

THE INDIAN PALANKEEN.

The palankeen is about six feet long by two and a half wide, and serves at night-time for a bed, in the day-time for a parlour. In the front part of the interior is fitted a broad shelf, underneath which a drawer pulls out, and over the shelf a net is stretched, such as we see in travelling carriages. In the after part, as a sailor would call it, there is generally fixed a shelf for books, a net for fruit or any loose articles, and hooks for hats, caps, towels, and other things. There are two doors, or sliding partitions on each side, fitted with Venetian blinds in the upper pannel; and in each end of the palankeen are placed two little windows. Many travellers choose to have a lamp fixed in one corner, with a glass face turned inwards, but trimmed from without, either for reading or for sleeping by—for your Indian must always have a light to see how to shut his eyes, as Pat said. The bottom, or seat, is made of strips of rattan, like that of a chair, over which is laid a light elastic mattress, made either of horse-hair, or, which is still better, I believe, of the small shavings used in dressing the bamboo and rattan.

Across the palankeen, at a distance of a foot and a half from the end, is hung a flat square cushion, buttoned tightly from side to side, for the traveller's back to rest against; while his feet are prevented from slipping forwards by a cross-bar, similar in principle to the stretchers in a boat, against which the rowers plant their feet. This bar, which slides up and down in slits cut at the sides of the palankeen, is capable of being shifted nearer to or further from the end, according to the length of the voyager's legs, or to his choice of position. In the space behind the cushion or rest for the back, are stowed away, in the day-time, the sheets, blankets, pillow, and other night-things; and in the net above, two or three changes of clothes, in case of any accident separating the traveller from his heavy baggage. In the drawers may be kept shaving articles, and such nick-knacks as a compass, thermometer, sketch-book. On the shelf behind, a few books—among which, of course, will be found a road-book and a Hindustanee vocabulary—jostling with a tea-pot and sugar-canister. Under the mattress, an infinity of small things may be hid, provided they be flattish. In each corner of this moving house are placed little round sockets for bottles and glasses. Many other odds and ends of comforts and conveniences suggest themselves as the journey advances, or may be found cut and dry in expensive palankeens. I speak merely of what mine possessed, and it was a very ordinary affair—cheap and strong, and not too heavy. Along the top, on the outside, is laid a wax-cloth cover, which, when not in use, is rolled up; but in rainy weather, or when the night air becomes chill, this cloth is let so loose as to envelope the whole palankeen.

At each end there is fixed a single strong smooth bar, which rests on the bearers' shoulders. This pole, which is somewhat thicker than a man's arm, is possessed of none of the elasticity which gives such an unpleasant motion to a sedan chair, being secured tightly to the corners of the palankeen by iron rods. To one of these poles there is generally suspended a beautifully shaped rattan basket, holding a goblet or water pitcher, which is still further defended from injury by an open tracery of split rattans, resembling not a little the work in relief on the buttresses and pinnacles of Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey. This goblet is hung in front, that the dew that exudes from its pores may be evaporated by the current of air it encounters as the bearers move on; and thus, even in the hottest weather, a cool draught of water may always be obtained. Under the pole behind are hung a tea-kettle, coffee-pot, and a curious but useful kind of wash-hand basin, imported from China, of a cylindrical shape, made of wood highly varnished.

Some people add a brace of pistols to the equipment of their palankeen; and I preferred, if it came to the push,

rather to be robbed in peace, than to fight a pitched battle with desperadoes about a trumpery watch, or a handful of pagodas. At the very best, one could only hope to repel the boarders, and perhaps put one or two of them to death; in return for which, a broken pate, or a slice with a grass-cutter's knife, would remain as lasting evidences of the traveller's prowess in jungle. As for tigers, I was assured that in ninety-nine cases in a hundred, they are quite as glad to make off from man as man is glad to get off from them; and in truth their instinct must be but small, or their hunger inordinately great, if they have not learned by this time, that Mr. Homo is much more than a match for Mr. Brute, with all his claws and teeth. Of this fact I saw ample proofs in the course of my journey, as I shall have occasion presently to relate in describing a great native festival near Seringapatam, where animals really wild, and not such tame creatures as are to be seen in our misnamed "wild beast" shows, were exhibited and baited for our edification, within twenty-four hours after being caught in the forest.

If the journey to be made in the palankeen be a short one, say thirty or forty miles, it may be run over in the night, with only one stop, during which the bearers light a fire and dress their supper. Including this delay, I have made, between eight in the evening and half-past six in the morning, a journey of full forty miles—that is, from Madras to the Seven Pagodas, or Mahabalipooram, the city of the great god Bali. On ordinary occasions, for short distances between house and house, when you are going out to dinner, only a couple of men run under each pole, and at such times the palankeen is carried at the rate of four or five miles an hour. But on journeys, there are generally three men to each pole, which employs six men out of the twelve, while the others run by their side, ready to relieve their companions at intervals. During the whole time they are in progress, they make a noise which is not easy to describe. Sometimes it consists of a long, deep, but slightly varied groan, in which the whole party join to correct time. Mostly, however, the men in front use one kind of groan or grunt, which is answered by another from those behind. These sounds often approach to a scream, and frequently include, words of warning against stones in the way, or pools of water; but these are articulated so indistinctly, that it is difficult to catch them. I remember one exclamation frequently used, "Kurab high!" Occasionally, when it is wished to make a great exertion, the leader of the song suddenly calls out some such word as "Shabash!" to which every one answers, and away they spring at double speed, while the tone of the music, so to call it, is changed from a dull sort of grumbling bass, to an angry and sharp intonation, mixed with something almost insulting or reproachful in its tone.

POETRY AND SCULPTURE.

James Montgomery, in his lectures on poetry and general literature, thus contends for the pre-eminence of poetry over sculpture:—

"Poetry is a school of sculpture, in which the art flourishes, not in marble or brass, but in that which outlasts both—in letters, which the fingers of a child may write or blot: but which, once written, Time himself may not be able to obliterate; and in sounds, which are but passing breath, yet, being once uttered, by possibility, may never cease to be repeated. Sculpture, to the eye, in palpable materials, is, of necessity, confined to a few forms, aspects and attitudes. The poet's images are living, breathing, moving creatures: they stand, walk, run, fly, speak, love, fight, fall, labour, suffer, die—in a word, they are men of like passions with ourselves, undergoing all the changes of actual existence, and presenting to the mind of the reader solitary figures, or complicated groups, more easily (for words are better recollected than shapen substances,) and in-