

which I felt when they had left me! About seventy miles of a good, straight road lay between me and the friendly haven of Sindhia's camp at Gwalior, for which I was bound. But I knew that not a friendly soul lived between. I could trust no one on the way. I must avoid all contact with the natives, lie hid by day and travel by night, seek food and water by stealth, and carry my life in my hand—the sole European wandering over miles upon miles of hostile ground. Under ordinary circumstances, I could easily have done the journey in four days. But unaccustomed to the peculiar Hindustani shoes which I now wore, I could not do my best. What creatures of habit we are, to be sure! I found that my progress was not rapid, and blisters very soon began to burn on my feet for want of stockings. I had not done ten miles, when the dawn appeared, and I began to look out for a hiding-place. I went off the road and climbed into a large widespread tree, and was well hidden in its leafy branches. From this lofty perch I scanned the country round, and to my great delight, I saw a small pool of water not far off. I was feeling very thirsty; but still I was obliged to wait patiently in my friendly tree for many a long hour, because, with the dawn, travellers came up who had begun their journey early, taking advantage of the cool of the morning to reach their first halting-place, for their mid-day meal, before the sun became too hot.

It was nearly noon, when seeing the road quite clear of enemies—for such to me were all who passed—I slipped from my tree and hastened to the pool. Under other circumstances, I would not have touched such water with my fingers; for it was a pond frequented by cattle, and consequently none of the purest or cleanest. But now! I was agonizing with thirst; and it was a pleasure not easily understood by those who have never undergone such an ordeal to find the all-necessary water near at hand, no matter in what state. The forethought of my friendly bricklayers had provided me with several wheat-cakes, enough to satisfy the wants of nature for a few days. At the edge of that pool, under the blazing sun, I ate a few of my cakes, and drank of the filthy water, which yet seemed nectar to my parched mouth. Then I hastened back to my tree.

Late in the evening, when the short tropical twilight had been extinguished in the darkness of night, I descended, and went forward again on my solitary way. My feet were all the worse for my first day's journey, and I had had no sleep in that time. My progress was proportionately slower. The dawn saw me hardly eight miles from my starting-place. A ruined edifice some distance off the road was my shelter for this day, and in the area enclosed by its dilapidated garden wall I found a well, and luckily an old bucket and half-rotten rope lay nearby. Again I ate of my cakes, and I drank of the water, and was able to have a good sound sleep in the friendly shelter of the ruin. Tired in body and wearied in mind, I slept long indeed, and night had already fallen when I awoke. After more food and drink, I started again, much refreshed with my rest. I travelled again all night; and in spite of my sore feet, I forced myself on, and made good progress. But the next morning found me in a sad predicament. I could see no cover or shelter of any kind, except a small clump of tall trees in the far distance ahead. I made for it, but with a heavy heart, for I knew that it indicated the roadside well where travellers rest for their mid-day meal. Still I found it to be. Still I could do nothing else; there was no other place to rest in. Perhaps also my success so far had emboldened me to a little negligence. I went up to the well, had another feed on the last of my wheat-cakes, and a hearty drink from the well. I then retired to the furthest of the trees, and lay down at full length on the ground, covering myself all over with my *chuddir*. This was rehearsing what I intended to do when travellers came up, for thus the natives are accustomed to take their short mid-day rest. At first the coast was clear, and I could lie at ease, with my head uncovered. I dared not trust myself to sleep. Very soon, however, travellers began to pass along the road, and many looked curiously at the lazy man who had either overslept himself till too late in the morning, or was beginning to sleep too long before noon. They were, however, too intent on their own journey to mind me much, and they went on; it was not from them I expected trouble.

The crucial time came, as noon approached. The blazing sun shone in full glory and heat. Travellers began to drop in at the well. I covered myself—head and all—with my mantle, pretending to be asleep, but carefully noticing every arrival. Among them, to my horror, I saw two sepoys armed with swords. They in due course began their meal, chatting freely, and I lay quite still, hoping that, after food and rest, they would proceed on their way, leaving me once more at liberty to resume my journey. Unluckily, the sun had begun to beat upon me, yet I dare not move. The mere fact of my lying thus still and immovable made them suspect that I was a corpse.

Perhaps he has been poisoned, said one. Or died of a snake-bite during the night; those cobras

are so deadly, said another. He may have money on him, suggested a third. He evidently does not hear us, said a fourth, let us go and see how matters stand.

Slowly two of them approached me, shook my shoulder, and at length, gently, raised the *chuddur* from my face. At the first glance, they sprang back, shouting the word *Faranghi!* (European). I jumped to my feet; and, in a moment I was surrounded by the entire group, including the two sepoys, with their swords now drawn.

At first I felt quite dazed, for I could not comprehend what had so suddenly betrayed me. But on their pointing to my face, and one of them producing a small pocket mirror (such as native dandies often carry about), I looked in the glass, and saw a strange sight. While my blue eyes showed that I could not be a native, I had also, while drinking, washed off the berry juice from my lips and part of my face, disclosing portions of a white skin, which convicted me of being a European indeed. It was useless to struggle or resist; the band was too numerous, and two had swords. They seized me at once, and dragged me nearer the well, and my hands were tied behind my back with the bucket rope. Some were for killing me at once. But the two sepoys greatly extolling their own prowess in having made me a prisoner, said that I belonged to them, and that they would take me on to Jhansi, where a reward was offered for every European brought in. As they were armed, no one disputed their argument, and I was left to them.

After a while, I was told by them to walk on between them. I did so, for resistance under the circumstances would have been madness; nor was I without hope that some unforeseen chance might yet enable me to escape. They were now, after all, only two to one, because, to avoid sharing their expected reward, they would not allow the others to travel with them. After having walked several miles back towards Jhansi without offering any resistance or making any remark, I saw with delight that they became less suspicious and observant of me and my doings. I gradually and cautiously tried the rope that bound my wrists. Luckily, it had not been knotted with the skill of a Jack-tar; and I found after a little working that I could easily free my hands. I was far too cautious to do so at once, however; I was determined to wait for a favourable chance.

That chance came sooner than I had expected. The day was very hot, and it was not very long before we were all very thirsty. A little after four in the afternoon, as we walked along, one of them said: "I see a well, a little off the road; let us go and drink."

"We had better hurry on to Jhansi," said the other.

"It will not take long," said the first; "and we must take care that our prisoner does not die of thirst or of sun-stroke, to which these cursed Europeans are so subject; otherwise, good-bye to our reward."

"Very well," said the other. "I have heard it said that branly causes sun-stroke, and drinking water keeps it off."

"He has accompanied us very tamely," said one. "He must be a coward," said the other; "they all are, except when they are together."

I listened, but said nothing, and we went to the well, some distance off the road. One of them ungirded his sword and put it down on the ground while he drew water from the well. Near it sat the other sepoy, his sword at his belt, waiting for his drink, while I stood near him, with my hands behind my back. Now or never, I said to myself. I quickly slipped my right hand from the loop that held it. To seize the sword on the ground and draw it was the work of an instant; the next, the sitting soldier fell a corpse to the ground, with his head almost severed from his neck with one blow of the sharply ground sword. At the noise of the attack, the soldier who was drawing water turned round, and for a moment was petrified at seeing his late prisoner free, brandishing a naked sword, and slaying his comrade. Recovering himself, he rushed at me with a shout; but him also I slew with his own sword.

I was once more free, and what was more, I was now a med. From my dead enemies I took their *chapatties*. In India, travellers generally carry some food with them, to meet the not unfrequent cases of finding scanty supplies. Not a soul was in sight. I ate and drank, and thanked God for my deliverance. Then I started once more in the Gwalior direction; but I kept clear of the road. I led the life of a nocturnal animal, resting during the day, and hiding as I best might, but during the night pushing forward at my best speed towards Gwalior. When the soldiers' *chapatties* was done, I satisfied the cravings of hunger by eating mangoes from the trees or the melons in the fields. Nor did I disdain the raw cobs of Indian corn, or, in fact, anything edible I could find. Never could I have believed, in my old soldier days, when we used to grumble at our beer and beef and bread as supplied by the commissariat, that I could ever have managed to get down my

throat what I ate with such relish during those four days. We never know what we can do till we try.

On the eight day after leaving Jhansi—the fourth after slaying the soldiers—I reached Gwalior, wearied, fagged, footsore, and almost tired of life. Another couple of days of such misery, and I should either have lain down to die, or have recklessly thrust myself into the midst of my enemies. But the distant sight of the great rock fortress of Gwalior revived my spirits. I was soon conducted to a house, and tendered and cared for, by order of Maharajah Sindhia.

On the luxury of a bath, after all that time and travel and suffering. A few days of rest and good food had almost set me up again, when I was once more started on my flight. The Maharajah continuing loyal to the government, incurred the animosity of his own people; and after a time of seething discontent and ill-suppressed murmurs, his troops broke out into open mutiny against him, crying to be led to join their brothers in arms. Attended by only a handful of faithful servants, Sindhia was obliged to flee to Agra for his life. Gwalior was of course now become too hot for any European; and I followed Sindhia's example.

Again I started on my wondering; but this time I had fewer adventures, for the distance was shorter. On the second day, I swam across the river Chumbal, at the imminent risk of being seized and devoured by one of the numerous alligators that swarm in its waters. But on the other hand there was the certainty of being seized and slain if I sought the ferry; bridge there then was none. I passed Dholpore; and soon found comparative safety under the influence of the vicinity of the European forces at Agra. There, in due course, I arrived, safe indeed as to life and limb, but I was not a very presentable object. My feet were blistered, swollen, and torn; my clothes were filthy and ragged; my skin was tanned and raw with the heat of the sun; and my eyes were inflamed and nearly blind from the continual glare and fine dust of the road. In all, I had done about one hundred and thirty miles, I may say barefoot, for the native shoes I had got from my bricklayers proved almost worse than useless to me.

As I came near to Agra, late in the afternoon, a lady driving in her carriage saw me, and very kindly took me up and conveyed me to the fort, still a good distance off. The neighboring Europeans had found shelter and safety in Akbar's old fortress, which was garrisoned by a large European force. I was taken to the Commandant, who heard my statement of what had occurred at Jhansi; and I was then attached to the battery of artillery in garrison. But I did little duty. An attack of brain fever soon followed; and during it I was nursed with the utmost care and tenderness by the wife and daughter of our sergeant-major. Before a year was out, I married that girl. When India was reconquered and peace restored, I was sent back to the Public Works Department. I have risen; and I now bear the commission of a lieutenant in Her Majesty's service. As I owe this rise to the steady habits insisted on by my wife, and as I could not have got her, in all human probability, but for the mutiny at Jhansi, I don't grudge the sufferings, great as they then seemed, which I endured in my escape.

THE LENGTH OF LEGS.

Birmingham Age-Herald.

A lawyer is presumed to be always able to suggest a difficulty, no matter how self-evident the case may seem, but the truly great lawyer knows how to state a point so that even a brother lawyer cannot start an objection. According to the *Yankee Blade*, Stephen A. Douglas and Mr. Lovejoy were once gossiping together when Abraham Lincoln came in. The two men immediately turned their conversation upon the proper length of a man's legs.

"Now," said Lovejoy, "Abe's legs are altogether too long, and yours, Douglas, I think, are a little too short. Let's ask Abe what he thinks about it." The conversation had been carried on with a view to Lincoln's overhearing it, and they closed it by saying:—

"Abe, what do you think about it?" Mr. Lincoln had a far-away look as he sat with one leg twisted around the other, but he responded to the question: "Think about what?"

"Well, we're talking about the proper length of a man's legs. We think yours are too long and Douglas's too short, and we'd like to know what you think is the proper length."

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln, "that's a matter that I've never given any thought to, so, of course, I may be mistaken; but my first impression is that a man's legs ought to be long enough to reach from his body to the ground."

It is said that the British naval authorities believe they have secured plates absolutely impenetrable by missiles hurled by any gun at present invented. The discoverers of the secret are said to be two well-known English firms in John Brown & Co. and the Beardmore Company; which are each casting by the process a steel plate ten inches thick for experimental purposes.