

MEMOIRS OF A GRIFFIN;

OR,

A CADET'S FIRST YEAR IN INDIA.

BY

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ILLUSTRATED FROM DESIGNS BY THE AUTHOR.

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suppose some difficulty in getting into the great Ganges at the point of junction, some days' journey higher up. Sometimes this part becomes absolutely impracticable for large boats, which are then obliged to effect the passage by another branch.

As we approached the great river, our journey became rather one by land than by water. The river had fallen to the depth of a few inches in some parts, we were pushed by main force, by our indefatigable dandies, over sandy shallows, of miles in extent.

This was a labour, however, to which they had evidently been accustomed, and most philosophically did they set about it: planting their backs against the broad Dutch-built stern of the budgerow, they worked us along by almost imperceptible degrees, with insufferable yelling, groaning, and grunting, varied occasionally by the monotony of "*Tan a Tooney hy yah!*"

After a *dos-à-dos*ing it in this style for some days, we had at length the satisfaction to find ourselves fairly backed out of the scrape, and riding in the Ganges.

The Ganges! Strange were my emotions as I gazed on the broad expanse of that famed and once mysterious river, with whose name were associated so many of my early ideas of Brahmins, Gentoos, burning widows, and strange idolatries! Alas! the romance of the world is fast departing. Steam, commerce, and conquest, are making all things common, and soon they will leave no solitary spot on this globe of ours where the imagination may revel undisturbed amidst dim uncertainties and barbaric originalities. There wants but a gin-shop on Mount Ararat, or a spinning-jenny on Olympus, to complete the work of desecration.

A day or two more brought us in sight of the blue mountains, or hills of Rajmahal, a great relief to the eye, after having been so long accustomed to the unvarying level of Bengal.

The low lands at the foot of these hills are well stocked with game, the neighbouring jungles affording them

secure shelter. Everything is here to be found, from the rhinoceros to the quail. Here I shot my first chikor, a splendid bird, of the partridge kind, but twice the size of ours.

Accompanied by the trusty Ramdial and Nuncoo, with a few dandies whom I had pressed into my service as beaters, I sallied out one morning with the determination to make a day of it.

After walking some distance inland, and to within a few miles of the hills, I found myself in an extensive, flat, marshy tract, which had evidently a short time before been covered by the periodical inundations, to the depth of eight or ten feet.

This tract was covered with long coarse grass, a sort of reeds, which, having lost the support of the water, were prostrated like lain corn. Through these I was making my way, my beaters actively employed on both sides of me, when, suddenly, a noble bird rose, with a rare clatter, from under my feet; before I could cock my gun and close an eye, he was at a good distance from me; nevertheless, being a fair mark, I fired, and dropped him.

I was delighted, on picking up my sport, to find it a fine massive bird, of the partridge kind, bigger than a red grouse; in short, as I afterwards learned from the captain, the chikor* above described. I reloaded and advanced; and in a few moments flushed another, which I was equally fortunate in killing.

Immediately after the discharge of my barrel, and whilst standing on the prostrate reeds, I heard a rustling, and felt a movement close to me. I thought it was another bird, and cocked my remaining barrel, to be ready for him; instead, however, of a chikor, an enormous boar, caked with dried mud, and whom doubtless I had roused from a luxurious snooze, burst forth almost from under my feet, to my very great astonishment.

His boarship's ear was most invitingly towards me; I

* The red-legged partridge of Kamaon is also called a chikor, but this is not the bird here meant.