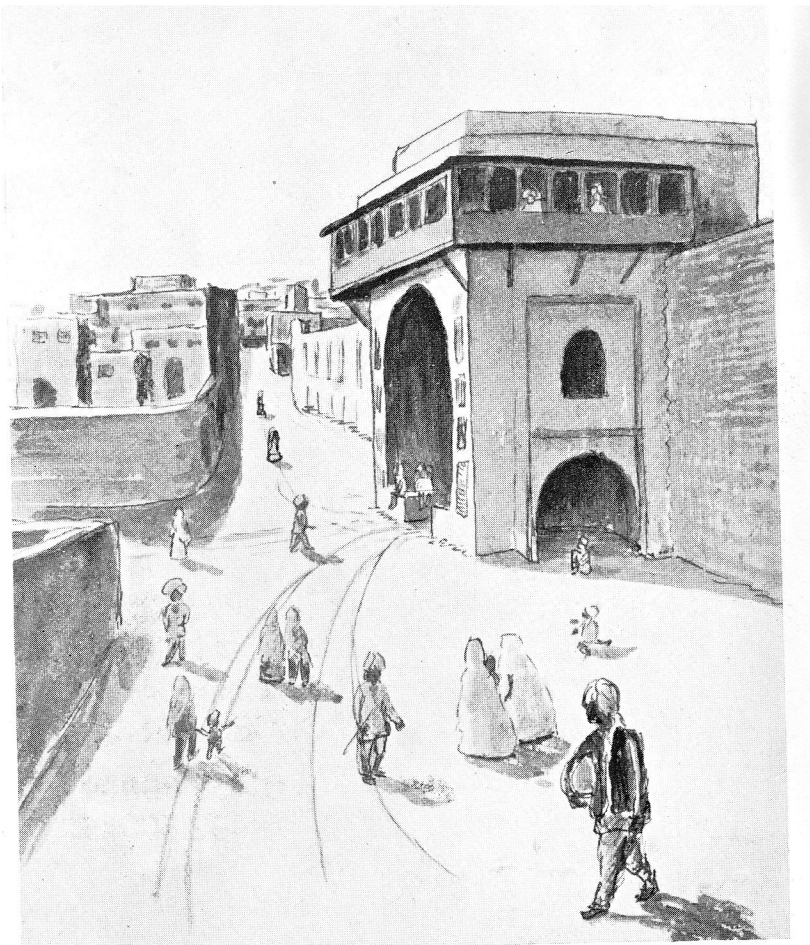

OUR ROAD.

A WOMAN DOCTOR ON THE FRONTIER

BY

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Contents.

The Avalanche.

IN a lovely upland valley, one of the hillsides was covered with a forest of great trees. The view was very beautiful; on this side of the valley snow—on that, a wooded slope. We wandered into that wood; it was damp and dark, the sun could scarcely penetrate it, and many dank weeds flourished.

We went up another year and, looking towards our forest, saw but a great bare hillside; all down the valley huge trunks of trees lay scattered and the hill was cropped and brown as if some giant had reaped it with a mighty scythe. Our view was spoilt; our hill all scarred and ugly. What had happened?

Said the hillmen: "In the winter, when no man may live here, there was a mighty avalanche; it swept down the valley and everything in its course was torn up—even the earth was ploughed bare." Our servants, who cared nothing for the view, said: "Great good fortune has come to us! See, the wood for lighting our fires and for burning

has come down right to our very tents ! We have but to step out and there is our wood."

Next year again we went up and looked toward our mountains. Oh, the change ! New life had come ; the whole hillside was a tender, lovely green. We climbed, and lo ! the hillside was covered with wonderful flowers—green grass and flowers. An old shepherd pointed upwards and said : " That snow did us a great benefit ; now our animals can feed well and we can watch them easily."

Yet we, with our short sight, had said : " Oh, how cruel—why do such things happen ? "

CHAPTER I.

A Jigsaw Puzzle.

INDIA is a vast country. It is like some huge jigsaw puzzle in which every part is different, yet each part fits together to make one perfect whole and that whole is India. Varied tribes, peoples, languages, religions, customs, castes, and dress, all these make infinite variety in our picture. Each part in the puzzle must fit accurately into its own place. What is true of the North is false of the South. Nay, a hundred miles or so may bring a different people and a different language. Nearer still, one street in a town may contain people different in religion, custom, outlook to people in the next street, as the people of Spain differ from the people of Scotland. These different people are not foreigners; they have been living side by side for centuries, yet they have never mixed. What is true of one town may be false of another; what is true of the village may be false of the neighbouring town. What is true of one district is false of another. In speaking of Mohammedan women, introduce a Hindu custom, and the whole picture is impossible.

Infinite variety—and yet the whole is India! And if the people vary, so does the scenery. Snow-covered mountains, sand-swept deserts, huge forests, tropical jungles, hundreds of miles of peaceful wheatlands and grazing grounds; palaces, mud huts, cave dwellings, great cities where there are trams, electric light and telephones; highly

civilised people and people of the stone age, naked savages who use the bow and arrow and make stone implements !

Is it any wonder that we find it difficult to describe India truthfully ? I think of the women of one part, gentle, meek, loving, living but to serve their dear ones, asking nothing in return, ready for any sacrifice ; I think of the women of another, strong, self-reliant, capable, splendid managers and housekeepers, following fairly closely Solomon's description of a wife and mother ; in another part she will be found hardworking, full of humour and goodwill; and in another district, tall, strong, lawless, bold, independent, fearing nothing and no one.

As we travel in India these vast differences are brought home to us. In the Panjab, whenever I told the story of the good Samaritan the women used to groan with pity for the wounded traveller. " Oh, poor man, poor man, to fall among thieves ! Alas, alas ! Ah, he was saved, he was taken to an inn ; that is good news." There was the greatest sympathy for the wounded man. We told the story to an audience of women in a Frontier Hospital, women who had come from a fighting tribe over the border ; the same picture, the same lantern, but how different the outlook of the hearers ! As the pictures were shown and the story proceeded, there was a stir among the women, no groans, no sympathy, a laugh of pure joy. " Did the robbers get everything ? " " Yes, everything." " Did they escape ? Get clear away ? "

"Yes, they got away." The company broke out into joyful congratulations. No sorrow for the robbed, no care to hear about the good Samaritan; enough that the robbers got away with the spoil; nothing else mattered! For all they cared the wounded man might lie there for ever. These are the women who after battle go out and maim the wounded. These are the women who themselves put stitches in their husbands' wounds. They are brave, these women! Their lives are always in danger. I remember one of them being carried into Hospital; she had fought like a wild thing to save her husband, but he was killed. She had grasped the sharp blades of the knives in her hands; her wounds showed the struggle she had made. Oh! these cruel blood feuds! The enemies never forget, they never forgive; some day, some time, they find their victim off his guard and then . . . .

A border man said to me once: "We never die in our beds."

Another woman lived with us in Hospital having her face gradually repaired. Someone had cut off her nose and upper lip. Sometimes this is a punishment for unfaithfulness—the husband, knife in hand, does the cruel deed, and the woman is marked for ever; sometimes it is through jealousy, when the woman is innocent; sometimes an enemy has done it to spite the family. Whatever the cause, it is an awful deformity. A beautiful girl looked up at us one day. "I have been sold," she said. "Sold?" "Yes, sold by my brother to his friend, sold to pay his gambling debts."

There came to Hospital one day a blind woman, neglected, dusty, in rags, a woman from over the border. Her sister many years before had become a Christian. Oh, the contrast ! The bright, clever, good-looking woman—a true, earnest, useful Christian—and the poor creature who lay on the bed. Yet they were sisters and had lived and grown up together in the distant mountain village. She had come, just as this one had come now, to the Hospital for healing ; indeed, the sisters came together long ago. The one found Christ, the other rejected Him, and oh, the contrast ! We who have doctors in every town, doctors and hospitals within easy reach, we cannot realise what it is to be far from all help. They come from near by for operations, from far away, some a few days journey, some from Kabul and from beyond.

One woman came down with the caravan from far Turkestan. A woman brought her into Hospital but could not stop—the caravan was passing. The patient, who had been a month on the journey, was left in Hospital. Then we found that no one knew her language ; no one could be found in the city who knew it. She could not understand any of our languages, but she was led to the operating table, by signs she was made to mount the table, by signs made to inhale the chloroform, and so the operation was performed. It showed most wonderful faith on her part. She had never left her home before ; she had never been in a city ; she had never seen a Hospital ; but something she had heard in her far-distant home had made her set out on this long

journey to seek healing. How she had heard, and who it was had told her, we never found out.

It reminded me a little of a patient in the days of my friend,—Katherine Gregg. From somewhere in Central Asia this woman, a good Mohammedan, set out to do the Mecca Pilgrimage. The journey was too much for her ; she fell ill and was brought to Hospital. In this case a small boy stayed to interpret and translate. Katherine Gregg became very fond of this woman from Central Asia, whose home was discovered to be somewhere in that vast continent near to China. She was an affectionate woman, became very fond of the doctor, and eventually recovered and left Hospital. Holiday time came and we went to Kashmir for a very happy holiday. I often heard of the Mohammedan Chinese woman. One day we were walking together on the narrow track amongst the mountains, the narrow track that was the road to Central Asia. A little company of travellers passed us, some men walking, a woman riding. We looked at them with interest, when suddenly there was recognition ; here, far away in Kashmir, on the road to Asia, was my friend's patient journeying back to her far-distant home. The woman quickly alighted from her pony and I was spectator of a wonderful and affectionate meeting. A few minutes' pause on the journey, then patient and doctor, Eastern woman and Western woman, parted never to meet again on this earth. The little group travelled onwards and we watched them till they were out of sight ; then we turned homewards

to our tent on the mountainside. That autumn there was a quick, sudden call, and Katherine Gregg laid down her work, and from the Hospital she loved passed into the presence of the King. Such a busy, happy, active life, a life of love and service. Silent and still they bore her out through the city gate and the people looked up sadly. The gun carriage passed down the long avenue to God's Acre, to the little cemetery where lie the heroes of the frontier. Here, in this far outpost, surrounded by the everlasting mountains, here, in this hallowed ground, far from home and kindred, lie English men and women and little children. "Wherefore this waste?" say some.

Years after I went into Hospital. A bright, high-born girl had come in and they had given her a little room apart. Deep tucked away under her pillow lay a little Testament. When she needed comfort or help out would come the Book, the Book that Katherine Gregg had given her. And "Oh," said the girl, "I think, I feel *sure*, my mother died a Christian. All those years she would never listen, but at the last she said, 'Come near and tell me of your faith, read me the words of the Gospel.' Her last word was Jesus."

Eight years later there came to me a message, a message just whispered in my ear. The woman who whispered it mentioned a name. "—— says she is well, but still shut up." The message given, the woman glided away. I was mystified, "—— is well, but still shut up."

Then I was told the story by the Hospital Bible-

woman. When Katherine Gregg was doctor in charge, a patient had decided for Christ and had come out as a Christian. One day, on her way to church, the village people stole her out of the covered cart and she was heard of no more. Now, eight years after, came the message, "Well, but still shut up." A prisoner for the faith that was in her for eight long, weary years. And seven more years have come and gone since that message came to me. Is the woman still shut up? The curtain was lifted for one brief moment and then dropped, and we know no more. We, who have been free to come and go all these years, still wonder: "What of that other woman?"

There was a woman once who wrote on her hand at out-patients, "I want to be a Christian." And when the open palm came up towards me I began to read the words aloud. In fear and trembling the hand closed over the letters and the arm was withdrawn.

Each year we have to devote time to preparing the statistics for Government. Every disease is classified and patients entered under long columns, not by name, but by results—cured, relieved, condition unchanged, died. How easy to keep those records, even when your patients run into thousands and thousands. The year's work is done, the record written, the paper folded and posted to the special official who has charge of all statistics, and with a happy mind we settle down to another year of work. But the spiritual results? That record is kept in heaven.

CHAPTER II.

Our Hospital.

IN "*Medical Sketches*" some of the little stories centred around a Hospital in the midst of villages, in a land of corn fields, mustard fields and sugar canes, a land of mud villages and farms, a land of rivers and of canals.

In "*In and Out of Hospital*" they centred around a Hospital in a city, an old city, a city of tall houses and narrow lanes, the city of the beautiful golden Temple, a city of rich merchants and poor beggars. In this little book the stories centre around a town, a very old town on the Frontier of India, where the Hospital is built on an old camel caravanserai, on a hill adjoining a fort which commands a view of the great valley all around.

Here came, to a Buddhist temple, Fa-Hian, the Chinese traveller, in A.D. 400. Five minutes' walk from the Hospital, deep buried in the sand, are the ruins of the temple. Wandering about the sandy mounds one can still find carved stones, figures in relief, Buddhas, wrestlers—the carving is clean and clear as the day when the old stonemason did his work.

To the Fort, in 1519, came the Emperor Baber, and in his diary he wrote: "There are nowhere else in the world such narrow and dark hermits' cells as at this place. After entering the doorway and

descending one or two steps, you must lie down and proceed crawling along, stretched at full length."

In this place was our house. We often wondered where beneath us were the dark passages. Tradition said that the opening was in the well of our compound, but this well had been filled up some years before by one of the doctors because of its contaminated water.

Prayer and thought and work and time and money have made the Hospital possible. I wish that many a working party, sewing through a long, hot afternoon, could get a glimpse of its bright wards.

Friends at home build and keep the Hospitals, and in India, through the ever-open doors, come the sick and suffering. To them come Hindu, and Mohammedan and outcaste for rest and healing. Through their wards pass the Indian Christian girls who are training as nurses. In the Hospitals orphan and deserted babies find a home. "Place of Healing," "Home of Rest," best name of all, "The Place of the Lord Jesus"—so the patients call their Hospitals.

* * * * *

A long ward, with walls whitewashed and floor of red bricks and tiles. The windows have good strong shutters, which are closed at night in the winter and in the hot weather only when a dust storm descends and the hot wind blows. The doors lead on to nice cool verandahs, so the patients have a choice of lying out in the sun, in the cool

verandah, or in the still cooler ward. Every patient who can do so escapes into the sunshine and lies outside. The doors are swing doors and are covered, as the windows are, with a fine wire netting to keep out the flies. We go to the ward, enter quickly, and shut the door, yet even so a waiting fly has made a dash to come in with us !

Down each side are strong iron beds, beds made by the local blacksmith, who is very proud of his work. By each bed is a locker. The carpenter made the lockers, and the potter, who lives in the Potters' Street, made the tiles to cover the tops. Down the centre is a long table, jug and basin, water and soap all ready. Even so we must hide the soap in a drawer, or Mrs. Dash, of the robber tribe, will calmly annex it, or Mrs. Blank, of a distant village, will borrow it to give her baby a bath !

Look at our patients. From what varied homes they come, all brought together by one common need.

Here lies one who slipped on the rock when washing clothes at the river. Her real home is far away in Central India ; her face, her clothes, her language all tell that she is a stranger to the Frontier. Her husband is a washerman to one of the Regiments, and their home is one room. In this one room all the little washers-to-be are brought up. Now, as their mother is ill, they are having the time of their lives ! The whole six of them have come into Hospital with her, and are in every kind of mischief, except of course the baby, who cannot walk,

though even *he* manages to fall off the bed several times a day ! * * * * *

On that bed a strong, wild-looking girl of about fourteen years old is sitting. She is wonderfully tame since the day, many months ago, when her father brought her to Hospital. They had come down from the wild mountains far over the Border ; her people were engaged in some tribal war, and she had injured her leg and was lame. One day the father appeared again, saw his daughter and left his skin coat with her to keep till he returned. That evening, after it was dark, the most awful shrieks came from Hospital. Every one ran to the ward. All the patients who could had rushed out and, trembling, they were clinging together. " A spirit, an evil spirit," and they all shrieked again. Finally some kind of order was restored and shaken nerves were calmed.

" What happened ? "

" Oh! a great hairy giant, quite black, came after us."

At that moment Nurse appeared dragging the patient after her and carrying the skin coat. This girl had turned her father's coat inside out so that the black goat's hair all showed, then she pushed out the sleeves just a little to look like ears, and thus clad had chased the patients in the darkness !

* * * * *

The patient lying in that bed is a Christian. Away on the great high road to Afghanistan, where a plain white gate marks the place where English

territory ends, there stands a huge caravanserai. The people who guard and clean the *serai* are Christians. A Mohammedan Christian would be murdered, a Hindu Christian stolen for ransom, but outcaste Christians can live in safety doing their humble work. So on the Frontier it is the outcastes who have the honour of being witnesses for Christ. This Christian woman is ill, and as one speaks to her one can but marvel at her refinement, her knowledge, her spiritual insight. Even now she is trying to teach one beside her, one who is an outcaste like herself. This woman sweeps and cleans in the town. The hopeless, dull face, the mind that can take in no new thoughts—what a contrast. One has used the muck rake, looking down and never upward, the other has caught a vision of the Crown of Gold.

* * * * *

Here lies a girl whose days are numbered, and none of her people care. "The sooner she dies the better."

* * * * *

There lies a girl whose mother sits beside her day and night, watching her every look; every wish is gratified at once if possible, and the widowed mother's store of small savings grows daily less. What matter, if only her daughter gets well.

"I am strong. I can earn money working for my neighbours."

* * * * *

A Hindu woman, who had slipped one day and broken her arm, sits waiting for her bandages to be adjusted. Then she will go home to her family. She said to me: "How soon shall I be well?"

"About a month," I answered.

Something worried her.

"Is the arm very painful?"

"No, it is not that; it is this, how can I pray for my family?"

Then she told me that it was her custom every morning, long before the others were up, to pray for her family, her sons and her daughters. I said: "You can sit still and pray for them during the day."

"Ah," she answered, "you do not know what a Hindu household is! The early morning, when the others are asleep, is the only quiet time I get in the day; after that, I cannot think. I get up when it is dark, then I bathe and I go away into the little room, and I remember and pray for my daughters and their children."

The Mohammedans call her an idolater, the Christians speak of her as a heathen, but she who had but graven images to bow before may rise up in judgment against them.

"Woe unto thee, . . . woe unto thee, . . . for if the works had been done in . . . and . . . which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes."

* * * * *

A small blind girl sits on that bed. She has no

mother, and her father brought her down from the Hills to see if she could be cured. When she arrived she had on each wrist massive solid gold bracelets, and they nearly caused a tragedy in Hospital. Two small girls of a frontier tribe were with us. They were, oh, so kind to the girl, and petted and made much of her, and at night said she must sleep by them; they would look after her. It was a warm, dark night and most of the patients slept outside in the compound. In the night the Nurse on duty heard a strange noise from the beds and she went to see what it was. The small blind girl was covered with a wadded quilt and held down, and the two small girls were removing the bracelets. One they had got off, the other nearly so! The next thing would have been a quiet departure over the wall with their booty and a strangled girl left behind. There are dangers even in Hospital!

As a Border man told us when he left his wife behind for treatment: "Never let any strange woman near her room; no one is to see her except yourselves."

"What do you fear?"

"We have many and deadly enemies. It might be the knife, it might be poison."

When they have enemies, they never know from where the blow may fall; what they do know is that some day the blow *will* surely fall.

And so the work goes on, healing for bodies, rest, comfort, advice, sympathy and teaching, and we who teach feel we have much, very much, to learn from our patients.

CHAPTER III.

Our Road.

DWELLING in the midst of an Eastern city, let me describe the scene.

Our windows look out on a broad street, and life in all its aspects sweeps past us. Men and, sometimes, women pass all day in endless procession, rich and poor, buyer and seller, master and servant. There passes a little child riding on a led horse, a reward for having read right through the Koran. How eagerly he must have read, longing for the day when in the sight of all the town he would ride forth on the tall horse and hear the whispered praise and comment of the people.

A wedding passes, the bridegroom on his horse, surrounded by his men friends; twirling dancers precede the procession, and at intervals the guns are fired. One can almost hear the cry, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh."

A funeral procession turns the corner, then winds down the hill towards the city gate. The corpse lies on the bedstead, we can see the outline of the body, and shoulder high the men carry him on his last long journey.

Here pass some veiled Mohammedan ladies on their way to the Turkish baths; there a little group of Hindu women tinkle along on their way to the Temple.

Some fakirs go by carrying a large flag. In a

moment a veiled figure has crept out from a hidden doorway; they wrap the flag around the woman, chant some words, and she glides back to her house. "O Allah, hear my prayer" she whispers.

There pass the honest workmen, the merchants, the shopkeepers, the traders; there also pass the coiner, the smuggler, the drunkard, the thief, the dealer in opium or cocaine. Beneath us sit the gamblers, heedless of the crowd, intent upon their game. There two men stand by an Arab pony and bargain and argue. In the corner by the wall the lame beggar keeps up a continuous whine: "Give, give, in the name of God, give."

And we look out from our windows, foreigners in a Frontier city. Tramp, tramp, the sound of coming feet, and a regiment swings into view; patter, patter, and an athlete training for one of the races trots steadily along, careless of the passers by. Hoarse shouts, men running and the police appear, a thief is escaping.

Camels led out to the water, horses brought in to be sold—all pass under our window. Across the road is our Hospital, and little groups of women pass in and out of the door. Husbands or brothers, waiting, spend the time in gossip or else turn to the bookstall and read a tract or a Gospel.

At night, when our road is deserted, people hurry past, and their loud, singing voices tell us that they fear the evil spirit, for our road is supposed to be haunted. Why, I know not, but they tell us that once upon a time, in the olden days, men as a punishment were thrown down from the central

gate, and as we glance up at the great gateway we can see it all in imagination—a man pushed hurriedly up the steep steps, dragged to the edge, then thrown headlong to the road beneath. A moment's vision of a falling body, a thud, and then the relations hurrying forward to drag the shapeless mass away. And if there be no friends—well, there are dogs, prowling dogs, in every city. But that was in the dim past, now the old gateway looks peaceful, and English rule in the land.

At night, sometimes, shots ring out and we turn in our beds and murmur : " What, another raid in the city ? " If we are sufficiently awake we can picture the scene. A dark night, no moon, wild tribesmen climbing cautiously over the city wall, dropping silently down into the street, then, guns in hand, creeping forward to some wealthy house they are about to attack.

There have been murders committed under our windows and the people gather and crowd, and the murdered man lies with upturned face heedless of the crowd, heedless of the enquiry. We hear the noise of the approaching people hushed as they near the place. A man pushes his way through the crowd on this side, way is made for a woman on that—people searching for a lost or absent son. They look earnestly down : " No, this is a stranger." And in time they carry him out to the Strangers' Burying Ground without the city wall.

Two young fellows fought one day; one was killed and the other wounded. When morning came the dead man lay beneath our window. The

relations put the wounded man on a bed and carried him out of the city gate.

"Whom have you there," said the policeman.

"We are carrying out a sick woman who has been at the Hospital," answered the relations. The policeman was suspicious and the young man was discovered. As it was a fight, he was sent to prison for a year. The day he came out I passed down the street and saw inverted bowls and boards placed in the road.

"We have covered up the blood stains; the son of the tailor has been murdered."

"Why?"

"The brothers of that other boy have been waiting quietly, waiting till he returned from prison; now they have killed him."

Many of the houses are built of wood, and in the dry, hot weather there is always fear of a fire. The houses burn like tinder.

A sudden glare, the sound of voices, a crowd! We go to our windows, or climb on to our roof, and look out.

Yes, there is the fire; the flames are shooting up, the women are throwing down their possessions into the road. Friends and enemies scramble to get them, and often more is lost by loot than by the fire itself. Men with long hooks are frantically pulling down the flimsy walls. Fire spreads so quickly, anything to save the other houses!

A man is pulling at the wall—it collapses—he disappears and a shower of sparks rises like a great firework. Women appear on a near house and

beat themselves, as they see their home being consumed. Even through the uproar we can hear their wails. The fire is over, thank God it has not spread; one family is homeless, but hundreds *might* have been so that night.

Towards morning, in the hush before the business day starts, the call of the Mohammedan muezzin is heard. From the minaret the cry comes loud and clear across the roofs calling the Faithful to prayer: "God is one," "God is one."

This is our city; here live our patients, here is our Hospital, here are the girls' schools. These are the people we work amongst,—our friends, our neighbours. We know them in their feasts and in the long month of the fast. We know them in their joys and sorrows, in sickness and in pain, in recovery and in death.

CHAPTER IV.

Fatama.

I.

FAR away in beautiful Kashmir, high up on one of the vast mountain ranges, is a lovely valley. Lovely in summer, when it is a place of green grass and gay flowers; lovely in winter, when the valley falls fast asleep, and nature spreads a covering over it, so deep, so white, so pure. All the short summer, from the time the snow first melts, till in the autumn the snow descends like a white pall, flower succeeds flower, bloom follows bloom, and the valley is a wonderful garden. Then winter steals upon it, and no human being can live there, no human being looks upon that valley.

In the summer the shepherd people know it well. Here every year a few shepherd families camp, for no grass is so tender, no air so good, and here in this lovely valley the flocks and herds thrive and fatten.

With the first touch of spring in the air the shepherd people break camp and start moving north. They leave the plains and seek the foothills; then, as the sun gets stronger and the snow melts, they gradually climb higher and higher, till at last the summer quarters are reached. The shepherd leads his flock; lambs born on the way,—

the little, weakly ones,—are tucked into his sheepskin coat and carried under his arm, warm with the warmth of his body. All travel quietly to suit the pace of the youngest and weakest. Sometimes, when the shepherd goes on ahead with the strong ones of the flock to seek out a way, the small children lead and drive the lame and wounded, those who cannot keep up. A few hill ponies carry the family possessions, and anyone sick or tired can get a lift.

In the valley, in a sheltered spot at the edge of the forest, is a small clearing—a few big rocks, a small cave, a shelter of pine trees. Here the shepherds come, year after year; the cave is cleaned out, blanket tents erected, tree trunks placed from rock to rock, and the summer home is ready. The days are hot, but at night a cold wind blows down from the mountain peak. The dark forest behind, the valley before, a stream within easy reach, and the shepherd children live a happy, if somewhat lonely, life.

* * * * *

One day in the Fast of Ramazan, Fatama opened her small eyes and looked out at the world into which she had so recently come. The view was limited, bounded on every side by the dark brown blanket tent. An old woman took up the baby; she was grumbling, for was not this the fast month, the Ramazan, when no good Mohammedan may taste food or drink from sunrise to sunset. The old woman was hungry, and as she grumbled she said: "This baby shall be called Ramazan Bibi." "Not

so," said the mother, "she is Fatama, my little Fatama."

A soft home-made blanket of sheep's wool was wrapped around her; a little nest was made of fresh, sweet-smelling pine branches and dry bracken, and it was lined with soft lamb's wool. It was a lovely little nest, so warm and soft and clean, and into it little Fatama was put; no wind or cold from the snows could reach her there. Slowly the sun sank behind the great peaks, the tinkle of bells was heard as the cattle gathered in the clearing; it was milking time, fires began to glow, women started their cooking. Higher up the valley, beyond the forest, shepherds and sheep dogs collected the sheep. Darkness settled over the valley, a chill wind blew, the fast time was over, hungry men called for their food and ate with relish and vigour. The women ate later. A few log fires were lighted to scare away any roaming beasts; wood was plentiful, was there not a huge forest of trees and undergrowth? People crept into their tents, silence settled over the camp, and Fatama's first day was over.

II.

As little Fatama grew older, she was carried out each day, warmly wrapped in a blanket. Sometimes she was carried on her mother's back, or her little nest was slung from the branch of a tree and Fatama rocked to and fro. The child was safe above the ground, and the mother could do her

work, boiling milk, making clarified butter. Now and then she would give the hanging nest a push ; the swinging soothed the shepherd baby. Every day she grew bigger and fatter and heavier. The outdoor life and the upland air suited the child. " How that child does grow," said an old woman. Fatama's mother made a gesture towards the mountain, adjusted the little charm around her baby's neck and covered her over with part of her veil. The old woman cackled and sucked her lips over her toothless gums. " What are you afraid of ? The fairies won't touch this child ; who wants a poor shepherd baby ? "

" Be quiet," said another woman. " Don't talk of these matters. The spirits of that lake often work great harm. We know that," and she pointed to a beautiful turquoise blue tarn far up the valley, and to the glacier which came down to its very edge.

" Have we not heard, time after time, of harm done ? Let us go to-morrow and lay an offering and repeat a prayer by the water." This pleased all the women, there was so little variety in their lives—cooking the daily food, spinning the wool into coarse thread, making butter, sewing clothes, collecting firewood—this was their occupation, and they led a busy but monotonous life. The men went far up into the mountains, guarding the flocks or watching the cattle, though as a rule the shepherds lived higher up than the herdsmen. They made journeys down to the village to fetch up salt for their animals, or food and grain for their

families. The butter, too, was taken down and exchanged for flour, or sold in the market.

Now Fatama's father was a tall, fair, young man, with delicate regular features and fine large eyes. He had never been strong and he formed a great contrast to the sturdy men and boys of his tribe and family. Ten years before, when he was a boy, there had come a very wet year. It poured with rain day after day and week after week. The ground was a swamp and everything soaking wet. The shepherds had no chance to dry their blanket tents or their clothes. The shepherd boy, sleeping night after night on the damp ground, wrapped round in wet clothes, had fallen ill with a fever. He had been carried down to a Mission Hospital, and after being most dangerously ill, had recovered. From that time on the family had great faith in English drugs. "There was no hope, and Allah and the doctor made him well." The boy had recovered, but his heart had remained weak. He did well enough in the plains, but the mountain air was always rather a trial. Still, he seemed to manage all right, and the family never worried.

This year, the year his little Fatama was born, the air was cold and keen and he seemed to fail. He returned exhausted from long walks with the sheep. He was breathless after exertion and did not seem to want his food. Each day he walked a little less, till one day he just laid himself down in his blanket near the fire and said: "Enough! I am done. I can do no more." The men gathered round and looked at him.

"Rest for a few days and all will be well," they said.

The women were very concerned. One got out a little tea from a precious, jealously-guarded paper and made a good hot brew. It warmed and revived him and he sat up.

" There is nothing like hot tea," said the women.

But next day Fatama's father was worse ; he lay scarcely able to get his breath, quite unable to speak. Again the men gathered around. " We must get a litter and carry him down. We must get him down to the warmth, that his blood may flow well."

The men and boys soon made a litter, and on this he was laid. Fatama's mother set up a loud and bitter wail when she saw the men prepare to take her husband away. Several women joined her in weeping, and the children, seeing the women cry, began to yell loudly.

" Peace," said an old shepherd. " Women and children, stop your noise, he is not dead. If God be merciful to us he will recover. Now, well done, lift."

The men lifted the home-made stretcher ; Fatama's mother uttered cry after cry ; the other women suddenly remembered things they needed from the distant village and shouted orders and requests to the men. It was an opportunity not to be missed. The men and boys marched off, leaving the rest to guard the camp and animals. The way down was steep and difficult, but the men were strong and hardy.

* * * * *

Down in a lower valley, near an old ruined temple, two of us—both women doctors—were camping. We had pitched our tent in a grove, preparatory to climbing the mountain ; we wanted to see the far-famed turquoise lake and the glacier. Our camp was in a lovely spot, around us a forest of trees, in front the most glorious view of mountain beyond mountain. In the evening we strolled around the temple and admired the stone work, the old cisterns, the bathing places, the pavements, the shrines. All was ruin now, and the sweet flowers flourished and gave a dash of colour to the grey stone. All was silent and deserted, no worshipper came from far and bowed before the shrine. The people around had forgotten whose the temple was, and who or what had been worshipped. Now and again as we walked a snake glided across the path and disappeared beneath the stones.

We said: "We must get to bed early to-night; we must start before six to-morrow."

" Oh, not so early, surely," said one. " Why the valley is only three miles away. Let us ask the servant again."

" Miss Sahib, walking, walking, you will take all day. Yes, you must start early."

" Walking, walking, take all day," we said, " and it is only three miles ! " .

We did rapid calculations and decided that we could not *possibly* take a whole day. We made our preparations : the inner part of a small tent, warm blankets and some food should go with us. Said one : " I am taking soap and powder for my

feet and the little pocket case of tabloids. We must take some heart medicine; who knows up there in the heights what may happen." So we thrust into our pockets some small tubes of tablets.

Next morning we had meant to start before six, but it was quite seven before we got off. At first the way lay along a pleasant path and then the path seemed suddenly to come to an end. The guide pointed up a track that seemed to be just scratched on the mountainside. A bare, rocky mountain. We looked at each other; this was our holiday. In a few days we should be down on the plains and hard at work. Was it worth while? We had not bargained for this. Then we remembered the words: "Walking, walking, it will take all day."

"Well? Ought we to do it? Can we do it?"

"Come along, yes, come along," and so we mounted up and up. But it was hard work; every few steps we stopped to breathe. Four steps, five steps, then a pause. Here a narrow ledge, there a rock. At last we sat down. "It is quite time we soaped our feet." Then we took to marking out certain spots ahead. "When we reach that place we will sit down." So we went on and on; the sun got very hot, we puffed, we panted, but we still went up. Some shepherds were coming down.

"Are we nearly at the top?"

They looked amused and answered: "You have not done quarter of the way yet. You have barely started."

At 11 o'clock we decided to have lunch and a good rest. Our guide said: "Miss Sahib, you must not stop long, we may be benighted." However, lunch we would have, and we climbed to a more level place, and there we saw Fatama's father. A group of shepherds were sitting round a stretcher, and on the stretcher lay what looked like a dying man. Of course questions were asked, and we were soon examining the man. Our servant made some hot tea; sip by sip they dropped some into the man's mouth. His colour began to come back just a little and he opened his eyes . . . now was the time for our medicine . . . a pretty stiff dose. He was covered up and warmth applied; he revived just a very little. We sat down and waited; had our lunch and then gave another dose. We told the men to take him down to the village, and gave all instructions and a supply of medicines to last some days. They went down and we continued our arduous and self-imposed task. At last we reached level ground, and the remaining two miles were fairly easy, through great upland valleys and meadows. It was getting dark as we reached our camping place. The tent was a most welcome sight. Near it the men had lighted a huge bonfire. In the dim light it was a wonderful sight—a great valley, and at the head of the valley a glacier, and above the glacier a snow-covered mountain. It was bitterly cold, the wind blew straight down from the snow and the ice; we were over 11,000 feet up. We just sat near the bonfire, rolled up in rugs, and ate our food, helping ourselves

straight out of the saucepan. Our fare was boiled rice and fried meat and plenty of hot tea to drink. We gave the men some meat and tea and they cooked their food at the bonfire. Oh ! how stiff we were, but as we gradually thawed we began to take an interest in our surroundings. Across the valley we could see the fires burning: shepherds watching their flocks by night. Said our guide: " These people over there, shepherd folk, they have sent us much good milk " ; he held out a pan of rich-looking milk. " You gave medicine to the sick man on the way and they are grateful." Some of the men had actually got back to the camp.

It was much too cold to undress, so we rolled ourselves into the blankets, hugged hot bottles and fell asleep. It was late next morning before we awoke, a hand lifted the flap of the tent and pushed in a saucepan of tea and two mugs. Soon the sun came out strongly and we had breakfast and set out to see the far-famed lakelet and the sacred mountain, rugged, forbidding, covered with snow, which showed up the more clearly because of the great black rocks. We reached the lake, a turquoise gem nestling in the arms of the mountain. It was a wonderful colour, clear as crystal and a perfect bluish green.

I shall never forget that day. We sat in a meadow of flowers, not another human being in sight ; before us the lake, above us the mountain, the abode of Hindu gods. Suddenly from the mountain above us came a roar, a terrifying sound like thunder, the surrounding mountains echoed and

re-echoed the sound. It was as if some giant lion had roared, seeking his prey. We looked at the mountain, at its snow-covered slopes and rocks; there was nothing to be seen, somewhere out of our sight a mighty avalanche must have fallen, sweeping everything away in its course. Somewhere in these vast heights there had been a great landslip of rocks. Somehow we got frightened and turned to go; there was something so menacing about that roar. We turned quickly and made for our tents.

After tea we set out to call on the shepherd women. Their tents were on the other side of the valley, among the birches. Women came out to greet us and were most interested in our appearance. Fatama was held up and her tiny hand was pulled out and placed on her forehead.

"She is salaaming; she thanks you for having given her father medicine." The women invited us to come to the cave and sit down; shy children ran to their mothers and peeped at us from a safe distance; bold children came near and stared at us with their small, black eyes. We stayed a long time chatting, looking at the blanket tents, the sheltered cave. Now and then a sheep dog would growl at us but it promptly received a clout from a woman which sent it yelping away. Women can always talk to women; country, race, religion, colour, may divide, but between them there is a subtle understanding, a sympathy, a link. So we talked and afternoon grew to evening and it began to get dark. The shepherds returned, bringing in

their flocks; bonfires were lighted, sheep dogs took up their places on scattered rocks. The shepherds on duty for the night seated themselves near the biggest bonfire where they could keep a good watch on the whole camp. Our guide appeared; he was angry. "Miss Sahib, it is getting dark, how can we get home?" "Why, our tent is only just across the valley."

He was wiser than we were! It was extremely difficult to get home. Rough grass, swamp, boulders, logs, all impeded our progress and we lost our way; finally shepherds and servants had to come with torches and lanterns and look for us. We could hear them calling, and our guide answered. It seemed ridiculous that in an open valley we should be so completely lost. We could see our own bonfire and the shepherds' fires, and yet we could reach neither. We had strayed on to the track of an old avalanche, great boulders which covered a concealed stream, and we could neither go forward nor turn back.

The shepherds found us, and we were each seized by the elbows and partly guided, partly lifted to safety.

"Miss Sahib, we lose many sheep in this place; why did you leave the track?"

Why had we left the track? We felt guilty. The track went round apparently a longer way to our tents: we had seen the fire so near, so clear, that we had just struck across what looked like nice, easy grass.

* * * * *

The next morning we packed up our belongings and prepared to depart. Fatama was brought round to say good-bye, and to beg us to give more good medicine to her father as we passed the village. Of course she could not talk, but much was said in her name as her tiny hands were held firmly on her head by her mother.

Going down was comparatively easy work, though very hard on our boots and our knees; down, down, down, our knees got more and more painful and stiff and our shoes began to look very frayed. At the foot of the great hill we met our ponies and were soon riding along a narrow path which led down the valley, a beautiful path which passed by green fields, rushing streams, which took us to shady walnut trees or through picturesque villages. At one village a man ran out; the sick man was here; he was much better; would we be so kind as to give some more medicine like the last? Fatama would soon be coming down with her mother, then all would go to the Mission Hospital and finish the cure there. The sick man sat basking in the sun well wrapped in a country blanket; a thick quilt had been spread on the raised platform on which the house was built. The house itself was very much like a Swiss chalet, built entirely of wood, the cracks and crevices being filled up with mud plaster. In front of it was a lovely view, but the village itself, though beautiful from a distance, was, on nearer acquaintance, most insanitary; children, hens, chickens, dogs, cows—all seemed free to run in and out of house

and yard, and refuse of every description just lay scattered about everywhere or was piled up close against the houses. The smell of the place was most unpleasant and yet everyone looked healthy and happy. We rode on to our next camping place and found our tents in the midst of rice fields, —a damp, low-lying spot. The man in charge apologised; there was no other clear ground except at a village and "Miss, you would not like to be there; all night long the dogs howl and steal and there would be no peace." We thought of the village where Fatama's father sat and said: "You have done well; this place may be damp, but the air is good and sweet."

Next morning we rode on our way down to the river and civilization, to the place where the house-boats were.

CHAPTER V.

Martha and Mary.

WE called them Martha and Mary, and they lived together in a small courtyard below us. On one side our windows looked out over the road; on the other, the windows of my room overlooked this yard.

Many years before the then Amir of Afghanistan had sent all Armenians out of his country. They had a difficult and tiresome journey to India. The old Christian priest, the husband of Martha, died; his ancient copy of the Scriptures and his wonderful robes were, I think, sent to Calcutta, and Martha was left to bring up the children, helped by her widowed sister, Mary.

They had but three rooms in that court beneath us, but one room was given up *entirely* to prayer and worship. A Bible, resting on a silk cloth, was kept open on the table, and in that room the family prayed and worshipped.

Martha was short, stout and comely, with rosy cheeks and a smiling face. She enjoyed a good joke and would laugh merrily. She cooked the most delicious curries. Whenever I looked out, Martha was hard at work over her household duties. She lived a busy, practical life.

Mary was tall, thin, frail, with a beautiful, placid, spiritual face. She would spend long hours pacing to and fro, meditating and praying, and each day the little prayer room door shut her in for many an hour alone with her God. I never saw her working, but she knitted most beautifully and supplied the family with socks and bags. Said Martha once, as she scoured her cooking pot: "Mary prays much over there; *this* is my prayer." There was absolute harmony and peace in that little yard. and there Martha and Mary together brought up Martha's daughters. Mary had no children, but she loved her nieces and counted them her own.

When we knew them the two old ladies were bringing up one of Martha's beautiful daughters. This girl had inherited her mother's busy, capable ways and added to them her aunt's more spiritual insight. They guarded her most carefully. They themselves were most strictly *purdah*. Generations of life in a Mohammedan city in Afghanistan had taught them the need of strict seclusion. One said: "Here it is well under British rule, but it is a misfortune for our girls to be beautiful." Then followed the story of a cousin, a lovely girl, the light and joy of her home. Somehow the fame of her beauty spread beyond her family, she had never been out unveiled, yet someone had talked. In time the words reached the ears of a Prince. (One can almost hear the whispered message: "In the house of the Armenian there is a lovely girl.") He sent for the girl and added her to his *harem*, There was nothing to do, nothing to say, the girl

was just taken away from her home, taken to a castle, and they never saw her again. "Ah! we heard that she died a year later; if so it was well with her, but we never knew. It is not good for our girls to be beautiful."

Perhaps it may have been the memory of this tragedy, and many such tragedies, that made these Armenian ladies almost absurdly careful over their own treasure. In this quiet courtyard she grew up, a sweet, devout, beautiful girl. In her Martha and Mary combined, and from the cooking of a most excellent dinner she would pass to the prayer room and spend time in worship there. The old ladies at last allowed her to come over to the Hospital and work with us. The practical side of her found very happy work in dispensing medicines, dressing wounds and keeping the statistics. Whatever her hand found to do she did it well. The spiritual side of her delighted in speaking to the women of her Lord and Master. She would speak to one alone or to a crowd of patients. She had inherited from her Armenian ancestors a gift for languages. Though brought up in the seclusion of that small yard, she could speak fluently in several languages. In Armenian to her mother and aunt, in English to us, and to the patients she would turn from one to another, speaking with ease in their various tongues—Persian, Pushtu, Hindustani, Panjabi, or some local dialect. Mary said once: "I have no child; I count this daughter of Martha's mine." Indeed, Martha was her mother and Mary was her spiritual mother, this niece her child in the Lord.

The two old ladies, though they never went out, were most interested in the Hospital work. That little room of worship was a power house. I see them now, standing side by side, clad in their beautiful, finely woven Armenian dress; yes, standing side by side, hands raised and crossed in front, heads bent as they received their Bishop's blessing.

Of the externals—wife, widow, exile, a stranger in a strange land, childless—that much I knew. Of the inner life—the joys and sorrows, failures, triumphs, the temptations—these were known only to her Lord and Master!

* * * * *

The pilgrims were getting near the river, the exiles were nearly home. They had reached the land of Beulah, "and because they were weary, they betook themselves awhile to rest."

The call came to Mary as to Christiana: "A true messenger with a sure token, an arrow whose point was sharpened with love, let easily into the heart."

Martha's eyes failed. To her the message was: "Those that look out of the windows shall be darkened."

So Martha and Mary came to the river bank and passed through the waters to the other side.

Martha's daughter wrote to tell me of her loss. "I feel very sad when I think that I will never live with my dear sweet mother and aunt again on this earth. This is my first Christmas without those two

dear ones. How often I wish I could see their sweet faces again. Oh! I will never forget them. I am only looking forward to the glorious meeting again, where there is no parting."

And I can still picture on the one side of my room the busy street with our Hospital beyond it, and on the other side the quiet, secluded yard, where Martha and Mary together lived and died.

CHAPTER VI.

The Cripple.

A WOMAN came crawling along the path. But *was* it a woman? that hunched-up object that crawled on hands and knees, painfully, haltingly to the open door of the Hospital? Rags hung in tatters and barely covered the poor body. Open sores, ulcers, maggot-filled wounds could be seen on all the exposed parts of the body. The hair, long, tousled, verminous, hung down in mud-matted locks. *Could* this be a woman, crippled, mis-shapen, bound, unable to lift herself up? And ever she crawled nearer and nearer to the Hospital, typical of women all the world over who have crept to the feet of the Master.

"Healing," "Healing," is the cry. Healing for the sin-stricken soul, healing for the pain-bound body. And ever she crept nearer. A woman walked out from the Hospital, tall and straight and strong, her face shining with an inward peace. She went swiftly to the side of the bowed woman and lifted her in her arms. As she raised her sister her bright face became clouded with sorrow and pity.

"Sister, come in, come in; there is plenty of room, and you shall find healing." She bore the maimed creature in.

She, strong, straight, womanly, full of power and love of service, typical of so many women who, having found the Master, long that others shall find Him too.

"Come in, sister, come in," and Indian woman bore Indian woman to safety and to rest.

* * * * *

Easter morning and the world in sunshine! Easter morning, when the converts come forward and confess Christ in baptism. Day of days, the marks of Hinduism swept from the forehead and the sacred sign of the Cross traced in pure water thereon!

What matter if the church be but a Hospital ward, the font a Hospital locker, the bowl a brass basin, the congregation little children and Hospital nurses? No wealthy convert this, leaving a beloved home; no high-born convert this, giving up all for Christ.

This is a lowly woman, a cripple, cast out, unwanted by her own people, and in crawling to the Hospital for healing she found life. The Indian Priest, in his white robes, passed down the ward to the bed where lay the new convert, her face shining,

"Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty. Maker of Heaven and Earth? Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord?"

"Yes, sir, I truly believe this," answered the woman.

"Wilt thou be baptised in this Faith?"

"Yes, sir, this is my wish."

The Good Shepherd had found her and brought

her home rejoicing. The Great Healer had laid His Hand on her and had said " . . . I will; be thou clean. Thy sins be forgiven thee."

And there was joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that had repented.

Easter morning had come and the beggar woman was signed with the sign of the Cross, to continue Christ's faithful servant unto her life's end.

* * * * *

Years passed, busy years, years spent upon a bed of usefulness, although a bed of suffering. Then the call came, softly at first but ever louder and more insistent. " The Master has come and calleth for thee." She turned her face from this world as one who sees the world to come.

Farewell? Yes, there was time for farewells. It was a slow and gentle passage and we shall meet again on the distant shore some day though now there flows between us a narrow stream, " the narrow stream of death." " God, our God, has wiped away all tears from her eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away."

" Faint are our notes of praise
To Thee our Saviour, King;
They cause the crystal walls of heaven
With perfect songs to ring."

CHAPTER VII.

Zargulla.

A PATIENT donkey was led to the Hospital gate and its load lifted to the ground. The load was a hill girl from one of the tribes over the Frontier. The journey had been long and trying, over rough mountain passes and through dry and sandy plains. They lifted the girl into Hospital and laid her on a bed. Then we heard the story.

Zargulla had been shot in the back and there was a large, open, gunshot wound.

"How did it happen?"

The usual Border blood feud. They are cruel, these blood feuds; they go on generation after generation. The brother had an enemy—an enemy always alert, ready and longing to kill him. At last one day he crept up silently, cautiously, to within shooting distance. He waited patiently until it got dusk, and then by chance the sister popped out of the door.

He did not mean to shoot her when, in his hurry and because of the dusk, he fired. Zargulla fell; all was confusion; women rushed out and seized the unconscious girl, burnt rags were stuffed into the wound, heated sand was laid around her body to bring back warmth, a goat was slain and skinned and the raw skin wrapped around the girl.

Zargulla recovered, but the wound would not heal, and it was found that she was paralysed, so

the relations put her on a donkey and brought her down, several days' journey, to Hospital. The brother, for fear of his enemy, dared not leave his home.

This wild Border girl had never seen a town or real buildings. The Hospital ward was a revelation —iron beds, sheets, coverlets, the red-tiled floor, the high roof, all were strange !

Zargulla knew nothing of the world beyond her home, a home on a bleak, dry, rocky mountain. She had no accomplishments ; she could not read or sew.

Days lengthened into months and the robber girl still lived among us. She was taught to sew and to thread beads and make chains ; she was taught to knit and crochet. Better than all, she was taught the love of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. " How could they teach such an ignorant girl," you say, " and how ensure that she would remember what she had learnt ? "

Well, the wordless book was given her and each page thoroughly explained by our Biblewoman and the Armenian dispenser. Teaching and conversation went much after this style, for the girl knew practically nothing of her own religion, Mohammedanism :—

" The black page for sin ; our hearts defiled and contaminated by sin." " Sin ! Yes, but you must first develop a conscience." " An unforgiving spirit, carelessness of human life, hate, then murder, that is sin." " Was it sin to shoot me—oh, no, it was my misfortune ! It was his duty to kill my brother, and it is my brother's duty to kill him."

"*Stealing* a sin, how can that be? How would we get things if we did not steal them. God made the rich idolaters that we His faithful people should get money and cattle. Robbing is our trade, we have no money, no shops over there on the mountains. Otherwise how could we get things we need?"

"*Lying* a sin?" That had to be left, it was no use at this stage even trying to get that home! "Lying could never be a sin." To steal, to lie, to deceive, to murder, to be cruel to beasts, to neglect the aged, all this was ordinary life; there was no sin here! Well, we must just leave all that and teach the texts by heart. "All have sinned—*all, all.*" "There is none that doeth good, no not one."

"The wages of sin is death." "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." Soon she knew the words by heart.

"The red page, let us take the red page, Zargulla." "Sacrifice—yes, she knew something of sacrifice." "When we are ill we have a sheep killed." "Every year we slay the pet lamb." The texts were taught. "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

"The white page." "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." She knew what snow was—all the cold weather those mountains were covered with white, white snow.

Did she know what clean white garments were? "In our village we wear dark clothes, then the dirt

does not show. I have never seen people dressed all in clean clothes. Yes, I have, though ; the nurses' clothes are all clean." When we went our rounds she would call us and, holding up the little wordless book, repeat her lessons in her own way and language.

" Sins make my heart inside me quite black—yes, they are like the spots and grease and mud which get on us every day. Yes, the mud is outside. Sins are mud inside." " God said ' You are all bad, you must be punished, your heart is black, like that black page.' " " Jesus Christ said, ' Don't punish her, I was a sacrifice for her, I will give her a quite white clean heart, white like the snow.' "

So in her quaint way she would place her finger on the pages and just say out what she remembered or understood.

And the gold page ? Heaven, glory, " What, for a poor Mohammedan girl, a girl of the robber tribe ? Gold, pure gold, not gold stolen from a Hindu but a city of gold waiting ready ? " " But I know the Angel of Death must come first. He must come to my side and call me. If he looks very black and I am frightened I will say ' Great One, I am only a woman. Your Honour, I am a traveller ; I am going to a golden city.' " Often she would call me, and go over the coloured pages.

The cold weather passed, the hot weather drew near. The mountain people leave the plains when the hot weather comes ; at the first hot wind they get restless, and gradually they all depart. The men came down to take Zargulla home.

"The women have never seen a Hospital, may I take a few things to show them?" A cloth was laid on the table and a few things collected together for Zargulla: a piece of soap, some beads, needles, some bright coloured cloth, a cup, a china ornament, a doll, and with these she tied up her wordless book. With her bundle in her hand she was ready to depart with her relations. Mixed with all the ignorance and superstition of her childhood she had grasped something as a thread of gold; through all her quaint ideas there ran the main idea of the teaching.

So Zargulla passed out of Hospital, and we missed her. Six months later she closed her eyes in the evening. She died on the ground, in the dark corner of a dark room in the caravanserai.

"The stars are setting, and the caravan
Starts for the dawn of nothing . . . Oh
make haste."

The dawn of nothing? No, in the darkness the golden page gleams, and I read therein:—

"The street of the city was pure gold . . . the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. The gates of it shall not be shut by day: for there shall be no night there."

Did Zargulla remember her golden page?

An Eastern poet asks:—

"What lamp had destiny to guide her little children stumbling in the dark?"

We gladly answer:—

"Jesus said, I am the Light of the World."

CHAPTER VIII.

A Frontier Village.

A LONG drive in rather a ricketty cart had brought us to the river. Generally we found horses here sent by the Chief of the village and rode across the river by the ford, but to-day a man was standing at the cross roads and he stopped us, saying, "The river is in flood, you cannot cross by the ford, we must move higher up."

One gets used to these Indian rivers, at one time so low that people can almost walk across, at another a raging torrent sweeping all before it. A sudden storm in the distant hills, shown perhaps by an inky cloud over some mountain peak, and the river comes down in flood often bearing strange objects on its crest. Trees, earth, farm implements, household possessions, drowned people, dead animals; when the river comes down in flood no man or beast may live in its torrent. Men who are wise look at that far-distant cloud and rapidly clear their cattle and animals from the river bank, but sometimes there is no warning, and all who are caught by the tide are drowned. I remember staying at a small bungalow on some high ground above a river, where there was a telegraph and post office. Suddenly there came a wire: "Warn all, the river is coming down in flood." At once all deserted the river bank, people crossing the ford fled one way or the other. Cows standing in the water were dragged, pulled, shoved,

beaten to safety ; all was excitement, yet the river looked so calm and safe. Then there came a distant rushing, booming sound, a sound that came nearer and nearer, louder and louder ; suddenly from the village went up a great shout, " It has come . . . it has come." We looked up the river and saw a great wall of water coming down ; with a roar it rushed past us. I remember catching sight of a bullock cart swept down like a toy on the rushing water. Where half an hour before had been a calm, peaceful river, now was a raging, swiftly flowing flood. Next morning all was calm and peaceful again, the water just a little fuller than it had been.

But to return to our man by the river ; he jumped into our ricketty cart and seated himself by the driver. I wondered if the harness would stand the extra strain, for we had had to stop once or twice before on our journey while the driver had tied it up with odd pieces of string, until when the string had given out and we could produce no more, he sacrificed a bit of cloth off the end of his *puggari* !

A mile or so further on the cart drew up at the side of the road and the man, jumping down, bade us follow him. That day I had with me a Mohammedan nurse, an elderly woman, who had been trained in the Hospital. We followed the man slowly, for the ground was uneven, with little hummocks of rough grass, tracks of small streams and rivulets now dry, and deep sandy places, where we sank at every step. I must say I enjoyed the walking, but my companion found it rather a trial,

her shoes would keep slipping off ! We arrived at length on the top of a cliff and neither of us was prepared for the sight before us or for the coming ordeal. The river flowed swiftly between two cliffs and there, slung from cliff to cliff, hung a stout cable and from that cable hung what looked like a large wooden tray.

" That," said the man, " is the way across." I looked, said nothing, and thought the more. I didn't want in the *least* to cross by that rope. The old nurse began to wail. " We cannot go that way, we cannot go," then as a last hope she said, " The doctor will *never* go on that."

" Yes, I will go," I said, " you can stay here and await my return." Her face fell, her last hope was gone ; she looked at the river, she looked at the wire rope . . . then, " I am old, I have daughters, but where the doctor Miss Sahiba goes, I go," she answered. So we were settled on the tray, she on one side I on the other, with our bag between us. She kept murmuring something of which I heard " Allah, Allah-i-khair," and we started.

Our tray was slung from a wheel which ran smoothly along the top of the cable. I felt rather like the change in a shop at home, propelled on a wire to the distant counting office. We swung slowly across, and half way I looked down at the rushing river, but it was not good to look down, and there was nothing *whatever* to prevent your falling off the tray ! Slowly we approached the other cliff, and I must say I was glad to feel firm

ground under me again. The nurse was delighted, but her joy and pleasure were marred by the thought that the river and this cable lay between her and her home. I had much the same feeling myself ! " Thank God, thank God," she kept saying, " but, Miss Sahib, we will have to cross again. Is there no other way," she enquired of the man. He answered, " This is nothing ; we all cross this way when the river is in flood. Look at that man and boy." We looked, they just jumped on the tray and, standing up, perilously balanced, were shot across the river.

We found horses waiting for us and were soon mounted. Our way lay across a desolate plain, then down near a stream, a little oasis in the desert where stood a Mosque, a small graveyard and a garden. Here the living worshipped, here the dead rested, here the caretaker lived and cultivated a little land. It was a quiet, restful scene and beyond it lay the mountains. We reached the village at last, a dreary looking place of mud houses more or less fortified. In a dark room in one of them lay the woman we had come to see. She was ill and suffering, and many neighbours sat round—some to help, others to look at us, for one is always more or less of a show, a kind of circus to the place, and a source of great excitement to all the small fry.

The twins, healthy boys, lay on a bed with a big sword between them.

" Why," I asked, " is the sword there ? "

" Custom," was the reply. " Miss Sahib," said

the nurse, "always all our new babies have a knife or a sword in the bed; this is their father's sword." Was it an ancient custom—a knife ready at any moment for protection, or was it a remnant of the old cult of iron?

I remembered a day when sitting examining out-patients I looked up to see a Pathan woman pointing a horrid looking, very sharp knife towards me. I objected strongly, and then found that the knife had been brought along because the baby had been brought for treatment and the baby could not come out without the knife. The woman held the knife so carelessly that its sharp edge point seemed always in the way, till we persuaded her to lay it on the table while I examined the baby.

This particular brace of babies lay very happily with their father's sword between them. The house was very proud of the twins, and the only cloud was the illness of the mother, but we were able to assure them that she would soon be well again We sat and talked with the women for some time. The next procedure was a meal. I had seen, through an open door, some women busy cooking, and a most appetising smell was wafted towards us. Then the meal arrived on a tray covered by a none too clean towel—a chicken with its wings and legs extended, looking as if it had died protesting to the last, a dish of rice covered all over with fried eggs, about twenty eggs in all. The village bread—some leavened, some unleavened—fried potato scones, chutney, and as a pudding sweet rice mixed with almonds. A tin spoon was

produced, and I am sure I did justice to that meal. The chicken, in spite of its shape and position, was very tender and tasted good. My Mohammedan nurse's eyes shone; she was delighted! When had she had such a meal? It compensated for the journey back. Then her spirits fell as she remembered the tray and the cable. Of course our first call involved many more, several people found that they were ill or had sick relations, and we went from house to house, till at last a man stopped us. "It is getting late," he said, "and we are responsible for you." I said to him, "No one would hurt me here." "No," he answered, "no, you are our guest, you have come to help us; no one would harm you here, but an enemy might, just to spite us and get us into trouble. We have many enemies." And we hurried off.

CHAPTER IX.

Little Jewel.

IT was a dark night. A woman passed swiftly from the village and laid down a bundle on the ground; as swiftly she fled back to the village. All was silent, all was in darkness, save that from one house a faint glimmer of light shewed. The woman opened a door and entered; several women were sitting round a charcoal fire. They looked up at her as she came in.

"Is all well?"

"Yes, no one saw me. I put down the bundle of cloth."

"You have been very quick" . . . "Did you bury it?" . . . "Was it dead?"

"Yes, it was dead; I buried it, not too deeply, the dogs will soon carry it away."

"It" was a new born baby girl, sent away by the grandmother because it was the third girl born in succession in that house. Third girls are very unlucky, and are supposed to cause the death of their parents. So the grandmother steeled her heart, and to save her son alive cast out the new born baby.

The father was told that a little boy had been born and that he had died. The women began to wail, wail for the boy that had never existed, and to sorrow for the little life that had never been.

* * * * *

From one of the mud huts just outside the village an outcaste woman came out into the darkness. She had been sitting with a sick sister and now, fearful of evil spirits and of ghosts, she crept homeward. Suddenly she heard a cry. Was it a stray kitten or a night bird? She stood still, prepared to fly back to safety. She listened, her woman's heart told her that the cry was the cry of a new born babe. She hesitated . . . "Someone has thrown away a child." She paused, then felt her way cautiously towards the sound.

A dog growled, and in the distance jackals raised their weird cry. She bent down, seized the bundle and fled, not to her own home but back to the house she had just left.

Her sister was very ill and a small dead baby awaited burial. It was the work of a moment; she put down her bundle, took up the dead child, ran out into the night and placed the little body on the ground. She then returned to the hut.

A woman's voice called from an inner room—

"Who is it?"

"I am here."

"I thought that you had returned to your home. Were you afraid, my child?"

"Nay, my mother, but see what I have found."

The hut had but two rooms, and neither room had any window.

An old woman rose in the darkness of the inner room and came out to her daughter.

"Have you found a jewel, my child?" The younger woman raised a small earthenware lamp

and letting the light fall on the small bundle, showed it to her mother.

" Someone has thrown away a girl baby and see, I have found it." There was no need for details, the two women peered down at the little face. " I have taken out the dead child and put it down in the same place."

" You have done well, it is a strong child, and well made ; God has sent it to our home."

The younger woman gave up all thought of returning to her own home that night, and she and her mother tended the sick woman.

As she sat through the long night she held the little foundling in her arms and crooned a little love song to it. She felt the warmth on her arm and the soft skin against her hand, and a great love for the child filled her heart. " It is mine, it is mine," she whispered. The sick woman stirred. " What was it she said ? "

" You have a man child, my daughter."

The baby gave a feeble cry. " Let me feel it," said the woman. They laid the baby by her side, she passed her hand over its face. " A man child," she said, " I am content." And she turned her face to the wall and slept and when morning came she died. She just slipped silently away. The outcaste women came to weep ; certain ceremonies had to be performed to prevent her ghost from returning, then rapidly the funeral arrangements were completed.

The husband was away on a long journey ; a letter was sent to him. A stout lock was fixed on

the door and Tabi took the baby to her own home. No one suspected that the baby was a high-born child.

* * * * *

The Hindu baby, cast out from its own home, found love and shelter in the outcaste's mud hut. The huts of these people were built a little way from the village, lest their nearness should contaminate the caste people. Several women remarked on the fairness of the baby. "Some Hindu woman in her past life must have sinned; the god of death as a great punishment has caused her to be born a sweeper baby." That is what they said, and that is what they thought. Tabi and her mother never breathed a word of what happened that night. Indeed, Tabi had come to think of the child as the child of her dead sister and yet she took a great secret pride in the thought that this wonderful child of hers was not sweeper but a Brahmin of the Brahmins. Tabi had no children of her own and her husband had died very suddenly of cholera when away with his master in Kashmir.

The baby was now all in all to Tabi, her one precious treasure. For the sake of her high-born child she tried to improve herself in every way. She studied the Hindu manners and customs more carefully. Her house had always been very neat and clean; she now became most particular over her food and cooking arrangements. Some of her friends twitted her about it, but she held on her way, regardless of all laughter, and as time went on she drew away more and more from her neighbours.

Her own work, the work by which she earned her living, was sweeping the narrow passages and carrying away the dust and dirt of the houses, and cleaning the drains. This had been her work ever since she could remember doing any work at all, and it had been the work of her ancestors from generation to generation. She had been content, and had enjoyed it. Now suddenly she felt a great distaste for it. "The mother and guardian of a Hindu child should not do such work; I must keep myself clean for the sake of the child."

And day by day, month by month, the child grew, and growing, loved her home.

No one in that other house ever dreamed that the small girl baby cast out that night had not been carried away by the dogs. As the child grew Tabi felt with a pang that she was altogether too fair. Each year her features became more and more the features of a Hindu girl and not the features of a sweeper.

Then suddenly Tabi saw a way out of the difficulty.

Somebody came to the village to preach, and Tabi sitting on the outskirts of the crowd listened with interest.

That night she discussed the situation with her mother for the first time. "I know which family my child belongs to; I saw one of the children to-day and the two are exactly alike." Then Tabi began to tell her mother her thought of becoming a Christian. Her idea was purely to save her child and keep it for herself. She had no higher vision.

And so it came to pass that Tabi, her mother and the child arrived one day at a mission compound and asked for teaching, and because this seemed a first fruit from that village there was rejoicing. The little family was given a room to live in and the training and teaching was begun at once. The older woman swept the compound ; Tabi did cotton spinning to earn a living.

" I can't think," said one of the ladies, " why those women want to be Christians ; they know absolutely nothing."

They were faithfully taught, however, and Tabi quickly learnt to read and write, but the old mother made no progress at all. " I am too old to learn ; my eyes are dim." As a matter of fact she was only a few years over forty, but hard work and poor food had aged her prematurely. " I cannot remember the time when I was not working," she once said. " Give me my broom and let me sweep, I cannot learn to read ; teach those two—they are young, they can learn."

Tabi made rapid progress, and as she sat in her class the child played near her or slept in her lap. They were never separated " those two." And so side by side they grew, grew in the knowledge of God their Saviour. Tabi in baptism was called Salome, and she called the child " Jewel," the name she had always called her. Had not her mother said that night : " What hast thou found ? A jewel ? "

Tabi was promoted to serving in the bungalow ; then to the Hospital ; from that she taught the infants in the little school. They sent her away for

training later to the Biblewomen's class. At last she returned to her own compound as a fully trained Biblewoman. " All these years I have despised my own people," she said, " now I have a great longing to help them. All these hundreds of years we have been outcaste and downtrodden and we are just as clever as the other peoples of India, only we have never had a chance. At first I came forward only to improve myself, but now that I have seen the Lord Jesus I long that my people should see Him too." And if in future years Jewel should be proud and despise her foster people, deep in her heart she will know that she owes all—her very life itself—to an outcaste woman.

CHAPTER X.

A Sunday Case.

ONE Sunday morning we had just come into church. The service had not commenced.

Ours is a beautiful church set in the midst of an Indian city. Externally, it is built in the mosque style, small dome and minarets; inside, the walls are a soft dove grey, a most restful colour, carved wooden screens, tiles of Indian make, marble from quarries, small carpets from Persia, stained glass windows, the glass sent from Europe; gifts from high officials, chaplains, from Indians, from missionaries, all combine to make our church a beautiful House of God, a witness to the Cross in the midst of a Mohammedan city.

Service had not started when someone came in to say that there was a call to a distant village. We two doctors started together, slipping out of the side door. Our servant had been thoughtful enough to get one of the nurses on duty at the Hospital to send down our medical bags and cases, so we were able to start at once. The country cart took us through one of the city gates, and we were soon driving along a broad high road. Our way lay across several rivers. The first we crossed by the bridge of boats, after which the road passed through

pleasant fields, then through the marshy land where the men go to shoot the wild duck ; always as we drove along we had the mountains in view—dim blue, ethereal—looking like fairy mountains.

Our driver was practical and interesting and full of information. He would point his whip up towards a mountain range and say, " There live such and such a tribe." "Over there live the Mohmands who gave the Government so much trouble." " Do you see this near village across the fields, the one with a high tower ; they are very bad people there. I would not pass that village after dark."

" Look at that tree, there the Chief of —— was shot, he was riding home rather late ; he fell and died just there."

" This cliff we are passing now is a noted place for robbers ; they hide in that graveyard, among the tombs ; this is the one little bit of the road that is not overlooked." The road took an S-shaped curve, bending sharply at the foot of the cliff, passing over a very shallow stream and then curving as it passed by the graveyard. One could see how easy it would be to overpower and drag off a solitary traveller even though there were plenty of people about. The last two rivers were crossed in the ferry boat. Our cart, donkeys, and buffaloes were crowded into the centre and the passengers stationed at either end.

In time we reached the village ; the last part of the way a man with a gun slung across his back had trotted alongside the cart, and he received us at the village. The yard where we went was full of

women ; so was the large barn where we with difficulty penetrated. Inside it was quite dark ; women screamed, pushed, squabbled ; we could do nothing. At last one of us went out and said to the husband, " You must get rid of these village women ; we can do nothing ; we cannot even see the patient."

The man came in, seized a bamboo cane and proceeded to clear the barn. Everyone fled before his stick ; women, children, babies, all poured through that one door into the yard. We then selected one or two older, sensible looking women. A small earthen lamp was lit, the door shut and bolted to keep out the women and the noise. The barn was a large one and the lamp gave a very small circle of light. A woman lighted a fire and proceeded to boil some water. We were nearly suffocated, the fireplace consisted of a few bricks hastily collected from the yard and placed just close enough together to hold the pan of water. A wood fire started with some straw was lighted between the bricks. There was no chimney and the smoke hung heavily in every part of the barn. We sneezed, we wept, we coughed ! " Have you both got colds ? " said one of the women.

" Colds, Mother ! Look at your smoke ! "— irritating, pungent smoke from a wood and dung fire.

" Smoke," she laughed ; " *is* there smoke ? But of course your English eyes are tender ; why, our very babies would not blink at this." The women were sorry, but there was no other way but to

endure. The only means of exit for the smoke was the door, and if that were opened every woman in the village would be on top of us.

So we proceeded with our operation. One gave the chloroform, the other operated. It was very quiet in the barn. From outside we could hear the laughter and shrieks of the women and children. Happily we had just finished and were beginning to clear up when, with a creak and a crash, the door burst inwards. The pressure from without had been too great; as the door fell inwards there poured into the room a stream of women and children and a cloud of dust and in a moment the barn was packed. Every one fought to try and get a view of us and we soon saw that the only way to empty the barn was to get out of it as soon as possible; we struggled to the door, a strong woman pushing a way for us. When we got out into the open we took deep breaths and filled our lungs with fresh air.

Nearly all the women followed us, and after they had looked at us well and openly commented on our appearance, we were taken into another room and given milk to drink. A broken and none too clean glass was taken from a niche in the wall. It was really only half a glass, for the top was gone, but it was filled with milk. Directly the doctor saw that glass she said to me, "I have been in this village before. I remember that tumbler!"

She then said to a woman, "Surely I have been in this village before?" "Yes," said the woman, "you were here two years ago; you came to see a

sick woman and we gave you milk out of this glass. See, we have kept it in this niche ever since."

The man with the gun soon whisked us off and rode with us as far as the river. We waded, with the rest of the passengers, out to the boat which could not reach the bank, and so crossing, in time we reached our home.

Thus was our Sunday spent.

CHAPTER XI.

The Village of Eggs.

IT was the hot weather, and we had all of us been sleeping on the roof. We were up before sunrise ready to start a day's work, when a call came from a distant village. The village stood about three miles below the ford, lower down the river—the same river that we had crossed on the cable. The woman needed an immediate operation, so off we went, bag, box, apparatus, packed in beside us in a country cart. Down the same long road we went, then we drew up at the side where a track lay across the fields. The man explained that this was a short cut to the village, and as it was early in the morning, the Mohammedan nurse and I walked the mile across flat, sandy country. As we walked we passed a tomb in a little clearing surrounded by thorn trees and small bushes. Red rags were tied all about the trees. "That is the grave of a martyr," said one of a group of men.

Seeking instruction, I asked "How does one become a martyr?"

"Well," answered one, "the man must be killed by a sword, and he must die without saying 'Ah' or giving one sigh."

"If he were shot, would he be a martyr?"

"Oh, no!" said the voices in chorus.

"If I were to die by the sword and utter no sigh, should I be a martyr?" The nurse looked at me in horror.

"God forbid. Oh, Miss Sahiba, may God not allow it to be done! Why do you ask?" I saw she was much disturbed, but even so she could hold out no hope to me of gaining a martyr's crown. Was not I a Christian, a foreigner and a woman? They walked on with us, and as we walked we came to a small bridge over a stream, a stream that had very steep banks. They passed over silently, bidding me be silent also. A little later I asked, "Why are we not allowed to talk near that bridge?" "That is a very bad bridge, robbers lurk beneath the bridge and by the bank." I think perhaps they meant that it was a haunted bridge, for there was no possible place where a robber could hide.

We passed a vineyard, four walls enclosing a square bit of ground. On one side there was a hole low down in the wall, large enough for a man to crawl through comfortably. The vines grew very low and peeping over the wall we looked down on them. A man pushed some brushwood out of the way, and we crawled through the hole to have a look. The vines formed a low network just over our heads as we knelt on the ground. It was quite easy to see how animals getting in could spoil the grapes.

* * * * *

Reaching the village, we found the woman lying in a mud-built barn. I had to shut my eyes before

I saw anything at all, then women and things began to materialise out of the darkness. We prepared for the operation. I found a straw arm-chair near; it looked so nice and flat that I spread the sterilised cloth and then laid out the instruments, all of which had of course been carefully sterilised. We were ready to begin, when suddenly a strange agitation and heaving occurred under my instruments. They began to rise up, and as I grabbed them from under the cloth there came a sitting hen. I don't know which of us was most annoyed, I at losing my nice flat table or the hen at having my weighty instruments laid on her back. It reminded me of another time when, in the middle of an operation, I turned round to see a hen perched on the edge of a basin, drinking the carefully prepared lotion! I never dared enquire whether there was a sudden death amongst their poultry later.

The operation proceeded; rats scurried at intervals across the rafters or stopped for a moment to stare at us. There was much grain in the barn. A very lazy, lean cat appeared, but took no notice of the rats. Her kittens were weird creatures; indeed in England they would hardly have been recognised as kittens. They looked exactly as if someone, having starved them, had picked up each kitten by the tail and had dipped it in a bucket of water. It was a strange assortment of animals—cats, rats, and chickens—but I think the abundance of each was the salvation of all.

The operation was over.

* * * * *

It was the month of June and very hot. I felt I could not possibly face that long walk. It would have meant heatstroke or a bad head. The village produced a riding animal, and it was a buffalo. For a saddle they spread a sack. The animal was induced to stand near a wall and I lowered myself from the wall on to its broad and ample back. Then, perched sideways on a buffalo's back, without anything to hold on to, there followed a great trial in balancing. I had to watch every step the creature took. He just jogged on and on, now splashing through a stream, now walking down or up a bank, apparently regarding me as some strange sack of merchandise. There was no way of stopping or of guiding him. He was a beast of burden, I, the luggage. If the bank looked steep, or the way rough, all I could do was to grind my fingers into the back of his neck. However, all things come to an end, and at last we reached our cart, and from that village of hens we brought back eggs. From pockets, from folds in clothing, from shawls, from sleeves, from veils, from puggaries, eggs were produced and handed into the cart with us. The Mohammedan nurse had eggs concealed about her *everywhere*. How they arrived in safety I don't know, but there they were—small eggs, large eggs, white eggs, brown eggs ! I almost expected to see among them a lean kitten or a bright-eyed rat ; but no, it was just eggs, and for days our Hospital patients had a delightful, if somewhat monotonous, diet, in which they rejoiced!

CHAPTER XII.

Witchcraft.

MY patient was very ill, and I visited her every day. The house was built of sun-dried bricks, cool in summer and warm in winter. It had only two rooms, a small narrow room in front which had no windows and opened into a passage, a larger room behind which opened straight into a nice airy courtyard. On the string bedstead in the narrow room lay a young woman. A small oil lamp gave a dim and very smoky light. A charcoal stove made the room unbearably hot and stuffy, and yet my patient was always rolled up in a thick blue wadded quilt. She had high fever, and was restless, but watchful relations always sat near to see that every portion of her was covered up. In vain she pleaded for air ; in vain I ordered fresh air. If so much as a hand came out it was covered up. " She must not get cold, no wind must strike her." So my patient made no progress ; indeed, she began to get worse. One day I went to the house in the morning. I saw a queer expression on the face of the woman who opened the door, but I walked straight in. There lay my patient smothered in the quilt, looking out with interested feverish eyes at the scene before her. The room was filled with a white, strange smelling smoke. I looked at the group of women

as they looked up shamefacedly. In their midst sat an almost naked woman, smeared all over with a white powder. She looked ghastly, as she bent over a pan from which ascended this dense white smoke. All round stood small pots and vessels. She was muttering charms and waving her hands to and fro.

I stood silently watching. The woman looked up, then seeing me, looked disconcerted, suddenly stiffened herself, had a kind of convulsion and fell forward in a fit. But I had been watching her carefully, and I saw that the fit was not a real one. The women round called out that she was dead and tried to revive her; she lay absolutely rigid. I did not worry, because I saw her nose was very near the suffocating smoke, and I knew she would have to cough soon. She held out as long as possible and then the cough came. It was no use pretending after that, so she sat up. Somebody covered her with a veil and she collected her various charms and potions.

"What are you doing," I said to the woman. "You, who are Mohammedans, what have you been doing in this heathen ceremony?"

They all looked very guilty. Someone waved a damp cloth to get rid of the smoke.

"Miss Sahiba, we thought she (pointing to the patient) was very ill. We wanted to find out if she was going to recover."

The poor patient had been a most interested spectator.

"And if she were not to recover, what then?"

"Oh, then, we would wire for her father and mother and . . ."

"And stop all treatment?" Again they looked guilty.

"Now this is your punishment. You must move the bed out of this room into the larger room. This quilt must be kept for the cold nights, by day a blanket is enough. Carry out the bed into the sun each day and give plenty of milk to drink. You must do this at once." The women were quite ready. Whether I had spoilt the charm or mixed things up, I don't know. Anyway, the bed was moved to the airy room. While this was being done, an aunt slipped into the room and I recognised her as the late witch.

The patient recovered. "I told you she needed fresh air and light and sun." They looked doubtful.

"Miss, the answer to that charm was 'she will get well.' We knew whatever was done she would recover."

So after all the aunt scored and certainly aided the recovery of the patient. "Whatever change you ordered we knew it was her fate to recover; see, she is well!"

CHAPTER XIII.

The Donkey Woman.

HER whole life had been spent in travel, moving about the country from place to place—now she was old. How was she to know anything about motor cars? She was old, she had never had a settled home, but following her tribe and custom had driven her donkeys and cattle from country to country and from village to village, and generally their way had lain across fields or waste sandy plains or up in the low hills. All her life she had been on the move, from the day when her mother first placed her, a tiny baby, in a basket and putting the basket on her head, had marched off behind the donkeys, carrying her thus for many a long day. Then as she grew older a comfortable place was made for her on one of the donkeys, a baby brother now occupying the basket on her mother's head. Later, she would walk by her mother's side, short distances at first, but as she grew tall and strong she could march as well as any girl in the tribe. Sometimes she, too, carried a baby sister or brother on her head and so learnt to walk erect and steady. At other times she would tear wildly along the road, stick in hand, driving the patient beasts. They never camped for long at any time. A day would come, the blanket tents would be taken down and rolled up, and, with the family possessions and bedsteads all packed on the

camels or donkeys, the whole family would move off, marching behind the animals. Sometimes they did not put up their tents but just stopped at some caravanserai. In this way she had grown old in the life, camping awhile, moving on, camping again.

This particular day the way lay along a great trunk road. What did she know of motor cars, except by hearsay? The camels, the donkeys, a goat or two, moved slowly along the road, raising a vast cloud of dust. It hung like a pall above and created a small fog before and behind. The caravan crawled on—the camels slow and dignified keeping an even pace, the donkeys moving slowly, heads hanging down, ears drooping, now trotting quickly, electrified into rapid movement by shouts and curses from behind. A throbbing sound was heard, a strange object materialised out of the dust and with much noise and tootling sent the small caravan into confusion. The old woman heard the words, shrieked at her side by her small grandson, "Lota car, lota car, wind carriage." Ah! *now* she knew! As it loomed nearer her one thought was the donkeys, the donkeys that carried her all, the precious beasts of burden. How was she to know that cars moved so quickly! She dashed to and fro beating, urging donkeys to the side, adding tenfold to the confusion. Then at the last moment she dashed back into the road straight in front of the car. How was she to know? An accident, an old woman knocked down—nobody's fault but her own! A broken leg? Well, caravans cannot wait, they must move on. So the old

woman was carried on one of her own precious donkeys and put down on the Hospital steps. And there we found her lying, cold, collapsed, and in great pain. What that journey must have been to her we could only partly guess when we saw the leg. We carried her to a ward and laid her on a bed and wrapped her round with blankets and hot water bottles. She was just a bundle of rags and dust—the natural dust of long travel which had entered into her clothes as dust enters into a door mat; the added dust of being rolled over by a motor car! Everything was very strange to her in that big bright ward with those brisk nurses. She had never been on a proper bed before, nor between sheets, and when the strangeness wore off she settled down to a life of real pleasure and enjoyment. A rest after a long life of toil; nothing to do; no work demanding instant performance; no early rising to be in time for the journey; no daily taking to pieces of her straw and blanket tent and packing all her goods. She had reached a caravanserai where she could really rest!

Then one day a daughter appeared, a strong, sturdy, healthy woman. She, too, was a bundle of rags and a mass of dust. It is easy to criticise, but who would wear good clothes when driving cattle day after day along a dusty road, and who would take a daily bath when the whole shelter was a very home-made tent, a tent shared with the whole family? How long would our clothes remain whole if we had constantly to take down our home, pack up our belongings and walk in all

weathers from place to place? Yes, the daughter *was* a mass of old rags! On her wedding day she had had a new outfit of strong country cloth, and it had been beautifully and carefully worked; but that was long ago. Since that day she had always carried, as her mother had done before her, a huge darning needle. Any piece of cloth picked up, any spare piece, was just patched over a hole, and in time the original dress was one big patch, cloth of every hue, toned down by sun and rain and dust to one dull faded red brick colour. The old mother stayed, the daughter came and went—with us one day and away the next.

One day she said, "If my mother had been killed I would have shot the motor car people."

"Can you shoot?"

She laughed, and raising her hands as if aiming with a gun, she said, "We all know how to shoot."

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The old woman went out well—cured—her broken leg strong and useful. Her gratitude was great. Had she turned from Mahomet to the Lord Jesus Christ? No, but for the first time in her long life she had met Christians, had felt the love and care freely given, had heard the Gospel story. To her, as to many, Christ was the Great Healer. Where is she now? Travelling from camp to camp? Or has she gone to that last caravanserai from which there is no more any going out?

The Cross.

ONE day they carried her, dying, into the ward. She had often been in Hospital before, and had gone out well. They laid her on a bed in the middle of the ward, and later we asked her if there was anything more that we might do for her. "Yes," she said, "show me the pictures—the pictures of Jesus."

I said, "To-morrow we shall be showing them."

"No, show me them to-night, I may not be here to-morrow."

So we carried the lantern into the ward, and she, whose name meant "Living," was propped up in bed. She turned her head and watched each picture in the life of our Lord. One by one they passed before her dying eyes, until there came the picture of the Cross—a beautiful picture, from which there seemed to stream a wonderful light, bright and clear.

"Living" stretched out her hand and touched her daughter, crouching by the bed. "See," she said, "see, the only light there is in this world comes from the Cross."

A wonderful confession; for Mohammedans do not believe that He Who died upon the Cross was the Son of God. To them He is as a Prophet, but not the Saviour of the world.

"See! the only light there is comes from the Cross"