

THE
MEMOIRS OF A BRAHMIN;

OR,

THE FATAL JEWELS,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"PANDURANG HARI," "THE ZENANA," "VIZIER'S
SON," &c., &c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE FATAL JEWELS.

CHAPTER I.

My new guide was more respectful than Sumbboo, and yet appeared to regard me with awe, always keeping at a very proper distance, and seldom speaking until spoken to.

Our road now lay between the passes of the Ghauts, so that we could not get on very fast, and my horse once or twice made a false step, and appeared, in fact, very lame. Descending to examine his fore foot, I found a nail had been thrust into it, evidently by the malicious Sumbboo. Having with some difficulty extracted the nail, the lameness subsided, and we got

on pretty well, although night set in long ere we could arrive at a village or place of rest.

“Are you sure you know the road?” said I, to the guide.

“Yes, I believe we are right,” said he.

“You believe!” cried I, “are you not sure?”

“No—M’haraj that I am not, and who can be in the dark?”

“Idiot!” cried I, “what business then have you to offer yourself as a guide unless you know your road by night as well as by day?”

“I know it as well and better than any body else in the village, whence I came,” replied the fellow, and did not calculate upon being in the mountains by night.”

“You are a pretty rascal,” said I, “and merit the same chastisement I gave the other fellow, so please to go on in advance,” I continued, “and remember if you bring me into any danger, or among thieves, this pistol is loaded, and will not be far from your head.”

“Vishnu preserve us,” cried the fellow, “I bring you among thieves! how do I know any such characters, or their abodes?”

“That I do not know,” replied I, “only beware that is all, for I am not to be trifled with, I can assure you.”

“I am an honest man, and have no fear,” rejoined my guide, going on briskly in advance, whilst I followed, keeping my right hand upon my pistol.

The rainy season was still in full force, and my situation among the rugged Ghauts, by night, ignorant of my road, and drenched with rain, was very far from being an enviable one, nay, to add to my inconvenience, I fully imagined my guide to be a traitor, who was conducting me to the haunts of banditti, if so, my life was certain to be taken, for the sake of my iron boxes, full of jewels, and my gold mohurs, and I now remembered on our arriving at the first village from Warree, when I was about to arise in the morning, having observed

Sumboo, minutely examining my person, and having felt my kummerband, in which was confined my gold, and other valuables.

We perceived a light emanate from a ruined tower, which had once belonged to a hill fortress situated in the Ghauts, and commanding the pass.

“There is a light,” said my guide, in so very joyous a tone of voice, as made me fancy, he had been long expecting the beacon.

“Well,” said I, “and what then?”

“Why,” replied he, “we can here be sheltered until morning.”

“How know you that?” said I.

“I only suppose so,” replied the fellow “but let us approach the gate, and demand shelter.”

“Not so fast, my fine fellow,” said I, “first I must learn who inhabits this lonesome, and ruined tower; they may not be friends.”

“Oh, I don't know who they are,” said the guide, “nor will you be able to find out by

gazing at the light from the loop holes above, I imagine."

"True," said I, "but, I do expect to learn it from gazing at you."

"Me! what do I know?" said the man.

"I imagine that you know more than you deem it wise to say," I replied, "however, I shall not seek shelter in that ruin, I assure you; I am safe now, and mean to remain so."

We were now actually beneath the gate-way of the building, when my guide blew a shrill whistle, which he extracted from his belt: it was his last treacherous signal, for a bullet from my pistol entered his brain ere he could remove the whistle from his lips, and he rolled off his pony, falling down precipices and rocky defiles, where his body must have been dashed to atoms.

My danger was by no means over, for doubtless the inhabitants of the ruin must have heard the signal, and would speedily descend to open

the gate. I alighted from my horse, and led him with the tattoo to a distance, where, fastening their bridles to a tree, I crept softly on my hands and knees among the rocks to the gate-way of the ruin, where men were busy opening the massy portals.

“I heard his whistle,” said one of the men.

“I am sure it was the guide’s preconcerted signal, and Sumboo would not have deceived us.”

“Ah,” said I, within myself, “Sumboo is the mover of all this, is he?”

“But,” said another voice, “what pistol was that fired? was that part of the signal also?”

“No—I can’t make that out at all,” said the first speaker, “perhaps the devil-king has shot poor Balloo, but do you not perceive any one mounted, near the place?”

“Not a soul,” said the other man, “all is quiet, dark, and rainy, so, I shall not stand shivering here any longer.”

“No—it is useless,” replied the other voice, “we will wait for another whistle: shut the gate.”

“You will wait long enough,” thought I, “for another whistle, as the lips that blew the last, are now closed in death.”

What was I now to do, and how get on with my horse and the tattoo to lead by my side down steep declivities, and rugged places which might conduct me many coss out of my way?

Were I certain two persons only garrisoned the ruin, I would demand shelter, and if I fancied violence was intended me, would use my pistols with the same effect I had done upon the treacherous Balloo.

I was about quitting my hiding-place, where I had overheard the conversation of the men, when the gate once more creaked upon its hinges, and a torch was thrust forth as if the party were still unwilling to give up their expected game.

“What can have become of Govind Gürù,”

said one of the men, "he ought to have been back here long ago."

"True, and Veetul has not returned, nor Laroba, nor any one, we have been expecting; I fear they have got into danger."

"Yes, that is my impression also," said a voice strange to me.

"But what will Mohun Lal say? he will be tired waiting so long, at the Heera Baugh, for I know he wants to be off on his march."

"True—do you see any one?"

"No."

At this juncture, as my ill-luck would have it, my horse set out neighing, in which musical performance he was joined by the pony, when the men who were just about closing the gate a second time, said, "here they come—get ready with your roomal, and 'mind, 'Pànee Lao,' (bring water,) is the J'hirnee."

"Very well; but no one seems to approach. I will call out—Holloa—who comes?"

No one answered, but my provoking horse,

who neighed again, and again, little imagining the injury he was doing his master.

“I hear their steeds neigh,” said the first speaker, “and they can’t be far off, but they don’t seem to approach an inch.”

“Take the torch, and go and look,” said the second speaker.

“Hold the gate then,” said the other fellow—“here goes:” with this he advanced holding on high his flambeau, which shewed to me every lineament of his countenance, while I was secure in my dark retreat from his penetration; the fellow found the horses, however, and conducted them to his friend, saying, “what can this mean? they must have fallen off, and tumbled down the Ghaut.”

“No, if so, how could the animals be found bound to a tree?”

“By Vishnu, I don’t understand it,” said the first speaker, “but lead the brutes in, we will secure them at any rate.”

“Poor night’s work though, when we ex-

pected so much money," said the other man, "but be quiet, the owner of the horses will soon arrive in quest of the animals, there is little doubt, and it will turn out to be as we expect, the Brahmin, kill-devil, as Sumboo calls him—so shut the gate."

They were mistaken, for I turned in an opposite direction, scrambling over rocks, and cutting my legs, and tearing my coat, and losing my turban, until I found myself once more on level ground, with not a hut to be seen, while the rain, descending in torrents, drenched me to the skin. My iron boxes around my loins, and my mohurs, from their weight, considerably impeded my progress, so that I could not proceed very far, while the darkness at intervals led me into ruts and holes filled with water, by which I lost one of my sandals, greatly to the inconvenience of my feet, which became cut, and severely wounded, by the sharp points of the rocks, and stones, in my path.

I learned one piece of news, which was, that Mohun Lal inhabited the Heera Baugh, or Garden of Diamonds, and that no doubt, my beloved Kishna was there, also, kept in confinement. Bitterly, and dearly, had I paid for this intelligence, my horse and pony, were for ever lost to me, myself wet to the skin, and my feet cut, blistered, and ignorant of my road, with no certainty I should not fall in with the Thugs, of the ruined tower, whose roomals I heard, were already prepared for my throat! these were the penalties, paid for my learning the place, of my beloved's abode, but was I now pursuing the right road? would the path I had selected lead me to, or *from* Aurungabad? I paused, resolved to wait for the coming day, ere I madly plunged and floundered about, ignorant where I was proceeding to.

What a night was that for me? again, had I been compelled, to deprive a human being of life; another was added to the catalogue

of my crimes, the recollection of which, would lacerate, and torture my bosom, at some future day, when all my dangers, and difficulties would be passed, if not forgotten. I heard the roar of the tigers, now prowling about for their prey, and who perhaps, smelt the body of my treacherous guide, not very far off. The jackall's bark, (but not the wished-for sound of the bark of the village dogs,) also struck upon my ears, while huge birds flew screaming past me, flapping their wings, as if to scare me, from my resting-place, beneath a large tree, which afforded me some little shelter, from the storm.

CHAPTER II.

MORNING at length dawned, when, through its early mists, what was my alarm, on distinguishing, plainly, the top of the ruined tower, which contained my enemies. I had not then journeyed half a coss, and must have returned, instead of having advanced on my way! I hastened forwards on perceiving the hideous ruin, but, my foot which had been deprived of its sandal, was so lacerated, that my pace could only equal that of a snail, and I gave myself up as lost, for, assuredly the men in the ruin above, would be marching on

towards Aurungabad, now that they had missed their prey, and would immediately suspect me to be the owner of the horses, they had secured in the night. Violence, I had no dread of, on their accosting me, for, being Thugs, their system was to feign kindness, and offer poor travellers the protection of their company, and all I had to do therefore, was, to look out for their J'hirnee, which, I fortunately was master of, and then to shoot one of the fellows, and combat with the other.

Fortunately I had secured my pistols, and placed them in my belt beneath my wadded coat, and had reloaded the one I had used upon my base guide; my powder also, was dry, and in good order; thus, should the fellows attempt to play me any of their Thug tricks, I should be a master for them: I could walk no further, being both lame, and racked by hunger, and therefore, seating myself on a large stone, I bewailed my destiny.

Had the Collector sent me the escort, all this would have been prevented, and I should have stood in need of no treacherous guides, to lead me into destruction.

About mid-day, as I imagined, two men on horseback, leading my own animals, came winding through the pass of the Ghaut. To avoid them was impossible, and I therefore, made my obeisance to them, not noticing my horses in any way whatever.

“Ah, friend,” said one of the fellows, whose voice was familiar to me, “what are you doing here?”

“I am going to Aurungabad,” said I, “but have lost my way, and what is worse, one of my sandals, which has detained me, but, as you have a spare horse or two, hope you will suffer me to mount one of them, and ride in your company.”

“Willingly,” said both the men in one breath, “mount by all means, which do you prefer?”

“Why,” said I, “being a poor horseman, I would rather mount the pony,” this I said to make them believe the horse to be a stranger to me.

“Very well, get up then,” said one of the men, “but, pray were you in the mountain, yesterday?”

“Yes,” said I, “and missed my way.”

“Did you see two men, one on a horse, and the other upon a tattoo, about the size of that on which you now sit?”

“No,” said I, “I saw no one, but I heard a shot fired about three hours after darkness had set in.”

“Ah, indeed? whereabouts might you have been then?” enquired the men.

“Why, that I can’t tell you, sometimes I was up, sometimes down and floundering about, and cutting myself to pieces, as you see.”

“But, was the sound of the pistol, or gun near you, or far off?”

“There is such an echo,” said I, “in the Ghaut, that I was unable to determine the distance.”

“Why did not you demand shelter at the ruin above?”

“Is there any such place?” asked I, in a well affected tone of ignorance, “I never saw any thing like shelter, or would gladly have availed myself of it I can assure you.”

“’Tis not him,” said one of the men.

“It is,” said the other, in a low whisper, and in a jargon I was familiar with.

“Impossible,” said the first speaker.

“You are a fool,” replied his companion, “jog on, and mind my orders.”

We halted at a ravine, very deep, and dangerous, and the spot was, I well knew, chosen for the express purpose, of hurling my body into it, after I should have felt their roomal about my neck. Unluckily one of my iron boxes fell from my sash, with a heavy sound, and I instantly detected significant glances,

pass between the Thugs, in whose clutches I now was fairly caught.

“Come, eat my friend,” said one of the men, “the rain holds off now, and this Banian tree, is an excellent halting place.”

I pretended to eat, but kept my left hand upon my pistols, beneath my coat, and sat at a little distance from my deceivers. Presently, one, who, seemed to act under the orders of the man, who invited me to eat, arose and pretended to be busied about some copper pots, immediately behind me, when I shifted my position, a little, as if by mere chance, upon which, the other man, who was still sitting, and devouring rice, cried “Pànee Lao,” which being the very J’hirnee I had heard determined upon, on the night previous, I instantly shot him through the head, and turning round now upon my feet, presented my pistol at the other villain, in whose hands was the fatal roomal, intended for my neck. The wretch fell upon his knees, but, spare a Thug I never

would, and as my second pistol-bullet entered his heart, he bounded up several feet, from the earth, placed his hand upon the wound, and then falling flat on his face, instantly expired.

I was now master of the field, and in possession of more horses, than I had any need for.

Fearing travellers might be coming, I raised the bodies of my enemies, and threw them into the ravine, which had been selected for myself.

Their horses I left fastened to the tree, and once more mounting my Arab steed, I dashed along an open plain, at full gallop, for nearly one hour, without pulling the rein. I now patted my good horse on his neck, dismounted, and re-loaded my pistols, which had rendered me so much good service. .

Securing well all my treasure, about my person, and tying my turban under my chin, I once more resumed my journey, and arrived

safe at a village, the name of which I never enquired, but found I was now in the territories of the Nizam, and that, all the authorities were Musselmans. I sought out a D'hurm Sallah,¹ or resting-place, for travellers, bought provender for my horse, and myself, and was asked no questions by any body.

Here I remained all night, and before sunrise, was once more on my journey, having enquired my way, from a civil Mahommedan, who assured me, I might reach Aurungabad, by next evening, if I put my horse on his mettle.

I took the hint, and allowed not my horse to flag, for an instant, and by sunset, beheld the Minarets² of Aurungabad. How my heart beat as I approached the abode of my beloved Kishna, my innocent wife!—oh! how I longed to hold her once more to my breast, but, what dangers had I still to encounter, ere I could enjoy this pleasure? was not Mohun Lal, the Thug chieftain, to be caught, and threatened,

or shot, before I could secure my injured Kishna, and how could I, by my single hand, or by the ingenuity of my brain, entrap this renowned, and too crafty Thug, before whom, I dared not venture, as he had but too vivid a recollection of my features, owing me a grudge, for having escaped from his band, on a former occasion? could he now only imagine, that Laroba, the Gùrù, and Veetul, also with the two men from the ruined tower, of the Ghaut, had all fallen by my hand, what chance had I for mercy? what hope could I entertain that my life would be spared?

Having seen to my horse, and provided a lodging for myself, I disguised my person, as a Sunyassee, or religious Ascetic, and then ventured near the Heera Baugh. My eyes now rested on the ring of Veetul! could I not by this means, entice the master Thug, from his lair, and lead him to some secluded spot, letting him believe that Veetul, himself,

awaited him, but was wounded, and unable to come himself, in person, to pay his respects?

I pondered on the scheme, weighing well every chance of detection, and danger, and then proceeded to select my supposed hiding place of the boy Veetul.

While wandering along the streets, I met a man who had belonged to my troop, in Ahmednuggur, whose name was Sujah, and a very brave fellow, I knew him to be : disguised as I was, it is not wonderful that he did not recognize me, but, when I spoke to him, and told him who I was, the man remembered me, in an instant.

“But, good heavens,” said he, “why are you become a religious mendicant !”

“Follow me,” said I, “and you shall hear all I have got to say.”

We sauntered into the suburbs, and from thence near the Heera Baugh, where I told him, “my wife was detained by a villainous

Thug, and in the hope of releasing her, I had assumed the habit only of a Sunyassee, or holy beggar. Now, my friend," said I, "if you will aid me in my enterprize, I will give you five hundred rupees."

"Done," cried Sujah, "I am your man, how do you mean to proceed?"

"Hush!" cried I, "here comes the villain, Mohun Lal."

"What that!" cried Sujah, "you are mistaken; he is the most respectable merchant in the city."

"*You* are mistaken," said I, "he is, in reality, a deceitful, murderous Thug, whose roomal, was all but, about my throat, let him pass, and notice him not."

We did so, and the villain entered a large gate, belonging to the Heera Baugh, which he closed after him.

"You do indeed amaze me," said my friend, "can it be possible that this man is what you say?"

“Yes,” said I, “and is only waiting here for the return of one of his gang, who, will never rejoin him, I can assure you, for I saw him expire.”

“We must manage cunningly,” said Sujah.

“We must indeed,” said I, “and I propose that you should go to the Garden-house, demand an audience of this respectable merchant, and present him this ring, saying, “it was given you by a wounded youth, named Veetul, who, was too ill to leave a retreat, he had found in the cell of a Gosein, but wished much, if it were possible, to see his old, and honoured master. Mohun Lal will immediately follow you, when you must conduct him to my pretended cell, which we must find somewhere about here.”

“Good,” said Sujah, “but when we get him there, what then?”

“Why, then he is at our mercy, and if he do not send a written order to some of his fellows, to deliver over to you my unhappy

will blow his brains out, that is all."

"Well done, Bapoo, you are a brave fellow, I must say."

"That is nothing to what I have been forced to do," said I, "what think you of finding myself between two Thugs, and hearing the J'hirnee given to prepare the roomal?"

"Indeed!" said Sujah, "and how did you escape?"

"By shooting the villains, ere they could prepare their instrument of death," replied I, "but we are losing time, where can I establish myself as a religious Gosein—do you know of any place suited to the occasion?"

"Yes," said Sujah, "near the burial ground, there is a solitary stone chamber, once tenanted by a Gosein, who is now dead; it will be just the place you desire."

"Lead me to it," I replied.

Sujah obeyed, and I highly approved of the spot.

“ Shall we not require another man ^{ing} us,” said Sujah.

“ No,” replied I, “ there are two rooms in this stone edifice ; Mohun Lal shall be desired to be seated on my mat, while I pretend to enter the inner chamber, to apprise the sick youth of his presence.”

“ Well,” said Sujah, “ how will that secure him ?”

“ Do not interrupt me, friend,” said I, “ but listen, and learn your task well. Mohun Lal will, unsuspectingly, seat himself upon the mat, which shall cover over a deep hole, filled with soft mud, in which, while he flounders about, we will secure his arms with cords, previously procured ; what then can he do ?”

“ Scream, and make a noise,” said Sujah.

“ A pistol at his ear, will make him hold his tongue,” replied I, “ if not, we will gag him ; mind, however, and procure writing materials, so that there be no delay, and when once possessed of my wife, why, the fellow

may be set at liberty, although I conceive it to be a duty I owe the public, to blow his brains out on the spot. However, I always like to abide by my word, and if I promise him his life, he shall have it."

"To-morrow night, or about one hour after sunset, will be a fitting time, will it not?" said Sujah.

"Yes," said I, "but you must mind how you manage, when you go with the ring: tell him the youth is handsome, slim, and of agreeable manners, and that he said his name was Veetul, and had matters of importance to communicate—now go, and purchase a spade, and let us at once, begin the making of the trap, for this cunning Thug." I accordingly gave money to my friend, who returned bringing the instrument for digging, and several yards of strong cord, which we put on one side in the inner chamber.

The ground, being of earth, the hole was soon made, and water being at hand, we

speedily filled it with the soft substance, just enough to spread the mat upon it, so as not to lead our victim to suppose, or suspect danger, and then, shutting the door, we departed, intending to devote the early part of the following day, to the further developement of our scheme.

The mat was bought, the writing materials prepared, and placed in the inner chamber, and the hole was covered so exactly by the mat, as that it did not sink in the middle, which, might have betrayed the whole affair, while other articles, such as earthen vessels, hookahs, &c., were strewed about in every direction, giving the place every appearance of a Gosein's dwelling. How my heart beat when I beheld the fiery sun, descend to his western couch! how I longed to have Mohun Lal in my toils, but, oh! how much more did I long for the hour, which would see me once more in the arms of my virtuous wife? oil, and a cocoa-nut cup, for it to burn in, had not been

forgotten, and, lighting up my cell, I despatched Sujah, with the silver ring, of the departed Veetul, of whose death, Mohun Lal must, in course, be ignorant. An hour passed away, and no Sujah, no Mohun Lal, appeared: my agony of suspense is indescribable! had my friend failed? was there any danger? or— at this moment a tap at my cell door, caused me to arise, and Sujah, with Mohun Lal, stood before me!

“ Ram, Ram, Gosein,” said Sujah.

“ Ram, Ram,” said the Thug.

“ Enter, friends,” said I, “ and be seated, and I will apprise the youth that you are here, and if you have any secrets to communicate, myself, and friend will leave you together.”

“ Thank you,” said the Thug, “ we have secrets certainly that we don't wish all the world to know.”

“ You have indeed,” thought I.

Having fairly entered my cell, I pointed to the mat upon which with joy I beheld my

enemy squat, and my rope lay behind my earthen pots quite handy, and Sujah, having fastened the door, and Mohun Lal having plounced into the trap, we rushed upon him, and bound his arms and legs, fast by the cord, and then dragged him out into the centre of the cell in a very miserable pickle indeed—“*Tumbakoo Lao,*” cried I, while Sujah pretended to roll up a roomal in the Thug fashion, to the great dismay and alarm of our dirty prisoner.

“Don’t you hear the J’hirnee?” said I to Sujah, “and why don’t you do your duty?” then turning to my captive, observed, “Good Mohun Lāī, is not that your signal for destruction, and why should not you feel a little suffocation, who have killed so many in your time?”

“How have I been deceived,” said the prisoner, “who are you that know so well my private signals?”

“Who?” said I, “one who escaped your cursed roomals, coming from Ahmednuggur,

and one whose wife you have got, and are about to sell her for money for the Nizam's Seraglio."

"Hah!" cried Mohun Lal, "has Veetul betrayed me?"

"No," said I, "nor Laroba, nor the *holy* Gúrù, but, still they are gone for ever; never will you again behold them, even should I permit you to go hence alive; which I will do, provided that in two hours time, my wife stand before me in this cell."

"I will call out, and demand assistance," said Mohun Lal, "if you will not loosen the cords."

"It will be your last call out then," said I, cocking my pistol, and holding it to his ear. "Let me recommend silence, and obedience to my commands," continued I, "I am captain now, remember, my friend, *TumbakooLao*, eh? no, not tobacco, but pens and ink, and paper, Sujah, directly, and now, Mohun Lal, if you desire your life, write an order to your head

villian, whoever he may be, in charge of your mansion yonder, to deliver to the bearer, Kishna, the wife of Bapoo Brahmin, and let the bearer be furnished with your signet ring, as a voucher for the authenticity of the document entrusted to him."

"Must I do this?" said Mohun Lal.

"Undoubtedly, you savage scoundrel," said I, "or else by M'hadeo, this pistol shall do your business for you, unless indeed you prefer walking out of the world with a roomal (Thug fashion) around your throat."

"Give me the pen," said he.

Whereupon Sujah in mock reverence, bending on one knee presented the inkstand, paper, and kulm, which being used precisely as I had intended them to be, I despatched Sujah, who was possessed of the ring of my prisoner, with the order to the Garden House of Mohun Lal.

During his absence, I kept a good watch over my prisoner, who I perceived attempt to

loosen his bonds, but, my finger on the trigger of the pistol, brought the fellow quiet in an instant.

“How did you escape us?” said he.

“By hearing you plan the murders, and state the very signal,” said I.

“How could this be?” questioned Mohun Lal.

I informed him, when he cursed his stupidity in not having overhauled the saddle bags and packs, in the consultation tent.

He next enquired about Veetul, who, I at once informed him, “had been shot, while Laroba, and the Gúrù had with many others quitted the world in a violent hurry, having been blown up by fifty barrels of gunpowder.”

“Merciful powers! and who did this?”

“Myself,” replied I, “so you see you caught rather an awkward customer, when you laid hold of me, by your cursed deceit, and abominable flattery; and, moreover, let me tell you, that you need not look out for your fellows

from the ruined tower in the Ghaut, for their bodies are now floating at the bottom of a ravine, not far from the mountain."

"And did you kill these men also?" enquired Mohun Lal.

"Yes, or they would have killed me, for the J'hirnee was actually given."

"Then they were bunglers," said Mohun Lal, "for, you ought not to have had time to draw your pistol—had I been there——"

"I wish you had," said I, interrupting him, "but you see you have fallen into another sort of trap."

"And what security have I, that having got your wife, you will not use your pistols."

"My word, fellow," said I, "I am no Thug but a destroyer of your race, and, if I did my duty to society, I ought to blow your brains out, without regard to the sanctity of my word, or to any appeals you may make to my compassion. However, as my friend has passed no word, I would recommend your instant

departure from Aurungabad, or, you may be nabbed, and your whole gang too, as many as may now remain with you."

A knock at the door, caused me to arise ; it was Sujah—and in another moment, Kishna was in my arms, crying for joy !

CHAPTER III.

I WAS now repaid for all my troubles, and hair-breadth escapes; Kishna shed tears abundantly, while her arms held me fast to her bosom.

“Never leave me again, dearest,” she cried, “do not, for I shall expire if subjected to such alarms, a second time.”

“It was unavoidable, my love,” said I, a blush of shame tingling my cheeks, when I called to mind, how basely, I had purposely, left her, to be sacrificed.

“Oh! Bapoo,” she cried, “if you had dis-

covered the travellers, to be Thugs, why not have communicated the discovery to me, and poor Heera Singh?"

"I had no time, my beloved," I replied, "and imagined, having taxed that monster with his real profession, would have ensured all your lives, but now what shall we do with him?"

"Let him go," said Kishna, "for, he it was, who saved my life, when told I had no jewels about me."

"Monster," said I, to my captive, "arise, and quit my presence, and if you are wise, you will take my advice and quit this city instantly, or I will not answer for what may befall you."

Sujah having loosened the cords, and removed them entirely, Mohun Lal bounded from the cell across the plain like an antelope, evidently pleased and surprised at having been let off so easily.

"Why did the Thugs detain me so long?" enquired Kishna.

"To sell you, dearest, at Hyderabad," I re-

plied, "and for the worst purposes, to ornament the Nizam's Zenana!"

"Merciful Vishnu! had I known as much I would have destroyed myself," said Kishna.

"Then how fortunate was your ignorance, beloved," said I, "for then, I should not now be straining you to my bosom."

"But you would not have blamed me for so doing, would you, Bapoo?"

"No," said I, "better that, than eternal disgrace, shame, and a life of infamy—no Kishna, bitterly should I have lamented your death, while praising your virtue, which led you to seek it. Let us hope now our troubles will come to a close; but, I believe all the world is my enemy, if so, my sword must not slumber in its scabbard."

"Sujah, my friend, you shall have the reward I promised you; attend us to the D'hurm Sallah, where I put up on my arrival."

Thus saying, we all three quitted the Gosein's cell, and reached the travellers resting-place

without interruption. I paid my friend his money, and he offered to accompany us in our return to Nuggur, or Candeish, to whichever place I was bound. I accepted his services, presenting him with a new sword, just ground, and a pair of pistols, which I purchased from a Mogul, who little knew their value. A pony for my wife, and another for Sujah, was all that would now be required, and taking Kishna, to my lodgings, I desired Sujah to employ himself in the purchase of the horses, on the following day. He promised so to do, and quitted us, making a hundred salaams, expressive of his gratitude, fidelity, and respect.

The next day we spent, in looking about us, viewing the mosques, the minarets, the aqueducts, and the fountains, many of which, however, were in very bad repair. The gardens, now watered by the rain from heaven, looked verdant, and beautiful, and we resolved to stroll to the Heera Baugh, to ascertain if

Mohun Lal had decamped, according to my advice. He was gone, and the place apparently deserted. Kishna pointed out to me, her place of confinement, which was in a small room, overlooking a private garden, where played a pretty fountain, and from whence, arose agreeable, and refreshing odours, from many a flower.

“How did you contrive to pass your weary hours?” enquired I.

“In truth, I can scarcely tell you,” said Kishna, “but there were women here, who were also prisoners, and somehow or another, we wiled away the time, but I was very miserable, and followed your friend here, with every presentment of evil. On our road, however, to your saintship’s cell, Sujah informed me, who I was about to meet, and he will tell you how I urged him forwards.”

“I have no doubt,” said I, “and now let us return to our lodgings.”

We accordingly returned, and Sujah inform-

ed me, he had seen a horse for himself, and a good strong pony for Kishna, both of which could be had cheap. I saw the animals, and highly approving, bought them at a fair price.

All being now settled, we left Aurungabad on the day following. Arriving at the ravine, the scene of my Thug exploit, I pointed out the exact place, where I had thrown the two bodies of my enemies, and Sujah laughed immoderately at my wonderful victory, as he called it; when I afterwards fully narrated to him the adventures of my mud fort, he gazed upon me, as though I were indeed, a being from another world, or a highly favoured one in this.

“For,” said he, “your ears are ever open and ready to overhear all plots against your life.”

“Yes,” said I, “but by the merest accident, you must allow, and when once one knows, what is hatching against us, it is very

easy to circumvent the conspirators, and turn the tables upon them.”

“True, but you have some courage, as well as cunning, Bapoo,” said Sujah, “and deserve to be succesful.”

“I do not merit, such base attempts on my life,” said I, “and he, who from the first, planned my destruction has now met death himself, and by my hand.”

“Thanks to good strong gunpowder,” said Sujah, “but holy Vishnu, what a blow up it must have been !”

“It was indeed,” said I, “and I thought certainly the old mud fort would have tumbled about my ears ; but the northern wall, and two bastions only suffered, leaving me to the mercy of Veetul, the Thug, who we speedily finished, by a bullet from a matchlock—but the explosion ! never shall I forget that—never before had I witnessed the effects of gunpowder ! It was the noise of a thousand mortars discharged all at once ; huge pieces of granite that would

have taken a thousand men to raise even an inch, rolled over and over like stones in a pebbly brook; showers of small stones, and fragments of rock flew about my bewildered head, while the dust, and the smoke almost blinded me. I imagine I used more powder than was requisite, for, the very earth seemed to heave beneath my feet, and I fully expected to be engulfed in the ruin I had intended for my enemies. On the day following, a violent wind blew off the thatched roof of my house, and down came the blackened leg of one of the conspirators, which had lodged on the thatch, on the evening of the explosion; and I am called by the villagers, the conquering devil, as they maintain, that I came to wage war against the demons of the dry well."

"They have not much miscalled you, Bappoo," said Sujah, "for, by Ishwur, I would not like to be your enemy, as you do get the upper hand surprisingly, I must say, and you

are determined to go to your wuttun, again, prior to visiting Ahmednuggur?"

"Yes," said I, "and will find out this Sumboo, who would have led me, again among the Thugs, in the ruined tower: he shall answer to me, for his vile treachery, rely upon it."

"Why, you won't blow him up, will you, Bapoo?"

"No, not with powder, but with reproaches, and get him well punished, if the Kumavisdar will only oblige me, by detaining him, until I can have an interview with the Collector."

"Right," said Sujah, "and it strikes me that this fellow, all along was leagued with the Thugs, and conducted Veetul towards your weak side of the fort, and that he knows very well you are no devil, or conjuror, and only harped upon the blowing up affair, and pretended battle with the demons, to throw you off the scent respecting himself, and his treacherous intentions towards you."

"You are no doubt correct," said I, "this

never struck me, but if so, he shall confess all, or I will know the reason why ; however, his friend, my new guide, has got *his* reward, for having enlisted in such a villain's service."

We now reached a village beyond the pass, which brought us into the territories of the English again, and I now discovered that my treacherous guide had unnecessarily lead me by an upper instead of a lower path, for which it appeared he had his own private reasons, and for which he met his just reward.

In the village where we now halted, there was considerable emotion, owing to a wonderful discovery of a murder, made by a young woman, recently married, who had come to the village from Oujein, an immense distance, and who, was of course, a perfect stranger to the parties, in this small and obscure place. Nevertheless, she actually had during a trance,³ which fell over her, detailed many acts, relative to a murder, which had been done, in this very village, about a month back. The circum-

stances being so similar, to what would have happened to myself, in the early part of my life, I begged, to be allowed to see the girl, while the trance was upon her.

“Let him come,” cried a voice, I knew to be that of Sumboo, my first guide, “let him come, I will wager a thousand rupees, he will drive the devil out of her.”

“Just keep your eye on that fellow, Sujah,” said I, “and allow me to enter the house.”

It so happened, that the instant I entered the room, where the girl had been making such wonderful disclosures, she became suddenly silent, and sunk down into a calm repose. The people who had heard Sumboo's words, now looked upon me, as a god, or demon, I could not determine which.

“I told you so,” said Sumboo, “I told you *he* alone could drive away the devil, from the girl—you see, she is quiet in an instant, after *he* set eyes upon her.”

“Come along with me,” said Sujah, to this

boasting fool, "I have a word or two, to say to you."

"What do you want with me?" said Sumboo.

"Nothing very particular," said Sujah, "but follow me."

"Thank you, I had rather not," said Sumboo, "you belong to the devil king, I rather think, so you will excuse me."

"He is too crafty," said Sujah, to me, "but we shall have him yet, never fear. But what is all this confusion about, in the village?"

"I will tell you," said I, "a month ago, a boy was missing, and could nowhere be heard of, and his parents, gave over the search, as hopeless. Now comes this young woman, who has been recently married, and having been beaten by her husband, falls in a trance, and tells all about the missing boy, even mentioning his name, saying he was murdered by a Gùrù, or a religious preceptor, for the sake

of his silver bangles ; she mentioned even the name of the Gùrú, the amount he sold the bangles for, and where the money was concealed, namely, beneath the mat, at an oilman's house. Search is made, and there is the money, sure enough. When I entered the room, the trance happened to pass away, and the girl is now in a tranquil slumber. This ass Sumboo, having apprised the people, that I had power to dispel the evil spirit, in the girl, and they seeing her become quiet, the instant I presented myself, now look upon me, as a wonderful person. Some conceive me to be a god, or an inspired being, while others look on me as a devil, or the prince of demons, before whom all minor devils flee away.

“ This is very awkward,” said Sujah, “ and we had better proceed on our journey.”

“ No,” said I, “ a precipitate departure will bear the appearance of guilt, and be deemed a tacit acknowledgement, that the accusation of Sumboo, is not altogether unfounded ;

I must first seize, and accuse him of being connected with the Thugs, and thus turn the rancour of the villagers against him; therefore come with me to the Patail."

Sujah, accordingly followed me, and having arrived at the Patail's house, I demanded an audience, which was readily granted to me. I explained every thing I thought necessary, to the Patail, wherein Sumboo was concerned, desiring he might be arrested; the Patail demurred until, I assured him I would bear all blame that might be laid to his door, and if Sumboo escaped, I would also use my influence with the Collector, to get the Patail punished for neglect of his duty.

Upon this, the Patail sent out Peons to seize Sumboo, without delay. The fellow was easily found, and appeared with hardened effrontery, little dreaming the nature of the charge against him; when, however, he did learn it, he denied all connexion with the Thugs, or with Balloo, the new guide; but when I distinctly

swore to the Thugs having used his name, he was silent, and the Patail ordered him to be kept in confinement, until further orders from the Collector. Here then was an end of Sumboo's going about calumniating me, but, he had already done enough, and my having occasioned his confinement, caused me to be regarded with very unfavourable eyes, and once, or twice, I imagined I heard myself called king of the devils, by a herd of rabble boys.

In the mean while, the Patail was busy with the evidence of the people, who heard the disclosures of the entranced woman, who now was the most ignorant person in the whole village, and knew nothing at all about the boy, the murder, or the Gùrù!

In three days time, we reached Warree, and I took possession of my mud fortress once more, placing Kishna in the best apartments I could boast of. No one had touched my roof, however, so that the rains had made sad havoc in the upper stories, but, below I contrived to

furnish very comfortable rooms, where we intended to reside. I now demanded workmen at the hands of the Kumavisdar, upon which ten men, very reluctantly made their appearance. The roof was soon refixed, the wall to the north began, and all was in progress, when, I was summoned to appear before the Collector, on my complaint against Sumboo. I left Kishna under the guard of my friend Sujah, and her two women servants, whom I had procured with some little difficulty, owing to the prejudice of the natives against my unfortunate wuttun, and its dry well, although the latter was now filled up, and admitted of no devils leaping from it, or ghosts to glide into it.

The Collector was situated a day's march only from Warree, and I reached his court without any let or hindrance.

The gentleman informed me that he had received a letter from the Collector of Nuggur, stating, he had been to Bombay, which accounted for his not having received my letter, request-

ing an escort, and which he only got, on his return to Ahmednuggur.

“You had a narrow escape, Bapoo,” said the Candeish Collector, and you imagine this Sumboo is connected with the Thugs?”

“I do,” said I, “or he would not have been so insolent.”

“For which, I understand, you beat him well,” said the Collector.

“I did so,” replied I, “and then discharged him, “but it seems he juggled with Balloo, my new guide, who had agreed to take upon him the traitor’s part, Sumboo, having lost, by his dismissal, all chance of betraying me, himself.”

“Yet, the Thugs by your account,” said the Collector, “expected the coming of Sumboo.”

“Yes, they could not have had time to be apprised of the change of the guides.”

“And what has become of Balloo?” enquired the Collector.

“I shot him dead, sir,” replied I.

“Indeed! where?”

“In the Ghaut, near the ruined tower.”

“That is in the Nizam’s territories,” said the Collector, “so I need not enquire into the affair, but think you acted perfectly right.”

“I gave him due warning, sir,” said I, “but he would not regard my threats, so what could I do?”

“I should have done the same,” said the Collector, “but now call in this Sumboo, and let us hear what he has to say for himself.”

Sumboo appeared, bowing, and cringing, and apparently ashamed of himself.

“You are accused of being connected with the Thugs,” said the Collector.

“It is not true,” said Sumboo.

“You are accused of trying to betray Bapoo Brahmin, into the hands of the Thugs,” continued the Collector.

“No,” said Sumboo, “I knew not the people in the fort were Thugs, but—”

“Oh, then you confess having endeavoured

to lure Bapoo into that ruined tower, in the Ghaut?"

"Yes, I do," said Sumboo.

"How did you know that the tower was inhabited by lawless people?"

"I will relate all if your lordship will permit me," said Sumboo.

"Speak, I am all attention," said the Collector.

"A stranger came to Warree, he was a young man, and said, 'he wanted to find the entrance to a secret cavern, below Bapoo's wuttun, not that he called it by the name of Bapoo's house, because he was ignorant who lived there.' I endeavoured to aid him, but we could not succeed. He offered me service, saying, 'his friends who lived by plunder, were in the tower, in the Ghaut pass.' I knew the place—one of the fellows, from the tower joined me, and the young man, while searching for the secret entrance to the cavern, and seeing he was losing time, proposed re-

turning alone, leaving the young man, and myself to ferret out the cavern's entrance. Not succeeding, I kept great part of the time with the man, from the Ghaut fort, who asked me 'how I lived?' I replied 'that I hired myself as guide for travellers, going to Aurungabad.'

"' You might do us a good turn then,' said he, 'and bring us a rich traveller now and then ; we will pay you well.'

"I know one who is about to go that road," said I, "but can't tell you when ; however, I will send a person off in advance, to give you due notice when to expect him, and my signal shall be one long and shrill whistle, by your entrance gate."

"' Good,' said the man, 'and you shall have one fourth of the booty.'

"Soon after this I heard that the young man who came in quest of the secret cavern had been shot by Bapoo, when attempting to enter his fortress, or wuttun, and that Bapoo was about

to travel to Aurungabad; I knew he would apply to the Kumavisdar for a guide, and therefore, made interest with that officer to send for me. He did so, and I became the guide of Bapoo Brahmin."

"And then you sent forward a man," said the Collector, "to plan his death."

"No, I only sent word to say the traveller had killed one of their associates, meaning the young man who had demanded my assistance to find out the secret cavern."

"Oh, that is all you did, was it?" said the Collector, "and pray what did you think the fellows would do with the traveller, who had killed one of their gang?"

"Rob him, of course," said Sumboo, coolly, "and——."

"And then let him go?" said the Collector, enquiringly.

"Perhaps, yes—perhaps, no"—replied Sumboo; "that was no affair of mine."

"Oh—no affair of your's," said the Collec-

tor, "we shall see about that, and in the meanwhile you will be imprisoned, until I determine how you shall be dealt with—take him away ; and now, Bapoo, will you take possession of your property, which nearly broke my camel's back."

I smiling, replied, "willingly, sir, and I return you many thanks for your condescension, in taking charge of it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE boxes being now produced, I was desired to break my seals, and see if all was right. I obeyed, and opened the first box, when, what was my amazement on finding it filled with stones, instead of rupees! and finding the second box contained the same cargo, I cried with vexation.

The Collector, although he at first laughed at my mortification, afterwards became very serious, reflecting as he did, that the boxes had been under his care.

“Did you well examine your seals, Bapoo?”
said he.

“Yes, sir, and they appeared my own, but, my money, sixty-thousand rupees is gone!”

“I am very deeply concerned, to hear this,”
said the Collector, “and the more so, since they have been under my charge, and I feel convinced my Treasurer could not have forged your seals, and stolen your money: some one must have possessed himself of your private signet, and plundered you long before the boxes were put upon my camel.”

“I believe it, sir,” said I, “and now you remind me, I recollect, when the villagers of Warree, pursued, and pelted me, I fled into my fortress, and one of my guards, at night time, brought me my ring, which in the scuffle, I had dropped near my gate-way. Sumboo, perhaps, must know about this robbery, may I promise him a full pardon, if he will confess all, and restore my money?”

“ Yes,” said the Collector, “ and I should be well pleased to find the robbery had taken place before the boxes were placed under my care.”

I then took my leave, and proceeded to the prison, where I saw and conversed with Sumboo.

“ You are in a pretty scrape, Sumboo,” said I, “ and will be hanged, unless I intercede for you.”

“ Which you will not do,” said he.

“ I don’t know,” replied I, “ that depends upon yourself.”

“ How, what can you mean?” said the fellow.

“ Tell me where my money is, that you have robbed me of, and then I will try all in my power to get you off.”

“ What money?” said Sumboo, “ I know of no money of your’s.”

“ Yes, you do,” said I, “ my guard was your

cousin, and between you, my boxes have been emptied of their contents, and filled with stones."

"And do you imagine I could act in this manner," said Sumboo, "where could I find your boxes? How did I know you had any money? and did not you seal them up with your own seal?"

"How do you know that?" said I.

"Did not you tell me so?"

"No, I never mentioned a word about the boxes being sealed," replied I, "so you must know something about the matter, and if you do not choose to make a full confession, and restore the money to me, hanged shall you be, for the attempt upon my life."

"'Tis all a trick of the devils in the well," said Sumboo, "I know nothing about your money, nor how you came by it."

"That," said I, "is no affair of your's; I am convinced you have robbed me, and if you desire to retain your life, you must tell me

where my treasure is concealed, and all about the robbery."

"I know nothing about it," continued the obstinate fool, adding, "go and find it yourself."

"Indeed," said I, "you must tell me first where to seek for it."

He laughed, and turned me into ridicule, which so exasperated me, that I left him, swearing, I would get him hanged if I expended all I was worth in so doing.

Sumboo, however, was hardened, and seemed to enjoy my disappointment. I allowed him his momentary laugh, assuring him, he would not laugh so merrily in a few weeks time.

"Never mind," said the villain, "I may have out-deviled you my prince of demons, where is the money, eh?"

"I thought you knew all about it," said I, "and it will be better for you to confess, or you will be sure to swing, for the attempt

upon my life, and I only wish I had not discharged you, when you would have now been, like your agent Balloo, food for the jack-alls."

"You are a very clever fellow, no doubt," said Sumboo, "but clever as you are, you can't find your rupees without my assistance, and perhaps not even then, for I can only tell you, that your guard, Vickajee, knows all about it, but he is gone far away, and I question if he have left the money behind him."

"How much did you get?" said I.

"That is of no consequence," said he, "I am not greedy, so you may guess how much I got, but it is of no use talking, for you will never find your money, I am confident."

"We shall see," said I, "give me only some clue to it, and I will speedily ferret it out."

"Well, then, promise to save my life, and I will tell you all I know," said the fellow.

"I promise, I swear by the cow," said I,

“ you shall not die, if you will tell me truly, all you know about the robbery.”

“ Well, then, as my cousin is safe off, I will tell you, that Shew Singh, a Shroff, of Warree, has got about fifty-five thousand rupees of your money, which was left with him by my cousin, your guard, who, having one day, found your ring, took an impression of it, before he returned it to you at night. He heard the Collector desire you to seal your boxes; he saw you go with a lighted lamp, into the round tower, by the gate-way, and he knew there lay your treasure. The key of the left hand tower, fitted the right hand one, and at night, my cousin changed the money into stones, sealing up the boxes, as well as you yourself could have done; he gave me a thousand rupees to help to get rid of you, in your way to Aurungabad, but never until you had started, and I had returned from being dismissed by you, did he tell me the

extent of his robbery, or where he had deposited the money."

I now promised him to speak in his favour, and save his life, provided that the Shroff should confirm his statement.

"Threaten him, and he will," said Sumboo, "for he is a great coward, and a child might terrify him."

Upon hearing this information, I proceeded to the Collector, to whom I related all I had heard.

"He shall not die," said he, "but by heavens, he shall never again be let loose, but," continued he, "go, Bapoo, to Warree, and if the Shroff, Shew Singh, prevaricate, you shall be furnished with an order to the Patail, to arrest him—in one hour it shall be ready for you."

I made my obeisance, returning my thanks, and in an hour afterwards, was in possession of my order to the Warree Patail.

On my return to my fortress, I found Kishna alarmed at my long absence, but having ex-

plained to her my loss, and the cause of my detention, she was too reasonable a creature to reproach me.

“Sixty thousand rupees!” exclaimed she, “why, Bapoo, you are very rich.”

“Not so very rich,” said I, “if it has been robbed, and in the hands of a thief.”

“True,” said she, “but you must, and will exert yourself to recover the sum, will you not, Bapoo?”

“Assuredly my beloved,” said I, “but it is not so easy to recover stolen money; however, I have a clue to its discovery when you shall have your jewels now in pledge, in Ahmednuggur, once more.”

“Why are you so extravagant, Bapoo?” said my wife, “why have expended so much money on our marriage? had you not done so, I might have retained my jewels.”

“And lost your life,” said I, “for remember your destitute condition alone, saved you from the roomal of the Taug’s.”

“That is true,” said she, “as it happened, but be careful my beloved, and do not spend more money than is necessary.”

“I will not, Kishna,” said I, “but where is Sujah?”

“In the village,” replied my wife, and wanting something to do.”

“Aye,” said I, “and if not employed, he will be after mischief, I have no doubt.”

The very person now entered my house, and was pleased to see me.

“Come,” said I, “we have some unpleasant business on hand, let us proceed to Shew Singh, Shroff, directly for he is in the possession of all my money.”

“Do you mean to shoot, or strangle him?” said Sujah, “because I am ready to aid you—say but the word.”

“No,” said I, “we shall proceed in a very different way, I assure you, and get the money quietly—follow me.”

Sujah obeying, we speedily found ourselves

at the Shroff's house, who receiving us civilly, demanded our business, I said, "my business was, to demand about sixty thousand rupees, which he had received from a thief, who stole it from me, and who was my guard, paid to protect my property."

Shew Singh hesitated, and could not deny having a large sum deposited with him, by the man I mentioned, "but," said, "he was not at liberty to give it up, without an order from the person who had left it with him."

"You will be compelled so to do, however," said I, "or must follow me to the Collector, who will soon do away with your scruples, I assure you: see, here is the order on my Pat-tail, to enforce obedience."

"I would give up the money," said the man, "but my brother has gone to Hy-derabad with it, and also much merchandize."

"That is nothing to me," said I, "and he may be robbed, or a thousand things may happen to him."

“No,” said the Shroff, “he is not likely to be robbed, for he travels with a very respectable merchant, a broker, and jeweller, whose name is valued in Aurungabad.”

“What is his name?” said I.

“Mohun Lal,” replied the Shroff.

“What!” said I, “the fellow who tenanted the Heera Baugh, at that place?”

“The same,” said he.

“Then you will never more set eyes upon your brother, that is all I can say,” replied I.

“Why?” enquired Shew Singh.

“Because he is in the hands of a Thug, and no doubt is by this time strangled, and all your money safe in the hands of his murderers.”

The unfortunate Shroff, set up such a howl as never before met my ears; he threw off his turban, stamped, tore, and roared like a maniac, declaring he was utterly ruined, and his poor brother murdered.

“ I have no doubt,” said I, “ that such is the case, yet, I well know, you must have enough money to answer all my demands, therefore, make no more excuses, but pay it down.”

“ I have no money, my brother took it all away to speculate with, and I am a beggar, I can't pay, I may be killed, but, I have no money, so do leave me I pray, and put up with your loss.”

“ Not I, indeed !” replied I, “ pay me my money, which you had no business to have received, from a man that you must have known could not lawfully have been in possession of such a large sum.”

“ Arry ! arry ! woe is me,” said the Shroff, “ I am ruined, I am a lost man, I have no money ! I did not know, indeed I am innocent !”

“ Pay me my money,” said I, “ or the Patail will arrest you the moment I present this order to him ; you are equal to the thief, and must answer the charge to the Collector.”

“How can I pay money, when I have it not?” said the Shroff, “Oh, my poor brother, he is killed, and all the money gone—gone—for ever gone!”

“This is all very well,” said I, “but you have still money left, and pay you shall, and must.”

After another hour's talk, the Shroff promised to pay me, and actually did produce fifty thousand rupees, saying, “that was all he had been entrusted with.”

I knew it was a lie, but put up with my loss; and walked home with my cash, much to Kishna's satisfaction, and delight. My jewels were at least, worth three times the amount, I had found in hard money, so that I might now sit down quietly with my fortune, and be engaged in no more broils.

Sumboo was not hanged, but imprisoned for ten years, having to labour on the roads, and the Shroff never more hearing of his un-

lucky brother, who travelled in such *respectable* company, went raving mad, and was kept in confinement for the remainder of his days : thus terminated my adventures, in my journey to Aurungabad. .

CHAPTER V.

HAVING recovered as much of my money as could be expected, I deemed it my duty to proceed to the Collector, to return thanks to him, for his assistance, and set out attended by Sujah, leaving Kishna under the care of her female domestics, and my guard, at the gate of my castle.

I found the Collector very much occupied in the investigation of the murder, brought to light, by the entranced female, who, however, was now as ignorant as she had before been wise. Certain it was, that she disclosed the

spot, where the body of the poor boy had been flung, after his wrists had been severed, and his throat cut, and in such a state had it been found.

The Gùrù, who in her trance she had inculpated, was now a prisoner, but he was a very different sort of character from my religious, mild, and meek preceptor, being a tall burly-looking, stout, and athletic fellow, aged about thirty, and scowling defiance on all around him.

To every question asked him, he replied, "not guilty," and to this he adhered, to the last moment, while the only inconvenience, he seemed keenly to feel, was being compelled to stand up, during the trial.

The Collector endeavoured to find out the Shroff, or jeweller, who had bought the bangles, but such person could not be heard of; and therefore as it was impossible to convict the prisoner, merely on the evidence of a dream, as it might be denominated; he was

fully acquitted, and allowed to take his departure.

The Collector appeared very unwilling to let the Gùrù loose again, feeling assured, in his own mind, of his guilt; and upon my relating to him, my adventure with a similar character when I was a youth, he was more than ever convinced that the Gùrù, in the present case, had sacrificed the unhappy boy. "But," said he, "Bapoo, we never execute persons without having the most satisfactory proof of their guilt, and here, unluckily, the entranced girl failed to mention the purchaser of the bangles; thus, a link in the chain of evidence is wanting, and the crime cannot be satisfactorily brought home to the prisoner, who, I am compelled to discharge, nor can he be tried again at any future time, on the same charge, such is our law, and such our justice."

"He would have confessed," said I, "if you had put him to the torture."

“Ah! we never do that,” replied the Collector, “as many a poor man might confess, merely to evade the agony of the thumb screw, nor do we ever even ask the accused to speak a word unless he pleases, and the Gùrù, you perceive, was wise enough to maintain profound silence.”

“I see your plan,” said I, “and it is a merciful one, but had he been arraigned before a Maharatta judge, he would not have escaped so easily, I assure you.

“I am about to re-organize my Police, Bapoo,” said the Collector “will you accept the office of Foujdar, or head commissioner of Police?”

“Willingly,” said I, “and you may depend upon me, for I am now rich enough to be independent, and above all dirty bribery, from any one.”

“For this reason, I have selected you,” said the Collector; “your pay will be three-hundred rupees per menseun, and you may select

your own deputy, who will receive half that amount."

I immediately recommended Sujah, my worthy friend, who had aided me in the recovery of my wife, and he was accordingly presented, and appointed from that hour as my deputy.

My duty was to investigate all criminal complaints, from the Kumavisdars of the districts, and to commit to prison where I deemed there was sufficient evidence to convict, and that the Collector himself, would try the persons, so committed by me, and sentence them accordingly, or acquit them, as he deemed proper.

The necessary orders were then sent to all the districts, while the Kumavisdars were informed that they were to report to me in the first instance, any breaches of the peace, or robberies which might come to their knowledge, and abide by my instructions.

"There seems, however, to be a prejudice

against you, Bapoo, in Warree," said the Collector, "about the blowing-up affair in your wuttun; tell me all about it."

I was rather taken by surprise, at this demand, and not feeling inclined to state the exact truth, laughingly replied, "why, sir, it seemed that the villagers had an idea that the well in my court yard was haunted, and in consequence, I could get no one to work for me, or approach my residence; I determined therefore to fill up my well, thinking, having so done, there could be no fear of evil spirits emerging from it, but, as no one would lend me their carts, or men to bring earth, I was resolved to complete the ruin of the well, by gunpowder, a large quantity of which, I found in my magazine. I blew up the well therefore, and blew down my wall to the northward at the same moment, fully expecting to find myself high up in the air, for the ground heaved beneath my feet."

The Collector laughed heartily, observ-

ing, "this is all no doubt true, Bapoo, but how do you account for legs, and arms having been afterwards seen strewed about the ravine, and even on your house top?"

"That," said I, "is, to me, a mystery, but imagine in blowing up the well, I had done the same to the cavern, in search of which, Sumboo's friend had taken the trouble to come all the way from Aurungabad. The legs, arms and limbs, therefore, must have belonged to those robbers, who, I imagine, happened to be all at home at the time of my explosion, but of whose existence I could not have dreamed."

The Collector laughed again, saying, "well, Bapoo, "no one can gainsay you, therefore, we must take your account as the truth."

I was silent, and the Collector now making some further arrangement, concerning my new appointment, and deciding that my head quarters should be at Warree, allowed me to retire.

Thirty Peons were allowed me, constantly to be at my call, and under my orders, and

when I deemed it necessary to go my rounds, through the districts, six horsemen, well armed, followed at my heels.

Before I commenced my labours, however, I demanded leave of absence to proceed to Poona, to place my money in my Banker's hands, and also to dispose of my diamonds, and valuable jewels, contained in my small iron boxes.

The Collector assenting, I set out, followed by Sujah, and my escort of mounted Sebundee Horse Soldiers, taking the route to Nasik, being anxious to see about my farm, and property in that quarter. No danger befel me now that I travelled in state, and had become indeed a great man.

In Nasik, there was a considerable stir, in consequence of the arrival of a Holy Pundit, from Benares, on his way to Guzrat. The name of this very sacred character, was, Rugoonath, and a man well known, and venerated, all through the country. He was

extremely austere, and cruel, constantly commanding sacrifices to Siva, wherever he went.

Now, as Nasik contained a temple devoted to the destroyer, it had been given out, that by the orders of Rugoonath, the holy one of India, a young child should be immediately immolated at Siva's shrine.

All the Brahmins including myself, assembled at a certain spot to dine with this illustrious priest, so praised for his learning and sanctity. There was something strange about the man, and I could not take my eyes off him; he was a Brahmin to all outward appearance, while his pronounciation of the Sancrit was pure in the extreme. He repeated his prayers correctly, seeming to have the Vedas at his tongue's end; still it ran in my head that he was an impostor. I endeavoured to save the sacrificial offering of the living child, but Rugoonath became exceedingly wrath, saying :

“Who are you that dare dictate to me?”

Have not the crops failed? Is there not distress in the land, and why? Because you go on from year to year, and forget to sacrifice to holy Siva; now therefore it must be done, and a woman having offered her child, a male infant, two years old, it will be acceptable to Siva, if immolated properly."

"How," said I, "what do you mean by properly?"

"*Pounded to death in a brazen mortar, previously made red hot!*" said the holy Pundit, with a most serious countenance.

"I will prevent this," said I within myself, "if possible, and resolved to attend in the temple."

Previous to the sacrifice, the Brahmins seated themselves around the altar, on which was already placed the victim, sleeping in its innocence, and unconscious of the horrid cruelties about to be practiced upon it.

Our rice was placed before us, upon Lotus leaves, and in silence did we begin to partake of it; my eyes never were off Ragoonath, the

holy Pundit, for a moment, and I detected him letting fall a grain of rice upon his leaf, and again putting it into his mouth.

“You are no Brahmin,” said I to myself, “not even a Hindù, and I will expose you.”

I nudged my neighbour, who had also made the same observation, but I signed him to silence.

After the meal, Rugoonath demanded “if the brazen mortar had been heated?” when an attendant answering in the affirmative, the Pundit arose baring his arms to immolate the smiling innocent, now awake at Siva’s feet.

“Stop!” cried I, “I protest against the sacrifice, it is unholy.”

“How!” cried one of the party, “is it not ordered by the holy Pundit, from Benares?”

“He is an impostor,” I exclaimed, “and no Brahmin!”

“How do you know this?” cried several of the company.

I then explained what I had observed during the meal, when my assertion having been con-

firmed by my friend at my side, a deep groan proceeded from the whole conclave of Brahmins.

The Pundit attempted to bluster, and call aloud for the sacrifice to begin, when upon being overpowered, beaten, and stripped, he confessed himself to be a *Mussulman* !

Taking advantage of the confusion, I snatched up the innocent child, and rushed with it from the temple, giving it to a woman who was its mother, and who was crying bitterly without the temple ; “take it cruel wretch,” said I, and as she stretched forth her arms to receive the babe, what was my astonishment on recognizing my once betrothed Beema !

“Is it possible,” cried I, “can you be so cruel, can you be such a vile unnatural being, as to give over your own child to be pounded to death in a red hot mortar ?”

“Do not blame me,” said she, “it is *Larcoba*’s doing, and I have been married to him long ago ; he is ill, and fancied if he gave up

his child to Siva, he would speedily recover."

"Lead me to him," I cried, "mistaken, or misguided woman—lead on."

She proceeded at a rapid pace, and stopped at a low door in a curious building, desiring me to enter.

There lay Larcoba, of copper pot memory, certainly at death's door, seeming quite disappointed at seeing his child brought home alive.

"Bapoo has saved my child," said she, "and now let me fall down and worship him."

"No," said I, "arise, Beema, I require no worship, I swore to save the child to whomsoever it might belong, and I have fortunately had it in my power to do so. Larcoba," I continued, "are you so besotted, so ignorant, so vile, as to imagine for an instant, that the immolation of your offspring can remove your malady? Shame upon you, selfish man that you are; I am a Brahmin, Larcoba, and I tell

you, all such sacrifices are abominations, and are not required at our hands, by any of our gods. Now, you *may* recover, but had your child perished, you never should, for I would have sent you out of the world myself, coward that you are, why fear you death? and you woman, how could you comply with this recreant's demands?"

"I have been very guilty," said Beema, "pray do not say any more, although I am more guilty than you think me to be, for I, with the Gùrù, bribed the water carrier to calumniate your wife, as I was jealous to think, that although betrothed to me, you abhorred the very sight of me—but, pray pardon me good Bapoo."

I was indeed amazed on hearing this most unexpected confession, but why, I know not, for a woman who would not scruple to sacrifice her own child, would scarcely hesitate about destroying her rival; "demons, that you both are," cried I, "let me go; the air that ye

breathe is polluted." Beema clung to my knees, but, spurning her from me with my foot, I rushed from her abode, rejoicing once more to breathe the pure air of heaven.

In the streets of Nasik, there was now a vast concourse of people assembled to witness the impostor, the sham Brahmin, ride through the town upon an ass, his face to the tail, a sentence which had been pronounced upon him by the assistant of the Nuggur Collector, who chanced to be in Nasik at the time, and before whom the disputants had been led by the Police Peons.

Rugoonath had now been compelled to confess, that his name was Fuzloodeen Dowlarker, and that he was, as his name denounced, a Mahommedan, an adventurer, and an arrant impostor!

What purifications, and ablutions had we not now to go through! for we were all polluted, and the temple also!

What a figure did we Brahmins make, and

how savage, did the whole conclave become, and they were also jealous, that my penetration detected the imposition, and I verily believe, rather than have been thus publicly exposed, they would have winked at the cheat, and unhesitatingly have pounded the innocent child, in the red hot mortar. I was now detested in Nasik, and having received my rents, from my tenant, in my farm, prepared to march for Poona.

Sujah, who was no Brahmin, enjoyed the joke, very highly, wondering what had become of the impostor, who, to give him his due, must have been a very highly-gifted man, for not one in ten thousand could have imposed upon the number of Brahmins, that he must have associated with, from Benares to Nasik.

We overtook a traveller, on foot, half-way between Nasik and Poona, and on looking steadfastly at his face, I at once discovered the sham Brahmin.

“Ah, my worthy Pundit,” commenced Sujah, who had recognized him, “what! here alone and no ass to ride upon? how is this?”

“It is my nuseeb,” said he, meaning his destiny.

“Ah, very true,” said I, “but how in the name of wonder, have you succeeded in blinding the eyes of the Brahmins, all through the country?”

“I am astonished myself,” replied the fellow, “and cannot tell how I have gulled all the world up to this time, and but for you, should have still gone on, and made a fortune.”

“I would not have exposed you,” said I, “were it not to save the child—you should have yielded to me in the first instance, and then all would have been well, but, that sacrifice was a piece of cruelty on your part, I would never sanction.”

“You forget,” said Fuzloodeen, “that I live by these outrageous acts, and without en-

forcing such sacrifices, I should be considered no more than any other every-day Brahmin."

"To benefit yourself then," said I, "you would have pounded the child, with your own hands?"

"Undoubtedly, or twenty more, if necessary," replied the hardened impostor.

"I think you are one of the most savage, heartless fellows I ever saw," said I.

"Not at all," replied the man, "I laid down a certain line of conduct, and was resolved to abide by it, shrinking at nothing; besides, does not your religion teach me all about sacrifices, and monstrous things, that I should never have dreamed of, and now you blame me for enforcing the sacred rites! this is not just."

"It is just," replied I, "and I do blame you, for had you been half killed by the Brahmins, I should not have pitied you, in the least; but how came you to study so deeply

the mysteries, and the language of our holy religion?"

"I looked on it, as a merchant would upon a bale of silks," replied the fellow, "conceiving both your language and your religion, would prove to me a source of profit, and I was correct."

"How much money may you have amassed, my friend?" enquired Sujah.

"About thirty thousand rupees," replied the impostor.

"Where is the money?" enquired my companion.

"Nay, that is telling too much," said the wary Mussulman, "suffice it to say, they are all safe, although I have not two hundred of them, now about my person."

"And how long pray?" enquired I, "may you have carried on this deception?"

"Four years," replied Fuzloodeen.

"And what were you originally?" enquired I.

“I was a Hookah Burdar,⁴ to a Nuwab,” said the impudent rascal.

“A Hookah Burdar!” exclaimed I, “and from thence turned Pundit?”

“Yes, it is true,” said the fellow, “and I found it paid me much better than filling fresh chil-lums, or rolling up rice balls for the pipe; so my falling in with you M’haraj, I consider a heavy calamity.”

“I should never have discovered you,” said I, “had you paid more regard to the puncti-lios of the meal, and had not returned to your mouth, rice that had once fallen from it.”

“I am very particular in general,” said the Mussulman dog, “but one can’t always be on one’s guard in such trifles.”

“You see,” said I, “that they are not trifles, but observations of moment, and the next time you play Brahmin, remember not to do as I saw you when at meals.”

“Alas! my day is passed,” said the fellow,

“for my followers have now deserted me, covered with shame, and I can carry on the game no longer.”

“You should not be so cruel then,” said I, “as to desire the immolation of infants, in the horrid manner proposed by you. Now, farewell, and believe me, I shall not point you out, in Poona, where you would most likely meet your death, for I think you have been punished enough. You are too clever a fellow to be stoned to death, so you are safe from me I promise you.”

“I am obliged,” said the man, making a salaam, and sitting down to rest, while we rode onwards in the prosecution of our journey.

“How could the fellow study so much?” said Sujah.

“I know not,” I replied, “but he knows far more than I do, or ever shall, while his pronounciation of the Sanscrit is perfect.”

“Wonderful!” ejaculated Sujah, “he will never want.”

“No, his abilities must ensure him a livelihood,” said I, “besides, by his own account, he has laid a pretty good foundation for a fortune.”

“I don’t believe it,” said Sujah, “that is only a Mahommedan’s lie, which they know how to utter well enough.”

“I wonder he was not killed outright,” said I, “by the Nasik Brahmins, who are terribly indignant, I assure you.”

“It is a capital joke,” said Sujah, “and one I shall ever enjoy, as long as I live.”

“Yes, you may well laugh,” said I, “and can scarcely refrain from so doing myself, besides I understand the Collector’s assistant nearly fainted from laughter.”

“Doubtless, that is true,” said Sujah, “for the Topee-wallas laugh at real Brahmins, much more at sham ones.”

“ True,” said I, “ they seem to make a joke of every religion, not excepting their own, I fancy; but they conquer, nevertheless, and seem happy people, and I must say, are very just, and good, when they do comprehend a case brought before them.”

“ Yes, I don't find much fault with them,” said Sujah, “ and being now deputy Foujdar, it would ill become me so to do.”

“ See to the camel, and horsemen,” said I, “ for they lag behind uncommonly, and I do not like it.”

The cavalcade speedily appeared, urged on by Sujah, who rejoined me, saying, “ they had halted to give the camel water.”

CHAPTER VI.

WE arrived safe in Poona, and calling on my old Banker, produced my silver dumps, called rupees, which caused him to open wide his glassy eyes, but when I shewed him my jewel boxes, he was ready to leap off his cushion, so glorious was the sight to him. Jewellers were summoned—scales, touchstones, and all sorts of pincers, and tools speedily produced; the result, was, that my treasure including the dumps, was valued at two lacs of rupees!

There is an old saying, which is, “never refuse whatever is given to you,” and in my case

I experienced its wisdom, for had I turned in disgust, from the gift of Trimbuckjee's wuttun, being disappointed in not getting Govind Rao's, my father's estates, I should not have found treasure, to the amount of two lacs of rupees!

No one asked such an impertinent question, as, where did you get all this money? or how came you by it? such is not the custom, and as long as a man has got money, none cares to find out how he came by it, nor ever thinks of enquiring, for one very good reason, because he would be sure to hear a lie in reply.

My Banker having credited to me, the sum of two lacs, I prepared to return to Candeish, to my Foujdarship, as I had now no business in Poona to detain me.

As I, accompanied by Sujah, rode along, I encountered the astrologer, or old fortune-teller, who, as usual, was on the look out for customers. Without making myself known to him, I demanded my destiny. He appear-

ed highly pleased by my condescension, desiring me alight, and enter his cavern.

“You have encountered many dangers,” said the old fellow, “and have got yet more to go through, but they are of your own seeking; your mind is settled and easy, for you are rich, and honoured by the powerful and great.”

“Indeed,” said I, “suppose I were to tell you, all you have said, is untrue.”

“You would then be the story-teller, *not* me,” said the old fellow, “for I am sure I tell true; you have had no children, though you are married, but, you will hear that your wife has been robbed; you have enemies now, abroad, and beware of them, for your life is in danger.”

“Ah!” said I, “who can I have so deeply offended?”

“You best know,” replied the soothsayer, “only beware, for they lay in wait for your blood, and now depart, for I have no more to say.”

I paid him his two rupees, for which, he was thankful, and then mounting my steed, followed by Sujah, galloped away, to make up for lost time.

In Nasik, the Brahmins looked upon me with angry eyes, as they were scarcely yet purified from the contaminating society, of the Mahomedan impostor. However, as it was no fault of mine, I did not care to avoid the holy set, but boldly entered among them.

“Why did you expose us, brother?” said they.

“I had no intention of so doing,” I replied, “I merely wished to expose the impostor.”

“And by so doing, have brought us into ridicule, and contempt,” said they.

“My object was to save the child,” observed
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“Confound the child,” said the hard-hearted conclave, “of what moment was the child’s life compared with our honour, and character?”

I was amazed, I must confess, but it was all

of a piece, with the conjurations of the priests, whose dignity, must be supported by any sacrifice, however monstrous.

“You seem astonished,” said one of the crew, “but you are not aware how much ground we have lost by this affair, and better would it have been, had twenty brats been all pounded together, in the mortar, than that one Brahmin should be exposed; a Nasik Brahmin,” continued he, “will now be a bye-word, and a jeer in the peoples’ mouths, and I wish, Bapoo, you had been a thousand coss distant, when the impostor arrived here.”

“I am very sorry,” replied I, “but really, I could not quietly look on, to see an innocent babe sacrificed, to please a scoundrel, who had no authority to order such a horrid rite, besides that fellow, has carried on his game for four years, amassing thirty thousand rupees by it, therefore, it is high time a stop should be put to such imposition, and all I can say, is, you should have kept

your eyes upon the fellow as I did, when you would have detected him, instead of myself, and could then have acted, as you might have thought proper; I have no more to say, but to bid you adieu, as I must proceed to Candesh without delay." Thus saying, I withdrew, followed by the angry eyes of all the Nasik Brahmins.

On our arriving at the Collector's station, I reported my return, professing my readiness to commence upon the duties of my office, without delay.

The Collector enquired, if I had met with any adventures in my journey, to Poona, upon which, I told him all that had occurred at Nasik, whereupon he laughed heartily, saying, "had the Brahmins killed the impostor, it would have served him right, for his barbarous intention of child-murder, which, had it been actually done, would have subjected all concerned, to a trial for the crime; so the Brahmins instead of being displeased with you,

Bapoo, ought to be much obliged to you, but, a mysterious case is now before me, in which, I shall want your aid. It appears that an old man, a merchant, named Lalldas, departed from hence, with valuable merchandize, in company with other merchants, on their way to Guzrat; the old man, however, having left behind him, some papers of importance, his son, Gopaldass, mounted his horse, to overtake the worthy company of merchants, with whom his father, he knew, was travelling: Gopaldass came up with the merchants, but on enquiring for his father, no one pretended to know anything about him, but told various tales concerning his departure, saying, he preferred travelling alone. The horse which his father had ridden, was also nowhere to be seen, nor was the merchandize forthcoming. Gopaldass, very properly, returned hither, stating to me this very extraordinary circumstance—what is your opinion, Bapoo?”

“My opinion, sir, is,” said I, “that Gopal-

dass will never more behold his father, for he has undoubtedly fallen among Thugs, who have destroyed, and buried him along with his horse."

"Gracious heavens!" cried the Collector, "do you really suppose this to be the case?"

"I am sure of it," replied I, "and if you will employ me, and let me go to work my own way, I will bring a dozen of them in here before a week's end."

"By all means," said the Collector, "and if you cannot succeed in so doing, shoot them, if you prove them to be the characters you now imagine them to be; but how in the name of wonder will you proceed?"

"I must," replied I, "feign to be a merchant, desirous of safe escort, and anxious to travel in their company, when I shall readily be received by the villains. About a few coss in advance I will overtake Sujah, who also with his attendants shall pretend to be a merchant, to whom I will propose travelling in

company, thus clubbing all our forces to guard against the B'heels, or jungle robbers. By these means, Sujah, and his followers, with myself, and servants, will be a force, equal, if not superior to that of the Thugs, who invariably send forward many of their men to dig the graves for their victims, who are to be strangled not far off from the hole that is to receive their bodies. I may not learn their J'hirnee this time, but it is generally *Tumbahoo Lao, or Pànee Lao*,⁵ and shall therefore be well upon our guard. We require proper dresses for my Peons, who, like myself, shall go as Marwarrys, while Sujah's detachment dressed as Bunyas, or general traders, will obviate all chance of any suspicion on the part of the Thugs. Gopaldass, well disguised, must accompany me, to see if he can recognise any of his father's property, while I shall cause every one of my followers to be supplied with a stout cord, and a brace of pistols, for as soon as the

J'hirnee is uttered by the leader of the gang, each of my fellows will perceive a Thug at his back, preparing their roomals to strangle him ; then must we be active, and look about us, lest the Thugs get the victory."

"It is a perilous undertaking, Bapoo," said the Collector, "but, you shall proceed upon it as you, by experience, so well know the habits, manners, and customs of this detestable race of men, whom our government is determined to crush: all expenses therefore, you shall be paid, and I think you ought to lose no time, as the Thugs are now two days in advance of you."

"True, sir," said I, "but I intend to make a circuit by a forced march, and be quietly awaiting their arrival at a village, which they must pass, before they can strike into the jungles, where, no doubt, they would prefer committing their murders, while Sujah shall be a few coss in advance. Our signals we shall arrange prior to starting, but it will be better not to let my Peons even know, what duty they are

entering upon, until I get them a day's march hence, for the Thugs have very likely a friend or two now lagging here, and on learning our schemes, would send off a courier to apprise the gang of their danger. If you please also, send for Gopaldass, that I may learn the strength of the Thug gang, because it would not do to bring too many men among them lest they might smell danger."

Gopaldass coming by the Collector's summons, informed us that he had counted twenty men.

"Very well," said I, "eight or nine of these will be busied in grave digging, so that the remainder we shall be able to manage, I have no doubt. You, Gopaldass, will accompany me, and let me know if you recognise any of your father's property."

"They will know me again," said Gopaldass.

"Not disguised as my syce, or groom for

my horse," said I, "so prepare without loss of time."

I took leave of the Collector, who did not appear so sanguine as myself in the chances of success, and joining Sujah, explained to him all the work we had in hand."

"Take care," said he, "that Mohun Lal is not among the gang, for he will be sure to recognize both of us."

"I had forgotten him," I replied, "but will trust to my disguise as a Marwarry, to baffle even his penetration, should he actually be among the troop of murderers."

I mustered the stoutest, and most powerful men among the Peons, taking eight of them with me, allowing Sujah a like number, making with Gopaldass, in all, nineteen of us, and I hoped, all determined characters, and no flinchers from the desperate work on hand.

I knew the Thugs in their assumed characters of peaceful merchants, never carried arms about their persons, and therefore in this res-

pect, I should have a decided advantage over them.

The Collector lent me a pair of English pistols, which took up but little space in my kummerband, and could not be seen, and as they were double barrelled, such as I had never before beheld, I may be said to have been doubly armed; whilst Sujah carried his own pistols, and a sharp short sword and a kuttar, or double edged dagger.

There was some difficulty in arming my Peons, who were to appear in the characters of merchant's servants, to protect the two camel loads of goods, for the Guzrat market, which I need scarcely inform my readers in reality consisted of only straw, covered over with coarse cloths, to look like real bales of merchandize. I preferred camels to bullocks, as the latter proceeded at such a slow pace that I feared we should never overtake the Thugs before they gained the jungles.

Sujah, and myself attended by our men

quitted the Collector's station, and at the end of the first day's march, I summoned the Peons, telling them, the service in which they were now engaged. In such thorough detestation were the Thugs held by all classes, that the gallant Peons swore by the cow, an oath I could depend upon, that they would either conquer or die by the roomals of the Thugs, and that they would obey me in every particular. I apprised the obedient fellows of the J'hirnee, which they might expect would be given from the leader's lips, desiring that then, whether the signal might be an order for tobacco, or water, or anything else, to get ready their cords, to bind whoever they might see behind them, my signal for action being the twisting of my moustachios twice. I also bade each man keep his eyes open at night, and his ears also, to ascertain if any men had been sent forward for any purpose whatever, "for," said I, "if such, you

should ascertain to be the case, rely upon it, they are sent to dig your graves.”

A groan of horror ran through my troop, who now prepared to disguise themselves in the clothes I had procured, and in which they were to figure as Marwarrys and Bunyas.

All being prepared, Sujah went forward with his camel, and attendants, while I proceeded leisurely, hoping to overtake the Thugs in the manner and place I had previously planned and determined upon.

CHAPTER VII.

By making a circuit, and proceeding quickly, I distanced the pretended merchants, who overtook me, watering my camel and horse, at a large tank, where they also halted for the same purpose. Salutations were exchanged, but no advances made by either party, until after our respective meals, when two of the villains, as I suspected them to be, made up to me, as I was smoking on the edge of the tank, and after conversing on different subjects, asked "to what country I was bound, and what description of goods I carried with me?"

“I am going to Guzrat,” said I, “with shawls, and muslins, and a valuable lot of keem-cabs.”

“Indeed!” cried the fellow, “and are you not apprehensive of robbers, while passing through the jungles?”

“Why should I, more than yourselves?” said I.

“True, but if we all proceed together,” said the man, “we shall be enabled to put to flight any B’heels, or robbers, who may molest us; say, therefore, will you join us? we shall be most happy of your company.”

“Well,” said I, “it is a wise arrangement, and if you please, it shall be so; do you march early, to-morrow?”

“Yes, before sunrise, when we shall expect you.”

“I will not disappoint you, friend,” said I, “and rejoice in having fallen in with such good company—farewell, for the present.”

Gopaldass, who remained with me, recog-

nized the two men immediately, and fancied he saw his father's ring upon one of the fellow's fingers, but would not be positive on the subject, however, he swore to the men as belonging to the merchant, with whom his father had agreed to travel to Guzrat.

“They are Thugs,” said I, “I have no doubt, by their strange ways, and artful manner, while affecting openness and candour, and would give something to find out if Mohun Lal is amongst them, for his presence would confirm me in my suspicions.”

I considered it would be a shocking thing, to fall too on the men, merely because one of them happened to call for his pipe, or for water, an order that might be issued by the most innocent of men; and all the grounds I had for my suspicion was the disappearance of the father of Gopaldass, who would scarcely have suddenly preferred traveling by himself, after his expressed pleasure in

finding respectable merchants to be in his company.

Heavy responsibility I found now rested upon me, and it behoved me to be extremely cautious not to set my blood hounds upon innocent people.

When the morning dawned, I joined the respectable merchants, whose faces were strangers to me, but I looked in vain for Mohun Lal, who, most probably had been frightened far enough away, by learning that he was known, and would be a marked man in the Deccan.

The master of the merchants, to whom I was now introduced, was a shrivelled-up little wretch, very dark, with large bushy eyebrows, and a remarkable thin nose, and compressed lips, while a pin might have passed through his cheeks without meeting a tooth to impede its progress. There was something devilish however, in his eye, which wandered in every direction, and I could not help

thinking he was a Mussulman, although disguised by Hindù costume. His attendants, on the contrary, were tall, muscular men, apparently devoted to his service. We travelled onwards conversing, merchant-like, upon the exchange of money, and bills, and prices of Dacca muslins, and so forth, so that I could not discover by my companion's manner that he was not what he seemed to be, and in fact, I really imagined I had got into the wrong hunt, and that my friend by my side was an honest man.

As soon, however, as Gopaldass could obtain my ear in secret, he said, "that fellow who rides by your side, wears my father's kurdoorah, or silver waist chain; I will swear to it."

"Silence," said I, "fall in the rear."

I was now satisfied, my companion was a Thug, or murderous robber of some sort, and kept upon my guard.

“Are there many robbers in the jungles?” enquired I.

“Can’t say friend,” replied my companion, “but hope not, as we are not prepared for them.”

“I depend on your protection nevertheless,” said I, “and our joint forces, now amount to nearly thirty men, so we ought to keep off any marauders, who may attempt to molest us; but who have we here? ah! another merchant,” continued I, seeing Sujah, and his people strapping the sham bales on the camel’s back, and preparing to march.

“This is lucky,” said my shrivelled-up merchant companion, “we will, with your permission, offer him our companionship, through the jungles; then, I think we may defy the B’heels which infest them.”

“By all means,” said I, addressing Sujah, as a stranger, “and hoping for the pleasure of his company.”

Sujah with well affected politeness, expressing his sense of our kindness, accepted our offer, in consequence of which, we all rode together, followed by our men, and camels, and bullocks, belonging to the precious Thug company, perhaps not the first of the kind ever established in the world.

“Any news abroad?” demanded Sujah.

“None,” said I.

“Not any!” responded the strange merchant.

“I heard,” said Sujah, “a young man, making a noise about his old father, who had gone on to Guzrat, but, upon his following him, he was nowhere to be heard of.”

“Died, perhaps,” said the shrivelled merchant.

“Most likely,” said I, “and nothing wonderful in that, I should think.”

“No, truly,” observed the stranger, “it is not all who travel, that return.”

“You old villain,” thought I, “you say right enough.”

“Asseerghur has surrendered,” said the stranger, “we came from thence.”

“Indeed !” said I, “this is news.”

“And the English are the victors,” said my companion, “as usual.”

“Do you like the English ?” enquired I.

“No, who does ? they are always interfering with what does not concern them, and when their interference is wanted, they are sure to hold back.”

“It may be so,” said I, “but, I know little of them.”

“Where do you reside ?” enquired my inquisitive merchant.

“Seldom long at any place,” answered I, “being always on the road with my merchandize.”

“You are lucky never to have been robbed,” said my friend.

“Do you think so?” observed I, “are then the thieves so very numerous?”

“I have heard so,” replied my companion, “but, have never fallen in with any desperate band, nor was I ever robbed but once, and that was by one of my own people.”

“What a rascal he must have been,” said I.

“Yes, what a rascal,” echoed Sujah, “did not you shoot him?”

“No,” replied the merchant, “and for one very good reason, I never caught him, and had I been so fortunate, should not have shot him, as I never practice violence, upon any body.”

I here gave Sujah the private signal, that I had received proof, the fellow was a Thug, as I had surmised, when my friend began fumbling about his sash, for his pistol, but I arrested his hand, by a frown of disapprobation, as our time for action, was not yet come.

At night we dispersed in different groups, my men keeping their eyes open, watch, and

watch about. I had desired them whatever they might observe, not to approach me before morning, lest any stir among us, during the night, might strike alarm into the breasts of our treacherous friends. Of course I, slept not, and as I imagined, saw eight men depart, carrying spades and pickaxes, on their shoulders; my men having seen the same, communicated with me, on the subject, in the morning. What the J'hirnee might be, I could not of course discover, but I well knew our graves were now, perhaps finished in the jungles, where in a short time we should find ourselves.

The strangulation I was aware, generally takes place near where the graves are prepared, that all may be over as expeditiously as possible, and that the Thugs may not have to carry the bodies of their victims, any distance, lest they might be surprised in the act by any passing traveller. In the present instance, therefore how did I know but that the graves were not more than

cross distant? and yet it would be necessary for us to alight from our horses, in order to be quietly strangled by the infernal roomals of the Thugs, and ere this could be proposed, we must be supposed to be fatigued, and invited either to eat, or drink water from some rivulet hard by. We stood near our horses, the camels having gone on, and I fancied I could discern some movement among the suspected party, who now mustered as many men as ourselves, although eight men had been sent forward to prepare the graves. How could this be? whence did they come? and who could have sent them information, that their services would be required? that they joined us in the night was very clear, and I was about to express my surprise to Sujah, when that sagacious fellow said: behold—a man is planted near every one of us, no doubt awaiting the J'hirnee."

The words were scarcely from his lips, when my shrivelled-up merchant exclaimed, 'Ghora

Lao,⁶ when a nod from me, made all my men turn suddenly round, detecting a fellow behind each preparing his accursed roomal. I gave my orders, and to it we went. The man immediately behind me, I knocked down with the but end of my holster pistol, and with one of my others, fired at the shrivelled chieftain, not with any intention of killing him however, and he fell, wounded in the thigh. He was, therefore, innôcuous, but the others, being powerful men, were with difficulty mastered; however, whenever I perceived any resistance to the cords of my followers, I presented my pistols, threatening instant death if any opposition should be offered to us.

Sujah was engaged with a very strong man, whose teeth he had battered down his throat, with his pistol, but who still shewed fight like an enraged buffallo, refusing to be bound, like a sheep for the slaughter-house. The fellow was also armed with a short

kuttar, which he flourished in Sujah's face, having twice wounded him with it, upon which, Sujah, losing all patience, blew the fellow's brains out with his pistol, which he had hitherto refrained from discharging.

Those we had succeeded in binding down with our ropes, lay bellowing on the ground like calves in a cart, while the chief, himself, gnashed his teeth in his impotent rage, at finding himself outwitted, conquered, and taken in the very act of Thugism. The eight grave diggers no doubt marvelling at our tardy approach, now appeared, bearing their spades upon their shoulders, but perceiving how matters stood, threw down their implements, and fled away like hunted hares. Sujah's opponent was the only one of the villains killed outright, and the chieftain the only person wounded, so that the rest became our prisoners, whom we joined together with ropes, and in such condition brought them to the

Candeish Collector, followed by thousands of people, eager to catch the sight of a real Thug. I was thanked by the Collector for my work, Sujah's wound was duly attended to, and the prisoners marched off to the jail, until they could be brought to a formal trial. So exasperated were the inhabitants against the Thugs, that it was a matter of no small difficulty to lodge them safe in the prison, as stones, and bricks were flying at the gang from every quarter, but at length, amid hootings, and hideous yellings, the Thugs were fairly housed, heavily ironed and well guarded.

The principal witness against the crew, was Gopaldass, who swore to his father's waist chain, actually on the person of the leader of the Thugs, and next to him was my testimony, and that of Sujah's, so that my shrivelled-up merchant was sentenced to be hanged, in company with three more of the gang. One of

these, however, offering to make a full confession, and relate the ways, and habits of the Thugs, an English gentleman well skilled in Eastern languages, was permitted to visit him, and take down his confession, which being at a very great length, I understand has been published in England, under the title of "Confessions of a Thug," and is a work which must astonish every reader, whether in England, or Hindustan. The fellow, by his confession, saved his life, but was sentenced to be kept in prison for the remainder of his days.

I had an interview with my shrivelled-up merchant, who confessed to being the father of Mohun Lal, who, he said, "was pursuing his respectable calling, in the neighbourhood of Nagpoor, enquiring how I came to dream his gang were Thugs?"

"By the father of Gopalda's being missing, and by other signs," replied I, "upon which my men were drilled accordingly. Thus, when you

gave the J'hirnee of "*Ghora Lao*," we were, unlike your every day victims, fully prepared to find a Thug, posted behind us."

"Then," said my sham merchant, whose name was Hurrychund, "I am not surprised at the failure, for it is only on the unsuspecting, that we can ever succeed."

He confessed that Gopaldass' father had been strangled, his horse shot, and buried with him in the same hole, and that the chain was his property.

Vast was the crowd that flocked from Nuggur, Poona, Nasik, and the surrounding villages, to witness the execution of the bloody minded Thugs. Hurrychund being light, died very hard, but the others soon ceased to exist, when the crowd dispersed, and order was once more restored.

The Collector presented me, in the name of his government, with a pair of very handsome shawls, and Sujah with a turban of some value,

while every Peon had a present of money, given into his hand by the Collector, himself; and thus ended my adventure with the second body of those pests of society, the atrocious Thugs.

CHAPTER VIII.

I returned to my wuttun, at Warree, where Kishna had been waiting for my coming, and had become considerably alarmed by my unusual absence, upon which I explained every particular to her, convincing her the delay was no fault of mine.

“Bapoo,” she observed, “one day if you will venture among such villains as Thugs, and B’heels, you will assuredly, never more return to your disconsolate wife; promise me, therefore, you will no more venture in any disguise, among such desperate people.”

“I cannot do this,” said I, “for I am now the Foujdar, and must, if necessary, set the example to my people under me; however, make your mind easy my beloved, for I do not apprehend that my services will again be required on such disagreeable duty, for the recent executions, together with the imprisonment for life, of all the Thugs, will soon be known throughout the country, so that other gangs will be very careful how they proceed for the future.”

“I hope what you say is true,” said Kishna, “but do not let me forget to tell you, that two farmers, brothers they tell me, are very anxious to come to terms with you, concerning the cultivation of that field, which, to me, seems only to produce, what grows there already, namely, thistles.”

“Hah!” exclaimed I, “this is very strange, let me see them when they come again; what can be their motive? for that field is the very worst belonging to my wuttun.” This per-

plexed me all night, and in the morning, I sent for the farmers, placing them in a room, behind which, was a closet, wherein I could hear all they might say, during my absence, on pretence of consulting my wife. The farmers purposed giving me a yearly sum, which astonished me, and more so, when they augmented it, on my demurring about the offer. I begged they would wait awhile, as I wished to consult with my wife, ere I gave a decided answer, to their proposals. Of course I went no further than the closet above mentioned, when with all my straining my ears to the utmost, all I could hear fall from the lips of the cautious farmers, was, "even then we shall be gainers." On my return to the men, I offered them any other field for the same yearly sum, but they would not hearken to my proposition, and prepared to depart.

"Well," said I, "it is impossible to give my assent just now, but I will send for you, when I shall have made up my mind."

“Then, in seven days time, we will come again,” said one of the men, “and surely by that time, you will know your own mind, and your wife’s too.”

I bit my lips, piqued at the fellow’s effrontery, in bringing up my wife’s name, and allowed them to depart.

To Kishna’s demand, “if I had arranged with the farmers,” I answered in the negative, saying, “Kishna that field must contain buried treasure, and these fellows know where to dig for it, or they would never offer me so much money, for a mere bed of thistles, as that ground has always produced.”

“Treasure!” exclaimed Kishna, her eyes sparkling with delight, “let us set all hands about digging up the ground; leave not a clod unturned—oh, the crafty knaves!”

“Yes,” my beloved, “you are right, for you cannot imagine how very anxious these brothers have been to come to terms about the spot—there must be treasure, and a good lump

of it too." I immediately procured two ploughs and oxen, to turn up my thistle field, taking care to be always on the spot, myself previously walking over every inch with a long stick in my hand, with which I sounded every foot of ground I passed over, hoping to find some trap-door, or discover some fresh turned earth; all I found however, was the leg of a man, most likely belonging to one of my victims in the gunpowder blow up, and this had been picked clean by the vultures, and other animals that revel in such luxuries. Disappointed, I returned to Kishna, who now purposed keeping watch by night, when the farmers would assuredly come to take away the money; apprehensive as they were, I would not come to any terms with them at the end of the seven days. This advice being good, I stationed myself behind a prickly hedge, determined, by some hideous noise, to scare away the farmers as soon as I could determine the spot where the money was buried. Knowing

how superstitious the fellows were, I felt assured they would soon take to their heels on hearing my attempt at the scream of an evil spirit. Nothing did I see for three long nights, and got very tired of my watching scheme, when Kishna resolved to relieve me, take post herself behind the hedge. No one came, however, and the seventh day dawned, without our having made any discovery, or seeing a soul, night or day upon the field, save my own ploughmen and oxen, that I had hired.

The farmers came punctual to time, when I told them, "I had resolved to cultivate the field myself, and must decline their offers, however tempting they might be."

That night, the fellows came, with a light well shaded to the field; I was on watch, and perceived them to my consternation, stop close by my post, and within a yard of me.

"As he won't let us have the field," said one

of the men, "we will take away all that it ever will be worth."

"Are you sure we are not watched?"

"Nonsense—no one is near us, dig away."

"Are you sure this is the place?"

"Yes, here is the stone I placed as a mark."

"Thurst down your iron rod, and let us hear if it strike against the trap door."

The man did so, leaving his rod fast in the earth, "all is right," said the fellow, "I heard it touch the iron door."

I now groaned awfully.

"What was that?" said one of the farmers.

"Pooh! nothing—dig away."

"I will swear I heard a sound like of a person dying."

"Well, it may be so, but he cannot interrupt us, so let him die."

"Dig away, I say."

"I am afraid, my hand shakes."

"Give me the spade, then," said the other man, "I will soon be down into the vault."

I now groaned louder, having, however, deemed it advisable to withdraw a few yards, when both the men scampered away as hard and as fast as their legs could carry them, leaving their divining rod conveniently sticking over the very entrance to the treasure chamber. I kept my watch all the night, and then emerged from behind the hedge, and set to work, digging with my customers tools. The door was soon found, and as speedily raised, and I as hastily in the vault, where, instead of money and valuables, as I had expected, I stumbled over a human skeleton, whose bones at my touch crumbled into dust.

CHAPTER IX.

I BEGAN now to consider, whether the removal of the skeleton had not been the motive of would-be purchasers, rather than the knowledge of any treasure, being concealed in any part of the field. If so, they must have made away with some person, and a very long time ago, If I might guess by the mouldering condition of the bones over which I had stumbled. I now sent a message to the two farmers, saying, "that I was willing to come to terms with them concerning the field," upon which, they waited upon me, their countenances express-

ing surprise at my apparently whimsical change~~ment~~ of mind ; “ yes, my friends,” said I, “ that field I will let you have, and I trust you will find your advantage in the same ; make out the necessary writings, and I will sign them.”

The men wisely remained silent respecting the groans near the hedge, while I, of course, could not allude to any such subject. The field, and perhaps, as they thought, the treasure was also theirs, but I had the curiosity to watch all night behind my sheltering hedge, and the mortification at perceiving no one approach. The next night was I doomed to a similar fate, but, on the third night after the bargain had been struck, my friends approached, raised the trap door, and descended, each bearing a large sack, which, no doubt, was intended for the better removal of the treasure.

Not long did they remain below ; first one, then the other hastily appeared, each striving

to address the other, but were prevented by the chattering of their teeth from the effects of the terror, the skeleton had inspired them with. I verily believe, had I been mischievous enough now to have groaned as I had previously done, both the brothers would have fallen dead upon the spot. I however remained perfectly quiet, contemplating their affrighted features, illumined as they were by the light from their own flambeau.

The turban of one of them had fallen off, while the other man was shoeless and standing in a state bordering on idiotcy, making signs to each other, for to speak they were unable.

I was considerably amused by this dumb show, and almost burst into a laugh, at length, one of the fellows slammed too the iron trap-door, while the other manfully shovelled over it, the earth that had now twice been disturbed, they then fell down upon their knees, crying upon M'hadeo to save them.

The horrid skeleton having now become

again covered over, the tongues of the men were loosened, and they began to accuse me of a knowledge of what they had but just discovered.

“Yes,” said one of the farmers, “and this is why he consented to take our offer! he knew well enough what was here; perhaps he put it here, having first killed.—”

“Silence,” said his brother, “how can that be, when the bones are now become powder.”

“True, aye, he could not have done the deed, or Trimbuckjee either, as it must have been perpetrated long before his time, but what a bargain we have got? a field that yields only thistles, and skeletons! we have become fools, and Bapoo will for ever laugh at us. Who could have imagined that no money was here to be found, or that the vault for the dead only, was all that remained! certainly treasure was here buried once, and as certainly, Bapoo has found it, and left only the dead man’s bones for our share, well, he is a cunning

fellow, and no wonder he was too much for the demon's of the well."

"Aye, that was a curious affair, however, it may now be hushed up," responded the companion of the last speaker, "but mind this, if he has found Trimbuckjee's money, a curse will attend him with it, for it was ill gotten wealth, and *that* never prospers, so let him look to it, for he will either be robbed of it, or possessing it, the coin will be his most bitter curse."

"Umph," said the other, "then it will be better for him if he be robbed of it at once."

"Yes, much better," replied the sagacious prognosticator, "for, with it, he will be a most miserable man!"

Listeners, they say, seldom hear much good of themselves, and I had heard enough to make me tremble, for my money which I had left in the Poona Banker's hands, by which all the pleasure I had just felt at the farmers disappointment, was now converted into alarm,

and fear on my own account, and I hastened home to Kishna, relating to her word for word, of the farmers' conversation. Kishna was, of course, superstitious, and immediately pronounced the farmers' words to be true.

"Therefore," said she, "you are either robbed, or cursed, and I advise you to set off to Poona, and ascertain which is the case."

"You seem to take it very coolly Kishna," said I, "and forget that we shall now soon have a son perhaps, and that money will be required, and suppose I am robbed? suppose the Banker has absconded? what shall I do?"

"Have not you this charming wuttun, have not you three hundred rupees a month, as Foujdar, of Candeish; and have you not plenty of ways and means to get money by your situation?"

"No," said I, "I have not, or if I have, never will I avail myself of them; I was appointed because I was known not to be a needy man, but, if I be brought down to be one, I

will shew the Collector I can be honest, and trust-worthy."

"Ah, very well, Bapoo," replied my wife, "I did not know, so you must excuse me, but set off to Poona as quick as possible, for I am quite prepared to hear that you are robbed."

On the day following I proceeded to the Collector, told him my fearful anticipations, and requested leave to visit Poona. He assenting, I, accompanied by Sujah, and two horsemen, set out without delay upon my journey. Nothing of any moment occurring on the road, I reached Poona on the evening of the second day, and proceeded to my Banker's, and found his shop shut, and himself decamped, having ruined many more besides myself! I dashed my turban from off my head, spat upon the shutters of the Shroff's shop, heaped abuse upon his knave's head, and performed many madman's actions, to the no small amusement of the crowd, by whom I was surrounded. I understood that my Banker

had been taken in by two Jews,⁷ and therefore had resolved to make all his customers sufferers to make up his losses. The facts as detailed to me, were as follow :—

Two very respectable looking men, dressed in the loose flowing slashed sleeved coats of Armenians, or Jews, came to my banker, offering to deposit with him a valuable diamond, worth nearly two lacs of rupees, upon which, they demanded only one lac, promising to redeem it in six months, in failure of their so doing, my Banker was to claim the valuable diamond. All was settled, and the Jews delivered over the gem in a small round tin box well lined with cotton wool, on the lid of which, and on the sides, they affixed their seals, in the presence of many Shroffs and Sahoukars, of Poona, and having received the hard cash, departed. The six months having expired, and the Jews not returning to claim their diamond, my Banker delighted at his prospect of gain, in the presence of the Eng-

lish Collector, broke open the tin box, when, to his amazement and horror, instead of beholding the glittering diamond, two dull copper pice, surrounded most carefully by cotton wool, met his anxious gaze !

The rascals had practiced legerdemain, while passing over the tin box, and so successfully, as to baffle the scrutiny of the hundred eyes that were upon them, at the moment ! my Banker said but little, but did much, for, he decamped with every-body's money, mine included, however, I consoled myself, by saying, " as it is Trimbuckjee's ill-gained money, it will carry a curse with it." Indeed, it was about six months ago, that I had invested the money in the Banker's hands, so that from such hoard, he no doubt, paid the Jew rascals their one lac of rupees, a very high price surely, for two copper pice !

No one could inform me, to what place my Banker had gone, nor had any one ever heard of, or from him, since he took his departure.

I was now again almost a beggar, for what was my paltry wuttun, but the place of thistles? and as to my situation under the Collector, how soon might I not have to resign it?—Oh, money, money! thou art indeed a curse, and particularly so to me! by the farmer's account, with or without it. I had a chance of succeeding in my attempts to realize more, and in a more direct and honest way; which having done, most likely I should love to see it, wrested from my grasp a second time.

“In future,” said I, “I will bury my money, where no one shall find it, or will seek for dragons to guard it; but, alas! how many years of labour, pain, and anxiety, might I pass away without a shadow of a chance, of ever being again in possession of half the sum, of which I was now so basely plundered? Destiny has fixed it,” said I, “that I am never to have any money; I am always to be a wanderer, and a beggar! Unlucky Bapoo! what could I do? mus

I return to be jeered by Kishna, and grinned at by the two greedy farmers, who no doubt would hear of my desperate condition?—No, I would again petition the Government for the restitution of my father's estates, I would even go to England to demand justice, and my rights—anything, but return to Candeish in my pitiful state.”

Before I had quite determined what steps to pursue, I had the pleasure of conversing with a rich Shroff, whose person was no stranger to me, and who had been one of the monied men present, when the Jews, or Armenians played off their legerdemain tricks on my scoundrel Banker. This man's name was Sunkersette Babolsette, a Shroff, of well-known respectability, and in high favour with the existing Government.

He assured me, my intended voyage to England would not benefit me in the least, as the authorities there invariably defended and approved of the acts and doings of the author

ties here, "besides," said he, "you must lose caste for ever. How will you eat, how cook your rice on board ship? where will you find your earthen floor, to prepare your meals on? where your Plaintain, or Lotas-leaf to place it on when cooked? You are mad, Bapoo; England, cold, miserable, foggy England, as I learn it is, will kill you, or send you back debased and degraded, with no good result arising from your voyage. It is true, you have been robbed by your Banker, and he, in his turn was robbed and cheated by the Jews."

"Did you," enquired I at this moment interrupting him, "did you see well the features of these Jews?"

"Yes," said Sunkersette, "and have them now clear in my recollection, one was tall, thin and swarthy, while the other was a younger man, not tall by any means, and with a round sleek face, and altogether a very pleasing countenance."

"Do you remember if he had a dent in his

forehead, just above his nose?" enquired I.

"Yes, he had," replied my friend, "a very remarkable dent, as if he had been wounded in that place."

"Then," said I, "the man is neither Jew, or Armenian, but a villainous Thug, and murderer, from whose hands I myself escaped, and whose life was once in my power."

Sunkersette seemed surprised, and I proceeded to relate to him my adventures:—adding, "oh! had I but strangled the villain, when in my power, in Aurungabad, then, perchance my money might have been safe, for I have no doubt, it was after that period, that this Mohun Lal hit upon the expedient of cheating my Banker, who, fool as he is, has no doubt, actually fallen into the hands of the Thugs, whose emissaries perhaps, have enticed him into their snare."

"Since no one has heard of your Banker, I am almost inclined to be of your opinion."

Bapoo," said Sunkersette, "but, let us hope not."

"Why?" said I, "I hope he *has* fallen in with the murderers, so that my money has been a curse to him, and his death."

"We shall never know this to a certainty," said Sunkersette, "unless Mohun Lal is taken, and will be pleased to make a full confession."

"What use is it taking him prisoner?" said I, "his money is well secured elsewhere, than being about his person, rely on it. Well, I am ruined, and as sure as I now sit on your mat, the rascal who pretended to be a Jew, was no other than Mohun Lal, the Thug, on whom be my most bitter curse; fool that I was, ever to let him slip through my fingers at Aurungabad, when my friend Sujah, would have given him a taste of his own roomal, had I permitted him so to do."

"That was indeed unwise," said Sunkersette,

“for while shewing mercy to a Thug, you were sacrificing hundreds of lives.”

“My Banker I hope among some of the hundreds,” said I.

“You are revengeful, Bapoo,” said the Shroff.

“So would you be my friend,” observed I, “if you had been reduced to want like myself.”

“Perhaps so,” replied my friend, “but I must now go home, and perform my ablutions, which you also will not neglect, I am well assured,” added my friend, as if I was now thinking about washings, and plashing in the river, or making “Pujah”^s to my stone gods, I, who in heart was worshipping the golden calf, although it had run away from me for ever.

“Curse on all forms and ceremonies,” cried I, “where is my money? That money that had proved my curse, and would perhaps have proved a more intolerable one, as it came from the hoard of Trimbuckjee Dhang-

lia, at least, so said the farmer, who purchased my field of thistles.”

Sujah sympathized with me in my loss, advising me at all events to return, and secure my situation as Foujdar, which must keep me respectably and from fear of want. Overcome by his persuasion, I once more mounted my horse, and was speedily on my road to Candeish.

At Nasik, the Brahmins refused to receive, or acknowledge me, for they had heard of my loss and had borne me a spite from the time when I exposed the impostor Fuzloodeen Dowlarker, the sham Brahmin. I felt their contumely bitterly, though I disdained to shew it, and made my stay in Nasik proportionably short.

The Collector at Candeish to whom I narrated my grievous loss, condoled with me, saying, “he had no doubt, but, that in time, I should be put in possession of my father’s estates, which would once more elevate me in the eyes of my caste, and society at large.

See how *we* toil, Bapoo," said the English gentleman, "in thirty years time, if we realize a lac and half of your rupees we think ourselves fortunate, and return to our country, weak, ill, and enervated from the effects of your hot sun, so unnatural to us, and consequently so injurious to our constitutions, while you, a young man, some how or another find two lacs of rupees, to place in a Banker's hands, and then marvel at losing it!"

"Why do you remain here so long, Sir?" said I.

"To realize a fortune, Bapoo, saved out of our monthly pay, and very slow work it is, I can assure you; for many die ere they can lay by enough to bury themselves with."

"You enjoy good health, Sir, do you not?" enquired I.

"Yes, Bapoo, generally, but I dare neither eat, or drink what my palate approves of, if I did, you would soon see me carried to the grave."

“Why do you toil so, Sir? surely you must have spared enough to retire on.”

“Perhaps so, Bapoo,” replied the good man, “but I have a mother and two sisters dependant upon me at home, and hope to be one day enabled to marry, and have a family of my own, which will require money in my country, I can assure you.”

“Well,” said I, “if you have not enough you can go to the Honourable Company, and demand more.”

The Collector laughingly replied, “Ah! Bapoo, you have too exalted an opinion of our Company, who after about thirty years service, will only allow me eight rupees a day to live upon, and if I did not lay by some thing of my own besides, I should find myself in a very bad way indeed.”

“Well,” said I, “this is very extraordinary, after your coming more than ten thousand miles to serve your employers, and remaining

here to be burned up alive in doing their business.”

“True,” said the Collector, “but you are not aware, poor as may seem our recompense, that there are thousands at home would be glad to take my place.”

“Why, I thought in England you were all rich, all Burra Sahibs!” said I.

“Oh! no, Bapoo, England, my country, is a sink of misery and want, the recital of which, would almost break your heart, while many enterprising men like yourself, have been plunged into the very vortex of wretchedness, by the dishonesty of others, in whom they reposed the most unlimited confidence. In England, you will see the rich merchant of to-day, a beggar to-morrow, a hopeless object of want, with perhaps a broom in his hand, sweeping the path, for his more fortunate brother speculator.”

“You do indeed surprise me, Sir,” but your

Company, the Honourable Company, are all rich, are they not?"

"No," said he, "they are well off, and no more."

"What?" cried I, "only well off, when they have now three-fourths of Hindustan?"

"Look at their expences," said he, "look at our army, constantly kept up, and regularly paid; and, besides, they have no fingering of the money, Bapoo, they are only managers, governors for the nation."

"Well," said I, "it is to me unintelligible, so I won't take up more of your time."

"Stay," said the Collector, "there is now a woman here, who wishes to become Suttee; I want to prevent her, how am I to succeed?"

"Is she of very high caste, sir?" I demanded.

"No, I believe not," replied the Collector, "but will that make any difference?"

"I fear so, sir," said I, "but you can try my scheme, which is, not to attempt thwart-

ing her inclinations, but, on the contrary, afford her every facility to burn."

"How do you mean, Bapoo?" I don't understand you."

"It is this, sir," said I, "let her proceed to the pyre, but take care she is unaccompanied by the rabble, and her relatives, and when she finds out that she is no longer looked on as a goddess, rely on it, she will cool upon her project."

"Exeellent!" cried the Collector, "who summoned his Sheristadar, ordering that no impediment should be made to the burning of the widow, but that no assemblage of persons should infest the streets."

The result was, as I had imagined; the woman declined the honour, and returned to her mourning friends.

"Why, Bapoo, you are indeed a wise counsellor, and must not be passed over," said the Collector, "and I shall mention you in my report to my superiors next month."

“Your servant is grateful, sir,” replied I, “but, I take no credit to myself, except that of telling you the real truth, and reason why so many unhappy women immolate themselves, which is from motives of vanity; to be the crowd’s goddess, for the moment, to be lauded, flattered, and fooled out of her money, her jewels, and her life, by deep designing Brahmins, aided by her greedy relatives; but above all, to be deemed by the crowd a more holy person than themselves. Such is the Suttee rite in nine cases out of ten, but which, by judicious interference, you see, may be prevented.”

CHAPTER X.

RUINED and undone, I slowly reached my wuttun, when here again a scene awaited me that made my very blood run cold ; Kishna, my beloved wife, who was within two months of bringing into the world perhaps a son, to inherit his father's disappointments, lay strangled on her bed, stripped of all her golden ornaments, and jewels ! I screamed aloud, so agonized was I at the monstrous sight.

Sujah, who was at my heels, and who could not imagine the cause of my heart bursting

yell of despair ; rushed into my apartment ; I pointed to the corse of my wife, whose face was now disfigured, and blackened, so as to almost baffle recognition. Sujah, was himself, motionless as a statue, the poor honest fellow trembled in every limb ; his knees shook under him, and his lips quivered as he grasped his sword, saying, “ Bapoo, I will discover the murderers of your wife, or never more will I dare enter your presence ; by the cow I swear it, never, never will I rest day, nor night until I bring the villains to justice.”

I heard him, and pressing his faithful hand, flung myself on the dead body of my wife, and burst into tears. Oh, what a night of agony was this to me ! my eyes seemed covered by a film that obscured even the bright flare of my lamp ; my hands shook, and refused their office, while my tongue seemed glued within my mouth. “ Where are the female attendants ? ” at length I uttered.

“ Gone to a Jatra, by permission of their

mistress," replied several of my Peons, those watchful guardians, under whose care I had left my wife.

"Villains!" cried I, "you shall suffer for this. Where have you all been? how employed, that such a scene as this should present itself to my eyes?"

The fellows held down their heads, not daring to make me any reply.

"Summon all the Peons," said I, "Sujah, get them inside, and bar the gates, for as I live all shall be sent prisoners to the Collector. Some one among them must have admitted the murderers, if they are not themselves the guilty party."

Sujah did as I commanded him, when thirty Peons were speedily in the fortress, and my prisoners. In vain did they, one and all protest their innocence; I looked on them all as culpable, and would have sacrificed them all to my just vengeance had I dared so to do;

as it was, I marched them off to the Collector, under a guard of horsemen.

When I had in some measure recovered from the dreadful shock, occasioned by the sight of my murdered wife, I made enquiries concerning the probable time, when she must have fallen beneath the ruthless hands of her destroyers. It appeared, that the crime must have been committed early on the preceding night, after sunset, at which hour, she was seen alive, and cooking some rice and milk. Thus, while I was aiding the Collector to save one woman from the flames, another, and that my own wife, was doomed to destruction, by some lawless villains, whose object in the first instance, no doubt, was plunder. The resistance of poor Kishna, most probably, hastened the horrid catastrophe, I was now fated to behold. My suspicions against the two greedy farmers, who I had in a measure, tricked into terms

for my field, were certainly not weakened by hearing that one of them had departed from Warree, although his brother remained quietly, turning over the ground in the thistle field, apparently ignorant of all that had taken place in my residence.

He came on being summoned, but declared his entire innocence, and that of his brother, who had never quitted his side all day or all night, and had departed early in the morning of the present day, to dispose of some grain, at a neighbouring market, and would return in the evening, though it might be at a late hour perhaps.

All this seemed very fair, honest, and straightforward, so that I had no proof beyond my own, perhaps erroneous suspicions.

The whole affair was consequently enveloped in mystery, so much so, that Sujah, who prided himself on his cunning, and sagacity, declared himself at fault, and yet was unwilling

to give up the search. He however disguised himself as a Gosein, resolved in such character to wander abroad, and glean information.

Kishna had been evidently suffocated by the hand, and not by a Thug's roomal, the impression of two thumbs, being apparent on her neck. The ornaments, which had been taken away, might lead to detection, of the guilty party, and as Sujah well knew, and could swear to every one of them, I allowed him to depart on his almost hopeless errand.

The Collector himself, with a numerous Aswarry, arrived late at night, and summoned me to his presence, "your thirty Peons, Bapoo, I could not detain," said he, "because there is no proof, or even suspicion against them, but I have dismissed them for neglect of duty. Who do you suspect to be the guilty persons in this horrid murder?"

I related to the Collector, the story of the field, and the skeleton in the treasure vault, and his suspicions also, were pointed at the

two farmers, whom he caused to be apprehended. The brother had returned from the market, and both appeared utterly confounded at the crime laid to their charge. After a very lengthened examination, the Collector thought fit to detain the farmers in his custody, and they were accordingly conducted to the Patil's Chowkee, and a guard stationed over them.

The house of the farmers was next minutely searched, but not a single ornament belonging to my wife, could be discovered, nor in fact, any thing that could bring the murder home to them, and they were eventually set at liberty.

The Peons had declared, they had admitted only one woman at the entrance gate, and ingress by any other way was impossible, unless my walls had been perforated, which was not the case. "The woman walked boldly into the place," said the Peons, "as if

acquainted with Kishna's female attendants, and came out again, about two hours after sunset."

"This must have been a man in disguise," said the Collector.

"I am of your opinion, sir," replied I, "but who could the fellow have been?"

"Some one that you have grievously offended, Bapoo, rely on it," observed the Collector, "but let us enquire if any strangers were seen lurking about in the village."

Enquiry was made, but some saying "yes," and others, "no," we could make nothing of it, leaving the affair wrapt in impenetrable mystery.

My wife's female attendants who had gone to the Jatra, now being brought before the Collector, deposed to their mistress having given them permission to go, and be absent all night. They remembered having been accosted by a strange woman on the confines of the village, and in fact, confessed having let

out, that they were servants to Kishna, Bapoo Brahmin's^o wife, and that their master had gone to Poona, but was expected home in a day or two. The women also remembered their strange female saying, "what then is Kishna all alone?"

To which the servants replied in the affirmative, adding, however, "that she was well guarded by thirty Peons."

This was all that passed, and on being questioned as to the appearance of the woman, the servants said, "she was very short, fat, and with a fair countenance, and apparently very poor, speaking in a peculiar hollow tone of voice, but with a very distinct, and correct pronunciation.

I was still unable to determine on whom to fix the crime, as no one that I remembered answered to this description of the strange woman, given by my female servants, whom I discharged, awaiting patiently the return of Sujah, who, however, might be weeks ere

he again appeared. What a miserable state of existence was now mine? alone, friendless, and worse than friendless, for I was surrounded by the mean, base, ignorant, and revengeful; and what had I done? what offence had I given, to merit the ill-will of all around me? I regretted much that Sujah had departed, ignorant of the fact, that a woman, supposed to be disguised as such at least, had entered my house on the night of the murder, for, had he been informed of this fact, it might have been some clue to him in the desired discovery. Kishna's blackened body was committed to the flames, amid a vast concourse of spectators, all informed of the manner by which she had come by her death.

Why did I wish to live after this sad ceremony? what pleasure had I now in life? robbed, not only of my money, but the partner of my existence, what charms did life hold out to me? none, and I wished to die, for I became exceedingly dejected, and very miser-

able. Sujah returned not, nor did any one make the least discovery, relative to the murder of my beloved wife. Oh! how miserable were the long, long days to me; when the sun arose, I wished for its setting, and then stretched upon my mat, longed for it to rise again, but it would neither hasten or retard its progress for me, however earnest might be my prayer.

CHAPTER XI.

THE Collector had departed, promising me all his aid, and authority whenever I might demand it. Alas! I seemed to be quite forgotten, and deserted even by Sujah my faithful companion. My house was now a barren wilderness; the curse to all that Trimbuckjee ever possessed, had followed me even into my mud fortress, and daily did I perceive the assertion of the farmer over the tomb of the skeleton, approach to downright verity. I now framed resolutions to quit the wuttun for ever; I would in fact have demolished the fort, had I felt

myself entitled so to do. Here had I found a fortune which had slipped through my fingers, here had I placed my beloved wife, who, also had been torn from me; could I then continue in such an abode? No, I would wander through the country, would resign my Foujdarship, and again seek my livelihood in the service of some potent prince, and my thoughts adverted to my cousin, of Satarrah, "he," said I, inwardly, "he will provide for me, and give me some lucrative situation;" why, therefore, should I pass my days in solitude and inactivity, cooped up in my miserable abode, in Warrree-Gaum? excitement at all times was necessary to my existence, and rather than be idle, and lead the life of a drone, better would it, were I to become a Pindàree, or even a Thug, however, revolting such lines of life might be to me.

Sujah, at length returned, saying, "that the only discovery he had made was, that the imposter, and sham Brahmin, Fuzloodeen Dow-

larker, was in the neighbourhood at the time of the murder of my wife."

"'Tis him," I cried, "'tis him! he was the man, disguised as a woman, who entered my fort, and destroyed my wife; where is he now Sujah?"

"Not far off," replied my astonished friend.

"Let us seize him," said I, "and tax him with the crime."

"Stay," said Sujah, "let me first find out where he lodges, and then a search may produce the proof, necessary to convict him."

"Good," said I, "go my friend, ascertain this, and return to me without delay, for I feel satisfied he is the murderer; I thwarted him, and he can never forgive me, it is not the nature of a Mahommedan so to do."

Sujah once more departed.

CHAPTER XII.

I HAD not entered the apartment, where my wife breathed her last, since her remains had been carried away, to be consumed, but now, being almost bereft of intellect, I found myself in the very chamber; the rays of the setting sun, darted through the open casement, shewing too clearly the couch, on which she had been reclining, on the fatal night of her murder. My foot struck against something, and I stooped to pick it up, when to my surprise, I grasped a silver ring, on which, were engraved several Sanscrit characters, which

however, I could not spare time to decipher. I could not positively swear to the ring being the impostor's, although knowing full well, the fellow had worn one, very much resembling it. How anxiously did I now wait the return of Sujah, to inform me of the villains resting-place, but still another day went by, and he returned not.

Two days elapsed, and my friend not returning, I became alarmed; at length he made his appearance, much fatigued, and exhausted. "I have discovered his abode, Bapoo!" said he, but——"

"But what?" cried I.

"But," continued my friend, "it will be of no use to search it."

"Why?" questioned I.

"Because, only last night, it was burned to the ground."

"Oh! unlucky that I am," cried I, "how did the fire occur?"

"I know not," replied my friend, "but as

he lodged in the house of an oilman, at the small hamlet of Mundigaum, it is not very wonderful, if a fire did take place, that the house should be burned to the ground."

"Did you observe this ring on the Musulman's finger?" said I, "when we overtook him, on his road, from Nasik to Poona."

"I cannot swear to it," replied Sujah, "but he certainly did wear a silver ring, and now his fingers are without such an ornament."

"What is his occupation, in this part of the country?" enquired I,

"He goes about from place, to place, with muslins, for sale," replied Sujah, "and evidently did not recognize me, in my Gosein's disguise."

"Did you see his pack open, and exposed?" I enquired.

"Yes, and no ornaments, or jewelry, of any kind, could I perceive," replied Sujah.

"This is very strange," said I, "and yet

I believe him to be guilty of my wife's murder, if not him, who can it be? did you hear him talk?"

"Yes, he conversed slowly, distinctly, and with a good pronunciation."

he "Then it is him," said I, "that was disguised as a woman, and conversed with my female servants. Once more must you depart, Sujah, taking with you, one of my discarded women-servants who will be able to swear to his pronunciation, and peculiar mode of delivery."

"Willingly," replied Sujah, "but, fear now his house or abode is destroyed, I shall experience some difficulty in finding him out, and already does he look on me, with a jealous and suspicious eye, for having so frequently thrust myself in his path."

"Send the woman-servant to him," said I, "and await her report."

"Then," said Sujah, "you will not be able to prove he was the same person, that enter-

ed your house, after sunset, on that fatal evening.” •

“True,” said I, “but he will be required to render some account of himself, and state why he was disguised as a woman, and some of my discharged Peons, may be enabled to swear to him.”

“Not unless he were to appear before them, in that very costume, I imagine,” said Sujah.

“You say right, Sujah, then he must escape, and all hope is fled.”

“No, I say not thus,” said Sujah, “send for your woman-servant, pay her well, and desire her to follow me ; there can be no harm in proving the similarity of tone, and voice, and we must not despair, Bapoo, although the difficulties are great, and numerous.”

I sent for one of the women-servants who readily consented to accompany my friend, on this, his third journey of discovery.

They returned to me, on the third day, the woman not being able to swear to the tone,

enunciation, or manner of the man, as being the same, as proceeded from beneath the woman's saree, on the confines of the village.

• Could I now only be positive, as to the ring, no further proof would be wanting.

Sujah hit upon the expedient, of going disguised, as a tramping jeweller, and proposed offering the ring to the Mussulman, among other articles for sale, adding "if he should evince any extraordinary desire to become purchaser, of the identical silver ring, such anxiety must condemn him, and he might, greedy as he was, claim it as his own property, lost sometime ago."

Acting upon this advice, I purchased a good stock of jewelry, and placing the silver ring conspicuously among the lot, once more despatched Sujah, now no longer a Gosein, but habited as a respectable vendor of gold, and silver trinkets.

Sujah returned on the following day, breathless, and impatient to give me information, saying, that he had offered the ring to the

Mussulman, who tossed it on one side, and was soon after joined by another very suspicious person, you will say.

“Who?” I demanded.

“Mohun Lal, the Thug,”

“Hah! indeed! then you have found the real guilty man, and I will take upon myself the responsibility of his arrestation. Accordingly, I once more despatched Sujah, followed by four trusty Peons, to one of whom I gave a written order to the Patail of the village, where the Thug and the Mussulman had taken up their residence, desiring him to afford every aid in his power to the bearer, and his companions, in the duty assigned them. I proposed following with Sujah in the track of the Peons, who being ignorant of the Thug's person, would not be able to act until our arrival to point the fellow out to them.”

After the Peons had departed by the usual road, my evil genius suggested to me the wisdom of reaching the village before them, and

proposed to Sujah cutting through the ravine, by the north side of my fortress, by which means we should be enabled to shorten the distance nearly three coss, or more; Sujah, ever ready to obey, or follow up any of my suggestions, was prepared to the moment, and off we started.

There was no water in the bed of the ravine, although the foliage refreshed by the late rains, was extremely luxuriant, having a grand and wild appearance, and forming a pleasant shade in many a nook throughout the rugged nullah; and so tempting proved the umbrageous spot to Sujah, that he proposed resting a while beneath the leafy retreat, little dreaming poor fellow, that he was selecting his own grave, for he had not seated himself a moment, when I, who was climbing up the opposite bank, heard a strange rushing noise, followed by a piteous yell, and on turning, beheld my staunch friend in the grasp of a royal tiger! I was

horror-struck; my hands refused their office for a few moments, and then they sought out my pistols; I fired, but with no effect, and discharged my second, but although the bullet touched the sanguinary tyrant of the woods, it only served to irritate him the more, as he lashed his sides with his tail, sucking with his monstrous jaws the life-blood from poor Sujah's throat.

“ Oh, Vishnu! what a sight was this for me to witness? helpless and unarmed in the manner alone, which might destroy the monster, I was doomed to gaze upon my poor friend, as feeble as a mouse under the claws of a cat, and beheld his life-blood gurgle down the tiger's throat, while his legs which in agony he attempted to draw up, were fiercely pressed down by the talons of the monster who growled horribly, continuing to swing his tail about in all directions.

Sujah was soon deprived of life, and the

tiger speedily satiated with his gorge, so that it behoved me to effect my escape, lest a similar fate should attend myself. I rushed into an open field uncultivated, and neglected, and there lay myself down, giving way to a violent flood of tears, crying "oh, unhappy Bapoo! no sooner do your enemies drop off, but your friends follow!"

I was now literally alone—no wife—no friend—no relative, and heartily sick of the world, and its unfeeling, cruel, deceiving inhabitants. Now doubly enraged against Mohun Lal, whose very existence at the village had been the cause of the dreadful catastrophe in the ravine, I hastened forwards, and meeting a poor cultivator, informed him that my poor friend had met his death from a royal tiger, describing to him the exact spot as nearly as possible.

"Take," said I, "his body and convey it to my wuttun, until my return this evening, when

it shall be consumed, and no expence spared."

The man promising obedience, I hurried on towards the village dreading lest Mohun Lal should recognize me before his apprehension ; in which case, I knew the fellow too well to suppose he would be fool enough to remain an instant longer where I had set my foot. Having once appeared before my enemy under the disguise of a Gosein, I dared not venture a repetition of that character, and merely contented myself by blacking my face, body, and arms, appearing as a Coombie, or tiller of the land. In this attire, I beheld the impostor Brahmin, Fouzloodeen Dowlarker, who now dressed in his Mahommedan costume, vending essences and perfumes to the women in the Bazaar.

He did not recognize me, and I should have marvelled much had he done so, for in truth, my disguise was complete.

At the Patail's house, I beheld my own Peon deliver my order, upon which, the Patail made several evasive replies, apparently unwilling to lend his authority, upon which I made myself know^W to my messengers, and having informed them of the fate of my poor friend, desired them, if the Patail made any more excuses, or delays, to arrest him and drag him to Warree-Gaum.

The threat had the desired effect, for the Patail desired my fellows to go and seize whoever they pleased, and bring the culprits to him, when he would sanction the measure.

Accordingly, the Peons in my company, being disguised, tracked the steps of the Mussulman to an obscure house on the confines of the village, where, no doubt, his friend the Thug was concealed, or at any rate resided.

Soon afterwards I, followed by my four Peons, knocked at the door of the solitary

house which the impostor Brahmin had entered, and after several minutes a voice from within cried, "who is there?"

"I am sent for some of your essences," said one of my men.

"Wait then, my friend," said Fuzloodeen, "wait a minute and the door shall be opened."

We entered, and were received with some surprise, and even distrust, by the Mussulman.

"How did you know I sold perfumes?" said he.

"I was recommended by a Shroff, in the Bazaar," replied my Peon, whom I had well tutored.

"Indeed? and for whom is the essence required?" demanded the vendor.

"For a very rich lady of your own caste, who is travelling with her husband towards Nasik, and on their way to Bombay," replied my ready Peon.

“Oh, indeed, when do they start, and which road do they travel, and are they attended by any guard?”

“They start to-night, but by what road I don't know, and have no guard but ourselves now present,” replied my servant.

“Indeed,” said the Mussulman, musing awhile, ere he spoke, “indeed, and are you well paid?”

“No,” we all cried, “miserably paid.”

“And yet your master and mistress are so rich!” said the essence vendor.

“Yes, they are very rich, and carry, I know not how many diamonds about with them.”

“You surprise me; but how much essence do you now require?”

“More than you hawked about all the morning,” replied another of my disguised fellows.

“Then I must consult my brother,” said the Mahommedan dog, as he sneaked into a

room, the door of which was situated behind him.

My Peon was about to follow, saying, "I should like to see your brother."

"You need not follow," said the vendor.

"But I will," replied my Peon.

"And so will I," said another.

"And me also," I ejaculated, drawing my sword, an action that was speedily imitated by my companions, who, by this time had an entrance into the *brother's chamber*.

"That is your prisoner," said I, at once recognising the Thug, "seize him, and bind his arms."

Mohun Lal was overpowered and captured, while the essence vendor essayed to elude our vigilance, by attempting to glide out from a low sort of window in his brother's room; a blow from my sword handle, however, soon made him sue for mercy, and he consented to accompany his precious brother, as he called

him, to the Patail's Chowkee, where he speedily sent for me, promising to confess all he knew about my wife's murder, if I would promise him his life.

I could only assure him I would plead for him to the English authorities, provided he told me the whole truth, upon which he, in the presence of the Patail, commenced his confession in the following words:—

“ Having been exposed by you, Bapoo, I, as you know, walked on towards Poona. You overtook me, and amused yourself at my expense. I hated you, and do hate you heartily, but you are too strong for me. I beheld your frenzy at the closed shop of the Banker, in Poona, with a delight that almost intoxicated me, and made me forget my own ruin in rejoicing at your's. I soon learned the description of person who had so successfully tricked your Banker, and hoped to stumble on him one day, make acquaintance with him, and enjoy with him the joke of your ruin. At

Hyderabad I beheld Mohun Lal, attired in an Armenian garb, and at guess, accused him of having defrauded the Poona Banker. Seeing I knew him but too well, Mohun Lal made friends with me, and I travelled in his company. He was followed by several attendants, and appeared a rich man. He laughed heartily at the Banker's flight, but when I related your loss to him, he was electrified by delight."

" 'Oh, how I do rejoice,' said Mohun Lal, 'that I have been the means of reducing that scoundrel Brahmin to beggary.'

"Not so," replied I, "Bapoo is still very rich; his wife is covered with jewels, and he is known to have immense treasure, belonging to Trimbuckjee D'hanglia, concealed beneath his fortress."

" 'Ah! say you so?' said Mohun Lal, 'where is his fortress?'

"In Warree-Gaum," said I, "so I was informed at Nasik."

" 'Can I depend on you,' asked Mohun Lal.

“In any thing,” said I, “that will injure Bapoo.”

“‘Very well, then I will march into Candesh,’ said he.

“What will become of the rich merchant, that travels with you?” enquired I.

“‘Oh, never fear,’ replied Mohun Lal, ‘he will not be in our way.’

“I thought no more about the merchant, but, on the following day, looked about for him in vain.

“Mohun Lal, however, seemed so little disturbed at the merchant’s absence, that I forbore to allude to it, or express my surprise, further than observing, he had not joined our morning meal.

“‘No, he is gone forward,’ said Mohun Lal, ‘his route being very different from ours.’

“Very,” said I, interrupting the confession, for his road laid in the grave.

“You amaze me,” said Fuzloodeen, “do you mean to say Mohun Lal murdered him?”

“Yes, he is a Thug, and so are all his followers.”

“As I live, and by Mahommed, and the twelve Imaums, I was not aware of this,” said the Mussulman.

“I do not doubt you,” replied I, “for he would not put himself too much in your power, and yet your enquiries concerning the rout of our pretended rich lady, laden with diamonds, almost makes me mistrust you.”

“I asked those questions by the orders of Mohun Lal, who recommended me to give him the earliest information, concerning the motions of travellers; of course, I knew robbery to be his motive, but, that he was a Thug, I little dreamed of, however, to proceed: we reached this village, and I was sent forward to gain information, at Warree-Gaum—with joy did I find out that you were absent, and your fortress ill-defended. Mohun Lal instantly formed the resolution, to visit your wife dressed as a woman, and friend to one

of her attendants, and for this purpose, he left me, so well disguised, that it was barely possible for any one to detect him 'his object was,' he said, 'to frighten your wife into confessing where your treasure lay buried,' and having possessed himself, of as much as he could bring away, to finish, by stripping her of every ornament of value about her person.

"He returned, however, next day, in rather an agitated manner, bringing only the woman's ornaments, and no buried stores, of any description whatever.

"To my questions as to his success, he merely pointed to the golden ornaments, saying, 'twas necessary for him to be concealed for a time, and when his friends should return from an expedition at a distance, he would quit Candeish immediately.'

"At length Mohun Lal confessed to me, that he gained easy access to your wife, whose

female attendants, he knew, were all absent, as he met them on their way to a Jatra, not many coss distant. He next told me that your wife declared you had removed all your money, and had taken it to Poona, but that he, imagining "she was deceiving him, and enraged at being foiled in his attempts, threw himself upon her, and, with his hands strangled her, and then stripped her of every ornament on her person.

"I observed that it was a pity it had not been the husband, instead of the wife."

"You are very kind," said I, "learned Pun-dit."

"Well, I tell the truth, I did say so, upon which, Mohun Lal observed, he was sufficiently avenged, for some trick you played upon him, in Aurungabad, when that very wife of your's, was actually in his power.

"This is all I know, but how you could possibly have found us out, in our very retreat in

the lone house, so as to lead your men direct upon us, I am at a loss to conjecture, and it only shews that the guilty must never consider themselves safe."

"Now," said I, "confess where my poor wife's ornaments are concealed."

"They were all melted down, and converted into bars," said Fuzloodeen, "one of which I appropriated to myself."

"And the rest?" enquired I.

"Were given to a strange man, whose face I was not familiar with, one night about six hours after sunset."

I was now fearful there would be no proof, but remembering the silver ring, shewed it to my informant, who at once recognized it as having been worn by Mohun Lal, when he went away disguised as a woman. Still there was only the evidence of the accomplice, and I well knew how averse the English were to convict on such testimony.

“What grain merchant did you deal with?”

My informant mentioned the name of the man, and the situation of his shop.

“Who purchased the grain generally?”

“Mohun Lal, always.”

“Summon the grain dealer,” said I, and accordingly he made his appearance; and being confronted with Mohun Lal, swore to the ring, as having been on his finger, when he paid for his rice.”

“This will do,” said I, “Mohun Lal, you are a dead man; this ring I found by my strangled wife.”

“I lent it to the Mussulman,” said he, endeavouring to throw the crime on the head of the chief witness.

“This won't do, my friend,” said I, “you committed the murder.”

“I did not,” said Mohun Lal, “and this fellow accuses me to exonerate himself.”

“ We shall see,” said I, “ for remember, my female servants met, and conversed with the villain dressed in woman’s attire, and although they would not positively swear to his voice, I felt confident the Mussulman was the disguised man ; yet why should Mohun Lal lend him his ring ?”

To this question, Mohun Lal gave a very rational reply.

“ It was,” he said, “ to serve as a signet in case Fuzloodeen should fear to return to him, and meet him in some other part of the country at a future time, when any messenger bearing the ring would be assured of a friendly reception.”

“ The accursed Mussulman is the guilty man after all,” said I, “ but I have evidence enough to hang his colleague for his murder of Heera Singh, when I first had the misfortune to fall in his company.”

We reached Warree in safety, and having

rested there one day, proceeded on to the Collector's station, my prisoners well bound, and guarded.

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CHAPTER XIII.

I RELATED to the Collector the success of my pursuit, and he, as well as myself, felt inclined to attach guilt to the Mussulman, "however," added he, "the women servants shall have an opportunity of hearing both parties speak, we shall then know on whom to fix the crime."

It was accordingly arranged that on the day of the trial, the women should be concealed behind a curtain, with orders to speak when they should be able to pronounce to a certainty

which of the prisoners had conversed with them on their way to the Jatra.

No sooner had Fuzloodeen commenced his testimony against his colleague, than the two women declared to an officer stationed by them "that he was the man, who disguised as a female conversed with them on the day of the murder."

Ere however, they were brought forward, Mohun Lal, with his sweet, silvery, and deceitful voice, had commenced his defence, when both the women declared his voice to be strange to them. It was now time to confront the Mussulman with the two females, when his countenance fell precisely in the manner it had done when detected in Nasik. His beard, and mustachios also had evidently been recently cut off, and were but just beginning to bud forth again, and finding himself now sworn to by the women, and accused by his colleague, who he had wished to implicate,

Fuzloodeen Dowlarker confessed himself to be the murderer of my poor wife.

“ I was not ordered to commit such a crime,” said he, “ but I feared the woman would alarm the guards, and that I should be taken with the golden ornaments in my possession. Mohun Lal, however, did not scold me for what I had done, neither did he reward me as I had expected, although he took charge of all the golden ornaments and jewels, giving me but one bar of gold, after they had been melted down; when I accused Mohun Lal, I said that I had filched the gold bar, but that was false.”

Mohun Lal was now acquitted of the murder of my wife, but committed for a conspiracy to rob me, and also for the murder of Heera Singh. So that in less than a month, both the culprits were led forth to the place of execution. Mohun Lal was reserved and silent, while his companion chattered away to every body, up to the moment when the rope was

fixed around his neck; he reviled his fellow sufferer, calling him a vile Thug, a deceiver, and a man who had brought him an *innocent man*, into the present horrible situation. Mohun Lal disdained a reply, but signing to me, confessed himself to be one of the pretended Israelites that had played the trick upon my Banker, who they afterwards, by accomplices seduced to abandon Poona, and join a body of merchants travelling to Oujeen.

“These merchants,” said Mohun Lal, “were myself and friends; you may guess your Banker’s fate, and that your money accordingly, which he bore with him became my property.”

“And where is it?” said I.

“Where you can find it, by means of the ring, which you produced in evidence,” said he, “provided you can get this accursed halter removed for ever from my neck.”

“It is now too late,” said I, “and were it not, I would lose my money cheerfully to see

you swing; however, I dare not propose such terms to the English judge; he would only despise me, and execute you just the same, therefore, now bear in mind the agonies you have caused hundreds of victims, by your infernal roomals, and now," said I, "if you are ready, I will give the J'hirnee—what shall it be? *Tumbakoo Lao?* or *Hookah Lao*, eh? valiant Thug!"

He waved me away with his hand, when the cart on which the malefactors stood, was suddenly drawn from under their feet, and Mohun Lal, and his vile tool the Mussulman, speedily ceased to exist.

Mohun Lal, either from his habit of boasting, or impelled by his awful situation, which prompted him to tell the truth, had confessed to the jailor that he was worth nearly one crore⁹ of rupees, all gained by the scientific practice of the roomal! where his treasure lie buried, or if in any Sahoukar's hands he would not state, but sent a message to the judge to

purchase his life and freedom for half a crore, a proposition which of course was unheeded, much to the surprise of the Thug, who could not understand what advantage the Topee-wallas could gain by his death.

He knew not the English, or I could have assured him, when once the sentence of death is pronounced, and sanctioned by a higher authority at a distance, no money, however enormous the sum, can put it aside; there is then no hope—the wretch's life is forfeited, and he must expiate all his crimes on the fatal tree, and be no more heard of.

CHAPTER XIV.

“WELL, Bapoo,” said the Collector, on the day after the execution, “your enemies are falling away fast.”

“Yes, sir,” said I, “and so also are my friends, for a tiger seized my last, and most faithful follower, our deputy Foujdar.”

“Indeed !” cried the Collector, “you are very unfortunate, Bapoo, but how did this happen ?”

I explained every thing to the Collector, up to the moment of Mohun Lal’s last hour, when he promised to restore to me the money he

had plundered the Banker of, on the road to Oujeen. .

“ He must in truth have a very strong bank somewhere,” said the Collector, “ as he offered me half a crore to let him go free.”

“ So I have heard,” said I, “ but as he took good care not to state where his money was concealed, I must put up with my loss.”

“ Keep that ring, Bapoo,” said the Collector, “ it may ensure you admittance, as a friend of its late possessor to some well defended place, where you may hear that the treasure belonging to the Thug is buried.”

“ It would be a very hazardous undertaking,” said I, “ seeing that at the time of the Thug’s death, most probably some one or more of his gang witnessed his last moments; how therefore, can I pretend to come from him, having left him alive, and well?”

“ True,” said the Collector, “ you will tread on very dangerous ground.”

“ Yes,” replied I, “ and feel their roomals

around my neck, instead of grasping my own money; but will you be pleased, sir, to appoint a new deputy, as my labours are very far from light I can assure you."

"I will appoint one to-morrow, Bapoo, and a man who will pull well with you, and render you every assistance."

I made my obeisance, and quitted the great man's presence.

Sometimes I fancied the Thug's treasure must be concealed in the Heera Baugh, at Aurungabad, for it is well known that he had employed many masons there, who, however, never had been heard of since, although they were proved to have left the building, after having received their full pay for their labour. Sujah had mentioned this fact to me, but, at the moment, I was so engaged with rescuing my wife from the grasp of the Thug, that I paid little, or no attention to what he was saying. Now, however, the remark fell upon me with its full force, and I said, "could I but

possess myself of all that treasure, what a fortunate person would become, Bapoo Brahmin?

I was not covetous, nor was I like many of my countrymen, in despair, on account of my grievous losses, and, if now, I permitted my mind to wander in the supposed direction, of the deceased Thug's treasure; it was more for the love of excitement, than from any inordinate desire of gain; indeed, the chances of success were so very slight, that to dream for a moment, of enriching myself by the spoil of hundreds of hapless victim's was in fact, a species of insanity, which I shook off, as I would have done a plague spot. I however, could not entirely banish from my mind, the glorious enterprise of effecting an entrance into the strong hold, and perhaps, the very treasury of the notorious Thug! his gang, I learned by the Mussulman's confession, and testimony, were now absent, upon some hazardous expedition, and if I really felt determin-

ed to run into danger, now was the most fitting season, as there could be but few of the troop left to guard the piles of gold—piles of gold? the very sound had an exhilarating influence on my spirits, for although, as I have before observed, I was not of a covetous or grasping disposition, I had nevertheless enough of the Maharatta Brahmin, in my composition, not to be regardless of the advantages arising from the possession of perhaps, more than a crore of rupees! a sum, or the half of it far beyond the reach of even my cousin of Satarrah, “surely,” said I, “my propitious star is now about to rise, and I shall soon experience its cheering rays, upon my hitherto distracted mind, and be prepared to follow its joyous beacon, whithersoever it may conduct me.

I dreamed of the Thug's money; I fancied the indignation, the dismay, the utter ruin of the gang, on their return, to find their coffers empty; but who could I trust to accompany

me? and to what place must I turn my face? the Heera Baugh, at Aurungabad, might be the depôt of the Thug's wealth, or it might be deserted, or if not, who could say, but that the mansion was filled with armed men, amid whom, it would be madness for me to venture! In short, I soon discovered that I was fretting and worrying my mind for nothing; the secret died with the Thug, and the money must fall into the hands of his worthless associates.—

Did they deserve it? how had they been enabled to amass such immense sums? by the wholesale murder, and inhuman massacre, of their company; then would not it be a glorious retaliation, on the abandoned crew, could I but wrest from their clutches the wages of their sin? undoubtedly it would, but at the same time, would it not be letting loose a ravenous pack, to recommence their murderous attacks on the innocent and unsuspecting? Perhaps such might be the case, but, in the like manner, would they have sallied forth,

even though their wealth reached to the roof of their stronghold. Rich, or poor, the trade of the Thug, progressed steadily, and to a certainty, there was no risk, the unsuspecting traveller and his followers, simultaneously bit the dust, and were also interred at the same moment, in the same grave, previously prepared for them; all trace of the crime, therefore was for ever lost, while the wealth thus seized from the persons of their victims, continued to swell the murderers' coffers, until their chief, to purchase his life, could offer half a crore of rupees! if so, it was evident, more than that sum must be within his reach, but where?—echo answered “where!” At length I became furious at my ignorance, when perhaps had I known the spot, the money would be still far, far from my grasp. In this state I wandered abroad, and visited the Chowkees of the Police Peons, finding fault with everybody, and every thing, so that all my subordinates evidently looked on me, as a person

deranged. I was accompanied by only one Peon, and it was after sunset, ere I turned towards my desolate mansion. We passed by the ravine, where the savage tiger had destroyed, and deprived me of my most true, and staunch friend, whose counsel would now, in truth, have been most acceptable to me. I was musing on his unhappy destiny, when a violent scream struck upon my ears, another and another, yet of a more piercing nature followed, so that I had little doubt but, that some act of violence, was in the act of being committed, upon some defenceless female; commanding my attendant to follow with his drawn sword, I made for the spot, whence the cries of distress had proceeded, and there sure enough, were two villians attempting to plunder a woman of her ornaments; a blow on her wrist by a flint stone had already been inflicted, and the blood was flowing copiously from the wound.

It had evidently been the intention of the

robbers, to have crushed the hands and wrists of their victim, with sharp, and heavy stones, the easier to slip off her golden bangles, and so occupied were the monsters in their brutal outrage, that they heard not my approaching footsteps, consequently I fell upon the fellow with the sharp flint in his hand, just as he was about to repeat his blow, while my Peon, with his well-tempered sword, actually clove the skull of the other in twain, and he rolled lifeless at his feet. I however, did not succeed so easily, or quite so speedily, for, having fallen on my man, we both rolled over and over, among shrubs, and stumps of trees, until we were both fairly landed at the bottom of the ravine, the culprit keeping as fast hold of me, as I could possibly do upon him. We were both unarmed, and although I was the most powerful, I was not so active as my antagonist, whose fingers were more than once at my windpipe; however, I shook him off, until my Peon with his sword, came

tumbling headlong down the steep bank of the ravine, falling on us with such force, as nearly to drive the breath out of my body. My antagonist endeavoured to wrest the sword from the firm grasp of my determined Peon, who, however, became fully aware of the rascal's intention, and was instantly on his legs, dealing a left-handed cut on my opponent, which severed his wrist, so that his grasp upon me, relaxed, and I was enabled to stand once more on my legs, commanding the miscreant to surrender, if he valued his life. This he was constrained to do, when my Peon, unfolding his turban, speedily converted it into bands, wherewith to tie the prisoner's arms behind him.

CHAPTER XV.

It was now dark, for the sun once down in our country, darkness suddenly envelops the land. Guided by the groans of the ill-used woman, and dragging our prisoner after us, we contrived to reach the spot where I had fallen upon the villains.

I paid every attention to the woman that the darkness would admit of: I bound her wounded wrist with my shawl, and raised her head and supported it by my arm. She still groaned and wept bitterly, but spake not a single connected sentence. I therefore resolved to

convey her to my residence, and urged her to use her feet, which were uninjured. She accordingly walked pretty well, leaning on my arm for support. At times, over rough or uneven ground, I was constrained to carry her, whilst my Peon was unmercifully dragging his prisoner along through thick and thin, rough and smooth, swearing at him, and abusing him marvellously; I say marvellously, for so it was to me, who had never hitherto heard so many opprobrious epithets, so ingeniously strung together. At length we reached my mud fortress, which, however insignificant in appearance, had been the theatre of many an important transaction. It was in this spot that in one instant nearly twenty souls winged their way to regions above, or below; here it was I found my first treasure, and here was it I beheld my murdered wife! what one of the farmers had said, certainly had truth contained in it, namely, "that Trimbuckjee's property would but prove a curse to its possessor."

This assertion that I had overheard was indeed verified; my fortress had been a curse to me; the money I had found in it prospered me not, and proved in reality a curse to the Banker, who absconded with it to lose it all, and his life into the bargain, by one twist of a roomal around his neck!

I was now about to introduce a new character to my unlucky habitation, but I was little aware of the extreme beauty of the female I had so gallantly escorted from the ravine. Lights having been procured, I stood gazing on my guest with real, and unfeigned amazement. She was a Mussulmanee, young, tall, graceful, and formed in an exquisite mould: teeth like pearls, even, and regular; when she opened her beautifully formed mouth, must have stricken even an Anchorite with admiration, at this specimen of nature's workmanship, while her large, full, black and piercing eyes, seemed to penetrate one's inmost soul, and yet could at the same moment beam soft-

ly, and express even her gratitude for the assistance she had received at my hands. I will not attempt to describe and praise every feature of this fascinating creature, but will content myself by assuring my readers she was perfect, and that each feature of her countenance was in exact proportion, and that where-withal, she was extremely fair, modest, and unassuming.

She informed me, that her name was "Mheitab,"¹⁰ and that she was alone in the world, having lost her mother very early, and her father, and her brother, not long ago, in a very extraordinary manner.

I begged her, not to fatigue herself at present, by the relation of any melancholy tale, and assured her of my protection, as long as it might be agreeable to her, to demand it.

The grateful creature fell at my feet, calling down the blessings of Allah, on my head, and adding, "you shall not repent your kindness in having thus saved my life from those

Nutkhuts,¹¹ as I know them to be, and I repeat it, Brahmin, you shall not repent having stretched forth your arm in the defence of me, a lonely woman—great shall be your reward. I was in truth not a little astonished on hearing such words proceed from her beautiful lips, marvelling much, who she might be, or if she were some Sultan's daughter, or niece, or wife of some wealthy Mahomedan, otherwise how was she to reward me in the lavish manner her language gave me reason to expect?

The wrists of my patient had been, indeed, severely cut and bruised, and her glass bangles which had been smashed, entered into the wound, and occasioned much pain, attended by considerable fever and depression of spirits. I hired a female of her own caste to attend upon her, begging she would ask for whatever she might fancy. Having procured oranges, and fruit of all sorts, I commanded the nurse never to quit her side, except to get her meals.

On the third day M'heitab sent for me. She was seated upon the raised dais I had ordered for her, while a separate gardee was prepared for myself.

“It is not for the slave,” said she, “to sit, and the master to stand, therefore be seated, noble Brahmin, and listen to what I have to communicate to you. I am in possession of a secret, which never, until now have I met with any one, worthy to be entrusted with it. You have not only saved my life, but have treated me with kindness, and if not of my faith, what does it matter? said I not, great should be your reward? and I repeat the same—Bapoo, you shall indeed be rich, if you possess courage, and firmness to secure the prize, so nearly within your grasp.”

“I am all attention,” said I, “and will convince you of my courage, and ability, by recounting to you a few events of my chequered life.”

“I rejoice to hear it,” said M'heitab, “I

have gained my knowledge—but, oh, Allah! would that I were still in ignorance, and that the lips that imparted it to me were now moving in life before me, but they are closed for ever, and laid in the silent tomb.”

Here the lovely M'heitab indulged in a violent flood of tears, and I motioned to retire, but she waved her hand, signing me to retain my seat. Presently the beautiful mourner recovering her self-possession, thus commenced her communication:—

“ My father, my brother, and my lover were all three masons by trade, and resided half-way between the cities of Hyderabad, and Aurungabad. They were one day, about nine months ago, summoned to repair to the latter place, to execute some particular work in a Garden House, called the ‘ Heera-Baugh.’ ”

“ Ah!” exclaimed I, all attention, “ and did they go?”

“ They did, woe is me, they did go, but one only returned, and that one was my beloved

Mirza Khaleel, who sunk at my feet desperately wounded. I will pass over the time expended in his recovery as I thought, and relate the substance of his story. The masons, ten in number, having completed a secret vault, intended for the concealment of money, were well paid, and dismissed, and on their road were overtaken by another band of masons, and carpenters, as they said, returning from Poona to Hyderabad, and it was proposed they should club their forces on the march, as a protection against thieves, and depredators: they travelled on for two days, until my father, brother, and lover began to approach our village, a circumstance they chanced to mention to their new associates. My lover Mirza, with my dear father and brother, and indeed all the workmen were resting near a pellucid stream, some smoking, others talking and passing their jokes, when suddenly, some one among their new associates cried out in a very peculiar tone of voice, '*Tumbakoo Lao,*'

upon which my father and brother were, it seemed to Mirza, dragged down to the ground by a handkerchief around their necks, while one of the new comrades was busily employed in endeavouring to serve my lover in the same manner, but being either a bungler in his trade, or Mirza being too active, his victim escaped, and fled, crying 'Thugs, Thugs—murder!' as loud as his voice would admit of, for which he received the contents of a matchlock, in his right shoulder. Still did he continue running, and crying 'murder!' until exhausted from loss of blood, he sunk under a peepul tree, where he was found by a goatherd, and by him brought to my humble abode. I need not expatiate on my agony on beholding my beloved in so miserable a condition, nor how I tore my hair and beat my breast, on hearing from Mirza as soon as he could speak, the death of my fond father, and my beloved brother; Mirza I hoped would recover, but I saw his strength fail him daily,

in fact he was sensible he could not last much longer, for he signed me to approach his pallet.

“‘M’heitab,’ said he, ‘my sand is nearly run out to the last grain, I am dying, but I will impart to you the secret the Thugs feared we should, if suffered to live, disclose to our friends—it may be the means of enriching you, though how, I cannot say: we contrived a secret vault in the Heera Baugh, for the reception of the treasure, said to belong to a rich merchant, named Mohun Lal, the master and proprietor of the Garden House. The vault itself is a mere cellar, but the entrance to it is somewhat out of the way, and was the invention of your poor father. On entering the marble paved hall, supported by pillars of granite; you might gaze and look about and examine for ever,’ without finding any thing at all resembling an entrance to a vault below; but now, should you ever have the opportunity, if you minutely examine the marble slab at

the base of the fourth pillar on your right hand and insert any iron instrument, prying it towards the pillar, it will instantly slide beneath the said pillar, showing a flight of stone steps, very steep, and rudely made but as the merchant would not have us longer about the work than was actually necessary, we were desired to leave the stairs in a very unworkmanlike condition; once below, light is ingeniously admitted from above, but how I cannot explain, nor is it necessary I should do so. Here no doubt is the treasure of the merchant, who it is evident is a murderous Thug, and who imagines I am dead, and that his secret is safe, but thanks be to Allah, I am alive to make this disclosure. When the gang are absent on one of their expeditions, I understand the Garden House is left in charge of an old woman, the mother of Mohur Lal, so shrewd, cautious, suspicious, and watchful, sleeping with both eyes open, that not even a mouse could run over the secret entrance to the

cavern without her knowledge, and the difficulty will, be to gain an entrance into the building at all, as she admits no one during her son's absence, except those he sends who are possessed of certain secret signs, and words which they must use, ere the old bel-dam will draw a single bolt, or turn a key of the massive door.' ”

“ Mirza here became exhausted, and on the following day expired in my arms. Now you will ask me how I came to be wandering in your village ? I buried my lover, I could not remain alone where I was so overwhelmed with such poignant grief as mine, and therefore determined to set out in a bullock carriage to proceed to Nasik, where an aunt, my father's sister, I knew, resided. The two men from whose violence you rescued me, came one as a guide, the other as proprietor of the vehicle, and I agreed to recompense them handsomely. My father's property was buried somewhere in, or about my dwelling, but the exact spot I

was ignorant of, and could not spare time to search for it, but set out without delay. Approaching this village my bullocks refused to move, and lay down, baffling all my attendants ingenuity to compel them to arise; their tails were twisted almost off, their nostrils pricked by sharp pointed sticks, and even a fire was proposed to be kindled beneath them, a piece of cruelty I by no means would consent to, preferring rather to alight and make for the village on foot. This I accordingly did, escorted by my guides, who purposely conducted me to the ravine, with the intention to rob, and murder me; you, Bapoo, have saved my life, and in return are in the possession of my secret, and I hope it will be the means of enriching you."

"It will," said I, "I have dreamed of this enterprise; it has day and night haunted me, for know, good M'heitab, that the villain Mohun Lal is hanged, and dead, and that to purchase his life, and freedom, he offered half

a crore of rupees, and that sum at least, we must find, in the Heera Baugh, the very building to which my suspicions directed me."

I then explained, how Mohun Lal had tricked my Banker, and then persuaded him in the character of a merchant, to follow in his train, bearing as he did, two lacs of my money with him, which now formed part of the Thug's treasure, as the Banker had fallen beneath their destructive roomals.

M'heitab actually shuddered on hearing the characters of these men, and began to fear I should fail in my attempts, until I shewed her the private signet ring, of the hanged chieftain.

"That will ensure you the whole of the treasure," said she, "be prudent and wary, and old Bhicca the Thug's mother, will be outwitted."

"That is," said I, "supposing we find her the sole guardian, of the place, which is by no means impossible, as I know to a certainty,

that the gang are now out upon an expedition."

"At any rate," said M'heitab, archly "Mohan Lal is not at home."

"That I can swear to," replied I, "but, now comes the important consideration, who is to be my companion? and having succeeded, how much may I keep for myself? as you fairest M'heitab, are entitled in fact, to the whole amount."

"I will not take a rupee," said the honest woman, "it is all your own."

"I insist," said I, "on an equal division."

"And I," said M'heitab, "will receive no such sum, and in fact, will wait to see how much you bring home with you, it will then be time enough to talk about my share, so, now select your companion."

"I can trust to no one," said I, "and should not like hereafter, to be called the treasure finder, or possessor of the Thugs ill-gotten riches; suppose you, dressed in male

habiliments, become my confidential attendant?"

"Me," cried M'heitab, "alas! I have now no nerve left for such a hazardous undertaking, and should betray my sex, at the very first outset; besides my wrist is painful, and I could neither handle sword or dagger."

"There must be two," said I, "to lift up the bags, and load my camels, on whose backs it is my intention to sling grain baskets, sprinkling rice, &c., over the precious ore, to deceive the guards, and inquisitive persons, in Aurungabad."

"That is an excellent plan," said M'heitab, "and only wish you could devise as good a one to disguise and conceal myself."

"Well," said I, "cannot you lead the camels up to the Garden House, there piquet them, and follow me into the very treasury?"

"You forget the old woman, or do you purpose given her the taste of her son's roomal?"

“No, no,” said I, “she shall not be hurt, though a good cord, to secure her arms, will be a necessary precaution.”

“Then you make sure of being admitted?” said my handsome friend.

“I do,” replied I, “and with you I also make sure of a fortunate termination to our enterprise.”

“How can my presence ensure you so much?” demanded M’heitab.

“I know not, but, I look on you as my good genius, under whose wing, Bapoo may calculate on protection, or upon whose propitious pinion he may soar, as you Mussulmans say, even up to the seventh heaven.”

“Mighty pretty flattery, for a Sage Brahmin to utter, methinks,” said M’heitab, “one would think I had discovered the veritable Hafiz, in Warree’s deep ravine, but, to be serious, I should like to accompany you, that our secret may die with us alone, so I will be your camel driver, and become as dirty a

one as you can find, between hence and Delhi."

"You rejoice me much," cried I, "by thus readily entering upon my views, and shall have a moiety of all we may discover."

"Then I am off," said Mheitab, "and you may drive your camels yourself."

"Well," said I, "as you please when shall we start?"

"To-morrow, for we are only losing time, and the gang you say, is on its return."

"Yes, I understood the Mahommedan so."

"What Mahommedan?"

"Ah, did I not state to you that two men were hanged?"

"No, you only said Mohun Lal."

"I ought to apologize fair one, that I omitted to mention so important a character as Fuzloodeen Dowlarkar, the impostor Brahmin, for he it was that swung by the side of the renowned Thug?"

"Oh, Allah!" cried M'heitab, "what is it

you say, is Fuzloodeen dead, executed! and was he a Thug?"

"No," said I, "he was not a Thug, but was hanged for having strangled my poor wife."

"Oh, worse and worse," cried M'heitab, shedding tears.

"Why do you cry?" said I, "was he known to you?"

"Alas! he was my uncle, my father's own brother!"

"You amaze me," cried I, "your uncle!—but you may be in error, it cannot be."

"It is true; my father's brother was from infancy, a wild and roving boy, got into bad company, then joined the Baze-ghurs, or jugglers, next turned saint, and mumbled at a mosque, then, finding but few rupees coming in, he studied Sanscrit under a Pundit from the holy city of Benares, lived, acted as a Brahmin, and visited even us in that character without our detecting him, and at length

gained the reputation of great learning, and unheard-of austerity of manner. We lost sight of him for two years and supposed he had been detected, and perhaps killed by your holy caste; think then what a shock must it be to me, now to learn that he was publicly executed for murder! and of your wife!"

"It certainly is a most curious coincidence," said I, "that having brought the uncle to the gibbet, I became the humble instrument to save the niece from a miserable and cruel death, and were I superstitious, and the difference of our creeds away, should pronounce it the will of destiny that we should never part, however, perhaps my fair friend you are as good an actress as your uncle undoubtedly was an actor, and are only playing the part of Mussulmanee."

M'heitab blushed, yet could not refrain from smiling at my observation, saying, "alas! would

I were not what I really am, a bereaved Mahomedan female !”

“ Bereaved, you shall never be,” said I, “ nor shall you lack wealth if we succeed, but I will go in quest of a neat pair of upper lip ornaments, to cover, and conceal that sweet mouth, and then—”

“ Bapoo,” said she, blushing, and interrupting me, “ I do not like flattery, I am conscious of no beauty, therefore go, and be quick about your business, and forget not the coarse hair kumberband, turban, and stout sandals, &c.”

“ I am a little experienced,” replied I, “ in disguises, so fear not ; and perhaps you would not believe that once, disguised as a Gosein, I made my mortal enemy eat poisoned cakes, baked expressly for myself !”

“ Indeed ! and the result ?”

“ Death—at which, however, I was horror-stricken for many days afterwards.”

“ And what became of the baker of those cakes ?”

“ Ask what became of the sugar-cane up-rooted and carried away by the hurricane—for in like manner did the baker vanish from this nether world.”

“ I do not comprehend you, Bapoo.”

“ Then to speak in plainer language, good M’heitab, he was, by me, blown half way to the first Mahommedan heaven by gunpowder, followed by many more as vile as himself, and this my court-yard was covered with their blackened limbs.”

“ Oh, Bapoo, you represent yourself as a very Siva, the destroyer of the human race—Thugs, Nutkhuts, Impostor Brahmins, and unlucky bakers of cakes, all vanish at your approach.”

“ Not quite so, good M’heitab, I had toil and trouble enough to catch them in my net, and not without considerable danger to myself; but one day you shall hear all my adventures, and hair-breath escapes; I will now take my leave for the present.”

Thus saying, I made my obeisance, and hurried on to the bazaar, to make the necessary purchases. The Jemmidar, of Sebundee horse soldiers, at my command, got in readiness eight well equipped, and properly armed men, "who were," I said, "to guard a large quantity of grain, I was about purchasing, for the English Government, and to place themselves entirely at my disposal."

The four camels I bought and paid for, dispensing with the services of their drivers, much to their surprise, and dismay, calculating as they no doubt did, that themselves, and the beasts, were inseparable, and part and parcel of the bargain.

CHAPTER XVI.

M'HEITAB having been properly moustachioed, dirtied, and sandalled, looked so extremely cunning, that I could have, had I dared, strained her to my bosom, and imprinted a lengthened kiss, on her polished forehead, which was the only part not disfigured by the dingy dye, used to stain her face, and hands; she was in good spirits, until actually called upon, to lead out her beasts of burthen, when I perceived her to tremble violently, a nod and a look from me, however, soon restored her to her self-possession, and

before sunrise, we quitted the village. I had not forgotten the cord for old Bhicca, nor had I omitted to load and prime my pistols, or to examine the edge of my kuttar, whose bejewelled hilt protruded proudly from my sash; in case of our meeting with more than one guardian to the treasure, I had also furnished myself with several small boxes, the lids of which were drilled with holes, containing very finely powdered quick-lime, for the purpose of throwing that aggravating dust, into the eyes of my opponents, whilst my own, should be filling with dust of a far more precious quality. My chief alarm arose from the anticipated terror of my companion, would she dare to follow me into the very den of the thieves? would she not betray some hesitation, and thus excite old Bhicca's suspicions? it was indeed a most hazardous undertaking, and one which the most trifling blunder, or shadow of fear on either of our parts, must

cause to fall to the ground, and our heads after it. .

I endeavoured, by constantly keeping near M'heitab, to cut off all approach of the horse-men, who I feared might detect her, by her voice, and thus raise at least a scandal, which for both our sakes, I thought better avoided.

As we entered Aurungabad, the morning sun was gilding with its glorious rays, each nodding minaret that ornamented and adorned the beautiful city, while from the terraces of the mosques, were the zealous Mowuzzins calling the faithful to matin prayer, so that one would have imagined the town a city of asses, so similar to the brayings of those animals, were the cacophonous sounds, which proceeded from the lungs of these worthies on the temple roofs. We halted at a Caravanserai, for travellers, and soon procured a warehouse, which I hired by the week, I then housed my camels and their grain baskets,

and as the day got up, sauntered through the town. The bazaar was now crowded, and certainly was a gay and imposing sight; the fruit was most tempting to behold, while the fragrance from the basket loads of flowers, some on the ground, some on porters heads, was exceedingly refreshing, and agreeable. Here might be seen the young Mussulman spendthrift, dressed in his silks, and flowing robes, his diminutive feet stuck into almost an infant's slipper, with its lofty heel, while in his delicate hand, dangled a gilded axe as he sauntered leisurely among the motly throng.

Turning from the contemplation of these effeminate idlers, my attention was attracted to a mountebank, who was practising his legerdemain, to the wondering crowd; he gave you a thong of leather, you hold it, and on opening your hand, a living snake falls to the ground; a handful of white sand, thrown from the dexterous hand of the conjuror, becomes all the colours of the rainbow, how

this is contrived, has puzzled wiser heads than mine.

The music of a wedding procession augmented the cheerfulness, and gaiety I everywhere observed, for the inhabitants of Aurungabad seemed for this day, at least, resolved to be merry. There was no squabbling, or abuse to offend the ear, and all seemed in a state of perfect contentment. There were compact smoking^g divans, where the morning loungers, on their crimson cushions, inhaled the bitter weed, whose nauseous flavour, they contrived to damp by the mixture of sweetmeats, and rice, and coarse sugar; while even this sickly exhaled smoke passed through rose water, causing that monotonous and gurgling sound, which renders the hookah a companionable instrument. In the midst of the smoking, and kabob frying, sweetmeat purchasing, &c., a saucy Mahowut rode his elephant, flourishing a white flag, and causing the huge beast to raise his trunk and scream aloud, as if to add

his voice to the general confusion of tongues that prevailed.

Next in succession came a Mahommedan woman, of consequence, covered over with a white sheet, having two holes for her eyes to peep through, and looking like a ghost from the other world.

As evening approached, M'heitab became considerably agitated, for it was now time to commence our operations. One hour before sunset then, M'heitab with her camels, and unattended by the horsemen, left the city gates, in the direction of the Heera Baugh, I having gone on in advance, to select a judicious spot, whereon to picquet our beasts of burthen; such a place I soon found, it was a little valley, and surrounded by trees, so as entirely to conceal the animals, when lying down; this having been done, M'heitab followed me, trembling greatly, to the very den of the Thugs; all was quiet, and I pro-

duced a large bag of copper pice, which I intended to pass off as mohurs, a few of which, I sprinkled in the mouth of the sack, in case Bhicca might misdoubt my word, and I had reason to congratulate myself on my caution, as will presently be seen.

I knocked at the entrance gate, which resembled that of a fortress, having a wicket of apparently vast thickness, and studded with large-headed nails; I waited, but no one answering my summons, my knock was repeated, and that the sound might be increased, now made use of a large stone, still no one approached; I observed there was an iron grating in the centre of the wicket, and presently beheld a light crossing the court-yard, of the building, and distinguished the bearer, to be the old woman, who, placing her sharp sallow visage to the iron bars of the grating, demanded my business in a mysterious whisper: I informed her "I was the bearer of a bag of money, sent by Mohun Lal, with orders from

him, to see it safely deposited in the treasure chamber."

"Ah!" said the old crone, "this may be all very true, but I don't admit any one during my son's absence, however, give me the money, and it shall be taken care of, rely upon it."

"Not so, good mother," said I, "for I am no stranger, and you have frequently seen me before, although you do not now recognize me, and I was with Mohun Lal, on his late successful return from the Poona Banker's affair."

"Hush!" said she, "no doubt, no doubt, and now you remind me, I will be burned if I have not forgot to feed him these two or three days; should not wonder if he is dead."

"How lucky was it I did not declare myself to have been the witness of his strangulation, for it appeared, the wretch was then a prisoner in the building!

"Who is your companion?" enquired the woman, "is he too, an old acquaintance of mine?"

“No, he is a stranger, and my attendant.”

“Indeed, and does he want to come in with you?”

“Yes, there is no fear, and to prove to you, I do come from your son, behold his signet seal!”

“It is his, without doubt,” said Bhicca, “and where is he now?”

“He has immense gains in view, near Ahmednuggur,” said I, “and will speedily return, laden with wealth.”

“Good,” cried the old hag, rubbing her hands, “let him come, but what means he by sending you with this bag of money? let me look at it?” saying which, she thrust her sharp nose through the grate, holding her lamps close to her cheek, so as almost to singe her hair.

Opening the sack's mouth, I exhibited the glittering ore, which made the eyes of the old crone, twinkle with pleasure, so that her

obedient hand instantly drew the ponderous bars of the heavy wicket, which admitted us into the court-yard of the building.

“Go forward,” said she, “and abide my coming at the place.”

I did so, and halted at the fourth column, so that the confidence of the old woman was now fully established, and she endeavoured to clutch the bag, which, however, I retained, until I had inserted an instrument, in the crevice of the marble slab, which instantly receded, as M'heitab had informed me, discovered a flight of stone stairs, down which, the old woman commenced crawling; I placed the heavy bag of copper on the upper step.

M'heitab, with her foot, now overturning the bag, it fell on the neck of the crone, and fairly tumbled her from the top to the bottom of the steep stairs—one groan only followed, and we found her a corpse!

Whether M'heitab had contemplated such

a catastrophe, or whether the foot had by accident, touched the sack, it was difficult to determine, but, I fancied I beheld a peculiar smile of satisfaction, play around her beautiful mouth, when I announced the dissolution of the Thug's mother.

The light of the place was of a very uncertain description, and I began to imagine nothing was here concealed, but when my eyes became a little familiar to the gloom of the chamber, how was I horrified on beholding the shrivelled form of a human being, chained to a wall, stretching forth its emaciated arms, demanding food !

Gracious Vishnu ! was this then the Banker, whom the Thug had chained within sight of his riches, but still left him to perish for want of sustenance ? I could not trace in the now thread-worn countenance of the unhappy man, any similitude to my once fat, sleek, and happy Banker, of Poona, nor could he speak to me, to satisfy me on the matter ; food I had

none to give him, and still did he in a hollow, and unearthly voice continue to demand it, while his eyes, dull, and lustreless from exhaustion, were strained half out of his turbanless head, from which now hung dirty, and matted grey hairs; no garment, save one coarse cloth around his loins, covered the living skeleton before me, as half erect on his filthy mat, he still cried for food. What a sight! Here was the once envied, once flattered, happy Poona Banker, who revelled in wealth, and luxury, now reduced to a mere bag of bones, chained within sight of his darling gold, and yet crying for a mouthful of rice!

Maddened by my inability to satisfy the cravings of nature, he strove to burst asunder the chain that held him, and in the attempt expired at my feet!

“Oh, unhappy, wretched man!” cried I, “your sufferings are terminated for ever—happy must be to you the release,” and I

almost rejoiced to behold him now no longer in the power of tyrant man!

“The old hag said truly,” observed M’heitab, “she had neglected him for days, inhuman monster that she must have been.”

“Yes,” said I, “but behold her reward! here must we therefore leave the prisoner and his jailor, now upon a par with one another—both lumps of inanimate clay, and let us turn to a more pleasing sight—behold *our* reward!” continued I, as I threw down bag after bag of money, which had been piled in one corner of the chamber; ascend my fair friend, and draw up each bag by the cord, which I furnished myself with for a different purpose—“be quick, or we may be interrupted.”

It was a work of time indeed, to clear that treasure chamber of its valuable contents; most of the bags contained gold mohurs, and but few exhibited the silver dumps of the country, so inconvenient to carry about.

Then came the most laborious part of our task, namely, the transportation of the bags to the valley, where the camels had been tethered. My slender companion in such a business, would be but of small service to me, and yet, trifling as might be her aid, I must avail myself of it. The bags were large, long, and weighty, and perhaps without some one to stand sentry over my laden camels, they might be abstracted by robbers, from the paniers, supposed to contain rice, and other grain; would it not then be more prudent to station M'heitab by the laden beasts, arming her with my pistols, while I went to and fro with the coin? M'heitab, herself, thought it would be the wiser plan so to do, and it was adopted. No one crossed my path, and by degrees, after a work of several hours, I abstracted the whole of the money, arranged my paniers, covered the tops of them over with grain, and we once more returned to the city.

It was late, but the gates had not been closed, when we drove our camels, laden with grain into the town. I had to pay some trifling dues at the outer barrier, and afterwards no questions were asked.

My horsemen, were all sound asleep, and amazed on the following morning to find the paniers filled with grain. I told them that I made my market while they slept, now commanding them to prepare to quit Aurungabad. Bidding adieu to mosques, and nodding minarets, we travelled slowly, on account of the] camels, and without let or hindrance, on the fifth day, arrived safe in my fortress of Warree Gaum.

M'heitab now resumed her proper habiliments, and assisted me in telling over the amount of our grand prize; we found that the whole of the treasure amounted to but eight lacs and a half of rupees, one lac and a half short of my fully expected crore! This was a sum, however, not to despised, and

I rejoiced exceedingly over my good fortune.

M'heitab would only accept of the odd half lac of rupees, all I could do, and this she left in my hands, to lay out to the best advantage for her.

CANCELLED

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT was to be done with this money, and the bags of jewels and golden ornaments among them? To again trust a countryman of my own with any of it, would have been unwise indeed; I would invest it in the Government securities, but this was no easy task; it would be necessary for me to go to Bombay, to well understand the business of investing money in such securities, and then what a trouble would it be to drag such a sum with me all that distance? or even to Poona, where Hoondies¹² might be procured on Bom-

bay? In this state of uncertainty and ignorance, and while the well filled bags were lying around me, the Candeish Collector entered my apartment. I fear I looked a guilty man, at least I appeared considerably confused, while the Collector certainly looked not a little surprized.

“Why, Bapoo,” cried he, “you are turned Shroff I perceive, how came you by so many bags of copper?”

“Copper!” cried I, exultingly, “no, Sir, gold—look!” and I emptied the bags before him, until the pile became awfully high—not content with this, I exhibited the jewels, and golden ornaments, augmenting the Collector’s surprise at every fresh display.

“You have found the Thug’s treasure,” said he, “and I give you joy.”

“I have,” replied I, “but it was not concealed in your territories; however, if I have no right to what I periled my life to obtain, take it—your government is welcome to it.”

“Certainly not, Bapoo,” said the Collector, “I know nothing, and am here as a friend; keep all you have, and no one, shall learn from me, by what means you have become enriched—part of the money I well know, is that robbed from you, by the Poona Banker; and as long as no one comes to me complaining of having been plundered by you, what right have I to interfere, or enquire from whence you gained your wealth?”

I then explained to him my dilemma concerning the disposal of the valuable treasure, when he advised me to invest it in his Government securities, and offered to manage the whole concern for me, which he did, so that I had neither to journey to Bombay, or even to Poona. I now related to the Collector the manner in which the money had fallen into my hands, merely suppressing the fact of the accidental death of old Bhicca, who I represented as having been left mute with astonishment at my audacity. Mute enough she certainly was,

but with a broken neck, and not surprise ; while I also thought it superfluous to narrate the sufferings, and death of the Poona Banker, who was now in a very well concealed vault, and had long been forgotten, and given over by his Poona friends and relatives.

The Collector expressed considerable curiosity to behold my fair camel driver, and as she was then strolling in the court-yard, I pointed her out to him.

“What a beautiful woman,” exclaimed he, “why, Bapoo, you are indeed in luck’s way this time.”

“Do not imagine, Sir,” said I, “that the female you now behold is here as my concubine, she is above all such——”

“Ah, come, come, Bapoo—don’t tell me,” said the Collector smiling.

I swore by the cow that I stated merely the truth, and that the woman was at liberty to go or stay as she pleased, and that she had

accepted only of half a lac of rupees as her share.

“Is this the woman that was attempted to be robbed by the fellow you sent me with one hand cut off?” enquired the Collector.

“It is,” said I, “and she has fully evinced her gratitude by what she has done, as you now see,” and here I pointed to the piles of gold and silver before me.

About one month after I had invested my money, I received a summons from the Collector, who on my appearing before him, said, “More good luck, Bapoo! your estates are now restored to you by my Government; the Rajah of Satarrah, is deposed by us, for, as he chose to deviate from the straight path, to follow the crooked line of policy, it has brought him to utter ruin, and his estates being confiscated, are given up to you, and I wish you every joy in the possession of them.”

I was in truth excessively surprised at hearing this good news, but more so when inform-

ed that, added to my father's estates, an immense tract of country had been added, that I was to hold for my life, paying tribute of only ten rupees annually to the British Government, who was never to interfere in my arrangements, and in fact, I was created a Thakoor, or independent Landholder, and to govern my subjects as I pleased; to frame laws, and administer justice, but of course never to arm against the British interests. Now I was indeed contented, and besought the Collector to express for me my sense of gratitude to the Government, for all they had done.

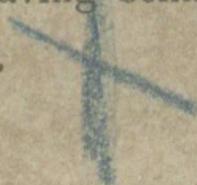
“You may thank the Ahmednuggur Collector,” said he, “for that gentleman has never suffered your interest to escape him a moment.”

“Then,” said I, “to-morrow will I go, and throw myself at his feet;” and I was as good as my word, for, attended by an immense Aswary, I Bapoo, Thakoor, in three days time entered Ahmednuggur, claimed an audience of

the Collector, and actually prostrated myself at his very foot.

The gentleman's delight at my success really equalled my own, while, as I passed from his presence, every head was bowed down to the earth, amid the cries of "Long live the mighty Thakoor!" vociferated by the mace bearers, and chobdars of the Collector's court.

Before I quitted the city, I distributed large sums to the poor and the distressed; gave a splendid nautch to the Collector, and all the head people in the place, leaving behind me a name never to be forgotten.



CHAPTER XVIII.

How shall I describe the taking possession of my estates in Candeish? my habitation was now a fort in the centre of almost a town, and for days had I to receive the Collectors of my revenues, my Patails, Coolcurnies, and Kumavisdars from my districts, ceded to me; in fact, I was in every sense of the word a Prince, and kept up the state of a very wealthy one which I really was.

M'heitab resided in a lonely sequestered garden house, not far from me, having her separate establishment, and well guarded by

my people. Marry she would not, although several wealthy men of her own caste endeavoured to shake her resolution; she had lost her Mirza, and where could she hope to find his equal? this was her constant answer to my endeavours to induce her to change her determination, and I could only remain silent.

I found employment enough, I can assure my courteous readers, and very courteous they must be, who have condescended to follow my chequered career, from the time when I first introduced them to the Gùrù's cell, in Nasik, up to the present hour, when I found myself a Candeish Thakoor? Yes, I was daily occupied in adjusting differences, examining old grants of land exempt from tax, appointing Puchayets, punishing criminals, honouring Brahmins, and fixing temple dues, repairing my fort and house, and the town wall and ditch, settling the revenue for the coming year, and organizing my police.

In the midst of my several occupations, I

was told one rainy night in the monsoon, "that a poor benighted traveller desired to be brought into my presence."

I admitted him, and he fell at my feet, saying, "Bapoo, let me here find rest."

"Who are you? and whence do you come?" enquired I.

"That you know me not, I am not surprised at," said my strange looking visitor, "for you have never before beheld me, but, I have heard your name mighty Bapoo, frequently spoken of; I was the minister of the fallen Rajah of Satarraah, who is, by this time, at Benares, but, with so limited an allowance from the English, that myself and many of his adherents, have been reduced to actual want; added to which, the Rajah's brother now upon the musnud, seeks my life, and I am a fugitive, come to claim your protection."

"You amaze me," replied I, "but, if you counselled the Rajah to be treacherous to the English, you richly merit all you suffer."

“As I live,” replied the man, whose name was Rungoba, “there never was any treachery meditated; the Rajah is the victim of a foul conspiracy, at the head of which, is his unprincipled brother, whose object was, the musnud for himself.”

“Did not the English institute an enquiry ere they deposed your master?” enquired I.

“They did, but behind his back; he was not allowed to confront his accusers, or hear the testimony of suborned witnesses against him. Oh it was a sad and heart-rending sight to witness the Rajah’s Palace, surrounded by the soldiers, and himself a prisoner, but, I could not with safety, stay to behold the indignities heaped upon his unoffending head, for I fled the city, the moment I saw him in the midst of the Siphæes, with their bayonets fixed—however, the Rajah intends to call aloud for justice, in England.”

“Alas!” cried I, “faint are the hopes of

success from thence, but, tell me how you became minister to the Rajah?"

"Were I to relate to you all the hardships and vicissitudes of my life," replied Rungoba, "they would indeed astonish you."

"Perhaps," said I, "they fall far short of my own, which I intend committing to paper, and will employ you as my amanuensis on the occasion."

"Agreed," said Rungoba, "to-morrow I will commence my labours."

And thus it was, gentle reader, that these pages came into existence, and appear before you in their present shape.

"You," said I, addressing my cousin, "have not informed me, whence you now come?"

"I am ashamed," said he, "but, from you, I will conceal nothing, I came from Aurungabad, where I left my unprincipled companions, beggars like myself, for you ought to be informed, that I linked myself with a formidable band of Thugs, merely for

their protection, and with the understanding, I was not, to be called upon to take away the lives of people, and was consequently employed by their leader as his clerk and accountant."

"And the leader's name was Mohun Lal, was it not?" I enquired.

"How know you his name?" enquired Rungoba.

"He was hang'd not far from hence," replied I, "but, go on."

"Well, we marvelled much what had become of our leader, and returned to our stronghold, near Aurungabad, consoling ourselves in the certainty of finding money enough for us all, and agreeing to a fair division of the same, which would have, undoubtedly rendered every man independent for life; how then can I paint the expression of each man's countenance, as he ascended the steps of our treasure vault, all declaring the same fact,

namely, that it was empty! while a horrid stench proceeding from it, told the dreadful tale of the old woman's dissolution; whether she had accidentally stumbled on the stairs, and thus met her death, or whether the robbers of the Thug's money had destroyed her, we could not determine. There was also another body festering and mouldering beneath us, and this I was informed, was a Banker, whom the Thugs preferred keeping chained up alive, instead of, at once putting him to death by their roomals."

"How was it," enquired I, in a most innocent manner, "that only an old woman had been left in charge of the treasure?"

"I know not," replied Rungoba, "but, imagine Mohun Lal had not too many men to spare, to permit them to stand idle, and that he considered his vault, sufficient protection for all his wealth."

"Had he much money?" enquired I, "yes,

nearly a crore of rupees," replied Rungoba, "and the groaning and the lamentation of the gang, with whom I was an associate, merely to secure protection, was heart-breaking to hear; some knocked their heads against the stone pillars of the hall, others ran about naked, having denuded themselves in their madness; while others sat by the now charnel-house, moaning, and inactive, for all, all had been abstracted, nor could any one form the least probable idea, who could be the thief, 'no one they said knew of the place, or how to gain access to it, as all the masons who had built it up, had been carefully put to death; at length, one man called to mind the attempted escape of a young mason between the places of Aurungabad and Hyderabad.

"'True,' said another, 'but my matchlock brought him to the ground, so he could tell no tales.'

Thus were we left in the dark, all conjecture was fruitless, and, as we were now all beggars alike, and no interest to unite us together, we separated, each choosing his own path, and here am I, perhaps more fortunate than the rest, in having found a good, and kind friend who will not desert me in my destitute condition."

This account of Rungoba was as music to my greedy ears; I fancied I could behold the rage, vexation, and agony of the disappointed villains, and inwardly chuckled at having thus despoiled them of their infamously acquired wealth, which, with me failed not to prosper and succeed, so that in time I became very rich; I informed Rungoba, after some considerable time, that I was the robber of the Thug's money, when, his astonishment I believe caused his death, for he was attacked by cholera two days after he had completed these my memoirs, leaving me once more alone,

without a single relation in the world ; but I am now grown old, and all I regret is to be forced to die without leaving an heir to inherit my immense wealth.

CHAPTER XIX.

GENTLE reader, allow me to pause at this last stage of my life; I trust you will have given me credit for my endeavours to pursue the straight forward path, from which I have occasionally been compelled to deviate, by deep designing and wicked men. When I was young, I viewed things youngly; but now the thoughts of maturer age, force themselves upon me, and I look back on past and by-gone days with sorrow and regret, and would give worlds to recall the past, to live my life

over again—to commence existence with my present experience; but, alas! that being impossible, I have only to go on, and follow the stream whose waters will at length, in their powerful rush, carry me either to some haven of rest, or hurry me into the ocean of destruction.

Nevertheless, I could not help asking myself more than once, what crime had I been guilty of? I had on one occasion given loose to my natural passions, which indulgence hurt myself alone; but, I never can believe that our passions and senses were given us merely to create temptations, that are to put to the test our powers of resistance. No, our reason is given us to regulate the indulgence of our natural inclinations.

However this may be, I was not satisfied with my past life, and as usual must spend the last half of it in repentance, for the manner in which the first had been spent. Let the time

come then, when I must for ever close mine eyes on the chequered scenes of my existence, and come it will, for though some may complain against Father Time for his tardy progress and others may tax him with his too rapid advance, still whether the one, or the other be right, he is continually passing in one continued pace, which cannot be shortened by the happy, nor quickened by the wretched, and will not fail in its due course, to put an end to the joys of the one, and the sorrows of the other.

I am now writing, my indulgent readers, when all my storms of life have subsided, and I am at length cast upon a hospitable strand, where the tempests of existence will not again reach my shattered hull, and I write in my retirement, where I have, by converse with many excellent Christians, whose language I have endeavoured to learn, been led to see, and deplore the errors of Hindùism, and

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although a Brahmin, myself, pronounce the religion, as absurd as it is wicked, and utterly useless to any one in this world, and ridiculous as affording any hope of salvation in the next.

Idleness may well be called the root of all evil, and if any people on earth are idle, it is my people, the Hindùs: their country, its heat, its enervating influence, its ways, and its religion, all combine to lead its unhappy victims astray, and to deprive them of all energy to obtain by labour, their daily bread. To covet another's goods is their first crime, which leads them on and on, until their neighbour's life is taken, to possess those coveted goods, and, when once the hand is stained with human blood, the hand so stained will again be uplifted, again be steeped in human gore, to acquire more worldly possessions. There is no stop to crime; once let it find a resting place in the human breast, and it will take so

firm a root that all warning, all preaching is vain, and yet strange to reflect, how much labour and pain does a bad man take to become so, when half the exertion would be necessary to make him honest. So is it with regard to the habits and vices of society, for few people can imagine the labour of that life, which is nothing but one continued lie. It may be wrong in me, the taker of life, the wholesale destroyer, thus, to moralize, but I feel the truth of what I write, and if bad myself, the truth is nevertheless the truth, and may benefit others, if not myself. I do not wish to offer excuses for my conduct, but, if I did venture so to do, it would be my good protector's bigotry, which induced him to give me an insight into the Hindù religion; gracious powers! what an insight did I receive!—murder, rapine, and bloodshed, formed my first lesson, and forced in my own defence, to counteract such demoniacal machinations,

I became in my own eyes a very demon. If such be the results of religion, how far better would it be to live without any at all—one could not be worse, and might be better—~~they tell me there is a religion that teaches better deeds, and that~~
~~is that religion; it may be so, but it is now too late for me to try it, as all my days of~~
trial and temptation are gone and past, and should I now study the ~~christian's~~ code, and feel convinced of its truths, I shall have the misery to find out they have shone forth upon me too late, and will only render my repentance the more poignant, with but little hope of either ameliorating my condition in this world, or securing my salvation in the world to come; besides, one cannot all at once discard, and disbelieve the doctrines of our own religion preached to us during the days of our youth, and thus between the old and the new, the mind must be led into so many, and

such repeated conflicts, as almost to induce us to discard them both, and trust to chance, and the will of the Almighty Creator and Preserver.

I may safely declare, that during my whole life, I have had no pleasure, not the pleasure of contentment and happiness, arising from inward satisfaction, and the little enjoyment I have had, has ever been tainted with some gall, some bitterness, that I could have little dreamed of, however; there is no pleasure without a pain, no more than there exists a rose without a thorn, and alas! how many beings have been led on by temptation, each one promising a happiness which has been but as a phantom in their grasps, until ruin and disappointment have opened their eyes to sad reality, and turned every pleasure into bitterness. And, oh! what would men give to be able to live over again their mispent lives; and how many look back with surprise

and sorrow, at the many years wasted and gone, never to return, and grieved to think that so much time has been more than lost.

Wealth, and the acquirement of it, either on my part, or that of my enemies, steeped all parties into the commission of crime; the one party to unjustly acquire wealth, and the other to preserve it from their ruthless grasp. Fatal Jewels! ye first tempted the Gùrù to take my life—in the securing Jewels, I took the life of Krishna Singh—for the sake of the Fatal Jewels, my wife became the mark for Thugs—while the proceeds of those Jewels, at the same time had purchased my merchandize, which attracted the avaricious gaze of those lawless and cruel marauders. Gracious powers! I hate the very sight of coin, or Jewels, they make me shudder, and cause me to exclaim, would I were the tenant of some lonely cave, living on the fruits of the earth,

and drinking from the rock the pure and limpid stream.

One advantage I had gained during my progress, through the chequered path of my existence, and this was, experience, and a thorough knowledge of the human heart. I knew my fellow man but too well; I felt to my sorrow, that their hearts were desperately wicked, and laden with the heavy weights of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, and alas! I am grieved to say, the hearts that beat beneath the fair skins of the Europeans, were equally oppressed with malice, and every vindictive feeling. I had an opportunity of seeing this, on the part of the Collector of Ahmednuggur, in more instances than one, but that to which I now particularly allude, took place prior to my quitting him. His assistant, an English gentleman, became the victim of a base conspiracy among the Brahmins, and natives of the city, who impunged his integrity

in the administration of his judicial duties. The instant that a whisper of the kind reached the Collector's ear, he sat about to work the ruin and downfall of his fellow countryman, with a diabolical ferocity, which rendered his very aspect, more like that of a wild beast, than a human being. He sent the town crier round the city, to beat up for volunteers, to come forward, and accuse the unhappy assistant, who however, had six months previously quitted Ahmednuggur, for another station. Behind one's back we Brahmins and Hindùs, are very courageous, and now supported by the authority of the Collector, nay, almost *commanded* to come forward, every unsuccessful suitor at the late assistant's court, of course, eagerly pressed forward to complain against him. The Collector having now many helpers, proceeded to nominate, as Commissioners of enquiry, two of the greatest villains about his Cutcherry,

namely, M'hadeo Rao, and one Succaram Bapoo, aided by a hoary-headed old Mussulman sinner, called the Cazee, and an old pensioner and idler about the town; all these men I knew but too well, to be the most corrupt, the most profligate villains, that the Deccan could produce, and it was rumoured that another English gentleman, wearing a red coat, urged by some revengeful feelings towards the accused assistant, lent *his* aid to this precious committee, and thus it was, no wonder that charges were speedily concocted against the absent and unsuspecting gentleman, which must weigh him to the earth, and which he must have been more than mortal, to have successfully defended. Two men can always ruin one, but here were half a dozen hard at work, day and night, and they did their work well, as far as they went in their own country, but when the case came to be tried in Bombay, the vile, the detest-

able conspiracy became apparent, and the whole truth came out; justice was done, and the accused was acquitted on every charge, his malignant enemies had brought against him, and yet, will it be believed? notwithstanding such acquittal, the ruin of the accused was determined upon, and the Governor foiled in his attempts to crush his victim by heavy fines, and imprisonment, sat to work to write him down in his most strong and energetic language, to the authorities in England, and the unhappy man is no doubt ruined, to the heart-felt satisfaction of all the base conspirators, of Ahmednuggur, while the Collector, the chief mover in the disgraceful affair, will be loaded with honours, for his zeal service!

Reader, when you are so ready to condemn my countrymen—after this, look well to the hearts of your own sect, and you will find many a black one encased under your whiten-

ed skins. Alas! I have now too much time on my hands, for these reflections, and as I spare not my own countrymen, why should I defend our conquerors, who are not generally beloved, whatever their opinions to the contrary may be. I was now indeed alone: my wife, my beloved Kishna, who I had rescued from the hands of her enemies, was now no more; my only friend too, had been torn from me by the ruthless fangs of the wild beast, and I alone left to ponder on my hard fate, and my forlorn, miserable condition—Unhappy Bapoo! was this to be the end of all your toils—all your hair-breadth escapes? art thou to become an isolated, blighted mortal, without friend or companion to cheer thy latter days, or tend thee on thy bed of sickness and of death!

I now called to mind Rungoba's account of the deposition of the unfortunate Rajah of Satarrah. The Collector had hinted by

to me something of the kind, and now the storm had burst over his devoted head; a mock trial it seems had taken place, and as usual with the British authorities, accusation had been deemed proof of guilt, and the Rajah deposed, and sent off to Benares with a pension! All this, I at first vainly imagined was done for my sake, but, how was I deceived? they placed his brother a debauched (short-lived it was hoped) fellow on the musnud, to suit their own ends.

When I heard the Rajah charged with intriguing at the seat of Government of Goa, and expecting aid from that quarter, I felt ready to choke with laughter. "In the name of wonder," cried I, "how could the Governor of Goa render him any assistance? without money or soldiers, they would have been an incumbrance rather than a help."

Next came long accounts of forged papers and seals, &c., all of which were believed

the English to be genuine, and proofs of the Rajah's baseness.—I regretted not being cut out of the musnud again, as such vile conspiracies might have arisen against me, as well as against my predecessor, and I well knew from the web so artfully woven there could be no escape. The most unaccountable step, however, taken by the new Governor of Bombay, was to go to Satarrah in person, and ask the accused Rajah to *confess his guilt*, when he would only be reprimanded! my cousin had too much pride for that, after his repeated assertions of innocence, and he indignantly refused to make any such admission, for which he was instantly deposed, and his brother reigned in his stead.

The Rajah intends appealing to England! hah—hah—hah! poor man, he will never rise again; little does he dream that whatever villainy is committed by Governors here, is invariably upheld and sanctioned by the autho-

rities in England; his doom is fixed, and though his Vakeels talked with tongues of angels, a hardened and a deafened ear, will be turned against them. It appeared that the two principal witnesses against the Rajah were Soobahdars, or native officers, in the service of the English, and these swore that the Rajah, had tampered with them, endeavouring to buy them over to his cause.

I thought of my own rash attempt at the battle of Poona, and shuddered. These Soobahdars, however, on being separately examined, varied I should say so materially, as to render nugatory their well concerted evidence, but no, it was said by the British Officers, "that the more contradictory the evidence, the more it bore the semblance of truth," and they were accordingly *both believed*.

The next witness was a man, seized and imprisoned in Admednuggur jail, who, it was said, "would say any thing that the Govern-

ment might desire, in order to obtain his freedom; very natural! he did depose, and he was liberated. All this reminded me of the chief witness against the unhappy English assistant, at that famed place, Ahmednuggur, who, was escorted to the court of enquiry, with drawn swords over his head, by way of a gentle hint, what he might expect if he varied in his tale, in the presence of the accused party.

Such is English justice, gentle readers, and woe be unto him who chances to be accused; he can never escape!

The Rajah disposed of, the attention of the British Government was directed to affairs beyond the Indus, where they must interfere, to place upon the Affghan throne, a man despised and rejected thirty years ago by the people of the country, namely, Shah Soojah Ool-Moolk, a tyrant, a debauchee and an unjust and cruel monster. The result of this

interference I can well foresee : if the Government would take my advice, they would not cross the Indus on any such wild scheme.

The Affghans are warriors to the back bone, they are high spirited, and furious fanatics, while their country, protected by mountains, and tremendous passes, renders the approach of an army extremely difficult, added to which the cold of their climate must be extremely trying to the poor Hindù Siphæe, baked at Calcutta, and the Indian settlements. As, however, I intend closing these memoirs long before the result of the Affghan war can be known, I shall only content myself with prognosticating a signal defeat of the British army, and also my firm opinion that, even should they succeed in placing Shah Soojah on the throne, his reign will be of a very short duration, as he will most assuredly, be either stabbed or poisoned.

I now turned over the leaves of my Vedas,

I have seen, I have experienced, and I know such to be human nature; of what then is the human heart composed? pride, selfishness, cunning, deceit, lies, and all abomination. Whose friendship then is worth cultivating? The man who sought you when abounding in wealth, will shun you as a plague and pestilence, unless you show the same number of gold coins you formerly did, and is this sort of friendship to be coveted?—Oh! no, no—keep away my fellow men—walk off with your hollow hearts, and your deceitful lips, I want ye not.

The world is a beautiful world, as it is seen adorned by the Maker's hands; all is beautiful save those for whom he made it, and who are totally, and entirely undeserving of it, and yet I have seen only one portion of the universe, and that not the most delightful, as I am told. Europe, they tell me, is the paradise; the sunny, yet mellowed heats of

Italy, the pastures, the hills, woods, and waters of England and Scotland, these they say would elevate my soul, and cause me, indeed to exclaim, "Oh, holy Aum, great and mighty Creator, what a beautiful paradise hast thou prepared for sinful men!"

Those scenes, however, I shall never behold, for I am fettered to my dark, frowning, sombre rocks, swollen rivers, and parched-up fields, scorching winds, or furious tornadoes, yet, on these I behold the power, the might, majesty, and dominion of the Most High, and learn to humble myself before his throne, and exclaim, "what am I, that thou carest for me? why hast thou shielded me with thy powerful wing in all my dangers, all my difficulties?—if, that I may live to proclaim thy power, thy goodness, thy loving mercy, then shall the remainder of my days be devoted to that duty, and as long as

I live will I praise thy great and glorious name."

Why do I continue writing my memoirs, since now all is over? I have got in this world all I must ever hope for, and have no more adventure, no more hair-breadth escapes to delineate, either to amuse or instruct my indulgent readers. I may here conclude my history, but ere I do so, would willingly instruct, as I yet hold the willing pen, for I feel as though it would require volumes to instruct the wayward and the vain, and the wicked, and in the hope of being able to turn but one heart into the right path, I continue to write on, and while I confess myself a sinner, trust as I speak or rather write, from experience, and delineate my own feelings, that my advice may have the desired effect. There is no peace from wrong doing, on this rely; but from well doing springs joy and a peace of mind, not to be explained or understood, and

I have done so little good in my brief time, that alas! I have but little satisfaction in the retrospect of *my* chequered life; yet, compared with the agony I endure from the remembrance of my bad deeds, the feelings engendered by the recollection of any one good act must indeed be enviable.

It is too true that men, instead of endeavouring to secure favour in the eyes of his Maker, before whose all seeing eye he quails not, puts forth all his energies to merit the praise of his fellow worm, and it is the love of praise, or fear of reprehension from them that sways, and governs him. Mistaken mortals! thy fellow man will cast thee off, unless thou possess riches, while thy Maker will receive thee naked as thou camest into the world; follow then his commandments, and heed not the deceits and vanities of thy weak fellow man.

Kind reader, farewell, and should you, or your countrymen pass Candeish, I will ensure you so hospitable a reception, that you shall never forget Bapoo Brahmin.

NOTES TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

- 1 "Dhurum Sallah"—Shells for travellers, which are in every village throughout Hindustan.
- 2 "Minarets."—Lofty towers of elegant architecture annexed to the principal mosques.
- 3 "Trance."—This is a recorded fact, and came under the author's cognizance.
- 4 "Hookah-burdar."—Pipe-bearer.
- 5 "Panee Lao."—Bring water.
- 6 "Ghora Lao." Bring my horse.
- 7 "Jews."—This trick was actually played off in Poona, soon after our taking possession of the city.
- 8 "Pujah."—Worship.

9 "Crore."—Ten lacs.

10 "M'heitab."—Moonshine.

11 "Nutkhuts."—Vagabonds, sometimes acting as jugglers, or snake men, but oftener thieves and robbers.

12 "Hoondies."—Bills of Exchange.

THE END.

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