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## THE STRANGE RIDE OF MORROWBIE JUKES.

BY RUDYARD KIPLING.

Alive or dead—there is no other way.—Native Proverb.

There is, as the conjurers say, no deception about this tale. Jukes by accident stumbled upon a village that is well known to exist, though he is the only Englishman who has been there. A somewhat similar institution used to flourish on the outskirts of Calcutta, and there is a story that if you go into the heart of Bikanir, which is in the heart of the great Indian desert, you shall come across not a village, but a town, where the dead who did not die but may not live have established their headquarters. And since it is perfectly true that in the same desert is a wonderful city where all the rich money lenders retreat after they have made their fortunes (fortunes so vast that the owners cannot trust even the strong hand of the government to protect them, but take refuge in the waterless sands) and drive sumptuous C spring barouches and buy beautiful girls and decorate their palaces with gold and ivory and Minton tiles and mother of pearl, I do not see why Jukes' tale should not be true. He is a civil engineer, with a head for plans and distances and things of that kind, and he certainly would not take the trouble to invent imaginary traps. He could earn more by doing his legitimate work. He never writes the tale in the telling and grows very hot and indignant when he thinks of the disrespectful treatment he received. He wrote this quite straightforwardly at first, but he has since touched it up in places and introduced moral reflections, thus:

In the beginning it all arose from a slight attack of fever. My work necessitated my being in camp for some months between Pakpattan and Mubarakpur, a desolate, sandy stretch of country, as every one who has had the misfortune to go there may know. My coolies were neither more nor less expiring than other gangs, and my work demanded sufficient attention to keep me from moping had I been inclined to do so unmanly a weakness.

On the 23d December, 1884, I felt a little feverish. There was a full moon at the time, and in consequence every dog near my tent was baying it. The brutes assembled in twos and threes and drove me frantic. A few days previously I had shot one loud-mouthed singer and suspended his carcass in terror about 50 yards from my tent door. But his friends fell upon, fought for and ultimately devoured the body and, as it seemed to me, sang their hymns of "thanksgiving" afterward with renewed energy.

The light-headedness which accompanies fever acts differently on different men. My irritation gave way after a short time to a fixed determination to slaughter one huge black and white beast who had been foremost in song and first in flight throughout the evening. Thanks to a shaking hand and a



DEATH AT HIS ANVIL.

The blacksmith is usually looked upon as the ideal of robust health. This is frequently the case, but nevertheless he is subject to the same ills that afflict other men, and owing to the arduous nature of his daily toil, the results of bilious attacks or indigestion are likely to be even more serious and speedy than in the case of men who lead sedentary lives. The harder a man works, whether at the anvil, or bench or plow handle, the more important is the necessity for a careful watchfulness over health.

When a hardworking man finds that his liver is torpid or his digestion bad, he can save himself much discomfort, and possibly a serious sickness, by resorting at once to Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery. The man who does this will always go to his work and come from it, whistling. A good wife or mother can be of great aid in this respect. Hardworking men are prone to disregard little disorders and let them run on. The good wife should see to it that there is always a bottle of "Golden Medical Discovery" in the house, and that it is used when needed. An honest dealer won't advise a substitute.

"About four years ago I was greatly afflicted with torpid liver," writes Miss Nellie Doyle, of Potsdam, St. Lawrence Co., N. Y. "A half dozen bottles of Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery made me 'a new woman.' I truly believe your remedy saved my life. I am having good health, and can do all my own housework."

For a paper-covered copy of Dr. Pierce's Common Sense Medical Adviser send 31 one-cent stamps, to cover cost of customs and mailing only, to the World's Dispensary Medical Association, Buffalo, N. Y. Cloth binding, 50 stamps.

Miss Rachel A. Jones, of Thomsville, Rankin Co., Miss., writes: "Your wonderful 'Medical Adviser' is worth more than its weight in gold. I do not see how you can give such a volume away. I have been offered \$2.50 for it, but I would not part with it for five dollars."

driddy head, I had already missed him twice with both barrels of my shotgun, when it struck me that my best plan would be to ride him down in the open and finish him off with a hog spear. This, of course, was merely the semi-delicious notion of a fever patient, but I remember that it struck me at the time as being eminently practical and feasible.

I therefore ordered my groom to saddle Pornic and bring him round quietly to the rear of my tent. When the pony was ready, I stood at his head prepared to mount and dash out as soon as the dog should again lift up his voice. Pornic, by the way, had not been out of his pickets for a couple of days. The night air was crisp and chilly, and I was armed with a specially long and sharp pair of persuaders with which I had been rousing a sluggish cob that afternoon. You will easily believe, then, that when he was let go he went quickly. In one moment, for the brute bolted as straight as a die, the tent was left far behind, and we were flying over the smooth, sandy soil at racing speed. In another we had passed the wretched dog, and I had almost forgotten why it was that I had taken horse and hog spear.

The delirium of fever and the excitement of rapid motion through the air must have taken away the remnant of my senses. I have a faint recollection of standing upright in my stirrups and of brandishing my hog spear at the great white moon that looked down so calmly on my mad gallop and of shouting challenges to the camel thorn bushes as they whizzed past. Once or twice I believe, I swayed forward on Pornic's neck and literally hung on by my spurs—as the marks next morning showed.

The wretched beast went forward like a thing possessed over what seemed to be a limitless expanse of moonlit sand. Next, I remember, the ground rose suddenly in front of us, and as we topped the ascent I saw the waters of the Sattlee shining like a silver bar below. Then Pornic blundered heavily on his nose, and we rolled together down some unseen slope.

I must have lost consciousness, for when I recovered I was lying on my stomach in a heap of soft white sand, and the dawn was beginning to break dimly over the edge of the slope down which I had fallen. As the light grew stronger I saw that I was at the bottom of a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand opening on one side directly on to the shoals of the Sattlee. My fever had altogether left me, and, with the exception of a slight dizziness in the head, I felt no bad effects from the fall overnight.

Pornic, who was standing a few yards away, was naturally a good deal exhausted, but had not hurt himself in the least. His saddle, a favorite polo one, was much knocked about and had been twisted under his belly. It took me some time to put him to rights, and in the meantime I had ample opportunities of observing the spot into which I had so foolishly dropped.

At the risk of being considered tedious I must describe it at length, inasmuch as an accurate mental picture of its peculiarities will be of material assistance in enabling the reader to understand what follows.

Imagine, then, as I have said before, a horseshoe-shaped crater of sand with steeply graded sand walls about 35 feet high. The slope, I fancy, must have been about 65 degrees. This crater enclosed a level piece of ground about 50 yards long by 30 at its broadest part, with a rude well in the center. Round the bottom of the crater, about three feet from the level of the ground proper, ran a series of 83 semicircular, ovoid, square and multilateral holes, all about three feet at the mouth. Each hole on inspection showed that it was carefully shored internally with driftwood and bamboos, and over the mouth a wooden drip board projected, like the peak of a jockey's cap, for two feet. No sign of life was visible in these tunnels, but a most sickening stench pervaded the entire amphitheater—a stench fouler than any which my wanderings in Indian villages have introduced me to.

Having remounted Pornic, who was as anxious as I to get back to camp, I rode round the base of the horseshoe to find some place whence an exit would be practicable. The inhabitants, whoever they might be, had not thought fit to put in an appearance, so I was left to my own devices. My first attempt to "rush" Pornic up the steep sand banks showed me that I had fallen into a trap exactly on the same model as that which the art lion sets for its prey. At each step the shifting sand poured down from above in tons, and rattled on the drip boards of the holes like small shot. A couple of ineffectual charges sent us both rolling down to the bottom, half choked with the torrents of sand, and I

was constrained to turn my attention to the river bank.

Here everything seemed easy enough. The sand hills ran down to the river edge, it is true, but there were plenty of shoals and shallows across which I could gallop Pornic and find my way back to terra firma by turning sharply to the right or the left. As I led Pornic over the sands I was startled by the faint pop of a rifle across the river, and at the same moment a bullet dropped with a sharp "whit" close to Pornic's head.

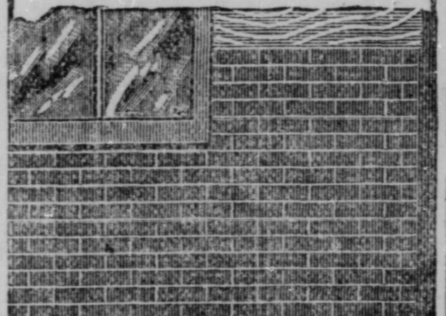
There was no mistaking the nature of the missile—a regulation Martini-Henry "picket." About 500 yards away a country boat was anchored in mid-stream, and a jet of smoke drifting away from its bows in the still morning air showed me whence the delicate attention had come. Was ever a respectable gentleman in such an impasse? The treacherous sand slope allowed no escape from a spot which I had visited most involuntarily, and a promenade on the river frontage was the signal for a bombardment from some insane native in a boat. I'm afraid that I lost my temper very much indeed.

Another bullet reminded me that I had better save my breath to cool my porridge, and I retreated hastily up the sands and back to the horseshoe, where I saw that the noise of the rifle had drawn 65 human beings from the badger holes which I had up till that point supposed to be untenanted. I found myself in the midst of a crowd of spectators—about 40 men, 20 women and one child who could not have been more than 5 years old. They were all scantily clothed in that salmon-colored cloth which one associates with Hindoo mendicants and at first sight gave me the impression of a band of loathsome fakirs. The filth and repulsiveness of the assembly were beyond all description, and I shuddered to think what their life in the badger holes must be.

(Continued on page 8.)

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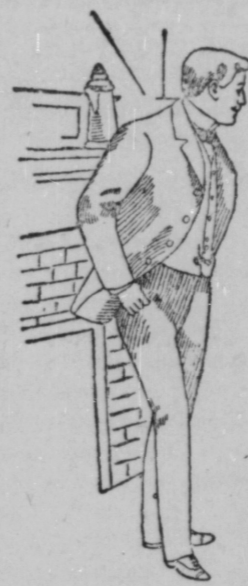
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