

EXTRACT FROM THE MEMOIRS OF A CADET.

[From the Metropolitan.]

In the month of May we were visited by the most terrific hail-storm I ever witnessed in the plains of India. It came from the north-east and must have been cradled in the mountainous regions of that *dirt*. At about 4, P. M. the north-eastern horizon darkened to pitchy blackness. The air was still, and not a sound disturbed the breathless tranquillity, save an occasional low growl of thunder very distant. The dark mass at first advanced so slowly that the motion was not perceptible, and we were only conscious that it *did* approach, in a manner that we are aware the hour-hand of a clock has moved after an interval of time.

Suddenly a flash of lightning clove the thick gloom, which for an instant only disclosed a gulf of liquid and living fire, that made the succeeding darkness more intense; a crash of thunder followed, that shook the habitations of men to their very foundations.

It seemed as if this first discharge were the signal for a general storm, which came on rapidly; the lightning gradually become one flashing stream of fire, the thunder an almost unceasing roar above and around us, accompanied by a tremendous fall of hail.

There appears to be a general depression of nature, animate and inanimate, during a thunder-storm, and the wildest spirits seem attempered to seriousness. It is felt as the voice of the Ruler of all worlds, that will be heard and listened to with solemn awe and deep reverence by all his creatures; and I have seen the most reckless scoffers at religion abide with blanched cheek and in solicitous anxiety the duration of a storm, and the boldest hold his breath while the voice of the Lord of all things has spoken in thunder.

The storm lasted in its fullest violence for about two hours, and after it had ceased, an evening so calm, so cool, so ethereally beautiful, succeeded, that words would utterly fail in an attempt to describe it.—Those who have witnessed such a storm will also have experienced the calm relief and joyousness of spirit which succeeds when the storm has passed away, and the agitated air again sighs itself to rest, refreshed and purified. In this

storm several of the natives were killed by the lightning, and the flagstaff was shattered to pieces.

The time of our sojourn at Berhampore had now nearly expired. A fortunate increase in the army had given lieutenantcies to all the ensigns of my standing, and the order arrived which posted us finally to regiments.—Those of us whose destination were attainable by water communication, were, by the kind and considerate permission of government, allowed to remain at Berhampore until the rise of the river should render the shallow places navigable.

The water in the various rivers of India begins slowly to rise about the month of April, although the rainy season does not commence in Upper Hindostan till late in June. This is consequent, in the first place, on the heavy falls of rain and hail in the mountains during March and April; and, secondly, on the meeting of the snow in the higher regions, when the sun becomes more vertical, and which appears to me to be one of the most striking and beautiful arrangements of Divine Providence which can be imagined.

Almost the whole of Upper Hindostan is one vast plain, so level, that the fall of the Ganges, after quitting the mountains, is by survey averaged at no more than four inches in the mile. From the breaking up of the rainy season, in the latter end of September to its re-commencement late in June, rain is scarcely known to fall, excepting in a few very light showers occasionally about Christmas. It may be well imagined, therefore, that the burning tropical sun, pouring its unceasing heat for nearly nine months successively upon the sandy soil of India, would dry up the rivers and calcine the surface of the land with all its vegetable produce to dust; had not the omniscient Creator caused it to be its own corrector, even from the moment that the work of destruction would otherwise commence; for the self-same heat that parches the plains opens exhaustless fountains of water in the mountains, by dissolving the snows, and the rivers are thus unceasingly supplied.

It was not till the commencement of July