THE JUMBLIES
AND OTHER NONSENSE VERSES BY
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WITH DRAWINGS BY
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THE CUMMERBUND
AN INDIAN POEM

I

SHE sat upon her Dobie,¹
To watch the Evening Star,
And all the Punkahs² as they passed
Cried, “My! how fair you are!”
Around her bower, with quivering leaves,
The tall Kamsamahs³ grew,

¹ Washerman
² Fan
³ Butler
The Cummerbund

And Kitmutgars\(^1\) in wild festoons
   Hung down from Tchokis\(^2\) blue.

\(1\) Waiter at table
\(2\) Police or post station

II

Below her home the river rolled
   With soft meloobious sound,
Where golden-finned Chuprassies\(^3\) swam,
   In myriads circling around.
Above, on tallest trees remote,
   Green Ayahs perched alone,
And all night long the Mussak\(^4\) moaned
   Its melancholy tone.

\(3\) Office messenger
\(4\) Water skin

III

And where the purple Nullahs\(^5\) threw
   Their branches far and wide,
And silvery Goreewallahs\(^6\) flew
   In silence, side by side,
The little Bheesties\(^7\) twittering cry
   Rose on the fragrant air,
And oft the angry Jampan\(^8\) howled
   Deep in his hateful lair.

\(5\) Watercourse
\(6\) Groom
\(7\) Water-carrier
\(8\) Sedan Chair

IV

She sat upon her Dobie—
   She heard the Nimmak\(^9\) hum—
When all at once a cry arose:
   "The Cummerbund\(^10\) is come!"

\(9\) Salt
\(10\) Waist Sash
The Cummerbund

In vain she fled; with open jaws
   The angry monster followed,
And so (before assistance came),
   That Lady Fair was swallowed.

V

They sought in vain for even a bone
   Respectfully to bury;
They said, "Hers was a dreadful fate!"
   (And Echo answered, "Very.")
They nailed her Dobie to the wall,
   Where last her form was seen,
And underneath they wrote these words,
   In yellow, blue, and green:
"Beware, ye Fair! Ye Fair, beware!
   Nor sit out late at night,
Lest horrid Cummerbunds should come,
   And swallow you outright."

NOTE—First published in the Times of India, Bombay, July 1874.