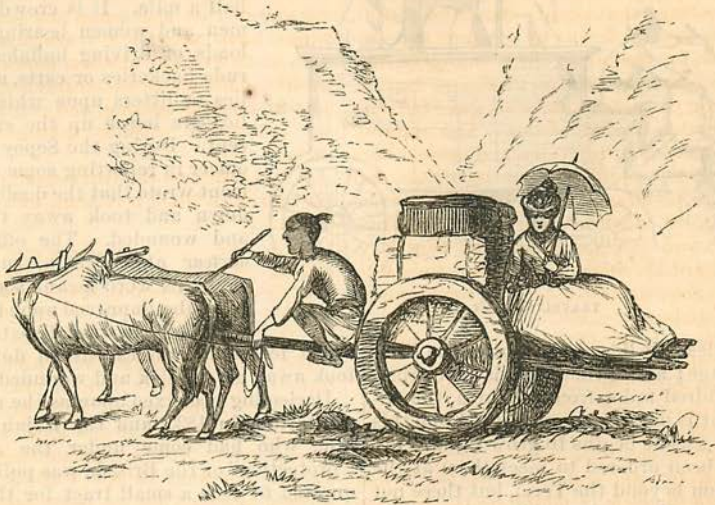


AN ENGLISHWOMAN AMONG THE HIMALAYAS.



THE MEM SAHIB AND HER TREASURES.

IT is held that British residents in the tropical lowlands of Hindostan must periodically recruit their health by a sojourn in a colder climate. The government has therefore established sanatoria or health stations at elevated points in its Indian dominions. The most noted of these is Darjeeling, in Sikkim, 370 miles north of Calcutta, in about the latitude of New Orleans, where, at an elevation of 7000 feet, the climate resembles that of the south of England. It is on the southern slope of the Himalayas, in view of the two loftiest summits on the globe, and there are several others which overtop the highest peaks of the Andes. From Darjeeling set forth two expeditions to explore this portion of the Himalayas. Of the first of these, made in 1848 by Dr. Hooker, we have before given some account.* Another has been recently undertaken by two English gentlemen, accompanied by the wife of one of them, who has just put forth a narrative of it.† She withholds her name, and merely designates her husband as F—. We learn that he was in the civil service, and was ordered for two years to Darjeeling. By the natives the lady was styled the Mem Sahib, equivalent to "Lady Mylord," and so we shall designate her, her husband being the Sahib.

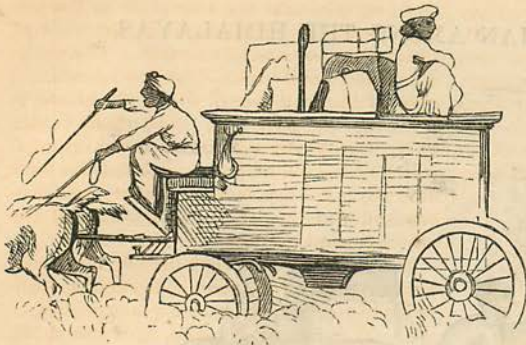
They left Calcutta by the railway up the left bank of the Ganges. The night train was provided with a sleeping-car for ladies only; but as the Mem Sahib was the only

first-class female passenger, her husband was after some demur allowed to occupy a berth. At dawn they reached a station where the railway bends eastward, while their route was due north, and upon the opposite side of the Ganges. A small steamer conveyed them several leagues up and across the broad river. Steamers appear to find little favor with the Hindoos, for the Mem Sahib and her husband were the only passengers. At dusk they landed at the little town of Caragola, whence they were to proceed by the "government bullock train." In India they usually travel by night, and the train was awaiting them. It consisted of a single wagon, with wheels of almost solid wood. The legal rate of speed is three miles an hour; but by dint of incessant prodding the driver was usually able to get only half that from his animals; once, by persistent twisting of their tails, he roused them from a walk to a slow trot; but in a few minutes they found themselves overturned into a rice swamp seven feet below the narrow causeway which formed the road. One night on the bullock train was enough for the Sahib, who at the next station bargained for a "palkee gharee," the Hindoo equivalent for a post coach. This, when brought up at dusk, proved to be a vehicle with closed sides, resembling a dilapidated hearse, drawn by two sorry horses, into which the Sahib and his wife crawled, and stretched themselves out at full length, the servant and luggage being mounted upon the roof.

At length they reached the Terai, a belt of malarious swamp and jungle from ten to twenty miles wide, peopled with wild beasts

* "A Naturalist in the Himalayas," *Harper's Magazine*, October, 1854.

† *The Indian Alps, and How we Crossed them*. By a Lady Pioneer. Illustrated by herself. London: 1876.



TRAVELING POST.

and reptiles. It lies at the foot of the Himalaya range; and although it is more than three hundred miles from Calcutta, the entire ascent is only as many feet. From this point the ascent begins to grow rapid. Ponies had been ordered to meet them at the first station beyond the Terai, but these not having come down, the Sahib undertook to walk to the next station, while a rude two-wheeled bullock cart was chartered to convey the Mem Sahib and the luggage to Punkahbaree, the last station but one before reaching Darjeeling.

The ascent, at first hardly perceptible, soon becomes more steep. Punkahbaree is 1800 feet above the sea. Kursi-ong, the last station, six miles beyond, is 3000 feet higher. The flora changes at every mile. Tropical palms are replaced by forests of oaks and birch, clothing the steep hill-sides. These forests are rapidly disappearing, the trees being cut down and the ground burned over to make way for the culture of the tea-plant, which is rapidly extending on the Himalayan slopes. A tea plantation is eminently unpicturesque; the plants, somewhat resembling currant bushes, are set out in rows in the blackened soil. The leaves are picked by women, whose babes are placed in shallow baskets in the scanty shade of a bush. The Mem Sahib assures us that no one who has not tasted it at the home of a cultivator has any idea what tea should be. It requires at least three years to gain a perfect flavor, the newly made article, even of the best quality, tasting like fresh hay with a dash of mint.

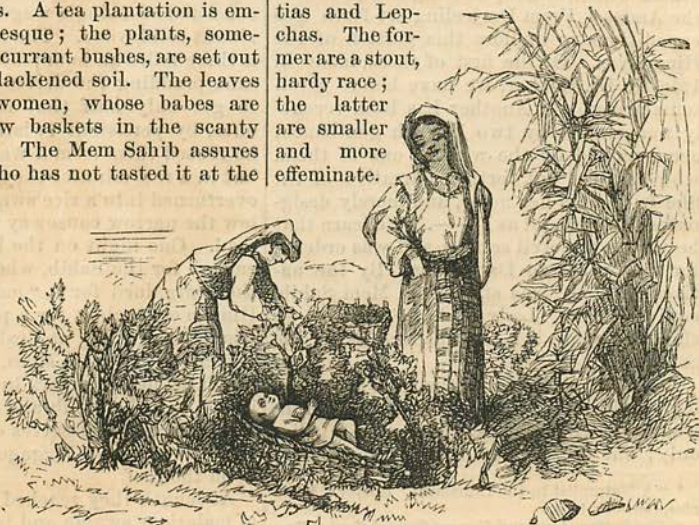
From Kursi-ong, twenty

miles, a broad, smooth road winds around the flanks of stupendous hills, making a total rise of about half a mile. It is crowded with men and women bearing heavy loads, or driving buffaloes, with rude hackeries or carts, and doolies or litters upon which invalids are borne up the steep ascent. During the Sepoy war an officer in reporting some engagement wrote that the doolies came down and took away the sick and wounded. The official *rédacteur* at Calcutta, supposing that this word meant some wild hill tribe, improved upon his text, and the homeward dispatch read,

"The ferocious Doolies rushed down and took away all the sick and wounded."

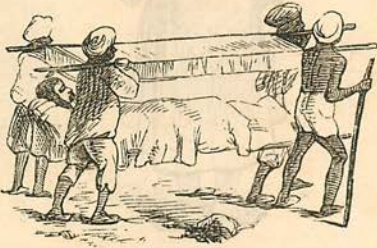
Darjeeling was fixed upon as the site of a sanitarium in 1835, and the Rajah of Sikkim, who had come under the amiable "protection" of the British, was politely requested to cede a small tract for this purpose. After no little pressure, he consented, "out of friendship to the British government," in consideration of an annual payment of £300. Some fifteen years later the Rajah offended his "protectors," who revoked the payment, and "annexed" a considerable additional tract of territory. Meanwhile barracks and a hospital were established, European residents of the plains erected pleasant cottages, and native villages grew up at a little distance around them. When Dr. Hooker was there, a quarter of a century ago, the entire population was about 5000; it now numbers about 20,000.

The bulk of the native population consists of Bhootias and Lepchas. The former are a stout, hardy race; the latter are smaller and more effeminate.



GATHERING TEA LEAVES.

The Bhootias are inclined to industry, have goats, pigs, cows, and buffaloes, and cultivate the fertile valleys. The Lepcha men are averse to hard work, which they throw upon their wives, while they spend their time in fishing and butterfly-hunting. The district is famous for its lepidoptera, and not a few of the English health-seekers busy



THE FEROCIOUS DOOLIES.

themselves in making collections. Both tribes are fond of dirt, gay clothing, and ornaments, and every one wears an amulet box containing relics of some departed Lama, clippings of his hair, parings of his nails, or, most prized of all, a decayed tooth.

The cantonment of Darjeeling occupies the summit of a ridge, from each side of which deep valleys slope steeply, but not precipitously. A walk or pony ride of a couple of hours will bring one from a climate like that of London to spots where the orange and the sugar-cane flourish. Looking northward, the horizon for a third of its circuit is bounded by the most magnificent mountain scenery of the globe. Right in front is Kinchinjunga, 28,177 feet, the second loftiest peak, whose summit reaches a mile nearer the stars than any other upon earth saving a few of his own gigantic brethren. The still loftier Gaurisankar or Deodunga, which the English have named Mount Everest, seventy miles to the west, and more than 29,000 feet high, is not seen from the cantonment, being hidden by an intervening lower and nearer range, but is visible from many points in the neighborhood. Just to the west of Kinchinjunga are Junnoo, 25,311 feet, and Kubra, 24,015 feet, the view to the east being bounded by the square gigantic mass of Donkia, 23,176 feet. At least twelve peaks, each more than 20,000 feet, are visible at a glance, the most beautiful of which is Pundeem, 22,207 feet, almost on a level with Aconcagua and Sahama, the loftiest in the Andes. Pile the Jungfrau upon Mont Blanc, and the summit would not reach that of Gaurisankar. Upon Mount Washington heap the three loftiest summits of the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, and the pile would not reach to within half a mile of the white crown of Kinchinjunga.

During a great portion of the year a clear

morning is almost the exception at Darjeeling; but when one does occur, the view at sunrise has no parallel on earth. The peaks are so lofty and sharp that they catch the rays of the rising sun while all below is shrouded in darkness. The first beams strike the white summit of Kinchinjunga, which puts on a rosy glow against the dark blue sky; Junnoo is next aflame, then Kubra and Pundeem, and one by one all the others in rapid succession.

The Sahib entered upon his official duties, whatever they were, smoked his cigars, stuffed his bird-skins, and rather pooh-poohed at the enthusiasm of his wife, who was much given to searching for and sketching the picturesque, for which we have abundant reason to thank her.

One day, while she was thus employed, she heard a soft voice from behind her, saying, in broken English, "That big mountain *thar* is Junnoo, Mem Sahib; and him *thar* is Kubra." Turning around, she saw a pretty girl of perhaps eighteen, spinning with a hand distaff—for the spinning-wheel has not yet found its way to the Himalayas. It soon appeared that the girl, whose name was Lattoo, was the daughter of a Bhootia, who had a cottage, fishing nets, buffaloes, pigs, and poultry in a pleasant valley. A handsome young fellow, who had nothing but his butterfly net, fishing rod, and knife, was in love with her. The father flouted at him because he was a Lepcha, and a poor



LEPCHA BUTTERFLY-HUNTER.

one at that. He wished her to marry a middle-aged Bhootia, who, besides pigs, poultry, and buffaloes, had a hut shaded by orange-trees and sugar-canes, and, moreover, was willing to give 400 rupees to purchase her for a bride. Lattoo had lived in the family of an English missionary, where she had learned the language, together with many

ideas not in accordance with those of her tribe, among which was a spice of coquetry, and a determination not to become the drudge of a man whom she did not like. The story of Lattoo runs all through the Mem Sahib's narrative. The poor girl had a sort of tenderness for her Lepcha lover, hardly amounting to love, but rather pity for him, because her father was always abusing him. She finally pined away and died, not, as romance would have it, of a broken heart, but because she could not make her half-European culture conform to her Bhootia destiny.

As the two years' term of service at Darjeeling was drawing to a close, the Mem Sahib cautiously broached to her husband the project of a long tour into the almost unknown interior. The Sahib at first poohpoohed. "I always knew," he said, between the puffs of his cigar, "that it was useless to expect a woman to be rational; but I never knew until this moment to what lengths you *could* go." "But," says the Mem Sahib, "I saw that I had only to keep up a judicious agitation, administered in small but frequent doses, to have my way in the end." And have her way she did. Leave of absence for three months was obtained, and preparations were commenced. Every season has its drawbacks for traveling in the Himalayas. From March to May the mountains are clothed in perpetual mists; from June to October is the wet season; the winter season is, upon the whole, the most favorable, and the start was to be made in November.

Luckily a friend, who is designated as "C——, a mighty potentate in the province, whose destinies he ruled with a mild and beneficent sway," offered not only to make one of the party, but to take upon himself almost the whole charge of it. On account



TENDOOK.

of his great stature, the natives styled him the Burra Sahib, "The Big Mylord," and we shall so call him. Moreover, a native gentleman named Tendook, a man of considerable influence at the court of the Rajah of Sikkim, proposed also to join the expedition. He, a rather tall and corpulent Lepcha, dressed usually in a long robe of maroon-colored silk, which he sometimes exchanged for one of amber-colored cloth. He proved himself an excellent fellow-traveler. Except for him the whole party would probably have perished.

After all, little more was contemplated than a long picnic, with a little "roughing it" among the mountains. What with interpreter, cook, servants, coolies to carry the tents, provisions, and other impedimenta, and a score of pioneers to go before and clear the way, there were more than seventy persons belonging to the party. Add to these Tendook and his own attendants, the whole number was ninety. They had five tents, one of which served as a dining-room, and could in a few minutes be fitted up as a very comfortable parlor. Table, bedsteads, and easy-chairs unscrewed and folded up like chess-boards; stove and astral lamp were unjointed so as to fit into the smallest possible compass; kitchen and dining utensils packed into each other so that a whole service took up no more space than a single one. Their cook, who performed his functions in the open air, was a model in his way; his dishes were unexceptionable, although the



THE MEM SAHIB AND LATTUO.

Mem Sahib was once somewhat startled by coming upon him preparing their breakfast. He was squatted upon the ground, both hands embracing his hubble-bubble pipe, while the toasting-fork was held before the fire between his toes. The servants, of course, slept in the open air, in warm or cold, sunshine and storm. Tendook's tent, which was always pitched at a little distance, was a gorgeous affair, covered with cloth striped in blue and white, richly embroidered with Thibetan devices. The commissariat was amply supplied. There was store of canned meats, pickles, preserves, biscuits, wine, brandy, rum, and the inevitable Bass's ale, and a number of sheep were driven along, to be slaughtered as occasion required. Moreover, the Burra Sahib had arranged with the officials of the Rajah to have fresh supplies awaiting them at various points—an agreement which was not kept, whereby in the end the party came to grief. The natives lived entirely upon rice and roasted ears of corn, with an occasional glass of rum.

For conveyance there were ponies for the Burra Sahib and the Sahib, with a spare one for the Mem when she chose to ride, although these were soon found useless, the gentlemen using their own natural means of locomotion. For the conveyance of the lady a "Bareilly dandy" was fixed upon. This is a reclining chair of cane, suspended by straps from a strong boat-shaped wooden frame, extending into a pole at each end. This is carried by four bearers, who are relieved at short intervals. Each team is, if possible, composed of two short and two tall men. In



THE MODEL COOK.

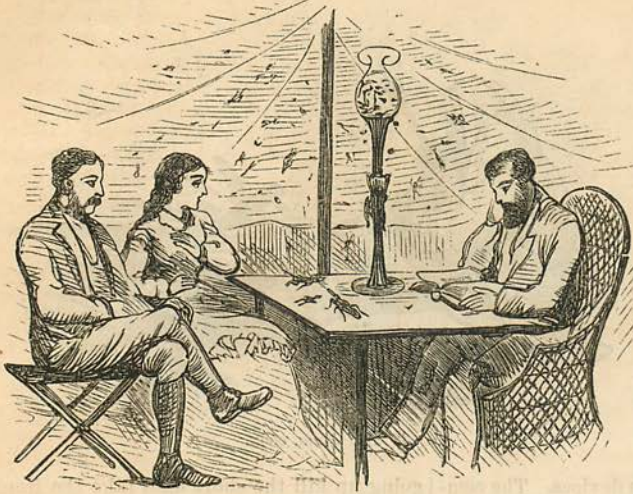
going up hill the short ones take the front pole and the tall ones the rear one, reversing the arrangement when going down hill.

Nothing could well present less appearance of "roughing it" than the aspect of the three persons seated in the big tent at evening, the astral lighted, and the stove aglow, when they had attained a cold region, the Sahib reading aloud to his companions from Kaye's ponderous *History of the Sepoy War*, which they had wisely brought with them instead of any lighter literature; the lady attired as though in her own boudoir, for she brought with her an abundant wardrobe, including garments for all weathers and a love of a bonnet, and for a while was particular about the arrangement of her back hair, in which she had the assistance of the wife of one of her bearers, who had surreptitiously joined her husband, and was installed as lady's-maid.

Their route at first took them down into the tropical valleys, where the lemons hung ripe on the trees; then it gradually ascended by narrow paths through the forests, until at last the bare summit of Mount Tongloo, 10,000 feet above the sea, was reached, where



A BAREILLY DANDY.



IN THE EVENING—ROUGHING IT.

the Mem Sahib for the first time saw, far away to the northwest, the summit of Gaurisankar, all the other great peaks as far as Chumulari to the eastward being in sight, while, turning to the south, the vast plains of Nepaul stretched far below them to the verge of the horizon. Here they were detained for three days in a cold rain-storm, and also awaiting the arrival of the Soubah of Mongmoo, whom the diplomatic Burra Sahib had expected to meet here. He not coming, the journey was resumed along the very crest of the Singaleelah range, an offshoot of the main Himalayas.

Still onward and slowly upward, they come to the region of pine forests, the trees all hoary, covered with moss, and many of them tottering to their fall. Although their cones covered the ground, not a single young

tree was seen; not a seed had germinated. Can it be that there is a cycle in the growth of trees? Has the sun's heat notably diminished since the time when these old trees were young? or is this vast region even now being slowly elevated by forces like those which originally upheaved it, so that the temperature is gradually growing colder? Still onward and upward, in gloomy weather, to the summit of Mount Singaleelah, 12,300 feet, where the Soubah had sent word that he would meet them, and where they found that he had placed piles of wood ready for their fires. At last he came—a mild, patriarchal old man, with long floating hair and beard, dressed in a garnet-colored robe with flowing sleeves, who, but for his broad-brimmed hat of finely plaited grass, might have passed for the model of pictures in old Bibles representing Noah upon Mount Ararat. He looked with mild surprise at the Mem Sahib, the only European woman whom he had ever seen; assured the travelers that their proposed route was a practicable one; furnished them, as the supplies for their men were growing short, with 160 pounds of rice and fifty pounds of a kind of millet, and a guide, who, he said, was a herdsman who every summer led his kine over these hills. The guide, notwithstanding his asserted low



THE SOUBAH OF MONGMOO.



THE GUIDE.



THE SOUBAH'S MEMORIAL STONES.

ly occupation, was gorgeously attired in a scarlet tunic embroidered with black, and wore a large knife in an ornamented sheath, for which the Sahib offered him fifty rupees (twenty-five dollars)—an offer which was scornfully declined. He was a handsome, intelligent fellow, but something in his eye led the Mem Sahib to suspect him.

Before taking his leave, the old Soubah caused his followers to erect upon the shore of a lonely tarn three stone slabs as a memorial of the meeting. The taller stone in the centre stands for the Burra Sahib, as befitted his superior dignity and bulk; the smaller one on the right is the Sahib; while the diminutive, stumpy one on the left represents the Mem Sahib, who professes to be somewhat vexed therewith, and wishes it to be distinctly understood that it is by no means a fair representation of her figure.

Sending back fourteen men with the tent furniture, the heavy luggage, and the now useless ponies, the party set out again on their journey amidst a blinding mist. At night, for the first time, a sheep was killed for the use of the attendants. They had encamped at the foot of a precipitous ascent six hundred feet high, seemingly almost perpendicular, but which must be climbed. The dandy was unavailable here, and all agreed that the Mem Sahib could not perform it on foot. Her most trusted and faithful carrier, the largest and most muscular man she ever saw, had been nicknamed Hatti, or "The Elephant." A tent chair was placed on his back, and firmly bound to his arms and around his forehead, and The Elephant fairly bore her up the cliff, up which the others could hardly climb on all fours.

The pine zone was now left far below, but the ground was covered with thorny brambles which greatly impeded the march. They supposed that they had attained an elevation of about 14,000 feet, but had as yet felt none of the unpleasant symptoms usually experienced by travelers at such a

height. The great peaks were usually hidden by nearer though lower summits; but occasionally through some depression Gaurisankar, far to the left, and the nearer Kinchinjunga, to the right, showed themselves. One magnificent near view of Pundeem broke upon them through a rocky cleft, the walls of which bore the shapes of stern weird human faces,

as distinct as that of our own famed "Old Man of the Mountains" at Franconia.

Still onward and upward, day after day, until the well-known symptoms of Alpine climbing began to manifest themselves—difficulty of breathing, nausea, and intense pain in the head. They were fast approaching the region of perpetual snow, which on this side of the Himalayas is from 15,000 to 17,000 feet, above which there are more than two miles of perpendicular ascent to the summit of Kinchinjunga. Snow has lately fallen, and they soon find it more than a foot deep.

Their supplies were almost exhausted. The bearers grew anxious. "Go back to Darjeeling, Mem Sahib," they cried; "this is a cold, hungry country; nothing to eat here; we shall all be starved." It was clear that the supplies promised at first by the Rajah



THE ELEPHANT-LOAD.



PUNDEEM AND THE PICTURED ROOKS.

of Sikkim had not been sent after them; but their guide assured them that the way they were going would soon lead them down to the Yak station of Yangpoong, where they would be within reach of food. So they kept on, still ascending instead of descending, and at last began climbing the steep face of a mountain, beyond which, across a deep glacial valley, rose the sharp cone of Junnoo, close to whose flank they had now reached. They marched in single file, following in the now deep snow the footsteps of their guide. At the top of the ascent they found themselves on an almost level plateau, along which they marched, almost blinded by the dazzling reflection from the snow. A thin, semi-transparent mist enveloped them, through which the sun shone like a ball of fire. All became almost blind, and could only relieve their aching eyeballs by muffling their faces, merely looking out for an instant to observe whither they were going.

The guide now announced that he had lost the way, and did not even know the direction of the village for which they were aiming. The Lepcha bearers sank down in despair; the bolder Bhootias seemed on the point of breaking out into open mutiny, from which they were only prevented by the influence of Tendook, who here, for the first time, seemed actually to be a member

of their party. A hurried consultation was held, the result of which was to return. They had probably reached an elevation of nearly 18,000 feet, almost half a mile higher than the summit of Mont Blanc. Few mortals have ever gone a thousand feet higher.

We pass rapidly over the incidents of the return journey. Their stock of provisions was reduced to three sheep, a little corn for the natives, and a few odds and ends of the miscellaneous stores. Two of the sheep had to be slaughtered for the men to save them from absolute starvation. Their only hope was to reach Mount Singaleelah by forced marches before their food wholly gave out. At the third stage their guide decamped in the night, and they saw him no more. He had certainly misled them, whether purposely or not the venerable old Soubah and himself only know.

They were doomed to be disappointed at Mount Singaleelah. There were no signs of the messengers who had been sent forward to hurry back supplies. The last rem-

of the messengers who had been sent forward to hurry back supplies. The last rem-



THE LAST ASCENT—JUNNOO.



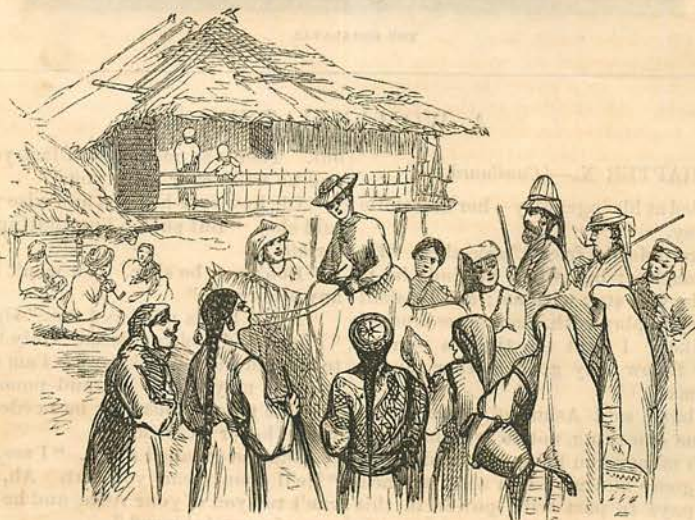
LAMAS AT THEIR DEVOTIONS.

nant of food was equally divided: there was but half a biscuit for each man. The march was taken up, the Mem Sahib for the first time going on foot, for the bearers were too weak to carry her. During the day they descended to the level of dense and dripping forests, when shouts were heard from below. Soon a messenger appeared with the glad tidings that rice, corn, and other food were close by. Fires were lighted, food cooked, and all ate and were filled, while the dim forest rang with the jubilations of the now merry Lepchas.

Before returning to Darjeeling the travelers made a tour eastward among the fertile valleys of Sikkim, visiting the Buddhist monasteries at Pemiouchi, described at length by Hooker in his *Himalayan Journals*. The most striking thing noted by the Mem Sahib is the Lamas at their devotions. About eighty of them were squatted on the floor of a large room, each having before him

a little desk, on which lay a pile of manuscript sheets, written on a kind of paper resembling parchment, from which they were reading in a low tone so intently that no one looked up at the entrance of the visitors. In the midst of their devotions a servant entered, bearing a vessel resembling a huge tea-pot. Each Lama, without interrupting his prayers, took from his bosom a small wooden platter, into which the contents of the vessel were poured. It was composed of tea leaves, butter, salt, and beans, all boiled together into a soup. This they drank, still muttering their prayers, and then licking the platters clean, they replaced them in their bosoms, and went on reading. This appears to be less a regular meal than a kind of sacrament; at least the well-fed aspects of the elder brethren indicated that they were not strangers to better fare than tea soup.

The three months' leave of absence over,



THE RETURN TO DARJEELING.

the Burra Sahib, the Sahib, and the Mem Sahib returned to Darjeeling. Ponies and fresh attire had been sent out to meet them, and they and their cavalcade passed in state

through the crowds in the Bhootia village just as the setting sun was throwing his latest beams upon the lofty head of Kinchinjunga.



THE HIMALAYAS.

A WOMAN-HATER.

CHAPTER X.—(Continued.)

INA smiled at his ingenuity—her first smile that day.

“You are indeed a friend,” said she. “He fears reproaches; but when he finds he is welcome, he will stay with me; and he shall have money to play with, and amuse himself how he likes. I kept too tight a rein on him, poor fellow; my good mother taught me prudence.”

“Yes, but,” said Ashmead, “you must promise me one thing, not to let him know how much money you have won, and not to go like a goose and give him a lot at once. It never pays to part with power in this wicked world. You give him twenty pounds a day, to play with, whenever he is cleaned

out. Then the money will last your time, and he will never leave you.”

“Oh, how cold-hearted and wise you are!” said she. “But such a humiliating position for him!”

“Don’t you be silly. You won’t keep him any other way.”

“I will be as wise as I can,” sighed Ina. “I have had a bitter lesson. Only bring him to me, and then, who knows? I am a change: my love may revive his, and none of these pitiable precautions may be needed. They would lower us both.”

Ashmead groaned aloud. “I see,” said he. “He’ll soon clean you out. Ah, well! he can’t rob you of your voice, and he can’t rob you of your Ashmead.”

They soon reached Frankfort. Ashmead