CHAPTER XXI.

JAILS.

In the matter of Prison organisation and management there has been during the past thirty years an improvement as steady as in most other Departments of the Administration. Indeed, the great and central prisons, Agra and Yerowda, for example, compare favourably with any jail in England. On the whole there has been less to correct in India where, as yet, happily, faddists have not had their way. Defective in structure, and often, from epidemics of particular forms of crime, or from the disturbed state of the country, jails were from time to time over-populated, sanitation was more or less neglected, discipline was apt to be lax, especially in the case of prisoners of the higher castes. But no such brutalities and infamies were perpetrated under the name of the Law as were exposed by Charles Reade in his well-known novel, ‘Tis Never too Late to Mend.’

In the early "Fifties" the Straits Settlements sent their long-term convicts to Bombay where they were mostly drafted to moist and (to them) con-
genial climates, Tannah, Ratnagiri, and the like, and by good behaviour earned tickets-of-leave to the Hill Stations, Mahabuleshwar and Matheran, and became the market-gardeners, shoemakers, and what not of the place, many of them preferring to remain after their time was expired, respected and respectable citizens often possessed of considerable wealth.

About this time the Ratnagiri Jail, capable of containing about three hundred and sixty convicts, was choke-full; at least two-thirds were Chinamen and Malays from the Straits—ruffians, each with a record of piracy or murder, or both combined. Many of them were heavily fettered and carefully guarded by armed Police when at their ordinary work in the "laterite" quarries, for they were mostly powerful men; the tools they used were formidable in their hands—there were known to be deadly feuds among themselves that might break out at any moment. Nevertheless, the punishment sheet was marvellously clear, breaches of jail discipline were much fewer among these desperadoes than among the milder Hindoos in the work-sheds within the jail. The fact in due time penetrated the intelligence of the powers that were at Bombay Castle, inquiries were instituted as to why pirates and murderers, usually very obstreperous in other places, should become so tame at Ratnagiri, but the riddle had yet to be solved.

For some years one Sheik Kassam had been the jailor. Belonging to the fisherman class and possessed of very little education he had, nevertheless,
worked his way upwards through the Police by dint of honesty, hard work, and a 'certain shrewdness which had more than once brought him to the front. At last, towards the end of his service the jailorship falling vacant, he was, with every one's cordial approval, nominated to the post. With comparative rest and improved pay the old gentleman waxed fat,

and a jollier-looking old fellow, or withal a more genial companion, the country round could not produce. The cares of State, the responsibility of three hundred murderous convicts weighed little on Sheik Kassam.

He developed, as was afterwards remembered, a remarkable talent or predilection for gardening, almost from first taking office; he laid out the quarry-beds, brought water down to irrigate them,
produced all the jail required in the way of green stuff, and made tapioca and arrowroot by the ton. The better plot of land belonging to the jail lay between Sheik Kassam's own official residence, a tiny "bungalow"-fashioned dwelling with a walled courtyard, near to the high road. The Sheik had no difficulty in obtaining permission to erect a high wall of rubble from the quarries along the whole road frontage, so that—as he urged—the convicts at work in the garden would not be gazed at by passers-by, and that forbidden articles, such as tobacco, sweetmeats, liquor, and the like, should not be passed or even thrown over to them.

In due course this favourite slice of garden was safely boxed in from the public view by a wall some eight feet high, extending from the jail itself round to the jailor's house, the only entrance to it being a little wicket-gate by the side of the Sheik's backyard.

Time went on, when some envious or malicious Brahmin desirous of curry-favour with the Doctor Saheb, or whoever the Superintendent was, revealed to his amazed ears that Sheik Kassam's disciplinary system consisted in his having the most dangerous of the Chinese and Malays quietly into his backyard from the garden, and there regaling them with plenty of sweetmeats, sugar, moderate potations, aye even with female society of a peculiar sort! If Chingfoo or A-chin became unruly or saucy he could, and sometimes did, get a dozen lashes; but if these worthies behaved decently, they had their
little festival in due rotation. Poor old Sheik Kassam's character as a model jailor was gone, of course; he was dismissed, but I am glad to say with a full pension, which he did not live long to enjoy. He never could be brought to see that he had done anything wrong!

**Running: "Amôt."**

Sheik Kassam was succeeded by a stalwart young Eurasian possessed of unusual courage and resolution, the punishment book filled up and the "cat-o'-nine-tails" was in constant requisition for a time, till the worst of the convicts found that they had a man over them not to be trifled with yet never vindictive or unjust. It was during this man's incumbency that a remarkable instance occurred of the feuds which, I have above observed, are, or rather were, so common among the Straits Settlement convicts. Chang-Sing was a powerful, rather tall Chinaman from Singapore, with a good-humoured grin on his face, not half a bad fellow by any means, whose name never figured in the black book. He was a life-convict for piracy and murder. So, too, was Buddoo, a Malay, a sort of human scorpion in appearance—short, with enormously broad shoulders, bow-legged, and with a malignant scowl on him that would "sour butter-milk," as they say in Ireland. He, too, came from Singapore, and it was no doubt during some of their joint "divilries" that Buddoo's hatred of Chang-Sing was engendered. The former
came to Ratnagiri with the character of the most dangerous, incorrigible convict in the gang. No punishment deterred him, his fiendish cruelty knew no bounds; he would upset scalding water at the cooking-place over the back of an unoffending fellow-prisoner, he would drop a live coal on the man working with him at the forge, he would run sharpened bamboos into any one near him, and the more you flogged him or locked him up in the solitary cells, the more he grinned and did not care.

His intense animosity to Chang-Sing being known, they were never allowed to meet, except at general parades. Chang-Sing was mostly in the quarries. Buddoo worked in the interior of the prison at shoe-making and other leather work at which he was very expert.

The Ratnagiri Jail, designed by Major Outram, brother of the great Sir James, whose lamentable fate need not be here referred to, is peculiarly adapted for the separation of the convicts. Stone arched passages, secured by strong gates, lead from one working yard to the other, from one dormitory to the other; but there is a common stone staircase leading up from the entrance yard to the dispensary and hospital. Chang-Sing received some contusion or injury in the quarries, and was on the sick list. Buddoo must have heard of it, he ran the point of an awl into his own finger, and with this excuse was permitted to go to the dispensary at a time in the morning when he knew he would be tolerably sure of seeing Chang-Sing upstairs or some-
where. He secreted himself in an angle on the stairs, having in each hand a shoemaker's knife. Chang-Sing was coming up the steps, when Buddoo jumping on him, struck him downwards two frightful blows, one of which severed the jugular vein, while the other penetrated the lung. Brandishing his weapons and covered with blood, Buddoo made off down the passage to his working shed; but the alarm had been given, the gate was closed, and a convict warder barred his way. Him Buddoo wounded in half-a-dozen places, while the poor fellow was opening the lock. With fiendish yells and howls—the other convicts flying before him—he made for his own working corner and squatted down.

The guard promptly enough surrounded him with bayonets fixed; even then, Buddoo, springing suddenly forward, plunged one of his knives into a Sepoy's arm. At this moment the Police Superintendent, a cool, calm Scot (who subsequently rose to high office in other colonies), appeared on the scene, and hit upon the following ingenious device for taking the miscreant alive.

Buddoo was crouched in a corner of a large, open work-shed with a low, four-foot mud wall all round it by way of protection from the weather. Our canny Scot obtained a stout fishing-net from the village and had it adroitly thrown over Buddoo from the outside, the police ran in, and Buddoo jumped up like a rabbit in a snare and was easily disarmed.

I happened (in virtue of another office I held at
CATCHING HIM ALIVE.

[To face p. 221.]
the time) to be the *ex-officio* Superintendent of the jail, but I was out for a morning ride, and only arrived just in time to see Buddoo locked up, Chang-Sing and the warder dead, while the policeman was lying bandaged up, and sweepers were mopping up the blood.

In my official report to the Inspector-General, while felicitating the canny Scot, I ventured to hint that, had I been present myself, I should probably have ordered the guard to load with ball, given Buddoo two or three minutes by my watch to throw his knives forward, and on his failing to do so, should have shot him like a rat.

I was gravely censured for the idea, but I think that even now, under similar circumstances, with a life-convict—a pirate and murderer from the first, who had just murdered two other men and wounded a third, I should certainly cheat the gibbet of its due rather than risk another life, or another wound to any one.
A Convict Joker.

A somewhat comic incident that occurred later at the same prison on the coast may be found amusing to my readers and a little refreshing also after the above sanguinary tale.

The Senior Assistant-Judge was again in official charge of the jail, a gentleman who died at Ratnagiri some years subsequently, beloved and regretted by all. The jail was about half full of the criminal population of the district, when some outbreak occurred among the Waghiris, a semi-barbarous tribe near distant and sacred Dwarka. Drafts of prisoners, made in the so-called insurrection were sent down to Ratnagiri, to the infinite disgust of the Civil Surgeon, who speedily found skin diseases of various loathsome forms appearing in his hitherto nearly empty Jail Hospital.

Towards the end of May, just before the monsoon closes the sea traffic, it moved the Government at Bombay to send down another draft of genuine Bombay jail-birds, with whom the House of Correction and the City Jail were inconveniently crowded. It was my duty to receive these gentry on their debarkation from a Shepherd's steamer, and to search them then and there. I may mention, without in any way intending to cast reflection on the Bombay Jail authorities, that there was scarcely a man who had not something contraband, such as tobacco or hemp decoction (Ganja) or opium, con-
sealed somewhere about his person. One nimble youth had even three currency notes of rupees fifty each stowed away neatly under, or rather in, his armpits. They were a motley crew, indeed—the sweepings of a large city—burglars, common thieves and pickpockets, swindlers of all castes and classes, many of them with fifteen, eighteen—one, I remember, with twenty-two corrections standing to his credit. They did not contribute to the discipline of the jail, as may well be imagined.

However, weeks rolled on, and they shook down fairly well, for "Jupiter Pluvius" at Ratnagiri during the months of June and July is calculated to damp the most ardent spirit. But the skin diseases spread rapidly, and the Doctor, in despair, recommended that there should be weekly sea-bathing parades; this the Senior Assistant-Judge approved. There was a peculiarly suitable site for the purpose not far from the jail on the beach just below the Adawlat (the Judge's residence), where, a tidal river flows out and meets the sea, forming an impassable bar throughout the Rainy Season. Accordingly, every Sunday morning the convicts were marched down in batches to the brink of the creek, where, surrounded by a strong cordon of armed Police, they were ordered to undress and bathe. Meantime, a boat conveyed half-a-dozen Police to the opposite shore, lest any adventurous spirit might swim over and try to escape. The whole scene lay in panoramic view from the verandah of the Senior Assistant-Judge's house above; and the residents of the station
while taking "Chota Hazri," or early Sunday breakfast, with our friend, could watch all that went on, and, with binoculars, easily discern the features of the bathers below.

Most of the convicts, of course delighted in the swim and there were many very expert swimmers among them; but the Waghiris seemed to have a mortal aversion to cold water. It is said that the Aboriginal black of Australia is the filthiest human being under the sun. Hottentots may run them close, no doubt, and the noble Red man of North America, as I smelt him years ago, must he bad to beat, but I would cheerfully back those Waghiris against them all! However, after being forced for several Sundays running into the water, they too became more approachable. The general health of the prison steadily improved; our worthy Civil Surgeon went about rubbing his hands, while the jail consumption of sulphur ointment went down to next to zero.

One lovely Sunday morning, during a break in the monsoon, the Civil Surgeon, myself, and two or three others were as usual up in the Adawlat verandah, when suddenly a violent commotion was visible among the bathers below—Policemen and bathers running over the sand towards the "surging bar." One of us fixing his binocular, exclaimed that a convict was being swept out to sea and was struggling in the surf. We all scampered down, except our host, who had to get something on besides his pyjamas; he was a wary man, and
bethought him to take a thoroughly good look at the drowning man with his "Dollond" before he left the verandah to join us, which he did (to our surprise) very leisurely just as the supposed corpse was carried ashore by a couple of fishermen who risked their lives to recover it.

"Stand back, every one." said he, "the rascal is only shamming! I've been watching all his antics in the water. He was either playing the fool, or bent on trying to escape! Examine him, Doctor!"

A very few moments elapsed, when the Doctor rose up, laughing, and pronounced that the fellow (whose name, by the way, was Bindoo) was as well as any of us, and was shamming dead—he was not even exhausted!

"Get up, Bindoo," quoth the Judge. No movement. "Lift him up," said the Doctor. Down dropped the body, all anyhow!

"Bindoo, if you don't get up and walk back to jail, you will be flogged!" Bindoo never stirred, beyond giving vent to a few spasmodic gasps.

"Very well, Bindoo! I shall send for the triangles." A policeman was accordingly sent off to have the triangles and the "cat" brought down by a couple of convicts. All the time, while we were laughing and chatting and tipping the two fishermen, Bindoo never moved a limb, though it was easy enough to perceive his efforts not to show his breathing.

The little cortège with the triangles, and a stalwart warder "cat" in hand, in due course
arrived, and the triangles were set up close to Bindoo.

"Now, Doctor," quoth our judicial friend, "be good enough to examine the man carefully, and tell me if he is in good health, and can bear a dozen lashes."

"Sound as a roach—would bear twenty, easy."

"Well, Bindoo," said the Judge in Maratta, "I'm going to tie you up and give you a dozen lashes if you don't get up this instant."

A slight squirm of Bindoo's body, his eyes opened slightly, and ejaculating, "Yih burra Zoolum hai!" (this is big bullying). Bindoo sullenly rose to his feet and shook himself, and after muttering occasionally that he would appeal to the "Burra Recorder Saheb" (the High Court Judges), he went off quietly to the jail, being made to take his turn now and again at carrying the triangles.

Poor Bindoo! He never saw the sea again till he had served out his sentence. We afterwards ascertained that the man—who could give points to any London professor of diving—was perhaps the most noted swimmer and diver on the coast. Opinions differed, but my own conviction is that he was simply having a lark and had no real intention of escaping.
CHAPTER XXII.

LOAFERS.

PART I.

Many of my observant readers will probably at some time or other in their up-country life have seen a crow in the course of his predatory wanderings, when he has discovered the craftily-hidden nest of some outlaying guinea-hen. With what ecstasy does he proceed to scratch an egg out into the open; with what vigour does he drive his pickaxe-like beak at the shell, fondly expecting that, like other eggs, he will pierce and break it, and be speedily devouring the luscious yolk therein! Dig! dig! Peck! peck! The smooth, hard brown shell, to his amazement, resists his beak, and the egg rolls a little way off. He tries another, and yet another, equally in vain. "The devil's in the eggs," quoth he, as he hops to one of them, and, steadying himself on one leg, tries *to grasp the egg with the claw of the other, with a view to delivering a deadly dig at the apex. No go! The egg from its peculiar shape is not to be firmly grasped, and his beak is useless. Beside himself with rage, he tries to lift
it, with a view to carrying it up on to some neighbouring branch, whence he proposes to drop it on the ground, and then! But either the egg is too heavy for him, or he cannot grasp it firmly. In his despair—caw! caw! caw!—he summons to the spot all the crows in the vicinity, and they rake out that nest: they all try with beak and claw, but
the "divil" an egg can they fracture. Meantime their clamour has attracted the attention of the cook-boy, the gardener, or the herd-boy, who, bethinking himself of a possible snake, hastens, stick in hand; to the spot and promptly pouches the whole setting.

Much as great a puzzle was, and perhaps still is, the dusty, dirty British loafer to the up-country policeman or to the village Patel. They do not know what on earth to do with him. The man had probably slouched in the village from nowhere in particular soon after the sun became hot, and had either betaken himself at once to the village rest-house, or to some out-lying, shady-looking shed, extending himself full length, with a log or his scanty bundle for a pillow. A mighty serviceable-looking shillelagh reposes beside him. The village curs bark at him—from a distance, bien entendu. The village children, leaving their dung pies half kneaded, peep in fearfully at him. Two or three women, carrying water-pots on their heads, pass by, glance at him, and hurry on, gathering the folds of their "saris"* over their faces, and muttering a few words of prayer for protection to their favourite deity. The trusty Mhar, or village watchman, soon hears of him, comes and looks, and makes off to report that a "Saheb" is lying asleep or drunk at such a place.

For none of these things does the loafer care one jot. He would call to the children to come and play with him, but he is too lazy, too hot, perhaps

* Woman's dress.
too tired; besides, he knows well that he must keep quiet, "lie low" for the present, and that it will all come right presently. Sure enough, the Police Patel of the village soon makes appearance accompanied by a shopkeeper or two and ever attended by the trusty Mhar. Loafer lazily lifts himself on his elbow, and then something like the following conversation ensues:—

"Saheb! Salaam," salutes the Patel.

"Slam! old chap!" says the loafer who always has a very fair smattering of the worst Hindoostani at his command.

"Does the Saheb want a guide?" ("Saheb Bhoomia mangta?"") asks the Patel, whose first anxiety is to get the white man out of his village as speedily as possible.

"Nay, nay, old fellow, 'tag gya sô...e mangta' (tired, want to sleep)—'peechee jaega'" (will go afterwards).

"Bhôt atcha, Saheb, aur khooch mangta?" (Very well, Saheb, do you want anything else?)

"Here, Dekho, old man! I'm beastly hungry and thirsty, don't you see? ('Bhôt bhookā, Samja? Kooch bi do.') Give me something," slapping his stomach and opening his mouth significantly.

A little confabulation between the Patel and his companions, and the Patel says, "Atcha Saheb—ham bèch dega" (All right, Saheb, I'll send), and makes off while Loafer, sitting up, calls after him, "Right you are, old cock! only be a little 'jeldie'." (quick).

Loafer composes himself to sleep, cursing the flies
and creation generally, or if he has a little "baccy," he sits up and smokes, spitting around quite genially.

After a time the Mhar again appears, with a pot of milk, a goodly platter of chow-pattis (unleavened cakes), perhaps a hard-boiled egg or two, a bunch of plantains—possibly even with a small piece of native-grown tobacco. Loafer eats and drinks his fill, lazily amusing himself by throwing pieces of bread to the village dogs who crowd round to fight over the morsels. He then betakes himself to solid repose, and sleeps the sleep of the just till evening.

In the meantime the Patel has not been idle: a messenger has been sent over to the nearest Police Post with a letter reporting that "a 'sojer' (white soldier), 'not a Saheb,' had arrived in the village, they were afraid, and wanted a Sepoy to come—God knows what might happen!" The blue-coat preserver of the peace duly armed with his musket, probably turns up in the evening and proceeds to interrogate our Loafer.

"Where has the Saheb come from?"
"From Bombay."
"Where are you going?"
"To Nagpore, damn yer!"
"Is the Saheb in a 'Phalton' (Regiment), or does he belong to the big Railway?"
"Phalton be d——d; going to a 'jaga' (employment) at Nagpur."
"But, Saheb, this is not on the right road; Saheb
should have gone by train from Pimpalgaum” (mentioning the nearest railway station).

“Tell yer I won’t! Shall go as I choose; I ain’t done anything!”

“Very well, Saheb! I shall report to the Burra (Big) Saheb.”

“All right! Report, and be d——d!”

Exit blue-coat—Loafer contemptuously expectorating and “darning” the “whole biling of peelers.” Blue-coat advises the Patel to let Loafer have some more food at night and to give him a few bundles of straw to lie upon, but on no account to let him have any liquor. Blue-coat then presently pays a visit to the liquor shop and solemnly warns the owner of the pains and penalties he will incur by supplying the white man with anything to drink.

Loafer has a capital supper with perhaps some “curry bhat” (curry and rice) provided by a charitable shopkeeper: he may or may not (usually he does not) try it on at the liquor shop: he has a splendid night, and by the time the village is astir he is well on his leisurely way to some other village. He does not make long marches, Loafer doesn’t: six or seven miles is far enough for him, with many little halts while he admires the scenery, or finds himself interested in the field work going on around him. An ordinary irrigation well with its Persian wheel and ramp has fascination for him and at such spots he is pretty sure to get a few plantains to eat, or a stick of sugar-cane to chew. When the sugar-cane is crushing he is in clover, for it is de rigueur with
the hospitable farmer then to give a plenteous drink of the fresh juice to all comers. At such times then he often passes a week or more in the neighbourhood of the Sugar Presses, supplied with abundant “Kirbee,” or straw, to make a wigwam of by day and to sleep upon at night, always generously fed by the farmer and his people. At such times he has even been supposed—mirabile dictu—to make himself useful in some sort of easy, lazy way!—but these reports require confirmation!

As a rule Loafer never steals—rarely drinks anything stronger than milk or fresh toddy juice; he is never much more truculent in his manner than I have above depicted him. Commonly, he is a mild, good-tempered soul, behaving well to the people and usually a favourite with the children. If he finds his quarters comfortable and stops on he soon becomes friends with the village elders; his “pidgeon” Hindoostani suffices to make himself fairly comprehensible and he is absolutely insatiable with his questions. “Bhôt bāt karta” (He talks an awful lot), said a Patel to me once. “He asks questions all day long. Is he going to be a missionary, or what is he, Saheb?”

The career of such a loafer as I have described was often a long one; many of them, to my knowledge, travelled over the greater part of India without a four-anna bit they could call their own, behaving decently and being right hospitably treated wherever they went. They did no harm to any one so the law did not much trouble about them. The villagers
did not particularly object to them, only they were mighty glad to see the last of them, especially if they were sickly, for it would have been a terrible calamity if any white man died in the village precincts.

Truculent or drunken loafers, on the other hand, had not a very prolonged run, though even to them—principally, no doubt, from fear, but partly owing to the innate kindliness of our Aryan brethren—

"THEY WOS VERY GOOD TO ME, THEY WOS."

unstinted hospitality was shown. These ruffians, who usually had a bad record, were soon followed up and "run in." In the end they naturally gravitated to the large cities and to the Presidency towns, where they were kept tolerably under control, as I shall hereafter relate.

Loafers, of course, have each his own history, which it is not difficult to trace. Occasionally, but rarely, it is a very pitiful one. Ordinarily, the record of the ruffian is that of a ruffian from start to
finish; thief, or pickpocket, or village ne'er-do-well in his boyhood, he has enlisted, or gone to sea, has been discharged with ignominy, or run away; or has worked his way out to the "Injies" on the off-chance of getting employment on the Railways; or he has got employment and been kicked out; drink and dissipation in the large towns have ruined him, body and soul:—desperation finally drives him into the interior where he hopes for peace, and has heard that the "niggers" are very kind. "They wos very good to me, they wos," in the very words used by poor "Jo" of "Tom-all-alone."* was almost the last sentence a poor dying wretch uttered to me once.

The record of the harmless, objectless, plausible loafer is, on the other hand, nearly always a simple record of the most incorrigible idleness. "Feckless" lads, they drifted rather than lived; their instincts, on the whole, were good and kept them from drink, riotous living, and dishonesty, mostly possessed of fair intelligence—some of them even cunning craftsmen, easily able to earn a good livelihood if they chose, but they never did choose—never overcame apathy—lived only for the day, caring nothing for what the morrow might bring. These, as they drifted aimlessly up-country, became imbued with Bohemian habits—they loved the open air, the freedom of their useless lives—caring nought, so long as they were not molested—well fed, they knew they always would be.

* See 'Bleak House,' by Charles Dickens.
Of both these types, with a large admixture of the criminal and semi-criminal classes, is mainly composed that vast army of the "Great unemployed"—the bane of the Home Secretary—the dread of London and every large city in Great Britain—at once the disgrace and the curse of their country.

On one memorable occasion, however, it was my lot to encounter a most mysterious loafer who belonged, so far as I have ever been able to ascertain, to neither of these types. It was in this way.

Just before the Pension Pay Frauds discovered by Colt, which I have related at the commencement of this series of papers, I rode out with Colt to a "Ghaut" road, or incline, which he was making about half-way between Dapoolie and Khèd. He was substituting a fairly practicable cart-road, with a gradient of about 1 ft. in 30 ft., for the zigzag bullock track that had existed for ages with a worn track about 1 in 10. There were two or three hundred men and women at work, and a good deal of drilling and blasting going on; so, while Colt descended to inspect, I too dismounted and seated on a comfortable boulder viewed the fair landscape below.

Suddenly I made out what was clearly a Briton's straw hat far below me, the wearer of it gradually hove in sight. It was a steep climb, so I had ample time to take stock of him as he paused now and again to mop his brows and to gaze over the valley through which he had just passed. He was a
red—healthy red—Englishman of about forty, very decently clad as to his understandings, carrying a white coat and a small bundle over his shoulders; in his right hand one of those long alpenstock-shaped canes peculiar to Kanara, the whole topped up by a stoutly-made and very broad-brimmed straw hat. He was above the average height and very powerfully built, with curly red-brown hair and large moustache, and a tremendous red beard flowing to his waist. A fine open countenance, but very resolute-looking mouth, completes the description of as fine a looking specimen of the British race as one would wish to see.

I knew every Englishman in the District, and, indeed, there was not one living within one hundred miles eastward of the place I sat upon; so, while he was toiling up the ascent I ran my mind over the descriptions of various deserters then wanted, but he was clearly not one of them. At last he topped the rise a few yards from me and very civilly doffed his straw hat, mopping his head while he bade me "Good morning, sir."

"Good morning," I said; "you've had a pretty stiff climb; sit down and rest a bit."

He complied, observing—

"Got a bit of baccy with you, sir?"

I had, and in my holster also a big flask of cold tea, of which we partook together. Presently he said—

"Tain't much of a climb after those I've made beyond," pointing generally south and eastward.
“Ah!” quoth I, “you’ve had a longish tramp then! Where from, where to?”

“That’s tellings,” he replied, and seemed to become at once what North-countrymen call “main surly.”

At this moment Colt reappeared, his inspection over. I tipped him a wink (to use a vulgarism)—he too sat down and we tried hard to pump our friend, but all in vain; he would only repeat, over and over again, that he was going his own way and wasn’t going to be stopped by any one.

“All right, my friend,” said Colt, “no one wants to stop you; but, you see, we are the Magistrate and Police Superintendent of the district and we’ve got to see that in these troublous times all Europeans are safe. Now, be the sensible man you are, and come along and put up a few miles hence with a grand old English Pensioner who has seen service, as I’m sure you have!”

“An old English Pensioner! that will I!” said the man. “Is’t far from here, for I’m main faint?”

We told him it was only two miles off at the very side of the road he was travelling.

The grand old Pensioner was Daniel Monk, Pensioned Conductor of the Ordnance Department, the old recluse of whom I made mention in the second part of my Pensions’ Fraud tale. We told our friend—who said his name was Johnson (good useful name, Johnson!)—that we would ride on and tell Monk to have breakfast ready, and that we ourselves hoped to see him later on. Item: we had friend Johnson
carefully watched and followed at a distance by certain Mhars we could trust. He went, however, straight on, and was received at his gate by good old Monk who had a hot bath and breakfast ready for him. We called in the evening and were concerned to find that Johnson had a smart attack of ague, to which he said he was subject. This kept him at Monk's for some days. In the meantime I had ascertained from Mr. Forjet, the far-famed Commissioner of Police in Bombay, that he, Johnson, was not among the list of those "wanted" for desertion or anything else.

Monk had pumped him all he knew, but without much result. All he could tell us was that he was tattooed on the chest with an anchor and a heart and that he certainly had been with Peel's Naval Battery at Lucknow, that he was going to Bombay, and was intent on going the shortest road through Habsán, the territory of the Nawab of Jinjira, with whom the British Government was at that time at loggerheads, and where the crew of an English surveying vessel had just been stoned when landing for water.

Colt and I were decided that Johnson must not go by that route: Johnson was equally determined he would go that way and no other.

"Law, bless you," he said, "nobody will ill-treat me. Why, they've fed me well, and forwarded me on from village to village all the way from south of Cochin, right through the Portagee country (Goa), and wouldn't take an anna from me, though
I offered it! I've quite enough money, gentlemen, about me—let me have my own way, for God's sake!"

However, it was finally decided that Colt should take his passage to Bombay in a cabin "pattimar" (native vessel), such as usually worked in those days between Hurree and Bombay.

Johnson came aboard all right and the vessel was to sail at early dawn, but after we left him Johnson persuaded the "Tindal," or native captain to put him ashore "for something he had forgotten." He never turned up again, and the ship sailed without him. Hurree is a short eleven miles from Bankote at the boundary of the Habsan territory. Johnson walked over in the course of the night, persuaded the ferryman to ferry him over, and from that moment was lost to us.

The Political Department was set in motion to gain tidings of him, and it was found that he got up as far as Jinjira (the capital of Habsan), and there shipped on a native vessel bound for Bombay. Mr. Forjett subsequently ascertained for me that a man answering to his description had shipped as mate on some square-rigged craft bound for the Mauritius.

If Johnson be still alive and should by any chance read this little tale, he is earnestly requested to communicate with the writer, who is sincerely desirous of knowing his history and especially how he fared in the Habsan territory. He would not, I am sure, have taken ship there if he had found the people as hospitable as those farther south.
Johnson was of just the stuff to succeed in any of our colonies, and, maybe, he is now Blank Johnson, Esquire, a grey-headed Ex-Colonial Legislator and a millionaire, in which case I pray his pardon for making public this little page of his eventful history.
CHAPTER XXIII.

LOAVERS.

PART II.

It will, of course, be understood that my attempt to delineate a loafer's life in the preceding chapter related rather to old times—before his existence had forced itself on public notice, and it became absolutely necessary to tackle him seriously—in other words, legislatively.

It was about the beginning of the great speculation mania that set in in Bombay in 1862–63—a mania to which, I believe, if facts and figures were compared, the South Sea Scheme would sink into insignificance—that the loafer came to the front. How many are alive still to remember those silver times? When Reclamation schemes turned everybody's brain—when "Back Bays" fluctuated between twenty and forty-five thousand rupees premium—when "Mazagons" and "Colabas" followed suit—when there was a new Bank or a new "Financial" almost every day—when it was a common thing, in strolling from your office to the dear old Indian Navy Club, to stop a moment in the seething Share Market and ask
your broker, "Well, Mr. B., or Bomanji! what's doing?" "Oh, sir! So-and-so Financials are rising—they say Premchund is buying." "Ah! well, just buy me fifty or a hundred shares" (as your inclination prompted you). You went to your "tiffin," or luncheon, at that memorable long table; you ordered a pint of champagne—no one ever drank anything but champagne in those days—you tried to get as near as possible to Doctor D. or poor T., the presiding geniuses of the meal, to obtain an "allotment" of a certain toast, which T. was justly celebrated for. Getting this, you were filled with exultation, for it was, and with reason, regarded as the precursor of other and more lucrative "allotments." Four o'clock saw you on your way back to office, and you stopped to ask your broker how your "financials" stood. "Rising slowly, sir!" would be the answer; with a calm conscience you said, "Then please sell mine," and the morrow brought you a cheque for fifty, a hundred, or two hundred rupees, as the case might be.

Why does not some abler pen than mine give an historical account of this great mania? When fortunes were made and lost in a few days; when the fatal telegram came announcing the peace between the North and South American States, and all our houses of cards came tumbling about our ears—when Back Bays (of which I was the happy possessor of one) rose to half a lakh premium—when "allotments" were sent to you "willy nilly," mostly worth some money—when poor Doctor D. ...
and Mr. T. were millionaires on paper! Many a pathetic story could be related of those times, and of the awful crisis afterwards; and of none could anything be more pathetic related than that of my old friend, Mr. T. I do not know if he is still in the land of the living. If he is, he will pardon me. He was no empty-bagged speculator, he had a handsome fortune when the mania set in, he had a lucrative appointment, which he gave up in his satious belief in the golden era which had dawned upon Bombay, and he was left by many a man whom he raised from poverty to affluence—how?

It was at this time, when the majority of citizens at Bombay were just as mad as the Ryots (cultivators) in the cotton districts, with their silver-tyred wheels, that Bombay, magnet-like, attracted "Loafer." From far and near they emigrated to Bombay as to an Eldorado. They infested the streets, they wandered about the suburbs, they became (the best of them) supervisors over the gaugs of labourers on the Reclamation works. They offered their valuable services as occasional "gardeners" on Malabar Hill, and many thousands of beautiful rose trees and other shrubs did they destroy! Foolish people squandered money on them, as a natural consequence, "Loafer" became a public nuisance, and the newspapers of the day teemed with complaints about them. The quasi-philanthropists, the easy-going charitable people, shelled out rupees to them without any sort of
inquiry. Loafer waxed fat; he took to drink, he became uproarious—occasionally he did a little business in frightening ladies left alone for the day, and at last he became an excrescence that could no longer be endured.

The Government of Sir Seymour Fitzgerald, compelled to take the matter up, convened a commission to "inquire and to recommend" in the usual flatulent parlance of a Government Resolution. The Chief Magistrate, Mr. Barton, was the President. Sir Frank Sonter, the Commissioner of Police, and Mr. Gompertz, long connected with the Strangers' and Sailors' Homes, were two of the members. I will not attempt to describe the fun related of this Commission, partly because some of the Commission may be still alive, partly because I should be writing of matters of only local and temporary interest. In the result, a Vagrancy Act was drafted and adopted, and is now, so far as I am aware, the law which governs "Loafer." By it a Vagrant Ward was established in the Byculla Jail, and was very soon full of loafers of all sorts and kinds, very disgusted with themselves and humanity in general, and the curtailment of the liberty of the subject in their own persons. The Act also provided for the transmission of vagrants up-country to Bombay, and for their compulsory deportation under certain circumstances.

A few years after this occurred a most laughable incident of the up-country loafer. To relate it, I must go back some years. In 1857 or 1858, when
Lord Elphinstone was pushing every available white soldier to the front, there was a half regiment or so of the 33rd (Duke of Wellington's Own) retained at Poonah. It had to take the guard over the Civil Treasury, a place where there was always a goodly stock of rupees. One night, with these Europeans on guard, a very large sum of cash in bags disappeared. I believe it was six thousand rupees, in three bags of two thousand rupees each. There was not the faintest clue to the theft—nor has there ever been to this hour, though I must confess I should much have liked to inspect the books of certain well-known and highly-respected native bankers of that city.

Time went on, when one day, many years afterwards, Sir Frank Souter received an official intimation from Nagpoor, requesting him to send up a European officer and good subordinates to take charge of a certain European "loafer" there apprehended, who declared that he was one of the 33rd regimental guard on duty on the night of the robbery, knew all about the crime, and where the treasure was still concealed. Sir Frank complied, and the loafer in question was taken safely down to Kalian, and thence up to Poonah. There he was supplied with a fatigue party, and they dug here, and they dug there, as he directed them. It is true, no doubt, that Poonah—the Wanowrie part of it especially—had immensely changed since 1858. Loafer alleged this change as his chief difficulty in "spotting" the place where the
treasure had been buried. The men worked away indefatigably wherever he said. About 11 A.M., when the sun was getting mighty hot, and the fatigue party mighty thirsty, Loafer threw himself on the ground with roars of laughter, vociferating, "I've only been making hares of yer! I never was in the 33rd, and I know just nothing. Years ago I saw an account in a newspaper of this 'ere robbery, and I thought I'd have a bit of a lark with it some day, and get down to Bombay."

By telegraph and by letter it was ascertained that this joker had never been in the Army at all; as a matter of fact, he was, in former years, a railway employé. He scored all round, for he could not be proceeded against. He got to Bombay, and was comfortably deported in due course to England.

No account of Bombay loafers would be complete without a reference to the harmless old fellow whose death, I think, I read of two or three years ago. For a quarter of a century or more, Collins, I believe he was named, was to be found somewhere or other squatted in some favourite nook in the Fort, his preference being for some lane opposite Watson's Grand Hotel. Many of us thought that he was an Armenian, and his features favoured this supposition. He never solicited alms—in fact, he never spoke, but there was a mute appeal in his sad, worn-looking eyes, a dignity in his grand face, with its long grey beard flowing to his waist, which attracted the passer-by, and made him forget the squalid
appearance of this curious old fellow. Many a coin was silently passed into his hands by European and Native, and as silently received, to be immediately put away in some place of concealment in the bundle of indescribable rags which made up his clothes. He was popularly supposed to have lost his wits in his youth, after some great domestic affliction, but there was nothing in his eye that betokened a weak intellect—at any rate, he was quite harmless, and
was officially tolerated by the Police. To what lair he retreated at night is best known to them. When he died, if I remember aright, a quite respectable sum of money was found about his person.

In conclusion of my brief account of loafers, and in support of my contention that Natives are wonderfully generous and kind to the mean white, it will be appropriate that I should recall a very touching incident that occurred during the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to Bombay. The popular gaze was then towards royalty; the popular mind was almost entirely occupied with the great pageants that for a whole week followed each other in quick succession, so that this particular incident may not have been known to or noted by many persons.

Among the Political agents, each with his particular Rajah or Nawab in tow, who were summoned to Bombay for Lord Northbrook’s and, afterwards, for the Royal visit, was Mr. C—–, the gentleman who, I believe, was the first Municipal Commissioner of Bombay, the man who built the Markets called after his name. It was fully five years since his connection with the City had ceased, and certainly neither market-dealers nor stall-holders had the remotest expectation that he could ever do anything for them again. It was notorious, however, that they had on more than one occasion when he visited the market given him quite an ovation.

Now, it will be remembered that on a certain day, the 12th of November, 1875, it was arranged that
as a part of the programme a "jolly good dinner" should be given to all the soldiers and sailors then in the City. The number of these who actually sat down ultimately was over two thousand.

While the preparations for this Gargantuan meal were progressing, a self-constituted Committee of the market-dealers asked the worthy Superintendent, Mr. Patrick Higgins, to co-operate with them, and to send Mr. C—- a sort of "round-robin," which was to the effect that they saw and heard on every side the extensive arrangements being made to banquet every one but the poor white man, such as the vagrants and the European convicts in the jails, the inmates of the Strangers' and other Homes, and the poor pensioners. To show, therefore, their gratitude to Mr. C—- in a way that he might accept, and that would be specially acceptable to him, they had determined on the same day, and at the same hour as the soldiers and sailors were to be feasted on the Esplanade, to give a good square meal to all the poor whites in Bombay. Details were left to Mr. C—-, and they bound themselves to comply with any indents for meat, vegetables, bread, and groceries that Mr. Higgins, the Market Superintendenent, should make. The American Ice Company gave ice *ad lib.*, and mineral waters in abundance were given by sundry other firms.

Not being on duty that day, I. obtained permission to accompany the Rev. J—-n R—-n (who, I think, was out as a special correspondent for some newspaper) and Mr. C—- to all the
places I have named above, where over one hundred and twenty unfortunate "mean whites" partook of at least as good a dinner as was given to Tommy Atkins and Jack Tar on the Esplanade. At each place a few words were said to the men, many of whom were visibly affected.

Yet it is commonly asserted that our Aryan brethren are destitute of the virtue of gratitude.
CHAPTER XXIV.

RECEIVERS OF STOLEN GOODS AND COINERS.

Receivers.

I have as yet said little or nothing about receivers of stolen goods, or "fences," as they were called in former days—and still are occasionally—in London. I doubt if the King of the Fences—Fagin the unforgettable—combining the receipt of any and everything purloined with the careful culture of youthful criminals, is, or ever has been, known in the flesh in the far East. I do not remember that General Charles Hervey in either of his publications mentions one. I myself never encountered one. The education of thieves, pickpockets, burglars, and dacoits is almost a caste matter—a mere question of heredity. Thief, burglar, or dacoit follows the calling of his forefathers, stimulated by unwritten traditions, excited to emulation of the deeds of their elders around them. There is no place for a general practitioner like the accursed Jew.

Take away the educational side of this double-dyed scoundrel, and there remains but the mere common-place rôle of the receiver, and of these in
India, perhaps more than in any land, there has always been an *embarras de richesse.* Among the petty traders, Waniyas, Goozars, Marwarris, and the like, it will scarcely be libellous to say that ninety-five per cent. have at some time or other in their lives been guilty of receiving stolen property, whether by way of purchase or pawn deposits, knowing, or having the best of reasons for supposing, it had been stolen. Even among the very well-to-do of these castes, and among the Brahmin and all Hindoo sowkars or bankers, there are not many who have not yielded to temptation when it has assailed them on a sufficiently large scale.

The nearest approach to Fagin, and by far the most dangerous to the public good, are those petty traders found in or near a cantonment where British troops are quartered. Even Rudyard Kipling will admit that there are some Tommy Atkinses in every regiment who are hopelessly bad, who were well known to the Police in England before they took the Queen's shilling, and that there are certain corps, very gallant in action, which contain, probably by reason of their recruiting-grounds being in tainted towns, a very large admixture of the semi-criminal classes.

Men of this stamp are not many weeks or days at their new quarters before they make acquaintance of Saloo Meeya, the rag and bottle and old iron collector; of Virchund, the obliging and obsequious Marwarri usurer; of Chimmapa, the tailor, and especially of Pedro, the half-caste Portuguese, where
"best Europe" goods to eat and withal to drink are always obtainable on the easiest terms. A sort of freemasonry is speedily established between these worthies, and they stick to each other through thick and thin. Very soon an officer loses his watch, and if we were to follow Private Peterson into the Bazaar next morning, we should see him loiter about till he gives, unperceived, some signal at a certain shop, strolling off, whistling, to sneak round to the back for a brief interview with Saloo, or Virchund, or Pedro. Private Peterson would then come out wiping his moustache, and would be somewhat flush of cash for a time, while the Major's watch would be well on its way to Bombay or Poona, or elsewhere, in charge of some safe hand, long before anything in the shape of search was instituted. Suspicion would fall on the wretched "boy" or body-servant of the Major, probably just picked up in the Bazaar. He would be "led a life" for a time, perhaps be turned out of camp in the end, while the Mess would inveigh against the dishonesty of native servants. *

Stolen gems and pistols, jewellery and clothing, are just as easily disposed of through the same agency. Rupees in cash Peterson and Company promptly pouch, but bank or currency notes only find a market with the Marwarri and his class.

I had been but a few months in the country when

* * *

*Nota Bene.—To Congress-Wallas and their puppet M.P.'s. To all globe-trotters and all belittlers of their countrymen abroad! English officers do not habitually call their servants "niggers"—dammed or otherwise—in India!
I was sadly victimised in the matter of notes. I had just been down from Satara to Bombay to pass my first examination, and, having come off with flying colours, easily obtained a month's leave, which I proposed to pass in Poona with dear old "Paddy" Hunt of the 78th Highlanders, a friend of my family. Before leaving Bombay I drew out 600 rupees from my agents, being the balance still to my credit of a liberal donation with which my father had started me in India. It was my intention to pick up a second nag cheap if I could, while sojourning with the 78th. I was advised to take up six Bank of England notes for £10 each, as being safest to carry, and likely to realise a good exchange up country. I stowed the precious documents in a brand-new despatch box, appending the key to my watch-chain. The second day after my arrival at Paddy Hunt's I opened the despatch box to get out a note, when, to my horror, I discovered that only one note remained out of the ten. The thief had had the grace to leave me one!

Hunt, as may be imagined, was very sore about the matter. He suspected my native servant, who was a man of the highest character, and had been all his life before in the service of a relation who had just retired, and left him to me. I suspected Hunt's soldier-servant, a particularly plausible Irishman of the name of Callaghan (the 78th Highlanders was half Irish in those days). It became so unpleasant, and moreover I had only just enough left to pay my way to Satara, that I cancelled my leave,
and shook the dust of the little house at Ghorpoorie off my feet.

About three months afterwards, I heard from Paddy Hunt that, in consequence of some angry words between two women in the Regiment, inquiry had again been taken up about my missing Bank notes. It appeared that "the immaculate Callaghan was "carrying on" with a young woman in the Regiment. She met a braw Scotch woman, wife of a corporal, near the Canteen. The twain had been having "sups," and got to quarrelling, when the Scotch-woman taunted Callaghan's light-o'-love about Callaghan, adding, "that the vera claes she wore were bought from that puir English laddie's notes." Orderly Room was succeeded by Court of Inquiry, and although legal evidence was not forthcoming, no reasonable doubt remained that Callaghan had opened my despatch box by the very simple process (which I forgot to mention before) of driving out the pin that ran down the hinge at the back, and that he had disposed of the notes to a certain Marwarri shopkeeper in the neighbouring Military Bazaar.

The notes, however, were never traced. Why Callaghan should have left me one of them, except out of pity for the "puir English laddie," I cannot conceive. Anyhow, I was very grateful to him for his forbearance. It was believed that Callaghan himself only got fifty rupees out of the Marwarri! In the result, Callaghan went back to duty in the ranks, with a black mark against his name, and the Marwarri was turned out of the cantonments.
Most regiments in India, I believe, maintain a kind of Detective Police of their own in their Bazaar, and they are tolerably efficient in preventing drunken broils, but there should be a Civil Detective agency also working secretly with the Adjutant. A Commanding Officer cannot be too particular as to whom he allows to settle down in his Regimental Bazaar, for it is a lodestone which attracts all the most dangerous and dishonest characters in the country-side—at least one-half of the crime committed by or attributed to Tommy Atkins is instigated by these rascals. Then, again, it is a trite saying that if there were no receivers there would be no thieves.

COINERS.

Coiners in India, though professionals, are of any caste; more commonly they are of the "Sonar," or Goldsmith caste. They range throughout India more or less. In the Western Presidency they have never abounded, by reason probably of the great caution evinced by the masses of the people in taking over money for payment. Most of my readers must have noticed that, be the poor man who he may, year gardener, your coolie (labourer), hired by the day or hour, he carefully rings each coin on a stone before he finally ties it up in the corner of his garment. I have often seen the beaters out shooting thus test the four-anna bits I gave them. It is an irritating detail to any one, but specially to an official who
knows that he can have no cash that has not come direct from the Government Treasury. But, after all, it is only natural, and the reasonable inference is, that there must be much more base coin in circulation than is generally supposed.

At page 130 of the second volume of General Hervey’s admirable* book entitled ‘Some Records of Crime,’ he gives a graphic account of the process adopted in making false coin, which I shall take the liberty to transcribe, omitting certain technical expressions, which would be unintelligible to the English reader.

“The moulds used are formed from unshaked lime, and a kind of yellow clay, finely powdered and sifted. This, when moistened and well worked into a kind of putty, is pressed round about the piece of money to be imitated; the mould, thus rudely formed, is then pared all round of superfluous stuff, and is placed within some charcoal embers till it gets baked. It is then taken out, and when cooled enough its rim is carefully incised all round and the enclosed coin released, leaving an exact impression of both faces of it within the hardened amalgam. The two parts are next joined together with an adhesive stuff, and molten tin poured into the hollow interior of the mould just formed through a small aperture deftly drilled through the rim, which, when sufficiently cooled, is taken out. When lo! the thing is done, the false money ready to hand, it only remaining to smooth away the metal protruding through the drilled hole, and to rub the piece over with dirt or other colouring substance whereby to give it the appearance of being old enough money.”

I have found, or had found by my subordinates, plenty of these cracked moulds; for a new mould is required for every base coin made. General Hervey was writing from his diary of 1867, and he mentions the difficulty in coining the old Company’s rupee
"by reason of the rim being milled or grained." Coiners have made great advances in the twenty-five years that have since elapsed, and base coin is now turned out milled in the rim, quite "according to Cocker." The main difficulty now experienced by the profession is to get the weight right enough to pass muster in a crowd, and even then the provoking thing will not ring true. Still, a great deal of base, coin does undoubtedly pass at fairs, pilgrimages, and other busy assemblages of ignorant natives.

Excellent imitations also are being made of the currency notes, especially those of the smaller denominations. Not a year elapses that the excellent Bombay City Police do not run in some gang of coiners or note-forgers. If this is done in the green tree, what will be done in the dry? When our enterprising friends learn some of the now many (say forty) processes by photo-zincography, and the like, for the exact reproduction of anything printed or photographed, what a harvest they will make for a while! The only wonder to me is that skilful note-forgers in England have not already been in the field, and that India has not been flooded with spurious currency notes of all values, prepared in Paris, and consigned to agents all over India for distribution. I shall be greatly surprised if at least one good haul is not soon made in this way.
CHAPTER XXV.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE FIGHTING QUALITIES OF THE POLICE.

Considering the low pay of Policemen in India—the opportunities for massing them in any numbers for Military Education—that only about one-half of them are fully armed, and two-thirds of them only half drilled, it must be admitted that, since their reorganisation in 1853, the Police of the Western Presidency (and doubtless of the whole of India) have shown themselves fairly staunch under fire. When led by European Officers they often display a good deal of what the French term *clan*; when led by native officers only they are apt to develop that quality which is best described as "caution"—there is a manifest disposition to get under cover if any is available. But the same may be said of Jack Sepoy, who is recruited from precisely the same classes—systematically and thoroughly drilled—and perfectly acquainted with the use of the weapon he carries.

I have seen some very gallant rushes by a handful of half-armed, half-drilled, native Policemen—I have
seen them hold their ground with the utmost
determination against greatly superior numbers.
Poor Sir Frank Souter, if he were alive, Captain
Daniell, the Kennedys, and your worthy City Com-
missioner, Mr. Vincent, will certainly bear me out
in this.

On some future occasion I hope to record events
in which the Police of the Western Presidency
greatly distinguished themselves. After all, they
are worth looking after, for they make up, if I
mistake not, at least fifteen thousand men in your
Presidency, exclusive of Sind and your City.

MULTIFARIOUS DUTIES.

The Policeman probably ranks second after that
official Camel the "Tehsildar," or Maniladar (Chief
Officer of a sub-district), in the multifarious nature
of the duties he is called upon to perform. The
latter, aided by the Chief Constables, have to give
the orders, supervise their execution, and is re-
sponsible for the money part of the business: the
Policeman has to carry them out. It is he who has
to assemble the people if they are wanted in any
particular numbers, as they often are; it is he who
has to collect carts, camels, bullocks, forage—any-
thing, in short, that the "Sirkar" may require, and
he does it fairly well if he knows his range and the
Patels, or headmen, in it.

I have seen them suddenly called upon to carry
out the most extraordinary "fads" of the Govern-
ment, or the Commissioner for the time being. For example:

Collecting the Spanish-Fly.

'Early in my career there was a certain very amiable Commissioner whose great idea was the development of the resources of the country, and in many little ways he did much good, which still bears fruit. It dawned upon him one day that a certain very offensive insect, which we all know as the "Blister-fly," had all the valuable properties of the Spanish-fly, or was really the same species, and that our Hospitals could be abundantly and cheaply supplied with Cantharides from our local stock of plagues. He accordingly persuaded the Government to grant a reward of so many annas per tola weight for the unsuspecting Blister-fly.

Out came the order, and forthwith all the available Police in the country were out with men searching for and collecting the noxious insect. I am afraid to say what this little experiment cost the State, or how many hundredweights of disgusting stuff was collected in various parts of the country, but I know the quest had to be stopped suddenly, at the instance of the terrified Secretary of the Financial Department.

It is fair, however, to mention that Cantharides have since been obtained locally for the Hospital Stores, so that perhaps in another quarter of a century the saving on the English price may wipe out the crushing first cost.
Snakes.

Shortly after the above incident, I was working in the same District with a Superintendent of Police, who went more or less mad about an antidote to a snake-bite. It was in the Southern Konkan, which is infested with these reptiles, and where the mortality from snake-bites each year far exceeds that of the whole of India.

Mr. C. claimed to have discovered that the administration of ammonia to the bitten man, with certain other simple remedies, such as lancing the wound, etc., was an almost certain cure. As a matter of fact, the use of Eau de lieu and other forms of ammonia in snake-bite cases had been known for many years, but this does not detract from the merit of Mr. C.’s action.

With the dogged obstinacy of a Scotchman, he hammered away at the subject with the District Magistrate, Commissioner, and Government, expending his own money in distributing Liquor Ammonia in neighbourhoods where he could personally watch results.

His efforts were at last crowned with success, and sanction obtained for the issue of unlimited supplies of the needful drug. Government were “pleased to direct” that Mr. C.’s system and code of instructions should be extended to all Districts.

This involved the drilling of all the Patels, or head men—the distribution to them by the Police of
supplies of Liquor Ammonia—the reporting of cases in which it had been used successfully, or otherwise. I believe in certain districts it is still de rigueur that every sub-district Office and every Police Post shall have a stock on hand. I have no doubt that in the past thirty years its use must have saved many lives, when the patient was in fair general health, and within reasonable distance of a depot. I have myself often used it with success in cases of men bitten by the "Foorsa,"* the commonest of the poisonous snakes, even though two or three days had already elapsed; but I do not believe that in the case of the Cobra, or that hideous beast the Chain Viper,† it would have the least effect, even if it were exhibited within a minute of the bite.

* A small brown snake whose name I have not ascertained.
† Curiously enough called also Daboia elegans.
From trying to cure snake-bites to exterminating the reptile altogether was a natural step, and accordingly a few months saw the war of destruction begun, and again the Police were spread broadcast over the country to enlist the people's aid. It was very soon found that the rewards tariff had been pitched too high, and, if I remember rightly, it was cut down to an eighth of the original offer. Nevertheless, such myriads of snakes were brought in that the Government was compelled to cry, "hold—enough," and to put a stop to the war summarily.

I know that in the Ratnagiri District alone the expenditure ran up to over a lakh of rupees. Most of the snakes brought in were "Foorsas." The fact is, that one might as well undertake to weed the
Southern Konkan during the Monsoon as to extirpate the Foorsas in that country—they are to be found under every stone on every hillside. There are certain sub-districts in which there live thousands of poor Mhars who, always at starvation point, do really starve between July and September, which is just the time of the year when Foorsas are most easily found. It would be humane policy to give special grants for rewards for Foorsas brought in during those months in those particular sub-districts.

As to the deadly Cobra and the Chain Viper, the tariff should be much higher, for these really might, to a great extent, be extirpated in a few years.

You want to encourage the Mhars to hunt for them steadily and persistently, not to pay any one who happens to light upon a venomous beast and kills it. Remember, too, that these two terrible reptiles are apt to haunt the vicinity of dwelling-houses and the pastures. Many a goat or bullock dies mysteriously which has simply been bitten by the Chain Viper. I should greatly rejoice if I heard that the rewards for these species had been raised to 2½ rupees each, or more.

The Great Famine.

It is unnecessary to dwell at any length on the exceptional services rendered by the Police during the Deccan Famine of 1876–78. Are they not still fresh in the memory of all those who worked throughout that awful calamity?
It was not merely that crime—especially offences against property—multiplied exceedingly, that each man had to do ten men's work, that he had to do it amid a starving population, among which he himself could barely purchase food, and in a country desolate exceedingly, many villages deserted, others with only a few emaciated wretches remaining in them.

Besides the abnormal increase of crime, which filled every jail and lock-up, and demanded extra guards, the Police had to aid the District Authorities to establish Relief Camps, to hunt up the starving, anywhere and everywhere, and to convey them to the Camp or the Relief Work. They had, moreover, to help in getting food grains from the railway stations into the interior, and they did it all without a murmur, and, I fear, with little or no reward.

The Locust Plague.

The Great Famine had passed away, the wretched survivors of the calamity had sown all the land they could, and were congratulating each other on the prospect of a decent crop, just then appearing above ground, when myriads of small hopping, caterpillar-looking grubs, very active in their movements, were observed marching on and over everything, and devouring every green blade that showed itself above the ground. There had been a few flights of locusts observed in the preceding year, but they passed unnoticed in the greater trouble of the Famine: they
must have deposited their eggs over the country side—these were their grubs, soon to develop wings, and perhaps to breed again when arrived at maturity.

The Government rose well to the occasion, and spared no expense in attempting to destroy the insects as they marched. Again the Police were out all over the land, organising bands of beaters—instructing the heart-broken villagers how to use a hundred and one devices for the destruction of the foe. Trenches were dug, and lines of beaters drove the insects into them and buried them. Long, low calico screens, covered with gum or glue, were dragged along in lines, or were erected, and the insects driven to them, so that they hopped on to the sticky surface and stuck there. Lines of fire were ignited across the path of the enemy, and they were driven to them. The Government even imported an expert in the extirpation of locusts, which are the scourge of Cyprus, but this amiable gentleman could tell us very little we did not know well before.

Meantime, the insects waxed larger and larger, developed their wings, and in a week or so after doing so—presto! they took flight and went for the forests along the Western Ghauts, and thence, in vast, dense crowds, went out to sea, and disappeared
into space, having devastated the crops over an immense area which had most suffered in the Famine.

It may be that in Cyprus, where the locust is ever present; it may be that in some of the American States which are annually ravaged by great swarms, breeding presumably on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains, some return may one day be realised for the vast expenditure incurred in dealing with this pest; but I am very sure that it is throwing away money to attempt to cope with them in India. They are ever present, it is true, in some part of the great Continent, but they usually stick to the forest ranges. If any casual visitors wing their way across the Indian Ocean, they too ordinarily settle first on the forests along the Syhadri range, and, according to my observation, take flight again, usually against the wind, over the ocean.

In one and the same hot season I saw clouds of locusts loading the forests on the south side of the slopes of Simla, and I encountered them in the "forests primeval" of North Kanara. It is not pleasant when you are just "posted" in your place up a tree in a heat for tiger to find the sun overcast by a cloud of full-grown locusts. As they come near you will observe vast numbers of crows and kites, and other birds of prey, skirmishing on the outside of the flying phalanx, and taking ever and anon a dive into the rustling mass. Once they are on you, you may give up shooting that jungle! They fly into your face—great ugly beasts three inches long—with a force that hurts considerably.
They mount on each other in myriads on the branches of large forest trees, till huge limbs are broken off by their weight, and a horrible foetid odour accompanies them. Game, especially all the deer species, abandon the area they occupy, unable, probably, to bear the smell, or to browse on the herbage tainted by their droppings; and the countless millions of dead that strew the ground. In ten days or so, however, after they have moved, the termites have done their scavenger's work, and the corpses are dismembered and carried off or eaten—a welcome storm comes down, and that nice young grass Bison and Sambhar love so well comes up with renewed luxuriance.

The lower castes of natives eat them in various preparations. They pickle them in salt, first plucking off the formidable serrated legs; they dry them in the sun and salt them—they press them into a loathsome-looking cake, which looks for all the world like mashed shrimps. They also have certain recipes for boiling, broiling, and roasting them. They say they are very good. I cannot say I ever had the courage to try any of these delicacies myself.

The Rat Plague.

As if famine and a plague of locusts were not sufficient to break down the wretched people, the year following (I think) an unkind Providence decreed a rat plague! The phenomenon has never been fully described; but I have not space in this paper to deal
with it adequately. People do not believe it in this country.

Suddenly there appeared over all the districts that had suffered more or less from the Famine millions of rats, all marching from the east towards the sea. They were almost all of the very pretty species known as the Jerboa rat, shaped just like the mammalian of that name, and travelling in the same way by prodigious leaps. They too ate up everything as they went, gnawing off even the barks of trees. They burrowed and bred as they went along, travelling ever westward, chiefly by night. The Tanga ponies slipped on them as they galloped along with the mail-cart—they found out every store of grain, and destroyed the growing crops.

Then came the old story. All hands—including, of course, the Police—to the rescue! All Assistant Collectors ordered out to Camp. Large rewards were offered by Government, to begin with, for the trouble was that the people had got it into their stupid heads that these rats were, in fact, the transmogrified bodies of those who had died in the Famine!

It was some little time before this notion could be expelled, and the villagers induced to collect together and hunt the vermin. In the meantime, however, certain of the low castes, who have no particular prejudice of this nature, found rat-killing a very profitable employment, notably the "Waddars," or earth-workers, whom I have elsewhere described as the railway navvies of Western and South-western India, turned to with a will. They always eat these little
rodents, and esteem them a great delicacy! And “what for no?” They—the Jerboa rats—are very delicate and dainty feeders, living entirely on grain, vegetables, and tender shoots. They are as fat as butter, and, when skinned, resemble a fat young rabbit, and, I am told, taste like one, too. There is a legend that an officer in charge of one of the Famine Camp Hospitals (then still crowded with patients suffering from the awful famine ulcer) needed flesh and meat for his patients, and hit upon the idea—

and a very good one, too, I thought, in common with other officials—of giving them savoury stews of the little Jerboa. His patients visibly improved under the diet, but, alas! the Government got wind of it, and, fearful of the Native Press, peremptorily stopped the experiment by a Government Resolution, which made the over-zealous officer shake in his shoes.

Well, to make a long story short, the Waddars and the Mhars, the Khaikaris and all the outcasts, got to work. From a rupee a hundred, the reward speedily dropped to a few annas. The system estab-
lished was this. All centres, such as sub-district offices, and all large or centrally situated villages in the affected area, were made payment depôts. The rat-killers brought their bags of dead rats to these depôts, where the tails of the corpses were cut off; the bodies were either taken away or burned, but the tails were tied up as vouchers into neat little bundles like radishes—until a supervising officer came round and checked off the vouchers against the amount disbursed. The supervisors (usually Assistant Collectors, or Police Superintendents, or Survey Officers) had to keep diaries, in which they would enter something like this—"Visited Rampur; all right—counted ten thousand tails—burnt them!"

I know that in two districts alone in the Carnatic, eleven millions of tails were thus accounted for! There were rumours, of course, of peculation, but a searching inquiry elicited no proof that there had been any. What amount of treasure this cost the State is a secret; it must have been immense, and it was just as much thrown away as in the case of the locusts, for what were ten or twenty millions of tails to the legions marching westward?

Finally, some tremendous falls of rain occurred, which drowned the vermin; the stream of pilgrims from the east dried up, and the rat plague was over.

Many theories regarding this phenomenon were advanced at the time, but I never heard but one that was at all intelligible. Prior to the famine—for generations past, in fact—when crops were abundant
and markets distant—it was the custom of the
villagers to excavate "pews," or underground grain
pits, lined with cow-dung, plaster, and straw,
wherein to store their surplus grain, covering them
with timber and a thick layer of earth. What the
people would have done but for these hoards when
the Famine broke out, God only knows! They were,
of course, full of rats, but as granary after granary
was cleared, the rats had to go elsewhere, and instinct
taught them to travel westward, because to the east
all was desolation: in the forests, in the country
below the Syladari range, there might be food of
some kind—so the migration began, swelling to
enormous numbers, as the little animals, with the
marvellous fecundity of their species, bred and bred
along the route.

I have dwelt thus, I fear, rather with too much
prolixity for my readers on some—only some—of the
multifarious duties demanded of the Indian Police.
*Mca culpa!* I crave pardon! My object has been
to show that the Indian Police have never shirked
their work—that they have performed it invariably
with zeal—that they have deserved well of the
Government whose salt they eat. When Congress-
Wallas, egged on by the "praying Mantis" order of
of politicians, shall have introduced Anarchistical
doctrines into India: when Asquith's shall there
abound, I do not doubt that the Native Policeman
will still be found equal to any task demanded from
him. He will control and good-temperedly deal
with processions of the great unemployed—the
educated M.A.'s and B.A.'s of the country; and he will dig and find, or not, as the case may be, explosives secreted about the country. But he must be dealt with in common fairness and honesty first; and in my next and concluding chapter, I shall, with all humility, suggest how that should be done.
CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCLUSION.

I trust that I may have been to some extent successful, in the twenty-five preceding chapters, in bringing into strong relief the better qualities of our Aryan brethren, while gleaning from the field of memory the incidents most remarkable or best illustrative of the "seamy side" of Indian life.

It was my purpose, also, to indicate the weak points in a highly-important detail of Indian Administration. I have endeavoured to show that the Police, who are numerically equal to—perhaps even exceed—the entire British Indian Army, lack, for the most part, the detective element.* I will add here that this deficiency cannot be supplied, and their general morale can never be improved, till they are sufficiently paid.

It is of little or no avail that competitive examinations are held in England for young gentlemen to join as Assistant Superintendents of Police. This is simply beginning reform at the wrong end. It

* I always exclude the City Police at the three Presidency Towns—Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. The police of the two first-named cities take the first rank with those of any in Europe.
is the rank-and-file who need attention, not the young fellows who are going to command them. These last, till Lord Roberts put down his foot, were usually selected from promising young Indian Regimental Officers, who had shown a predilection for Police work. No one will cavil at Lord Roberts's decision; he is invariably right in any matter affecting the Indian Armies he so long and ably governed. Superior Police Officers can even now be selected on the spot, without resort to England, from the Survey and Forest Departments, which possess exceptional experience of the country, and knowledge of the languages and the people. Their ranks can continue to be recruited from England: thus, a constant stream of excellent Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents might be kept up. Men show their aptitude and inclination for this kind of duty comparatively early in their career, so that a Governor or Lieutenant-Governor would have but to select from his list of qualified candidates.

But to return to the rank-and-file. In England the Police Force is a corps d'élite in its way. The best men are sought for, whether as to physique, general intelligence, or previous antecedents. They are obtained without difficulty, and, when obtained, receive a much higher wage than they could command in the fields of labour—they have good prospects of promotion, ample opportunity for showing the stuff they are made of—a comfortable pension assured to them for their old age. The whole world cannot show a finer body of men, for example—take them
all in all—than the Metropolitan Police, who are thus recruited.

In India the rule is just the other way. A visit to the Head-quarters parade-ground of any District will satisfy any one that physique is not secured. Of all sorts, sizes, and heights, the men present the appearance of a collection of shambling scarecrows. They are willing (as I have shown) and fairly honest, but fifty per cent. of them, or more, are illiterate. Their antecedents are not usually bad (it is true), and many of them strike out to the front, and earn their small pensions meritoriously. But oh! they are so miserably paid! Horse-keeper—gardener—cow-men—the very coolie, or labourer, who works by the day—turns up his nose at the pittance the blue-coat Policeman receives. He is respected, because he is a man clothed (literally) in authority, but it is certain that he uses this authority in many petty ways to eke out his slender means.

The inevitable question will be asked—"Why should these things be?" "Are there not District Magistrates and Commissioners to point out the need of reform, and to suggest a remedy?" The answer is, that these Officers, for many years past, have never ceased pressing the question of Police reform on reluctant Governments. The pigeon-holes of the Secretariats must be full of printed and unprinted matter on the subject. Secretaries to Government must have written reams, clerks must have compiled hundredweights of "précis," and Honourable Members of Honourable Boards must have racked
their brains in writing lucid Minutes on Police Reform.* "Why, then, has nothing been done?" is the next question. This brings us at once into a consideration of what the Government of India is.

It has been described as a complex system of cog-wheels. So it is, and a very excellent system, too—for India.

It is the creation of a hundred and twenty-five years or more of a foreign nation working among an agglomerate of races, creeds, and castes. A wheel has been added here and there as occasion arose: some new development created, some reform initiated, as opportunity and means were available. Cog-wheels have been taken out from time to time and cast away as worn out: others have been re-cast and replaced, without need for stopping the machine as a whole. So it must always be: a system of fly-wheels at full speed would long ago have jammed or broken the entire fabric into a thousand fragments. The machine is worked with the utmost simplicity by the Chief Engine Drivers—Viceroy's, Provincial and Lieutenant Governors. The modern

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* Lest I should be accused of exaggeration, I may mention after counting each item that the papers alluded to in the footnote to page 282—ignoring all that had passed before—began on the 22nd November, 1888, and terminated on 3rd February, 1894, thus covering four years and five months. The papers laid on the Editor's table (see the Mulratta of 18th February) enumerate seventeen letters, two telegrams, and four resolutions. Heaven only knows how many memos. and cross-memos. must have passed besides!
fuel consists of Government Resolutions, Minutes, and the like—and very well they burn. The lubricating material has heretofore been keen sympathy with the peoples concerned, the most earnest desire for their good, and the advancement of the Great Empire which shameless English Politicians now decry or endeavour to belittle. The worst and most dangerous lubricants—happily as yet of modern and only partial introduction—have been "Baboo-grease" and "Faddist-oil"; the former is a corrosive of the most virulent type; the latter, at present, is of milder action, but still dangerous. It is being used just now with opium, and will be comparatively innocuous until it be strengthened by "Party spirit" of English distillation.

I cannot refrain from quoting at this point some of the weighty words used by Lord Lansdowne on the 23rd of last January, in a speech which is, from the first word to the last, the utterance of an acute and able Statesman on the present position of India.

"On every side new difficulties and problems are presenting themselves, nor are they diminished by the habit of applying to a country, which is Eastern to the marrow of its bones, standards of treatment which are essentially European and Western. We cannot conceive England governing India as if it were one huge Native State. Under a British ruler the thing is impossible. We cannot turn back. All that we can do when we see inordinately strong doses of Western nostrums poured down Indian throats, is to protest as strongly as we can, and to endeavour, if possible, to stay the tide. Another danger, again—and I am not sure that it is not the greatest of all—seems to me to lie in the tendency to transfer the power from the Government of India to
the British Parliament." (The speaker was interrupted at this point for some time by enthusiastic cheering.)

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"There is no Act of the executive, British or Indian, which can be removed beyond its control. The Viceroy and the Secretary of State have alike to reckon with it, and there is no escape from its authority. It does not, however, follow that, because these powers are inherent in Parliament, they should be perpetually exercised by it; and it is the modern tendency to exercise those powers continually, and at the instance of irresponsible persons, which in my belief constitutes a grave menace to the safety of the Empire." (Loud and continued applause.)

* * * * *

"In the House of Commons an erratic member, in a thin House, may carry over the heads of the Secretary of State and of the Government of India a resolution vitally affecting the welfare of this country as summarily and as light-heartedly as if the proceedings were those of the debating club of a college rather than the senate of a great Empire. In a couple of hours the work of years may be undone; and so it may come to pass that, while we are slowly and laboriously striving to obtain an equilibrium between income and expenditure, or endeavouring to improve the condition of our Indian service, some haphazard decision of our masters on the other side threatens our finance with bankruptcy, or capsizes our most carefully considered schemes for improving the efficiency of the public services."

These words, and other sentences as terse and valuable on other Indian topics, ought to be emblazoned in golden letters on the panels of the Cabinet Council Chamber.

The question of Police Reform, like a hundred questions of more or less importance, has been from time to time shelved, to make room for whatever at the moment seemed the more pressing matter of the day. Faminos, and kindred calamities, have
stood in its way. Irrigation Works; Famine Relief Railways and their Feeders; Education, the great cormorant—with its technical and other greedy progeny;—all these have come from time to time—most unrighteously—in the way of Police Reform, in truth, the greatest, the most important of them all.

But Governors and Lieutenant-Governors want to make their mark, not so much in India as in England, where their career, if they are ever to have any career, will be. They have a short term of office, and at least the first half of it is occupied in learning some smattering of the people they are governing. Pageants and tours take up a great deal of their time, and they are naturally wary of identifying themselves with reforms which will have only local bearing, and may not tell effectively in their gubernatorial career as a whole.

Thus has the question of Police Reform been systematically "shunted," though several Governments, including Bombay, are understood to be strenuously striving to set their houses in order.*

It is a matter, moreover, which unquestionably

* Since these papers have been in the publishers' hands the Bombay Police Reform Scheme has been sanctioned and "placed on the Editor's table." It shows a vigorous attempt by Lord Harris to right a great wrong, but, alas, the monetary difficulty was against him. Half a loaf is ordinarily better than no bread, but, besides that, the pay of the Armed Police has been left untouched. A dangerous experiment is to be tried with unarmed police on comparatively high pay. I need not indicate to any Anglo-Indian who has worked outside the Secretariat what that is.
involves increased expenditure; and for many years past, with the rupee steadily falling in value, there has been little to spare: no Governor would have dared to propose a substantial advance for Police purposes. Sir Richard Temple—who has done more for Western India than can be accounted in millions sterling in the one matter of Forest organisation—would certainly have brought Police Reform to the front had he but stayed. But there are not many Indian Administrators possessed of Sir Richard's energy and experience.

No man who has calmly considered the events of the past few months—be he Anglo-Indian or not—can fail to perceive the signs of coming trouble. These riots are abnormal; the Police are failing to curb, or, what is of more importance, to prevent them. The time has surely come when Police Reform has forced itself into the first rank of the great needs of the Government.

I do not know how many of my readers may have been encamped in sultry weather on tour—not a cloud in the sky, not a breath of wind to stir the leaves of the trees above us—when the trusty peon outside has suddenly opened the tent purdah, or "Chick" screen, and announced, "Saheb! Dibbil átá" (There's a devil coming). You look out and see advancing over the still, arid plain a thing like a waterspout, thickening and increasing in volume as it comes. It is a spiral dust storm (how raised—God knows!), sweeping over the country. Anon, it will be seen to pass over, suck up and disperse in
fiendish wantonness huge stacks of forage standing in the fields below you, or playfully to snatch off the thatched roofs of the village a few hundred yards off. Lucky if it does not take your encampment by the way! If it does, then, despite of tent-pegs driven newly in, and all your screens braced down, you experience a blast of wind, hot as from a furnace, and

find your floors, your table, your bed, half an inch deep in sand. It passes, and all is quiet again, but it is the infallible precursor of a storm of wind and rain.

These riots here and there all over India seem to me to resemble "the devils" we used to know and grumble at. They are the forerunners of trouble, perhaps of an outbreak, which will tax all energies. A Reformed Police, well commanded, having in its
body picked detectives communicating with the Commandants, will go far to ward off the impending evil.

If in the few preceding chapters I may have done injustice to any person, or to any class, it has been unwittingly. In all my—not uneventful—career in India it has been painfully impressed upon me that between us—Englishmen—and the various races we govern "there is an impassable gulf fixed." Our ways are not as their ways, our thoughts and habits not as theirs. Thirty-five years have only made me more conscious of how little I really know of the people among whom I have lived so long and liked so well. It has been in a spirit of keen sympathy with them that these sketches have been penned. Farewell!

T. C. Arthur.