One of the Garrison;

Or, A Mysterious Affair.

CHAPTER XV.

Thull Valley, Oct 1, 1841.—The Fifth Bengal and the Thirty-third Queen's passed through this morning on their way to the front. Had tiffin with the Bengalese. Latest news from home that two attempts had been made on the Queen's life by semi-maniacs named Francis and Bean.

It promises to be a hard winter. The snow line has descended a thousand feet upon the peaks, but the passes will be open for weeks to come, and even if they were blocked, we have established so many depots in the country that Pollock and Nott will have no difficulty in holding their own. They shall not meet with the fate of Elphinstone's army. One such tragedy is enough for a century.

Elliott, of the Artillery, and I, are answerable for the safety of the communications for a distance of twenty miles or more, from the mouth of the valley to this side of the wooden bridge over the Lotar. Goodenough, of the Rifles, is responsible on the other side; and Lieutenant-Colonel Sidney Herbert, of the Engineers, has a general supervision over both sections. Our force is not strong enough for the work which has to be done. I have a company and a half of our own regiment, and a squadron of Sowars, who are of no use at all among the rocks. Elliott has three guns, but several of his men are down with cholera, and I doubt if he has enough to serve more than two. (Note: Capsicum for cholera—tried it.) On the other hand each convoy is usually provided with some guard of its own, though it is often absurdly inefficient. These valleys and ravines which branch out of the main pass are alive with Afreedees and Pathans, who are keen robbers as well as religious fanatics. I wonder they don't swoop down on some of our caravans. They could plunder them and get back to their mountain fastnesses before we could interfere or overtake them. Nothing but fear will restrain them. If I had my way I would hang one at the mouth of every ravine as a warning to the gang. They are personifications of the devil to look at, hawknosed, full-lipped, with a mane of tangled hair, and most Satanic sneer. No news to-day from the front.

October 2.—I must really ask Herbert for another company at the very least. I am convinced that the communications would be cut off if any serious attack were made upon us. Now, this morning two urgent messages were sent me from two different points more than sixteen miles apart, to say that there were signs of a descent of the tribes. Elliott, with one gun and the Sowars, went to the farther ravine, while I, with the infantry, hurried to the other; but we found it was a false alarm. I saw no signs of the hillmen, and though we were greeted by a sputter of jezail bullets we were unable to capture any of the rascals. Woe betide them if they fall into my hands! I would give them as short a shift as ever a Highland cateran got from a Glasgow judge. These continued alarms may mean nothing or they may be an indication that the hillmen are assembling and have some plan in view.

We have had no news from the front for some time, but to-day a convoy of wounded came through with the intelligence that Nott had taken Khuznee. I hope he warmed up any of the black rascals that fell into his hands. No word of Pollock. An elephant battery came up from the Punjaub, looking in a very good condition. There were several convalescents with it going up to rejoin their regiments. Knew none of them except Mostyn of the Hussars and young Blakesley, who was my fag at Charterhouse, and whom I have never seen since. Punch and cigars alfresco up to eleven o'clock. Letters to-day from Wills & Co. about their little bill forwarded on from Delhi. Thought a campaign freed a man from these annoyances. Wills says in his note that since his written applications have been in vain, he must call upon me in person. If he calls upon me now he will assuredly be the boldest and most persevering of tailors. A line from Calcutta Daisy and another from Hobhouse to say that Matilda comes in for all the money under the will. I am glad of it.

October 3.—Glorious news from the front to-day. Barelay, of the Madras Cavalry, galloped through with dispatches. Pollock entered Cabul triumphantly on the 16th of last month, and, better still, Lady Sale has been rescued by Shakespear, and brought safe into the British camp, together with the other hostages. "Te Deum laudamus!" This should end the whole wretched business—this and the sack of the city. I hope Pollock won't be squeamish, or truckle to the hysterical party at home. The town should be laid in ashes and the fields sown with salt. Above all, the Residency and the Palace must come down. So shall Burns, McNaughten, and many another gallant fellow know that his countrymen could avenge if they could not save him!

It is hard when others are gaining glory and experience to be stuck in this miserable valley. I have been out of it completely, bar a few petty skirmishes. However, we may see some service yet. A jemidar of ours brought in a hillman today, who says that the tribes are massing in the Terada ravine, ten miles to the north of us, and intend attacking the next convoy. We can't rely on information of this sort, but there may prove to be some truth in it. Proposed to shoot our informant, so as to prevent his playing the double traitor and reporting our proceedings. Elliott demurred. If you are making war you should throw no chance away. I hate half-and-half measures. The Children of Israel seem to have been the only people who ever carried war to its logical conclusion—except Cromwell in Ireland—made a compromise at last by which the man is to be detained as a prisoner and executed if his information proves to be false. I only hope we get a fair chance of showing what we can do. No doubt these fellows at the front will have C. B.'s and knighthoods showering upon them thick and fast, while we poor devils, who have had most of the responsibility and anxiety, will be passed over completely. Elliott has a whitlow. The last convoy left us a large packet of sauces, but as they forgot to leave anything to eat with them, we have handed them over to the Sowars, who drink them out of their pannikins as if they were liquors. We hear that another large convoy may be expected from the plains in the course of a day or two. Took nine to four on Cleopatra for the Calcutta Cup.

October 4.—The hillmen really mean business this time, I think. We have had two of our spies come in this morning with the same account about the gathering in the Terada quarter. That old rascal Zemaun is at the head of it, and I have recommended the Government to present him with a telescope in return for his neutrality! There will be no Zemann to present it to if I can but lay my hands upon him. We expect the convoy to-morrow morning, and need anticipate no attack until it comes up, for these fellows fight for plunder, not for glory, though, to do them justice, they have plenty of pluck when they get started. I have devised an excellent plan, and it has Elliott's hearty support. By Jove! if we can only manage it, it will be as pretty a ruse as ever I heard of! Our intention is to give out that we are going down the valley to meet the convoy and to block the mouth of a pass from which we profess to expect an attack. Very good. We shall make a night march to-night and reach their camp. Once there I shall conceal my two hundred men in the wagons and travel up with the convoy again. Our friends the enemy having heard that we intended to go south, and seeing the caravan going north without us, will naturally swoop down upon it under the impression that we are twenty miles away. We shall teach them such a lesson that they would as soon think of stopping a thunderbolt as of interfering again with one of Her Britannic Majesty's provision trains. I am all on thorns to be off.

Elliott has rigged up two of his guns so ingeniously that they look more like costermongers' barrows than anything else. To see artillery ready for action in the convoy might arouse suspicion. The artillerymen will be in the wagons next the guns, all ready to unlimber and open fire. Infantry in front and rear. Have told our confidential and discreet Sepoy servants the plan which we do not intend to adopt. N. B.—If you wish a thing to be noised over a whole province always whisper it under a vow of secrecy to your confidential native servant.

8.45 p.m.—Just starting for the convoy. May luck go with us!

October 5.—Seven o'clock in the evening. Io triumphe! Crown us with laurel—Elliott and myself! Who can compare with us as vermin killers? I have only just got back, tired and weary, stained with blood and dust, but I have sat down before either washing or changing to have the satisfaction of seeing our deeds set forth in black and white—if only in my private log for no eye but my own. I shall describe it all fully as a preparation for our official account, which must be drawn up when Elliott gets back. Billy Dawson used to say that there were degrees of comparison—a prevarication, a lie, and an official account. We at least cannot exaggerate our success, for it would be impossible to add anything to it.

We set out then, as per programme, and came upon the camp near the head of the valley. They had two weak companies of the 54th with them who might no doubt have held their own with warning, but an unexpected rush of wild hillmen is a very difficult thing to stand against. With our reinforcement, however, and on our guard, we might defy the rascals. Chamberlain was in command—a fine young fellow. We soon made him understand the situation, and were all ready for a start by daybreak, though his wagons were so full that we were compelled to leave several tons of fodder behind in order to make room for my Sepoys and for the artillery. About five o'clock we inspanned, to use an Africanism, and by six we were well on our way, with our escort as straggling and unconcerned as possible—as helpless looking a caravan as ever invited attack.

I could see that it was to be no false alarm this time, and that the tribes really meant business. From my post of observation under the canvas screen of one of the wagons I could make out turbaned heads popping up to have a look at us from among the rocks, and an occasional scout hurrying northward with the news of our approach. It was not, however, until we came abreast of the Terada Pass, a gloomy defile bounded by gigantic cliffs, that the Afreedees began to show in force, though they had ambushed themselves so cleverly that had we not been keenly on the lookout for them, we might have walked right into the trap. As it was, the convoy halted, upon which the hillmen seeing that they were observed, opened a heavy but ill-directed fire upon us. I had asked Chamberlain to throw out his men in skirmishing order, and give them directions to retreat slowly upon the wagons so as to draw the Afreedees on. The ruse succeeded to perfection. As the redcoats steadily retired, keeping behind cover as much as possible, the enemy followed them up with yells of exultation, springing from rock to rock, waving their jezails in the air, and howling like a pack of demons. With their black, contorted, mocking faces, their fierce gestures, and their fluttering garments, they would have made a study for any painter who wished to portray Milton's conception of the army of the damned. From every side they pressed in until seeing, as they thought, nothing between them and victory, they left the shelter of the rocks and came rushing down a furious, howling throug, with the green banner of the Prophet in their van. Now was our chance, and gloriously we utilized it. From every cranny and slit of the wagons came a blaze of fire, every shot of which told among the close-packed mob. Two or three score rolled over like rabbits and the rest reeled for a moment, and then, with their chiefs at their head, came on again in a magnificent rush. It was useless, however, for undisciplined men to attempt to face such a well-directed fire. The leaders were bowled over, and the others, after hesitating for a few moments, turned and made for the rocks. It was our turn now to assume the offensive. The guns were unlimbered and grape poured into them, while our little infantry force advanced at the double, shooting and stabbing all whom they overtook. Never have I known the tide of battle to turn so rapidly and so decisively. The sullen retreat became a flight, and the flight a panic-stricken rout, until there was nothing left of the tribesmen except a scattered demoralized rabble flying wildly to their native fastness for shelter and protection.

I was by no means inclined to let them off cheaply now that I had them in my power. On the contrary, I determined to teach them such a lesson that the sight of a single scarlet uniform would in future be a passport in itself. We followed hard upon the track of the fugitives and entered the Terada defile at their very heels. Having detached Chamberlain and Elliott with a company on either side to protect my wings, I pushed on with my Sepoys and a handful of artillerymen, giving them no time to rally or to recover themselves. We were so handicapped, however, by our stiff European uniforms and by our want of practice in climbing, that we should have been unable to overtake any of the mountaineers had it not been for a fortunate accident. There is a smaller ravine which opens into the main pass, and in their hurry and confusion some of the fugitives rushed down this. I saw sixty or seventy of them turn down, but I should have passed them by and continued in pursuit of the main body had not one of my scouts come rushing up to inform me that the smaller ravine was a cul-de-sac, and that the Afreedees who had gone up it had no possible means of getting out again except by cutting their way through our ranks. Here was an opportunity of striking terror into the tribes. Leaving Chamberlain and Elliott to continue the pursuit of the main body, I wheeled my Sepoys into the narrow pass and proceeded slowly down it in extended order, covering the whole ground from cliff to cliff. Not a jackal could have passed us unseen. The rebels were caught like rats in a trap.

The defile in which we found ourselves was the most gloomy and majestic that I have ever seen. On either side naked precipices rose sheer up for a thousand feet or more, converging upon each other so as to leave a very narrow slit of daylight above us, which was farther reduced by the feathery fringe of palm trees and aloes which hung over each lip of the chasm. The cliffs were not more than a couple of hundred yards apart at the entrance, but as we advanced they grew nearer and nearer, until a half company in close order could hardly march abreast. A sort of twilight reigned in this strange valley, and the dim, uncertain light made the great basalt rocks loom up vague and fantastic. There was no path, and the ground was most uneven, but I pushed on briskly, cautioning my fellows to have their fingers on their triggers, for I could see that we were nearing the point where the two cliffs would form an acute angle with each other.

At last we came in sight of the place. A great pile of boulders were heaped up at the very end of the pass, and among these our fugitives were skulking, entirely demoralized apparently, and incapable of resistance. They were useless as prisoners, and it was out of the question to let them go, so there was no choice but to polish them off. Waving my sword, I was leading my men on, when we had a most dramatic interruption of a sort which I have seen once or twice on the boards of Drury Lane, but never in real life.

In the side of the cliff, close to the pile of stones where the hillmen were making their last stand, there was a cave which looked more like the lair of some wild beast than a human habitation. Out of this dark archway there suddenly emerged an old man—such a very, very old man that all the other veterans whom I have seen were as chickens compared to him. His hair and beard were both as white as snow, and each reached more than half way to his waist. His face was wrinkled and brown and bony, a cross between a monkey and a mummy, and so thin and emaciated were his shriveled limbs that you would hardly have given him credit for having any vitality left, were it not for his eyes, which glittered and sparkled with excitement, like two diamonds in a setting of mahogany. This apparition came rushing out of the cave, and, throwing himself between the fugitives and our fellows, motioned us back with as imperious a sweep of the hand as ever an emperor used to his slaves.

"Men of blood," he cried, in a voice of thunder, speaking excellent English, too—"this is a place for prayer and meditation, not for murder. Desist, lest the wrath of the gods fall upon you."

"Stand aside, old man," I shouted. "You will meet with a hurt if you don't get out of the way." I could see that the hillmen were taking heart, and that some of my Sepoys were flinching, as if they did not relish this new enemy. Clearly, I must act promptly if I wished to complete our success. I dashed forward at the head of the white artillerymen who had stuck to me. The old fellow rushed at us with his arms out as if to stop us; but it was no time to stick at trifles, so I passed my sword through his body at the same moment that one of the gunners brought his carbine down upon his head. He dropped instantly, and the hillmen, at the sight of his fall, set up the most unearthly howl of horror and consternation. The Sepoys, who had been inclined to hang back, came on again the moment he was disposed of, and it did not take us long to consummate our victory. Hardly a man of the enemy got out of the defile alive. What could Hannibal or Caesar have done more? Our own loss in the whole affair has been insignificant—three killed and about fifteen wounded. Got their banner, a green wisp of a thing with a sentence of the Koran engraved upon it.

(To be continued.)

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WHOOPING COUGH CURE.

Paris Doctor Thinks Remedy Is In Sight.

The possibility of the discovery in the near future of a cure for whooping cough was held out recently at the Academy of Sciences by Dr. Emile Roux, director of the Pasteur Institute and a member of the Academy of Medicine.

Dr. Roux was merely transmitting the report of Dr. Alfred Conor, bacteriologist, of the Belvedere Military Hospital, Tunis, where, with the collaboration of Dr. Nicolle, he had prepared a solution containing living cough baccilli which he injected into his children suffering from the disease, repeating it every two days.

Thirty-seven per cent. of the children recovered in less than three weeks, whereas under the ordinary treatment the mildest attack lasted two and sometimes five or six months. Of the rest forty per cent. improved greatly, while the remaining twenty-three per cent. were not affected either for good or bad.

Dr. Roux while declaring the experiments thus far were on too small a scale to make a definite pronouncement, said he believed an effective cure for whooping cough was in sight.

Facts Against Him.

An old negro was charged with having stolen a hog. The facts were all against him. He had no counsel, and when the judge asked him if he wanted a lawyer assigned to defend him he declared that he did not. "But you are entitled to a lawyer," the Court explained, "and you might as well have the benefit of his services." "Yoah Honor would jes' gimme some cheap white trash lawyer," the old darkey replied, "and he wouldn't do me no good. If it's jes' de same to yoah Honor I'd rather depen' on de ign'rance ob de Court."

On the Farm

Poultry Pointers.

Keep the eggs in a cool, dry room or cellar.

Attend to the machine carefully and at regular hours.

Always test the hen on china or nest eggs before setting.

Proper ventilation and sunlight mean a dry house and healthy birds.

The hopper system is all right, provided you have the proper things in the hopper.

Sickness and lice are scarce articles where poultry houses are kept dry and clean.

Look out for hidden nests. At this season hens that are on range are very apt to steal their nests.

A quiet, gentle hen with the mother instinct strongly developed is worth money in the chicken business.

Give the fowls, old and young, all the water they want, with occasionally some milk if you would get best results.

Overfeeding must be avoided as must also underfeeding. Either extreme will stunt the growth of the young stock.

A dust bath three feet square filled with common road dust or sifted ashes, should be placed in one corner of the poultry house.

Crippled chickens should be put out of their misery with a good sharp axe. They spoil the looks of the flock and the food they consume is a loss.

In your spring campaign do not forget the importance of keeping down lice. These pests will produce all the symptoms of disease in a flock of fowls, young or old.

The strong, vigorous April-hatched chicks should now be growing well. A good growth now will better fit them to stand the depressing effects hot June suns are apt to have.

It will not take long, if you watch out, to see what kind of food your birds take the most of if they can get it. Then furnish that kind generously. The hens need it and will make good use of it.

Give special attention to the setting hens. Have their nests so arranged that they can go on and off at will. Do not fuss with them, but keep a watch on their supplies—grain and water should be constantly before them.

During the summer months when fowls have free range and can procure insects and an abundance of grass, meat and vegetables are not so essential in the bill of fare, but if the hens are confined meat scraps and green feed should still be supplied.

Regular feeding is of the utmost importance. Adopt the method of feeding best suited to your circumstances. Fowls become accustomed to their feed at certain times, and irregular feeding impairs digestion from overindulgence if the feeding deferred, or want of appetite if fed too frequently.

Egg eating is generally caused by an insufficient supply of lime. The best cure is to give them all the broken egg shells they will eat. A broken egg mixed with red pepper or kerosene will help to break the habit. Plenty of oyster shells within reach, wholesome food, exercise, pleasant quarters and darkened nests will act as a preventative.

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Many vigorous men waste a lot of perfectly good energy in making fools of themselves.

Stirring News.

Little Peter, after listening attentively to a lesson on kindness to animals, went home to dinner very thoughtful; when he returned to school in the afternoon he went up to his teacher, obviously having striking news to impart. "Well, Peter," she exclaimed, "what is it?" "I just wanted to tell you, teacher, how I was good to dumb animals this morning," he replied. "Why, isn't that nice, Peter? What did you do?" Peter drew himself up to his full three feet and proudly declared, "I kissed the cat!"

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