

AN INDIAN SHAITAN.

BY MELISSA.

MANY years ago—exactly how many I hardly like to recall, but it was about the time of the Great Mutiny—I was stationed at Bellary, a place some hundred or more miles west of Bangalore, in the Madras Presidency, and here I became in a way acquainted with an Indian Shaitan. Of devils generally my acquaintance is of a very meagre character; but it is my rule to speak of even devils as I find them, and this particular Shaitan turned out to be such a very friendly one, that I am induced to record the circumstances of our very limited, if to me very pleasing, acquaintance.

Bellary is one of the hottest stations in India. At that time there were several regiments stationed at Bellary: the 74th Highlanders, the 3rd Madras Cavalry, a detachment of artillery and two regiments M.N.I. Captain Doveton was an officer in the cavalry regiment. He had recently married a young French lady of Pondicherry. The young couple lived in a house built as usual in the centre of a compound. The house rejoiced in one upper room, the walls of which were made of pantiles. Such an arrangement gave to the fresh air and the mosquitoes "an easy entrance night and day." Having been educated in a Swiss school (Vevey, Canton de Vaud), I understood French, a knowledge of which language was not then so common among Anglo-Saxons as it is now. Consequently, I was often invited to the Dovetons' house. After a month's tenancy, the Captain and his wife removed into another residence. On my inquiring why they had made the change, I was told that one Sunday evening, on returning from church, they found seated in the drawing room an elegantly shaped young lady, heavily veiled and clad in deep mourning. Much astonished, the Captain advanced towards his visitor; the lady rose, lifted her veil, and bowed low to her hosts. Her face was extremely beautiful, but of a deadly pallor. Her eyes were black; large, lack-lustrous, but of unutterable sadness; her lips like those of a dead person. She essayed to speak, but no sound proceeded out of her mouth. Suddenly turning, she seemed to glide rather than walk towards the staircase which led to the upper room. The Captain followed the lady upstairs. There was no entrance into or exit from that room except by the one staircase, and yet the lady was nowhere to be seen! This adventure happened every Sunday evening during the month; and Mrs. Doveton became so frightened that she refused to live any longer in the house.

The next tenant was Dr. Jackson, of the 30th Madras N. I. To him no lady appeared; but every night mysterious knockings were heard. These knockings were so loud and continuous that the good doctor could not sleep a wink. Dr.