

A young bride's experience in India from 1895

This is an account by **Amy Scott Elliot**, who married **Captain Harry Frere Loch** in January 1895 and then travelled immediately out to India. Amy was the daughter of **General Charles Scott Elliot** who had served in India and been present at the capture of Lucknow. Harry Loch was a son of **George Loch**, a judge at the Calcutta High Court.

Despite being born in India, Amy had grown up in Britain. She was, however, like many Scots, surrounded by Indian connections other than those of her parents. Her great-grandfather, **James Scott** had left for India in 1752 and became a Captain in the Bombay Marine; her grandfather's brothers had also served in India, one as ADC to **General Lord Harris** at Seringapatam; Lord Harris was her father's great-uncle. Her father's brother had been a prominent Calcutta merchant and her own brother (my grandfather) had left for India in 1893 to serve as an officer in the 4th Madras Pioneers.

In transcribing her account I have tried to leave it largely as written, accepting that it is not always grammatically correct. I have, however, aligned the spelling, as far as possible, with that in the Anglo-Indian dictionary, *Hobson-Jobson*.

In the account, there are many references to servants. For convenience I summarise their roles below:

Ayah :A lady's-maid or nurse-maid.

Bheesty :Domestic who supplies a family with water.

Bobachee :Cook.

Chokidar :Watchman, generally from the thieving tribe.

Cooly :Labourer.

Dhoby :Washer-man

Dirzee : Tailor.

Kitmutgar :Table servant.

Mallee :Gardner.

Mussaulchee : Scullery maid.

Syce :Groom.

The account follows. Harry Loch is referred to by Amy as Hal throughout.

John Webley – 2015

I

All our honeymoon plans had gone ajeer as the War Office arranged we should travel to India in a Trooper so our time was very cut short and it was only six weeks after the wedding I found myself on board in the middle of an intensely cold February.

This, instead of going to India via Venice, the dream of my life, was, in itself, a great blow but it saved money on fares which was a great consideration. Officers travelled free, ladies had to pay for board.

As Hal had passed so high out of the Staff College (2nd) he was looked on as a coming man likely to get a good appointment. I had always wanted to see India of which I had heard so much all my life but when the moment came to break away from my happy life and began to realise it might be years before I saw my country again, I did not feel so cheerful.

I will always remember how grateful I felt to Lilian, who was the girl cousin nearest to me in age and character, for coming to see me off at Southampton. It took off a bit of the strangeness and, as after having gone through the necessary formalities we found ourselves in my cabin unpacking the lovely but heavy dressing case, her present to me, we were chattering as usual when a knock at the door startled us.

On calling out " *Come in*" a lady appeared who asked which of us was Mrs Loch. I had hardly got used to my new name but Lilian, pointing to me, the woman started to tell me that I must never divulge the awful secret that Hal and I had a cabin to ourselves; that if any one asked me I must pretend there were two other women sharing the cabin with me as, if senior ladies discovered this fact, there would be a terrible row.

She went on to tell me she and her husband were in the opposite cabin. He was a Major, my husband a junior Captain and there was the wife of another Major somewhere who would be furious if she knew we had cabins with our husbands.

I was very shy with strangers at any time but this woman terrified me and when she left us Lilian and I looked at each other and asked why on earth we should be in the same cabin with our husbands. At that moment Hal popped in to tell us the bell for passengers would be sounding shortly and we had better come on deck. Pulling him into the cabin and carefully shutting the door I asked him if he thought the woman had been mad.

He laughed and said " *Oh no, that is a bit of military precedence which you will have to get used to. You see, as a rule the women share one cabin with three berths, their husbands the opposite cabin but I arranged with Capt D, also newly-wed, that we would toss for an empty cabin, second class, and he has gone into it with his wife leaving us together.*"

Having said good bye to Lilian, I went down again to the cabin as I was too shy to go on deck alone and Hal had something to do and I prayed that awful woman would not come in again and upset me.

Never will I forget the bitter cold of that ship before we arrived at Queenstown where we had to pick up troops. The icicles were hanging in glittering fringes on every available space and I

felt very sick and miserable as I tossed in my narrow bunk with no desire for food. We were able to go ashore at Queenstown which cheered me up and going into a shop I was approached by a dear old woman, hearing I was bound for India, asking me with tears in her eyes to look out for her son who was serving there. I took down his name and address but never found him and have never been in Ireland again.

We plugged on and I gradually got sea-legs but was not at all happy, feeling such a stranger with all, including my husband. To make matters worse, I was the only woman at a long table filled with Staff officers, friends of my husband, who were all most kind to me but all their talk was above my head and I longed for a woman friend.

I found one in the wife of Capt. D who had taken the second class cabin and who had also only been married a few weeks. Unfortunately for her, he was adjutant of the ship which meant he had hours of duty and he would not allow her on deck without him. We agreed this was ridiculous and I suggested she should rebel.

Soon after, at dinner, where the officers always tried to get me to drink port but which I always refused, never having been used to wine, I suddenly remembered being told what bad manners it was to keep refusing hospitality and took a small glass from **Major Younghusband** to drink the Queen's health. He had been most kind to me, doing all he could to make me feel at ease, so I was stunned when after dinner Hal took me down to the cabin and gave me a very unpleasant ten minutes while he explained no girl should ever accept wine from a stranger when her husband was there. He knew perfectly well I did not like wine and also knew he would have given it to me had wished so I told him if he felt I had disgraced him I was prepared to go on board a ship which I knew we would pass at Port Said on which a cousin was returning to England.

This calmed him down and I told Mrs D that was the best way to treat jealous husbands. I don't know if she acted on my advice but she shortly after appeared more frequently on deck and was allowed to sit beside me.

Meantime the woman next door often told me what a time she was having at her table which was next to ours but had a mixed collection of male and female She put me to the blush by laughing over the many fibs she made up when asked how she got on in her cabin and used to say how annoying it was the time I took over my hair or how I wanted go to the bath just as she did too.

I told her no one ever asked who was in my cabin and I would have thought it very impertinent had they done so. All she replied was "*Oh you have a lot to learn*". The only other woman I spoke to was the wife (Mrs W) of a veterinary officer who was going out to join her husband at Muttra with two fat naughty small children and a very nice nurse.

The Capt. asked Mrs D several times to tea on his deck which we loved as we got away from the crowds and had much better tea out of thin cups and delicious cakes not provided in the dining saloon where the tinned milk always made me feel rather sick as it was sweet. This interest on the Captain's part aroused the fury of the older ladies we heard after. We were quite unaware we were doing anything at all out of the way and were beginning to enjoy the voyage with all its many new and interesting experiences. We were taken down to the engine room by some officers also down to the ice chamber by others, played the usual silly games and began to feel less shy and awkward.

We were looking forward eagerly to landing and seeing the first of the East. Then the bomb burst. The woman opposite dashed into my cabin to tell me we had been found out and the senior ladies were FURIOUS and our husbands had been called up to be interviewed by the CO. She mentioned the name of one terrible woman who used to shock me by sitting with practically nothing on while waiting for her turn for the bath. She was very fat and red and used to disgust me but I never spoke to her.

She it was who had found out how this woman had been making up all the stories to hide her part in the wickedness. She made up a great tale of how it would tell against our husbands' future prospects and alarmed me to such an extent when I went that afternoon to tea with the Capt. I told him the whole story and how the report to head-quarters was to be posted at Port Said.

He laughed heartily and said. *"My dear lady. I am the Capt. of this ship. I know all about it and knew all about it long ago and was waiting for this but don't tell anyone the Postbag was sealed yesterday and the report is not in it."* We felt he was a true friend and were most grateful though neither of us really took in what all the fuss was about.

We enjoyed our time ashore at Port Said buying many attractive baubles and amused by the natives patter and sleight of hand tricks though it was not then as clean and well-ordered as it became later and back on board we felt we could defy the unpleasing remarks which greeted us as we strolled on deck about *"pride will have a fall"*, *"junior ladies must learn their place"* etc. but one thing it did. It made me take a great dislike to Indian ladies as they were something quite outside my ken and gave me a very bad impression of society I might expect.

Of course no more was ever heard of this episode. It got hotter and hotter every day and at night our mattresses were carried on deck and the ladies' quarters were fenced off by deck-chairs arranged by the stewards. It meant having to get up at dawn while the decks were sluiced and going down to a very hot cabin to rest till the stewardess brought a nasty cup of tea and biscuit after which we rose and had a bath, dressed and ate a breakfast or as much of it as we could manage. The dinners were very lengthy and tiresome to me. I would much rather have skipped them and remained on deck but that again was not permissible.

The first sight of Bombay delighted me and I never got over my admiration for that city on the sea and always enjoyed a few nights in the Taj Hotel with its large airy rooms and marble floors which seemed so cool and clean.

I said goodbye to Mrs D and never saw or heard of her again but before I parted with Mrs W she handed me a card giving me the name and address of her nurse who she explained had been trained at Queen Charlotte's hospital (though I had no idea why she told me this) also gave me her address and hoped not to lose sight of me.

Our destination was Jubbulpore (Jub), hers Muttra and they left that night. We remained a few nights in Bombay where I much enjoyed drives in horse carriages, eating the air as they say in Hindustan and watching eagerly all the novel sights of native life and colour. Hal had certain duties and I was left eating my breakfast on the veranda of my room when crows darted down and took the bread out of my fingers which so alarmed me I got on to my bed and sat there watching anxiously the feet passing under the half door, which allowed the

breeze to cool the room, and wondered what would happen if a servant came in and I could not understand what he said. Hal had engaged a bearer for himself but my *ayah* was to meet us at Jub so I had no one to help me and found unpacking very hot work. By the time I had struggled into a thin silk dress I felt I wanted to change into another.

My trousseau was a large one and been most carefully packed by my mother who prided herself in good packing but I had not inherited the gift and hated the sight of my boxes after having to pull them in and out of the cabin.

I had been given £50 to buy a piano by an uncle and I intended to have that piano as I had never been without one but Hal was not so keen as it meant a heavy cost to get it to Jub. However, we chose one and arranged for its transport and I felt I had something of my own to take care of.

We had a carriage to ourselves on the train and spent a day and night in it getting very dusty and dirty but all was so interesting. We had to get out at stated stations for meals, very good ones they were, though the heat, even in March, was trying to me and the pest of flies abominable.

We each carried our bedding, as the custom is, which the bearer arranged on the side seats as night fell and I slept like a top in spite of the rattling and jingling and hoarse voices at the stations of vendors of sweets or water.

We went to the dawk bungalow (*for temporary accommodation*) at Jub as we had to find a bungalow and Hal went off to see the regiment while I interviewed the *ayah*, a relic of an aunt who had arranged for me to employ her. She was a white-haired woman who made a profound salaam then started to talk English to my relief and took possession of everything including me. She produced an imp of a granddaughter who she said must stay with her and was most punctilious about not allowing our boxes to touch the white wash walls of the room which I thought rather far-fetched. She also made the bearer bring bricks to raise them on to keep away the ants she explained.

When Hal returned he told me there was no spare bungalow and we must share with another officer and his wife which filled me with horror.

It was bad enough to be a bride but to have to face complete strangers was the limit in my opinion. However there was nothing for it and we went to the bungalow where I was introduced to a couple of women who I did not take to at all. They were kind and very condescending explaining many things I would have to do and anxious to see my clothes; all very odd to me.

They took me to the club where I was stared at as if I were a wild beast and later they told me my appearance had caused much surprise as they expected a much older woman. When I asked why and what they knew about me I was informed they had read the account of my wedding in some paper and because I chose to have a pink tulle lining to my old lace gown they imagined I must be a very ancient dame. I never could think why.

II

After several, to me, most uncomfortable days as, when Hal was on duty, I was entirely at the mercy of these strange women- who chattered like parrots, dragged me to the club every afternoon and talked a language quite unknown to me. Hal discovered an ancient unoccupied bungalow which had to be whitewashed and re-thatched also each room had to be matted which all took up time though it is really wonderful how soon these men get the work done.

It was a very dark house of six rooms in a small compound which had been neglected and altogether gloomy. The white ants had been very busy on walls and shelves and the ceiling cloth showed signs of civet cats who prowled over our heads in pursuit of rats making most unpleasing scuffling noises but I was so thankful to get away from my hosts I entered with zest into arranging the hired furniture we had chosen and started the *ayah* on the unpacking of linen and silver etc.

The evening before I was, as usual, taken to the club where, while sitting mournfully wishing I had some relation to talk to, a child suddenly plumped onto my knee and putting her finger into her mouth rubbed it down my cheek. Pushing her away saying " *You dirty little girl* " she turned to a woman saying " *No Mummy, it does not come off* " I then grasped it was my complexion which had caused this impertinence. More than ever did I know I would never like India.

I had been horrified when I discovered the marble bath room of my dreams turned into a bare chunam (*a type of plaster used in India*) room with a tin bath which had to be filled with hot and cold water by the *bheesty* when required. Each bedroom has its own bath room which is the most comfort about it and most rooms have also their dressing room. The *ayah* was most particular in firmly shutting every door when I was dressing though I sometimes desired to call across to Hal who I did not see much of during the day.

She had been evidently very carefully trained by my Aunt in all the best traditions of married life and she took a very firm stand with me, softly admonishing any frivolity on my part during dressing saying "*Memsahib, Sahib there.*" pointing to the door of his room.

The number of doors and windows which have to be curtained in every house is quite expensive and a *dirzee* had to be engaged to make them. He is one of the most useful of the staff sitting on the veranda from 9 to 6 with intervals for food and prayers so is always ready to fill a gap should a visitor not be able to attract the attention of a servant with the usual cry of "*Qui-hi*" or "*Is anyone there*".

Calling hours start at 12 noon and one has to be dressed and able to receive and try to place the numbers of young officers who call singly or two at a time to pay their respects. Lunch is at 2 and was as large a meal as dinner, of many courses. Hal had been fortunate in getting back his invaluable Tamil butler who brought a nephew as bearer and he in turn produced a bearer's boy. I considered this great extravagance but was told it was usual and I had to find a cook, *mussaulchee* or scullery maid and *kitmutgar* or table servant to work under the butler. Every head servant in India expects to be waited on and the cook never dreams of carrying

his basket to the market or bazaar but stalks ahead with much dignity while his own boy walks behind with basket on head.

My Uncle, who had been a commissioner in the CP (*Central Province- her mother's brother, Colonel William Vertue*), and whose wife's *ayah* I inherited had impressed on me that as natives look down on women it was up to me to maintain my own dignity also the dignity of the British Empire by my conduct and observance of all native customs so I was petrified after sampling one or two cooks who did not come up to the mark. I found one with excellent chits who gave us a first class dinner but I was confronted next morning by the entire staff who desired to leave, all that is except the bearer who explained I had engaged a Christian, a mission boy, and they could not degrade themselves by serving such a *Memsahib*.

This was an impasse I had not foreseen and did not know what to do about it. I had no idea the man was a Christian nor could I see why the others should object to it so had to wait till Hal returned and put the problem before him.

He at once said "*Get rid of him and get another. You will have no peace till you do and the others seem to suit you.*" So out he had to go and I had to start again. Not easy with no knowledge of the language. Both Madras boys talked English so I had to use one of them as interpreter on every occasion.

There was no scarcity of servants and as soon as the word went forth several chits were brought me and I had to make my choice with my very limited experience not only of Indian servants but of kitchen and house work generally.

We had always had excellent highly trained maids who just did the work and I had never ordered a dinner in my life as we were not allowed to go down to the kitchen except on wet days as a great treat to make scones and oatcakes. When in Scotland I had been warned that I must have a "Go-Down" or store cupboard and keep the key, give out the lamp oil daily or it would all vanish and spoon out flour, sugar, tea etc. according to requirement.

The cook or *bobachee* as he is called was given so much money on account and had to render his account daily after his visit to the bazaar when he brought me his menu or suggestions for the meals. This performance took place after breakfast which we had on return from our morning ride and took up quite a lot of time. The bearer ladled out the oil for all the lamps at the same time.

I also made a round of the compound and saw the servants' houses were clean also my cooking pots and pans displayed shining in the sun by the cook's boy who grinned from ear to ear when I said "*Utcha*". I also paid a visit to the stables and gave the ponies sugar cane and when that was all done it was time to change into another fresh frock for the benefit of the callers.

India had several excellent customs. One was it was permissible and gave no offence to say "*Durwauza-bund*" which meant I was at home but did not wish to see any one, though it was awkward when an officious servant added "*Memsahib goozul- khana*" which meant I was in my bath.

Another excellent idea was the callers' box which was fixed to the gate post and conveyed the information that I was not at home so cards could be put in there and save a drive to the

house. All the men in station called or left cards unless their wives did so for them and new comers were expected to call on the residents unless they were brides, as in my case. Ladies were permitted to call in the afternoon to escape the heat of midday and as one was usually out oneself the box was often full of cards; calls which had to be returned within a week. Official calls had to be made at midday even for ladies. Being a bride I was able to sit at home or, rather, to busy myself getting the house into order and was glad of the occupation as I was alone from ten to one and again till tea-time and found it a dull business.

Some days there were several men callers, other days only a couple and no one sat very long as they had a round to do. It took me a long time to get them into their proper places and regiments and to remember them when we met but worst of all were the dinner parties which started almost before I could get my breath. Here again the bride was treated with much ceremony and to my embarrassment I was met at the door by the host who armed me into the drawing-room filled with strangers. He took me into dinner before every other lady and must have been horribly bored with me as I often was with him.

My first experience covered me with blushes as, sitting waiting for someone to make a move after dinner, hardly able to conceal my yawns, a lady sidled up to me and whispered "*You must make a move*". I jumped up as if I had been shot, hurriedly shook hands and bowed to the room and fled.

Hal was never the least use on these occasions as he was as ignorant as I was as he had not been married before. How thankful we were to go into the cool night air and drive back to bed and sleep.

These functions were of nightly occasion for me as it seemed as if everyone must see the bride and I longed for a quiet night at my own dinner table always with the haunting remembrance these civilities had to be returned.

I had been told of the awful dinners given by a retired General and his wife who had settled down in Jub and seemed to consider themselves almost royalty. I was told it would not be possible to refuse an invitation though as a rule some lady always fainted from the heat of the room so when my order to attend arrived I chose the very coolest dinner frock and hoped I would survive.

I had not seen my hosts before and the usual ceremony took place. I managed to sit through the meal and listen to my host's remarks with I hope sane replies but when after dinner the hostess desired me to sit beside her I was staggered when she said quite crossly "*I have never had a bride dine with me before who did not wear her wedding gown. I always expect that.*" Quite taken aback I hardly knew what to say but managed to gasp out that my dress has such a long train I could not have got into the *tumtum* with it on. The *tumtum* is a dog cart with high wheels by no means easy to get onto in any frock and the *syce* has to use a bamboo guard to keep your skirts off the wheel.

The good lady was not at all appeased and I was much hurt as I thought the dress I had on a very pretty one. I had refused to be presented to Queen Victoria as Hal suggested as I thought the expense of a dress quite unnecessary and I had no desire whatever to appear at court but as we were told we were going to Calcutta I had my wedding dress made with a train which would have been suitable for presentation to the Viceroy.

Much to the great disappointment of Hal, who had been looking forward eagerly to participate in the expedition to the relief of Chitral, it was decreed he was to remain in Jub as D A G to Gen Dalrymple. I had arranged to return to England, not altogether sorry, as I was so disappointed with the India I found not at all like my dreams. I was desperately lonely and had not discovered one woman I could cultivate as a friend.

All the ceremony of entertainments and the increasing heat bored me except the dances which unfortunately Hal did not care about and thought I ought not to require but dancing was just a thing I loved and had been used to a good deal of and I found the officers easier to get on with than the ladies.

I disliked club life which was general and where all the gossip emanated which did not interest me in the least as I knew none of the persons alluded to. So I never rested till we bought ponies which would make us independent of everyone and give me the joy which with dancing meant more to me than anything else. Thus I became the owner of my beautiful Kathiawar polo pony (Jim) which we bought from Gen D, a very impulsive impetuous steed, 13 3, a dark chestnut with pricked ears and perfect paces when he could be induced to go steadily and not at a half canter. Hal had his charger and as Jim stolidly refused to go in harness we had to buy a hack for the *tumtum*.

As a rule one picked out from the Pioneer advertisements which were many and numerous what one wanted but Hal, fancied trying ponies brought round by dealers as thus one could see them and not buy in the dark. But it is a marvel to me, looking back on our experiments, how we were not killed as the brutes were often only half-broken for saddle and not at all for harness.

Hal had an idea he could break them with which I did not agree as he lost his temper easily and had rather heavy hands. If he got on to Jim there was always trouble as he much disliked being joggled and Jim much disliked being checked.

We could not afford high prices but eventually found a steady trotter who neither shied at every scrap of paper or tried to turn us over every culvert and would stand still to allow me to clamber into the high seat without ruining every dress I had on.

Each horse required his own groom and "grass-cutter" who goes afar in the early morning to cut and bring in the daily ration and then help the groom to put a grand polish on his coat with much arm exercise. We were always out before 7 am, often much earlier if Hal had inspection or manoeuvre work I could attend and we often rode again in the evening exploring the villages and country when office work was over.

The office was left in a very disordered condition by the lucky staff officer who went to Chitral and Gen D was a very exigent disciplinarian who Hal often said would not help him in any way which was the best training he could have, he admitted later.

The Gen was very kind to me. He had no wife there and used to send me baskets of Lychee which I was very fond of as he had a beautiful garden with well-kept lawns and much fruit. Flowers grew in profusion everywhere as long as they got plenty of water which was thrown on them from a *mussuck* (leather water-bag) by the *bheesty* and the *mallee* began to produce quantities for the house which very often did not come out of my garden. If we did not ride

we played golf and sometimes tennis though this meant getting up a four at the club where I used to go for my books.

III

As the heat increased and the house had to be shut up with *Cuscuss tatties* (grass screens) at all the French windows, on which water was poured with the idea of keeping the rooms cool, I found the days very long and could not see any point of lying down as most did, from soon after lunch to tea time under a *punkah* (swinging fan). It only made me hotter so to amuse myself I bought an oil cooker and tried to make sweets and cakes or used my machine or played the piano.

The wife of a forest officer, hearing me say my cakes were not a success, offered to give me a lesson and I spent two hours one hot morning with her while she expounded the art of preventing the fruit dropping to the bottom of the cake only to find when hers was baked that is where the fruits landed.

The native oven called *tawa* is a large iron box round with a lid on which charcoal is placed as well as underneath and in this all the baking and roasting was done; the cook's boy fanning the embers to the right heat, an art I never could understand.

Sometimes at breakfast we had an *anghiti* brought into the veranda and struggled to make an omelette without success. The cook I had was not very efficient and my ignorance was not much help.

I ordered sheep's-head broth one day which, as usual, the cook said "*brut ucha*" to and when a dreadful smelling plate, full of black water, was placed before us Hal demanded the presence of the lord of the kitchen with the pan the soup was made in. Peering into its black depths we were terrified to find a sheep's-head with the wool on bobbing up and down. After all, the man had done what he was told, bought a sheep's-head but like all natives would not own he did not know what to do with it.

Whenever possible, to get a few days leave, we rode out and spent some nights in the country or sent the horses out and drove out. On one such occasion, with the bullock cart at the door waiting to be packed with tents and baggage, the *ayah* was shouted for and no response. It was discovered she was enjoying a *goozul* (bath) in my bathroom. This was the last straw She had become very troublesome and went so far as to say, when she had fever on one occasion, that her late *Sahib*, my uncle, had carried out tea to her in her "go-down". He may have done so but no one would expect Hal to do so and he now said I must get rid of her.

As soon as I got back from our short holiday I demanded an *ayah* and my dear Nursoo applied for the job. Such a relief after the grim old woman who was always grumbling and telling me what I ought and ought not to do. Quite a young woman though she had three daughters, children from 8 to 12. Small, spotlessly clean, bright, cheery, smiling, active and thoroughly well trained; she made all the difference to my life.

Her husband, a cook in a big way, had looked at another woman and though he suggested she should return to him and he would help her to bring up the girls she had no use for him and

preferred to make her own way and take on the heavy responsibility of marrying off three daughters, a very expensive business. She also brought her old mother to look after the children and a tiresome brother, a scamp we tried to employ but he was always in trouble and no use to poor Nursoo.

She was *Telugu*, the same caste as Tobi and Pinto the bearer and her elder girl married the latter eventually making a solid family party.

Nursoo spoke English very well and was most intelligent and efficient and was a good influence in the household so I can't understand those who declared an *ayah* always made trouble and now no one, I hear, keeps one. I would not have been without mine for anything and she had great pluck as returning from a ride one day I found great excitement.

Nursoo had found one of the *punkah coolies* in my room having stolen my cash-box from a drawer. She caught and held him while shouting for the *chokidar* who, of course, was not to be found but some of the boys came to the rescue and the man was punished.

I never could see the object of the *chokidar* myself. He was very disturbing as he roamed round the house at night coughing loudly, either to reassure himself or us.

He was of the thieving caste and the idea was, that as long as one was employed, our possessions would be safe.

He had to be given a blanket, lantern and stick so after his failure to appear I dispensed with him and did not have another and never suffered in any way. With doors and windows all open to obtain as much air as possible it was wonderful how few thefts took place.

Before I could start to return the hospitality we had received, the hot weather was up on us and most of the ladies went off to the hills. Their husbands took leave as they could get it and joined them but Gen D did not move so Hal was kept as busy as ever. He did send me away to a small hill station but I very soon returned as I much preferred being with him to the necessary gay round expected in a hill station

We had bought a cow and chickens and were able to make our own butter which means a great deal when bazaar butter is often made from buffalo milk, a nasty white colour and taste, and with an ice box, could keep it fresh. Meat was killed and eaten the same day but chickens and game were very tough and tasteless and vegetables scarce so my culinary efforts were not exciting.

I was exceedingly annoyed when Tobi informed me one day the cow had dried up and wanted the bull. I told him not to talk nonsense but to see that the *gualor* (milkman) was not stealing the milk. I don't know what he thought of me but Hal seemed to think it a great joke which only added to my indignation. No cow would give her milk unless she was able to lick the head of her calf and if the calf died the poor thing was stuffed and stuck up in front of its mother who seemed quite satisfied. If you went into camp, all this paraphernalia had to go too.

I had not met a single woman I could make a friend of. Living in the regimental lines I was fair game for the ladies of the Regt who used to send and borrow whatever they were short of. One woman told me she having a dinner set made just like mine and when I asked her where

she had seen it she told me when she asked for some flour it was sent on one of the dinner plates. As the bazaar was only a few yards further than our bungalow I got rather tired of this nuisance as it meant having to unlock the “go-down” door to obtain what was required.

My first year was a misery with this locking-up business and accounts and every now and then would find a chit on my table from Hal to say I owed him a few rupees as he had paid something on my side of the account book. Later on I gave up both and took the advice of an old friend who had been in India who told me to pay everything by cheque and not worry about farthings.

I don't believe my oil, tea, sugar etc. went any more quickly after I gave up that key but it was the *dustoor* (custom) to distrust your servants as it was their custom to take *bucksheesh* from every one they could.

I never lost anything in India except once, a ring which I missed much to Nursoo's indignation as she was very sensitive about her scrupulous honesty and imagined she might be blamed but after a long search and no sign of the ring Tobi called in a man who lined up all the servants and gazed into the palm of their hands and the ring was found under a mat in the house. I was told this man, in some fashion, watched the toss of the individual while looking at the hand and knows by the way they wriggle who is culprit who then hurriedly produces the ring or article missing.

I felt very limp as the heat grew worse and longed for the rains but still the calls and dinners; parties went on with gymkhanas as a variation and polo. All very hot joys. The evenings were often lovely and when free we would get a drive then to freshen us up before bed and the burning pillows and sheets.

A British Resident was established at Chitral with a military force and the regt returned to Jub. **Lord Elgin** was the Viceroy when we went out but he never saw my lovely white brocade train as we did not go to Calcutta till after the great Assam earthquake.

Hal gave me a monthly allowance which had to pay for all household expenses and servants wages. I think it was 700 rupees a month. He paid rent and stable expenses, not *syces'* wages, those were my share. Also all the uniforms were paid for by me. In the hot weather the servants wore white apart from the *cummerbunds* or belts and turban straps which were of the regt's colours. When servants went to the hills they had all to be fitted with warm uniforms and blankets; quite a costly business. The *dirzee* made them, the uniforms I mean, which were maroon with the regimental colours.

Every month I had 22 servants to pay who were lined up by one of the orderlies who had already placed the money in piles on my table which I had to hand out and put down in a book with any fines or advances of pay from the last time. It was a long performance as they often had excuses to make or demands for advances and I was glad when it was over.

Nursoo then got 14 rupees, the butler 16, bearer 14, cook 14, head *syce* 8, *dirzee* 12, *dhoby* 12, *malee* 8 and so on, the younger boys going down in proportion. *Punkah coolies* got 6. They worked in relays, often pulling the rope with their toes.

Before we left India these wages had trebled and must now be enormous. Nursoo, who always returned to me never got more than 25 rupees though often left a lady who was giving

her more to come back but when I went out again later the *ayah* I engaged got 40 and, though a very beautiful and useful woman, nothing like Nursoo.

They all had two hours during the day for their midday meal, taking in rotation, so that there should always be so many on duty.

IV

Hearing much commotion one, afternoon I went into the veranda to meet Hal hobbling into the house holding onto his side in much pain. He had come back earlier than usual so the horse sent for him had not reached the office and he took a *tonga*. A *tonga* is a low dogcart on two wheels drawn by one or two ponies. The driver sits in front and the fare behind with a board between. The pony had either shied or stopped suddenly at the door and Hal got a very nasty blow on his spine which crippled him for some days and to which I attribute the bad health he suffered from later.

He did not consult a doctor, but I applied hot fomentations to the enormous black bruise. Had I known what I know now I would have suggested a chiropractor or even a native masseuse.

I was not feeling at all well myself and put it down to the heat and confinement to the house which was very foreign to me but as nothing seemed to help me I consulted the regimental doctor, a very young man, who did not seem to have any ideas.

Hearing I had been stung by a wasp when putting my foot into a slipper he thought it might be that but not feeling the satisfaction I expected from him I wondered to whom I could turn. I did not know or like any woman I had met to speak to and was averse to asking them what I could do to avoid accepting dinner invitations as I always felt worse in the evening. I knew that one with the colour I had would never be considered ill.

I had noticed at church, in the pew of the Commissioner, a very sweet faced woman visitor and I decided to ask her to help me. The Chief Commissioner was the head of all the British residents and many looked on him with awe. I had done my duty call and was not attracted by his wife but this lady looked more approachable.

I was fortunate to find her in and alone. What she thought of me I do not know and did not care so desperate was I to speak to a woman. After explaining my symptoms and difficulty she smiled and said "*I think my dear you are going to have a baby. Aren't you glad?*"

Glad? I was intoxicated with delight Ever since I had to part with my brother when I was eight I had prayed God to give me a baby of my own and used to borrow the coachman's baby boy when at Woodslee (*the family house in Scotland*) who his trusting mother allowed me to take out whenever I asked for him.

I was so excited I could hardly listen to her advice and instructions till I heard her say I must stop riding. I explained I could not do that as it was it was my one joy after being shut up in the dark all day.

She was very firm however and made me promise not to ride again and to see the doctor which I thought unnecessary after his stupidity.

All he said after examining me was he could not hear the child's heart and seemed to think I was to blame. Nursoo was even more delighted than I was though she had never given me the least hint as she said "*Doctor Sahib no tell*".

Remembering the card thrust into my hands by Mrs W, I wrote to her and booked Lydia for a certain date and when Mrs W heard that Hal had to attend a course at Agra to finish his staff college training suggested I should go and stay with her as it would be easy for Hal to get to Muttra.

I was only too pleased to accept this most kind invitation. It was settled we would travel in October as it would be cooler by then. Mrs W thought this rather late and suggested September, which was not so convenient for Hal. The doctor said it was all nonsense about any month being risky as soldiers' wives travelled at any period so the pack-up began.

Everything had been hired except our own private possessions, silver, china, glass, kitchen utensils, curtains etc. We sent round a list of anything we wanted to sell including the matting and garden produce as much is grown in large pots.

I had a long round of P P C cards (*ppc- pour prendre congé*) to leave which took up many afternoons and helped me to relinquish my rides with less regret. I felt much better as soon as I knew what to expect and wrote home for a complete set of clothes which mother offered to provide. Our old butler, being a father himself, was most motherly in his attentions, greatly to my embarrassment.

He and the bearer were to go with us but the other servants were paid off while the ponies and *syces* would be looked after by one of the officers as we expected to be back soon after Xmas.

The journey was a long and exhausting one and I felt it a good deal having to lie with ice on my head as we banged along day and night but on arrival was told I was looking so well no one would imagine I had such expectations.

I had a nice suite of rooms and much enjoyed talking to a woman at last also we had a great deal of music, Mrs W playing my accompaniments as my piano had been sent up.

Lydia was a tower of strength though she had a task in trying to manage the three fat children who thrived on *dal bhat*. Capt. W promised I could ride any of his lovely ponies as soon as I was able to do so and altogether it was a very cheery happy house to stay in.

Hal went to Agra where his cousin W L was Resident so he was able to stay with him. He was to come for Xmas and it was then I expected to present him with a son or daughter. I prayed for the former but November 11th I woke feeling strange and told Nursoo to fetch Lydia. She sent for the doctor who refused to examine me as he said a first confinement was bound to be a long business.

The result was H (*her first son, Humphrey*) fell on the floor as I was about to get up and return to the bed Lydia was arranging. Both she and the doctor lost their heads and it was Nursoo who picked up the poor victim of my ignorance and the doctor's obstinacy as Lydia had begged him to examine me.

I was more angry than hurt; terrified anything should harm the longed-for baby who only weighed 2 1/2 pounds. I was not ready for him as he arrived six weeks too soon in spite of all the Jub doctor had said and no one knew what to do with him. I had no idea he was anything

unusual in the baby line but as he did not put on weight and the feeding was difficult Hal took me over to Agra to consult the great doctor, **Sir W Wilcocks**.

We stayed at the Residency with W L which I much enjoyed. He was a delightful host but when the doctor suggested a *daye* (native foster mother) I absolutely refused the idea and we went back as we came as Sir W said he had no other solution.

Lydia and Nursoo kept him alive till Hal had orders to go to Jhansi at the end of January. I was very sorry to leave Muttra, the birthplace of Krishna, which Nursoo kept impressing on me was a very lucky birthplace and we had a trying journey, the infant being ill when ever fed and very weak when we arrived.

Hal wired for the doctor to meet us, a Maltese, who saved his life by his great attention and kindness but he insisted on the *daye* who was wired for and arrived with the usual relation to take away her own child after the doctor had vetted her. To my amusement and relief the mother departed with her baby leaving us the aunt who, of course, was as useless as myself. As fate seemed to side with me the only thing was to get a cow and give pure cow's milk, pasteurised in small quantities, which Nursoo took complete charge of; seeing the cow lent by one of the orderlies milked and increasing the quantity by degrees.

This answered perfectly and when Hal was ordered to Assam in September 1896 I had a normal baby though a relation who met us at Allahabad thought he looked very delicate I heard later.

I was very pleased to find we were not to return to Jub where I had really been very unhappy and never wished to see again but this journey was a very long one. We had to go to Calcutta first, then by steamer up the Ganges to Gauhatti, then by *tonga* through the Kasia hills to Shillong, a perfectly lovely hill station.

Assam is situated between Tibet and Burma and the Cossya are a mixture of both, quite different to any natives I had met.

My bungalow delighted me as it was built in English fashion with real windows, not French doors and large verandas opening out of the main rooms.

Well-built so no sound was heard from room to room. A heavy tin roof and no unpleasing animals wandering overhead. The garden was lovely, filled with every sort of English flower as well as orchids hanging from the trees. Heliotrope hedges, green lawns, roses in profusion while honeysuckle climbed over the veranda with masses of geranium and bushes of Pelargonium. It was well worth the long journey to arrive in the first breath of cold weather I had felt since leaving England.

The country was hilly and interesting with good roads for driving as well as riding. A well-run club with a lake full of fish, tennis and a golf course.

Our **General was Denning** and Hal was A D C with an office not far from the house. Gurkha troops and artillery made up the brigade.

Our ponies had come from Jub and a new staff had to be engaged of Cossya servants. Tobi soon settled that and we were saved further trouble as the bungalow was furnished.

The Cossya are good servants but had some unpleasing customs. One, the constant chewing of *pawn* (betel), a red juice which stained their mouths and, when discharged also stained the ground. The present lip-sticked mouths often remind me of those servants.

In any other part of India where *pawn* is chewed, it is considered a stimulant and *coolies* who have not time to get a meal can carry on all day if they have *pawn*. It is looked on as impertinence to chew in front of a *Sahib*. Not so here as they never had the nasty stuff out of their mouths but I insisted we were spared at meals.

Another unpleasing feature was the worship of the snake and every house had its pet snake concealed in the roof, not of our house but in the kitchen (*the kitchen was always separate from the house*). I always entered with an apprehensive eye round in case the Lord snake had descended for the milk put down for it in a saucer.

Every year these brutes had to be propitiated with human blood and an unfortunate victim was found not far from our house with his ears and some other part of his body cut off for this celebration.

The usual entertaining went on and I was now able to enjoy it. I also did much exploring of the various villages outside the station as Hal was not so hard worked and we could ride at any hour. The General kindly lent me a dogcart as we did not bring up the one we had. Hal got some shooting and there was plenty of game to be had. We also bought a couple of cocker spaniels. H flourished and grew fat and was not in any way behind babies of his own age.

Hal often had to go on tour with the General down to Cachar, the tea plantations and once to Manipur and I got a friend to stay with me. I used to go and see a young officer who was very ill in a bungalow close by and was interested in the wife of a Gunner who lived even nearer whose nurse used to come in to tea some times and told me how this young girl, after the birth of her baby, took an intense dislike to her husband and refused to see him or anyone but her mother who had come to her.

Early in June I was alone, Hal on tour, and was roused by tremendous noises under my bed as if rocks were falling. I thought I was dreaming but sat up and still the noises continued. The dogs in my room started to bark furiously and rushed to the door jumping up and throwing themselves against it. I knew there was an orderly somewhere who had orders to sleep in the house and expected Nursoo to come rushing in but, as no one took any notice, I returned to bed and the noises died down.

I asked several people if they had heard anything strange and they said I must have dreamed it. I knew I had not but could not account for it. Hal returned and laughed when I told him and was soon engrossed telling me of his tour and who he had met etc.

On June 12th we went for a ride, returned for tea, and when that was finished, I ordered the trap and still in my riding habit went off to see the sick boy. I sat with him for a bit then drove round to make a call when quite suddenly the pony started to gallop madly, the trap swayed from side to side and, as I did my best to pull him in, I saw Hal's office collapse like a pack of cards.

It did not dawn on me that this was an earthquake as my one idea was to save the trap from destruction. The *syce* shouted to me from behind to jump but how he expected me to do so I can't imagine. He managed to fall off and leapt to the head of the pony who now was shaking from head to foot and I found, when I did get off, I could hardly stand. The earth was rocking like a ship at sea and a terrific noise was going on underground like galloping artillery. One on each side of the terrified pony we clung and I noticed a man playing golf hurriedly getting into his coat taking no notice of me.

The noise and heaving abated and the rains broke with a tremendous rush of water which soaked us. Dazed and stunned I looked round and saw other bungalows on the ground and then grasped it was an earthquake. Turning the pony we walked beside him towards our house but met Hal coming to meet me who told me the house was a mass of ruins. He had been in the veranda had only just time to get out or would have been killed.

Where was the child with two *ayahs*? He had gone for his ride as usual but in what direction? Still walking towards the house we met him with Nursoo. The second *ayah* and small *syce* had run off with the tiny pony he rode. Nursoo alarmed but courageous as usual had seen the *gualor* running with the can of milk in his hand and took it from him. Now where to go for shelter? No use going up to the ruined house. We went down to the cricket-ground where already many refugees had established themselves and we heard from them every house but one had fallen and all were houseless.

No room for us in the cricket pavilion so Hal took us to the native bazaar; a long low collection of huts merely roofed but no sides and on the damp earth we sat down to collect our thoughts.

The shakes went on at intervals also the horrible noise. Suddenly I remembered my friend the wife of the D C who was expecting a baby. I felt I must get to her somehow though it was quite a long walk to the other end of the station. Hal also hurried off to see what he could do and get orders.

Leaving Nursoo calmly seated on the ground with the child in her lap I hurried in pouring rain while the huge pine trees which lined the road seemed as if they must fall at every shock. Passing groups of white-faced men and women I, for the first time, felt fear, as the men looked afraid.

One lady seeing me pass her tumbledown bungalow suggested I should take her parasol which seemed to me useless as I was soaked through anyway. However, she persisted so on I went to find Mrs A wonderfully composed sheltering under an outhouse with the youngest boy on her lap. He had been asleep and saved by the bearer.

Natives tore past me in terror. They just ran and ran not knowing where they were going and many were buried under the ruin of their huts. Some dug out days later seemed little the worse. I never saw the *ayah* or *syce* again.

I got back safely and sat down on what was now almost a quagmire. The question of food was exercising the men and Gurkhas were digging into the ruined bazaar shops to get out what stores they could find. A tin of lump sugar was our share and, most fortunate of all was the milk Nursoo had saved for the child, who slept peacefully through the night.

There was nothing to screen us from the gaze of all who took refuge near us and soon every stall was filled with women and children. In the stall next to me, the lady who was bedridden after the birth of her baby had been brought and, seeing my child, she asked for hers for the first time. When the first shock occurred she had jumped out of bed, which she had not left for three months or more and started running in her nightgown. Some officer had put his coat round her and they managed to bring her to shelter.

The rain pelted down as it can in monsoon and after three nights of it Hal managed to get a 40 pound tent up and all four of us crept in, thankful for its cover.

Food was gradually appearing and our cook returned with a chicken; I was glad it was not a snake. The Madrassi boys had stood by us but were helpless to feed us till more supplies had been unearthed. The *gualor* managed to get hold of the cow and milk was most welcome.

All this time the shocks continued in varied intensity and I longed to get off my riding boots which, having been wet to start with had made my feet swell and had to be cut off. I suggested returning to the house to try and get clothes but Hal said it was useless, everything was buried. However, it was possible to get out boxes of clothing intact and the comfort of a change was invigorating. Poor little H was red as a lobster when undressed but did not suffer in any other way.

Relays of Gurkhas were put on all the house and produced the most extraordinary collection of strange looking garments and furniture, twisted and broken. The silver-chest was intact but any silver in it was practically useless although I was able to get a few pieces mended later.

Most wonderful of all, my rings were all found. I never wore them out riding and left them on my dressing table as usual. The *syces* had got the ponies, so they were alright and the precious cart which I was driving.

Only I European was killed, a man who was in bed, but hundreds of natives and the only bungalow which stood up was the oldest in the station. The Club was in ruins, the lake had disappeared and the Residency was badly damaged though not uninhabitable.

Grass huts were quickly erected and most comfortable they seemed when we were able to get a couple and a few sticks of broken furniture.

The servants settled down and the cook with his kitchen of stones turned out excellent meals.

V

The rains continued with the usual fine intervals which enabled some exercise but all riding and driving was put a stop to by the broken roads in many of which large crevasses had opened. It was almost impossible to get down to Gauhatti except by runners who went through the hills and men working below were anxious about wives and families.

The centre of the quake was said to be Shillong but Calcutta was making a great fuss about their shocks and casualties.

These shocks were felt far apart in many directions. Food was being brought up by carrier and by degrees we got more to eat. But all entertaining was stopped just as I had begun to enjoy myself and get to know several people I liked much. Once the bride taint had been got rid of and I left Jub the black load of depression had been lifted and India began to assume more of my ideas of it.

Shillong was a perfectly glorious station till we were shaken to bits and I thoroughly enjoyed the entertaining and sports. Our two Madrassi boys had proved their worth and been like Nursoo, invaluable. Never once thinking of themselves or the families they had left so far away.

The *dhoby* who turned up brought various garments he had managed to dig out of the ruins which, when washed, were most serviceable. I walked round to the house one day. What a sight - a heap of tin sheets and flung round twisted beds, chairs, sofas, wardrobes all useless even for fire wood as they were soaked.

I did regret that house. I never had such another though some were larger. We lost all our wedding presents and Hal his excellent collection of photographs which could never be replaced. Gradually we heard more about our friends' experiences. The General's wife who was in bed with broken arm had just been able to get outside in time. The poor boy I had been to see was terrified and his plucky little nurse, a small woman, had to drag him to the window where a servant managed to extricate him while she was held down by her dress which a wardrobe fell on the end of but she also got out.

The one man who was killed could not be buried for several days as the rains constantly filled up the grave.

The Commissioner's wife caused much annoyance to the A D C's by insisting they dig out her blouses and when I heard she had bread which we had not seen I walked off to call on her and demand some for the children. The Residency had a few semi-habitable rooms and she received me in one where she was inspecting these blouses, all in a filthy condition. Noticing a basket of bread in a corner I asked for a couple of loaves which she unwillingly allowed me to take.

Every day there were fresh rumours about the condition of the shocks which did not decrease and we were warned by the natives that the earth was going to open and swallow us all. They held a convention of prayer to their Gods on the cricket ground during a dry

moment all rising and falling together with hands raised to the skies. It made one feel anything might happen.

Japanese experts were invited to come and give their opinion and when they declared it was caused by a slip in the earth's surface I felt I had not been so far wrong when I described the sounds I heard as of falling rocks.

After that we organised amusements in the shape of cooking experiments offering prizes for the best cakes, scones, etc. and started a writing club run by an elderly spinster who managed to make a nice little income out of sending accounts to the C & M Gazette. The effects of the earthquake were so widespread and Shillong was the centre of it.

It was now October, dry and bright with all the autumn tints and clear deep blue skies. The nights of brilliant moon which often had a marvellous circle of three or four very coloured rings round it which the natives looked on as a bad omen but we were told it was the effect of electricity in the air.

Hal was to be transferred as soon as possible and my father had written offering to pay our fares home which meant a great help after heavy losses. The Government had refused to assist in any way saying it was an Act of God which we were well aware of but God had not sent us to India.

It was decided I should go with the child and Nursoo though I was not now so anxious to leave India as I had been. I had found friends and was very sorry to leave Mrs S H C who had, with her handsome son, been so kind to me and given me excellent advice on the "Importance of being Earnest" and taking the etiquette of India, which always seemed to me so ridiculous, seriously. The General's wife had also insisted on my doing my calls punctiliously, showing no favouritism, being courteous and pleasant to all alike which to me who took great dislikes and fancies was not so easy but it was excellent training.

She made a sketch of our wrecked bungalow and gave it to me, a never failing memento of our narrow escape with our lives as well of the beautiful hill station in which India had first appealed to me.

The pack up this time was a very light one, so much we had possessed being buried and, as we were rattled down the hill in *tongas*, I was as sorry to leave as I had been glad to leave Jub.

Guhatti had been very badly knocked about and part of the railway line damaged so we started in an engineers' trolley which, pushed by *coolies*, conveyed us to the waiting train. Then a delightful journey by steamer to Calcutta. He early showed his socialist tendencies by describing a very dirty old English man who used to come on deck as "*mine friend*".

We stayed in Calcutta with relations of mine who amused us much by their accounts of the terror they suffered from the shocks which, though intense, were nothing like ours as their house had only one small crack in it. Calcutta did not appeal to me as Bombay did which would be looked on as heresy by the rich merchants who made fortunes there. Their grand houses were jumbled up with native hovels and the evening drive round the Maidan I found extremely uninteresting, gazing upon all the beauty and fashion and even in October it was hot and sticky with mosquito nets still over the beds.

We had paid off the Cossya servants and only had the two Madrassi boys and Nursoo with us, a host in themselves. It is a boon in India that every visitor brings their own staff or when dining out takes their own table servant who stands behind his master's chair and attends directly to him.

I felt much having to leave Hal behind he had been so bitterly disappointed at not being allowed to go to Chitral that no staff job made up for what he missed and now he had to start again in a new place, Agra, with heavy losses to be made up.

We went by second class, P & O, and I was lucky to have a cabin to myself with the child. I found a cousin of Hal's on the 1st class deck who had just lost his wife, according to him a perfect angel and he used to come over to descant on her perfection with tears in his eyes often bringing me some luxury from the 1st Class. I was amused to hear later he married shortly after arrival in Ireland.

It was only when I found myself with my mother again I discovered what a strain I had been through and how, if a table shade fluttered, I was out of the door like a shot. Our Scots family doctor recommended smoking as a sedative to nerves. I was disgusted but to please him tried for a week to follow his instructions but got no benefit from the modern day soother.

He also overhauled H who was considered a miracle of health after such a hectic entry into this world of woe and after experiences but he hurled away the many garments I had been told were necessary and pooh-poohed the idea that he must wear a penny wrapped in flannel on his tummy for fear he should strain himself crying. He soon began to acquire a bright colour and, with his golden hair, was a very pretty child.

I was afraid Nursoo would suffer from cold so gave her cashmere saris, stockings, shoes which she had never worn before and a heavy shawl but she seemed to feel the change of climate less than I did and was delighted with the novelty of everything especially the bathroom which she said was very " 'andy Memsahib' ". She slept on the floor beside the child's cot and took him out in his pram, very soon finding her way and crossing the roads without fear. She became such a specialty that nurses used to beg for the honour of her acquaintance and I would see one or two waiting outside the front door till she appeared.

On one occasion having taken H to tea with friends I sent Nursoo home alone. A heavy fog came down and I was horrified to find she had not arrived. I sent in all directions and was about to go for the police when she turned up escorted by some kind soul who had found her wandering in the wrong direction.

Being *Telugu* she was able to eat anything so was no trouble in that way and was a great favourite in the kitchen.

When I began to recover my equilibrium I went off on a succession of visits leaving the child at Gloucester Terrace and soon fell again into all my old routine of life as before marriage.

We went up to Ilkley in Yorkshire for the summer which was said to be very bracing and stayed in an hotel there where I met again a woman I had liked some years before when I came out at a dance at Coopers Hill. She was older than I and not married then but now she was the wife of **Col P** and had small girl about the same age as H.

On return to London I had again to start buying and packing as I had much to replace in the way of linen, china, glass etc.

This time I went out City Line which I liked much better than P&O. They were smaller boats with less pomposity about the passengers and excellent food. I sat next the Captain which was all very well except when he forgot his teeth which were brought to him on a salver by his cabin steward.

I met an officer who started by accusing me of being of the family of a man who had made love to his wife but, on closer inquiry, I found he had mistaken the H in my name for K and after that we made great friends and he came to stay with us. He belonged to a Gurkha regiment and knew curiously little of other parts of India other than Abbotabad.

I had a pretty evening coat which was then the fashion worn over a silk skirt. It was a mixture of lace and ribbon and whenever I wore it a queer old man, who I never saw at any other time, used to appear and whisper "*You are the queen of the Night*". I never could discover who he was or where he lived.

Hal met us at Bombay and told me we were to go to Bareilly but first we had to go to Agra to pick up kit ponies etc. He had purchased for H a sweet little goat carriage drawn by a very handsome white goat and a smart young *syce* was in charge. I was delighted to see my beautiful Jim looking so glossy and well-groomed, his ears pricked and ready to prance at the least encouragement.

To be able to ride again was intense joy and I was very pleased with my new habit and the smart riding *topee* I got at Heaths which was so light and unlike the hideous head coverings most people wore. I found a green gauze veil a great comfort when riding in blazing sun as I never could take to glasses which ruined all I looked at.

My wedding present from the Macs had been a Champion and Wilton saddle and this had escaped destruction and was soon on Jim's back and we were able to have wonderful rides exploring all the sights of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri. The Taj from all angles and at all hours of day and night – impossible to say when most beautiful. Hal had taken several days leave in order to show me as much as possible and he also got a little shooting.

This time a bungalow was ready for me and I count my Indian life really began in Bareilly as it had been a succession of misfortunes up to then and I was anxious to start with a new view of life in the East.

Bareilly was considered one of the picked stations as regards climate. Not as hot as Jubbulpore and with a convenient hill station Ranikhet, to which the General and staff moved at the beginning of the hot weather so I had only to arrange myself for four months with the prospect of another pack-up. A new General was expected and the staff officer was Major S J Burton, whose wife was to become a close friend.

Servants rolled up to be engaged and I soon had picked out what I thought would suit us and started on the usual round of calls.

The Cantonment Magistrate was a very dear man called **General Thornhill** who kept us all in great order as regards cleanliness of our compounds, riding round to inspect them himself and sending a warning if he found any litter or paper about. He used to give delightful children's parties, sending to each small guest a personal invitation in an envelope with an amusing painted picture of an elephant on it to explain there would be a *hatty* (elephant) to ride on. For years after I used to hear from him with the same device or something of that sort.

He was most particular as to the behaviour of the natives and when I drove up to see one in a *ticca garry* (hired carriage) he came out to receive me and had the driver off his seat before he spoke to me because the man had his *puggry* (scarf wound round a hat) dangling behind which was considered an impertinence

He was greatly respected and loved by the natives because he understood their customs and manners and stood no nonsense from them but was as just and kind to them as to everyone else.

The cold weather was very pleasant, the climate just perfect, the nights glorious as we drove to dinners, dances and theatricals and the fear of shocks entirely ceased to worry me.

The Bungalow was not a large one but we had a spare room and a Shillong friend came to stay with us. She had married after leaving Assam, a Gurkha officer, who had to attend a course at Ranikhet so we offered them rooms in the bungalow we had booked up there which happened to be a large one.

The office work was not as heavy as in Jub so Hal had more time to give me and we played golf, tennis and got in a few days shooting which I enjoyed most of all. The society was very congenial and very varied and we had the A&S Highlanders who also moved to Ranikhet.

My piano had had to be discarded before we went to Assam but I was able to hire and we had much music and concerts in which I took my share.

Hearing from my sister-in-law, who lived in Cachar that her small boy, the same age as H, was ill after having fallen into a bath of boiling water I offered to take him to Ranikhet and give him a complete change. He arrived, poor mite, after the long journey, with two very dirty servants, an ayah and bearer who I got rid of at once and handed him over to Nursoo engaging a second ayah to assist her. I explained that he was delicate and should not be forced to eat as his mother said she could not make him eat.

The morning after his arrival Nursoo reported to me he had eaten a larger breakfast than H which I put down to the companionship of another child and he never looked back but his nerves were in a pitiful condition and he used to have terrible screaming fits which it was difficult for me to know how to cope with. He was not shy as H was and used to dance with excitement when there was a party on prospect which H went to reluctantly.