

Following the Equator, Part 6 eBook

Following the Equator, Part 6 by Mark Twain

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CHAPTER LI.

Let me make the superstitions of a nation and I care not who makes its laws or its songs either.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

Yes, the city of Benares is in effect just a big church, a religious hive, whose every cell is a temple, a shrine or a mosque, and whose every conceivable earthly and heavenly good is procurable under one roof, so to speak—a sort of Army and Navy Stores, theologically stocked.

I will make out a little itinerary for the pilgrim; then you will see how handy the system is, how convenient, how comprehensive. If you go to Benares with a serious desire to spiritually benefit yourself, you will find it valuable. I got some of the facts from conversations with the Rev. Mr. Parker and the others from his Guide to Benares; they are therefore trustworthy.

1. Purification. At sunrise you must go down to the Ganges and bathe, pray, and drink some of the water. This is for your general purification.

2. Protection against Hunger. Next, you must fortify yourself against the sorrowful earthly ill just named. This you will do by worshiping for a moment in the Cow Temple. By the door of it you will find an image of Ganesh, son of Shiva; it has the head of an elephant on a human body; its face and hands are of silver. You will worship it a little, and pass on, into a covered veranda, where you will find devotees reciting from the sacred books, with the help of instructors. In this place are groups of rude and dismal idols. You may contribute something for their support; then pass into the temple, a grim and stenchy place, for it is populous with sacred cows and with beggars. You will give something to the beggars, and “reverently kiss the tails” of such cows as pass along, for these cows are peculiarly holy, and this act of worship will secure you from hunger for the day.

3. “The Poor Man’s Friend.” You will next worship this god. He is at the bottom of a stone cistern in the temple of Dalbhyeswar, under the shade of a noble peepul tree on the bluff overlooking the Ganges, so you must go back to the river. The Poor Man’s Friend is the god of material prosperity in general, and the god of the rain in particular. You will secure material prosperity, or both, by worshiping him. He is Shiva, under a new alias, and he abides in the bottom of that cistern, in the form of a stone lingam. You pour Ganges water over him, and in return for this homage you get the promised benefits. If there is any delay about the rain, you must pour water in until the cistern is full; the rain will then be sure to come.



4. Fever. At the Kedar Ghat you will find a long flight of stone steps leading down to the river. Half way down is a tank filled with sewage. Drink as much of it as you want. It is for fever.

5. Smallpox. Go straight from there to the central Ghat. At its upstream end you will find a small whitewashed building, which is a temple sacred to Sitala, goddess of smallpox. Her under-study is there —a rude human figure behind a brass screen. You will worship this for reasons to be furnished presently.



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6. The Well of Fate. For certain reasons you will next go and do homage at this well. You will find it in the Dandpan Temple, in the city. The sunlight falls into it from a square hole in the masonry above. You will approach it with awe, for your life is now at stake. You will bend over and look. If the fates are propitious, you will see your face pictured in the water far down in the well. If matters have been otherwise ordered, a sudden cloud will mask the sun and you will see nothing. This means that you have not six months to live. If you are already at the point of death, your circumstances are now serious. There is no time to lose. Let this world go, arrange for the next one. Handily situated, at your very elbow, is opportunity for this. You turn and worship the image of Maha Kal, the Great Fate, and happiness in the life to come is secured. If there is breath in your body yet, you should now make an effort to get a further lease of the present life. You have a chance. There is a chance for everything in this admirably stocked and wonderfully systemized Spiritual and Temporal Army and Navy Store. You must get yourself carried to the

7. Well of Long Life. This is within the precincts of the mouldering and venerable Briddhkal Temple, which is one of the oldest in Benares. You pass in by a stone image of the monkey god, Hanuman, and there, among the ruined courtyards, you will find a shallow pool of stagnant sewage. It smells like the best limburger cheese, and is filthy with the washings of rotting lepers, but that is nothing, bathe in it; bathe in it gratefully and worshipfully, for this is the Fountain of Youth; these are the Waters of Long Life. Your gray hairs will disappear, and with them your wrinkles and your rheumatism, the burdens of care and the weariness of age, and you will come out young, fresh, elastic, and full of eagerness for the new race of life. Now will come flooding upon you the manifold desires that haunt the dear dreams of the morning of life. You will go whither you will find

8. Fulfillment of Desire. To wit, to the Kameshwar Temple, sacred to Shiva as the Lord of Desires. Arrange for yours there. And if you like to look at idols among the pack and jam of temples, there you will find enough to stock a museum. You will begin to commit sins now with a fresh, new vivacity; therefore, it will be well to go frequently to a place where you can get

9. Temporary Cleansing from Sin. To wit, to the Well of the Earring. You must approach this with the profoundest reverence, for it is unutterably sacred. It is, indeed, the most sacred place in Benares, the very Holy of Holies, in the estimation of the people. It is a railed tank, with stone stairways leading down to the water. The water is not clean. Of course it could not be, for people are always bathing in it. As long as you choose to stand and look, you will see the files of



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sinners descending and ascending—descending soiled with sin, ascending purged from it. “The liar, the thief, the murderer, and the adulterer may here wash and be clean,” says the Rev. Mr. Parker, in his book. Very well. I know Mr. Parker, and I believe it; but if anybody else had said it, I should consider him a person who had better go down in the tank and take another wash. The god Vishnu dug this tank. He had nothing to dig with but his “discus.” I do not know what a discus is, but I know it is a poor thing to dig tanks with, because, by the time this one was finished, it was full of sweat—Vishnu’s sweat. He constructed the site that Benares stands on, and afterward built the globe around it, and thought nothing of it, yet sweated like that over a little thing like this tank. One of these statements is doubtful. I do not know which one it is, but I think it difficult not to believe that a god who could build a world around Benares would not be intelligent enough to build it around the tank too, and not have to dig it. Youth, long life, temporary purification from sin, salvation through propitiation of the Great Fate—these are all good. But you must do something more. You must

10. Make Salvation Sure. There are several ways. To get drowned in the Ganges is one, but that is not pleasant. To die within the limits of Benares is another; but that is a risky one, because you might be out of town when your time came. The best one of all is the Pilgrimage Around the City. You must walk; also, you must go barefoot. The tramp is forty-four miles, for the road winds out into the country a piece, and you will be marching five or six days. But you will have plenty of company. You will move with throngs and hosts of happy pilgrims whose radiant costumes will make the spectacle beautiful and whose glad songs and holy pans of triumph will banish your fatigues and cheer your spirit; and at intervals there will be temples where you may sleep and be refreshed with food. The pilgrimage completed, you have purchased salvation, and paid for it. But you may not get it unless you

11. Get Your Redemption Recorded. You can get this done at the Sakhi Binayak Temple, and it is best to do it, for otherwise you might not be able to prove that you had made the pilgrimage in case the matter should some day come to be disputed. That temple is in a lane back of the Cow Temple. Over the door is a red image of Ganesh of the elephant head, son and heir of Shiva, and Prince of Wales to the Theological Monarchy, so to speak. Within is a god whose office it is to record your pilgrimage and be responsible for you. You will not see him, but you will see a Brahmin who will attend to the matter and take the money. If he should forget to collect the money, you can remind him. He knows that your salvation is now secure, but of course you would like to know it yourself. You have nothing to do but go and pray, and pay at the



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12. Well of the Knowledge of Salvation. It is close to the Golden Temple. There you will see, sculptured out of a single piece of black marble, a bull which is much larger than any living bull you have ever seen, and yet is not a good likeness after all. And there also you will see a very uncommon thing—an image of Shiva. You have seen his lingam fifty thousand times already, but this is Shiva himself, and said to be a good likeness. It has three eyes. He is the only god in the firm that has three. “The well is covered by a fine canopy of stone supported by forty pillars,” and around it you will find what you have already seen at almost every shrine you have visited in Benares, a mob of devout and eager pilgrims. The sacred water is being ladled out to them; with it comes to them the knowledge, clear, thrilling, absolute, that they are saved; and you can see by their faces that there is one happiness in this world which is supreme, and to which no other joy is comparable. You receive your water, you make your deposit, and now what more would you have? Gold, diamonds, power, fame? All in a single moment these things have withered to dirt, dust, ashes. The world has nothing to give you now. For you it is bankrupt.

I do not claim that the pilgrims do their acts of worship in the order and sequence above charted out in this Itinerary of mine, but I think logic suggests that they ought to do so. Instead of a helter-skelter worship, we then have a definite starting-place, and a march which carries the pilgrim steadily forward by reasoned and logical progression to a definite goal. Thus, his Ganges bath in the early morning gives him an appetite; he kisses the cow-tails, and that removes it. It is now business hours, and longings for material prosperity rise in his mind, and he goes and pours water over Shiva’s symbol; this insures the prosperity, but also brings on a rain, which gives him a fever. Then he drinks the sewage at the Kedar Ghat to cure the fever; it cures the fever but gives him the smallpox. He wishes to know how it is going to turn out; he goes to the Dandpan Temple and looks down the well. A clouded sun shows him that death is near. Logically his best course for the present, since he cannot tell at what moment he may die, is to secure a happy hereafter; this he does, through the agency of the Great Fate. He is safe, now, for heaven; his next move will naturally be to keep out of it as long as he can. Therefore he goes to the Briddhkal Temple and secures Youth and long life by bathing in a puddle of leper-pus which would kill a microbe. Logically, Youth has re-equipped him for sin and with the disposition to commit it; he will naturally go to the fane which is consecrated to the Fulfillment of Desires, and make arrangements. Logically, he will now go to the Well of the Earring from time to time to unload and freshen up for further banned enjoyments. But first and last and all the time

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he is human, and therefore in his reflective intervals he will always be speculating in “futures.” He will make the Great Pilgrimage around the city and so make his salvation absolutely sure; he will also have record made of it, so that it may remain absolutely sure and not be forgotten or repudiated in the confusion of the Final Settlement. Logically, also, he will wish to have satisfying and tranquilizing personal knowledge that that salvation is secure; therefore he goes to the Well of the Knowledge of Salvation, adds that completing detail, and then goes about his affairs serene and content; serene and content, for he is now royally endowed with an advantage which no religion in this world could give him but his own; for henceforth he may commit as many million sins as he wants to and nothing can come of it.

Thus the system, properly and logically ordered, is neat, compact, clearly defined, and covers the whole ground. I desire to recommend it to such as find the other systems too difficult, exacting, and irksome for the uses of this fretful brief life of ours.

However, let me not deceive any one. My Itinerary lacks a detail. I must put it in. The truth is, that after the pilgrim has faithfully followed the requirements of the Itinerary through to the end and has secured his salvation and also the personal knowledge of that fact, there is still an accident possible to him which can annul the whole thing. If he should ever cross to the other side of the Ganges and get caught out and die there he would at once come to life again in the form of an ass. Think of that, after all this trouble and expense. You see how capricious and uncertain salvation is there. The Hindoo has a childish and unreasoning aversion to being turned into an ass. It is hard to tell why. One could properly expect an ass to have an aversion to being turned into a Hindoo. One could understand that he could lose dignity by it; also self-respect, and nine-tenths of his intelligence. But the Hindoo changed into an ass wouldn't lose anything, unless you count his religion. And he would gain much—release from his slavery to two million gods and twenty million priests, fakeers, holy mendicants, and other sacred bacilli; he would escape the Hindoo hell; he would also escape the Hindoo heaven. These are advantages which the Hindoo ought to consider; then he would go over and die on the other side.

Benares is a religious Vesuvius. In its bowels the theological forces have been heaving and tossing, rumbling, thundering and quaking, boiling, and weltering and flaming and smoking for ages. But a little group of missionaries have taken post at its base, and they have hopes. There are the Baptist Missionary Society, the Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Missionary Society, and the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission. They have schools, and the principal work seems to be among the children. And no doubt that part of the work prospers best, for grown people everywhere are always likely to cling to the religion they were brought up in.



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CHAPTER LII.

Wrinkles should merely indicate where smiles have been.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

In one of those Benares temples we saw a devotee working for salvation in a curious way. He had a huge wad of clay beside him and was making it up into little wee gods no bigger than carpet tacks. He stuck a grain of rice into each—to represent the lingam, I think. He turned them out nimbly, for he had had long practice and had acquired great facility. Every day he made 2,000 gods, then threw them into the holy Ganges. This act of homage brought him the profound homage of the pious—also their coppers. He had a sure living here, and was earning a high place in the hereafter.

The Ganges front is the supreme show-place of Benares. Its tall bluffs are solidly caked from water to summit, along a stretch of three miles, with a splendid jumble of massive and picturesque masonry, a bewildering and beautiful confusion of stone platforms, temples, stair-flights, rich and stately palaces—nowhere a break, nowhere a glimpse of the bluff itself; all the long face of it is compactly walled from sight by this crammed perspective of platforms, soaring stairways, sculptured temples, majestic palaces, softening away into the distances; and there is movement, motion, human life everywhere, and brilliantly costumed—streaming in rainbows up and down the lofty stairways, and massed in metaphorical flower-gardens on the miles of great platforms at the river's edge.

All this masonry, all this architecture represents piety. The palaces were built by native princes whose homes, as a rule, are far from Benares, but who go there from time to time to refresh their souls with the sight and touch of the Ganges, the river of their idolatry. The stairways are records of acts of piety; the crowd of costly little temples are tokens of money spent by rich men for present credit and hope of future reward. Apparently, the rich Christian who spends large sums upon his religion is conspicuous with us, by his rarity, but the rich Hindoo who doesn't spend large sums upon his religion is seemingly non-existent. With us the poor spend money on their religion, but they keep back some to live on. Apparently, in India, the poor bankrupt themselves daily for their religion. The rich Hindoo can afford his pious outlays; he gets much glory for his spendings, yet keeps back a sufficiency of his income for temporal purposes; but the poor Hindoo is entitled to compassion, for his spendings keep him poor, yet get him no glory.

We made the usual trip up and down the river, seated in chairs under an awning on the deck of the usual commodious hand-propelled ark; made it two or three times, and could have made it with increasing interest and enjoyment many times more; for, of course, the palaces and temples would grow more and more beautiful every time one saw them, for that happens with all such things; also, I think one would not get tired of

the bathers, nor their costumes, nor of their ingenuities in getting out of them and into them again without exposing too much bronze, nor of their devotional gesticulations and absorbed bead-tellings.



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But I should get tired of seeing them wash their mouths with that dreadful water and drink it. In fact, I did get tired of it, and very early, too. At one place where we halted for a while, the foul gush from a sewer was making the water turbid and murky all around, and there was a random corpse slopping around in it that had floated down from up country. Ten steps below that place stood a crowd of men, women, and comely young maidens waist deep in the water—and they were scooping it up in their hands and drinking it. Faith can certainly do wonders, and this is an instance of it. Those people were not drinking that fearful stuff to assuage thirst, but in order to purify their souls and the interior of their bodies. According to their creed, the Ganges water makes everything pure that it touches—instantly and utterly pure. The sewer water was not an offence to them, the corpse did not revolt them; the sacred water had touched both, and both were now snow-pure, and could defile no one. The memory of that sight will always stay by me; but not by request.

A word further concerning the nasty but all-purifying Ganges water. When we went to Agra, by and by, we happened there just in time to be in at the birth of a marvel—a memorable scientific discovery—the discovery that in certain ways the foul and derided Ganges water is the most puissant purifier in the world! This curious fact, as I have said, had just been added to the treasury of modern science. It had long been noted as a strange thing that while Benares is often afflicted with the cholera she does not spread it beyond her borders. This could not be accounted for. Mr. Henkin, the scientist in the employ of the government of Agra, concluded to examine the water. He went to Benares and made his tests. He got water at the mouths of the sewers where they empty into the river at the bathing ghats; a cubic centimetre of it contained millions of germs; at the end of six hours they were all dead. He caught a floating corpse, towed it to the shore, and from beside it he dipped up water that was swarming with cholera germs; at the end of six hours they were all dead. He added swarm after swarm of cholera germs to this water; within the six hours they always died, to the last sample. Repeatedly, he took pure well water which was bare of animal life, and put into it a few cholera germs; they always began to propagate at once, and always within six hours they swarmed—and were numberable by millions upon millions.

For ages and ages the Hindoos have had absolute faith that the water of the Ganges was absolutely pure, could not be defiled by any contact whatsoever, and infallibly made pure and clean whatsoever thing touched it. They still believe it, and that is why they bathe in it and drink it, caring nothing for its seeming filthiness and the floating corpses. The Hindoos have been laughed at, these many generations, but the laughter will need to modify itself a little from now on. How did they find out the water's secret in those ancient ages? Had they germ-scientists then? We do not know. We only know that they had a civilization long before we emerged from savagery. But to return to where I was before; I was about to speak of the burning-ghat.



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They do not burn fakeers—those revered mendicants. They are so holy that they can get to their place without that sacrament, provided they be consigned to the consecrating river. We saw one carried to mid-stream and thrown overboard. He was sandwiched between two great slabs of stone.

We lay off the cremation-ghat half an hour and saw nine corpses burned. I should not wish to see any more of it, unless I might select the parties. The mourners follow the bier through the town and down to the ghat; then the bier-bearers deliver the body to some low-caste natives —Doms—and the mourners turn about and go back home. I heard no crying and saw no tears, there was no ceremony of parting. Apparently, these expressions of grief and affection are reserved for the privacy of the home. The dead women came draped in red, the men in white. They are laid in the water at the river's edge while the pyre is being prepared.

The first subject was a man. When the Doms unswathed him to wash him, he proved to be a sturdily built, well-nourished and handsome old gentleman, with not a sign about him to suggest that he had ever been ill. Dry wood was brought and built up into a loose pile; the corpse was laid upon it and covered over with fuel. Then a naked holy man who was sitting on high ground a little distance away began to talk and shout with great energy, and he kept up this noise right along. It may have been the funeral sermon, and probably was. I forgot to say that one of the mourners remained behind when the others went away. This was the dead man's son, a boy of ten or twelve, brown and handsome, grave and self-possessed, and clothed in flowing white. He was there to burn his father. He was given a torch, and while he slowly walked seven times around the pyre the naked black man on the high ground poured out his sermon more clamorously than ever. The seventh circuit completed, the boy applied the torch at his father's head, then at his feet; the flames sprang briskly up with a sharp crackling noise, and the lad went away. Hindoos do not want daughters, because their weddings make such a ruinous expense; but they want sons, so that at death they may have honorable exit from the world; and there is no honor equal to the honor of having one's pyre lighted by one's son. The father who dies sonless is in a grievous situation indeed, and is pitied. Life being uncertain, the Hindoo marries while he is still a boy, in the hope that he will have a son ready when the day of his need shall come. But if he have no son, he will adopt one. This answers every purpose.

Meantime the corpse is burning, also several others. It is a dismal business. The stokers did not sit down in idleness, but moved briskly about, punching up the fires with long poles, and now and then adding fuel. Sometimes they hoisted the half of a skeleton into the air, then slammed it down and beat it with the pole, breaking it up so that it would burn better. They hoisted skulls up in the same way and banged and battered them. The sight was hard to bear; it would have been harder if the mourners had stayed to witness it. I had but a moderate desire to see a cremation, so it was soon satisfied. For sanitary reasons it would be well if cremation were universal; but this form is revolting, and not to be recommended.

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The fire used is sacred, of course—for there is money in it. Ordinary fire is forbidden; there is no money in it. I was told that this sacred fire is all furnished by one person, and that he has a monopoly of it and charges a good price for it. Sometimes a rich mourner pays a thousand rupees for it. To get to paradise from India is an expensive thing. Every detail connected with the matter costs something, and helps to fatten a priest. I suppose it is quite safe to conclude that that fire-bug is in holy orders.

Close to the cremation-ground stand a few time-worn stones which are remembrances of the suttee. Each has a rough carving upon it, representing a man and a woman standing or walking hand in hand, and marks the spot where a widow went to her death by fire in the days when the suttee flourished. Mr. Parker said that widows would burn themselves now if the government would allow it. The family that can point to one of these little memorials and say: “She who burned herself there was an ancestress of ours,” is envied.

It is a curious people. With them, all life seems to be sacred except human life. Even the life of vermin is sacred, and must not be taken. The good Jain wipes off a seat before using it, lest he cause the death of some valueless insect by sitting down on it. It grieves him to have to drink water, because the provisions in his stomach may not agree with the microbes. Yet India invented Thuggery and the Suttee. India is a hard country to understand. We went to the temple of the Thug goddess, Bhowanee, or Kali, or Durga. She has these names and others. She is the only god to whom living sacrifices are made. Goats are sacrificed to her. Monkeys would be cheaper. There are plenty of them about the place. Being sacred, they make themselves very free, and scramble around wherever they please. The temple and its porch are beautifully carved, but this is not the case with the idol. Bhowanee is not pleasant to look at. She has a silver face, and a projecting swollen tongue painted a deep red. She wears a necklace of skulls.

In fact, none of the idols in Benares are handsome or attractive. And what a swarm of them there is! The town is a vast museum of idols—and all of them crude, misshapen, and ugly. They flock through one’s dreams at night, a wild mob of nightmares. When you get tired of them in the temples and take a trip on the river, you find idol giants, flashily painted, stretched out side by side on the shore. And apparently wherever there is room for one more lingam, a lingam is there. If Vishnu had foreseen what his town was going to be, he would have called it Idolville or Lingamburg.



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The most conspicuous feature of Benares is the pair of slender white minarets which tower like masts from the great Mosque of Aurangzeb. They seem to be always in sight, from everywhere, those airy, graceful, inspiring things. But masts is not the right word, for masts have a perceptible taper, while these minarets have not. They are 142 feet high, and only 8 1/2 feet in diameter at the base, and 7 1/2 at the summit—scarcely any taper at all. These are the proportions of a candle; and fair and fairylike candles these are. Will be, anyway, some day, when the Christians inherit them and top them with the electric light. There is a great view from up there—a wonderful view. A large gray monkey was part of it, and damaged it. A monkey has no judgment. This one was skipping about the upper great heights of the mosque—skipping across empty yawning intervals which were almost too wide for him, and which he only just barely cleared, each time, by the skin of his teeth. He got me so nervous that I couldn't look at the view. I couldn't look at anything but him. Every time he went sailing over one of those abysses my breath stood still, and when he grabbed for the perch he was going for, I grabbed too, in sympathy. And he was perfectly indifferent, perfectly unconcerned, and I did all the panting myself. He came within an ace of losing his life a dozen times, and I was so troubled about him that I would have shot him if I had had anything to do it with. But I strongly recommend the view. There is more monkey than view, and there is always going to be more monkey while that idiot survives, but what view you get is superb. All Benares, the river, and the region round about are spread before you. Take a gun, and look at the view.

The next thing I saw was more reposeful. It was a new kind of art. It was a picture painted on water. It was done by a native. He sprinkled fine dust of various colors on the still surface of a basin of water, and out of these sprinklings a dainty and pretty picture gradually grew, a picture which a breath could destroy. Somehow it was impressive, after so much browsing among massive and battered and decaying fanes that rest upon ruins, and those ruins upon still other ruins, and those upon still others again. It was a sermon, an allegory, a symbol of Instability. Those creations in stone were only a kind of water pictures, after all.

A prominent episode in the Indian career of Warren Hastings had Benares for its theater. Wherever that extraordinary man set his foot, he left his mark. He came to Benares in 1781 to collect a fine of L500,000 which he had levied upon its Rajah, Cheit Singly on behalf of the East India Company. Hastings was a long way from home and help. There were, probably, not a dozen Englishmen within reach; the Rajah was in his fort with his myriads around him. But no matter. From his little camp in a neighboring garden, Hastings sent a party to arrest the sovereign.



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He sent on this daring mission a couple of hundred native soldiers sepoy —under command of three young English lieutenants. The Rajah submitted without a word. The incident lights up the Indian situation electrically, and gives one a vivid sense of the strides which the English had made and the mastership they had acquired in the land since the date of Clive's great victory. In a quarter of a century, from being nobodies, and feared by none, they were become confessed lords and masters, feared by all, sovereigns included, and served by all, sovereigns included. It makes the fairy tales sound true. The English had not been afraid to enlist native soldiers to fight against their own people and keep them obedient. And now Hastings was not afraid to come away out to this remote place with a handful of such soldiers and send them to arrest a native sovereign.

The lieutenants imprisoned the Rajah in his own fort. It was beautiful, the pluckiness of it, the impudence of it. The arrest enraged the Rajah's people, and all Benares came storming about the place and threatening vengeance. And yet, but for an accident, nothing important would have resulted, perhaps. The mob found out a most strange thing, an almost incredible thing—that this handful of soldiers had come on this hardy errand with empty guns and no ammunition. This has been attributed to thoughtlessness, but it could hardly have been that, for in such large emergencies as this, intelligent people do think. It must have been indifference, an over-confidence born of the proved submissiveness of the native character, when confronted by even one or two stern Britons in their war paint. But, however that may be, it was a fatal discovery that the mob had made. They were full of courage, now, and they broke into the fort and massacred the helpless soldiers and their officers. Hastings escaped from Benares by night and got safely away, leaving the principality in a state of wild insurrection; but he was back again within the month, and quieted it down in his prompt and virile way, and took the Rajah's throne away from him and gave it to another man. He was a capable kind of person was Warren Hastings. This was the only time he was ever out of ammunition. Some of his acts have left stains upon his name which can never be washed away, but he saved to England the Indian Empire, and that was the best service that was ever done to the Indians themselves, those wretched heirs of a hundred centuries of pitiless oppression and abuse.

CHAPTER LIII.

True irreverence is disrespect for another man's god.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

It was in Benares that I saw another living god. That makes two. I believe I have seen most of the greater and lesser wonders of the world, but I do not remember that any of them interested me so overwhelmingly as did that pair of gods.

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When I try to account for this effect I find no difficulty about it. I find that, as a rule, when a thing is a wonder to us it is not because of what we see in it, but because of what others have seen in it. We get almost all our wonders at second hand. We are eager to see any celebrated thing—and we never fail of our reward; just the deep privilege of gazing upon an object which has stirred the enthusiasm or evoked the reverence or affection or admiration of multitudes of our race is a thing which we value; we are profoundly glad that we have seen it, we are permanently enriched from having seen it, we would not part with the memory of that experience for a great price. And yet that very spectacle may be the Taj. You cannot keep your enthusiasms down, you cannot keep your emotions within bounds when that soaring bubble of marble breaks upon your view. But these are not your enthusiasms and emotions—they are the accumulated emotions and enthusiasms of a thousand fervid writers, who have been slowly and steadily storing them up in your heart day by day and year by year all your life; and now they burst out in a flood and overwhelm you; and you could not be a whit happier if they were your very own. By and by you sober down, and then you perceive that you have been drunk on the smell of somebody else's cork. For ever and ever the memory of my distant first glimpse of the Taj will compensate me for creeping around the globe to have that great privilege.

But the Taj—with all your inflation of delusive emotions, acquired at second-hand from people to whom in the majority of cases they were also delusions acquired at second-hand—a thing which you fortunately did not think of or it might have made you doubtful of what you imagined were your own what is the Taj as a marvel, a spectacle and an uplifting and overpowering wonder, compared with a living, breathing, speaking personage whom several millions of human beings devoutly and sincerely and unquestioningly believe to be a God, and humbly and gratefully worship as a God?

He was sixty years old when I saw him. He is called Sri 108 Swami Bhaskarananda Saraswati. That is one form of it. I think that that is what you would call him in speaking to him—because it is short. But you would use more of his name in addressing a letter to him; courtesy would require this. Even then you would not have to use all of it, but only this much:

Sri 108 Matparamahansrzpairivrajakacharyaswamibhaskaranan
dasarawati.

You do not put “Esq.” after it, for that is not necessary. The word which opens the volley is itself a title of honor “Sri.” The “108” stands for the rest of his names, I believe. Vishnu has 108 names which he does not use in business, and no doubt it is a custom of gods and a privilege sacred to their order to keep 108 extra ones in stock. Just the restricted name set down above is a handsome property, without the 108. By my count it has 58 letters in it. This removes the long German words from competition; they are permanently out of the race.



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Sri 108 S. B. Saraswati has attained to what among the Hindoos is called the “state of perfection.” It is a state which other Hindoos reach by being born again and again, and over and over again into this world, through one re-incarnation after another—a tiresome long job covering centuries and decades of centuries, and one that is full of risks, too, like the accident of dying on the wrong side of the Ganges some time or other and waking up in the form of an ass, with a fresh start necessary and the numerous trips to be made all over again. But in reaching perfection, Sri 108 S. B. S. has escaped all that. He is no longer a part or a feature of this world; his substance has changed, all earthiness has departed out of it; he is utterly holy, utterly pure; nothing can desecrate this holiness or stain this purity; he is no longer of the earth, its concerns are matters foreign to him, its pains and griefs and troubles cannot reach him. When he dies, Nirvana is his; he will be absorbed into the substance of the Supreme Deity and be at peace forever.

The Hindoo Scriptures point out how this state is to be reached, but it is only once in a thousand years, perhaps, that candidate accomplishes it. This one has traversed the course required, stage by stage, from the beginning to the end, and now has nothing left to do but wait for the call which shall release him from a world in which he has now no part nor lot. First, he passed through the student stage, and became learned in the holy books. Next he became citizen, householder, husband, and father. That was the required second stage. Then—like John Bunyan’s Christian he bade perpetual good-bye to his family, as required, and went wandering away. He went far into the desert and served a term as hermit. Next, he became a beggar, “in accordance with the rites laid down in the Scriptures,” and wandered about India eating the bread of mendicancy. A quarter of a century ago he reached the stage of purity. This needs no garment; its symbol is nudity; he discarded the waist-cloth which he had previously worn. He could resume it now if he chose, for neither that nor any other contact can defile him; but he does not choose.

There are several other stages, I believe, but I do not remember what they are. But he has been through them. Throughout the long course he was perfecting himself in holy learning, and writing commentaries upon the sacred books. He was also meditating upon Brahma, and he does that now.

White marble relief-portraits of him are sold all about India. He lives in a good house in a noble great garden in Benares, all meet and proper to his stupendous rank. Necessarily he does not go abroad in the streets. Deities would never be able to move about handily in any country. If one whom we recognized and adored as a god should go abroad in our streets, and the day it was to happen were known, all traffic would be blocked and business would come to a standstill.



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This god is comfortably housed, and yet modestly, all things considered, for if he wanted to live in a palace he would only need to speak and his worshipers would gladly build it. Sometimes he sees devotees for a moment, and comforts them and blesses them, and they kiss his feet and go away happy. Rank is nothing to him, he being a god. To him all men are alike. He sees whom he pleases and denies himself to whom he pleases. Sometimes he sees a prince and denies himself to a pauper; at other times he receives the pauper and turns the prince away. However, he does not receive many of either class. He has to husband his time for his meditations. I think he would receive Rev. Mr. Parker at any time. I think he is sorry for Mr. Parker, and I think Mr. Parker is sorry for him; and no doubt this compassion is good for both of them.

When we arrived we had to stand around in the garden a little while and wait, and the outlook was not good, for he had been turning away Maharajas that day and receiving only the riff-raff, and we belonged in between, somewhere. But presently, a servant came out saying it was all right, he was coming.

And sure enough, he came, and I saw him—that object of the worship of millions. It was a strange sensation, and thrilling. I wish I could feel it stream through my veins again. And yet, to me he was not a god, he was only a Taj. The thrill was not my thrill, but had come to me secondhand from those invisible millions of believers. By a handshake with their god I had ground-circuited their wire and got their monster battery's whole charge.

He was tall and slender, indeed emaciated. He had a clean cut and conspicuously intellectual face, and a deep and kindly eye. He looked many years older than he really was, but much study and meditation and fasting and prayer, with the arid life he had led as hermit and beggar, could account for that. He is wholly nude when he receives natives, of whatever rank they may be, but he had white cloth around his loins now, a concession to Mr. Parker's Europe prejudices, no doubt.

As soon as I had sobered down a little we got along very well together, and I found him a most pleasant and friendly deity. He had heard a deal about Chicago, and showed a quite remarkable interest in it, for a god. It all came of the World's Fair and the Congress of Religions. If India knows about nothing else American, she knows about those, and will keep them in mind one while.

He proposed an exchange of autographs, a delicate attention which made me believe in him, but I had been having my doubts before. He wrote his in his book, and I have a reverent regard for that book, though the words run from right to left, and so I can't read it. It was a mistake to print in that way. It contains his voluminous comments on the Hindoo holy writings, and if I could make them out I would try for perfection myself. I gave him a copy of Huckleberry Finn. I thought it might rest him up a little to mix it in along with his meditations on Brahma, for he looked tired, and I knew that if it didn't do him any good it wouldn't do him any harm.



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He has a scholar meditating under him—Mina Bahadur Rana—but we did not see him. He wears clothes and is very imperfect. He has written a little pamphlet about his master, and I have that. It contains a wood-cut of the master and himself seated on a rug in the garden. The portrait of the master is very good indeed. The posture is exactly that which Brahma himself affects, and it requires long arms and limber legs, and can be accumulated only by gods and the india-rubber man. There is a life-size marble relief of Shri 108, S.B.S. in the garden. It represents him in this same posture.

Dear me! It is a strange world. Particularly the Indian division of it. This pupil, Mina Bahadur Rana, is not a commonplace person, but a man of distinguished capacities and attainments, and, apparently, he had a fine worldly career in front of him. He was serving the Nepal Government in a high capacity at the Court of the Viceroy of India, twenty years ago. He was an able man, educated, a thinker, a man of property. But the longing to devote himself to a religious life came upon him, and he resigned his place, turned his back upon the vanities and comforts of the world, and went away into the solitudes to live in a hut and study the sacred writings and meditate upon virtue and holiness and seek to attain them. This sort of religion resembles ours. Christ recommended the rich to give away all their property and follow Him in poverty, not in worldly comfort. American and English millionaires do it every day, and thus verify and confirm to the world the tremendous forces that lie in religion. Yet many people scoff at them for this loyalty to duty, and many will scoff at Mina Bahadur Rana and call him a crank. Like many Christians of great character and intellect, he has made the study of his Scriptures and the writing of books of commentaries upon them the loving labor of his life. Like them, he has believed that his was not an idle and foolish waste of his life, but a most worthy and honorable employment of it. Yet, there are many people who will see in those others, men worthy of homage and deep reverence, but in him merely a crank. But I shall not. He has my reverence. And I don't offer it as a common thing and poor, but as an unusual thing and of value. The ordinary reverence, the reverence defined and explained by the dictionary costs nothing. Reverence for one's own sacred things—parents, religion, flag, laws, and respect for one's own beliefs—these are feelings which we cannot even help. They come natural to us; they are involuntary, like breathing. There is no personal merit in breathing. But the reverence which is difficult, and which has personal merit in it, is the respect which you pay, without compulsion, to the political or religious attitude of a man whose beliefs are not yours. You can't revere his gods or his politics, and no one expects you to do that, but you could respect his belief in them if you tried hard enough; and you could respect him, too, if you tried hard enough. But it is very, very difficult; it is next to impossible, and so we hardly ever try. If the man doesn't believe as we do, we say he is a crank, and that settles it. I mean it does nowadays, because now we can't burn him.



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We are always canting about people's "irreverence," always charging this offense upon somebody or other, and thereby intimating that we are better than that person and do not commit that offense ourselves. Whenever we do this we are in a lying attitude, and our speech is cant; for none of us are reverent—in a meritorious way; deep down in our hearts we are all irreverent. There is probably not a single exception to this rule in the earth. There is probably not one person whose reverence rises higher than respect for his own sacred things; and therefore, it is not a thing to boast about and be proud of, since the most degraded savage has that—and, like the best of us, has nothing higher. To speak plainly, we despise all reverences and all objects of reverence which are outside the pale of our own list of sacred things. And yet, with strange inconsistency, we are shocked when other people despise and defile the things which are holy to us. Suppose we should meet with a paragraph like the following, in the newspapers:

"Yesterday a visiting party of the British nobility had a picnic at Mount Vernon, and in the tomb of Washington they ate their luncheon, sang popular songs, played games, and danced waltzes and polkas."

Should we be shocked? Should we feel outraged? Should we be amazed? Should we call the performance a desecration? Yes, that would all happen. We should denounce those people in round terms, and call them hard names.

And suppose we found this paragraph in the newspapers:

"Yesterday a visiting party of American pork-millionaires had a picnic in Westminster Abbey, and in that sacred place they ate their luncheon, sang popular songs, played games, and danced waltzes and polkas."

Would the English be shocked? Would they feel outraged? Would they be amazed? Would they call the performance a desecration? That would all happen. The pork-millionaires would be denounced in round terms; they would be called hard names.

In the tomb at Mount Vernon lie the ashes of America's most honored son; in the Abbey, the ashes of England's greatest dead; the tomb of tombs, the costliest in the earth, the wonder of the world, the Taj, was built by a great Emperor to honor the memory of a perfect wife and perfect mother, one in whom there was no spot or blemish, whose love was his stay and support, whose life was the light of the world to him; in it her ashes lie, and to the Mohammedan millions of India it is a holy place; to them it is what Mount Vernon is to Americans, it is what the Abbey is to the English.

Major Sleeman wrote forty or fifty years ago (the italics are mine):

"I would here enter my humble protest against the quadrille and lunch parties which are sometimes given to European ladies and gentlemen of the station at this imperial tomb;



drinking and dancing are no doubt very good things in their season, but they are sadly out of place in a sepulchre.”

Were there any Americans among those lunch parties? If they were invited, there were.



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If my imagined lunch-parties in Westminster and the tomb of Washington should take place, the incident would cause a vast outbreak of bitter eloquence about Barbarism and Irreverence; and it would come from two sets of people who would go next day and dance in the Taj if they had a chance.

As we took our leave of the Benares god and started away we noticed a group of natives waiting respectfully just within the gate—a Rajah from somewhere in India, and some people of lesser consequence. The god beckoned them to come, and as we passed out the Rajah was kneeling and reverently kissing his sacred feet.

If Barnum—but Barnum's ambitions are at rest. This god will remain in the holy peace and seclusion of his garden, undisturbed. Barnum could not have gotten him, anyway. Still, he would have found a substitute that would answer.

CHAPTER LIV.

Do not undervalue the headache. While it is at its sharpest it seems a bad investment; but when relief begins, the unexpired remainder is worth \$4 a minute.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

A comfortable railway journey of seventeen and a half hours brought us to the capital of India, which is likewise the capital of Bengal—Calcutta. Like Bombay, it has a population of nearly a million natives and a small gathering of white people. It is a huge city and fine, and is called the City of Palaces. It is rich in historical memories; rich in British achievement—military, political, commercial; rich in the results of the miracles done by that brace of mighty magicians, Clive and Hastings. And has a cloud kissing monument to one Ochterlony.

It is a fluted candlestick 250 feet high. This lingam is the only large monument in Calcutta, I believe. It is a fine ornament, and will keep Ochterlony in mind.

Wherever you are, in Calcutta, and for miles around, you can see it; and always when you see it you think of Ochterlony. And so there is not an hour in the day that you do not think of Ochterlony and wonder who he was. It is good that Clive cannot come back, for he would think it was for Plassey; and then that great spirit would be wounded when the revelation came that it was not. Clive would find out that it was for Ochterlony; and he would think Ochterlony was a battle. And he would think it was a great one, too, and he would say, "With three thousand I whipped sixty thousand and founded the Empire—and there is no monument; this other soldier must have whipped a billion with a dozen and saved the world."

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But he would be mistaken. Ochterlony was a man, not a battle. And he did good and honorable service, too; as good and honorable service as has been done in India by seventy-five or a hundred other Englishmen of courage, rectitude, and distinguished capacity. For India has been a fertile breeding-ground of such men, and remains so; great men, both in war and in the civil service, and as modest as great. But they have no monuments, and were not expecting any. Ochterlony could not have been expecting one, and it is not at all likely that he desired one—certainly not until Clive and Hastings should be supplied. Every day Clive and Hastings lean on the battlements of heaven and look down and wonder which of the two the monument is for; and they fret and worry because they cannot find out, and so the peace of heaven is spoiled for them and lost. But not for Ochterlony. Ochterlony is not troubled. He doesn't suspect that it is his monument. Heaven is sweet and peaceful to him. There is a sort of unfairness about it all.

Indeed, if monuments were always given in India for high achievements, duty straitly performed, and smirchless records, the landscape would be monotonous with them. The handful of English in India govern the Indian myriads with apparent ease, and without noticeable friction, through tact, training, and distinguished administrative ability, reinforced by just and liberal laws—and by keeping their word to the native whenever they give it.

England is far from India and knows little about the eminent services performed by her servants there, for it is the newspaper correspondent who makes fame, and he is not sent to India but to the continent, to report the doings of the princelets and the dukelets, and where they are visiting and whom they are marrying. Often a British official spends thirty or forty years in India, climbing from grade to grade by services which would make him celebrated anywhere else, and finishes as a vice-sovereign, governing a great realm and millions of subjects; then he goes home to England substantially unknown and unheard of, and settles down in some modest corner, and is as one extinguished. Ten years later there is a twenty-line obituary in the London papers, and the reader is paralyzed by the splendors of a career which he is not sure that he had ever heard of before. But meanwhile he has learned all about the continental princelets and dukelets.

The average man is profoundly ignorant of countries that lie remote from his own. When they are mentioned in his presence one or two facts and maybe a couple of names rise like torches in his mind, lighting up an inch or two of it and leaving the rest all dark. The mention of Egypt suggests some Biblical facts and the Pyramids—nothing more. The mention of South Africa suggests Kimberly and the diamonds and there an end. Formerly the mention, to a Hindoo, of America suggested a name—George Washington—with

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that his familiarity with our country was exhausted. Latterly his familiarity with it has doubled in bulk; so that when America is mentioned now, two torches flare up in the dark caverns of his mind and he says, "Ah, the country of the great man Washington; and of the Holy City—Chicago." For he knows about the Congress of Religion, and this has enabled him to get an erroneous impression of Chicago.

When India is mentioned to the citizen of a far country it suggests Clive, Hastings, the Mutiny, Kipling, and a number of other great events; and the mention of Calcutta infallibly brings up the Black Hole. And so, when that citizen finds himself in the capital of India he goes first of all to see the Black Hole of Calcutta—and is disappointed.

The Black Hole was not preserved; it is gone, long, long ago. It is strange. Just as it stood, it was itself a monument; a ready-made one. It was finished, it was complete, its materials were strong and lasting, it needed no furbishing up, no repairs; it merely needed to be let alone. It was the first brick, the Foundation Stone, upon which was reared a mighty Empire—the Indian Empire of Great Britain. It was the ghastly episode of the Black Hole that maddened the British and brought Clive, that young military marvel, raging up from Madras; it was the seed from which sprung Plassey; and it was that extraordinary battle, whose like had not been seen in the earth since Agincourt, that laid deep and strong the foundations of England's colossal Indian sovereignty.

And yet within the time of men who still live, the Black Hole was torn down and thrown away as carelessly as if its bricks were common clay, not ingots of historic gold. There is no accounting for human beings.

The supposed site of the Black Hole is marked by an engraved plate. I saw that; and better that than nothing. The Black Hole was a prison—a cell is nearer the right word—eighteen feet square, the dimensions of an ordinary bedchamber; and into this place the victorious Nabob of Bengal packed 146 of his English prisoners. There was hardly standing room for them; scarcely a breath of air was to be got; the time was night, the weather sweltering hot. Before the dawn came, the captives were all dead but twenty-three. Mr. Holwell's long account of the awful episode was familiar to the world a hundred years ago, but one seldom sees in print even an extract from it in our day. Among the striking things in it is this. Mr. Holwell, perishing with thirst, kept himself alive by sucking the perspiration from his sleeves. It gives one a vivid idea of the situation. He presently found that while he was busy drawing life from one of his sleeves a young English gentleman was stealing supplies from the other one. Holwell was an unselfish man, a man of the most generous impulses; he lived and died famous for these fine and rare qualities; yet when he found out what was happening to that unwatched sleeve, he took the precaution to suck that one dry first. The miseries of the Black Hole were able to change even a nature like his. But that young gentleman was one of the twenty-three

survivors, and he said it was the stolen perspiration that saved his life. From the middle of Mr. Holwell's narrative I will make a brief excerpt:



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“Then a general prayer to Heaven, to hasten the approach of the flames to the right and left of us, and put a period to our misery. But these failing, they whose strength and spirits were quite exhausted laid themselves down and expired quietly upon their fellows: others who had yet some strength and vigor left made a last effort at the windows, and several succeeded by leaping and scrambling over the backs and heads of those in the first rank, and got hold of the bars, from which there was no removing them. Many to the right and left sunk with the violent pressure, and were soon suffocated; for now a steam arose from the living and the dead, which affected us in all its circumstances as if we were forcibly held with our heads over a bowl full of strong volatile spirit of hartshorn, until suffocated; nor could the effluvia of the one be distinguished from the other, and frequently, when I was forced by the load upon my head and shoulders to hold my face down, I was obliged, near as I was to the window, instantly to raise it again to avoid suffocation. I need not, my dear friend, ask your commiseration, when I tell you, that in this plight, from half an hour past eleven till near two in the morning, I sustained the weight of a heavy man, with his knees in my back, and the pressure of his whole body on my head. A Dutch surgeon who had taken his seat upon my left shoulder, and a Topaz (a black Christian soldier) bearing on my right; all which nothing could have enabled me to support but the props and pressure equally sustaining me all around. The two latter I frequently dislodged by shifting my hold on the bars and driving my knuckles into their ribs; but my friend above stuck fast, held immovable by two bars.” I exerted anew my strength and fortitude; but the repeated trials and efforts I made to dislodge the insufferable incumbrances upon me at last quite exhausted me; and towards two o’clock, finding I must quit the window or sink where I was, I resolved on the former, having bore, truly for the sake of others, infinitely more for life than the best of it is worth. In the rank close behind me was an officer of one of the ships, whose name was Cary, and who had behaved with much bravery during the siege (his wife, a fine woman, though country born, would not quit him, but accompanied him into the prison, and was one who survived). This poor wretch had been long raving for water and air; I told him I was determined to give up life, and recommended his gaining my station. On my quitting it he made a fruitless attempt to get my place; but the Dutch surgeon, who sat on my shoulder, supplanted him. Poor Cary expressed his thankfulness, and said he would give up life too; but it was with the utmost labor we forced our way from the window (several in the inner ranks appearing to me dead standing, unable to fall by the throng and equal pressure around). He laid himself down to die; and his death, I believe, was very sudden; for he was a short,



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full, sanguine man. His strength was great; and, I imagine, had he not retired with me, I should never have been able to force my way. I was at this time sensible of no pain, and little uneasiness; I can give you no better idea of my situation than by repeating my simile of the bowl of spirit of hartshorn. I found a stupor coming on apace, and laid myself down by that gallant old man, the Rev. Mr. Jervas Bellamy, who laid dead with his son, the lieutenant, hand in hand, near the southernmost wall of the prison. When I had lain there some little time, I still had reflection enough to suffer some uneasiness in the thought that I should be trampled upon, when dead, as I myself had done to others. With some difficulty I raised myself, and gained the platform a second time, where I presently lost all sensation; the last trace of sensibility that I have been able to recollect after my laying down, was my sash being uneasy about my waist, which I untied, and threw from me. Of what passed in this interval, to the time of my resurrection from this hole of horrors, I can give you no account.”

There was plenty to see in Calcutta, but there was not plenty of time for it. I saw the fort that Clive built; and the place where Warren Hastings and the author of the Junius Letters fought their duel; and the great botanical gardens; and the fashionable afternoon turnout in the Maidan; and a grand review of the garrison in a great plain at sunrise; and a military tournament in which great bodies of native soldiery exhibited the perfection of their drill at all arms, a spectacular and beautiful show occupying several nights and closing with the mimic storming of a native fort which was as good as the reality for thrilling and accurate detail, and better than the reality for security and comfort; we had a pleasure excursion on the ‘Hoogly’ by courtesy of friends, and devoted the rest of the time to social life and the Indian museum. One should spend a month in the museum, an enchanted palace of Indian antiquities. Indeed, a person might spend half a year among the beautiful and wonderful things without exhausting their interest.

It was winter. We were of Kipling’s “hosts of tourists who travel up and down India in the cold weather showing how things ought to be managed.” It is a common expression there, “the cold weather,” and the people think there is such a thing. It is because they have lived there half a lifetime, and their perceptions have become blunted. When a person is accustomed to 138 in the shade, his ideas about cold weather are not valuable. I had read, in the histories, that the June marches made between Lucknow and Cawnpore by the British forces in the time of the Mutiny were made weather—138 in the shade and had taken it for historical embroidery. I had read it again in Serjeant-Major Forbes-Mitchell’s account of his military experiences in the Mutiny—at least I thought I had—and in Calcutta I asked him if it was true, and he said



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it was. An officer of high rank who had been in the thick of the Mutiny said the same. As long as those men were talking about what they knew, they were trustworthy, and I believed them; but when they said it was now “cold weather,” I saw that they had traveled outside of their sphere of knowledge and were floundering. I believe that in India “cold weather” is merely a conventional phrase and has come into use through the necessity of having some way to distinguish between weather which will melt a brass door-knob and weather which will only make it mushy. It was observable that brass ones were in use while I was in Calcutta, showing that it was not yet time to change to porcelain; I was told the change to porcelain was not usually made until May. But this cold weather was too warm for us; so we started to Darjeeling, in the Himalayas—a twenty-four hour journey.

CHAPTER LV.

There are 869 different forms of lying, but only one of them has been squarely forbidden. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

FROM DIARY:

February 14. We left at 4:30 P.M. Until dark we moved through rich vegetation, then changed to a boat and crossed the Ganges.

February 15. Up with the sun. A brilliant morning, and frosty. A double suit of flannels is found necessary. The plain is perfectly level, and seems to stretch away and away and away, dimming and softening, to the uttermost bounds of nowhere. What a soaring, strenuous, gushing fountain spray of delicate greenery a bunch of bamboo is! As far as the eye can reach, these grand vegetable geysers grace the view, their spoutings refined to steam by distance. And there are fields of bananas, with the sunshine glancing from the varnished surface of their drooping vast leaves. And there are frequent groves of palm; and an effective accent is given to the landscape by isolated individuals of this picturesque family, towering, clean-stemmed, their plumes broken and hanging ragged, Nature's imitation of an umbrella that has been out to see what a cyclone is like and is trying not to look disappointed. And everywhere through the soft morning vistas we glimpse the villages, the countless villages, the myriad villages, thatched, built of clean new matting, snuggling among grouped palms and sheaves of bamboo; villages, villages, no end of villages, not three hundred yards apart, and dozens and dozens of them in sight all the time; a mighty City, hundreds of miles long, hundreds of miles broad, made all of villages, the biggest city in the earth, and as populous as a European kingdom. I have seen no such city as this before. And there is



a continuously repeated and replenished multitude of naked men in view on both sides and ahead. We fly through it mile after mile, but still it is always there, on both sides and ahead—brown-bodied, naked men and boys, plowing in the fields. But not woman. In these two hours I have not seen a woman or a girl working in the fields.



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“From Greenland’s icy mountains,
From India’s coral strand,
Where Afric’s sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand.
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error’s chain.”

Those are beautiful verses, and they have remained in my memory all my life. But if the closing lines are true, let us hope that when we come to answer the call and deliver the land from its errors, we shall secrete from it some of our high-civilization ways, and at the same time borrow some of its pagan ways to enrich our high system with. We have a right to do this. If we lift those people up, we have a right to lift ourselves up nine or ten grades or so, at their expense. A few years ago I spent several weeks at Tolz, in Bavaria. It is a Roman Catholic region, and not even Benares is more deeply or pervasively or intelligently devout. In my diary of those days I find this:

“We took a long drive yesterday around about the lovely country roads. But it was a drive whose pleasure was damaged in a couple of ways: by the dreadful shrines and by the shameful spectacle of gray and venerable old grandmothers toiling in the fields. The shrines were frequent along the roads—figures of the Saviour nailed to the cross and streaming with blood from the wounds of the nails and the thorns. “When missionaries go from here do they find fault with the pagan idols? I saw many women seventy and even eighty years old mowing and binding in the fields, and pitchforking the loads into the wagons.”

I was in Austria later, and in Munich. In Munich I saw gray old women pushing trucks up hill and down, long distances, trucks laden with barrels of beer, incredible loads. In my Austrian diary I find this:

“In the fields I often see a woman and a cow harnessed to the plow,
and a man driving.

“In the public street of Marienbad to-day, I saw an old, bent, gray-headed woman, in harness with a dog, drawing a laden sled over bare dirt roads and bare pavements; and at his ease walked the driver, smoking his pipe, a hale fellow not thirty years old.”

Five or six years ago I bought an open boat, made a kind of a canvas wagon-roof over the stern of it to shelter me from sun and rain; hired a courier and a boatman, and made a twelve-day floating voyage down the Rhone from Lake Bourget to Marseilles. In my diary of that trip I find this entry. I was far down the Rhone then:



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“Passing St. Etienne, 2:15 P.M. On a distant ridge inland, a tall openwork structure commandingly situated, with a statue of the Virgin standing on it. A devout country. All down this river, wherever there is a crag there is a statue of the Virgin on it. I believe I have seen a hundred of them. And yet, in many respects, the peasantry seem to be mere pagans, and destitute of any considerable degree of civilization.” We reached a not very promising looking village about 4 o’clock, and I concluded to tie up for the day; munching fruit and fogging the hood with pipe-smoke had grown monotonous; I could not have the hood furled, because the floods of rain fell unceasingly. The tavern was on the river bank, as is the custom. It was dull there, and melancholy—nothing to do but look out of the window into the drenching rain, and shiver; one could do that, for it was bleak and cold and windy, and country France furnishes no fire. Winter overcoats did not help me much; they had to be supplemented with rugs. The raindrops were so large and struck the river with such force that they knocked up the water like pebble-splashes. “With the exception of a very occasional woodenshod peasant, nobody was abroad in this bitter weather—I mean nobody of our sex. But all weathers are alike to the women in these continental countries. To them and the other animals, life is serious; nothing interrupts their slavery. Three of them were washing clothes in the river under the window when I arrived, and they continued at it as long as there was light to work by. One was apparently thirty; another—the mother!—above fifty; the third—grandmother!—so old and worn and gray she could have passed for eighty; I took her to be that old. They had no waterproofs nor rubbers, of course; over their shoulders they wore gunnysacks—simply conductors for rivers of water; some of the volume reached the ground; the rest soaked in on the way. “At last a vigorous fellow of thirty-five arrived, dry and comfortable, smoking his pipe under his big umbrella in an open donkey-cart—husband, son, and grandson of those women! He stood up in the cart, sheltering himself, and began to superintend, issuing his orders in a masterly tone of command, and showing temper when they were not obeyed swiftly enough. “Without complaint or murmur the drowned women patiently carried out the orders, lifting the immense baskets of soggy, wrung-out clothing into the cart and stowing them to the man’s satisfaction. There were six of the great baskets, and a man of mere ordinary strength could not have lifted any one of them. The cart being full now, the Frenchman descended, still sheltered by his umbrella, entered the tavern, and the women went drooping homeward, trudging in the wake of the cart, and soon were blended with the deluge and lost to sight.



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“When I went down into the public room, the Frenchman had his bottle of wine and plate of food on a bare table black with grease, and was “chomping” like a horse. He had the little religious paper which is in everybody’s hands on the Rhone borders, and was enlightening himself with the histories of French saints who used to flee to the desert in the Middle Ages to escape the contamination of woman. For two hundred years France has been sending missionaries to other savage lands. To spare to the needy from poverty like hers is fine and true generosity.”

But to get back to India—where, as my favorite poem says—

“Every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile.”

It is because Bavaria and Austria and France have not introduced their civilization to him yet. But Bavaria and Austria and France are on their way. They are coming. They will rescue him; they will refine the vileness out of him.

Some time during the forenoon, approaching the mountains, we changed from the regular train to one composed of little canvas-sheltered cars that skimmed along within a foot of the ground and seemed to be going fifty miles an hour when they were really making about twenty. Each car had seating capacity for half-a-dozen persons; and when the curtains were up one was substantially out of doors, and could see everywhere, and get all the breeze, and be luxuriously comfortable. It was not a pleasure excursion in name only, but in fact.

After a while the stopped at a little wooden coop of a station just within the curtain of the sombre jungle, a place with a deep and dense forest of great trees and scrub and vines all about it. The royal Bengal tiger is in great force there, and is very bold and unconventional. From this lonely little station a message once went to the railway manager in Calcutta: “Tiger eating station-master on front porch; telegraph instructions.”

It was there that I had my first tiger hunt. I killed thirteen. We were presently away again, and the train began to climb the mountains. In one place seven wild elephants crossed the track, but two of them got away before I could overtake them. The railway journey up the mountain is forty miles, and it takes eight hours to make it. It is so wild and interesting and exciting and enchanting that it ought to take a week. As for the vegetation, it is a museum. The jungle seemed to contain samples of every rare and curious tree and bush that we had ever seen or heard of. It is from that museum, I think, that the globe must have been supplied with the trees and vines and shrubs that it holds precious.

The road is infinitely and charmingly crooked. It goes winding in and out under lofty cliffs that are smothered in vines and foliage, and around the edges of bottomless



chasms; and all the way one glides by files of picturesque natives, some carrying burdens up, others going down from their work in the tea-gardens; and once there was a gaudy wedding procession, all bright tinsel and color, and a bride, comely and girlish, who peeped out from the curtains of her palanquin, exposing her face with that pure delight which the young and happy take in sin for sin's own sake.



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By and by we were well up in the region of the clouds, and from that breezy height we looked down and afar over a wonderful picture—the Plains of India, stretching to the horizon, soft and fair, level as a floor, shimmering with heat, mottled with cloud-shadows, and cloven with shining rivers. Immediately below us, and receding down, down, down, toward the valley, was a shaven confusion of hilltops, with ribbony roads and paths squirming and snaking cream-yellow all over them and about them, every curve and twist sharply distinct.

At an elevation of 6,000 feet we entered a thick cloud, and it shut out the world and kept it shut out. We climbed 1,000 feet higher, then began to descend, and presently got down to Darjeeling, which is 6,000 feet above the level of the Plains.

We had passed many a mountain village on the way up, and seen some new kinds of natives, among them many samples of the fighting Ghurkas. They are not large men, but they are strong and resolute. There are no better soldiers among Britain's native troops. And we had passed shoals of their women climbing the forty miles of steep road from the valley to their mountain homes, with tall baskets on their backs hitched to their foreheads by a band, and containing a freightage weighing—I will not say how many hundreds of pounds, for the sum is unbelievable. These were young women, and they strode smartly along under these astonishing burdens with the air of people out for a holiday. I was told that a woman will carry a piano on her back all the way up the mountain; and that more than once a woman had done it. If these were old women I should regard the Ghurkas as no more civilized than the Europeans. At the railway station at Darjeeling you find plenty of cab-substitutes—open coffins, in which you sit, and are then borne on men's shoulders up the steep roads into the town.

Up there we found a fairly comfortable hotel, the property of an indiscriminate and incoherent landlord, who looks after nothing, but leaves everything to his army of Indian servants. No, he does look after the bill—to be just to him—and the tourist cannot do better than follow his example. I was told by a resident that the summit of Kinchinjunga is often hidden in the clouds, and that sometimes a tourist has waited twenty-two days and then been obliged to go away without a sight of it. And yet went not disappointed; for when he got his hotel bill he recognized that he was now seeing the highest thing in the Himalayas. But this is probably a lie.

After lecturing I went to the Club that night, and that was a comfortable place. It is loftily situated, and looks out over a vast spread of scenery; from it you can see where the boundaries of three countries come together, some thirty miles away; Thibet is one of them, Nepaul another, and I think Herzegovina was the other. Apparently, in every town and city in India the gentlemen of the British civil and military service have a club; sometimes it is a palatial one, always it is pleasant and homelike. The hotels are not always as good as they might be, and the stranger who has access to the Club is grateful for his privilege and knows how to value it.



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Next day was Sunday. Friends came in the gray dawn with horses, and my party rode away to a distant point where Kinchinjunga and Mount Everest show up best, but I stayed at home for a private view; for it was very old, and I was not acquainted with the horses, any way. I got a pipe and a few blankets and sat for two hours at the window, and saw the sun drive away the veiling gray and touch up the snow-peaks one after another with pale pink splashes and delicate washes of gold, and finally flood the whole mighty convulsion of snow-mountains with a deluge of rich splendors.

Kinchinjunga's peak was but fitfully visible, but in the between times it was vividly clear against the sky—away up there in the blue dome more than 28,000 feet above sea level—the loftiest land I had ever seen, by 12,000 feet or more. It was 45 miles away. Mount Everest is a thousand feet higher, but it was not a part of that sea of mountains piled up there before me, so I did not see it; but I did not care, because I think that mountains that are as high as that are disagreeable.

I changed from the back to the front of the house and spent the rest of the morning there, watching the swarthy strange tribes flock by from their far homes in the Himalayas. All ages and both sexes were represented, and the breeds were quite new to me, though the costumes of the Thibetans made them look a good deal like Chinamen. The prayer-wheel was a frequent feature. It brought me near to these people, and made them seem kinfolk of mine. Through our preacher we do much of our praying by proxy. We do not whirl him around a stick, as they do, but that is merely a detail. The swarm swung briskly by, hour after hour, a strange and striking pageant. It was wasted there, and it seemed a pity. It should have been sent streaming through the cities of Europe or America, to refresh eyes weary of the pale monotonies of the circus-pageant. These people were bound for the bazar, with things to sell. We went down there, later, and saw that novel congress of the wild peoples, and plowed here and there through it, and concluded that it would be worth coming from Calcutta to see, even if there were no Kinchinjunga and Everest.

CHAPTER LVI.

There are two times in a man's life when he should not speculate: when he can't afford it, and when he can.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

On Monday and Tuesday at sunrise we again had fair-to-middling views of the stupendous mountains; then, being well cooled off and refreshed, we were ready to chance the weather of the lower world once more.



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We traveled up hill by the regular train five miles to the summit, then changed to a little canvas-canopied hand-car for the 35-mile descent. It was the size of a sleigh, it had six seats and was so low that it seemed to rest on the ground. It had no engine or other propelling power, and needed none to help it fly down those steep inclines. It only needed a strong brake, to modify its flight, and it had that. There was a story of a disastrous trip made down the mountain once in this little car by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, when the car jumped the track and threw its passengers over a precipice. It was not true, but the story had value for me, for it made me nervous, and nervousness wakes a person up and makes him alive and alert, and heightens the thrill of a new and doubtful experience. The car could really jump the track, of course; a pebble on the track, placed there by either accident or malice, at a sharp curve where one might strike it before the eye could discover it, could derail the car and fling it down into India; and the fact that the lieutenant-governor had escaped was no proof that I would have the same luck. And standing there, looking down upon the Indian Empire from the airy altitude of 7,000 feet, it seemed unpleasantly far, dangerously far, to be flung from a handcar.

But after all, there was but small danger-for me. What there was, was for Mr. Pugh, inspector of a division of the Indian police, in whose company and protection we had come from Calcutta. He had seen long service as an artillery officer, was less nervous than I was, and so he was to go ahead of us in a pilot hand-car, with a Ghurka and another native; and the plan was that when we should see his car jump over a precipice we must put on our break [sp.] and send for another pilot. It was a good arrangement. Also Mr. Barnard, chief engineer of the mountain-division of the road, was to take personal charge of our car, and he had been down the mountain in it many a time.

Everything looked safe. Indeed, there was but one questionable detail left: the regular train was to follow us as soon as we should start, and it might run over us. Privately, I thought it would.

The road fell sharply down in front of us and went corkscrewing in and out around the crags and precipices, down, down, forever down, suggesting nothing so exactly or so uncomfortably as a croaked toboggan slide with no end to it. Mr. Pugh waved his flag and started, like an arrow from a bow, and before I could get out of the car we were gone too. I had previously had but one sensation like the shock of that departure, and that was the gaspy shock that took my breath away the first time that I was discharged from the summit of a toboggan slide. But in both instances the sensation was pleasurable—intensely so; it was a sudden and immense exaltation, a mixed ecstasy of deadly fright and unimaginable joy. I believe that this combination makes the perfection of human delight.



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The pilot car's flight down the mountain suggested the swoop of a swallow that is skimming the ground, so swiftly and smoothly and gracefully it swept down the long straight reaches and soared in and out of the bends and around the corners. We raced after it, and seemed to flash by the capes and crags with the speed of light; and now and then we almost overtook it—and had hopes; but it was only playing with us; when we got near, it released its brake, made a spring around a corner, and the next time it spun into view, a few seconds later, it looked as small as a wheelbarrow, it was so far away. We played with the train in the same way. We often got out to gather flowers or sit on a precipice and look at the scenery, then presently we would hear a dull and growing roar, and the long coils of the train would come into sight behind and above us; but we did not need to start till the locomotive was close down upon us—then we soon left it far behind. It had to stop at every station, therefore it was not an embarrassment to us. Our brake was a good piece of machinery; it could bring the car to a standstill on a slope as steep as a house-roof.

The scenery was grand and varied and beautiful, and there was no hurry; we could always stop and examine it. There was abundance of time. We did not need to hamper the train; if it wanted the road, we could switch off and let it go by, then overtake it and pass it later. We stopped at one place to see the Gladstone Cliff, a great crag which the ages and the weather have sculptured into a recognizable portrait of the venerable statesman. Mr. Gladstone is a stockholder in the road, and Nature began this portrait ten thousand years ago, with the idea of having the compliment ready in time for the event.

We saw a banyan tree which sent down supporting stems from branches which were sixty feet above the ground. That is, I suppose it was a banyan; its bark resembled that of the great banyan in the botanical gardens at Calcutta, that spider-legged thing with its wilderness of vegetable columns. And there were frequent glimpses of a totally leafless tree upon whose innumerable twigs and branches a cloud of crimson butterflies had lighted—apparently. In fact these brilliant red butterflies were flowers, but the illusion was good. Afterward in South Africa, I saw another splendid effect made by red flowers. This flower was probably called the torch-plant—should have been so named, anyway. It had a slender stem several feet high, and from its top stood up a single tongue of flame, an intensely red flower of the size and shape of a small corn-cob. The stems stood three or four feet apart all over a great hill-slope that was a mile long, and make one think of what the Place de la Concorde would be if its myriad lights were red instead of white and yellow.



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A few miles down the mountain we stopped half an hour to see a Thibetan dramatic performance. It was in the open air on the hillside. The audience was composed of Thibetans, Ghurkas, and other unusual people. The costumes of the actors were in the last degree outlandish, and the performance was in keeping with the clothes. To an accompaniment of barbarous noises the actors stepped out one after another and began to spin around with immense swiftness and vigor and violence, chanting the while, and soon the whole troupe would be spinning and chanting and raising the dust. They were performing an ancient and celebrated historical play, and a Chinaman explained it to me in pidjin English as it went along. The play was obscure enough without the explanation; with the explanation added, it was (opake). As a drama this ancient historical work of art was defective, I thought, but as a wild and barbarous spectacle the representation was beyond criticism. Far down the mountain we got out to look at a piece of remarkable loop-engineering—a spiral where the road curves upon itself with such abruptness that when the regular train came down and entered the loop, we stood over it and saw the locomotive disappear under our bridge, then in a few moments appear again, chasing its own tail; and we saw it gain on it, overtake it, draw ahead past the rear cars, and run a race with that end of the train. It was like a snake swallowing itself.

Half-way down the mountain we stopped about an hour at Mr. Barnard's house for refreshments, and while we were sitting on the veranda looking at the distant panorama of hills through a gap in the forest, we came very near seeing a leopard kill a calf.—[It killed it the day before.] —It is a wild place and lovely. From the woods all about came the songs of birds,—among them the contributions of a couple of birds which I was not then acquainted with: the brain-fever bird and the coppersmith. The song of the brain-fever demon starts on a low but steadily rising key, and is a spiral twist which augments in intensity and severity with each added spiral, growing sharper and sharper, and more and more painful, more and more agonizing, more and more maddening, intolerable, unendurable, as it bores deeper and deeper and deeper into the listener's brain, until at last the brain fever comes as a relief and the man dies. I am bringing some of these birds home to America. They will be a great curiosity there, and it is believed that in our climate they will multiply like rabbits.

The coppersmith bird's note at a certain distance away has the ring of a sledge on granite; at a certain other distance the hammering has a more metallic ring, and you might think that the bird was mending a copper kettle; at another distance it has a more woody thump, but it is a thump that is full of energy, and sounds just like starting a bung. So he is a hard bird to name with a single name; he is a stone-breaker,



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coppersmith, and bung-starter, and even then he is not completely named, for when he is close by you find that there is a soft, deep, melodious quality in his thump, and for that no satisfying name occurs to you. You will not mind his other notes, but when he camps near enough for you to hear that one, you presently find that his measured and monotonous repetition of it is beginning to disturb you; next it will weary you, soon it will distress you, and before long each thump will hurt your head; if this goes on, you will lose your mind with the pain and misery of it, and go crazy. I am bringing some of these birds home to America. There is nothing like them there. They will be a great surprise, and it is said that in a climate like ours they will surpass expectation for fecundity.

I am bringing some nightingales, too, and some cue-owls. I got them in Italy. The song of the nightingale is the deadliest known to ornithology. That demoniacal shriek can kill at thirty yards. The note of the cue-owl is infinitely soft and sweet—soft and sweet as the whisper of a flute. But penetrating—oh, beyond belief; it can bore through boiler-iron. It is a lingering note, and comes in triplets, on the one unchanging key: hoo-o-o, hoo-o-o, hoo-o-o; then a silence of fifteen seconds, then the triplet again; and so on, all night. At first it is divine; then less so; then trying; then distressing; then excruciating; then agonizing, and at the end of two hours the listener is a maniac.

And so, presently we took to the hand-car and went flying down the mountain again; flying and stopping, flying and stopping, till at last we were in the plain once more and stowed for Calcutta in the regular train. That was the most enjoyable day I have spent in the earth. For rousing, tingling, rapturous pleasure there is no holiday trip that approaches the bird-flight down the Himalayas in a hand-car. It has no fault, no blemish, no lack, except that there are only thirty-five miles of it instead of five hundred.

CHAPTER LVII.

She was not quite what you would call refined. She was not quite what you would call unrefined. She was the kind of person that keeps a parrot.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.

So far as I am able to judge, nothing has been left undone, either by man or Nature, to make India the most extraordinary country that the sun visits on his round. Nothing seems to have been forgotten, nothing over looked. Always, when you think you have come to the end of her tremendous specialties and have finished banging tags upon her as the Land of the Thug, the Land of the Plague, the Land of Famine, the Land of Giant Illusions, the Land of Stupendous Mountains, and so forth, another specialty crops up and another tag is required. I have been overlooking the fact that India is by an unapproachable supremacy—the Land of Murderous Wild Creatures. Perhaps it will be

simplest to throw away the tags and generalize her with one all-comprehensive name, as the Land of Wonders.

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For many years the British Indian Government has been trying to destroy the murderous wild creatures, and has spent a great deal of money in the effort. The annual official returns show that the undertaking is a difficult one.

These returns exhibit a curious annual uniformity in results; the sort of uniformity which you find in the annual output of suicides in the world's capitals, and the proportions of deaths by this, that, and the other disease. You can always come close to foretelling how many suicides will occur in Paris, London, and New York, next year, and also how many deaths will result from cancer, consumption, dog-bite, falling out of the window, getting run over by cabs, *etc.*, if you know the statistics of those matters for the present year. In the same way, with one year's Indian statistics before you, you can guess closely at how many people were killed in that Empire by tigers during the previous year, and the year before that, and the year before that, and at how many were killed in each of those years by bears, how many by wolves, and how many by snakes; and you can also guess closely at how many people are going to be killed each year for the coming five years by each of those agencies. You can also guess closely at how many of each agency the government is going to kill each year for the next five years.

I have before me statistics covering a period of six consecutive years. By these, I know that in India the tiger kills something over 800 persons every year, and that the government responds by killing about double as many tigers every year. In four of the six years referred to, the tiger got 800 odd; in one of the remaining two years he got only 700, but in the other remaining year he made his average good by scoring 917. He is always sure of his average. Anyone who bets that the tiger will kill 2,400 people in India in any three consecutive years has invested his money in a certainty; anyone who bets that he will kill 2,600 in any three consecutive years, is absolutely sure to lose.

As strikingly uniform as are the statistics of suicide, they are not any more so than are those of the tiger's annual output of slaughtered human beings in India. The government's work is quite uniform, too; it about doubles the tiger's average. In six years the tiger killed 5,000 persons, minus 50; in the same six years 10,000 tigers were killed, minus 400.

The wolf kills nearly as many people as the tiger—700 a year to the tiger's 800 odd—but while he is doing it, more than 5,000 of his tribe fall.

The leopard kills an average of 230 people per year, but loses 3,300 of his own mess while he is doing it.

The bear kills 100 people per year at a cost of 1,250 of his own tribe.

The tiger, as the figures show, makes a very handsome fight against man. But it is nothing to the elephant's fight. The king of beasts, the lord of the jungle, loses four of his mess per year, but he kills forty—five persons to make up for it.



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But when it comes to killing cattle, the lord of the jungle is not interested. He kills but 100 in six years—horses of hunters, no doubt—but in the same six the tiger kills more than 84,000, the leopard 100,000, the bear 4,000, the wolf 70,000, the hyena more than 13,000, other wild beasts 27,000, and the snakes 19,000, a grand total of more than 300,000; an average of 50,000 head per year.

In response, the government kills, in the six years, a total of 3,201,232 wild beasts and snakes. Ten for one.

It will be perceived that the snakes are not much interested in cattle; they kill only 3,000 odd per year. The snakes are much more interested in man. India swarms with deadly snakes. At the head of the list is the cobra, the deadliest known to the world, a snake whose bite kills where the rattlesnake's bite merely entertains.

In India, the annual man-killings by snakes are as uniform, as regular, and as forecastable as are the tiger-average and the suicide-average. Anyone who bets that in India, in any three consecutive years the snakes will kill 49,500 persons, will win his bet; and anyone who bets that in India in any three consecutive years, the snakes will kill 53,500 persons, will lose his bet. In India the snakes kill 17,000 people a year; they hardly ever fall short of it; they as seldom exceed it. An insurance actuary could take the Indian census tables and the government's snake tables and tell you within sixpence how much it would be worth to insure a man against death by snake-bite there. If I had a dollar for every person killed per year in India, I would rather have it than any other property, as it is the only property in the world not subject to shrinkage.

I should like to have a royalty on the government-end of the snake business, too, and am in London now trying to get it; but when I get it it is not going to be as regular an income as the other will be if I get that; I have applied for it. The snakes transact their end of the business in a more orderly and systematic way than the government transacts its end of it, because the snakes have had a long experience and know all about the traffic. You can make sure that the government will never kill fewer than 110,000 snakes in a year, and that it will never quite reach 300,000 too much room for oscillation; good speculative stock, to bear or bull, and buy and sell long and short, and all that kind of thing, but not eligible for investment like the other. The man that speculates in the government's snake crop wants to go carefully. I would not advise a man to buy a single crop at all—I mean a crop of futures for the possible wobble is something quite extraordinary. If he can buy six future crops in a bunch, seller to deliver 1,500,000 altogether, that is another matter. I do not know what snakes are worth now, but I know what they would be worth then, for the statistics show that the seller could not come within 427,000 of carrying out his contract. However, I think that a person who speculates in snakes is a fool, anyway. He always regrets it afterwards.



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To finish the statistics. In six years the wild beasts kill 20,000 persons, and the snakes kill 103,000. In the same six the government kills 1,073,546 snakes. Plenty left.

There are narrow escapes in India. In the very jungle where I killed sixteen tigers and all those elephants, a cobra bit me but it got well; everyone was surprised. This could not happen twice in ten years, perhaps. Usually death would result in fifteen minutes.

We struck out westward or northwestward from Calcutta on an itinerary of a zig-zag sort, which would in the course of time carry us across India to its northwestern corner and the border of Afghanistan. The first part of the trip carried us through a great region which was an endless garden—miles and miles of the beautiful flower from whose juices comes the opium, and at Muzaffarpore we were in the midst of the indigo culture; thence by a branch road to the Ganges at a point near Dinapore, and by a train which would have missed the connection by a week but for the thoughtfulness of some British officers who were along, and who knew the ways of trains that are run by natives without white supervision. This train stopped at every village; for no purpose connected with business, apparently. We put out nothing, we took nothing aboard. The train bands stepped ashore and gossiped with friends a quarter of an hour, then pulled out and repeated this at the succeeding villages. We had thirty-five miles to go and six hours to do it in, but it was plain that we were not going to make it. It was then that the English officers said it was now necessary to turn this gravel train into an express. So they gave the engine-driver a rupee and told him to fly. It was a simple remedy. After that we made ninety miles an hour. We crossed the Ganges just at dawn, made our connection, and went to Benares, where we stayed twenty-four hours and inspected that strange and fascinating piety-hive again; then left for Lucknow, a city which is perhaps the most conspicuous of the many monuments of British fortitude and valor that are scattered about the earth.

The heat was pitiless, the flat plains were destitute of grass, and baked dry by the sun they were the color of pale dust, which was flying in clouds. But it was much hotter than this when the relieving forces marched to Lucknow in the time of the Mutiny. Those were the days of 138 deg. in the shade.

CHAPTER, LVIII.

Make it a point to do something every day that you don't want to do. This is the golden rule for acquiring the habit of doing your duty without pain.

—Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar.



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It seems to be settled, now, that among the many causes from which the Great Mutiny sprang, the main one was the annexation of the kingdom of Oudh by the East India Company—characterized by Sir Henry Lawrence as “the most unrighteous act that was ever committed.” In the spring of 1857, a mutinous spirit was observable in many of the native garrisons, and it grew day by day and spread wider and wider. The younger military men saw something very serious in it, and would have liked to take hold of it vigorously and stamp it out promptly; but they were not in authority. Old-men were in the high places of the army—men who should have been retired long before, because of their great age—and they regarded the matter as a thing of no consequence. They loved their native soldiers, and would not believe that anything could move them to revolt. Everywhere these obstinate veterans listened serenely to the rumbling of the volcanoes under them, and said it was nothing.

And so the propagators of mutiny had everything their own way. They moved from camp to camp undisturbed, and painted to the native soldier the wrongs his people were suffering at the hands of the English, and made his heart burn for revenge. They were able to point to two facts of formidable value as backers of their persuasions: In Clive’s day, native armies were incoherent mobs, and without effective arms; therefore, they were weak against Clive’s organized handful of well-armed men, but the thing was the other way, now. The British forces were native; they had been trained by the British, organized by the British, armed by the British, all the power was in their hands—they were a club made by British hands to beat out British brains with. There was nothing to oppose their mass, nothing but a few weak battalions of British soldiers scattered about India, a force not worth speaking of. This argument, taken alone, might not have succeeded, for the bravest and best Indian troops had a wholesome dread of the white soldier, whether he was weak or strong; but the agitators backed it with their second and best point prophecy—a prophecy a hundred years old. The Indian is open to prophecy at all times; argument may fail to convince him, but not prophecy. There was a prophecy that a hundred years from the year of that battle of Clive’s which founded the British Indian Empire, the British power would be overthrown and swept away by the natives.

The Mutiny broke out at Meerut on the 10th of May, 1857, and fired a train of tremendous historical explosions. Nana Sahib’s massacre of the surrendered garrison of Cawnpore occurred in June, and the long siege of Lucknow began. The military history of England is old and great, but I think it must be granted that the crushing of the Mutiny is the greatest chapter in it. The British were caught asleep and unprepared. They were a few thousands, swallowed up in an ocean of hostile populations. It would take months to inform England and get help, but they did not falter or stop to count the odds, but with English resolution and English devotion they took up their task, and went stubbornly on with it, through good fortune and bad, and fought the most unpromising fight that one may read of in fiction or out of it, and won it thoroughly.



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The Mutiny broke out so suddenly, and spread with such rapidity that there was but little time for occupants of weak outlying stations to escape to places of safety. Attempts were made, of course, but they were attended by hardships as bitter as death in the few cases which were successful; for the heat ranged between 120 and 138 in the shade; the way led through hostile peoples, and food and water were hardly to be had. For ladies and children accustomed to ease and comfort and plenty, such a journey must have been a cruel experience. Sir G. O. Trevelyan quotes an example:

“This is what befell Mrs. M——, the wife of the surgeon at a certain station on the southern confines of the insurrection. ‘I heard,’ she says, ‘a number of shots fired, and, looking out, I saw my husband driving furiously from the mess-house, waving his whip. I ran to him, and, seeing a bearer with my child in his arms, I caught her up, and got into the buggy. At the mess-house we found all the officers assembled, together with sixty sepoy, who had remained faithful. We went off in one large party, amidst a general conflagration of our late homes. We reached the caravanserai at Chattapore the next morning, and thence started for Callinger. At this point our sepoy escort deserted us. We were fired upon by match-lockmen, and one officer was shot dead. We heard, likewise, that the people had risen at Callinger, so we returned and walked back ten miles that day. M—— and I carried the child alternately. Presently Mrs. Smalley died of sunstroke. We had no food amongst us. An officer kindly lent us a horse. We were very faint. The Major died, and was buried; also the Sergeant-major and some women. The bandsmen left us on the nineteenth of June. We were fired at again by match-lockmen, and changed direction for Allahabad. Our party consisted of nine gentlemen, two children, the sergeant and his wife. On the morning of the twentieth, Captain Scott took Lottie on to his horse. I was riding behind my husband, and she was so crushed between us. She was two years old on the first of the month. We were both weak through want of food and the effect of the sun. Lottie and I had no head covering. M—— had a sepoy’s cap I found on the ground. Soon after sunrise we were followed by villagers armed with clubs and spears. One of them struck Captain Scott’s horse on the leg. He galloped off with Lottie, and my poor husband never saw his child again. We rode on several miles, keeping away from villages, and then crossed the river. Our thirst was extreme. M—— had dreadful cramps, so that I had to hold him on the horse. I was very uneasy about him. The day before I saw the drummer’s wife eating chupatties, and asked her to give a piece to the child, which she did. I now saw water in a ravine. The descent was steep, and our only drinkingvessel was M——’s cap. Our horse got water, and I bathed my neck. I had no stockings,



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and my feet were torn and blistered. Two peasants came in sight, and we were frightened and rode off. The sergeant held our horse, and M—— put me up and mounted. I think he must have got suddenly faint, for I fell and he over me, on the road, when the horse started off. Some time before he said, and Barber, too, that he could not live many hours. I felt he was dying before we came to the ravine. He told me his wishes about his children and myself, and took leave. My brain seemed burnt up. No tears came. As soon as we fell, the sergeant let go the horse, and it went off; so that escape was cut off. We sat down on the ground waiting for death. Poor fellow! he was very weak; his thirst was frightful, and I went to get him water. Some villagers came, and took my rupees and watch. I took off my wedding-ring, and twisted it in my hair, and replaced the guard. I tore off the skirt of my dress to bring water in, but was no use, for when I returned my beloved's eyes were fixed, and, though I called and tried to restore him, and poured water into his mouth, it only rattled in his throat. He never spoke to me again. I held him in my arms till he sank gradually down. I felt frantic, but could not cry. I was alone. I bound his head and face in my dress, for there was no earth to bury him. The pain in my hands and feet was dreadful. I went down to the ravine, and sat in the water on a stone, hoping to get off at night and look for Lottie. When I came back from the water, I saw that they had not taken her little watch, chain, and seals, so I tied them under my petticoat. In an hour, about thirty villagers came, they dragged me out of the ravine, and took off my jacket, and found the little chain. They then dragged me to a village, mocking me all the way, and disputing as to whom I was to belong to. The whole population came to look at me. I asked for a bedstead, and lay down outside the door of a hut. They had a dozen of cows, and yet refused me milk. When night came, and the village was quiet, some old woman brought me a leafful of rice. I was too parched to eat, and they gave me water. The morning after a neighboring Rajah sent a palanquin and a horseman to fetch me, who told me that a little child and three Sahibs had come to his master's house. And so the poor mother found her lost one, 'greatly blistered,' poor little creature. It is not for Europeans in India to pray that their flight be not in the winter."

In the first days of June the aged general, Sir Hugh Wheeler commanding the forces at Cawnpore, was deserted by his native troops; then he moved out of the fort and into an exposed patch of open flat ground and built a four-foot mud wall around it. He had with him a few hundred white soldiers and officers, and apparently more women and children than soldiers. He was short of provisions, short of arms, short of ammunition, short of military wisdom, short of everything but courage and devotion to duty. The defense



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of that open lot through twenty-one days and nights of hunger, thirst, Indian heat, and a never-ceasing storm of bullets, bombs, and cannon-balls—a defense conducted, not by the aged and infirm general, but by a young officer named Moore—is one of the most heroic episodes in history. When at last the Nana found it impossible to conquer these starving men and women with powder and ball, he resorted to treachery, and that succeeded. He agreed to supply them with food and send them to Allahabad in boats. Their mud wall and their barracks were in ruins, their provisions were at the point of exhaustion, they had done all that the brave could do, they had conquered an honorable compromise,—their forces had been fearfully reduced by casualties and by disease, they were not able to continue the contest longer. They came forth helpless but suspecting no treachery, the Nana's host closed around them, and at a signal from a trumpet the massacre began. About two hundred women and children were spared—for the present—but all the men except three or four were killed. Among the incidents of the massacre quoted by Sir G. O. Trevelyan, is this:

“When, after the lapse of some twenty minutes, the dead began to outnumber the living;—when the fire slackened, as the marks grew few and far between; then the troopers who had been drawn up to the right of the temple plunged into the river, sabre between teeth, and pistol in hand. Thereupon two half-caste Christian women, the wives of musicians in the band of the Fifty-sixth, witnessed a scene which should not be related at second-hand. ‘In the boat where I was to have gone,’ says Mrs. Bradshaw, confirmed throughout by Mrs. Betts, ‘was the school-mistress and twenty-two misses. General Wheeler came last in a palkee. They carried him into the water near the boat. I stood close by. He said, ‘Carry me a little further towards the boat.’ But a trooper said, ‘No, get out here.’ As the General got out of the palkee, head-foremost, the trooper gave him a cut with his sword into the neck, and he fell into the water. My son was killed near him. I saw it; alas! alas! Some were stabbed with bayonets; others cut down. Little infants were torn in pieces. We saw it; we did; and tell you only what we saw. Other children were stabbed and thrown into the river. The schoolgirls were burnt to death. I saw their clothes and hair catch fire. In the water, a few paces off, by the next boat, we saw the youngest daughter of Colonel Williams. A sepoy was going to kill her with his bayonet. She said, ‘My father was always kind to sepoys.’ He turned away, and just then a villager struck her on the head with a club, and she fell into the water. These people likewise saw good Mr. Moncrieff, the clergyman, take a book from his pocket that he never had leisure to open, and heard him commence a prayer for mercy which he was not permitted to conclude. Another deponent observed an European making for



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a drain like a scared water-rat, when some boatmen, armed with cudgels, cut off his retreat, and beat him down dead into the mud.”

The women and children who had been reserved from the massacre were imprisoned during a fortnight in a small building, one story high—a cramped place, a slightly modified Black Hole of Calcutta. They were waiting in suspense; there was none who could foretaste their fate. Meantime the news of the massacre had traveled far and an army of rescuers with Havelock at its head was on its way—at least an army which hoped to be rescuers. It was crossing the country by forced marches, and strewing its way with its own dead men struck down by cholera, and by a heat which reached 135 deg. It was in a vengeful fury, and it stopped for nothing neither heat, nor fatigue, nor disease, nor human opposition. It tore its impetuous way through hostile forces, winning victory after victory, but still striding on and on, not halting to count results. And at last, after this extraordinary march, it arrived before the walls of Cawnpore, met the Nana’s massed strength, delivered a crushing defeat, and entered.

But too late—only a few hours too late. For at the last moment the Nana had decided upon the massacre of the captive women and children, and had commissioned three Mohammedans and two Hindoos to do the work. Sir G. O. Trevelyan says:

“Thereupon the five men entered. It was the short gloaming of Hindostan—the hour when ladies take their evening drive. She who had accosted the officer was standing in the doorway. With her were the native doctor and two Hindoo menials. That much of the business might be seen from the veranda, but all else was concealed amidst the interior gloom. Shrieks and scuffling acquainted those without that the journeymen were earning their hire. Survur Khan soon emerged with his sword broken off at the hilt. He procured another from the Nana’s house, and a few minutes after appeared again on the same errand. The third blade was of better temper; or perhaps the thick of the work was already over. By the time darkness had closed in, the men came forth and locked up the house for the night. Then the screams ceased, but the groans lasted till morning.” The sun rose as usual. When he had been up nearly three hours the five repaired to the scene of their labors over night. They were attended by a few sweepers, who proceeded to transfer the contents of the house to a dry well situated behind some trees which grew hard by. ‘The bodies,’ says one who was present throughout, ‘were dragged out, most of them by the hair of the head. Those who had clothing worth taking were stripped. Some of the women were alive. I cannot say how many; but three could speak. They prayed for the sake of God that an end might be put to their sufferings. I remarked one very stout woman, a half-caste, who was severely wounded

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in both arms, who entreated to be killed. She and two or three others were placed against the bank of the cut by which bullocks go down in drawing water. The dead were first thrown in. Yes: there was a great crowd looking on; they were standing along the walls of the compound. They were principally city people and villagers. Yes: there were also sepoys. Three boys were alive. They were fair children. The eldest, I think, must have been six or seven, and the youngest five years. They were running around the well (where else could they go to?), and there was none to save them. No one said a word or tried to save them." "At length the smallest of them made an infantile attempt to get away. The little thing had been frightened past bearing by the murder of one of the surviving ladies. He thus attracted the observation of a native who flung him and his companions down the well."

The soldiers had made a march of eighteen days, almost without rest, to save the women and the children, and now they were too late—all were dead and the assassin had flown. What happened then, Trevelyan hesitated to put into words. "Of what took place, the less said is the better."

Then he continues:

"But there was a spectacle to witness which might excuse much. Those who, straight from the contested field, wandered sobbing through the rooms of the ladies' house, saw what it were well could the outraged earth have straightway hidden. The inner apartment was ankle-deep in blood. The plaster was scored with sword-cuts; not high up as where men have fought, but low down, and about the corners, as if a creature had crouched to avoid the blow. Strips of dresses, vainly tied around the handles of the doors, signified the contrivance to which feminine despair had resorted as a means of keeping out the murderers. Broken combs were there, and the frills of children's trousers, and torn cuffs and pinafores, and little round hats, and one or two shoes with burst latches, and one or two daguerreotype cases with cracked glasses. An officer picked up a few curls, preserved in a bit of cardboard, and marked 'Ned's hair, with love'; but around were strewn locks, some near a yard in length, dissevered, not as a keepsake, by quite other scissors."

The battle of Waterloo was fought on the 18th of June, 1815. I do not state this fact as a reminder to the reader, but as news to him. For a forgotten fact is news when it comes again. Writers of books have the fashion of whizzing by vast and renowned historical events with the remark, "The details of this tremendous episode are too familiar to the reader to need repeating here." They know that that is not true. It is a low kind of flattery. They know that the reader has forgotten every detail of it, and that nothing of the tremendous event is left in his mind but a vague and formless luminous smudge. Aside from the desire to flatter the

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reader, they have another reason for making the remark—two reasons, indeed. They do not remember the details themselves, and do not want the trouble of hunting them up and copying them out; also, they are afraid that if they search them out and print them they will be scoffed at by the book-reviewers for retelling those worn old things which are familiar to everybody. They should not mind the reviewer's jeer; he doesn't remember any of the worn old things until the book which he is reviewing has retold them to him.

I have made the quoted remark myself, at one time and another, but I was not doing it to flatter the reader; I was merely doing it to save work. If I had known the details without brushing up, I would have put them in; but I didn't, and I did not want the labor of posting myself; so I said, "The details of this tremendous episode are too familiar to the reader to need repeating here." I do not like that kind of a lie; still, it does save work.

I am not trying to get out of repeating the details of the Siege of Lucknow in fear of the reviewer; I am not leaving them out in fear that they would not interest the reader; I am leaving them out partly to save work; mainly for lack of room. It is a pity, too; for there is not a dull place anywhere in the great story.

Ten days before the outbreak (May 10th) of the Mutiny, all was serene at Lucknow, the huge capital of Oudh, the kingdom which had recently been seized by the India Company. There was a great garrison, composed of about 7,000 native troops and between 700 and 800 whites. These white soldiers and their families were probably the only people of their race there; at their elbow was that swarming population of warlike natives, a race of born soldiers, brave, daring, and fond of fighting. On high ground just outside the city stood the palace of that great personage, the Resident, the representative of British power and authority. It stood in the midst of spacious grounds, with its due complement of outbuildings, and the grounds were enclosed by a wall—a wall not for defense, but for privacy. The mutinous spirit was in the air, but the whites were not afraid, and did not feel much troubled.

Then came the outbreak at Meerut, then the capture of Delhi by the mutineers; in June came the three-weeks leaguer of Sir Hugh Wheeler in his open lot at Cawnpore—40 miles distant from Lucknow—then the treacherous massacre of that gallant little garrison; and now the great revolt was in full flower, and the comfortable condition of things at Lucknow was instantly changed.

There was an outbreak there, and Sir Henry Lawrence marched out of the Residency on the 30th of June to put it down, but was defeated with heavy loss, and had difficulty in getting back again. That night the memorable siege of the Residency—called the siege of Lucknow—began. Sir Henry was killed three days later, and Brigadier Inglis succeeded him in command.



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Outside of the Residency fence was an immense host of hostile and confident native besiegers; inside it were 480 loyal native soldiers, 730 white ones, and 500 women and children.

In those days the English garrisons always managed to hamper themselves sufficiently with women and children.

The natives established themselves in houses close at hand and began to rain bullets and cannon-balls into the Residency; and this they kept up, night and day, during four months and a half, the little garrison industriously replying all the time. The women and children soon became so used to the roar of the guns that it ceased to disturb their sleep. The children imitated siege and defense in their play. The women—with any pretext, or with none—would sally out into the storm-swept grounds. The defense was kept up week after week, with stubborn fortitude, in the midst of death, which came in many forms—by bullet, small-pox, cholera, and by various diseases induced by unpalatable and insufficient food, by the long hours of wearying and exhausting overwork in the daily and nightly battle in the oppressive Indian heat, and by the broken rest caused by the intolerable pest of mosquitoes, flies, mice, rats, and fleas.

Six weeks after the beginning of the siege more than one-half of the original force of white soldiers was dead, and close upon three-fifths of the original native force.

But the fighting went on just the same. The enemy mined, the English counter-mined, and, turn about, they blew up each other's posts. The Residency grounds were honey-combed with the enemy's tunnels. Deadly courtesies were constantly exchanged—sorties by the English in the night; rushes by the enemy in the night—rushes whose purpose was to breach the walls or scale them; rushes which cost heavily, and always failed.

The ladies got used to all the horrors of war—the shrieks of mutilated men, the sight of blood and death. Lady Inglis makes this mention in her diary:

“Mrs. Bruere's nurse was carried past our door to-day, wounded in the eye. To extract the bullet it was found necessary to take out the eye—a fearful operation. Her mistress held her while it was performed.”

The first relieving force failed to relieve. It was under Havelock and Outram; and arrived when the siege had been going on for three months. It fought its desperate way to Lucknow, then fought its way through the city against odds of a hundred to one, and entered the Residency; but there was not enough left of it, then, to do any good. It lost more men in its last fight than it found in the Residency when it got in. It became captive itself.



The fighting and starving and dying by bullets and disease went steadily on. Both sides fought with energy and industry. Captain Birch puts this striking incident in evidence. He is speaking of the third month of the siege:



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“As an instance of the heavy firing brought to bear on our position this month may be mentioned the cutting down of the upper story of a brick building simply by musketry firing. This building was in a most exposed position. All the shots which just missed the top of the rampart cut into the dead wall pretty much in a straight line, and at length cut right through and brought the upper story tumbling down. The upper structure on the top of the brigade-mess also fell in. The Residency house was a wreck. Captain Anderson’s post had long ago been knocked down, and Innes’ post also fell in. These two were riddled with round shot. As many as 200 were picked up by Colonel Masters.”

The exhausted garrison fought doggedly on all through the next month October. Then, November 2d, news came Sir Colin Campbell’s relieving force would soon be on its way from Cawnpore.

On the 12th the boom of his guns was heard.

On the 13th the sounds came nearer—he was slowly, but steadily, cutting his way through, storming one stronghold after another.

On the 14th he captured the Martiniere College, and ran up the British flag there. It was seen from the Residency.

Next he took the Dilkoosha.

On the 17th he took the former mess-house of the 32d regiment—a fortified building, and very strong. “A most exciting, anxious day,” writes Lady Inglis in her diary. “About 4 P.M., two strange officers walked through our yard, leading their horses”—and by that sign she knew that communication was established between the forces, that the relief was real, this time, and that the long siege of Lucknow was ended.

The last eight or ten miles of Sir Colin Campbell’s march was through seas of, blood. The weapon mainly used was the bayonet, the fighting was desperate. The way was mile-stoned with detached strong buildings of stone, fortified, and heavily garrisoned, and these had to be taken by assault. Neither side asked for quarter, and neither gave it. At the Secundrabagh, where nearly two thousand of the enemy occupied a great stone house in a garden, the work of slaughter was continued until every man was killed. That is a sample of the character of that devastating march.

There were but few trees in the plain at that time, and from the Residency the progress of the march, step by step, victory by victory, could be noted; the ascending clouds of battle-smoke marked the way to the eye, and the thunder of the guns marked it to the ear.

Sir Colin Campbell had not come to Lucknow to hold it, but to save the occupants of the Residency, and bring them away. Four or five days after his arrival the secret



evacuation by the troops took place, in the middle of a dark night, by the principal gate, (the Bailie Guard). The two hundred women and two hundred and fifty children had been previously removed. Captain Birch says:



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“And now commenced a movement of the most perfect arrangement and successful generalship—the withdrawal of the whole of the various forces, a combined movement requiring the greatest care and skill. First, the garrison in immediate contact with the enemy at the furthest extremity of the Residency position was marched out. Every other garrison in turn fell in behind it, and so passed out through the Bailie Guard gate, till the whole of our position was evacuated. Then Havelock’s force was similarly withdrawn, post by post, marching in rear of our garrison. After them in turn came the forces of the Commander-in-Chief, which joined on in the rear of Havelock’s force. Regiment by regiment was withdrawn with—the utmost order and regularity. The whole operation resembled the movement of a telescope. Stern silence was kept, and the enemy took no alarm.”

Lady Inglis, referring to her husband and to General Sir James Outram, sets down the closing detail of this impressive midnight retreat, in darkness and by stealth, of this shadowy host through the gate which it had defended so long and so well:

“At twelve precisely they marched out, John and Sir James Outram remaining till all had passed, and then they took off their hats to the Bailie Guard, the scene of as noble a defense as I think history will ever have to relate.”

CHAPTER LIX.

Don’t part with your illusions. When they are gone you may still exist but you have ceased to live.

—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

Often, the surest way to convey misinformation is to tell the strict truth.

—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.

We were driven over Sir Colin Campbell’s route by a British officer, and when I arrived at the Residency I was so familiar with the road that I could have led a retreat over it myself; but the compass in my head has been out of order from my birth, and so, as soon as I was within the battered Bailie Guard and turned about to review the march and imagine the relieving forces storming their way along it, everything was upside down and wrong end first in a moment, and I was never able to get straightened out again. And now, when I look at the battle-plan, the confusion remains. In me the east was born west, the battle-plans which have the east on the right-hand side are of no use to me.

The Residency ruins are draped with flowering vines, and are impressive and beautiful. They and the grounds are sacred now, and will suffer no neglect nor be profaned by any sordid or commercial use while the British remain masters of India. Within the grounds are buried the dead who gave up their lives there in the long siege.



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After a fashion, I was able to imagine the fiery storm that raged night and day over the place during so many months, and after a fashion I could imagine the men moving through it, but I could not satisfactorily place the 200 women, and I could do nothing at all with the 250 children. I knew by Lady Inglis' diary that the children carried on their small affairs very much as if blood and carnage and the crash and thunder of a siege were natural and proper features of nursery life, and I tried to realize it; but when her little Johnny came rushing, all excitement, through the din and smoke, shouting, "Oh, mamma, the white hen has laid an egg!" I saw that I could not do it. Johnny's place was under the bed. I could imagine him there, because I could imagine myself there; and I think I should not have been interested in a hen that was laying an egg; my interest would have been with the parties that were laying the bombshells. I sat at dinner with one of those children in the Club's Indian palace, and I knew that all through the siege he was perfecting his teething and learning to talk; and while to me he was the most impressive object in Lucknow after the Residency ruins, I was not able to imagine what his life had been during that tempestuous infancy of his, nor what sort of a curious surprise it must have been to him to be marched suddenly out into a strange dumb world where there wasn't any noise, and nothing going on. He was only forty-one when I saw him, a strangely youthful link to connect the present with so ancient an episode as the Great Mutiny.

By and by we saw Cawnpore, and the open lot which was the scene of Moore's memorable defense, and the spot on the shore of the Ganges where the massacre of the betrayed garrison occurred, and the small Indian temple whence the bugle-signal notified the assassins to fall on. This latter was a lonely spot, and silent. The sluggish river drifted by, almost currentless. It was dead low water, narrow channels with vast sandbars between, all the way across the wide bed; and the only living thing in sight was that grotesque and solemn bald-headed bird, the Adjutant, standing on his six-foot stilts, solitary on a distant bar, with his head sunk between his shoulders, thinking; thinking of his prize, I suppose—the dead Hindoo that lay awash at his feet, and whether to eat him alone or invite friends. He and his prey were a proper accent to that mournful place. They were in keeping with it, they emphasized its loneliness and its solemnity.

And we saw the scene of the slaughter of the helpless women and children, and also the costly memorial that is built over the well which contains their remains. The Black Hole of Calcutta is gone, but a more reverent age is come, and whatever remembrancer still exists of the moving and heroic sufferings and achievements of the garrisons of Lucknow and Cawnpore will be guarded and preserved.



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In Agra and its neighborhood, and afterwards at Delhi, we saw forts, mosques, and tombs, which were built in the great days of the Mohammedan emperors, and which are marvels of cost, magnitude, and richness of materials and ornamentation, creations of surpassing grandeur, wonders which do indeed make the like things in the rest of the world seem tame and inconsequential by comparison. I am not purposing to describe them. By good fortune I had not read too much about them, and therefore was able to get a natural and rational focus upon them, with the result that they thrilled, blessed, and exalted me. But if I had previously overheated my imagination by drinking too much pestilential literary hot Scotch, I should have suffered disappointment and sorrow.

I mean to speak of only one of these many world-renowned buildings, the Taj Mahal, the most celebrated construction in the earth. I had read a great deal too much about it. I saw it in the daytime, I saw it in the moonlight, I saw it near at hand, I saw it from a distance; and I knew all the time, that of its kind it was the wonder of the world, with no competitor now and no possible future competitor; and yet, it was not my Taj. My Taj had been built by excitable literary people; it was solidly lodged in my head, and I could not blast it out.

I wish to place before the reader some of the usual descriptions of the Taj, and ask him to take note of the impressions left in his mind. These descriptions do really state the truth—as nearly as the limitations of language will allow. But language is a treacherous thing, a most unsure vehicle, and it can seldom arrange descriptive words in such a way that they will not inflate the facts—by help of the reader's imagination, which is always ready to take a hand, and work for nothing, and do the bulk of it at that.

I will begin with a few sentences from the excellent little local guide-book of Mr. Satya Chandra Mukerji. I take them from here and there in his description:

“The inlaid work of the Taj and the flowers and petals that are to be found on all sides on the surface of the marble evince a most delicate touch.”

That is true.

“The inlaid work, the marble, the flowers, the buds, the leaves, the petals, and the lotus stems are almost without a rival in the whole of the civilized world.”

“The work of inlaying with stones and gems is found in the highest perfection in the Taj.”

Gems, inlaid flowers, buds, and leaves to be found on all sides. What do you see before you? Is the fairy structure growing? Is it becoming a jewel casket?



“The whole of the Taj produces a wonderful effect that is equally sublime and beautiful.”

Then Sir William Wilson Hunter:

“The Taj Mahal with its beautiful domes, ‘a dream of marble,’ rises on the river bank.”



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“The materials are white marble and red sandstone.”

“The complexity of its design and the delicate intricacy of the workmanship baffle description.”

Sir William continues. I will italicize some of his words:

“The mausoleum stands on a raised marble platform at each of whose corners rises a tall and slender minaret of graceful proportions and of exquisite beauty. Beyond the platform stretch the two wings, one of which is itself a mosque of great architectural merit. In the center of the whole design the mausoleum occupies a square of 186 feet, with the angles deeply truncated so also form an unequal octagon. The main feature in this central pile is the great dome, which swells upward to nearly two-thirds of a sphere and tapers at its extremity into a pointed spire crowned by a crescent. Beneath it an enclosure of marble trellis-work surrounds the tomb of the princess and of her husband, the Emperor. Each corner of the mausoleum is covered by a similar though much smaller dome erected on a pediment pierced with graceful Saracenic arches. Light is admitted into the interior through a double screen of pierced marble, which tempers the glare of an Indian sky while its whiteness prevents the mellow effect from degenerating into gloom. The internal decorations consist of inlaid work in precious stones, such as agate, jasper, *etc.*, with which every squandril or salient point in the architecture is richly fretted. Brown and violet marble is also freely employed in wreaths, scrolls, and lintels to relieve the monotony of white wall. In regard to color and design, the interior of the Taj may rank first in the world for purely decorative workmanship; while the perfect symmetry of its exterior, once seen can never be forgotten, nor the aerial grace of its domes, rising like marble bubbles into the clear sky. The Taj represents the most highly elaborated stage of ornamentation reached by the Indo-Mohammedan builders, the stage in which the architect ends and the jeweler begins. In its magnificent gateway the diagonal ornamentation at the corners, which satisfied the designers of the gateways of Itimad-ud-doulah and Sikandra mausoleums is superseded by fine marble cables, in bold twists, strong and handsome. The triangular insertions of white marble and large flowers have in like manner given place to fine inlaid work. Firm perpendicular lines in black marble with well proportioned panels of the same material are effectively used in the interior of the gateway. On its top the Hindu brackets and monolithic architraves of Sikandra are replaced by Moorish carped arches, usually single blocks of red sandstone, in the Kiosks and pavilions which adorn the roof. From the pillared pavilions a magnificent view is obtained of the Taj gardens below, with the noble Jumna river at their farther end, and the city and fort of Agra in the distance. From this beautiful and splendid gateway one passes up a straight



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alley shaded by evergreen trees cooled by a broad shallow piece of water running along the middle of the path to the Taj itself. The Taj is entirely of marble and gems. The red sandstone of the other Mohammedan buildings has entirely disappeared, or rather the red sandstone which used to form the thickness of the walls, is in the Taj itself overlaid completely with white marble, and the white marble is itself inlaid with precious stones arranged in lovely patterns of flowers. A feeling of purity impresses itself on the eye and the mind from the absence of the coarser material which forms so invariable a material in Agra architecture. The lower wall and panels are covered with tulips, oleanders, and fullblown lilies, in flat carving on the white marble; and although the inlaid work of flowers done in gems is very brilliant when looked at closely, there is on the whole but little color, and the all-prevailing sentiment is one of whiteness, silence, and calm. The whiteness is broken only by the fine color of the inlaid gems, by lines in black marble, and by delicately written inscriptions, also in black, from the Koran. Under the dome of the vast mausoleum a high and beautiful screen of open tracery in white marble rises around the two tombs, or rather cenotaphs of the emperor and his princess; and in this marvel of marble the carving has advanced from the old geometrical patterns to a trellis-work of flowers and foliage, handled with great freedom and spirit. The two cenotaphs in the center of the exquisite enclosure have no carving except the plain Kalamdan or oblong pen-box on the tomb of Emperor Shah Jehan. But both cenotaphs are inlaid with flowers made of costly gems, and with the ever graceful oleander scroll.”

Bayard Taylor, after describing the details of the Taj, goes on to say:

“On both sides the palm, the banyan, and the feathery bamboo mingle their foliage; the song of birds meets your ears, and the odor of roses and lemon flowers sweetens the air. Down such a vista and over such a foreground rises the Taj. There is no mystery, no sense of partial failure about the Taj. A thing of perfect beauty and of absolute finish in every detail, it might pass for the work of genii who knew naught of the weaknesses and ills with which mankind are beset.”

All of these details are true. But, taken together, they state a falsehood—to you. You cannot add them up correctly. Those writers know the values of their words and phrases, but to you the words and phrases convey other and uncertain values. To those writers their phrases have values which I think I am now acquainted with; and for the help of the reader I will here repeat certain of those words and phrases, and follow them with numerals which shall represent those values—then we shall see the difference between a writer’s ciphering and a mistaken reader’s—

Precious stones, such as agate, jasper, *etc.*—5.



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With which every salient point is richly fretted—5.

First in the world for purely decorative workmanship—9.

The Taj represents the stage where the architect ends and the jeweler begins—5.

The Taj is entirely of marble and gems—7.

Inlaid with precious stones in lovely patterns of flowers—5.

The inlaid work of flowers done in gems is very brilliant (followed by a most important modification which the reader is sure to read too carelessly)—2.

The vast mausoleum—5.

This marvel of marble—5.

The exquisite enclosure—5.

Inlaid with flowers made of costly gems—5.

A thing of perfect beauty and absolute finish—5.

Those details are correct; the figures which I have placed after them represent quite fairly their individual values. Then why, as a whole, do they convey a false impression to the reader? It is because the reader—beguiled by, his heated imagination—masses them in the wrong way. The writer would mass the first three figures in the following way, and they would speak the truth

Total—19

But the reader masses them thus—and then they tell a lie—559.

The writer would add all of his twelve numerals together, and then the sum would express the whole truth about the Taj, and the truth only—63.

But the reader—always helped by his imagination—would put the figures in a row one after the other, and get this sum, which would tell him a noble big lie:

559575255555.

You must put in the commas yourself; I have to go on with my work.

The reader will always be sure to put the figures together in that wrong way, and then as surely before him will stand, sparkling in the sun, a gem-crusted Taj tall as the Matterhorn.



I had to visit Niagara fifteen times before I succeeded in getting my imaginary Falls gauged to the actuality and could begin to sanely and wholesomely wonder at them for what they were, not what I had expected them to be. When I first approached them it was with my face lifted toward the sky, for I thought I was going to see an Atlantic ocean pouring down thence over cloud-vexed Himalayan heights, a sea-green wall of water sixty miles front and six miles high, and so, when the toy reality came suddenly into view—that beruiled little wet apron hanging out to dry—the shock was too much for me, and I fell with a dull thud.

Yet slowly, surely, steadily, in the course of my fifteen visits, the proportions adjusted themselves to the facts, and I came at last to realize that a waterfall a hundred and sixty-five feet high and a quarter of a mile wide was an impressive thing. It was not a dipperful to my vanished great vision, but it would answer.



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I know that I ought to do with the Taj as I was obliged to do with Niagara—see it fifteen times, and let my mind gradually get rid of the Taj built in it by its describers, by help of my imagination, and substitute for it the Taj of fact. It would be noble and fine, then, and a marvel; not the marvel which it replaced, but still a marvel, and fine enough. I am a careless reader, I suppose—an impressionist reader; an impressionist reader of what is not an impressionist picture; a reader who overlooks the informing details or masses their sum improperly, and gets only a large splashy, general effect—an effect which is not correct, and which is not warranted by the particulars placed before me particulars which I did not examine, and whose meanings I did not cautiously and carefully estimate. It is an effect which is some thirty-five or forty times finer than the reality, and is therefore a great deal better and more valuable than the reality; and so, I ought never to hunt up the reality, but stay miles away from it, and thus preserve undamaged my own private mighty Niagara tumbling out of the vault of heaven, and my own ineffable Taj, built of tinted mists upon jeweled arches of rainbows supported by colonnades of moonlight. It is a mistake for a person with an unregulated imagination to go and look at an illustrious world's wonder.

I suppose that many, many years ago I gathered the idea that the Taj's place in the achievements of man was exactly the place of the ice-storm in the achievements of Nature; that the Taj represented man's supremest possibility in the creation of grace and beauty and exquisiteness and splendor, just as the ice-storm represents Nature's supremest possibility in the combination of those same qualities. I do not know how long ago that idea was bred in me, but I know that I cannot remember back to a time when the thought of either of these symbols of gracious and unapproachable perfection did not at once suggest the other. If I thought of the ice-storm, the Taj rose before me divinely beautiful; if I thought of the Taj, with its encrustings and inlayings of jewels, the vision of the ice-storm rose. And so, to me, all these years, the Taj has had no rival among the temples and palaces of men, none that even remotely approached it it was man's architectural ice-storm.

Here in London the other night I was talking with some Scotch and English friends, and I mentioned the ice-storm, using it as a figure—a figure which failed, for none of them had heard of the ice-storm. One gentleman, who was very familiar with American literature, said he had never seen it mentioned in any book. That is strange. And I, myself, was not able to say that I had seen it mentioned in a book; and yet the autumn foliage, with all other American scenery, has received full and competent attention.



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The oversight is strange, for in America the ice-storm is an event. And it is not an event which one is careless about. When it comes, the news flies from room to room in the house, there are bangings on the doors, and shoutings, "The ice-storm! the ice-storm!" and even the laziest sleepers throw off the covers and join the rush for the windows. The ice-storm occurs in midwinter, and usually its enchantments are wrought in the silence and the darkness of the night. A fine drizzling rain falls hour after hour upon the naked twigs and branches of the trees, and as it falls it freezes. In time the trunk and every branch and twig are incased in hard pure ice; so that the tree looks like a skeleton tree made all of glass—glass that is crystal-clear. All along the underside of every branch and twig is a comb of little icicles—the frozen drip. Sometimes these pendants do not quite amount to icicles, but are round beads—frozen tears.

The weather clears, toward dawn, and leaves a brisk pure atmosphere and a sky without a shred of cloud in it—and everything is still, there is not a breath of wind. The dawn breaks and spreads, the news of the storm goes about the house, and the little and the big, in wraps and blankets, flock to the window and press together there, and gaze intently out upon the great white ghost in the grounds, and nobody says a word, nobody stirs. All are waiting; they know what is coming, and they are waiting waiting for the miracle. The minutes drift on and on and on, with not a sound but the ticking of the clock; at last the sun fires a sudden sheaf of rays into the ghostly tree and turns it into a white splendor of glittering diamonds. Everybody catches his breath, and feels a swelling in his throat and a moisture in his eyes—but waits again; for he knows what is coming; there is more yet. The sun climbs higher, and still higher, flooding the tree from its loftiest spread of branches to its lowest, turning it to a glory of white fire; then in a moment, without warning, comes the great miracle, the supreme miracle, the miracle without its fellow in the earth; a gust of wind sets every branch and twig to swaying, and in an instant turns the whole white tree into a spouting and spraying explosion of flashing gems of every conceivable color; and there it stands and sways this way and that, flash! flash! flash! a dancing and glancing world of rubies, emeralds, diamonds, sapphires, the most radiant spectacle, the most blinding spectacle, the divinest, the most exquisite, the most intoxicating vision of fire and color and intolerable and unimaginable splendor that ever any eye has rested upon in this world, or will ever rest upon outside of the gates of heaven.

By, all my senses, all my faculties, I know that the icestorm is Nature's supremest achievement in the domain of the superb and the beautiful; and by my reason, at least, I know that the Taj is man's ice-storm.

In the ice-storm every one of the myriad ice-beads pendant from twig and branch is an individual gem, and changes color with every motion caused by the wind; each tree carries a million, and a forest-front exhibits the splendors of the single tree multiplied by a thousand.

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It occurs to me now that I have never seen the ice-storm put upon canvas, and have not heard that any painter has tried to do it. I wonder why that is. Is it that paint cannot counterfeit the intense blaze of a sun-flooded jewel? There should be, and must be, a reason, and a good one, why the most enchanting sight that Nature has created has been neglected by the brush.

Often, the surest way to convey misinformation is to tell the strict truth. The describers of the Taj have used the word gem in its strictest sense—its scientific sense. In that sense it is a mild word, and promises but little to the eye—nothing bright, nothing brilliant, nothing sparkling, nothing splendid in the way of color. It accurately describes the sober and unobtrusive gem-work of the Taj; that is, to the very highly-educated one person in a thousand; but it most falsely describes it to the 999. But the 999 are the people who ought to be especially taken care of, and to them it does not mean quiet-colored designs wrought in carnelians, or agates, or such things; they know the word in its wide and ordinary sense only, and so to them it means diamonds and rubies and opals and their kindred, and the moment their eyes fall upon it in print they see a vision of glorious colors clothed in fire.

These describers are writing for the “general,” and so, in order to make sure of being understood, they ought to use words in their ordinary sense, or else explain. The word fountain means one thing in Syria, where there is but a handful of people; it means quite another thing in North America, where there are 75,000,000. If I were describing some Syrian scenery, and should exclaim, “Within the narrow space of a quarter of a mile square I saw, in the glory of the flooding moonlight, two hundred noble fountains—- imagine the spectacle!” the North American would have a vision of clustering columns of water soaring aloft, bending over in graceful arches, bursting in beaded spray and raining white fire in the moonlight—and he would be deceived. But the Syrian would not be deceived; he would merely see two hundred fresh-water springs—two hundred drowsing puddles, as level and unpretentious and unexcited as so many door-mats, and even with the help of the moonlight he would not lose his grip in the presence of the exhibition. My word “fountain” would be correct; it would speak the strict truth; and it would convey the strict truth to the handful of Syrians, and the strictest misinformation to the North American millions. With their gems—and gems—and more gems—and gems again—and still other gems—the describers of the Taj are within their legal but not their moral rights; they are dealing in the strictest scientific truth; and in doing it they succeed to admiration in telling “what ain’t so.”

CHAPTER LX.

Satan (impatiently) to *new-Comer*. The trouble with you Chicago people is, that you think you are the best people down here; whereas you are merely the most numerous.
—Pudd’nhead Wilson’s New Calendar.



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We wandered contentedly around here and there in India; to Lahore, among other places, where the Lieutenant-Governor lent me an elephant. This hospitality stands out in my experiences in a stately isolation. It was a fine elephant, affable, gentlemanly, educated, and I was not afraid of it. I even rode it with confidence through the crowded lanes of the native city, where it scared all the horses out of their senses, and where children were always just escaping its feet. It took the middle of the road in a fine independent way, and left it to the world to get out of the way or take the consequences. I am used to being afraid of collisions when I ride or drive, but when one is on top of an elephant that feeling is absent. I could have ridden in comfort through a regiment of runaway teams. I could easily learn to prefer an elephant to any other vehicle, partly because of that immunity from collisions, and partly because of the fine view one has from up there, and partly because of the dignity one feels in that high place, and partly because one can look in at the windows and see what is going on privately among the family. The Lahore horses were used to elephants, but they were rapturously afraid of them just the same. It seemed curious. Perhaps the better they know the elephant the more they respect him in that peculiar way. In our own case—we are not afraid of dynamite till we get acquainted with it.

We drifted as far as Rawal Pindi, away up on the Afghan frontier—I think it was the Afghan frontier, but it may have been Hertzegovina—it was around there somewhere—and down again to Delhi, to see the ancient architectural wonders there and in Old Delhi and not describe them, and also to see the scene of the illustrious assault, in the Mutiny days, when the British carried Delhi by storm, one of the marvels of history for impudent daring and immortal valor.

We had a refreshing rest, there in Delhi, in a great old mansion which possessed historical interest. It was built by a rich Englishman who had become orientalized—so much so that he had a zenana. But he was a broadminded man, and remained so. To please his harem he built a mosque; to please himself he built an English church. That kind of a man will arrive, somewhere. In the Mutiny days the mansion was the British general's headquarters. It stands in a great garden—oriental fashion—and about it are many noble trees. The trees harbor monkeys; and they are monkeys of a watchful and enterprising sort, and not much troubled with fear. They invade the house whenever they get a chance, and carry off everything they don't want. One morning the master of the house was in his bath, and the window was open. Near it stood a pot of yellow paint and a brush. Some monkeys appeared in the window; to scare them away, the gentleman threw his sponge at them. They did not scare at all; they jumped into the room and threw yellow paint all over him from the brush, and drove him out; then they painted the walls and the floor and the tank and the windows and the furniture yellow, and were in the dressing-room painting that when help arrived and routed them.



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Two of these creatures came into my room in the early morning, through a window whose shutters I had left open, and when I woke one of them was before the glass brushing his hair, and the other one had my note-book, and was reading a page of humorous notes and crying. I did not mind the one with the hair-brush, but the conduct of the other one hurt me; it hurts me yet. I threw something at him, and that was wrong, for my host had told me that the monkeys were best left alone. They threw everything at me that they could lift, and then went into the bathroom to get some more things, and I shut the door on them.

At Jeypore, in Rajputana, we made a considerable stay. We were not in the native city, but several miles from it, in the small European official suburb. There were but few Europeans—only fourteen but they were all kind and hospitable, and it amounted to being at home. In Jeypore we found again what we had found all about India—that while the Indian servant is in his way a very real treasure, he will sometimes bear watching, and the Englishman watches him. If he sends him on an errand, he wants more than the man's word for it that he did the errand. When fruit and vegetables were sent to us, a "chit" came with them—a receipt for us to sign; otherwise the things might not arrive. If a gentleman sent up his carriage, the chit stated "from" such-and-such an hour "to" such-and-such an hour—which made it unhandy for the coachman and his two or three subordinates to put us off with a part of the allotted time and devote the rest of it to a lark of their own.

We were pleasantly situated in a small two-storied inn, in an empty large compound which was surrounded by a mud wall as high as a man's head. The inn was kept by nine Hindoo brothers, its owners. They lived, with their families, in a one-storied building within the compound, but off to one side, and there was always a long pile of their little comely brown children loosely stacked in its veranda, and a detachment of the parents wedged among them, smoking the hookah or the howdah, or whatever they call it. By the veranda stood a palm, and a monkey lived in it, and led a lonesome life, and always looked sad and weary, and the crows bothered him a good deal.

The inn cow poked about the compound and emphasized the secluded and country air of the place, and there was a dog of no particular breed, who was always present in the compound, and always asleep, always stretched out basking in the sun and adding to the deep tranquility and reposefulness of the place, when the crows were away on business. White-draped servants were coming and going all the time, but they seemed only spirits, for their feet were bare and made no sound. Down the lane a piece lived an elephant in the shade of a noble tree, and rocked and rocked, and reached about with his trunk, begging of his brown mistress or fumbling the children playing at his feet. And there were camels about, but they go on velvet feet, and were proper to the silence and serenity of the surroundings.



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The Satan mentioned at the head of this chapter was not our Satan, but the other one. Our Satan was lost to us. In these later days he had passed out of our life—lamented by me, and sincerely. I was missing him; I am missing him yet, after all these months. He was an astonishing creature to fly around and do things. He didn't always do them quite right, but he did them, and did them suddenly. There was no time wasted. You would say:

“Pack the trunks and bags, Satan.”

“Wair good” (very good).

Then there would be a brief sound of thrashing and slashing and humming and buzzing, and a spectacle as of a whirlwind spinning gowns and jackets and coats and boots and things through the air, and then with bow and touch—

“Awready, master.”

It was wonderful. It made one dizzy. He crumpled dresses a good deal, and he had no particular plan about the work—at first—except to put each article into the trunk it didn't belong in. But he soon reformed, in this matter. Not entirely; for, to the last, he would cram into the satchel sacred to literature any odds and ends of rubbish that he couldn't find a handy place for elsewhere. When threatened with death for this, it did not trouble him; he only looked pleasant, saluted with soldierly grace, said “Wair good,” and did it again next day.

He was always busy; kept the rooms tidied up, the boots polished, the clothes brushed, the wash-basin full of clean water, my dress clothes laid out and ready for the lecture-hall an hour ahead of time; and he dressed me from head to heel in spite of my determination to do it myself, according to my lifelong custom.

He was a born boss, and loved to command, and to jaw and dispute with inferiors and harry them and bullyrag them. He was fine at the railway station—yes, he was at his finest there. He would shoulder and plunge and paw his violent way through the packed multitude of natives with nineteen coolies at his tail, each bearing a trifle of luggage—-one a trunk, another a parasol, another a shawl, another a fan, and so on; one article to each, and the longer the procession, the better he was suited—and he was sure to make for some engaged sleeper and begin to hurl the owner's things out of it, swearing that it was ours and that there had been a mistake. Arrived at our own sleeper, he would undo the bedding-bundles and make the beds and put everything to rights and shipshape in two minutes; then put his head out at, a window and have a restful good time abusing his gang of coolies and disputing their bill until we arrived and made him pay them and stop his noise.



Speaking of noise, he certainly was the noisest little devil in India —and that is saying much, very much, indeed. I loved him for his noise, but the family detested him for it. They could not abide it; they could not get reconciled to it. It humiliated them. As a rule, when we got within six hundred yards of one of those big railway stations, a mighty racket of screaming and shrieking and shouting and storming would break upon us, and I would be happy to myself, and the family would say, with shame:



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“There—that’s Satan. Why do you keep him?”

And, sure enough, there in the whirling midst of fifteen hundred wondering people we would find that little scrap of a creature gesticulating like a spider with the colic, his black eyes snapping, his fez-tassel dancing, his jaws pouring out floods of billingsgate upon his gang of beseeching and astonished coolies.

I loved him; I couldn’t help it; but the family—why, they could hardly speak of him with patience. To this day I regret his loss, and wish I had him back; but they—it is different with them. He was a native, and came from Surat. Twenty degrees of latitude lay between his birthplace and Manuel’s, and fifteen hundred between their ways and characters and dispositions. I only liked Manuel, but I loved Satan. This latter’s real name was intensely Indian. I could not quite get the hang of it, but it sounded like Bunder Rao Ram Chunder Clam Chowder. It was too long for handy use, anyway; so I reduced it.

When he had been with us two or three weeks, he began to make mistakes which I had difficulty in patching up for him. Approaching Benares one day, he got out of the train to see if he could get up a misunderstanding with somebody, for it had been a weary, long journey and he wanted to freshen up. He found what he was after, but kept up his pow-wow a shade too long and got left. So there we were in a strange city and no chambermaid. It was awkward for us, and we told him he must not do so any more. He saluted and said in his dear, pleasant way, “Wair good.” Then at Lucknow he got drunk. I said it was a fever, and got the family’s compassion, and solicitude aroused; so they gave him a teaspoonful of liquid quinine and it set his vitals on fire. He made several grimaces which gave me a better idea of the Lisbon earthquake than any I have ever got of it from paintings and descriptions. His drunk was still portentously solid next morning, but I could have pulled him through with the family if he would only have taken another spoonful of that remedy; but no, although he was stupefied, his memory still had flickerings of life; so he smiled a divinely dull smile and said, fumblingly saluting:

“Scoose me, mem Saheb, scoose me, Missy Saheb; Satan not prefer it, please.”

Then some instinct revealed to them that he was drunk. They gave him prompt notice that next time this happened he must go. He got out a maudlin and most gentle “Wair good,” and saluted indefinitely.

Only one short week later he fell again. And oh, sorrow! not in a hotel this time, but in an English gentleman’s private house. And in Agra, of all places. So he had to go. When I told him, he said patiently, “Wair good,” and made his parting salute, and went out from us to return no more forever. Dear me! I would rather have lost a hundred angels than that one poor lovely devil. What style he used to put on, in a swell hotel or in a private house—snow-white muslin from his chin to his bare feet, a crimson sash

embroidered with gold thread around his waist, and on his head a great sea-green turban like to the turban of the Grand Turk.



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He was not a liar; but he will become one if he keeps on. He told me once that he used to crack cocoanuts with his teeth when he was a boy; and when I asked how he got them into his mouth, he said he was upward of six feet high at that time, and had an unusual mouth. And when I followed him up and asked him what had become of that other foot, he said a house fell on him and he was never able to get his stature back again. Swervings like these from the strict line of fact often beguile a truthful man on and on until he eventually becomes a liar.

His successor was a Mohammedan, Sahadat Mohammed Khan; very dark, very tall, very grave. He went always in flowing masses of white, from the top of his big turban down to his bare feet. His voice was low. He glided about in a noiseless way, and looked like a ghost. He was competent and satisfactory. But where he was, it seemed always Sunday. It was not so in Satan's time.

Jeypore is intensely Indian, but it has two or three features which indicate the presence of European science and European interest in the weal of the common public, such as the liberal water-supply furnished by great works built at the State's expense; good sanitation, resulting in a degree of healthfulness unusually high for India; a noble pleasure garden, with privileged days for women; schools for the instruction of native youth in advanced art, both ornamental and utilitarian; and a new and beautiful palace stocked with a museum of extraordinary interest and value. Without the Maharaja's sympathy and purse these beneficences could not have been created; but he is a man of wide views and large generousities, and all such matters find hospitality with him.

We drove often to the city from the hotel Kaiser-i-Hind, a journey which was always full of interest, both night and day, for that country road was never quiet, never empty, but was always India in motion, always a streaming flood of brown people clothed in smouchings from the rainbow, a tossing and moiling flood, happy, noisy, a charming and satisfying confusion of strange human and strange animal life and equally strange and outlandish vehicles.

And the city itself is a curiosity. Any Indian city is that, but this one is not like any other that we saw. It is shut up in a lofty turreted wall; the main body of it is divided into six parts by perfectly straight streets that are more than a hundred feet wide; the blocks of houses exhibit a long frontage of the most taking architectural quaintnesses, the straight lines being broken everywhere by pretty little balconies, pillared and highly ornamented, and other cunning and cozy and inviting perches and projections, and many of the fronts are curiously pictured by the brush, and the whole of them have the soft rich tint of strawberry ice-cream. One cannot look down the far stretch of the chief street and persuade himself that these are real houses, and that it is all out of doors—the impression that it is an unreality, a picture, a scene in a theater, is the only one that will take hold.

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Then there came a great day when this illusion was more pronounced than ever. A rich Hindoo had been spending a fortune upon the manufacture of a crowd of idols and accompanying paraphernalia whose purpose was to illustrate scenes in the life of his especial god or saint, and this fine show was to be brought through the town in processional state at ten in the morning. As we passed through the great public pleasure garden on our way to the city we found it crowded with natives. That was one sight. Then there was another. In the midst of the spacious lawns stands the palace which contains the museum—a beautiful construction of stone which shows arched colonnades, one above another, and receding, terrace-fashion, toward the sky. Every one of these terraces, all the way to the top one, was packed and jammed with natives. One must try to imagine those solid masses of splendid color, one above another, up and up, against the blue sky, and the Indian sun turning them all to beds of fire and flame.

Later, when we reached the city, and glanced down the chief avenue, smouldering in its crushed-strawberry tint, those splendid effects were repeated; for every balcony, and every fanciful bird-cage of a snuggerly countersunk in the house-fronts, and all the long lines of roofs were crowded with people, and each crowd was an explosion of brilliant color.

Then the wide street itself, away down and down and down into the distance, was alive with gorgeously-clothed people not still, but moving, swaying, drifting, eddying, a delirious display of all colors and all shades of color, delicate, lovely, pale, soft, strong, stunning, vivid, brilliant, a sort of storm of sweetpea blossoms passing on the wings of a hurricane; and presently, through this storm of color, came swaying and swinging the majestic elephants, clothed in their Sunday best of gaudinesses, and the long procession of fanciful trucks freighted with their groups of curious and costly images, and then the long rearguard of stately camels, with their picturesque riders.

For color, and picturesqueness, and novelty, and outlandishness, and sustained interest and fascination, it was the most satisfying show I had ever seen, and I suppose I shall not have the privilege of looking upon its like again.