

sleeping apartment, which (by the merest chance, of course) *happened to be vacant* on my arrival.

Ah "Spif," you only anticipated the "spats;" and you, "Nosey," just sniffed from afar those watery vapours which annually baptized the "splendid diggings"—the "rare lot"—to which you consigned me in all the plentitude of your benevolence and charity for an "illustrious stranger."

I think I had enjoyed the society of my two domiciliary friends and that of the *beau monde* of Fort St. George for a brief period of, say 11 days—perhaps only 10—it may have been twelve (but I desire to be cautious in committing myself to a statement which might involve my veracity), when I experienced the first "tropical" of the season—"Spiff" assured me it was the first, therefore I have no hesitation in committing myself to a repetition of that assertion.

Being still young, and of course the self same innocent "*stupid of other days*," I had some little difficulty in understanding the precise meaning of the word "*tropical*" in its relation to a shower of ordinary magnitude; but my ever-faithful friend and tutor was promptly at his post to enlighten me on this point, which he succeeded in doing by means of an historical *fact* which he related, and which I will now take the liberty to record for the information of the reader and for that of posterity. [Your kind attention is respectfully invited to the foot note marked thus †.]

With a laudable inclination to ponder over and digest the *great fact* communicated to me by my esteemed friend (and "pitcher"†) I retired, with a somewhat elevated and *distingue* air, within the territorial limits of that "rare lot" of which I was the reputed tenant-at-will; and having taken a furtive glance at the face of external nature in the vicinity of my window, I calmly and cautiously dropped into the *horizontal*—a position, by the way, which (in *my* case) bore a close affinity to a frog taking preliminary "bearings" for the maritime survey of a pond.

Coeval with my distended recumbency, the "first tropical of the season" was proclaiming itself in rather boisterous accents in the immediate neighborhood of the humble couch on which I was spread. The noise of thunder tearing the firmament and bursting over one's

† The Historical Fact.—His HIGHNESS SHERR-OW-KOOLA, the second Nizam of the Deccan, was an earnest and faithful devotee at the shrine of Bacchus, and was long distinguished for the right royal "spreads" which he gave at the court of Hyderabad (the "City of Hyder"—the first Nizam). On those occasions the most costly wines that could be procured on the European continent were handed round to his courtiers who sat cross-legged in two concentric circles, and quaffed the rosy nectar out of golden goblets which were placed for that purpose around the outer edge of the royal carpet. Owing to the immense quantities of Port consumed at those festivities H. H. was induced to issue the following edict to the then Lord Steward of the household (the renowned Sulimoonjee Bahajee): "With the view of obviating oft-repeated and unnecessary hookums (orders) H. H. hereby commands that all future supplies of Port shall be obtained by the lac (100,000) instead of by the dozen." In complying with the new system then inaugurated, the untutored merchants who flourished in that memorable reign, billed H. H. for "one lac-i-port" [sic]. As any direct pun upon these words would have been viewed as high treason and punished by the immediate decapitation of the offender, the letters were inverted by the Editor of the "Hookamsnivay" (one of the dailies of the period) so as to read "tropical," and thus the law of treason was evaded by the adoption of a well-concealed "*jeu de mots*," which has ever since been applied to all "liquids in a superabundant quantity!" "You perceive," said Spiffin, "that that fully and satisfactorily accounts for the presence of the cream in the interior of the cocoa nut!"

[Accepting with many thanks the lucid explanation embodied in this interesting and touching narrative, I bowed with becoming dignity and withdrew from "the presence."—J.S.]

† I extremely regret my inability to trace the root or origin of this word, in the sense in which it is here used; but I trust that the fact of my having given it a place in the text may be considered a sufficient proof that the expression is quite admissible and appropriate.