

it is governed, and by the accuracy of foresight which provides for all contingencies, and prepares for anticipated action.

The preliminary arrangements immediately prior to the outburst of the campaign in Abyssinia, furnish a notable example of the promptness with which army operations are projected in the military bureaux of our Indian Empire. In that instance, the exact number and description of troops to be employed—their equipment—material of war—commissariat, medical, and transport arrangements, were all determined *long before the Indian Journals were aware of the fact that Theodore was to be attacked at all!*

I must apologize to the reader for this digression, and shall now resume the thread of my little narrative.

I gradually ascended from the position of junior assistant, and have now reached the third step from the top of the ladder; and *there* I must (I fear) remain for an indefinite period, not through any fault of mine; but in consequence of the wilful stupidity of my two seniors, who have deliberately determined to *live and not to die!* The manifest inconvenience of this dogged persistency on their part to “stick on” and neither retire nor condescend to “shuffle off this mortal coil” must of course, (as the novelists say) be painfully apparent to the meanest capacity, and to no capacity more than to that of Mr. Ramsawmy Sivajee. However, it is rather consoling to know that “*the one year more*” will assuredly cook their goose.*

That word *will* crop up! I have no objection to the fowl when “served up” but it is (*to me*) indissolably connected with that abominable word *plu*—there! that’s enough of that.

During the first year of my *griffinage*† I was agreeably impressed with the domestic arrangements of our bungalow, which was a snug, pretty little building, just large enough to accommodate three bachelors. It was a perfect model of the old-fashioned glebe house, with a spacious verandah all round,—a handsome lawn in front,—and enclosed in a compound‡ containing about three acres, well wooded and shaded. *There was a roof on the house!*

Reader! I am by no means apprehensive that you will commit yourself to any expression of boisterous merriment at the simple fact just recorded; but, keeping in view the interesting particulars which will be detailed in my next chapter, it would be just as well, to remember that there *was* a roof on the Indian edifice which afforded hospitality and shelter to the once luckless, helpless, friendless SIVAJEE.

* The phrase “*the one year more*,” has become a proverb in India. It has reference to those old antiquated gentlemen who remain at their posts without intermission or relaxation in the way of furlough, in the hope that by thus “sticking to the ship,” they will be enabled to quit India the sooner, and for ever, on the pensions so well and so nobly earned; but *the one year more* is that fatal year which cannot be foreseen nor measured by statistical hypotheses; and so the wary calculator, grey in the service, and feeble with age, sinks paralysed and enervated and—*dies in harness!* “Another victim of the *one year more*.”

† In our younger colonies the presence of a stranger at “the diggings” used to be at once detected by the older “hands” owing to the *gaucherie*, which marked his efforts in the art of “digging for gold;” and he was thereupon dubbed as “*another new chum*.” In a similar, but less vulgar style, the novice on Indian soil is distinguished from his more experienced brethren by the term “*Griffin*.” This sobriquet attaches to the individual until he becomes habituated to the customs of the country.

‡ The plot of ground; in the centre of which the house (or bungalow, as it is called), stands.