



THE FAMOUS CASHMERE GATE, DELHI.

house, creep over walls and ceilings, make their home behind your pictures from whence they sally out to feed on flies, mosquitoes and such like deer. It is amusing to watch how they stalk their prey, creeping gradually nearer and nearer, when, quick as a flash, the tormenting mosquito is where the wicked cease from troubling. When food is plentiful the lizards keep on eating until their little bodies look as if they would burst.

The common ant is also a great plague; no particle of food is safe from it unless kept in a receptacle protected by water. Sometimes an army of large black ants will march through the bungalow, perhaps meeting another of a different kind, when a battle royal ensues, and lasts till few are left alive. It is a strange sight to watch how tenaciously they cut and mangle each other until the ground is strewn with fragments of their bodies.

During the rainy season one has to keep a sharp lookout for snakes, as they sometimes come in out of the wet. My quarters in Fort William overlooked the river. In the hot, still nights I often sat in the broad verandah to catch the breeze that sometimes blew from the water; my

favorite seat was a wicker arm-chair I brought from Madeira. One night I sat sweltering in the heat, thinking of the cool breezes of my home-land. A lamp which hung close by threw a dim light over the stone-paved veranda; happening to look down, I caught sight of a snake as it came gliding slowly out from under the chair, between my feet. I remained perfectly still, and, in an undertone, said to my wife, who sat near me, "Don't move, there's a snake here. It is coming out between my feet." I waited till it was clear, when I sprang up and threw the chair on the top of it, but in the darkness it managed to get away. The following night I thought it would be well to examine the chair before sitting on it, when, to my surprise, out glided a snake, which I quickly dispatched. It was a full-grown krite, one of the most poisonous kind, whose bite is certain death. According to official statistics over 22,000 persons die annually from snake bites in India. The natives are great fatalists; they will walk with bare feet and legs through the long grass where the snakes lurk. The Hindu, as a rule, will not destroy animal life, but he does not mind another doing it for him.