

the impulse is upon them, they hesitate not to gossip about matters which must inevitably reflect discredit on themselves, though of course nothing can be farther from their intention than this result. They are pretty sure to make public sooner or later everything they can tell, even though it be in matters of the utmost delicacy or importance; thus doing their utmost to destroy that mutual confidence which is the very foundation of society. They care nothing for Napoleon's celebrated saying, that "it is well to wash one's dirty linen at home;"—perhaps many of them have not even heard of it, for Leaky Tubs have never well-stored minds, and therefore have few resources but personal gossip;—they, on the contrary, invite all their friends to take part in the unsavoury job. The natural consequence is, that they are continually in hot water, but they somehow fail to perceive that they have themselves to thank for it. They do not grow wiser by experience, in spite of the time-honoured proverb about the burnt child and the fire, but before they are well clear of one scrape, will go and put their foot into another just like it. They are incorrigible. "All in vain comes counsel to their ear;" and though you may patch up a leak for a time, it is of little use. They *must* cackle: they cannot help it, for 'tis their nature to." And if any latent sense of decency and propriety hinders your true Leaky Tub from blurring out its whole tale at once, it seeks to stimulate curiosity by judiciously dropping obscure hints, and then with well-feigned reluctance suffers all that it is burning to tell to be drawn from it by questions.

Such are some of the characteristics I have noticed in this most curious class, and I dare say the experience of others will suggest many more. There are a few pertinent and plain-spoken verses in the book of Proverbs which are very applicable to them. "A talebearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. The words of a talebearer are as wounds. Where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth: but a whisperer separateth chief friends." *Talebearer* is not here used in the common school sense of *tell-tale* (though that, too, is a thing much to be condemned), but evidently means those who go about whispering in an underhand way, either thoughtlessly or maliciously, what may be hurtful to others.

We all, doubtless, number some of these Leaky Tubs among our acquaintance, for they are unfortunately to be found everywhere. There is just one general principle to be borne in mind in dealing with all such, and it is this—Beware what you put into them.

TRAVELLING IN INDIA.

UNTIL within a comparatively recent period, the facilities for journeying from one portion of our Indian territories to another were comparatively "few and far between." Such as did exist were of a primitive character, hardly satisfactory to the European or American traveller accustomed to railways, well-constructed roads, and efficient "conveniences." Railways in India have scarcely been commenced more than a dozen years, and al-

though operations in connection with their establishment and extension have progressed favourably, (as far as Oriental matters generally go,) only a small extent of country in the most important sections of the British dominions has as yet been traversed by the "iron horse." True, there is the ancient river, the sacred stream, upon whose bosom numerous budgerows floated, laden with passengers and goods; but this mode of transit was considered unsafe, owing to the frequent depredations of river dacoits or pirates. These cumbrous and unsightly vessels were, however, in time in a measure superseded by river steamers and flats, introduced under the auspices of joint-stock companies, but no very enormous dividends ever accrued to shareholders from the profits derived from these undertakings; for, owing to the very serpentine course of the river, the distance from place to place is considerably greater than by land—(Allahabad, for instance, being only four hundred miles from Calcutta by road, and exactly double that distance by water); consequently, the time occupied by a voyage up the Hooghly, or the Ganges, is proportionably longer, especially as steamers are obliged to anchor at night.

Owing to the inconveniences and uncertainties of river conveyance, the construction of a durable roadway for traffic through the country became a matter of State necessity, and accordingly the Grand Trunk Road was projected, and in due course opened out for public purposes.

This magnificent highway—one of the most stupendous works of engineering in the world—is metalled or macadamized with a substance called *kunkur*, for upwards of a thousand miles, (except, perhaps, occasionally, where the nature of the ground renders the use of this material unnecessary,) and extends from Howrah, a village on the Hooghly, opposite to Calcutta, to Peshawur, a city situated at the north-western extremity of our possessions beyond Lahore, and is the main artery of communication between the metropolis and the various important stations which are either on or contiguous to the line of road. For a length of time, however, this great highway was used for the transport of goods to a very limited extent, even Government stores being generally forwarded by river steamers to the "up country" stations. Under these circumstances, a gentleman on the Bengal medical staff (Dr. Paton) put himself in communication with the authorities, and furnished such information as led to the consideration of a scheme for establishing a regular system of land traffic by means of bullock trains. The idea once started, attracted the attention of capitalists; and now there is, if not two, at least one Land Transit Company, with an efficient establishment of carts, drivers, overseers, clerks, and bullocks—stations being appointed along the line of road at every stage of ten miles, for relays of bullocks, the carts being compelled to proceed at a uniform speed of two miles per hour.

Passengers by road usually proceed to their destinations by *dak*—a system of travelling organized under the East India Company's administration, and, during their government, subject to the

general control of the postal department. The traveller would "lay his dāk"—that is, he would signify to the postmaster, if at an out-station, or to the manager of the dāk office, if at Calcutta, his intention of proceeding to a stated locality on a certain day, and pay the price of his journey according to a regular scale of charges. At the time appointed, a heavy palanquin, attended by sixteen bearers, would await his pleasure at his residence, and his servants would then pack that "convenience" with such articles as he might consider essential for his personal comfort during the journey. There is a shelf at the foot of the palanquin, furnished with a drawer, and a reclining cushion is securely fastened at the head of the mattress, which may be adjusted according to the inclination of the occupant. Altogether, it is an easy and luxurious mode of travelling for short stages; but the laziest individual gets weary of it on very long journeys. The palanquin starts, and is borne on the shoulders of four of the bearers. You would hardly conceive the capability of those slim, gaunt, and weakly-looking Bengalees to bear that ponderous unwieldy carriage, and to convey it along at the speed they do, never stopping during their period of duty except to change shoulders; and even then the traveller is hardly conscious of any delay, so rapidly are the changes effected. After they have performed a certain distance, they are relieved by the others. But it must not be supposed that because the palanquin is only borne by four men at a time, the twelve who trot after to take their turn are, during the intervals when they are relieved from their principal burthen, suffered to proceed altogether untaxed. One carries the sahib's carpet-bag, and others bear his trunks, suspended from the ends of thick bamboos, which are balanced across the shoulder.

Fresh relays of bearers are ready at every stage of ten or twelve miles, the station-houses at which they are posted along the line of dāk being called "travellers' bungalows." (See No. 440.) These are, or were, Government institutions, and were conducted subject to certain specific rules and regulations. Each of these houses of call was furnished with a table and a number of chairs, and, in some instances, bedsteads were available for the accommodation of the visitor during the night. The bungalow was under charge of a native (a *kansamah*), appointed and paid by Government, whose duty it was to procure refreshments for such as chose to stay and take a meal at his station, upon payment of the bazaar rates of charges. Travellers occupying or using the bungalow were charged a rupee per diem, which sum was chargeable however short a time you might remain; a book being kept, in which each visitor was required to enter his name, by way of check against the official in charge. Contiguous to each bungalow was a *babachee khana*, or cook-house, in which your own servants might conduct your *cuisine*; or if you happened to travel without any staff of attendants (as dāk passengers bound on long journeys generally do), the *kansamah* would do the needful, in anticipation of liberal *bucksheesh* by way of reward for his services. To travel through certain districts in the low lati-

tudes during the boiling heat of the day, even although under shelter of a double-roofed, well-ventilated palanquin (or *palkee*, as it is generally called), with damp *kuskus** *tatties*, or blinds, hung down the sides, is not only unpleasant, but frequently dangerous to the health of Europeans; and therefore the daytime, from 9 A.M. until 4 P.M. is usually chosen for rest in a travellers' bungalow. On a much frequented road, the *kansamah* often has his *godown* stocked with beer, spirits, soda-water, and sometimes port and sherry, and reaps a tolerable profit from the sale of such beverages.

You again start on the road at four in the afternoon, the bearers having trimmed the lamps, which are fixed on each side of the forepart of the *palkee*, and prepared their torches for the night journey. For two hours you are carried on your way, and then the shadows of night begin to fall thickly around you. The *palkee* is stopped, and flint and steel are put into requisition for the purpose of procuring some fire; the lamps and the torches are then lit, and the nocturnal procession moves on. The sides of your *palkee* being open, you look out into the night. Innumerable fire-flies are glimmering amongst the trees; the frogs have begun to croak in the vicinity of the ponds and marshes; the crickets are chirruping everywhere about you; the buzzing of mosquitoes is detected in unpleasant proximity to your ears, and a variety of unmelodious sounds incidental to an Oriental night fill the murky air—above all which are the dismal howling of the jackal, and, perchance, the distant roaring of the tiger. It is chiefly by way of protection against these latter animals that the bearers carry burning torches during the night journeys through jungly tracts of country.

The lamps in front of the *palkee* cast a light inside sufficient for you to read by; but if you intend to indulge in an hour's mental recreation of that sort, it would be prudent of you to get your bearers to brush your *palkee* clear of mosquitoes and then shut yourself closely in. This precaution is likewise indispensable if you have any idea of going to sleep. You do not stop at the bungalow at which you call during the night, except to change bearers and perhaps to take a cup of warm coffee, if you are thirsty or need a refresher; but, if you have tolerably well succeeded in excluding mosquitoes from your snuggerly, it is advisable not to show. After about a couple of hours' further travelling, you hail the notes of "the cock, which is the herald of the morn," with inexpressible gratefulness, and open your panels to admit the daylight and the morning air.

The Trunk Road runs through several provinces, exhibiting different aspects of scenery and possessing various climates. It traverses the rich alluvial plains of Bengal, teeming with luxuriant vegetation, and the drier but no less fertile tracts which cover the districts of Patna and Benares; it wends its way through the romantic regions of the Doab and

* *Kuskus* is a fragrant grass, which is woven into mats or hanging blinds, which, if wetted and hung over doorways and windows, cool the hot air which passes through them.

Punjab, and passes on to its termination over an arid and barren wilderness, resembling in its dreary aspect the vast deserts of Africa and Arabia. Immediately west of the Jumna, between that river and the Indus and their respective branches, there intervenes a considerable space, which is refreshed only by a few small rivulets that spring up and disappear amid the waste. This space comprises a desert "of extent sufficient," says Murray, "to form a mighty kingdom, and occupying the whole breadth in that direction from the mountains to the ocean. This entire region is about six hundred miles long and three hundred broad." The eastern *division* Lord Elphinstone describes as consisting of "heaps of sand, heaped often into hills of surprising elevation, and so loose that, whenever the horses quitted the path hardened by beating, they sunk above the knee." Over this wilderness is scattered, however, at intervals some coarse grass, with stunted and prickly shrubs, while in the midst of the sand are occasionally found large water melons, which afford delicious refreshment to the thirsty traveller. One would hardly suppose that, amidst the dreary solitudes of this desert waste, human beings would make choice of localities for habitation; yet, upon its arid and dreary surface, wide apart from each other, miserable villages exist, consisting of mud huts, around which efforts at cultivation have occasionally been rewarded by the appearance of scanty crops of coarse grain and pulse, "the stalks of which stand distinctly separate from each other." And there is reason to believe that a considerable population is sprinkled over the desert, since Bikaner in its centre presents all the characteristics of an important eastern city, having within its precincts stately palaces and temples, and other edifices of considerable pretensions.

All along the Trunk Road the electric telegraph wires are placed, and messages can be communicated from one important station to another with the same facility as in England. Along this road, too, travelling is not attended with the disadvantages which are incidental to the less important highways of India. The traffic is so considerable that there is always company upon the road. As you proceed on your journey, you encounter the buggy of the military officer or the indigo planter, the carriage of a district judge, the palkee gharee of the Portuguese clerk, the keranchee of the native baboo, and many European and native equestrians.

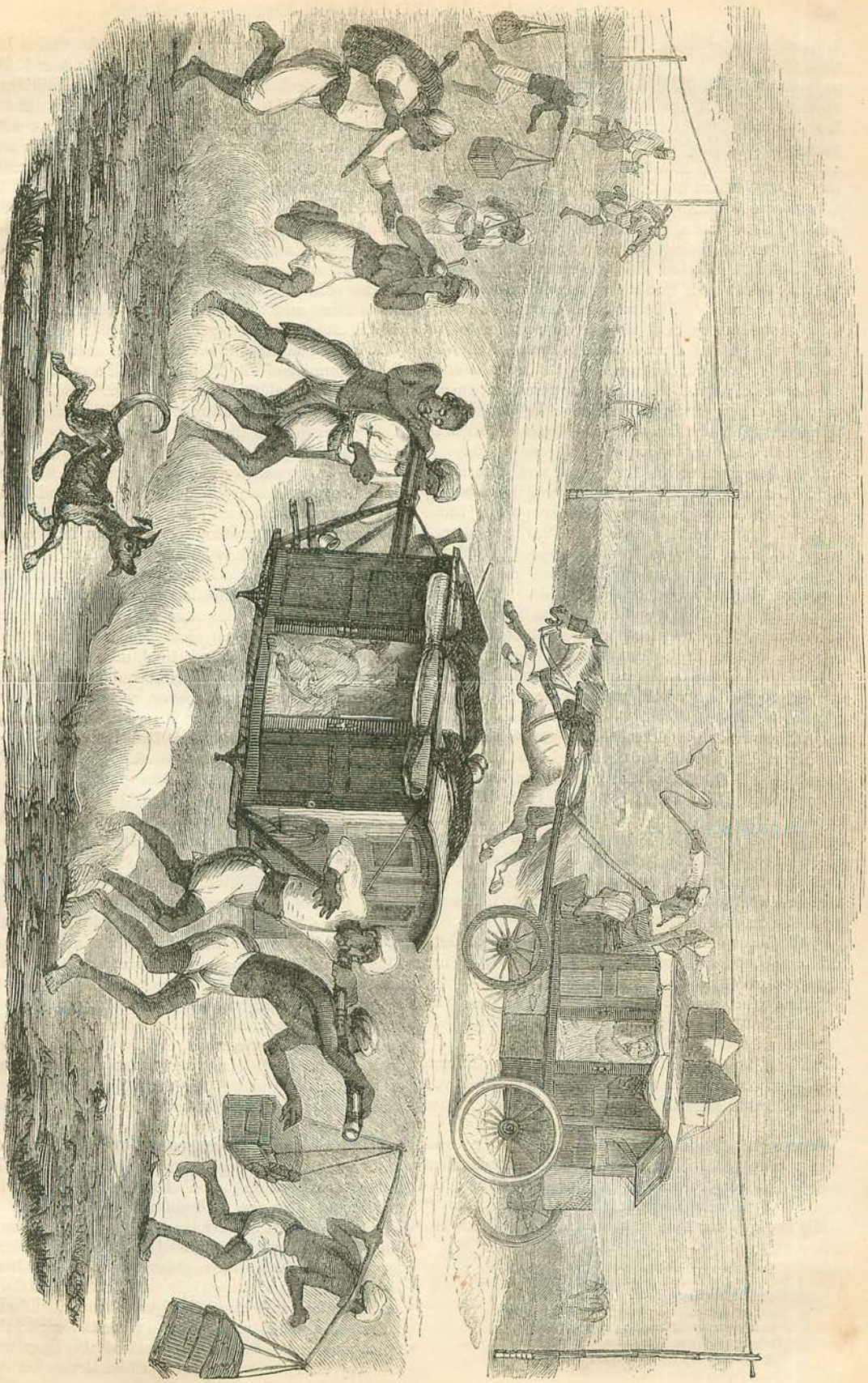
Our illustration is taken from a drawing by the late Captain G. F. Atkinson, of the Bengal Engineers, the author of a series of amusing sketches recently published under the quaint title of "Curry and Rice," and graphically represents a scene on the Grand Trunk Road. In the foreground is a palanquin carried by its four bearers, preceded and followed by attendants, two bearing trunks and boxes, and others carpet bags, whilst another is getting a hurried whiff or two from a hubble-bubble, which his comrade is holding out his hand to receive so soon as the other may be willing to surrender it. They are below the embankment, off the road, as is usual when the ground is inviting. Running alongside the palanquin is a lean and hungry-looking pariah dog, through

whose skin every bone of his body is distinctly visible. On the left of the picture, in the background, are two dark runners or postmen, the foremost carrying the mail-bag destined for some cross country station; and, tearing along the road in the opposite direction, is a palkee gharee, or jaun, of apparently inferior build, in which is seated a Mahomedan merchant—a hawker, or boxwallah, we imagine, judging from the peculiar shape of the boxes which are lashed on the roof of the vehicle. He is evidently a trader of some consequence in his small way; probably his boxes, and the bundles which are most likely inside the carriage, contain valuable cashmere shawls, and Persian scarfs and rich silks and muslins embroidered with gold, together with cases of jewellery. The coolie who carries the boxes from house to house at the stations at which the proprietor sojourns to dispose of his wares, travels on the box by the side of the Mahomedan coachman, who is lashing the poor native pony with all his might into a fast gallop, which he will keep up for about a quarter of a mile further, when he will stand stock-still in spite of lashes and abuse, till he feels equal to another gallop, into which he is sure to be whipped directly he has made a start again.

SORROWS OF OLD SCHOOL-BOYS.

It was not my lot to be an "unlicked cub" while at school. Nor was it the lot of any of my companions; for with the utmost impartiality our tutor administered the process to us, to which the various names of caning, flogging, thrashing, hiding, licking, leathering, and others, are applied, according as schools are of high or low degree. Hence the statement of my flogging experience, while under tuition, involves no personal discredit. With perfect truth it may be affirmed, that no boy ever left the academy of Dr. Touchem without being well acquainted with certain writhings, contortions, and ejaculations indicative of bodily uncomfortableness, caused by the ability and industry with which he wielded the weapon of chastisement. None could surpass him in the act of using the cane with dexterity and emphasis, so as to make it fulfil the castigating office with the most efficiency in the smallest possible time. After a preliminary shake and flourish for a moment or two, as if to make sure that it was safe in his gripe, he had a knack of giving it force by a peculiar twist, just at the point of contact, which, though perfectly indescribable, brought it down with telling effect upon one's flesh and blood. It seemed a thing of life, though not of beauty, in his hand; and to this day, I almost flinch, wince, and smart, at the very reminiscence of its vigorous application.

Touchem, to do him justice, was not of irritable or explosive temper—quite the contrary. He was as cold and passionless as marble—a man of imperturbable gravity, always solemnly serene while extracting a full chorus of lamentation; and to me, the abominably cool methodical manner with which he went to work, to make one's back or fingers tingle for an hour afterwards, rendered the infliction



SCENE ON THE GRAND TRUNKROAD, INDIA.