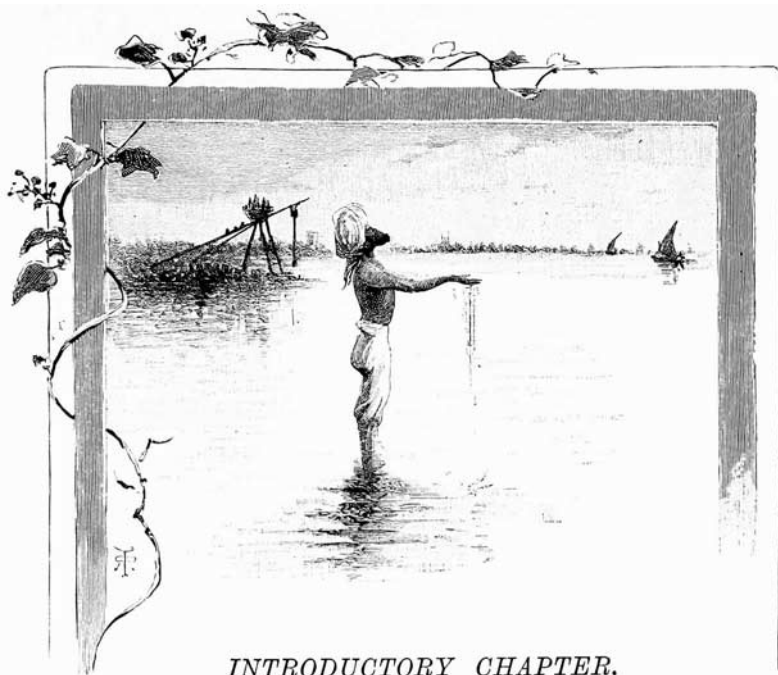


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Annie Brassey

Excerpt

[More information](#)*INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.*

WHEN the arrangements for a contemplated cruise to the East were being considered, towards the end of 1886, it was thought best for Lady Brassey and her daughters to make the voyage to Bombay in a P. & O. steamer. The 'Sunbeam' herself was to sail from Portsmouth by the middle of November. Lord Brassey, in the first paragraph of his 'Sunbeam Papers,' thus acknowledges the help he derived at starting, in what may be called the domestic department of the yacht, from Lady Brassey's presence on board for even a few hours.

'We embarked at Portsmouth on Monday, November 16th. The "Sunbeam" was in hopeless confusion, and it required no ordinary effort of determination and organisation to clear out of harbour on the following day. A few hours at South-

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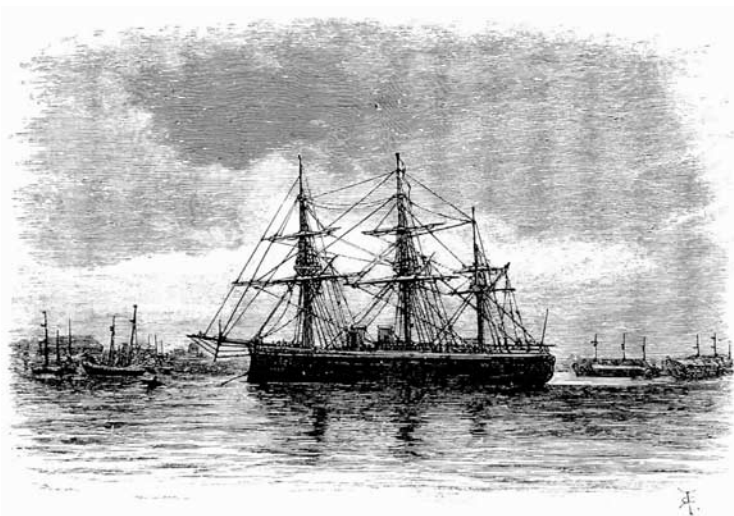
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ampton did wonders in evolving order out of chaos. On the afternoon of November 18th, my wife and eldest daughter, who had come down to help in preparing for sea, returned to the shore, and the "Sunbeam" proceeded immediately down Channel.'

At Plymouth Lord Brassey was joined by the late Lord Dalhousie and by Mr. Arnold Morley, M.P. The former landed at Gibraltar, and the latter at Algiers. Through the long voyage to Bombay the gallant little yacht held stoutly on her course, meeting first a mistral in the Mediterranean, then strong head-winds in the Red Sea, and having the N.E. monsoon in her teeth after leaving Aden.

In the meantime Lady Brassey, her three daughters, and some friends left England a few days after the yacht had sailed, travelling slowly, with many interesting stopping-



Portsmouth. H.M.S. Hercules

places, and not finally reaching Brindisi until December 11th. Thence to Egypt was but a brief voyage, and the one day's

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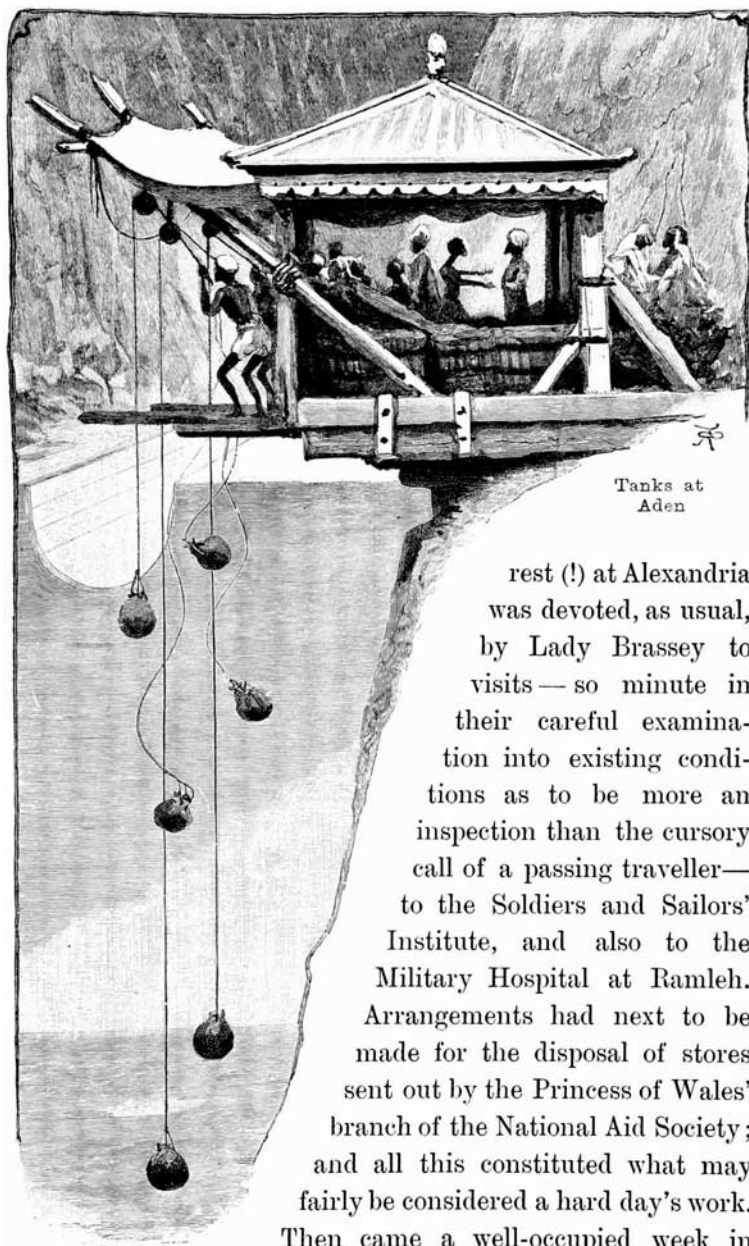
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Tanks at
Aden

rest (!) at Alexandria was devoted, as usual, by Lady Brassey to visits — so minute in their careful examination into existing conditions as to be more an inspection than the cursory call of a passing traveller — to the Soldiers and Sailors' Institute, and also to the Military Hospital at Ramleh. Arrangements had next to be made for the disposal of stores sent out by the Princess of Wales' branch of the National Aid Society; and all this constituted what may fairly be considered a hard day's work. Then came a well-occupied week in

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Cairo, where much hospital-visiting was again got through, and many interviews respecting the site for the new hospital at Port Said were held with the Egyptian authorities. This pleasant but by no means idle dawdling brought the party to Suez on December 23rd, where they embarked at once on board the P. & O. steamer 'Thames,' Captain Seaton, and started at midnight for Bombay.

Carefully and well had the plans for both voyages been laid, and successfully—by grace of wind and weather—had they been carried out. On January 3rd, 1887, Lord Brassey in the 'Sunbeam' and Lady Brassey in the 'Thames' exchanged cordial signals of greeting off the harbour of Bombay. The incident must be briefly described from the earlier 'Sunbeam Papers' (for of this first portion of the cruise Lady Brassey has unhappily left no notes). 'As we were becalmed off Bombay, waiting for the sea breeze which invariably freshens towards noon, the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamship "Thames," with my wife and children on board, passed ahead of us into the harbour. We had a delightful meeting in the afternoon at Government House, Malabar Point, where we were greeted with a most cordial welcome from our dear friends Lord and Lady Reay.'

We are so accustomed nowadays to the punctual keeping of appointments made months before, with half the width of the world between the meeting-places, that this happy and fortunate coincidence will scarcely excite remark, even when the home journal dwells on the added joy of the arrival, that very same evening, as planned beforehand, of Lord Brassey's son, who had started earliest, and had been spending some weeks of travel, sight-seeing, and sport, pleasantly combined, in Ceylon and Southern India.

The punctuality of the P. & O. steamers might be a proverb, if in these hurried days anyone ever paused to make a proverb; and therefore it is not the rapid run of the

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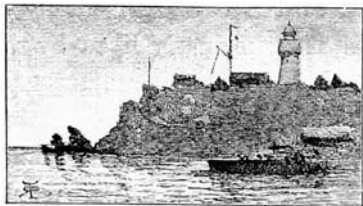
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'Thames' which excites our admiration. It is rather the capital sailing qualities, well tried and proven as they are, of the 'Sunbeam.' Though essentially a *sailing* vessel and



Kurrachee Harbour

carrying very little coal, the yacht had made her way through the intricate navigation of the Red Sea and against the strong contrary winds of the N.E. monsoon, which blew with quite exceptional force off the

southern shores of Arabia, and had finally dropped anchor at the appointed day, and almost hour, in Bombay Harbour.

On this, her first visit, the 'Sunbeam' remained only three days at Bombay. She sailed again for Kurrachee on January 6th, 1887, and reached her destination early on Tuesday, the 11th. The stay in Bombay was cut short by the desire of the travellers to join Lord and Lady Reay, and journey with them for the first few days of an official tour in Sindh, on which the Governor of Bombay was about to start. There are exceptional opportunities in such an excursion for seeing great concourses of natives, and gaining knowledge of the condition of the country from the officials engaged in its



The Miro Falconer

administration. The first point of interest noted is a native horse-fair held at Shikarpur, where 'in the immense concourse gathered together, all the races of these wild districts

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Bokhara Man

were represented. The most characteristic people were the Beloochees—men of sturdy build, who carry themselves with a bold and manly air. They formerly lived by raids and cattle-lifting, swooping down from the Suleiman Mountains upon the people of the plains, who were seldom able to offer any effectual resistance. We have established order in these once lawless regions by our military force, posted at Jacobabad.'

From the brief notes of this earlier part of the journey, which follow, it is evident

that the travellers had semi-official receptions of their own at nearly every large station. Addresses of cordial welcome were presented; replies had to be made; and it is perhaps from these causes of added fatigue and excitement that Lady Brassey was unable to do more than jot down the events of each day.

Lord and Lady Brassey and their family travelled together through Sindh, along the north-west frontier of India to Lahore, Peshawur, and the Khyber Pass; and Lord Brassey gratefully notes in the first number of 'Sunbeam Papers' that his



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wife's health in Northern India was better than it had been for years.

A fresh start on the return journey to Bombay was made from Lahore on January 21st, *viâ* Patiala, whose Maharajah, young as he is, carries on the practice of sumptuous welcome and entertainment of English travellers which forms part of the historic traditions of the loyal rulers of the state. Agra was



Our Home on Wheels

reached on January 30th, and at this point, after a brief delay, the party separated, Lord Brassey retracing his steps to Kurra-
chee to take the yacht back to Bombay. The rest came round by Cawnpore and Lucknow, Benares, Jubbulpore, and Poonah, and so on to Hyderabad, their farthest inland point, where Lady Brassey's more elaborated diary commences.

The whole of this long journey of 4,500 miles was made

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in thirty-six days, and with the exception of the two nights at the Maharajah's palace at Patiala, the railway train was the only sleeping-place of the travellers, who were eleven in number. Halts and stoppages were made in the day-time to admit of local sight-seeing and excursions. Lady Brassey, in a private letter, declared this plan of travel to be delightful and thoroughly comfortable; and it will be seen that Hyderabad was reached not only with comfort but with renovated health, and with the full enthusiasm of travel and ardour of enjoyment strong in the breast of the well-known diarist, whose last journals, faithfully kept when once commenced, are now before us.

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JOURNAL.



CHAPTER I.

BOMBAY TO JUBBULPORE.

Thursday, January 6th.—Left Bombay harbour at 2 A.M. and proceeded to sea under steam. Rather rolly. Very busy all day unpacking and arranging things. As nearly everybody was more or less overcome, I felt that I must make an effort. Small party at meals. State of things improved towards evening.

Friday, January 7th.—On deck at 5 A.M. Shifty breeze.

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Tacking all day. Busy unpacking and repacking, and trying to get things straight. Towards evening the invalids began to pick up a little and to appear on deck.

At noon we were off Verawal, having run 135 miles since yesterday. Distance from Kurrachee, 310 miles.

Saturday, January 8th.—On deck at 5 A.M. Pleasant breeze, but not favourable. Several dhows in sight near the land. At eight o'clock a dead calm and very hot. At noon a sea-breeze, fair; at five o'clock a land-breeze, foul. Steam up at 11 P.M.

Sunday, January 9th.—A flat calm at 4.30 A.M. The 'Southern Cross' and 'Great Bear' bright in the heavens. The moon set with curious 'horse's-tail' effects. At noon we were off Kori, or Lakhpat. At 10 P.M. heavy squall from N.E. came on, accompanied by a downpour of rain.

Monday, January 10th.—Made Kurrachee Light soon after midnight. Entered the harbour at daybreak. Very cold on deck. Soon after we had anchored, Mr. Dashtar, one of the Parsee cricketers, came on board with bouquets of flowers for all of us. After much settling, and packing, and engaging new



servants, we breakfasted; and then, having landed, proceeded to see something of Kurrachee City, the alligator-tank, and the cantonment. Engaged additional horses for a longer