

**THE TIMELY RETREAT; OR, A  
YEAR IN BENGAL BEFORE THE  
MUTINIES, BY TWO SISTERS.  
IN TWO VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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**M. WALLACE-DUNLOP & R. WALLACE-DUNLOP**

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THE  
**TIMELY RETREAT;**  
OR,  
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BEFORE THE MUTINIES.

BY  
TWO SISTERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II

LELAND STAMP

UNIVERSITY

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RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,  
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1858.

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FRASCHI  
ROBATO QUALITÀ  
BREVIO



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## THE TIMELY RETREAT;

OR,

A YEAR IN BENGAL BEFORE THE MUTINIES.

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THE morning we left Mahrgong was most bitterly cold, and the frost so severe, our men fell several times climbing up the hill. When we reached the top and were set down to rest, some of the Coolies from the other camp passed us, one carrying a port-manteau. Natives are inquisitive creatures, so he was instantly assailed by questions as to whom it belonged, and informed them the "Lal wallah" (red one). Mr. Atheling, from sometimes appearing in a scarlet flannel shirt, had earned for himself that appellation. You are much better known among

natives by any peculiarity than by your proper name, which they rarely master, making the most ludicrous failures whenever they attempt it. Scarlet is the royal colour in India, and natives are passionately fond of it.

Our homeward path led us past a great many charred trees. Natives travelling are so careless that they will light a fire under any tree, and never think of putting it out ; so it often smoulders up the trunk till the whole tree is in a blaze, and sometimes you see a hill-side covered with scorched and blackened trunks, holding up their leafless arms as if twisted and contorted in their last agonies. The most curious of the forest trees presented to our gaze, is that round, shiny, whitish grey trunk, which rears itself constantly before our astonished eyes, sometimes perfectly straight, sometimes taking two or three snake-like twists before rising. I am quite sure if a piece of this trunk was divested of branches, and taken home, few people would guess its origin. I have seen many beech-trees not half so timeworn or

covered with hoary moss; and this strange trunk actually belongs to the common square-leaved cactus, with whose prickly edges our juvenile fingers have so often been painfully acquainted at home.

In returning we avoided the inhospitable Brahmins of Muchkiam, and camped at Raaker instead. It looked a comfortable village, having plantations of sugar-canes and plantains round it, and was not so completely deserted, the head man not being, perhaps, such a strict disciplinarian as usual. When we went to look for sketches, we collected a curious crowd directly. Keith asked one man why he locked up all the women, and he assured us *he* never did so: he used to do it once, but now he had been into Mussoorie and knew better. His people did, he acknowledged. Not knowing exactly what a Sahib could do, they thought it the safest plan to put the women and children out of sight. A woman here showed us the whole process of preparing grain. She was a slight, toil-worn creature; not young, or she would not have