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A LADY'S ADVENTURES IN UNKNOWN INDIA.

BY ISABEL SAVORY.

I.—A BEAR SHOOT IN KASHMIR.

and the servants. There are no roads in Kashmir, and the whole of the transport all over the country is done either by coolies or ponies. A pony carries a hundred and sixty pounds, and can manage two tents, whereas it takes two coolies to carry one: as coolies are four annas a march, and ponies twelve annas, the latter are slightly cheaper. Marches average from ten to twelve miles a day. We took one bazaar *tat*—a native pony—to ride in turn. The saddle would have astonished the riders in the Row: it was a fearful and wonderful wooden arrangement—a square-shaped peak at the back, and a slanting rise in front; the bottoms of the stirrups were solid round pieces of wood,

NEARLY all one's friends go to India nowadays. It is unkindly said that girls go there to get married; and, of course, a good many do end by entering the holy bonds and settling down for a time in the gorgeous East; still, there are a certain number who do not, who take less interest in Anglo-Indian society than in the natives, the country, and the sport for which India is so justly famous. I was more anxious to travel about than to do anything else, and I don't think I wasted much time in civilised regions.

One morning last autumn the hill station of Murree had grown too hot to hold us—hot, at least, in the way of picnics and balls. To put it shortly, we said good-bye to all the dear Anglo-Indians, and packed ourselves into a *tonga*, and shook the dust of bungalow life off our feet. Two days' drive took us into Kashmir, into the "Promised Land" of the most glorious climate in the world, where one can rove about like gipsies, and practise sweet idleness to the heart's content, or where one can lead a life of the most thrilling adventure and really hard work.

My brother B—and I certainly did want to "do something," and we soon mapped out our line. We got hold of a Kashmeri cook, a dirty, servile fellow; also a shikari, Lalla by name, and a rogue—but, as far as bears went, he knew his business. We took three eighty-pound tents with us for ourselves



Isabel Savory,

like saucers. But really the whole thing was not bad for rough, scrambling work. A lady's side-saddle would have been useless—it is more tiring for continuous uphill riding, and it slips round a native pony.

These dry facts left behind, and arrived in Kashmir, picture us starting off with a line of natives stooping under the burden of the tents, some carrying leather *killers*, in which our pots and pans were packed, others with a tin bath, with the kerosene oil-can—that can which, with the soda-water bottle, is said to mark the track of the sahib all over the East. India could not do without it. That tin, after the oil is finished, packs all your most valuable possessions; it turns into a bread-pan, a cake-tin, a receptacle in which to boil hot water, a milk-pan; it takes one's hat and a shirt or two; it packs your curios; and finally, when its last leg has gone, its remnants serve to patch all the rest of your luggage.

With our never-to-be-forgotten tin, then, we were at last off. Who does not know the thrill of feeling with which one starts upon the utterly unknown? Generally expectation is so much better than reality. However, this expedition was to be a blissful contrast to that old adage, and, when all was over, we were both to feel that we "had lived a bit," and "played the game," and had something to look back upon for the rest of our lives.

As we rode and walked along in the direction of the country which held bears, the valley of Kashmir stretched on our right—a long-shaped central vale, thirty miles from end to end; green to a degree it looked, almost like part of the Thames valley, the placid river Jhelum winding down the length of it; all round the valley, as far as one could see, mountains, green and grey, and wooded up to a certain line, and above that line snow, dazzling snow in the sun. It is the land of fruit, a land where one has only to stick a walking-stick into the soil for it to grow. The vale, which is after all only a small part of the country of Kashmir, was no doubt once a lake, which hundreds of years ago, I suppose, burst its natural dam at Baramoula, and, flowing down towards the plains

of India, formed the river Jhelum. This river drains the vale now, and is, with the Wular lake, all that is left of old days. It is a delightful life to live on a house-boat on the Jhelum, and have a real "loaf" all over Kashmir, by its river and rivulets; but we turned our eyes at present from this "lazily, drowsily" existence, and, grasping our sticks and guns, murmured, "Excelsior!" It was excelsior, too, and very much so; and it was hot. Apples and pears, picked by the way, were the greatest blessing, while we talked of the drink we would like to summon—I forget what, but it was very long and very cool, and always had "ice tinkling in the glass." When we reached our camp, it would come down to the very common or garden milk—even milk was not to be slighted. Leaving Baramoula, the entrance-gate of the Promised Land, we turned left-handed in the direction of the Lolab valley; and as we kept along by the little Pohru river, the Kag Nag mountains lay on our left, to the right being the Wular lake, with beyond it the far-famed "road to Gilgit," opening visions of the Russian and Chinese frontiers to the imagination.

Four days' march found us about to camp close to the ground where we might expect to find bears. Little inhabited, silent, and thickly wooded, its dark shades and hollows looked as though they might contain anything; one was awed by the gloom of the shadows, by the vague possibilities of those dark deodars and impenetrable undergrowth. However, the camp had to be chosen and pitched, and we turned our thoughts to this, and to making safe and fairly comfortable arrangements for the night. Lalla, the shikari, walking first with B—and myself, usually chose our camping-ground. We selected a little grove of fruit-trees, as being more open ground, and more cheerful than the dark firs and spruces. The coolies soon arrived with our kit, and the natives had our tents up in a few moments, while our bearer unpacked other things, and laced up our camp-beds, etc. He was a weird packer, that bearer. I found our tea-cups all packed inside my long boots, a cake of soap hidden in a coat-sleeve, and my collars wrapped round a cheese which we bought

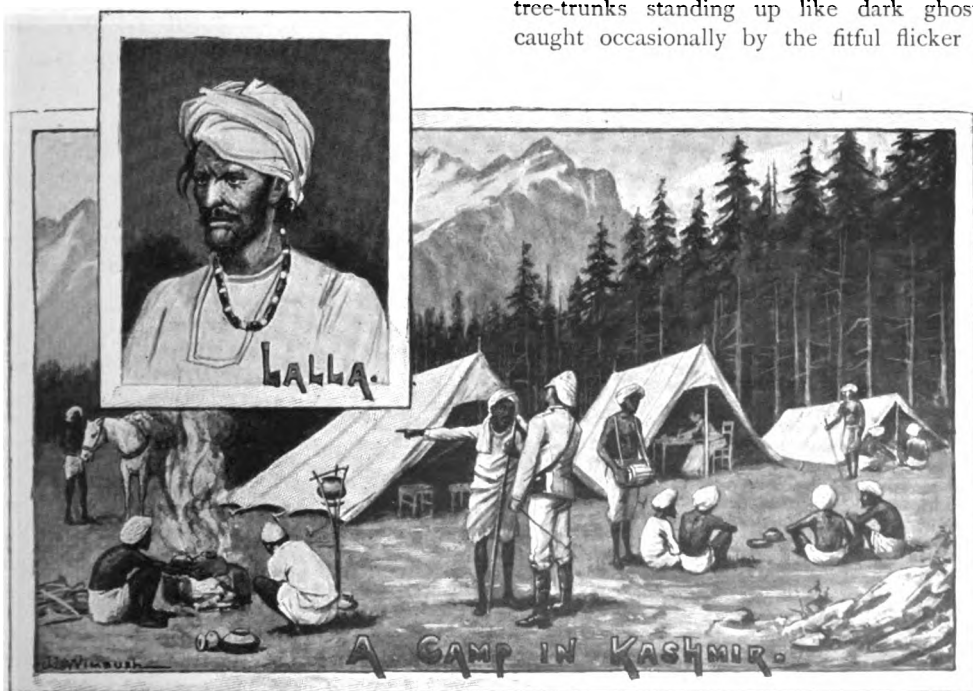
in Murree. If a native can break a thing, of course he always does—nothing but cast iron lives in the hands of a native. The long, warm afternoon was a great joy after the sweltering march. How we lay under those trees in the shade, reading the latest novel and writing Home—Home, which plays such a large part in life out in India—to get there the dream of every subaltern's life, the goal of the hard-working civilian! As Kipling says:

O! the toil that knows no breaking!
 O! the HEIMWEH, ceaseless aching,
 O! the black, dividing sea and alien plain!

But here were we enjoying ourselves, cleaning the guns, and, after the cook and servants had squatted round the fire for a bit, eating the meal we stood in need of. It used to be nice to a degree sitting at our camp-table, and tackling with splendid appetites even soup like glue, a chicken killed the moment before it was cooked, and a solid currant-pudding calculated to cement every crevice left in the interior. This meal over, we used to stroll about, never very far away from the camp, and

hear news from an occasional native of a bear seen.

The sunset over the distant cold snows was often most beautiful, warming them up for a brief half-hour, and crimsoning the desolate ridges, outlined by a long, thin saw-edge of black fir-trees. The night was on one at once, for there is little or no twilight, and the eerie shadows round the fathomless forests drove us back to camp. There we always found a bright fire, which was kept burning through the night, and was a great protection against invaders of any sort. To avoid the trouble of light, and with a view to making early starts, we went to bed at 8 p.m. Those who only know what it is to sleep under a roof between four walls conceive the night as a thing apart from themselves, comfortless and dark, and to be avoided. But those who have once known what it is to be of it, and in it, to sleep *à la belle étoile*, as the French so happily put it, care perhaps more about it than they care even for a warm, still summer afternoon. I used to lie in my tent with the front flap tied back and open, looking straight out into the country. Restful, comforting darkness all round, the black shadowy tree-trunks standing up like dark ghosts, caught occasionally by the fitful flicker of



the camp-fire, the eternal stars overhead, the occasional droning of a tree-beetle, the thud of an apple as it fell on my tent,— is it not with me now as I write? One is never “alone”; all around

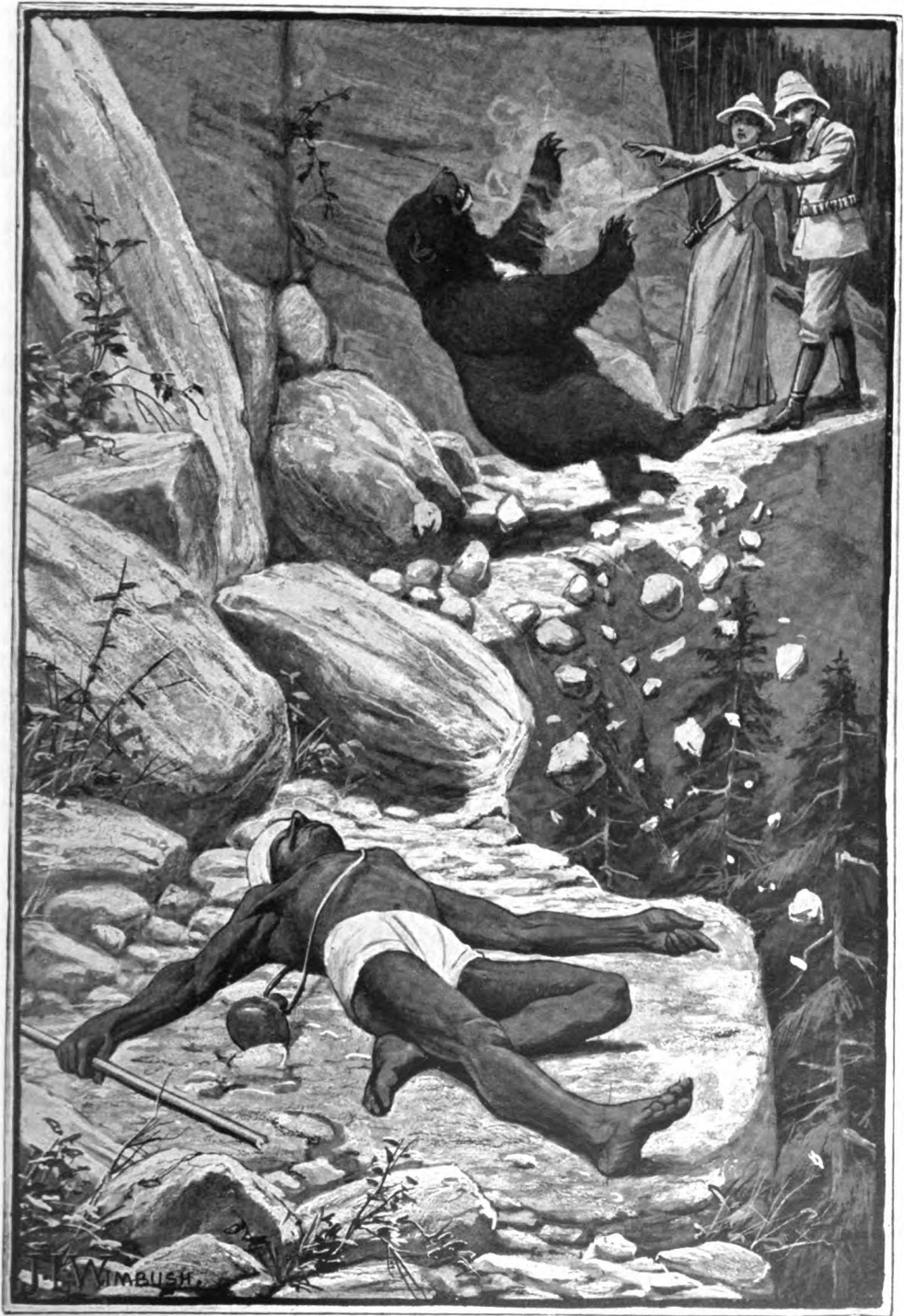
A voiceless yearning that is surely prayer—
Life's strange dumb cry to Nature in her pain.

The silence is full of sound—the immediate world breathing all around, only a part of the great world sleeping, toiling, sorrowing, from the east unto the west. Once, and once only, in the night, Nature awakes. Indeed, it is a known fact. About two o'clock in the morning the cocks crow and the birds chirp a little; the ponies would move round the camp and rub against the tent-ropes; the cows, if there were any round, move about and munch a little; the sheep and goats on the hills change their ground. All Nature rouses up, turns over, and goes to sleep again. And you yourself sleep until you wake to find a wan light breaking over everything, and a shivering breeze stirring the grey grass—dawn! Dawn, and a cold freshness everywhere, and dew on everything.

We were generally up at half-past four, and having breakfast outside our tents at five o'clock—breakfast, which often might have been done better justice to, for excitement and appetite do not work well together. There was an air of suppressed excitement at that hour, when starting was so near, and the morning before us was probably to contain so much of the unexpected. Preparations were being made all round, and one of the most important items in the shoot, the beating of the jungle, had to be arranged. The headman of the district supplied us on this occasion with a hundred and fifty coolies for beating, and we had them all down, near our camp, squatting in front of it in a great line. The noise that those natives made, jabbering and shouting! Lalla and the servants tried to keep a sort of order with sticks, but it was not much good. We gave them each a little scrap of initialed paper to give back at the end of the day, when we paid them: it is hopeless otherwise to know who has beaten and who has not. We tried

to choose out only the strong, young men, for old ones are worse than useless; but, as usual, Lalla allowed a greybeard or two to creep in. They all wore nothing but a loin-cloth and a *puggarree*. Their tickets were hidden in the folds of one or the other, and they each had a stick; but it is very little protection against the attack of wild animals, and many an unfortunate native has sought another world through the medium of bears and tigers.

At last all was ready, and we really were off. Lalla and a Chota shikari went first; B—— followed; then myself, on the pony to start with; and lastly, our servant—his name was Mary—with an extra gun and bottle of cold tea. The coolies had been divided into two parties, and sent some miles from where we were eventually to take our stand. We soon left the sunny little camp and began to penetrate into the gloom of the jungle. Great deodars towered over our heads, and on either hand formed masses of impenetrable depths, in which one felt there probably was what one little knew. Silently we trod, avoiding stepping on a branch or anything which could betray our presence. I soon had to leave the *tat* behind, tied up to a tree, where I hope he enjoyed himself more than I should have done under similar circumstances. To be left behind alone was one of the last things one wished, and I crept and climbed and scrambled assiduously, and kept my wind for the time when it would be wanted, and often got a tow from the Chota shikari with his stick. It was very hot, as well as very silent, work. We were following a small stream, and coming to a deepish pool in one place. Lalla, after peering over the wet soil round it, whispered in an awed and triumphant voice, with many gesticulations, “*Hurput's* bath,” pointing to the unmistakable track of a bear's foot, so curiously like a human footmark in formation. There were splashes showing where the bear had shaken himself. So there, in that dank hollow, never lighted by the rays of the sun, half concealed in the thick jungle-grass, a bear had actually been, within the last hour. Hearts beat faster, and we realised that what we had dreamed of, “fought for, and wrought for,” was a very present and grim reality.



HIS GALLANT CHARGE WAS ENDED.

More silently than ever we crept on, the two shikaris moving with the greatest care, and very slowly, and hunting the ground for more traces of *hurputs*. After a long distance of this sort of thing, the jungle opened a little, and showed a clearer space, where one could at least see to shoot between the tree-trunks, the undergrowth having disappeared. By gesticulations Lalla showed us we were to stop; this, then, was to be where we were to take up our stand—here was to be success or failure. I don't know that cold tea is the best of "jumping powder," but certainly stimulant in a hot climate does not clear one's head. It is absolutely necessary to be cool and clear on these occasions, and so we always drank cold tea. We had a pull now at the bottle, and felt better. B— had a 500-Express rifle; Mary carried the other gun. The shikaris chose a piece of rising ground to stand on; to the left of us was a small nullah, and in front of us the jungle sloped gradually away into the distance. We had, as I said, sent the beaters into position: one party, led by the headman of the village, had gone on some miles, and would start beating in line towards us from that distance, with a view to driving bears in our direction; the rest of the beaters were arranged as stops, at intervals, lining on either side the country between ourselves and the beginning of the beat, in order to turn any bear which should try to break sideways instead of coming straight on. We had a long wait, long enough to cool the most jumpy nerves when once one had grown accustomed to the unbroken silence—a silence which is always apt to get on the nerves, and to make one at the slightest rustle see visions and dream dreams. Perhaps a great red fox would steal by, and call up the sound of "gone away!" in the mind of the fox-hunting sahib, now under such different circumstances. Occasionally we saw a pig, and pine-martins; but generally it was painfully and nervously silent, until at last, far away, we can distinguish the vibration of tom-toms, the yells of the natives, and we know that the beaters are coming, the beat has begun! Now is the time to harden the heart and be ready to face the unknown. Absolutely alert, straining every nerve to see

and hear, curbing every longing to move a hair's breadth, to breathe almost, we crouched behind an immense deodar trunk, and knelt, waiting. The tom-toms and cries gradually got nearer and nearer, louder and louder. It seemed a long time to be in such a state of tension, and I was just beginning to think that the beat had nothing in it, when suddenly came, as it always comes, the supreme moment; the present was alive with reality, we were on the boards, and the curtain was rung up.

Lalla's muscular back in front of me was stiffened with excitement. I caught the gleam of his eye as he turned, and the Chota shikari hissed, "*Hurput!*" into my ear. We were all up in a second, and there, moving quickly towards us, was a great black form, which now came out into the open, now disappeared behind a tree. The bear suddenly turned off to the left, and was passing our stand without seeing us. But at that moment Mary moved, and cracked a stick under his foot. The bear turned and growled savagely, but a shot rang out almost simultaneously, and a thick smoke hid what followed. Hit or not, the bear had gone on. We rushed after him. Whatever happened, I knew that I must keep up with the rifle, and I did my best, hauled along by the Chota shikari. But through such tangled jungle to move fast was no easy matter. Left behind once, at last we caught up Lalla and B—, hurrying into a nullah. In the gloomy shadows it was difficult to see far; there seemed no traces whatever of the bear. At this moment, above the shouting and the tom-toms, which had by this time come quite close, rose other shouts and cries of alarm. We turned round, and saw at once, on the other side of the nullah, another and a much larger bear, coming along the top. He turned off sideways, and I saw to my horror that one of the "stops" was right in his path. He was an old man too, and could not spring quickly aside. It was all the work of a moment—to shoot would have been even chances on killing the bear or the native. With wild and thundering growls the bear sprang towards the half-naked coolie, and, standing at once on his hind feet, he hit the man on the top of the skull a buffet with one great forefoot; with the other he struck the

man's upraised arm, and at the same time he bit him in the chest. With agonising shrieks the poor native fell upon the ground, and as the bear moved away from him B— fired. It was a long and awkward shot. Heavens! he has missed him! The bear turned, rushed down the nullah, and made straight for us. We both turned a bit white, I think; this "glorious hour of crowded life"

each other, and took a long breath, as we watched his body roll over and over to the bottom of the nullah. He was a big, old male bear, measuring six feet three inches. His coat was rusty and rather bare. We ran across to the poor native, who was soon surrounded by a sobbing throng; his scalp was terribly lacerated, his arm broken, and his chest mauled. We did all we could for him, and sent him off, several days' journey, in a *dhoolie*, under Mary's care, to the nearest hospital. He lived, I am thankful to say, and actually recovered in time, even though his skull had been fractured.

I left B— arranging about the poor native, and, with one man as a guide, I went back and found my *tat* and rode to the camp. Later on the bear was carried in upon poles, the



THE BEAR WAS
CARRIED IN UPON POLES.

seemed likely to be over-crowded. Lalla and the Chota shikari screamed and yelled—a native is an arrant coward. I remember thinking of getting the spare gun from Mary, but Mary had fled up a young sapling and left the gun lying below. I stuck to B—and hoped for the best. On the old *hurput* came, in far less time than it takes to read this, growling with rage. B—, with his last barrel, waited to make it a dead certainty; but the *hurput* was most appallingly close, at the distance of four yards, when his gallant charge was ended with a bullet behind his ear into his vitals.

I shall never forget how we looked at

natives yelling and dancing around, and walking in front beating tom-toms. It was a most triumphant procession. Then followed the paying of the beaters, who again squatted round, handed us their tickets, received two annas each, and went off still very much excited, and tearful over the wounded man. We sat down to a very grateful and comforting meal while Lalla and Co. skinned our *hurput*. And so the day ended.

. My article next month will be on Tiger-shooting, which is the sport *par excellence* in India. There one really does meet with thrilling adventures. Such, at least, is my experience.



A LADY'S ADVENTURES IN UNKNOWN INDIA.

BY ISABEL SAVORY.

II.—TIGER-SHOOTING.

knew each other well, and they had, I hope, sufficient confidence in me not to pigeon-hole me with that class of woman who, at a cricket match, remarks, "How well that bowler manages to hit the man's bat!"

We left our camp at half-past six one morning, and rode off to look at our tie-up, leaving the ponies, and creeping the last mile absolutely silently to where the last night the shikaris had fastened a bullock. Tiger-shooting cannot be called a cruel proceeding, considering the huge number of lives of natives and of cattle which are saved by the death of a tiger. We crept up to the spot. The bullock was gone! The rope was broken off short, and in the dust close to the stake was an enormous scratch-mark; there was a broad trail where the body had been dragged off. How we three smiled and swelled with joy and expectation! Never follow a trail up—you may disturb the tiger; and, as we found later, nothing on the face of this earth is more dangerous.

We returned to the camp for breakfast, and started at twelve o'clock for a beat, by which time the tiger should be asleep, and all the natives for beating duly collected. I don't remember feeling very nervous then, but I am powerless to convey to you any idea of the concentrated excitement of those days. The Zoo gives no notion of what a tiger is like in his native conditions—how, like a flash of lightning, he rushes upon beast or man; one spring, and the long white teeth penetrate through the chest and back right into the lungs, as the beast seizes the man's shoulder in his mouth and mauls his head with his cruel claws. That massive paw will stun an ordinary-sized bullock, and crush his skull with one blow. Naturally, then, one's feelings

EVEN the greatest shikaris say there is nothing in this world so exciting as a tiger-shoot. My first essay showed you that bears may afford any amount of sport and danger, but the most thrilling bear-shoot pales before a day in the jungle after tigers. I am not giving you in this letter my own experiences, but those of my friend Miss Grahame, which contain more adventures than my own, and for the truth of every fact of which I vouch.

We left Bangalore one day in the middle of last April, J—— and myself, in answer to a wire from Captain F—— at Secunderabad, "Arrangements for shoot complete."

I had been in India nearly a year, had stuck my pig, and now, fortified with a sixteen-bore rifle, prepared for my first tiger. The Deccan, two thousand feet above sea level, is the coolest jungle I have been in, but I impress upon any woman who ever follows my example the necessity of taking every precaution against the heat. It was 104° in our tents in the shade. I wore a long thin coat and knickerbockers of green shikar material, a spine-pad sewn inside the coat and another hooked outside, a huge pith helmet with a wet rag inside on my head, and a pair of dogskin gloves with half the fingers cut off, which enabled one to hold the burning barrels. Captain F——, J——, and I

are of a somewhat "wrought" nature as one goes out after tigers.

We three guns were posted in trees, each in a *machân*, which is a stout, hard, stuffed leather cushion, strapped and buckled on to the branches of the tree about fifteen feet from the ground. Your gun-bearer and second gun are on a branch at hand; your *châgul*, or leather water-bottle, is slung close.

Captain F—— and I were about eighty yards apart; we had climbed into our perches by a rough little ladder, and now sat in perfect silence, sometimes looking across at each other. The tiger we were beating for, and who had carried off our tie-up, was considered *bobbery* (pugnacious), and the natives had warned us that he climbed trees—a rare thing for a tiger to do: in fact, they insisted upon it that he had been seen going up a tree after a bear, which tale we rather scoffed at; but, as you will see, it was only too true.

The beat advanced, the tom-toms and the shouts of the beaters grew louder and nearer. I sat in my *machân* feeling as I had never felt before, my nerves strung with expectation so intense that it was painful; and I thought of the blessed relief to follow when all was over. I watched, keenly alive to every leaf stirring in the dry scrub, while down upon the burning sand and rocks blazed the relentless sun. Suddenly I heard monkeys trooping towards me, high in the trees, grasping the pliant branches, and shaking

them with rage: a tiger must be in the neighbourhood. Another second, the jungle-grass waved and crackled, and out into the open emerged my first tiger.

On he came, a picture of fearful beauty, his cruel eyes lazily blinking in the sun. His long, slouching walk betrayed the vast muscle working through the glossy and loose skin, which was clear red

and white, with its double stripes, and the W mark on the head. His absolute majesty as he swung along, licking his lips and moustache after his feed, was something worth looking at, while at the same time through one's heart stole an awful, cold sensation at the sight of such consummate power.

He came on. I sat with my rifle at full cock. But he went straight up to Captain F——'s tree, looked up, saw him, gave a fierce growl, and then stood still about ten yards off. A loud detonation followed: but Captain F—— must have made a poor shot; he hit him in the back—much too far in the rear—the bullet going down almost to his hock. The tiger presented a fine appearance still, standing on a little

knoll, lashing his tail and looking vindictively up into the tree. At the same moment Captain F—— and I both fired at him, and both missed him. This was too much. In one moment, like a flash, he darted round, galloped at the tree, sprang about half-way up, and then swarmed up the rest as quickly and easily as possible. Shall I ever know such a fearful moment in my whole life again? To see that vast and terrible body flying up the tree, more quickly than any



MONKEYS
TROOPING TO-
WARDS ME, HIGH
IN THE TREES.

cat ; to see my poor friend jumping on to his feet, both barrels fired, and helpless ! His hand was on the edge of the *machân*, and the tiger's mouth, closing upon it, tore his finger all down the back of it to the bone. In my brain's eye I pictured a ghastly struggle, the two falling to the ground, and then a sickening death ; but at the same instant the tiger's back, as he clasped the trunk of the tree, presented a difficult but not impossible shot. I had one barrel left. It was about eighty yards. I fired, and have never thanked Heaven so fervently as when I saw the tiger drop at once to the ground. But, with nine catlike lives, he was not dead ; he walked off and disappeared. To say that now all was over the relief was unspeakable expresses quite inadequately what we felt.

We dared not look for him then and there, dying and savage, in such dangerous ground. But next morning we found him cold and stiff. He was a magnificent male tiger, very large and heavy, with enormous paws and moustache—a splendid "great cat."

We had a good many "off" days, when there was no kill and no beat ; these occasions, with nothing on earth to do, and in such streaming heat, were most trying for our three tempers. A woman is supposed at such times to be a "ministering angel" ; but I was never a success at that *rôle*, and possibly acted the reverse part ! I was amused, some time after, with reading J——'s and Captain F——'s diaries.

"On my return to camp, surprised to find Joe" (that's myself) "very rude and bad-tempered : she is becoming a perfect bore with her fits of temper." This was J——'s. And again, "F——, before the beat, was very rude, and told me that if I fired to the left of a red ant-heap, he would consider it cribbing his shot."

In Captain F——'s diary I found : "I was glad we got the tiger, but consider it a great shame of J—— to shoot him when he was sixty yards off, as he would certainly have walked right under my tree."

We had just finished breakfast one morning when some excited natives came running up to tell us a man near their village had been mauled by a tiger. We asked for the

man. "Oh," they answered, "he is dead, quite dead ; how can he come before your honour?" In fact, not only was he dead, but probably eaten ; and as the same thing had happened before, no doubt an old man-eater was in the neighbourhood. It was with no small joy we heard this news, and set off promptly to "Cherla," where the shikaris arranged at once to beat the supposed "lie" of the tiger.

The natives were, as usual, surprised to see a woman—a "Miss Sahib"—on such an occasion, and implored me to stay behind in the village. But lack of nerve never was my failing—indeed, a little excitement and a "tight corner" always pick me up for days. Ah ! now, while I am stagnating in the solid ooze of English country life, how often my arms ache for my rifle once again ; and the East is calling—calling—calling !

I was right-hand gun this time, and the beat had begun ten minutes by the watch in my wrist-strap. I was watching some jungle-sheep—dear little animals—trot past on my right, and had rather neglected my left, when, glancing round, a splendid sight—"Stripes" himself—appeared before my eyes, going at a great rate through the under-wood.

"*Bāgh ! bāgh !*" (Tiger ! tiger !), whispered my gun-bearer. I had just time to fire both barrels, and to see that the first, at any rate, had missed him. He galloped off, roaring with unusual grandeur. Much disgusted, when the beaters came up I climbed down. A shikari picked up my first bullet ; but a little farther on we found blood, and marks where he had dug his claws deeply into the ground. J—— and Captain F—— thought he was badly hit, and would probably be dead in half an hour, so we sat down and had tiffin. Afterwards, sending the beaters home, we three and four shikaris started to follow him up. The two others did their best to persuade me not to come. Of course I have a will of my own.

As I have said, tigers cling to life with an extraordinary tenacity ; the greatest precaution is needful in approaching them. Expecting to find the tiger dead, we followed his tracks quietly for about a hundred and fifty yards, and then came upon a place

where he had evidently lain down and lost much blood. Again we followed the fresh *pugs* (footmarks), and were stealing in line through the trees and grass when our hearts stood still. There was a spring, with a hideous roar; bounding through the cover with open mouth, his tail lashing his sides, his whole fur bristling, dashed the tiger straight upon us.

Heavens! what a sight for our unprepared eyes! I could see nothing, owing to the beast's tremendous speed, but a shadowy form, with two large lamps of fire fixed on me with an unmeaning stare as it literally flew at me. Such was the vision of a moment. The trees were so thick I dared not shoot till he was close, for I had time, even then, to recollect that everything depended upon keeping cool and killing him if possible. I fired straight at his chest. On he came. Again I fired, without moving at all; and then instinctively, almost miraculously, I darted to the left as the tiger himself sprang past me—so close that I found his blood splashed over my gun-barrels afterwards.

Captain F—— had fired two shots sideways, one of which missed altogether, and the other only knocked out the tiger's canine teeth. It was an awful escape. In fact, it was the nearest shave I have ever had of my life. One and all felt a little shaky. It was getting dark, and we had had quite enough of it, so we returned to camp.

To cut a long story short, we found my tiger next morning, dead. If there is any episode in my life to which I look back with a special thrill, it is that; if I have one trophy now which I care about, it is his skin.

I have said nothing about the other tigers shot because these are my own personal experiences; nor about our blank days, because I want to bore my readers as little as possible. But one more interesting day must not be forgotten.

We were each up in our *machâns*, and the beaters were working towards us, trying to drive out a tiger, who was evidently in a cool, damp spot, where he wished to remain. Instead of waiting to fire the tall, dry grass, or else sending buffaloes in, either of which expedient generally moves a tiger, the



I FIRED.

beaters, with a careless *sang froid* which marks them, plunged on through the reeds, and must have got too close to him. Suddenly, only two or three feet away from one terror-stricken wretch, up leapt the tiger. "*Bâgh! bâgh!*" shrieks on all sides, clashings of tom-toms, while we horrified listeners, powerless to help, sat inert, straining our ears.

I gather that the miserable native sprang into the nearest tree; but, in any ordinary case, where is a man when matched with a tiger? Round whisked the lithe, muscular body; one pounce, one horrible crunch, and he dashed back at a gallop farther into the jungle, while the poor native subsided on to the ground. None of us really saw the catastrophe.

We did all there was to be done for the man ; his thigh presented a horrible appearance, full of livid holes, with one artery only too evidently severed—not a pleasant subject to dwell upon. We sent him off, bound up, in a *dhoolie*, with twenty-four men to carry him in relays forty miles to the nearest hospital. But he died before reaching it, probably of exhaustion and blood-poisoning. Fright, too, has killed many victims ; but tigers' bites are often poisonous, and even a mere scratch-wound has resulted in lockjaw.

After such a sad and terrible experience, the shikaris (not, alas ! "wise in time") collected a number of bullocks, and drove them into the tiger's stronghold.

J—— was not far from me in his *machân*. I saw him put up his gun. He had evidently caught a glimpse of something, and in another moment I saw a tiger myself just disappearing into a little nullah which ran towards our two trees, but divided them from each other. He was coming towards us, hidden in the undergrowth. Would he come out upon my side or upon J——'s? It was an "intense" moment ; and then, to my joy, I saw a magnificently bearded and muscular form stalk slowly into the centre of the little clearance close to my tree. I took a long, steady aim, and pulled the trigger. One vast bound into the air, and the kingly beast lay upon his back ; he squirmed over on to one side, glared for a second up at my tree, and then rolled back—dead ! It was an easy shot, just right, and I felt the poor native was avenged. He had a splendid head, with a regular yellow ruff all round his neck, and great sprouting whiskers and moustache. I stood by him, feeling his colossal muscle, and trying in vain to lift one of his great fore-arms ; the joint at the wrist measured twenty-six inches round.

These three tigers were all that fell to my own bag in the Deccan. To all women who are fond of sport I would certainly say that tiger-shooting is the finest sport in the world, as they will find. If anything, it is almost too exciting. In narrating the above, I feel that the dangers are rather under-estimated than otherwise. In tiger-

shooting fact is indeed more thrilling and more wildly unexpected than any fiction. But if you mean to try to shoot a tiger, you have no right to go unless you are prepared in every way for it—prepared, I mean, not only for a certain amount of peril, but for a very considerable amount of heat. It sickens me to see women in the present day attempting to do things quite beyond their physical strength, and without realising in the least what lies before them. Do the thing if you can, by all means ; but do it, and do not play at it only. A shoot in the Deccan at that time of year is anything but unadulterated joy. The temper, the personal appearance, and comfort are all in turn trodden upon. But then, to make up for it, you have what I have poorly described, what I think it is even worth having lived for.

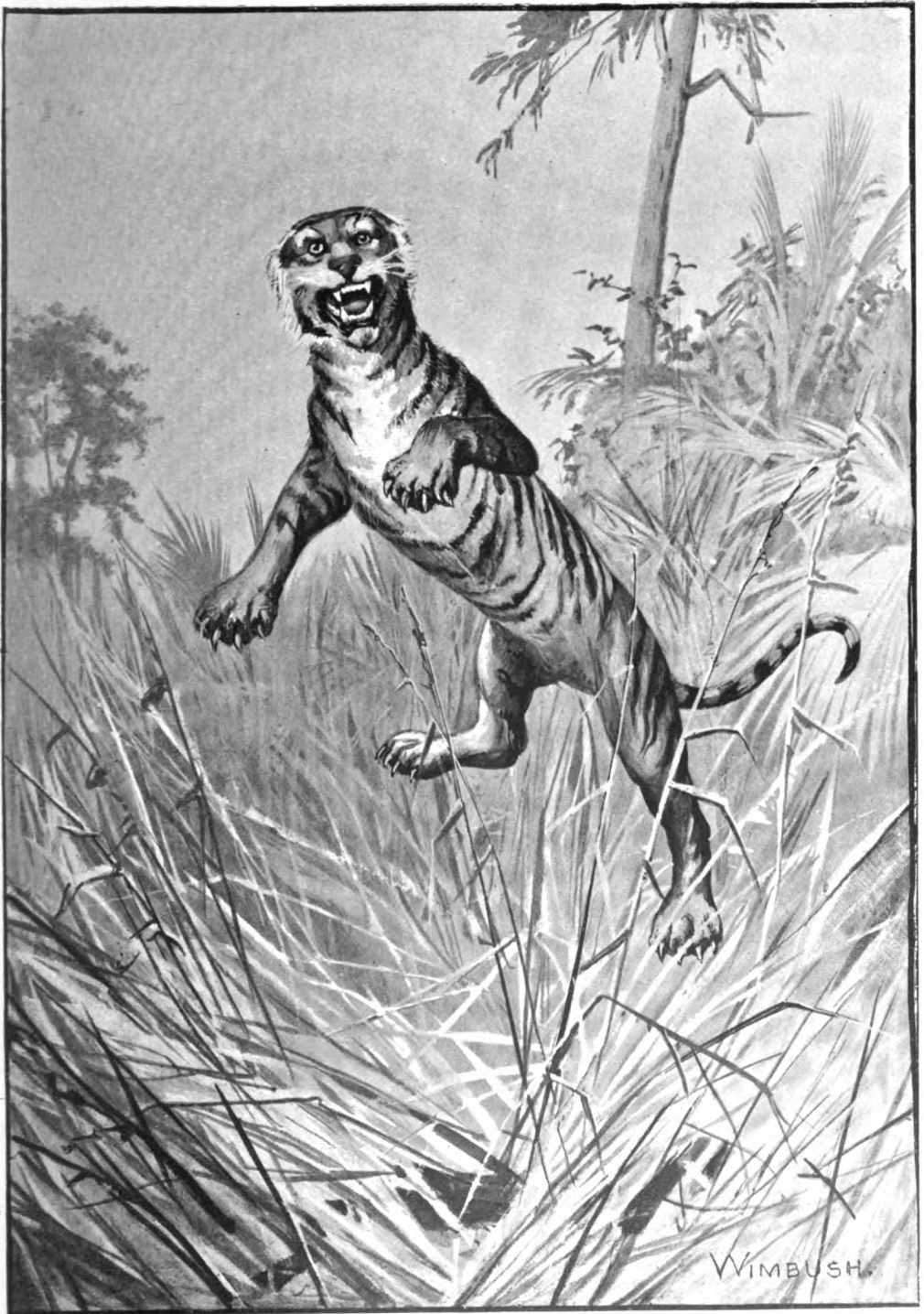
Life in the jungle defies all description to me. There is so much connected with it which one never forgets, and yet which is hardly worth description, which sinks into one's being, and becomes a part of one's self— one of the most precious past pages of life.

I remember an awful storm when we were camped by the Godaveri, a huge river four miles across, but in the summer only a waste of sand with a small stream in the middle. Think of fording these rivers when they are full by nothing but a narrow sand-bank, like the—

Ford—ford—ford o' Kabul river :
'Cross the Kabul river in the dark !

We were trying to shoot *muggers* (crocodiles) that evening ; but the beasts were too wily, and, directly we got anywhere within shot, slid off the hot rocks, where they were sunning themselves, into deep water. After a bit we noticed far down the valley, a vast cloud of yellow dust, which was really nothing but the sand in the river-bed.

On it came—a thousand miles an hour ; and before we had hardly had time to leave the river-bed, the blue, calm water at our feet went black green, and was churned up into a leaping, boiling mass by the tempest which broke over it. We ourselves, blinded by dust and storm, were hurled this way and that as we tried to struggle on. Eventually



ONE VAST BOUND INTO THE AIR.

we got to our tents. India does everything on a big scale: she is either very hot or very cold, very wet or very fine, very delightful or very disagreeable. A thunder-storm is no exception to this rule. The sky went as dark as night, jagged all over with enormous cracks and chasms of violet lightning, which lit up every stone in the whole country round in turn like a search-light. The crashing thunder made one feel that surely the whole universe was cracking and breaking up overhead. Then the skies poured sheets—literally reservoirs—of water over our devoted heads. Smash! went both poles of my long-suffering tent. I lay under the folds, agonised, wasting a whole vocabulary. Luckily the pole had missed my head, and after a few moments the others nobly put in an appearance and hauled me out. My things were all right under the *débris*—indeed, I possessed very little to hurt—and this was only a slight *contretemps*. The tempest lasted

three hours, at the end of which the drought-stricken plain was a sheet of water.

With this I must bring my two months out in camp in the Deccan to a close. It was an eventful time. As the reader will perceive, most of what might have proved fatal accidents arose from wounding tigers. It is a truism to remark that one's great object should be to kill them; but in case any of my readers should follow my example, and find themselves on a like expedition, let me add that it is of vital importance to remember never to fire unless you have every reasonable chance of shooting a tiger dead, for a wounded tiger endangers the lives of the whole party. One is only too apt to fire over soon and at too great a distance. I went back to civilisation and the "man-stified town" lighter in weight than I have ever been since, more sunburnt, and more "fit."

We all came to the conclusion that the first tub in a cool bungalow was a luxury, the first glass of iced champagne divine.



Christmas Day in the Morning:

BY NORA HOPPER.

THE merriest day in all the year
 Out of the dark is dawning here;
 She comes, light-foot, as fairies do,
 With snow upon her shining hair,
 Fur-clad, like any Arctic maid:
 Her red mouth laughs, her eyes are fair,
 Her laughter has no touch of rue:
 The fairest day that childhood knew
 Or ever manhood wakened to.
 The morning star for her has stayed,
 For Christmas Day in the morning.

She hath the Yule-log for her own—
 The Yule-log hewn from oak alone.
 The Christmas chimes from spire to spire
 Rung out in token that all men
 Are knit to-day in peace again.
 Divided hearts about her fire
 She brings, and long-divided hands.
 Good-will she scatters in all lands;

Her garland does with holly glow,
 And gleam with sacred mistletoe.
 No fairer day the year may know
 Than Christmas Day in the morning!



Photo. by H. E. Hall.

Nora Hopper



A LADY'S ADVENTURES IN UNKNOWN INDIA.

BY ISABEL SAVORY.

III.—HUNTING THE WILD BOAR.

NOT down to the Deccan this time shall I lead you, but far away up north to the Punjab, where late in February it is still cool. By that time the crops were nearly cut, and the land lay dry and fallow.

Sir George B. Wolseley, then commanding the Punjab Forces, one of his "staff," his aide-de-camp, and myself were guests of H.H. Maharajah Sir Jagatjit Sing Bahadur, K.C.S.I., and were most hospitably entertained at the guest-house near the palace.

Years before, the Maharajah had arranged a large pig-sticking party for Prince "Eddy," and it was to the same piece of country we were to go, more or less in the centre of the native state of Kapurthala.

Dining the first evening with the Maharajah, needless to say fox-hunting *versus* pig-sticking was discussed—a stupid comparison, and goodness knows why it invariably arises.

Some one, of course, ran down fox-hunting at home—"A mob of little dogs bow-wowingly after a poor little beast who is doing his level best to escape from them, the excitements consisting of jumping big places, taking heavy falls, and keeping near hounds."

With the noble science of hog-hunting you start away with a couple of miles' gallop as hard as you can, if the boar is a good one ;

then with a sudden pause he rushes round and charges down upon you like lightning. You may stop his rush, but you won't kill him. Then your work begins, and you discover what a fiend a wounded boar can be.

As far as my own opinion goes, I love fox-hunting for a thousand reasons ; and the uncertainty about it, the diminutive number of those real good days, add to the glamour which surrounds it. Pig-sticking is on another shelf. As you ride you neither realise who is near you nor what may be in front of you : you ride as you never before have ridden.

How mad and bad and sad it was
And yet, alas ! how sweet !

Next morning, early, we all met some miles outside the city. It was a nice country, not a very hard one to ride over, and there were some useful patches of cover, well separated from each other.

The Maharajah mounted me, and even provided one of Champion and Wilton's side-saddles used by the Rānee. There is no reason why a woman on a side-saddle should not quite easily carry a spear. Spear-riding on the near side is not allowed, and she can reach anything on the "off." I never found it awkward. The spear should be carried, when riding, diagonally across the body, and held about the centre of the shaft, the knuckles downwards, the shaft lying underneath the forearm, so that it is ready to hand, less dangerous to oneself when falling and to one's friends when riding.

I always used a long underhand spear, made of male bamboo, the spearhead narrow and leaf-shaped, with a sharpened rib up each side, the edges and point kept keen from day to day.

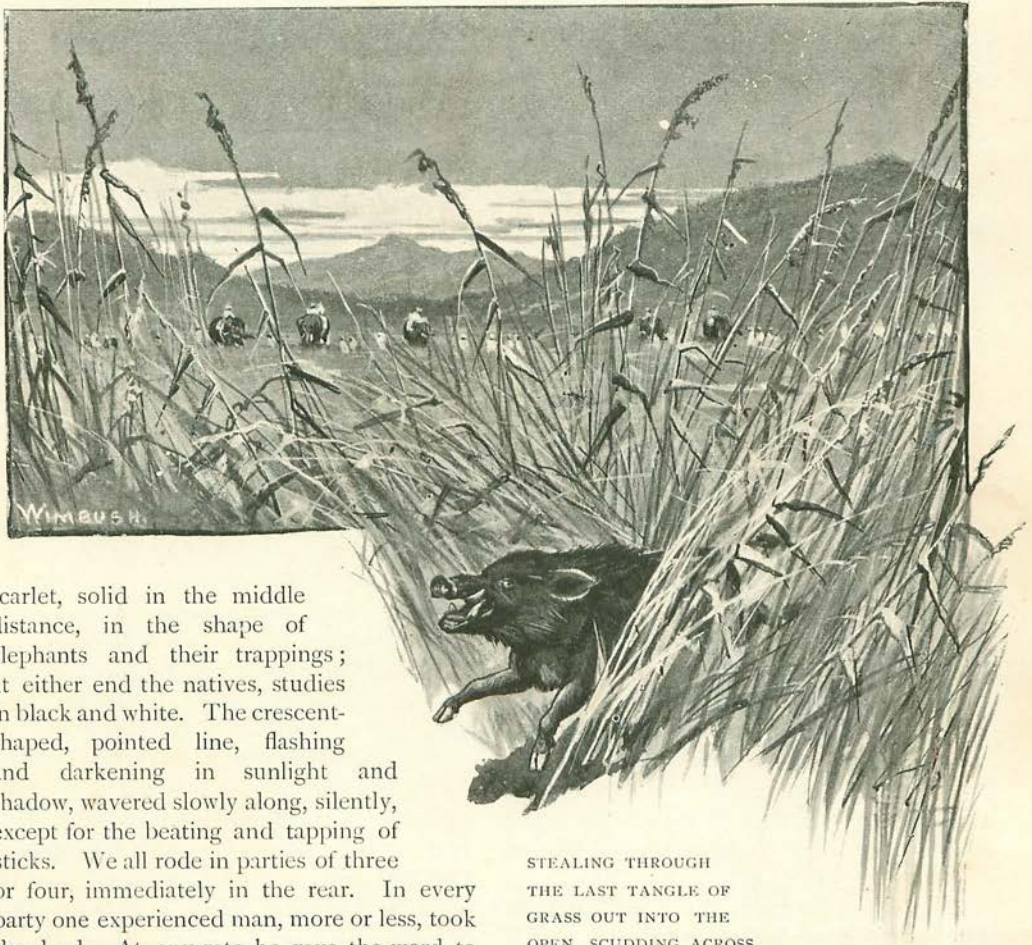
* * * This series of six articles will be concluded in the April Number.—ED.

Horses must be quick and hardy, bold, staunch to pig, not too big, and just as fast as you can get them. A small-sized Waler, or an Arab, are more to be relied upon than a country-bred, which will not always face pig—though I had a dear, funny little mare from Lahore named Facey Rum Nose, than which I could wish for no better.

Well, we were all ready, and we rode off to draw. "Looks as though we were drawing for an outlying fox, doesn't it?" said S—. Our imposing-looking train sped out over the country. We had fourteen elephants and fifty native beaters, and when they were formed up in line in cover the colour and the life about it all did one good: a wide expanse of tall, waving grass—yellow; a mass of mouse-colour and

How keenly one watched the long grass for a sign! how intense grew the excitement when the beaters saw a boar in front of them and prevented his breaking back! Well ahead they kept him going, till at last we saw the sight, dear to the sporting *sahib*, of a grey object stealing through the last tangle of grass out into the open, scudding across the fallow.

How one devoured him with one's eyes! The wiry form lobbed away across the open for all the world, as they say, "like a carpet bag tumbling end over end." One was just in a fever of impatience to be off,—but it is most necessary to remain quiet till the pig has got well away. The wiliest of all cunning animals, he hates to leave a good sanctuary, and only does so when he thinks the coast



scarlet, solid in the middle distance, in the shape of elephants and their trappings; at either end the natives, studies in black and white. The crescent-shaped, pointed line, flashing and darkening in sunlight and shadow, wavered slowly along, silently, except for the beating and tapping of sticks. We all rode in parties of three or four, immediately in the rear. In every party one experienced man, more or less, took the lead. At any rate he gave the word to "Ride!" before any one could start after a pig.

STEALING THROUGH THE LAST TANGLE OF GRASS OUT INTO THE OPEN, SCUDDING ACROSS THE FALLOW.

is clear. If he finds himself at once being followed, he will nip round and slip back to cover at lightning pace, and decline to leave it again. It seemed years—it was only a couple of moments, I suppose—before S—, leaning forward in his saddle, called out, "Ride!"

One instant, and this vain, unsatisfactory world was forgotten in the all-engrossing present, in the maddening rush and rattle of the horses' hoofs—the wind in one's face—eyes only for one grey object fast disappearing. I was quite too foolishly happy! Away we went at our best pace. I had no idea that such an ungainly looking animal could possibly have covered the ground as he did, but it was all a horse could do to live with him; and yet he appeared to be ambling calmly along, without effort.

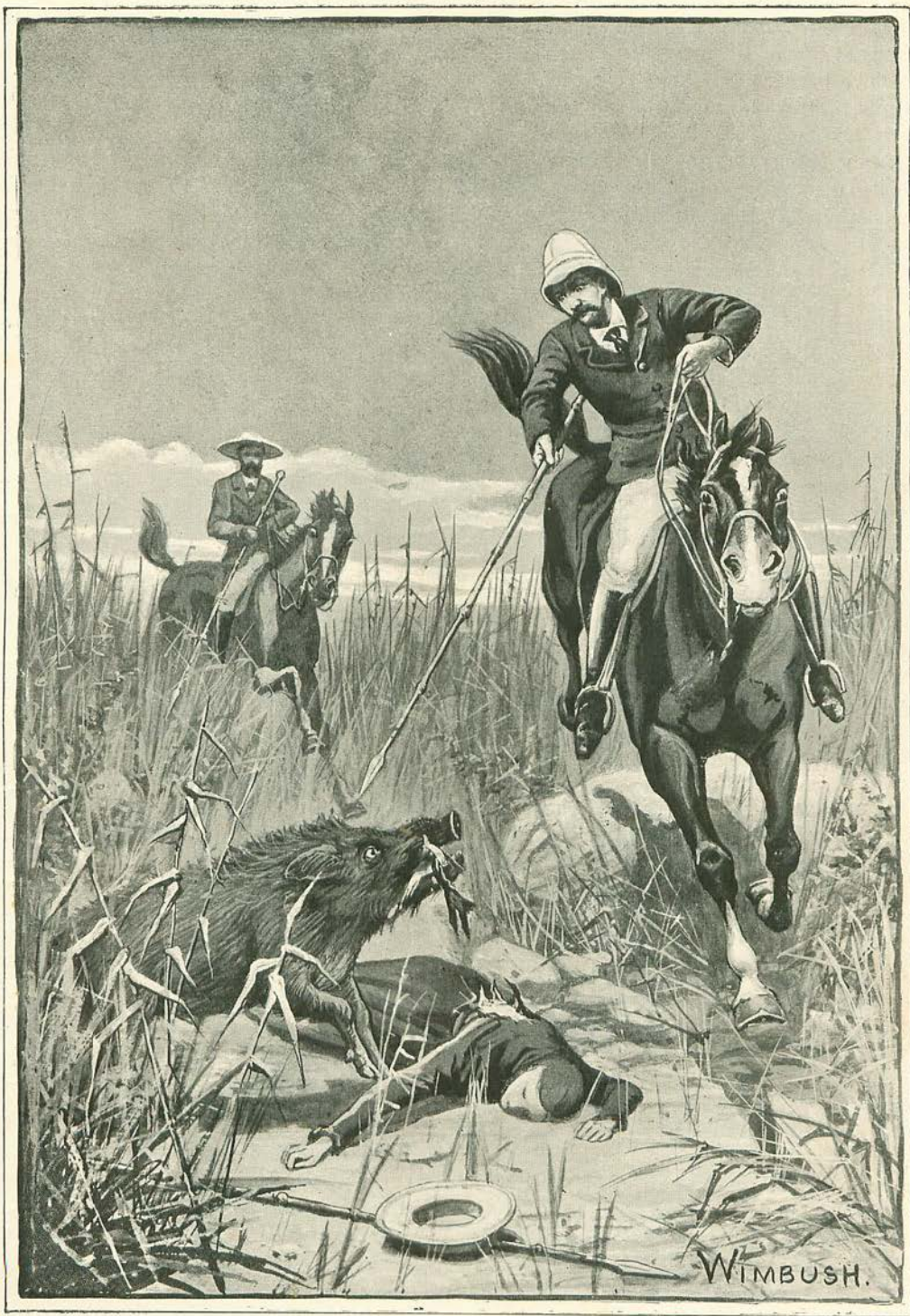
What will not muscle do? For the first field or two we had nothing to do but sit down and gallop; then a big wall loomed in front of us, with a strong suspicion of a drop and water beyond. The pig apparently cantered up to it and down it a few yards, then, turning, with a wonderful knack he somehow jumped himself over it sideways. There was nothing for it but to have it. "Harden your heart like a millstone, Ned, and set your face like a flint." S—, G—, and myself charged it gallantly in line, the other two following. G—'s horse, a biggish Waler, sailed over wall, water, and all in his stride. S— hit the wall hard, and he and his horse disappeared completely in the watery uncertainty beyond; but they soon crawled out and were off again. My horse left his hind-legs in the ditch; but we recovered ourselves, and the two others came through the hole made by S—.

The pig now took advantage of a footpath across a fallow, and ambled along down that. We were still riding as hard as we could lay legs to the ground. One of the others had taken it quietly, with a view to saving his horse—a fatal thing to do; for if you have once let a pig get his second wind, you will find it impossible to make up lost ground and overhaul him.

Out of the footpath he turned, at right angles, into a road, and, coming to a stiff, forbidding-looking gate, he resolutely charged

it, smashed the bottom bar, and was through in a moment. But he swung the gate loose, which G—, who was ahead of us, did not see; and as his horse rose, the gate, opening again, caught him and brought him down head-over-heels—a nasty-looking fall. G—, who had landed on his back, seemed practically unhurt, and we all dashed on. A big prickly-pear hedge or two had to be negotiated; I selected my spot, and rode down at the first one fairly fast. We landed with lots to spare. The next was stiffer, and had a little ditch towards us. The pace was beginning to tell. I pulled my horse up to a canter, and, getting him well together, ought to have cleared it; but it was a bad take-off, and he blundered and came on to his head. Result: a few cuts from the prickly-pear. G—, S—, and I were, however, still going strong, when the pig took advantage of a small thicket to squat down and recover his wind. The other two rode on to view him away; I stayed behind. A rustle near me, and I saw our cunning friend, thinking he had dodged us this time, slip out at exactly the spot he had gone in, and proceed to scurry away almost on his old line, back again. A shout brought S— and G—, and we were galloping in pursuit once more. And now an ugly little deep nullah crossed the line: it was a breakneck drop, but without hesitation the boar threw himself down, and then leapt some six feet up on the opposite side and was off. I found a place lower down, where I jumped in and out, and was once more rather behind the other two, but still in view of the pig galloping along.

Suddenly I found myself sprawled out in some long, thick reeds. I suppose I owed it to them that my horse could not see the buffalo-hole we had ridden into; but they also saved my fall. I held the reins by a sort of instinct: it is a great bore to be left horseless, and it also often prevents your coming on to your head, and brings you over instead on your shoulders and back. Feeling a trifle knocked out of time, I picked up my spear and scrambled on again, to see some natives cutting grass for thatching away on our right. The pig saw them too, and, indignant and vindictive,



HE LUNGED HIS SPEAR INTO THE BOAR'S SIDE.

deliberately deviated from his course, charged them as they fled, caught one fugitive between the knees, cut each thigh badly, overset him, and went on his own way rejoicing. A pig is possessed of the nastiest temper of any living animal, and his sharp, curving tusks are useful instruments, used with incredible swiftness and unerring aim.

One is often apt to get spilt as I was, for it is impossible to watch the ground one rides over: you must leave it all to your horse to pick his way. "Keep your eye on the pig," is a golden rule. A clever horse gets across broken ground in a marvellous way. Neither must you cut off corners; for you do not know what you may come to, whereas the pig in front of you must have found some sort of a footing.

I saw S—— laid out a little farther on over a *goanchie*, a lump formed by roots of grass,—there were indeed "wigs on the green" that day,—but he was up again in two minutes and leading with G——. They were gradually overhauling the pig. G—— was now close to him. The boar allowed him to come near, and then, with infinite cunning and dexterity, made a sudden jink to one side, leaving G—— some points to the bad. Again and again this happened. Every time G—— got up close enough to think of spearing, the pig would jink, now this way, now that.

I was coming up upon their right, my good little mount white with lather, and neither of us as fresh as when we started. As I got nearer, the pig seemed to be edging over right-handed too, jinking away from G——. I pressed on. Rattle, rattle went our hoofs over the hard ground. Suddenly the boar darted round—seemed to get away like lightning from the other two—and before you could say "Knife" was charging all he knew straight at me. So does it happen often and often, in life as well as in pig-sticking, the first man and the best man is not allowed by fate to get "first spear"—for it lay within my grasp now, though I had only practically followed S—— and G—— all through the gallop.

In one brief second all the injunctions my dear friends had showered upon me flashed

through my mind—to keep hold of my spear till death did us part, to ride as hard as I could, etc. It was only a second's memory. On came the boar, straight for my horse's shoulder and forelegs—a gallant charge. Hustling my horse along and shortening his stride, we went full tilt. I leaned well down, meaning to lunge my spear into the pig directly he was within reach, low down in the body just behind the elbow, knowing that, without any effort on my part, our impetus would send it home. . . . Followed one instant of deadly sickness as I realised I had missed him. The next thing I saw was sky, and then stars!

Sitting loose and leaning right over, I must have come well away from my horse; and one's helmet is an excellent thing for saving the neck. Giddy and sick, I sat up, only to see the pig, with a hoarse grunt of defiance, resolutely charging at me as hard as he could gallop, while I was upon the ground. His bristles were standing up at right angles from his curved spine; his great wedge-shaped head and horrid tusks were lowered, the muscle working round the huge shoulders as he pelted at me;—all seemed to add savage action to his charge.

I threw myself flat on my face and lay still (I had lost my spear), and the next thing I felt was blow after blow, quick, cutting gashes in the back; and then G——'s voice—never was human voice more welcome—as he lunged his spear into the boar's side. I sat up, feeling badly shaken and bruised. But there was "life in the old dog yet." Before me were S—— and G—— and the pig.

The pluck of the bull-dog does not beat
The pluck of the gallant boar.

He was magnificent. Furious with rage, again and again he literally hurled himself on their spears in his mad longing to get at them, till he died facing his foes—splendid animal! I quite grieved to see him lying dead. He was thirty-eight and a half inches high at the withers, and his tusks measured eight and a half inches. He weighed three hundred pounds. Half a dozen beaters slung his mighty carcass on a pole, and took it home to divide the flesh

between them. His tusks fell to G——, first spear, which I had missed.

We called up the elephant with the drink-box to quench the pig-stickers' thirst—the thirst which exceeds all others. My little Waler had had a heavy fall, but, as we were going at a good pace, he was not as badly ripped as he might have been; he had two ugly gashes. My thick coat and S——'s timely intervention had providentially saved me considerably, and the sight of fresh horses quite, so to speak, "put me on my legs" for another ride; but I was bruised and sore the following day.

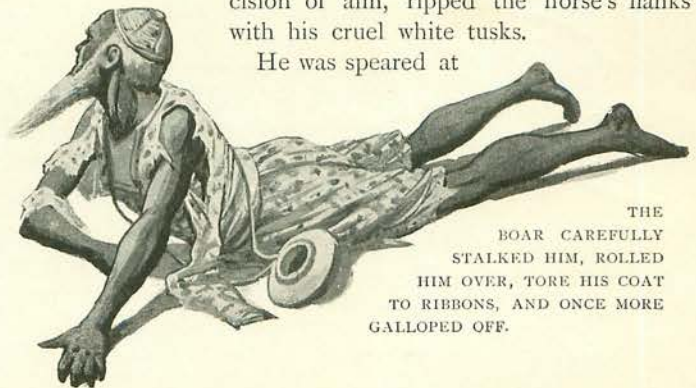
The next piece of cover we drew was thick, and the line of beaters advanced noisily with drums and shouting.

They came, of every race, a mingled swarm :
Far rung the groves and gleamed the yellow grass
With tom-tom, club, and naked arm.

We riders were posted outside the cover at points where the pig was likely to break. Of course, in the natural sequence of all events, he went away just where he was not wanted to, and headed straight for a canal. O reader, don't you hate water when you are on an unknown mount? I do. This water, too, was quite unjumpable. Nothing comes amiss to a boar. I was brought up to believe that pigs in swimming cut their own throats. This is incorrect. Our pig emerged from the canal fresher than ever, and lobbed casually off down the opposite fallow. I followed the others' example, and proceeded to slither down the canal bank till my horse was up to his neck in water, and then swim for it. About half-way across, just as I was feeling rather secure and triumphant, "wet, but joyful," my horse started plunging, and, to my extreme horror, we parted company; but I secured his long tail, and we both got across safely somehow, and scrambled out. I had lost my whip, and, much more important, my stirrup; but some one helped me up, and I managed to ride the

rest of the gallop as I was. Our pig headed for some bushes, and was in them before one had time to look round. We waited for coolies and sent them in to beat him out. But his temper was now thoroughly aroused; he bowled over three beaters, and, though we were all well on the look-out, he sneaked away down a road and was almost out of sight when S—— caught sight of him and raised a wild "Tally ho!" We all lay legs to the ground. S—— caught him up and pressed him closely, but the astute wretch slipped into a mango-grove. Over the mud wall we flew into the grove, in time to see the pig bustling away down the field beyond. We pushed through and under the great trees. It was a very awkward *lep* out of the grove—a stiff pear-hedge set on a bank; but we got over it somehow, and raced down the next field. At the bottom we came to a nasty blind nullah: there were two empty saddles after that. In the next field the pig turned and made back for the mangoes. Away at him went S——, and was charged at once. He missed the pig, was bowled completely over, horse and all, like I was, and broke his collar-bone. I galloped to the rescue, and this time did manage to spear our friend, but not badly. There is, I have since found, a great deal of knack in it, as, indeed, there is in most things. The pig also went off with my spear, which, of course, I ought never to have allowed. Not that he went "off," plucky fellow! He had no idea of leaving us. First he smashed my spear in half against a tree; then, seeing one of the others coming up, deliberately charged straight at him, and, with the neatest precision of aim, ripped the horse's flanks with his cruel white tusks.

He was speared at



THE
BOAR CAREFULLY
STALKED HIM, ROLLED
HIM OVER, TORE HIS COAT
TO RIBBONS, AND ONCE MORE
GALLOPED OFF.

the same time, but it seemed to make no difference to him. An unfortunate *māli*-keeper of the mango-grove had hurried up. The boar carefully stalked him, rolled him over, tore his coat to ribbons, and once more galloped off. All this was the work of a moment.

We rode for all we were worth after him down a road. Over he threw two wretched women, and cut them both badly; tore through a village, tilted a native who was standing by a well straight into it, and finally took up his stand once more near a sugar crop.

I have never seen such magnificent grit, such implacable defiance, in any animal; he never lost head nor heart, and his grim, fiendish temper was a study.

Speared twice again, he fell and died, "the bravest of the brave."

I look at his "tushes" now, and I feel that I should do well if I could play the game of life as nobly and meet death as callously.

It is just feelings of this better sort which sport rouses in us—feelings which surely nullify those accusations of "unwomanly," which are sometimes brought against us women. No, indeed! As long as pity and reverence and admiration have any part in our being, we can never grow "hard"; and the more deeply we enter into active, physical life, as well as mental, the more deeply is our better nature stirred.

"The bravest are the tenderest."

We shall not have lived in vain if we only learn to ride straight, to appreciate life and nature to the full, and to back one another up from the cradle to the grave.



Isabel Savory,

Quiet:

BY THE LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE.

THERE was no sound in the air,
 When my soul had passed away,
 But the sound of a wordless prayer,
 And the things that I know to-day
 Expounded in silence were.

There was no sound in the heart
 I had loved with the love of life;
 But it silently drew apart
 From the noise of confusing strife,
 From the sword and the battle-dart.

There was no sound in Heaven,
 When my soul had entered at last,
 But a sound which rose in the even
 From a soul on the earth bound fast,
 Who prayed for the dead unshriven.

·IN·THE·HIMALAYAS·
·WITH·A·RIFLE·

BY·ISABEL·SAVORY·



WIMBUSH.

WHAT a good feeling it is to be fit and well, to have your nerves steady and your head cool, to awake every morning simply revelling in being alive in the almost "fizzing" air! Such is life in the wilds of the northern Indian mountains, twelve thousand feet above sea-level, in a little *khaki* tent on a steep, rocky slope. At all distances around only peak after peak of snow is to be seen, and gorgeous and solemn mountains, to the tops of which no man ever has been or ever will go, which are therefore steeped in the glamour of the "un-get-at-able"—that "un-get-at-able" which, as long as man lives, always has, always does, and always shall constitute the heart's desire.

The Himalayas are full of memories—memories which bring the hill-man up from the plains back to the hills to die, back to the land of storms and sunsets, to the dear damp smells of rotting undergrowth, of scented fir-pins, of wet moss. It cannot be told why, for it is a thing

which is born in a man, or else it is not: he knows.

I could never stand the plains :
Think of blazing June and May,
Think of those September rains
Yearly till the Judgment Day!
I should never rest in peace,
I should sweat and lie awake ;
Rail me, then, on my decease,
To the hills—for old sake's sake.

Come there with me now, and hear a tale of myself and S—and our adventures when we were shooting tahr last year.

Women do not shoot with their husbands and brothers nearly as much as they might do, provided they are the right sort of women. Of course there are women and women ; but in the present day, when so many of them care for a free life, I wonder that the majority should still live a conventional one.

We were in the native state of Chamba, somewhat south-east of Kashmir, having had permission from the Rajah to shoot there. I do not suppose a European woman had ever been in this particular spot. We had a very difficult time getting there at all, for the paths were inaccessible for mules. However, we were settled in our camp at last.

One cold, "parky" morning at five o'clock, fortified with some coffee and biscuits, we set out with our rifles and two shikaris after tahr. As we tramped over the rough ground and climbed gradually up the craggy hillsides, the sun rose. It is idle to describe a sunrise over snow mountains with no other human being near. Paradoxical though it sounds, it is

A light that never was on land or sea.

It was a hard task labouring up those steep ascents in the rarefied atmosphere.

* * This article is No. 4 of "A Lady's Adventures in Unknown India."

One must have a good head, too, to get round some of the corners, where the rock above bulges out in a most awkward way, and where the ledges, affording scant foothold, sink abruptly into rough, perpendicular precipices far below. I handed the shikari my rifle and held on with my eyelids.

Almost as bad were the steep slopes of rocky shale which we had to cross. As we carefully moved over

interval before the resounding crash at the bottom suggesting an unpleasant "drop."

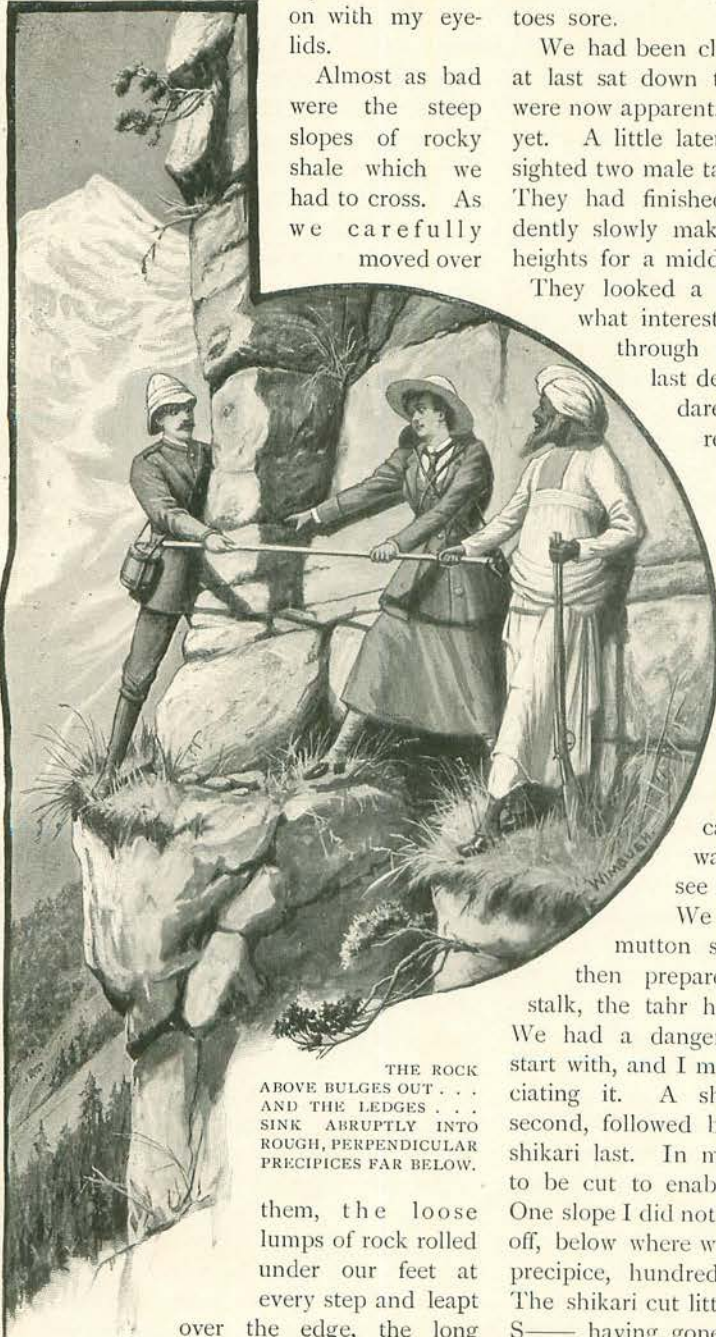
I wore thick indiarubber-soled shoes—they are noiseless, and in climbing in forests do not slip on the pine-needles. We tried grass-shoes at first; but two pairs wore out in a day, and they made the toes sore.

We had been climbing for some time, and at last sat down to scan the ridges, which were now apparent. Nothing was to be seen yet. A little later and one of the shikaris sighted two male tahr through the telescope. They had finished feeding, and were evidently slowly making their way up to the heights for a midday sleep among the rocks.

They looked a long way off; and with what interest did I not examine them through my glasses! Keen to a last degree one feels, to do and dare *anything*, when the reason of life (for the time being) lies within the grasp.

The sight of the big grey goats compensated for every step of the way we had toiled from the plains. Their light ash colour deepened to brown-black on the head; their long, shaggy hair on the necks and shoulders caught the sun as they walked; and I could just see their short, curling horns.

We sat down and discussed mutton sandwiches and cold tea, then prepared to set forth on our stalk, the tahr having gone out of sight. We had a dangerous ravine to cross to start with, and I must confess to not appreciating it. A shikari went first, S—second, followed by myself, and the other shikari last. In many places foot-holes had to be cut to enable us to get along at all. One slope I did not like in the least; it broke off, below where we crossed, into an abrupt precipice, hundreds of feet sheer descent. The shikari cut little holes for our feet, and, S—having gone over, prepared to follow



THE ROCK ABOVE BULGES OUT . . . AND THE LEDGES . . . SINK ABRUPTLY INTO ROUGH, PERPENDICULAR PRECIPICES FAR BELOW.

them, the loose lumps of rock rolled under our feet at every step and leapt over the edge, the long

himself, with me just behind. Meanwhile, the other shikari, in a superior way, thought to climb across himself higher up. Suddenly he lost his balance and slipped, and came sliding, gliding down the slope, in spite of all his efforts to stop himself with his finger-nails and stick, straight on to me. Over I was knocked, and, falling partly on the top of him, stopped him in a degree; but we should both have slipped on and gone into eternity had not the first shikari saved us. Using all his strength, and with extraordinary grip of the insecure foothold, he caught us, and stopped us till we had regained our balance. I felt rather green for the next ten minutes.

We crept up at last, with infinite caution, to the ridge the tahr had crossed as they disappeared from view. There they were again! *Joy!* Three hundred yards off, but still moving on and looking for a select corner. They were fine, big fellows through the glasses, and once more we watched them vanish, when, to our disgust, a female appeared just above where the males had crossed, and was evidently on the look-out. She had chosen her stand so well that if we even put our heads above the rocks she *must* see us. She was about eight hundred yards away. It was very provoking, but the only thing remaining to be done was to go back and put the ridge between ourselves and this astute sentinel.

This we did, and, climbing the dividing ridge, got round the flank of the tahr; then, dropping below out of sight of the female, we worked towards the place where the males should be. The task was a formidable one indeed. We began the toilsome ascent with the sun literally *blazing* on our backs. On we climbed, up and up, across some "hair-curling" ground, always thinking that surely at last this *was* the top of all things, only to find a still higher platform of cliff.

At last the top was reached. We were hot before; now we were to be frozen, for the northern slope was one vast sheet of snow. It was soft, and we sank in, often up to our knees. It was slow, toilsome work. My fingers ached with cold; my feet were numb.

We began climbing downwards again. And now the greatest possible precaution

was needed, for it was impossible to know exactly where the tahr were; that they were quite close was certain, but whether to the right, or to the left, or below, we had no idea.

We trod as silently as the cutest burglar. Once, crossing a slaty ridge, the rock under my feet gave way, and down the slates went with a terrible rattle, which must have been heard a mile off. But I remembered with comfort that hill game are not disturbed by noises of this sort.

Now that we were getting close my nerves were becoming "jumpy," and I knew that I should make a bad shot.

We halted. S—— and the shikari crept on to try to locate the tahr. I watched them pass out of sight. A quarter of an hour's nervous tension followed, and then the shikari reappeared and beckoned to me. I stole down as noiselessly as possible, and then followed to where S—— was waiting behind a rock.

Silently we drew ourselves up and looked over, and saw a sight one could never forget, for culminating points stamp themselves indelibly on the memory.

Below us lay our *raison d'être*. Perfectly at home, on a small patch of sloping grass, about a hundred yards off across a small ravine, there were the tahr.

How can I describe our feelings when we suddenly saw them leap up and rush off like the wind! The disappointment and shock were so great that neither of us fired. Besides, they were out of sight in a twinkling. We were off too. It was impossible that they could have been disturbed by us, consequently possible that, not having seen us, they might come round and let us have a shot. S—— took the left and I the right, and what we had faintly hoped for came to pass. S—— got two easy shots, and killed with his second barrel; meanwhile, I ran and climbed, helped here and there by the shikari in front. Suddenly he dropped, and cried, "Shoot!" and over his shoulder I got a snapshot at an old goat going his best pace. I look upon the result as *the* surprise of my life; he rolled over and over like a rabbit. It was indeed a "fluke." I was too jubilant for any words, and the

shikari was beside himself. But alas! it meant a reputation up to which I could never live!

Thoroughly pleased with ourselves, S— and I partook of some tiffin, after which we climbed to the place where we had first seen the tahr lying down, and, from claw-marks and little tufts of hair lying about,

praying for a change. It snowed and rained hard for a bit, and then, to our relief, cleared away as quickly as it came, the great masses of cloud driving away before the wind on our left, while the sun began to stream over everything on the right.

We left the heads of the two tahr to be fetched later, and then we walked off and upwards to new ground. From point to point we swept the country with our glasses; but the desolate crags stretched away from us untenanted with life of any sort; no living creature moved on the slopes. The storm had driven everything, like ourselves, to take shelter. So be it. We descended.

If the mountain had been bad to climb up, it was a thousand times worse to go down. I hate looking at what may constitute the gate of hell or heaven. Across one bad ledge, like the roof of a house, a precipice on either side, the shikari took me on his back.

Providence directs sportsmen. We were resting after a bad bit, when we saw some tahr actually in the direction of our camp.

gathered that probably a leopard had jumped down among them. We both thought we saw something, but it all happened in such a flash! Anyway, he had missed his prey.

The sky by this time was darkening over, and it became very evident we were in for a bad storm. Down came the snow-clouds and mist and sleet, like a solid white wall. One of the shikaris led the way to a goat-shed, a filthy little lean-to used by goatherds, into the corner of which, where the roof leaked less, S— and I huddled, shivering,



WIMBUSH.

MISS SAVORY'S
FIRST TAHR.

Had the shower not driven us down, we should have missed them. They were on a spur, grazing close to a block of white stone, which made a capital mark to guide the stalker. In a bee-line they were a mile off, but we should have to go down to the bottom of the valley, over the stream, and again up very impracticable-looking precipices.

With such an incentive we positively *rushed* down to the bottom, and, luckily finding a goat-track up the other side, we got into the right position just about an hour after we first saw the tahr. The white stone was very helpful. S—— separated from me.

One tahr was lying under the stone; another was more to the right. I was to get as near as possible to the former, while he stalked the latter. After giving him time, I was to fire first. (S—— was a most unselfish individual.)

By dint of excessive caution, and advancing an inch at a time, I got to within about fifteen yards, and, by leaning forward, could see the shaggy old goat through a fissure in the rock. It was the easiest shot in the world, except that the earth I stood on crumbled considerably, and I was not very steady. I waited some minutes, almost hearing my heart thump — thump; then, raising my rifle, took a long aim. *Great goodness!* I had missed him. I gave him the second barrel as he bounded off, and missed again. Feeling more like suicide than anything else, I followed the shikari, whose pity added to my disgust. S—— had fired at the other tahr and hit him hard. We followed him up, found him in a corner, and despatched him.

Three heads in one day was not bad, and I was beginning to recover, when, crossing my line of fire, we came upon blood-marks. Then after all I *had* hit him, with my second barrel! Up went my spirits mountains high. Farther on more blood; then marks where he had rolled and fallen over the edge of the cliff. Kneeling down and stretching over, there we saw him, dead, at the bottom. No doubt I had hit him fair, but his own impetus carried him on, and he disappeared from our view just before he rolled over.

In the now sunless ravine it was freezing sharp. How grateful and comforting our evening meal was inside my tent! Such exercise is worth a caravan-load of doctor's stuff. Our cook worked miracles in the way of dinner. Here is a specimen: mulligatawny soup, a capon and a hump, chicken cutlets, curry and rice, with "poppadums" (thin wafers, only seen in the East) and biscuits and cheese.

We sat by the camp-fire afterwards, well wrapped up, talking of the day's adventures and the morrow's plans. You will find that one of the best parts of travelling consists in all that it gives one afterwards to look back upon.

So, with the friends whom death hath spared,
When life's career is done,
We'll talk of the dangers we have shared
And the trophies we have won.

I've often wondered how I should define a true sportswoman: I think as "A fair shot, thinking of others, and never doing an unsportsmanlike action, preferring quality to quantity in a bag, a keen observer of all animals, and a real lover of Nature."

One is very apt to get careless in shooting, as in everything else. I was toiling lazily along after my shikari one day, allowing him to carry my gun, when suddenly an ibex appeared on the sky-line, only about eighty yards from me. He stood perfectly motionless and had a good look at us. *Tableau!* How we stood, like two statues! As he nipped round and was off like a flash I dashed at my rifle and had two shots at him. The moral was very obvious; but, *cui bono?* As long as we are what we are, we shall do the same thing over and over again.

Our rough camp arrangements on the rocky slope were unconventional. Occasionally one's seat went over backwards, the result of thoughtless movement. We had no cloth on the table, of course, but a large tin teapot, whiskey- and claret-bottles, a cup with butter in it, a cup of sugar, a saucerful of salt, teacup and plate of enamelled tin, knife, fork, and spoon, each, with the addition of two bedroom candles, which our servant stuck down to the table by a pool of their own grease.

Again, my clothes in the evening were of



MISS SAVORY TRIES IN VAIN TO SAVE HER HORSE.

the oddest description. I brought as little as possible, and so made use of odds and ends when it grew cold at night—woollen gloves, a "warm coat British" (one of those issued to all our men up at the front), a cap, and a *towel* generally wound round each leg. I slept in most of my clothes, including a covert coat.

As we left Chamba and rode part of the way out, a shocking accident happened. S— had a pony called the "Child," and rode his Waler, a charger named Sphai. He was really too big to be quite safe for riding in the hills; but he was unusually clever, and so we brought him with us for the first part of our journey.

Picking them up again as we returned, we rode the Child and Sphai wherever the ground would allow, and, when too bad, dismounted and led them. I was on a man's saddle. We went up and down some very dangerous and difficult places, and familiarity after a time was apt to breed contempt. One no longer realised how dangerous it was. Many of the paths were barely three feet wide in places, with a cliff above on one side and a precipice below on the other; they were the roughest tracks, and one came to vast rocks, and had to follow a sort of staircase up them, with no proper footing for a horse at all.

It was very nervous work at first, but, as I said, we grew used to it.

Descending a steep ravine, I remember, as I rode over a little bridge at the bottom, loosening my short skirt, which had caught up under the saddle. S— was in front, out of sight.

Slowly Sphai clambered up the path on the other side until we were nearly at the top. The last little bit was much steeper. On the left a wall of rock rose perpendicularly above our heads, on the right the narrow path broke off into a sheer precipice down to the gorge far below.

Making an effort up the last steep bit, Sphai dug his willing toes into the rock, and broke into a jog; at the same time he turned a little across the path, inwards, which, of course, threw his quarters outwards. With one of his hind-feet he loosened a rock at the edge, and his foot went over with it.

It is almost impossible to describe such scenes, even though this one will remain in my memory as long as I live. *Instantly*—there was no time to think—I felt him turn outwards still more, and *both* his hind-legs were over. In the self-same moment I threw myself off the saddle on to the path. I do not know—I never shall know—how I did it. I kept hold of the reins, and, for a second of time, kneeling on the path, clung to them, Sphai's head on a level with me, his two poor great fore-legs clattering hopelessly on the path, while with his strong hindquarters he fought for a minute for life, trying to dig his toes into some crevice in the precipice.

It was only for a second. I was powerless to hold him up. There was not even time to shout for S—. Right over, backwards, he slowly went, with a long heave. I saw the expression in his poor, imploring eyes. . . . Picture what it was like to stand there, powerless to help in any way! I rather wished I had gone over too.

A hideously long silence—such a *dead* silence—and then two sickening crashes, as he hit rock after rock. A pause, and a long resounding roar from all the rocks and pebbles from the bottom of the gorge!

The shock of what had happened stunned me beyond expression. The whole scene has been a nightmare many a time since. Sphai lay, literally smashed to pieces, down below; and but for the facts that I had just happened to pull out my skirt, and, being on a man's saddle, slipped off at once, the rocky gorge would have held us side by side.

S— went down and afterwards examined with glasses the face of the precipice. The unfortunate horse must have twice struck rocky projections before the fearful and final smash, a short distance from the stream. The perpendicular height was not less than three hundred yards.

I am little tempted to linger over such a scene.

It will be a sad day for the Himalayas if they are ever overrun by Europeans, and the present much-to-be-condemned scheme of a railway into Kashmir seems to make it probable. There is no time to lose. Go while you can.

THE ZOJI LA PASS: A DAY ON THE MOUNTAINS.



BY
ISABEL
SAVORY.

“TOIL and pleasure, in their nature opposite, are yet linked together in a kind of

necessary connection,” says Livy. Perfectly true. Women as well as men love most what is dearly bought—often *too* dearly bought. After my climbs over some of the mountains in Kashmir I realised this, and at the end of a hard day enjoyed such content as is given to few, and to them seldom in any lifetime.

Of all spots in the “Happy Valley,” Sonamerg, at the top of the Sind, is possibly the most beautiful. After following the narrow gorge, closed in by frowning heights, the valley suddenly opens out into the richest little “merg” of pasture-land, which lies mountain-locked, green to distraction, and golden with crocuses. Sonamerg means “the golden meadow.” It is 8,650 feet above sea level, and yet we walked knee deep in grass and flowers, thick, scented blossoms, blue, purple, and yellow. The hillsides were covered with luxuriant vegetation. Higher up, the steep nullahs were lined with deodars and pines; and above the

tree-zone rose rocky mountains, glittering glaciers wedged between them, and their long, gaunt ribs sustaining vast feather-beds of snow.

Under some shady pines in a corner of this Garden of Eden we pitched our tents, the scent of ripe strawberries round us mixing with the damp, aromatic fir-pines; and the next day we prepared to go over the Zoji La Pass.

A certain amount of awe and reverence surrounds the very name *Zoji La*—the one gap in the vast range of the Western Himalayas; the gigantic steep, over 2,000 feet high, by which one rises from Kashmir up on to the tablelands of Thibet; the barrier between the Aryan and the Mongolian races, between sunny Kashmir and the bleak wastes of Central Asia.

Though only 11,500 feet high, this treacherous Pass was responsible last winter for the loss of three hundred mules and their drivers, who were overtaken, and perished in the deadly cold. Its reputation for icy gales and sudden snowstorms is world-wide.

We cantered up the valley of Sonamerg to Baltal, at the foot of the Pass, crossing the Sind river continually by narrow wooden bridges, made from time immemorial on the cantaliver principle. They consist generally of one arch, the supporting timbers projecting one over the other from the bank, the shore ends being weighted down with masonry. They are said to have suggested the Forth Bridge.

Baltal consists of a collection of three or four rough stone huts clustered together, forming a refuge for Dāk Wallers and for

. This is the fifth instalment of “The Adventures of a Lady in Unknown India.” The series will conclude in the next number.

the Ladakis and Dards bringing droves of baggage-mules across the Pass.

It was sleeting a little, and we went into the largest hut, where there was a fire on the mud floor of damp dwarf birch logs, which made a suffocating smoke. Some stunted Dras coolies of the ugly Mongolian type were squatting round it. Outwardly they compare to disadvantage with the handsome Kashmiris, but there is no question which are the better men of the two.

The storm clearing off, we were only too glad to get out of the "man-stifled" hut and begin our climb up the Pass. It was a long, zig-zagging ascent, at first through birch-trees and flowers, which gave place higher up to deodars, and above them to rhododendron-bushes; these last luxuriate on the Himalayas right up to the snow-line. It grew distinctly colder, and when at last we were well in the funnel of the Pass the wind *whistled*.

The barren region beyond the Zoji La is fascinating to an extraordinary degree. Central Asia, with its desert wastes, its freezing blasts, and burning sun, has indeed a fitting entrance in that "sun-burnt and sorrowful" valley.

There are mountains on either side of the Zoji La—heights unnamed, uncared for, and unexplored. Than the vastness and nakedness of this Pass, with its shattered *débris* and ice-worn stones, there is nothing sadder. The ancients worshipped mountains; and no wonder. "Too great to appease, too high to appal, too far to call,"—after all, Nature is our background and abode, the link between man and man, and that which teaches us to know ourselves.

We walked on through the Pass until we came to the point where the streams ran away from us towards Thibet. We were beyond the roof-ridge. The descent on the other side was scarcely noticeable, the country, as I said, being in the form of a tableland.

We waded through two of the ice-water streams, cold beyond all description, the stones sharp and cutting; and we clambered over a great glacier many tens of yards thick.

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The stream ran underneath, and we stood in the cave formed by it as it went in—a cool cavern, a veritable "ice-house," with its shingly floor, its blue-green sides and roof, ribbed and polished and wet,—the coldest place in the world. In the shades at the end of the cavern, by tortuous windings where the torrent had eaten its way, it boiled along, thundering to itself far away in the heart of the glacier after it had disappeared in the sinuosities of the walls.

Through caverns measureless to man,
Down to a sunless sea.

The wind outside was deliciously dry and bracing, even if it *was* cold. As Euripides said of the Athenians, so were we "ever delicately treading through most pellucid air." All idea of distance was lost by the atmospheric effect, and mountains eighty



miles away might
be taken for hillocks
forty yards off, and *vice*
versâ.

The little marmots we came across (*burra chuars*—big rats—the natives called them) were splendid little fellows. One heard a shrill, uncanny whistling, and a reddish-brown marmot, with a black stripe down his back, himself some three feet long, was seen sitting up on his hind-legs at 'tention on a heap of stones, gazing impertinently and whistling jeeringly. He bolted, when we got close, into holes and galleries under the stones, and emerged to jibe again after we had departed.

We turned our faces towards Kashmir, the green forests, greener meadows, and bright, salmon-like river stretching below us. We were in the Pass again; but the kingdom of ice and rocks above had already woven its spell, and we were to return to it before long. Two of our party, H— and F—, had climbed most of the peaks in the Alps, and G— was one of the few women who had been up the Matterhorn. These three had come out to India prepared to explore a little in the Himalayas, and I was glad to join them.

A month later we had two tents carried up on the north side of Sonamerg, and pitched, between ten and eleven thousand feet high, on a barren but sheltered little plateau below a steep cliff. From this base we made four ascents.

We had two native servants to cook, and two to go down to the little bazaar at Sonamerg and bring up supplies; but, of course, we had our own commissariat too—tinned meats, tea, chocolate, soup tablets, condensed jelly, and so on. H—'s servant, "Chowry," a Goorka scout, accompanied us on all our climbs, and was almost equal to a guide. We all wore *puttoo*—thick woollen stuff: a long coat and knickers are the only suitable and safe garments for women to climb in. It was bitterly cold, and water froze hard inside our tents, but a big fire outside the openings was warming; besides, we were out on the

mountains all day, and only in camp to eat and sleep. Our last ascent was quite the most full of interest and adventure; for these reasons I have selected it to describe here.

Growing accustomed to the altitude, and beginning to feel in good condition, we set off early one morning before the sun had risen. G— dragged me out of bed (it was freezing hard); she never ceased all day to boast of it.

H—, F—, G—, and I had some hot coffee under the cold stars, standing round the camp-table, which was frozen to the grass outside my tent, our usual *rendezvous*, and, feeling at that early hour rather cross, and very much "martyrs," we set forth.

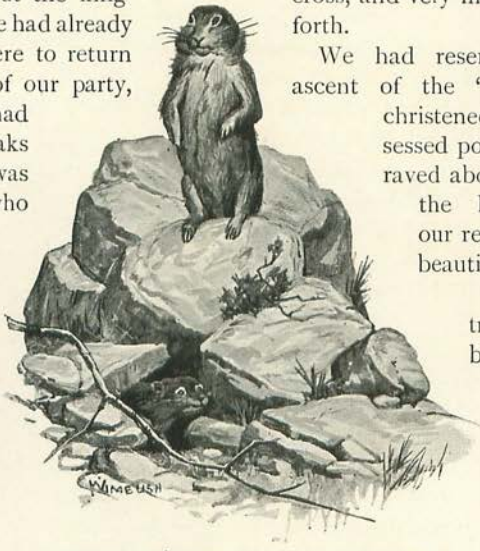
We had reserved for to-day the ascent of the "Silver Throne," so christened by F—, who possessed poetical tendencies, and raved about moonlight; it was the highest peak within our reach, and a singularly beautiful one.

We followed a goat-track for some time, but quitted it when it bore away to the east, and struck off across the moraine. It was a desolate waste of gigantic rocks, hard work to climb across, and

constituting the *débris* of the great glacier above us, upon the edge of which it fringed. Now and again between the rocks we looked down into a fissure filled with the blue-green light of ice, and showing what lay before the moraine.

At last we left it altogether, and struck out across the glacier itself. Here we decided that it was advisable that we should be roped. As events showed, it was by no means a needless precaution; we none of us knew the country, and though experienced mountaineers such as H— and F— could see a great deal, it is not like having a local guide.

H— went first, G— second, Chowry



SITTING UP ON HIS HIND-LEGS AT 'TENTION.

third, myself fourth, and F— fifth. The last man should always be a good man.

Chowry was a born climber, like so many of the Goorkas. The great thing to remember when roped is to keep the rope taut between each person, and they should be at intervals of about fourteen feet from each other.

We each carried an ice-axe and an alpine stock, a supply of which the others had brought out from London.

Our climb began now, following each other in a straight line up the centre of the glacier. We did no talking, keeping our mouths shut to stave



SLOWLY AT FIRST,
FASTER AND FASTER
EVERY MOMENT, WE
SLID, DRIVING UP CLOUDS
OF SNOW IN FRONT.

H— had to cut steps in it the whole way, and it was not the sort of place to be careless on. As we got higher and higher, and turned some corners, a slip on that glassy slope from one of us would probably have dragged the whole party to destruction. I often think it unwise to be roped in places of this description.

We were by this time a great height up, and could at last see Nanga Parbat, "the naked mountain," as the name means, because it is *always* white with snow. Its jagged peak soared far above every other range, 26,620 feet high, the third highest mountain in the world.

In a hundred ages of the good I could not tell the glories of Nanga Parbat. As the dew is dried up by the morning sun, so are the sins of mankind by the sight of Nanga Parbat.

Ethereally white, lonely beyond description, the peak stood out against the calm sky, that peak which defied even Mummery, and which is now his grave.

The sun glinted on the crystal castle on its summit, which the natives call *shal-battekot*. "Did not a certain shikari once climb to it, and did he not find therein countless snakes? Let the man that doubts go there,

off
thirst.

Suddenly

I heard an
exclamation,

and saw to my
horror the last of

G— disappearing
through a little rotten place
in the ice headlong into a

hidden crevasse.

The strain came upon H— and Chowry, and they met it as one man. G— was soon hauled out; but it was not pleasant to gaze into the huge fissure, which went out of sight down into the bowels of the glacier, and to see the thin crust of ice covering it over which we had walked. Thank Heaven, we had been roped!

The head of the glacier was connected with a high ridge by a steep bank of snow, which was frozen hard on the outside. Up this we slowly zig-zagged—*very* slowly, for

and bring down word, that all may know the truth."*

It was a grand view upon a grand day. Beneath our feet the glacier swept proudly from us in beautiful and satisfying curves, turning corner after corner, then draping itself in its dark moraine, and vanishing in the distance. Blue-fringed icicles hung in fantastic forms from the ice-bound rocks around us; the black ribs of the mountain piercing through the snow were singularly decorative; above our heads stood out the Silver Throne.

Climbing mountains grows upon one. To begin with, it seems toilsome and dangerous, and you vow never to go up another. But human nature is such that on the very first opportunity you are back among the snows once more; and to care about it to-day and yesterday is to care about it for ever.

Mountain scenery is the acme of repose, and repose is one of the greatest latent forces in the world; it is also the expression of form and line in their most soul-satisfying sense; it responds to your every mood, and it is, thank God, removed far beyond the reach of miserable little man to spoil.

The solemn heights embody the strong and the abiding—those "everlasting hills." The weird crags are peopled by fancy's ghosts; the quiet wastes of snow speak with unearthly voices. Here, at last, the still, sad music of humanity can never weary, nor the sordid stream of life stain.

Five little black dots in the midst of leagues and leagues of snow and ice, we continued our climb till we were at the top of a ridge. To reach our peak we had to make a steep descent, then bear away to the right over a level plateau, and finally ascend the west side of our peak by an *arête*.

Our shortest way lay down a snow couloir; that is nothing more nor less than a gully partly filled with snow, often a most useful institution, and the joy of the mountaineer. Couloirs look prodigiously steep when seen from the front, but snow does not actually lie steeper in them than in other places; this one was like a half section of a sloping chimney, grooved with the passage of stones down it.

"A daring leader is a dangerous thing." F—— pronounced our best way to be down the couloir, and, taking H——'s place, cut foot-holes for our descent. It certainly was steep. We were going cautiously, moving one at a time, when suddenly we heard "Crack!" and all our hearts stood still. H——, just above me, said quietly, "We're done for." The snow had cracked across just above us, at first only a gape of half an inch; but now the crust of the lower half was slowly beginning to slide downwards, and away we went on it. "Stop!" we all shouted instantly, and instantaneously dashed our axes into the underlying ice. They slid over it fruitlessly. "Stop!" thundered F—— again and again, hewing at the ice. But there was no stopping. Slowly at first, faster and faster every moment, we slid, driving up clouds of snow in front. *Was this the end?* Yet even in that awful moment we all remembered that the couloir turned a corner before it reached its end; and as we were swept round the angle, we one and all jumped—threw ourselves—fell—off the moving snow, against the rocks, into the corner, while on rushed the young avalanche—a mad glissade—down the couloir, over a little ledge at the bottom, and thundered into a crevasse below, where, had we stayed on it four seconds longer, we should all have been lying. Mountain-climbing is no joking matter; but it is as easy to be killed at home by a passing cab.

Having waited till we were steady, we turned into the couloir once more, and, reaching the ledge, we passed it on our left. The next flat snow-field was soon crossed, and then followed the last bit and the worst bit—a steep, rocky *arête*. Here F—— led again, followed by Chowry, and they literally hauled G—— and myself up after them. There was barely any foothold, and the last bit of rock was undermined, and bulged outwards at the top. We all stood, panting, upon it at last, then ran up a last easy slope of snow, and, hurrah! the Silver Throne was ours. We stood silent. Around us, and beneath us, and on every side, sombre, solemn mountain-peaks, "glittering walls, turrets,

* Ausland.

pinnacles, pyramids, domes, cones, and spires of ice and snow; every combination that the world can give, and every contrast that the heart can desire."

We could not linger long, hard though it was to leave. Having eaten some kola biscuits and chocolate, we began the descent by a different route. It proved to be more difficult than the other way, and, worse still, we had no time to make it safe by descending very slowly.

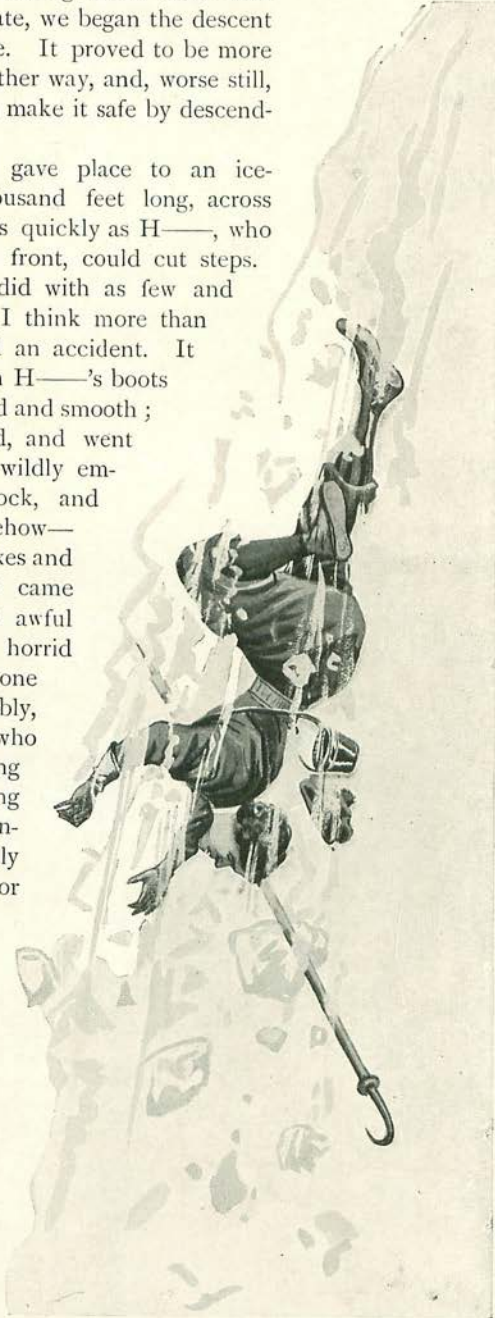
The rocky *arête* gave place to an ice-slope fully two thousand feet long, across which we moved as quickly as H—, who was once more in front, could cut steps. To save time, we did with as few and small as possible. I think more than one of us expected an accident. It came. The nails in H—'s boots had become rounded and smooth; he suddenly slipped, and went flying forwards. I wildly embraced a handy rock, and the rest clung somehow—somewhere—with axes and finger-nails. Taut came the rope with an awful strain. It was a horrid moment; but we one and all stood it nobly, and held H—, who (as we were heading diagonally) swung round like a pendulum, and finally came to anchor spread-eagled against the icy face. He was splendidly cool—kept hold of his axe, and, cutting himself foot-holes, got back into his place once more. We all took it calmly enough at the moment; it did not do to let oneself go. A short time after

we were safely off the slope, to our horror a mist came over the mountains and quickly thickened, blotting out all traces of our whereabouts. Clearly it was impossible to go on. Oh, ye immortal gods! where were we?

Heaven, who watches over children and drunkards, was good to us. We had only sat down in despair for a quarter of an hour when shapes began to loom in front of us, and our path was once more visible. We were surmounting the second ridge, which we found, to our disgust, to be not soft snow, but ice, with merely a thin layer of snow on the top.

Every step had to be cut through into the ice, this time by Chowry. Our advance was very slow, and the heat at the end of the long afternoon unbearable. There was plenty of air on the actual ridge, and now and then a refreshing puff quickened us into life; but for the most part we seemed to be in complete aerial stagnation. Was life worth living then? It seemed intolerable. We sucked ice to allay our thirst, and only grew thirstier.

I longed to cast away my axe, to abandon everything, as I mechanically struggled on, caring for nothing, observing nothing, only dimly conscious of the gloomy depths below, floored by cold, hard



MISS SAVORY FALLS OFF THE EDGE INTO A GULLY.

glaciers, torn by fathomless crevasses. In a dull dream I pictured the ice steps giving way, and speculated into which crevasse my body, after falling, falling, falling, would eventually find its way.

Thank Heaven the breezy summit brought with it reaction, and with the wind in our faces we prepared for the last descent. Putting our "best foot foremost," we hurried down the crisp slope. The sun was setting, sending its brilliant light from behind us, flooding the snows; our long shadows seemed to hurry on before us down towards our little camp.

We had unroped, and unexpectedly came across some awkward corners, which we proceeded to climb slowly round, holding the rock, and finding foothold on the edge of the snow-bank.

Perhaps I was tired and careless: I slipped and fell. In a moment I felt myself whirling headlong down the slope and being

pitched into some rocks at the bottom. Then a ghastly sensation followed as I fell off the edge into a gully and went down a snow slope in great bounds. . . . I realised it all in the most horrible manner—*my last moments!* Trivial things crowded into my brain—by no means was it a parade of sins! I was not at all surprised at finding myself lying on my right side, comparatively safe. I promptly fainted. H——'s white face was the next thing I saw.

How it was I only escaped with cuts and bruises I cannot tell; but snow is soft to fall upon. That evening's meal, welcome and most cheery, was a thing to be remembered; and over those drinks which are reserved for the faithful we vowed anew that we would not only continue to play at the game, but would gladly pay for the same. Is it not worth the candle?

And now I must leave you. We shall meet again at the historic Khyber.



A · WOMAN'S · IMPRESSIONS · OF · THE · KHYBER · PASS · DURING · THE · FRONTIER · WAR , 1898.

J. I. WIMBUSH.



A scrimmage in a border station,
A canter down some dark defile—
Two thousand pounds of education
Drops to a ten-rupee *jesail*;
The Crammer's boast, the Squadron's pride
Shot like a rabbit in a ride!

BY ISABEL SAVORY.

who cannot get up to the hills meet in the stifling clubs.

EVERY one told us that we should not get up the Khyber Pass at all until peace was concluded; but, as far as I was concerned, it was then or never, for I was leaving Peshawur in a few days.

Sir William Lockhart was omnipotent. We tried, and we succeeded. He finally wrote to my sister, Mrs. Merk, giving us permission to go up with an escort of the 9th Bengal Lancers, provided that we wired first for her husband's leave, as there was "a minimum of danger." W. R. Merk replied, "Go, with my blessing"; and so 7.30 a.m. on March 22nd saw us driving off from Peshawur in a *tum-tum*, with a pair of grey *tats*.

Peshawur was charming just at that time—every compound filled with orange-blossom; every bungalow-hedge composed of roses in full bloom; orchards of pink peach-blossom all around;—the scent was intoxicating and overpowering. Perfumed Peshawur!

Another three months, and it would be one of the hottest, most feverish spots in all India—

O! the white dust in the highways!
O! the stenches in the byways!—

and there would not be an Englishwoman left in the place. Deserted, except in the evenings, when the white-faced, weary sahibs

But Peshawur on this morning was green; the lawns on either side of the shady cantonment roads between the lines and the bungalows were dotted with glowing flower-beds. Down the Mall walked the everlasting spotlessly white native, sauntered the everlasting mem-sahib under sun-umbrella, drove the everlasting young subaltern, as cool and clean-looking as of old, with the same cart, same pony, and the same terrier running behind. Cantonments never vary. Some way off was the walled-in native city. I remember driving in at one of the few gates, and being struck dumb with the infinitely picturesque scene: a city of eighty thousand native inhabitants, the little streets crammed with them, a veritable rabbit-warren of humanity, all walking, all talking, all dressed in white, scarlet, blue, yellow—every conceivable colour. Sikhs, Afridis, Afghans, Yusufzaies, Pathans, Hindoos, Mohammedans, all meet in Peshawur. One realises at once what it is to be the only Englishwoman among thousands of natives. Every eye is on you, not rude, or staring, but you feel eyes everywhere, and you realise that, were there no cantonments outside, you would probably have one of the many knives in your back—which reflection puts you on your mettle. The secret of the British power in the East is that they have no fear.

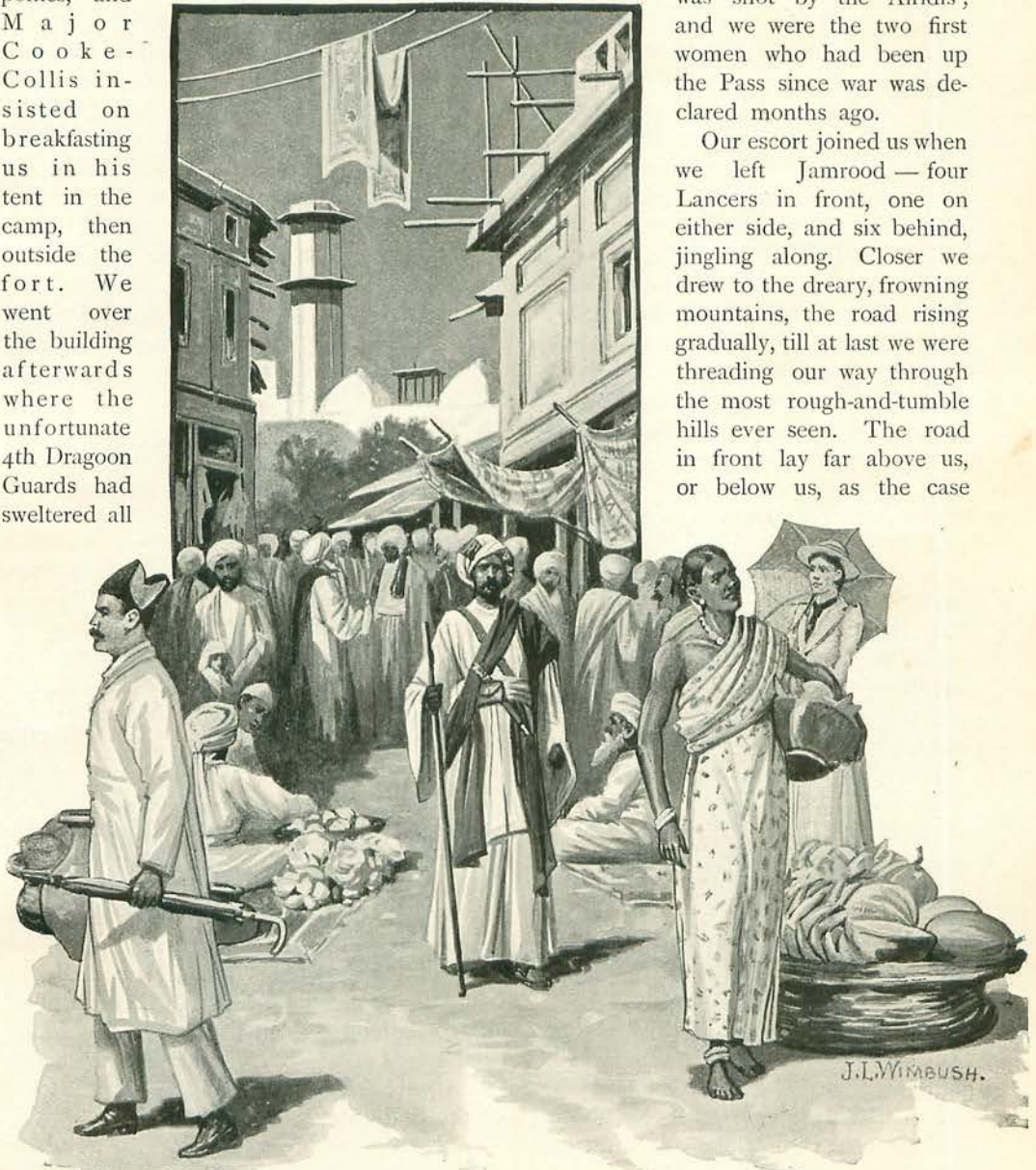
The fascinating bazaars on either side held the native sellers and their workmen, squatting on the floors; carpets, silks, and embroideries hung from the flat-roofed mud-houses—a carnival of colour which satisfied the most thirsty soul, flashing and fading into the dazzling blue sky.

Away from this unique city, across some miles of flat plain, and finally over the border, my sister and I drove till we reached Jamrood Fort, a building of light brown mud, with a caravanserai and a parade-ground. Jamrood stands—a sort of initial letter at the entrance of the Khyber—at the foot of the mountains which surround the plain of Peshawur. Here we changed ponies, and Major Cooke-Collis insisted on breakfasting us in his tent in the camp, then outside the fort. We went over the building afterwards where the unfortunate 4th Dragoon Guards had sweltered all

the autumn months. The black-and-white drawings from "Alice in Wonderland" in the mess upon the whitewashed walls are excellent.

We had no time to waste, for no one was allowed in the Pass after 3.30 p.m. It was unsafe, even though the road was picketed, for it was not long since Sir Havelock-Allan, wandering off it by himself, was shot by the Afridis; and we were the two first women who had been up the Pass since war was declared months ago.

Our escort joined us when we left Jamrood—four Lancers in front, one on either side, and six behind, jingling along. Closer we drew to the dreary, frowning mountains, the road rising gradually, till at last we were threading our way through the most rough-and-tumble hills ever seen. The road in front lay far above us, or below us, as the case



THE ONLY ENGLISHWOMAN AMONG THOUSANDS OF NATIVES.

might be, twisting round corners which required very skilful driving, and snaking its way between high precipices. It dawned upon us how easy it must have been for our men to be hopelessly cut off and shot down in those winding defiles and steep chasms by the treacherous Afridis.

England has not forgotten how in 1842 General Elphinstone's little army, marching through a pass not more than forty feet wide, was surrounded by the revengeful Afghans who had sworn to see them safely through. Three men escaped alive. Of these, two were murdered at Futteeabad. One man, and one only, Dr. Brydon, lived to tell the tale. Alone, worn out with fatigue, starvation, and wounds, grasping in his right hand the hilt of his broken sword, he rode into Jellalabad, leaning rather than sitting on a miserable, dead-beat pony—the only survivor of the Kabul army.

It is quite impossible to go through the Khyber Pass without such thoughts as these crowding into the brain. The lifeless, wind-swept mountains, with their stunted tufts of vegetation fading in the wastes of sand, their gloomy rocks and tumbled heights, call up picture after picture of the past.

The Khyber is indeed the "gate of India," for the road through it and over the Bamian Pass is the only route which is practicable for artillery across that vast wall of mountains anywhere between Burmah and Beloochistan, a distance of three thousand five hundred miles.

The great Napoleon's dearest desire was to send an army through Persia, by way of Herat, into India. He would have joined that throng which passes before one now—a ghostly procession—along that selfsame road we are upon now.

There is Nadir Shah, who marched back from the Punjab in 1738, carrying with him untold gold and booty, including the great Koh-i-noor diamond. After the sack of Delhi, observing the magnificent jewel glittering in the puggaree of the fallen Mogul monarch, himself the son of a sheepskin-cap maker, he commanded his royal captive to exchange turbans with him.

In 327 B.C., long before Nadir Shah's

day, another army wound down the Khyber Pass—fair Greeks and Macedonians, led by the world's general, Alexander the Great.

Earlier still, before Mohammedanism or Christianity was thought of, Tartars, Persians, and Afghans trooped down these passes to their conquests and plunder in India, intermingled with caravans of traders and religious pilgrims from Thibet, Tartary, China, and Siberia, going down to worship at the holy places of Buddhism.

Further back there is a misty outline of an invasion by an army of Darius King of Persia.

What have these mountains not seen?

Notice that there has never been any tide of conquest and immigration out of India. What has gone out, and particularly by this Pass, have been immeasurable wealth and one great religion—a wealth over which nations have squabbled from time immemorial; a religion which once influenced millions, now fading away.

. . . That last drear mood
Of envious sloth and proud decrepitude,
While . . . whining for dead gods that cannot save,
The toothless systems shiver to their grave.

As we drove along we soon began to meet whole families of Kabulees coming down the Pass, with their grand Bokhara camels, and heavily laden saddle-bags full of carpets, spice, and various Eastern merchandise. Little Afghan children were tied in *poshteens* to the tops of the saddle-bags, their heads jerking backwards and forwards at every stride.

The Afghans themselves claim their descent from the Israelites, and say they are the representatives of part of the lost ten tribes who never returned from the Assyrian captivity, into which they were carried by Tiglath-Pileser (721 B.C.). They wore gay-coloured clothes, low sheepskin caps, and were armed with Persian hilted swords, and with matchlocks, called *jesails*, the tops of which are strange-looking hooks, shaped like a sickle, and intended to fit under the arms.

Now horses hate camels. As we drove up towards the long train, the ponies hesitated, and it took gentle persuasion and



J.L. WIMBUSH

LED BY THE WORLD'S GENERAL, ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

coaxing to get them along. I should have waited, and made the "Khaileefa" take the outside of the road, instead of taking it ourselves. There was no protection at the edge, which ended in a steep bank and precipice. We got on all right till we were well in the middle of the *cortège*, and then one camel, taller than the rest, whose saddlebags took up half the road, seemed to come towards us in a menacing manner. The ponies dashed to the opposite side, wild with fright, and began backing the cart over the edge. Appalling moment! No whip or voice was of the slightest use. My sister sat quite cool. The wheels went nearer and nearer the precipice. Though it takes long to read, it happened in a second of time. Another instant, and the ponies seemed to rise up in the air, and the cart to fall under our feet! We tumbled out on either side into the arms of some of the Afghans who were with the Khaileefa; at the same time our *syce* and others seemed to get hold of the cart and ponies, and to haul them back into the road: and thus was a very serious accident averted.

We went on, winding round turns in the rock, until at last Fort Maude towered above us, its blackened and ruined walls a disgrace indeed to the British Government, who, in spite of every warning, refused to send troops up to it and to Ali Musjid before the Afridis had overpowered the Khyber Rifles and burnt and sacked both forts. We met a few Afridis on the road, to whom the Khyber and south-west country belongs—tall, athletic Highlanders, lean and muscular, with high noses and cheekbones, fair complexions, and long, gaunt faces—brave but treacherous robbers. They move over their hills at a long, slow, wolf-like trot.

Below Fort Maude was a little valley, a green patch watered by a streamlet, over which a primitive mill had been put up—Lala China, where in 1878 Cavagnari met Sher Ali's officer, and received a reply which was the cause of our war with Afghanistan.

The Russian frontier question has never been "shelved" yet. Our Indian frontier and Afghanistan are full of no common

interest, and may yet be the theatre of one of Britain's last wars. In the face of this, may I digress, and not waste the opportunity, when in this country, where so many dramas have been played, of recalling some of those events which may repeat themselves in the future?

On the report in 1877 that a Russian envoy was about to visit Kabul, our Viceroy, Lord Lytton, announced his intention to the Amir, Sher Ali, of sending a British Mission there, under General Sir Neville Chamberlain. However, the Russian *General Stolietoff* informed the Amir that the simultaneous presence of two embassies would not be convenient. The Amir therefore refused to allow the British Mission to enter Afghanistan; but as he did not communicate direct with the Viceroy, it had already started, and arrived at the Khyber. Here Sir Neville Chamberlain deputed Major Louis Cavagnari to ride up the Pass, and demand leave for the Mission to enter it.

Down by this same little mill which we had just seen, Cavagnari met the commander of the Afghan troops, who flatly refused permission, and added that but for his personal friendship with Cavagnari, he would, in obedience to the Amir's orders, have shot him down and his escort.

War was immediately declared. Lord Roberts, after hard fighting and untold difficulties with transport in that mountainous, desolate region, saved the position and entered Kabul.

Sher Ali and the Russian Mission—that hornets' nest—had fled to Turkestan, where the Amir died; and his son, Yákub Khán, assuming the government, arranged and signed a treaty, through the consummate skill and diplomacy of Cavagnari, with the English.

A British representative was to reside in Kabul, and Cavagnari (now Sir Louis) was selected. He arrived at Lord Roberts' camp in Kurram in July 1879, and he spent that evening with the great General, whose own heart was full of gloomy forebodings. The peace had been signed all too quickly: the Afghans were not crushed, and Lord Roberts had terrible fears for the friend who was going out of England's

reach into the heart of an implacable enemy. Cavagnari himself was hopeful as ever, and spoke of his wife's joining him in the spring. That farewell dinner was a sad one, and Lord Roberts could hardly find words in which to propose Cavagnari's health.

Next morning they both rode into the valley, and there they said farewell and turned away. But they had only gone a few yards on their different roads before an unaccountable impulse made them simultaneously turn round; they both rode back, shook hands once more, and parted—for ever.

Only two months later all India was struck aghast at the awful news of the massacre of Sir Louis Cavagnari and his staff at Kabul.

Once more Lord Roberts, after much fighting, entered the city. The walls of the Residency were pitted with bullets and drenched with blood, but no traces of the bodies of the Englishmen, who must have died so hard, were ever found.

Oh, you members of Parliament who sit in your clubs in London half the day, you wire-pullers of the greatest nation in the world, does it ever repent you of the lives you have sacrificed at the altar of your god, party power? You cut down the expenses and you tie the hands of the able men who are on the spot, and then you regret that England's prestige is trailed in

the dust, and the blood of her gallant men wantonly shed!

To conclude. Yákub Khán abdicated and was sent to India. Abdur Rahman was nominated, in August 1880, Amir of Afghanistan, where he still reigns. The British Government presented him with ten *lakhs* of rupees, twenty thousand breech-loading rifles, a heavy battery of four guns and two howitzers, a mountain battery, and a liberal supply of ammunition.

Roads and railways are wanted on the Indian frontier: trade would increase, and the isolation of the Afghans and our bitter conflicts would become things of the past. At present, if an army from the north invaded

India, it would assuredly be joined by every man of the two hundred thousand warlike tribes. Why were all the warnings about Merv unheeded, and called by a

distinguished politician "Merv-ousness"? A little later, and they were verified. Skobeloff's victories over the Tekke mountains gave Merv and Sarakka into the hands of the Russians, and Turkestan was in direct communication with St. Petersburg. This enabled the Russians practically to dictate terms to the Boundary Commission which the British Government sent to define the northern limits of Afghanistan, and to turn out an Afghan garrison from Punjeh under the eyes of the British officers.



HARDLY A NIGHT PASSED WITHOUT A VISIT FROM ONE OF THESE CLEVER RIFLE-STEALERS.

Why was it possible for the Amir to say that he had warned us repeatedly of the advance of Russia, but that no attention had been paid to his warnings, owing to the strife of parties in England and to the excessive caution of the British Government?

To return to our drive. We passed the spot where Sir Havelock-Allan was shot, and at last arrived at Ali Musjid, which fort the Afridis had also burnt. Below its ruins General Hart and his brigade were encamped.

Whose are the khaki tents that crowd the way
Where all was waste and silent yesterday?—
This City of War, which in a few short hours
Hath sprung up here.

The hum of the camp and of the little bazaar of camp-followers was an unwonted sound in that weird mountain-pass. General Hart met us, and, apologising for the roughness of everything, took us past the post-office tent and the mess tent, into his own quarters. One hardly expects to see luxuries on active service; but it was quite a luxurious lunch to which we sat down later, my sister at one table, myself at another—the first ladies seen for six months. Wine-glasses were naturally non-existent, and we sat on big square sacks of *gram* [corn].

The officers' tents were some six feet long by two and a half feet wide, three feet high in the centre, where the pole ran from end to end, the khaki covering sloping straight to the ground. A man creeping out of his tent on all fours was rather like a dog emerging from his kennel.

It must have been bitterly cold in the winter. They told us that the average for tubs was one in eleven days, and always resulted in a cold.

The Tommies slept sixteen in a large tent, with their rifles rolled up inside their blankets with them. Even then the Afridis and Pathans contrived to creep under the tents, and managed to steal them, and also revolvers from under pillows. In spite of sentries, hardly a night passed without a visit from one of these clever rifle-stealers.

The only recreation at Ali Musjid was

hockey, and the officers and men played vigorously. Later on, when our troops were still kept there in that sun-scorched furnace of rocks, the number of deaths was appalling. "Helly Musjid," the Tommies called the infernal spot. A soldier's life is by no means all ease, and that frontier war cost us dear. How often in those dark defiles our men were picked off by the Afridis!

Strike hard, who cares; shoot straight who can:
The odds are on the cheaper man.

How many of our men succumbed to dysentery and enteric!

We've got the fever here in camp—it's worse than forty fights;

We're dying in the wilderness the same as Israelites;
It's before us and behind us, and we cannot get away,
And the doctor's just reported ten more deaths to-day.

While we were finishing lunch a conjuror appeared (one of the camp-followers), and, squatting down on the ground with only a turban and a cummerbund on—therefore no possibility of concealment—began his tricks. He took a small twig of one of the stunted bushes, ran his fingers down it, stripping off the leaves—small leaves like those of a sensitive plant—and then showered down among us with the leaves great live scorpions—not little things, like Italian scorpions, but formidable animals, almost as long as my hand. We did not fall in love with this creeping company, so he gathered them up, crumpled them one by one in his hand, and they disappeared. Then he waved his bare arms in the air, and a live cobra appeared to drop into one hand, which he threw into the midst of us. How he did these feats I have not the faintest idea.

We hurried away from the juggler to ride up to the charred ruins of the fort with Captain Anderson and Captain Bruce. The view both up and down the Pass was very fine; but afterwards, from the top of one of the surrounding hills, a panorama—Afghanistan, the land of mystery and treachery—lay before us, and the Kabul river wound like a grey thread across the plain.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river!

Isabel Savory.