

that we were able to leave Berhampore, as we were detained by the commanding officer of the station to perform the local duties, in consequence of the paucity of officers, until the arrival of a new corps finally relieved us.

We commenced our voyage under the auspices of a fine easterly wind, which carried us rapidly up the Bhagritty.* On the third evening we entered the mighty Ganges, which appeared like an ocean rolling its waves along. We came to for the night a few miles beyond the village of Sootee, where we found two budgerows with their attendant boats already moored. On inquiry, we ascertained that they were tenanted by a party of officers proceeding to Agra, my promised land.

Introductions are speedily effected in India—especially in the army. Milden and I sent message with our cards to Captain Morland and his brother, a young lieutenant, reporting that we should be happy to wait for them in their boat, if perfectly agreeable to them. A polite answer came, that they would be glad to see us: we accordingly went and introduced ourselves to the captain and his brother. The captain then performed the same ceremony between us and a third gentleman, who was in their company.—This was a Lieutenant Lake. Such was my first meeting with these officers, with whom we became consequently on terms of great intimacy. Captain Morland was the officer whose return from England had been awaited by the native servant Seurage, as formerly mentioned. This man was with him, and recognizing me, came to make his salutation.

Our voyage on the Ganges was one of peculiar interest. There is a remarkable feature which attaches to that river throughout its whole course, from its entrance into the Bay to the sea; one of its banks is invariably high, while the other is a mere low sandy plain, extending for some miles inland when the low bank becomes elevated, which generally does abruptly, the opposite one varies as suddenly falls, so that during the rainy season the river has always sufficient space for expansion either to the right

or left along the lower line of country. This would be a complete safety valve, as it were, for the protection of the towns and villages on the higher bank, were the latter composed of hard and durable material; but this is not the case, the soil is sandy, and consequently, when the current is strong during the flood season, the banks become rapidly undermined, and large masses fall continually into the water with a great noise. This causes, in a very few years, a material change in the course of the river, and particularly affects landed property. In a single season large estates become completely embedded, and new ones created from fresh deposits of alluvion. The Ganges, during the rains, is so muddy, that Major Rennell says—"The quantity of sand held in suspension by its waters is so great, that in the year 1794, one of the mouths of the Bhageruttee, '(Ganges)' at Sadigunge, full five miles in length, was in the course of a week filled up very nearly to a level with the contiguous country, although it must have contained about nine hundred millions solid feet. In the neighbourhood of Colgong, where the depth of the river is in many places upwards of seventy feet, new islands have risen to more than twenty feet above the level of the stream.—At about two hundred and forty miles from the sea by the river, there is a variation in its height of thirty-one feet at different seasons."

This is immense, when we consider the amazing increase in the breadth of water for each foot of elevation in so level a country.

I have thought it advisable to give the above sketch of the Ganges, as it may render the narrative of my journey along its devious course more intelligible.

About noon on the second day after our departure, we discovered right ahead a large fleet of boats, like our own, proceeding upwards. These contained detachments of European soldiers, with their officers, who were *en route* to join their various regiments stationed in the interior. As their vessels were for the most part much heavier sailers than ours, we rapidly gained upon them, and had nearly closed in with the rear, when our

* The first stream that leaves the main river to find its own way to the Bay of Bengal. This branch, though a comparative rivulet, carries away with it all the holiness from the native Gunga Bach, after this separation, is by the natives called Pudda.