

On Service In India

Despatches From Lieut. Davis of 8th Hampshires.

The Courier to-day has an exclusive series of articles to offer its readers in the letters of a young Territorial lieutenant of the 8th Hampshire Regiment, now on service in India, Lieut. David Davis.

On the outbreak of war the Territorial forces of Britain were mobilized, and after six months' training some were drafted as reinforcements to battalions at the front, while others were sent to India to relieve regiments of the regular army for service in Europe.

The letters, which are a simple narrative of the life of an army in the "Shiny East," are quite a new class of reading matter for readers of local papers. At no time till the publication of these pen pictures did the public have an opportunity of knowing just what "foreign service" in India means.

A sister of this officer resides at Onondaga, and to that lady we are indebted for the use of this manuscript, of which installments will be given from day to day.

April 29, 1915.
I will start with telling you of a little expedition I went on Saturday and Sunday, April 24th and 25th. I went with Sergt. Luker "E" Coy, and Sergt. Warr, "F" Coy. I forget if I have told you my platoon is "F" Coy and Sergt. Warr is my platoon Sergt. He is the Colonel's gamekeeper at home and is a very nice man and very interesting. He was in the South African war and has been a lot in Africa with the police.

We started out about 1.45 p.m. on Saturday in a 4-wheeled 2-horsed carriage along the Bijnour Rd. east-north-east. It was of course very hot. It goes up to about 90 degrees every day in the verandah outside the mess and that is a cool place. The official temperature here on Monday for instance was 101 degrees.

You would have laughed to see us. We had the hood up to keep off the sun, but fortunately there was a good breeze. I was wearing a blue shirt and putties with my "khaki-red" shirt and braces, no tie, and coat off!

Along the first part of the Bijnour Road the country looked terribly dry and dusty and dreary. All the corn was cut and the bare stubble left. In one place along an irrigation canal several hundred huge vultures were standing. In the distance they looked just like crouching natives.

As we got further out the appearance of the country improved somewhat, there were more groups of trees and a good many fields with young sprouts showing just like thick blades of corn. It was sugar cane. We saw them in one place, sawing it. Behind a sort of plough that made drills, walked a man with small sections of sugar cane about five or six inches long; these he chucked into the drill at a tremendous rate. If you remember, the sugar cane was cut in January and February.

About 12 miles out we passed through a very busy village. In the open spaces there were corn stacks, while there were lots of groups of oxen treading the corn to thrash it. It is laid out in a big circle and the oxen, sometimes as many as eight at a time, are driven round and round over it until it is reduced to a pile of grain and tiny bits of straw and chaff; then

the pile is sifted by hand. In this village were numerous families of pigs, most of them wallowing in muddy pools. Some were covered up to the tops of their backs in slime!

We eventually got to Mawana, a large village about 16 miles from Meerut. Here we halted at about 4 p.m. We had a meal of tea, bread and jam, and eggs. I had brought my valise and during the process of packing it up after tea (it had most of my food in it) the jam pot slipped and large blobs of strawberry jam fell on to the white road splashes! I was startled out walking with our shikari about a quarter to five. We had two guns and two .303 rifles between us. About a mile from the village was a big canal, a branch of the Ganges canal, which I went to at Srdhana. This we soon struck. It was a delightful relief to get to it after the uninspiring scenery of most of the country. As I found later about five feet deep all over. The stream runs down at about three miles an hour. On each side are grassy banks, almost like an English lawn, and a track runs along on each side, the stream being some six yards in width from five to six yards to 100 yards.

Sometimes the trees are big ones, and at other places they are just shrubs. In a practically continuous line through the middle of the belt runs a sort of hedge of cactus, which just now is sending up long thick flower stems.

This is one just starting to send up its shoot. Some of them were 10 feet or more high. They seem a sort of mixture between a cactus and a palm with more of the former.

Along the canal we saw one or two partridges and lots of jackals, and of course numerous birds of all sorts, also a hare or two. In one place we got quite close to three jackals playing down by the water. I think the water is actually a bit higher than the surrounding country in most places, as although the ground rises from the water on each side, it slopes down again to the open country beyond. Beyond the belt of trees the country was much the same as anywhere else, mostly flat and dry and brown, here and there large groups of trees and villages.

We crossed the canal by a bridge soon after starting it. Round the bridge were countless little martins, who were nesting under the arches.

Very soon we saw a large herd of deer in the distance, about four or five hundred yards from the canal. We advanced along under the shelter of the trees until we got opposite them. There were two fine buck, showing up black and white amongst the sandy colored does. There were several antelope, who were racing about at a tremendous rate and giving flying leaps every now and then. I started to stalk them, crawling out over the stubble for about 100 yards to a bush. Before I got to it they saw me and began to move away. I had two shots at one of the bucks, but missed, and they went away. It is fine to see them starting away with tremendous leaps up into the air.

During the evening and the next morning we had in all, I think 14 shots at buck, and missed them all. We did not know our rifles, not having shot with them before, and they were much under-estimated. If we had had rifles which we knew, we ought to have got two or three buck at least. Once, the first two buck came running in our direction when we were by the canal and passed by at a trot about 100 yards away from the edge of the trees. Both the Sergts. had shots and missed.

I think we walked about eight miles on Saturday evening. As we were coming back and it was growing dark, we saw numerous little moving bits of light over the canal and amongst the trees—fire-flies. They fly about and seem to show their light for a few seconds and then shut it off for a few seconds, and so on. When it got quite dark they were very pretty. Sometimes one would come near you, and you would suddenly see a bit of fire coming towards you. It is very weird at first.

We got to our encampment about 7.30 p.m. and brought our things out

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to a field by the side of a dusty track. I had my valise and the Sergts. had big mac sheets which I brought, and one blanket each.

We had a meal and drank—we eat a bit and drank, and drank and ate a little and drank and drank and drank. We brought 5 water bottles full of tea, but fortunately there was good water in a well close to, or we should have been undone. As it was, before we left on Sunday afternoon we had all five water bottles filled several times, and my two were big ones, holding at least two pints. We lay down afterwards and watched the fireflies and listened (perforce) to the "brain-fever bird," the bane of many people out here, who cannot sleep in the hot weather. These birds, speckled black and grey and larger than a blackbird, sing all day and all night, and their note is a continuous repetition in a gradually increasing wail of three notes which sound like rising fever, with the emphasis on the middle note. As soon as they have reached the highest and loudest note they can get to, they stop for a moment and then start low down again. They do not worry me much fortunately.

We did not sleep much, as we sweated and there were numerous bullock carts passing along the track. I woke once with a start and saw a lanky white dog looking as if it were going to lick Sergt. Luker's face. I made it fly, however.

Several times I noticed black patches on the top of my valise. When it got light I saw that they were patches of large black ants rising and falling over the sticky jam patches! I soon made them fly too.

We got up at 5 a.m. and had breakfast and started out by 5.45 in the same direction. The sun was just rising, and it was comparatively cool. We wandered on and across the bridge and I chased buck ineffectively. During my chasings I shot a silver fox, like an ordinary one, only silver grey with a little brown, a very long neck, and a very long tail with a black tip. In one place I saw a little doe, quite a baby, crouching down about sixty yards away. I was scanning the landscape with my glasses and suddenly saw it. I could hardly see it with the naked eye.

We rested by the canal from 12.0 to 2.0, watching birds and dozing and sweating. There were several of these lovely kingfishers, blue, blue, blue, brown back and head and greenish-blue back and wings. Also several horn-bills. A lot of water buffalo oxen came across the canal. They are comical beasts, especially when just the type of the head and backbones are showing out of the water.

It was very hot, and as we plodded wearily and perspiring along the canal bank again, we got tired and tired and tired and tired and tired. During one halt about 3.30 I could not resist the temptation of a bathe. The water was a bit dirty, but I clambered in, topee on head, and it was most refreshing. I made just a head with a topee on it floating down stream! I must have been a funny sight.

Water was short and we were at the last stages of exhaustion when we reached our headquarters. I rapidly consumed two pints of water and one and a half bottles of soda water. I had not eaten anything since 5.30 except two oranges, but did not feel hungry—so great is the power of thirst!

We started back about 5 o'clock p.m. When we had gone a few miles, the shikari sitting in front by the driver espied a hare. The carriage pulled up and I shot him. While I was watching the hare we saw several partridges run from the side of the road under cover, but they must have got away when I shot the hare, as we could not find them afterwards. Immediately afterwards we saw great numbers of peacocks. It was near a village and they seemed quite tame. They are fine birds, like our English ones in most respects, but with a lot of white on their wings. They are of course sacred to most natives, and it does not do to shoot them, especially near villages.

As we drew near to Meerut we came to the region of vultures. The air seemed full of them. It was just getting dark and they were flying in great numbers and they seemed quite tame. They seem to patronise the trees along the road, and we would look up and see perhaps twenty crouched on the top branches of a tree above us.

We got in about 7.30, weary—but I have never enjoyed an outing more. Nothing much has happened since then. I am sorry I had no time to finish this and send it off yesterday. To-day, April 30th, we are really off to Chakrata. We start at 8 o'clock from barracks to-night. We travel all night by train to Dehra Dun. Tomorrow, Saturday, May 1st we spend there, and we start our four days march up to Chakrata on Sunday at 3 a.m. Of course we march early each morning and finish at eight or nine a.m. I may not be able to write again except from Dehra Dun, before next morning.

Many thanks again for yours of April 1st received April 25th. Articles in "Athenaeum" very interesting. Several evenings lately I have been taking a gym class from 7 to 8 p.m. of any men who are keen. It is rather funnily.

Chakrata, May 5, 1915.
Just a note—no time for more. Here we are at last. We arrived this morning about 6 o'clock a.m., and have been in comfortably. I can not describe this place now or the march up. It will take some time. Everything is wonderful—almost beyond description.

We had very hard marches, but I am as fit as I have ever been, and in spite of lack of sleep and exertions, am quite all right now, and I have not enjoyed anything so much since leaving England as these last few days. Your mail, which I should have got last Sunday at Meerut, has not yet come, it has not been forwarded punctually.

The mail goes here on Wednesday evening—only a day's difference. Am very sleepy—reveille 1.15 a.m. and no sleep since, and a climb of 3,000 feet to finish up with!

Chakrata, Monday, May 10th, 1915.
Here begin the account of our journey up here. I will try to describe it as best I can.

Friday, April 30th. Parade 8 o'clock p.m. Our detachment, "A" and "C" double companies, practically half the battalion, marched down to the station—at least the backbone marched down, as large numbers were on various duties, baggage, guard, etc. We safely entrained and started off about 10 o'clock p.m. I was in carriage with Capt. Keene, Jenkins, and Alcott (doctor) and we played bridge and tried to keep cool for an hour or so. Our journey was slow—trotting train—never hurry—and when we woke up about 7 o'clock in the morning, we were still some way from our ter-

Three India letters 222240Y100 minus, Dehra Dun. The country was ripping—such a change from the sun-scorched plains of Meerut. We were climbing steadily. Everything was green (comparatively); there were corn fields, ripe, but still uncut, but mostly luxuriant woods and more open country with small trees, bushes and high coarse grass, such as you imagine tigers haunt; for some distance on each side of the line the country was comparatively level, at times we would go through a cutting through a small hill, and sometimes the ground sloped steeply down to a dry stony water course.

We were running practically north, a little west. On our left a mile or two away was a thickly wooded range of hills, on our right further away foot-hills (it was a bit misty), several thousand feet above the valley, running nearly north-west by southeast, and there were numerous groves of banana trees, the green fruit showing on many of them. In places grew high clumps of cane (not sugar cane) twenty feet or more high. One of the most noticeable things was the mixture of brilliant greens and brown tints in the woods. Here were one or two bright green trees in full foliage, while standing amongst them were other and shrivelled leaves. But the predominant impression was of green and luxuriance. Our height above the sea level was somewhere near two thousand feet.

On arrival at the station about 8 a.m., we found the rest-camp, tents in a field, only 100 yards from the station. "A" Company unloaded luggage, so after our company had been seen into their tents and had got our breakfast, our officers made their way to the Dak Bungalow for breakfast. There are no inns or hotels in India, except in the larger towns, and Dak Bungalows are used by Europeans in their stead. They are looked after by natives who supply food and necessities—you usually have to notify your coming before hand.

Far from being cool, Dehra Dun seemed just as hot as Meerut. It is in a sheltered valley and gets much of the damp, tropical heat than the dry parching heat of the plains. The native town is much like any other Indian town, a dirty, smelly jumble. Dehra is the headquarters of the Gurkhas and their barracks are about two and a half miles away to the north-west on higher ground.

Unfortunately there is an outbreak of cholera in this neighborhood and we had to be very careful about food and water and mixing with natives at all. It also affected our march up, as you will see later.

North-west, north, and east of Dehra the mountains tower up to anything between 5,000, 6,000 and 7,000 feet up about 6 miles away from the town. That is due north of Dehra. Chakrata is about 30 miles N.W. as the crow flies.

Most of the day we spent lying down, doing nothing (seemingly) but at 4.30 we all paraded and marched up to Cantonments to exchange rifles. We had the old pattern and drew in exchange new short rifles. It was a tiring expedition in the heat of the afternoon, and not a very fitting prelude to our next day's exertions. However, we endured it. We passed over one huge river bed (dry) 100 yards across. I may have told you that around Meerut there is not a rock and hill to be seen. The river bed was one mass of rock and stones—a most refreshing change.

It was also novel, if not pleasant, to climb up hills. There were fine trees, especially in canyons, and a very noticeable something like our European mountains. We passed one Gurkha football grounds, on which a relay race was in progress—very comical. Beyond that was a thickly wooded hill to the foot of the mountains, which rise steeply—more thickly wooded and mostly bare on top.

We got back about 7 p.m., perspiring and sweating—the dust was in our eyes, but will not be carried to extremes. Conservative widths are from 2 to 2½ yards in suits and from 2 to 3 yards in dresses with greater fullness for all novelty effects.

The skirts of suits and tailored dresses are mostly in modified circular, flare or plaited effect. In many cases plaits are introduced at the sides. Pockets and belts are still favored. Skirts of dressy frocks are sometimes in draped effect and a few have a very long tunic with under petticoat of different material. Practically all of the street suits and wraps and figure dresses have long sleeves. Close fitting effects lead, but there are novelty forms showing considerable fullness, introduced in various ways. Closer fitting lines, with a curve accentuated under the bust, are a leading feature in dress bodices. The backs are straight and the hips only moderately emphasized. In the low waisted dresses the bodice shows straighter lines, although there is a slight hint of the natural figure line.

The dressy blouses match the suit in color and are made of chiffon, silk and Georgette crepe, with crepe de chine in flesh color and in white for the more practical types. For these the semi-tailored finish is preferred. The sleeves are mostly long and snug-fitting or flat.

In suits, coats, dress bodices and blouses, the collars are mostly high and close fitting. A few open in the front. Many suits and coats have collars which can be worn either high or low. In waists and dresses the idea sometimes carried out but the strictly high or the low lines are preferred.

Various types and lengths are seen in suit coats. Those reaching the finger tips or slightly below dominate in the lines. A few redingotes are also included in the showings. Belts are used to some extent. Flare effects are also in evidence. The strong tendency is in favor of Russian blouses, which are seen in suit coats. Those reaching the finger tips or slightly below dominate in the lines. A few redingotes are also included in the showings. Belts are used to some extent. Flare effects are also in evidence. The strong tendency is in favor of Russian blouses, which are seen in suit coats.



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the plains. The funny part of the country was that every now and then little bits of scenery view would or three hundred yards away would remind you of English woodland scenery, yet hardly a single tree or plant is the same as an English one. Then the landscape seen as a whole is very un-English.

On our left getting gradually nearer and nearer was the same range of wooded hills as we had seen from the train. They had got higher, and what was more noticeable was the top, like a huge saw up and down with tall scraggy trees showing up sparsely against the sky. In between us and the hills ran the big river we crossed close to Dehra.

(To be continued.)

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Simplicity of outline and meagreness of trimming characterize the new season hats. Much of the garment will be in the form of appliques. Signal ornaments will also be seen. Colors are dark. Velvet and idea covered shapes, as well as pressed felts, are in evidence. Beaded novelties are a strong feature, as also are crewl embroidery. Buckle ornaments in cut steel and in nickel are prominent in the lines.

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Quite a number of the labor various Ontario cities who old to go to the front and on the unemployed list have advantage of the opportunity roll in the home guard and them are putting in their capacities that is bringing a few dollars that help out ably during these dull times say a dollar in the hand is than a bird in the bush.

A move is on in Winnipeg the members of labor union city patronize restaurants at places that are fair to the Co. Waiters' Union. This organization negotiating with the pro for the inauguration of a week and fair scale of wages proved working conditions, the patronage of union men used to establishments that the union card.

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