

what a gamble the life of a big game shikari must be, how much his life lies in the keeping of the sahib who engages him. I know he questioned my bearer closely about me, and my bearer, of course, told him I was a good shot; and when I hit the first bear down the khud and obeyed his injunctions by reloading at once without looking round, his relief was palpable. Often I had noticed him closely scrutinizing my face, as if to read it, with quick, half-anxious glances. His duty is to sit by whilst the sahib shoots; he has no weapon himself unless he carries spare rifle or gun, and even that he is not supposed to fire unless his master is knocked down and being actually mauled. If he goes with a jumpy or very excitable individual, or one who fiddles about with his weapon or treats the whole business as a joke, the poor man is, of course, in a very evil case, for he knows all too well the grim possibilities that underlie fooling about with big game hunting. Probably it is in these cases that he cannot find the game and has to go away with a bad "chit," which is, however, better than not going away at all, or with half his face torn off. Amír Khan was a bit of a naturalist, too, and full of forest lore. We became tacit friends who understood one another perfectly and, later on, when I was suddenly taken ill, his grief that our hunting together must cease was sore, and he never ceased to talk of the time when I should be restored and rejoin him in another trek.

Echoes of the Past

"A VOYAGE TO CHINA OVERLAND."

INTRODUCTION BY FLEET SURGEON W. E. HOME, R.N.

THE writer, Dr. W. Home, Staff Surgeon, 2nd Class, was the youngest son of Dr. James Home, Professor of Practice of Physic in Edinburgh. He graduated in 1837, and after a period of study in Paris, joined the Medical Department of the Army. He was sent to Canada and lived at Kingston, Ont., with the P.M.O., Dr. John Smith, who afterwards was head of the Department in the Crimean War. At Kingston (as later at Hong Kong and Mauritius) he established a dispensary for the treatment of poor civilians, because he recognized there were at that time few well-trained doctors abroad except in the Army. On his return from Canada he was appointed Assistant Surgeon to the 26th Cameronians, then at Edinburgh. He left the regiment a year and a half later, on his promotion to Staff Surgeon, 2nd Class, amid expressions of regret, twenty officers of the regiment uniting to give him as a memento a family Bible with a suitable inscription. Shortly after he was sent to Hong Kong, whence he was

transferred in a year to Mauritius, where he did a successful practice until, in 1855, he was sent to the Crimea, where, being promoted, he was medical officer of a division, and seems to have satisfied Sir John Hall, the P.M.O., for, in his "Life," at p. 416, he says, "Home is an intelligent first-class man also. I put him at the head of the Pathological Board in camp." He afterwards served in Ireland, China, and Scotland, and retired from ill health, in 1870, as a Deputy Inspector of Hospitals. He died in 1876.

A VOYAGE TO CHINA "OVERLAND" IN 1848-49: EXCERPTS
FROM THE HOME LETTERS OF A PASSENGER, AN ARMY
SURGEON FOR HONG KONG.

INTRODUCTION.

The Steamer "Ripon," off Cape St. Vincent, *Christmas Day*, 1848.

I WRITE in the Cabin all hung round with holly. We have had the usual service of the Church of England, performed by a German missionary (Ehrhardt, C.M.S.), for Aden and the East Coast of Africa. On Wednesday, 20th, in London, my careful servant had me up at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5, my fire lighted and my breakfast laid, and after cramming all I had left into a carpet bag I was on my way to the Railway by $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6. The train was tolerably full. A great proportion of our passengers, 3 or 4 in my carriage, were bound on this lengthened journey. Reaching Southampton at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10, and accompanied by the Adjutant and my carpet bag, went on board a small tug steamer, was conveyed a couple of miles out into the Southampton river, and there introduced to the "Ripon," large, newly painted, apparently ample in its accommodation. It is a paddle steamer. My berth, 91, is a dark and forbidding spot. Then went ashore to farewell friends, and returned, arriving in time to accompany the Indian Mail on board, 150 boxes all of the same size and shape, nailed and sealed, painted according to destinations, blue, Calcutta, yellow, Madras, black, Ceylon, white, Bombay, and red, Hong Kong. The pile was immense, and gave a gigantic idea of the magnitude of our communication with our Eastern Empire. Sailed and found there were 4 beds in my cabin. At 4 o'clock the hour of dinner had arrived; a full hundred sat down, and all hungry. Tea made its appearance at 7, and after tea an unexpected band of 6 performers, who played not amiss. Our pilot left us as we passed the Needles at 9. At 10 I went to my bed, the cabin decidedly improved by a suspended lamp.

Gibraltar, *Tuesday, Dec. 26th.*

Weather now delightful. In quarantine as there is cholera in England. Arrived at 4 p.m. (6 days out). Coaling all night. Letters are received with tongs and are fumigated. Sailed at 11 a.m. Most of us at night play whist, also there are chess, écarté, backgammon and draughts. After tea at 7, there is wine and biscuits at 9. Lights out at 10 $\frac{1}{2}$, in the cabins at 11.

Off Alexandria, *January 4th*, 1849.

Anchored at Malta 31st (11 days out), at 9 a.m. Oranges, especially Mandarin, much appreciated. Picked up here passengers who had come through France.

We left on the afternoon of the 1st, and we have on several days done 250 miles. We are making up our parties of six for the vans in which we are to cross the desert, and drawing lots for the period of our several departures. With good luck the set to which I belong have drawn 19 (out of 20) in the order of departure, so I hope there will be time for us to see the Pyramids, 3 hours ride from Cairo. The majority of the party will spend their leisure hours at Suez, 118 1st cabin passengers, 18 2nd, 9 children and 30 or 40 of crew.

"Bentinck," in the Red Sea, *January 13th*, 1849.

Writing difficult, ship vibrating much, engines so strong, 550 h.p. Reached Alexandria at 11 a.m. on 5th (15 days out). 4 of us got into a boat and were conveyed by a single rower to the shore. The number for each boat is painted on it, as is also the exact amount of the fare, a shilling, Mehemet Ali having with the most scrupulous minuteness made the most precise arrangements in everything that relates to the Overland Route. Camels were patiently waiting for the baggage, and one or two omnibusses here also to take us and our bags to the hotel. Also there were donkeys. With an Indian medical officer (Son of Sir Geo. Ballingall) from Edinburgh, called on Dr. Farquhar, an old Edinburgh friend, in good practice; and saw Pompey's Pillar, Cleopatra's Needle, and the slave market, the majority apparently happy and contented with their lot. Not one white face from Georgia. Value (of blacks) varied from £15-£30. Dined with Dr. and Mrs. Farquhar (soup, fish and roast goose) and Dr. Farquhar mounted us and took us to the docks and palace for a ride, and back to tea at 6, and after an hour and a half rest and chat it was time to return to the hotel where we found all in preparation for departure. The passengers were in numbered parties of six for the drive across the desert. For the journey to Cairo there were two groups, of which one left Alexandria at 1 p.m., the other at 8 p.m., the parties, in pairs, were to leave Cairo at intervals of four hours. The second group, we left the hotel in omnibusses, drove five or six miles to the commencement of the Mahmoudieh Canal. Our boat was pretty well packed, and towed by steamers, contrived to accomplish the journey to Afteh on the Nile by daybreak on the following (Saturday, 6th), morning. The night was exceedingly sharp and cold, so that all were forced to pack into the small cabin. My share being a portion of the floor under one of the tables. In Egypt I never saw, by night or day, a single cloud. We had a brilliant full moon by night. The Nile steamer we joined at Afteh was small but very comfortable, the property of the Pasha. With a strong current and head wind our speed did not exceed 5 miles an hour, so that starting from Afteh at six a.m., we did not reach Boulac, the stopping place for Cairo,

before 1 or 2 next morning. I shall not forget my sail on the Nile. It reminded me of the Mississippi. The villages were miserable, some of them prettily situated among groves of palm trees. No crocodiles. We passed 3 steamers full of passengers from India, and gave them a hearty cheer. The port of Boulac is two miles from the town. The moon was shining as bright as day, so we decided, if it was at all possible, to see the Pyramids, 15 miles from Cairo. We took care to land the very first, drove in a sort of fly from the river to the town, and after securing the services of a guide, at the Transit Office found we were fixed for 5 in the afternoon. Some of the first set had already started. Resolved to miss sleep, rode on donkeys to the Pyramids, and went inside, but not to the top, and were back in Cairo at 11. A Turkish bath and food, Mosque Sultan Hassan, the Citadel, Mehemet Ali's Palace and the Mosque, the Bazaars, and dinner at 4. The excellent guide got £1, the donkeys, which were thought to have done 40 miles, generally at a canter, cost 4/- each, and total cost per head 20/- well spent. Very soon after 5 a six inside covered spring van with four horses and a Turkish driver appeared at the Hotel door, and in it we were to make the passage of the desert. Two others started at the same time and carried the last of our party to Suez. We took abundance of oranges to clear our throats of the desert dust. Off we set, a long Egyptian lad of eighteen running in front, cracking a whip to clear the way. Not half a mile from the hotel we found the town end and the desert begin, more like Portobello sands than anything else I have seen, 75 miles between Cairo and Suez. At first it was dead flat, but within a stage or two of the Red Sea it became hilly and rocky, the rocks exactly the colour of the surrounding waste. I often thought of the utter hopelessness of people like the Children of Israel, shut in on all sides by the barren desert. Our road was a track marked by small piles or heaps of stones, gathered for the purpose of directing the travellers. Small telegraph towers were also every here and there, built by the Pasha to facilitate the Overland Route. Our stopping places were every 5 to 7 miles for changing horses, our cattle being completely done up by the heavy draft through the deep sand. We had plenty of room, and, when not asleep, chatted all pleasantly together, or joined in the chorus of some well known song. The time passed rapidly away, and so did the dark, and at the Central Station we made an early breakfast on food as in England. At 2 in the afternoon (7th) we arrived at Suez. The only travellers we had met on the desert, were the various parties of camels transporting our baggage, the most picturesque being those transporting the mail in its many-coloured boxes, with its guard mounted. Went off with the missionary, Ehrhardt, to visit the "Camel ford," the nearest suggested point for the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea. Were the last passengers to embark in a boat for the "Bentinck," lying four miles off. The dinner at the hotel, kept by a Scotsman, was exorbitantly priced at 5/. Were three hours getting off, and the ship sailed at 1 a.m.

I have a better cabin on "Bentinck." In the dining saloon we are kept cool by windsails and open windows, by cooled wine and iced water, but this is winter and the temperature above 82° ; what in the world will summer be! Immense cockroaches, $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches long infest our cabins. On the 14th (noon) passed the Straits of Bab-el-Mandel arriving at Aden at 8 p.m. (twenty-five days from Southampton). The passengers (22 left the ship here for Bombay, including Ballingall), visited Aden in the forenoon, and I got on board just in time to have a shower bath and to prepare for dinner. Arabs on camels bring in firewood, sheep (4/- or 5/-), and ostrich eggs, taking back cotton, dates and water in skins. Rupee exchange 10 to the sovereign. I was astonished to see what good masonry the brown fellows (Indians) turned out. We found the band of one of the Sepoy Regiments practising, and really the piece we stopped to hear was executed in a manner that would have been creditable to Europeans. The Sepoy soldiers a very fine set of fellows, taller considerably than our own men. Though we have the N.E. Monsoon against us, it is not strong. Sometimes a calm, and the sea phosphorescent at night, all over one evening, almost like a smooth sheet of Canadian ice reflecting the light of a brilliant moon. The crew more numerous than on "Ripon," lascars and seedies. The captain, I hear, gets £1,000 a year, the doctor's post is worth £400, the steward's, £200. From our own pay $3/6$ a day is stopped for, messing, this includes drinks. Total expenses to China expected to be £5. Breakfast ends at 9, everyone on deck till 10 at night, except for meals. Ice has given out, only water now, which is tepid, and brought from the Ganges, which, like that of the Thames, keeps better than any other at sea. Steward's fees were made a separate charge and paid before starting in London, £4 for the whole journey, but the young ones on board give an extra sovereign when they leave. In this cool weather passage (83°) no one seemed to sleep on deck. We made about 240 miles a day. Reached the harbour of Galle at 7 a.m. on the 27th (37 days from London), the "Malta," a new ship, waiting for us, to make her first trip to China. She left England in August last, sailed round the Cape to Bombay, there had her paddles put in their places. At Ceylon all the Company's steamers rendezvous at Point de Galle, each leaving China, Calcutta, and Bombay so as to meet at Point de Galle at the same time. I took my baggage on board the "Malta," and went ashore to breakfast. Spent the day with an Army doctor, 14 years in Ceylon, and sorry to be now ordered home. A charming spot. Sailed at 5, having got $21\frac{1}{4}$ rupees for a sovereign, with few passengers and great comfort, in this ship of 1200 tons and 480 h.p., extra strong to stand the typhoons. Favourably impressed with the Chinese in the crew, clean, smart, and intelligent, though not beauties. The nights are hot, partly the vessel being of iron. She is new and tolerably free of cockroaches, but I found a rat in my basin. Another inconvenience is the strong smell of opium that pervades the ship. Thermometer nothing above 88° , but 120° in the engine room! 30

tons of coal an hour is our ship's allowance. At 6 we get a cup of coffee, at 7 a tub of sea-water is brought, at 8.30 we have breakfast, tea, toast, fried fish and potatoes; at 12, lunch or tiffin, soup for me, for the others, cheese, anchovies and beer; after lunch I play chess. At 4, dinner, mine to-day was soup, the wing of a duck, potatoes, rice and curry sauce, plum tart, claret and water, and dessert, pineapples, the best anywhere, at Penang yesterday, a farthing each, mangosteens, the small white inside has the delicate flavour of a rich plum, watermelon, an old American friend of mine, and last the Plantain, a long narrow yellow soft fruit, more like a mealy apple than anything else. Penang I saw only in the moonlight.

Singapore, *Feb.* 6, 1849.

We arrived (three days after leaving Penang) on the forenoon of Tuesday the 6th (47 days from London), and must wait to take on board 400 tons of coal. As we were not to leave till early on Thursday (7th), we had ample time to see the town and neighbourhood. The smoke and soot on board a steamboat is a serious inconvenience in that otherwise excellent mode of travelling. The accumulation of dirty linen becomes great and tiresome. Coals are all sent to the coaling stations from England, the P. & O. company employing in this about 200 sailing vessels. Here they cost £2 or £3 a ton, at Aden £3 10s., at Suez £4 10s., being there all transported from Alexandria, across the desert, on the backs of camels.

The first interest at Singapore was the number of Chinese with pigtailed umbrellas. Malays rather resemble them and so are easily distinguished from the Indians with rather a European cast of countenance. We lay two miles from the shore. Houses are good, displaying neatness and taste. With an Indian merchant, a fellow-passenger, took a carriage for the day (4/-), the driver ran by the horse, saw multitudes of curios, especially in the great shop of Whampoa, a Chinaman. We drove to Jöhore, and called on the Maharajah, pleased to see us. Pineapples very good, also oranges, which are green outside. Dinner at the French Hotel, good and 5/-. After dinner the bells of the church announced the mid-week service of the Church of England, which we attended, thrilled to hear the well-remembered words so far from home, with cane seats instead of pews, and sitting under noiseless, perpetually moving punkahs. The ship sailed 7th at 6 a.m., weather gradually became cool and pleasant, appetites improved, and Hong Kong appeared on the 16th (58 days from London), through a haze and rain that might have been in the Channel. Islands with elevated and rounded, not peaked, tops, the characteristic of granite. Herbage scanty, brown, more on the low grounds, almost wanting on the bare red summits. The town of Victoria stands on the shore of the bay, and on the side of the hills which rise rather rapidly behind it, facing north. The place altogether was larger and more imposing than I had expected. The town proper might extend East and West about a mile, while for a mile further were detached warehouses and places

of residence. Nowhere was a tree to be seen beyond a bushy size, and these but rarely. The hills something like Arthur's Seat, but twice the height. We landed in one of the Chinese boats, occupied by a family, the mother steered. Coolies slung our trunks to their stout Bamboos, and off we set to a place called "The Club." There I left my things, and called on the Head of my Department. My arrival was quite unexpected, the ship 5 days early too. Dr. Ferguson, Deputy Inspector of Hospitals, two steps of rank above me, lost his wife two months ago. After sitting with him chatting a couple of hours, he proposed that I should have a room in his house, till I determined on my future plans. Here I have been ever since. I dine to-night with the Commander of the Forces, General Staveley; temperature 75°. I have made acquaintance with the Episcopalian clergyman, and took a walk of several miles with him the other day. Heavy baggage expected, round the Cape, in a couple of months.

Current Literature.

- i. TÔYAMA, I. **Studies on Lacquer Dermatitis. III. Dermatitis produced by Chinese Lacquer.** *Japan. J. Dermat. & Urol.* 1926. v. 26, English summary, pp. 51-5. [In Japanese pp. 927-36, 3 figs. 43 refs.]
- ii. ——— & USUBA, T. **Studies on Lacquer Dermatitis. IV. The Histopathology of Lacquer Dermatitis.** *Ibid.* English summary pp. 56-7. [In Japanese pp. 937-46, 3 figs. 18 refs.]

i. There is a strong reason to suppose that the lacquer tree is not indigenous to Japan. It is probably an imported specimen of the *Rhus vernicifera* D.C. of China. It grows wild in the latter but not in the former country. According to the author, records of its artistic employment in China date from 2640 B.C.; in Japan from 392-291 B.C. To-day much the larger proportion of the local consumption of lacquer in Japan is a Chinese product. For this reason it may be stated that the chief cause of dermatitis from handling the boxes of "mah jough" sets is due to Chinese lacquer.

The poisonous principle is "urushiol." Raw Chinese lacquer contains approximately between 70.02 per cent and 36.88 per cent. In the Japanese variety it is somewhat larger. Experimentally, a drop, the size of a pinpoint, diluted ten times in olive oil, applied to the skin, brings out in seven hours erythema and œdema. With the Chinese product, this does not appear until the following day. Moreover, the inflammatory condition always remains less severe. With either substance, papules and vesicles usually form. The fresh lacquer is always the more virulent. Thorough dryness and oxidation remove the danger of dermatitis. Industrial lacquer dermatitis is of great antiquity in China, although the