William Waterfield's Indian Diary 1857 – 1859

Introduction

This is the transcription of part of William Waterfield's Indian Diary, written between February 1857 and April 1859. Starting and ending abruptly, it would seem to be but one volume of others; preserved particularly, perhaps, because of the first-hand observations about the Mutiny, or maybe just chance of history.

Provenance

J.P.Waterfield, William's grandson and my father, wrote[1]:

> "William's (Bengal Civil Service) unpublished diaries ... are stored in the India Office library[2] at Blackfriars, where I once called to inquire about getting them photographed. The cost was prohibitive. My halfuncle Philip, William's eldest son by Louisa M Gay ... inherited the diaries on my grandfather's death in 1907. His daughter Phoebe (born 1912) gave them on permanent loan to the India Office library, for the use of historians and researchers.
>
> A copy is also now in the hands of Roger Waterfield (born 1934), Tom Waterfield's son,...he being the senior in family terms of male births of his generation. My sister also took photocopies of the diaries from Roger's set..."

The version you are reading is a based on a previously-typed document ('the typescript') that was in my father's possession when he died (his sister Mary's copy was also of this previously-typed document). The occasional manuscript amendment to the typescript indicates that this typing was not done by either my father's wife or Mary, although between them they did a lot of such work.

Without the original manuscript, the various possible errors, particularly with respect to variations in spelling of place names but also occasionally missing words, cannot be untangled. Accordingly I have tried to keep to the text as presented, although noting variations and just occasionally adding [clarifying] words in square-brackets.

I have been much more free with paragraphs. The typescript often has relatively long spaces in the blocks of text, and I believe this replicates a common style of the period that was probably present in the manuscript, to indicate a change of subject with such space; we would expect a new paragraph, and I have provided them liberally for ease of reading.

I have also been quite free in regularising words such as 'to-morrow', 'to-night' (removing hyphens the modern reader's eye finds odd), and ordinals, in the typescript sometimes with stops '2nd.' and sometimes not '6th', and, of course, never in superscript although the

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1 In *Some Memories for my Grandchildren*

2 'The India Office Records, previously housed in the India Office Library, became the responsibility of the British Library Board in 1982, and are now administered as part of the Asia, Pacific and Africa Collections of the British Library, London, as part of the Public Records of the United Kingdom. They are open for public consultation, except for recent personal files, and a very small number of subject files. They comprise 14 kilometres of shelves of volumes, files and boxes of papers, together with 70,000 volumes of official publications and 105,000 manuscript and printed maps.' - wikipedia

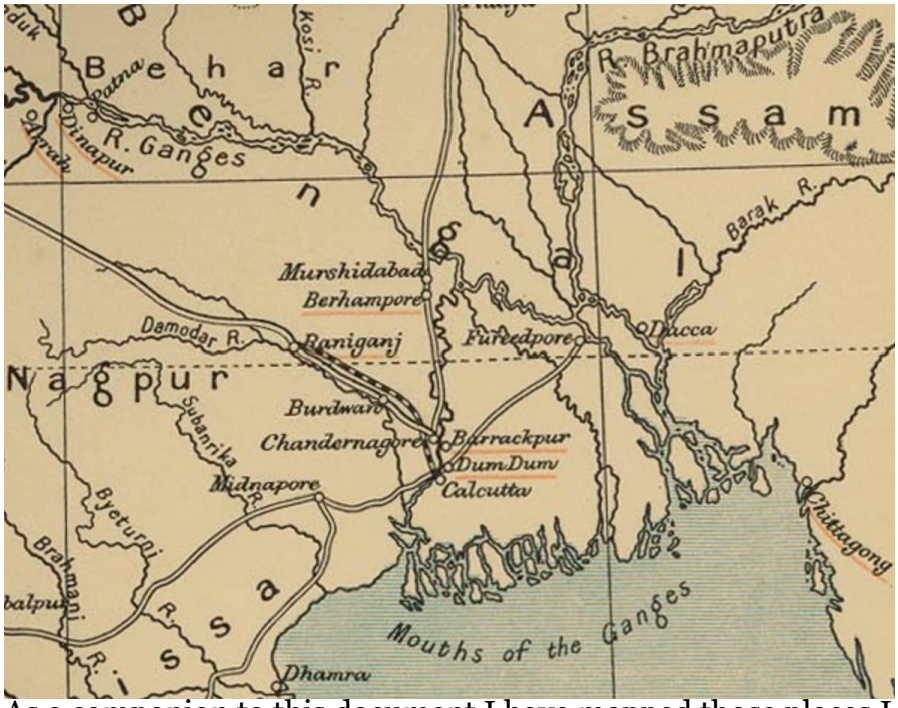
styles of the time mean that they were almost certainly so. Rather arbitrarily (because I like them!) I have retained 'verandah' and 'shew'.

Places

On Ash Wednesday 1892, William wrote to his son Philip describing his career in India:

> … I was in India first in Calcutta, and its outstations Alipore and Howrah [suburbs of Calcutta], then in the Survey, at **Berhampore** and **Moorshedabad** headquarters and in the districts of Jepore, Beerbhorm and **Furedpore**. Then in another Survey Division in **Dinajapore**. Then in the Finance at Madras, and Calcutta, Madras again and Calcutta again, and at Bombay for a short time on my way to England. When I came out again, I was in the North West Provinces and Oudh, headquarters at Allahabad, and latterly in the Dummergat Naini Tal in the Himalayas, where Willy and you and Odo were born. After our second furlough, we came back to the same appointment, till we moved to Calcutta, which was the last…

This diary dates from when he was at Berhampore, Moorshedabad (*Murshidabad*), Furedpore (*Faripur*) and Dinajapore (*Dinajpur*) – modern names in italics here. Place names are a problem generally – mainly due to variations in spelling, and also because of multiple instances.



This extract of a map of north India, 1857[3] gives some idea of the area he was working. The places underlined in red indicate 'the principal centres of the Mutiny'. It shows Berhampore, Murshidabad and Fureedpore; but the 'Dinapur' underlined in the top-left is *not* one of those spelling-variants; William's Dinajpur is somewhere near the 'A' of Assam on this map.

As a companion to this document I have mapped those places I have been able to identify (shown in **bold** in the text) to a shared Google-map: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=1IK6Nrkr_A0qez4NdpLsP5iDukfRybQo&usp=sharing

Some of the places mentioned have not been identified, or, even if a name matched, was clearly the wrong one. The difficulties and uncertainties are sketched in the footnotes. One particular camp, because his base for a while, disappointingly resisted location: Lohajara. The best I can offer is 'near Jessore' (*Jashore*). However, looking at the shared map,

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[3] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f9/India_north_1857.jpg

overall it is easy to see that William's activities focussed on the band of country up the Bhagirathi river from Kolkata 220km (137m) to Janjipur, with a nexus further NNE around Dinajpur (330km, 205m due N of Kolkata) and a lesser line NE of Kolkata to Jashore and Faridpur.

Faridpur and Dinajpur are now in Bangladesh; in William's time this was all just Bengal.

Work

William was born on 14 August 1832; he was only 24 when the diary starts and not yet 26 when it ends in April. In some of his reported japes he is a very young man – the early and surely drunken return to camp described in the very first entry is an example – but otherwise he is having to be the responsible supervisor and even judge of the local folk.

Not that we find out much about his actual work – the typically-reported parts of most people's days are the bits around work, after all – though there are plenty of references to its quantity, paperwork, associates and underlings, and holding court (*kachhari*). By his own description he was 'in Survey'.

'Survey' does not automatically mean the 'great trigonometric survey' that mapped the sub-continent: there was also the Archaeological Survey of India, the Geological Survey, the Zoological Survey, the Marine Survey and the Statistical Survey. William seems something of a generalist – perhaps Statistical? One colleague, surely Archaeological, is described as attending to 'his vases': 'I am working very hard now at Registers and am at them in the morning before breakfast, while Garstin goes out investigating his vases.'[4]

'Accurate geographic data facilitated the planning of infrastructure projects such as roads, railways and irrigation systems, essential for economic development. Maps were also vital for the collection of land revenues, as they provided information on land use and boundaries. The survey's work in mapping resources and land use patterns also contributed to optimising agricultural practices and resource extraction.'[5]

An analogy might be made with the Domesday Book; new owners needed to know what they had got.

Genealogy

The diary is written as to a specific person – 'Just a line to shew that I have not forgotten you to-day…'[6] – which makes it read somewhat like a series of letters. Another contributory factor to this sense is that they are written roughly in weekly instalments, rather than daily. Who the recipient might be is never revealed, but it must have been a close relative, perhaps his parents or a brother. Not a wife (he didn't get married for another 15 years) or fiancé, I think ('I do not suppose I should have gone but for the Ball that evening. I wished much to meet Miss Whitehead again'[7]).

Some genealogy is needed to illustrate the possibilities (and to understand the provenance, as above):

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4 December 21st [1858]
5 https://historyreclaimed.co.uk/the-great-surveys-of-india/
6 August 14th [1857]
7 February 12th [1857]

Thomas Nelson Waterfield 1799-1862 = Elizabeth Benthall 1804-1886 – brother Edward

children:

Waterfield, Mary	1827-12-09	1901-07-20
Waterfield, William	1829-06-30	1829-06-30
Waterfield, William	1830-04-20	1830-04-22
Waterfield, William	1831-05-15	1831-05-15
Waterfield, William	**1832-08-14**	**1907-01-24**
Waterfield, Edward	1835-02-03	1902-11-25
Waterfield, Henry	1837-06-30	1913-07-05
Waterfield, Alfred	1840-04-04	1871-02-07
Waterfield, Anna	1842-01-06	1903-08-07
Waterfield, Ellen	1844-03-25	1925-02-24
Waterfield, Florence	1847-04-11	1902-03-21

William Waterfield	=(1) 1864	Louisa Gay Benthall (1836-1882)
	=(2) 1885	Matilda Rose Herschel (1844-1914)

children of (1):

Waterfield, Thomas Herschel	1865-05-31	1865-11-08
Waterfield, Charles Louis	1866-07-13	1867-09-18
Waterfield, Katharine Emily	1867-08-14	1903-02
Waterfield, Violet Louisa	1869-09-04	1940-02-07
Waterfield, William Herschel	1871-07-11	1872-07-11
Waterfield, Philip Gay	1872-07-31	1954-06-12
Waterfield, Edward Hope	1876-08-12	1925-03

children of (2):

Waterfield, William Francis H.	1886-06-01	1933-05-14
Waterfield, Alexander Percival	1888-05-16	1965-06-02

Alexander Percival > John Percival Waterfield	1921-10-05	2001-12-21
> James Thomas (me)	1960	

Underlined names appear elsewhere in this document (descendants of William only in this introduction, of course).

The Mutiny

Come the disturbances William is asked to volunteer for guarding the Station[8], has parade and drill[9], and started patrolling on July 30th 1857[10], with muskets issued the next day and ammunition the one after that[11]. By the middle of August he is 'on patrol every third night, and always acting as officer in charge.'[12] Yet William was in Survey – he is clear about that.

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8 July 16th [1857]
9 July 29th [1857]
10 July 31st [1857]
11 August 1st [1857]
12 August 20th [1857]

It really was a matter of 'all hands on deck'. The diary records shifting rumours, opinions, and desperate lack of facts, particularly of which regiment has revolted or not; it is strongly evocative of the time, if not, perhaps, shedding any great light on the historical narrative. 'Little more news, but some reports which are not to be believed.'[13] Indeed (after getting on for two centuries) it is often unclear from the text whether a reported regiment might be doing 'the right thing' or the opposite. William is largely doubtful that the worst will happen, but many around him were less sure and the effect is contagious: as everyone leaves the church service but him and the parson and the parson's wife, 'I must say my heart beat somewhat, not having an idea what was going on.'[14]

The personal observations are clear, however; for example, it is moving to hear of the dishonour felt by regiments who are disarmed. The knife-edge of trust – or its loss – is sharp, and desperate defence risks provocation:

> When [the native cavalry] came on the ground, they dismounted and took off their belts &c: flinging them as far away as they could, and I believe some even snapping their swords. Then they found out that their horses were to be taken too. They had never dreamt of this, and some made a move to recover them, but our people had been too sharp and had cut them off. So they walked in melancholy procession behind them to the hospital compound where they were all placed, and then the troops took off their boots, and flung them over up the wall, saying they were of no use now… It was rather hard on them, as horses and arms are their own (they all came down the next day to lament over them)… But there is no doubt that if they had once suspected it they would have gone off instantly.[15]

Other material

There's more hunting than we like, especially of now-endangered animals suffering from habitat loss. There doesn't seem to be any lack of dangerous creatures back then, with tigers, leopards and even boars reportedly hurting and killing livestock and people; let alone the cobras, kraits and other snakes being trodden on, found in dark outhouses, falling from the ceiling or lurking in the go-downs.

Incidental notes of flora are interesting. Astronomy observations were probably kindled by his friendship with Herschel – but even so, knowing that a bright star near Arcturus was out of place[16] shows a keen amateur eye.

The natives are usually feckless, credulous and superstitious, when not needy or sick; they would not even try to put out a fire in their village unless William and his men rallied round.[17] There is a splendid sense of superiority which wholly glosses over his own state of primitive existence – living in tents, without electricity, refrigeration, antibiotics, or the telephone(!). 'The people expect me to know everything. I was stopped the other day, and asked to prescribe for a cow.'[18] Nowadays we are required to deplore this colonialism ('at

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13 June 1st [1857]
14 June 27th [1857]
15 August 6th [1857]
16 October 5th [1858]
17 March 15th [1858]
18 March 10th [1858]

one muddy stream [we] were obliged to make the people carry us across'[19]) but the behaviour is no more outrageous than what would have been used by native rulers. Modern sensitivities have no place in such a time and place.

William is mildly self-deprecating. There are hints of a dry humour in some observations: the ford was *down* the river, not where he crossed up stream with difficulty[20]; on tense guard duty as the Mutiny raged, 'we stayed without much excitement, except that one man let off a pistol, and nearly demolished the ear of another'[21].

Society is mainly young professional men, with all that entertains: '…when LO! Mrs. Gastrell appeared. Of course there was a general scuttle. I being the only one in a condition to face the enemy was left to pacify her…'[22] Or 'we had a very pleasant evening; they were very merry and joking at Dalrymple for his fall with his model horse. D apologized for the accident by saying there was a little drop in the ground at the jump, but Gordon said he found it at least a tumbler. There were also some vile Hindustani jokes. I hardly ever laughed so much.'[23]

It is not entirely such beer[24] and skittles. Mrs Gordon Young's children are 'beautiful' – 'I took Percy to see my elephants, the great tank &c. After they came back Gordon and I drove both Percy and Mary a little way. They are beautiful children.'[25] And the death of the one and a half-month-old Cecil Watson was clearly moving:

> I saw Watson lead his wife out, and knew it was all over. He just came into the verandah to tell us so. I believe they lost their last baby in the same way, but that one was only a few hours old. Watson asked me to go the grave, as I had to the font… I afterwards rode to find Parsons, and beg him to excuse me from dining at the mess that night. I did not feel as if I could bear it.[26]

It is a pity that we do not have the rest of the document.

As always, I will have introduced some further typos and errors, hopefully they will be ironed out gradually following further re-reading, but for which I can only apologies [sic] meanwhile.

J T Waterfield
June 2026

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19 February 12th [1857]
20 December 18th [1858]
21 August 6th [1857]
22 July 11th [1857]
23 January 17th [1859]
24 In fact there is not a mention of drink other than tea or water, and certainly nothing alcoholic.
25 December 5th [1858]
26 December 5th [1857]

1857

Camp Kandee[27]

February 12th.

This is a celebrated camping ground, and always the last stage for troops marching in to **Berhampore[28]**. The river[29] is famous for its water, which is carried, I hear, to **Moorshedahad[30]**. I did not much like it at first, but it is better now. Spencer and I were always up before daylight, and walked out with our horses following us. In the evening we went out with a lot of straggling attendants on Spencer, and at least two of his dogs. Before bed-time we generally took another turn under the trees by moonlight. After our morning walks S held his levee and dressed. I cannot get into the Indian way of not dressing at first, and am always scolded for lateness in consequence. Sometimes I came in for a share of the levee, but I have had none since S went away. We had one *raja[31]* (by courtesy) and the agents of 3 or 4 others, besides the *munsif[32]*, and offerings were laid before us of fruit, (an unknown kind, which my man assured me no one can eat without catching fever), vegetables, flowers, sugar, butter and fish. I rather regret being obliged to refuse the flowers, but I suppose I should get another nosegay if I were to walk over to the garden of Raja Prutabchandra Sen. We went there the first afternoon.

I knew him and his brother last year, but we found they were now in **Calcutta**[33]. They are only *rajas* by courtesy, and have not much here besides the house and bazaar. Their house stands in the middle of the town. We passed under a gateway and up the bazaar till we came to a temple with an inscription on it in English letters, though not quite the right ones. That was in honour Badhaballabh, Badha's darling, a name of Krishna: but we were told that the temple was dedicated to everybody and 400 Rs. were spent there daily. Possibly.

Turning to the left we entered a square with a pond in the centre, in front of the house. Over the gateway are 3 figures, said to be two lions and a *Peri[34]* in the middle. Nothing very remarkable. We passed on into the garden, trim and rather pretty, with an oval fish-pond. Here the *dewan[35]* of the raja joined us, and we were taken to the drawing-

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27 **Kandee:** Kandi. Places in bold have been mapped.

28 **Berhampore** is in West Bengal, about 27km (16m) NE of Kandi. (All distances given are straight-line.)

29 Kandi is on the Kana Mayurakshi River. Moorshedabad (see also note 30) is on the Bhagirathi, which is a branch of the Ganges as it flows south towards the Bay of Bengal. 'The Hooghly River is the westernmost distributary of the Ganges, situated in West Bengal, India. It is known in its upper reaches as the Bhagirathi' - wikipedia; though NB Google Maps labels the Berhampore and Moorshedabad stretch as 'Hooghley'. Moorshedabad is about another 8km (5m) N of Berhampore from Kandi, so the water is being carried at least 35km (21m).

30 **Moorshedahad**: but spelled elsewhere 'Moorshedabad'; may be a typo or misreading in the original transcript. Presumably Murshidabad**,** about 8km (5m) N of Berhampore as noted above.

31 *raja*: 'frequently with capital initial. Originally: an Indian king or prince. Later extended to a petty chief or dignitary or a member of the Hindu nobility in India' - OED

32 *munsif*: 'in South Asia: a judge; spec. a junior-grade judge in a civil court' - OED

33 **Calcutta**: Kolkata

34 *peri*: 'in Iranian (esp. Zoroastrian) mythology: a member of a race of superhuman beings, originally represented as evil female demons, subsequently also as benevolent, graceful spirits' - OED

35 *dewan*, 'var of diwan: In some Indian states, esp. Bengal...: a chief treasury official, finance minister, or prime minister' - OED

room, with the *punkahs*[36] painted all over with more peris I believe, grand mirrors &c. But the furniture was covered up, and we were not inclined to wait for the revelation, so we descended again to the garden, where we were seated to see the fish fed. They are certainly very large and rather tame, and we were both told would come in warm weather in numbers to eat from the hand. They are never allowed to be caught, but many have died lately.

On our return we were taken up the stairs leading to the temple, and thence along the roof of the side of the bazaar, to the gate, where we descended as one might at Covent Garden. Thence to see another garden of the *Raja's*, a melancholy looking affair, and so home.

We went again the next day to see the fish, but though there were more than at dusk the evening before, they are not what they are in the hot weather. Some large fish had been caught in a pond in the temple court; some were sent to us at once, and the rest, till wanted turned loose, tied to bundles of straw. In the afternoon we were introduced to the Raja's *Naik*[37], and accompanied by him and the *Dewan* (whom we much disgusted by walking so that they could not use their *palkis*[38], but had to walk too) we went to see the way they proposed to turn the road so as to avoid the lanes of the town. We seldom went less than 10 miles a day, and Spencer went such a pace with his long legs. He walked the skin off my feet in three places.

We beat the horses hollow and so at one muddy stream were obliged to make the people carry us across. On Saturday morning we walked to **Panchtopi**[39] a place (town) 9 miles to the South. We waited there under a group[40] of trees for our horses, and then had a capital gallop home. In leading across a *nullah*[41], Akbar and I tumbled head foremost into a hole. He was off his legs, and I nearly over his neck, but we scrambled out, and were none the worse at the end of our ride.

The next evening we fell in with a troop of monkeys among the tamarind trees, and it was very amusing to see how they laughed at the beards of the dogs, who tried to scramble up the trees, the monkeys scolding and pelting and jumping down to the lowest branches over them. They were the first really wild monkeys I had seen, for those at **Kishnagar**[42] are so tame they walk all about the bazaar, helping themselves from the shops.

Tuesday morning Spencer returned to the Station, and I determined to accompany him. I rather wanted to see what the people I had left in my office were doing in my

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36 *punkah:* 'A large swinging fan made of cloth or canvas stretched on a rectangular frame, suspended from the roof' - OED.

37 *Naik*: 'in South Asia: a lord, prince, or governor; a nobleman' - OED.

38 *palki*: 'a palaquin' - OED; a sedan chair.

39 **Panchtopi:** Panchthupi

40 orig clearly has 'tope' but a tope is 'a mound, dome or tumulus of masonry' (OED, East Indian, 1815+) which I can't reconcile with the context - JTW.

41 *nullah:* 'A watercourse, river-bed, or ravine; a drain or channel for rain- or floodwater' - OED.

42 **Kishnagar**: Kishangarh, Rajasthan would seem to match but this is personal experience per this diary and his own career summary (see introduction) WW had not been far from Calcutta (though later - see p.45 - he refers to 'the N.W. style' – maybe a suggestion of earlier travel? or possibly it is simply 'N.W. Bengal'...?). Instead, I suggest Krishnanagar, West Bengal, about half-way from Calcutta and Berhampore (see also notes 86, 116).

absence, but I do not suppose I should have gone but for the Ball that evening. I wished much to meet Miss Whitehead again. However I was rightly served for my dereliction.

A day or two previously, we passed the equipage of some Rani migrating. A motley affair: elephants to begin with, riders, *palkis*, and ending with carts and a long string of *coolies*[43] with very peculiar loads. I do not know whether it had anything to do with that party, but we were not half-way through the bazaar, on Tuesday morning, when an elephant loomed in the moonlight. I was on "the Doctor", whose pace is never very easy, and it was not improved by the encounter. However we got past safely when we came upon a second. This was too much. Round went the Doctor, and off went I, spoiling my looks by taking all the skin off my right temple, and my projects of dancing by a blow on my left knee. I never had such a fall before, certainly not from so big a horse, and in India, I had never been thrown, always coming down horse and all. I did not feel the blow on my head but the pain in my knee turned me quite giddy, and I nearly fell in staggering to the side of the road.

Spencer in the dark did not see me, and thought my horse had bolted past as his did when he could persuade him to advance - so on he went without hearing me call - I almost thought of turning back to the tents, but that would never have done, so after I was somewhat recovered, and had straightened my spectacles, I succeeded in remounting, and found Spencer waiting outside the town. Some way on, we came to a gap in the causeway, which we do not remember being so large on our coming. I scrambled across, but, on turning saw Jack's legs in the air. He had fallen backwards upon Spencer, but got up without hitting him beyond the shake, and stood on the hither side. Spencer followed, and attempted to lead him, and then to ride him across, but he would not move, and though I even crossed and recrossed before him (conduct disinterested and heroic) it was without avail, and he had to ride round by the field.

On we galloped and in a sharp turn I lost both stirrups, and Spencer thought I was doomed, but I recovered them only to lose my tie which was picked up, and fastened round Jack's neck. I was not sorry when we came in sight of Garkaru, but about 20 yards from the place a bullock ran across road, and over I went again, this time on my back and in nice soft sand, so I was none the worse. It was mere carelessness, thinking myself safe arrived, and not looking out, and when once I lost my balance my leg was too lame to let me recover it again. However I remounted once more, but was not I glad to find myself on Akbar and in my own saddle again, and a capital gallop we had, and I went to the Ball, and even danced twice, though I cannot yet quite bend my knee.

On Wednesday (yesterday) I dined at the Mess, and this morning before sunrise, we started, Spencer to the South, I to the West, I arrived safe at a little after 9. Akbar brought me the whole way, and is somewhat disconsolate at finding his companions are gone with Spencer.

February 15th.

The river in some parts looks as broad as the Medway, but I suppose it is shallow, and in some places I could step across it. Plenty of shells in the sand. It is amusing to see the

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[43] *coolie*: ‘in India and (later also) China: a hired labourer (esp. one employed by a European); a porter...’ - OED.

people bathing. I saw one fellow who was going through a great part of the mythology, dousing himself vehemently the while, and nearly taking away his breath.

I could not think what a splashing was that I heard the other night. It was a kingfisher dipping. There are lots of queer little divers, which run more under than above water.

I saw the black Dhatura[44] last night. It differs from the other as the coloured bindweed from the white; it is a much stronger poison. It was in fruit, the thornapple, like a withered horse-chestnut full of small seeds.

The people are gathering the *palas*[45] blossoms to make an orange dye to throw at the Holi festival, their carnival.

Here is a specimen of a native letter:

> "To W.C. Spencer Esq., Magistrate of **Moorshedabad**[46]. Sir Many Gentleman are please to quench the thirst of those persons who Swims upon the Sea, and not to them that are in need and Sunk down to the bottom of deep adversity as I am without Salary from June to December last 1856. I have the honor to be Sir, your most obedient Servant Ram Kisto Sircar Dak Writer".

February 26th.

I had rather a long walk the day before yesterday, and found several pretty little flowers, like speedwell; hawkweed, woodsorrel, and something like rest-harrow in flower, but more delicate.

I rode yesterday into the village to see if it had any end, and think I nearly found one.

I saw a very handsome bird the other day, reddish brown, with a long tail; I fancy a kind of pigeon. Many of the fields are rather high here, and they have to raise the water to irrigate them. Two men stand, one on each side of the channel, holding a basket by ropes; this they dip into the water, and swinging it up, empty it on the higher level, whence it is conducted by channels to the fields. Or sometimes a single man has a bent trough, like a scoop, with one end resting on the higher level, and the other attached to a lever. This end he presses down with his foot, and pulls the rope till the scoop is filled with water, when he releases it, and by the weight of the lever it raises up, and empties itself above. When the water is very low, they often have two sets of these at work before they can get it raised to the height they wish.

The crops are much more various here than in **Jessore**[47]. There we had almost all rice-fields green and bright enough before I departed, but at first the endless stubble there was neither attractive to the eye nor pleasant to the foot. There was a little indigo, but most

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[44] Dhatura - '*Datura metel* is a shrub-like annual... or short-lived, shrubby perennial (zone 8–10), commonly known in Europe as Indian thornapple, Hindu datura, or metel... It is found notably in India, where it is known by the ancient, Sanskrit-derived, Hindi name dhatūra (धतूरा)' – wikipedia.

[45] *palas*: '*Butea monosperma* is a species of Butea native to tropical and sub-tropical parts of South Asia and Southeast Asia. It is also known as flame of the forest, Bengal kino, dhak, **palash**, and bastard teak... it flowers from February to April... is revered as sacred by Hindus... The flowers are used to prepare a traditional Holi colour called "Kesari". It is also used as a dye for fabric... Hindus ink their foreheads with this colour' - wikipedia.

[46] **Moorshedabad:** Murshidabad.

[47] **Jashore**: 'Jessore, officially Jashore, is a city ... in southwestern Bangladesh' – Google maps. Camp Lohajara, later, is at (or near) Jessore.

of the remaining fields were planted with date trees, cultivated not for their fruit which is worthless, but for the *tan* (*toddy*)[48]. Not all used for drinking however, but for making sugar. This is a very pretty crop, from the time that the young trees sprout, when having no trunk they resemble young firs, till they attain their full height (never very great) with their long leaves branching to the ground. We have none of them just here, but we have much less of the rice stubble. Barley, sugar-cane, linseed (which is very pretty having flowers blue and purple, not the washed out colour of English flax), mulberry &c. The last is only allowed to grow about a foot high and then the leaves are cropped for the silk worms. They are now cutting the cane round us, and I often go to watch the sugar manufacture, which is very simple. There is a large triangle of three pieces of wood:



A man sits at C and guides a yoke of oxen, also keeping down the balance by his weight. The oxen walk round in a circle, and B-A, which is like a mast, works in a socket, and crushes the cane, which has been cut into small pieces, and thrown in. The juice runs down a trough into a basin, which is occasionally emptied, and the juice carried inside a hut, where there is a furnace with a series of basins over it. Here it is kept boiling for some hours, and the scum removed, and so it becomes *gur*[49] or treacle. It smells good. I do not think they complete the manufacture here. The people were very communicative, and asked if we made sugar differently in England. I told them we had no canes, but most of our sugar came from America, a country to the West, which they supposed was somewhere near Bombay.

Berhampore

March 1st.

I started yesterday morning before daylight, and had as usual rather a disastrous journey. The bearer told me a day or two before that he thought Akbar was not quite well, and would want a dose when we returned to the station, but he carried me well enough on Friday morning.[50] However, before I had gone far, I saw that all was not right. I had some difficulty in getting him past the scene of Spencer's fall, and then he went slower and slower, and at last I could not rouse him from a walk. So as soon as I had forded the Dwarah, I gave him to a *chankidar*[51] to take on to the *thana*[52] till my people should come up, and I walked the remaining 12 miles. It was noon before I got in, and I was very hot and tired. A man met me on this side the river and held his umbrella over me. He told me there had been a meeting in the regiment on Thursday night about the question of greased cartridges. I hear the Col. did not behave wisely, taking out the guns and Cavalry to enforce orders and yet not enforcing them. However all has been quiet since. Poor Akbar is dead. I shall never get a horse so quiet and good tempered, and that I know so well, again.

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48 *tan*: perhaps short for patanir: 'In India, palm wine or *toddy* is served as either neera or pa**tan**īr (a sweet, non-alcoholic beverage derived from fresh sap)' - wikipedia.

49 *gur*: 'A coarse variety of sugar made in India' - OED.

50 1 March was Sunday.

51 *chankidar* = chowkidar: 'a watchman, in India' - OED.

52 *thana*: 'East Indian. A police station in India; formerly, a military station or fortified post' - OED.

March 5th.

There was such a scene when the *syce*[53] came in, he protesting that Akbar was not dead, but he was. I wish his story had been true.

Herschel[54] is very unwell, and has applied for leave to come into the Station to work.

There was much brick-making going on near Kandee. They put the bricks loosely on their corners, on a place in the ground like a wheel, resting them on the spokes and tire, & here and there there is a row of bits of wood. Then they set it alight and the whole lump is baked. Most of the houses at Kandee had their doors ornamented with frescoes; dragons, birds and all sorts of queer things, some like a dyer's sign: all patchwork of colours.

March 13th.

On Sunday Spencer and I drove to Cossim bazaar, and went into the Churchyard. We saw the tomb of Mary, the wife of Warren Hastings, and her infant daughter. She died in the 2nd year[55] of her age, and her husband erected the tomb out of due regard to her memory, (which I suppose was not much).

Tuesday to Thursday were the Holi holidays. Our new Padre is arrived. The Col. called on Thursday, and told us he is ordered to march at once to **Barrackpore**[56]. It is thought the Regt. will be disbanded. I am very sorry they go. The 63rd are to succeed them. They report also that all the Irr. cavalry are to be moved. The 63rd have no band.

March 18th

Sunday morning Herschel came in having had another attack. He has been pretty well here, but has now violent toothache, and was not able to go to Church with Spencer and me. In the evening we were almost the only persons present, for I am afraid Mr. Sturrock is not attractive. He has certainly very odd manners. He is a little insignificant man, with a kind of stutter. He rides in jack boots and spurs, but has his horse led by a *syce*, and his wife follows with two *syces*. She is rather a nice person, quite a girl and Irish. He gave us a very odd sermon and reads in a succession of jerks. It is a pity for he seems zealous, and I must say I prefer him to Bland, who, as I see from some extracts from his sermons left about here, thought it vain and unnecessary to repeat the Commandments to a Christian congregation of moderate education.

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53 *syce*: 'In parts of Africa and Asia, and esp. in India, a servant who attends to horses, a groom' - OED.

54 later referred to as William, this is presumably William James Herschel, son of Sir John Herschel. born 9 Jan 1833 (so about the same age as the writer): 'Herschel is credited with being the first European to note the value of fingerprints for identification. He recognized that fingerprints were unique and permanent. Herschel documented his own fingerprints over his lifetime to prove permanence. He was also credited with being the first person to use fingerprints in a practical manner. As early as 1858, working as a British officer for the Indian Civil Service at Jangipur in the Bengal region of India, he started putting fingerprints on contracts' - wikipedia. William (the diarest) was to marry WJH's sister later.

55 orig transcript has '2 (not filled up) yearof'

56 **Barrackpore**: Barrackpore, West Bengal is now on the northern edge of the modern Kolkata. 'The military station of Barrackpore came into being in 1765. It is the oldest cantonment in India' - wikipedia.

March 21st.

Herschel was much better last evening, so when we left the office we drove to speak about a horse, an iron-grey Cabul[57]; I have bought it for 400 Rs.

March 30th.

I drove Tazi to the early Service yesterday, and had scarcely walked home when they told me she was ill; so Herschel went with me, and we made great preparations for dosing her, but she seemed better without it, so we left her to herself. I have had her moved to Gastrell's stalls, till I can have some run up in our own compound, for the *syces* had such a fight last night with Watson's (who are come back with his horses) that I cannot risk another. We are expecting the Watsons almost every day.

March 31st.

The vanguard of the 63rd, consisting of one fifer, arrived about a week ago. The Doctor Dunbar, and his wife are since arrived, but the report is that the regt. will not march unless the whole is moved, and not six companies as was the order at first. I do not know how much is true, but they are taking things pretty coolly in these days.

April 1st.

The 19th is actually to be disbanded, and if the 24th were to be decimated it would only serve them right. The only one of the fellows who attacked Herschel, and who did not get off at once in the trial, has just got 7 years. I am glad they have made an example, as all the rest were let off, but we would much rather it had been another, as no one but the law had the smallest doubt that the others attacked him, while I believe this one only lay on his back and howled, which scarcely deserves 7 years. I am rather sorry for the 19th for there is no doubt they were led on by the 4th. They were very quiet except on that one occasion and sorry for what had happened.

April 5th.

We had a northwester last night, it came not before it was wanted, but it was unlucky that night, as the moon was hidden, and it was both dark and drizzling when poor Herschel started, riding towards Nuddea for the examinations. On the 31st I received the news of my appointment to the 2nd grade to count from the 10th. It was earlier than I expected, promotion having been so slow for 18 months, and I consider myself independent now.

April 11th.

The Watsons arrived on Wednesday. I spent some time with them on Thursday, and was introduced to their otter, such a trump and quite tame. I have heard from Vallings - he says there has been a very good effect from the executions of the mutineers of the 34th. The 63rd came in on Wednesday night after midnight. I was walking in the verandah and directed the soldiers to their lines, for the square was quite out of their way.

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[57] presumably a horse from Cabul or (in modern spelling) Kabul: '1754.—There are in the highland country of Kandahar and Cabul a small kind of horses called Yabous, which are very serviceable.—Hanway, Travels, ii. 367' - https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Hobson-Jobson/Y . Note WW is consistent about spelling the Afghan 'Kabul' with a C-; references to 'Kabul' are to another place, see note 137.

April 15th.

On my return from Church on Good Friday I found Herschel at home. He left me on Sunday evening.

April 21st.

We saw such a beautiful meteor last evening. It was larger than a rocket, and burst like one.

April 27th.

We are just come back from Miss Kean's wedding which Sturrock refused to perform in the evening, so it was as it should be, at 11 A.M. It was amusing how everyone emerged five minutes afterwards in their old clothes again.

April 28th.

Yesterday was a bridal day in truth, for news arrived in the evening of Barlow's engagement to Miss Dicken - I have wedding cards to-day and an invitation to a ball at Mrs. Kean's on Tuesday.

I hear that Herschel and some others passed the Divisional Committee. He writes that the storms we have had had taken away the cholera, but brought back his fever. However yesterday he sent me his home letters and said it had left him. But I doubt his being able to stay here in the rains.

I saw such a fine course the other evening - a frog after a spider, such doublings and twisting that it was a caution to cats. Frogs of all sorts and sizes abound here. In the rains there is quite a fringe of them all round the room, and the variety of note they have would astonish one not intimately acquainted with them - I believe they have an ear for music, and answer in a different key, according as the note is struck.

We have not much of regular hedges and ditches here, except by a high-road. The fields stretch from to village to village, with just ridges between to part them. In the country by Herklott's place there are steep banks covered with copse-wood, between which we rode; but those are embankments against the river.

May 7th.

The Ball on Tuesday was on the whole very pleasant, though my dancing days are over, at any rate till Anna & Co. can give me some lessons. However I danced three times.

The small-pox has been raging in Calcutta and is pretty bad here. My *khidmatjar*[58] has it, and his mother died of it.

They have disbanded the 24th. They ought to have been decimated; they were ten times worse than the 19th. There is such disaffection everywhere. I hold with E. Grey: O for one hour of Ramsay's rule.

We paid the otter a visit last evening. She was being fed, and not patient under the operation, wherefore when the Supt. jested with her, she laid hold on his leg.

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[58] *khidmatjar:* 'khidmutgar, in India: a male servant who waits at table' - OED. Later also spelled khitmatgar

I hear that I am to be transferred temporarily to the 2nd (Smythe's) Division to have the charge of the **Dinagepore** Survey. It is a great nuisance. I do not know any redeeming point. It is a place where every one shoots tigers and swims in a big tank[59] with a *shola*[60] hat on his head. I believe the Ravenshaws are nice people, but she is the first lady who ever ventured into the district.

May 15th.

The otter is a great pet. It has web feet, a head just like a seal, and such a thick rudder of a tail. He lived on milk when they first had him, but the other day he caught a fish, and since he tasted that he will eat nothing else, and they must be alive. He used to go about quite loose at **Khulua**[61], but here, where the place is more strange, he is generally tied up, though he is often let loose, especially when out for a walk. If the sweeper pretends to run away, he comes tearing up the bank, and stands on his hind legs, to see which way he is going. Every fisherman in the Eastern parts has two or three - some are kept in the house like this, but most live in their own holes, and only come out at a whistle when wanted to drive the fish into the nets. Ours always walked out with the puppies while they were alive; he used to delight in tricks with Dot, dodging into the water, and trying to entice her in, but she is rather doubtful about him, and generally contrives to be looking another way when he appears. He always sleeps with the tip of his tail in his mouth.

May 18th.

The news of the disturbance seems to be thickening. We hear various reports, but nothing is known certainly as the country has risen between, and all the posts are stopped. Col. Mitchell says the 63rd are considered the most disaffected regiment in the service. - Pleasant - However the Irregulars are all right, and the Sikhs at **Beerbhoom**[62], and even without them there are so many Europeans we might show some fight here, but the officers are no doubt very few and young.

May 19th.

I understand the 54th, William's Regt, is one of those at **Delhi**, and Trevor wrote that they had an idea all the civilians at Meerut were killed; but I do not believe it.

A letter is just come from Trevor. He says Herschel and Barlow have passed.

May 20th.

One of the Macnabbs is killed. I am much afraid about Wm. This morning Forbes is come with intelligence that the 2nd Fusiliers have bolted with arms, treasure, and everything. It is supposed they are gone to join the 34th disbanded who are plundering about **Raneegunge**[63], but no one knows even if they have crossed the river, and they may be on their way hither. Pijou and Forbes went to consult Macgregor about a plan of operations. He talked about the palace. We should hardly get there, 7 miles, in a night attack. I believe he has written for European troops here. I think it a pity, as in the first

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59 A 'tank' is a man-made pool holding water for drinking; see also notes 205 and 253 re Ram Sagar.

60 *shola* '= sola, a tall leguminous swamp-plant (*Æschynomena aspera* or *paludosa*) of India; the pith of this employed in making light hats. Used attributively with hat, helmet, topi' - OED (first use 1844).

61 **Khulua**: Kholua, Uttar Pradesh

62 **Birbhum**, West Bengal

63 **Raniganj**, West Bengal; visited later (page 43).

place I doubt whether any can be spared, and in the next, whether they can arrive in time, and I doubt whether it is wise to make a difference from what we were before. They say I should be the best off if I went to Dinagepore[64]. But we have cheering news from that too, for the whole station is blown away, having had two ... over it. From the accounts it would seem the Collector's whole house is gone, fragments of his dress and his wife's being traced all around.

May 21st.

The news last night was much better as regards Meerut, though bad enough. Not a word in the papers about that story of Forbes's. The general impression is that he has been hoaxed; it made him leave his sister-in-law at **Serampore** instead of bringing her up here. However the report is all among the natives, and the *sepoys*[65] are very restless. Macandrew writes that they distrust the Calcutta regiments, and have European guards every where, and they will assist us with everything except European troops. I do not think we want them, but do not see what other assistance we can have. A list of the killed at Meerut is come, and of some who have escaped from **Delhi**; nothing yet of Wm.

May 28th.

To-day is come news of a mutiny at Ferozepore[66] &c &c. The *dak*[67] is now stopped again. The Zeminders had risen and escorted it safely themselves, and they are said to have concealed many of the Europeans at **Delhi**, so I hope Wm. may be among them - Lord Canning is coming out. He made the 2nd fire the cartridges in honour of the Queen's birthday, and turned the guns on them to shoot them all down if they hesitated.

But the people in Calcutta are awful fools. With all their European troops, and enough of themselves to meet any natives about them, they are in a perfect panic. No report too absurd to be believed; every revolver bought up; and then taking to bayonets and blunderbusses. There is more cause for alarm here, though I believe the 11th is quite firm, and the 63rd passive, and will not rise of their own accord. Though I would not rely on their assistance; nor do I think they would murder us if they rose, but only plunder, and march to join their companions.

Herschel did not come in for the holidays, as he did not like to leave his post at such a time. Cornish has had his factory partly burnt and partly blown down, but has escaped in both better than many of his neighbours.

Monday was a holiday for the Queen's birthday. Spencer was not well enough to dine with the *Nawab*[68], so I took his excuses. Many people stayed away through fright, and we were charged alternately with unfeelingness in leaving them to be murdered, and disregard of their feelings in going to be poisoned ourselves. Some wondered we had the heart to go in the present state of uncertain news.

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64 possibly Uttar Dinajpur, also known as North Dinajpur?

65 *sepoy*: 'Anglo-Indian; a native of India employed as a soldier under European, esp. British, discipline' - OED

66 **Ferozpur**, Punjab

67 *dak:* 'Anglo-Indian; post or transport by relays of men or horses stationed at intervals; a relay of men or horses for carrying mails, etc.' - OED

68 *Nawab*: 'in South Asia: a Muslim official who acted as a deputy ruler or viceroy of a province or district under the Mughal empire (now historical); any governor of a town or district, or person of high status' - OED

But though the news is now rather worse, I observe they are going to-day to a grand dinner given by the Sons of the Oudh[69] *Wazir*[70] at the *Dewan*'s house. Tuesday was the *Bahr Id* at the close of the Ramadan, and in honour of Abraham's sacrifice.

The river is reported to be slightly rising; it has never been so low this year as it is sometimes and it runs all in one bed on our side of the river. Last year it was opposite and cut up by sand-banks. I do not think the Ganges water is coming in yet. Our elephant is come in from the district. Sedley has two which I saw the other day drinking in a tank. Our I hear that one day one of them saw an old woman eating parched grain, so he quietly pitched her into the river and finished her supper for her.

May 30th.

It was a grand dinner at the *Dewan*'s last night, and I believe every soul in the place down to the *griffs*[71] was asked, except Spencer and me, I do not know why we were cut, and should not much care, though it was a pretty sight, and dances are rare nowadays, but I wish I could have got you one of the chains they bestowed on the guests. Those we usually get are not to be compared with them.

June 1st.

Herschel came in yesterday morning for the Communion, and to see me, as he thought I was going off to **Dinagepore**, but I shall stay at any rate for the present. He would go off in the evening though tomorrow is a holiday.

Little more news, but some reports which are not to be believed. The 63rd were told on parade this morning that the 70th had volunteered, so they did the same. As I thought they were rather passive and the first impulse decided them. Had the news been of a revolt they would probably have gone the other way.

June 5th.

It was reported that Forbes was to be tried by a court-martial for spreading that absurd story. He has been let off with a caution.

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69 Oudh: 'The Oudh State (also Kingdom of Awadh, Kingdom of Oudh, Awadh Subah, Oudh Subah, or Awadh State) was a Mughal subah, then an independent kingdom, and lastly a British protectorate in the Awadh region of North India until its annexation by the British East India Company in 1856. The name Oudh, now obsolete, was once the anglicized name of the state, also written historically as Oudhe' - Wikipedia.

70 *Wazir*: '=vizier', OED.

71 *griffs*: presumably a slang shortening of griffin: 'Anglo-Indian: a European newly arrived in India, and unaccustomed to Indian ways and peculiarities; a novice, new-comer, greenhorn' - OED

June 11th.

It is certainly warm just now, perhaps from the comet.[72] The thermometer at 4 o'clock to-day was at 95 in the dining room, though the sun is then on the other side of the house.[73]

Yesterday we heard of 6 Regiments going over in different places. One had volunteered only 3 days before. Another was so much trusted as to be sent to keep the disaffected ones in check, and two others were part of the Army of Retribution, and being with overwhelming English force were blown to pieces. So one cannot rely upon a shew of loyalty, or the apparent impossibility of affecting anything. I never trusted our men an atom the more for volunteering, but I did think they would remain quiet because they were so isolated as to be hopeless of support. Though if men will mutiny when surrounded by English troops, I cannot tell what these may do. Macgregor has written very urgently for Europeans, but though I do not think we are by any means safe when they hear of this, I fancy troops are more wanted elsewhere. The worst news is of a Regiment of Irregulars and one of Sikhs having gone. We thought we could trust these implicitly, the latter especially.

June 12th.

More bad news. The 17th has gone, killing Home, the Magistrate, and poor Cuppage too has been killed. I do not think our Rgts. will go, but undoubtedly they are in a bad spirit, and if any one would lead them they would go at once.

June 13th.

The letters are come. No particular public news, but all delay makes our situation worse. Macgregor and Alexander have both written urgently for troops, but I think our fate will be decided before they can arrive. If the Govt. had decimated the 24th or if a march had been made at once on **Delhi**, nothing worse would have happened. Now they think we are afraid to attack them, and they hear of all the risings about the country, and do not believe a word of our successes, saying that was what we said at **Cabul**[74]. They get in a rage at once if any of the Bengalis speak in our favour before them. I am not surprised at any outbreak, after the way the papers go on, calling every act of Govt. imbecile, treacherous, cowardly, cheating and worse names. You remember when they promised sympathy to any one who should assassinate a magistrate.

June 15th.

After I came home on Saturday, a cow came into my room, stumbling about. Yesterday a man brought a black monkey to shew us. From the length of its arms I think it must have been a gibbon. He had been commissioned by the Burdwan *Raja* to get one, and

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[72] The observation is probably more satirical than astronomical: 'a scary prediction that a Great Comet would hit the Earth on 13th June 1857, as described in *The great comet, now rapidly approaching, will it strike the earth?* (pub. James Gilbert, 1857)' -https://jsbookreader.blogspot.com/2011/05/comet-apocalypse-1857.html – was current, giving rise in particular to hysteria in Paris - https://www.artic.edu/artworks/3400/adelaide-adelaide-i-think-i-can-see-the-comet-coming-oh-my-god-this-is-the-end-of-the-world-how-annoying-they-promised-it-wouldn-t-come-until-june-13-plate-31-from-croquis-parisiens (the link says it all...!). There *was* a comet in 1857 but nothing compared to 'the great comet' of 1858; see note 221.

[73] 95°F is 35°C.

[74] **Cabul**: Kabul, Afghanistan.

was bringing it down, but some *baboo*[75] saw it and wanted to have it. He said it was a commission, and he could not sell it; so the *baboo* sent some people to wring its neck. I fear the case could not be proved. It is very seldom that it can in Bengal against a *Baboo*, and things will not mend while we are bound by the Regulations.

The letters came last night. They say the 12th Regt. has now gone, making about 17 this week, and that Halliday is sending us, instead of Europeans, one artillery officer with horses for the guns. It is just the thing to set the men off, and a very small trifle would do it. They say that the Sikhs have come back again, and the idea is that they did not fire till they were fired at. There must have been some great mismanagement.

June 17th.

There is great sickness now from the heat. My *khidmatgar*[76] has recovered from the small-pox, and come back again.

There was great excitement last night, as no letters or newspapers arrived from Calcutta, except for Macgregor. We suppose this is to prevent any one's being told of the despatch of European troops, but it is just the thing to cause an alarm, and the only result is that we know nothing of what is going on, while the *Sepoys* whose intelligence does not come by Calcutta have all their news as usual. I proposed sending our compliments, and asking them for news, as we had none. I hear that we are to have 50 or perhaps 100 troops, brought to us on their march through **Rajshahye**[77]. It does not seem much, but I think with ourselves we might make a good fight for the station. There is no doubt that we have had a very narrow escape. Macgregor is gone to the city for two days, and the people are in a great fright, burying their money, returning all deposits, and sending their families away.

We heard from **Patna** yesterday. The three Regts. at **Dinapore**[78] had plotted to massacre all their officers at mess on Trinity Sunday, and then march on the treasuries of **Patna**, **Arrah**, and **Chupra**[79]. But it became known, and some Madras troops, happening to pass, were landed[80], and they kept quiet. But they have not been disarmed, and may rise any day. There are 500 of the Queen's 10th and the Sikhs there if they will be firm. The Commissioner's house and Opium Godown have been fortified, and most people [are] living there.

At **Ghazipore**[81] they have stopped a steamer, and keep the ladies and children on board. When all steamers are wanted to carry troops, it is as about as selfish a thing as can be, to stop one in that way. If they are afraid to keep the ladies, they might send them down to a safe station out of the way. Moreover the 65th is so far perfectly quiet, though distrusting them in that way is just the thing to set them off.

Our men are not at all pleased at the notion of sending for European troops, and they have been going about the bazaar coolly saying that our doing so is of very little use, for

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75 *baboo*: 'A title of respect typically appended (sometimes prefixed) to the surname of a Hindu man. The title is comparable to English Mr or Esq.' - OED.

76 *khidmatgar = khidmatjar,* above note 58.

77 **Rajshahi**, Bangladesh – about 45km (28m) NE of Berhampore.

78 **Danapur**, Bihar

79 **Patna**, **Arrah** and **Chapra** are in Bihar.

80 Chapra is on the Ganges.

81 **Ghazipore**: Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, upstream on the Ganges from Patna.

before they come they mean to rise, as we have been killing all their friends, and they can die but once, and as soon as they get letters from **Dinapore** (no doubt about the success of the aforesaid plot) they mean to polish off all the Europeans and plunder the place[82] and treasury.

They are now forbidden to leave the lines after sunset. The natives here think the cavalry the worse of the two. I do not. Watson has received several warnings that they mean to attack his treasury.

June 18th.

The people in Calcutta seem to be afraid of a Muhammedan rising. The natives here are in the most awful fright, but mostly at the Irregulars, which adds to the idea that it may be a Muhammedan movement. Fortunately the people of the city are Shias, not Sunnis as at **Patna**, Gya &c; so they will not join them, except the bad characters for the sake of plunder. Some of the Irregulars went to a rich *Baboo* here, and said they should require a stock of provisions shortly, and he must have it in readiness. It is thought that 48 hours will settle the business, but I doubt whether we shall be safe before the 23rd which will be 100 years from the battle of Plassey[83], and there is a general idea that that is to finish us.

June 19th.

There is a report that **Delhi** is taken, and though it is only a native report, they have generally earlier news than we. The Irregulars are said to be much disgusted at the news, but the people are immensely consoled, and the 63rd subdued in consequence. They are said to have come to the conclusion that the Muhammedans made them a cat's paw. I hear they have scouts on the **Calcutta** road to warn them of the approach of European troops; it will rather take them aback when they march in from the opposite quarter.

It was reported yesterday that the Irregulars had actually left their lines, sent in their resignation, and were marching on the station.

The Deputy Collector shivered with fright when a *sepoy* came into the office; the *Sadr Amin*[84] shut up his court and gave as an excuse that the Judge had not come, it being then 1/4 to 11.

However I think in some of the stations the Europeans are as bad or worse.

C writes to ask whether they are to look to their ammunition or their boats, and hopes in case of a rise we shall give him a line, as if we should have nothing else to think of. They are expecting 40 *Sepoys* of a quiet Regt. for treasure, on the strength of which they have all barricaded themselves in one house. Much commiseration was expressed for the Collector who had to give the money and some gentlemen volunteered to accompany him, "but on second thoughts they considered that if he were attacked they could not escape, and so decided to remain where they were". The letter praises their prudence, and is sure we shall agree in the opinion.

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82 ? ‘palace’

83 ‘The Battle of Plassey was a decisive victory of the British East India Company, under the leadership of Robert Clive, over the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies on 23 June 1757’ - Wikipedia

84 *Sadr Amin* – ‘sadr-e-amiin: deputy chief of justice’ - Rekhta Dictionary

I wonder what they would do here with 1250 men who had mutinied before they arrived. They have disarmed all the Regts. at **Barrackpore**, including the 70th, which no one has ever suspected, and which was thanked for volunteering by the G.G.[85] in person. They feel themselves disgraced, and have refused to eat, while the men of the 43rd are deserting, and coming up here, of course spreading discontent, if nothing worse. We have people out to stop them.

June 20th.

I dined last night at mess. Wynch was sent out during dinner and brought in some troopers with 17 of those deserters. The people in **Calcutta** are rather in a fright about us at lest, and have sent some troops direct. They have reached **Kishnagur**[86].

I am so glad Lord C. has had the pluck to pass that Publishing Act.

We hear from **Patna** they had a plan to rise after morning Service on Sunday; but it was discovered, and there was no morning service. It is said they propose one more attempt.

June 24th.

Herschel has passed for the 2nd standard.

One of those sagacious newspapers which are so indignant at a censor, published a letter, giving a list of persons murdered, and then saying "I give you this as bazaar gossip but it is worth nothing." Fancy a paper inserting such a thing.

Spencer and I drove to the jail to see the 17 prisoners. 13 belonged to the 43rd. They said they had lost their honour by being disarmed and distrusted and wanted to go quietly home. Two others had certificates of leave, and they were to be sent by Spencer on their way, and seen into the next district; and the remaining two, though they looked like *Sepoys*, were said to have been picked up by the rest on the way so they were sent back to be enquired into, when the others were marched to **Barrackpore**.

June 27th.

The report that I before mentioned of the capture of **Delhi** stood us in good stead, and I fancy contributed not a little to carry us over the doubtful time. For unquestionably it was a near touch with us. Towards the end of the morning Service on Sunday (21st) it struck me that at **Patna** they had twice tried Sunday for their rise, and perhaps our friends might do the same. Just then there was a noise at the door, and Wynch entered with a long face. He beckoned to Pester, who knew there would be a panic if he went out, and took no notice, till Wynch came back again and beckoned again. He then went out, and presently Macgregor was summoned, and Mrs. M. went with him. Nothing ever escapes Mrs. Pigou, and since the revolt her senses have been preternaturally acute. I saw her change colour at the first call, and this time they too went out.

I think Sturrock cut his sermon short, and he began the prayer for the Church Militant, but all the congregation got up one after another, and at the end I was the only one in my place. Spencer went to see if he was wanted as Magistrate but could find nothing

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[85] Governor-General

[86] **Krishnanagar**, West Bengal is about half-way from Kolkata to Berhampore (qv. note 42.)

and came back to me, and poor Mrs. Sturrock went over to the Communion rails near her husband; there was not another soul in the place.

I must say my heart beat somewhat, not having an idea what was going on, but I thought if the Padre could stay to the end, so could I, and I wished to wait for the Benediction. We knew nothing of what had happened, but Spencer told them they had better not go home away from Cantonments[87].

So I desired him to drive Mrs. S. with Tazi, and I would follow with the Padre, who being very blind and rather deaf, and not understanding the plan, looked aghast when he came out of the vestry, at seeing me in his buggy, and his wife nowhere.

We found the next of our block of houses, Gastell's and Keans, collected together, but no wiser than ourselves and I went to forage news. I found a knot opposite the Watsons' and ascertained that the report brought by Wynch was that both regiments were up, but that no-thing seemed clearly known, except that the deserters who were being sent to **Barrackpore** had been released by the Cavalry. This report, as the least alarming, I brought to the ladies, and the Watsons walked back with me. He proposed to drive her into the city, whither the Macgregors and Pigous had started straight from the Church doors, the ladies having forcibly carried off their husbands. It is true Macgregor's post was to keep the *Nawab* quiet, but he would have been glad to make some previous preparations here. However it was decided on all going to the hospital.

I went home, got your pictures, and put them in the tin box with the silver, and that into the buggy, and told the servants to save anything a valuable that they could, if it should come to an attack. S's guns were also put into the buggy. Mrs. Kean invited me to drive off with them in their carriage, but Miss. K. was anxious to wait for a protegée of hers whose child she had in her arms, and as I saw Mrs. K. was much frightened I said they had better drive on, and I would bring the child's mother in the buggy.

She was an immense time coming, and then said her mother was there also; so I had to take out my guns, and had then a considerable load with both the women and their *aya*[88]. The younger was in a terrible fright, but, luckily for me, did not faint in the buggy, though she did when half way up the hospital stairs, which was a state of things I was neither prepared for nor accustomed to. But I got her up at last.

Such a sight as there was. The floor covered with women, children and servants, sitting or crawling all about; and all kinds of people walking up and down with all kinds of weapons. I think the greatest escape of the day was that nothing went off accidentally. Three *kidmatgars* were found marching about with double barrelled guns on full cock. Down in the courtyard there was a crowd of horses and carriages, besides volunteers of all fashions. Campbell had one or two guns brought in and placed to command the gateway. One won't go off, but they don't know that. There are two others dismounted, but he spiked them, and asked Gastrell to take charge of these, as he wanted to be off to his Regt.

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87 Cantonment: 'The place of lodging assigned to a section of a force when cantoned out; also (often in plural) the place or places of encampment formed by troops for a more permanent stay in the course of a campaign, or while in winter quarters; 'in India the permanent military stations are so termed' (Stocqueler Mil. Encycl.)' - OED

88 *aya*: 'Ayah: a native-born nurse or maidservant, employed esp. by Europeans in India...' - OED.

All the officers galloped up to the lines, not knowing but that they might be shot down at once; even Mackeson went and was rewarded with a wigging for appearing there when on the sick list. I rushed about with orders, had the buggy placed, by way of a barrier, against the back gate, which was undefended, and then went for chairs and tables for the ladies - our house being one of the nearest. But it was a good way off, and running to and fro in the sun, at noon, on the longest day, and before the rains set in, was no joke, independently of carrying the loads some way.

I found only *chuprassies*[89] in the house, but succeeded in getting *coolies*, the people being less alarmed than I expected. They told me that the treasury was plundered, the fact being that the treasury guard had sent to announce that they were all right. I met several of the Pigous people in great anxiety to know what had become of them, and one man of the 63rd who gave us plenty of abuse. What were we running away for? They were not traitors, why did we distrust them? &c &c I said we never for an instant doubted his fidelity, but there were some bad characters who had released the prisoners, and we did not know what might happen. However he was not satisfied. Indeed when I found all so quiet on getting out of Church, I had very little alarm for the result; but still one never can tell.

Officers came and went, so did reports. The ladies whose husbands were with the troops were of course very anxious; but at last they returned, and said their men were perfectly quiet, and we might all go back. Some thought that as we were there we might as well stay till the arrival of the troops. It was known that they were near at hand, both those from **Calcutta** and from **Rajshahye**; but at the same time this might just rouse the *Sepoys* to use their last opportunity for attacking us unguarded. However it was thought best not to provoke them by showing further distrust, and we returned in spite of certain forebodings that it was all a ruse to draw us from our fastness.

Whether we could have held the hospital against a real attack is doubtful. The gun commanded one gate, but the wall all round is scarcely above 8 feet high, and might of course be scaled in all directions by a mob. With our party we could easily have held the stairs against numbers provided the guns were spiked, but they might have annoyed us with musketry through the numerous windows, and the roof is scarcely tenable in the day time.

But I do not think the *sepoys* would have taken the trouble to storm the place merely to kill us. They would have plundered the treasury and houses and gone off. I never feared anything beyond that.

I had suffered much from thirst whilst running about and carrying loads, and rushed on the soda water when I came home. When we opened the door, there was Dot the Skye terrier sitting on a chair, wagging her tail as if nothing unusual had happened. Spencer and Cape drove into the City to quiet the people there, for they were crossing the river by thousands, and the bazaars were almost deserted; and Wynch was sent out to look after the **Calcutta** troops.

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89 *chuprassy:* 'chaprasi, originally Anglo-Indian: an attendant, messenger, household official, or other functionary bearing an official badge (now historical). Now also: a junior office worker who carries messages' - OED.

I went to evening Church, but found no congregation except Mrs. Sturrock, and afterwards some of the half-caste fifers came in. The beginning of the disturbance seems to have been this. The *darogah*[90] was told to take the deserters away at 4.a.m. and not to go through the lines. He did not start till 7; then went to the cavalry lines (though not to the 63rd). One trooper rushed out with his drawn sword, and the police, seeing others behind him, all bolted. The trooper took the deserters to the lines, but no others would join, and the Native Adjutant, having previously sent on one messenger, galloped off himself to tell Alexander, the trooper with his carbine chasing him all the way.

Wynch was there, and started off for cantonments, asking if he could do anything. Alexander did not think of Church and said "Yes, you may tell Macgregor, or if you see Pester, just give my *salaam*[91] to him". But Wynch who had quite lost his nerve, told Pester that both regiments were up, and then of course Pester said he had better tell Macgregor. When I returned from Church, I found Alexander had been round and said his men were just wavering from one side to the other, and he thought all the ladies ought to sleep in the Hospital.

When the Pigous returned, she was rather nervous, and not much pleased at the state of affairs, as the Palace she had left was capitally fortified, and she expected to find us all quiet. Pester told us that some of his best men told him there would be a rise that night, and he ordered his invalid officers into the hospital. The reason this was expected was, because some of the 11th had captured their mutinous companion, and the deserters, and it was thought likely that an attempt would be made in the night to rescue them, which would have cut off our retreat to the hospital where they were then lodged being between it and cantonments.

At night they were moved to the jail, and Spencer, thinking that the arrival of the escort at midnight would terrify the guards out of their senses, went with them himself, and did not get home till 1, when he went to bed. At 12 an express came in from Palmer who was marching with the troops from **Nuddea**[92]. He brought letters for Spencer and Macgregor, and as, neither was in the station, I carried them to Gastrell, who was in command at the hospital.

It was great fun to see the people there armed in all fashions, relieving guards: I accompanied some of the patrols, and sat a good while at the gate with the main guard. Our greatest doubt was of the native artillery men, and orders were passed to shoot any who attempted to meddle with the guns. I did not go upstairs, but I heard it was a curious sight: Some rooms carpeted with babies, and ladies walking, sitting, or lying in all manner of costumes. One had a *palki*, but the generality, I believe, chairs, though in one room at least there were *charpoys*[93].

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90 *darogah*: 'daroga, darogha: Anglo-Indian; a governor, superintendent, chief officer, head of police or excise' - OED.

91 *salaam*: 'The salutation (as)salām (ʿalaikum), Peace (be upon you). Hence applied to a ceremonious obeisance with which this salutation is accompanied, consisting (in India) of a low bowing of the head and body with the palm of the right hand placed on the forehead' - OED.

92 **Nabadwip**: 'Nadia district (Bengali pronunciation: [noɖ̪ia]) is a district in the Indian state of West Bengal..."Nadia" is a shortened name for a historic city in the district. Nabadwip, literally "new island", was formerly an island created by alluvial deposits of the Ganga' - wikipedia

93 *charpoy*: 'Anglo-Indian; the common light Indian bedstead; "...a web of netting stretched on four short legs"' - OED.

We had a shower, and took shelter under the porch of the gate, but at 2 I thought everything was quite safe, and went home to bed. Not a sound in the square, nor a light except in our house and at the guard. Indeed all the night I thought the greatest danger was from thieves; so did Sturrock, and he stayed to look after his house.

I was roused at 5 to hear that the 35th had marched in from **Nuddea** and at 7 to hear the 64th from **Rajshahye**. The latter had orders to attack the mutineers at once; but luckily before arriving they met some one who informed them there were none, so they came in quietly.

The report they [had] heard at **Jungipore**[94] was that the troopers released the prisoners, we took refuge in the hospital with 6 guns, they rode up to the gate, and said they would not injure us if not further provoked, but they would never allow Europeans to enter cantonments. All over the district there was a great panic; the indigo planters can get no native to give them drafts or advances, or in some parts, to work for them; but this was chiefly owing to that rascally report of the *Hurkaru*[95], that the *Nawab* had revolted.

He has complained to Government, and I only wish he would prosecute them for libel. It shews the necessity for the censor. They never allow that anyone connected with Govt. can by possibility do right, or do the commonest act without the basest of motives.

Tuesday was a holiday, and Spencer and I paid a great many visits.

It was decided to try the experiment of a native court martial on the trooper - after 5 hours they came to a decision which was sent back to them for revision but they stuck to it the next day - transportation for life.

The hospital has been occupied by Europeans and strong guards are about every where. The city had been covered with mutinous placards, and one man has been taken up for talking treason. Several other deserters have also been sent in, many by Herschel, whose population are all firm. They say that the people of the city reproach the troops for not rising, as they would have joined them.

No doubt we had a very near touch, and it was thought in **Calcutta** that no other Bengal station was in such danger, for though others had worse spirit among the people, they all had troops, as well as easy escape by the rivers. It was a bad thing for Govt. that the river is so low this year. Last year we had a steamer on the 25th and might have had one before, while now the river did not begin to rise till Saturday, & though it is getting on fast, this is only the water from the hills, and Ganges is not yet coming in. It was foretold that it would not till we were swept out of the country.

However we have passed the 23rd, the centenary of Plassey, and I fancy are likely to keep on some time longer; but another prophecy did not make our time up till 1864. I do not think there is much to fear now we have the troops but if the spark had been applied a week earlier, I have scarcely a doubt we should have been in a blaze. As it was, they knew

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94 **Jangipur** – later visited by boat, page 35.

95 *Hurkaru*: 'harkara (Ircara, Hurcarrah, harcar, hircar [etc]): an East Indian spy, messenger, or courier' - OED. Here, presumably, the name of a newspaper or broadsheet.

Europeans were close at hand, and they believed that **Delhi** had fallen, and that saved us. But much less has set off other Regts. who were better disposed.

Macgregor instead of sending back the 64th as Govt. desired, ordered the steamer to return to **Calcutta**. Few men would have had the pluck then [to go] against the known wishes of Govt. I should not have thought they were needed, but if Macgregor says so, I fully believe it; for he would not send for Europeans at all till he found it absolutely necessary, and he says that though 100 are enough for **Berhampore** they would not keep **Moorshedabad** quiet.

A man was found tonight trying to creep up to the main guard, where the prisoners are; he was fired at, but got off. We are challenged everywhere if we go out. At **Fyzabad**, the mutinous Regts. had a meeting. The Irregulars wanted to murder their officers, but were out-voted. They were treated with great respect, saluted, furnished with boats, part of their property, and a small sum out of the Treasury, and started off; the Regts. behaving just as usual, under the native officers. It is almost as good as the report of the 9th paying their Officers' salary up to date, and informing them that their services were no longer required. Two factions of the 19th wanted to murder their officers on their march down to **Barrackpore**, but the third happened to be led by the most influential man, and would not go so far. Macgregor says he would rather have 3 N.I. Regts. rise, than one Cavalry.

The rain set in on Saturday, and has scarcely stopped since.

July 8th.

Herschel came in last week for a day.

Col. Hannyngton, who was in the S.W. frontier, has been sent to the 63rd, and now commands the Station.

The river began to rise last week, and is now quite a fine stream again. Two steamers passed down yesterday, and took away our mutineer and deserters. The man who was charged with inciting the multitude is gone to the madhouse. The Steamers brought down plenty of ladies and children who have all free passage in Govt. Steamers. Spencer has the Order to stop anyone from travelling up country. The *Nawab* has given his house in **Calcutta** and 5000Rs. for the Refugees. It is well the capture of **Delhi** is confirmed - which was quite a mistake - for the revolt of the whole **Gwalior**[96] contingent is unpleasant.

July 9th.

We have had the bad news from **Cawnpore**[97]. I cannot understand their trusting that blackguard, but I suppose they had no one to lead them after Wheeler was mortally wounded. Their being killed is bad enough, but I do not believe the other stories. It is very improbable, in some of the cases impossible, and has never been confirmed by any credible authority.

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96 **Gwalior**, Madhya Pradesh

97 **Cawnpore**: Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

July 11th.

There has been a row at **Patna** at last; but not so bad as it might have been in such a place. I see an account to-day that poor Moore had been killed. Jones said he was the cleverest man he had known at Haileybury.

I hear the troopers at **Beerbhoom**[98] were on the point of going, and only restrained by their *Risaldar*[99], who behaved very well.

Another steamer is come down to-day. One of our acquaintances has been writing of a wonderful escape he had through the back doors, as the *Sepoys* burst in at the *tatties*[100] the fact being that they were rattled by Sedley, who went to call at the house, and finding the door shut, and noone about, tried to make himself heard.

Yesterday we had an evening party: Macgregors, Wilsons, Sturrocks. A horseman, doubtful whether from the City or to the Irregulars, rode up to one of the *Sepoy* guard, and asked where the Colonel lived. As he hesitated to tell him, the man said, What, do you mean to side with the Europeans against us? and made a cut at him and galloped off. He told Hannyngton, and though it was not supposed that anything would be done that night, if at all, it was thought as well to warn the troops to be in readiness, and that all out residents should be brought into cantonments. It is known that some of the 11th are ripe for any mischief, but the 63rd are now considered true, though there was something suspicious about Hannyngton's guard last night. Pester wanted to send them back to the lines, but they were kept, and I think wisely, as distrust might just set them off. Our visitors stayed with us till 11.30 and then the Sturrocks went to sleep at Wilson's. He and I escorted them, and he went on to the hospital, where there was a half-cured madman, who he thought might possibly have broken out and caused the fright, but he was fast asleep.

Meanwhile I went home, and finding everybody in bed, I lay on the sofa reading, when there entered an apparition of Gastrell bare-footed and in *deshabille*. The Keans had been told that something was amiss, and had sent to the Gastrells for tidings; they were asleep, and were roused to have the question asked, and were at the same time told that the Regt. was up, so Gastrell rushed off to know the truth. I was afraid he would burst in on the Macgregors, to whom Spencer had given up his room, or that he would disturb them, and led him into the verandah, where Macgregor joined us, without his coat, and Spencer who was just out of bed; when LO! Mrs. Gastrell appeared.

Of course there was a general scuttle. I being the only one in a condition to face the enemy was left to pacify her. Mac. returned in costume and then Gastrell fled, hearing of the advance of Mrs. Mac. from one quarter, and Mrs. Kean from another. Presently the ladies all assembled, and Miss Kean, and Gastrell's little girl were brought to join the party. We amused them as well as we could, and rejoiced in tea and society till past 2, when we

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98 probably the **Birbhum** in West Bengal (there are others)

99 *Risaldar* var of ‘rissaldar: originally: an Indian officer in a cavalry (occasionally also infantry) regiment of the British Indian Army, of a rank corresponding to captain in the British Army’ - OED.

100 *tatties*: ‘East India: a screen or mat, usually made of the roots of the fragrant cuscus grass, which is placed in a frame so as to fill up the opening of a door or window, and kept wet, in order to cool and freshen the air of a room’ - OED.

saw our visitors home, and all retired to bed except myself. I was lively, and went on reading till past 4. I was not asleep when the reveille sounded.

At half past 5 Spencer and I were both roused by Pigou's laugh. Hearing something of the row, he and Pemberton came in to know what was the matter. I dressed and went to tell the story to Watson. I am a little tired to-day, but not much, and should enjoy such another evening, for it was great fun, but too good to come often. I have heard some more particulars of the occurrence. Two deserters had been caught in the bazaar just before, and it was thought there might be another scheme of rescue. The horsemen who caused the alarm met the *sepoy* of the guard, a Hindoo, who was unarmed and walking in the *maidan*[101] behind the square. When he evaded a reply to the question, the man also said "Only wait till the reign of Ali Naki Khan" the Oude[102] *Wazir*, and made him come along with him. They happened to meet the patrol, when the *sepoy* rushed to them, and the horseman making a cut at him, was off like a shot. The *sepoy* rushed to the mess house, and Hannyngton and Campbell walked towards the lines.

A man hailed them as they passed, and coming up, proved to be a Mussulman *sepoy*, and one of the Col's guard, which he said he had left, finding it hot. He was evidently taken aback, when he found whom he had hailed, and it is supposed that the horseman had appointed to meet him, but came across the Hindoo by mistake. His steps were traced to the native hospital, not beyond, and it is doubted whether he belonged to the 11th.

A man answering the same description went to the *Nawab*'s stables, shortly before the day of our hospital adventure, and made many close enquiries touching our force and preparations. It is even surmised that he may be Ali Kariu, an individual for whom a reward has been offered at **Patna**, and who is supposed to have fled to this city, where he has relations. He is the same man, who got damages last year from the Supreme Court, against Sandys, the Judge, because the latter wrote that he was at the bottom of all the mischief in the district, which it is now evident that he was; but then, of course, all the newspapers supported him through thick and thin as a most ill-used and oppressed gentleman.

It seems that the row at **Patna** was not caused by the people of the city, but a band of unknown strangers. Those who escaped went off in 4 boats, and are thought to be on their

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[101] *maidan*: ‘esp. in South Asia: a marketplace, park, or other open space in or near a town; an esplanade or parade ground’ - OED.

[102] ‘Oudh’ earlier.
Of Ali Naqui Khan, Surendra Nath Sen writes in ‘1847’, published 1947 by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India: “...we find that these historians regard Ali Naqi Khan, Wazir of Oudh, as one of the chief conspirators. Any one who has made a study of the history of Oudh will regard this suggestion as ridiculous. Ali Naqi Khan was completely the henchman of the East India Company. He was the man on whom the British relied in their efforts to persuade Wajid Ali Shah to give up his kingdom voluntarily. General Outram, the British Resident, had promised generous rewards to Ali Naqi Khan if he succeeded in his mission. Ali Naqi Khan was so persistent in his efforts that Wajid Ali Shah's mother became apprehensive that he might secure his end by some subterfuge. She, therefore, took the state seal in her own possession, kept it in the zenana and issued orders that it should not go out without her orders. All these facts are well known in Lucknow and people there look upon Ali Naqi Khan as a traitor. To suggest that such a man was one of the masterminds behind the struggle is, on the face of it, absurd.”

way to try and rouse up either Dacea[103] or this place. Of course we have people on the look out for them.

The Macgregors sleep now at the Gastrells! and Mrs. Sturrock at the Keans; he remains in his own house. The troops could make no stand against our Europeans, nor could the infantry do any mischief; but if the cavalry should rise, they could be all over the place in five minutes, and could cut us up before we could assemble to oppose them. That is what is now feared, but I do not think there is much ground for alarm. Without European Cavalry, we can never be secure against a rush, and scarcely with them.

July 16th.

We had a dinner party on Saturday, but I was dreadfully tired, and hardly fit to entertain them.

Steamers with troops passed up on Sunday and Monday. The latter had Vincent Eyre's battery of artillery.

I hear that on Friday night the troops had orders to shoot any one who crossed the bridge. Some of the Europeans ran away, some tried to get to the hospital, where they were not admitted by the sentries: a woman shouted that every one was to go to the middle of the square but without muskets. We however were very happy through it all.

Martin has just been to ask if I will become a Volunteer for guarding the Station. Of course I shall be glad to make myself useful, but I cannot say I think it needed.

July 26th.

There is little to tell since I wrote last on Thursday week. Spencer went to **Lal Bagh**[104] on Monday and I did not leave the square till he returned, except twice to look at the river. He had taken away my bridle, so that I could not ride, and no one sought my society. Last year I suppose I should scarcely have been once alone, but things are different now; not that I care, for I got through a great deal of reading, and as for bachelor parties, I hate them. Spencer came back last night.

This is the Watsons' wedding day. How different from the last, when I was there just after the Browns arrived. She was sitting in the verandah when we passed to-day - the first time that I have seen her, or that she has been so far since the news of her father's death arrived. The 64th are off to-morrow morning by a steamer now at the *Ghat*[105]. She brought another 100 of the 35th instead.

The 64th gave a musical entertainment last week. We did not hear of it till after dinner. I wanted to go, but Spencer was lazy, and I knew so few of them that I was shy of going alone.

After Church to-day we drove to the *Coolie Ghat*. Things seem quiet enough, but people still think they ought to be prepared for a sudden outbreak. I see they have a lot of

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[103] Dacea: perhaps 'Datia' in Gwalior Division in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh - mentioned earlier as site of revolt - but a long way distant from Patna (and the other direction from 'this place' ie Berhampore).

[104] **Lalbagh**, Murshidabad – about 8km (5m) north of Berhampore.

[105] *Ghat*: 'A passage or flight of steps leading to the river-side; (hence) gen. a landing-place, the place of a ford or ferry' - OED.

palisades ready to entrench the place; and I hear they have been laying up provisions. Much of the treasure has been moved into cantonments.

The other day a planter was looking up his arms, and sent for some lead to make bullets, when they brought him in a whole lot ready made. It is a thing never before heard of in a native bazaar. This is on good authority, but one can seldom believe the stories that the Planters and Railway people tell. Herschel says they do an immense deal of mischief among the natives by their reports. One declared to him that **Berhampore** had been plundered, and all the Europeans killed; that the *sepoys* took possession of Fubsa! of all places in the world - and massacred all the inhabitants, and that his friend had seen two carts loaded with amputated limbs. And these are the reports that go to fill up the newspapers. The *Hurkaru* is the worst. The other day they had a statement that every one at Furneah had been massacred, and not a doubt was thrown on the story, though in the very same page they had printed a letter of later date, reporting all well.

July 28th.

I went last evening to Gastrell's, where the Volunteers met, Government having approved of their enrolment. One great safety for us has been that all the houses are roofed; there are no bungalows to burn which is the favourite mode of attack, taking advantage of the confusion.

July 29th.

I have beaten Alfred[106] in the military line, for I had my first parade this morning. We did little today except settle affairs, but are to have gun-drill every fine morning at the magazine, and foot-drill every wet one from 5.20 to 7 in the middle barrack.

July 31st.

I walked down to the *bund*[107] on Wednesday evening. A war steamer of 6 guns had come up, and is still anchored here. Presently the down steamer came in sight with a considerable load. All had come who could get sitting-room, and many had been left behind in all the stations. We heard by this steamer a confirmation of the report of the row at **Dinapore**[108]: all the regiments there having marched off, through some unaccountable mismanagement. We hear that Major Holmes has been killed and they have burnt **Arrah**. This is getting very close to us, but I do not think it will lead to anything at this time. Our troops are now quite caged by the rivers, and I think the station itself is too strong for them. However some of the ladies are off. The Keans go to-day, and others are talking of it.

Our volunteering is commencing in earnest. We have had two days gun-drill, and patrolling began last night.

August 1st.

This is a Mahomedan festival; they always bring out some fanaticism, and the natives are now in a great panic at the **Dinapore** news. Forbes's *peon*[109] was in the bazaar last

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106 presumably his brother Alfred, b.04.04.1840 – presumably just starting a military career at 17.

107 *bund*: 'Anglo-Indian: any artificial embankment, a dam, dyke, or causeway' - OED

108 **Danapore**: Danapur, Bihar - just upstream from Patna.

109 *peon*: In parts of South and Southeast Asia: an attendant, an orderly; a footman or messenger having subordinate authority over other staff. Also: a junior member of staff in an office' - OED.

night, and the men said that if the troops did not rise tonight they would be disarmed and lose their last chance.

There was also a story that they refused to give out ammunition this morning, but I do not believe it, though the 35th were all talking of it. However we volunteers had our muskets last night, and attended this morning to have ammunition given to us.

We had 4 guns at the first day's drill, but since we have only had two, the others being, I believe, unserviceable. We have all practised hitherto, but at lest a dozen of us were told off, to be appointed regularly in case of a row, 6 to each gun. I was among them and am No. 4 of the 2nd i.e. I have to prime and serve the vent. I shall be much surprised if anything does occur, though I suppose if it ever does, tonight is the most likely time.

The people in **Calcutta** are in an alarming panic about us; it is believed that the troops have mutinied here, and are marching down upon them to relieve the King of Oudh. Such a likely plan! I do not think they troubled themselves about us, till it struck them after polishing us off they might go down to them.[110]

August 6th.

On Saturday morning (1st) I attended gun-drill on parade for an hour and half. Afterwards I was kept for 2 hours waiting for my ammunition to be served out, and not seeing any chance of getting it, I came away at 11 A.M. very tired, having had nothing to eat.

Watson went to the Collectorate, and found the guard so insolent that he did not think it safe to stay, and left as soon as he had finished all that was necessary. There was a great deal of excitement going on, partly with the news from **Behar**, and partly with reports of disarming here, and of a rise among the Muhammedans, who had, it was said, sworn to hold their feast inside the square. The war steamer, the Jumna, is anchored where her guns can range on to the lines and is to remain as long as Col. Macgregor thinks it requisite. The **Calcutta** people were in a desperate fright, and doubted whether even this was enough, and ordered off the Calcutta[111] with the Nemesis in tow, at a moment's notice, both filled with the 90th Regt.

Even after that they despatched the Mirzapore with the rest of the 90th. (While the river was fordable and we had no means of escape by water, and the troops could march where they pleased, no one in **Calcutta** was at all troubled about us, but they suddenly took it into their heads that the troops, if revolted could not easily cross the Ganges, and might come down upon them, and the newspapers gave out that they had done so).

All three vessels arrived on Saturday as did the Koil, a small steamer sent up with ammunition, Enfield rifles for the 35th and for our volunteer company &c: and also I fancy, as a despatch boat, to report the result.

So I had scarcely arrived at home after office, which was closed earlier than usual for the holiday, before the volunteers were ordered out under arms, and the 90th and the guns

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[110] The meaning of this is initially unclear: ‘The people of Calcutta are (only now) worried about us, after imagining themselves to be no longer protected by us since (reportedly) we have been massacred.’

[111] here this seems to be the name of a vessel; unclear whether ‘the Calcutta people’ are those of the city or of the boat.

marched up to disarm the troops at the lines, while the 35th went around to the various guards, and we were left in the square, for we were not wanted with our guns, as they had sailors to work them. We put most of the women and children into our house and Capt. Gastrell's on the right, while we were posted with loaded muskets under Mrs. Kean's portico on the left (as it poured with rain) except a detachment sent to watch the corner leading into the bazaar, lest the bad characters should make a rush.

There we stayed without much excitement, except that one man let off a pistol, and nearly demolished the ear of another.

Some mounted on the roofs, from which we could see with the telescopes all that was going on. Indeed we who were below could distinguish the long line of troops paraded at the infantry lines, which are not a mile and half off, while the cavalry are 4 miles.

We could see that the infantry had behaved quietly enough, but there were no signs of the cavalry and we began to think they would not come, as many had surmised from the first.

However at last they appeared slowly riding along, and twice they halted before they came on the ground; Capt. Alexander had offered to ride up and fetch them but the Col. would not let him.

There is little doubt that they would not have come, if they had been aware of what was going to happen, but being taken unprepared, they had not time for discussing the matter, and so obeyed. When they came on the ground, they dismounted and took off their belts &c: flinging them as far away as they could, and I believe some even snapping their swords. Then they found out that their horses were to be taken too. They had never dreamt of this, and some made a move to recover them, but our people had been too sharp and had cut them off. So they walked in melancholy procession behind them to the hospital compound where they were all placed, and then the troops took off their boots, and flung them over up the wall, saying they were of no use now. I believe 46 pairs were picked up.

It was rather hard on them, as horses and arms are their own; (they all came down the next day to lament over them;) but certainly if they were to be disarmed, it would have been of uncommonly little use unless they dismounted them too. But there is no doubt that if they had once suspected it they would have gone off instantly.

They were in a great rage, and abused the 63rd, saying that if they had shown the least spirit, they would have been ready to join them at once. The 63rd on their part, were also displeased, for their lines had been searched, while those of the 11th had not though the latter showed a far worse spirit; and when the Europeans were coming here, the 63rd came to their officers, and said, if it was intended to disarm them, they requested they might give up their arms now, when they could so do of their own accord, before any Europeans arrived to compel them; this was not done, but they were paraded, and made to give them up; and those wretches who call themselves soldiers, the *Nawab*'s guard, had a message, requesting them to send theirs over. The horses were put in the Hospital compound, and you may fancy what a scene there was, fighting with each other, attacking any one who passed and galloping about everywhere - I think it was two days before all were caught and all the *syces* decamped instantly, so that it was no easy task to supply their place. I was on patrol that night from 10 to 12.

August 11th.

It seems to be the prevalent opinion that we have been polished off. In **Calcutta** they said that an outbreak was immediately expected because the troops had been disarmed to supply the volunteers with arms! We having at that time only taken 30 from recruits, to which it was known they had no objection. Then it was reported that we had all been massacred, except one officer - So firmly was this believed Mrs. Medham's friends wrote to **Calcutta** to her, on the chance of her having escaped, thinking it out of the question that she could be here and alive.

Herschel is constantly besieged with enquiries from the district. "What has been done at Berhampore since the mutiny?" "What Mutiny?" "Why that reported in the papers". You have no idea what mischief such reports cause. I did hope Govt. was going to shew some vigour, and prohibit their insertion when the censor was established; but they did nothing more than endeavour to put down criticism which they might easily overlook in anything so contemptible as the Indian papers.

August 14th.

Just a line to shew that I have not forgotten you to-day, which I have made a regular holiday[112] with dear Herschel, who is just gone, looking much better than I expected. The 5th at **Bhagulpore**[113] have departed. I wonder how the 32nd will stand, who are close to them. Their officers, the other day, wanted to send away their families, but the *sepoys* came and said they objected; they had not yet made up their minds whether to rise or not, but if the officers sent away their families it would decide them at once. If however they kept them and they still determined to rise, they promised to escort them all to a safe place first. This is even cooler than the Sikhs, who debated for about 6 hours which side to take but at last decided for us, and have behaved splendidly, The rebels were fools enough to provoke them almost as much as they did us - When Mrs. Pigou sent to Calcutta for mourning, there was none to be had anywhere. I hear you can scarcely see anyone not in black.

August 20th.

Today is the feast of the Bera, but the *Nawab* gives no party this year. I have had a letter from Colledge dated July 6th. He, Robertson &c had been out fighting the Gujees, and after some skirmishes they with 180 men beat between 2 and 3 thousand, killing between 2 and 3 hundred. The district has been quiet since. His wife and children are safe in the hills.

I have been on patrol every third night, and always acting as officer in charge. They now make the watch & hours, from 10 to 1, and 1 to 4. I rather prefer the old system, though of course it does not come round so often. We carry a sword, pistol, or a loaded musket and cartridge box (but we do not take them to Church as the soldiers do). Then we are hailed "Who goes there". "Patrol". "Stand Patrol, advance one, and give the word". "Vellore". "Pass, friend, all's well". Some of them have a fancy for catching every unfortunate native they find straying about and putting him in the guard. I always keep my party in better order. We have never given a false alarm, though once as I was coming

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[112] William (Waterfield) was born 14 August 1832: this was his 25th birthday.
[113] Bhagalpur, West Bengal

home and uncocking my gun, I let it slip. Fortunately I had seen there was no cap on it, and it did not go off.

We have not had gun-drill since the disarming, as the compound has been full of the horses, but we have foot-drill every morning, latterly with a regular sergeant. I like it all very much and never miss the drill, even when, having been on the late patrol, I might be excused. Our uniform is a brown holland frock, with shoulder straps, a *shola* helmet with chin-strap, and a belt. I wonder whether it would do to be presented in at Court. We have changed our old pipeclay belts for rough brown leather ones; and last Saturday when we paraded in full accoutrements, we each received 20 rounds of cartridges.

On Friday Herschel and I went to the Hospital, and chose some swords of those taken from the people. I have a short curved one with a belt. I was just dressed for the early Service on Sunday morning, the 2nd (the day after the troops were disarmed) when Spencer came in and said I was wanted to help him to disarm the city. I was sorry, particularly as it was Sacrament Sunday, but of course it was work to be done.

Wynch joined us, and after breakfast we went down to the river, and got 200 men of the 90th and stationed them in pickets all round the bazaar. The 90th are almost all Crimean men, and very little - The natives were taken completely aback at seeing such a regiment suddenly land, as they thought we had no troops left. A *sepoy* asked one of our men if there were any more coming. "Well, sir, I thought I might as well stuff him up a little, so I said I believed the next ship was expected to bring a *lakh* (100,000). You should have seen his jaw fall".

When the troops were picketed we went to the *thana*, and divided the police into 3 bodies, each taking a district, and searching every house. I found the people generally willing enough to produce the arms, and when they did not I detected nothing concealed. Indeed it was impossible we could have found any except by chance, as our search through every house must have been cursory in the extreme. The chief thing was to menace them with unheard of penalties if any were discovered hereafter. I had amateur assistants at times Money, Ward and some of the 90th officers.

Such queer things we go hold of. I never saw a matchlock before. There were guns of every possible device, and in all stages of dilapidation; curious daggers; swords rusty and bent; pistols even as the guns; battle axes; iron claws to put on the fingers and scratch withal &c. It was not a pleasant day, deep in mud, and a constant succession of smart showers, with a steamy August sun, as we had the whole of our disarming days.

I had some work to manage between the 90th and my men in charge of the carts. The others were constantly taking up the weapons to look at them: my men were afraid of losing them, and neither could understand the other. I arrived at home between 4 and 5, the last of the party.

After Church we walked to see the horses. Some were caught, but there was dreadful confusion still. They say the men all came down in a body to lament over their favourites. I had strained the muscles of my foot, and could hardly keep up; I afterwards went to Watson to get leave of absence for the next day.

He had been very busy too, being ordered to move all his treasure into the hospital. He offered me a revolver or sword stick for the next day, but I preferred my own stick.

I was up at 4 on Monday morning. Wynch drove me to **Lal Bagh**. I felt dreadfully knocked up, but was somewhat improved by breakfast and a sleep on the sofa while it was preparing. For 6 weeks I have not had 3 hours sleep in bed; that night I had none at all, for I was not in bed till 2.30, and then my head was working too much to let me sleep before 4. After breakfast I had to ride 4 miles to my *thana*. It was hot and rainy and though I was very tired I could hardly sit on the horse, as when mounted I could get no shade from the sun, or shelter for my legs when it rained. Among the houses I took that day were those of a *Raja*, several bankers, and two of the Jugut Seth family, descendants of those in Clive's time.

At the *Raja*'s and one other place I asked for a glass of water which was all the refreshment I had. I should have done my division easily, but that when at the *Raja*'s (a new very smart house) I had a note from Spencer asking me to take another *thana*, as some of his people were concealing arms. I had now all the Mogul *tola*[114], rather pretty houses and gardens overlooking the river. This of course kept me late, but I freshened as the sun went down, and would not have minded staying longer if I could have seen …

Spencer waited for me, and we had a pleasant drive by moonlight. Pigou and Watson came over to know our fate. I believe many people thought we ran an awful risk. Even Govt., though they praised Spencer's zeal and activity, thought it would have been more prudent to have had the assistance of the troops. I do not know what they were afraid of - Spencer only once met with any sullenness and none other of us met with any. Wynch was the only one who had a pistol, and I was often alone with one attendant and not even my stick, for the *syce* had carried it off, and I had only a switch which I had cut when my horse was lazy. (◯Thick end of the stick with which I disarmed **Moorshedabad**).

Others blame us for not taking the city in the first instance, before the alarm was given, which of course would have been right, but Spencer's plan was over-ruled by the military.

I was at parade the next morning, for though we had two more days of marching we did not begin till after breakfast, and then Spencer, Wynch and I divided Rhagla between us - the great bazaar to the North of Cantonments. The day was like the others - August sun or sharp showers.

I got over my part quickly, and returned home, changed my clothes, and went to my office. But I found it shut, for Watson was busy in the Collectorate, and had given the people [time] to look after their things, as their belongings were to be pulled down to clear the ground round the Hospital.

I offered my services to Watson and he sent me to look for Layard. I could not find him for a very long time and with mud and wet I was quite tired out. The next day Spencer said I had done enough and he did not want me to help, but I found he had plenty of other

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[114] *tola*: Not as per OED, a weight, coin, but in this context an area, territory: ‘Tola is like a small colony. Usually people of one community live there’ – Reddit answer to ‘What does "Tola" mean in Bihari / Bhojpuri - Google Maps?’ - https://www.reddit.com/r/india/comments/1g9e73/what_does_tola_mean_in_bihari_bhojpuri_google_maps/

work and I therefore took all the disarming for that day and got it over before breakfast. It was only some parts about the Goar bazaar which had been omitted on Sunday.

All was then done except the Cantonment Bazaar, which could only be performed by the Military Authorities. It was known to be full of arms, but neither it nor the I.C. Lines was ever searched. And then they abuse civil management as compared with military!

That day was a holiday and I was very glad to have no more work. The next day we moved our office into the Northern barrack as all who were outside were ordered into the station and room was wanted.

On Saturday the 8th it was announced decidedly that the College was to be blown up. It was a great pity, as it was the best house in the Station, and certainly there was no longer any fear of our being besieged; but it was thought to interfere with the range of the Hospital guns, so it was doomed, together with many other buildings which [were] no loss, and some fine trees which were.

It was amusing to see how the activity relaxed as soon as Napier was gone, and I doubt whether they ever finish all the wonderful batteries and bastions, and ramparts and curtains of the hospital compound. The only gun mounted was found to be spiked and the bastion was cracked from top to bottom, so if it stood many shocks it would be surprising.

Watson and I drove over to see the last of the College - we found it much dilapidated with everything taken away that could be taken; and we wandered about upstairs with almost all the station - As there seemed no near prospect of anything being done, and I was engaged to dine with Cape and Alexander, I came away. But Cape and Spencer wanted to see the explosion, which took place just as we were tired of waiting dinner. It seems the charge was too weak, for nothing but rubbish came down.

After evening Church on Sunday S. and I were walking round by the river, when we saw a blaze and a second explosion, and down came a good part of the wall. This would have been sufficient had it been done at first, as it was double the original charge, but the walls were so shaken by that, that they did not offer enough resistance, and the charge was in part wasted. Still it was a fine sight, and I should have been sorry to have missed seeing it; the bricks flew a long way.

The 13th and 14th were holidays and Herschel came as he had promised long before. In the evening we sat by the river and saw some lamps floating down for the Bera holiday[115], though their great day was the 20th.

The next afternoon we went to look at the College. A lot of sailors and *coolies* were tackled on to a great rope, pulling at the walls. But though it gave to each pull it would not come down, and the end was always the rope breaking.

We often hear a pattering in our side of the square, which is the monkeys galloping on the roofs. I have seen them sometimes looking over the wall of P's garden, large white ones with black faces, like those at **Kishnagur**.[116]

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[115] 'Bera Bhasan (বেরাভাসান) Festival, also known as the Khoja Khizri festival, is a festival that dates back to the Nawabs of Bengal and is hosted in Murshidabad district, in the district of West Bengal' - Wikipedia

[116] Monkeys are mentioned earlier at 'Kishnagar' (see footnote 42).

August 26th.

On Thursday, which was the great Bera day, we saw numbers of lamps on the river.

I was on patrol, and some people passing in a boat were impertinent when challenged. I would have sent a shot over their head but for alarming the station, and it was of little use to rouse the lazy guard of sailors in their boat. I believe they were asleep, but they said they were awake, but it was no use to challenge the boats that passed, as they never could catch them if they chased. The fact is they do not like to pull back again against [the] tide. I thought if those were their sentiments they were a very useless guard, and so reported to Gastrell next day. I believe the boat's crew had only been looking at the sight in the City, but they might have been doing worse and we could not have stopped them.

My life is rather different now from what it formerly was, when I scarcely moved except from my chair at the Office to the sofa at home, but I do not think the exercise makes me any thinner.

The naval brigade arrived here yesterday, and I believe will remain for some time, as they doubt whether this steamer can pass up the river, and the one which should have relieved them broke down.

We began musket drill this morning. I have been office in charge 7 times.

August 29th.

This has been a very wet week. Monday's rain prevented drill, and made patrolling anything but pleasant. I was out from 1 to 4. It has since been fine and very hot, so that we drill in the shade of our houses, beside the river, which after stopping and falling for some time has risen very fast, and is within 4 inches of last year.

The Board are much gratified to find that I and the Deputies have been so diligent in the performance of our duties in the last quarter.

August 30th.

I dare say you have thought of me today. It would probably have been a disturbed one if any were to have been as being the great day of the *Muharrain*[117], but it is pouring enough to damp any one's ardour.

September 5th.

I have not been out in the evening for much more than a month, though I often want something to refresh me after all my work. Last evening, however, I went to see Watson, who has been ill.

They have heard at last from Barlow. He says he was married May 23rd, and had to send his wife away June 16th, and sees no prospect of getting her back. He has also sent

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[117] presumably '*Muharram*: (Arabic: ٱلْمُحَرَّم, romanized: al-Muḥarram) is the first month of the Islamic calendar. It is one of the four sacred months of the year when warfare is banned' - wikipedia. 30 August 1857 was 10 Muharram 1274: 'the tenth of Muharram is known as Ashura, an important day of commemoration in Islam. For Sunni Muslims, the day commemorates the parting of the Red Sea by Moses and the salvation of the Israelites, observed through voluntary fasting and other permissible expressions of gratitude. By contrast, Ashura is a day of mourning for Shia Muslims, who annually commemorate the death of Husayn ibn Ali, grandson of the Islamic prophet Muhammad and the third Shia imam.' - ibid.

away his furniture, and the residents all mess together. The rebels are within a few miles, but there is the river between. In the next district they hold office regularly in the name of the King of Oudh. He says he would have volunteered for the relief of **Arrah**, but his wife would not let him, and it was well she did not, for all the volunteers were killed but 3, and 2 of those were wounded.

September 6th.

The last feat of the troops is somewhat rich; 20 of the 11th were detected in some plot for killing the officers at Julpidouri[118], whereupon the 73rd, all of their own accord, disarmed and dismounted them. The 20 men were sent down here for trial at Headquarters, without a soul to look after them. Accordingly they marched by themselves, reporting themselves as they came along, and finally arrived last night.

September 7th.

Government have ordered all women and children away from **Rajmahal**[119] and above, and have forbidden any furlough for next year; my promotion seems further off than ever.

September 20th.

On Monday 3 steamers arrived. One brought upwards of 70 women and 100 children from **Dinapore**. You may imagine the addition they make to the station being quite unexpected. They belong to the 10th. They were sent into the north barrack, so I had to move my office for the third time since May. I have succeeded in obtaining the same room that we had before in the middle barrack where the Collectorate is.

A prisoner got out of the port-hole of one of the steamers in the night, and as he was ironed, I suppose he was drowned.

We were very anxious for fine weather to see the eclipse on Friday[120], as we have much rain lately, and often been prevented from having parade. It was very cloudy both on the morning and afternoon, but cleared up beautifully at the right time, and we had a capital view of the eclipse, which was annular with us. We had the sextant, theodolite out in front of Gastrell's, and nothing could have been better. Some saw the stars, but I did not, thinking not of looking for them. I saw a spot in the sun, and one curious appearance, that the sunlight between leaves of trees were all crescent-shaped. All eclipses are native holidays but I was obliged to work in the afternoon.

September 23rd.

Watson is getting better, and will be well as soon as he gets a change, but no boat is procurable here. I wrote last night to Herschel, asking if he could lend one for the holidays, which begin today for those who can take them. I had intended to go to **Calcutta** for part of them, but I believe I can be useful by going on board with Watson to look after him, and it is so seldom that I can be of any use, or can give up anything for anyone else, that I am

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118 maybe Jalpaiguri, West Bengal?

119 **Rajmahal**, Jharkhand – but only about 45km (28m) NE of Berhampore, just across the Padma River.

120 There was an eclipse in India on Friday 18 September 1857.

glad of the opportunity especially for the Watsons. I have heard from Harry; he offers me a bed, and will look out for Alfred.

September 27th. In a marsh.

In my visit to the Watsons on Thursday (24th), I found that Herschel had sent down Mr. Stewart's boat to them, but as he said in a note to me that although he was delighted to lend it, he did it with some inconvenience, Watson hired another also which was at the *ghat*.

Boats.

Spencer and Cape started for **Jungipore** at 5 next morning, but they drove as far as **Jungunge**[121], and got such a start of us that I doubt our seeing them at all. Gastrell gave me leave of absence from the Volunteers, and we started soon after Church. (We have the Litany on Wednesdays and Fridays). Mrs. Wat[son] came on board with us to see us settled. At this time of the year the wind blows gently from the north, except in stormy weather, when it is strong from the south, and it had been so all the beginning of the week, but it went down, and the tide is very strong against us.

September 28th.

We had other difficulties to contend with from the number of country ships with coal, salt, *ghee*[122] &c wind-bound against the banks, so that we had to pass the towing ropes over all their masts one by one. Our boat was under-manned too, and very heavy. Mr. Stewart's would have been up in half the time. But by towing, punting, rowing and once sailing we got on slowly. Sometimes we sent on the cook-boat with the tow-rope to fasten to a post, and then worked ourselves up to it. This was when the ships lay so thick on the shore that we could not tow.

We had some rain the first afternoon which cooled the air and once brought us to a stop. Through the mist we saw a steamer passing down. Another went up yesterday morning. We have had no rain since. We dine at 4, sit on deck from sunset till 7 or 8, when we have tea and soon turn in. I sleep in Stewart's boat, but am all day in the other. We have beautiful moonlight now the clouds are gone off.

We anchored the first night rather below **Lal Bagh**.

One man who was sent for milk was detained by impassable creeks, and we did not get tea till late, when after much shouting and going round about the passage was discovered.

I wrote a bulletin for Mrs. Watson early the next morning, and sent it by a servant who was going back. He overtook us again in the evening with a note from her to Watson. It was her birthday, poor thing.

When we were opposite the palace[123] I found they came to a dead stop, as there was some masonry jutting out into the river so that they could not pass the towing rope, and

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121 ?=**Jiaganj** West Bengal - on the way upriver (the) to Jungipore anyway.

122 *ghee*: 'butter made from buffalo's or cow's milk, clarified by boiling, so as to resemble oil in consistency' - OED.

123 The Hazarduari Palace is just upstream from Murshidabad. (On the modern map Lalbagh is a suburb of the latter.)

the current ran like a sluice. They were waiting for the wind, which has not come yet. However, I sent our crew to help the large boat, and we got it over at breakfast time.

We cross the river now and then to avoid the strength of the current, and of course lose some ground in the process We went up a creek in the afternoon - very pretty with a large island on our right, and did not rejoin the main river till we came to **Jungunge**. This is a very large mart with quantities of ships which we could pass but very slowly, and we anchored for the night near the end of them on the east bank.[124] We took a little walk on the bank.

By breakfast time yesterday morning we arrived at **Gysabad** on the W. bank.[125] Some way above the river spread out immensely and we passed out into this *jhiel*[126], which runs parallel to the river, and they say up to **Rajmahal**. Of course the current is much weaker here, and we pole famously. It seems quite like a large lake, except for the bushes, low trees and long reeds here and there, for the open plains which I have often described in Bengal scenery are all submerged, and there is one sheet of water from the trees of one village to those of another. Here and there the smell was unpleasant, but not often. As it grew dark, we could not distinguish the channel and our boat ran aground several times, so after a vain attempt to reach **Gadi**[127], which had been reported half a mile ahead for the last 4 hours, we gave it up, and anchored in the middle of the water; till then we had always been tied to the bank.

October 6th.

Soon after I wrote the above we sighted **Jungipore**, but did not come up for hours. The other boat pushed ahead, and Herschel jumped on board, and was grievously disappointed at not finding us. However, it was soon explained, and he came back to meet us. I thought it better that Watson should not land till the sun was down, but went myself to pay my respects to Mr. Stewart. Spencer and Cape were there and would have come to see Watson had I let them.

Jungipore

We returned and found the boat was off again; we pursued it and after joining it we passed on into the broad flood of the river Bhansha[128], where there was a magnificent expanse of water before us, covered with boats taking their holiday, and in the distance the cone of the **Dharani pakar**[129], and more faintly the Rajmahal hills[130]. I wonder when I last saw one.

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124 They have travelled about another 5km (3m) this day.

125 If correctly identified on the map, this appears to be good progress, about another 5km (3m) – before breakfast!

126 *jhiel*: 'jheel, East India; a pool or lagoon (in India) often of vast extent, left after an inundation' - OED. Damus Lake may be the remains of this.

127 **Gadi** Ferry Ghat remains on the west bank; Kismatgadi seems to be village now.

128 river Bhansha: unidentified. I can only suppose the 'Bhansha' was the name of this part of the Ganges delta at the time; both the watercourses and their names may be expected to have changed since the 1850s.

129 **Dharani pakar:** 'Dharni Pahar, located in Pakur, Jharkhand, India, is a significant geological and cultural site' - https://www.myindianproducts.com/travel/jharkhand/pakur/dharni-pahar – it is about 37km (23m) WNW from Jangipure.

130 Rajmahal hills: '...run in a broad northeast-southwest-trending arch for some 120 miles (190 km) from the Ganges southward almost to Dumka. They rise to 1,861 feet' - https://www.britannica.com/place/Rajmahal; they are about 67km (41m) WNW from Jangipure.

Then we ceased our toilsome progress to the N. and floated S.E. with the stream, back into the Bhagirathi, and so arrived in front of the station, as we came up behind it, and landed Watson in the *tonjon*[131].

Stewart received us most hospitably. We had chess, and chess problems and H[ersche]l and I stayed up late looking through his telescope at Jupiter's satellites and the Orion nebula &c.

Next morning we were up early and went with Mr. Stewart to bathe in a tank. My last swim was at Collingwood.[132] Our dodge was to turn jars upside down in the water and tackle on. The best plan is to tie sticks of bamboo at the mouth and sit upon them, or else to take the jar between your ancles and lie on your back, when you may go to sleep if disposed. We also tried standing on them, but none of us could the balance correctly.

In the evening we went down again; Watson, Spencer and I sat on the bank while the others bathed. I thought it would be too much for me again. Spencer and Cape left after dinner. We stayed up again looking at Jupiter, and were up before dawn to see Venus and Saturn and Guzio[133], the great sun himself. Then for another bathe.

I swam across the bank, but was rather done, and waited for my jar, with which I went out into the middle and lay floating for half an hour. We were an hour and half swimming altogether. We started directly after breakfast, taking H[ersche]l as far as **Rajarampore**[134], where he left us after dinner. We got down in 10 hours just before 8.

Berhampore

I spent the evening with the Watsons. Mrs. Pigou came in; her husband was not well enough. Everyone gets ill except me, but nothing seems to hurt me. Gastrell says I have walked 3 men into fevers by patrolling with them in all weathers.

There was no parade next morning, which I did not know, and was there alone.

Morris and Wilson came to breakfast on Saturday. Morris has orders to take **Dinagepore**, which as he says does both him and me out of promotion, for if they had not combined the two divisions, I should have had it, and then he would have had 1500. We have others grievances also.

The next day we had a Special Service for the state of the country.

Spencer and I had, as usual, a short drive in the evening.

Yesterday I dined with the Watsons, but I am dreadfully fagged, what with work, and getting up early, and running about in the sun all day. I can scarcely sit up in the house, even to eat. Pigou has been ill the last 10 days and has made over the Post-office to me. Of course I do not like to keep people anxiously waiting for their letters, so I am dressed and there soon after 5, before any one is stirring. Then comes parade. Then I have often to attend to my writers till breakfast-time. Then I go to Watson's to drive him to the Office,

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131 *tonjon*: 'East India: a kind of sedan chair slung on a pole and carried by four bearers' - OED.

132 Collingwood House, nr Hawkhurst, Kent: his family home.

133 I cannot understand this name or reference, but would appear to be the sun as it rose?

134 **Rajarampore** – Rajarampur: I think this is the one (!) on the Bhagirathi, on the way to Jangipur; see note 236.

and I have many things to do besides my own work and the Superintendent's, for now that Wynch is away, I am more than ever an amateur assistant in the Collectorate.

Yesterday I went to the hospital, to receive and take out treasure. To-day I shall inspect a lot of *dhoorlie*[135] bearers to be sent to Ward for the troops, as I did on Friday and Saturday, and then there are letters to be drafted. The other *daks*, except the Calcutta, come in the afternoon, so I have to go to receive them, and back to my Office; and as I said before I am pretty well done up, even if I have no patrol. Both sun and moon affect me much; sometimes I am quite knocked up by a walk across the square with a *shola* hat on, or by sitting with my back towards the sunny wall of the house, though not in the rays.

October 11th.

I was down on the *bund* for a short time on Thursday evening, but the morning, when I go to the Post, is the time to enjoy. There is the Moon, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn; Orion, Sirius, Canopus, the Twins, Procyon, Capella and the Great Bear, and then come the red streaks in the clouds, and the sunrise.

But the days are exceedingly hot and will be so, I suppose, till we get rain. The river is falling fast - scarcely ever known so fast and I fear there will soon be much sickness among the natives. It was full of marsh-weed the other day, as the waters were flowing back again to the river.

Col. Hannyngton was going to blow his flute the other day, when a centipede came out and bit his lip.

Spencer tells me I got great credit among the natives for the way in which I dis-armed them without unnecessary bother, while the police, if alone, would have plagued them and taken their money. I dare say that means I was not strict enough: but the Hindoos, at any rate, approved of the measure.

Tuesday we had a dinner party, and I was afterwards on patrol from 1 to 4.A.M.

At 4 the post was in and then I had only time to bathe and dress before parade. On Wednesday evening all the Volunteers marched to the Burial ground to the funeral of Wilkins, one of our Corps, who came here ill, and died in his boat. The last time I saw him we patrolled together.

Poor little Dot died while were on the river in a fit from the heat. She was a pretty little Skye, and was very fond of me. She once, not having seen me for some days came half across the square to meet me - a great honour, as one of her fancies was never to walk on the grass. If we made a short cut when out with her, she always went round by the road.

Herschel is going to buy my Cabul.

The women and children who have been here on their way down the river, all left for **Dumdum**[136] on Tuesday. They were quieter than I expected, but we were glad to be quit of them before they got over their strangeness. They used to come in crowds to the Post

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[135] *dhoorlie*: 'doolie: a rudimentary litter or palanquin used in India by the lower social classes, and as an army ambulance' - OED

[136] **Dum Dum**, Kolkata, West Bengal

office. Their letters had such queer addresses. One was directed European Market. One had outside it "My dear - Bear in mind the duty of writing to your Uncle K.M.B." Some are marvellously spelt-"Catrin (something like Hanigan) Her Majesty's 10th Regiment Brampor Est Injtes or else were".

I do not suppose you heard half the terrible stories first reported, but they have all been contradicted one by one except the simple massacre. The stories come from natives, but not with a motive of triumphing over us. It is partly with a view of shewing their acquaintance with the particulars of circumstantial detail, when very likely they had not been there at all. Anyone who knows anything of native evidence is aware of this. Partly too from a natural love of the horrible and of bringing news, which Europeans share to the full, and repeat and exaggerate and speak of reports as facts, and so send them to the papers. Natives will believe anything (except the fall of **Delhi**, of which they cannot be persuaded after the first hoax). It was reported up country that we had sent up one regiment of fiends in petticoats, and one from Ceylon who were cannibals. It was believed that the Highlanders were usually chained up, and only let loose when wanted to fight. The report now is that 60,000 Europeans have landed to march up the river in both sides, murdering and plundering till they reach Kabul[137], when they are to turn back; so the brave are burying their money and the timid running away. We have been rather anxious about our neighbours, part of the 32nd having gone off in **Beerbhoom** within 70 miles of us.

We have been keeping a sharp look out in patrolling, and looking to our fortifications which had nearly gone to sleep; cutting down the trees in front of the bastions &c. It is a pity, as they shaded that dreadfully hot road by the river side, but I suppose the fort would be useless without it.

October 20th

Mrs. Watson had a son this morning.

Two more companies of the 32nd are gone, and the rest are expected to follow. They must know that not a man of them will escape, yet they go as in despair. I should not be surprised any day to hear that our men were off from the same panic, though I do not think they would try to touch us, and we are enough for them if they do. No one who does not know the Natives can make allowances for the pressure upon them. I believe the 63rd were only too glad to be disarmed, that they might have a good excuse for not rising. Many regiments which have behaved well when they could have mutinied without opposition, suddenly turn when they have been disarmed, have no friends in the population, and must be hopeless of escape; but they dread more the being said to have shrunk from the danger their companions met. This is a sentiment which might lead to much good if rightly directed.

October 27th.

We have not had a drop of rain since a shower on the day we started in the boats, & the upland crops, which promised beautifully, are, they say, quite ruined. Unless there are speedy importations there will be no rice in the district.

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[137] Kabul: unidentified but from context somewhere on a river in West Bengal, ie *not* what he calls ‘Cabul’. WW is consistent about spelling the Afghan capital with a C-, see note 57.

I have heard from Edward[138]; he has passed the local exam; I hope the Central will confirm it. They talk of disturbances in that part after all.

Some days ago Mr Nesbitt, the Road Surveyor, brought me some Muhammedan coins to look at; they were dug up at the factory of Mr. Perriu, a Frenchman and one of our Volunteers, just across the river. Watson and I have been to-day to see the factory and the place where the coins were found. They were in a shell not a foot below the ground, in a place which he is smoothing down for a yard. When he bought it, it had no appearance of having ever been held by any one; but now the ground is covered with broken bits of pottery turned up. They have also found the mouth of an old well, and in digging a tank they came on the remains of a boat. I have made out the coins - One of Bahadur Shah - 4 of Sher Shah and 2 square ones of Akbar.

November 25th.

The weather is delightful now, except when one is in the way of Spencer and such individuals who will have punkahs, but there is no sign of rain, and I am afraid if it came now it would not save the upland crops or prevent a famine. Things look very bad. Down in **Cuttack**[139] the low crops have been all washed away by the floods, and the others burnt up; and I heard long ago of the people going about in bands, compiling those who had stores to sell them, on threat of taking them by force.

We now have parade only 3 times a week, but then all have to attend, whether on patrol or not, which I however always do, and besides I have to get up for the *dak*. The parade is now not till 6.15, and we are to wear our new uniform, a dark blue frock with red collar, cuffs, and shoulder straps.

Herschel was coming in for the Communion on Sunday, but was detained by work till too late to start. Wynch has resigned our company, so I am the only civilian left. A little while ago, some Hindu gentlemen offered to enrol themselves as Volunteers, and patrol the native town. Spencer declined with thanks, as not required at present. Everyone who has left this place for **Calcutta** has mentioned the contrast - the panic that seems to have seized on everyone there, and the impossibility of getting any reliable information. Tisdale and his party waited for some days opposite **Chandernagar**[140], because they were told that the 72nd had lined the river so as to prevent all passage. Now there were only at the utmost 200 of them, and they revolted 75 miles from this, and went off straight in the other direction; and the idea of their stopping the navigation for a day had they been on the bank! The ignorance of the Newspapers passes everything. Fancy the Home News describing the panorama of **Delhi** as the view being closed in golden sunset by the purple mountains of **Cabul**. Not above 1300 miles off I believe.

November 21st.

I have heard from Edward and Alfred.[141] The latter gives a very amusing account of his voyage.

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138 Edward: presumably here his brother, b.03.02.1832, in the military at Balasore in 1857, rather than ‘Uncle Ed’.
139 **Cuttack**, Odisha – some 450km (280m) to the south of Berhampore
140 **Chandernagar**: Chandannagar, West Bengal
141 His brothers.

Herschel came in on Friday the 13th. We dined with [the] Macgregors, who have decided on retiring in February if they get leave; and if they don't it will be, as he says, at least very complimentary. I shall be very sorry to lose them.

The next day was a holiday. The Watsons took us for a drive in the evening, and we dined with them all by ourselves.

After Church on Sunday their baby was Christened. Mrs. Pigou, Herschel, and I stood for the sponsors. Baby behaved quite well, and I named him Cecil Wilberforce. Watson took us home and we lunched and stayed at their house till evening church time. We dined quietly and packed off Herschel afterwards.

December 5th.

On Wednesday the 25th I heard that poor little Cecil was very ill. On my way home from dining with Cape and Alexander I went again to enquire, and talked to Watson, till Dr. Wilson arrived, and then waited to hear his report. Mrs. Pigou was there. She came into the verandah, and when Pigot and I joined her she said she was afraid it had taken a very bad turn. Just then I saw Watson lead his wife out, and knew it was all over. He just came into the verandah to tell us so. I believe they lost their last baby in the same way, but that one was only a few hours old. Watson asked me to go the grave, as I had to the font. Pigou took me in his buggy. Macgregor went with Watson and the coffin in his carriage. It is the burial ground beyond the river. No one else was there except Sturrock. I afterwards rode to find Parsons, and beg him to excuse me from dining at the mess that night. I did not feel as if I could bear it.

December 9th.

Poor Mrs. Watson is quite crushed at the loss of her little Cecil.

I hope to start tomorrow for **Calcutta**.

Alfred is at Bancejunje. I shall try to run up and see him from **Hooghly**[142] if he be not gone on. There have been many disturbances about since I wrote, and we are very anxious now for Julpijauri. People in **Calcutta** cannot quiet their apprehensions, even with 8000 troops, and had an idea that the disarmed **Barrackpore** *sepoys* were likely to come down upon them some night, or else that they would make off by this road, and our people were to rise independently of them; they had fixed last Friday night for our rise, and Wigram wrote from **Beerbhoom** to request he might be informed by express as soon as the rise took place. There was also great excitement here at the discovery that the gun mounted on the bastion of our fort which faces the road to the lines had been spiked and filled with earth, and that a lot of lead had been stolen, enough to make bullets to any extent. Macgregor is not allowed to retire, but sent as Political Representative with Jung Bahadar. A very nice appointment, but she, poor thing, is much distressed at the parting, and we are sorry to lose them.

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[142] **Hooghly** - Chinsurah, West Bengal; 'Hugli-Chuchura... also known by its former names Chinsurah or Hooghly-Chinsurah, is a city of Hooghly district and the district headquarters of Hooghly division in the Indian state of West Bengal... It lies on the bank of Hooghly River, 35 km north of Kolkata...' - wikipedia.

River

December 23rd.

Herschel came in on the 5th for the Communion and left at dawn on the 7th. We left **Berhampore** about noon on Thursday the 10th; the Watsons in the Magistrate's Guard boat, I in a native boat, and the servants, baggage, kitchen &&c: in four others. At 4 P.M. the Watsons called me on board to dinner. I had not seen Mrs. Watson since she lost her baby and she was much affected, but the change had done her good.

The first day we passed **Rangimalti**[143], which I believe means the red earth. It is a curious cliff quite high above the river and the surrounding country, and there is no similar soil anywhere in the neighbourhood. Great part of it is, every year, washed away by the river; garden, stables, summer-house &c go, one by one. I suppose the house will follow before long. They say that some years ago, a pot of gold coins was laid bare, but it was only slightly uncovered, and high up the bank; they left it a while, and one fine morning it all rolled into the river. I believe that antiquities are often found, and the Indian traditions make it a very ancient place.

They say it was a city and capital of a raja, but nearly depopulated by an ogre, who, from one of the beauties of his person, was called Gaskera, or cow-ear. Two great pits are still, I believe, shown, one of which used to be filled with rice, the other with curry for him every day. But in time he was tired of this, and wanted more substantial food, so he began to devour the inhabitants. He was afterwards slain by some hero, and a neighbouring town is still called Gaskaru; my poor horse Akbar is buried there. At present the house is one of Lyell & Co's silk factories, and I believe the largest in **Moorshedabad**, and when Wemyss was there, a bachelor, it was a very favourite resort for anyone who wanted change of air, or a honeymoon, or even a party would go down for a day or two. The present manager has a family.

We pushed on below this, as far as light would serve us, through the shallows, being anxious to make the best of our way from the station, as the bachelors' ball was to be given that night, and many people suspected the *sepoys* would take advantage of the fact to make a bolt, and at **Rangamalti**[144] the river is fordable. There were various stories afloat of *sepoys* being over-heard, while at their ablutions, addressing prayers to the Ganges to make haste and dry up; and the Watsons, who had very valuable property with them, were rather anxious.

For my part, I never thought the *sepoys* would go, nor that, if they did, they would choose the ball night, when every one was up and awake, nor the Southern road, (but rather the Northern by **Jungipore**, where they might get some plunder, and be off into the Jungles instead of coming upon the line of the troops passing up country) nor if they did come southward, that they would hear of us, or think it worth their while to leave the ford to look for us, or be able to find us in a very winding river between steep banks on a

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143 **Rangimalti** - Rangamati Chandpara, West Bengal. They have made good progress back down river and are now already south of their starting point.

144 **Rangamalti** – as above

dark night. However, there was nothing like being prepared, and Watson loaded his gun. I had a gun, musket and sword with me.

We were anchored to a bank divided by a narrow channel from the shore, and on any alarm could soon have pushed off to the Western bank, and had a fair start to getaway in the darkness. All however passed off quietly.

On Friday we passed the white factory of Markulbarinja. We also passed all that is left of the battle-field of **Plassey**[145]; the greater part is cut away by the river.

That night, at bed-time we heard the quacking of ducks; Watson and I followed it along the sand as far as we could without getting wet; but it appeared as far off as ever.

Becoming more courageous, we that night began beating the gong, which is done at sunset on all police boats, as a warning to river thieves to look out; we had kept very quiet the first evening, but we continued it till **Calcutta**, when, as we had no exact right to take a guardboat there, we thought it better to dispense with our dignity, and so stopped the drum, and struck the flag we [had] waved proudly before.

Saturday morning we passed the **mouth of the Babla river**[146], branches of which, the Mor and Dwaraka, I used to cross in my journeys last year. Later in the day we paraded passed the **Ajay R**.[147], the northern boundary of **Burdwan**[148]. We were off **Cutwa**[149] about noon, and Watson landed to see if there was any news, and whether the troops had actually bolted. The native Deputy Collector was very polite, gave him a newspaper with the **Lucknow** despatches, and invited him to dinner, to which however he could not stay.

We encamped that night near Agurdun, and walked up and down the beach, enjoying a fire our boat-men had made. But our people were not quite so happy, for they heard the *phiu*, a strange cry, made I believe by the jackal, though some explain it otherwise, but certainly showing that a tiger or leopard is in the neighbourhood. However it was distant, and never troubled us. Sunday was the first night we anchored on the **Burdwan** side of the river. Till then we had always been on the left bank. Next morning we reached the mouth of the **Jahinghi**[150], and so entered the Hooghly[151].

We were by no means sorry to have plain navigation; for the Bhagirathi R. has been in charge of a new man this year, who had some wonderful scheme for keeping the navigation open throughout the year, and saving Govt. some extraordinary sum; partly through this, and partly through the tricks of his subordinates (who took advantage of his confidence and inexperience, and checked the navigation in order to extort fees from the

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145 **Plassey**: Palashi Monument.

146 **Mouth of the Babla river**: 'the Dwarka River (also called Babla) is a tributary of Bhagirathi' - wikipedia. Google maps labels it 'Dawarka'.

147 The mouth of the **Ajay River** is about 10km (about 6m) downstream from that of the Babla (or Dawarka).

148 **Burdwan**: Bardhaman, West Bengal is to the west of the Hooghly. 'Bardhaman, officially Bardhaman Sadar, is a city and municipality located on the northern bank of the Damodar river in the state of West Bengal, India. It is the headquarters of Purba Bardhaman district, having become a district capital during the period of British rule. Burdwan, an alternative name for the city, has remained in use since then' - wikipedia.

149 **Cutwa** - Katwa - Ballavpara Jeti Ghat mapped. Katwa is in fact only just below the join with the Ajay.

150 **Jahinghi**: 'The Jalangi River is a branch of the Ganges river [which] flows into the Bhagirathi river and strengthens its lower channel, the Hooghly' - wikipedia. It meets the Bhagirathi at Nabadwip.

151 The Hooghly is what was the Bhagirathi; it is the same waterway that flows from the west side of the Ganges a bit north of Jangipur and south to Kolkata and beyond to the Bay of Bengal.

boatmen going up and down), the river is in a worse state than was ever known, and is almost impassable in parts where there has always hitherto been deep water. The fences to point out the passage, and keep the channel clear are placed in the most absurd position, sometimes at right angles from bank to bank, as if there was ever a current running in that way. Of course they favour the accumulation of sand instead of its removal. We could always tell when there was a bad place by the number of country boats stuck fast, which served as beacons, and we ourselves were at times delayed not a little, and had doubts whether we should be able to accomplish the journey.

We used to manage thus: our six boats charged the place together, and the chances were that one or two hit the channel, which the rest followed as soon as they could get off by pushing and turning round. Watson and I had a long walk on each side of the river in search of ducks, but they were too shy for us.

We anchored on the **Burdwan** side, a little below Murzapore, and the **mouth of the Kari River**[152], where Herschel and I put in on June 17 and 19, 1853. On returning from our walk, we were rather taken aback at finding that we had come within the influence of the tide, and our boats were left aground. The fall was but slight and we soon got off. Next day we passed Culuade and rested between Chagda and **Sulehsagar**[153], but on the opposite side, still on the right bank. Such a beautiful sand we had for walking, I never saw finer on the seaside ----------

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Raneegunge

While staying at Calcutta, I paid a visit to Alfred at **Ranegunje**[154]. I left Harry Marshall's house in ample time on the Saturday morning (Dec. 19th) but several things delayed me, and I missed the train, and had to take the mail train, which I found was only first Class, and my funds with me were insufficient. I had calculated on going 2nd Class and had left a large margin. No one in India carries money, and W. Terraneau who drove me to the station had none with him. The ticket keeper was not particularly civil, but at last consented to take W. T's security and I got safely off.

We arrived at the station about 2.A.M. and the question was how to proceed. There is a hotel there, but so awfully exhorbitant that I should not have thought of going to it if I had had money, which I had not. I had serious thoughts of getting myself taken up as a suspicious character by the sentries and waiting till the morning by the guard-fire, but the ticket man of whom I enquired the distance to the camp, said that I could not go there at night, and had much better stay in the carriage till morning. This was exactly what I wished, and so I coiled myself up in my blue wrapper, as well as I could. There is a way of drawing out those railway seats to make a bed but I could not find the dodge; however I dozed tolerably till about 6 o'clock, when I started on my discovery. Nothing was stirring in the dawn but a few carts and pack-bullocks, but I got a direction to the camp, and after passing through the Madras troops and the Rifles who were just arrived, I found myself

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[152] The **mouth of the Kari river** is at Dhatrigram – still about 80km (50m) as the bird flies from the centre of Kalkota.

[153] **Sulehsagar** – tentatively – Sukhsagar.

[154] Raniganj (note 63) is about 170km NW of Kalkota. And yes, it is spelled both ‘Ranegunje’ and ‘Raneegunge’ in close proximity as above.

near the Cavalry tents, and at last got a direction to the quarters of the Cornets doing duty, which were quite at the other end.

Alfred was in bed, but awake, and debating between the enjoyment of an extra snooze with no morning drill, or a bathe, for which, however, he had waited rather too long. So he jumped up, and we dressed, and after I had been introduced to his chum Kemble, we went out for a walk, first to see his horses, which are rather nice ones, then by the place where they had such an awkward blow a few days before, breaking his tooth, and spoiling his dress with blood, besides damaging his leg. Then across the Grand Trunk Road, and among some fields to the other side. There we met Dick who was at Westminster. He and another were out shooting.

Raneegunge is as different as possible from Bengal, quite in the N.W. style. The soil sandy and very hot in the sun, and with the dust rising on the march it was very unpleasant in the extreme. But it was an agreeable novelty to come upon high banks and ledges of rock jutting out of the ground, while in the distance when the morning haze cleared off, there were hills, and above all the glorious cone of the **Parasunith**[155]. I could scarcely take my eyes off him.

Alfred seemed to be getting on very well, and trying to learn his work, and I was amused to find he was rather in request among the captains for his knowledge of the language. It certainly was rather curious to hear some of the others, and I had a good deal of amateur interpreting with one and another.

One of the other Cornets is young Lock, a connection of the Watsons. His father is very much esteemed, so I wished Alfred to make friends with him, and get introduced to him myself. I engaged a servant for him and Alfred jointly, and when I asked the man if he accepted the terms, he replied in the usual form that he looked for *parivasti* (i.e. subsistence) to them. Upon which there was a great outcry that he was like all the rest, always asking for *parivasti* (*pariwasti*), which they took to be a kind of extra allowance for board, I believe - They had matters rather rough in their tent, of course, and the sand came into it rather abundantly, but still everything seemed very comfortable, except the water, which I must say was villainous.

We had breakfast and luncheon, then boiled mutton and either Irish stew, or fried beef and potatoes. Also the remains of a rice and currant pudding, which was something over and above the rations, and bought on their own account. There was also a bottle of claret; for the major had sent round one to each of them, and this was kept in my honour. We were not, as you may suppose, over supplied with furniture; but there were the beds, a camp chair for me, and some boards fixed across for the table. Their neighbours lent knives and forks &c; Alfred's canteen appeared a very nice one. I liked what I saw of his Captain, he seemed a very nice sort of fellow.

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[155] **Parasunith**: Parasnath Hill, Jharkhand, about 100km WNW of Raniganj.

Camp Lohajara, Jessore.

January 1st 1858

We arrived here[156] on the 30th, but the office boats are not all come yet. We find plenty [of] work in arrear, as you may suppose, and are rather in confusion at present.

January 15th.

Watson has written to the Board: "All these processes are checked most thoroughly by Mr. Waterfield, who I consider deserves every credit for the care and patience he bestows on the register work. The entire credit is due to him for the enhanced accuracy we have secured, for hitherto I own I had been accustomed to rely implicitly on the Church registers furnished by the Surveyor." In the Annual statement he wrote: "The ability and perseverance exhibited by Mr. Assist. Waterfield in dealing with the **Moorshedabad** registers has already been reported by me to the Board in terms of commendation. Mr. W. had a difficult duty to perform, and the success which has attended his labours is very creditable to him."

I do not know whether I ever told you of a curious circumstance that occurred here last year. When the Survey went out, they found spinning wheels floating down all the rivers, and it was discovered that *chuprassies* had been round the villages the year before, telling the people that Govt. were going to introduce iron ones, and only a certain number were to be allowed in each village. So when the Survey came, they thought it was to enquire into the matter, and broke and threw theirs away for fear of a fine. This looks more like a plot to excite previous discontent in the country than anything I have yet heard.

Most of the roads here are dreadfully hard and rough to walk on, and I doubt whether there is a cart in the place. Walking by the river on Friday evening, we saw three otters running along with some fishermen, who were going to prepare for their midnight fishing - They were caught by strings which were round their necks, and brought for us to look at. They are taken some way above the nets, and then turned loose to drive fish into them. These were so tame that I fancy they are kept in the houses, but I believe there are others which live in their own holes in the banks, and only come when their master calls them to go fishing. Three young ones were brought into my tent the other day; they went squeaking and sprawling over each other like kittens.

The first evening we were here Watson and I went out shooting and he killed several pigeons. Then next I shot a kind of osprey or fishing eagle; my first bird, except two paddy-birds in the **Sunderbunds**[157]. Since then we have been out duck-shooting, but not in the evenings. We get up early and ride the elephant to the marsh, where we arrive just as dawn breaks. We take each a caure[canoe?], and sit in front, a *chuprassie* in the middle, and the boatman behind. There are 4 kinds of ducks, none so large as the Brahmini, which we tried to get on the Hooghly; the sarail, a large reddish kind; the harail, or teal; the gangrail, with

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[156] **Jessore**: Jashore (see note 47) is about 110km (63m) NE of Kolkata – ie the other way from Raniganj, about 215km (134m) from there. This seemed a conclusive identification but I'm hesitant due to references about travelling to and from it by boat. It does have a river (Bhairab) but it is small: 'The river is near about 160 kilometres (100 mi) long and 91 metres (300 ft) wide. Its average depth is 1.2 to 1.5 metres (4 to 5 ft) and with minimal water flow, it has plenty of silt' - wikipedia. **Camp Lohajara**: not identified; later spelled 'Lohagara' (note 179).

[157] **Sunderbunds**: Sundarbans, part of the Ganges delta to the SE of Kolkata.

green wings; the dalpipi, which lives in the dal or duck-weed, and tastes thereof; and a great variety of other birds; also immense numbers of fish, which leap a yard out of the water across the bows.

When we come to our boats, the first thing is to empty them, for the people sink them every evening lest anyone should make use of them without permission. They do it by rocking them, which must require much practice. Of course they are still very wet, but we have platforms to sit on.

January 18th.

I shot 25 birds this morning; pretty well considering that there was a great mist, which while it lasted, blinded my spectacles every half minute, and I had only one barrel to my gun. My sight is a great disadvantage.

I find this a very jolly place. I believe it is the one the *Moulvie*[158] described in his letter about heinous beasts and terrible biters. As to the latter, this is not the season for them, they are nearly torpid, I imagine; but in the hot weather they sometimes come and take men out of the boats.

An immense flock of wild geese passed over the tents one day. The mess tent stands under the shade of a magnificent tamarind tree, and in front is the ground leading down to the river[159], and the other tents are near. The elephant is kept under a tree to the E. of the tents. The whole country to the S. is an open plain cultivated mostly with vetches and mustard much to the elephant's emolument, when she crosses it with us to the *jheel*.[160] We often go and see her watered in the evening, when she stands a long time not liking to wet her feet, or even dip her trunk into the cold water.

W. of the tamarind is a patch of cane jungle with houses here and there. They say that in one tree close to us there live some wild cats - I believe a kind of civet-cat; and we certainly smell something very strong at times. Jackals of course abound, and we often hear the *phiu*, though what that is is uncertain. Some say it is an animal about the size of a jackal which always accompanies the tiger; others that it is the cry of an animal fascinated by the tiger; but I believe it is the note of the jackal when he comes across the tiger. No one seems to know why he makes it. I do not think it is fright, for he is never caught by the tiger, being far too cunning. He follows him and aggravates him with the cry till he turns, when he darts on one side, and so plagues and delays him till he has wasted the night. If it be for a warning as I suppose it must be, it is very disinterested of the jackal, since I conclude he would come in for scraps of the spoil. It is a melancholy noise. I do not think there is a tiger here, though there is a trap set for one in the wood, and some calves have been carried off. One of our servants saw the beast, and swore on the Koran it was a small tiger, but I think it was only a leopard of some kind. He has a lair within three yards of some of the servants by the kitchen, and on Saturday we were called there. I could not see him, but Watson saw his face plainly, and fired but missed him, I am afraid he will not come here again.

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158 *Moulvie*: 'maulvi: a Muslim doctor of the law; an imam. Also gen. (esp. in South Asia): a teacher of Arabic, a learned man. Also as a title and form of address' - OED.

159 Jashore is on the Bhalrab River.

160 earlier, '*jhiel*', see footnote 126.

January 22nd.

The last two days were the holidays on which the Hindus invoke the instruments of their livelihood. When we arrived here it was the month of *Paus*[161], during which the children went about the village in the evening singing, and making collections at the doors, after which, on the last day of the month, they invested the proceeds in rice and sweets meats, part of which they give away, and with the remainder hold a feast themselves.

On Wednesday night we sent Watson's hill tent, which is the only one the elephant can carry, to the march[?marsh], and we followed in the morning and spent the day there.

January 26th.

On Saturday I was off before dawn to visit my *ameers*, crossing the river in the *darojah*'s[162] boat to the factory where my horse is kept, and riding on. I was not back to breakfast till to ¼ to 3.

On Tuesday I went again and Watson accompanied me to look at the factory which Macarthur has offered us to live in.

On Sunday we were surprised by the arrival of the Gastrells in a boat from **Rajshahye**[163].

I hear the *koil*[164], coppersmith and woodpecker here; also the tree frog, and there are lots of *ichneumons*[165] among the cane jungle.

There is a curious mode of fishing here. They have something like a bundle of skewers tied together at one end, and use it as a kind of spear, bringing up the fish sticking between them.

An eagle followed me one day swooping at all my wounded birds. The men were very anxious we should shoot (kill) the cormorants &c: which kill the fish, but they will not eat those birds.

I should have mentioned among the tiger's habits that he is awfully afraid of a tent, thinking the ropes are some trap.

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161 *Paus*: 'Pausha (Pauṣa), or Pushya is the tenth month of the Hindu lunar calendar and the Indian national calendar. The month corresponds to the pre-winter (Hemanta) season and falls in December-January of the Gregorian calendar' - wikipedia.

162 *ameer*: variant of *emir*, eg 'We know how the Amír of this place is wont to treat his Christian prisoners' – Calcutta review 1854, OED example. *Darojah*: earlier *darogah*, a chief officer etc, note 90.

163 **Rajshahye**: Rajshahi, see note 77. Puzzled how they got to Jessore (Jashore) by boat if I'm correct about it being Jashore, but perhaps only most of the journey was on the river. Rajshahi is on the R.Padma, which could have brought them 2/3 of the way.

164 *koil*: 'a cuckoo of the genus Eudynamis, esp. the E. honorata of India' - OED – earliest example 1826, 'the koel... has a kind of song, and is the nightingale of Hindustân.'

165 *ichneumon:* 'A small brownish-coloured slender-bodied carnivorous quadruped ... closely allied to the mongoose, and resembling the weasel tribe in form and habits. It is found in Egypt' - OED. I imagine he means mongoose, since the ichneumon itself ('Pharoah's rat') is only found in Egypt.

My *peshkar*[166] sent in the other day an invoice. "Item, one envelope, item, one alligator"[167]. It is kept in a jar, but it certainly is crowded there, though a tub would suit well. It is about a foot long, eats fish, and bites anything. I think we shall give it to Grote, whom we expect, and who is great in natural history. My *peshkar* swears that when he carried it off the old one followed him for a mile. I doubt it.

February 11th.

Grote is not coming. I see the alligator carried about by its tail, and a string round its neck; then it is tied to a pole in the tank and allowed to swim.

The holiday we were out shooting there was an immense flock of wild geese or possibly pelican, I dare say 2 miles long, rising and falling and glistening in the sun. Watson shot one of a pair of large cranes this morning on the wild cat's tree.

It is curious to see the fishermen paddling here. They will send the boat perfectly straight though they paddle only on one side of it. They catch many porpoises[168] here and burn their oil. My *omla* buys it as a great specific for rheumatism. They say if it is poured into the palm of the hand it will soak through and run out at the back.

February 12th.

One man came to ask for medicine for a woman who had been seized by a tiger while cutting bamboos in the cane brake near the village where we go shooting. It let her go on the other women's shouting, but she was bitten in the neck and leg, and had her eye clawed. We sent off the native doctor on the elephant. He says she is much hurt, the bleeding is stopped, but he doubts whether she will get over it. The tiger was above 4 feet high.

A man is just brought in clawed by the same tiger. It was under some trees and he pointed it out to the others, when it sprang on him. It is said they always spring on any one who points at them. It got some branches in its mouth which prevented it from taking hold with its teeth, and he is not so much hurt as the woman. The marks of its claws are about a hand-breadth apart, so it must have a been a good-sized one.

February 19th.

The big tiger is said to have come to this village, and to be still here. The large ones seldom stay long in one place.

Wednesday morning we had news of our friend the leopard being asleep in a plantain garden; so we dropped down the river in the *darojah*'s boat to look him up. Some natives were watching the garden on each side. One shewed us the way. There was a narrow path

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166 *peshkar*: not in OED. ‘A Peshkar is a bench clerk and he is the judge's main clerk in the court office. He keeps order sheets and case files in good shape, make[s] cause-lists, handle[s] court processes, and take[s] care of exhibits in the courtroom.’ - https://www.collegesearch.in/articles/peshkar-in-court-salary-per-month-uttar-pradesh-bihar

167 ‘Three species of crocodilian are present in India. The mugger (or marsh) crocodile (Crocodylus palustris) is found in lakes and rivers throughout the country. The saltwater crocodile (C. porosus) is found along the eastern coast of the country... The gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) is found in river areas’ - wikipedia. This is probably the saltwater crocodile, which ‘live in the mangroves of Bhittarkanika and Sunderbans, Mahanadi Delta, and in the swamplands in Odisha and West Bengal (including rivers)’ - ibid.

168 ‘Ganges river dolphins live in the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Meghna, Karnaphuli, and Sangu rivers and their tributaries’ - wikipedia.

between the garden and the river bank, and among the plants something very like a footstool. I was first, but seeing it, waited for Watson to pass (we had both passed it before we could get the view): he went on and fired, but the thing never moved, and I thought he must have been killed, or he would at least have woke. I did not like to spoil his skin by another shot. Moreover I could not see Watson and thought he had gone round the fence to seize him, but in truth he was wiser than I, and directly on firing ran back to avoid his spring and also to watch him if he should break from the garden. I knew nothing about it, and I believe stood a great deal too near, but I saw natives as near, and knew no better. If he had sprung, I suppose he might have clawed me, but the chances are he would have merely knocked me over the bank into the river.

As I was looking Watson came up again and fired; then he got up, and I fired too as he rose, and hit him also. I saw he could not limp far, and so did not fire the other barrel, but walking on with my eye on him to give him a shot if he should recover, I slipped on the steep bank and fell, and the gun went off. Happily, I had it pointed towards him, and it hit nothing else. I do not suppose it hit him, but his skin had more bullet marks than were readily accounted for. Then every one rushed over the hedge after him, and he got terribly mauled with spears, sticks &c: especially by one of the *chuprassies*, who fired my musket at about a yard, making a terrible hole in his skin, and then clutched the musket and managed to break the stock. He was brought home in triumph in another boat. He measured 6 ft. 93", quite big enough to kill a man, or to carry off children. He was however much out of condition, and had a wound in his foot. We think he may have been hit that day by the tents, and perhaps was too lame to get food, for we have heard nothing of him since. Watson has the skull, and gave me the skin. The whiskers were cut off and burnt instanter by the people, being, it is said, poisonous. The villagers carried off some of the liver &c on a skewer as medicine, and the rest was thrown into the river, for if the jackals eat it they go mad and people bitten by them die. They say that people who take the flesh as medicine are mad for an hour or two.

February 27th.

The country is beautiful now with the Simal tree[169] in full blossom of red in all directions. There is another tree very abundant here, the *gab*[170], bearing a fruit like a small apple, the juice of which is a capital gum, and used for caulking boats.

There are in these parts many pillars of loose hard earth, like clods, about a foot high at least, and perhaps three inches in diameter. The bearer says they are made by crabs.[171]

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[169] '*Bombax ceiba* ... known as the cotton tree... This Asian tropical tree has a straight tall trunk and its leaves are deciduous in winter. Red flowers with 5 petals appear in the spring before the new foliage... This tree is commonly known as ... semal (Hindi: सेमल), shimal (Nepali: सीमल), shimul (Bengali: শিমুল)...' - wikipedia.

[170] '*Diospyros malabarica* (Bengali, Hindi & English names are same): A mid-sized spreading evergreen tree with gnarled darkish bole and low, dense, dark green crown that becomes very conspicuous in Mar-Apr when startingly red leaves emerge' - https://sites.google.com/site/treesofkolkata/the-trees/02-trees-with-peepal-like-leaves-ovate/gab

[171] 'Fiddler crabs primarily exist upon mudflats, sandy or muddy beaches as well as salt marshes within mangroves... The crab will feed through bringing a chunk of sediment to its mouth and sifting through it to extract organic material... Once finished consuming all the organic matter from the sediment, these crabs will then deposit them as small sand balls near their burrow' - wikipedia.

We were very busy all yesterday, packing, arranging boats &c. The mess tent was struck on Sunday night; my office tent yesterday; and the Watsons' sleeping tent will be as soon as they are dressed; and the only ones standing will be this of mine, and the small office tent which goes to Jessore. Just as we were going to bed last night a violent storm come on. It ran through the outer tent in no time, and I was obliged to have my bed moved into the middle of the inner one. I got doused going into the verandah for a second; however I rolled myself up in the bedclothes which were dry, and being dead-tired was asleep at once.

On Saturday night we passed one of the erections very common here, but which I never saw W. of Jessore. They are in form like the truncated Mexican pyramids with 3 terraces. On the top is placed a *dhooly*[172] containing Krishna and Kadhika, the favourite of the cowherdesses, for this is a ceremony in memorial of his dances with them in Vrindavan. I believe the pyramids are left to themselves except for this one day in the year, when the *dhoolie* is put on the top, plantain trees are planted at the four corners, and the people dance round and offer flowers &c.

There was great excitement on Sunday: the servants squirting and smearing each other and all the passers by with the red Holi[173] powder or water painted with it. It is a beautiful colour.

March 4th.

I hear still bad accounts of the crops from **Cuttack**, but in Bengal things seem better now. They will be worse in the rains, and even now the people are threatening our bearer's family, who have a store for their own use, that if they do not sell it, they will break in and take it, though it is not hoarded to make a profit, as they have no more than they want to consume in the family.

I saw the *hakund mahout*[174] get on his elephant by laying hold of its ears, and walking up its trunk which it sloped for his convenience.

We left Lohajara on Tuesday afternoon. The clouds came up as we went on, and it was so threatening that we had great thoughts of lying to, as the boat was very top-heavy, and a storm on the river is no joke. But we pushed on, racing with the storm, and won, getting under shelter before it began.

Camp Habra.[175]

This is a jolly bungalow, just like a house in the Zoological Gardens. It rises to a peak, and has rough beams inside with thatch. The South part is shut off for a verandah, but in the rest, the partitions of the rooms are only 8 feet high, of cane work; all above is open, on the river bank at an angle, looking up one reach to the N. and down one to the W.

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172 *dooly*: earlier (note 135) *doorlie* – a doolie, ie a litter or palanquin.
173 see note 45.
174 *mahout* is an elephant-keeper, driver, but I can't find what *hakund* might signify.
175 **Habra**: about 45km (28m) NE of Kolkata. But, rather like Jessore, not obviously on a river!

Mr. Stoddart called here this morning while I was out, and said I was to use the house in every way. I sit and eat here, but hold *kachhari*[176], and sleep in my tent just before the door.

The Watsons set off in the afternoon for **Furcedpore**[177], so I am left alone, which I feel the more after such kindness as theirs, but I have plenty of employment.

I killed a small snake in my tent, which the bearer considers a bad one though I do not think it is mortal.

I took a walk along the bank in the evening, and was accompanied by some of the factory people, with whom I had conversation, among other things about an appearance in the sky which I thought was a cloud, but they said no, and thought it boded no good.

Watson writes "I wish you had seen that cloud or waterspout or whatever it was. It was the most remarkable thing I ever saw in my life. A bright meteor shot across the sky from E. to W. The moment the star-like point at the end vanished, there appeared a long train of luminous vapour like an enormous snake, or a thick cable of light. It quivered distinctly its entire length, from, I presume, the action of the light breeze. This cord of tremulous light lasted by my watch 6 minutes, from ½ past 6 to 24 minutes to 7 P.M. The natives here are much astonished and perplexed by it. They do not like it at all, and say some great evil will come upon the land - either great mortality, or murrain amongst cattle: the latter appears to be the general impression."

The houses here are rather pretty, and different from what I have seen. Each homestead stands separate on an artificial mound, where are clustered houses, stacks, and ricks, trees, and palms &c.

March 8th.

The girls here about this time go every morning and evening round the *kadamba* tree[178], offering flowers and lamps and making a most curious shrill noise with their lips and tongue. Another peculiarity here is the way the women sing; either for pleasure or religion they are always at it, the bearer says. There was a grand procession today to give Krishna an airing with drums &c.

Cholera is very bad in a village close by; I hear there have been about 20 deaths.

March 10th.

I shot 4 whistling teal on a tank yesterday. The other day when we came home and the game was laid out on the grass, one of my birds got up and flew off to the other end of

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176 *kachhari*: not in OED. 'Kachari: a term probably of Hindi or Marathi origin. The word kachari got currency in Bengal in the seventeenth century through the European companies. It refers to a courthouse, a hall, an office of administration, a place of business transactions, and zamindari management office, etc.' - https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Kachari

177 **Forcedpore**: I think this is 'Fareedpore' and 'Foreedpore' (as later; a misreading or typo here) and so Faripur, now in Bangladesh, some 80km (50m) NE of Jashore, and on the Padma river, as described in the April 19th entry.

178 *kadamba tree:* '*Neolamarckia cadamba*, with English common names burflower-tree, laran, and Leichhardt pine, and called kadamba or kadam or cadamba locally, is an evergreen, tropical tree native to South and Southeast Asia... It has scented orange flowers in dense globe-shaped clusters. The flowers are used in perfumes. The tree is grown as an ornamental plant and for timber and paper-making. Kadamba features in Indian religions' - wikipedia

the marsh. I suppose he was hit on the head and stunned, and the *chuprassie* had not killed him.

The bearer says that great mortality is prognosticated by the ways the dogs howl here. Certainly they do make a vile noise. The people expect me to know everything. I was stopped the other day, and asked to prescribe for a cow.

March 17th.

I have several cholera cases in hand. I have not heard the result, and am happy to say all my own people are well.

I heard a noise last night in the roof of the verandah, and went to see what it was. It was an enormous cricket some inches long, and it made a noise proportionately loud.

I hear that two leopards walked leisurely by the tent at Lohagara[179] the other day.

I was looking yesterday at some weavers. They had a lot of long threads slung from a tree to a stand of poles, with sticks twisted across them at intervals to keep the skeins from entangling. The skeins were thus kept tight and straight; they had wetted them and were running the length of them with a brush made of some water-side plant, to clean them and to find out the unravelled threads, which they twist in again.

The other day I was shown a piece of paper covered with a scrawl which they say a certain *fakir*[180] spends his time in writing but which no one else can read. I intimated that I did not think he could himself.

March 15th.

A fire broke out today in the next village just at one corner, and there being a high wind, it went all through it, burning down 5 homesteads, including I was told, 60 or 70 houses. I do not think there were so many, though they said two of them contained at least 15 houses each. I went over with some of my people, but it ran across before we got there, and was not then spreading. We set to, to try to save something, and helped to get up the water from the river, and up the bank. We tried a long time to save the ricks, but the fire had got too much hold upon them. At last we gave up the water in great measure and set to moving the untouched grain to another place. The neighbours did very little to help, and would have done nothing, I believe, but for us. We saved some of the grain, but the straw rick was still burning bright at night, and will smoulder probably for days. In one house were two chests, one said to contain 1100 Rs.[181] also 300 *mans*[182] of treacle, and lots of grain, besides what we saved, and 200 *mans* of treacle which was got out before.

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179 Presumably ‘Camp Lohajara, Jessore’ of the earlier heading (note 156) - but still not identified!

180 *fakir*: ‘A Muslim or (more loosely) Hindu religious ascetic who lives solely on alms. Frequently in South Asian contexts’ - OED.

181 Rs. – rupees. Strangely I have been unable to convert an 1850 rupee to GBP, though minted by the same sovereign (Victoria). ‘Prior to World War One, the major countries (England, USA etc.) were on the gold standard. The Indian rupee coin was silver, convertible into gold at the prevailing 15:1 ratio based on their weights. Hence the rupee exchange rate was 240/15 equalled 16 d. or 1 sh. 4 d. This was its par value. It was called a silver exchange standard: rupee notes were convertible into silver coin, and that was in turn convertible into gold’ - wikipedia; neither persuasive about 1850 values not generally helpful!

182 *mans*: not in OED. ‘Āḍhaka ... a measure of grain (= 1/4 droṇa = 4 prasthas = 16 kuḍavas = 64 palas = 256 karṣas = 4096 māṣas; = nearly 7 lbs. 11 ozs. avoirdupois; **in Bengal = two mans or 164 lbs. avds**.)’ – Sanskrit dictionaries cited on https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/adhaka; so one *mans* is 82lb. 300 *mans* is a lot, then.

Altogether the damage done was said to be 10,000 Rs. but I think that is overstated. The second largest of the homesteads belonged to a girl, a widow, who lost her father not a month ago, and her brother the day after, and they say she is gone out of her mind. I saw another fire in the distance this evening.

March 19th.

My last two cholera patients to whom I gave our doctor's pills have recovered.

The other day some thieves robbed one of our *Ameens*[183] in the southern district. Among other things they took the compass-box, but finding what it was, they came back to the bank, and called out to the *Ameen* that it was no use to them, and if he wanted it he might fetch it.

The country in that part is flooded by the first rain, and the people keep little boats in their houses to go from one room to another.

A boa 10 feet long or more was brought to me the other evening. It was lying in long grass on the bank of a marsh and the man did not see it till he drove his plough over its head.

March 24th.

I had an application on Saturday to know whether I should object to the people having a man to sing to them. On my assenting I was invited to honour the company with my presence. The performance did not begin till nearly 12, so I just stayed to hear the overture, and came away. There were 9 performers; two on long barrel drums, and two on different kinds of cymbals. The rest sang or walked round with the other performers, throwing up their arms in time to the music. Afterwards all sat down but one, who danced and beat time, but after I retired they had two fiddles, and two smaller drums, and sat down as an orchestra and chorus. The real actors and dancers had, I believe, smart dresses, and represented Krishna and 4 of the cowherdesses. There was also a *fakir*. They kept it up till 7 A.M. They had been paid to come from Calcutta by the factory *jomasta*[184], besides which they received donations at any particular triumph of their art; the swells, including the *omla*[185] and my bearer, bestowing rupees and others less. Such a thing had never been known in these parts, and the whole neighbouring population collected; but except the educated ones, they could not well understand the recitation, it being far too good Bengali for them - what the bearer says I should understand. This was only a selection from the whole work, which from the description appears to me to be a kind of jumble of the lives of Krishna and Kama[186]. It takes 10 days to get through the whole piece. The stage was a carpet, with a bamboo rail round it, and a canopy above. Lamps were fixed on standards

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183 *Ameen*: 'in India: any of various officials appointed to settle disputes, carry out judicial investigations, etc.' - OED.

184 *jomasta*: 'gomashta - an agent or representative of a person, business, or organization' - OED.

185 *omla*: 'amlah: in South Asia (esp. India): the body of officials who staff a courthouse; (more generally) any body of minor officials associated with a particular institution' - OED.

186 Is 'Kama' perhaps 'Rama'? - 'two of Vishnu's most popular and important incarnations, viz., those in which he manifests himself in the persons of Krishna and Rama, two heroes whose exploits are celebrated in the Mahabharata and Ramayana...' https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica,_Ninth_Edition,_v._4.djvu/250

and hung from poles, but were not very brilliant. The people sat or stood outside under the flaps of the awning, and mats, or carpets, or the ground.

April 2nd.

I am trying to clear off my work in this part, as I ought to be moving southwards.

Last night my people killed a cobra of the white kind; they are said to abound near all indigo factories. I am told they live in pairs, and that its mate will go all over the place hunting for it. Competent judges affirm that it had not bitten anyone, as whenever it does it loses a joint of its tail.

The people who came to mend my tent brought some boa-constrictor skin to cut into strips for thread. They say it is first rate for shoes.

Sitting by the river this evening I saw a beautiful meteor. Though it was still twilight and only a few of the brightest stars [were] to be seen, it was more brilliant than any rocket, and passed slowly along with a train. I saw it first near Sirius and it was about Aldebaran when it disappeared.

I have done one good deed here The cattle in the pound never had anything to eat, though they were often there for several days. I made a row, and now they are let out to feed every day.

April 10th.

Another of my cholera patients was cured yesterday to the great reputation of my medicines.

Mrs. Watson sends me a paper to shew me that the *phiu* is made by a superannuated jackal, trying to guide the tiger to his prey in hopes of the remains. It may be so sometimes but I think not always.

I am told that the shoes I spoke of are not made of the skin of boa-constrictors, but of a great lizard they call the *go-samp* (cow-snake).

April 19th.

Monday and Tuesday were holidays, for the swing-festival[187], and as Watson's elephant arrived on Saturday morning with a box of papers and letters, I thought it a capital opportunity to run into **Fareedpore**; so I started on the pad just before sunset. We reached Syedpore, a large trading mart about 10 or 11 P.M. and halted to give the elephant some rice. She had come from that place in the morning, and what was worse the *piyada*[188] had done the same. As we had a broad road the rest of the way, I wanted him to wait there, but he preferred walking on with us. It is wonderful how far natives can walk. Till then our road lay across country, and in great part by the banks of the river. From Syedpore I walked, and let the *piyada* ride for a change. We went through a very pretty lane, wooded, so different to the open country here. It was a fine starlight night and the palms and

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[187] swing-festival: 'The Sanskrit word Dola means a swing,[6] while utsava means a festival or a feast. Hence, Dolotsava literally means swing festival or swing feast and refers to religious service of swinging the idol of a deity on a swing' - wikipedia.

[188] *piyada*: not in OED; Hindi, '/pyādā/' infantry-man, foot-soldier' and 'from classical Persian پیادہ (piyāda)'; https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/hindi-english and https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/piyada.

bamboos stood out clearly; but the houses scattered among them could not be seen, and it appeared like a forest. We came out at the river again at the place where it crossed by the road from **Calcutta** and **Jessore** to **Fureedpore**, and **Dacca**[189], which we followed thenceforth. We were able to cross the first creek dry-shod, though I dare say it is a large river in the rains. At Jaynagar I mounted, having walked about 5 miles. The next creek too was very low, a log of wood being laid across as a bridge; but the third, at Chandpoor, the half-way, was the Kumas River itself, of which I think the others must be branches, and the *piyada* had to mount with me for the crossing. After letting the elephant drink, we moved on. I cannot say I was very comfortable; the pad-ropes cut my legs and back as I lay; sitting up made my back ache, and in lying down there was literally no rest for the soles of my feet, which always gives me the fidgets. However I lay and watched the stars, and saw several meteors, one very bright, almost like a small moon. We saw one or two fires, and plenty of preparations for the next day's ceremony.

When we came to the town I dismounted, not liking to ride up to the house on the elephant, lest she should trumpet and disturb the Watsons, but I had a longer walk than I expected, for the road took me nearly a mile, through a fine avenue swarming with bats. It struck 4 on the gongs of the jail and the *kechari*[190] we passed.

When an elephant is hot and tired, it blows and splutters and is very disagreeable, but though mine was much averse to such an extra journey, and protested frequently, yet as it was fortunately night and cool, she confined herself to grumbling, and was consoled with an occasional branch of a tree as we passed; though when she turned aside too frequently she got sundry digs on the head with the iron hook, and a long altercation would ensue between her and the *mahout*. "What pretending to be tired already, and we have gone nothing like half way. You call yourself an elephant and shut up at 18 *kos*[191]. Now Mah[192], it's no use; you may grumble as much as you may please, but you will get off at Fureedpore and not one step before" &c. To all of which there were as vehement replies only I could not understand them exactly though their general purport was plain enough.

Foreedpore

The *palkis* were in the verandah and I crept into one, not to disturb any body, and rested as well as I could on the cane work (for the cushions had been taken out) and dozed till Watson passed the door, and his shadow woke me. He wanted me to lie down but I declined, so we had some tea, and walked about the premises, and sat outside and talked to the Magistrate and doctor who joined us, till it was time to dress. **Fureedpore** is a very pretty little station, and one of the coolest in Bengal. It is much like Garden Reach without the river. There are only two really good houses, the magistrate's and the Circuit where the Watsons are, but one or two tolerable ones. There are many fine trees about, many of them the Simal, which has long lost its flowers, but is now in full leaf, and with its cotton ripe,

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189 **Dacca**: Dhaka, Bangladesh, is NE of Jessore (Jashore). I have not located (despite the wealth of opportunity, you would think) Syedpore, Jaynagar, Chandpoor or the Kumas River (itself)! though 'the road from Jessore to Fureedpore' (see note 177) gives the general area and direction. And a 'Kumar' river flows approx NW-SE half-way along the route from Jashore to Faridpur.

190 Court house, etc: see *kachhari*, note 176.

191 *Kos*: 'coss, cos: Anglo-Indian, a measure of length in India, varying in different parts from 2½ miles or more down to about 1¼' - OED.

192 Obviously the elephant's name, but maybe a pet shortening of 'maharajah' as would be appropriate for an elephant.

flying off in flakes as the birds perch and shake the branches. The ground was often quite white with it, but the storm cleared it nearly all away. The house stands in a kind of lawn, and has some nice verandahs, one especially, looking upon a pretty little dot of a garden, which supplies plenty of flowers. It was a comfort to see some again.

The air was very heavy on Sunday and we all felt it and as I had been up all night, they made me lie down a little while. We sat on the grass in the evening, as they thought I was too stiff to walk far, and afterwards the storm which we expected came on.

We had a walk on Monday evening but hurried home, for a violent storm came up which blew down nearly a third of the town. In the middle a fire broke out, but the storm was so high it kept it under.

Tuesday we walked down the avenue through which I arrived to the Ganges or **Padna**[193]. There was little to see for it is only a few yards broad; then comes an immense *chur*[194], stretching beyond sight, which formed about 8 years ago. Beyond is a much wider sheet of water, and then another *chur*. So far we could see, but I am not sure that there is not yet another *chur* before coming to the main river, which is about 3 miles broad.

The avenue is of magnificent trees, but they are being unmercifully hacked to make way for the electric telegraph, and I am afraid there will soon be no shade left. Why they would not take the line over the smooth open slope of grass behind, I do not understand. There are plenty of pretty walks and drives and winding wooded lanes about the place. I had intended to have returned that night, but Watson wished me to stay for some work, and said he would send a man to secure a boat.

There was another storm on Wednesday evening so that I could not start if I had been well enough, but I was suffering much from tooth-ache. It was better on Thursday, though my face was much swollen.

The storm that day was the most violent of all. None of us had ever heard so many loud claps of thunder so near together. We could not go out at all; still less could I start.

On Friday we took the same walk as on Monday, as that is the most airy, and the weather was rather still after the storm.

I started [back] at bed-time, and settled myself more comfortably than before, and slept a little. From Chandpore I walked to the second creek, and arrived at Syedpore in the morning. The man whom Watson had sent had borrowed from the *babu*[195] of the place a nice little boat, in which I lay down and slept very comfortably, reaching this place[196] in about 5 hours.

Camp Habra

They have had no storms here except Sunday and Monday, and in Lohajara none at all; so they could not understand my non-appearance and sent a man that morning to look

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193 **Padna** river: this would seem now to be but a small branch of the Padma, passing the edge of Faridpur.

194 *chur*: 'from Hindustani چر / चर (car, "ford; island, shoal") - an island or shoal in a river' - https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/chur

195 *babu*: earlier (note 75), *baboo*, title of respect comparable to Mr or Esq.

196 ie back to Camp Habra.

for me; but he met the elephant in Syedpore, and came back with her. My tent was down as I expected. The wooden cap of the pole was broken, and the wind had torn the tattered parts of the outer covering to pieces, and the whole field is covered with rags. It will now, they say, keep out sun, but not rain; cheerful for me when I go to the South.

April 25th.

There has been a proclamation made by tom-toms in several villages of Jessore, that in three months the Bengalis will have every thing but one. It must however be a lying prophecy, for courage and truth are <u>two</u> things. Also it has been stuck up in Jessore bazaar that in 3 months and 13 days there will be nothing white in Bengal. As if there would not be paddy-birds.

It is odd that about a year ago, a *Brahman* from **Dacca**[197] came to the Magistrate of **Fureedpore** and insisted on speaking to him in private. He was so excited and mysterious that the magistrate thought he was mad, and sent him over to the Dr. where he behaved in the same way, and at last told him that he wanted to say there was to be a general rising in three months, and every European in the country would be killed, and he was then on his way to Calcutta to tell Halliday and G. Gl.[198]. It was such a strange story at that time that they thought he must be mad, and had him sent back again to **Dacca** under charge.

I had an invitation from Macarthur on Friday to spend the next day, and rode up in the morning to Meergunge[199], and then crossed the river in a fishing boat. We spent a pleasant day, amusing ourselves with music, chess, conversation, books &c. Mrs. M. seems a nice person, and her daughter plays and sings very well. M. is very anxious about the weather; rain now will probably make the difference between fortune and ruin to him and others.

I intended to return by moonlight, but they would not let me, and I started early in the morning with Stoddart and Gardiner, another of M's assistants. I hear great stories of the storms here. One bungalow was carried quite away two years ago. The top story of another was blown quite off one day. Another storm completely destroyed a village in the marshes leaving nothing alive. Fish were carried away with the water, and dashed about the country, and the native brass plates like salvers were torn into shreds.

When I was at **Fureedpore** the Watsons shewed me a gazette, inviting any one to register himself as a candidate for employment in the finance and accounts department. They advised me to do so, which after reflection I did, though I do not suppose I shall ever get it, and am not very anxious about it, but it will shew that I am not perfectly content having been passed over four times.

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[197] typescript clearly has ‘Brahmab from Dacea’ but this seems more likely; *Brahman*: ‘Brahmin: in the traditional Indian theory of social order: a member of the highest *varna*, originally that of priests and scholars’ - OED. ‘Dacea’ is repeated in the typescript some seven lines further on but despite this encouragement to look, I have not found any place with this name in the general area.

[198] G.Gl.: the Governor General? ‘Until 1833, the title of the position was "governor-general of the Presidency of Fort William in Bengal". The Government of India Act 1833 converted the title into "governor-general of India", effective from 22 April 1834.[5] The title "viceroy and governor-general" was first used in the queen's proclamation appointing Viscount Canning in 1858’ - wikipedia. Fort William is in Hastings, an area of Kolkata.

[199] Various ‘Mirgunj’ and similar variations suggest themselves, but none a morning’s ride from where I have located ‘Camp Habra’.

The lizards here go about three together; the white ants come after every rain; and other creatures abound from snakes and centipedes downwards. There are lots of tortoises too in the river wherever I have been.

April 30th.

My horse bolted with me on Wednesday, I turned him from some trees for which he was making, but in leaping a ditch he fell upon my ancle. I hurt my right arm too, and am bruised in one or two other places. I was better this morning except my arm, and could stand, but think I have tried to do too much, and must keep still.

One of my men says that a leopard put both his hands through some folding doors at Lohajara the other day, and seized a calf. The people woke and beat him off with sticks as he could not get his head in.

At Amdanga there is a small *bil*[200] used by the people to get water and bathe, and a larger one so far off that it is never used. Two alligators tried to burrow from one to the other, but were marked by the people, who cut off their retreat and dug for them. They killed one 12 feet long, as he was within 5 or 6 feet of the small *bil*. They have not yet found the other. It is wretched to see what the poor people who are far from the river have now to drink. A few drops of water in a muddy hollow.

At the next factory to Meergunge there are besides Mrs. Bell, 6 young ladies, all unmarried except one, who was left a widow in a fortnight. Fancy what an alarming place to light on in the *Mofussill*[201]!

May 5th.

Stoddart came to see me on Sunday, having heard of my accident. Phillips sent me some lichis, and some more fruit on Monday; and Macarthur invited me to meet his brother yesterday, and offered to send his boat for me. As I had cleared my office work, and could not ride on investigations I went. We spent the day much as the last time, and I returned in the boat this morning. We had some showers by the way, but not much.

On Saturday we had 4 storms. I never saw such drifting rain. It was usually horizontal, and sometimes sloped upwards.

I should not wonder if my application for the account dept. frightened them into bribing me to stay, as I know well I could not easily be spared from the Survey, for I have had a letter from Govt. appointing me to officiate for Morris, with powers in a list of 14 places. Morris goes to Fubna, so I suppose I am not likely to return here as Assistant. It is ungrateful to grumble after having talked so long about promotion, but I must say I wish it had not come just now. It is a most awkward time to leave Watson, and will, I am afraid, put him to great inconvenience, besides leaving myself no good name, for great confusion is sure to arise out of any change, and I cannot clear my circuit within another month. It is

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200 *bil* - not in OED; '...whose characteristic features are marshes and swamps (*bils*), which in the rainy season often form large winding lakes' – from Agriculture chapter of a Bengal District Gazetteer, published in the first two decades of the 20th century, https://famineanddearth.exeter.ac.uk/displayhtml.html?id=fp_00091_en_bdgazetteersrajshahi

201 *Moffusil*: 'Usually with *the*: ... those parts of India outside any of the large cities. In later use: the rural localities of a district of India as distinguished from its chief station or town' - OED.

an awkward time too to take charge of an office, and not a pleasure to travel, as the river is very dangerous for country boats in these storms. And then I leave all my friends, and even the natives with whom I am accustomed to work, and those northern districts are detested by all natives, and **Rungepore**[202] is very unhealthy even for Europeans.

I am beginning to walk a little, but my ancle is still very weak, and I have a dull pain when my foot is down. I had a narrow escape. The horse caught his foot in a rat-hole as he jumped, and so came down. He rolled over me, and in getting up kicked my ancle. Happily there had been a good deal of rain, and the ground was soft. A little farther on, we should have come on brickbats. My arm is pretty well again.

There was a tree-frog on one of the posts of the verandah, a glassy greyish green, with very prominent eyes and unwebbed feet. As I was watching him, he jumped into my hair, and thence on to the grass. The bearer says the pain in my foot is in the bone, and he wanted to apply fire to draw it out, which treatment I declined, whereon he desponded of a cure.

May 8th.

I have been on the horse today at a walking pace, but was somewhat knocked up.

I have had a letter from Spencer. He is to be married to Miss Hannyngton on June 28th. I feel very down about going away, but shall be glad when the *Baboo* comes to take charge, and I get it over. It is weary unsettled work now.

Fureedpore

May 15th.

Finding that Watson wanted to see me about the Registers, I came here the night before last, on the elephant, starting about 7 or 8 in the evening after a busy day, and arriving at about the same hour the next morning.

We took a walk yesterday, so you may suppose my foot is much better, but the walk rather tried it.

The price of rice here is fearful. Nearly 50 per cent above average, and in some parts the people can only take one meal a day. This must make many discontented. Letters from the North speak of things there as much worse, so I am not likely to gain by the exchange of districts.

We have been infested lately with those green bugs, which are something horrible.

I hear the *Baboo* has arrived to take charge at Lohajara. Morris writes to ask me to join as soon as possible. He has arranged that I am to live at **Dinagepore**[203], which is far better than **Rungpore** and to have half a house with Gordon, which will be very pleasant.

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[202] **Rungepore**: 'Rungpore' below; Rangpur, Bangladesh, about 330km (205m) NNE of Camp Habra.

[203] **Dinagepore**: Dinajpur, some 170km NNE of Berhampore and now in Bangladesh; 60km WSW of the ill-reputed Rungpore.

Rampore Beauleah

June 1st.

Here I am arrived so far, after various adventures which I have not time to relate. I opened a paper accidentally at Baboocally and there saw the account of poor Uncle John's death[204], in large letters. It gave me a great shock. I had intended to write to him that very day.

Dinagepore

June 14th.

I am very comfortable here, and quiet enough, but I have plenty of work, and not time for correspondence. Gordon is not well from the effects of his exertions and exposure at Julpigouri last year, and I believe will take sick leave. I am sorry for it, but Chapman will probably act for him, which will so far be very agreeable.

I arrived on Saturday, and took charge. On Sunday Gordon and I took a walk to see the Naval Brigade officers, but as they were at dinner I did not go in. We have 100 sailors here.

There is not now a lady in the station or the Zillah.

I am here a swell among the swells: the 3rd in rank in the station. I have an Assistant and 4 Deputies (2 Native and 2 European) from whom I hear appeals. There are about 130 *Ameens* under me, for I have the 2nd division to look after as well as the 1st. I have also five elephants, half a dozen *chuprassies*, and as many *pugadas*.

June 17th.

Chaitan and my tents &c arrived by boat last night. They saw wild buffaloes on their way.

June 30th.

Chapman arrived this morning. We had on Midsummer day some games for which we subscribed prizes to the sailors. Racing in various ways, high and broad jumping, racing in sacks, a game called the bellman, a ring being formed, and all blinded except one who rings a bell and whom they try to catch; lastly the greased pig, which was caught, but not in the orthodox way by the tail. Then they adjourned to grog, and finally dispersed after cheers. I was on foot, but many were on horseback, leaping the hurdles, turning the pig &c.

Friday was the first regular day of the rains and I caught a bad cold from the change. Saturday was a holiday, and Grant, the Judge, asked us to **Ramsagar**, a favourite retreat in the rains. I rode out alone later than the others. The grey horse had been so little ridden since my fall that he was rather troublesome, and this, added to the slipperiness from the rain, at last brought him down, and we rolled over, but I was not much damaged except a bruise on my shoulder. **Ram Sagar** is a tank 1100 yards by 400[205], six miles off on the S. road.

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[204] John Bottamley Waterfield, 'Handsome Jack', died Agra 15 May 1858; reportedly the last person killed in the Mutiny, see JPW's 'Some Memories...'

[205] See earlier reference (note 59). This is reputedly the largest such construction – see note 253 and source there.

There is one nearly as large with very pretty trees about it at the first dak stage, 12 miles off. It is called **Pran Sagar**[206], or the Ocean of Life, and there is one in the station called Zulm Sagar, or the Ocean of Oppression, because the Magistrate made his prisoners dig it, and the natives said he condemned people on purpose to work at it.

The road to **Ram Sagar** winds through a pretty avenue, and I soon overtook my elephant carrying out my clothes, bed &c. He retired from the road to let me pass, but then I met Dalrymple's, an immense elephant, with a vast load of branches for fodder on his back, striding down the centre of the avenue, and the men would not move at all towards one side. No wonder that the horse, who is not much used to *hathis*[207], was alarmed, backed me up against the trees, and spun round. When I had passed the avenue the rain came on, and I was wet through and went slowly on, not being very anxious to arrive before my clothes.

An Indian tank has a mound surrounding it, like a Roman amphitheatre, with passes here and there through which the people go for water, and at times cut channels to water their fields, for the surface of **Ramsagar** is 5 feet above the plain. Thus there is a beautiful piece of grass for riding all round between the water and the banks, and then a steep mound with the houses on top of it. One seldom sees such a view in Bengal, as we cannot often get up so high; and the ground is slightly undulating here, which is not the case in the Delta.

Certainly Bengal is pretty at times, though not romantic in the scenery. But it is a delightful green; & to see the light colours of the young rice and deeper green of the village trees, with a dark thunder-cloud advancing over them; or a sunset in the rains, with clouds of all possible shades and colours, and bursts of golden light betwixt, and the water gleaming up from the rice fields below, is decidedly worth looking at. **Ramsagar** is not in its glory, however, till the snowy range comes out.

The buildings at **Ramsagar** are one large billiard room, and one large eating room, a good way apart. We can range our beds round the side of either, but most choose the billiard room. Between and half way down the hill is a bath-room. There is another bungalow on the opposite corner of the tank, but not now used. Full dress at **Ram Sagar** is *janghiyas* (bathing-drawers) and shirt. Many wear nothing more all day. We bathe sometimes 3 times a day and always twice, and in the intervals there are billiards, coursing, rifle-practice, reading, eating &c.

I like bathing early much better than late in a *sola*[208] hat and umbrella which are much in the way.

On Monday morning the others preferred riding home to bathing early, so I was left till the last, and trotted in safely. I was stung by some creatures in the water-weeds, but have recovered from it, as well as from a nip from a fly some weeks ago on the ball of my thumb, the mark of which is still there.

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206 **Pran Sagar**: Pransagar. Zulm Sagar not located.
207 *hathi*: '*Anglo-Indian*. An elephant. Now *historical* and *rare*' - OED.
208 earlier (note 60), *shola*, pith from swamp-plant of this name.

July 4th.

I left office early on Thursday and saw Gordon off. To-day Chapman and I sent to ask the others if they would come and read the service with us.[209] Four of them came. (Grant is absent).

The sunsets here are most beautiful, but the weather is somewhat warm.

July 15th.

We are generally invited out to dinner, or have some one with us - Drummond at **Jalpigouri**[210], has had a narrow escape. Alone, on foot, and in a dark night, he killed a musk elephant, 10' 9" high, which had killed 6 large ones, besides knocking down houses &c many of the *ryots*[211] had fled from the neighbourhood.

July 29th.

Money (my Assistant) drove me to **Ramsagar** on the 22nd. The snowy range was out on the 21st, and I hoped to have seen it, but was disappointed. We had a pleasant time with the usual amusements. We had also a boat belonging to Holm, a *zemindar*[212], a Dane, and a friend of Uncle Ed's[213] when he was here. Holm and Chapman went out on Saturday when he was here. Holm and Chapman went out on Saturday morning, but were caught in a gale and nearly upset. Such waves on Sunday! The holidays depended on the first appearance of the moon, which would settle whether they should be Thursday and Friday, or Friday and Saturday. Grant with a laudable desire of avoiding offence to all consciences, took all three, and as my work was in a forward state, I thought there would be no great harm in doing the same.

Holm drove me in on Monday morning. On Sunday we walked by night to the middle of the South side of the tank. The mound has been widened to hold the houses, but in other places it is only a narrow footpath at the top, though it is as high, or in some parts higher, about 30 feet above the water, and 35 above the country round. The tank is 20 to 24 feet deep. In the space between the mounds at the North end stands a ruined temple which looks very well. The dodge here in bathing is to have one or two bamboos about 8 feet long. With these we disport in divers ways. Sometimes we sit on one as you might on a broomstick; sometimes we hold one under water with both hands, on which we are balanced like a swing; sometimes we swim in the ordinary way with one under each arm; and sometimes I put one under my knees and another for a pillow.

August 3rd.

On Sunday morning Money drove us to **Ramsagar**; he and I came home on an elephant next day, and we dined with him. I can scarcely find any time for writing. I am generally busy in the office till dark, and am never alone in the evenings, while Sundays and holidays are spent at **Ramsagar**, where it is not easy to sit down and write.

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209 July 4th 1858 was a Sunday.

210 **Jalpigouri**: Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, is about 100km north of Dinajpur.

211 *ryot*, var of 'raiyat: in South Asia: a peasant, husbandman, or cultivating tenant' - OED.

212 *zeminder,* 'zaminder:... (later, under British rule) a landowner required to pay a fixed land tax directly to the government' - OED.

213 This must be Edward Benthall (1807-1889), William's mother Elizabeth's brother.

August 18th.

I had a bad cold and was very unwell on the 5th, but the feverishness passed off, and I was all right the next day.

On Sunday the 8th Money drove me to **Ramsagar** and I returned on Monday morning. We started a fine fox half way and had a good chase with 3 of the terriers, the fox playing with them, and coursing about as he chose.

I came out here again on Saturday. I believe there are holidays properly at this time except for the civil courts; however all the rest have taken them and my people begged hard for a change, saying that many were ill and that others who did come to office were almost too unwell to do anything. Moreover, the river, which had risen nearly to our house had fallen again, and it was not very healthy to stay there. We do much as usual, and Grant has his rowing boat brought out.

It has been pouring the last 3 days except when it drizzles, and the river is higher than ever. The whole country to the S.W. is a sheet of water from it. Great rumours here of two alligators seen at the upper end of the tank, but they have not yet disturbed us here. Only one has ever been known here yet, and that was shot at by Drummond last year and probably frightened away though his track could not be found, but he has never been seen since.

I have at last got travelling allowance for 227[214] miles in coming to **Dinagepore** - it does not anything like pay my expenses even not counting moving anything from **Berhampore**, but still it is some help.

August 29th.

Our time at **Ramsagar** went off very pleasantly. I am getting quite strong in swimming, and could come in alone from the rifle target in the tank, about 150 yards. The water has now risen so that we can jump off the platform, which we could not when I first went there. I steered the rowing party twice, and the sailing once, and Amesbury had down his photography, and took us all in full **Ramsagar** costume. He drove me in and out on Monday. We did not break up our party at once, because Tuesday and Wednesday were Hindu holidays, one for an eclipse.

There was an earthquake on Tuesday; in the evening we watched the eclipse but under difficulties, as we have had shocking weather till yesterday and today.

On the *Muharram* great day[215] they brought us some of the things which they carried in procession to look at. A kind of tower of bamboo, lace-paper &c. with any ornament they can get stuck on. Simple enough but rather pretty.

I got wet through riding in with Chapman on Thursday morning. This is a very unhealthy place for natives, and my poor *khidmatgar* is very ill, though a little better today. It makes me very low, knowing what a dread they have of the place and that they only came following my fortunes. I knew the native doctor was attending him, and have

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214 Habra to Dinajpur is about 305km (190m) as the crow flies.
215 20 August 1858; see note 117

enquired about him every day, but it was only yesterday I found out how ill he had been. I have got him now in my verandah, and see that he is looked after.

September 1st.

Kalu has been improving steadily since Sunday, but he is not yet out of danger, and I do not like to leave him for **Ramsagar**, where the rest are gone, there being two holidays. But if he is still better in the evening, I shall see what Amesbury says of him. The people are so stupid, and except an old *chuprassie* so careless, that I shall not leave him if there be any risk. I have none of my old servants here except the boy Hari, who would help him, but he is a Hindu, and Kalu would not let him.

September 5th.

Amesbury said that Kalu was doing well and out of danger so he drove me out to **Ramsagar** on Wednesday evening, and we returned on Friday. I rode out again this morning. Kalu is getting all right again.

A man who was staying at Amesbury's house had a very narrow escape. it. He went into a bath room when it was quite dark and trod on a cobra; luckily on its head so it could only twist round his leg. He managed to jerk it off, and jumped back out of the room, which had no outlet, the cobra having apparently fallen from the roof. He fetched a light and musket, shot it through the back, and then killed it.

Two have lately been killed in our outhouses, but I have seen none, though I am generally wandering about night. I think I have told you of the king snake, which the natives say has two heads. Dalrymple tells me he has often seen the tail-head rudimentally developed, but once he found it perfect, the eyes rolling and tongue vibrating as it died. He turned into his tent for a bottle to preserve it in and a kite carried it off.

You should see my *hathis* now that I am become a swell, and advanced in the scale of creation from an A.S.S. to an O.S.S.. Two of them, "Dear to Lakshmi" and "Krishna's darling" are at Bungpore. "David's rose" is a small tusked elephant. "The gift of Madar" (some Muhammedan saint) is a large *hathi* with an uncertain temper. He threw down his *mahout* the other day, and bruised him woefully. He has short tusks and broke one against a tree. I have the piece, but it is bad ivory.

"Beetle-crusher" is the one we generally ride; not large, but with a nice face and very fine tusks. I had them sawn short the other day, and have the ends which are very good. We generally keep the tusks from growing too long. They are not wanted and are heavy but there is a good length still.

Last night I went with Money and Chapman on our *hathi* to dine with Browne and Garstin, returning in the same way after some singing. We escaped the storms and had [no] other accidents except that I was twice pushed over the tail. We have had a good deal of storm lately.

September 19th.

I rode home on Monday morning after writing my last.

On Saturday Holm came to tell me the snow was out. I went to the upper room and saw the peak above the trees, but they almost hid it.

In the evening I rode out to **Ramsagar**; Dalrymple and I had such a bathe in the morning. I think we were floating for an hour in the water. He burnt all the skin off his shoulders and arms, but I was more under water and suffered but little. Of course we had hats on.

Next morning the peaks were out again, but not the whole range, still less the lower blue range as had been on Saturday. It is rather difficult at times to distinguish them from clouds, but when clear they look like high cliffs in the air. They must be 200 miles off. The plainest visible is **Kamchanjhanga**[216], the golden peak or Dhawalagiri[217], the white mountain which was thought the highest in the world till they found Devadunga[218] the peak of the gods.

I rode in that day and came out again this morning. The weather this month is trying. Sometimes not a breath of wind and the country drying up and steaming, especially the Gogra river. I have had a little rheumatism, and the mosquitoes are at times almost as bad as those in **Calcutta**, and the prickly heat makes me nearly frantic - I feel hot even when wandering about at night, though that is the pleasantest time, and the glow-worms are beautiful. I did not know there were any in India, till the other day when I saw a magnificent one at **Rajshahye**.

A goat of ours has been killed by a snake.

In the afternoon when the sun comes round I am actually obliged sometimes to have a *punkah*; but then Money has all the best side of the house, and I can not open the doors through. We are beginning to sow vegetables here. There were still a few strawberries when I came, but going off and poor. Also we had one day some pears of a peculiar kind which tasted exactly like apples.

October 4th.

Just as I closed my last letters a storm came on which cooled the air somewhat, and it has since rained harder and harder, till the last three days of last week it poured as I had scarcely ever seen it before. The river which had fallen quite low is higher than ever; many stables and small bungalows are flooded and it is quite up to our servants' houses.

I am sitting with Grant in his house, holding an examination of Money, Browne and five others. The river looks beautiful from this room, close up to the windows, and bending round in a wide reach; on the other side it extends over its banks with trees and huts rising out of it. I suppose it is this that has driven up all the snakes. We killed a *karnik* the other

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216 **Kamchanjhanga**: 'Kangchenjunga is the third-highest mountain in the world' - wikipedia. It is almost due N. of Dinajpur and Ramsagar, and about is 240km (150m) from the latter.

217 Dhawalagiri: 'Dhaulagiri is the Nepali name for the mountain which comes from Sanskrit where dhawala means dazzling, white, beautiful and giri means mountain' - wikipedia. The 7th highest mountain in the world, the peak with this name now is 600km (373m) away and would not have been visible; I think here this is another name for the mountain he is describing as 'the plainest visible', 'the white mountain'.

218 Devadunga: 'the Sanskrit name for Mount of God' - wikipedia; 'in Darjeeling, it was called Deodungha, meaning Holy Mountain' – British Library leaflet about the naming of Mount Everest.
'Until 1852, Kangchenjunga was assumed to be the highest mountain in the world. However, precise calculations and meticulous measurements by the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India in 1849 showed that Mount Everest, known as Peak XV at the time, is higher. After allowing for further verification of all calculations, it was officially announced in 1856 that Kangchenjunga is the third-highest mountain in the world' - wikipedia. The RGS officially adopted the name 'Mount Everest' in 1865.

day on the steps of my office, and another before our door, while two Cobras and a large snake were killed in the go-downs[219], both my brandy bottles being smashed in exterminating one of them. Its mate, which bit Gordon's goat, is still uncaught.

Grant never saw the river so high, except in the inundation when he first came here many years ago, which carried away the great bridge; and karait?[220]

The weather is now quite cold at times.

October 5th.

On my way home last night I saw a bright star near Arcturus, and watching it, as I thought it had no business there, I detected a faint tail, and I showed it to all the others, none of whom had seen it and some denied it at first; but as the twilight deepened, it came out gloriously, with a magnificent plume, and a tail I should think 20 feet long. It was such a beautiful sight with Venus as brilliant as possible, and we watched them reflected in the water like a lake all round.[221]

Ten men are ordered up to the N.W.P.[222], among them are Chapman and Money; also Edward, and Herschel's name was down. They seemed to have fixed on all my friends and left me the only one of the old set. I was very low about it for some time, and felt like a ghost, thinking of past ages, but when the list actually came out, Herschel was not in it, nor Bruce Lane.

I wrote off at once to advise Edward to stay for the examinations, as they are said to be much more strict in the N.W. and his *Uriya*[223] will be of no use at all; but by a letter from him I think he must have started before he received mine. There has been an immense panic at Darjeeling with very little cause, but it was necessary to make preparations which are still continued though the troops are countermanded. They thought Jung Bahadur[224] was in full march upon the place. Our Brigade were ordered up, but are as I said countermanded.

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219 go-down: 'Chiefly South Asian and Southeast Asian; a warehouse or other place for storing goods' - OED.

220 As typescript - could be transcriber's tentative identification of *Karnik* earlier in the paragraph as *karait*, 'The common krait (*Bungarus caeruleus*) is a highly venomous snake species...; the species demonstrates high adaptability and...is common in rural areas. During the monsoon season, it often enters human dwellings in search of shelter or prey' - wikipedia.

221 This, presumably, was the Great Comet, Comet Donati (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comet_Donati), of 1858 – see also note 72.

222 N.W.P.: 'The North-Western Provinces (NWP) was an administrative region in British India. The North-Western Provinces were established in 1836, through merging the administrative divisions of the Ceded and Conquered Provinces. In 1858, the Nawab-ruled kingdom of Oudh [qv] was annexed and merged ...' - wikipedia. This merger might be the origin of the sudden relocation orders. Looking at the map https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North-Western_Provinces#/media/File:NorthWesternProvincesIndia1857.jpg, the area extends NW from Bengal in a broad band along the boarder with Nepal to Delhi in its bottom-left corner; with respect to a modern map of the whole of India, this is more of a 'central-north' area.

223 *Uriya*: 'Odia formerly rendered as Oriya) is a classical Indo-Aryan language spoken in the Indian state of Odisha...; it is also spoken in parts of West Bengal' - wikipedia.

224 'Jung Bahadur Rana (1817–1877) was the Prime Minister of Nepal and the 1st Maharaja of Lamjung and Kaski... The Kot massacre took place on 14 September 1846, when Jung Bahadur Rana and his brothers killed about 40 members of the Nepalese palace court, including the Prime Minister and relative of the king, Chautariya Fateh Jung Shah, at the palace armory, known as the Kot, in Kathmandu' - wikipedia.

Money has had a theft by his *chuprassie*, and they tried the dry rise ordeal.[225] It was reported successful after a fashion, but I think the man was judged before-hand.

Chapman starts tonight.

October 10th.

The holidays begin tomorrow, and I hope to run up to Darjeeling. It is a pity to be so near and not to see it, and I feel that I want some change. I have seldom had a busier week, with 4 days taken up by the examination, and all the arrears of the work to make up afterwards.

(No account of visit to Darjeeling but wrote thence on October 25th).[226]

November 5th.

I am scarcely fit to write for a rash is come out all over my face and hands. They are much swollen, full of pins and needles, and itch even unto aggravation. Amesbury says it is from change in the weather. Hari inclines to attribute it to spiders, but says also that I had it at **Berhampore**, which I do not remember.

Gordon arrived this morning; I have heard from Edward who arrived at **Allahabad**[227] on the 20th. He does not like the place - hot in the sun, cold at night; awfully dusty and dear.

The Spencers are gone to **Dacca**. Herschel acts for Spencer till Muspratt relieves him.

November 19th

Edward wrote on the 30th from **Allahabad**, but was going to **Lucknow**. He is posted to **Budaon**.[228] Rohilcund[229] is considered the best of all the Divisions.

H.G.W.[230] has his Lieutenancy, and one Lieutenaux[sic] under him. Alfred's Regiment too has the Line step.

Almost all my establishment are ill, especially the English writers, so that I have to write all my public letters myself. All the servants too have fever except Hari. I do not know why this is, for the weather has been delightful though not too cold. We hear the foxes barking every night, a sure sign of cold weather. The tree like the laburnum too, which was covered with gold three weeks ago, is now gone off.

I have quite got rid of my rash.

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225 I think this must be 'dry rice': 'Ordeal of Rice Chewing: In India, concentrated rice was... chosen... to determine a person's guilt or innocence. "Guilty" persons were not able to swallow a single grain' – Understanding Polygraph Techniques, https://www.scribd.com/document/645965146/POLYGRAPHY.

226 As transcription – obviously not in original diary. 'Wrote thence...' – some other correspondence, I presume; entry for December 5th below has 'I returned from Darjeeling on the 28th of October.'

227 **Allahabad**: Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

228 **Budaon**: Budaun, Uttar Pradesh - some 220km (136m) NW of Prayagraj.

229 Rohilcund: 'Rohilkhand is a region in the northwestern part of Uttar Pradesh, India' - wikipedia.

230 Perhaps his cousin Henry Gordon Waterfield b.27.02.1840.

December 5th.

My poor old Tazi arrived to-day looking much as usual; Herschel has been using her lately.

I have not given you a regular journal for a long time. I returned from Darjeeling on the 28th of October.

On Monday the 1st at 4. P.M. we all assembled at the billiard room to read the proclamation.[231] Grant read it in English and a native in Bengali. He wanted me to read it, but I did not think my pronunciation distinct enough. We had a capital salute from the sailors with our two cannon and their muskets. We dined at Grant's to celebrate the day, and had holidays on Monday and Tuesday.

The 5th was a native holiday, not as my new assistant Clementson thought for Guy Fawkes, but for the *Dewali*[232] and I dare say the town was very prettily illuminated, which, if it had been 4 days earlier, would have done for the Proclamation. My room had 36 little lamps on the ledge of the verandah outside, and it had a very pretty effect. The next day was also a holiday, and we called on Mrs. Amesbury.

On Sunday (7th) we had Morning Service in the Magistrates office.

Browne's sister and her husband Mr. Clarke who is C.M.S. Missionary at Peshawur[233], were staying with him. I dined with them on Monday, and went over again on Thursday evening to say good-bye as they intended to start the next day.

On Friday morning before we were dressed, Mrs. Gordon Young with her nurse and children arrived. We knew they would be very uncomfortable at the *dak* bungalow and invited them to stay with us, but we did not expect them quite so early. They occupied my rooms, and we both slept in my office tent.

That evening Gordon drove her out, and I took Percy to see my elephants, the great tank &c. After they came back Gordon and I drove both Percy and Mary a little way. They are beautiful children. Saturday was much the same, except that I was kept later at office and did not walk with the children. Mrs. Gordon Young gave me some photographs of Darjeeling, and promised me a beautiful collection of ferns, some from Darjeeling and some Australian. They started for **Calcutta** on Sunday afternoon.

The next day (15th) the Brigade marched away.

Late at night Clementson and I were in the verandah when a sailor came to us saying he had lost the way. I sent for a guide and a *coolie* to carry one of his muskets, and meanwhile he narrated his adventures; how he had been captain to the W. African coasts,

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[231] The Government of India Act 1858 was 'an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed on 2 August 1858. Its provisions called for the liquidation of the East India Company (who had up to this point been ruling much of India under the auspices of Parliament) and the transferral of its functions to the British Crown' - 'The Proclamation by the Queen in Council, to the Princes, Chiefs, and People of India' announcing her personal rule was made in Allahabad, Monday 1st November - https://southasianbritain.org/events/queen-victorias-proclamation/

[232] *Dewali*: Diwali; 'The five-day celebration is observed every year sometime from the second half of October to the first half of November coinciding with a new moon as per the Hindu lunisolar calendar' - wikipedia.

[233] C.M.S.: Church Mission Society; Peshawar lies between Islamabad and Kabul and is in now in Pakistan.

and how the consignees tried to poison him; and he invited us to his estate of Hailey house in Ayrshire, if ever we passed there.

We have played cricket two evenings, and when I have had time I have taken evening walks with Browne or Clementson; but generally I am at work till dark.

Last Sunday news came of a leopard marked down by the villagers, who begged us to kill it; so Garstin and Dalrymple went out, and the former shot it; a very fine large one.

A day or two before some men from **Myminsing**[234] brought a half-grown cheeta to show. It seemed pretty tame, and I stroked it, but it was rather bullied by them, and they would not trust it loose.

December 18th Camp Charibandar[235]

(i.e. the port on the River Chiri)

Garstin and I rode out here by moonlight last night, he riding my horse, and lending me his pony. We went on at first pretty well, but after we had gone some way it struck Garstin that we were wrong, and we found we had taken a wrong turning; so we retraced our steps, and then skirted the Gogra for some time. When we reached **Rajarampore**[236], we found the bridge was under repair and impassable, but the river was very shallow, and we forded it easily, though the large horse was rather obstreperous, and splashed me as I followed him. When we reached the main stream of the **Atrai**[237], the chief river of this and **Rajshahye** districts, we tried to stir up some cart-men to shew us the ford, but they swore they came from **Berhampore** and knew nothing of the road, so we tried it ourselves, and got over pretty well, though I, being on the pony, was wetted half way up to the knee. We passed some of the last of the carts with some hangers-on of the camp and released some cartmen whom I suspect they had been bullying, but not bang being our own regular people I could do no more than scold them.

At the Kankra[238] river we could find no ford, nor anyone to shew it to us. Garstin said he had crossed up the river, and we rode along the sands to what seemed the narrowest part, and where we thought there was a road on the other side. The "Eater" however declined it, and sent a kick which would have done for me, had it not missed me. So I went first. We got on half way, when it grew deeper and deeper, and I soon found we were swimming. There was no use however in turning back, so we pushed on and climbed up the other bank, when you should have seen the pony shake himself. What we had taken for a road was the river Chiri, now a mere ditch, but navigable for four months in the year. When I had found a landing place, I hailed Garstin, but the horse would not come, and I rode on to the camp which was only a mile off, and sent two men to help him, but before long he galloped up.

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234 **Myminsing**: Mymensingh, Bangladesh.

235 **Charibandar**: Chirirbandar, Bangladesh; 13km (8m) ENE from Dinajpur.

236 **Rajarampore**: this one (compare note 134) is Rajarumpur, 3km (1.9m) ENE of Dinajpur; really now just on outskirts of Dinajpur, identified from the name 'Rajarumpur bazar' on Google maps. Location (existence) of the place is clear on the Survey of India map, One-Inch to the Mile No 78 C/10 and parts of 78 C/14 & C/6 - 1st Edition Surveyed: 1859 to 1861, Published: 1939 - https://maps.nls.uk/view/270633967

237 The **Atrai** has at least two streams they would have had to cross – see next.

238 From the position of the camp relative to the river, the Kankra (or Kanchra, a bit later) is now labelled as a branch of the Atrai.

After I [had] left the bank, he pushed the horse in, and got about half way, when they came suddenly into deep water, and the horse trying to turn back, they rolled over together. The horse put his foot on his head, and when he came up, being in jack-boots he could make no way by swimming, till luckily he got hold of his *shola* hat for a float, and came across. The horse went back and gazed on him from the other side, till some men coming up behind caught him, and brought him over the ford which was down the river.

We are not the worse for our adventure. We walked last night through the place, it being market-day, principally it appeared for enormous radishes big as carrots. We are encamped in the open field, with the houses to the north, and apparently jungle not far off on all other sides.

A wild boar came into the camp last night, close to where the bearer was eating. They say there are lots about.

My new *khidmatgar* is a most original character. He invents two or three new dishes a day, all out of fowls, though I knew all the varieties of old; and manifold they are. One day we had chicken cake, just like the outer crust of a custard pudding round the meat, and something else which he might have called chicken-custard.

December 21st.

It is getting desperately cold, and I have not had my feet warm for 24 hours. Such a fog this morning, and my poor *omla* look wretched, for I am working very hard now at Registers and am at them in the morning before breakfast, while Garstin goes out investigating his vases.

The country round is rather pretty, many of the fields being bright yellow with mustard crops, and pretty little patches of jungle here and there. There are lots of pariah dogs about; also peewits crying all night. I prefer the pony, and Garstin the horse, so we arrange very amicably.

Dinagepore December 25th.

We rode in last evening. I sent a man before to shew us the fords, and we crossed the Kanchra beautifully, but the man at the **Atrai** took us through deep water, and I got my feet wetter than last time; we came among bushes on the other side, and had to back out again and go round.

We were over by sun-down, but this side of **Rajarampore** we took another road through the bazaar; which I do not admire in the dusk. We met an elephant - the first, I suppose, that the hill-pony had ever seen; he wheeled round suddenly into the narrow street, and I was spilt, and rolled over into a deep stone drain, dry, but I did not bargain for the fall.

On arriving at home, we were told there was no dinner as we were all expected at Grant's. I thought it odd, but went as I saw no prospect elsewhere, and found it was an invention or mistake, but were received hospitably.

December 28th.

We dined at Grant's on Christmas day. The relieved sailors from Julpigouri arrived in the course of the day, and went on this morning. They came in no sort of order, most of

them either riding or leading ponies, and with no end of plunder acquired on the way, especially poultry, of which every man had several skewered on his bayonet. Their fashion was to spike in this way all they could find in any village they passed. Our sailors here, kept tight under Fryer and Bethnam, were an unusually good sample.

Camp Chiribandar.

January 3rd 1859.

Garstin and I rode back to Camp yesterday afternoon and arrived quite safe.

The other night there was a great fight in the jungle close by, between a leopard and a boar. They made such a noise that all the people collected round, but it grew dark and they did not see which won.

January 6th.

I am much troubled by the sickness in my office. I find it impossible to get any substitutes for the sick, and things are getting into great confusion.

The rice has all been reaped since we came here. It was then lying flat in the fields. They beat it down in this way, that the grain may not be shaken out in cutting it. There are an immense lot of field mice about, running even on the roof of the tent.

The servants said they heard the leopards the night before the last. Last night we walked round a patch of jungle which certainly seemed a not unlikely place for wild beasts.

They say that a wild boar came out of the wood about noon yesterday; but he was gone before they could tell us.

The villagers say that the tree, where our kitchen is, is holy, and that the leopards walk round it every night, but I do not know who has seen them.

January 8th.

Garstin rode off this evening, having moved his camp for the pageant six miles S.E. Holm writes that he and Gordon have not had much sport, one pig and one leopard. The latter was rounded from the *howdah*[239], and then they rode after him with spears. Gordon speared him, but Holm went too near, and he charged with one paw on his thigh, one on the pony's breast and his teeth in the top-boot. There was a Home News in the boot, which saved his leg, though he bit through boot and paper. The pony was a good deal clawed. Gordon says, when the leopard charged, his foot must have passed through its mouth, as his instep was scratched by the upper tooth.

January 12th.

Our *chuprassies* have, as usual, established a concert, containing a drum and lute. One of them vows the leopards walk round the saint's tree every Friday.

In my walk yesterday I found a tortoise by the pond.

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[239] *howdah*: ‘East India; a seat to contain two or more persons, usually fitted with a railing and a canopy, erected on the back of an elephant’ - OED.

This evening I took a *chuprassie* out with me. I like to make the natives talk, and hear the queer simple way they have of announcing facts. The *chuprassie* stated the inadvisability of going into the thick jungle especially so late, as he said people would not even walk by the road between that and the pond jungle, unless 5 or 6 were together.

He said pigs would run away and not attack one, unless hardpressed, but leopards would attack of themselves, though he would not take it on him to say of themselves for he thought it depended on whether God sent them.

He told me of a place where a party of pigs came and broke upon a barn to get at the grain.

January 17th.

The day before yesterday, Gordon rode up soon after I was dressed, and told me he was one of a party going for sport to Mangalbari[240] &c. He asked me to join them, and also to lend my elephant as a beater; so I sent my bed on it.

After he had left me, Holm, Jowett and Amesbury rode up and they too invited me to be of the party.

Dalrymple passed later; but not knowing where I was, he did not stop.

Camp Mangalbari

I left off work rather earlier than usual and set off. I arrived at their camp by moonlight and found them just returned, having seen one boar which they lost, and Dalrymple had had a heavy fall. I believe the people in the neighbourhood had had a *battue*[241] on their own account the day before, and driven all the pigs from their usual haunts.

We had a very pleasant evening; they were very merry and joking at Dalrymple for his fall with his model horse. D apologized for the accident by saying there was a little drop in the ground at the jump, but Gordon said he found it at least a tumbler. There were also some vile Hindustani jokes. I hardly ever laughed so much. I slept in the mess tent with Holm and Jowett.

After breakfast yesterday we started. I would not ride or take a spear, but mounted on a *charjama* (a seat like a jaunting car[242]) upon Gordon's elephant, and took the command of the beaters. I think we had about 13 elephants and I made myself hoarse with shouting before the day was over. First we went to a very nice and pretty jungle. There were handsome trees in it, but the undergrowth was a tall thick aromatic shrub, I believe cardamum. I took in the elephants in line, while the horsemen waited on the outskirts. We soon roused something, and then began the excitement, the bushes moving in advance, the *mahouts* screaming to the elephants, and calling *Stur*[243] as they saw the boor; the

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[240] Mangalbari: unidentified but obviously not far from Chirirbandar - reachable in an evening's ride (?10 miles).

[241] *battue*: this is not Anglo-Indian - obviously French, indeed - but unfamiliar: 'The driving of game from cover (by beating the bushes, etc. in which they lodge) to a point where a number of sportsmen wait to shoot them' - OED.

[242] jaunting car: 'jaunting-car: a light, two-wheeled vehicle, popular in Ireland, now carrying four persons seated two on each side, either back to back (outside jaunting-car) or facing each other (inside jaunting-car), with a seat in front for the driver' - OED.

[243] *Stur*: not in OED; from context, either a local name for boar or just a hunting cry.

elephants also in a great state as the boar turned and tried to break their line, for they much object to his getting between their legs, and if at bay he will charge at them and cut their legs, as I saw, though I do not think any horse was hurt.

I was trying to keep the line, gesticulating and signalling to the riders on the jungle edge, and shouting a tally-ho when after twice or thrice turning through us, he broke cover. It was the same boar in riding at which Dalrymple got his fall the day before, and as then, he made for a thick wood, and reached it before any of us could gain on him. It was useless to follow him there, so we assembled again, and proceeded across a wide parched grass plain, or dry marsh.

Here I saw numbers of the Saras a beautiful blue or slate-coloured crane[244]. Holm said that this was the only spot in the country where he had ever seen them in flocks; you generally see only a pair, or a pair and one young one.

We roused one pig, but the cry of *madah*, female, and not *nar*, male, stopped us. Then we beat the edge of a tank, and started another sow, this time with a litter of pigs. It was a ridiculous sight to see the little ones scamper and leap the gullies. They are pretty little things, and always barred with horizontal stripes black and yellow; as sure a mark of the young wild pig as the straight of the old one.

These tank jungles constituted the rest of our beatings for the day, and they are all alike, only varying in width and impenetrability. They are a belt of low wood round the tank, sometimes leaving one side or more open, sometimes only the passage down to the water, and they are disagreeable to both elephants and drivers, consisting of low stiff, young trees with plenty of thorn-bushes, cow-itch a horrid parasitical creeper[245], which is very common and now and then a swarm of wild bees.

I did my best to keep the beaters to their work, and in regular line, but they often shirked, getting out at the edges, either by the field or a tank, and some of them we found quite impracticable where the belt was very broad and steep.

We beat several with no success, and at last, out of a most unlikely scrap of a wayside bush we ejected a young boar. All runs, too, are much the same. Pig always goes away at score, and it is some time before the horsemen gain on him. Sometimes they overtake him, while still running enough to give first spear, for which there is always a race; and then if he crosses the horse, he is pretty sure to upset the whole concern; all three roll over each other, and get up equally astonished, so that he does not use his opportunity of attacking man or horse till more help arrives. But sometimes, even before they reach him, the boar gets tired, and quietly turns round and charges back. Then is the time to shew skill, to receive him with the spear, and avoid his cutting the horse with his tusk.

The most dangerous is an occasional jumping pig, which dodges over the spear, and strikes the horse high.

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[244] Saras: ‘the sarus crane (Antigone antigone) is a large nonmigratory crane found in parts of the Indian subcontinent’ - wikipedia.

[245] cow-itch could be many things but perhaps *Mucuna pruriens*, ‘a tropical legume native to Africa and tropical Asia... Its English common names include... Bengal velvet bean... cowage, cowitch... The plant is notorious for the extreme itchiness it produces on contact’ - wikipedia. Not that this is actually parasitical.

The pig scarcely ever utters a sound when speared, though he has been known when hit in the nape of the neck, or when a very childish porker, to squeal like a tame relation. I heard of a man who, when riding on the Brahmaputra[246] grass plains, stuck his spear into a kind of haycock, and straightway haycock and spear erect went over the country at a tremendous pace. The pigs there build nests of grass to lie under, and he had pinned this one's house to its back; but not a sound was heard as it sailed off.

There is not near the sport there used to be when many parts of the country were almost unvisited by Europeans, and old boars reigned there, the terror of all the villages around. About the last of this kind that I heard of was one at Turnbook the first day the Tent Club went there. He came out of the jungle to look at them, and lay down champing his tusks, while none of the horsemen liked to approach. At last when he was tired of waiting for them to come on, he got up and faced the whole line of horsemen, and charged them, cutting two or three before they did for him.

You would not believe what a boar's tusks can do. He frequently kills a native, if one crosses his path while he is escaping. A jumping boar charged Ravenshaw's horse and aimed at his flank, but missed it and struck the tail, severing the bone and cutting off the hair on that side as clean as with a razor, so that it fell down together, and the tail itself hung by the skin on the opposite side.

This boar did not shew much fight, & after turning him once or twice, we killed him in a village. We tried some more bushes and tank borders, and I had enough to do shouting myself hoarse to keep the other *mahouts* in line, for they tried to shirk the heavy bits, especially where there were thorns or a kind of cowage[247] very common about the trees, or worst of all a swarm of bees.

Then we halted for luncheon under the shelter of two immense trees, which must have touched each other when they stood, but now were fallen, rising so high on their roots that I could not see the elephants across them. The strange thing was they were fallen in exactly opposite directions; so I suppose it must have been just the vortex of a hurricane, and a pretty sharp one too to move them. After luncheon came the grand hunt; we had to cross the river once or twice, and it was not very easy to find a ford, and get the elephants and horses to take it.

This pig we started and drove from cover to cover; sometimes he turned at bay and charged; sometimes he went away with a spear (or two) in him. Once after he had had eleven spears, and one still in him, he came out coolly on to the plain, and stood there facing us. Few of the horses would then go near him, and the riders did not like it; for, as he turned sharply, the shaft of the spear would give an awkward blow. At last Gordon managed to give him another. Then he went into the mud of the tank and lay there, and as we could not reach him, we had to shoot him to finish him. The first shot missed, but the second went through his shoulder, and still he got up and walked to the jungle where he lay down, and Gordon went in on an elephant and stabbed him in the spine. I think he had 15

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[246] The Brahmaputra river flows south about 90km (56m) east of where he is.
[247] cowage – presumably the ‘cow-itch’ again.

wounds, and all the old hunters said they had never seen a better fighter. I believe he cut the foot of an elephant, but no horse.

Gordon and I went back on the elephant to camp, a long way off. I had enough to do in guiding the string of elephants to keep the *mahouts* from taking them over the rice fields. Of course each helped itself to about a sheaf at a time when within reach.

This morning we beat out on the **Rungipore** road, but without success, and Jowett then rode on to **Rungipore**, Gordon and Amesbury went home, and Dalrymple followed later; I went with Gordon, but not having so far to go, fell behind and took it more leisurely, saw my *peshkar* on the way and arrived safely at my camp.

Camp Chiribandar

January 19th.

Herschel has applied for 3 months leave to go and meet his brother, and it begins on the 21st.

The black curlew have been making a quacking noise to-day; they have a handsome red crest.[248]

The *Simal* is becoming quite red with blossom. I have an advantage in being encamped here that I get plenty of vegetables from the garden sent with my letters.

Dinagepore

January 28th.

I rode in on Saturday to receive R. Thompson who has been appointed to Dinagepore Survey. He is 2 years my senior; I suppose I shall be left as his Assistant, which will be rather hard on me. I found a letter from Probyn, in camp, and very jolly after his marriage on the 11th. Also from Edward, who likes Budam, where he arrived on Christmas Day.

The next day I had a letter from Herschel to say he should pass through on his way to Darjeeling, after which he was going to **Calcutta**, and so up country with Johnny to **Delhi**, **Lucknow** &c. I wrote to ask Capt. Cornish if he could help them with the horses. Thompson arrived to breakfast on Tuesday (25th). He is a very nice fellow, and brother of Lady Shakespear, so he told me all about Emma. He came out with John Herschel.

I was expecting the Herschels all day, but they did not appear till we had dined, as being doubtful of my being in the station, they had gone first to the *dak* bungalow. And then they wanted to be off again, but I had stopped their *dak*, which was well for them, as the ponies I had procured helped them much towards getting up hill. I lent Herschel my binocular glass.

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[248] black curlew – 'the historical name black curlew was used for the glossy ibis' but this is perhaps the red-naped ibis (Pseudibis papillosa) 'also known as the Indian black ibis or black ibis ... found in the plains, agriculture fields and cities of the Indian subcontinent' - it has a 'dark head with a patch of crimson red warty skin on the crown and nape' - wikipedia.

On Wednesday morning we wandered about the place, which Herschel thought the prettiest he had seen here, and far surpassing **Rajshahye**. They started off soon after dinner.

February 1st.

Thompson and I cannot understand the directions which are given us as to the arrangements of our work. His appointment would be scarcely any relief to me. I propose that we should arrange the office as we pleased, without reference to Divisions, and Lushington writes privately to Thompson that he will answer his note to the same effect when he gets mine; so I am not turned out, but of course his coming makes my getting to the head of the line almost hopeless, as he, having been home on sick leave, cannot take furlough for six years.

February 19th.

Mr. Fisher arrived on circuit on Saturday the 5th so we had service on Sunday morning in the Magistrate's office. He left us on Wednesday.

Thompson started on the 11th for **Rungpore** to take up local investigations. I am sorry not to see **Rungpore**, the Brahmaputra, and the **Garrow Hills**[249], but could ill have spared the time, and am very glad of the relief. I like Thompson much; he is engaged to Miss. G. Currie. In the five terms next above me, there is now only one bachelor left in Bengal.

The Herschels came in on Saturday morning. They breakfasted with us, but would only stay 3 or 4 hours. We lent them horses for the first stage.

March 5th.

Your letters arrived on Thursday. They had a narrow escape, for the other bag did not arrive, and a packet was found in the tank early in the morning. On search others were taken out, and 80 out of 90 have been recovered, including all for this station. It is supposed to be connected with a forgery case. The forged paper was expected from **Calcutta** to-day, and by mistake they got hold of the other bag instead of the **Calcutta** one.

I left the station on Sunday the 20th. I had taken the precaution to send on a tent to **Samdiya**[250] (12 or 14 miles off) a day or two before, and so had only my bed &c to pack the day I found I could start.

I rode along the Bogra[251] Road to **Anandai Sagar**[252], a large tank dug by Raja Rammuth, who also dug Ram Sagar[253] &c. Here I took a short cut across the fields, and before long overtook the carts which had left home some time before me. I walked my horse beside the servants, as it was of no use to push on and arrive alone, and got in about sunset, the tent being just above the bank of the river, shaded by some bamboos.

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249 **Garrow Hills** - Garo Hills, Meghalaya, are E of Rungpore: the Bhahmaputra is 50km (31m), the Garo Hills a further 60km (27m).

250 **Samdiya**: Samjia, West Bengal is 17km (11m) SE from Dinajpur.

251 Bogra Road – heading SE to Bogura.

252 **Anandai Sagar**: Ananda Sagar, Dinajpur.

253 Ram Sagar (**Ramsaga**) was dug Raja Ram Nath - https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Ramsagar

Up before sunrise and forded the river, which was here a wide water bed independent of the stretch of sand, but is very shallow this year, much more so than when I forded it on the **Rungpore** road. The rivers of this district often change their channels, and they run into, and out of, and across each other in the most eccentric way. I believe the Karatiya which divides us from **Rungpore** crosses almost all the others. **Samdiya** is a very large mart with houses all down the banks, and its suburbs are considerable.

Of course the dry season is the slack time, as few boats come up, and I believe it has much fallen off of late, I suppose owing to the river's change. As usual, I walked the first 3 or 4 miles and then mounted, but I go slowly, for the horse when alone is lazy, and I like to watch the birds &c. I saw a great many, especially water-birds of all kinds.

At 5 miles we crossed the Inhamati; 5 more to **Chintaman**[254], and soon after[255] we came on old marshy channels of the **Jamuna**.

[254] **Chintamen**: Chintaman (Government College) is indeed about 17km (10m) from Samjia.
[255] soon after – in another 6km (4m).