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Despatches From Lieut. Davis of 8th Hampshires.

(Continued from Saturday's Issue.)
One bit of the march was especially pretty. We went along the road to what looked like a precipice in front. We looked across a wide flat valley with a river running down it and on the other side the ground rose gradually and was thickly wooded. The river was not an English sort of one. It was about fifty yards across and was a jumble of rocks and stones with a little water running down the middle. In the rains of the course it will be a rushing, raging torrent. When we got to the edge of the descent the road turned sharp off to the left and wound down with a steep bank rising up above and descending steeply down on the right—both banks covered with a luxuriant tangle of vegetation.

As we looked across the valley, I was first struck with the vastness and immensity of the scenery here. I feel it every day up here.
Our progress was slow. Once or twice we had to adjust the load and retrace it. Owing to the shortage of transport it was much overladen. However we at last trudged wearily into camp about 10.45. I forgot to take a cup of hot tea and a pure sandwich at the eighth milestone. We had the same every day. Our camp was half a mile to the left of the main road and close to the river. The officers had a small stone bungalow and the men simply deposited their belongings under trees close to.

The rest of the day we rested and tried to sleep. There had been no mosquitoes since arrival at D-hra, but the common fly made itself felt both by its numbers and persistence. We retired early. I forgot to say that I had hired a tonga to convey my small baggage and other articles and my bearers' luggage. Thus I had everything I wanted in camp each day. We slept on camp beds out in the open under trees. Jackals howled and dogs barked and native camp followers chattered and clattered, but we were soon asleep.

One of the diversions of the march was the doings of the numerous train of dogs which belonged to the men and followed the column. One man in my platoon has a big mongrel fox terrier, white and yellow, called Ginger. He has a most comical face, as in between his ears on the top of his head the skin goes into wrinkles and gives him a sort of surprised look! "E" Co platoon have about six dogs of all descriptions. One of these came with my platoon on Monday, May 3rd, as owing to sore feet I had to make up the strength of the platoon with six "E" men. "A" Co marched off at 2.50 am. and went a short cut, about 15 miles. Those who had sore feet went with them. The baggage had to go round by road 19 1/2 miles, so I only took the soundest men. In spite of delays not a single man under me dropped behind. They marched splendidly and we all got together just after 11.00.

We left camp at 3.15 a.m. We continued westward, descending for 9 1/2 miles through much the same country. We passed several tea plantations. The tea-plants—about two feet high—were planted under scattered trees and were all out level on top, so at a distance it looked like a wood with a green lawn beneath the trees. The tea plant is rather like a box bush, but the leaves are a little bigger, more pointed, and a brighter green. These plantations are owned by Colonel Rennie, a retired R. A. M. C. officer who is at present at Chakrata and runs the Officers' club here.

At 9 1/2 miles we turned sharply back to N. E. and started approaching the foot of the mountains, climbing up gradually, with the Jumna two or three miles to our left. We had to cross the Jumna before getting to the rest camp. About five miles from camp we turned upon a cartload of baggage overturned into a ditch. Fortunately we soon got another bullock wagon and reloaded, but were delayed about an hour altogether, as we had to see the cart into camp.

For a mile before crossing the Jumna we descended through thick jungle, big trees and dense tangled undergrowth. The river is a big quarter mile across and a big bridge spans it. On each side, thickly wooded hills rise more or less steeply, and on the far side the mountains tower up several thousand feet. There was not much water coming down—it was mostly rocks with various streams down the middle. To put the finishing touch to our exhaustion, we had a stiff pull for 1 1/2 miles up to camp from the river. Our camp was on a flat open level on the ground surrounded by woods. Our Dak Bungalow was one-quarter mile away and looked down a steep wooded slope across the river. It was a fine place, though very hot. It was still only about two or three hundred feet over 2000 feet.

We had the usual eat and sleep. I was not so very exhausted considering I had carried one rifle and equipment a distance of about four of them had another rifle as well.
Most of the forests round about were preserved. If you want to go shooting you have to apply for a licence from the District Forest Officer. Across the river near our camp after the first day's march there are a lot of tigers, and some of the

best shooting in India, I believe.

We had a thunderstorm in the afternoon and the men had to put up tents in a hurry.

Tuesday, May 4th—You remember I told you about the "brain-fever" bird. It is a sort of cuckoo and during our marches we heard and saw another relative, which takes its place up here. Its note is very familiar, but four-fold instead of three-fold, and it sings as it flies about. Also strange to say we heard lots of ordinary English cuckoos! We saw a lot of Golden Orioles, a small bird and a bright yellow except for the lower part of back and wings which are black. In one place on the first day's march, we saw lots of small monkeys—grey black with light breasts. They scampered across the fields near the road and into the woods close by, sitting up every now and then to look back and watch us.

To continue the journey, we left Kalsi at 2.45 a.m. This time C. Company ahead. I have not mentioned it before, but each morning when we got up there was a bright moon, which helped us to pack up and get started.

We started climbing at once. The roads during the first two days had been frightfully dusty, but now they were much better. We went mainly through thick woods and soon began to see what we were in for. We could see almost as well as in daylight. On our right was a deep valley with a stream. Our progress was slow. We could not tell at first in which direction the road would take us next, as the mountains seemed to rise almost perpendicularly all round us. The road would go along in one direction and then take a double back again, so that at times we seemed to be almost directly above the road lower down, so steep were the mountain sides. There was one big bend near the beginning, and after going about three miles or so from camp we found ourselves going in a south-easterly direction and there far below we caught glimpses of the road gleaming white in the moonlight amongst the dark trees.

Our direction was north and we gradually cleared of the thick woods and came out into the valley which we followed up to Saiah, our next camp, 11 1/2 miles from Kalsi. (The actual village of Kalsi we saw away down in the valley close to the stream, we did not see much more than the roofs, soon after we left the camp.)

As we left the woods behind we could see more of our surroundings. In the woods I saw a very large snake, a cobra, and a very large lizard. The bottom of the valley away below. The sides of the valley seemed almost perpendicular both above and below. As the trees thinned and got smaller we could see better the depth of the valley and the height of the mountains above us. The road is cut out in the mountain side about half a mile from the bottom. On one side (our right) we kept on level. The other side (our left) the rocky side went almost sheer down for 500 feet or more, and it was generally almost as steep up above. People talk of a course of a sheer drop down, but there are never or hardly ever, what we should call cliffs, but it is so steep you would not have much chance if you fell over. Sometimes, of course, it is not quite so steep, and you could walk down it very easily. The road was not quite so steep, long a wonderful bit of work. It is just as good as most English roads, and is never really steep—just a gradual pull up all the time. It has to follow the contours of the hills, and there are numerous steep side valleys with precipitous streams coming down them. We began to get a delicious cool breeze down the valley, and it helped us on very finely. I suppose we had done about 6 miles. We noticed in several places near the tops of the mountains, where it was not quite so steep, long bright strips. We could not make them out at first, but soon discovered that they were patches of corn. It seemed incredible at first, but we soon got used to it. The hillmen cultivate any convenient place and make patches on the terrace system. It gives the mountain side a most weird appearance, at times in the distance looking like a series of sandhills rising and falling in regular succession. Further on we saw a native harvesting one of these fields. He went along picking off each ear one by one! Lots of the fields we noticed were simply stalks of straw standing up without any ears.

In one place we saw a big brown monkey jumping up the hillside above. He sprang into a tree fifty yards up, which seemed almost to overhang the road, and started to shake the branches at us very violently! As we advanced we got nearer to the stream. In places where there was room little plots of land were cultivated close above the water. In several places there were fields across the valley on a level with the road, and we saw lots of the small, grey, black monkeys sitting about on the edge and in the middle of the corn. At last we saw an opening in the valley ahead. We gradually got nearer to the level of the stream until we crossed it and came to Saiah, a collection of two Dak bungalows and a few native huts, and just room on the grassy terrace above the stream for our tent. We got in about 8 a.m., after quite an easy march compared with the other days. We climbed about 1500 ft, but it was gradual all the way.

Rest of day spent as usual. There was not much sun, as it came over cloudy for most of the rest of the day. My quarters were in the upper Dak bungalow, 100 feet or more straight up the hillside above the camp. I lay on my camp bed and watched the birds and the mountains.

There was a gorgeous tree twenty yards away, no leaves on the shape of an apple tree, and covered with brilliant orange crimson flowers which evidently provided much honey. You can imagine how pretty golden orioles were as they came to suck the flowers. Numerous other birds came as well.

I looked across at a steep hill rising across the valley for 600 or 700 feet. It was rocky but covered with grass, and in places bushes and low trees. There were some cattle grazing more than half way up, and they looked as if they would fall off every minute. In places there was a sort of network of zig-zag tracks in the grass. You cannot walk straight up, but have to go backwards and forwards.

I saw one or two natives coming down with huge bundles of brushwood on their backs—it looked most precarious, but it was not quite so steep as it looked.
(To be continued.)



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COL. RENNIE IN LONDON ON LEAVE OF ABSENCE.
London, Aug. 18.—Lieut.-Col. Rennie, of the 3rd Battalion (Queen's Own, Toronto), has arrived in England on a short leave of absence.
Major-General John Carson of Montreal, who is an Englishman attached to the Canadian Record Office as the representative of the Minister of Militia, had a narrow escape yesterday from serious injury to his eyes. While motoring in London he was struck in the face by a stone thrown by a small boy. The blow inflicted a cut within half an inch of the General's left eye. As the General wears glasses he would probably have suffered the loss of his sight had the stone landed half an inch nearer his eye.

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August 24th and 28th.—From Toronto and stations West and North in the Province of Ontario, but not including stations on line North of Toronto to Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, Ont.

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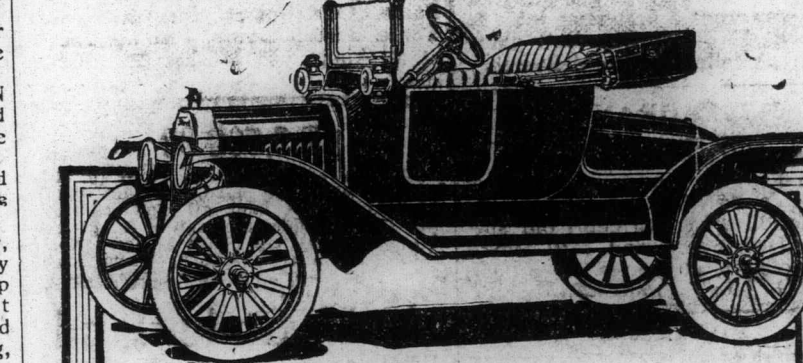
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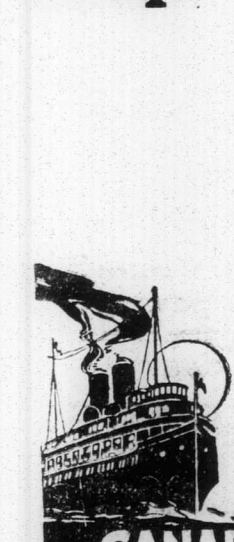
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