

# PICTURESQUE NEPAL

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of an infuriated man-eating tiger, or stopping the charge of a wild elephant. As he recounted the long list of thrilling adventures which he had diplomatically avoided by locking himself in the cook-house for the whole of the time, his terrified looks were an assurance that neither friend nor foe was in any danger from its rusty point. In his imaginings this individual was not far removed from a servant of another time and place who, finding himself in a somewhat similar situation, had occasion to communicate with the writer on a business matter. His epistle was elegantly rounded off by a somewhat gratuitous discourse on the fauna of the district, with a view no doubt to exciting his master's compassion, and concluding with the statement that the country "abounded in wild beasts such as monkeys, jackals, hares, dears (*sic*), and other bloody animals."

From Churia a further stretch of the highway continues along another stony river-bed until, after seven miles, Hatawa is reached. This village is in the heart of the best sporting country, and is usually the starting-point for "shikar" expeditions. Ordinarily it is a

squalid collection of huts, but becomes a bustling centre of life when, as in the days of the great Jung Bahadur, it was made the rendezvous for a tiger, rhino, or elephant hunt. Near by, rippling over a rocky bed, is the Rapti River, and three miles farther on, where it is joined by the Samri, is a useful suspension bridge.

Here, close to the village of Separi Tar, the sporting appearance of the river, which was of a nature to harbour mahseer or snow-trout of a good size, tempted one to fish the waters with a spoon-bait and other lures. But in spite of every endeavour the result of many hours' desperate labour was but the solace—

“ With patient heart  
To sit alone, and hope and wait,  
Nor strive in any wise with fate,”

when a cheery Nepali officer riding by dismounted and commenced a conversation. After the usual salutations and conventionalities, the subject of sport was broached, and eventually the prospects of fishing in Nepal. He assured us that there were fish to be caught, and that in several places he had

been most successful, having landed many large mahseer with but little trouble. We listened with keen interest, for here was the local knowledge and experience which no sportsman, whether after fin, fur, or feather, can afford to disregard. Cautiously the question was put, knowing that often these matters are jealously guarded secrets, but "what bait did our friend use with such glorious results?" And the reply came with the innocent smile of a child, "Dynamite." Sadly, but firmly, the fishing paraphernalia was packed up, and our journey continued, with the feeling that the deadliest of spoons could never compete with the cataclysmic "baits" of this Nepali Isaac Walton.

From this point a very picturesque march of about twelve miles along a river gorge brings the traveller to Dokkaphedi, where a fresh phase of the journey commences. This is the ascent leading to the first of two steep passes which are the natural ramparts guarding the approach to the Valley of Nepal. Crossing a hot and glaring river-bed at Bhimpedi—one mile from Dokkaphedi—a steep and