

**THE TRIBES ON MY
FRONTIER; AN
INDIAN NATURALIST'S
FOREIGN POLICY**

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The tribes on my frontier; an Indian naturalist's foreign policy by E. H. Aitken

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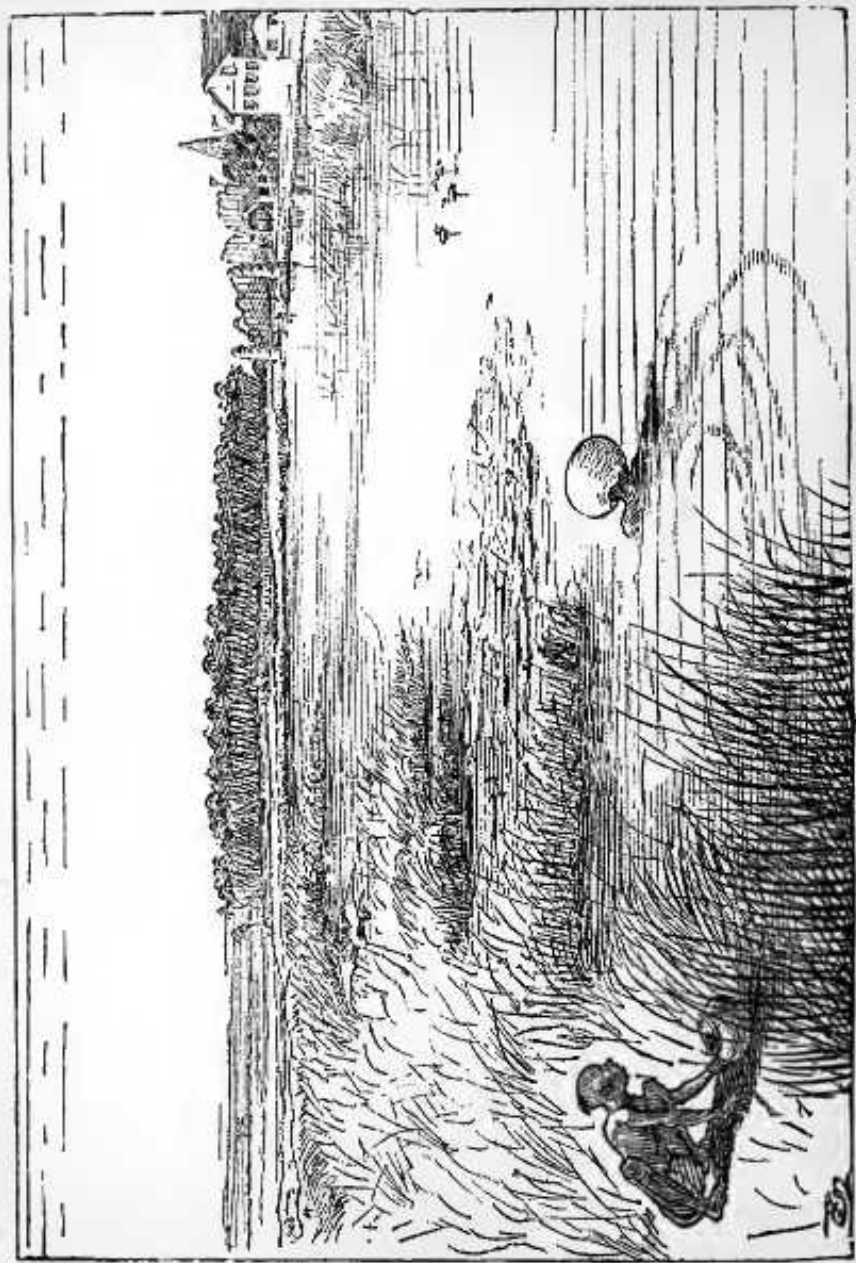
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E. H. AITKEN

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A TANK.—NATIVES SHIKARRING DUCKS.

[See end of Contents.]

THE TRIBES ON
MY FRONTIER. AN
INDIAN NATURALIST'S
FOREIGN POLICY. SIXTH
EDITION.

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ILLUSTRATED BY
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PREFACE

THESE papers were written during the Afghan War, and made the *débat* in the *Times of India*. They come on the stage again in answer to what vanity fancied was an encore. Perhaps it was the voice of the Scotchman crying, "Ong-core ! Ong-core ! We'll hae nae mair o' that."

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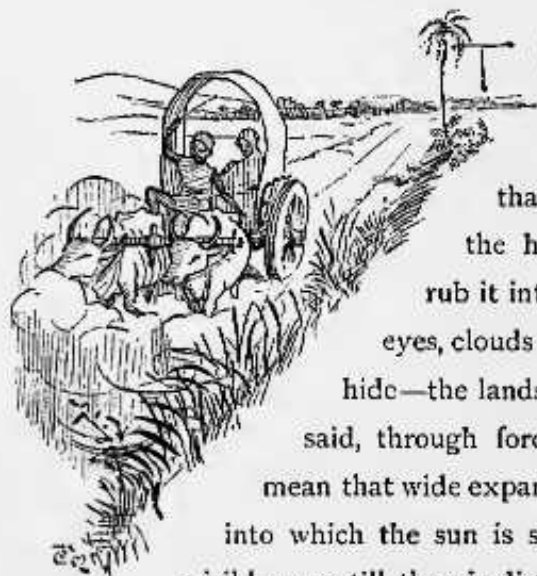
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FRONTISPIECE.—NATIVES SHIKARRING DUCKS.—The wild ducks, familiar with floating gourds, are unsuspecting of the natives, who wade towards them covered by a chattee, or earthenware vessel, very like a gourd, and draw them under water by the legs.

THE TRIBES ON MY FRONTIER.

A DURBAR.

June.



IS June in Dusty-
pore. Fancy a
scorching wind
that seems to gather
the heat together, and
rub it into your cheeks and
eyes, clouds of dust that nearly
hide—the landscape I had almost
said, through force of habit, but I
mean that wide expanse of negativeness
into which the sun is striking his almost
visible rays till the air distinctly quivers and
trembles under them ; no ice, no resource except “thinking
on the frosty Caucasus,” or sitting behind those rheumatic

and agueferous devices, tatties and thermantidotes. Bombay people do not know what heat is. The only thing to be complained of at this time in Bombay is a certain tendency to liquefaction. Chemically speaking, one gets deliquescent about the end of May. The melting mood is strongest during the morning walk; at the end of it there is little left of one but a pool of water. But abjure walking, court the sea-breeze, or sit under punkahs, and the climate of Bombay is balmy. These are the signs by which any one may know *hot* weather. When you take a change of raiment from the drawer and it feels like fresh-baked bread, when you put on your coat and it settles like a blister on your back, when returning to dinner from the evening constitutional you feel as you step through the doorway that you are entering a limekiln, then the weather is getting hot. In such weather every Oriental whose hard fate has not made him a punkah-puller religiously enjoys his midday nap, and so about noon a quiet as of a Scotch Sabbath comes over the land.

Just at that time when all is stillest and sleepest, I hold a *levée*, for a house is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and to its blessed shelter, as the sun grows fiercer and fiercer, all the neighbourhood "foregathers."