

**REMINISCENCES OF
AN INDIAN JUDGE,
IN SIX PARTS**

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Reminiscences of an Indian Judge, in Six Parts by F. Lascelles

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INTRODUCTION.

IN publishing these Reminiscences, I yield to the urgent suggestions of many valued friends. Were I simply to consult my own feelings, I should still maintain the silence to which I have long adhered. Resolved as I am to observe the utmost forbearance in treating of personal wrongs, it will still be necessary, though very painful, for me to record facts which may not redound to the credit of the service to which I for so many years belonged, and from which it would be my desire to avert all censure.

It has been pointed out to me that the knowledge and experience which I acquired during a residence of forty years in the East, and in the exercise for thirty-two years of the functions of an Indian Judge, might enable me to convey much information to the British public, in connection with that Indian Empire which is daily increasing in interest and importance in the eyes of all Englishmen. Yielding to this consideration I have reluctantly taken up my pen to record a few incidents of general interest connected with my Indian life, in hopes of being able to bring to the knowledge of

my very numerous relatives, friends, and the world, facts which will much interest them; and also by the introduction of various circumstances of a religious and political nature, expose to light that which would otherwise have remained unknown. Regarding my public career I have nothing to conceal, nothing to explain away, nothing to simulate, nothing even to defend.

PART FIRST.



CHAPTER I.

How first employed in India.—The state of the “Ceded and Conquered” Provinces—Sir Thomas Munroe and his Punic War—Anecdotes of robberies in the ceded districts—Adventure and robbery of Lady Munroe, Lady Gordon, and Lady Grey—Building of the first Church in the district, and the Christian Village of Goshen—Opposition to Mission Work—Glorious change—Bishop Dealtry’s visit to Hoonore—Gursepah Waterfalls—Two short Speeches—First Female Native Communicants—German Missions on the Malabar coast—The Burial Place of a Waterloo hero, General Hill.

In the year 1812, a relative, a Peer of the Realm, obtained for me from the President of the Board of Control, an appointment to India in the Civil Service. After passing the usual examinations, and going through College at Haileybury, I landed at Madras in 1815, and was in due time sent on duty into the “ceded and conquered provinces.” At this time I had the honour of becoming personally acquainted with Sir Thomas Munroe: he was collecting a body of Peons (police) in the ceded districts, for the purpose of quelling the Mahratta insurrection; we gave to this little campaign the sobriquet of “Hannibal and the Punic War.” Sir Thomas Munroe, on becoming the Go-

vernor, appointed me head assistant to the Collector and Magistrate, and soon after Acting Civil and Criminal Judge in the same district.

For seven years I resided at Cuddapah, called from the unhealthiness of its climate, "the penal settlement." This atmosphere and hard work, seriously affected my health, and for a time broke down a good constitution.

Cuddapah is one half of the ceded provinces, Bellary the other half: the former is nearly 300 miles in length, and it had a population of a million and a half. These provinces, when ceded were found to be a nest of freebooters, which it was desirable to reform. Mr. Ross, the Collector, and Mr. Newnham, the Judge, were remarkably conspicuous for zeal and activity in these districts. On one occasion they started together, to visit a village where some robberies had been perpetrated. On reaching it, the head men were summoned and lectured. The first night the two gentlemen retired to rest in their palanquins. On awaking next morning, they discovered that every item of clothes taken off on the previous night, had been carried off, even to their boots and hat. What was to be done? Nothing, except to call the bearers to take them back to Cuddapah, where a mob had collected to see the gentlemen get out of their palanquins; which annoyed them both much. Shortly after this, all the property that had been carried away, was during the night placed in one of their verandahs.

On the next excursion of a similar kind, these two gentlemen had to attend them as guard, a young European officer, and a company of Sepoys. The head man of the first village they halted at offered to give them a guard to protect them: this was indignantly refused. Very early in the night, an alarm was

given, and the guard was turned out; in order to frighten the supposed thieves, and to show that they were awake, the young officer gave orders for a volley to be fired, the muskets had been loaded the night previously. "Fire!" cried the young officer;—all was still: "Fire!"—still louder—no sound in reply. Every flint had been extracted, and the party had not even a spare one in hand.

I well remember that when Lady Munroe, her sister Lady Gordon, and Lady Grey, were passing through this part of the district, all their watches, chains and seals, were extracted from below their pillows, while they were asleep. This was done while a strong body of-sepoys was guarding the tent. The thief confessed to me, that he went naked and oiled from head to foot: that he laid down on the ground and did not move whilst the sentry was approaching him, but when the sentry turned round he moved nearer, and so on, till the tent was reached, where he soon worked himself under the awning. Having a few small pebbles, he kept throwing one on the bed, till there was no proof of the lady being awake: he then, having seen her put her watch under the pillow, extracted the same, and retired in the same manner as he had entered. Being afraid that if these watches were seen, they would betray him, he melted them all down with the chains and seals into one piece: that piece was sent by me to Judge Grey at Madras.

During the period of my residence in this district I took an active interest in the education of the natives, and in the erection of a church, schoolrooms, and in building the village of Goshen for the native Christian converts. These works in 1823 and 1824 were, as subsequent events proved, very distasteful to those high in authority, but, what a glorious change took place during the

next thirty years. I lived to see the very same work done in Hoonore, on the Malabar coast, in 1853 and 1854, by the same hands, which met with the full approval of many good men, also high in authority. What a change! it was all accomplished by ceasing to interfere with God's work, which when man attempts to interfere with always goes wrong. Whether the state which seeks to advance Christianity by the worldly means at its command, or the earthly power which opposes it by violence, does the greater injury to the Church, and the people of God on the earth, has been a great historical problem to men of all creeds. It is only those who witnessed this total change, from death to life, and watched its gradual development, who can fully appreciate its glorious beauty, and its precious value. To illustrate this, I will here relate an incident of much interest at the time, to many whose best wishes were with this glorious work. The chapel, parsonage and school-room were just finished at Hoonore in 1853, when Bishop Dealtry notified his intention of visiting the station. He was the first Bishop who had ever done so. It occurred to me, that I might with a little trouble, give to the Bishop, Mrs. Dealtry and the large party which accompanied them, a great treat; which was, that during the 48 hours the steamer was allowed to remain at anchor at Hoonore,—by previously making certain arrangements,—I could show the whole party the far-famed Gursepah Waterfalls, much the finest known and visited in the world. With this object in view and knowing when the steamer would call, all necessary preparations were made.

The Gursepah Waterfalls were forty miles inland, and there was not one mile of anything resembling a road, the distance had to be traversed in snake-boats, through a densely heavy forest, up to the foot of the Falls, the river being full of alligators, and then we had to climb 1,000 feet.