

From

New York to Delhi,

By way of

Rio de Janeiro, Australia and China.

By

Robert B. Minturn, Jr.

SECOND EDITION.

New York:

D. Appleton & Co., 346 & 348 Broadway.

London: 16 Little Britain.

1858.

ficient protection against the rain ; while the houses of the Chinese agriculturists are always solid, in good repair, and comfortable looking, however poor the dwellers in them may be.

The vicinity of Calcutta, for five or six miles around, is a favourite place of residence of the European merchants, and rich natives from the city. All along the roads, one passes large, handsome country-houses, in the Anglo-Indian style, about a quarter of a mile from one another. The compounds are planted with fine large trees, and the lawns covered with turf, which does very well in Bengal, though such a thing is never seen in any other part of India. Many of these suburban residences are occupied by native princes, who have been deposed, and are detained at Calcutta, or who prefer to live at that city. The former class are always in the receipt of large pensions from Government, but they generally contrive to spend all they get, living very expensively, and being an easy prey to horse-jockeys and other sharpers.

I had letters to the officer commanding the artillery stationed at Calcutta. I found him at Dum-Dum, which is the artillery station, as Barrackpoor is the infantry station of the capital. All troops in India are stationed near the cities which they protect, but not in them. The stations consist of a village of mud huts for the soldiers, and lines of bungalows for the officers ; each bungalow being separated from the others by a compound, and generally inhabited by two officers, who, unless they are married, prefer to divide the expense of the rent. Every station contains a shop, where all sorts of European stores can be obtained ; a bazar, where the soldiers buy their food and other necessaries, and a mess-house, where the unmarried officers dine in common. In large stations there is also a church, with a chaplain appointed by Government. Where two or more regiments occupy the same station, there is a bazar for each regiment, and each has its own lines. It will be understood, that when I speak of soldiers, I mean the native sepoy, who, until recently, formed the army of India ; and in describing the cantonments, I describe arrangements which are done away with by the revolt of the soldiery, the

murder of the officers, or their forced flight, and the burning of the bungalows, stores, and churches.

Dum-Dum was a very large station, but when I was there, had been diminished in importance by the removal of the artillery head-quarters to Meeruth. I found Colonel Mowatt, to whom my letter was directed, living in the largest bungalow, which was about forty feet square, and two stories high. He was a most amiable person, who took the greatest pains to amuse and entertain me during my stay in Calcutta; and when I went up-country, gave me letters to several officers, which I found a great advantage. I dined, by the Colonel's invitation, at the artillery mess-house, which is considered the finest building of the kind in India; it is very spacious, and decorated in front by a broad verandah, with a fine row of columns. The officers were, like all those whom I had the pleasure of meeting in India, a very gentlemanly set of men. Several of them obligingly gave me letters to friends in the interior, and Major Broom, whom I met at the mess, showed me the Company's gun foundry at Cossipoor, of which he was the director, and kindly made me a present of some curious native armour. I spent a couple of days at Dum-Dum with Colonel Mowatt, who was unremitting in his attentions. He showed me over the Dum-Dum percussion-cap manufactory, of which he was at the time, the head; took me to an amateur theatrical performance by the officers, and some European soldiers; and got me an invitation to a ball at the mess-house, where most of the great people of Calcutta were present. The Colonel took me also to visit one of the deposed Ameer's of Sind, who lives in an elegant residence near Dum-Dum. On the road to the Ameer's, we passed a large country-seat, called "Seven Tanks," belonging to a wealthy native merchant, in the inclosure of which we saw a rhinoceros, standing in a pond of water. Of elephants, I saw several in the roads about Calcutta, but none in the city itself. There are now but few of them used lower down the country than Oude.

On asking for the Ameer, we heard that he was taking his siesta, but, just as we were about driving away, he came out on

the verandah and invited us to walk in, having been awakened by the noise of our carriage. He received us in a very large, plain room, with no other furniture than a *pullun* (low native bedstead) in the centre, and a few chairs about the wall. The Ameer seated himself cross-legged on the pullun, over which swung a punkah, and we took chairs near him. He was a little man, of clear olive complexion, and a very Jewish caste of features; not having dressed since his nap, he wore only a fine muslin shirt, and loose *panjama* of the same material. We remained nearly an hour, the colonel and the Ameer conversing in Persian, the court language of the East. Of course I could take no direct part in what they said, but the colonel translated to me the most interesting remarks of the prince. Before we left, the Ameer showed us several swords, daggers and other arms, which were heirlooms in his family. These weapons were of the finest Indian steel, which is considered superior to that made in Europe. The hilts, scabbards, belts and buckles of these arms were decorated in the most magnificent manner with diamonds and other jewels. One sword was estimated to be worth £40,000, and one dagger, nearly half that sum. The Ameer also brought out for our inspection a copy of the Koran, which had been in his family for two hundred years. It was written on the finest vellum, and the execution was as perfect as that of any manuscript I have seen. The case which contained it was of velvet, set with jewels, worth many thousand pounds. At the end of the volume were the signatures of the other Ameers, the brothers or cousins of our entertainer, who wrote them there when they swore on this book, to be faithful unto death to him and each other, having done which, with the usual fidelity of natives, they betrayed him to the English the same day. The Ameer's servants were all old followers, dressed like their master in the long muslin shirt, the *panjama*, and the low, red cap, with a projecting crown, which form the costume of Sind. They were tall, heavily built men, with long white locks, and magnificent snowy beards, their complexion clear, although rather tawny, their gait and bearing majestic—altogether as fine looking specimens of men as you will easily see. They

reminded me a little of the old representations of men in the Nineveh sculptures.

Barrackpoor, the infantry station of Calcutta, and the scene of the premonitory symptoms of the recent general mutiny, is situated about 15 miles from the city; while the distance from the city to Dum-Dum is only 6 miles. There was always a considerable number of troops at Barrackpoor, only two regiments being kept in Fort William. It is also the residence for the greater part of the year of the Governor General, who has here a magnificent mansion, surrounded by gardens and enclosed in a large park, well filled with trees.

It was at Calcutta that I first saw the Sepoys, or more properly *Sipahees*, from *sipah*, the Persian word for a bow. They were a better looking race of men than the Bengalees, being recruited up-country. Their uniform was similar to that of English soldiers, except that their shako had no leather peak, which would be an offence to their caste. The Sepoys always looked better when off duty in their native dress, than when in uniform, as they had not the prominent chest of the European; and the heavy red coat seemed a most inappropriate dress for the climate. However, they were very proud of it, and so much did it take the fancy of the natives, that years ago it was introduced into the armies of all the independent native princes. The Sepoys made good troops generally, and would fight well enough in company with European regiments, of which the Honourable Company had seven, and the Queen generally twenty or more, in India. The English regiments wear, in this hot climate, an undress uniform of white cotton, with a cap of the same, having a white turban wound around it. A turban is found to be the best protection against the effects of the Indian sun, and no European ever goes out without one round his hat.

The great trouble with the Sepoys was that they were always too much petted. Their pay was higher than what they could have earned by any other occupation; and far higher than that of any army in Europe, if the expense of the necessaries of life be taken into account. The lowest wages of a Sepoy were six rupees per month, more than double