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LITERATURE.

A LADY'S SECOND JOURNEY ROUND THE WORLD.

A Lady's Second Journey Round the World. By IDA PFEIFFER. In 2 vols. London: Longman and Co.

There is something really startling in the very title of this work. One journey round the world we should have thought sufficient to satisfy the most ardent lover of travelling, especially when the journey appears to have no other motive than curiosity. The organ of "locomotion"—we beg pardon of Gall and Spurzheim for thus naming one of the organs—must, however, be exceedingly largely developed in Madame Ida Pfeiffer to have induced her to attempt a second voyage round the globe. We are heartily glad again to welcome the adventurous lady, and rejoice with her on her safe arrival, after encountering dangers of no ordinary character. In her present tour Madame Pfeiffer has penetrated countries and visited tribes of whom but little is known to the civilized world; and the narrative of her progress and the description of the strange scenes and people which she witnessed make up a most interesting and charming work of travel.

Leaving London in 1851, Madame Pfeiffer proceeded to the Cape of Good Hope, thence to Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Celebes, Ceram, the Moluccas, and other of the Dutch East Indian possessions; thence away to California, Panama, Peru, Equador, the United States, and back to England. Since her first voyage round the world, Madame Pfeiffer has visited Iceland, Scandinavia, and the Holy Land; and there would appear to be now no part or country of the world on which she has not set foot, and with the inhabitants of which she has not made herself acquainted. The most interesting portion of the work of this lady is that which is occupied by her adventures in the Indian Archipelago. Perhaps the most novel and interesting of Madame Pfeiffer's adventures was among the Battakers, some wild and savage tribes inhabiting the interior of Sumatra. Arrived at a place called Muara-Sipongie, the fair traveller was warned of the danger of penetrating further into the interior, among the cannibals who had recently had their tastes for white flesh whetted by three missionaries, who had shortly before paid them a welcome visit. Nothing daunted by the statement of the perils which she would have to encounter, she contrived to have all the regents of the surrounding villages sent for, in order to confer with them on the subject of her intended visit:—

"In the evening we sat in solemn conclave surrounded by regents, and by a great crowd of the people, for it had been noised abroad far and wide that here was a white woman who was about to venture into the dreaded country of the wild Battakers. Regents and people all concurred in advising me to renounce so perilous a project; but I had tolerably well made up my mind on this point, and I only wanted to be satisfied as to one thing, namely, whether it was true, as many travellers asserted, that the Battakers did not put their victims out of their pain at once, but tied them living to stakes, and, cutting pieces off them, consumed them by degrees with tobacco and salt. The idea of this slow torture did a little frighten me; but my hearers assured me, with one accord, that this was only done to those who were regarded as criminals of a deep dye, and who had been on that account condemned to death. Prisoners of war are tied to a tree and beheaded at once; but the blood is carefully preserved for drinking, and sometimes made into a kind of pudding with boiled rice. The body is then distributed; the ears, the nose, and the soles of the feet are the exclusive property of the Rajah, who has besides a claim on other portions. The palms of the hands, the soles of the feet, the flesh of the head, and the heart and liver, are reckoned peculiar delicacies, and the flesh in general is roasted and eaten with salt. The Regents assured me, with a certain air of relish, that it was very good food, and that they had not the least objection to eat it. The women are not allowed to take part in these grand public dinners. A kind of medicinal virtue is ascribed to the trees to which prisoners have been tied when they have been put to death, and the stem is usually cut into sticks five or six feet long, carved into figures or arabesques, and decorated with human hair; and these sticks are taken in the hand by people who go to visit the sick, or when any medicine is to be given."

How Madame Pfeiffer fared on her journey, and the numerous incidents which she met with in her enterprise, we must refer the reader to the work itself; but as there may be some who are anxious to know something of the Battakers, and who may not have an opportunity of perusing the work itself, we will give one or two extracts. The first village met on the road was:—

"Sipirok lies in a small smooth valley. Here is the last coffee plantation under the superintendence of a native writer. I happened to arrive just as the coffee was being delivered, and this gave me an opportunity of seeing a great number of the people. Their appearance was not prepossessing; their faces were of the same type as the Malays, but actually uglier, and the females excessively diminutive. In the elegant art too of filing and blackening their teeth they have obtained such proficiency, that they are able to do what might seem impossible—to render themselves more frightful than nature has made them. They were very scantily attired, extremely dirty, and all had their cheeks puffed out with the siri they were chewing, and were spitting right and left among, or at least close to, the coffee beans that lay spread out. By way of amusing their leisure, too, they were occupying themselves with hunting for vermin on the heads and clothes of their children, who, covered as they were with horrid cutaneous eruptions, were playing and pelting each other with the coffee beans."

Donan was the next village arrived at, and—

"Here I drew, as actors say, such very full houses, that is to say, my hut was so thronged, that I could not tell for a long time who were to be my fellow-lodgers; but at length I had the pleasure of discovering that the other inmates were a nearly dying man and—a murderer! The latter had killed one of his neighbours in a fit of jealousy, and was to be beheaded for it in two days in the bazaar. He lay on the ground naked, and fastened to a post, his feet being drawn through a block; and he was behaving almost like a madman, laughing, weeping, and screaming alternately, and dashing himself wildly from one side to the other. It was a horrible sight! The sick person was a youth of eighteen years of age, who also lay on the ground, without mat or covering, though he appeared to be in the last stage of consumption, and had dreadful fits of coughing. Unfortunately I could do nothing for the poor fellow, having neither medicine nor anything else with me."

The customs of the inhabitants are very graphically told in the following:—

"The next day also I was obliged to pass in Donan, for the Rajah, who was nominally under the protection of the Dutch Government, assured me that without his escort I could not venture into the country of the wild Battakers, now only a few miles off. He would go with me, he said, and use his personal influence with the Rajah, with whom he was acquainted, to secure my safety. In pursuance of this friendly resolution, he first slaughtered a buffalo-calf in my honour, to secure the patronage and favour of the evil spirits—who, if they were offended, might oppose insurmountable obstacles to our undertaking—to induce them to refrain from increasing the perils of our journey.

"Early in the morning he paid me a visit, attended by some dozens of women and girls, mostly his relatives. They defiled before me in a profoundly humble attitude, bending down, and shading their faces with their hands—the mode of salutation, I was told, for inferiors towards persons of rank. Then they sat down on the ground at the back of the hut, and took out of some pretty plaited baskets a quantity of siri that was intended for my delectation.

"The girls wore from ten to fifteen leaden rings in their ears, and had also the upper part of the cartilage pierced and decorated with a button, or a string of glass beads; but when they marry, I was told they have to lay aside all these trinkets. The girls have their bosoms covered, the married women mostly bare, and both women and girls twist their hair up into a knot, putting a straw cushion under it to increase its apparent mass. What is rather perplexing, too, the gentlemen wear it just as long, and twist it up in the same manner as the ladies; they have no beards, and they wear the sarang, their only garment, fastened round them mostly in the same manner. Fortunately they, for the most part, stick on a straw cap, or twist a handkerchief round their heads, and by this sign one may recognise the superior sex.

"Many of the girls were of considerable *embonpoint*, and were only young ladies by courtesy, as they had, in fact, passed their youth, although, as it appeared, without entering the conjugal state; a circumstance to be accounted for from wives being purchasable articles here.

"The purpose of the Rajah's visit was to invite me to the solemn slaughtering of the buffalo-calf, and I soon accompanied him and his ladies to his hut. The ceremony began with a wild dance, performed by the Rajah's son, a youth of eighteen; and as every one desired to witness the *pas seul* of the young chief, the hut soon became so full that there was no moving. It was whispered about, probably to flatter the young man, that he was possessed by an evil spirit; and as if he wished to justify the opinion, his dancing became even more and more fast and furious, until at last he fairly fell down exhausted. Then another took his place; but this was an inferior performer, who did not enjoy the advantage of demoniacal possession, and he soon retired, for the Rajah's son sprang up again, and recommenced his mad exhibition to the accompaniment, as before, of a kind of uproarious music. A bowl filled with unboiled rice was then presented to him, and he raised it several times above his head, as if he wished to offer the contents to the spirits, or beg their blessing upon it. Then he took a small portion and flung it into the air, and after that he rushed out of the hut, scattering the rice as he went, and at last poured the remainder over the buffalo-calf, which lay on a sort of scaffold, bound, and ready to be slaughtered.

"After this the prince returned to the hut and continued his extraordinary *ballet d'action* until he could no longer stand, and fell exhausted into the arms of the much-edified spectators. Thereupon the calf was slain, cut into many little bits, and for the most part distributed among the people; and the liver was politely put aside for me, and in the evening presented to me; but, unluckily, it had been roasted till it was as hard as a stone, and quite uneatable, so that I had again to content myself with rice and salt, although the calf had been killed expressly to do me honour."

Here is a description of a chief of the Malay priests:—

"The Malay chief priest came in grand state to pay his respects, and certainly he did astonish us with his finery. He wore a long robe of rose-coloured silk, and over it another of white gauze, trimmed with three broad flounces. The sleeves were also full-trimmed with lace. To complete this costume, which any European lady might have gone to a ball in, this reverend personage had a man's white waistcoat and a belt, in which were stuck some superb weapons. He also had on a white turban, and over it a large lace veil, that fell down and half covered him. Altogether, I never saw such an absurd-looking fellow; and when the lace veil was thrown back, and a young and beardless face appeared, I should certainly, had he not been announced as the high priest, have had considerable doubt whether we had before us a lady or a gentleman."

Among the amusements of the natives of the island of Sumatra cock-fighting appears to be a great favourite:—

"Near the bazaar I noticed a space enclosed with palings, and sheltered by a roof thatched with leaves. This it seems was a place set apart for cock-fights, one of which edifying entertainments was now going on. A dense crowd of people was standing round it; several fights had already taken place, and betting was proceeding with great animation. To my astonishment, too, these wretched destitute-looking creatures were not betting doits, but Spanish dollars; and I was told that the sums squandered in this way by men that you would really take for beggars, would be sufficient to keep them and their families in comfort and plenty. The preparations for the combat, and the manner in which the poor animals are excited to anger, are the same as in Java; but I noticed that here each proprietor of a cock kept making the most horrible grimaces and threatening movements with the hands and feet during the fight, and that one of them was continually blowing, which both spectators and bettors took much amiss, so that there arose a general murmur about it. In about a minute one of the cocks left the field of battle, and the other was declared the victor; but he fell down and died even before the vanquished one. Other cocks were immediately brought to replace these victims, and the sport proceeded. Half the day will these men, amongst whom were more Malays than Battakers, continue this brutal and disgusting kind of gambling, and lose at it, as I have said, sums that would be sufficient for their ample maintenance. Its great prevalence at this place may be accounted for from the number of Malays."

The Wizard of the North might learn something from the performances of the sleight-of-hand natives of Tangerong. The close of an entertainment got up for the edification of Madame Pfeiffer is thus described:—

"The close of the entertainment, the performance of the Hercules, was really curious in its way. He appeared with nothing on but a pair of drawers; and a cord was passed round his neck, and with this his hands and arms were so firmly tied behind him that he could not make the smallest movement. He came to us to have the knots examined, and then he crept under a high covered basket, beneath which various garments were placed; and after the lapse of a few minutes the basket was lifted up, and the Hercules made his appearance, completely clothed in them; then he crept again under the basket, and came out without them, but holding the cord with all its knots fast in his hand, and so forth. All this would of course have been nothing in a theatre, where assistance might have been given him; but this was in a meadow, where no assistance was possible. One of the gentlemen present offered him twenty-five rupees for his mystery, but he declined the offer."

We regret that our space does not admit of our giving several other most interesting passages which we had marked for quotation. The extracts which we have given, however, will convey a fair notion of the character of the work.