

ished and bedraggled head against the fierce blue white sky, looking as if it were longing to lie down in peace to die, if it could only bend that stiff, slender trunk. Here and there a village flashes into sight, a clump of thatched mud houses, a group of large trees, a shrieking crowd of dancing children—and it is gone. Now we shoot past the grateful gloom of a mango grove, and out into the glare again. The only relief to the dazzled eye is the soft blue outline of the hills, whither we are bound, now growing nearer and more distinct with every mile of our journey. At last the end is come, and we step out on the station platform at Metlapollium. Upon doing so, a breath as out of a heated oven smites us in the face. The atmosphere quivers over the bare, gray fields, and the glare is blinding.

From M——, the ascent—twenty-two miles to Coonoor, thirty-four to Ootz—is made in various kinds of conveyances. One may go up in the "tonga," a vehicle of the mail cart species drawn by four skinny but expeditious animals. This trip is made by daylight. Or one may patronize the humble and unostentatious ox-cart and make the ascent in the night. The latter method of procedure has its disadvantages; one does not get much of the scenery, but it is not devoid of a certain charm for those who love the night. A tender, subtle charm lies under the starlight, dwells in the hush of Nature, and speaks peace to the weary and care-worn, a charm peculiar to "Night's soft presence," which flies before the approach of Day.

The ascent is begun, our carts are creeping up the hill, the tinkling of the bells on the oxen's necks echoing under the trees along the sides of the roads. Up, up, up, winding along the road which circles the hills again and again, crawling along their slopes, diving down into the valleys, climbing up the steeps, traversing the brink of the precipices, stealing under the great over-arching bluffs. The night is still, breathless. Only the stars look down upon us from their steadfast height.

Up, up, up, through the cool, sweet darkness laden with the fragrance of many a hidden mountain blossom, full of the "calm, majestic presence of the night." Up, up, farther up, and now the mountain breeze begins to stir in the tree-tops, rushes down the gorge and sweeps past us to the plains, and a little