## WINDLESS RAIN.

The rain, the desolate rain!
  Ceaseless and solemn and chill!
How it drips on the misty pane,
  How it drenches the darkened sill!
Oh scene of sorrow and dearth!
  I would that the wind awaking
To a fierce and gusty birth
  Might vary this dull refrain
  Of the rain, the desolate rain;
For the heart of the heavens seem breaking
  In tears o'er the fallen earth,
And again, again, again,
We list to the sombre strain—
The faint, cold monotone,
Whose soul is a mystic moan
  Of the rain, the mournful rain,
  The soft, despairing rain.

The rain, the mournful rain!
  Weary, passionless slow,
'Tis the rhythm of settled sorrow,
  The sobbing of cureless woe!
And all the tragic of life,
  The pathos of long ago,
Comes back on the sad refrain
Of the rain, the dreary rain;
Till the graves in my heart unclose,
  And the dead who are buried there,
From a solemn and a wierd repose
  Awake, and with eyes that glare
And voices that melt in pain
On the tide of the plaintive rain,
The yearning, hopeless rain,
The long, low whispering rain!

—Paul Hamilton Hayne.

# Guncotton vs. Wild Animals.

By GEORGE D. MITCHELL.

LAST winter I stayed a week in the sacred Hindu city of Benares. My companion, Stevens, and I had been journeying down the broad plain of the Ganges, on our way across India by bicycle. As we had little to eat along our route but boiled rice, coarse flapjacks, parched peas, and occasionally a little buffalo's milk, we found in the comfortable European hotel of the holy city a grateful respite from our jungle hardships.

We were almost the only foreigners in Benares, for every man, woman and child who could possibly do so had deserted the up-country for the winter excitement of Calcutta. One evening, however, a third guest presented himself at the dinner table, and, as sometimes happens when men are thrown together in far-off lands, we became better acquainted with him in the next hour than we might have done in half a lifetime at home.

He was a comparatively young man, a Mr. Reid, a mining engineer, and—not to enlarge upon the story of an interesting and adventurous career—he was now employed in the service of the East India Copper Mining Company, whose operations in Sikhim are well known in metal trade circles.

He was bound on a prospecting tour for a district nearly 200 miles to the north of us, up in the foothills of the Himalayas, almost on the Nepalese frontier, where there were ancient copper workings, which had long since been abandoned by the native miners, but which modern methods might perhaps make remunerative. The country he was about to penetrate was rough, infested with wild animals, and contained scarcely a European at that time of year. It naturally fell out, therefore that Reid should invite us to join his lonely and adventurous jaunt, and we in turn welcomed so unusual an opportunity to see the country in its roughest aspect.

Although it was too early in the season for systematic hunting, the abundance of big game gave promise of all the excitement we cared for. Through the kindness of a gentleman in the Bengal Bank, to whom we had a letter of introduction, Stevens and I equipped with a pretty complete hunting outfit. We left our bicycles and extra baggage behind at the hotel, with instructions that they were to be forwarded to our home address in case we were not heard from.

We took the train as far as Gorakhpur, where Reid found awaiting him his khitmutger, or native assistant, Ram Chunder, who had come up direct from Calcutta in charge of three cases of guncotton, the electric detonating apparatus, and some other requisites for the expedition.

There was a small branch line of railroad under construction from this point to Uska Bazar, fifty miles to the north, but it was not yet in operation. As there was not such a thing as a European gharry, or other reputable conveyance to be had anywhere, we had to content ourselves with places in the camel dak, a cumbersome, lumbering two-story public stage. This kept us three days more on the road.

At Uska Bazar we engaged as guide and porter a native acquainted with the region, and we had the good fortune to find three hardy country ponies for ourselves, as well as a bullock ekka for the baggage. As for the thin, lithe Ram Chunder, he traveled afoot, and was never far away when anything was wanted. Give him but leave to dream over the incense of his cocoanut pipe and you would never hear a complaint from him.

On the third day we had to dismiss the ekka. The path had become too rough for a wheeled vehicle. Ram Chunder and the Uska Bazar bearer had to carry what we could not stow away in our saddle bags.

Our progress was slow, but before noon we came in sight of the foothills of the Himalayan chain. Above them we could here and there catch a glimpse of the overtowering peaks of the Snowy Range, rising majestic and awful away beyond in the unknown interior of Nepal—"those divine altars" before which, "like a praying carpet," lies spread the green valley of the Ganges.

As we entered the hills and began to ascend, we traversed a luxuriantly wooded region and encountered startling examples of tall, slender bamboos and other tropical plants, flourishing side by side with the vegetation characteristic of the temperate zone.

We reached the village of Barwa, our night's objective, without mishap. There is not in Barwa a dak bungalow, or anything approximating a house of entertainment. Huts of bamboo chinked with mud offer little hospitality, any way, and a night or two in the open air was noting less than a luxury in that balmy Indian winter.

Inquiry confirmed Reid's opinion that the deserted mine was now within easy reach. That dark and unexplored hollow in the mountain was notorious throughout the adjacent country, and held in the greatest horror by the villagers as the supposed retreat of many wild animals. Great havoc had been committed by these beasts among the oxen and sheep, and it had not been three weeks since a woman had been killed and devoured right within sight of the village.

When we arrived we found the community in consternation. The Hindus feel a sacred tenderness for life in all its forms, and it is contrary to their faith and the spirit of their civilization to kill any living thing. So it sometimes happens that a man-eating tiger will terrorize a whole community for months at a time.

But if a European chances to appear on the scene at such a time, the natives feel no compunction against begging him to kill the monster. They will even go so far as to point out the way to his lair, and do everything that may incidentally contribute to his downfall, although they will not actually strike a blow.

Our experience in this instance verified what we had often been told. The natives were eager to pay off their old grudges. The next day, when we sallied out of the village to reconnoitre in the vicinity of the mine, we were accompanied by a volunteer escort of nearly a dozen men.

After a walk of about four miles we came to the place. All round was virgin forest, and in the midst of the profuse verdure there was, occasionally, at this altitude, a straggling maple or beech to remind us of home.

We found the mine without difficulty. We saw two entrances. One was a cavernous opening somewhat higher than a man; the other was a hole that one could hardly have crawled through. The confusion of tracks round about, some of them evidently made by heavy animals, prompted us to act with circumspection.

At their own instance the men fell heartily to work to build in a large tree commanding the smaller orifice of the mine a scaffolding of bamboo thonged together with twisted splints from bamboo tips. When this was completed they fashioned a rude ladder of the same materials for us to ascend by.

Meanwhile Reid, after a wary inspection of the place, concluded that, as a preliminary step, it would be well, in any event, to blow up the mine with a charge of guncotton before making any attempt to explore it.

Stevens and I were set to guard the mine, while some of the men, under Ram Chunder's direction, made a wickerwork hatch of strong bamboos thickly woven and interwoven. This we placed before the larger opening, and re-enforced with a barricade of rocks and tree trunks.

Further search on the hillside above had revealed the existence of what appeared to have been intended for an air and light shaft. Into this shaft we proceeded to lower with the greatest care a heavy charge of guncotton.

Eight octagonal blocks of the stuff had been placed in the sheet metal canister—as harmless looking as so many cakes of soap, although a single one of them was capable of destroying our whole party in the winking of an eye. We paid out nearly eighty feet of rope, little by little, very cautiously, before we felt the infernal thing strike bottom.

Connected with the fulminate bridge of the cartridge in the usual way were two insulated wires for electrically detonating the charge at the desired moment.

These two wires were strung along down the hillside, and the ends we pulled up into our perch in the tree branches.

The natives were extremely interested in these mysterious operations. The air of the hills sharpens men's perceptions always, and these fellows seemed to feel little of the fatalistic indifference that takes all the healthy curiosity out of a Bengali of the jungle. The Uska Bazar man had been retailing to them warnings he had about the terrible destructiveness of guncotton; but when Rum Chunder tried to impress upon them that it was our intention to blow up the mine, they only laughed at him in a skeptical way, and still hovered round, watching our every act, inquisitive as ever.

At last, all the preliminaries having been arranged, we warned them all with a "Hut jao!" to be off. But it was only after earnest remonstrance that they were persuaded to take up their stand at a safer distance, for they were bent on losing sight of no part of the operations.

We ascended to our scaffolding and drew the ladder up after us. Including Ram Chunder's, we had four rifles to rely upon and little to fear. We assured ourselves that the magazines were supplied with cartridges and that everything was in readiness for instant use. Finally we completed the connections between the wires from the mine and the magneto detonator we had brought with us.

We held our breath as Reid's finger approached the innocent looking switch that was to complete the circuit and explode the charge. Ram Chunder turned the crank of the magneto.

"All right!" said the engineer.

There was a moment of hushed suspense. Then followed the most terrific explosion I ever heard. The air trembled and pulsated, the trees quivered, the very earth seemed to vibrate and sway, and an avalanche of stones and earth, started by the shock, came rushing down the mountainside.

I thought we were doomed. It seemed as if we must be swallowed up in the convulsion. The natives, who had been hanging furtively about, took to their heels, and fled recklessly into the bamboo thicket, seized with genuine terror. Ram Chunder rather enjoyed their predicament, and kept shouting to them to run for their lives. Their ludicrous efforts to get out of the way momentarily distracted my attention from the mine itself.

Suddenly there broke on the lull an indescribable confusion of howls, yells and snarls of rage. I hope I may never hear the like again. It was pandemonium opened wide.

Something plunged against the barricade from the inside, and nearly beat it down. Then, forestalled here, out of the smaller exit there came tearing a train of wild animals sufficient to have stocked a zoo.

There were several black leopards in the lead, bounding forward with incredible agility—and the black leopard, although not so large as the tiger by a good deal, is one of the most terrible and vicious of the wild animals of India.

Following in their wake were a host of chetahs, jackals and other small animals; also we saw, hurriedly coiling themselves along, several great repulsive serpents, which Ram Chunder pronounced pythons, although for myself I was doubtful, from their markings, what to call them.

It occurred to me afterward that we saw no tigers, and I was a little surprised; but these animals do not often wander so far out of the jungle region, and we were too high up in the hills for them.

In other circumstances our position might have been precarious; but, fortunately, the explosion created such a panic among the denizens of the mine that they tore past us and scattered for cover in all directions, without tarrying for an instant to join issue with us. It could hardly have been a minute before the commotion was all over and the uproar had died away.

It had all been very sudden, but we had had the presence of mind, notwithstanding the excitement of the moment, to discharge out rifles into the pack as they emerged from the cavern and swept past us. As the result, we now saw, lying on the ground just under our perch, an unusually fine specimen of black leopard, a male of large size, snarling savagely as he writhed in the agonies of death.

Two more bullets put him out of his misery. We soon had him stripped of his fine coat, and we left Ram Chunder quarreling over the teeth while we went to explore the mine.

The explosion had been very effective. A large mass of rock had been dislodged from the roof of the gallery, and the passage was almost choken up with debris. A chetah and a small leopard cub we found half buried. How many other animals had been covered up in their attempt to escape we never discovered.

Reid carefully noted the results of the explosion. A rich vein of copper was disclosed, a thick seam of it being in the pure state. In short, the work had been so thorough and the evidences were so favorable that he considered further blasting unnecessary.

After gathering up what specimens he desired for analysis, he returned with us to Barwa, whence we took our departure again the next morning for Benares, little desirous of needlessly prolonging our stay in so wild a district. We shot one black deer on the way down and small game was plentiful. Beyond this the trip was without incident.

Reid made a report to his company soon after, giving the details of his experiment, and before we left Calcutta they had decided to establish a mining plant on the ground.

In my sleeping room, by my bedside, I now have a fine rug, made of a black leopard pelt, to put me in mind of the most exciting adventure that befell me during my stay in India. It feels very soft and warm and pleasant to one's feet on a cold winter morning.—Youth's Companion.

### Pleased to Oblige.

"Can't you throw in something else?" asked an old woman who had purchased a half pennyworth of carrots from a greengrocer.

The man replied sarcastic like, "Certainly, madam," said he. "If you will sit down a few minutes I shall be glad to throw in a sack of potatoes and a barrel of apples, and, while I'm about it, I'll add a hundred weight of turnips and a box of oranges! And," he shouted, as the old lady indignantly flounced out, "I may as well throw in the cart and horse. If that ain't enough, come back for the shop!"—London Tit-Bits.

## WOMEN WHO NEVER SEE MEN

### The Remarkable Life of the Sisters of St. Bernard in the Pyrenees.

NOT many miles from Biarritz, among the pines that clothe the lowest slopes of the Pyrenees, is the nunnery of Anglet, the home of one of the most remarkable bodies of women in the world, who have voluntarily deprived themselves of their sex's most cherished privilege, the use of tongue and eyes.

To steal away from Biarritz with its gay crowds, whose days are passed in pursuit of pleasure, to this home of silence at the foot of the equally silent hills, is to touch within a few hours the two extremes of human life, and the contrasted picture to those who have seen it is one that lingers ineffacably in the memory.

One might think that such a place as this retreat of the Sisters of St. Bernard would be jealously guarded from the world of curious observers, but it is not. The only condition imposed on visitors is the notice that greets them at the entrance to the nunnery grounds—a request to speak in a low voice. The first glimpse that the writer got of the mysterious occupants of this retreat was when he was conducted into the garden, surrounded on three sides by plain, one-storied buildings, and on the fourth by the equally mysterious convent chapel.

Scattered over this square garden were about thirty women, robed in loose-fitting white garments, with the sabots of the peasant on their feet, and black hoods concealing their faces, and bearing a large white cross where they flowed down the back. A few were pacing up and down the paths bowed in deep meditation, but the majority were busy with spade and rake, working on the soil. Most remarkable of all, although these women must have been aware that a stranger was gazing at them, not a single movement of the head, much less a glance, showed the slightest consciousness of the fact.

While I was taking in this strange spectacle my cicerone told me, in a whisper, how the convent was founded sixty-four years ago by the Abbe Cestac, a priest of Bayonne, famed for his asceticism and piety; and how the nuns, many of whom entered as young and beautiful girls, are pledged to lifelong solitude and silence, holding no communication whatever even with each other, although constantly thrown together at meals, work, and at religious exercises.

So complete is this isolation that the Sisters of St. Bernard are always shut off by curtains from the neighboring Sisters of St. Mary, who occasionally worship in the same chapel; and stories are told of women who in the outer world had been close friends and near relatives, living for years together in the convent without even knowing of each other's presence.

This state of things is rendered more bearable by the constant work that occupies every hour of the day. Except at meals or devotions, each nun must never spend an idle moment. They are famed for the beauty of their needlework, and—strange irony—many of the most lovely trousseaux in Europe are wrought by the hands of these silent women, with whom it is a sin to look even on each other's faces.

The refectory in which they take their meals, and which I was permitted to see, is a long, thatched building, with whitewashed walls and an earthen floor, and its furniture consists of a wooden table and benches. Dry bread, vegetables, and water in an earthenware jug constitute each day's menu, with the exception of a small quantity of meat on alternate days. This refectory and many of the original convent buildings, it is interesting to record, were built by the nuns themselves, who can thatch a roof, drive a plow, or do an exquisite piece of embroidery with equal skill.

Devotion naturally enters largely into the lives of these Sisters of St. Bernard. Every hour, as the clock strikes, they cease whatever work they are engaged on and, dropping on their knees, spend a few minutes in prayer; and much time is spent in religious services in the chapel, with its beautiful image of "Our Lady of Sorrows," of which a romantic story is told, or in prayer at the shrine of "Our Lady of Pity" in the garden.

To each nun is allotted one of two rows of tiny, narrow whitewashed cells, containing only a hard, rough bed and a wooden chair and opening into a long, dreary corridor, which is the only drawing and reception room the convent boasts; and so Spartan are these sisters that in the coldest weather a fire is unknown.

It is little wonder that life led under such conditions should be short, or that before half their possible days are numbered, many of these mute sisters should be taken to rest in the cypress-fringed graveyard, where a rude mound is the only memorial.

### Identified.

"What has become," asked the occasional guest, "of the pretty black-eyed girl who used to wait at that table over in the corner?"

"What pretty black-eyed girl?" frigidly inquired the young woman with the snub nose and prominent chin.

"If I remember rightly, she had a little bit of a mole on one cheek."

"Oh, that girl with the blotch on her face? I think somebody married her."—New York Press.

## THE PEANUT KING.

### How Pembroke D. Gwaltney Amassed a Fortune in Virginia.

The humble little peanut has made this man rich and given him a title—The Peanut King. The man was Pembroke D. Gwaltney. He went away from a corner of Virginia, that gave him birth, to bore spikes from Federal guns captured by Stonewall Jackson. That occupation, however laudable, ended with Lee's surrender at Richmond. Back to the little corner of Virginia, then came the Confederate armorer to rejoice in a wise and prudent wife. The bundles of "shin plasters" he had received as army pay and sent home she had invested in land. There it was—a fine Virginia farm, to begin with.

Smithfield, Va., of 1500 souls, is on Pagan Creek (and very Christian nevertheless), a branch of the James River, thirty miles from Norfolk. By the genius of the Peanut King it is the opulent centre of a thriving and lucrative industry—the greatest peanut fields in the world. The business of growing them was started by Gwaltney soon after the war. He prevailed on all the farmers round about to plant them. Then he built a packing factory and bought their product. A thousand bags a day, cleaned and sorted, is the output of the factory. The income from the business is a million dollars a year. Rivals he has had, but they have not lasted, they didn't know the arts of the peanut business so well. His son, Pembroke, Jr., followed in his father's footsteps and owns a general store at Smithfield. A story illustrates the old gentleman's business acumen. Young Pembroke bought several large lots of peanuts one season with the intention of holding them for the usual rise to realize a profit. The rise came slowly that year, the young man was almost discouraged and his father hearing that he was anxious to sell for fear that he would lose not only profit but principal on the peanuts, bought the stock at the market price and thus relieved the younger man of a great anxiety. Several months afterward Mr. Gwaltney said:

"Pembroke, you made a pretty neat profit on those peanuts you sold to be, I believe?"

"Yes, I sold without loss," said the prudent young man, not knowing what turn the colloquy might take and unwilling to commit himself to a large profit.

"As a matter of curiosity tell me how you came out?" said the elder man. The young man reluctantly acknowledged; apparently fearing that he might be called on to divide, that he had realied a profit of $3000. To his great astonishment his father said:

"Pembroke you are a successful merchant, but I made $5000 more an that same lot of peanuts."

Smithfield is noted for its export packed hams as well as for its peanuts, and the controlling genius of the world in the latter product. When Admiral Evans returned from Kiel he said of Emperor William's wonderful general knowledge:

"He knows even the flavor of the Smithfield ham."

For many years before her death the hams that supplied Queen Victoria's table at Windsor Castle were packed at Smithfield. The little town is very proud of its hams, of its peanuts, and of its leading citizen, the Peanut King, whose children and grandchildren, a populous family, are adding to the welfare and wealth of the State.

### A Defective Memory.

Mrs. Ferguson had just returned from an entertainment, and was in ecstacies over a young woman elocutionist who had taken part in it.

"She had on a trained gown of dark purple velvet," she said, "with bodice trimmed in deep cape collar of real Irish lace and lace cuffs. She wore her hair pompadour and had a diamond cluster at her throat."

"What did she recite?" asked Mr. Ferguson.

"Something about a little girl whose mother lost her in the park, or somewhere. I've forgotten the name of it. You know well enough what a wretched memory I have. But it was awfully pathetic. What are you grinning about, I'd like to know?"—Chicago Tribune.

### Not Exactly Lost.

"In Moscow," said a writer, "I saw a little child crying miserably one afternoon. He walked slowly down one of the principal streets, and his howls soon brought a big crowd around him.

"'What is the matter, my child? What troubles you?' every one asked.

"The boy paused finally. He looked at the multitude which had assembled; then, lifting up his voice, he shouted, in a shrill treble:

"'I am lost. Will somebody please take me home to Ivan Troubetskoy, the champion clothier of the South End, who has just got in his new stock of autumn overcoats, suits, neckties, shirts, hats and umbrellas, which we will sell cheaper than any one else in the city?'"

### The Rise of the Sea.

The phenomenon of the changes in the level of the sea is one of which is well shown in the case of the Mediterranean. A recent brochure presented to the French Academy of Sciences furnishes interesting information on this point, it being apparent that the sea has greatly increased in depth as compared to ancient times.

Formerly a bridge 3000 feet long united Leucade to the Continent. Today it is submerged, but the foundations of the work were discovered eleven feet beneath the surface. It may, therefore, be concluded that since the construction of the bridge the sea has risen at this point over nine feet. Similar incidents have been noted at other points.

## POPULAR SCIENCE

The Ambidextrous Society, of London, has been formed with the object of encouraging people to use both hands with equal facility.

A recent mechanical wonder is a telegraphic instrument which sends 1000 words a minute over lines 1000 miles in length. A human operator can transmit fifty words a minute.

Welding by electricity is brought to such perfection that welding apparatus can be carried to a railroad track and two rails joined as solidly as if they had come out of the rolling mill in one piece.

A novelty in stoves is a battleship range, with steel racks for preventing the pots and pans from going helter-skelter in a high sea, and with ingenious braces for holding the range itself in place.

Though the ocean covers about three-fourths of the surface of the earth, it does not in the same proportion provide for the wants of man. It is estimated that only about three per cent. of the people in the world obtain their living directly from the sea.

Dr. Wolf, director of the Koeningsstuhl Observatory, in Berlin, Germany, has discovered photographically a new planet, of the thirteenth magnitude. It is presumed to be one of a number revolving between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, of which number 500 have been already charted.

Last year coal constituted about forty per cent. of the total tonnage of the American railways. To carry a ton in England from the Yorkshire coal fields to London, a distance of 158 miles, costs $1.87, while coal is carried from the Carbondale coal region, in Illinois, to Chicago, 276 miles, for seventy-five cents.

## THE MODERN HORSE.

### He Must Be a Beast of Superior Intelligence Now-a-Days.

The horse is getting wise. He always was intelligent, but he has learned many things in the last few years. A really successful horse today must know a great many things not essential to those olden horses who did not live in electric-lighted stables or ride up and down stairs on an elevator, and did not have their hair cut by electricity. A horse to have a career to-day must not only have horse sense, but he must be acquainted with the ways of the world, says the Washington Star. He must be a "horse-of-the-world" or a "horse-about-town," if it be permissible to paraphrase those hard-worn phrases, "man-of-the-world" and "man-about-town." Nearly every horse is becoming an educated horse. During the last few years the horse has been taking a course in the study of automobiles, and already he has a very good understanding of the subject. Time was when a horse would forget his spavins, sore shoulders or quarter crack and would jump a six-bar gate at sight of one of these monsters. Now he can walk up to auto, look it in the lamps and sniff its evil breath without breaking a trace or kicking in the dashboard. He can now meet one of these benzine buggies on a lonely road and a dark night without throwing either a fit or his rider. The time may be coming when the horse and the auto will sleep in the same stable and drink from the same bucket. There was the trolley car. A few years ago it was the abomination of every horse. Now the horse would feel positively lonesome if he had all the street to himself and did not have his wagon smashed now and then as a diversion. The horse is learning.

### Exploding Trees.

Instances of exploding trees are well authenticated, though not common. Some years ago an oak in the grave below the front of the White Lodge in Richmond Park, in England, exploded when struck by lightning. The bark flew off and disappeared in small patches, while the rest of the tree was shattered into fragments.

Although the cause of this phenomenon is not certainly known, a very probable explanation has been suggested. The electric current, it is said, generates such enormous heat that the sap in the trees is converted suddenly into superheated steam, which expands and causes the explosion. Between the bark and the trunk there is most moisture, and this fact accounts for the bark being driven into space, while often the rest of the tree is not affected.

American manufacturers of wood pulp use a similar method. Logs of fir are placed in a strong room and exposed to the action of the superheated steam until the moisture in every cell becomes an explosive gas. The room is opened, and as the log explodes it is changed instantly into wood powder.

### Italian Royal Residence.

The favorite summer abode of the Italian King and Queen is the beautiful Castle of Racconigi, as indeed it has been of several monarchs of that country. King Humbert, when in need of relaxation, used to go to the castle, which resembles an English country home rather than a castle of Italy, standing as it does in well kept grounds and a thickly wooded park. The gardens are most beautifully laid out, and the whole estate is the delight of the Queen and Victor Emanuel, who spent a great part of his boyhood at Racconigi.