

# Following the Equator, Part 5 eBook

## Following the Equator, Part 5 by Mark Twain

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

# Contents

<a href="#">Following the Equator, Part 5 eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">6</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">10</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Page 23.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>

Page 24.....	34
Page 25.....	35
Page 26.....	36
Page 27.....	38
Page 28.....	39
Page 29.....	40
Page 30.....	41
Page 31.....	42
Page 32.....	44
Page 33.....	45
Page 34.....	47
Page 35.....	48
Page 36.....	49
Page 37.....	51
Page 38.....	53
Page 39.....	55
Page 40.....	56
Page 41.....	57
Page 42.....	58
Page 43.....	60
Page 44.....	62
Page 45.....	63
Page 46.....	65
Page 47.....	66
Page 48.....	67
Page 49.....	69

Page 50.....	70
Page 51.....	71
Page 52.....	73
Page 53.....	75
Page 54.....	76
Page 55.....	78
Page 56.....	79
Page 57.....	80
Page 58.....	82
Page 59.....	83
Page 60.....	84
Page 61.....	86
Page 62.....	88
Page 63.....	89
Page 64.....	90
Page 65.....	91
Page 66.....	92
Page 67.....	93
Page 68.....	94
Page 69.....	95
Page 70.....	96
Page 71.....	98

# Page 1

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

By trying we can easily learn to endure adversity. Another man's, I mean.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

You soon find your long-ago dreams of India rising in a sort of vague and luscious moonlight above the horizon-rim of your opaque consciousness, and softly lighting up a thousand forgotten details which were parts of a vision that had once been vivid to you when you were a boy, and steeped your spirit in tales of the East. The barbaric gorgeousnesses, for instance; and the princely titles, the sumptuous titles, the sounding titles,—how good they taste in the mouth! The Nizam of Hyderabad; the Maharajah of Travancore; the Nabob of Jubbelpore; the Begum of Bhopal; the Nawab of Mysore; the Rance of Gulnare; the Ahkoond of Swat's; the Rao of Rohilkund; the Gaikwar of Baroda. Indeed, it is a country that runs richly to name. The great god Vishnu has 108—108 special ones—108 peculiarly holy ones—names just for Sunday use only. I learned the whole of Vishnu's 108 by heart once, but they wouldn't stay; I don't remember any of them now but John W.

And the romances connected with, those princely native houses—to this day they are always turning up, just as in the old, old times. They were sweating out a romance in an English court in Bombay a while before we were there. In this case a native prince, 16 1/2 years old, who has been enjoying his titles and dignities and estates unmolested for fourteen years, is suddenly haled into court on the charge that he is rightfully no prince at all, but a pauper peasant; that the real prince died when two and one-half years old; that the death was concealed, and a peasant child smuggled into the royal cradle, and that this present incumbent was that smuggled substitute. This is the very material that so many oriental tales have been made of.

The case of that great prince, the Gaikwar of Baroda, is a reversal of the theme. When that throne fell vacant, no heir could be found for some time, but at last one was found in the person of a peasant child who was making mud pies in a village street, and having an innocent good time. But his pedigree was straight; he was the true prince, and he has reigned ever since, with none to dispute his right.

Lately there was another hunt for an heir to another princely house, and one was found who was circumstanced about as the Gaikwar had been. His fathers were traced back, in humble life, along a branch of the ancestral tree to the point where it joined the stem fourteen generations ago, and his heirship was thereby squarely established. The tracing was done by means of the records of one of the great Hindoo shrines, where princes on pilgrimage record their names and the date of their visit. This is to keep the prince's religious account straight, and his spiritual person safe; but the record has the added value of keeping the pedigree authentic, too.

## Page 2

When I think of Bombay now, at this distance of time, I seem to have a kaleidoscope at my eye; and I hear the clash of the glass bits as the splendid figures change, and fall apart, and flash into new forms, figure after figure, and with the birth of each new form I feel my skin crinkle and my nerve-web tingle with a new thrill of wonder and delight. These remembered pictures float past me in a sequence of contracts; following the same order always, and always whirling by and disappearing with the swiftness of a dream, leaving me with the sense that the actuality was the experience of an hour, at most, whereas it really covered days, I think.

The series begins with the hiring of a “bearer”—native man-servant—a person who should be selected with some care, because as long as he is in your employ he will be about as near to you as your clothes.

In India your day may be said to begin with the “bearer’s” knock on the bedroom door, accompanied by a formula of, words—a formula which is intended to mean that the bath is ready. It doesn’t really seem to mean anything at all. But that is because you are not used to “bearer” English. You will presently understand.

Where he gets his English is his own secret. There is nothing like it elsewhere in the earth; or even in paradise, perhaps, but the other place is probably full of it. You hire him as soon as you touch Indian soil; for no matter what your sex is, you cannot do without him. He is messenger, valet, chambermaid, table-waiter, lady’s maid, courier—he is everything. He carries a coarse linen clothes-bag and a quilt; he sleeps on the stone floor outside your chamber door, and gets his meals you do not know where nor when; you only know that he is not fed on the premises, either when you are in a hotel or when you are a guest in a, private house. His wages are large—from an Indian point of view—and he feeds and clothes himself out of them. We had three of him in two and a half months. The first one’s rate was thirty rupees a month that is to say, twenty-seven cents a day; the rate of the others, Rs. 40 (40 rupees) a month. A princely sum; for the native switchman on a railway and the native servant in a private family get only Rs. 7 per month, and the farm-hand only 4. The two former feed and clothe themselves and their families on their \$1.90 per month; but I cannot believe that the farmhand has to feed himself on his \$1.08. I think the farm probably feeds him, and that the whole of his wages, except a trifle for the priest, go to the support of his family. That is, to the feeding of his family; for they live in a mud hut, hand-made, and, doubtless, rent-free, and they wear no clothes; at least, nothing more than a rag. And not much of a rag at that, in the case of the males. However, these are handsome times for the farm-hand; he was not always the child of luxury that he is now. The Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, in a recent official utterance

## Page 3

wherein he was rebuking a native deputation for complaining of hard times, reminded them that they could easily remember when a farm-hand's wages were only half a rupee (former value) a month—that is to say, less than a cent a day; nearly \$2.90 a year. If such a wage-earner had a good deal of a family—and they all have that, for God is very good to these poor natives in some ways—he would save a profit of fifteen cents, clean and clear, out of his year's toil; I mean a frugal, thrifty person would, not one given to display and ostentation. And if he owed \$13.50 and took good care of his health, he could pay it off in ninety years. Then he could hold up his head, and look his creditors in the face again.

Think of these facts and what they mean. India does not consist of cities. There are no cities in India—to speak of. Its stupendous population consists of farm-laborers. India is one vast farm—one almost interminable stretch of fields with mud fences between. . . Think of the above facts; and consider what an incredible aggregate of poverty they place before you.

The first Bearer that applied, waited below and sent up his recommendations. That was the first morning in Bombay. We read them over; carefully, cautiously, thoughtfully. There was not a fault to find with them—except one; they were all from Americans. Is that a slur? If it is, it is a deserved one. In my experience, an American's recommendation of a servant is not usually valuable. We are too good-natured a race; we hate to say the unpleasant thing; we shrink from speaking the unkind truth about a poor fellow whose bread depends upon our verdict; so we speak of his good points only, thus not scrupling to tell a lie—a silent lie—for in not mentioning his bad ones we as good as say he hasn't any. The only difference that I know of between a silent lie and a spoken one is, that the silent lie is a less respectable one than the other. And it can deceive, whereas the other can't—as a rule. We not only tell the silent lie as to a servant's faults, but we sin in another way: we overpraise his merits; for when it comes to writing recommendations of servants we are a nation of gushers. And we have not the Frenchman's excuse. In France you must give the departing servant a good recommendation; and you must conceal his faults; you have no choice. If you mention his faults for the protection of the next candidate for his services, he can sue you for damages; and the court will award them, too; and, moreover, the judge will give you a sharp dressing-down from the bench for trying to destroy a poor man's character, and rob him of his bread. I do not state this on my own authority, I got it from a French physician of fame and repute—a man who was born in Paris, and had practiced there all his life. And he said that he spoke not merely from common knowledge, but from exasperating personal experience.

## Page 4

As I was saying, the Bearer's recommendations were all from American tourists; and St. Peter would have admitted him to the fields of the blest on them—I mean if he is as unfamiliar with our people and our ways as I suppose he is. According to these recommendations, Manuel X. was supreme in all the arts connected with his complex trade; and these manifold arts were mentioned—and praised—in detail. His English was spoken of in terms of warm admiration—admiration verging upon rapture. I took pleased note of that, and hoped that some of it might be true.

We had to have some one right away; so the family went down stairs and took him a week on trial; then sent him up to me and departed on their affairs. I was shut up in my quarters with a bronchial cough, and glad to have something fresh to look at, something new to play with. Manuel filled the bill; Manuel was very welcome. He was toward fifty years old, tall, slender, with a slight stoop—an artificial stoop, a deferential stoop, a stoop rigidified by long habit—with face of European mould; short hair intensely black; gentle black eyes, timid black eyes, indeed; complexion very dark, nearly black in fact; face smooth-shaven. He was bareheaded and barefooted, and was never otherwise while his week with us lasted; his clothing was European, cheap, flimsy, and showed much wear.

He stood before me and inclined his head (and body) in the pathetic Indian way, touching his forehead with the finger—ends of his right hand, in salute. I said:

“Manuel, you are evidently Indian, but you seem to have a Spanish name when you put it all together. How is that?”

A perplexed look gathered in his face; it was plain that he had not understood—but he didn't let on. He spoke back placidly.

“Name, Manuel. Yes, master.”

“I know; but how did you get the name?”

“Oh, yes, I suppose. Think happen so. Father same name, not mother.”

I saw that I must simplify my language and spread my words apart, if I would be understood by this English scholar.

“Well—then—how—did—your—father—get—his name?”

“Oh, he,”—brightening a little—“he Christian—Portygee; live in Goa; I born Goa; mother not Portygee, mother native-high-caste Brahmin—Coolin Brahmin; highest caste; no other so high caste. I high-caste Brahmin, too. Christian, too, same like father; high-caste Christian Brahmin, master—Salvation Army.”



All this haltingly, and with difficulty. Then he had an inspiration, and began to pour out a flood of words that I could make nothing of; so I said:

“There—don’t do that. I can’t understand Hindostani.”

“Not Hindostani, master—English. Always I speaking English sometimes when I talking every day all the time at you.”

“Very well, stick to that; that is intelligible. It is not up to my hopes, it is not up to the promise of the recommendations, still it is English, and I understand it. Don’t elaborate it; I don’t like elaborations when they are crippled by uncertainty of touch.”

## Page 5

“Master?”

“Oh, never mind; it was only a random thought; I didn’t expect you to understand it. How did you get your English; is it an acquirement, or just a gift of God?”

After some hesitation—piously:

“Yes, he very good. Christian god very good, Hindoo god very good, too. Two million Hindoo god, one Christian god—make two million and one. All mine; two million and one god. I got a plenty. Sometime I pray all time at those, keep it up, go all time every day; give something at shrine, all good for me, make me better man; good for me, good for my family, dam good.”

Then he had another inspiration, and went rambling off into fervent confusions and incoherencies, and I had to stop him again. I thought we had talked enough, so I told him to go to the bathroom and clean it up and remove the slops—this to get rid of him. He went away, seeming to understand, and got out some of my clothes and began to brush them. I repeated my desire several times, simplifying and re-simplifying it, and at last he got the idea. Then he went away and put a coolie at the work, and explained that he would lose caste if he did it himself; it would be pollution, by the law of his caste, and it would cost him a deal of fuss and trouble to purify himself and accomplish his rehabilitation. He said that that kind of work was strictly forbidden to persons of caste, and as strictly restricted to the very bottom layer of Hindoo society—the despised ‘Sudra’ (the toiler, the laborer). He was right; and apparently the poor Sudra has been content with his strange lot, his insulting distinction, for ages and ages—clear back to the beginning of things, so to speak. Buckle says that his name—laborer—is a term of contempt; that it is ordained by the Institutes of Menu (900 B.C.) that if a Sudra sit on a level with his superior he shall be exiled or branded—[Without going into particulars I will remark that as a rule they wear no clothing that would conceal the brand.—M. T.]. . . ; if he speak contemptuously of his superior or insult him he shall suffer death; if he listen to the reading of the sacred books he shall have burning oil poured in his ears; if he memorize passages from them he shall be killed; if he marry his daughter to a Brahmin the husband shall go to hell for defiling himself by contact with a woman so infinitely his inferior; and that it is forbidden to a Sudra to acquire wealth. “The bulk of the population of India,” says Bucklet—[Population to-day, 300,000,000.] —“is the Sudras—the workers, the farmers, the creators of wealth.”

## Page 6

Manuel was a failure, poor old fellow. His age was against him. He was desperately slow and phenomenally forgetful. When he went three blocks on an errand he would be gone two hours, and then forget what it was he went for. When he packed a trunk it took him forever, and the trunk's contents were an unimaginable chaos when he got done. He couldn't wait satisfactorily at table—a prime defect, for if you haven't your own servant in an Indian hotel you are likely to have a slow time of it and go away hungry. We couldn't understand his English; he couldn't understand ours; and when we found that he couldn't understand his own, it seemed time for us to part. I had to discharge him; there was no help for it. But I did it as kindly as I could, and as gently. We must part, said I, but I hoped we should meet again in a better world. It was not true, but it was only a little thing to say, and saved his feelings and cost me nothing.

But now that he was gone, and was off my mind and heart, my spirits began to rise at once, and I was soon feeling brisk and ready to go out and have adventures. Then his newly-hired successor flitted in, touched his forehead, and began to fly around here, there, and everywhere, on his velvet feet, and in five minutes he had everything in the room “ship-shape and Bristol fashion,” as the sailors say, and was standing at the salute, waiting for orders. Dear me, what a rustler he was after the slumbrous way of Manuel, poor old slug! All my heart, all my affection, all my admiration, went out spontaneously to this frisky little forked black thing, this compact and compressed incarnation of energy and force and promptness and celerity and confidence, this smart, smily, engaging, shiney-eyed little devil, feruled on his upper end by a gleaming fire-coal of a fez with a red-hot tassel dangling from it. I said, with deep satisfaction—

“You'll suit. What is your name?”

He reeled it mellowly off.

“Let me see if I can make a selection out of it—for business uses, I mean; we will keep the rest for Sundays. Give it to me in installments.”

He did it. But there did not seem to be any short ones, except Mousawhich suggested mouse. It was out of character; it was too soft, too quiet, too conservative; it didn't fit his splendid style. I considered, and said—

“Mousa is short enough, but I don't quite like it. It seems colorless—inharmonious—inadequate; and I am sensitive to such things. How do you think Satan would do?”

“Yes, master. Satan do wair good.”

It was his way of saying “very good.”



There was a rap at the door. Satan covered the ground with a single skip; there was a word or two of Hindostani, then he disappeared. Three minutes later he was before me again, militarily erect, and waiting for me to speak first.

“What is it, Satan?”

“God want to see you.”

## Page 7

“Who?”

“God. I show him up, master?”

“Why, this is so unusual, that—that—well, you see indeed I am so unprepared—I don’t quite know what I do mean. Dear me, can’t you explain? Don’t you see that this is a most ex——”

“Here his card, master.”

Wasn’t it curious—and amazing, and tremendous, and all that? Such a personage going around calling on such as I, and sending up his card, like a mortal—sending it up by Satan. It was a bewildering collision of the impossibles. But this was the land of the Arabian Nights, this was India! and what is it that cannot happen in India?

We had the interview. Satan was right—the Visitor was indeed a God in the conviction of his multitudinous followers, and was worshiped by them in sincerity and humble adoration. They are troubled by no doubts as to his divine origin and office. They believe in him, they pray to him, they make offerings to him, they beg of him remission of sins; to them his person, together with everything connected with it, is sacred; from his barber they buy the parings of his nails and set them in gold, and wear them as precious amulets.

I tried to seem tranquilly conversational and at rest, but I was not. Would you have been? I was in a suppressed frenzy of excitement and curiosity and glad wonder. I could not keep my eyes off him. I was looking upon a god, an actual god, a recognized and accepted god; and every detail of his person and his dress had a consuming interest for me. And the thought went floating through my head, “He is worshiped—think of it—he is not a recipient of the pale homage called compliment, wherewith the highest human clay must make shift to be satisfied, but of an infinitely richer spiritual food: adoration, worship!—men and women lay their cares and their griefs and their broken hearts at his feet; and he gives them his peace; and they go away healed.”

And just then the Awful Visitor said, in the simplest way—“There is a feature of the philosophy of Huck Finn which”—and went luminously on with the construction of a compact and nicely-discriminated literary verdict.

It is a land of surprises—India! I had had my ambitions—I had hoped, and almost expected, to be read by kings and presidents and emperors—but I had never looked so high as That. It would be false modesty to pretend that I was not inordinately pleased. I was. I was much more pleased than I should have been with a compliment from a man.

He remained half an hour, and I found him a most courteous and charming gentleman. The godship has been in his family a good while, but I do not know how long. He is a



Mohammedan deity; by earthly rank he is a prince; not an Indian but a Persian prince. He is a direct descendant of the Prophet's line. He is comely; also young—for a god; not forty, perhaps not above thirty-five years old. He wears his immense honors with tranquil brace, and with a dignity proper to his awful calling. He speaks English with the ease and purity of a person born to it. I think I am not overstating this. He was the only god I had ever seen, and I was very favorably impressed. When he rose to say good-bye, the door swung open and I caught the flash of a red fez, and heard these words, reverently said—

## Page 8

“Satan see God out?”

“Yes.” And these mis-mated Beings passed from view Satan in the lead and The Other following after.

### CHAPTER XL.

Few of us can stand prosperity. Another man’s, I mean.  
—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

The next picture in my mind is Government House, on Malabar Point, with the wide sea-view from the windows and broad balconies; abode of His Excellency the Governor of the Bombay Presidency—a residence which is European in everything but the native guards and servants, and is a home and a palace of state harmoniously combined.

That was England, the English power, the English civilization, the modern civilization—with the quiet elegancies and quiet colors and quiet tastes and quiet dignity that are the outcome of the modern cultivation. And following it came a picture of the ancient civilization of India—an hour in the mansion of a native prince: Kumar Schri Samatsinhji Bahadur of the Palitana State.

The young lad, his heir, was with the prince; also, the lad’s sister, a wee brown sprite, very pretty, very serious, very winning, delicately moulded, costumed like the daintiest butterfly, a dear little fairyland princess, gravely willing to be friendly with the strangers, but in the beginning preferring to hold her father’s hand until she could take stock of them and determine how far they were to be trusted. She must have been eight years old; so in the natural (Indian) order of things she would be a bride in three or four years from now, and then this free contact with the sun and the air and the other belongings of out-door nature and comradeship with visiting male folk would end, and she would shut herself up in the zenana for life, like her mother, and by inherited habit of mind would be happy in that seclusion and not look upon it as an irksome restraint and a weary captivity.

The game which the prince amuses his leisure with—however, never mind it, I should never be able to describe it intelligibly. I tried to get an idea of it while my wife and daughter visited the princess in the zenana, a lady of charming graces and a fluent speaker of English, but I did not make it out. It is a complicated game, and I believe it is said that nobody can learn to play it well—but an Indian. And I was not able to learn how to wind a turban. It seemed a simple art and easy; but that was a deception. It is a piece of thin, delicate stuff a foot wide or more, and forty or fifty feet long; and the exhibitor of the art takes one end of it in his hands, and winds it in and out intricately about his head, twisting it as he goes, and in a minute or two the thing is finished, and is neat and symmetrical and fits as snugly as a mould.

## Page 9

We were interested in the wardrobe and the jewels, and in the silverware, and its grace of shape and beauty and delicacy of ornamentation. The silverware is kept locked up, except at meal-times, and none but the chief butler and the prince have keys to the safe. I did not clearly understand why, but it was not for the protection of the silver. It was either to protect the prince from the contamination which his caste would suffer if the vessels were touched by low-caste hands, or it was to protect his highness from poison. Possibly it was both. I believe a salaried taster has to taste everything before the prince ventures it—an ancient and judicious custom in the East, and has thinned out the tasters a good deal, for of course it is the cook that puts the poison in. If I were an Indian prince I would not go to the expense of a taster, I would eat with the cook.

Ceremonials are always interesting; and I noted that the Indian good-morning is a ceremonial, whereas ours doesn't amount to that. In salutation the son reverently touches the father's forehead with a small silver implement tipped with vermillion paste which leaves a red spot there, and in return the son receives the father's blessing. Our good morning is well enough for the rowdy West, perhaps, but would be too brusque for the soft and ceremonious East.

After being properly necklaced, according to custom, with great garlands made of yellow flowers, and provided with betel-nut to chew, this pleasant visit closed, and we passed thence to a scene of a different sort: from this glow of color and this sunny life to those grim receptacles of the Parsee dead, the Towers of Silence. There is something stately about that name, and an impressiveness which sinks deep; the hush of death is in it. We have the Grave, the Tomb, the Mausoleum, God's Acre, the Cemetery; and association has made them eloquent with solemn meaning; but we have no name that is so majestic as that one, or lingers upon the ear with such deep and haunting pathos.

On lofty ground, in the midst of a paradise of tropical foliage and flowers, remote from the world and its turmoil and noise, they stood—the Towers of Silence; and away below was spread the wide groves of cocoa palms, then the city, mile on mile, then the ocean with its fleets of creeping ships all steeped in a stillness as deep as the hush that hallowed this high place of the dead. The vultures were there. They stood close together in a great circle all around the rim of a massive low tower—waiting; stood as motionless as sculptured ornaments, and indeed almost deceived one into the belief that that was what they were. Presently there was a slight stir among the score of persons present, and all moved reverently out of the path and ceased from talking. A funeral procession entered the great gate, marching two and two, and moved silently by, toward the Tower. The corpse lay in a shallow shell, and was under



## Page 10

cover of a white cloth, but was otherwise naked. The bearers of the body were separated by an interval of thirty feet from the mourners. They, and also the mourners, were draped all in pure white, and each couple of mourners was figuratively bound together by a piece of white rope or a handkerchief—though they merely held the ends of it in their hands. Behind the procession followed a dog, which was led in a leash. When the mourners had reached the neighborhood of the Tower —neither they nor any other human being but the bearers of the dead must approach within thirty feet of it— they turned and went back to one of the prayer-houses within the gates, to pray for the spirit of their dead. The bearers unlocked the Tower's sole door and disappeared from view within. In a little while they came out bringing the bier and the white covering-cloth, and locked the door again. Then the ring of vultures rose, flapping their wings, and swooped down into the Tower to devour the body. Nothing was left of it but a clean-picked skeleton when they flocked-out again a few minutes afterward.

The principle which underlies and orders everything connected with a Parsee funeral is Purity. By the tenets of the Zoroastrian religion, the elements, Earth, Fire, and Water, are sacred, and must not be contaminated by contact with a dead body. Hence corpses must not be burned, neither must they be buried. None may touch the dead or enter the Towers where they repose except certain men who are officially appointed for that purpose. They receive high pay, but theirs is a dismal life, for they must live apart from their species, because their commerce with the dead defiles them, and any who should associate with them would share their defilement. When they come out of the Tower the clothes they are wearing are exchanged for others, in a building within the grounds, and the ones which they have taken off are left behind, for they are contaminated, and must never be used again or suffered to go outside the grounds. These bearers come to every funeral in new garments. So far as is known, no human being, other than an official corpse-bearer—save one—has ever entered a Tower of Silence after its consecration. Just a hundred years ago a European rushed in behind the bearers and fed his brutal curiosity with a glimpse of the forbidden mysteries of the place. This shabby savage's name is not given; his quality is also concealed. These two details, taken in connection with the fact that for his extraordinary offense the only punishment he got from the East India Company's Government was a solemn official "reprimand"— suggest the suspicion that he was a European of consequence. The same public document which contained the reprimand gave warning that future offenders of his sort, if in the Company's service, would be dismissed; and if merchants, suffer revocation of license and exile to England.

## Page 11

The Towers are not tall, but are low in proportion to their circumference, like a gasometer. If you should fill a gasometer half way up with solid granite masonry, then drive a wide and deep well down through the center of this mass of masonry, you would have the idea of a Tower of Silence. On the masonry surrounding the well the bodies lie, in shallow trenches which radiate like wheel-spokes from the well. The trenches slant toward the well and carry into it the rainfall. Underground drains, with charcoal filters in them, carry off this water from the bottom of the well.

When a skeleton has lain in the Tower exposed to the rain and the flaming sun a month it is perfectly dry and clean. Then the same bearers that brought it there come gloved and take it up with tongs and throw it into the well. There it turns to dust. It is never seen again, never touched again, in the world. Other peoples separate their dead, and preserve and continue social distinctions in the grave—the skeletons of kings and statesmen and generals in temples and pantheons proper to skeletons of their degree, and the skeletons of the commonplace and the poor in places suited to their meaner estate; but the Parsees hold that all men rank alike in death—all are humble, all poor, all destitute. In sign of their poverty they are sent to their grave naked, in sign of their equality the bones of the rich, the poor, the illustrious and the obscure are flung into the common well together. At a Parsee funeral there are no vehicles; all concerned must walk, both rich and poor, howsoever great the distance to be traversed may be. In the wells of the Five Towers of Silence is mingled the dust of all the Parsee men and women and children who have died in Bombay and its vicinity during the two centuries which have elapsed since the Mohammedan conquerors drove the Parsees out of Persia, and into that region of India. The earliest of the five towers was built by the Modi family something more than 200 years ago, and it is now reserved to the heirs of that house; none but the dead of that blood are carried thither.

The origin of at least one of the details of a Parsee funeral is not now known—the presence of the dog. Before a corpse is borne from the house of mourning it must be uncovered and exposed to the gaze of a dog; a dog must also be led in the rear of the funeral. Mr. Nusserwanjee Byranijee, Secretary to the Parsee Punchayet, said that these formalities had once had a meaning and a reason for their institution, but that they were survivals whose origin none could now account for. Custom and tradition continue them in force, antiquity hallows them. It is thought that in ancient times in Persia the dog was a sacred animal and could guide souls to heaven; also that his eye had the power of purifying objects which had been contaminated by the touch of the dead; and that hence his presence with the funeral cortege provides an ever-applicable remedy in case of need.

## Page 12

The Parsees claim that their method of disposing of the dead is an effective protection of the living; that it disseminates no corruption, no impurities of any sort, no disease-germs; that no wrap, no garment which has touched the dead is allowed to touch the living afterward; that from the Towers of Silence nothing proceeds which can carry harm to the outside world. These are just claims, I think. As a sanitary measure, their system seems to be about the equivalent of cremation, and as sure. We are drifting slowly—but hopefully—toward cremation in these days. It could not be expected that this progress should be swift, but if it be steady and continuous, even if slow, that will suffice. When cremation becomes the rule we shall cease to shudder at it; we should shudder at burial if we allowed ourselves to think what goes on in the grave.

The dog was an impressive figure to me, representing as he did a mystery whose key is lost. He was humble, and apparently depressed; and he let his head droop pensively, and looked as if he might be trying to call back to his mind what it was that he had used to symbolize ages ago when he began his function. There was another impressive thing close at hand, but I was not privileged to see it. That was the sacred fire—a fire which is supposed to have been burning without interruption for more than two centuries; and so, living by the same heat that was imparted to it so long ago.

The Parsees are a remarkable community. There are only about 60,000 in Bombay, and only about half as many as that in the rest of India; but they make up in importance what they lack in numbers. They are highly educated, energetic, enterprising, progressive, rich, and the Jew himself is not more lavish or catholic in his charities and benevolences. The Parsees build and endow hospitals, for both men and animals; and they and their womenkind keep an open purse for all great and good objects. They are a political force, and a valued support to the government. They have a pure and lofty religion, and they preserve it in its integrity and order their lives by it.

We took a final sweep of the wonderful view of plain and city and ocean, and so ended our visit to the garden and the Towers of Silence; and the last thing I noticed was another symbol—a voluntary symbol this one; it was a vulture standing on the sawed-off top of a tall and slender and branchless palm in an open space in the ground; he was perfectly motionless, and looked like a piece of sculpture on a pillar. And he had a mortuary look, too, which was in keeping with the place.

## CHAPTER XLI.

There is an old-time toast which is golden for its beauty.  
“When you ascend the hill of prosperity may you not meet a friend.”  
—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

## Page 13

The next picture that drifts across the field of my memory is one which is connected with religious things. We were taken by friends to see a Jain temple. It was small, and had many flags or streamers flying from poles standing above its roof; and its little battlements supported a great many small idols or images. Upstairs, inside, a solitary Jain was praying or reciting aloud in the middle of the room. Our presence did not interrupt him, nor even incommode him or modify his fervor. Ten or twelve feet in front of him was the idol, a small figure in a sitting posture. It had the pinkish look of a wax doll, but lacked the doll's roundness of limb and approximation to correctness of form and justness of proportion. Mr. Gandhi explained every thing to us. He was delegate to the Chicago Fair Congress of Religions. It was lucidly done, in masterly English, but in time it faded from me, and now I have nothing left of that episode but an impression: a dim idea of a religious belief clothed in subtle intellectual forms, lofty and clean, barren of fleshly grossnesses; and with this another dim impression which connects that intellectual system somehow with that crude image, that inadequate idol—how, I do not know. Properly they do not seem to belong together. Apparently the idol symbolized a person who had become a saint or a god through accessions of steadily augmenting holiness acquired through a series of reincarnations and promotions extending over many ages; and was now at last a saint and qualified to vicariously receive worship and transmit it to heaven's chancellery. Was that it?

And thence we went to Mr. Premchand Roychand's bungalow, in Lovelane, Byculla, where an Indian prince was to receive a deputation of the Jain community who desired to congratulate him upon a high honor lately conferred upon him by his sovereign, Victoria, Empress of India. She had made him a knight of the order of the Star of India. It would seem that even the grandest Indian prince is glad to add the modest title "Sir" to his ancient native grandeurs, and is willing to do valuable service to win it. He will remit taxes liberally, and will spend money freely upon the betterment of the condition of his subjects, if there is a knighthood to be gotten by it. And he will also do good work and a deal of it to get a gun added to the salute allowed him by the British Government. Every year the Empress distributes knighthoods and adds guns for public services done by native princes. The salute of a small prince is three or four guns; princes of greater consequence have salutes that run higher and higher, gun by gun,—oh, clear away up to eleven; possibly more, but I did not hear of any above eleven-gun princes. I was told that when a four-gun prince gets a gun added, he is pretty troublesome for a while, till the novelty wears off, for he likes the music, and keeps hunting up pretexts to get himself saluted. It may be that supremely grand folk, like the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Gaikwar of Baroda, have more than eleven guns, but I don't know.

## Page 14

When we arrived at the bungalow, the large hall on the ground floor was already about full, and carriages were still flowing into the grounds. The company present made a fine show, an exhibition of human fireworks, so to speak, in the matters of costume and comminglings of brilliant color. The variety of form noticeable in the display of turbans was remarkable. We were told that the explanation of this was, that this Jain delegation was drawn from many parts of India, and that each man wore the turban that was in vogue in his own region. This diversity of turbans made a beautiful effect.

I could have wished to start a rival exhibition there, of Christian hats and clothes. I would have cleared one side of the room of its Indian splendors and repacked the space with Christians drawn from America, England, and the Colonies, dressed in the hats and habits of now, and of twenty and forty and fifty years ago. It would have been a hideous exhibition, a thoroughly devilish spectacle. Then there would have been the added disadvantage of the white complexion. It is not an unbearably unpleasant complexion when it keeps to itself, but when it comes into competition with masses of brown and black the fact is betrayed that it is endurable only because we are used to it. Nearly all black and brown skins are beautiful, but a beautiful white skin is rare. How rare, one may learn by walking down a street in Paris, New York, or London on a week-day particularly an unfashionable street—and keeping count of the satisfactory complexions encountered in the course of a mile. Where dark complexions are massed, they make the whites look bleached-out, unwholesome, and sometimes frankly ghastly. I could notice this as a boy, down South in the slavery days before the war. The splendid black satin skin of the South African Zulus of Durban seemed to me to come very close to perfection. I can see those Zulus yet—'ricksha athletes waiting in front of the hotel for custom; handsome and intensely black creatures, moderately clothed in loose summer stuffs whose snowy whiteness made the black all the blacker by contrast. Keeping that group in my mind, I can compare those complexions with the white ones which are streaming past this London window now:

A lady. Complexion, new parchment. Another lady. Complexion, old parchment.

Another. Pink and white, very fine.

Man. Grayish skin, with purple areas.

Man. Unwholesome fish-belly skin.

Girl. Sallow face, sprinkled with freckles.

Old woman. Face whitey-gray.

Young butcher. Face a general red flush.

Jaundiced man—mustard yellow.

Elderly lady. Colorless skin, with two conspicuous moles.

Elderly man—a drinker. Boiled-cauliflower nose in a flabby face veined with purple crinklings.

## Page 15

Healthy young gentleman. Fine fresh complexion.

Sick young man. His face a ghastly white.

No end of people whose skins are dull and characterless modifications of the tint which we miscall white. Some of these faces are pimply; some exhibit other signs of diseased blood; some show scars of a tint out of a harmony with the surrounding shades of color. The white man's complexion makes no concealments. It can't. It seemed to have been designed as a catch-all for everything that can damage it. Ladies have to paint it, and powder it, and cosmetic it, and diet it with arsenic, and enamel it, and be always enticing it, and persuading it, and pestering it, and fussing at it, to make it beautiful; and they do not succeed. But these efforts show what they think of the natural complexion, as distributed. As distributed it needs these helps. The complexion which they try to counterfeit is one which nature restricts to the few—to the very few. To ninety-nine persons she gives a bad complexion, to the hundredth a good one. The hundredth can keep it—how long? Ten years, perhaps.

The advantage is with the Zulu, I think. He starts with a beautiful complexion, and it will last him through. And as for the Indian brown—firm, smooth, blemishless, pleasant and restful to the eye, afraid of no color, harmonizing with all colors and adding a grace to them all—I think there is no sort of chance for the average white complexion against that rich and perfect tint.

To return to the bungalow. The most gorgeous costume present were worn by some children. They seemed to blaze, so bright were the colors, and so brilliant the jewels strum over the rich materials. These children were professional nautch-dancers, and looked like girls, but they were boys. They got up by ones and twos and fours, and danced and sang to an accompaniment of weird music. Their posturings and gesturings were elaborate and graceful, but their voices were stringently raspy and unpleasant, and there was a good deal of monotony about the tune.

By and by there was a burst of shouts and cheers outside and the prince with his train entered in fine dramatic style. He was a stately man, he was ideally costumed, and fairly festooned with ropes of gems; some of the ropes were of pearls, some were of uncut great emeralds—emeralds renowned in Bombay for their quality and value. Their size was marvelous, and enticing to the eye, those rocks. A boy—a princeling—was with the prince, and he also was a radiant exhibition.

The ceremonies were not tedious. The prince strode to his throne with the port and majesty—and the sternness—of a Julius Caesar coming to receive and receipt for a back-country kingdom and have it over and get out, and no fooling. There was a throne for the young prince, too, and the two sat there, side by side, with their officers grouped at either hand and most accurately and creditably



## Page 16

reproducing the pictures which one sees in the books—pictures which people in the prince's line of business have been furnishing ever since Solomon received the Queen of Sheba and showed her his things. The chief of the Jain delegation read his paper of congratulations, then pushed it into a beautifully engraved silver cylinder, which was delivered with ceremony into the prince's hands and at once delivered by him without ceremony into the hands of an officer. I will copy the address here. It is interesting, as showing what an Indian prince's subject may have opportunity to thank him for in these days of modern English rule, as contrasted with what his ancestor would have given them opportunity to thank him for a century and a half ago—the days of freedom unhampered by English interference. A century and a half ago an address of thanks could have been put into small space. It would have thanked the prince—

1. For not slaughtering too many of his people upon mere caprice;
2. For not stripping them bare by sudden and arbitrary tax levies, and bringing famine upon them;
3. For not upon empty pretext destroying the rich and seizing their property;
4. For not killing, blinding, imprisoning, or banishing the relatives of the royal house to protect the throne from possible plots;
5. For not betraying the subject secretly, for a bribe, into the hands of bands of professional Thugs, to be murdered and robbed in the prince's back lot.

Those were rather common princely industries in the old times, but they and some others of a harsh sort ceased long ago under English rule. Better industries have taken their place, as this Address from the Jain community will show:

“Your Highness,—We the undersigned members of the Jain community of Bombay have the pleasure to approach your Highness with the expression of our heartfelt congratulations on the recent conference on your Highness of the Knighthood of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India. Ten years ago we had the pleasure and privilege of welcoming your Highness to this city under circumstances which have made a memorable epoch in the history of your State, for had it not been for a generous and reasonable spirit that your Highness displayed in the negotiations between the Palitana Durbar and the Jain community, the conciliatory spirit that animated our people could not have borne fruit. That was the first step in your Highness's administration, and it fitly elicited the praise of the Jain community, and of the Bombay Government. A decade of



your Highness's administration, combined with the abilities, training, and acquirements that your Highness brought to bear upon it, has justly earned for your Highness the unique and honourable distinction—the Knighthood of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, which we

## Page 17

understand your Highness is the first to enjoy among Chiefs of your, Highness's rank and standing. And we assure your Highness that for this mark of honour that has been conferred on you by Her Most Gracious Majesty, the Queen-Empress, we feel no less proud than your Highness. Establishment of commercial factories, schools, hospitals, etc., by your Highness in your State has marked your Highness's career during these ten years, and we trust that your Highness will be spared to rule over your people with wisdom and foresight, and foster the many reforms that your Highness has been pleased to introduce in your State. We again offer your Highness our warmest felicitations for the honour that has been conferred on you. We beg to remain your Highness's obedient servants."

Factories, schools, hospitals, reforms. The prince propagates that kind of things in the modern times, and gets knighthood and guns for it.

After the address the prince responded with snap and brevity; spoke a moment with half a dozen guests in English, and with an official or two in a native tongue; then the garlands were distributed as usual, and the function ended.

## CHAPTER XLII.

Each person is born to one possession which outvalues all his others—his last breath.  
—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Toward midnight, that night, there was another function. This was a Hindoo wedding—no, I think it was a betrothal ceremony. Always before, we had driven through streets that were multitudinous and tumultuous with picturesque native life, but now there was nothing of that. We seemed to move through a city of the dead. There was hardly a suggestion of life in those still and vacant streets. Even the crows were silent. But everywhere on the ground lay sleeping natives—hundreds and hundreds. They lay stretched at full length and tightly wrapped in blankets, beads and all. Their attitude and their rigidity counterfeited death. The plague was not in Bombay then, but it is devastating the city now. The shops are deserted, now, half of the people have fled, and of the remainder the smitten perish by shoals every day. No doubt the city looks now in the daytime as it looked then at night. When we had pierced deep into the native quarter and were threading its narrow dim lanes, we had to go carefully, for men were stretched asleep all about and there was hardly room to drive between them. And every now and then a swarm of rats would scamper across past the horses' feet in the vague light—the forbears of the rats that are carrying the plague from house to house in Bombay now. The shops were but sheds, little booths open to the street; and the goods had been removed, and on the counters families were sleeping, usually with an oil lamp present. Recurrent dead watches, it looked like.

But at last we turned a corner and saw a great glare of light ahead. It was the home of the bride, wrapped in a perfect conflagration of illuminations,—mainly gas-work designs, gotten up specially for the occasion. Within was abundance of brilliancy—flames, costumes, colors, decorations, mirrors—it was another Aladdin show.

## Page 18

The bride was a trim and comely little thing of twelve years, dressed as we would dress a boy, though more expensively than we should do it, of course. She moved about very much at her ease, and stopped and talked with the guests and allowed her wedding jewelry to be examined. It was very fine. Particularly a rope of great diamonds, a lovely thing to look at and handle. It had a great emerald hanging to it.

The bridegroom was not present. He was having betrothal festivities of his own at his father's house. As I understood it, he and the bride were to entertain company every night and nearly all night for a week or more, then get married, if alive. Both of the children were a little elderly, as brides and grooms go, in India—twelve; they ought to have been married a year or two sooner; still to a, stranger twelve seems quite young enough.

A while after midnight a couple of celebrated and high-priced nautch-girls appeared in the gorgeous place, and danced and sang. With them were men who played upon strange instruments which made uncanny noises of a sort to make one's flesh creep. One of these instruments was a pipe, and to its music the girls went through a performance which represented snake charming. It seemed a doubtful sort of music to charm anything with, but a native gentleman assured me that snakes like it and will come out of their holes and listen to it with every evidence of refreshment And gratitude. He said that at an entertainment in his grounds once, the pipe brought out half a dozen snakes, and the music had to be stopped before they would be persuaded to go. Nobody wanted their company, for they were bold, familiar, and dangerous; but no one would kill them, of course, for it is sinful for a Hindoo to kill any kind of a creature.

We withdrew from the festivities at two in the morning. Another picture, then—but it has lodged itself in my memory rather as a stage-scene than as a reality. It is of a porch and short flight of steps crowded with dark faces and ghostly-white draperies flooded with the strong glare from the dazzling concentration of illuminations; and midway of the steps one conspicuous figure for accent—a turbaned giant, with a name according to his size: Rao Bahadur Baskirao Balinkanje Pitale, Vakeel to his Highness the Gaikwar of Baroda. Without him the picture would not have been complete; and if his name had been merely Smith, he wouldn't have answered. Close at hand on house-fronts on both sides of the narrow street were illuminations of a kind commonly employed by the natives—scores of glass tumblers (containing tapers) fastened a few inches apart all over great latticed frames, forming starry constellations which showed out vividly against their black back grounds. As we drew away into the distance down the dim lanes the illuminations gathered together into a single mass, and glowed out of the enveloping darkness like a sun.

## Page 19

Then again the deep silence, the skurrying rats, the dim forms stretched every-where on the ground; and on either hand those open booths counterfeiting sepulchres, with counterfeit corpses sleeping motionless in the flicker of the counterfeit death lamps. And now, a year later, when I read the cablegrams I seem to be reading of what I myself partly saw—saw before it happened—in a prophetic dream, as it were. One cablegram says, “Business in the native town is about suspended. Except the wailing and the tramp of the funerals. There is but little life or movement. The closed shops exceed in number those that remain open.” Another says that 325,000 of the people have fled the city and are carrying the plague to the country. Three days later comes the news, “The population is reduced by half.” The refugees have carried the disease to Karachi; “220 cases, 214 deaths.” A day or two later, “52 fresh cases, all of which proved fatal.”

The plague carries with it a terror which no other disease can excite; for of all diseases known to men it is the deadliest—by far the deadliest. “Fifty-two fresh cases—all fatal.” It is the Black Death alone that slays like that. We can all imagine, after a fashion, the desolation of a plague-stricken city, and the stupor of stillness broken at intervals by distant bursts of wailing, marking the passing of funerals, here and there and yonder, but I suppose it is not possible for us to realize to ourselves the nightmare of dread and fear that possesses the living who are present in such a place and cannot get away. That half million fled from Bombay in a wild panic suggests to us something of what they were feeling, but perhaps not even they could realize what the half million were feeling whom they left stranded behind to face the stalking horror without chance of escape. Kinglake was in Cairo many years ago during an epidemic of the Black Death, and he has imagined the terrors that creep into a man's heart at such a time and follow him until they themselves breed the fatal sign in the armpit, and then the delirium with confused images, and home-dreams, and reeling billiard-tables, and then the sudden blank of death:

“To the contagionist, filled as he is with the dread of final causes, having no faith in destiny, nor in the fixed will of God, and with none of the devil-may-care indifference which might stand him instead of creeds—to such one, every rag that shivers in the breeze of a plague-stricken city has this sort of sublimity. If by any terrible ordinance he be forced to venture forth, he sees death dangling from every sleeve; and, as he creeps forward, he poises his shuddering limbs between the imminent jacket that is stabbing at his right elbow and the murderous pelisse that threatens to mow him clean down as it sweeps along on his left. But most of all he dreads that which most of all he should love—the touch of a woman's dress; for mothers and

## Page 20

wives, hurrying forth on kindly errands from the bedsides of the dying, go slouching along through the streets more willfully and less courteously than the men. For a while it may be that the caution of the poor Levantine may enable him to avoid contact, but sooner or later, perhaps, the dreaded chance arrives; that bundle of linen, with the dark tearful eyes at the top of it, that labors along with the voluptuous clumsiness of Grisi — she has touched the poor Levantine with the hem of her sleeve! From that dread moment his peace is gone; his mind for ever hanging upon the fatal touch invites the blow which he fears; he watches for the symptoms of plague so carefully, that sooner or later they come in truth. The parched mouth is a sign—his mouth is parched; the throbbing brain—his brain does throb; the rapid pulse—he touches his own wrist (for he dares not ask counsel of any man lest he be deserted), he touches his wrist, and feels how his frightened blood goes galloping out of his heart. There is nothing but the fatal swelling that is wanting to make his sad conviction complete; immediately, he has an odd feel under the arm—no pain, but a little straining of the skin; he would to God it were his fancy that were strong enough to give him that sensation; this is the worst of all. It now seems to him that he could be happy and contented with his parched mouth, and his throbbing brain, and his rapid pulse, if only he could know that there were no swelling under the left arm; but dares he try?—in a moment of calmness and deliberation he dares not; but when for a while he has writhed under the torture of suspense, a sudden strength of will drives him to seek and know his fate; he touches the gland, and finds the skin sane and sound but under the cuticle there lies a small lump like a pistol-bullet, that moves as he pushes it. Oh! but is this for all certainty, is this the sentence of death? Feel the gland of the other arm. There is not the same lump exactly, yet something a little like it. Have not some people glands naturally enlarged?—would to heaven he were one! So he does for himself the work of the plague, and when the Angel of Death thus courted does indeed and in truth come, he has only to finish that which has been so well begun; he passes his fiery hand over the brain of the victim, and lets him rave for a season, but all chance-wise, of people and things once dear, or of people and things indifferent. Once more the poor fellow is back at his home in fair Provence, and sees the sundial that stood in his childhood's garden —sees his mother, and the long-since forgotten face of that little dear sister—(he sees her, he says, on a Sunday morning, for all the church bells are ringing); he looks up and down through the universe, and owns it well piled with bales upon bales of cotton, and cotton eternal—so much so that he feels—he knows—he swears he could make that winning hazard, if the billiard-table would not slant upwards, and

## Page 21

if the cue were a cue worth playing with; but it is not—it's a cue that won't move—his own arm won't move—in short, there's the devil to pay in the brain of the poor Levantine; and perhaps, the next night but one he becomes the 'life and the soul' of some squalling jackal family, who fish him out by the foot from his shallow and sandy grave."

### CHAPTER XLIII.

Hunger is the handmaid of genius

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

One day during our stay in Bombay there was a criminal trial of a most interesting sort, a terribly realistic chapter out of the "Arabian Nights," a strange mixture of simplicities and pieties and murderous practicalities, which brought back the forgotten days of Thuggee and made them live again; in fact, even made them believable. It was a case where a young girl had been assassinated for the sake of her trifling ornaments, things not worth a laborer's day's wages in America. This thing could have been done in many other countries, but hardly with the cold business-like depravity, absence of fear, absence of caution, destitution of the sense of horror, repentance, remorse, exhibited in this case. Elsewhere the murderer would have done his crime secretly, by night, and without witnesses; his fears would have allowed him no peace while the dead body was in his neighborhood; he would not have rested until he had gotten it safe out of the way and hidden as effectually as he could hide it. But this Indian murderer does his deed in the full light of day, cares nothing for the society of witnesses, is in no way incommoded by the presence of the corpse, takes his own time about disposing of it, and the whole party are so indifferent, so phlegmatic, that they take their regular sleep as if nothing was happening and no halts hanging over them; and these five bland people close the episode with a religious service. The thing reads like a Meadows-Taylor Thug-tale of half a century ago, as may be seen by the official report of the trial:

"At the Mazagon Police Court yesterday, Superintendent Nolan again charged Tookaram Suntoo Savat Baya, woman, her daughter Krishni, and Gopal Yithoo Bhanayker, before Mr. Phiroze Hoshang Dastur, Fourth Presidency Magistrate, under sections 302 and 109 of the Code, with having on the night of the 30th of December last murdered a Hindoo girl named Cassi, aged 12, by strangulation, in the room of a chawl at Jakaria Bunder, on the Sewriroad, and also with aiding and abetting each other in the commission of the offense.

"Mr. F. A. Little, Public Prosecutor, conducted the case on behalf of the Crown, the accused being undefended.

## Page 22

“Mr. Little applied under the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code to tender pardon to one of the accused, Krishni, woman, aged 22, on her undertaking to make a true and full statement of facts under which the deceased girl Cassi was murdered.” The Magistrate having granted the Public Prosecutor’s application, the accused Krishni went into the witness-box, and, on being examined by Mr. Little, made the following confession:—I am a mill-hand employed at the Jubilee Mill. I recollect the day (Tuesday); on which the body of the deceased Cassi was found. Previous to that I attended the mill for half a day, and then returned home at 3 in the afternoon, when I saw five persons in the house, viz.: the first accused Tookaram, who is my paramour, my mother, the second accused Baya, the accused Gopal, and two guests named Ramji Daji and Annaji Gungaram. Tookaram rented the room of the chawl situated at Jakaria Bunder-road from its owner, Girdharilal Radhakishan, and in that room I, my paramour, Tookaram, and his younger brother, Yesso Mahadhoo, live. Since his arrival in Bombay from his native country Yesso came and lived with us. When I returned from the mill on the afternoon of that day, I saw the two guests seated on a cot in the veranda, and a few minutes after the accused Gopal came and took his seat by their side, while I and my mother were seated inside the room. Tookaram, who had gone out to fetch some ‘pan’ and betelnuts, on his return home had brought the two guests with him. After returning home he gave them ‘pan supari’. While they were eating it my mother came out of the room and inquired of one of the guests, Ramji, what had happened to his foot, when he replied that he had tried many remedies, but they had done him no good. My mother then took some rice in her hand and prophesied that the disease which Ramji was suffering from would not be cured until he returned to his native country. In the meantime the deceased Cassi came from the direction of an out-house, and stood in front on the threshold of our room with a ‘lota’ in her hand. Tookaram then told his two guests to leave the room, and they then went up the steps towards the quarry. After the guests had gone away, Tookaram seized the deceased, who had come into the room, and he afterwards put a waistband around her, and tied her to a post which supports a loft. After doing this, he pressed the girl’s throat, and, having tied her mouth with the ‘dhotur’ (now shown in Court), fastened it to the post. Having killed the girl, Tookaram removed her gold head ornament and a gold ‘putlee’, and also took charge of her ‘lota’. Besides these two ornaments Cassi had on her person ear-studs a nose-ring, some silver toe-rings, two necklaces, a pair of silver anklets and bracelets. Tookaram afterwards tried to remove the silver amulets, the ear-studs, and the nose-ring; but he failed in his attempt. While he was doing so,



## Page 23

I, my mother, and Gopal were present. After removing the two gold ornaments, he handed them over to Gopal, who was at the time standing near me. When he killed Cassi, Tookaram threatened to strangle me also if I informed any one of this. Gopal and myself were then standing at the door of our room, and we both were threatened by Tookaram. My mother, Baya, had seized the legs of the deceased at the time she was killed, and whilst she was being tied to the post. Cassi then made a noise. Tookaram and my mother took part in killing the girl. After the murder her body was wrapped up in a mattress and kept on the loft over the door of our room. When Cassi was strangled, the door of the room was fastened from the inside by Tookaram. This deed was committed shortly after my return home from work in the mill. Tookaram put the body of the deceased in the mattress, and, after it was left on the loft, he went to have his head shaved by a barber named Sambhoo Raghoo, who lives only one door away from me. My mother and myself then remained in the possession of the information. I was slapped and threatened by my paramour, Tookaram, and that was the only reason why I did not inform any one at that time. When I told Tookaram that I would give information of the occurrence, he slapped me. The accused Gopal was asked by Tookaram to go back to his room, and he did so, taking away with him the two gold ornaments and the 'lota'. Yesso Mahadhoo, a brother-in-law of Tookaram, came to the house and asked Tookaram why he was washing, the water-pipe being just opposite. Tookaram replied that he was washing his dhotur, as a fowl had polluted it. About 6 o'clock of the evening of that day my mother gave me three pice and asked me to buy a cocoanut, and I gave the money to Yessoo, who went and fetched a cocoanut and some betel leaves. When Yessoo and others were in the room I was bathing, and, after I finished my bath, my mother took the cocoanut and the betel leaves from Yessoo, and we five went to the sea. The party consisted of Tookaram, my mother, Yessoo, Tookaram's younger brother, and myself. On reaching the seashore, my mother made the offering to the sea, and prayed to be pardoned for what we had done. Before we went to the sea, some one came to inquire after the girl Cassi. The police and other people came to make these inquiries both before and after we left the house for the seashore. The police questioned my mother about the girl, and she replied that Cassi had come to her door, but had left. The next day the police questioned Tookaram, and he, too, gave a similar reply. This was said the same night when the search was made for the girl. After the offering was made to the sea, we partook of the cocoanut and returned home, when my mother gave me some food; but Tookaram did not partake of any food that night. After dinner I and my mother slept inside the room, and Tookaram slept on a cot near his brother-in-law, Yessoo Mahadhoo, just outside the door. That

## Page 24

was not the usual place where Tookaram slept. He usually slept inside the room. The body of the deceased remained on the loft when I went to sleep. The room in which we slept was locked, and I heard that my paramour, Tookaram, was restless outside. About 3 o'clock the following morning Tookaram knocked at the door, when both myself and my mother opened it. He then told me to go to the steps leading to the quarry, and see if any one was about. Those steps lead to a stable, through which we go to the quarry at the back of the compound. When I got to the steps I saw no one there. Tookaram asked me if any one was there, and I replied that I could see no one about. He then took the body of the deceased from the loft, and having wrapped it up in his saree, asked me to accompany him to the steps of the quarry, and I did so. The 'saree' now produced here was the same. Besides the 'saree', there was also a 'cholee' on the body. He then carried the body in his arms, and went up the steps, through the stable, and then to the right hand towards a Sahib's bungalow, where Tookaram placed the body near a wall. All the time I and my mother were with him. When the body was taken down, Yessoo was lying on the cot. After depositing the body under the wall, we all returned home, and soon after 5 a.m. the police again came and took Tookaram away. About an hour after they returned and took me and my mother away. We were questioned about it, when I made a statement. Two hours later I was taken to the room, and I pointed out this waistband, the 'dhotur', the mattress, and the wooden post to Superintendent Nolan and Inspectors Roberts and Rashanali, in the presence of my mother and Tookaram. Tookaram killed the girl Cassi for her ornaments, which he wanted for the girl to whom he was shortly going to be married. The body was found in the same place where it was deposited by Tookaram."

The criminal side of the native has always been picturesque, always readable. The Thuggee and one or two other particularly outrageous features of it have been suppressed by the English, but there is enough of it left to keep it darkly interesting. One finds evidence of these survivals in the newspapers. Macaulay has a light-throwing passage upon this matter in his great historical sketch of Warren Hastings, where he is describing some effects which followed the temporary paralysis of Hastings' powerful government brought about by Sir Philip Francis and his party:

"The natives considered Hastings as a fallen man; and they acted after their kind. Some of our readers may have seen, in India, a cloud of crows pecking a sick vulture to death—no bad type of what happens in that country as often as fortune deserts one who has been great and dreaded. In an instant all the sycophants, who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favor of his victorious enemies

## Page 25

by accusing him. An Indian government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined, and in twenty-four hours it will be furnished with grave charges, supported by depositions so full and circumstantial that any person unaccustomed to Asiatic mendacity would regard them as decisive. It is well if the signature of the destined victim is not counterfeited at the foot of some illegal compact, and if some treasonable paper is not slipped into a hiding-place in his house."

That was nearly a century and a quarter ago. An article in one of the chief journals of India (the Pioneer) shows that in some respects the native of to-day is just what his ancestor was then. Here are niceties of so subtle and delicate a sort that they lift their breed of rascality to a place among the fine arts, and almost entitle it to respect:

"The records of the Indian courts might certainly be relied upon to prove that swindlers as a class in the East come very close to, if they do not surpass, in brilliancy of execution and originality of design the most expert of their fraternity in Europe and America. India in especial is the home of forgery. There are some particular districts which are noted as marts for the finest specimens of the forger's handiwork. The business is carried on by firms who possess stores of stamped papers to suit every emergency. They habitually lay in a store of fresh stamped papers every year, and some of the older and more thriving houses can supply documents for the past forty years, bearing the proper water-mark and possessing the genuine appearance of age. Other districts have earned notoriety for skilled perjury, a pre-eminence that excites a respectful admiration when one thinks of the universal prevalence of the art, and persons desirous of succeeding in false suits are ready to pay handsomely to avail themselves of the services of these local experts as witnesses."

Various instances illustrative of the methods of these swindlers are given. They exhibit deep cunning and total depravity on the part of the swindler and his pals, and more obtuseness on the part of the victim than one would expect to find in a country where suspicion of your neighbor must surely be one of the earliest things learned. The favorite subject is the young fool who has just come into a fortune and is trying to see how poor a use he can put it to. I will quote one example:

"Sometimes another form of confidence trick is adopted, which is invariably successful. The particular pigeon is spotted, and, his acquaintance having been made, he is encouraged in every form of vice. When the friendship is thoroughly established, the swindler remarks to the young man that he has a brother who has asked him to lend him Rs.10,000. The swindler says he has the money and would lend it; but, as the borrower is his brother, he cannot charge interest. So

## Page 26

he proposes that he should hand the dupe the money, and the latter should lend it to the swindler's brother, exacting a heavy pre-payment of interest which, it is pointed out, they may equally enjoy in dissipation. The dupe sees no objection, and on the appointed day receives Rs.7,000 from the swindler, which he hands over to the confederate. The latter is profuse in his thanks, and executes a promissory note for Rs.10,000, payable to bearer. The swindler allows the scheme to remain quiescent for a time, and then suggests that, as the money has not been repaid and as it would be unpleasant to sue his brother, it would be better to sell the note in the bazaar. The dupe hands the note over, for the money he advanced was not his, and, on being informed that it would be necessary to have his signature on the back so as to render the security negotiable, he signs without any hesitation. The swindler passes it on to confederates, and the latter employ a respectable firm of solicitors to ask the dupe if his signature is genuine. He admits it at once, and his fate is sealed. A suit is filed by a confederate against the dupe, two accomplices being made co-defendants. They admit their Signatures as indorsers, and the one swears he bought the note for value from the dupe. The latter has no defense, for no court would believe the apparently idle explanation of the manner in which he came to endorse the note."

There is only one India! It is the only country that has a monopoly of grand and imposing specialties. When another country has a remarkable thing, it cannot have it all to itself—some other country has a duplicate. But India—that is different. Its marvels are its own; the patents cannot be infringed; imitations are not possible. And think of the size of them, the majesty of them, the weird and outlandish character of the most of them!

There is the Plague, the Black Death: India invented it; India is the cradle of that mighty birth.

The Car of Juggernaut was India's invention.

So was the Suttee; and within the time of men still living eight hundred widows willingly, and, in fact, rejoicingly, burned themselves to death on the bodies of their dead husbands in a single year. Eight hundred would do it this year if the British government would let them.

Famine is India's specialty. Elsewhere famines are inconsequential incidents—in India they are devastating cataclysms; in one case they annihilate hundreds; in the other, millions.

India had 2,000,000 gods, and worships them all. In religion all other countries are paupers; India is the only millionaire.

With her everything is on a giant scale—even her poverty; no other country can show anything to compare with it. And she has been used to wealth on so vast a scale that she has to shorten to single words the expressions describing great sums. She describes 100,000 with one word—a ‘lahk’; she describes ten millions with one word—a ‘crore’.

## Page 27

In the bowels of the granite mountains she has patiently carved out dozens of vast temples, and made them glorious with sculptured colonnades and stately groups of statuary, and has adorned the eternal walls with noble paintings. She has built fortresses of such magnitude that the show-strongholds of the rest of the world are but modest little things by comparison; palaces that are wonders for rarity of materials, delicacy and beauty of workmanship, and for cost; and one tomb which men go around the globe to see. It takes eighty nations, speaking eighty languages, to people her, and they number three hundred millions.

On top of all this she is the mother and home of that wonder of wonders caste—and of that mystery of mysteries, the satanic brotherhood of the Thugs.

India had the start of the whole world in the beginning of things. She had the first civilization; she had the first accumulation of material wealth; she was populous with deep thinkers and subtle intellects; she had mines, and woods, and a fruitful soil. It would seem as if she should have kept the lead, and should be to-day not the meek dependent of an alien master, but mistress of the world, and delivering law and command to every tribe and nation in it. But, in truth, there was never any possibility of such supremacy for her. If there had been but one India and one language—but there were eighty of them! Where there are eighty nations and several hundred governments, fighting and quarreling must be the common business of life; unity of purpose and policy are impossible; out of such elements supremacy in the world cannot come. Even caste itself could have had the defeating effect of a multiplicity of tongues, no doubt; for it separates a people into layers, and layers, and still other layers, that have no community of feeling with each other; and in such a condition of things as that, patriotism can have no healthy growth.

It was the division of the country into so many States and nations that made Thuggee possible and prosperous. It is difficult to realize the situation. But perhaps one may approximate it by imagining the States of our Union peopled by separate nations, speaking separate languages, with guards and custom-houses strung along all frontiers, plenty of interruptions for travelers and traders, interpreters able to handle all the languages very rare or non-existent, and a few wars always going on here and there and yonder as a further embarrassment to commerce and excursioning. It would make intercommunication in a measure ungeneral. India had eighty languages, and more custom-houses than cats. No clever man with the instinct of a highway robber could fail to notice what a chance for business was here offered. India was full of clever men with the highwayman instinct, and so, quite naturally, the brotherhood of the Thugs came into being to meet the long-felt want.

How long ago that was nobody knows—centuries, it is supposed. One of the chiefest wonders connected with it was the success with which it kept its secret. The English trader did business in India two hundred years and more before he ever heard of it; and yet it was assassinating its thousands all around him every year, the whole time.

## Page 28

### CHAPTER XLIV.

The old saw says, "Let a sleeping dog lie." Right.... Still, when there is much at stake it is better to get a newspaper to do it.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

*From diary:*

January 28. I learned of an official Thug-book the other day. I was not aware before that there was such a thing. I am allowed the temporary use of it. We are making preparations for travel. Mainly the preparations are purchases of bedding. This is to be used in sleeping berths in the trains; in private houses sometimes; and in nine-tenths of the hotels. It is not realizable; and yet it is true. It is a survival; an apparently unnecessary thing which in some strange way has outlived the conditions which once made it necessary. It comes down from a time when the railway and the hotel did not exist; when the occasional white traveler went horseback or by bullock-cart, and stopped over night in the small dak-bungalow provided at easy distances by the government—a shelter, merely, and nothing more. He had to carry bedding along, or do without. The dwellings of the English residents are spacious and comfortable and commodiously furnished, and surely it must be an odd sight to see half a dozen guests come filing into such a place and dumping blankets and pillows here and there and everywhere. But custom makes incongruous things congruous.

One buys the bedding, with waterproof hold-all for it at almost any shop —there is no difficulty about it.

January 30. What a spectacle the railway station was, at train-time! It was a very large station, yet when we arrived it seemed as if the whole world was present—half of it inside, the other half outside, and both halves, bearing mountainous head-loads of bedding and other freight, trying simultaneously to pass each other, in opposing floods, in one narrow door. These opposing floods were patient, gentle, long-suffering natives, with whites scattered among them at rare intervals; and wherever a white man's native servant appeared, that native seemed to have put aside his natural gentleness for the time and invested himself with the white man's privilege of making a way for himself by promptly shoving all intervening black things out of it. In these exhibitions of authority Satan was scandalous. He was probably a Thug in one of his former incarnations.

Inside the great station, tides upon tides of rainbow-costumed natives swept along, this way and that, in massed and bewildering confusion, eager, anxious, belated, distressed; and washed up to the long trains and flowed into them with their packs and bundles, and disappeared, followed at once by the next wash, the next wave. And here and there, in the midst of this hurly-burly, and seemingly undisturbed by it, sat great groups of natives on the bare stone floor,—young,



## Page 29

slender brown women, old, gray wrinkled women, little soft brown babies, old men, young men, boys; all poor people, but all the females among them, both big and little, bejeweled with cheap and showy nose-rings, toe-rings, leglets, and armlets, these things constituting all their wealth, no doubt. These silent crowds sat there with their humble bundles and baskets and small household gear about them, and patiently waited—for what? A train that was to start at some time or other during the day or night! They hadn't timed themselves well, but that was no matter—the thing had been so ordered from on high, therefore why worry? There was plenty of time, hours and hours of it, and the thing that was to happen would happen —there was no hurrying it.

The natives traveled third class, and at marvelously cheap rates. They were packed and crammed into cars that held each about fifty; and it was said that often a Brahmin of the highest caste was thus brought into personal touch, and consequent defilement, with persons of the lowest castes—no doubt a very shocking thing if a body could understand it and properly appreciate it. Yes, a Brahmin who didn't own a rupee and couldn't borrow one, might have to touch elbows with a rich hereditary lord of inferior caste, inheritor of an ancient title a couple of yards long, and he would just have to stand it; for if either of the two was allowed to go in the cars where the sacred white people were, it probably wouldn't be the august poor Brahmin. There was an immense string of those third-class cars, for the natives travel by hordes; and a weary hard night of it the occupants would have, no doubt.

When we reached our car, Satan and Barney had already arrived there with their train of porters carrying bedding and parasols and cigar boxes, and were at work. We named him Barney for short; we couldn't use his real name, there wasn't time.

It was a car that promised comfort; indeed, luxury. Yet the cost of it —well, economy could no further go; even in France; not even in Italy. It was built of the plainest and cheapest partially-smoothed boards, with a coating of dull paint on them, and there was nowhere a thought of decoration. The floor was bare, but would not long remain so when the dust should begin to fly. Across one end of the compartment ran a netting for the accommodation of hand-baggage; at the other end was a door which would shut, upon compulsion, but wouldn't stay shut; it opened into a narrow little closet which had a wash-bowl in one end of it, and a place to put a towel, in case you had one with you —and you would be sure to have towels, because you buy them with the bedding, knowing that the railway doesn't furnish them. On each side of the car, and running fore and aft, was a broad leather-covered sofa to sit on in the day and sleep on at night. Over each sofa hung, by straps, a wide, flat, leather-covered shelf—to sleep on. In the daytime



## Page 30

you can hitch it up against the wall, out of the way—and then you have a big unencumbered and most comfortable room to spread out in. No car in any country is quite its equal for comfort (and privacy) I think. For usually there are but two persons in it; and even when there are four there is but little sense of impaired privacy. Our own cars at home can surpass the railway world in all details but that one: they have no cosiness; there are too many people together.

At the foot of each sofa was a side-door, for entrance and exit. Along the whole length of the sofa on each side of the car ran a row of large single-plate windows, of a blue tint—blue to soften the bitter glare of the sun and protect one's eyes from torture. These could be let down out of the way when one wanted the breeze. In the roof were two oil lamps which gave a light strong enough to read by; each had a green-cloth attachment by which it could be covered when the light should be no longer needed.

While we talked outside with friends, Barney and Satan placed the hand-baggage, books, fruits, and soda-bottles in the racks, and the hold-alls and heavy baggage in the closet, hung the overcoats and sun-helmets and towels on the hooks, hoisted the two bed-shelves up out of the way, then shouldered their bedding and retired to the third class.

Now then, you see what a handsome, spacious, light, airy, homelike place it was, wherein to walk up and down, or sit and write, or stretch out and read and smoke. A central door in the forward end of the compartment opened into a similar compartment. It was occupied by my wife and daughter. About nine in the evening, while we halted a while at a station, Barney and Satan came and undid the clumsy big hold-alls, and spread the bedding on the sofas in both compartments—mattresses, sheets, gay coverlets, pillows, all complete; there are no chambermaids in India—apparently it was an office that was never heard of. Then they closed the communicating door, nimbly tidied up our place, put the night-clothing on the beds and the slippers under them, then returned to their own quarters.

January 31. It was novel and pleasant, and I stayed awake as long as I could, to enjoy it, and to read about those strange people the Thugs. In my sleep they remained with me, and tried to strangle me. The leader of the gang was that giant Hindoo who was such a picture in the strong light when we were leaving those Hindoo betrothal festivities at two o'clock in the morning—Rao Bahadur Baskirao Balinkanje Pitale, Vakeel to the Gaikwar of Baroda. It was he that brought me the invitation from his master to go to Baroda and lecture to that prince—and now he was misbehaving in my dreams. But all things can happen in dreams. It is indeed as the Sweet Singer of Michigan says—irrelevantly, of course, for the one and unfailing great quality which distinguishes her poetry from Shakespeare's and makes it precious to us is its stern and simple irrelevancy:

## Page 31

My heart was gay and happy,  
This was ever in my mind,  
There is better times a coming,  
And I hope some day to find  
Myself capable of composing,  
It was my heart's delight  
To compose on a sentimental subject  
If it came in my mind just right.

—[“The Sentimental Song Book,” p. 49; theme, “The Author’s Early Life,” 19th stanza.]

Barroda. Arrived at 7 this morning. The dawn was just beginning to show. It was forlorn to have to turn out in a strange place at such a time, and the blinking lights in the station made it seem night still. But the gentlemen who had come to receive us were there with their servants, and they make quick work; there was no lost time. We were soon outside and moving swiftly through the soft gray light, and presently were comfortably housed—with more servants to help than we were used to, and with rather embarrassingly important officials to direct them. But it was custom; they spoke Ballarat English, their bearing was charming and hospitable, and so all went well.

Breakfast was a satisfaction. Across the lawns was visible in the distance through the open window an Indian well, with two oxen tramping leisurely up and down long inclines, drawing water; and out of the stillness came the suffering screech of the machinery—not quite musical, and yet soothingly melancholy and dreamy and reposeful—a wail of lost spirits, one might imagine. And commemorative and reminiscent, perhaps; for of course the Thugs used to throw people down that well when they were done with them.

After breakfast the day began, a sufficiently busy one. We were driven by winding roads through a vast park, with noble forests of great trees, and with tangles and jungles of lovely growths of a humbler sort; and at one place three large gray apes came out and pranced across the road—a good deal of a surprise and an unpleasant one, for such creatures belong in the menagerie, and they look artificial and out of place in a wilderness.

We came to the city, by and by, and drove all through it. Intensely Indian, it was, and crumbly, and mouldering, and immemorially old, to all appearance. And the houses—oh, indescribably quaint and curious they were, with their fronts an elaborate lace-work of intricate and beautiful wood-carving, and now and then further adorned with rude pictures of elephants and princes and gods done in shouting colors; and all the ground floors along these cramped and narrow lanes occupied as shops—shops unbelievably small and impossibly packed with merchantable rubbish, and with nine-tenths-naked natives squatting at their work of hammering, pounding, brazing, soldering, sewing, designing, cooking, measuring out grain, grinding it, repairing idols—and then the

swarm of ragged and noisy humanity under the horses' feet and everywhere, and the pervading reek and fume and smell! It was all wonderful and delightful.

## Page 32

Imagine a file of elephants marching through such a crevice of a street and scraping the paint off both sides of it with their hides. How big they must look, and how little they must make the houses look; and when the elephants are in their glittering court costume, what a contrast they must make with the humble and sordid surroundings. And when a mad elephant goes raging through, belting right and left with his trunk, how do these swarms of people get out of the way? I suppose it is a thing which happens now and then in the mad season (for elephants have a mad season).

I wonder how old the town is. There are patches of building—massive structures, monuments, apparently—that are so battered and worn, and seemingly so tired and so burdened with the weight of age, and so dulled and stupefied with trying to remember things they forgot before history began, that they give one the feeling that they must have been a part of original Creation. This is indeed one of the oldest of the princedoms of India, and has always been celebrated for its barbaric pomps and splendors, and for the wealth of its princes.

### CHAPTER XLV.

It takes your enemy and your friend, working together, to hurt you to the heart; the one to slander you and the other to get the news to you.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Out of the town again; a long drive through open country, by winding roads among secluded villages nestling in the inviting shade of tropic vegetation, a Sabbath stillness everywhere, sometimes a pervading sense of solitude, but always barefoot natives gliding by like spirits, without sound of footfall, and others in the distance dissolving away and vanishing like the creatures of dreams. Now and then a string of stately camels passed by—always interesting things to look at—and they were velvet-shod by nature, and made no noise. Indeed, there were no noises of any sort in this paradise. Yes, once there was one, for a moment: a file of native convicts passed along in charge of an officer, and we caught the soft clink of their chains. In a retired spot, resting himself under a tree, was a holy person—a naked black fakeer, thin and skinny, and whitey-gray all over with ashes.

By and by to the elephant stables, and I took a ride; but it was by request—I did not ask for it, and didn't want it; but I took it, because otherwise they would have thought I was afraid, which I was. The elephant kneels down, by command—one end of him at a time—and you climb the ladder and get into the howdah, and then he gets up, one end at a time, just as a ship gets up over a wave; and after that, as he strides monstrosly about, his motion is much like a ship's motion. The mahout bores into the back of his head with a great iron prod and you wonder at his temerity and at the elephant's patience, and you think that perhaps

## Page 33

the patience will not last; but it does, and nothing happens. The mahout talks to the elephant in a low voice all the time, and the elephant seems to understand it all and to be pleased with it; and he obeys every order in the most contented and docile way. Among these twenty-five elephants were two which were larger than any I had ever seen before, and if I had thought I could learn to not be afraid, I would have taken one of them while the police were not looking.

In the howdah-house there were many howdahs that were made of silver, one of gold, and one of old ivory, and equipped with cushions and canopies of rich and costly stuffs. The wardrobe of the elephants was there, too; vast velvet covers stiff and heavy with gold embroidery; and bells of silver and gold; and ropes of these metals for fastening the things on harness, so to speak; and monster hoops of massive gold for the elephant to wear on his ankles when he is out in procession on business of state.

But we did not see the treasury of crown jewels, and that was a disappointment, for in mass and richness it ranks only second in India. By mistake we were taken to see the new palace instead, and we used up the last remnant of our spare time there. It was a pity, too; for the new palace is mixed modern American-European, and has not a merit except costliness. It is wholly foreign to India, and impudent and out of place. The architect has escaped. This comes of overdoing the suppression of the Thugs; they had their merits. The old palace is oriental and charming, and in consonance with the country. The old palace would still be great if there were nothing of it but the spacious and lofty hall where the durbars are held. It is not a good place to lecture in, on account of the echoes, but it is a good place to hold durbars in and regulate the affairs of a kingdom, and that is what it is for. If I had it I would have a durbar every day, instead of once or twice a year.

The prince is an educated gentleman. His culture is European. He has been in Europe five times. People say that this is costly amusement for him, since in crossing the sea he must sometimes be obliged to drink water from vessels that are more or less public, and thus damage his caste. To get it purified again he must make pilgrimage to some renowned Hindoo temples and contribute a fortune or two to them. His people are like the other Hindoos, profoundly religious; and they could not be content with a master who was impure.

We failed to see the jewels, but we saw the gold cannon and the silver one—they seemed to be six-pounders. They were not designed for business, but for salutes upon rare and particularly important state occasions. An ancestor of the present Gaikwar had the silver one made, and a subsequent ancestor had the gold one made, in order to outdo him.



This sort of artillery is in keeping with the traditions of Baroda, which was of old famous for style and show. It used to entertain visiting rajahs and viceroys with tiger-fights, elephant-fights, illuminations, and elephant-processions of the most glittering and gorgeous character.

## Page 34

It makes the circus a pale, poor thing.

In the train, during a part of the return journey from Baroda, we had the company of a gentleman who had with him a remarkable looking dog. I had not seen one of its kind before, as far as I could remember; though of course I might have seen one and not noticed it, for I am not acquainted with dogs, but only with cats. This dog's coat was smooth and shiny and black, and I think it had tan trimmings around the edges of the dog, and perhaps underneath. It was a long, low dog, with very short, strange legs—legs that curved inboard, something like parentheses wrong way (. Indeed, it was made on the plan of a bench for length and lowness. It seemed to be satisfied, but I thought the plan poor, and structurally weak, on account of the distance between the forward supports and those abaft. With age the dog's back was likely to sag; and it seemed to me that it would have been a stronger and more practicable dog if it had had some more legs. It had not begun to sag yet, but the shape of the legs showed that the undue weight imposed upon them was beginning to tell. It had a long nose, and floppy ears that hung down, and a resigned expression of countenance. I did not like to ask what kind of a dog it was, or how it came to be deformed, for it was plain that the gentleman was very fond of it, and naturally he could be sensitive about it. From delicacy I thought it best not to seem to notice it too much. No doubt a man with a dog like that feels just as a person does who has a child that is out of true. The gentleman was not merely fond of the dog, he was also proud of it—just the same again, as a mother feels about her child when it is an idiot. I could see that he was proud of it, notwithstanding it was such a long dog and looked so resigned and pious. It had been all over the world with him, and had been pilgriming like that for years and years. It had traveled 50,000 miles by sea and rail, and had ridden in front of him on his horse 8,000. It had a silver medal from the Geographical Society of Great Britain for its travels, and I saw it. It had won prizes in dog shows, both in India and in England—I saw them. He said its pedigree was on record in the Kennel Club, and that it was a well-known dog. He said a great many people in London could recognize it the moment they saw it. I did not say anything, but I did not think it anything strange; I should know that dog again, myself, yet I am not careful about noticing dogs. He said that when he walked along in London, people often stopped and looked at the dog. Of course I did not say anything, for I did not want to hurt his feelings, but I could have explained to him that if you take a great long low dog like that and waddle it along the street anywhere in the world and not charge anything, people will stop and look. He was gratified because the dog took prizes. But that was nothing; if I were built like that I could take prizes myself. I wished I knew what kind of a dog it was, and what it was for, but I could not very well ask, for that would show that I did not know. Not that I want a dog like that, but only to know the secret of its birth.

## Page 35

I think he was going to hunt elephants with it, because I know, from remarks dropped by him, that he has hunted large game in India and Africa, and likes it. But I think that if he tries to hunt elephants with it, he is going to be disappointed.

I do not believe that it is suited for elephants. It lacks energy, it lacks force of character, it lacks bitterness. These things all show in the meekness and resignation of its expression. It would not attack an elephant, I am sure of it. It might not run if it saw one coming, but it looked to me like a dog that would sit down and pray.

I wish he had told me what breed it was, if there are others; but I shall know the dog next time, and then if I can bring myself to it I will put delicacy aside and ask. If I seem strangely interested in dogs, I have a reason for it; for a dog saved me from an embarrassing position once, and that has made me grateful to these animals; and if by study I could learn to tell some of the kinds from the others, I should be greatly pleased. I only know one kind apart, yet, and that is the kind that saved me that time. I always know that kind when I meet it, and if it is hungry or lost I take care of it. The matter happened in this way

It was years and years ago. I had received a note from Mr. Augustin Daly of the Fifth Avenue Theatre, asking me to call the next time I should be in New York. I was writing plays, in those days, and he was admiring them and trying to get me a chance to get them played in Siberia. I took the first train—the early one—the one that leaves Hartford at 8.29 in the morning. At New Haven I bought a paper, and found it filled with glaring display-lines about a “bench-show” there. I had often heard of bench-shows, but had never felt any interest in them, because I supposed they were lectures that were not well attended. It turned out, now, that it was not that, but a dog-show. There was a double-leaded column about the king-feature of this one, which was called a Saint Bernard, and was worth \$10,000, and was known to be the largest and finest of his species in the world. I read all this with interest, because out of my school-boy readings I dimly remembered how the priests and pilgrims of St. Bernard used to go out in the storms and dig these dogs out of the snowdrifts when lost and exhausted, and give them brandy and save their lives, and drag them to the monastery and restore them with gruel.

Also, there was a picture of this prize-dog in the paper, a noble great creature with a benignant countenance, standing by a table. He was placed in that way so that one could get a right idea of his great dimensions. You could see that he was just a shade higher than the table—indeed, a huge fellow for a dog. Then there was a description which event into the details. It gave his enormous weight—150 1/2 pounds, and his length 4 feet 2 inches, from stem to stern-post; and his height—3 feet 1 inch, to the top of his back. The pictures and the figures so impressed me, that I could see the beautiful colossus before me, and I kept on thinking about him for the next two hours; then I reached New York, and he dropped out of my mind.



## Page 36

In the swirl and tumult of the hotel lobby I ran across Mr. Daly's comedian, the late James Lewis, of beloved memory, and I casually mentioned that I was going to call upon Mr. Daly in the evening at 8. He looked surprised, and said he reckoned not. For answer I handed him Mr. Daly's note. Its substance was: "Come to my private den, over the theater, where we cannot be interrupted. And come by the back way, not the front. No. 642 Sixth Avenue is a cigar shop; pass through it and you are in a paved court, with high buildings all around; enter the second door on the left, and come up stairs."

"Is this all?"

"Yes," I said.

"Well, you'll never get in"

"Why?"

"Because you won't. Or if you do you can draw on me for a hundred dollars; for you will be the first man that has accomplished it in twenty-five years. I can't think what Mr. Daly can have been absorbed in. He has forgotten a most important detail, and he will feel humiliated in the morning when he finds that you tried to get in and couldn't."

"Why, what is the trouble?"

"I'll tell you. You see——"

At that point we were swept apart by the crowd, somebody detained me with a moment's talk, and we did not get together again. But it did not matter; I believed he was joking, anyway.

At eight in the evening I passed through the cigar shop and into the court and knocked at the second door.

"Come in!"

I entered. It was a small room, carpetless, dusty, with a naked deal table, and two cheap wooden chairs for furniture. A giant Irishman was standing there, with shirt collar and vest unbuttoned, and no coat on. I put my hat on the table, and was about to say something, when the Irishman took the innings himself. And not with marked courtesy of tone:

"Well, sor, what will you have?"



I was a little disconcerted, and my easy confidence suffered a shrinkage. The man stood as motionless as Gibraltar, and kept his unblinking eye upon me. It was very embarrassing, very humiliating. I stammered at a false start or two; then——

“I have just run down from——”

“Av ye plaze, ye’ll not smoke here, ye understand.”

I laid my cigar on the window-ledge; chased my flighty thoughts a moment, then said in a placating manner:

“I—I have come to see Mr. Daly.”

“Oh, ye have, have ye?”

“Yes”

“Well, ye’ll not see him.”

“But he asked me to come.”

“Oh, he did, did he?”

“Yes, he sent me this note, and——”

“Lemme see it.”

For a moment I fancied there would be a change in the atmosphere, now; but this idea was premature. The big man was examining the note searchingly under the gas-jet. A glance showed me that he had it upside down—disheartening evidence that he could not read.

“Is ut his own handwrite?”

## Page 37

"Yes—he wrote it himself."

"He did, did he?"

"Yes."

"H'm. Well, then, why ud he write it like that?"

"How do you mean?"

"I mane, why wudn't he put his naime to ut?"

"His name is to it. That's not it—you are looking at my name."

I thought that that was a home shot, but he did not betray that he had been hit. He said:

"It's not an aisy one to spell; how do you pronounce ut?"

"Mark Twain."

"H'm. H'm. Mike Train. H'm. I don't remember ut. What is it ye want to see him about?"

"It isn't I that want to see him, he wants to see me."

"Oh, he does, does he?"

"Yes."

"What does he want to see ye about?"

"I don't know."

"Ye don't know! And ye confess it, becod! Well, I can tell ye wan thing—ye'll not see him. Are ye in the business?"

"What business?"

"The show business."

A fatal question. I recognized that I was defeated. If I answered no, he would cut the matter short and wave me to the door without the grace of a word—I saw it in his uncompromising eye; if I said I was a lecturer, he would despise me, and dismiss me with opprobrious words; if I said I was a dramatist, he would throw me out of the window. I saw that my case was hopeless, so I chose the course which seemed least

humiliating: I would pocket my shame and glide out without answering. The silence was growing lengthy.

“I’ll ask ye again. Are ye in the show business yerself?”

“Yes!”

I said it with splendid confidence; for in that moment the very twin of that grand New Haven dog loafed into the room, and I saw that Irishman’s eye light eloquently with pride and affection.

“Ye are? And what is it?”

“I’ve got a bench-show in New Haven.”

The weather did change then.

“You don’t say, sir! And that’s your show, sir! Oh, it’s a grand show, it’s a wonderful show, sir, and a proud man I am to see your honor this day. And ye’ll be an expert, sir, and ye’ll know all about dogs—more than ever they know themselves, I’ll take me oath to ut.”

I said, with modesty:

“I believe I have some reputation that way. In fact, my business requires it.”

“Ye have some reputation, your honor! Bedad I believe you! There’s not a jintleman in the worrld that can lay over ye in the judgmint of a dog, sir. Now I’ll vinture that your honor’ll know that dog’s dimensions there better than he knows them his own self, and just by the casting of your educated eye upon him. Would you mind giving a guess, if ye’ll be so good?”

I knew that upon my answer would depend my fate. If I made this dog bigger than the prize-dog, it would be bad diplomacy, and suspicious; if I fell too far short of the prizedog, that would be equally damaging. The dog was standing by the table, and I believed I knew the difference between him and the one whose picture I had seen in the newspaper to a shade. I spoke promptly up and said:

## Page 38

"It's no trouble to guess this noble creature's figures height, three feet; length, four feet and three-quarters of an inch; weight, a hundred and forty-eight and a quarter."

The man snatched his hat from its peg and danced on it with joy, shouting:

"Ye've hardly missed it the hair's breadth, hardly the shade of a shade, your honor! Oh, it's the miraculous eye ye've got, for the judgment of a dog!"

And still pouring out his admiration of my capacities, he snatched off his vest and scoured off one of the wooden chairs with it, and scrubbed it and polished it, and said:

"There, sit down, your honor, I'm ashamed of meself that I forgot ye were standing all this time; and do put on your hat, ye mustn't take cold, it's a drafty place; and here is your cigar, sir, a getting cold, I'll give ye a light. There. The place is all yours, sir, and if ye'll just put your feet on the table and make yourself at home, I'll stir around and get a candle and light ye up the ould crazy stairs and see that ye don't come to anny harm, for be this time Mr. Daly'll be that impatient to see your honor that he'll be taking the roof off."

He conducted me cautiously and tenderly up the stairs, lighting the way and protecting me with friendly warnings, then pushed the door open and bowed me in and went his way, mumbling hearty things about my wonderful eye for points of a dog. Mr. Daly was writing and had his back to me. He glanced over his shoulder presently, then jumped up and said—

"Oh, dear me, I forgot all about giving instructions. I was just writing you to beg a thousand pardons. But how is it you are here? How did you get by that Irishman? You are the first man that's done it in five and twenty years. You didn't bribe him, I know that; there's not money enough in New York to do it. And you didn't persuade him; he is all ice and iron: there isn't a soft place nor a warm one in him anywhere. That is your secret? Look here; you owe me a hundred dollars for unintentionally giving you a chance to perform a miracle—for it is a miracle that you've done."

"That is all right," I said, "collect it of Jimmy Lewis."

That good dog not only did me that good turn in the time of my need, but he won for me the envious reputation among all the theatrical people from the Atlantic to the Pacific of being the only man in history who had ever run the blockade of Augustin Daly's back door.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

If the desire to kill and the opportunity to kill came always together, who would escape hanging.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

## Page 39

On the Train. Fifty years ago, when I was a boy in the then remote and sparsely peopled Mississippi valley, vague tales and rumors of a mysterious body of professional murderers came wandering in from a country which was constructively as far from us as the constellations blinking in space—India; vague tales and rumors of a sect called Thugs, who waylaid travelers in lonely places and killed them for the contentment of a god whom they worshiped; tales which everybody liked to listen to and nobody believed, except with reservations. It was considered that the stories had gathered bulk on their travels. The matter died down and a lull followed. Then Eugene Sue's "Wandering Jew" appeared, and made great talk for a while. One character in it was a chief of Thugs—"Feringhea"—a mysterious and terrible Indian who was as slippery and sly as a serpent, and as deadly; and he stirred up the Thug interest once more. But it did not last. It presently died again this time to stay dead.

At first glance it seems strange that this should have happened; but really it was not strange—on the contrary, it was natural; I mean on our side of the water. For the source whence the Thug tales mainly came was a Government Report, and without doubt was not republished in America; it was probably never even seen there. Government Reports have no general circulation. They are distributed to the few, and are not always read by those few. I heard of this Report for the first time a day or two ago, and borrowed it. It is full of fascinations; and it turns those dim, dark fairy tales of my boyhood days into realities.

The Report was made in 1889 by Major Sleeman, of the Indian Service, and was printed in Calcutta in 1840. It is a clumsy, great, fat, poor sample of the printer's art, but good enough for a government printing-office in that old day and in that remote region, perhaps. To Major Sleeman was given the general superintendence of the giant task of ridding India of Thuggee, and he and his seventeen assistants accomplished it. It was the Augean Stables over again. Captain Vallancey, writing in a Madras journal in those old times, makes this remark:

"The day that sees this far-spread evil eradicated from India and known only in name, will greatly tend to immortalize British rule in the East."

He did not overestimate the magnitude and difficulty of the work, nor the immensity of the credit which would justly be due to British rule in case it was accomplished.

Thuggee became known to the British authorities in India about 1810, but its wide prevalence was not suspected; it was not regarded as a serious matter, and no systematic measures were taken for its suppression until about 1830. About that time Major Sleeman captured Eugene Sue's Thug-chief, "Feringhea," and got him to turn King's evidence. The revelations were so stupefying that Sleeman was not

## Page 40

able to believe them. Sleeman thought he knew every criminal within his jurisdiction, and that the worst of them were merely thieves; but Feringhea told him that he was in reality living in the midst of a swarm of professional murderers; that they had been all about him for many years, and that they buried their dead close by. These seemed insane tales; but Feringhea said come and see—and he took him to a grave and dug up a hundred bodies, and told him all the circumstances of the killings, and named the Thugs who had done the work. It was a staggering business. Sleeman captured some of these Thugs and proceeded to examine them separately, and with proper precautions against collusion; for he would not believe any Indian's unsupported word. The evidence gathered proved the truth of what Feringhea had said, and also revealed the fact that gangs of Thugs were plying their trade all over India. The astonished government now took hold of Thuggee, and for ten years made systematic and relentless war upon it, and finally destroyed it. Gang after gang was captured, tried, and punished. The Thugs were harried and hunted from one end of India to the other. The government got all their secrets out of them; and also got the names of the members of the bands, and recorded them in a book, together with their birthplaces and places of residence.

The Thugs were worshipers of Bhowanee; and to this god they sacrificed anybody that came handy; but they kept the dead man's things themselves, for the god cared for nothing but the corpse. Men were initiated into the sect with solemn ceremonies. Then they were taught how to strangle a person with the sacred choke-cloth, but were not allowed to perform officially with it until after long practice. No half-educated strangler could choke a man to death quickly enough to keep him from uttering a sound—a muffled scream, gurgle, gasp, moan, or something of the sort; but the expert's work was instantaneous: the cloth was whipped around the victim's neck, there was a sudden twist, and the head fell silently forward, the eyes starting from the sockets; and all was over. The Thug carefully guarded against resistance. It was usual to get the victims to sit down, for that was the handiest position for business.

If the Thug had planned India itself it could not have been more conveniently arranged for the needs of his occupation.

There were no public conveyances. There were no conveyances for hire. The traveler went on foot or in a bullock cart or on a horse which he bought for the purpose. As soon as he was out of his own little State or principality he was among strangers; nobody knew him, nobody took note of him, and from that time his movements could no longer be traced. He did not stop in towns or villages, but camped outside of them and sent his servants in to buy provisions. There were no habitations between villages. Whenever he was between villages he was an easy prey,



## Page 41

particularly as he usually traveled by night, to avoid the heat. He was always being overtaken by strangers who offered him the protection of their company, or asked for the protection of his—and these strangers were often Thugs, as he presently found out to his cost. The landholders, the native police, the petty princes, the village officials, the customs officers were in many cases protectors and harborers of the Thugs, and betrayed travelers to them for a share of the spoil. At first this condition of things made it next to impossible for the government to catch the marauders; they were spirited away by these watchful friends. All through a vast continent, thus infested, helpless people of every caste and kind moved along the paths and trails in couples and groups silently by night, carrying the commerce of the country—treasure, jewels, money, and petty batches of silks, spices, and all manner of wares. It was a paradise for the Thug.

When the autumn opened, the Thugs began to gather together by pre-concert. Other people had to have interpreters at every turn, but not the Thugs; they could talk together, no matter how far apart they were born, for they had a language of their own, and they had secret signs by which they knew each other for Thugs; and they were always friends. Even their diversities of religion and caste were sunk in devotion to their calling, and the Moslem and the high-caste and low-caste Hindoo were staunch and affectionate brothers in Thuggery.

When a gang had been assembled, they had religious worship, and waited for an omen. They had definite notions about the omens. The cries of certain animals were good omens, the cries of certain other creatures were bad omens. A bad omen would stop proceedings and send the men home.

The sword and the strangling-cloth were sacred emblems. The Thugs worshiped the sword at home before going out to the assembling-place; the strangling-cloth was worshiped at the place of assembly. The chiefs of most of the bands performed the religious ceremonies themselves; but the Kaets delegated them to certain official stranglers (Chauras). The rites of the Kaets were so holy that no one but the Chaur was allowed to touch the vessels and other things used in them.

Thug methods exhibit a curious mixture of caution and the absence of it; cold business calculation and sudden, unreflecting impulse; but there were two details which were constant, and not subject to caprice: patient persistence in following up the prey, and pitilessness when the time came to act.

Caution was exhibited in the strength of the bands. They never felt comfortable and confident unless their strength exceeded that of any party of travelers they were likely to meet by four or fivefold. Yet it was never their purpose to attack openly, but only when the victims were off their guard. When they got hold of a party of travelers they often moved along in their company several days, using all

## Page 42

manner of arts to win their friendship and get their confidence. At last, when this was accomplished to their satisfaction, the real business began. A few Thugs were privately detached and sent forward in the dark to select a good killing-place and dig the graves. When the rest reached the spot a halt was called, for a rest or a smoke. The travelers were invited to sit. By signs, the chief appointed certain Thugs to sit down in front of the travelers as if to wait upon them, others to sit down beside them and engage them in conversation, and certain expert stranglers to stand behind the travelers and be ready when the signal was given. The signal was usually some commonplace remark, like "Bring the tobacco." Sometimes a considerable wait ensued after all the actors were in their places—the chief was biding his time, in order to make everything sure. Meantime, the talk droned on, dim figures moved about in the dull light, peace and tranquility reigned, the travelers resigned themselves to the pleasant reposefulness and comfort of the situation, unconscious of the death-angels standing motionless at their backs. The time was ripe, now, and the signal came: "Bring the tobacco." There was a mute swift movement, all in the same instant the men at each victim's sides seized his hands, the man in front seized his feet, and pulled, the man at his back whipped the cloth around his neck and gave it a twist the head sunk forward, the tragedy was over. The bodies were stripped and covered up in the graves, the spoil packed for transportation, then the Thugs gave pious thanks to Bhowanee, and departed on further holy service.

The Report shows that the travelers moved in exceedingly small groups —twos, threes, fours, as a rule; a party with a dozen in it was rare. The Thugs themselves seem to have been the only people who moved in force. They went about in gangs of 10, 15, 25, 40, 60, 100, 150, 200, 250, and one gang of 310 is mentioned. Considering their numbers, their catch was not extraordinary—particularly when you consider that they were not in the least fastidious, but took anybody they could get, whether rich or poor, and sometimes even killed children. Now and then they killed women, but it was considered sinful to do it, and unlucky. The "season" was six or eight months long. One season the half dozen Bundelkand and Gwalior gangs aggregated 712 men, and they murdered 210 people. One season the Malwa and Kandeish gangs aggregated 702 men, and they murdered 232. One season the Kandeish and Berar gangs aggregated 963 men, and they murdered 385 people.

Here is the tally-sheet of a gang of sixty Thugs for a whole season—gang under two noted chiefs, "Chotee and Sheik Nungoo from Gwalior":

"Left Poora, in Jhansee, and on arrival at Sarora murdered a traveler.

"On nearly reaching Bhopal, met 3 Brahmins, and murdered them.

“Cross the Nerbudda; at a village called Hutteea, murdered a Hindoo.

## Page 43

"Went through Aurungabad to Walagow; there met a Havildar of the barber caste and 5 sepoy (native soldiers); in the evening came to Jokur, and in the morning killed them near the place where the treasure-bearers were killed the year before.

"Between Jokur and Dholeea met a sepoy of the shepherd caste; killed him in the jungle.

"Passed through Dholeea and lodged in a village; two miles beyond, on the road to Indore, met a Byragee (beggar-holy mendicant); murdered him at the Thapa.

"In the morning, beyond the Thapa, fell in with 3 Marwarie travelers; murdered them.

"Near a village on the banks of the Taptee met 4 travelers and killed them.

"Between Choupra and Dhoreea met a Marwarie; murdered him.

"At Dhoreea met 3 Marwaries; took them two miles and murdered them.

"Two miles further on, overtaken by three treasure-bearers; took them two miles and murdered them in the jungle.

"Came on to Khurgore Bateesa in Indore, divided spoil, and dispersed.

"A total of 27 men murdered on one expedition."

Chotee (to save his neck) was informer, and furnished these facts. Several things are noticeable about his resume. 1. Business brevity; 2, absence of emotion; 3, smallness of the parties encountered by the 60; 4, variety in character and quality of the game captured; 5, Hindoo and Mohammedan chiefs in business together for Bhowanee; 6, the sacred caste of the Brahmins not respected by either; 7, nor yet the character of that mendicant, that Byragee.

A beggar is a holy creature, and some of the gangs spared him on that account, no matter how slack business might be; but other gangs slaughtered not only him, but even that sacreddest of sacred creatures, the fakeer—that repulsive skin-and-bone thing that goes around naked and mats his bushy hair with dust and dirt, and so beflours his lean body with ashes that he looks like a specter. Sometimes a fakeer trusted a shade too far in the protection of his sacredness. In the middle of a tally-sheet of Feringhea's, who had been out with forty Thugs, I find a case of the kind. After the killing of thirty-nine men and one woman, the fakeer appears on the scene:



“Approaching Doregow, met 3 pundits; also a fakeer, mounted on a pony; he was plastered over with sugar to collect flies, and was covered with them. Drove off the fakeer, and killed the other three.” Leaving Doregow, the fakeer joined again, and went on in company to Raojana; met 6 Khutries on their way from Bombay to Nagpore. Drove off the fakeer with stones, and killed the 6 men in camp, and buried them in the grove.” Next day the fakeer joined again; made him leave at Mana. Beyond there, fell in with two Kahars and a sepoy, and came on towards

## Page 44

the place selected for the murder. When near it, the fakeer came again. Losing all patience with him, gave Mithoo, one of the gang, 5 rupees (\$2.50) to murder him, and take the sin upon himself. All four were strangled, including the fakeer. Surprised to find among the fakeer's effects 30 pounds of coral, 350 strings of small pearls, 15 strings of large pearls, and a gilt necklace."

It is curious, the little effect that time has upon a really interesting circumstance. This one, so old, so long ago gone down into oblivion, reads with the same freshness and charm that attach to the news in the morning paper; one's spirits go up, then down, then up again, following the chances which the fakeer is running; now you hope, now you despair, now you hope again; and at last everything comes out right, and you feel a great wave of personal satisfaction go weltering through you, and without thinking, you put out your hand to pat Mithoo on the back, when —puff! the whole thing has vanished away, there is nothing there; Mithoo and all the crowd have been dust and ashes and forgotten, oh, so many, many, many lagging years! And then comes a sense of injury: you don't know whether Mithoo got the swag, along with the sin, or had to divide up the swag and keep all the sin himself. There is no literary art about a government report. It stops a story right in the most interesting place.

These reports of Thug expeditions run along interminably in one monotonous tune: "Met a sepoy—killed him; met 5 pundits—killed them; met 4 Rajpoots and a woman—killed them"—and so on, till the statistics get to be pretty dry. But this small trip of Feringhea's Forty had some little variety about it. Once they came across a man hiding in a grave—a thief; he had stolen 1,100 rupees from Dhunroj Seith of Parowtee. They strangled him and took the money. They had no patience with thieves. They killed two treasure-bearers, and got 4,000 rupees. They came across two bullocks "laden with copper pice," and killed the four drivers and took the money. There must have been half a ton of it. I think it takes a double handful of pice to make an anna, and 16 annas to make a rupee; and even in those days the rupee was worth only half a dollar. Coming back over their tracks from Baroda, they had another picturesque stroke of luck: "The Lohars of Oodeypore' put a traveler in their charge for safety." Dear, dear, across this abyssmal gulf of time we still see Feringhea's lips uncover his teeth, and through the dim haze we catch the incandescent glimmer of his smile. He accepted that trust, good man; and so we know what went with the traveler.

Even Rajahs had no terrors for Feringhea; he came across an elephant-driver belonging to the Rajah of Oodeypore and promptly strangled him.

"A total of 100 men and 5 women murdered on this expedition."

Among the reports of expeditions we find mention of victims of almost every quality and estate.

## Page 45

Also a prince's cook; and even the water-carrier of that sublime lord of lords and king of kings, the Governor-General of India! How broad they were in their tastes! They also murdered actors—poor wandering barnstormers. There are two instances recorded; the first one by a gang of Thugs under a chief who soils a great name borne by a better man —Kipling's deathless "Gungadin":

"After murdering 4 sepoy, going on toward Indore, met 4 strolling players, and persuaded them to come with us, on the pretense that we would see their performance at the next stage. Murdered them at a temple near Bhopal."

Second instance:

"At Deohuttee, joined by comedians. Murdered them eastward of that place."

But this gang was a particularly bad crew. On that expedition they murdered a fakeer and twelve beggars. And yet Bhowanee protected them; for once when they were strangling a man in a wood when a crowd was going by close at hand and the noose slipped and the man screamed, Bhowanee made a camel burst out at the same moment with a roar that drowned the scream; and before the man could repeat it the breath was choked out of his body.

The cow is so sacred in India that to kill her keeper is an awful sacrilege, and even the Thugs recognized this; yet now and then the lust for blood was too strong, and so they did kill a few cow-keepers. In one of these instances the witness who killed the cowherd said, "In Thuggee this is strictly forbidden, and is an act from which no good can come. I was ill of a fever for ten days afterward. I do believe that evil will follow the murder of a man with a cow. If there be no cow it does not signify." Another Thug said he held the cowherd's feet while this witness did the strangling. He felt no concern, "because the bad fortune of such a deed is upon the strangler and not upon the assistants; even if there should be a hundred of them."

There were thousands of Thugs roving over India constantly, during many generations. They made Thug gee a hereditary vocation and taught it to their sons and to their son's sons. Boys were in full membership as early as 16 years of age; veterans were still at work at 70. What was the fascination, what was the impulse? Apparently, it was partly piety, largely gain, and there is reason to suspect that the sport afforded was the chiefest fascination of all. Meadows Taylor makes a Thug in one of his books claim that the pleasure of killing men was the white man's beast-hunting instinct enlarged, refined, ennobled. I will quote the passage:

## CHAPTER XLVII.

Simple rules for saving money: To save half, when you are fired by an eager impulse to contribute to a charity, wait, and count forty. To save three-quarters, count sixty. To save it all, count sixty-five.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.



## Page 46

The Thug said:

“How many of you English are passionately devoted to sporting! Your days and months are passed in its excitement. A tiger, a panther, a buffalo or a hog rouses your utmost energies for its destruction—you even risk your lives in its pursuit. How much higher game is a Thug’s!”

That must really be the secret of the rise and development of Thuggee. The joy of killing! the joy of seeing killing done—these are traits of the human race at large. We white people are merely modified Thugs; Thugs fretting under the restraints of a not very thick skin of civilization; Thugs who long ago enjoyed the slaughter of the Roman arena, and later the burning of doubtful Christians by authentic Christians in the public squares, and who now, with the Thugs of Spain and Nimes, flock to enjoy the blood and misery of the bullring. We have no tourists of either sex or any religion who are able to resist the delights of the bull-ring when opportunity offers; and we are gentle Thugs in the hunting-season, and love to chase a tame rabbit and kill it. Still, we have made some progress-microscopic, and in truth scarcely worth mentioning, and certainly nothing to be proud of—still, it is progress: we no longer take pleasure in slaughtering or burning helpless men. We have reached a little altitude where we may look down upon the Indian Thugs with a complacent shudder; and we may even hope for a day, many centuries hence, when our posterity will look down upon us in the same way.

There are many indications that the Thug often hunted men for the mere sport of it; that the fright and pain of the quarry were no more to him than are the fright and pain of the rabbit or the stag to us; and that he was no more ashamed of beguiling his game with deceits and abusing its trust than are we when we have imitated a wild animal’s call and shot it when it honored us with its confidence and came to see what we wanted:

“Madara, son of Nihal, and I, Ramzam, set out from Kotdee in the cold weather and followed the high road for about twenty days in search of travelers, until we came to Selem pore, where we met a very old man going to the east. We won his confidence in this manner: he carried a load which was too heavy for his old age; I said to him, ‘You are an old man, I will aid you in carrying your load, as you are from my part of the country.’ He said, ‘Very well, take me with you.’ So we took him with us to Selem pore, where we slept that night. We woke him next morning before dawn and set out, and at the distance of three miles we seated him to rest while it was still very dark. Madara was ready behind him, and strangled him. He never spoke a word. He was about 60 or 70 years of age.”

Another gang fell in with a couple of barbers and persuaded them to come along in their company by promising them the job of shaving the whole crew—30 Thugs. At the place appointed for the murder 15 got shaved, and actually paid the barbers for their work. Then killed them and took back the money.

## Page 47

A gang of forty-two Thugs came across two Brahmins and a shopkeeper on the road, beguiled them into a grove and got up a concert for their entertainment. While these poor fellows were listening to the music the stranglers were standing behind them; and at the proper moment for dramatic effect they applied the noose.

The most devoted fisherman must have a bite at least as often as once a week or his passion will cool and he will put up his tackle. The tiger-sportsman must find a tiger at least once a fortnight or he will get tired and quit. The elephant-hunter's enthusiasm will waste away little by little, and his zeal will perish at last if he plod around a month without finding a member of that noble family to assassinate.

But when the lust in the hunter's heart is for the noblest of all quarries, man, how different is the case! and how watery and poor is the zeal and how childish the endurance of those other hunters by comparison. Then, neither hunger, nor thirst, nor fatigue, nor deferred hope, nor monotonous disappointment, nor leaden-footed lapse of time can conquer the hunter's patience or weaken the joy of his quest or cool the splendid rage of his desire. Of all the hunting-passions that burn in the breast of man, there is none that can lift him superior to discouragements like these but the one—the royal sport, the supreme sport, whose quarry is his brother. By comparison, tiger-hunting is a colorless poor thing, for all it has been so bragged about.

Why, the Thug was content to tramp patiently along, afoot, in the wasting heat of India, week after week, at an average of nine or ten miles a day, if he might but hope to find game some time or other and refresh his longing soul with blood. Here is an instance:

"I (Ramzam) and Hyder set out, for the purpose of strangling travelers, from Guddapore, and proceeded via the Fort of Julalabad, Newulunge, Bangermow, on the banks of the Ganges (upwards of 100 miles), from whence we returned by another route. Still no travelers! till we reached Bowaneegunge, where we fell in with a traveler, a boatman; we inveigled him and about two miles east of there Hyder strangled him as he stood—for he was troubled and afraid, and would not sit. We then made a long journey (about 130 miles) and reached Hussunpore Bundwa, where at the tank we fell in with a traveler—he slept there that night; next morning we followed him and tried to win his confidence; at the distance of two miles we endeavored to induce him to sit down—but he would not, having become aware of us. I attempted to strangle him as he walked along, but did not succeed; both of us then fell upon him, he made a great outcry, 'They are murdering me!' at length we strangled him and flung his body into a well. After this we returned to our homes, having been out a month and traveled about 260 miles. A total of two men murdered on the expedition."

And here is another case-related by the terrible Futtu Khan, a man with a tremendous record, to be re-mentioned by and by:

## Page 48

"I, with three others, traveled for about 45 days a distance of about 200 miles in search of victims along the highway to Bundwa and returned by Davodpore (another 200 miles) during which journey we had only one murder, which happened in this manner. Four miles to the east of Noubustaghat we fell in with a traveler, an old man. I, with Koshal and Hyder, inveigled him and accompanied him that day within 3 miles of Rampoor, where, after dark, in a lonely place, we got him to sit down and rest; and while I kept him in talk, seated before him, Hyder behind strangled him: he made no resistance. Koshal stabbed him under the arms and in the throat, and we flung the body into a running stream. We got about 4 or 5 rupees each (\$2 or \$2.50). We then proceeded homewards. A total of one man murdered on this expedition."

There. They tramped 400 miles, were gone about three months, and harvested two dollars and a half apiece. But the mere pleasure of the hunt was sufficient. That was pay enough. They did no grumbling.

Every now and then in this big book one comes across that pathetic remark: "we tried to get him to sit down but he would not." It tells the whole story. Some accident had awakened the suspicion in him that these smooth friends who had been petting and coddling him and making him feel so safe and so fortunate after his forlorn and lonely wanderings were the dreaded Thugs; and now their ghastly invitation to "sit and rest" had confirmed its truth. He knew there was no help for him, and that he was looking his last upon earthly things, but "he would not sit." No, not that—it was too awful to think of!

There are a number of instances which indicate that when a man had once tasted the regal joys of man-hunting he could not be content with the dull monotony of a crimeless life after ward. Example, from a Thug's testimony:

"We passed through to Kurnaul, where we found a former Thug named Junooa, an old comrade of ours, who had turned religious mendicant and become a disciple and holy. He came to us in the serai and weeping with joy returned to his old trade."

Neither wealth nor honors nor dignities could satisfy a reformed Thug for long. He would throw them all away, someday, and go back to the lurid pleasures of hunting men, and being hunted himself by the British.

Ramzam was taken into a great native grandee's service and given authority over five villages. "My authority extended over these people to summons them to my presence, to make them stand or sit. I dressed well, rode my pony, and had two sepoys, a scribe and a village guard to attend me. During three years I used to pay each village a monthly visit, and no one suspected that I was a Thug! The chief man used to wait on me to transact business, and as I passed along, old and young made their salaam to me."

And yet during that very three years he got leave of absence “to attend a wedding,” and instead went off on a Thugging lark with six other Thugs and hunted the highway for fifteen days!—with satisfactory results.

## Page 49

Afterwards he held a great office under a Rajah. There he had ten miles of country under his command and a military guard of fifteen men, with authority to call out 2,000 more upon occasion. But the British got on his track, and they crowded him so that he had to give himself up. See what a figure he was when he was gotten up for style and had all his things on: "I was fully armed—a sword, shield, pistols, a matchlock musket and a flint gun, for I was fond of being thus arrayed, and when so armed feared not though forty men stood before me."

He gave himself up and proudly proclaimed himself a Thug. Then by request he agreed to betray his friend and pal, Buhram, a Thug with the most tremendous record in India. "I went to the house where Buhram slept (often has he led our gangs!) I woke him, he knew me well, and came outside to me. It was a cold night, so under pretence of warming myself, but in reality to have light for his seizure by the guards, I lighted some straw and made a blaze. We were warming our hands. The guards drew around us. I said to them, 'This is Buhram,' and he was seized just as a cat seizes a mouse. Then Buhram said, 'I am a Thug! my father was a Thug, my grandfather was a Thug, and I have thugged with many!'"

So spoke the mighty hunter, the mightiest of the mighty, the Gordon Cumming of his day. Not much regret noticeable in it.—["Having planted a bullet in the shoulder-bone of an elephant, and caused the agonized creature to lean for support against a tree, I proceeded to brew some coffee. Having refreshed myself, taking observations of the elephant's spasms and writhings between the sips, I resolved to make experiments on vulnerable points, and, approaching very near, I fired several bullets at different parts of his enormous skull. He only acknowledged the shots by a salaam-like movement of his trunk, with the point of which he gently touched the wounds with a striking and peculiar action. Surprised and shocked to find that I was only prolonging the suffering of the noble beast, which bore its trials with such dignified composure, I resolved to finish the proceeding with all possible despatch, and accordingly opened fire upon him from the left side. Aiming at the shoulder, I fired six shots with the two-grooved rifle, which must have eventually proved mortal, after which I fired six shots at the same part with the Dutch six-founder. Large tears now trickled down from his eyes, which he slowly shut and opened, his colossal frame shivered convulsively, and falling on his side he expired."—Gordon Cumming.]

So many many times this Official Report leaves one's curiosity unsatisfied. For instance, here is a little paragraph out of the record of a certain band of 193 Thugs, which has that defect:

## Page 50

“Fell in with Lall Sing Subahdar and his family, consisting of nine persons. Traveled with them two days, and the third put them all to death except the two children, little boys of one and a half years old.”

There it stops. What did they do with those poor little fellows? What was their subsequent history? Did they purpose training them up as Thugs? How could they take care of such little creatures on a march which stretched over several months? No one seems to have cared to ask any questions about the babies. But I do wish I knew.

One would be apt to imagine that the Thugs were utterly callous, utterly destitute of human feelings, heartless toward their own families as well as toward other people's; but this was not so. Like all other Indians, they had a passionate love for their kin. A shrewd British officer who knew the Indian character, took that characteristic into account in laying his plans for the capture of Eugene Sue's famous Feringhea. He found out Feringhea's hiding-place, and sent a guard by night to seize him, but the squad was awkward and he got away. However, they got the rest of the family—the mother, wife, child, and brother—and brought them to the officer, at Jubbulpore; the officer did not fret, but bided his time: “I knew Feringhea would not go far while links so dear to him were in my hands.” He was right. Feringhea knew all the danger he was running by staying in the neighborhood, still he could not tear himself away. The officer found that he divided his time between five villages where he had relatives and friends who could get news for him from his family in Jubbulpore jail; and that he never slept two consecutive nights in the same village. The officer traced out his several haunts, then pounced upon all the five villages on the one night and at the same hour, and got his man.

Another example of family affection. A little while previously to the capture of Feringhea's family, the British officer had captured Feringhea's foster-brother, leader of a gang of ten, and had tried the eleven and condemned them to be hanged. Feringhea's captured family arrived at the jail the day before the execution was to take place. The foster-brother, Jhurhoo, entreated to be allowed to see the aged mother and the others. The prayer was granted, and this is what took place—it is the British officer who speaks:

“In the morning, just before going to the scaffold, the interview took place before me. He fell at the old woman's feet and begged that she would relieve him from the obligations of the milk with which she had nourished him from infancy, as he was about to die before he could fulfill any of them. She placed her hands on his head, and he knelt, and she said she forgave him all, and bid him die like a man.”

If a capable artist should make a picture of it, it would be full of dignity and solemnity and pathos;

## Page 51

and it could touch you. You would imagine it to be anything but what it was. There is reverence there, and tenderness, and gratefulness, and compassion, and resignation, and fortitude, and self-respect—and no sense of disgrace, no thought of dishonor. Everything is there that goes to make a noble parting, and give it a moving grace and beauty and dignity. And yet one of these people is a Thug and the other a mother of Thugs! The incongruities of our human nature seem to reach their limit here.

I wish to make note of one curious thing while I think of it. One of the very commonest remarks to be found in this bewildering array of Thug confessions is this:

“Strangled him and threw him an a well!” In one case they threw sixteen into a well—and they had thrown others in the same well before. It makes a body thirsty to read about it.

And there is another very curious thing. The bands of Thugs had private graveyards. They did not like to kill and bury at random, here and there and everywhere. They preferred to wait, and toll the victims along, and get to one of their regular burying-places (‘bheels’) if they could. In the little kingdom of Oude, which was about half as big as Ireland and about as big as the State of Maine, they had two hundred and seventy-four ‘bheels’. They were scattered along fourteen hundred miles of road, at an average of only five miles apart, and the British government traced out and located each and every one of them and set them down on the map.

The Oude bands seldom went out of their own country, but they did a thriving business within its borders. So did outside bands who came in and helped. Some of the Thug leaders of Oude were noted for their successful careers. Each of four of them confessed to above 300 murders; another to nearly 400; our friend Ramzam to 604—he is the one who got leave of absence to attend a wedding and went thugging instead; and he is also the one who betrayed Buhram to the British.

But the biggest records of all were the murder-lists of Fatty Khan and Buhram. Fatty Khan’s number is smaller than Ramzam’s, but he is placed at the head because his average is the best in Oude-Thug history per year of service. His slaughter was 508 men in twenty years, and he was still a young man when the British stopped his industry. Buhram’s list was 931 murders, but it took him forty years. His average was one man and nearly all of another man per month for forty years, but Fatty Khan’s average was two men and a little of another man per month during his twenty years of usefulness.

There is one very striking thing which I wish to call attention to. You have surmised from the listed callings followed by the victims of the Thugs that nobody could travel the Indian roads unprotected and live to get through; that the Thugs respected no quality, no

vocation, no religion, nobody; that they killed every unarmed man that came in their way. That is wholly true—with one reservation. In all the long file of Thug confessions an English traveler is mentioned but once—and this is what the Thug says of the circumstance:



## Page 52

“He was on his way from Mhow to Bombay. We studiously avoided him. He proceeded next morning with a number of travelers who had sought his protection, and they took the road to Baroda.”

We do not know who he was; he flits across the page of this rusty old book and disappears in the obscurity beyond; but he is an impressive figure, moving through that valley of death serene and unafraid, clothed in the might of the English name.

We have now followed the big official book through, and we understand what Thuggee was, what a bloody terror it was, what a desolating scourge it was. In 1830 the English found this cancerous organization imbedded in the vitals of the empire, doing its devastating work in secrecy, and assisted, protected, sheltered, and hidden by innumerable confederates—big and little native chiefs, customs officers, village officials, and native police, all ready to lie for it, and the mass of the people, through fear, persistently pretending to know nothing about its doings; and this condition of things had existed for generations, and was formidable with the sanctions of age and old custom. If ever there was an unpromising task, if ever there was a hopeless task in the world, surely it was offered here—the task of conquering Thuggee. But that little handful of English officials in India set their sturdy and confident grip upon it, and ripped it out, root and branch! How modest do Captain Vallancey’s words sound now, when we read them again, knowing what we know:

“The day that sees this far-spread evil completely eradicated from India, and known only in name, will greatly tend to immortalize British rule in the East.”

It would be hard to word a claim more modestly than that for this most noble work.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

Grief can take care of itself; but to get the full value of a joy you must have somebody to divide it with.

—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

We left Bombay for Allahabad by a night train. It is the custom of the country to avoid day travel when it can conveniently be done. But there is one trouble: while you can seemingly “secure” the two lower berths by making early application, there is no ticket as witness of it, and no other producible evidence in case your proprietorship shall chance to be challenged. The word “engaged” appears on the window, but it doesn’t state who the compartment is engaged, for. If your Satan and your Barney arrive before somebody else’s servants, and spread the bedding on the two sofas and then stand guard till you come, all will be well; but if they step aside on an errand, they may find the



beds promoted to the two shelves, and somebody else's demons standing guard over their master's beds, which in the meantime have been spread upon your sofas.

You do not pay anything extra for your sleeping place; that is where the trouble lies. If you buy a fare-ticket and fail to use it, there is room thus made available for someone else; but if the place were secured to you it would remain vacant, and yet your ticket would secure you another place when you were presently ready to travel.

## Page 53

However, no explanation of such a system can make it seem quite rational to a person who has been used to a more rational system. If our people had the arranging of it, we should charge extra for securing the place, and then the road would suffer no loss if the purchaser did not occupy it.

The present system encourages good manners—and also discourages them. If a young girl has a lower berth and an elderly lady comes in, it is usual for the girl to offer her place to this late comer; and it is usual for the late comer to thank her courteously and take it. But the thing happens differently sometimes. When we were ready to leave Bombay my daughter's satchels were holding possession of her berth—a lower one. At the last moment, a middle-aged American lady swarmed into the compartment, followed by native porters laden with her baggage. She was growling and snarling and scolding, and trying to make herself phenomenally disagreeable; and succeeding. Without a word, she hoisted the satchels into the hanging shelf, and took possession of that lower berth.

On one of our trips Mr. Smythe and I got out at a station to walk up and down, and when we came back Smythe's bed was in the hanging shelf and an English cavalry officer was in bed on the sofa which he had lately been occupying. It was mean to be glad about it, but it is the way we are made; I could not have been gladder if it had been my enemy that had suffered this misfortune. We all like to see people in trouble, if it doesn't cost us anything. I was so happy over Mr. Smythe's chagrin that I couldn't go to sleep for thinking of it and enjoying it. I knew he supposed the officer had committed the robbery himself, whereas without a doubt the officer's servant had done it without his knowledge. Mr. Smythe kept this incident warm in his heart, and longed for a chance to get even with somebody for it. Sometime afterward the opportunity came, in Calcutta. We were leaving on a 24-hour journey to Darjeeling. Mr. Barclay, the general superintendent, has made special provision for our accommodation, Mr. Smythe said; so there was no need to hurry about getting to the train; consequently, we were a little late.

When we arrived, the usual immense turmoil and confusion of a great Indian station were in full blast. It was an immoderately long train, for all the natives of India were going by it somewhither, and the native officials were being pestered to frenzy by belated and anxious people. They didn't know where our car was, and couldn't remember having received any orders about it. It was a deep disappointment; moreover, it looked as if our half of our party would be left behind altogether. Then Satan came running and said he had found a compartment with one shelf and one sofa unoccupied, and had made our beds and had stowed our baggage. We rushed to the place, and just as the train was ready to pull out and the porters were slamming the doors to, all down the line, an officer of the Indian Civil Service, a good friend of ours, put his head in and said:—

## Page 54

“I have been hunting for you everywhere. What are you doing here? Don’t you know \_\_\_\_\_”

The train started before he could finish. Mr. Smythe’s opportunity was come. His bedding, on the shelf, at once changed places with the bedding—a stranger’s—that was occupying the sofa that was opposite to mine. About ten o’clock we stopped somewhere, and a large Englishman of official military bearing stepped in. We pretended to be asleep. The lamps were covered, but there was light enough for us to note his look of surprise. He stood there, grand and fine, peering down at Smythe, and wondering in silence at the situation. After a bit he said:—

“Well!” And that was all.

But that was enough. It was easy to understand. It meant: “This is extraordinary. This is high-handed. I haven’t had an experience like this before.”

He sat down on his baggage, and for twenty minutes we watched him through our eyelashes, rocking and swaying there to the motion of the train. Then we came to a station, and he got up and went out, muttering: “I must find a lower berth, or wait over.” His servant came presently and carried away his things.

Mr. Smythe’s sore place was healed, his hunger for revenge was satisfied. But he couldn’t sleep, and neither could I; for this was a venerable old car, and nothing about it was taut. The closet door slammed all night, and defied every fastening we could invent. We got up very much jaded, at dawn, and stepped out at a way station; and, while we were taking a cup of coffee, that Englishman ranged up alongside, and somebody said to him:

“So you didn’t stop off, after all?”

“No. The guard found a place for me that had been, engaged and not occupied. I had a whole saloon car all to myself—oh, quite palatial! I never had such luck in my life.”

That was our car, you see. We moved into it, straight off, the family and all. But I asked the English gentleman to remain, and he did. A pleasant man, an infantry colonel; and doesn’t know, yet, that Smythe robbed him of his berth, but thinks it was done by Smythe’s servant without Smythe’s knowledge. He was assisted in gathering this impression.

The Indian trains are manned by natives exclusively. The Indian stations except very large and important ones—are manned entirely by natives, and so are the posts and telegraphs. The rank and file of the police are natives. All these people are pleasant and accommodating. One day I left an express train to lounge about in that perennially ravishing show, the ebb and flow and whirl of gaudy natives, that is always surging up

and down the spacious platform of a great Indian station; and I lost myself in the ecstasy of it, and when I turned, the train was moving swiftly away. I was going to sit down and wait for another train, as I would have done at home; I had no thought of any other course. But a native official, who had a green flag in his hand, saw me, and said politely:

## Page 55

"Don't you belong in the train, sir?"

"Yes." I said.

He waved his flag, and the train came back! And he put me aboard with as much ceremony as if I had been the General Superintendent. They are kindly people, the natives. The face and the bearing that indicate a surly spirit and a bad heart seemed to me to be so rare among Indians—so nearly non-existent, in fact—that I sometimes wondered if Thuggee wasn't a dream, and not a reality. The bad hearts are there, but I believe that they are in a small, poor minority. One thing is sure: They are much the most interesting people in the world—and the nearest to being incomprehensible. At any rate, the hardest to account for. Their character and their history, their customs and their religion, confront you with riddles at every turn—riddles which are a trifle more perplexing after they are explained than they were before. You can get the facts of a custom—like caste, and Suttee, and Thuggee, and so on—and with the facts a theory which tries to explain, but never quite does it to your satisfaction. You can never quite understand how so strange a thing could have been born, nor why.

For instance—the Suttee. This is the explanation of it:

A woman who throws away her life when her husband dies is instantly joined to him again, and is forever afterward happy with him in heaven; her family will build a little monument to her, or a temple, and will hold her in honor, and, indeed, worship her memory always; they will themselves be held in honor by the public; the woman's self-sacrifice has conferred a noble and lasting distinction upon her posterity. And, besides, see what she has escaped: If she had elected to live, she would be a disgraced person; she could not remarry; her family would despise her and disown her; she would be a friendless outcast, and miserable all her days.

Very well, you say, but the explanation is not complete yet. How did people come to drift into such a strange custom? What was the origin of the idea? "Well, nobody knows; it was probably a revelation sent down by the gods." One more thing: Why was such a cruel death chosen—why wouldn't a gentle one have answered? "Nobody knows; maybe that was a revelation, too."

No—you can never understand it. It all seems impossible. You resolve to believe that a widow never burnt herself willingly, but went to her death because she was afraid to defy public opinion. But you are not able to keep that position. History drives you from it. Major Sleeman has a convincing case in one of his books. In his government on the Nerbudda he made a brave attempt on the 28th of March, 1828, to put down Suttee on his own hook and without warrant from the Supreme Government of India. He could not foresee that the Government would put it down itself eight months later. The only backing he had was a bold nature and a compassionate heart. He issued his proclamation abolishing

## Page 56

the Sutte in his district. On the morning of Tuesday—note the day of the week—the 24th of the following November, Ummed Singh Upadhya, head of the most respectable and most extensive Brahmin family in the district, died, and presently came a deputation of his sons and grandsons to beg that his old widow might be allowed to burn herself upon his pyre. Sleeman threatened to enforce his order, and punish severely any man who assisted; and he placed a police guard to see that no one did so. From the early morning the old widow of sixty-five had been sitting on the bank of the sacred river by her dead, waiting through the long hours for the permission; and at last the refusal came instead. In one little sentence Sleeman gives you a pathetic picture of this lonely old gray figure: all day and all night “she remained sitting by the edge of the water without eating or drinking.” The next morning the body of the husband was burned to ashes in a pit eight feet square and three or four feet deep, in the view of several thousand spectators. Then the widow waded out to a bare rock in the river, and everybody went away but her sons and other relations. All day she sat there on her rock in the blazing sun without food or drink, and with no clothing but a sheet over her shoulders.

The relatives remained with her and all tried to persuade her to desist from her purpose, for they deeply loved her. She steadily refused. Then a part of the family went to Sleeman's house, ten miles away, and tried again to get him to let her burn herself. He refused, hoping to save her yet.

All that day she scorched in her sheet on the rock, and all that night she kept her vigil there in the bitter cold. Thursday morning, in the sight of her relatives, she went through a ceremonial which said more to them than any words could have done; she put on the dhaja (a coarse red turban) and broke her bracelets in pieces. By these acts she became a dead person in the eye of the law, and excluded from her caste forever. By the iron rule of ancient custom, if she should now choose to live she could never return to her family. Sleeman was in deep trouble. If she starved herself to death her family would be disgraced; and, moreover, starving would be a more lingering misery than the death by fire. He went back in the evening thoroughly worried. The old woman remained on her rock, and there in the morning he found her with her dhaja still on her head. “She talked very collectedly, telling me that she had determined to mix her ashes with those of her departed husband, and should patiently wait my permission to do so, assured that God would enable her to sustain life till that was given, though she dared not eat or drink. Looking at the sun, then rising before her over a long and beautiful reach of the river, she said calmly, ‘My soul has been for five days with my husband's near that sun; nothing but my earthly frame is left; and this, I know, you will in time suffer to be mixed with his ashes in yonder pit, because it is not in your nature or usage wantonly to prolong the miseries of a poor old woman.’”

## Page 57

He assured her that it was his desire and duty to save her, and to urge her to live, and to keep her family from the disgrace of being thought her murderers. But she said she “was not afraid of their being thought so; that they had all, like good children, done everything in their power to induce her to live, and to abide with them; and if I should consent I know they would love and honor me, but my duties to them have now ended. I commit them all to your care, and I go to attend my husband, Ummed Singh Upadhya, with whose ashes on the funeral pile mine have been already three times mixed.”

She believed that she and he had been upon the earth three several times as wife and husband, and that she had burned herself to death three times upon his pyre. That is why she said that strange thing. Since she had broken her bracelets and put on the red turban she regarded herself as a corpse; otherwise she would not have allowed herself to do her husband the irreverence of pronouncing his name. “This was the first time in her long life that she had ever uttered her husband’s name, for in India no woman, high or low, ever pronounces the name of her husband.”

Major Sleeman still tried to shake her purpose. He promised to build her a fine house among the temples of her ancestors upon the bank of the river and make handsome provision for her out of rent-free lands if she would consent to live; and if she wouldn’t he would allow no stone or brick to ever mark the place where she died. But she only smiled and said, “My pulse has long ceased to beat, my spirit has departed; I shall suffer nothing in the burning; and if you wish proof, order some fire and you shall see this arm consumed without giving me any pain.”

Sleeman was now satisfied that he could not alter her purpose. He sent for all the chief members of the family and said he would suffer her to burn herself if they would enter into a written engagement to abandon the suttee in their family thenceforth. They agreed; the papers were drawn out and signed, and at noon, Saturday, word was sent to the poor old woman. She seemed greatly pleased. The ceremonies of bathing were gone through with, and by three o’clock she was ready and the fire was briskly burning in the pit. She had now gone without food or drink during more than four days and a half. She came ashore from her rock, first wetting her sheet in the waters of the sacred river, for without that safeguard any shadow which might fall upon her would convey impurity to her; then she walked to the pit, leaning upon one of her sons and a nephew—the distance was a hundred and fifty yards.

“I had sentries placed all around, and no other person was allowed to approach within five paces. She came on with a calm and cheerful countenance, stopped once, and casting her eyes upwards, said, ‘Why have they kept me five days from thee, my husband?’ On coming to the sentries her supporters stopped and remained standing; she moved on, and walked once around the pit, paused a moment, and while muttering a prayer, threw some flowers into the fire. She then walked up deliberately and steadily to the brink, stepped into the centre of the flame, sat down, and leaning back in the



midst as if reposing upon a couch, was consumed without uttering a shriek or betraying one sign of agony.”

## Page 58

It is fine and beautiful. It compels one's reverence and respect—no, has it freely, and without compulsion. We see how the custom, once started, could continue, for the soul of it is that stupendous power, Faith; faith brought to the pitch of effectiveness by the cumulative force of example and long use and custom; but we cannot understand how the first widows came to take to it. That is a perplexing detail.

Sleeman says that it was usual to play music at the suttee, but that the white man's notion that this was to drown the screams of the martyr is not correct; that it had a quite different purpose. It was believed that the martyr died prophesying; that the prophecies sometimes foretold disaster, and it was considered a kindness to those upon whom it was to fall to drown the voice and keep them in ignorance of the misfortune that was to come.

### CHAPTER XLIX.

He had had much experience of physicians, and said "the only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what; you don't like, and do what you'd druther not."  
—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

It was a long journey—two nights, one day, and part of another day, from Bombay eastward to Allahabad; but it was always interesting, and it was not fatiguing. At first the, night travel promised to be fatiguing, but that was on account of pyjamas. This foolish night-dress consists of jacket and drawers. Sometimes they are made of silk, sometimes of a raspy, scratchy, slazy woolen material with a sandpaper surface. The drawers are loose elephant-legged and elephant-waisted things, and instead of buttoning around the body there is a drawstring to produce the required shrinkage. The jacket is roomy, and one buttons it in front. Pyjamas are hot on a hot night and cold on a cold night—defects which a nightshirt is free from. I tried the pyjamas in order to be in the fashion; but I was obliged to give them up, I couldn't stand them. There was no sufficient change from day-gear to night-gear. I missed the refreshing and luxurious sense, induced by the night-gown, of being undressed, emancipated, set free from restraints and trammels. In place of that, I had the worried, confined, oppressed, suffocated sense of being abed with my clothes on. All through the warm half of the night the coarse surfaces irritated my skin and made it feel baked and feverish, and the dreams which came in the fitful flurries of slumber were such as distress the sleep of the damned, or ought to; and all through the cold other half of the night I could get no time for sleep because I had to employ it all in stealing blankets. But blankets are of no value at such a time; the higher they are piled the more effectively they cork the cold in and keep it from getting out. The result is that your legs are ice, and you know how you will feel by and by when you are buried. In a sane interval I discarded the pyjamas, and led a rational and comfortable life thenceforth.

## Page 59

Out in the country in India, the day begins early. One sees a plain, perfectly flat, dust-colored and brick-yardy, stretching limitlessly away on every side in the dim gray light, striped everywhere with hard-beaten narrow paths, the vast flatness broken at wide intervals by bunches of spectral trees that mark where villages are; and along all the paths are slender women and the black forms of lanky naked men moving, to their work, the women with brass water-jars on their heads, the men carrying hoes. The man is not entirely naked; always there is a bit of white rag, a loin-cloth; it amounts to a bandage, and is a white accent on his black person, like the silver band around the middle of a pipe-stem. Sometimes he also wears a fluffy and voluminous white turban, and this adds a second accent. He then answers properly to Miss Gordon Cumming's flash-light picture of him—as a person who is dressed in “a turban and a pocket handkerchief.”

All day long one has this monotony of dust-colored dead levels and scattering bunches of trees and mud villages. You soon realize that India is not beautiful; still there is an enchantment about it that is beguiling, and which does not pall. You cannot tell just what it is that makes the spell, perhaps, but you feel it and confess it, nevertheless. Of course, at bottom, you know in a vague way that it is history; it is that that affects you, a haunting sense of the myriads of human lives that have blossomed, and withered, and perished here, repeating and repeating and repeating, century after century, and age after age, the barren and meaningless process; it is this sense that gives to this forlorn, uncomely land power to speak to the spirit and make friends with it; to, speak to it with a voice bitter with satire, but eloquent with melancholy. The deserts of Australia and the ice-barrens of Greenland have no speech, for they have no venerable history; with nothing to tell of man and his vanities, his fleeting glories and his miseries, they have nothing wherewith to spiritualize their ugliness and veil it with a charm.

There is nothing pretty about an Indian village—a mud one—and I do not remember that we saw any but mud ones on that long flight to Allahabad. It is a little bunch of dirt-colored mud hovels jammed together within a mud wall. As a rule, the rains had beaten down parts of some of the houses, and this gave the village the aspect of a mouldering and hoary ruin. I believe the cattle and the vermin live inside the wall; for I saw cattle coming out and cattle going in; and whenever I saw a villager, he was scratching. This last is only circumstantial evidence, but I think it has value. The village has a battered little temple or two, big enough to hold an idol, and with custom enough to fat-up a priest and keep him comfortable. Where there are Mohammedans there are generally a few sorry tombs outside the village that have a decayed and neglected look.

## Page 60

The villages interested me because of things which Major Sleeman says about them in his books—particularly what he says about the division of labor in them. He says that the whole face of India is parceled out into estates of villages; that nine-tenths of the vast population of the land consist of cultivators of the soil; that it is these cultivators who inhabit the villages; that there are certain “established” village servants—mechanics and others who are apparently paid a wage by the village at large, and whose callings remain in certain families and are handed down from father to son, like an estate. He gives a list of these established servants: Priest, blacksmith, carpenter, accountant, washerman, basketmaker, potter, watchman, barber, shoemaker, brazier, confectioner, weaver, dyer, *etc.* In his day witches abounded, and it was not thought good business wisdom for a man to marry his daughter into a family that hadn't a witch in it, for she would need a witch on the premises to protect her children from the evil spells which would certainly be cast upon them by the witches connected with the neighboring families.

The office of midwife was hereditary in the family of the basket-maker. It belonged to his wife. She might not be competent, but the office was hers, anyway. Her pay was not high—25 cents for a boy, and half as much for a girl. The girl was not desired, because she would be a disastrous expense by and by. As soon as she should be old enough to begin to wear clothes for propriety's sake, it would be a disgrace to the family if she were not married; and to marry her meant financial ruin; for by custom the father must spend upon feasting and wedding-display everything he had and all he could borrow—in fact, reduce himself to a condition of poverty which he might never more recover from.

It was the dread of this prospective ruin which made the killing of girl-babies so prevalent in India in the old days before England laid the iron hand of her prohibitions upon the piteous slaughter. One may judge of how prevalent the custom was, by one of Sleeman's casual electrical remarks, when he speaks of children at play in villages—where girl-voices were never heard!

The wedding-display folly is still in full force in India, and by consequence the destruction of girl-babies is still furtively practiced; but not largely, because of the vigilance of the government and the sternness of the penalties it levies.

In some parts of India the village keeps in its pay three other servants: an astrologer to tell the villager when he may plant his crop, or make a journey, or marry a wife, or strangle a child, or borrow a dog, or climb a tree, or catch a rat, or swindle a neighbor, without offending the alert and solicitous heavens; and what his dream means, if he has had one and was not bright enough to interpret it himself by the details of his dinner; the two other established servants were the tiger-persuader and the hailstorm discourager. The one kept away the tigers if he could, and collected the wages anyway, and the

other kept off the hailstorms, or explained why he failed. He charged the same for explaining a failure that he did for scoring a success. A man is an idiot who can't earn a living in India.

## Page 61

Major Sleeman reveals the fact that the trade union and the boycott are antiquities in India. India seems to have originated everything. The “sweeper” belongs to the bottom caste; he is the lowest of the low—all other castes despise him and scorn his office. But that does not trouble him. His caste is a caste, and that is sufficient for him, and so he is proud of it, not ashamed. Sleeman says:

“It is perhaps not known to many of my countrymen, even in India, that in every town and city in the country the right of sweeping the houses and streets is a monopoly, and is supported entirely by the pride of castes among the scavengers, who are all of the lowest class. The right of sweeping within a certain range is recognized by the caste to belong to a certain member; and if any other member presumes to sweep within that range, he is excommunicated—no other member will smoke out of his pipe or drink out of his jug; and he can get restored to caste only by a feast to the whole body of sweepers. If any housekeeper within a particular circle happens to offend the sweeper of that range, none of his filth will be removed till he pacifies him, because no other sweeper will dare to touch it; and the people of a town are often more tyrannized over by these people than by any other.”

A footnote by Major Sleeman’s editor, Mr. Vincent Arthur Smith, says that in our day this tyranny of the sweepers’ guild is one of the many difficulties which bar the progress of Indian sanitary reform. Think of this:

“The sweepers cannot be readily coerced, because no Hindoo or Mussulman would do their work to save his life, nor will he pollute himself by beating the refractory scavenger.”

They certainly do seem to have the whip-hand; it would be difficult to imagine a more impregnable position. “The vested rights described in the text are so fully recognized in practice that they are frequently the subject of sale or mortgage.”

Just like a milk-route; or like a London crossing-sweepership. It is said that the London crossing-sweeper’s right to his crossing is recognized by the rest of the guild; that they protect him in its possession; that certain choice crossings are valuable property, and are saleable at high figures. I have noticed that the man who sweeps in front of the Army and Navy Stores has a wealthy South African aristocratic style about him; and when he is off his guard, he has exactly that look on his face which you always see in the face of a man who has is saving up his daughter to marry her to a duke.

It appears from Sleeman that in India the occupation of elephant-driver is confined to Mohammedans. I wonder why that is. The water-carrier (‘bheestie’) is a Mohammedan, but it is said that the reason of that is, that the Hindoo’s religion does not allow him to touch the skin of dead kine, and that is what the water-sack is made of; it would defile him. And it doesn’t allow him to eat meat; the animal that furnished the meat was

murdered, and to take any creature's life is a sin. It is a good and gentle religion, but inconvenient.

## Page 62

A great Indian river, at low water, suggests the familiar anatomical picture of a skinned human body, the intricate mesh of interwoven muscles and tendons to stand for water-channels, and the archipelagoes of fat and flesh inclosed by them to stand for the sandbars. Somewhere on this journey we passed such a river, and on a later journey we saw in the Sutlej the duplicate of that river. Curious rivers they are; low shores a dizzy distance apart, with nothing between but an enormous acreage of sand-flats with sluggish little veins of water dribbling around amongst them; Saharas of sand, smallpox-pitted with footprints punctured in belts as straight as the equator clear from the one shore to the other (barring the channel-interruptions)—a dry-shod ferry, you see. Long railway bridges are required for this sort of rivers, and India has them. You approach Allahabad by a very long one. It was now carrying us across the bed of the Jumna, a bed which did not seem to have been slept in for one while or more. It wasn't all river-bed—most of it was overflow ground.

Allahabad means "City of God." I get this from the books. From a printed curiosity—a letter written by one of those brave and confident Hindoo strugglers with the English tongue, called a "babu"—I got a more compressed translation: "Godville." It is perfectly correct, but that is the most that can be said for it.

We arrived in the forenoon, and short-handed; for Satan got left behind somewhere that morning, and did not overtake us until after nightfall. It seemed very peaceful without him. The world seemed asleep and dreaming.

I did not see the native town, I think. I do not remember why; for an incident connects it with the Great Mutiny, and that is enough to make any place interesting. But I saw the English part of the city. It is a town of wide avenues and noble distances, and is comely and alluring, and full of suggestions of comfort and leisure, and of the serenity which a good conscience buttressed by a sufficient bank account gives. The bungalows (dwellings) stand well back in the seclusion and privacy of large enclosed compounds (private grounds, as we should say) and in the shade and shelter of trees. Even the photographer and the prosperous merchant ply their industries in the elegant reserve of big compounds, and the citizens drive in thereupon their business occasions. And not in cabs—no; in the Indian cities cabs are for the drifting stranger; all the white citizens have private carriages; and each carriage has a flock of white-turbaned black footmen and drivers all over it. The vicinity of a lecture-hall looks like a snowstorm,—and makes the lecturer feel like an opera. India has many names, and they are correctly descriptive. It is the Land of Contradictions, the Land of Subtlety and Superstition, the Land of Wealth and Poverty, the Land of Splendor and Desolation, the Land of Plague and Famine, the Land of the Thug and the Poisoner, and of the Meek and the Patient, the Land of the Suttee, the Land of the Unreinstatable Widow, the Land where All Life is Holy, the Land of Cremation, the Land where the Vulture is a Grave and a Monument, the Land of the Multitudinous Gods; and if signs go for anything, it is the Land of the Private Carriage.



## Page 63

In Bombay the forewoman of a millinery shop came to the hotel in her private carriage to take the measure for a gown—not for me, but for another. She had come out to India to make a temporary stay, but was extending it indefinitely; indeed, she was purposing to end her days there. In London, she said, her work had been hard, her hours long; for economy's sake she had had to live in shabby rooms and far away from the shop, watch the pennies, deny herself many of the common comforts of life, restrict herself in effect to its bare necessities, eschew cabs, travel third-class by underground train to and from her work, swallowing coal-smoke and cinders all the way, and sometimes troubled with the society of men and women who were less desirable than the smoke and the cinders. But in Bombay, on almost any kind of wages, she could live in comfort, and keep her carriage, and have six servants in place of the woman-of-all-work she had had in her English home. Later, in Calcutta, I found that the Standard Oil clerks had small one-horse vehicles, and did no walking; and I was told that the clerks of the other large concerns there had the like equipment. But to return to Allahabad.

I was up at dawn, the next morning. In India the tourist's servant does not sleep in a room in the hotel, but rolls himself up head and ears in his blanket and stretches himself on the veranda, across the front of his master's door, and spends the night there. I don't believe anybody's servant occupies a room. Apparently, the bungalow servants sleep on the veranda; it is roomy, and goes all around the house. I speak of menservants; I saw none of the other sex. I think there are none, except child-nurses. I was up at dawn, and walked around the veranda, past the rows of sleepers. In front of one door a Hindoo servant was squatting, waiting for his master to call him. He had polished the yellow shoes and placed them by the door, and now he had nothing to do but wait. It was freezing cold, but there he was, as motionless as a sculptured image, and as patient. It troubled me. I wanted to say to him, "Don't crouch there like that and freeze; nobody requires it of you; stir around and get warm." But I hadn't the words. I thought of saying 'jeldy jow', but I couldn't remember what it meant, so I didn't say it. I knew another phrase, but it wouldn't come to my mind. I moved on, purposing to dismiss him from my thoughts, but his bare legs and bare feet kept him there. They kept drawing me back from the sunny side to a point whence I could see him. At the end of an hour he had not changed his attitude in the least degree. It was a curious and impressive exhibition of meekness and patience, or fortitude or indifference, I did not know which. But it worried me, and it was spoiling my morning. In fact, it spoiled two hours of it quite thoroughly. I quitted this vicinity, then, and left him to punish himself as much as he might want to. But up to that time

## Page 64

the man had not changed his attitude a hair. He will always remain with me, I suppose; his figure never grows vague in my memory. Whenever I read of Indian resignation, Indian patience under wrongs, hardships, and misfortunes, he comes before me. He becomes a personification, and stands for India in trouble. And for untold ages India in trouble has been pursued with the very remark which I was going to utter but didn't, because its meaning had slipped me: "Jeddy jow!" ("Come, shove along!")

Why, it was the very thing.

In the early brightness we made a long drive out to the Fort. Part of the way was beautiful. It led under stately trees and through groups of native houses and by the usual village well, where the picturesque gangs are always flocking to and fro and laughing and chattering; and this time brawny men were deluging their bronze bodies with the limpid water, and making a refreshing and enticing show of it; enticing, for the sun was already transacting business, firing India up for the day. There was plenty of this early bathing going on, for it was getting toward breakfast time, and with an unpurified body the Hindoo must not eat.

Then we struck into the hot plain, and found the roads crowded with pilgrims of both sexes, for one of the great religious fairs of India was being held, just beyond the Fort, at the junction of the sacred rivers, the Ganges and the Jumna. Three sacred rivers, I should have said, for there is a subterranean one. Nobody has seen it, but that doesn't signify. The fact that it is there is enough. These pilgrims had come from all over India; some of them had been months on the way, plodding patiently along in the heat and dust, worn, poor, hungry, but supported and sustained by an unwavering faith and belief; they were supremely happy and content, now; their full and sufficient reward was at hand; they were going to be cleansed from every vestige of sin and corruption by these holy waters which make utterly pure whatsoever thing they touch, even the dead and rotten. It is wonderful, the power of a faith like that, that can make multitudes upon multitudes of the old and weak and the young and frail enter without hesitation or complaint upon such incredible journeys and endure the resultant miseries without repining. It is done in love, or it is done in fear; I do not know which it is. No matter what the impulse is, the act born of it is beyond imagination marvelous to our kind of people, the cold whites. There are choice great natures among us that could exhibit the equivalent of this prodigious self-sacrifice, but the rest of us know that we should not be equal to anything approaching it. Still, we all talk self-sacrifice, and this makes me hope that we are large enough to honor it in the Hindoo.

## Page 65

Two millions of natives arrive at this fair every year. How many start, and die on the road, from age and fatigue and disease and scanty nourishment, and how many die on the return, from the same causes, no one knows; but the tale is great, one may say enormous. Every twelfth year is held to be a year of peculiar grace; a greatly augmented volume of pilgrims results then. The twelfth year has held this distinction since the remotest times, it is said. It is said also that there is to be but one more twelfth year—for the Ganges. After that, that holiest of all sacred rivers will cease to be holy, and will be abandoned by the pilgrim for many centuries; how many, the wise men have not stated. At the end of that interval it will become holy again. Meantime, the data will be arranged by those people who have charge of all such matters, the great chief Brahmins. It will be like shutting down a mint. At a first glance it looks most unbrahminically uncommercial, but I am not disturbed, being soothed and tranquilized by their reputation. “Brer fox he lay low,” as Uncle Remus says; and at the judicious time he will spring something on the Indian public which will show that he was not financially asleep when he took the Ganges out of the market.

Great numbers of the natives along the roads were bringing away holy water from the rivers. They would carry it far and wide in India and sell it. Tavernier, the French traveler (17th century), notes that Ganges water is often given at weddings, “each guest receiving a cup or two, according to the liberality of the host; sometimes 2,000 or 3,000 rupees’ worth of it is consumed at a wedding.”

The Fort is a huge old structure, and has had a large experience in religions. In its great court stands a monolith which was placed there more than 2,000 years ago to preach (Budhism) by its pious inscription; the Fort was built three centuries ago by a Mohammedan Emperor—a resanctification of the place in the interest of that religion. There is a Hindoo temple, too, with subterranean ramifications stocked with shrines and idols; and now the Fort belongs to the English, it contains a Christian Church. Insured in all the companies.

From the lofty ramparts one has a fine view of the sacred rivers. They join at that point—the pale blue Jumna, apparently clean and clear, and the muddy Ganges, dull yellow and not clean. On a long curved spit between the rivers, towns of tents were visible, with a multitude of fluttering pennons, and a mighty swarm of pilgrims. It was a troublesome place to get down to, and not a quiet place when you arrived; but it was interesting. There was a world of activity and turmoil and noise, partly religious, partly commercial; for the Mohammedans were there to curse and sell, and the Hindoos to buy and pray. It is a fair as well as a religious festival. Crowds were bathing, praying, and drinking the purifying waters, and many sick pilgrims had come long journeys

## Page 66

in palanquins to be healed of their maladies by a bath; or if that might not be, then to die on the blessed banks and so make sure of heaven. There were fakeers in plenty, with their bodies dusted over with ashes and their long hair caked together with cow-dung; for the cow is holy and so is the rest of it; so holy that the good Hindoo peasant frescoes the walls of his hut with this refuse, and also constructs ornamental figures out of it for the gracing of his dirt floor. There were seated families, fearfully and wonderfully painted, who by attitude and grouping represented the families of certain great gods. There was a holy man who sat naked by the day and by the week on a cluster of iron spikes, and did not seem to mind it; and another holy man, who stood all day holding his withered arms motionless aloft, and was said to have been doing it for years. All of these performers have a cloth on the ground beside them for the reception of contributions, and even the poorest of the people give a trifle and hope that the sacrifice will be blessed to him. At last came a procession of naked holy people marching by and chanting, and I wrenched myself away.

## CHAPTER L.

The man who is ostentatious of his modesty is twin to the statue that wears a fig-leaf.  
—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

The journey to Benares was all in daylight, and occupied but a few hours. It was admirably dusty. The dust settled upon you in a thick ashy layer and turned you into a fakeer, with nothing lacking to the role but the cow manure and the sense of holiness. There was a change of cars about mid-afternoon at Moghul-serai—if that was the name—and a wait of two hours there for the Benares train. We could have found a carriage and driven to the sacred city, but we should have lost the wait. In other countries a long wait at a station is a dull thing and tedious, but one has no right to have that feeling in India. You have the monster crowd of bejeweled natives, the stir, the bustle, the confusion, the shifting splendors of the costumes—dear me, the delight of it, the charm of it are beyond speech. The two-hour wait was over too soon. Among other satisfying things to look at was a minor native prince from the backwoods somewhere, with his guard of honor, a ragged but wonderfully gaudy gang of fifty dark barbarians armed with rusty flint-lock muskets. The general show came so near to exhausting variety that one would have said that no addition to it could be conspicuous, but when this Falstaff and his motleys marched through it one saw that that seeming impossibility had happened.

## Page 67

We got away by and by, and soon reached the outer edge of Benares; then there was another wait; but, as usual, with something to look at. This was a cluster of little canvas-boxes—palanquins. A canvas-box is not much of a sight—when empty; but when there is a lady in it, it is an object of interest. These boxes were grouped apart, in the full blaze of the terrible sun during the three-quarters of an hour that we tarried there. They contained zenana ladies. They had to sit up; there was not room enough to stretch out. They probably did not mind it. They are used to the close captivity of the dwellings all their lives; when they go a journey they are carried to the train in these boxes; in the train they have to be secluded from inspection. Many people pity them, and I always did it myself and never charged anything; but it is doubtful if this compassion is valued. While we were in India some good-hearted Europeans in one of the cities proposed to restrict a large park to the use of zenana ladies, so that they could go there and in assured privacy go about unveiled and enjoy the sunshine and air as they had never enjoyed them before. The good intentions back of the proposition were recognized, and sincere thanks returned for it, but the proposition itself met with a prompt declination at the hands of those who were authorized to speak for the zenana ladies. Apparently, the idea was shocking to the ladies—indeed, it was quite manifestly shocking. Was that proposition the equivalent of inviting European ladies to assemble scantily and scandalously clothed in the seclusion of a private park? It seemed to be about that.

Without doubt modesty is nothing less than a holy feeling; and without doubt the person whose rule of modesty has been transgressed feels the same sort of wound that he would feel if something made holy to him by his religion had suffered a desecration. I say “rule of modesty” because there are about a million rules in the world, and this makes a million standards to be looked out for. Major Sleeman mentions the case of some high-caste veiled ladies who were profoundly scandalized when some English young ladies passed by with faces bare to the world; so scandalized that they spoke out with strong indignation and wondered that people could be so shameless as to expose their persons like that. And yet “the legs of the objectors were naked to mid-thigh.” Both parties were clean-minded and irreproachably modest, while abiding by their separate rules, but they couldn’t have traded rules for a change without suffering considerable discomfort. All human rules are more or less idiotic, I suppose. It is best so, no doubt. The way it is now, the asylums can hold the sane people, but if we tried to shut up the insane we should run out of building materials.

## Page 68

You have a long drive through the outskirts of Benares before you get to the hotel. And all the aspects are melancholy. It is a vision of dusty sterility, decaying temples, crumbling tombs, broken mud walls, shabby huts. The whole region seems to ache with age and penury. It must take ten thousand years of want to produce such an aspect. We were still outside of the great native city when we reached the hotel. It was a quiet and homelike house, inviting, and manifestly comfortable. But we liked its annex better, and went thither. It was a mile away, perhaps, and stood in the midst of a large compound, and was built bungalow fashion, everything on the ground floor, and a veranda all around. They have doors in India, but I don't know why. They don't fasten, and they stand open, as a rule, with a curtain hanging in the doorspace to keep out the glare of the sun. Still, there is plenty of privacy, for no white person will come in without notice, of course. The native men servants will, but they don't seem to count. They glide in, barefoot and noiseless, and are in the midst before one knows it. At first this is a shock, and sometimes it is an embarrassment; but one has to get used to it, and does.

There was one tree in the compound, and a monkey lived in it. At first I was strongly interested in the tree, for I was told that it was the renowned peepul—the tree in whose shadow you cannot tell a lie. This one failed to stand the test, and I went away from it disappointed. There was a softly creaking well close by, and a couple of oxen drew water from it by the hour, superintended by two natives dressed in the usual “turban and pocket-handkerchief.” The tree and the well were the only scenery, and so the compound was a soothing and lonesome and satisfying place; and very restful after so many activities. There was nobody in our bungalow but ourselves; the other guests were in the next one, where the table d'hôte was furnished. A body could not be more pleasantly situated. Each room had the customary bath attached—a room ten or twelve feet square, with a roomy stone-paved pit in it and abundance of water. One could not easily improve upon this arrangement, except by furnishing it with cold water and excluding the hot, in deference to the fervency of the climate; but that is forbidden. It would damage the bather's health. The stranger is warned against taking cold baths in India, but even the most intelligent strangers are fools, and they do not obey, and so they presently get laid up. I was the most intelligent fool that passed through, that year. But I am still more intelligent now. Now that it is too late.

## Page 69

I wonder if the 'dorian', if that is the name of it, is another superstition, like the peepul tree. There was a great abundance and variety of tropical fruits, but the dorian was never in evidence. It was never the season for the dorian. It was always going to arrive from Burma sometime or other, but it never did. By all accounts it was a most strange fruit, and incomparably delicious to the taste, but not to the smell. Its rind was said to exude a stench of so atrocious a nature that when a dorian was in the room even the presence of a polecat was a refreshment. We found many who had eaten the dorian, and they all spoke of it with a sort of rapture. They said that if you could hold your nose until the fruit was in your mouth a sacred joy would suffuse you from head to foot that would make you oblivious to the smell of the rind, but that if your grip slipped and you caught the smell of the rind before the fruit was in your mouth, you would faint. There is a fortune in that rind. Some day somebody will import it into Europe and sell it for cheese.

Benares was not a disappointment. It justified its reputation as a curiosity. It is on high ground, and overhangs a grand curve of the Ganges. It is a vast mass of building, compactly crusting a hill, and is cloven in all directions by an intricate confusion of cracks which stand for streets. Tall, slim minarets and beflagged temple-spires rise out of it and give it picturesqueness, viewed from the river. The city is as busy as an ant-hill, and the hurly-burly of human life swarming along the web of narrow streets reminds one of the ants. The sacred cow swarms along, too, and goes whither she pleases, and takes toll of the grain-shops, and is very much in the way, and is a good deal of a nuisance, since she must not be molested.

Benares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together. From a Hindoo statement quoted in Rev. Mr. Parker's compact and lucid Guide to Benares, I find that the site of the town was the beginning-place of the Creation. It was merely an upright "lingam," at first, no larger than a stove-pipe, and stood in the midst of a shoreless ocean. This was the work of the God Vishnu. Later he spread the lingam out till its surface was ten miles across. Still it was not large enough for the business; therefore he presently built the globe around it. Benares is thus the center of the earth. This is considered an advantage.

It has had a tumultuous history, both materially and spiritually. It started Brahminically, many ages ago; then by and by Buddha came in recent times 2,500 years ago, and after that it was Buddhist during many centuries—twelve, perhaps—but the Brahmins got the upper hand again, then, and have held it ever since. It is unspeakably sacred in Hindoo eyes, and is as unsanitary as it is sacred, and smells like the rind of the dorian. It is



## Page 70

the headquarters of the Brahmin faith, and one-eighth of the population are priests of that church. But it is not an overstock, for they have all India as a prey. All India flocks thither on pilgrimage, and pours its savings into the pockets of the priests in a generous stream, which never fails. A priest with a good stand on the shore of the Ganges is much better off than the sweeper of the best crossing in London. A good stand is worth a world of money. The holy proprietor of it sits under his grand spectacular umbrella and blesses people all his life, and collects his commission, and grows fat and rich; and the stand passes from father to son, down and down and down through the ages, and remains a permanent and lucrative estate in the family. As Mr. Parker suggests, it can become a subject of dispute, at one time or another, and then the matter will be settled, not by prayer and fasting and consultations with Vishnu, but by the intervention of a much more puissant power—an English court. In Bombay I was told by an American missionary that in India there are 640 Protestant missionaries at work. At first it seemed an immense force, but of course that was a thoughtless idea. One missionary to 500,000 natives—no, that is not a force; it is the reverse of it; 640 marching against an intrenched camp of 300,000,000—the odds are too great. A force of 640 in Benares alone would have its hands over-full with 8,000 Brahmin priests for adversary. Missionaries need to be well equipped with hope and confidence, and this equipment they seem to have always had in all parts of the world. Mr. Parker has it. It enables him to get a favorable outlook out of statistics which might add up differently with other mathematicians. For instance:

“During the past few years competent observers declare that the number of pilgrims to Benares has increased.”

And then he adds up this fact and gets this conclusion:

“But the revival, if so it may be called, has in it the marks of death. It is a spasmodic struggle before dissolution.”

In this world we have seen the Roman Catholic power dying, upon these same terms, for many centuries. Many a time we have gotten all ready for the funeral and found it postponed again, on account of the weather or something. Taught by experience, we ought not to put on our things for this Brahminical one till we see the procession move. Apparently one of the most uncertain things in the world is the funeral of a religion.

I should have been glad to acquire some sort of idea of Hindoo theology, but the difficulties were too great, the matter was too intricate. Even the mere A, B, C of it is baffling.

There is a trinity—Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu—independent powers, apparently, though one cannot feel quite sure of that, because in one of the temples there is an image



where an attempt has been made to concentrate the three in one person. The three have other names and plenty of them, and this makes confusion in one's mind. The three have wives and the wives have several names, and this increases the confusion. There are children, the children have many names, and thus the confusion goes on and on. It is not worth while to try to get any grip upon the cloud of minor gods, there are too many of them.

## Page 71

It is even a justifiable economy to leave Brahma, the chiefest god of all, out of your studies, for he seems to cut no great figure in India. The vast bulk of the national worship is lavished upon Shiva and Vishnu and their families. Shiva's symbol—the "lingam" with which Vishnu began the Creation—is worshiped by everybody, apparently. It is the commonest object in Benares. It is on view everywhere, it is garlanded with flowers, offerings are made to it, it suffers no neglect. Commonly it is an upright stone, shaped like a thimble-sometimes like an elongated thimble. This priapus-worship, then, is older than history. Mr. Parker says that the lingams in Benares "outnumber the inhabitants."

In Benares there are many Mohammedan mosques. There are Hindoo temples without number—these quaintly shaped and elaborately sculptured little stone jugs crowd all the lanes. The Ganges itself and every individual drop of water in it are temples. Religion, then, is the business of Benares, just as gold-production is the business of Johannesburg. Other industries count for nothing as compared with the vast and all-absorbing rush and drive and boom of the town's specialty. Benares is the sacreddest of sacred cities. The moment you step across the sharply-defined line which separates it from the rest of the globe, you stand upon ineffably and unspeakably holy ground. Mr. Parker says: "It is impossible to convey any adequate idea of the intense feelings of veneration and affection with which the pious Hindoo regards 'Holy Kashi' (Benares)." And then he gives you this vivid and moving picture:

"Let a Hindoo regiment be marched through the district, and as soon as they cross the line and enter the limits of the holy place they rend the air with cries of 'Kashi ji ki jai—jai—jai! (Holy Kashi! Hail to thee! Hail! Hail! Hail)'. The weary pilgrim scarcely able to stand, with age and weakness, blinded by the dust and heat, and almost dead with fatigue, crawls out of the oven-like railway carriage and as soon as his feet touch the ground he lifts up his withered hands and utters the same pious exclamation. Let a European in some distant city in casual talk in the bazar mention the fact that he has lived at Benares, and at once voices will be raised to call down blessings on his head, for a dweller in Benares is of all men most blessed."

It makes our own religious enthusiasm seem pale and cold. Inasmuch as the life of religion is in the heart, not the head, Mr. Parker's touching picture seems to promise a sort of indefinite postponement of that funeral.