some of the boys are not great riders, but like most natives they have wonderfully good ‘eyes,’ and rarely miss the ball. Polo-ponies come in very usefully in other ways—such as pig-sticking, for their training makes them so handy that it is easier to tackle a boar on a polo-pony than when mounted on a horse. Besides, they are cheap, and the men can afford a pony where they could not stand the expense of a horse.”

Another very notable point in this article is the expression of confidence in the loyalty, as a general rule, of the Nobles of India. This same belief—nay more, *conviction*—is expressed all through the writings of Ali Baba.

At the same time, voice is given to the thought that “they have built their houses of cards on the thin crust of British Rule that now covers the crater, and they are ever ready to pour a pannikin of water into a crack to quench the explosive forces rumbling below,” *vide* p. 48.

Reuter, in a telegram from Calcutta dated Friday, February 11, 1910, and printed in but few of the London newspapers of the 14th, informs us that:—

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“The leading Nobles and Gentry of Bengal have formed an Imperial League for the promotion of good feeling between Indians and the Government, the denunciation of anarchy and sedition, and the education of the people by means of lectures and pamphlets in the views of the Government.

“The Maharajah of Burdwan is president, and Maharajah Sir Pradyat Tagore secretary of the new league.”

It must of course be borne in mind that since this article was written by Ali Baba, the formation of the Imperial Service troops, and the Imperial Cadet corps, furnished and in some cases officered by Indian Nobles and their sons, many of whom were educated at Delhi and Indore by Aberigh-Mackay, surely warrants us in believing that more than a mere “pannikin of water” is *now* available, if need be.

No. 8

WITH THE POLITICAL AGENT

The position of Political Agent, important though it was in 1879, is much more so now. The territories of the Indian Princes are being daily opened up more and more by railways; many of them contain coal, iron, gold, and other minerals in payable quantities, and the development of these resources call for very delicate handling in the matter of friendly advice by Political Agents.

In recent years, nay, at the present time, loud complaints have been published, emanating from experienced and unbiassed sources, that the position of many of the great feudatories of India, who by their treaty rights are much more allies than subjects of His Majesty the King-Emperor, has been reduced to that of a mere figure-head, with no real authority except when they meekly obey the dictation of the British Resident.

It is a fact that many of the Political Agents in 1879 were officers who had served in Madras Cavalry Regiments, the Central India Horse and other corps, but it is also a fact that many of the most successful administrators India has ever seen have been Soldier-Politicians.

Colonel Henderson, so pleasantly cited by Aberigh-Mackay, and happily still alive, was himself a Madras Cavalry Officer, who served as Under-Secretary to the Foreign Department of the Government of India, as Resident in Kashmir and latterly in Mysore, and Superintendent of operations for the suppression of Thagi and Dakaiti.

Our late King's visit to India as Prince of Wales in 1875-6 owed a good deal of its success to Colonel Henderson, who was special officer in attendance, and his services in connection therewith were recognized by a Companionship of the order of the Star of

India. It may also be mentioned here that Aberigh-Mackay became his Brother-in-law in October, 1873.

No. 9

WITH THE COLLECTOR

In this sketch, warm with local colour, the real pivot of the great official wheel of Indian administration, "the Collector," is drawn with the exactness due to his importance. Withal very lifelike and picturesque in many of its touches.

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Thirty years have of course made great changes in many of the details of life in the districts of an Indian Province, now as a rule connected up by lines of railway. Improved leave rules and many other causes have rendered intercourse with the home country much easier. Whether or no this far easier intercourse is altogether an advantage to the rulers and the ruled is what is termed a “burning question” at the present moment. In a word, that improved communications have not correspondingly increased our sympathy with a new birth in intellect, social life, and the affairs of state, all of which are mainly the results of British rule.

The functions of a Collector, sketched by Ali Baba in an entertaining medley, have increased enormously of late years, and the position is now said to be less desirable than of old, when it was amusingly said of every member of civilian society, that the verb “to collect” was conjugated thus: “I am a collector, you are a collector, he should be a collector, they will be collectors,” and so on, *ad infinitum*.

NOS. 10, 20 AND 35

BABY IN PARTIBUS

This sketch, which may well be termed a beautiful lament over poor Baby, has brought back vividly to many a one touching recollections: a picture in fact which appealed, and continues to appeal, to an audience infinitely wider than that of Anglo-India. The same may be said of the sketches “The Grass-Widow,” p. 139; “Mem-Sahib,” p. 157, by many considered the best sketch of all; and “Sahib,” p. 181. All of them full of that pathos and tenderness akin to, but yet differing widely from, the bantering style of the others, which are also full of allusions and covert references to individuals and affairs of the Anglo-India of thirty years ago.

In “Sahib,” however, there are traits of character and other touches taken from the life of one who was—among many other features—a “merry Collector,” not yet forgotten by a rapidly decreasing circle of contemporaries. While time and ameliorated conditions have changed the “loathsome Indian cemetery” into something of a garden in which Ali Baba our friend in common would have rejoiced.

No. 11

THE RED CHUPRASSIE

Alas! the Red Chuprassie is still a rift in the lute of Indian administration; a reform in Chuprassies would doubtless be more beneficial to India than any wonder-working *nostrum*—such as Advisory Councils or extended Legislative Councils.

The cry for reform in Chuprassies, or in other words the underlings of many Departments, is a very old one. Ali Baba's denunciation of the "Red Chuprassie" powerfully expands that one by Sir Alfred Lyall, where in his poem of *The Old Pindaree*, written in 1866, the "belted knave" is associated with the "hungry retainers" and others forming the camp establishment of an official on tour.

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Ali Baba's practice of adequate payment, which he states—in a spirit of banter—to be potent to remove temptation to bribery and corruption, has received attention in connection with recent ameliorations of the terms of subordinate service in India, and it is believed has met with a certain amount of success.

The well-meant but not altogether satisfactory trial of the Gaikwar of Baroda, by a mixed tribunal of Indian Nobles and highly placed British officials, which took place during Lord Northbrook's viceroyalty, is alluded to in the conclusion of the article; in which the Anglo-Indian soubriquet for a subservient person—Joe Hookham, literally *jaisa hukam* = as may be ordered—is also introduced.

No. 12

THE PLANTER

It is now upwards of thirty years since this genial picture of a veritable "Farmer Prince" was painted—in bold and broad outline, of course. The years that have passed bringing in their train many altered conditions, the most important of all, perhaps, being the replacing of a natural vegetable dye such as indigo by chemically produced substitutes.

Probably in a few more years the still remaining features of the Bengal indigo planter's off duty life as depicted by Ali Baba will have quite disappeared, unless the substitution of sugar planting for that of indigo now receiving considerable attention in various Bengal, and more particularly Tirhoot, districts prove a success.

Anyway, the Macdonalds, the Beggs, and the Thomases, names now, as formerly, prominently identified with the great indigo industry, have been assured of continual remembrance. So prominent, in fact, has the Scotch element among planting families always been that it is said that if any one present at a race, polo, or Christmas week gathering were to shout out "Mac!" from the verandah of the Tirhoot Club, every face in the crowd would be simultaneously turned towards the speaker.

The bantering allusion to "Mr. Caird and *The Nineteenth Century*," applies to that great authority on many and very varied agricultural subjects, the late Sir James Caird, who died in 1892. In 1878-79 he was deputed to India by the Secretary of State as a member of the Indian Famine Commission called into being by the Strachey Brothers; the general impressions then formed by a six months' tour through India being embodied in the series of articles, entitled "Notes by the Way in India; the Land and the People," which appeared from July to October, 1879, in *The Nineteenth Century* magazine, thereafter in book form in 1883, and in an augmented form as a third edition in 1884.

For a detailed account of a Bengal indigo planter's life, mainly confined, however, to the processes and surroundings of planting and manufacture, there is no more valuable record than the late Colesworthy Grant's well illustrated book, "Rural Life in Bengal," which was published in 1860. In that work may be found a drawing of "Mulnath House," a glorified illustration of the fast disappearing surroundings of a Lower Bengal planter's residence.

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No. 13

THE EURASIAN

In November, 1879, when this “Study in chiaro-oscuro” was published, renewed attention was being directed to the Eurasian community in India, mainly by the discussions in all circles aroused by the publication of the late Archdeacon Baly’s Bengal Social Science Association Paper of May in the same year, which dealt with the employment, *inter alia*, of Europeans of mixed parentage in India; a question which still engages the anxious consideration of many Indian statesmen. Ali Baba’s “Study” is not an ill-natured summary of the widespread discussions of 1879, but indeed as far back as 1843, the late John Mawson in his paper, “The Eurasian Belle,” which first appeared in the Calcutta newspaper, *The Bengal Hurkaru*, had approached the social and domestic side of the question, and to some extent may be said to have anticipated Ali Baba.

NOS. 14 AND 17

THE VILLAGER AND THE SHIKARRY

Both of these sketches are examples of what maybe termed Ali Baba’s contemplative mood, the villager’s life being revealed to us in all its pathos and interest, otherwise than through an atmosphere of statistics and reports—the daily life of probably two hundred million of the inhabitants of India.

Aberigh-Mackay early showed in his book “A Manual of Indian Sport,” which, in addition to collecting in small compass lessons taught by many a noted Indian hunter, contains a great deal of original matter useful to every would-be sportsman, that he was well fitted to depict “The Shikarry” in correct and graphic manner and from actual personal knowledge.

NOS. 15 AND 16

THE OLD COLONEL AND THE CIVIL SURGEON

“The Old Colonel” and “The Civil Surgeon,” p. 123, are both types of characters that have since practically ceased to exist in India, although fairly numerous in the 1870’s.

“The Old Colonel,” a relic of the great changes caused by the disappearance of many regiments during the Indian Mutiny, and the alterations in Army organisation due to the introduction of the “Staff corps” system, has disappeared from the scene, having long since attained the pensioned rank for which he was ripening when depicted by Ali Baba.

As regards “The Civil Surgeon,” an entirely new state of conditions has altered him also. Even, however, in Ali Baba’s time it could not be said—as it was “long ago”—that a medical officer intended for an Indian career, in order to become perfectly qualified need only sleep one night on a medicine chest.

All the same, to those of us who can look back to life in India forty or fifty years ago, there will surely arise visions of many genial old colonels and doctors, full of good stories and much sympathy in health or sickness for those just entering upon an Indian career.

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Captain Atkinson, in his book "Curry and Rice," published at the lime of the Indian Mutiny, depicted by pen and pencil individuals who in after years developed into Ali Baba's subjects. Illustrations which may now surely be regarded as valuable records of past Anglo-Indian life and character.

NOS. 19 AND 21

THE TRAVELLING M.P. AND ALI BABA ALONE

"The Travelling M.P." requires no elucidation. He is still with us and has developed greatly during the course of years, in fact, increased facilities of communication between England and India have much increased the species. Happily there are correctives in the shape of adverse votes by constituents which, in some notorious instances at the last Parliamentary elections, have relieved the situation.

As to "Ali Baba Alone," nothing could add to the perfect picture which, among other things, good-naturedly alludes to many surmises and rumours current at the time as to the identity of the Author, leading in some cases to public disclaimers by various highly placed officials and others.

THE TEAPOT SERIES

"SOCIAL DISSECTION" and "THE ORPHAN'S GOOD RESOLUTIONS"

These papers when first published in *The Bombay Gazette* aroused keen speculation as to their authorship. They are as applicable to Society everywhere as to that of Anglo-India. Greatly appreciated all over India, they were, with the others of the series, reprinted in book form and published shortly before the Author's death in a volume, entitled "Serious Reflections by a Political Orphan," which has long been out of print.

"THE GRYPHON'S ANABASIS"

The amiable and other idiosyncracies—personal and official—of the late Sir Lepel Griffin, K.C.S.I., who, born in 1840, died on March 9, 1908, having retired in 1889 from the Bengal Civil Service, which he entered in 1860 by open competition, and of which he was a distinguished ornament, are very well portrayed in this article. An article of very tragic interest, because its publication was the indirect cause, in all human probability, of the death of its Author.

This is not the place to recount Sir Lepel Griffin's career in many high places of Indian administration and diplomacy, latterly more particularly in the Punjab and Afghanistan.

Suffice it here to say that in 1880, when Chief Secretary of the Punjab, a post he had then held for upwards of nine years—earning the reputation of being the *best* occupant of that very important and responsible appointment ever known—Mr. (as he then was) Lepel Griffin was selected by the Viceroy—Lord Lytton—to proceed to Kabul, and arrange for its Government as a prelude to the termination of the British occupation of Afghanistan.

Under the Viceroyalty of Lord Lytton's successor, the Marquess of Ripon, and after anxious negotiations, Abdur Rahman was proclaimed Amir of Afghanistan, July 22, 1880. In a spirit of thoroughly good-natured banter the Gryphon's veritable "Expedition" from Lahore to the seat of Government to receive the Viceroy's instructions, and thereafter Afghanistan-ward to carry them out—made under very different conditions from that one by Cyrus the younger—is amusingly portrayed.

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Travelling through the provinces then ruled over by the late Sir George Couper and Sir Robert Egerton respectively, until finally Kabul is reached, where Sir Frederick Roberts handed over his powers to the Civil authority, as embodied in the Gryphon. A progress which, as profusely chronicled by the correspondents of the innumerable newspapers, British, Indian, and Foreign, attracted to India by the second Afghan War, is lightly, yet not unkindly, satirized by Aberigh-Mackay under the *nom de plums* of “Your Political Orphan.” Who also in this article gave expression to the general impression of the day, that by entrusting Mr. Lepel Griffin with the direct negotiations, the position of the then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Mr. (now Sir) Alfred Lyall had been somewhat ignored.

Be this as it may, for his undoubtedly great services, in which he was very greatly aided by his intimate acquaintance with the Persian language, still the French of Afghanistan and other Central Asian lands in diplomacy and etiquette, Mr. Griffin was created a K.C.S.I., and shortly afterwards appointed Governor-General's Agent in Central India and Resident in Indore—where Aberigh-Mackay was Principal of the Rajkumar College—the College for the “Sons of Nobles”—the first “Eton” established under British rule in India. These appointments Sir Lepel held from 1881 until 1888, when he was appointed Resident at Hyderabad, the last official position he held in India.

The article now under elucidation appeared on March 29 1880, in *The Bombay Gazette*, then edited by the late Mr. Grattan Geary, whose narrative of a journey from Bombay to the Bosphorus through Asiatic Turkey, published in 1878, did much to revive and stimulate interest in those important countries, where happily British trade and other influences are now being actively commented upon by the press of Western India, and developed by the merchants of Bombay, Karachi, and Western India generally.

Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, the proprietor of *Vanity Fair*, who had always warmly appreciated the literary work done for him by Aberigh-Mackay, about this time offered him the editorship of the paper. This post Aberigh-Mackay had virtually accepted.

Shortly before Sir Lepel Griffin took up his appointment as Governor-General's Agent, gossip, more especially at Indore and in Central and Western India, was very busy with surmises as to the fate in store for the writer of this article, as well as many other paragraphs commenting, *inter alia*, upon Afghan affairs, and, *en passant* Mr. Lepel Griffin, which had appeared in *The Bombay Gazette* from February to December, 1880, under the general heading of “Some Serious Reflections.” These articles, hitherto anonymous, having being republished in book form, with their authorship avowed, at Bombay in 1880, shortly before the new Resident and Governor-General's Agent arrived at Indore.

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The gossips were—as is nearly always the case—quite wrong, for one of the first men to extend a friendly welcome to Aberigh-Mackay when he arrived at Lahore on the 13th August, 1869, to take up his appointment of “Manager of the Government Zoological Collection” was Mr. Lepel Griffin, then the Deputy-Commissioner of the City and District.

Afterwards, at Simla and elsewhere, these two kindred spirits—in many ways—met frequently, and learnt to understand each other thoroughly well. They also had several common friends, civil, military, and non-official; and their literary pursuits in historical directions were also much in sympathy.

In 1881 they were not fated to meet, although Aberigh-Mackay had taken immediate steps to endeavour to do so, as soon as he became aware that a prevalent rumour was abroad to the effect that the Gryphon would—to use a colloquialism—now make it hot for him.

Aberigh-Mackay indignantly repelled any such surmises, and laughed to scorn the idea that Sir Lepel could possibly entertain any revengeful thoughts of the kind that were anticipated by those who knew absolutely nothing of the old and existing intimacies of either of the two men concerned.

To effectually dispel and give the lie to all such insinuations, he arranged to postpone his departure for England until after the arrival of Sir Lepel Griffin at Indore, and then make patent to official and other society the true inward state of affairs.

Aberigh-Mackay was a very keen all-round sportsman, and in the first weeks of December, 1880, had played at Mhow and Indore in the interesting polo matches between the 29th Regiment and the station of Indore, both matches being won by Indore, notwithstanding a good fight by the Regimental team, headed by Major Ruxton.

On the 7th January, 1881, he read and played with the Chiefs and Thakores of the Rajkumar class of his College; on the evening of the 8th he played lawn-tennis in the Residency garden, when he caught a chill. The next day—Sunday—symptoms of tetanus appeared which created anxiety among his relatives and friends. On Tuesday, the 11th January, signs of imminent danger became apparent, and at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, he died, some weeks before the new Governor-General's Agent arrived at Indore.

It is a very pleasing fact that the most eloquent and very evidently heart-felt testimony to the great and abiding worth of Abengh-Mackay's work at Indore and far beyond, came from the very pen of Sir Lepel Griffin in his “Report of the Central India Agency for the Year 1881-82,” issued in July, 1883, as follows.—

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'The death of Mr Aberigh-Mackay was for Central India, an almost irreparable loss. The patience, tact, and enthusiasm which he brought to his responsible educational duties were worthy of all admiration and those young Chiefs who had the benefit of his guidance will compare most favourably both in acquirements and manners with any students trained under the most favourable conditions in the colleges of British India. It so happened that at the time Mr Mackay was in charge of the Rajkumar College, a large number of important Chiefs were minors, including the Rajah of Rutlam, the junior Chief of Dewar, the Nawab of Jaora, and the two sons of His Highness the Maharaja Holkar. At present there are no Chiefs of the first rank in the Residency College. It will be well if the earnestness and devotion which animated the work of Mr. Abengh Mackay will be felt by those who succeed him.

In Elucidation No. 1—"The Viceroy"—Lord Lytton's *personal* nomination of Abengh-Mackay to a Fellowship in the Calcutta University has been referred to. This act of *noblesse oblige*, in the highest sense of the term, was happily known to Abengh-Mackay during his lifetime.

"SOME OCCULT PHENOMENA"

In the autumn of 1880 many strange stories were afloat in India concerning the studies and practices of what is now widely known as occult science, indulged in and made manifest by the late Madame Blavatsky, the authoress of *Isis Unveiled*, who claimed to possess in a high degree, by nature, those attributes which spiritualists describe (without professing to understand) as "mediumship".

Prominent members of Anglo-Indian society associated themselves with Madame Blavatsky, supported her, and believed in the *bona fides* of her powers, derived as Madame declared from Eastern "adepts" in the science of Yog-Vidya, as this occult knowledge is called by its devotees.

A science according to some—to others a mere vulgar imposition—with which, as maintained by certain renowned Western exponents, Lord Lytton was well versed and largely imbued, his *imagina-tive* account of the achievements accomplished by Vril in the *Coming Race*, being, according to the school and scholars of Madame Blavatsky, altogether inspired from that Eastern fount.

"Mr. Cypher Redalf, the eminent journalist," in the proper person of Mr. A.P. Sinnett, editor of *The Pioneer*, a daily newspaper published at Allahabad, and then, as now to an increased degree, the leading English newspaper in India, printed in that journal an authoritative statement of various occurrences in Blavatskyian circles at Simla when Madame was on a visit to Mr and Mrs. Sinnett.

It is this statement, the outcome of "the true spirit of devout inquiry ... by persons of consideration in evening dress" which forms the *leit motif* of Aberigh-Mackay's powerful

satire, in which a gingham umbrella, “conceived in the liberal spirit of a bye-gone age,” is substituted for an old fashioned breast brooch set round with pearls, with glass at the front and the back, made to contain hair, which, long lost, was stated to have been recovered for its owner as a result of Madame Blavatsky’s occult powers.

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Powers made manifest at a dinner in Mr. A.O. Hume's house at Simla on Sunday the 3rd of October, 1880, at which were present as guests Mr. and Mrs. Sinnett, Mrs. Gordon, Mr. F. Hogg, Captain P.J. Maitland, Mr. Davison, Colonel Olcott, and Madame Blavatsky.

Most of the persons present believed that they had recently seen many remarkable occurrences in Madame Blavatsky's company, and the conversation largely turned on occult phenomena, in the course of which Mrs. Hume was asked by Madame if there was anything she particularly wished for. After some hesitation Mrs. Hume replied that she was particularly anxious to recover an old-fashioned brooch she had formerly possessed, which she had given away to a person who had allowed it to pass out of her possession.

The brooch having been minutely described as above, and roughly sketched, Madame then wrapped up a coin attached to her watch-chain in two cigarette papers, and put it in her dress, and said that she hoped the brooch might be obtained in the course of the evening.

At the close of dinner she intimated to Mr. Hume that the paper in which the coin had been wrapped was gone. A little later, in the drawing-room, she said that the brooch would not be brought into the house, but that it must be looked for in the garden; and then, as the party went out accompanying her, she stated that she had clairvoyantly seen the brooch fall into a star-shaped bed of flowers. Mr. Hume led the way to such a bed in a distant part of the garden, and after a prolonged and careful search made by lantern light, a small paper packet, consisting of two cigarette papers and containing a brooch which Mrs. Hume identified as that which she had originally lost, was found among the leaves by Mrs. Sinnett.

All this, and a great deal more, including the conviction of all present that the occurrence was of an absolutely unimpeachable character as an evidence of the truth of the possibility of occult phenomena, being carefully embodied in the published statements, which had been duly read over to the party and signed. The publication of the statement aroused a great discussion in the newspapers of the day, by no means confined to India, and gave a powerful impetus to Madame Blavatsky's views.

Mr. Allan Octavian Hume, happily still alive, son of Joseph Hume the great Radical member of Parliament, created C.B. for his very distinguished services in the Mutiny, retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1882 after a notable career in many departments. Ornithologist, and since his retirement following hereditary instincts by organizing and supporting the National Congress, and criticizing much of the policy of the Government of India.

Mr. Sinnett, the leading actor in the affair described above, not long after the publication of the Simla narrative, ended his connection with *The Pioneer*, and may be regarded as

one of the leading spirits of the Theosophical movement, in connection with which he has written many books, and he now holds high office in the London branch of the Society.

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NOTES

[A: *Lit. Great Ladies, i.e. Wives of Heads of Departments.*]

[B: *A genus of molluscous animals.*]

[C: *A primary constituent of matter.*]

[D: *A slightly narcotic mixture.*]

[E: *Throne.*]

[F: *Hindu festivals in honour of the Ganges and the War God respectively.*]

[G: *Household.*]

[H: *Official messengers.*]

[I: *Lit. high-handed.*]

[J: *Fairs.*]

[K: *Table attendants.*]

[L: *I have assumed the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in commemoration of the happy termination of the Afghan War.—A.B.*]

[M: *Confirmed in the appointment.*]

[N: *Settlement of the land revenue.*]

[O: *Children.*]

[P: *Kitchen.*]

[Q: *Grooms.*]

[R: *The chuprassies are official messengers, wearing Imperial livery, who are attached to all civil officers in India.*]

[S: *Civil servants.*]

[T: *An old English form of avaunt, begone! Vide "Macbeth," I. iii. 6.*]

[U: *"Bring me a brandy and soda."*]

[V: *Low-lying land.*]

[W: *News.*]

[X: *An arrangement, a plan.*]

[Y: *Criminal cases.*]

[Z: *Land revenue settlement.*]

[AA: *A water-carrier's leathern bag.*]

[BB: *Chief Board of Land Revenue in the United Provinces.*]

[CC: *Equivalent to Sir.*]