

AT THE Ruanwella Rest House

I had been in Ceylon some years when the incident I am about to relate took place. At the time I had a billet on a tea estate "up country," but having a fortnight's leave due I had decided to spend it with my friend Price, at Mahadenia estate, in the Kelani valley, or the "K. V.," as it is familiarly called. I had never been in this part of the island before, though it had often been mentioned to me as being an extremely hot place. My trip involved a journey of 28 miles from Colombo to Avisawella; for the Kelani Valley railway, now in course of construction, had not even been thought of in those days. This was the first time I had left my district since coming out, and everything I saw seemed comparatively new and strange. The paddy-fields on either side of the road; the Royal Mail coach, a broken-down, second-rate concern, with horses to match—all seemed curious and remarkable.

After leaving Avisawella I had a walk of some eight miles before me. The Kelani Ganger had to be negotiated in a dug-out canoe; then came a trudge through leech-infested paddy-fields; and then, as darkness drew on, a climb of 800 feet. At last, however, I reached the bungalow, receiving a hearty welcome from my friend. Price was musical; he could play a variety of instruments—flute, mandolin, violin and guitar—and was fond of whistling to his own accompaniment. It was a pleasure to listen to him, and the evenings used to pass all too quickly.

At the end of a week we decided to visit some friends in Avisawella. It was a Saturday, and as it had been raining hard for two days, and we could see the paddy-fields were flooded, we went round the long way, which was more likely to be passable. In some places we were compelled to wade through the flood, at one time having to go in right up to our necks. At other places we got canoes or rafts, their native owners being glad to earn a few cents by taking us across deep stretches. The day was fine and very hot, and as we had on thin khaki clothes we soon got dry again after each ducking.

After spending a pleasant Sunday with our friends we started back for the estate on Monday morning. The waters had somewhat abated by this time, and Price said he would take me home by a short cut. But, as is often the case, the "short cut" proved the longest way round, for Price missed his way, and at 11 a. m. we found ourselves not much nearer home, but, fortunately, very near Ruanwella Rest House, for which we decided to make. Here we met an officer of the public works department named Carey, who was in charge of some works in the neighborhood and made the rest-house his headquarters. He was glad of some company, and we stopped to breakfast. While we were enjoying the meal it came on to rain, and poured in bucketsful all the afternoon. Under the circumstances we could not cross the river, and so had to make up our minds to spend the night at the rest-house.

Carey had a pet monkey, a pretty little white thing called Rance, which took a great fancy to Price, who played with her and gave her plantains and biscuits. She seemed to appreciate Price's whistling powers, and would sit on his knee while he whistled, placing one paw on each side of his face and looking into his eyes with a most comical expression. I suppose it was partly this whistling that attracted her. At any rate, it led to a most fortunate result, as will be seen hereafter.

Bed-time arrived in due course, and Price and I shared a room. We left the window open and the light burning. It was one of those primitive contrivances consisting of a floating wick in coconut oil, and made an excellent night light, albeit rather smelly. This stood on a small table near Price's head, which faced the window. My bed was in the opposite corner. These are trivial details, you may think, but they have an important bearing on my story.

We turned into bed and soon dropped off to sleep. After some time, however, I was aroused by the sound of whistling coming from Price's corner. "Surely he doesn't whistle in his sleep?" I muttered, irritably, and as I could get off to sleep again while the whistling went on, I turned over to reach for a shoe to throw at him. Suddenly an object caught my eye which made me pause and hold my breath. There, near the bed, stood the light, burning dimly as we had left it. On Price's chest, its head raised and swaying from side to side and its hood inflated, lay a large cobra! It had evidently crawled into his bed for warmth and awakened him, and he, knowing that snakes are influenced by certain kinds of music, had, with extraordinary presence of mind, thought of this expedient to keep it from attacking him. There he lay, unable to stir, whistling a low, plaintive tune—a weird air in the minor key—while the snake kept time to it. A more remarkable spectacle it is impossible to conceive, and I lay there fascinated.

I tried to devise some means of helping my friend out of his terrible position, and presently I sat up in bed. Hearing me move, the snake got restless and the whistling almost ceased for a moment, as Price realized that I saw his situation and could perhaps render assistance. He may, too, have wished to warn me against startling the reptile into striking. The cobra, annoyed at the cessation of the music, hissed and darted out its tongue, and Price, with admirable nerve, started again. The whistling resumed its even measure, and that deadly head began to sway again in time in the air.

I dared not move again. My friend's face I could not see. My own, I knew, was moist with great beads of perspiration. The agony of suspense was intense, so that I knew what my poor chum must be suffering. When would his nerve break down? When would the snake tire of the whistling and strike? These were but a few of the thoughts that crowded through my mind as I sat and watched this awful spectacle of life and death. How long I sat like this, not daring to move for fear of disturbing the reptile, I cannot say, but at last it came to an end.

A small figure hopped on to the window-sill. Rance, attracted, I suppose, by the whistling, had come to listen. She paused a moment, peering into the corner from which the sound came. She was behind the snake, so that the latter could not see her. The little creature seemed to take in the situation instinctively, and with two cat-like bounds and a guttural snarl she was on the bed, had grasped the cobra from behind close to the head, and buried her sharp teeth in its back. With a yell I sprang from my bed and seized a stick, as monkey and snake rolled over on the floor in a confused and struggling heap. So mixed up were they that it was impossible for me to get a blow without hurting the plucky little monkey. By this time the whistling had ceased, and aroused by my cries Carey came running in with a lamp.

The struggle did not last long. The cobra, weakened by the repeated bites of its determined little antagonist, and unable to get at her to bite, relaxed its coils and soon lay on the floor a bleeding mass, while the victor skipped on to the bed where Price lay and perched itself on his pillow, gibbering excitedly. She was, luckily, quite unharmed.

Having disposed of the snake, Carey and I devoted our attention to Price. The poor fellow was in a swoon, and on being restored to consciousness went off again. He presently developed a high fever, and as the case was beyond our powers he was removed to the local hospital at Caravanella. When he finally became convalescent we took him down to Mount Lavinia, a pleasant seaside hotel near Colombo, where he stayed until he sailed for England, complete change and rest being declared necessary by the doctors after the fearful experience of that night at the Ruanwella Rest House. Price told me, when at "The Mount," that he had been awakened by feeling something moving on his chest, and on opening his eyes had been terrified to see a large cobra. The snake raised its head to strike, whereupon a sudden inspiration prompted him to begin whistling. This action undoubtedly saved his life, for the music arrested the attention of the cobra and at the same time attracted the plucky little Rance, who was the means of relieving him of his terrible bed-fellow.

You may be sure the pretty little monkey was not forgotten. Carey gave her to Price, and I kept her for him until he came back from his trip to England.

She lived for some years after that, and her greatest pleasure was to hear Price whistling. She always slept curled up on his pillow, evidently determined that never again should her master's slumbers be disturbed by unwelcome intruders.

A COSTLY PEACE.

Details of the South African Army of Occupation.

The last number of the Canadian Military Gazette gives the following details of what troops the South African army of occupation will consist. Truly, war is a costly game, and, in this case, peace scarcely less so. The particulars are as follows:—

"An increase is to be made in the force originally destined for the peace establishment of South Africa. The change is due to the probable increase in the population, and involves the addition of both cavalry and infantry. In future there will be in the Transvaal seven cavalry regiments, nine mounted infantry battalions, twenty-seven battalions of infantry, two batteries of horse artillery and one brigade division of field artillery. In the Orange River Colony the garrison will consist of two cavalry regiments, three mounted infantry battalions, eight infantry battalions, and one brigade division of field artillery. In Cape Colony there will be two cavalry regiments, six mounted infantry battalions, twelve infantry battalions and one brigade division of field artillery; while in Natal the force will be increased to two cavalry regiments, three battalions of mounted infantry, six battalions of infantry and one brigade division of field artillery."

MEN HUNTED FOR YEARS.

CHASES THAT HAVE SPREAD OVER SEVEN BIRTHDAYS

Capture of a New Caledonia Convict—Two Queensland Desperadoes Caught.

There has recently been run to earth at Matmat, in Algeria, a convict, named Pierre Lamonte, who escaped from New Caledonia some three years back, after murdering two of his guards, and dangerously wounding a third. Usually the French authorities in that remote quarter of the globe do not trouble greatly after runaway prisoners, once they have got clear of the colony; but the circumstances surrounding this particular gaol-breaking were so exceptionally atrocious that it was resolved to make an example. Money was accordingly poured out like water, large rewards were offered, detectives were dispatched to follow up all clues and investigate all rumors, and the result of it all was that the "wanted" man was eventually found to be serving—although a Frenchman—in the foreign legion at Algiers.

One of the Parisian detectives sent to effect his re-arrest, however, had been well-known to Lamonte in days gone by, and as soon as the criminal caught sight of him he bolted for the desert. He succeeded, too, in eluding his pursuers for another thirteen months, but the latter were now on their mettle, and by dint of enlisting the good offices of the Sheik of Wargla, their quarry was at length captured disguised as a Mohammedan pilgrim.

EN ROUTE FOR MECCA.

An even more exciting man hunt, although not one of such long duration, was that which has just resulted in the arrest of Patrick and James Keniff, two Queensland desperadoes, who for three months set at defiance the united efforts of two inspectors, fifty constables, and sixteen black trackers, reinforced and aided from time to time by a small army of volunteer helpers. The pursuit cost the Queensland Government over \$10,000 a week, or about \$125,000 in all.

The brothers began by murdering a Chinese teamster and looting his waggons. There went in search for them a sub-inspector of the mounted police, named Doyle; a Mr. Dalke, manager of the Carnarvon cattle station in the Mitchell district of Queensland; and a black tracker. They came across one of the desperadoes by a fire, but while they were binding him the other suddenly opened fire from an ambush. The black tracker thereupon ran away, and since then neither Mr. Dalke nor Inspector Doyle have been seen of human eyes. Aided, however, by native guides, who were able to decipher the story from the signs on the earth as plainly as though they had been witnesses of the affair, the dreadful tragedy that ensued was

AFTERWARDS MADE PLAIN.

The two man hunters were riddled with bullets, and their bodies were then dragged by the brothers Keniff to a big rock having a hollow depression in the summit, and there burnt to ashes. When the fire had died out, the murderers collected together certain calcined bones, teeth, and buttons, and packed them in the saddle-bags of the unfortunate inspector's horse, with a view to removing them eventually to some better hiding-place. The horse, however, bolted, carrying with it its dreadful burden, and it was this which led to the brothers' undoing. The whole colony was up in arms at the unexampled atrocity; and, although, being well mounted, the murderers escaped capture on several occasions, they were at last run down. One of the brothers was wounded and taken prisoner, and then the other, after some parleying, gave himself up.

The notorious James Lynchebaum, who escaped the other day from Maryborough convict prison, has a record of which even an Australian bushranger might be proud. Five years ago, when arrested for arson and attempted murder, he, while being removed on a side car from Doogert to Castlebar, stunned one of his escort with a blow on the head from his manacled hands, and took to the woods. He remained at large for six months, during which time a force of 250 police were continually beating the country for him. When at last re-captured he exclaimed: "I shall give you the slip yet," and

HE HAS KEPT HIS WORD.

The exploits of Soar and King, again, who last year escaped from Borstal convict prison, will doubtless be fresh in the minds of most readers of this article. Hundreds of police were on their track within a few hours, but they eluded capture, although reports of their whereabouts quickly began to come in from practically all over Kent. It transpired afterwards that the runaways had struck straight for London, and had gone into hiding in the East-end. Both were eventually re-taken, but not until months afterwards, and then more by chance than anything else.

But both these instances are quite eclipsed by the big man hunt which took place in the mountains of Donegal in 1889, when seven peasants, accused of having participated in the murder of District-Inspector Martin, of the Royal Irish Con-

stabulary, at Gweedore, were tracked to their doom by more than 600 police, assisted by an entire battalion of infantry, and by strong detachments of the

SCOTS GREYS FROM DUNDALK.

The entire countryside was, of course, friendly to the fugitives, and the game of hide and seek might conceivably have continued even longer than it actually did, had not the "wanted" men been ill-advised enough to quit the mainland, and seek refuge in a small island off the coast. There they were stormbound, and ran so short of provisions that they were glad rather than sorry to be taken off by a gunboat specially dispatched for the purpose.

No man hunt of modern times, however, has lasted so long, or cost so many lives as that organized in this country against the brothers Jesse and Frank James, train robbers, murderers, and professional desperadoes. For four years on end the Pinkertons, the famous detectives, tried their hardest to effect their capture, but, after losing nearly a dozen of their best men, had to confess themselves beaten. In the end, James was shot dead by a detective named Ford, who wormed himself into the robber's confidence and then took advantage of his trust to kill him in his sleep; and Frank surrendered. The chase lasted altogether seven years, and cost the nice little sum of \$250,000; while, of their would-be captors, the brothers killed twenty-three and wounded eighteen. —Pearson's Weekly.

DRAWING TEETH.

The Phonograph Is Now Used by a Paris Dentist.

M. Donier, one of the leading dentists of Paris, is using the phonograph to lessen the horror of tooth drawing. He has three large establishments in the busiest part of the French capital, and he noticed that those patients to whom he was obliged to give an anaesthetic—no matter of what kind, even if it were only laughing gas—showed unfavorable symptoms when they awoke from unconsciousness, their condition being largely due to the effect of the noise of the traffic in the street outside. They suffered from severe headache and interference with vision; but what distressed them most was that during the time they were under the influence of the anaesthetic they had usually horrid dreams or imaginings.

The dentist saw that if he could keep the noise from the ears, and consequently from the mind also of his patients, great good would be done. The only way to do this was to create a louder counteracting noise or sound which should be pleasant, not nerve irritating. Obviously music was the thing. He tried a phonograph, and still uses it. When a patient is seated in his chair he places the phonograph's tubes to the ears and allows the instrument to work for a little while. Then he administers the anaesthetic and he finds that the patient becomes unconscious much more quickly and easily, and requires much less anaesthetic than was formerly the case.

Not only that, but he can perform the dental operation without interruption, and when the patient recovers consciousness the after effects are slight indeed compared with those which nearly always presented themselves before the phonograph had been numbered among the dentist's professional instruments.

Another form of suffering, more or less mental, which music has the power to relieve is insomnia. At a time when the great majority of people were quite unaware of this, the first Napoleon put his knowledge of the fact into practice. After his banishment to St. Helena, sleep was for a long time almost denied to him, and the effect on his general condition became so bad that his attendants became seriously alarmed. At last he said:

"I must have a couple of hours of music before going to bed." And night after night he took the pleasant "dose" he had prescribed for himself. So unexpectedly good were the results that instead of the "long wakefulness" that Lord Rosebery refers to in "Napoleon: the Last Phase," the fallen emperor slept, as a rule, for eight, and sometimes even ten hours.

But perhaps the strangest use to which music can be put is to stop the flow of blood from a wound. An army doctor noticed that when a wounded soldier was taken to without any hearing of music, hemorrhage was either greatly reduced or actually stopped. Neither he nor others, who confirmed his observations, could understand how this phenomenon was brought about, but it is now believed that the vibrations of the air produced by the music causes the patient to become faint, in which case the action of the heart is so considerably lessened that the overflow of blood is reduced.

CHOOSING HIS LAST MEAL.

An amusing story is told of a man condemned to death recently in France who was asked, according to custom, what he would prefer for his last meal. He chose mussels, which, though his favorite dish, always, he said, caused him terrible indigestion: "This time, however," he added, grimly, "they will not have the chance."

IN MERRY OLD ENGLAND

NEWS BY MAIL ABOUT JOHN BULL AND HIS PEOPLE.

Occurrences in the Land That Reigns Supreme in the Commercial World.

The Queen's gift to brides whom she desires to specially honor almost invariably takes the form of a brooch or a bracelet.

The biggest laundry in London has seven miles of drying lines, all under cover. Eighty thousand pieces can be dried at once in the space of half an hour.

The total proceeds of the Burns and Scott Memorial Bazaar held in St. James' hall, London, amount to £3,960. The amount received from the children's purses was £100.

There are at present in Great Britain some 47,000,000 spindles; in the United States, 21,558,974; in India, 5,000,000; in Japan, 1,500,000, and some 700,000 spindles in China.

Mr. Francis Johnson, a well known justice of the peace for Cheshire, fell dead on Liverpool landing stage, while hurrying to catch a ferry boat for Egremont, where he resided.

The 2nd Highland Light Infantry has arrived in Jersey and the Royal Welsh Fusiliers left for Lichfield. No Highland regiment has been stationed in Jersey for at least three-quarters of a century.

Colonel Hippley, who has just retired from the Scots Greys, after commanding the regiment to the end of the war in South Africa, had a splendid reception on his return home.

The Roman Catholic population of the United Kingdom is estimated at five and a quarter millions—viz., England, 1,500,000; Scotland, 433,000; Ireland, according to the census of 1901, 3,310,028.

In a national brass band competition held at the Crystal Palace, London, and in which 88 bands took part, Black Dike won first prize, Wyke Temperance the second, and Luton Red Springs the third.

In more than a dozen English towns electric light plants running from 19,000 to 22,000 lamps of sixteen candle-power get power from furnaces in which refuse is burned, either by itself or mixed with other fuel.

At present 108 trains in Britain run 100 miles and over daily without a stop. In Scotland the Caledonian Company take the lead, their longest run being from Carlisle to Stirling, 117½ miles, in 2 hours and 18 minutes.

Great Britain, with her colonies, owns nearly one-half of the total tonnage belonging to the marine of forty nations, or 14,000,000 tons out of a total of 29,000,000 tons. This is divided among 28,350 vessels, of which 10,838 sail under the British flag.

Five hundred men, of many nationalities, of many occupations—but all of them homeless, penniless, in the world's richest city—may be seen any evening, however wet or cold it may be, forming a long, black line in one of the obscure streets of the backyard of London.

The Duke and Duchess of Westminster, who sailed for South Africa will make a tour of the battlefields of the late war. The Countess of Airie sailed also to visit the grave of the late Earl, and see the memorial which was erected by the officers and men of the 12th Lancers.

A Welsh minister was surprised the other day to receive a basket of potatoes from an old woman—a member of his congregation—with the message that, as he had remarked the previous Sunday that common taters (commentators) did not agree with him, she had sent him real good ones.

St. Penioli's Library, Hawarden, which has been erected as a national memorial to Mr. Gladstone, at a cost of £100,000, was opened by Earl Spencer on the 14th ult. It has been placed on the brow of the hill at Hawarden, and commands a lovely view over the estuary of the Dee. Externally the building is faced with Helsing stone, a red sandstone, while the roof is covered with dark green Buttermere slate.

Like Queen Victoria, Queen Alexandra has tombstones erected over the graves of her pet dogs. Queen Victoria had small statues made of her deceased canine companions, and placed on blocks of stone over their remains in the grounds at Frogmore. At Sandringham are the graves of two dogs, a Siberian and a St. Bernard, and on the stones are inscribed their names, the length of time they were owned by Queen Alexandra, and the dates of their deaths.

In his new book Admiral Sir William Kennedy relates the case of a marine who was brought before a court martial at Hong Kong charged with insubordination. The court having been sworn, the prisoner was asked the usual question—Did he object to any member of the court? Looking around with infinite contempt on his judges, he said, "Yes, I object to the whole bloomin' lot of yer, 'specially the bald-headed old bouncer in the middle!" His sentence is not recorded.

At St. Augustine, Florida, is the only mill in the world which gets its power direct from an artesian well.