The painlessness of nearly all syphilitic manifestations, which is apt to lead both surgeon and patient astray.

(4) The unreliability very often of the patient's explanation of the trouble.

(5) The mistake of applying antiseptics to such lesions before a diagnosis is made. Here they were applied before syphilis was suspected.

(6) The correct interpretation of the Wassermann reaction, recollecting that the blood-serum is, more often than not, negative in the first seventeen days from the commencement of the sore (the pre-Wassermann stage). In this case it was negative on the twelfth day and positive on the twenty-sixth.

These notes are recorded with the object of reminding those who rarely see venereal cases of the importance of the early recognition of syphilitic lesions, and particularly of those which occur in unusual situations.

I have to thank Lieutenant-Colonel S. M. W. Meadows, D.S.O., R.A.M.C., Officer Commanding, British Military Hospital, Rangoon, for permission to publish this case.

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**Sport.**

LOTUS AND BLACK BEAR: SOME ADVENTURES IN KASHMIR: AN ACCOUNT OF THE SLAYING OF THE RECORD BLACK BEAR.

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FOREWORD.

In presenting this narrative I seem to owe my readers a double apology, first, for the tax on their credulity; second, as one apologizes for fluking at billiards, for my colossal good luck in making my third black bear a world's record. It may placate them to know that this is the only stroke of such luck I ever did have; and, further, as I made the bundobust myself, instead of trusting myself and my fortune (sic) to rascally native bankers in Srinagar, and as I found and engaged my own shikari, and as I am luckily for myself a good shot, I was, at least, a good opportunist. As to killing the first two bears with one shot, all I can say is it befell as I tell in the ensuing pages, and old hands at big game shooting will know that it is the strange and unexpected that always happens once you go adventuring in the jungle. The details of the bear itself are given in the last edition of Rowland Ward's "Big Game Records," that eminent firm having prepared and set up the skin for me.

In the end of June of 1921, having passed the hot weather in the plains and my two months' Army leave falling due, I travelled up to Kashmir,
that fabled wonderland of marsh and mountain, of more than English
greenery, and of snows as everlasting as those of the Arctic. It is a great
country, larger than England, for all that it lies tucked away, as the map
would have it, in the far north-west corner of Hindustan. To the north it
is conterminous with those vast wastes that hedge in the deserts of Central
Asia; and in those valleys the sun shines unseen of men and the blizzard
rages to the peril of none. But, for the most part, when people speak of
Kashmir they mean that immediate valley that lies round the city of
Srinagar. It is like a great sponge thrust down into the cup of the
mountains, just as you might thrust one down into a flower pot and then
pour water on it until merely a few islands stood up. The mountains
stand round peak behind peak, 10, 12, 14,000 feet, and behind those
more again, looking over their shoulders, a hundred miles away,
20,000, and more yet, the monsters of the earth, mysterious, proud, cold
with the frigidity of diamond-like snows which have never melted since the
world began.

No wonder the Moghuls of old, when their fancies turned from the
ghastly Indian summer heats to those cool uplands of their ancestors in far
off Samarkand and the wild woods of Turkestan, built themselves gardens
and pleasures in fair Kashmir. It is a strange idea that, till they came
and conquered India, the minds of no Indian princes had ever reverted to
this mountain refuge. Now, to this day, their gardens run back from
the lotus-laden lakes into the recesses of prodigious heights, terrace upon
terrace dripping with cool splashing waterways and shaded with giant
chenars; and still stand the old pavilions where
they
sat to drink in the
breezes and the vistas and toyed with their silken favourites, seeming to
echo yet the whispers of their idle dalliance though they have long since
been dust.

Behind these gardens to which the Srinagar citizens swarm out by
boats across the lake on festivals to vie with the brilliant flower beds in
the glitter of their adornment, the ravines are carried up into the frowns
of mighty peaks till they are lost in the far black ridges; and here the
lordly sambur stag and the fierce black bear have their assured homes
where no man may assail them. For these are sanctuaries set aside by the
State and in them every sort of beast can propagate and rear his young
unafraid of man. So it is that in these valleys swarm the bear, the wolf,
the fox, the jackal, the martin, the leopard, the wild cat and tiger cat, along
with boars and stags down to the little timid
musk-deer. From a great
ridge overlooking one of these valleys, a valley whose area with all its
divagations could not have been much less than one of the smaller English
counties, I watched a black bear nosing and poking on the edges of a
wheat field which ran up to the limit of cultivation. It was my first
glimpse of the savage creatures. I was to see much more of them later.
Meanwhile the sight roused in me every instinct of the hunter and awoke
wild enthusiasms which had well-nigh slumbered since boyhood.
A. W. Howlett

I stayed no long time in Srinagar, for it was a city which did not greatly attract me. It is like a Venice amongst the mountains. I should say at a rough guess quite half the population live in houseboats, and through all the city areas noisome canals penetrate, serving not only as roads but as drains and even water supply as well. All the citizens who are going to die, die young, very young I should imagine, and those that are left can drink anything. Thus it behoves a stranger to be careful and not to accept too readily assurances that everything is all right.

I made haste to hire a houseboat and its usual staff. In this case it consisted of the boatman and his wife, his brother and his wife, the cook and his wife, two small children of 8 and 10, a bhisti (water carrier) and a sweeper. My bearer came, too, as body servant. Being a Pathan he had a lofty contempt for Kashmiris. He was always telling me how frightened they were of him, fear and respect being, in his mind, as in most Easterns, convertible. The flotilla, then, as it finally appeared ready for sea, consisted of my own houseboat, the "Blue Bird," the cook boat on which the servants lived, and a small craft, half dinghy, half canoe, which did duty as the Admiral's launch and performed such diverse offices as fishing, marketing at the lake-side villages and picking lotus flowers. The first night we ran into a long winding creek, with low, soggy banks and much overgrown with weeds. Patches of market gardens grew on the bits of terra firma; the view was closed on most sides by willows and beyond them by the spire-like poplars, so numerous in Kashmir. Back of all, the mountains with their vast ravines, now purple in the fading daylight, made a proscenium for the more gigantic heights behind, which glazed all rosy red from the dying sun. Kingfishers were common as sparrows. They made use of my boat as a look-out; and, as I stood in the bows watching the fading scene before me and listening to the chunk chunk of the paddles of the home-going boats of the fishermen and weed gatherers, I was roused continually by the plock of the birds as with folded wings they shot arrow-like into the stream and fluttered back to their perches with their prey.

They and the lotus flower and the chenár leaf are the common art emblems of Kashmir and are reproduced on most of the carving and embroideries. In autumn the broad-fingered leaves of the giant chenár, taking on their last glories, set all the land aflame.

A great peace deepened down and mosquitoes began to hum. In the little fore-cabin my bearer set the lamp on the table and told me dinner was ready. We were moored near the bank, a long pole driven into the mud holding the boat: A long plank laid on the deck across to a projecting piece of earth made a gangway. The servants' "cook boat" was similarly made fast behind me. It was weird and very lonely when night had at last come down. The pattern of stars in the sky was cut all round by the jagged shapes of mountains, and I thought of the leopards and bears prowling on them in the dark. From time to time, borne across the lake came wild ulula-
Lotus and Black Bear

tions like the common howl of jackals, but louder and of a more human timbre. They lasted all through the night and later I asked the boatman what they were. It was only small boys who were stationed in the fields, as the corn was now getting ripe, and had to keep up these unearthly yells to scare away the bears and other depredators, and I could not but feel a pity for the poor little rascals, for, though noise is part of a small boy’s heaven, if he can make it himself, I doubt if he would love it so well if he had to sit up a tall pole all night and, most likely, go a-reaping all next day. The idea that civilized peoples work hardest is peculiar to civilized people.

I spent a fortnight in this aimless cruising, passing from lake to lake by numerous channels, tying up by night, visiting the old Moghul gardens, sketching, fishing, photographing, a true lotus-eater’s life. And there was the lotus coming out in bloom on the lake. I had usually two or three huge blossoms, each as big as a cauliflower, which the boatmen pulled for me and set in old jam jars in my cabin. All day the surface of the lake was animated by canoes darting here and there like fish. Some men were gathering the large plaque-like leaves which floated together like fairy archipelagoes, and I learnt to my surprise that they were gathered to serve as plates for the Maharajah’s dining rooms. Others, and many women, squatted on their hams in the bows of their canoes, which they depressed till they were nearly level with the water, and pulled up long strands and trusses of the green clinging weed. My boatmen said it was for cattle fodder. A strange scene it all made, and amidst it tall gaunt water birds, herons and jacanas, often of brilliant colouring, strode about like Japanese screens come to life.

The water was clear, and one could spend hours gazing over the side of the vessel to watch the shoals of fish flashing in and out the subaqueous forests of weed. A great part of the Dal lake is covered with what they call floating gardens, a relic of curious old diversions, again, of the Moghuls. Hence this part of the lake has a sort of false bottom. To all appearance the water is no more than four or five feet deep; but you would get a nasty shock if you stepped overboard, for you would find that what appears to be solid ground covered with grass is only a thin floating crust. It is hard enough for the boatmen to thrust against with their poles as they punt the houseboat over it; but an extra vigorous thrust will go through it. People who live on and around these lakes imagine that they are like the sea. They have, of course, never seen the sea, the nearest point of which is about 1,700 miles away. When you endeavour to tell them of the real ocean and of the ships that plough it, they all but laugh and, at least, smile superiorly like folk who are not so simple as strangers take them to be. The Maharajah’s steam launch is to them the most wonderful ship in the world, and they watch it puffing and churning up the rivers with wonderment unabashed.

Much has been written of the beauty of Kashmir women; and, of a truth, many of them might pass as wondrous fair, but for their appalling
incrustation of dirt. I never knew a race of women with greater possibilities of enchantment so marvellously careless of their charms. Either it is ignorance or the stupidity which so often accompanies mere formal beauty of features, but certain it is that they appear to make not the slightest effort towards the enhancement or cultivation of the gifts with which Nature has endowed them. Their complexions often are so fair that they would scarcely arouse suspicion of alien blood if you saw the possessors clad in European garb in a London hotel. With a little more of the tincture of the Orient, they are pink and olive, warmly suffused and graded, with thick blue-black hair. Their features are fine and Caucasian shaped. Passing by the banks in your boat, either through the rabbit warren of Srinagar itself, or in the more open country, you will see often a tall and shapely lass step down to the water edge, pick up her loose blue skirt above her bare brown knees, and squat down to wash out some garment in the stream. Having finished, she laps up two or three handfuls of the muddy brown fluid for a drink. Let the stranger beware; the Kashmiri does not understand the meaning of dirt. As I have said, every Kashmiri that is capable of being poisoned is poisoned young. Those that remain can drink from a sewer with impunity; but the stranger probably cannot.

I used to insist on having my milk boiled and my milk jug scalded with boiling water. One morning I chanced to be standing on the bank. The boat was moored alongside in some particularly foul water which had a nasty scum on it. I saw my cook with my milk jug in his hand, and it had steaming water in it which he was swilling round and round. Mentally I commended him, and was considering whether all servants were such fools as they were painted, when I beheld him throw out the steaming water into the lake, then dip the jug down in the scum over the side of the boat to cool it.

He had obeyed orders, he had scalded the jug, what more could be done!

And one day I said I would go fishing. We were at the time moored among the reeds of the Dal lake, so I stepped into the little shikara, I and the boatman, and we paddled off. He vowed he would take me to a place where the biggest and greediest fish in all the lake were wont to congregate. After half an hour across the glassy evening-stilled waters, we came to a fair-sized village, among the houses of which there stood out a great mosque. Parenthetically, I may remark, it was a mosque of some celebrity, for in it was preserved an authentic hair from the beard of the Prophet. It was, therefore, much frequented and, like many holy places, quite likely to lead aspirants to a better land, though rather on account of cholera than from its particular sanctity. In front of this small Mecca was a great floating wooden structure moored out in the lake, and it was here my friend had brought me to fish. It was the public latrine. I discovered the fact just after we had let down our anchor and our lines. Nor could my worthy friend understand my disgust and my hurry to get away from so favoured a locality.
Lotus and Black Bear

It was the end of the mulberry season, and mulberries' swarm in Kashmir. At this season everyone and every animal and bird lives on them. The bears come boldly down from the mountains to feast themselves to repletion with the luscious black berries. The village women go out and bring in basket loads. The deadliest bait in the world for fish is, at this season, a ripe black mulberry on your hook. Kashmir is indeed the land of wild fruits. Later on, the wild apples and apricots come on and again afford feasting to man and beast. A black bear which I shot later on was found to be stuffed with apricots which he had gobbled so fast that most of them were whole in his stomach.

I soon tired of aimless cruising about the Kashmir waterways. I had had the unwisdom to come alone, for I fancied that the freedom with which I could order my movements would more than compensate for the solitude. By this, however, I had tired of talking Urdu to my servants and boatmen and was beginning to long to hear again the sound of my own mother tongue. This could not be yet, so I now prepared to put into execution my grand scheme of shikar.

In the city of Srinagar I had hired from a native gunsmith a single barrel falling block, .475 high-velocity rifle with a score of soft nosed bullets. It is not considered wise to go after black bear with a single barrel for, obviously, in the all too probable event of a charge, your life hangs entirely on the honesty of the gunmaker’s mechanism, and even the trustiest of rifles may jam. I had, however, my double-barrel shot gun, and for this I bought a supply of ball cartridges as well as a few loaded with buck shot. Then I brought my houseboat a two days’ journey back across the lake and moored her under some willows by the river mouth. From here it was easy to ascend the river and get into the canals of the city through the great sluice or water gate. We made several trips in the little shikara and laid in a quantity of stores. They wanted calculating to a nicety, for where I was going I should find no more. I bought also some chaplais, a kind of leather lace-work sandal, into which the foot goes encased in a soft leather sock. These were requisite for myself and shikari, and such servants as might accompany me in the more rugged and difficult areas. All these purchases I made on my own judgment, turning a deaf ear, quite wisely as I discovered later, to the wiles of the agents, bankers, traders and what not of that ilk, who fatten in Srinagar on ignorant voyagers. The most honest of these, for instance, assured me that I should want chaplais for all my coolies, that they always wore them and could not go without them; further, that it was the custom of all sahibs to supply them. He offered to supply them of a cheap grade for rupees six per pair. He was taken aback a little when I explained that I had already myself bought all I required in the bazaar at rupees three a pair for servants, and at rupees five for myself, and that I did not intend to purchase any at all for my coolies. As a fact, I found later on the coolies never wore them, and barely
knew what they were. If they wore any foot gear, which was seldom, it was grass shoes.¹

At last I had all my bundobust complete, even to the necessary licence entitling me to slay black bears, leopards, or wild boar *ad lib.*, they being the only beasts in season, as they always are, for their preservation is not considered politic.

One night I anchored in the mouth of the Jhelum River, where it runs with a swift current into the great marsh-like expanse of the Woolar Lake. The lake is dangerous on account of sudden storms which seldom come down till late in the day. Hence the crossing is always undertaken early, and at the first light of dawn we were astir and creeping out with the current, winding our way through the reed beds towards the open water. As the light grew it threw into relief the multifarious ridges of mountains, which came down on all sides into the lake, whilst the intervening nullas remained hidden still in sullen gloom. The surface was still as glass, and the quiet air re-echoed in melancholy music with the quavering calls of water birds. With the regular clunk, clunk of our boatmen’s poles we glided on, and the cook boat, drawing alongside, served me in my cabin with my breakfast.

A dozen miles brought us across that part of the lake, and we drew into a semilunar bay, very rugged, with boulders fallen all along the beach from the overtopping crag.

My shikari, whom I had engaged through my head boatman, was a native of the village² which lay near this bay. He was anxious that I should start at once in the neighbourhood where he assured me there were several large bears. I was a little sceptical. I fancied that, like so many of his class, he was anxious to draw his pay and stay at home whilst doing it—so many so-called shikaris set out on shikar without any serious intentions of meeting bears. Indeed, from what my shikari told me afterwards, the last thing they desired to meet was the animal they were going in search of. This attitude lends encouragement to loafers who call themselves shikaris, and lead ignorant Englishmen about the hills in idle pretence of hunting.

We set out for a nulla, which lay round a great shoulder a couple of miles away along the lake shore, and passing through the village and the usual horde of snapping and snarling mongrels which inhabited it, began to climb. Soon we passed the region of fields and entered a long, wide ravine, clad about the sides with a great tangle of jungle, wild canes, raspberry, blackberry, and other low brush, and patches of wild apple trees and apricots. It was about four in the afternoon. The lake lay far below us, a mirror of blue, on which in its far bay lay my boat like a toy ship on a horse pond.

¹ This does not apply to trekking in the more distant and rugged regions such as Baltistan.
² The name of it was Kyunhuns.
We chose a rocky bracket, and there with my rifle across my knees I sat down and waited. My shikari sat beside me with my shot gun loaded with ball between his knees. He was anxious to impress on me his instructions.

"Remember, sahib, after firing, reload at once, don't wait to look; then wait till it is at fifteen paces."

About six o'clock, as the shadows grew long on the hillside, we heard a great crackling of boughs on the other side of the ravine, and saw the foliage of the wild apple trees moving along a certain path. My heart pounded on my ribs, and I softly brought my rifle nearer the ready.

"An old mother bear and cub," whispered my Shikari in my ear. "Remember, sahib, fifteen paces."

We knew it was a she bear with young by the way she kept gritting her teeth, which we could distinctly hear where we sat some seventy yards away. At times she emitted a low, surly grunt, and all the while, with a great rending and crashing, she continued to pull boughs off the apple trees. We had no sight of her, but I observed she was working her way slowly towards a clear path where she would come into view. So I waited in a state of high nervous tension. And then, just as I thought ten minutes more would reward us with a sight of her, a miserable coolie came clattering down the nulla, dragging a long bare pole which he had evidently spent the day in cutting. To scare wild beasts and keep up his own spirits, he was yelling some song at the top of his voice. This finished all chances with the bear, and she was off with her cub like the wind. We heard them smashing through the bushes up the hillside, but could not get a glimpse of them. Only we saw the course they followed by the commotion in the foliage.

Thus ended my first bear hunt.

(To be continued.)