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31. THE OLD PINDAREE

On the Nerbada, 1866

Allah is great, my children, and kind to a slave like me;
The great man's tent is gone from under the peepul tree;
With his horde of hungry retainers, and oil-fed sons of the quill;
I paid them the bribes they wanted, and Satan may settle my bill.

It's not that I care for the money, or expect a dog to be clean,
If I were lord of the ryots, they'd starve ere I grew lean;
But I'd sooner be robbed by a tall man who showed me a yard of steel,
Than be fleeced by a sneaking Baboo, with a belted knave at his heel.

There goes my lord the Feringhee, who talks so civil and bland,
Till he raves like a soul in Jehannum if I don't quite understand;
He begins by calling me Sahib, and ends by calling me Fool;
He has taken my old sword from me, and tells me to set up a school;

Set up a school in the village, "And my wishes are," says he,
"That you make the boys learn reg'lar, or you'll get a lesson from me";

Well, Ramlal the oilman spites me, and pounded my cow last rains;
He's got three greasy young urchins; I'll see that *they* take pains.

Then comes a Settlement Hakim, to teach us to plough and to weed,
(I sowed the cotton he gave me, but first I boiled the seed)
He likes us humble farmers, and speaks so gracious and wise
As he asks of our manners and customs; I tell him a parcel of lies.

"Look," says the school Feringhee, "what a silly old man you be,
You can't read, write, nor cypher, and your grandsons do all three;
They'll total the shopman's figures, and reckon the tenant's corn,
And read good books about London and the world before you were born."

Well, I may be old and foolish, for I've seventy years well told,
And the Franks have ruled me forty, so my heart and my hand's got cold;
Good boys they are, my grandsons, I know, but they'll never be men,
Such as I was at twenty-five when the sword was king of the pen;

When I rode a Dekhani charger, with the saddle-cloth
gold-laced,
And a Persian sword, and a twelve foot spear, and a
pistol at my waist:
My son, he keeps a pony, and I grin to see him
astride,
Jogging away to the market, and swaying from side
to side.

My father was an Afghan, and came from Kandahar:
He rode with Nawab Amir Khan in the old Maratha
war:
From the Dekhan to the Himalay, five hundred of one
clan,
They asked no leave of prince or chief as they swept
thro' Hindusthan;

My mother was a Brahminee, but she clave to my
father well;
She was saved from the sack of Juleysur, when a thou-
sand Hindus fell;
Her kinsmen died in the sally; so she followed where
he went,
And lived like a bold Pathani in the shade of a rider's
tent.

It's many a year gone by now; and yet I often dream
Of a long dark march to the Jumna, of splashing across
the stream,
Of the waning moon on the water, and the spears in the
dim star-light,
As I rode in front of my mother, and wondered at all
the sight.

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Then, the streak of the pearly dawn—the flash of a
sentinel's gun,
The gallop and glint of horsemen who wheeled in the
level sun,
The shots in the clear still morning, the white smoke's
eddying wreath,
Is this the same land that I live in, the dull dank air
that I breathe?

But the British chased Amir Khan, and the roving
times must cease,
My father got this village, and he sowed his crops in
peace;
And I, so young and hot of blood, I had no land or
wife,
So I took to the hills of Malwa, and the free Pindaree
life.

Praise to the name Almighty! there is no God but one,
Mahomed is his prophet, and his will shall ever be done;
Ye shall take no use for your money, nor your faith for
a ransom sell;
Ye shall make no terms with the infidel, but smite his
soul to hell.

Tell me, ye men of Islam, who are rotting in shameful
ease,
Who wrangle before the Feringhee for a poor man's
last rupees,
Are ye better than were your fathers, who plundered
with old Cheetoo,
And who fleeced the greedy traders, as the traders now
fleece you?

Yes, and here's one of them coming, my father gave
him a bill;
I have paid the man twice over, and here I'm paying
him still;
He shows me a long stamp-paper, and must have my
land, must he?
If I were twenty years younger, he'd get six feet by
three.

And if I were forty years younger, with my life before
me to choose,
I wouldn't be lectured by Kafirs, or bullied by fat
Hindoos;
But I'd go to some far-off country where Musalmans
still are men,
Or take to the jungle, like Cheetoo, and die in the
tiger's den.

ALFRED LYALL.

32. FORD O' KABUL RIVER

KABUL town's by Kabul river—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
There I left my mate for ever,
Wet an' drippin' by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
There's the river up and brimmin', an' there's 'arf
a squadron swimmin'
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town's a blasted place—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Strewth I sha'n't forget 'is face
Wet an' drippin' by the ford!
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
Keep the crossing-stakes beside you, an' they will
surely guide you
'Cross the ford of Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town is sun and dust—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' sooner drownded fust
'Stead of 'im beside the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
You can 'ear the 'orses threshin', you can 'ear
the men a splashin',
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Kabul town was ours to take—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
I'd ha' left it for 'is sake—
'Im that left me by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
It's none so bloomin' dry there; ain't you never
comin' nigh there,
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark?

Kabul town 'll go to hell—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Fore I see 'im 'live an' well—
'Im the best beside the ford.

Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
Gawd 'elp 'em if they blunder, for their boots 'll pull 'em under,
By the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

Turn your 'orse from Kabul town—
Blow the bugle, draw the sword—
'Im an' 'arf my troop is down,
Down an' drownded by the ford.
Ford, ford, ford o' Kabul river,
Ford o' Kabul river in the dark!
There's the river low an' fallin', but it ain't no use o' callin'
'Cross the ford o' Kabul river in the dark.

RUDYARD KIPLING.

33. THE GUIDES AT CABUL

(1879.)

SONS of the Island Race, wherever ye dwell,
Who speak of your father's battles with lips that burn,
The deed of an alien legion hear me tell,
And think not shame from the hearts ye tamed to learn,
When succour shall fail and the tide for a season turn,
To fight with a joyful courage, a passionate pride,
To die at the last as the Guides at Cabul died.

For a handful of seventy men in barracks of mud,
Foodless, waterless, dwindling one by one,
Answered a thousand yelling for English blood
With stormy volleys that swept them gunner from gun,
And charge on charge in the glare of the Afghan sun,
Till the walls were shattered wherein they crouched at bay,
And dead or dying half of the seventy lay.

Twice they had taken the cannon that wrecked their hold,
Twice they had toiled in vain to drag it back,
Thrice they toiled, and alone, wary and bold,
Whirling a hurricane sword to scatter the rack,
Hamilton, last of the English, covered their track.
"Never give in!" he cried, and he heard them shout,
And grappled with death as a man that knows not doubt.

And the Guides looked down from their smouldering barrack again,
And behold, a banner of truce, and a voice that spoke:
"Come, for we know that the English all are slain,
We keep no feud with men of a kindred folk:
Rejoice with us to be free of the conqueror's yoke."
Silence fell for a moment, then was heard
A sound of laughter and scorn, and an answering word.

"Is it we or the lords we serve who have earned this wrong,
That ye call us to flinch from the battle they bade us fight?
We that live—do you doubt that our hands are strong?
They that have fallen—ye know that their blood was bright!
Think ye the Guides will barter for lust of the light
The pride of an ancient people in warfare bred,
Honour of comrades living, and faith to the dead?"

Then the joy that spurs the warrior's heart
To the last thundering gallop and sheer leap
Came on the men of the Guides; they flung apart
The doors not all their valour could longer keep;
They dressed their slender line; they breathed deep,
And with never a foot lagging or head bent,
To the clash and clamour and dust of death they went.

HENRY NEWBOLT.

34. SOLDIERS OF IND

MEN of the Hills and men of the Plains, men of the Isles and Sea,
Brothers in bond of battle and blood wherever the battle may be;
A song and a thought for your fighting line, a song for the march and camp,
A song to the beat of the rolling drums, a song to the measured tramp,

When the feet lift up on the dusty road 'neath sun and moon and star,
And the prayer is prayed by mother and maid for their best beloved afar.

What say the Plains? The Plains that stretch along
From hamlet and from field, from fold and byre.
"Here once toiled one who sang his peasant song
And now reaps harvest 'mid the tribesmen's fire."
The Spirit of a mightier world than springs
From his poor native village led him on
To Glory: "Yea—to Glory!" Ever sings
The Spirit of the Plains when he is gone.

What say the Hills whence comes the Gurkha breed—
The bull-dogs of the East? From crest and vale
Reverberate the echoes, swift they speed
On falling waters or the mountain gale—
"Our hillmen brave as lions have gone forth.
They were our sons—we bred them—even we—
To face thy foemen—Islands of the North—
We know their worth and sing it thus to ye."

What say the Passes? There the requiem
Of battle lingers o'er the undying dead—
"Our Soldiers of the Sun, whose diadem
Of Honour glitters in the nullah bed,
Or by the hillside drear, or dark ravine,
Or on the *sangared* steep—a solemn ray
That touches thus the thing that once hath been,
With Glory! Glory!"—So the Passes say!

And so the great wo[illegible] and men's eyes blaze,
As each one to his neighbour cries "Well done!"
A little thing this speech—this flower of praise,
Yet let it crown our Soldiers of the Sun.
Not here alone—for here we know them well,
But tell our English waiting on the shore
To welcome back their heroes: "Lo! these fell
Even as ours—as brave—for evermore."

I hear the roar amid the London street.
The earth hath not its equal whether it be
For ignorance or knowledge, and the feet
That press therein and eyes that turn to see
Know nothing of our sepoys—let them know
That here be men beneath whose dark skin runs
A battle-virtue kindred with the glow
That fires the leaping pulses of our sons.

'Tis worth proclaiming. Yea it seems to me
This loyalty—to Death—lies close akin
To all the noblest human traits that be,
Engendered whence we know not—yet within
Choice spirits nobly gathered. Lo! we stand,
Needs must, against the world. Yet war's alarms
Are nothing to our mightiest Motherland
While Nation circles Nations in her Arms!

J. R. Denning.

35. ENGLAND IN THE EAST

(From *Ave Imperatrix*)

The strong sea-lion of England's wars
Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,
To battle with the storm that mars
The star of England's chivalry.

The brazen-throated clarion blows
Across the Pathan's reedy fen,
And the high steeps of Indian snows
Shake to the tread of armed men.

And many an Afghan chief, who lies
Beneath his cool pomegranate-trees,
Clutches his sword in fierce surmise
When on the mountain-side he sees

The fleet-foot Marri scout, who comes
To tell how he hath heard afar
The measured roll of English drums
Beat at the gates of Kandahar.

For southern wind and east wind meet
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,
England with bare and bloody feet
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,
Grey pillar of the Indian sky,
Where saw'st thou last in clanging flight
Our wingèd dogs of Victory?

The almond-groves of Samarcand,
Bokhara, where red lilies blow,
And Oxus, by whose yellow sand
The grave white-turbaned merchants go:

And on from thence to Ispahan,
The gilded garden of the sun,
Whence the long dusty caravan
Brings cedar and vermilion:

And that dread city of Cabool
Set at the mountain's scarped feet,
Whose marble tanks are ever full
With water for the noonday heat:

Where through the narrow straight Bazaar
A little maid Circassian
Is led, a present from the Czar
Unto some old and bearded Khan,—

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight;
But the sad dove, that sits alone
In England—she hath no delight,

In vain the laughing girl will lean
To greet her love with love-lit eyes:
Down in some treacherous black ravine,
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see
The lingering wistful children wait
To climb upon their father's knee;
And in each house made desolate

Pale women will kiss their lord
Will kiss the relics of the slain—
Some tarnished epaulette—some sword—
Poor toys to soothe sad anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields
Are these, our brothers, laid to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

OSCAR WILDE.

36. INDIA REPOSING

Be glad, thou tranquil Hindustan,
That God such mercy gives,—
That tribe with tribe, and man with man,
In friendly concord lives.
Rejoice for peace and quiet days,—
Instead of those old times
When all the region was ablaze
With cruelties and crimes.

O happy days for India,
Now wars are made to cease,—
Nor Timur, Singh, nor Scindiah
Invades thy plenteous peace.

Beneath the flag of England
Ye hundred millions, rest.
And shout for joy, and sing, land
In Britain's mercies blest.

For strong-armed Law protects the weak
From each maurading crew,—
Nor savage Gond, nor fiery Sikh,
Affrights the mild Hindoo;
No more can Thug or hireling Bheel
Infest the pool or steep,
No longer does Pindaree steel
The ryot's harvest reap.

Rejoice from Himalaya's snows
To level Malabar,—
From where the Nile-like Ganges flows
To Cutch and Candahar,—
Rejoice! that those old times are past,
Those fears and sorrows fled,
That gospel peace is come at last
And India comforted.

MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER.

37. THE GIFT OF INDIA [1]

Is there aught you need that my hands withhold,
Rich gifts of raiment or grain or gold?
Lo! I have flung to the East and West
Priceless treasures torn from my breast,
And yielded the sons of my stricken womb
To the drum-beats of duty, the sabres of doom.

Gathered like pearls in their alien graves
Silent they sleep by the Persian waves,
Scattered like shells on Egyptian sands,
They lie with pale brows and brave, broken hands,
They are strewn like blossoms mown down by chance
On the blood-brown meadows of Flanders and France.

Can ye measure the grief of the tears I weep
Or compass the woe of the watch I keep?
Or the pride that thrills thro' my heart's despair,
And the hope that comforts the anguish of prayer?
And the far sad glorious vision I see
Of the torn red banners of Victory?

When the terror and tumult of hate shall cease
And life be refashioned on anvils of peace,
And your love shall offer memorial thanks
To the comrades who fought in your dauntless ranks,
And you honour the deeds of the deathless ones
Remember the blood of my martyred sons!

SAROJINI NAIDU.

[1] From *The Broken Wing* by Sarojini Naidu. (London: Heinemann.)

38. THE GIFT OF HINDUSTAN

THIS day do Maharaja and Zemindar
Show forth the Orient's most imperial mood.
Satrapies old, and kingdoms that were food
For ravening Time already in years afar,
Long ere Hydaspes' tide disdained to bar
The hosts of Alexander, bring unwooed,
Their offerings, and the East forgets to brood,
And leaps to follow in tempest England's star.
For there, where first it bloomed, still wisdom flowers,
And Hindustan knows well her friends, being wise!
Hither, with smouldering empires in her eyes,
She pours unasked her "tributary gold."
Pouring therewith her heart's goodwill, in showers
Richer than all Golconda an hundredfold.

WILLIAM WATSON.

NOTES

1. These lines containing the picture of a Vedic Warrior proceeding to battle are a translation from the *Rig Veda* (vi. 75). They furnish interesting evidence of the civilisation of the period, with regard to weapons of warfare.

2. The passage is taken from the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayan*, and cannot therefore be treated as very accurate history. But even making due allowance for poetic exaggeration, it is probably valuable as presenting the description of an ancient Indian city.

4. A translation of one of Asoka's well-known pillar-inscriptions.

5. This story represents Mohamed of Ghazni as a ruler with a high sense of duty anxious to do justice to all his subjects.

6. This incident refers to the sack of the temple of Somnath in Guzerat by Mohamed of Ghazni in 1024 A.D. The story of the hidden treasure is considered apocryphal, but it throws light on the fierce, iconoclastic nature of the Moslem invader. There is a reference to the destruction wrought in India during his invasion in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*:

> Fierce in wrath
> He comes, and India's diadems
> Lie scattered in his ruinous path.

7 and 8. The two poems explain themselves. The first is in praise of Mohamed of Ghazni by the great Persian poet, author of the *Shah Nameh, The Book of Kings*, Firdausi. The satire was the result of ill-treatment the poet had received at the hands of the Sultan. The story runs that the poet was asked to complete his *Shah Nameh* and the Sultan promised to give him one gold *mishkal* for every distich which he wrote. But when the sixty thousand distichs of the great epic were actually produced, he was given only 60,000 silver *dirhems*. Firdausi was at the public bath when the bags of treasure

he found that they contained only silver

38. Ted at the insult offered to him that on the
20,000 *dirhems* to the keeper of the bath, 20,000 to[illegible] days of refreshments and 20,000 to the slave who brou[illegible]hem. It is said that the Sultan repented for it later, and sent the promised number of coins in gold. But it was too late—the poet's corpse was being carried to the grave by one gate, when the treasure arrived by the other.

9. *Akbar's Dream* does not probably belong to the department of history so much as to that of philosophy, but we, nevertheless, get a fine picture of the philosopher-statesman who endeared himself to all his subjects, Hindu and Moslem alike.

10. The Court of Jahangir was well-known for its luxurious grandeur. Students of history are familiar with the eloquent description of it by the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe. The poem describes the Feast of Roses which the emperor kept, with his wife, in the Valley of Kashmere. The career of Nurjahan and the influence she exercised over Jahangir is one of the most romantic episodes of Indian history.

12. The Taj Mahal at Agra was built by Shah Jehan in memory of his dearly-loved wife. It is one of the sights of the world, and has been described by various writers and tourists. See the description in Pierre Loti's *India* and the [illegible]hat long description in verse in Sir Edwin Arnold's *With Saadi in the Garden.*

13. This vivid account of the savage massacre at Delhi, under the orders of the cruel Persian invader, Nadir Shah, is taken from Herbert Sherring's *Nadir the Persian, and Other Poems.* Mr. Sherring is the author of another work in verse which has a special bearing on the subject of this book, *The Romance of the Twisted Spear and Other Tales in Verse*, dealing with the chivalry of Rajasthan. The length of the tales has prevented their inclusion in this volume.

14. The incidents related in this poem deal with the third battle of Panipat at which the power of the Mahrattas was crushed by a combined attempt on the part of the Mohamedan powers in India.

15 and 16. It is a pity that the *Lusiad* is not more well-known in India, in spite of its being the only Western poem of any magnitude directly connected with this country. Poem No. 15 describes the first glimpse which Vasco da Gama had of India when he came round the Cape of Good Hope, when he might have felt,

> Like some watcher of the skies,
> When a new planet swims into his ken,

and he offered thanks to [illegible] knee
admiral who first stared at the Pacific, "Silc
in Darien." The second poem is a pathetic rem
glorious position which the Zamorins of Calicut oc
one time on the West Coast of India. The descen
the Zamorin before whom the great Vasco da Gama app
for favours is now a mere Zamindar and even his estate
now (1917) managed by the Court of Wards.

17. The anecdote narrated in this poem throws light on the greatness of the empire-builder, Clive. A friend of his is represented as asking him for an account of the single event in his career which might be said to indicate the spirit of his heroism. Clive narrates the story of a challenge into which he had to enter when he was but "a desk-drudge slaving at St. David," with a captain, for having exposed his cheating at cards. He missed fire, the muzzle of the opponent's pistol touched his forehead—he would only repeat his accusation and exclaim :

> Cheat you did, you know you cheated and this moment know as well,
> As for me, my homely breeding bids you—fire and go to hell.

Struck with this courage, and stung by a sense of humiliation, this "scarlet son of Mars from head to heel," who had cherished supreme contempt for the poor clerk, recognised in him the worth which was to prove of such service to the empire. In the light of this biographical incident, it is probably much easier for us to see how

> That Clive—that youth, that green-horn, that quill-driving clerk, in fine—
> He sustained a siege in Arcot.

But for this escape from death it has been suggested he must have left

> England probably to pay on still
> Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will.

18. Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore, died fighting at the siege of Seringapatam, his capital, on the 4th May, 1799.

19. The battle was fought at Assaye, near Aurangabad, on September 23, 1803. General Arthur Wellesley defeated the forces of the great Mahratta leader, Scindia.

20. The battle of Deeg was fought in the course of the same war, the Second War with the Mahrattas. It was in the year 1804, Holker sustaining a defeat at the hands of the English.

describ[illegible] coming of Gillespie from Arcot
38. [illegible]ed intimation of the outbreak of the Sepoy [illegible]ellore (1806).

to[illegible]his [illegible]he poem is in commemoration of a touching incident of brou[illegible]chivalry, which happened in the war with Sind (1843). [illegible]late[illegible] chief of one of the hill-tribes had no hesitation in be[illegible]stowing the Red Thread of Honour, the distinction for heroes, upon some soldiers of the enemy, who

Mistook a mandate, from afar half heard
And, in that glorious error, calmly went
To death without a word.

Truckee was a stronghold in the desert considered impregnable.

23. This lamentation on the carnage of war is on the battle of Ferozepore (1847), fought between the English under Sir Hugh Gough and the Sikhs. The battle lasted two days and the Sikhs were defeated only after a desperate struggle in which both sides lost heavily.

24. The battle of Chillianwallah was fought in the Second Sikh War, on the 13th January, 1849. Both sides claimed the victory and it has often been regarded as a drawn battle.

25. This relates to a dark episode in the Indian Mutiny. The English who left Cawnpore in boats on the Ganges were fired at by the Sepoys of Nana Sahib, the rebel leader, though they had been promised protection. There were, of course, a large number of Hindu and Mohamedan chiefs who were faithful to the English cause at that time.

26–29. All these four poems deal with various stages of the siege of Lucknow by the rebels in the Indian Mutiny, (1857-58). Tennyson describes the defence, and Whittier the arrival of the relieving party under Sir Colin Campbell. R. T. S. Lowell's poem is an account of the episode well-known as *Jessie's Dream*. Denning gives vent to reflections suggested on visiting the present ruins of the Residency at Lucknow.

30. In spite of being a British official, Sir Alfred Lyall has been able to place himself in the position of the Indian mutineers, in this poem. The result was, his loyalty was suspected.

31. The old Pindaree's dissatisfaction with the features of civilised administration beginning to be introduced into the country, finds vent in this poem.

32–33. The poems deal with the Second Afghan War (1879).

34. A tribute to the Indian soldier.

This extract fro[illegible]
put the reader in mind of *England's Dead* by

The hurricane hath might
Along the Indian shore
And far by Ganges' banks at night
Is heard the tiger's roar.

. . . . .

But let the sound roll on,
It hath no tone of dread
For those that from their toils are gone—
There slumber England's dead.

36. It is interesting to see the author of *Proverbial Philosophy* writing this poem on the benefits of British rule in India, though in lines which do not rise to any heights of poetic inspiration.

37–38. These two poems enable the collection to be brought quite up to date, as they deal with India's splendid contribution to the Empire in the Great War.

"Hindustan knows well her friends."

