

A THRILLING JOURNEY TO KASHMIR

By M. F. GUYTON.

ON the night of August 29th, we four started out with great expectations for a holiday in Kashmir. This holiday had been long talked of and much planned for. We had planned to reach our destination, Pahlgám, on September 1st. The first part of the journey was done by train as far as Jammu, which we reached soon after three on the afternoon of August 30th. It was good to have a night's rest and a beautiful hot bath after the dirty train journey. One of our number had a friend living in Jammu who called and took us for a drive in a car and so we were able to see something of the place: the Raja's palaces, high school and hospital, though only from the outside. We also had a foretaste of the beauties we were to see on our drive the next day, by going a little way on the road. We had arranged for a motor lorry to take us and our luggage straight through to Pahlgám, stopping for one night on the way at a Dak Bungalow, and asked that an early start might be made the next morning, so that we might get as far as possible the first day. We were greatly looking forward to the journey of 206 miles in front of us, all amongst the hills. We were ready soon after 6 A.M. the next day, but various things connected with the lorry delayed us and we did not really make a start till 8 A.M. As we drove along the beautiful valley, gradually climbing higher, with the river Tawi flowing by the side of us nearly all the way, and frequent waterfalls down the hill-side, we greatly rejoiced. The sight of so much water and fresh green colour was delightfully refreshing after the parched sandy plains. All went well with our journey, (except for a little rain, and even that we took pleasure in as our supply on the plains had been so scarce,) until we had travelled about sixty miles, and then, when trying to avoid another lorry, the back wheel of ours slipped into a ditch, and, owing to the softness of the road, it seemed almost impossible to get it out again. Three Indian gentlemen coming that way looked at the lorry, and calmly saying "it will never come out of that" passed on their way. But fortunately other more helpful men came, and by great perseverance, filling and building up with stones and wooden planks, after three quarters of an hour we were able to go on our way once more rejoicing.

About 6 P.M. there was a discussion as to where we should stay for the night. The motor men wished us to stay there at Rámban, saying it was seventeen miles on to the next dak bungalow, and it would be dark before we reached it. We were anxious to get at least half way on our journey, and had only travelled about eighty-five out of the 206 miles, so we pleaded to be taken another stage. They agreed but grumblingly. About 6-45 P.M. it began to get dark, and we asked them why they did

not turn on the lights. To our dismay we were told the lights were out of order! If only they had told us when discussing the point we should have been quite willing to stay at Rámaban, even at the risk of spending another day on the journey. We were travelling along a twisting hill road with a precipice on one side and a steep hill on the other; there was no room to turn round, we could only go on and hope for the best! The last five or six miles were done in the dark, and our hearts were in our mouths for that half hour. However we arrived safely and we breathed freely once again. The Rest House at Rámsu, our stopping place, was down in a valley, quite near a stream which was then very noisy, but we had no thought of its being out of the ordinary. We soon had a fire burning and supper and went quickly to bed and rest. We rose early, at 4-30, the next morning, hoping to make an early start. On going to call the driver at 6 A.M. we found it had been raining heavily all night and was still raining. When asked if he were ready, the driver said he was afraid that owing to the rain the road ahead would be either broken away, or blocked by landslips; that if we ordered him he would take us, but he thought it safer to wait for news of the road. We decided to wait, and soon we heard the road was blocked.

In an hour or so we began to realize that the stream running near by was becoming a raging torrent, trees were being uprooted and swept along in dozens. We watched them, fascinated, for a time, and gradually the bank between the stream and the Rest House was being eaten away. We began to wonder if the Rest House was safe, and went up on to the road above, where the garage was in which the lorry and the rest of our luggage had been kept for the night, so that we might judge as to the need for moving. While we were talking together some men of the village came running to tell us that we must not stay in the road as we were in danger of having some of the hillside fall on us as it had fallen on the road just behind us, but that the house was as safe as anywhere. We went back for a time, but watched the stream anxiously. It was rising and gaining in strength rapidly. After a little while part of the wall in front of the caretaker's house fell down, and was swept away, gradually the trees the other side of the wall 6 or 8 ft. from the verandah of the Rest House were mown down, then a piece of the wall slid down. Just at that moment a man came hurriedly to us, and said "Run! Miss Sahib! it is very dangerous! So we picked up what little things we could carry and ran out at the back of the house, along the road a little way, over a bridge which crossed another stream, and took shelter in an Indian gentleman's house. We found out afterwards that he was the contractor for roads in that district. Our driver then got the lorry out of the garage and brought that and our luggage away. In a little while he came to tell us he had found a room for us in the village and we followed him. Rain had been

pouring down all the time and was still pouring. We started out again with our possessions in both hands and hurried along. It was only about ten minutes walk, but it seemed much longer. We were told to hurry as it was dangerous. The road had wide cracks in many places, and parts of the hillside were falling; we did not know from one minute to another whether danger would meet us through the earth falling away from under us, or through boulders rolling on to us from above. In many places water was running swiftly down the hillside across our path and we were often ankle deep in water. We arrived safely and found a room had been procured for us over some shops in the bazaar. It was a wooden room fortunately provided with the windows all along the front. There were two charpais and all our luggage was piled up in one corner. We were all wet through and cold, so as soon as possible we changed and tried to get used to our new surroundings. We were still in sight and sound of the stream (or rather it had become a river) and we could see the Rest House we had left. The room we were in shook all the time with the vibrations from the now roaring river. We were told it was quite safe, but it was difficult to believe. Very soon we heard that the bridge we had crossed over to get to the village had been washed away, then we saw part of the Rest House go, then the motor garage fell like a pack of cards, then the rest of the Rest House. We could not rest, but watched, fascinated, the destruction going on. Trees just slid down the side of the hill the other side of the river, sometimes six at a time, and they were swirled out of sight in a moment. When night came it seemed as if the water were going down, and to our joy it had stopped raining. Fortunately the moon was full so that we could still watch carefully. We decided to sleep in our clothes in case there was need for a sudden flight, for the house was still shaking. We did not have much rest that night, partly because of anxiety, partly because the beds were too narrow for two on each, and partly because of the presence of undesirable companions. The next day was a beautiful bright sunny day, and we went out to view our surroundings. The water had subsided considerably and tree trunks were visible in large quantities along the banks.

We enquired as to the possibilities of going forward, and were told that the road was badly broken and blocked ahead of us as well as behind another bridge had been washed away, and that it might be a month before the lorry could go forward; the only possibility was to walk on by stages and have our luggage carried by coolies as soon as the road was fit for walking. The next day we heard that the overseer of the district would be going along our road and would be willing to take us and help us over the difficult places, the day after; so three days after the flood we started off to walk ten miles on to Banihál. Only enough coolies for half our luggage could be obtained at the last moment, so we left our boxes and

started off, glad to leave Rámsu ! In many places we had very narrow and rough paths to walk on, but the worst was when we had to cross a swirling stream which was spanned by two tree trunks with stones balanced between them, which wobbled alarmingly as one stepped from one to another ! We reached the dak bungalow without any untoward happening, and great was our joy to have tea with milk in, nicely served on a clean cloth, and to have hot baths, after the three days with a very limited supply of water, no convenience for washing and very great difficulty in getting food, partly owing to the villagers' own supply being rather short, and partly because some of them thought we were the cause of the disaster. In spite of promises that our luggage should be sent on the next day, we did not receive it until three days later, so we had to manage with very little variety of clothes. After staying in Banihál six days, we were able to obtain a lorry and continue our journey to Pahlgám, arriving ten days later than we had at first hoped. We saw many signs all along the road of the havoc wrought by the storm and waters. In one place the river had made its bed 25 ft. deeper than normal because huge firm rocks had prevented the sides being broken down. Huge boulders were in our path, having fallen from the side making it very difficult to get the lorry past. Very often it looked as if it would be impossible to guide the lorry safely through all the obstacles, and any one of the obstacles might have caused it to turn over and down the precipice at the side. But we were fortunate in having a splendid driver, who took us safely to our journey's end, where we found three friends, who had left a week earlier than we did, looking anxiously for us.

THE NURSES' UNIFORM

(Continued from November)

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IT was not until the middle of the 19th century that reforms in hospital and nursing work took definite shape. The work of the Quakeress Elizabeth Fry and similar high church movements in England, and the organisation of the Deaconess movement under the Flieðnersat Kaiserwerth, Germany, were all efforts to find a way for enlisting a better class of women in the care of the sick and with them came the re-establishment of uniform costumes for those so engaged.⁹ The regulations for the dress and conduct of the Institution of Nursing Sisters founded by Mrs. Fry in 1840 were rigid.¹⁰ The sisters were to wear "a neat and becoming uniform" consisting indoors of print dresses, voluminous aprons, brown