

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

VOL. VI.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1856.

No. 18.

MOON'S PHASES.—NOVEMBER, 1856.

First Quarter 5th day, 1h. 10m. evening. E. S. E.
Full Moon 12th day, 4h. 43m. morning. W. S. W.
Last Quarter 19th day, 6h. 22m. morning. S.
New Moon 27th day, 11h. 48m. morning. S.

Literature.

A STILL DAY IN AUTUMN.

I love to wander through the woodlands hoary,
In the soft gloom of an autumnal day,
When summer gathers up her robes of glory,
And, like a dream of beauty, dies away.

How through each loved, familiar path she lingers,
Serenely smiling through the golden mist,
Tinting the wild grape with her dewy fingers,
Till the cool emerald turned to amethyst.

Kindling the faint stars of the hazel, shining
To light the gloom of Autumn's mouldering halls,
With hoary plumes the climatic entwining,
Where o'er the rock her wither'd garland falls.

Warm lights are on the sleepy uplands waning
Beneath dark clouds along the horizon rolled,
Till the slant sunbeams through their fringes raining,
Bathe all the hills in melancholy gold.

The moist wind breathes of crisped leaves and flowers
In the damp hollows of the woodland sown,
Mingling the freshness of autumnal showers
With spicy airs from cedar alleys blown.

Beside the brook and on the embowered meadow,
Where yellow fern-tufts flock the faded ground,
With folded lids beneath their palmy shadow,
The gentian nods, in dewy slumbers bound.

Upon those soft fringed lids the bee sits brooding,
Like a fond lover loth to say farewell,
Or, with shut wings, through silken folds intruding,
Creeps near her heart his drowsy tale to tell.

The little birds upon the hill-side lonely
Flit noiselessly along from spray to spray,
Silent as a sweet wandering thought, that only
Shows its bright wings and softly glides away.

The scentless flowers, in the warm sunlight dreaming,
Forgot to breathe their fulness of delight—
And through the traced wood soft airs are streaming,
Still as the dew-fall of the summer night.

So, in my heart a sweet, unwonted feeling,
Stirs, like the wind in Ocean's hollow shell,
Through all its secret chambers stealing,
Yet finds no words its mystic charms to tell.

LIFE IN INDIA.

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS IN THE LIFE OF MR. GRIFFIN.
BY A QUI HY.

We are now in the full enjoyment of all the manifold delights of the English dog-days. Old gentlemen nap their foreheads, and walk on the shady side of the street with their hats in their hands; small boys take cheap shower baths under the spouts of the water curts; young ladies subsist entirely on ice and wafers; and fussy people give you their word they never experienced anything like the heat in the whole course of their life. Let us, by way of contrast, change the scene for a short time to the plains of Hindostan, and see the kind of life led by some of our expatriated fellow countrymen in that complexion-tanning, temper-trying, fever-catching, liver-inflaming, rupee-getting country, during the hot season.

I will be harlequin on the occasion. One blow of my magic wand—the prompter sounds his whistle—and hey! presto! having insured our lives, and put on our most gossamer dress, we find ourselves, towards the small hours of the morning—the best time to travel in the tropics—in the middle of the station of Burragurampore, having beaten the overland mail by five weeks.

It is the beginning of June, before the rains have set in—not that they lessen the heat much, they only change its character; the air, from being dry and dusty, becomes moist and steamy—you live in a vapor-bath instead of a limekiln; and between Burragurampore and the lower regions, in point of heat, the natives themselves say there is only a sheet of brown paper.

The moon has just risen, and we can see, dotted about, the houses of the English residents, looking very snug and comfortable in the subdued light. Which shall we enter? Not the large pukka-bungalow in the splendid garden; that belongs to the commissioner, who gets 5000 rupees a month, and is, of course, supplied with every luxury and appliance that can lessen the heat, and render the life of the burra sahib, or great man, endurable. Rather let us choose the small catch-built one, standing in the perfectly bare compound, the property of Raboo Chuckerbatty Bux, but let for the time being, and in consideration of the very irregular payment of thirty rupees per month, to Ensign Go-ahead Griffin, of the Seringapatam Slashers; and we will give him the honour of our society for twenty-four hours we are going to spend together in the Company's dominions.

There is no Mrs. Griffin, so we will walk in without ceremony. After stumbling over a bundle of clothes in the veranda, which grunts on being trod on, and turns out to be the chokydar, or watchman, refreshing himself with a nap, we enter the bungalow. Passing through a large sitting room, we find ourselves in a sleeping apartment, which is without a scrap of furniture excepting a bedstead—the legs of which stand in earthenware pans of water, to prevent foraging excursions on the part of crawling and venomous insects—and a small table near it, on which are placed a bottle of brandy, a tumbler, and a cheroot box. On the mattress there is a cool Calcutta mat; and on the mat, dressed in a shirt, and loose Turkish trousers, made of Delhi silk, our young friend is extended, panting with heat, and tossing and turning in vain attempts to sleep.

He has lately returned from mess; and his bearer, having divested his weary and passive limbs of his regimentals, and clothed him in the night dress above hinted at, has retired to the veranda, where, curled up like a dog on the floor, he is sleeping calmly and placidly. Not so his master. The heat is stifling, and would be unbearable, but for the comparatively cool current of air caused by the punka—an enormous fan, suspended by ropes from hooks in the ceiling, and swinging

with regular strokes over his head, the fringe within a few inches of his nose. The doors are wide open—and an Indian bungalow is all doors—but not a breath of air enters to cool his feverish brow; inside and out it is like a furnace; the thermometer hanging on the wall indicates a temperature considered in England the maximum of a warm bath. The night is so still, the slightest sound falls with painful distinctness upon his unwilling ear; the distant and incessant bark of the village paria dog; the everlasting beat of the tam-tam, or native drum, indicating some jollities going on in the bazaar; the periodical cry of conscientious chokyars, who, to prevent themselves from going to sleep on their posts, and to strike terror into the heart of any one prowling near with felonious intentions, continually shout through the night the warning, "Hhubada-a-a-r," or "Take care;" the muttered conversation and suppressed laughter of the grass cutters in the compound, who never appear to go to sleep, but squat all night round a blazing fire, cooking jupatties, or wheat cakes, and smoking their bubble-bubbles, the guggie-guggie of which tortures to madness his distracted tympanum—these, and a dozen other sounds, insignificant in themselves, but magnified by the stillness of the air and his longing for sleep, wring from the dissolving victim groans of wretchedness, and assume an importance in his feverish imagination which drives him almost frantic, till at last, worn out with fatigue, he sinks into a sort of apoplectic doze. His breathing is thick and irregular, his dreams are hideous, and he restlessly twists himself round, till his feet are on the pillow and his head over the side of the bed. In this uncomfortable position, he is rapidly getting black in the face—a horrible nightmare oppresses him; when all at once he wakes with a start; he hears the most frightful complication of sounds that ever saluted mortal ears, as if ten thousand screeching imps had been let loose, mixed with the shrieks of women and cries of children—at one moment close to the house, the next miles away, and scarcely audible; now in full and unearthly chorus of laughing, crying, moaning, howling, shrieking, and whooping; then getting lower and lower, and subsiding at last into a melancholy wail, only to burst out again with redoubled vigour and intensity. Half choked, he starts up and gets a smart crack on the head from the undulating punka, which thoroughly rouses him to the fact, that the horrible yell he has till now associated with his dreams are caused only by a pack of jackals on a scavenging expedition.

Disgusted beyond measure at the occurrence, he seeks consolation in his ice-tub, and tosses off a fumbler of deliciously cold water, which communicates a kind of electric shock to his parboiled anatomy; he could drink a gallon, but must economise the precious liquid. The ice pits are opened only every second day, and the greatest amount of care and flannel will hardly make his share last the twenty-four hours. Carefully closing his treasure, he lights a cheroot by way of sedative, and takes a stroll in his compound. The moon is shining with a brilliancy only seen in tropical skies; but the beauty of the night has no charm for him—he prefers comfort, which is to be found nowhere but under the punka. He soon returns, and throwing himself on his bed, manfully determines he will go to sleep, in spite of jackals, chokyars, tam-tams, and bubble-bubbles!

He partially succeeds. His cheroot gradually goes out, and finally drops from his mouth; he is on the point of falling off into a delicious nap, when whirr! whirr! whirr! a sharp, clear, and continuous buzz close to his ear; it is the trumpet of the mosquito; he knows his tiny enemy, and prepares to annihilate him. Breathless with anxiety, and "profoundly impressed," as the French say, with the conviction that the enjoyment of his night's rest depends very much upon the success of his operations, he stealthily disengages his right arm, raises it gently with extended hand, and waits his opportunity. The whirr ceases; his diminutive foe has settled on his cheek, and is about to plunge his proboscis up to the hilt in what he considers a nice juicy spot. "Now I've got him!" The sufferer's hand is poised for a moment over the unconscious little glutton, and then descends like lightning—smack! Our hero has dealt himself a severe fencer; but he cares not for the tingle; he has smashed his tormentor—at least he thinks so; and with a light heart he turns over, and again composes himself to sleep. Unhappy mortal! He is gradually dropping off, going by easy stages into the land of dreams; he is already past the half way house, when whirr! whirr! whirr! "What, again!—not smashed!" This time his pitiless little assailant selects his nose as a likely diggin, and forthwith inserts his pick. Again the arm is raised—again the hand descends, inflicting serious damage on the olfactory organ, and once more the martyr exultingly sets out for the land of Nod. He has scarcely obtained that unsatisfactory modicum of repose vaguely designated "forty winks," when whirr! whirr! again announces the hostile approach of his insatiable tormentor, or another equally vindictive. It is in vain to cope with an enemy that bears a charmed life; and, as a last and desperate resource, our long suffering sub seizes his hitherto discarded sheet, and, at the risk of suffocation, buries his head and face in its protecting folds.

Only those who have suffered, like Griffin, from similar attacks on a seething night—when a month's pay would willingly be given for an hour's sleep, if that precious commodity were saleable—can enter into his feelings under the trying circumstances. Exhausted nature at last gives in; overcome with fatigue, he falls into a sound sleep, only, however, to awake soon after to a dreamy consciousness of intolerable heat. He is a perfect bath; the cause is soon explained—the huge fan above him is scarcely stirring. "Pull the punka!" he shouts to the nodding native in the veranda, whose duty it is to ere a an artificially cool atmosphere in the room, by the means of a rope working through a hole in the wall of the apartment—"Pull the punka, you sleepy son of an owl!" The machine makes a frantic dash, and for a minute or two a small gale is blowing over our friend's head, soon, however, to moderate, and then subside into another suffocating calm. "Will you pull the punka," he roars out in Hindostanee, viciously shying a boot in the direction of the drowsy coolie, "you lazy, good-for-nothing black pig?" Another violent squall takes place; the punka works with a swing that threatens to bring the whole apparatus down about his ears, causing a grateful diminution of temperature. But the pace is too good to last; the vibrations again become feeble and irregular, varied occasionally with a spasmodic jerk, as the nodding coolie finds he is falling off his stool, and brings himself up by the rope, only making the succeeding lull more unbearable. At last the motion ceases altogether. Human patience is limited, especially in India. A servant who is paid to keep awake, and goes to sleep in the execution of his duty, is guilty of a gross breach of contract—to say nothing of his presumption in doing with ease what his master has been so long unsuccessfully attempting. A stern sense of justice animates Mr. Griffin. Grinding his teeth, he gets off his bed and fumbles for his slippers, which some time before

he has buried at a squeaking musk-rat. He can't find them. With bare feet, and at the risk of stepping upon a promiscuous centipede or scorpion, he gropes his way to his bath room, and shouldering a large chattie, or earthenware vessel, full of water, staggers to the veranda, where he finds the sinning punka-puller—with his back against a pillar, and mechanically giving feeble tugs at the rope—not only fast asleep, but trumpeting aloud. He dashes a volume of water over the head and face of the culprit. It is bright moonlight; and he takes a malicious pleasure in watching the contortions of the startled native, as, gasping for breath, and his glistening teeth chattering with terror, he throws himself on his knees, and with clasped hands implores his "lordship," his "father," the "protector of the poor"—meaning Griffin—not to drown him utterly. His lordship contents himself with an indignant kick, which hurts the unslipped foot of the protector of the poor much more than the bony frame of the coolie, who, however, out of compliment to his master, thinks it necessary to writhe as if suffering excruciating agony; and with a threat of cutting off the offender's pay, if he is ever caught napping again, the jaded ensign has recourse to another tumbler of ice water, which he qualifies this time with a dash of brandy, just to kill the animalcule—an excuse current in India, the amount of alcohol necessary for the operation varying according to the taste of the imbiber.

Glowing with satisfaction and heat, from the judicial business in which he has been engaged, he throws himself on his mat, and again essays to propitiate the drowsy god. He is successful at last; the air, as the morning approaches, is perceptibly cooler, and the "cold pig" has had a most enlivening effect upon the punka-wallah. In five minutes Griffin is in a deep sleep that would require whole armies of mosquitoes to rouse him from; they might fly away with him, if they choose, without his knowing anything about it. But alas for the transitory nature of human happiness!—he has not enjoyed the long-wished-for repose more than an hour, when bang goes the morning gun, shaking the whole house, and booming and echoing all over the station. Griffin, nevertheless, doesn't stir, and the air resounds with the rattling of drums, the squeaking of fifes, and the clangor of trumpets and bugles, making enough noise to wake the seven sleepers, but not Griffin, who, happily unconscious of the uproar, remains wrapt in a slumber that Jullien's band, playing the *Rose Polka* in his bedroom, would not break.

It requires the accustomed low, monotonous voice of his bearer, who, dressed in white, glides in like a ghost, and standing motionless at the side of the bed, commences in a deep sepulchral tone with "Sahib." No reply. "Sahib." A grunt is the only answer.

Bearer (in an awful voice.) Sa-heeb!

Griffin (scarcely audible.) All right.

B. The gun has fired, your lordship!

G. (with an impatient twist.) Oh! (A pause, during which the bearer draws on one of his master's socks; he then makes another attempt.)

B. Sahib. (The sahib doesn't stir.)

B. (in a plaintive voice.) My lord!

G. (incoherently.) If you don't hold your tongue, I'll punch your head.

B. (unmoved.) The gun has fired, protector of the poor! (The protector sleepily indulges in some untranslatable Hindostanee abuse.) Enter a khidmutgar, carrying a cup of tea, with a "top" of foam from the fresh goat's milk.

Khidmutgar (at one side of the bed.) My lord, I have brought your tea.

G. (turning away.) Very good.

B. (at the other side.) Your lordship's tea is brought.

G. (turning back again, and digging his face into the pillow.) Oh! take it away, and don't bother. (The khidmutgar places tea on table, and retires, and the bearer puts on the other sock; he then returns to the charge.)

B. (in an injured tone.) Sahib.

G. (with one eye open.) Yes, yes, I know (impatiently.)

B. (knowing he has the best of the argument, as his master must go to parade.) Your lordship's horse is at the door.

This is a clencher. After many grunts and growls, interspersed with uncourteous reflections on the bearer's pedigree, Griffin wakes with parched throat and throbbing brow, and by the time he is thoroughly restored to consciousness, finds himself already half dressed under the clever hands of his noiseless domestic. He finishes his hasty toilet, swallows the tea, and, jaded and unrefreshed, mounts his horse and gallops off to parade, meeting on the road most of his acquaintances, male and female, on horseback or in carriages; the men on duty like himself; the ladies taking advantage of the only cool part of the day to get a little fresh air and exercise.

Although it is scarcely light when he arrives, the men have fallen in; and giving his horse to his syce, who has kept up with him, although he galloped the whole way, and his bungalow is a mile off, he sneaks round the rear of the regiment to prevent Colonel Ramrod or Adjutant Pipeclay from discovering that he is late. The latter sharp-shooting functionary has had his eye upon him, however; and having received from the former a severe "wiggling," as a military reprimand is irreverently termed by young gentlemen with their organ of veneration imperfectly developed, the weary sub listlessly strolls through the ranks after his captain; with eyes feeling red hot in their sockets, inspects the arms and accoutrements; mechanically "tells off" the company, and falls into his place like an automaton; an ensign's place, when he has not to stagger under a heavy colour, being usually in rear of the men, where his toes are trod on, his shins "barked," and where he is prodded with bayonets by awkward privates, and invariably "pitched into" by the colonel when a mistake is made, and that dignity is not sure whose fault it is. Captains are soon ordered to "fall out," and the regiment is handed over to the adjutant, who remorselessly trots it about on a hot and dusty plain, till the sun gets too powerful.

Griffin has then to attend a kind of military jail-delivery, called "orderly-room," and to sit on a court martial for the trial of a soldier who has been found asleep on his post, with the feeling that all he requires to make him happy is a wink under the table and go to sleep himself.

Having got through his "day's work" by about 8 o'clock, our sub mounts his horse, and, under the rays of a scorching sun—to protect himself from which he has several yards of white linen wound round his forage-cap—starts homewards, paying a visit on his way to the shop of Rummeejee Bormebnoy, the Parsee merchant, where, after spending half an hour in pulling about that respectable trader's wonderfully miscellaneous stock, which comprises everything from pickled salmon to a grand piano, he eventually buys a warning-pan, or something equally useless, and swallows a glass of curacao and soda water, which the polite fire-worshipper presses upon him in the most cordial manner, not forgetting, however, to charge for his hospitality in the bill.

Griffin then gallops home through a sun hot enough to make

an omelet of any brains he may happen to have under his hat; his horse and himself looking as if they had just stepped out of a vapour bath.

On arriving at his bungalow, which he finds carefully shut up, with a view of excluding the already heated atmosphere, and keeping in as much of the cool air as possible—he shouts for mangoes.

A basketful is brought; and sitting down in the veranda with a large basin of water before him, his jacket off, and shirt sleeves tucked up to the elbows, he luxuriates in the delicious fruit, till his face and hands are covered with streams of their thick yellow juice. Having emptied the basket, he enters his bungalow, where he finds Tom, the barber, awaiting him. This necessary functionary—for not even the private soldiers shave themselves in India—commences retailing little scraps of gossip, after the manner of barbers, whether in Bengal or Bond Street; and having invested master with a towel, proceeds to lather his face very gingerly, knowing from experience that his customer is apt to be slightly irritable at this time of the day; and should the most homoeopathic particle of soap get into master's nose or mouth, that a sudden contraction of master's right leg would send him flying to the other end of the room.

Tom then produces a razor from a collection of two or three dozen, which he keeps in a towel slung over his shoulder; and having stropped it on his Meechi—namely, the palm of his hand—seizes the protector of the poor by the nose, which indignity his highness is compelled to submit to as a necessary evil; and by half a dozen skilful scrapes leaves him shaven and shorn—carrying away with him his lordship's beard on his bare arm, where it is plastered in ridges together with those of other sahibs operated upon in the course of the morning.

Tom having retired with a deep salam—to the ensign's great relief, for the barber's partiality for garlic is painfully apparent—the sahib, with the assistance of his bearer, languidly divests himself of his reeking garments, and with feeble steps totters to his bath-room.

This is a small department generally enclosed from the veranda, with a plastered floor, and furnished with a tub of gigantic dimensions. Ranged round the room stand a dozen chatties, made of porous red earth, holding about two gallons, in which the water has stood all night, and which the process of evaporation has rendered comparatively cool, as the punka-wallah, when he got the ducking, could testify.

In the last stage of debility and bad temper, Griffin with difficulty raises a chattie in both hands above his head; he inverts it. "Ha! ha! cured in an instant!" The water dashes over his splitting head and feverish body; he is a new creature. Another and another follows, till the whole dozen are emptied; he gasps with delight, and then tumbles into his tub, dashing and splashing the water about in pure enjoyment, and puffing and blowing like a grampus, till in about ten minutes he emerges, all pink and smoking, a happy man, and a triumphant demonstration of the excellencies of the cold water system. At peace with all the world, he subsides into a chair under the punka, and surrenders himself, an amiable doll, into the hands of his bearer, who, with the aid of rough towels, rubs him into a pleasant glow, dries his feet, pulls on his socks—in fact, completes his not very elaborate toilet, with the exception of a few finishing touches, which he adds himself. In most ethereal attire, and with a feeling almost amounting to energy, he manfully walks to his sitting-room, and sets to work to study Hindostanee with his moonshine, or native professor. After an hour's "grind," he dismisses his fat friend, who departs, and bestows his agreeable society on some other aspiring sub, ambitious of the honour of writing P. H. (Passed in Hindostanee) after his name, without which magical letters no staff appointment can be obtained. Our ensign then sits down under the punka to a plentiful breakfast, consisting of curry, omelet, fish, rice, eggs, jam, and bottled beer. What with the bath and Hindostanee, he is positively hungry; and when, after he has done full justice to his kurree box's cookery, he lolls back in his arm chair, watching the smoke of his cheroot curling up over his head, he feels comparatively cool and comfortable, although the atmosphere is that of an iron foundry.

By degrees, however, the refreshing effects of the bath, breakfast, and "baecy" begin to give way to the increasing heat of the day; languor gradually steals over his frame; drawing is too laborious, writing makes his head ache, and, as a last resource, he throws himself on a sofa, and tries to read—a work of difficulty in the darkened room. As a matter of course, he falls asleep, and wakes unrefreshed and feverish; he wanders restlessly about the house, and, for a change, goes into the veranda, where he superintends his dhubzee, or native Backmaster, darning his stocking, sewing buttons on his shirts, or artificially imitating a pair of London made pantaloons.

Everything out of doors looks red hot, and there is that peculiar wavy appearance in the air that is seen at the mouth of a furnace. Brahmince kites and Egyptian vultures glide lazily about, apparently without the energy to give a single flap to their great wings, occasionally making a languid swoop, and audaciously carrying off a bone or piece of bread from under the very nose of its indignant proprietor dining in the compound. Melancholy adjutants mope on one leg, with their heads buried in their breasts, looking the concentrated essence of prostration and misery; and many paria-dogs lie panting in the dust, their frothy tongues and bloodshot eyes causing an involuntary shudder at the thought that they must be already suffering from incipient hydrophobia.

The only things at all lively are the ants, as big as beetles, that swarm in such myriads on the cracked and blistered ground, that it is impossible to walk a yard without crushing dozens; lizards, that glide with ceaseless activity over walls so hot you cannot keep your hand upon them; and troops of pretty little tabby squirrels, that play about in the shade of the mango-trees. Everything else appears to have succumbed to the intense heat, and to be indulging in a general siesta. Even the crows, usually so lively and impudent, sit gasping in long rows on the walls, incapable of motion, with their beaks wide open, and a helpless, idiotic expression on their generally wide awake countenances.

Nearly scorched, Griffin goes in-doors, and, the twelve o'clock gun having fired, proceeds, nautically speaking, to "splice the main brace"—a figurative mode of describing a simple operation, which consists in skilfully combining one-third of brandy with two of water, and drinking it.

Tired of his own society, which he finds exceedingly stupid, Griffin orders his baggy, and determines to brave both sun and heat in search of a little excitement. Dressed in a highly starched white jacket, and continuations of the same colour and equal consistency, which give him a square, mathematical appearance, he drives to the bungalow of a married acquaintance. He is received at the entrance by a servant, who informs him with a salam that the "doors are shut," which means that the "men sahib" or lady of the house, is

* A "Griffin" in India is a new coin.
† A pukka-bungalow is made of properly burnt bricks; a catch-built one only of squares of mud, dried in the sun. The term pukka brick applied to an individual, as often is, requires no explanation.
‡ The enclosure in which the bungalow stands.