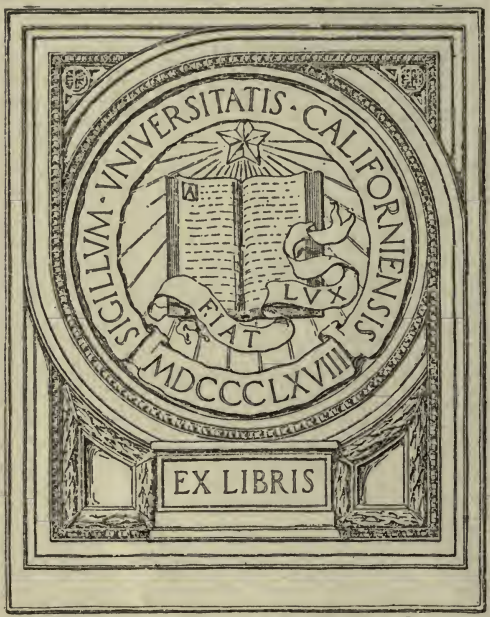

RAMBLES IN KOOLOO

BY

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Carpenter

RAMBLES IN KOOLOO.

CHAPTER I.

THREE of us, P., M., and H., having found ourselves at Sooltanpore, in the Kooloo Valley, determined on a little exploration up the Parbuttee river, which is a tributary of the Beas, joining the latter on the left bank near the village of Shumshee, some five miles to the south of Sooltanpore. Our traps having been despatched the day before, on the 5th of May of this present year of grace, at early dawn, we sallied forth from the Sooltanpore rest-house, and crossing by a good *sungha* bridge the Surburree torrent, which comes down from the Bubboo Pass, entered the town that stands on a slight elevation, by a species of old gateway, which opened out a vista of a narrow, paved, and clean street lined with shops, the owners of which would appear, by their multifarious wares, to do a good deal of general business. Once a place of note, when it was the residence of the court of the Kooloo Sovereigns, it has gradually been falling more and more into decay, and according to latest accounts, there are not now 500 houses in all, with

a population of over 1,100 souls. But the impetus that the recent expansion of trade with Central Asia has given seems to have reacted here, and several new houses are in course of erection; and probably in a few years, if the Central-Asian trade should turn out to be something more than the myth its decryers state it to be, this little town may become of some importance. The return of the entire traffic which passed through Sooltanpore in 1869 has been placed at over £150,000, which is a fact of no little significance; but as these jottings are not intended to be dissertations on trade, but a veritable account of a pleasant trip, let us pass out at the other gateway, and, descending by a steep slope, strike across a small plain, which stretches to the Beas, here over 200 feet in width, and spanned by a *sungha* bridge, which is a good deal in want of repair.

But before proceeding with an account of our trip, it may be as well to enter here what were the inducements that had led each of us to undertake this somewhat out-of-the-way journey. P., then, was the sportsman of our party, and as any thing was fish for his net, from blue-rock pigeon to bear, he was in full hopes that his battery would not unfrequently be brought into good use; H., afflicted with a mania for fine scenery, which, like most maladies, but feeds upon itself, was well aware that there would be abundant occupation for brush and pencil up the Parbuttee Valley; and M., not exactly an

enthusiast for shooting, was willing to take the chance of what he could get, and wanted also to see as much of the country as he could manage in a season's leave. However our tastes may have severally differed, yet we were all agreed about several "trifles light as air" perhaps, but without which three men travelling together can't well get on. There was a most charming unanimity of feeling regarding the advisability of breakfast being a substantial meal, lunch something more than a refection of "cakes and ale," and dinner all that dinner should be, keeping steadily in view the pet fancies of those who were to be catered for. We were each prepared to fully sympathise in the pursuits of the rest, there being no better sign of this than the interesting fact, that when one of us lit the peaceful pipe, the other two were pretty sure to be not long in following such a commendable example. We were all in fair walking trim, but with none of that abominable pride which refuses a "mount," and insists on its owner doing a whole stage "*per pedes:*" we came out with the full intention of enjoying ourselves, and in a happy combination of knicker-bockers, wide-awakes, and Norfolk shirts, we threw collars off and care to the dogs (Thomas and Robert by name,) which were the choice companions of our travels. As to our complexions, figures, features, and so forth, why enter on a description? Suffice it to say that the three of us measured something less than

eighteen feet, and so now we may return to the point we had arrived at before this little explanation broke in upon the run of the narrative.

Opposite Sooltanpore, that is, to the due east, and separated from it by the Beas river, rises a fine pine-clad hill, which, running in a southerly direction from the Rohtung Pass, ends abruptly at Bijli Mahdeo temple, where we intended breakfasting. Sooltanpore stands 4,092 feet above sea level, and as the Bijli Mahdeo temple is 8,076 feet in height, we had a pull before us of about 4,000 feet. The hill-side was ascended by zig-zags, and the road up to the hamlet of Dyapore was quite fit for riding. Close to this we found a small cistern built over with cut-stone, rather a pretty spot shaded by trees, which invited a halt: the *Negee* of the *kothee*,* who accompanied us through his beat, informed us that this cistern was called Bhoon Bhae. From thence the pathway was pretty level for a mile or two, when it turned to the south, up a steep incline leading to the village of Dart, picturesquely situated on a projecting spur of the mountain. Before we arrived here, P., with Robert, had gone off shooting, as *chikor* were calling all round, and M. and H. waited for him to come up: he had not, however, succeeded in securing his birds. Leaving Dart, the road wound up a series of

* The districts of Kooloo, Lahoul, and Spiti are divided into *kothees*, each of which has its separate *Negee*, or head-man.

rocky steps; and as our sudden appearance disturbed some diminutive cows also proceeding up the mountain side, by a "happy thought" of M.'s we each seized a bovine tail, and so pleasantly ascended till the broken ground ceased. The track now became rather too steep for pleasant walking in a blazing sun, so the ponies were called up, and we soon after entered on a forest of thick kyle *(Pinus excelsa)* observing by the way a fine tree that had been struck by lightning, and down the stem of which there was to be observed a long narrow line caused by the passage of the electric fluid. The people who were with us stated that unless a tree was hopelessly destroyed by lightning, it generally lived a couple of years after being struck, and certainly the specimen we passed evinced no signs whatever of decay. Leaving the forest we emerged on to a grassy plain, which rose in tiers to the brow of the hill whereon the celebrated Bijli Mahdeo temple stood, and on the shady side of which we found the morning meal cleverly laid out upon a charpoy, placed at the disposal of the *khitmutgars* by the *kardar* or warder of the buildings.

The temple is a large and substantially built structure, though from Sooltanpore it looks to be a mere hut, in breadth 24 feet by 36 in length; the lower portion of the walls of cut-stone, no plaster being used throughout. Round the building runs an overhanging covered verandah of well-cut deodar,

supported on beams from the walls; and the roof, of six tiers of massive deodar planks, secured along the upper surface by a solid beam surmounted by cut blocks of wood, ornamented with tridents, overhangs, and is supported at the doorway (which, as in all these temples, faces to the west), by fancifully carved uprights that join on to the verandah; that on this side is of open work, being pierced with arched windows handsomely ornamented. The timbers throughout are very strong. Just before the doorway, ascended by steps, are two very rudely sculptured stone bulls, and some pyramidal and carved masses of stone-work; while to the right of these again rises a lofty beam of deodar or kyle, inserted in the ground and wedged in by huge blocks of wood. The height of this pole would be about sixty feet; it was struck by lightning in the beginning of April, and the marks of the damage it sustained are quite visible from summit to base, and as it is no longer safe another pole is to be shortly run up. We were told that these poles have to be re-placed generally once in every two years, as they are nearly always within that period struck by lightning, the insertion of the new upright being the occasion of a considerable gathering of the people. The name Bijli Mahdeo signifies the frequent recurrence of thunder-storms, which appear to rage with peculiar violence at this spot, that is the one noted place in Kooloo for lightning, of which, curiously enough, there is very

little in the Upper Beas Valley. The people of the temple refuse admittance to all strangers into the inner sanctum, but entrance up to this point is permitted to those who will take their shoes off, and P. and M. being curious, divested themselves of their boots and were rewarded by seeing great expanse of blank darkness, which gratified them a good deal: there was however, it should be added, some fine wood carving in the interior, which cannot be well inspected when standing outside, so it was not all lost-labour they underwent. Adjacent to the main building is a species of out-house, used as a *dhurmsala* or rest-house by the people who come to the shrine.

It is somewhat curious that beyond the wildest legends, there is nothing whatever to guide one as to when or by whom this temple was erected; that it is very ancient is unquestionable, but in what century it was actually completed there is no means of ascertaining. None of the priests live at the shrine, but it is their duty to attend every day, and if they do their work properly, it must be no sinecure, and rather a trying business, to have to visit the temple daily during the rainy season, when one thunder-storm after another rages over the exposed hill-side, which, with the exception of a small bush that has grown over a species of raised cooking-place for *faqueers*, cannot boast of even that most diminutive shrub. The view from the temple is very fine,

for it commands the whole range of heights which separate Mundee State from Kooloo ; and looking south the Beas is to be seen winding past Bajoura, and eventually losing itself in the sinuosities of the hills that crowd one above another till lost in an impenetrable haze. To the north the Lahoul peaks stand out with great clearness ; towards the south-east, the lofty Deotiba, 20,417 feet in height, towers up with crest of driven snow a lordly sentinel over that grandest of all passes the Humta, and the minor mountain tops, which lift their rugged fronts over the densely wooded slopes, that on either side the valley sweep down in lines of ever-varying beauty to the bed of the Parbuttee river, whose waters can be traced upwards for many and many a mile.

Breakfast and a pipe having been discussed, we prepared for the descent to Chawan. It being near mid-day, and the sky singularly free of clouds, the sun's rays were powerfully felt, and a hotter walk we all declared we had seldom had before. The pathway was a mere track, and in some places such a very narrow and steep one, that to ride down would have been impossible ; but as it neared the village of Shan, the road became better, and a young growth of deodar and kyle afforded a welcome shade from the heat ; and now, passing by cultivated fields we were soon enabled to see our tents pitched under a delightful grove of walnut trees, close to the village of Chawan, the canvas dwelling of the domestics

being located, as usually happens when those gentlemen go on first, in a pleasant shady spot, infinitely preferable to the one given over to our worthy selves. Black partridge and chikor were calling all about us, and after a bit of a rest, P. sallied forth with his gun, and in a short time returned with three or four brace of plump birds, which were a very acceptable addition to the larder. And now, having fairly earned our rest, we enjoyed to the full that *otium cum dig*, without which life is a burden. Tables are intended for various purposes, but to what purpose can they be better applied than to the support of three pairs of weary legs, which have been tramping about half the day; so, under the spreading branches, we sat in thorough enjoyment, the clink of the spoon in the friendly goblet, or the gurgling of the liquid which soothingly and pleasantly spoke of creature-comfort, being the only sounds that broke the repose of the hour, except, perhaps, a languid interjection on the part of M. that it was uncommonly hot, or P.'s kindly utterances as to what the poor beggars in the plains would give to be where we then were.

Towards evening we sallied out for a stroll, and lighted on a very curious growth of briar-root, which had enveloped a grove of fig trees, completely encircling every trunk and stem, and showering its impenetrable foliage all round; completing a circle perhaps 80 feet in diameter, into which there was but

one difficult entrance. Standing within this natural bower, one could not but follow with some wonder the extraordinary snake-like contortions of the trailing parasite, that in coils of near a foot in thickness and perfectly divested of all foliage caught the supporting branches in its vice-like grip, and in many a strange and fantastic shape stretched towards the earth, along which, with repeated evolutions, it seemed to hurry on, ere disappearing altogether from the eye. In the gathering gloom that tended to magnify the size and impart a species of stealthy life to all inanimate objects, it was impossible to altogether dispel the feeling of awe which insensibly fastens on all minds affected by anything of the mysterious, and in the dim twilight the thought would arise that here, where human foot so seldom trod, was truly the spot where devilish rites might fitly be enacted, and it required no great stretch of the imagination to see the trailing creepers slowly changing into serpentine life under the terrible enchantments of the demon of the forest and his attendant satyrs. On the occasion in question, however, the spirits of the wood were not propitious, and as there appeared no chance of any transformations taking place while we were on the spot, we retired, leaving the ground to the mosquitoes which swarmed in hundreds, and returned again to camp.

CHAPTER II.

By 5 o'clock next morning we had struggled out of bed, and, leaving the tents to follow, struck into the road which led down to the Parbuttee, passing *en route* the villages of Dulogee, Murolee, and Tipri, which last must be a good thousand feet above the river. Fine fields of poppy and wheat lay on either flank, and every particle of ground capable of bearing a crop had been seized on by the *zemindars*, who appeared determined to let not an acre lie fallow that could be reached with a mattock. Dulogee is a little tumbledown hamlet, outside of which were cattle-pens enclosed in great hedges of thorn and briar, presumably to keep off wild animals. Tipri, however, is a village of some size, with large houses and a species of ruined tower, and in the old times when the country was in a disturbed state, and every little collection of villages had its own Thakoor or Rana, it must have been located as it is on rising ground, a place of some strength. Popular tradition quotes Tipri as one of the most ancient inhabited spots in Kooloo; the legend being that Purus Ram (an incarnation of Vishnoo in the form of a Brahmin) resided there with the Brahmins in his company. From this, the path descends through fields yielding luxuriant crops, to the Parbuttee, 80

or 90 feet in breadth and crossed by a good *sungha* bridge; and now going up stream (on the left bank), we gradually ascended and got a glimpse of some strikingly fine views; the charms of which were enhanced, seen as they were through the maze of trees which covered with creepers and flowering roses, fought for place on either side of the road-way. At Chani Kor, M. and H. voted for a halt, and a convenient spot under an avenue of horse chesnuts being selected, a pleasant quarter of an hour was loitered away, while P. wandered onwards with his gun. But a long pull was yet to be accomplished, so casting aside dull sloth the march was continued, and after two or three miles through a pretty country (the village of Chong which boasts of an old fort being over-head but not observable from the road), a small bridged stream of very clear water ran across the path, flowing from a beautiful gorge to the right, the cliff above it rising in battlemented crags many hundred feet in height, and descending in precipitous masses stained deep with orange and purple, to the thick woodland which swarmed up the declivities, and hung its outposts of inaccessible trees on every "coign of vantage" and overhanging crest. A wondrous blue haze lay over this vale, which at its furthest extremity was commanded by some peaks of the snowy range, a fitting background for such a lovely dell.

The view up the Parbuttee Valley looking north-

east is also worth a moment's notice. The mountains on the right bank of the river, though in the foreground rather bare, merge eventually into wooded heights further in the distance, where they are met by the steeper precipices on the opposite shore, which are covered with an impenetrable network of splendid timber far out of the reach of the destructiveness of man. Over these again rises, in dazzling brilliancy, the superb peak of Deotiba, with his vast crest of purest snow standing out sharp and crisp, while a few lazy clouds floated over-head and wreathed themselves in ethereal lines along the mountain tops.

The path at this point ascends a very stiff bit of ground, and occasionally there occur steps, which it would be dangerous to ride over; now it turns to the right (almost due east) and seems as if it must desert the main valley, which however is presently again lying before us ; the smaller gorge which was in front being now to our left, the turbulent stream that courses through it joining the Parbuttee that sweeps round from the east just a little below the village of Jhiree, where our camp was for the day. Before reaching the tents, our attention is directed to a small patch of cultivation away up the western gorge, which is pointed out as the spot near which stands Malauna, a village, the inhabitants of which we are informed are "kaffirs!" at which intelligence we listen incredulous and amused. Still

one reflection occurs to us all, and it is, that if in truth Malauna is as high up and in such a region as that shewn, we shall have a pretty tough piece of work cut out for us if we still hold to going so far. Jhirree is a tolerably large village, above which are extensive woods, pretty well thinned however by the axe. The Forest Department carry on a good deal of work here; and a noticeable feature in the place is the great wood slide that runs in successive tiers from the clearing to the river's bank, and down which the logs are rolled when fit for transport; hundreds of these were lying about piled one over the other, a great many more being ranged in even rows lower down, ready for the onward move to the Parbuttee. The tents were under a grove of horse chesnuts of considerable girth, which gave complete shelter from the sun, but not, alas! from the rain that before long began to fall heavily. The view across the river to which the passing thunder-clouds lent an additional grandeur was exceedingly striking. As if torn asunder by some gigantic force, rose up on either side a rugged tier of splintered rock, the rigidity of the outlines being however somewhat broken by the feathery links of a light fringe of forest, which also filled up every gorge and recess in the lower valleys. To the rear of these stupendous heights in front stretched another range, which almost from its loftiest reaches was covered with an impalpable haze, through which the sun shot a long

stream of light that tipped every tree and eminence in its path with a golden glory. But light and warmth soon vanished from the picture, the gloom got more intense, and the heavy clouds descending lower and lower blotted out with a dull grey vapour every tint that had before been a pleasure to the eye; the hoarse rumbling of the thunder re-echoed from peak to peak, and ere long the driving gusts of rain sent us disconsolate to find shelter in the tents.

Rain in camp is altogether a nuisance; this we all agreed to with some slight emphasis. How was H. to produce those fine effects his soul hankered after, as did the Israelites for the flesh pots of Egypt, when no effect at all, except dense mist, was to be seen anywhere; how was it possible for M. to enjoy a quiet pipe, even when he *had* got his wet matches alight, with the rain drops falling on his nose, and so disturbing his equanimity; and to what a very trifling extent was P. better off than the rest, for allowing he could clean his battery twice over, he would not afterwards have much more than the others to fall back upon. Now anything interests people when they fall into a certain state of mind, and the *deux ex machinâ* on the present occasion was as insignificant an object as could be fixed on. P. had exhausted his genious in putting the last touch to his fowling-piece; M.'s disgust at the dampness of the atmosphere was fast threatening to culminate in bad language, and H. was reduced to the consideration of a pipe,

while he regarded with severe mien the detestable weather which held out but small promise of clearing; when out stalked before us a most ridiculously small and draggle-tailed fowl, with a defiant chuckle and a piece of string tied round one leg; which said piece of string he drew after him with a degree of pride and triumph, as if it was the poultry (*not* paltry) equivalent of the companionship of the Star of India, that his own Sirkar (in the form of one of our khits) had tacked on to his person; that is, if a creature not eight inches high can be considered to have a person.

We gazed at this "fowl proceeding" with almost a cheerful interest; here was one creature, at any rate, that the weather could not influence to moroseness; for with a knowing look and the usual galvanic and gallinaceous motion of the neck, he audaciously advanced, and chuckling as he came, slowly brought up one foot over the other, retaining an impression in his right optic that implied in unmistakeable language, that he had his weather-eye open. Nor could this sagacious creature have been entirely oblivious of his possible end, for every now and then, and this was generally after a failure in a search for nutriment, he broke out into a moaning gurgle, which said as distinctly as ever did the language of fowls, "Well its about time now to have done with me; I'm sick of this life." And so he went on his way, picking his steps in the puddles and following as far as

his instinct would allow, the procedure of a more majestic specimen of his race, till lost to sight in a small tumble-down out-house, from which he was presently brought again to notice, a captive in the hands of a blood-thirsty cook; but as his merry-thought did not grace our simple meal the same night, we began to hope the poor little beggar had probably bolted again, and gone to some more congenial sphere where kitchens are unknown. The subordinate forest officer, who used to have to reside at Jhirree for some months of the year, had the use of a small hut originally a bunneah's house, but which has been added to a little, a rough scantling having been run up on one side; and in this, as the weather was still threatening and our tent accommodation was limited, we arranged to have dinner,—a repast carried on with some difficulty as the wind blew through numberless chinks in the rude wall, and the opening of the door too suddenly was the signal for all the lights going out. There is a degree of discomfort too in a repast that has to be partaken off a table, which (the owner must have been a perfect Brobdignag in size) was nearly up to our chins, but these after all are minor matters which do not require any special mention. And this brings us to the end of our second day's journey.

CHAPTER III.

QUITTING Jhirree early on the 7th of May we at once struck into a charming country; the path passing through glen after glen filled with most luxuriant vegetation; the kyle *(Pinus excelsa)*, cheel *(Pinus longifolia)*, and deodar *(Deodarus excelsa)*, growing thickly by the road-side, the timber of the two former particularly being more straight and lofty than is generally usual with these trees. There had been some cutting along the upper heights on the left bank of the river, which, as before mentioned, was on the whole far more densely wooded than were the slopes on the opposite side.

Near Kushole village, which comes into view through a delightful vista of deodars, the road winding up through these in a series of easy steps, the scenery becomes very beautiful, for the river, after having been concealed for some little distance, here again comes into view, pouring its waters under a *sungha* bridge that spans the stream perhaps half a mile further on, the lower reaches being heavily hung with masses of pine, which the sun not having yet touched were of a deep blue-purple hue; the same features of snowy range and forest-clad mountain helping, as they do all throughout the valley, to add

their charms to the landscape "in sweet confusion blending"—

"Lone Nature feels that she may safely breathe,
And round us and beneath
Are heard her sacred tones; the fitful sweep
Of winds across the steep;
Through withered bents—romantic note and clear
Meet for a hermit's ear—
The wheeling kite's wild solitary cry,
And scarcely heard so high,
The dashing waters when the air is still
From many a torrent rill
That winds unseen beneath the shaggy fell,
Tracked by the blue mist well;
Such sounds as make deep silence in the heart,
For thought to do her part."—*(Kehle.)*

Indeed H. and P., who had visited the Upper Beas Valley, began now to have their faith in the supremacy of the latter somewhat shaken, and the heresy was actually broached that nothing finer could be seen than what we had before us. The one thing wanting, however, in the valley of the Parbuttee are the trees, which in the sister vale so richly fringe the whole river's length; and neither are the mountains on either side of the Parbuttee so lofty or so well wooded as those which rise in mighty tiers from Sooltanpore right up to the Rohtung Pass in Kooloo Proper. The vegetation along our line of road was quite tropical, and this was not so surprising, for the heat in this narrow valley is very great in the summer months. The common

edible fig here becomes quite a tree, and the olive and the box flourish in abundance side by side, while the alder, kyle, and cheel attain a growth which is not a little remarkable. Kushole is a large village delightfully situated on the left bank of the Parbuttee, and leaving it behind, the path turns to the left through a good deal of marble-like but very friable rock, and crosses the river by the *sungha* seen from the other side of the village. This bridge was built, the people say, in the time of the Sikhs (probably about 1843), and is now becoming rather shaky. The Negee of the *kothee* who, by the way, may be introduced to the reader as a very obliging young fellow by name Futtoo, garbed in the usual Kooloo costume of a short coat, loose trousers, and flat cap, with a roll of cloth round the edge, adorned with a patch of scarlet at the top, pressed upon the travellers the advisability of a new bridge being run up, and actually offered to have such a new one built, if the Government would assist with a *douceur* of Rs. 120! This may not seem at first sight to be such a very small sum, but it must be recollected that the Parbuttee at this point is over 100 feet in width, and that if the actual cost of the construction be taken into account, an expenditure of nearly Rs. 2,000 would be required. Then why is it that the people will undertake such a job at such a very unremunerative rate of payment? Well, the case stands "thusly," as Artemus Ward would put it. By the tenure in Kooloo,

the people are bound to do *begar*, the manifold ramifications of which system none of us feel inclined to attempt to explain here; but as *begar* means forced labour, the Government can, in consideration of the very light assessment, demand the services of the zemindars on all public works. Now bridges are essentially works of utility both to the State and the people, and when *sunghas* are required on main roads the reward the people receive ranges from Rs. 200 to Rs. 800; but where these bridges are purely for the convenience of a particular *kothee*, the assistance given is much smaller. The *sungha* that spans the river at Kushole is certainly so far necessary, for it keeps open the communications on the line of road between Sooltanpore and the head of the Parbuttee Valley; but Europeans seldom advance further than Jhirree in this direction, and knowing this well, the Negee of the *kothee* was aware that anything like a large grant for such an almost purely local want would never be sanctioned.

Perhaps the majority of those who have their intellects raised by the perusal of the *Pioneer* may not understand very well what a *sungha* bridge is like, so a short description of the same may be inflicted on the "gentle reader." The *sungha* bridge is formed as follows. On either side the river, piers of rubble masonry, alternated with cross braces of timber, are built up, and into these are inserted stout poles in tiers one over the other, the interstices between the

tiers being filled in with cross beams. The poles increase in size as they rise from the river and approach the upper platform, the tiers projecting in succession one over the other with a slightly upward incline, their shore ends being firmly fixed into the tiers. Across the uppermost tier of poles are placed two or three, and sometimes four trees (in length from 30 to 70 feet according to the width of the stream to be bridged), strong timbers being laid over these horizontally, and securely fastened below, in the better class of *sunghas* a hand rail being added for greater security. A very large quantity of timber has to be used in some of these bridges, one of which is now being erected at Bajoura over the Beas, where the river is 185 feet in breadth, and where there will be on either pier four tiers of five poles each (the upper ones over 40 feet in length and of corresponding girth), and three connecting trees each measuring nearly 70 feet! These connecting poles are pushed over the supports till the balance has been nearly lost, a thick rope having been fastened at the furthest extremity, the end of which rope is held by men on the opposite shore. The beam is then gradually tilted over and swung across, and this part of the work is the most difficult, though the conveyance of the logs down to the point selected for the bridge is undoubtedly the most trying in the whole undertaking.

After crossing the *sungha* at Kushole, the path

keeps to the right bank of the Parbuttee, which now narrows. The road in places is very steep, and numerous ranges of steps that are pleasant enough for the pedestrian are anything but agreeable to the owners of horse-flesh, who have good ground for the fear that hoof and shoe will soon part company even if nothing worse befall. There is always the chance too of some native of the country, who has been reposing round the corner, suddenly springing up to *salaam* as the sahibs approach, which instantaneous plunge into the light of a dark body is a trial of no mean order for an ordinary steed; but fortunately all ours were extraordinary cattle, and exactly like those described in such feeling language to Mr. Pickwick by Shiny Villiam, for they would not have shied even had they "met a waggon load of monkeys with their tails burnt off." Half a mile from Manikurn, the Parbuttee can be crossed by a very frail *sungha* (off the main track), the supports of which are perched on boulders on either side the stream that seethes below an angry and rushing flood. Manikurn has about fifty houses of some size, and one very large temple, with six smaller ones; but we did not care to visit these or the hot springs just then; and, as M. declared it was undoubtedly time for breakfast and not for humbugging with hot water, we proceeded onwards to find our tent pitched on a little level plot of turf just below an old ruined house, the front part of which was still in tolerable

preservation, and which had been placed at our disposal. Fortunately the sun got clouded over, and it kept tolerably cool all day, so we were able to sit in our verandahed room with comfort. The house, we were informed, was erected by some Rajah of Kooloo, whose descendant, Rae Gyan Singh,* the jaghirdar of Wuzeeree Rupi, annually visits the hot springs ; but this particular edifice has long been uninhabited, and the main building is quite untenable, though it answered all our purposes fairly enough. True, the flooring, composed of uneven boards, would occasionally tilt up in an aggravating manner just at the critical moment the khits were bringing in the Oxford sausages and the mutton-chops, when it became an even toss-up for a good three-quarters of a minute whether those delicacies would ever grace the board ; and the steps leading to the ground were in such a dismantled state that it was a trial of patience and shoe-leather to encompass them ; but these little matters did not much disturb our equanimity, for our business after the fatigues of the march clearly was to seat our exhausted frames in the most comfortable spot to be found, and with legs tossed over the low wooden railing of the verandah, present ourselves to the gaze of the youth and maturer age of the village, which appeared to take a great delight in inspecting us from either the roadway, where a battalion of youngsters sat staring with open mouths,

* Since this was written Rae Gyan Singh has died.

or from the corners of adjacent buildings, the fair sex not being above this clandestine mode of procedure.

In the afternoon we strolled down to the village, first passing the principal temple, which we could not enter. The legend has it that, 500 years ago, the Parbuttee rising out of its bed swept over the plateau on which stands the edifice, and so saturated the soil that the building sank to the position it now occupies three feet below the general level. Something of the sort may have possibly occurred, for the walls of the temple are more uneven and the joists more thrown out of the horizontal than a mere slight sinking would have occasioned; but an eminent engineer, who has visited Manikurn, has pronounced an opinion contrary to this theory, being convinced that the building was originally built below the surface; one fact has to be noted in corroboration of this view, and that is, that no other structure in the place has in like manner sunk beneath the level of the ground. The Manikurn temple is of a form not uncommon in the Upper Beas Valley, though rare in this locality; a pyramidal mass of cut-stone being covered at the top with a cupola-like wooden-roof, held up by supprots fastened to the main building, to one side of which is attached a low square edifice, roofed with slates of a coarse grey marble, as are all the houses in the village. The great attractions at Manikurn are, however, the

hot springs, which we visited after leaving the temple. The spring that used to be the most important gradually subsided, and within the last few years has died away altogether; the ground around is curiously marked as if with an overflow of lava, which has apparently trickled over the rocks in great masses, the soil in its vicinity being streaked with brilliant chrome and burnt sienna. Various specimens of rock were collected; these were deeply tinged and impregnated with copper and lead, there being another formation which appeared like putrified wood; but whether it was wood or stone neither M., H., nor P. could determine. Having been denied access to geological academies in early youth, their knowledge of geological science was somewhat scanty, and the reader is therefore spared an account of mineralogy and stratas, which, if any of the party could have treated of with an approach to correctness, would most certainly have been inflicted on the suffering public, that only knows of the existence of granite, or sand-stone when they see it in buildings, or of clay when it sticks to their boots. One of the springs in play is down by the river's side; a second, which for centuries has been flowing, is yearly becoming less active, and the third is the one which is the most important at the present time. The hole of this last is about twelve feet in circumference, and there is a basin of very clear water which sends the mercury instantaneously up to 180° Faht., the best test of the

extreme heat being that every pilgrim who comes to the place has his portion of rice cooked in the pool, and as we were not above doing in Rome as the Romans do, we had our supply of rice prepared in the same manner, and are bound to declare that it was none the worse for its immersion in this curious cauldron. The raw rice is placed in a loose bag and thrown into the water, which soon cooks it to perfection. There are three distinct jets in the pool, which it is said rise in height as does the river, and the water dashes out with a loud noise, the highest jet being three or four inches in height, the others bubbling up also, but with a less audible sound. The rocks all round are too hot to bear the touch of the naked hand, and a smell of sulphur and old shoes (native) pervades the atmosphere. When Captain Hay was Assistant Commissioner of Kooloo, he prepared a bath for the use of European visitors that was fed from the spring, since dried up, and the bath is consequently empty, but there are others frequented by natives, though we were not able to ascertain what specific maladies were benefitted by immersion in these waters: probably all rheumatic affections would be eased by a series of baths in such hot springs as are those at Manikurn. The waters, of course, rapidly cool after leaving the source, and at the bathing-places are fit for ablutionary purposes. None of us having any one of the "ills that flesh is heir to," except a consuming hunger two or three times in the day, and

that no amount of bathing could diminish, and Thomas and Robert both objecting in the most unmistakeable manner to go near the tepid flood, nothing remained to be done but to return again towards our abode. There was a house close to this belonging to the Kardar, or chief warder of the temples, which was sufficiently curious to merit notice here. The wood-work on the enclosed verandahs was most elaborately carved, every inch of space round the windows being worked into a running pattern of diagonal lines and rude foliage. The walls alternated equal tiers of marble stone and beams of pine placed in exactly parallel lines, the roof being of fine white slabs of the same description of stone that crops out so abundantly near the village. Close to this mansion rose up the humbler houses of the *zemindars*, which, if not so ornate, were at any rate very picturesque, with their overhanging verandahs and deep pent roofs, under which were suspended sheeves of grass, yellow hay, or bundles of wearing apparel, mixed with other miscellaneous articles that in the deep shade cast from above could not be easily identified. Below were out-houses for cattle and here in calm enjoyment of a good feed were stalled our Rosinantes, none the worse for their journey so far. We made up our minds to go on to Malauna, and had hoped to reach that place easily in one march, but our faithful *khalassie*, Luchmun, a very reliable authority as to Kooloo localities, smilingly informed

us that it would be too much of a journey for one day, so we determined on doing the distance comfortably in two stages, our first halt being at Rusole, but where this interesting spot lay neither P., H., nor M. had the very slightest idea.

The ponies were sent back from Manikurn as they could be no longer utilized over the road before us, an account of which part of our journey is given in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

ABOUT day-break on the 8th of May we were ready for the start, and, accompanied by Futtoo, the *Negee*, and others, who appeared to consider our going to Malauna as a good joke, we struck into the road followed the previous day, and passing the *sungha*, still kept to the right bank of the Parbuttee instead of crossing over to the Jhirree side of that river: the heavier tents with the ponies and all but necessary equipage being returned from Manikurn to Sooltanpore, as we were obliged to travel with as little impedimenta as was possible. Now leaving the river the path entered on a pine wood, and shortly after Chilaul village, two and a half miles from Manikurn, came in sight; the villagers as we approached producing the skin of a leopard that a native sportsman had just shot, and the sight of which greatly impressed Robert and Thomas, these faithful companions of our wanderings immediately adjusting their tails well under their hind-legs. P. gave Rs. 2 for the skin, the proper curing of which would, he deemed, be a profitable and pleasurable amusement to his establishment. Some rocky ground ensuing, the ascent up a steep gorge commenced; the path at first being tolerably good, but continually gaining in difficulty as it at last rose over a long

succession of wide steps; but the sun had not yet topped the huge mountain on our right, so we had it pleasantly cool for the first part of the journey. Very little vegetation was to be observed on either flank of this narrow glen, but clusters of pine grew here and there, and the rhododendron became quite a large tree, and being in full bloom, the brilliancy of its foliage was not a little remarkable. The marble-like formation that was to be observed near Manikurn was also very common here, and higher up the rock was evidently deeply impregnated with copper and iron. Along all these roads, as ought to have been mentioned, there are every two or three miles regular banks built of loose stone, on which the *zemindars* proceeding from place to place can rest their *kiltas* or baskets; and having now arrived at one of these, yclept Shirra, H. and M. determined on a rest; but P., eager in pursuit of sport, and perhaps with the legend from *Cymbeline* in his mind, that,—"He that strikes the venison first shall be lord o' the feast. To him the other two shall minister,"—started onwards with Robert, leaving "the other two" reposing on the bank, which shelved up gradually behind, the overhanging branches of the rhododendrons stretching over the pathway, along which grew plentifully, throwing out a pleasant aroma, the wild thyme, or *jungleewakt*—as an abandoned individual, lost to all sense of right feeling, was once heard to call it. This being deemed a spot in which the influence of

tobacco might be supposed to have a soothing effect, pipes were produced, and the smokers lay calmly enjoying the view, while they discussed in appropriate language the chances of a European war, the many charms of the Indian plains, and the income tax (which they considered to be the most unobjectionable impost ever hit upon); with such other kindred topics as might have clearly proved to any one listening, that though on a mere pleasure trip, M. and H. were not unmindful of their high destinies and had the interests of their country fully at heart.

From Shirra upwards, it was a mere agony that may be passed over, for much of the same has to be recorded further on; the sun came out in full force, and yet our halting place lay still far away above us.

But every lane has its end, and at length the last range of steps was left behind, and Rushole was entered, a substantial village some 7,500 feet above sea level, hemmed in on either side by mountains, a great deal of cultivation lying all round; the wheat we passed through being probably as fine as any to be found even in England, judging from the crops over four feet in height, the ears being nearly eight inches in length! The houses in Rushole are clumsily and carelessly put together, and very dirty-looking; but as there was not room in the small terraces for more than one tent at a time, and as all our canvass dwellings were widely separated, we made an upper verandah in one of these tenements our rendez-

vous, there finding breakfast laid out, P. having made all the necessary arrangements on arrival.

At the height we had attained to the view down the gorge that narrowed much toward the base was of course very fine; but, as much the same landscape was presented to us in greater perfection higher up, there is no need to enter on any descriptions at present. Snowy peaks lay in front, and behind uprose the crests of the range we had to ascend on the morrow by the Kundee Pass, ere Malauna could be reached. A nice business this ascent was evidently to be, but breakfast is breakfast all the world over, at any rate where Englishmen are; and on the good old principle of thinking of the evil when the evil comes, we enjoyed the *dolce far niente* of the present, bearing as amicably as we could the plague of flies, which swarmed around with more than Egyptian ferocity; and moving, when moving was necessary, as carefully as possible over the rotten beams, that very far from touching, formed the flooring of our *al fresco* entertainment. Truly ludicrous was it to creatures like ourselves only encumbered with two legs, to see the struggles of our four-footed friends to reach us by means of a rude ladder, made of notches in a beam, and then pass over a narrow pole ere a firm footing could be found! Robert and Thomas both came up once, but in returning to *terra firma* touched the latter in a fashion they never expected, and no inducements were of avail

to get them to renew their visits; and they both retired below in sulky dignity, refusing further heed to our blandishments.

At mid-day the heat got intense, and perhaps it would not be too much to say that we all for a brief period partook of refreshing repose, veiled, however, under the ostensible pursuit of literature; but even the charms of that thrilling narrative in the *Cornhill*,—"Put your nose in his face,"—could not keep M. from slumber; and the geology of the Andaman Islands, or the researches of the Entomological Society, were in the case of the other two equally inefficacious. At 4 P. M. the sun retired behind the hills, and his disappearance interfered with a little amusement we had in hand; which consisted in casting the glare, suddenly and with Archimidean skill, by means of hand glasses, into the faces of the population; the latter, consisting mainly of children in scanty raiment, evidently regarded the flashing of the light upon them as the finest piece of fun imaginable. The evening now came on, and as it was still early we wandered about the village; Thomas behaving in such an improper manner, flying at the cattle with angry and vociferous demonstrations, that he was summarily recalled, made to sit up on a round stone, which he objected to, and go through his daily exercise of catching portions of bread, first adjusted on the brink of his amiable nose. His feats were the astonishment of the people,

who, by this time, were apparently beginning to believe that we had no intentions of sacking the village, and otherwise rendering ourselves obnoxious to a dirty but humble population. As a long pull lay before us on the morrow, we separated early for the night.

CHAPTER V.

PERHAPS nothing more than an early march evokes curious difference as to ideas of time. Now the energetic P., as was his wont, arose on the 9th of May like a giant refreshed, at somewhere about the middle of the night, and by the time H. and M. were lazily turning out of bed, declaring it couldn't be 4 o'clock, this meritorious traveller had his tent down, his belongings packed up, and coffee for the three of us only awaiting our pleasure to imbibe; the sagacious Robert, in his eagerness to be off, was wagging his stump of a tail in a manner that threatened to dislocate his latter end, and Thomas was indulging in a series of wild gambols, that had for their sole object an immediate start. Under the circumstances, therefore, to contend about the time of day was out of the question, so the entire party of us were very soon under weigh. The path on this occasion lay up the heights to the rear of Rushole, and terribly tiresome heights we found these before we had done with them. Up and up the road wound, over loose stones, frowning rock, and by objectionable precipices, which were horribly monotonous in the certainty they promised of speedily putting a termination to the earthly pilgrimage of the individual who might chance to take a

false step. We were now in the Kundee Pass, and fortunately the morning was a cool one, for the exertion in tramping over the nearly perpendicular bank would have been something more than trying had we been exposed to the great glare and heat of the sun. Leaving the scrub jungle that extended some way up above the village we had quitted, we passed into belts of forest that here began to flank the hill side; the holly oak growing abundantly, and the rhododendron still a large tree being in full bloom. At Nundrauna, a halting stage, we all stopped for a good rest, and each partook of a slight refection and a pipe; not altogether an impolitic measure, as it enabled the servants and baggage to get ahead a bit. Moving onwards, our exhaustion increased as we approached the summit, and it was with no small delight we at last stood on the crest of the Pass, which might be 10,000 feet in height.

The top of the Kundee Pass is a depression between two peaks, and commands a most extensive view of the snowy ranges; the ascent took us over 3½ hours, and in the way of sport but one *minal* was flushed, and he, unfortunately, by the people above us; and all we had was an instantaneous sight of him as he floated out of reach of shot down the gorge in all his sheeny brightness of green and gold. On the highest point of the Pass there was a large cairn of stones placed, we could not ascertain, when or by whom; large perpendicular shafts of rock being

inserted in the soil around it. P. and M. poised themselves in appropriate attitudes on the cairn, and H., retiring to a suitable distance, at once transferred them to paper, as they gazed with gloomy abstraction over the ground yet to be traversed. Snow lay deep on the Malauna side of the mountain, stretching for a good 300 yards below; and in this it was the delight of Thomas to revel as he dashed after the snow-balls that were flung in profusion down the descent. His progress through the drifts was ludicrous in the extreme, for it so happened that he frequently lost his footing, and rolling over and over could not bring himself up for several yards; but nothing daunted, the plucky fellow, after recovering his balance, would dash again along the steep incline, and seldom failed to bring up what he had gone in search of.

The descent of the Pass was very steep, but a thick forest of pine and walnut gave a pleasant shelter from the sun; and half way down, M. and H. were seduced into stopping for a rest, while P. pushed on ahead. As lower ground was reached, the forest died away, and the road, crossing a rivulet strewn with the trees brought down by the avalanches, struck into cultivated fields and so up the left bank of the Malauna stream, the heat now becoming excessively oppressive. The river was crossed by a *sungha*, and then before us lay another weary ascent of about a mile, ere the village could be reached.

Breakfast was laid out under a huge walnut tree,

which at ten feet above the ground showed by our measurement a girth close on thirty feet! and to protect us still further from the sun, poles were laid slantingly against its branches, and blankets fastened across these. During the meal, served on a string bedstead, through the interstices of which a hand could be comfortably thrust, one of these poles garnished with an unpleasant head and spike of iron, moved by the evil spirit of the place, came down with a run, and just escaping H.'s brain box, fell among the cups and saucers, which, perhaps owing to the conveniently open-work of the table, escaped without injury. Congratulations on H.'s good fortune having been offered and accepted, and breakfast being over, it remained for us now but to light our pipes and look about us.

This is what we saw. To our right and down the valley, but on higher ground than was our camp, stood one portion of the village of Malauna made up of several good-sized houses, with the usual overhanging verandahs and sloping roofs so common all over Kooloo. Between this and the lower village, which was a great deal larger, stretched an inclined plane of the richest green grass, broken occasionally by trees and grey rock: and all around us lay fine fields, which the people have every interest in carefully cultivating, as all the lands round Malauna, as are those by Rushole, are held rent-free and pay no revenue to Government. Before us lay the Kundee

Pass, which we felt we were well out of, and behind rose the Malauna Pass that was to be crossed on the morrow. Having heard various queer stories of the Malauna people, the *Negee* of Nuggur *Kothee* within whose jurisdiction the village lies, and who here met us, brought several of the inhabitants up, and with these we endeavoured to enter into conversation ; but it was hopeless work, and we were informed that the villagers spoke a dialect that was not understood by any but themselves ; though, on the other hand, they were able to converse with tolerable ease in the Kooloo language. The men and women dress much in the same way as do the poorer classes in Kooloo, but their attire has none of the bright colours observable in other parts of the district ; the females wear a curious species of brown cowl (like a monk's) over the head, but this is not uncommon in one or two villages above Manikurn, in the Parbuttee Valley.

The aspect of the males is very peculiar ; in stature they are below the middle height, with figures that are far from being well developed : their eyes have a startled look ; the nose is without exception long and projecting over the mouth ; and this last feature, as does the narrow retreating chin, gives the countenance an imbecile and vacuous expression. Beards and whiskers are, in our acceptation of these terms, unknown, and the moustache is hardly perceptible ; but the hair is worn long, in elf-like and matted locks.

The dress is tattered, and the dirty appearance of the men and the few women we saw, renders the villagers of Malauna a far from prepossessing race. The word race is used advisedly, for it is clear these people do not form an integral portion of the inhabitants of Kooloo, and are a distinct species, whose language and social customs do not assimilate with those of the people amongst whom their lot is so strangely cast. Neither Kooloo, Spiti, nor Lahoul men can understand the speech of the Malauna *zemindar*, and the latter will neither eat nor intermarry with any one not a resident of their village.

It is not a little curious to reflect, nor is it altogether a waste of time to speculate on the probable antecedents of this isolated community; when could this colony of foreigners have entered Kooloo? and what strong bonds of sympathy can have existed in their midst, which has so completely kept them apart from the rest of the population? As Malauna lies in a valley, it might be guessed that its residents in all probability crossed the snowy range, and descended to where they now are to be found; but this is proved to be an impossibility, for on the other flank of the range, at the head of the Malauna Valley, rise impassable heights and snowy defiles, over which no human foot has ever passed, and besides, these people do not bear in their faces the faintest marks of affinity to the physiognomy of the Thibetan or Mongolian, although again, curiously enough, they have several

words in their language, which are pure Thibetan, such as *shing* (wood) and *mih* (fire.)

The opinion may be hazarded that they are a colony from the plains, driven up many centuries ago, who taking refuge in this sequestered valley have been left unknown and undisturbed; and, mixing but little with the people of the country, have kept together in one close community, and have ignored, and been ignored by, the outside world.

A break-neck path, hardly safe for men and quite impracticable for cattle, leads from Malauna by Bailung, an off-shoot of the parent village, to the river Parbuttee, opposite Jhirree; but, except on emergencies, neither do Kooloo people come to Malauna, nor do the inhabitants of the latter ever leave their homes. Various interrogatories were put to the head-man and several other rude fathers of the hamlet, but they could give no information as to where they came from, and when their ancestors first entered the valley. In the evening we went down to the lower village, which is built, as it were, round a large open square within which no native can pass with shoes on, and as through this enclosed space runs the high road to the several temples, it is a necessity for all visitors to go about bare-footed; but they did not object to our entering this sacred arena booted, and taking advantage of this liberality of sentiment, we sauntered about, seeing what there was to see, followed by crowds of the Malauna men,

who but seldom have an opportunity of inspecting a white face. Last year the Forest Officer passed through the village, but he was the first European that had come there within five years, so we were objects of particular interest to these simple mountaineers. Washing here appeared quite out of fashion, and we were informed that when the use of water became absolutely indispensable, the victim to such an adverse fate invariably got fever; and one ague-stricken individual was dragged before us as a case in point, he having been rash enough to bathe his face and chest about a fortnight ago. Perhaps they thought it was probable we should insist on the whole population cleansing themselves on the spot, and therefore deemed it incumbent to be as positive as possible regarding the evil effects of contact with cold water. Goitre, so common in the hills, is quite unknown in the valley, and the general health of the inhabitants was good, fever being the only malady that ever gave much trouble. Though so ignorant that not one soul in the place can read or write, yet their ideas as to the sanctity of the marriage tie are far superior to those which prevail in Kooloo generally, each man contenting himself with one wife; but this after all may not be held to be so very praiseworthy, where a plurality of wives would, in the case of such a small community, be well nigh impossible. It is not so very long ago since these people used to try

all disputes before a court of their own, and as they seldom, if ever, are said to appear with complaints before the Civil authorities, it is not improbable that they still prefer to settle all village squabbles themselves. The procedure adopted was as follows. On the day fixed for holding a court, the Gooroos of the temples came together, and sitting down called out " Houroongoo-a" to collect the villagers, this call being repeated thrice in one hour. Whoever was absent when time was up was fined a *kutcha seer* of kathoo (a kind of grain), and if he did not appear before night, this fine rose to eight *dawwas* (about 2½ annas), which went to the temple funds.

The court now having been formally opened, the three Gooroos sat on an upper terrace, and a case being called up, the judges gave their opinions and delivered these to the public, who appear to have acted as a species of jury. If the audience approved of the decision, the same was acted upon; but if there were many dissentients, the arguments that were to be brought forward were listened to; and if, finally, unanimity was impossible, the contending parties each brought a goat before the god, and each litigant at the same moment cutting the thighs of the animal open, inserted poison in the wounds, and the man whose goat first died won the case.

Husbands were allowed to dispose of their wives, and if they once agreed to accept the usual price, which was Rs. 40, they could not draw back; and

this sum was handed to them in open court, and out of it the god received a *douceur* of one rupee.

We enquired what the amusements of the people were, seeing some of them busily engaged at hockey in the square; and were informed that they sometimes danced and sang. Expressing a desire to witness a performance of this nature, about twenty men presently arranged themselves in a line, and moving in a circle gradually increased in speed, their gestures being not altogether ungraceful; a species of flageolet with drum accompaniment being the dance music. But it was now getting dark, and with a half regret that our stay must be short, and that we had found out so little of this strange people, we turned again to our tents.

The legend the Kooloo folk have about Malauna, which is fantastic enough to please the most exuberant fancy, is as follows:—

A long time ago (to commence in the old fairy-tale style,) there were only four villages in Kooloo; these were Tipri, Chunsari, Durmot, and Tramlee, which were built by the Great Purus Ram, who after having defeated the adherents of the lunar race, visited the country now known as Kooloo; this being about the year 1400 B. C. These villages, it may be mentioned, still exist. Now at the termination of the terrible war beween the Pandoos and Kooros, the more celebrated Chiefs of India, who were, as all historians tell us, regarded as gods by

the people, came to the Himalayas for devotional purposes, and passing from place to place at last reached the ranges about Malauna. There they divided off the whole of the surrounding territory among themselves; but it seems that one supercilious individual of their number, whose name was Jaimlu, must have had more than the usual proportion of pride; for he deemed himself quite above sharing in this distribution, and proceeded to China to see what was going on in that part of the world. Whether he was dissatisfied with his trip, or found the climate of that country did not agree with his constitution, cannot at this lapse of time be clearly ascertained; but apparently he deemed Kooloo the more preferable land of the two, for he was soon after, or long after, it does not much matter which, a resident in the Upper Beas Valley; where, choosing Jugut Sookh as his head-quarters, he contrived to make himself very unpleasant to a family of sixteen fairies, who in vain tried to get him to leave the place. Such constant quarrels were there, that at last it was arranged the cast of the dice should decide who was to vacate the field; and as generally happens at games of skill and chance combined, when the fair sex put their hearts into the work, the fairies were successful, and Jaimlu, not without some ugly suspicions that he had been tricked, had to wander further on. With a propensity for lofty mountains, which seems to have been a distinguishing feature of

his character, he took up his abode on the peaks of the Humta Pass (leading from Kooloo into Spiti), and with a vanity that all his travelling experience does not appear to have been able to free him from, he placed his own statue in an inaccessible spot, where it was next to impossible for any one to see it. Perhaps weary of the monotonous appearance of the everlasting snow, and dissatisfied with his own stone image, which we may suppose was but a rude work of art and not calculated to be much of a solace to one in his unfortunate position, he again took up his staff, and once more arrived at Malauna. The seclusion of the place pleased his fastidious sense of propriety, and by an exercise of power, the existence of which seems lately to have died out of India altogether, he created two boys, whom he reared and left before they were of an age to use their tongues. What became of Jaimlu no one can say, but as time advanced, and the boys began to talk, they used a gibberish of their own, and the names they gave to every object became the names of the same for ever after; and then the people who came to Malauna forgot their own speech and adopted that which they found in vogue. Hence the dissimilarity of languages, which has held good from that day to this.

This legend—and a very old one it is—tends to show that these people in Malauna have for many centuries had a dialect of their own, and that it is not of late years they have become so completely apart

from the race amongst whom they reside. It would be highly interesting to ascertain where they came from, and to what race they may be said to belong, but the problem is one that is very unlikely to be ever solved.

CHAPTER VI.

We left Malauna at day-break, as a long march lay before us to which we addressed ourselves as speedily as possible. The ascent of the Malauna Pass, was by no means an easy journey, but perhaps, on the whole, it was not more troublesome than the passage of the Kundee had been the day before. The track we followed, though at first bare of everything but scrub jungle, entered at last into a region of holly oak *(Quercus semicarpifolia)*, and as is frequently seen in these hills, as if to show that the oak and the pine will not to any extent take kindly to the same soil or grow side by side, not a single fir-tree was to be seen on the ascent. The morning was so cold, that as we mounted higher we were glad to get into the sun; and so backward was all vegetation, that the blossoms of the rhododendron (this being the 10th of May) were only just sprouting. These last trees were clustered in considerable numbers in different parts of the mountain side, and at one of these clumps we noticed specimens with blossoms tinted with crimson, rose, light pink, and lilac.

Just before reaching the crest of the Pass, a good stretch of hard snow lay over the track; and now arriving at the summit we all stopped to look around. Such a perfectly magnificent amphitheatre

of snowy heights we none of us had seen before, and probably may never see again. We were standing at an elevation of about 12,000 feet above sea level, (the highest peak on this Malauna range is about 12,080 feet,) and there was nothing above us but the gradually sloping banks which bound in the Pass itself, and which in no case were fifty feet higher than the point from which we were surveying the wondrous landscape that lay spread before us in all its dazzling brilliancy. Peaks—the names of which we knew not, and others that by previous reference to the map we could pretty well identify—shouldered each other with their glistening canopies, and away far down in the tremendous gullies beyond the Parbuttee Valley were vast beds of the whitest snow, that overlapped the mighty mountains which stood out like the sentinels of winter against the now approaching summer, that with its conquering heats was soon to tear down these icy strongholds and bear their burden to the thirsty plains of the Punjab.

North, south, east, and west it was the same; range after range, snow-capped and glacier-bound, stretched backward in receding ranks; one great mass of solid ice, many hundred feet high, cresting a mighty barrier to the west, which in all probability was Deotiba over the Humta Pass. How could the eye ever be satiated with this superb panorama! In the clear morning light, when every rugged cliff stood out in startling relief against the shadows that

lay cold and deep, the gaze wandered with a calm delight from the surrounding eminences hoary with a thousand winters, and rested on the contrast afforded by the dense woodland that mounted up on the nearer hills against the snow line, the sunlight faintly playing on the tiers of forest, the mass below being shaded off in a mysterious gloom of cerulean blue, which again died away into, and was merged with, a tender aërial grey. Not a breath of air stirred on the summit of the Pass, which was two feet deep in the snow that covered the Kooloo side of the descent; not a sound was to be heard; no sign of life broke the utter stillness; and everything combined to bring to one's mind the mighty majesty of Nature, which here seemed to have marshalled its icy battalions in overpowering and overwhelming strength. H. had toiled up the Pass with a sketch-book, hoping to get a view from the summit; but from what point could any drawing be taken that could be said to give even an approximate idea of what lay around! The snow also was rapidly melting, and the longer the delay the greater the difficulty of getting down. Still an attempt had to be made, and a rough idea was knocked off, which it was fondly believed might be turned into something respectable hereafter.

So then we prepared for the descent. P. and M. preferred the more dignified process of walking, but as H. had had some experience before in sliding over

the snow, he allowed the others to precede him, and then, with all the natives who had remained gazing in solemn wonder at his efforts at high art, commenced preparations for the *glissade*, after all a very simple matter. The traveller lies flat on his back, keeping the legs close together, and down he goes; should the pace become too great the legs are opened and the elbows dug into the snow, which, unless the latter be too hard, very soon brings one up. On this occasion the accidents were truly most ludicrous, for not only the natives, but H. also, were continually coming to utter grief, and rolling head-over-heels, side-ways, or head downwards, for considerable distances, presenting an appearance, as each bedraggled body swept past, of most utter helplessness. However, all in safety reached the spot where the tent was pitched for breakfast, and the scattered caps, alpen-stocks, and other articles being collected from the drifts into which they had temporarily disappeared, nothing now remained but to tackle the meal that was laid out in the tent, surrounded by snow, young rhododendrons in full bloom, and other trees just springing into leaf. Our table was a box, and our seats the ground, over which carpets were carelessly flung, and under the circumstances neither the accommodation nor the repast could be complained of. After a pipe, we struck into the gully covered with snow, and below which rushed a torrent, and jumping here, scrambling there, and

tumbling every where, at last, after a descent almost more weary than the ascent, left the great beds of dirty snow behind and entered on a most beautiful valley, richly forested with various descriptions of pine. Through the centre of this coursed a fine spring of clear water, almost blocked up, however, in many places with the hundreds of enormous trees that had been swept down by avalanches. The road now became good, and before long we were able to see the tents under a grove of horse chesnuts in a grassy camping ground called Jijmole, about two miles from any village, although some signs of cultivation were even here to be met with. Looking up at the Pass from this, it seemed truly a very ugly affair, and P., M., and H. all agreed they'd see it somewhere before they crossed it again. As night came on the cold became intense, and we were glad to get into the tents; but it was worth while lingering for a moment outside to observe the scene our camp presented. The Malauna coolies were seated round a blazing fire of pine logs, under shelter of a lofty bank, and the servants had crowded together in a cosy nook, where a rude wall of stones between two huge trees served as a protection from the chilly blasts that occasionally swept down the flank of the mountain; while around, on every side, rose the feathery fronds of the firs, which were faintly stirred as now and then they were touched by the night breeze. Thoroughly fatigued after the day's

exertions, the three of us slept the sleep of the just, and early the following morning we had all the tents down, and prepared once again to enter into civilized life; and as there was a vague rumour that one, possibly two ladies might be at Nuggur, collars were the order of the day, and the reckless and brigand-like expression of countenance that had stamped its mark on us all was now sobered down into a deportment and aspect more consonant with respectable attire.

Jijmole can hardly be more than five miles from Nuggur, and it was not long before we could see well into the glorious Upper Beas Valley, and we were soon passing through scattered hamlets buried in the woodland, while ever and anon a majestic group of cedars circled round some rude village temple, and hung their mighty branches with fostering care over the quaint and picturesque cottages of the peasantry.

A turn in the road, and Nuggur Castle was before us, with its long range of buildings, once the palace of the Sovereigns of Kooloo, built about A. D. 1640 by Rajah Juggut Sing, and now used as a residence by the Assistant Commissioner in charge of the Subdivision, at this time absent from the place.

Our little trip was now over. Certainly M. and H. had their faces pretty well as red as faces can become, and the garments of the latter had not altogether come out scatheless, from the rapid gliding

of their owner through the snowy descent of the Malauna Pass; but we had the satisfaction of feeling we had done all we had hoped to perform, and, if there had not been very much in the way of sport, that nevertheless the abundant exercise we had each taken had done us a world of good, and set us up with a stock of health sufficient for a twelvemonth.

And so this veracious chronicle comes to an end, and may all who undertake a week's tramp in the hills be met with as pleasant smiles and warm welcomes as P., M., and H. found awaiting them at their journey's end. The curtain drops, and as the lights are one by one being extinguished, the audience disappears, and our little play of Rambles in Kooloo in six Acts is taken off the stage to make way for some other piece.

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