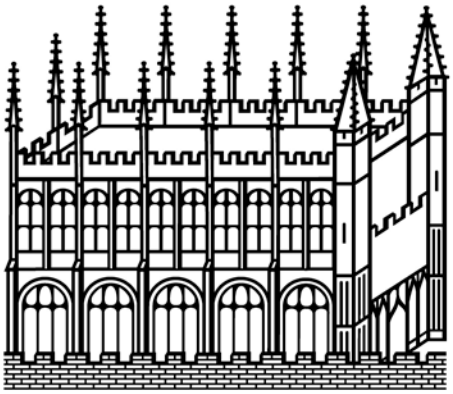

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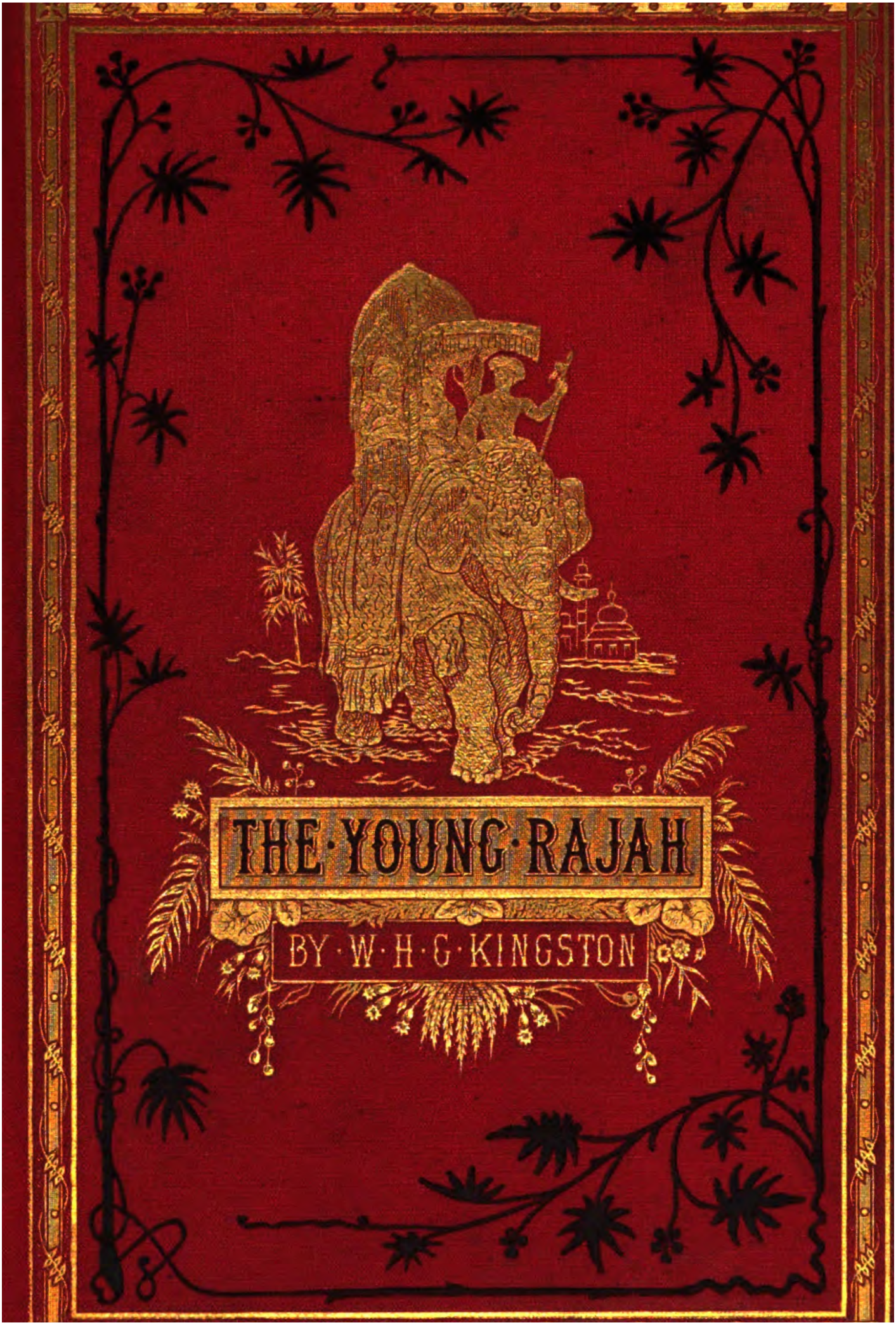
THE·YOUNG·RAJAH
BY·W·H·G·KINGSTON

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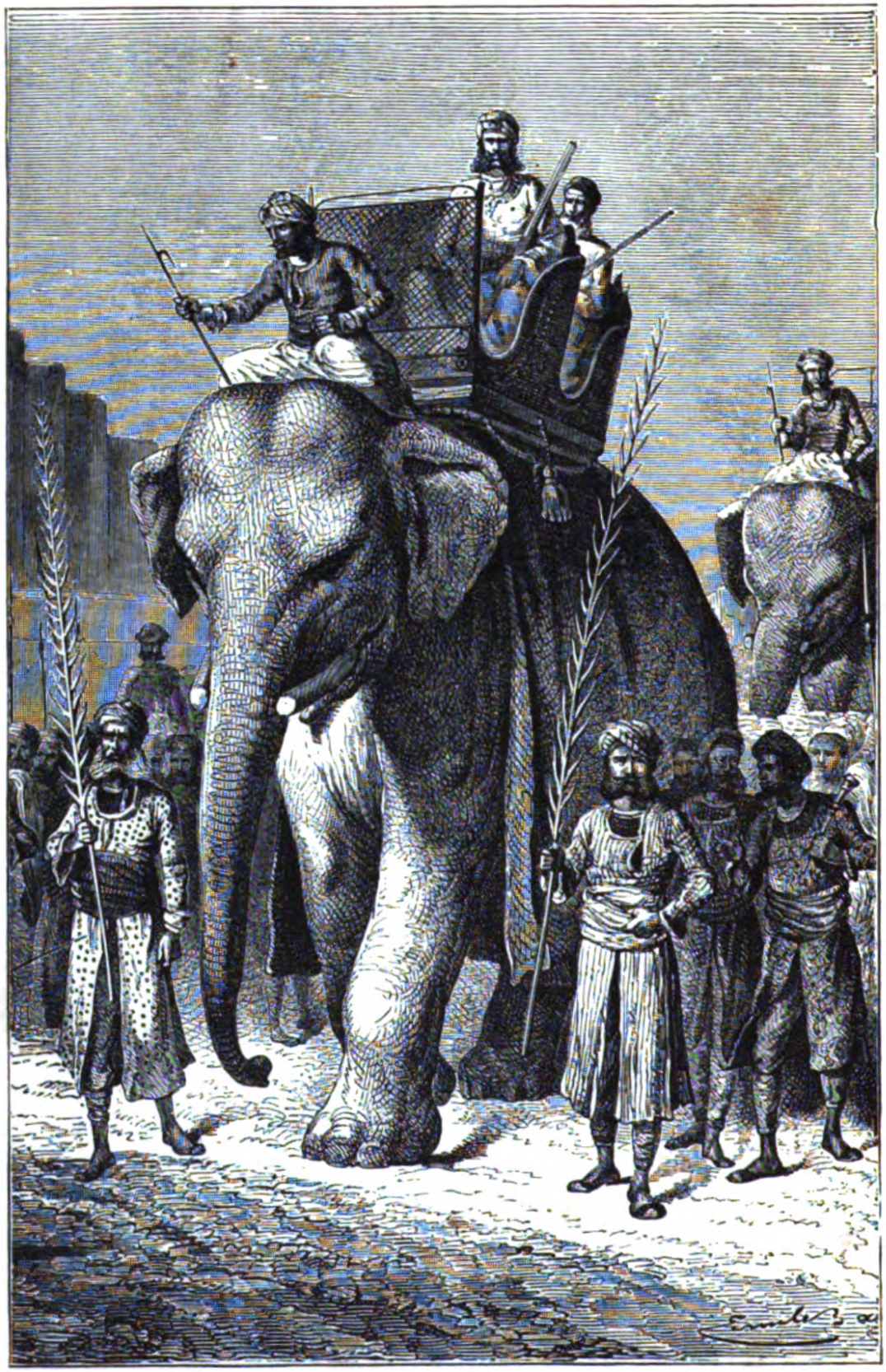

THE TRAVELLERS WELCOMED TO ALLAHAPOOR.

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THE YOUNG RAJAH.

A Story of Indian Life and Adventure.

DISAPPOINTED!

Page 241.

Thomas Nelson and Sons,
LONDON, EDINBURGH, AND NEW YORK.

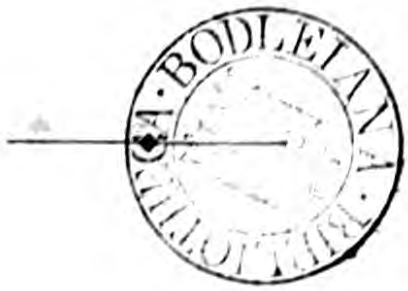
THE YOUNG RAJAH.

A STORY OF INDIAN LIFE AND ADVENTURE.

BY

W. H. G. KINGSTON,

AUTHOR OF "OLD JACK," "IN THE EASTERN SEAS," "ON THE BANKS OF THE AMAZON," "IN THE WILDS OF AFRICA," ETC.



LONDON:
T. NELSON AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW;
EDINBURGH; AND NEW YORK.

1876.

251. d. 616.

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THE YOUNG RAJAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE "GLAMORGAN CASTLE" ON HER VOYAGE TO INDIA—HER PASSENGERS—OUR HERO—COMBINED EFFECTS OF A KICK AND A ROLL—VIOLET ROSS—CUPID AT WORK—OUR HERO'S GALLANT EXPLOIT—THE SHIP REACHES THE HOOGHLY—PARTING OF REGINALD AND VIOLET

THE stout old *Glamorgan Castle*, with studding-sails on either side, was running before the trade-wind on her course to India. The passengers were lounging about on the poop, sheltered by an awning from the burning rays of the sun, which struck down with no inconsiderable force, making even the well-seasoned Indians grumble and incline to be quarrelsome. Of passengers the ship had her full complement, for all the cabins were full. There were among them generals, and judges, and officers of all ranks; as well as married dames returning to their husbands, and young ladies committed to their care; but few of them need be noticed. There were Colonel Ross, with his sweet, blooming daughter Violet; and

Major Molony and his pretty little round wife, to whom he had lately been married; and Captain Hawkesford, going out to rejoin his regiment,—a handsome-looking man, but with a countenance not altogether prepossessing, for it betokened selfishness and want of feeling, or the lines about his firm set mouth, and large gray eyes, belied him.

The commander, Captain Lyford, was a fine specimen of a sailor. He made himself agreeable to his passengers, and kept his ship's company in good order. When nothing occurred to excite him, his face was calm and unimpassioned; but it lighted up in a moment, and his clear, ringing voice when issuing an order to the crew showed that there was no lack of courage and determination in his composition.

There were the usual disputes and misunderstandings on board, which gave the good skipper, who always acted as peacemaker, no little trouble to settle. The ladies not infrequently fell out; and their quarrels, he confessed, were the hardest matters to put to rights, especially when jealousy set them by the ears. Mrs. Brigadier Bomanjoy considered that she did not receive the same attention which was paid to Mrs. Lexicon, the wife of the judge; and Miss Martha Pelican, who was making her second expedition to the East, complained that the officers neglected her, while they devoted themselves to silly Miss Prettyman, who had no other qualifications than her pink cheeks and blue

eyes to recommend her. The "griffins" not infrequently had warm disputes; but the captain quickly managed to settle their more noisy quarrels, and restore them to good-humour.

"Come, come, lads," he used to say, "let's hear what it's all about, and then we will get the whole matter into a nut-shell. It can be stowed away in less space than that, I've no doubt; and when it's there, we'll heave it overboard. Now then, shake hands, and forget all about it."

He did not, however, venture to interfere when husband and wife fell out, considering that a third person would only make matters worse; and more especially did he avoid interfering in the everlasting squabbles of Major and Mrs. Molony—which were indeed rather amusing than otherwise, the object of the little lady being apparently to bring her lord and master under the complete subjection of her imperious will, to which he, good-tempered as he was, had no intention of yielding.

There were several very nice girls, of whom Miss Violet Ross was universally considered the most charming. She was young, and very pretty; fair as a lily, with blue eyes and rich auburn hair. But she had a good deal more than her beauty to recommend her. She was sweet-tempered, gentle, and high principled. Mrs. Brigadier Bomanjoy declared that she was puritanical and prudish; but she was in reality truly

religious and modest, without a particle of nonsense in her composition. Captain Hawkesford, generally supposed to be indifferent to female charms,—at least, to those of his own countrywomen,—paid her more attention than he did to any one else, although she evidently offered him no encouragement.

There was another person on board who must now be mentioned. Many inquiries had been made of the captain who he was, but no satisfactory answer had been given. His costume was that of a seaman, but no one could suppose that he was a common sailor. His manner was distinguished, his good looks remarkable, and the tone of his voice and language refined. He was still very young, being scarcely more than eighteen or nineteen years of age. He was on familiar terms with the officers of the ship, and mingled with the passengers without any objection being made by the captain. He spoke Hindostanee fluently, and addressed the Lascars in their own tongue; while he showed an intimate acquaintance with Indian manners and customs, as well as with those of China and the East generally. The hot suns of Eastern seas had tanned his cheeks and given him almost the appearance of an Oriental. The only account the captain gave of him was that his name was Reginald Hamerton, and that he had come home with him from India on his last voyage, and had, during a heavy gale, exhibited much courage and nautical knowledge. Many thought, from

his dark skin, classical features, and flashing eye, that there was Indian blood in his veins; and it was whispered that he was the son of a resident at the court of some native prince, and that his mother was the rajah's daughter: but of this the captain said he knew nothing. He spoke English perfectly, was well educated, and had the manners of a young man accustomed to the best society. He conversed freely with every one, but it was observed that he was extremely reticent about himself, never alluding to his past life or his future prospects. Still he seemed perfectly at his ease about them; nor did he speak like a person who had any doubts as to what he should do on his arrival in India.

Altogether, there was a perfect mystery about him, which increased the interest his personal appearance was calculated to excite,—at all events, among the fairer portion of the passengers. He was courteous and attentive to all the ladies; but it was remarked at length that he was more frequently seen in conversation with Violet Ross than with any one else. If her eye brightened when he came near, that was but natural; as also that she should prefer talking to him to listening to the remarks made to her by the cynical Captain Hawkesford,—who evidently regarded young Hamerton with a feeling of dislike, which he exhibited whenever he had an opportunity by a haughty and contemptuous manner towards him. Colonel Ross, on the contrary,

treated Reginald in a kind and friendly way, and appeared to have no objection to his conversing with Violet on deck, or to any of the attentions he paid her. The third officer being ill, young Hamerton, as he was generally called, took his place; and few could have failed to remark the officer-like style in which he carried on duty, or the clear, ringing voice in which he issued his orders,—displaying to advantage his well-knit figure as he walked the deck with telescope under his arm, or with his hand to his mouth, his fine head thrown back, shouting to the crew. Violet's eye was wont to watch him as he moved about the deck, and a gentle flush mounted on her cheek whenever he came near and bent down to speak to her.

Captain Hawkesford scarcely concealed his jealousy, and expressed it in remarks which he seemed to wish should reach Reginald's ear. "As the young sailor was to all appearance working his passage, he should not venture to make himself so familiar with those who were above him in rank and position. For his part, he was surprised that Captain Lyford allowed him to dine in the cabin, when he ought to mess with the other junior officers."

If Reginald did hear what was said, he took no notice of Captain Hawkesford's remarks, but appeared to be quite as much at his ease as at first.

One day while he was attending to some duty forward, Captain Hawkesford took a seat near Violet, and

endeavoured to make himself agreeable to the best of his power. She listened, for without rudeness she could not avoid doing so; but no smile played around her mouth, while her answers were mostly in monosyllables. Colonel Ross at length coming near, she jumped up and took his arm, saying that she should like to enjoy a walk for a few minutes. Captain Hawkesford looked excessively annoyed, but did not attempt to accompany her. After a short time Reginald came aft, when the gong sounded for dinner. She said a few words to him as she went below; upon which he followed with a haste he seldom exhibited, and, as the passengers took their seats, slipped into a chair on one side of Violet, while her father sat on the other. Captain Hawkesford, on returning from his cabin, found the place he had intended to occupy already filled, and with an angry frown on his brow he went to the further end of the table. Most of the passengers had collected, when some one remarked that the chairs of Major and Mrs. Molony were vacant.

"Why did they not come down?" asked Mrs. Brigadier Bomanjoy.

"The little lady is in one of her tantrums," answered Miss Pelican. "The gallant major is endeavouring to bring her round, but she won't because she won't."

Just then the voice of the little lady was heard, mingled with the expostulations of her liege lord, coming down the open skylight, on the coomings of

which she was seated, directly over the head of the table.

"Come, ladies and gentlemen, we must commence operations or the meat will get cold," observed the captain; and having said grace, he was about to begin carving a leg of mutton swimming in gravy placed before him, when there came a wild scream and a shout from the major,—"Arrah, my darling, where are you after going to?" though, before the words were well out of the speaker's mouth, down came flop on the top of the leg of mutton the rotund form of Mrs. Major Molony, fortunately head uppermost, in a semi-sitting posture,—the joint of meat serving as a cushion to that part of her body which is usually thus accommodated, while one of her feet stuck into a dish of potatoes and the other into one of curry and rice, the gravy flying on all sides like the contents of a bursting bomb.

"Oh, where have I got to?" cried the little lady, panting and screaming with terror, though she was sufficiently aware of what had happened to make an endeavour to cover up her little round legs, which were more exposed than her modesty would have allowed.

Captain Lyford, with all the delicacy imaginable, though his sides were splitting with laughter, placed his arms under the little lady, and lifted her up ready to present to the major, who came rushing down wild with alarm, under the belief that she must have either

broken her neck, or have been spitted on the carving knife and fork.

"Arrah now, my darling, is it killed you are entirely?" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of her.

The shouts of laughter proceeding from all sides, and in which even Violet and Reginald could not help joining, prevented her answer from being heard, as the major, taking her in his arms, bore her off to her cabin, that she might put a fresh skirt on in lieu of her gravy-bespattered dress.

The steward had in the meantime picked up the leg of mutton, which had been sent spinning out of the dish; and its tenderness was accounted for by the unusual pressure to which it had been subjected by the fair little dame.

It appeared, from the conversation of the major, who soon returned to the table, that at the moment his wife was kicking at him pettishly with her foot the ship gave a roll, and she, losing her balance, the catastrophe lately witnessed had occurred; a lesson, as he observed with a wink, by which he piously hoped she would in future profit.

"I congratulate you, my dear, that it did not happen to you," observed the brigadier to his better half.

"I never kick at my husband," answered the lady.

For the sake of the feelings of Mrs. Molony the conversation was changed, when she at length appeared, considerably crestfallen, and took her seat

meekly by her husband's side. Dinner was proceeded with; but every now and then some of the young ensigns burst out into uncontrollable fits of laughter, joined in by the rest like the fire of skirmishers, as one of them happened to recall the incident to mind,—the only one hitherto worth noting during the voyage, which promised to terminate without the occurrence of any of greater importance.

Some days had passed after this event, when, as the ship was still running before the wind, making eight or nine knots an hour, with a somewhat heavy sea on, a fine young lad—going out to join his father and mother, who had obtained some employment for him in the uncovenanted service—was sky-larking aloft with some other youngsters, when, losing his hold, he fell into the foaming sea.

"Man overboard!" was the cry.

Captain Lyford was on deck in a moment, issuing orders to shorten sail and bring the ship to, that a boat might be lowered. The lad could swim, but suddenly finding himself plunged amid the foaming seas, he lost his presence of mind, and it appeared doubtful whether he would keep afloat. A couple of chairs and a hencoop had been hove to him, but not till he had been left some way astern. Reginald, on hearing the cry, ran aft, and without waiting to take off even his hat, lowered himself into the water and struck out towards the well-nigh drowning lad. It

was evening, and darkness was rapidly coming on. Intense was the excitement of all on board. Violet Ross did not exhibit her feelings, as some of the other ladies did, by shrieking and crying out, but she was seen standing on the poop, her gaze fixed on the two young swimmers.

Running at the rate the ship was going, they were soon lost to sight; for though the crew were under good discipline, it was not to be expected that sail could be shortened as rapidly as on board a man-of-war.

Opinions of all sorts were being hazarded. Some gave them up for lost, declaring that the best of swimmers could not keep afloat in such a sea.

"The young fellow may drown, for what I care," muttered Captain Hawkesford, as he turned forward, away from the rest of the lookers-on. The captain and officers were too busy to answer the questions put to them on the subject.

At length the ship was hove-to, and a boat with the first mate and a crew of volunteers was lowered. Away she pulled in the direction in which the swimmers had been last seen, the thick gathering gloom and the foaming seas surrounding her, and quickly hiding her from sight. The excitement on board was intense, even the captain could scarcely retain his composure. It would have been great had Jack Andrews, the lad who had fallen overboard, been alone; but young

Hamerton had excited the interest of all, and even the stern old brigadier declared that he would be ready to give up all the loot he had bagged at the taking of Mooltan for the sake of recovering the lad; and those who knew the old soldier best, were aware that his feelings must have been highly excited to induce him to say so. Poor little Violet! Her father could not fail to remark her agitation, but believed that she would have felt the same if any other among her fellow-creatures had been placed in the fearful peril to which young Hamerton was exposed.

The moments seemed minutes, the minutes hours, as those on board watched anxiously for the return of the boat. At length the captain began to fear for her safety, as well as for that of the swimmers.

"Silence on deck," he cried. "Does any one see her?"

No reply was made. The ship had for some time been hove-to. The wind whistled through her rigging, and the seas washed up her sides as she surged slowly forward.

"Burn a blue light, Mr. Timmins," he shouted to the boatswain, who had got one all ready; and as the bright fire burst forth it cast a lurid glare on the masts and rigging, and the countenances of the lookers-on, giving them the hue of death.

Colonel Ross, forgetting for a moment the effect always produced by the light, thought that his daughter

was going off into a swoon. But her trembling voice reassured him.

"I am thankful to see that signal;" she observed. "It will surely enable them to find their way to the ship."

"I hope that they will bring back our young friend, and the lad he has so gallantly hazarded his own life to save," said the colonel; "but the difficulty of finding them in the dark must be very great, unless they retain strength sufficient to make their position known by their voices."

"They will come! they will come!" exclaimed Violet. "Oh, father, it is very dreadful!" She could say no more.

The time went on. More blue lights were burned. Again and again the captain shouted, "Does any one see the boat?"

At length a seaman exclaimed, "There she is! there she is!" and others declared that they saw her. A cheer arose, joined in by most on board, but it was silenced by the captain. He now himself observed the boat approaching slowly, tossing up and down on the heaving seas. Oh, the horrible suspense to be endured till it could be got alongside, for it was impossible to see who was in her!

"Have you got them safe?" asked the captain, unable longer to restrain his anxiety. No answer came. Possibly the dashing of the seas drowned his voice.

The boat came nearer and nearer, and willing hands stood ready to lift on board those she brought back. On she came. The oars were thrown in. The bowman caught the rope hove to him. Eager faces peered down into her to ascertain if the lads had been saved.

"All right; we have them safe!" at length cried a voice from the boat.

"They are saved! they are saved!" was echoed along the deck; and even the most phlegmatic of the passengers shook each other's hands, and expressed their satisfaction; while several of the ladies burst into tears,—as did one of the officers, as gallant a young fellow as ever lived. Violet darted forward, followed by the colonel, as Reginald was hoisted on deck. Though evidently exhausted, he was able to stand leaning on the shoulder of honest Dick Thuddichum, a seaman who had gone off in the boat, and had assisted him up the side. (Dick ought before to have been introduced. He was a fine specimen of a sailor, with his broad shoulders and big bushy beard and whiskers. He had come on board with the young officer, and, judging by the eager way in which he had leaped into the boat going off to his rescue, was attached to him with no ordinary attachment.) Violet stopped short as she got close to Reginald, for already he was surrounded by most of the officers and passengers, eager to shake him by the hand and compliment him on his intrepidity. Reginald saw her,

and would have sprung forward, when, just as she had faintly murmured an expression of thankfulness, her father came up in time to save her, overcome by her feelings, from sinking on the deck. He then, after heartily congratulating Reginald, led his daughter into the cabin.

"Though I am thankful that the young man has been saved, I may have cause to regret that we have met him, if you allow too great an admiration of his gallantry and personal qualities to take possession of your heart," remarked the colonel. "Be cautious in future. We know nothing of his birth or position; and, attractive as are his manners, he may be merely an unprincipled adventurer—though I hope I should wrong him by thinking so. Now lie down and rest, for it may be better not to appear at the tea-table."

Violet promised to do as her father advised; but before throwing herself on her bed, she knelt down and poured out her grateful thanks to Heaven for Reginald's preservation.

The latter, meanwhile, nearly overwhelmed with compliments and congratulations, had been led by the doctor to his berth.

"Come, come, Mr. Hamerton," said the "medico;" "I have looked after young Andrews, and I must now see to you. *You* may think yourself made of iron, but the human frame cannot endure the strain you have put on it without reaction; and we shall have

you on the sick-list to-morrow, unless you take due precautions."

An unwonted sensation of weakness warned Reginald that the doctor was right; and following his advice, he turned in—inclined to be obedient also for the sake of avoiding the further compliments he felt sure the ladies would be disposed to pay him. The only gentleman who had not spoken to him was Captain Hawkesford, who had turned away when he saw that he was safe, uttering an expression of bitter ill-feeling.

"She will think more of the fellow than ever," he muttered. "Would that he were fathoms deep beneath the water!"

Thanks to the doctor's care, Reginald by the next morning was quite himself again; and as soon as he appeared on deck, young Andrews, who had also recovered, came to him and thanked him with hearty expressions of gratitude for saving his life.

"If it had not been for you, I should very soon have gone down. My great wish now is to serve you as long as I live; and I only hope that I may have the opportunity of doing so," he exclaimed.

"I only did for you what I would have done for any other man or boy," said Reginald; "but at the same time I shall be glad of your friendship, for, whatever our respective positions, we may be able to help each other."

Reginald, it must be confessed, looked with more than usual eagerness for the appearance of Violet, who had not yet come on deck—scarcely heeding the compliments he received from the other ladies, or being able to give any very clear answers to the numerous questions put to him about his gallant exploit, as they were pleased to call it. He did his best, however, to explain how, after having succeeded in reaching young Andrews, he had towed him to the hen-coop, to which he held him fast till the arrival of the boat.

"Yes, it *was* trying," he added; "but I never lost hope. My great fear was that the lad would sink from exhaustion, though I felt capable of holding on till the morning. I was sure, too, that the captain would not leave the spot till he had searched for us by daylight."

Violet at length came on deck. A blush rose to her cheek as she put out her hand to welcome Reginald. She said but little, however, her eyes speaking more eloquently than words. Her father remained by her side, and took an opportunity, as soon as he could do so without making his object too evident, of leading her to the other side among the ladies on deck. The gallant young officer was naturally the subject of conversation, and she heard with inward satisfaction his praises repeated by all around her. Much as Colonel Ross liked Reginald, he could not help regretting that

Violet had ever met him. He could not be blind to his personal appearance and manners, but he naturally disliked the thought of his daughter marrying a man of whose birth and fortune he knew nothing; and he resolved to break off all connection with the young stranger as soon as they landed at Calcutta. Reginald, he supposed, was not likely to remain long in that city, and would be either again going to sea, or proceeding up the country; at least he fancied, from some remarks the young man let drop, such would be the case. Violet, too, was not likely to remain long without receiving an eligible offer, which he trusted she would have the sense to accept—although he was not the man to force her to do so against her inclination.

During the remainder of the voyage Reginald enjoyed frequent opportunities of conversing with Violet, though, by the colonel's management, they were but seldom left alone. They perfectly understood each other, however; and the day before the ship was off the Sunderbunds, Reginald told Violet that he loved her better than life; and although he confessed there was a mystery about his birth, he said he hoped ere long to clear it up, and to be in a position to offer her his hand.

"If I succeed, as I have every reason to hope I may, your father will have no cause to refuse me on account of my birth and fortune. More I may not tell you; but you will confide in my honour, dearest

Violet: I know you will!" He took her hand, which she did not withdraw.

"I trust you implicitly. I know my kind father has a sincere regard for you, and he is only at present unwilling to sanction our engagement because he believes that it would not conduce to my happiness," she answered.

The following day the *Glamorgan Castle* dropped her anchor in the Hooghly. Shortly afterwards a man-of-war steamer hove in sight, and brought-to at a short distance from the ship. A boat from her came alongside, when Reginald came up to Colonel and Miss Ross.

"I must bid you farewell; but I hope that I may be allowed to call on you in Calcutta," he said with tolerable calmness.

The colonel hesitated in his reply.

"I cannot say where my duty will call me; but you may be assured, Mr. Hamerton, that I shall not forget you," he at length answered evasively. "Farewell! I see your attendant at the gangway waiting for you."

Violet, pained at her father's manner, said but little. Reginald, however, understood her look and manner; and paying a hurried adieu to the rest of the passengers, he went towards the gangway, passing, as he did so, Captain Hawkesford, who cast at him a super-

cilious and angry glance, without returning his salute. Followed by Dick Thuddichum, he descended to the boat, which pulled towards the steamer.

Violet watched the vessel as she glided up the river, and observed Reginald, after shaking hands with the officers, standing on the paddle-box, with his eyes fixed on the *Glamorgan Castle*. She little thought at the time how long it would be before they would again meet!

UP THE HOOGHLY.

CHAPTER II.

REGINALD MEETS BURNETT — A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT — VOYAGE UP THE GANGES — TIGER-SHOOTING AT NIGHT — TIGER ANECDOTES — TIGER-SHOOTING FROM THE BACK OF AN ELEPHANT — REGINALD SAVES FAITHFUL FROM A CROCODILE — HER GRATITUDE — JOURNEY TO ALLAHAPOOR — RECEPTION BY THE RAJAH — THE BEAUTIFUL NUNA — A BANQUET, AND BARBARIC ENTERTAINMENTS — COCHUT KHAN'S JEALOUSY — FAITHFUL WATCHES OVER REGINALD.

REGINALD having ascertained where Colonel and Miss Ross were living, was making his way through the broad streets of the "city of palaces," intending to pay his respects to them, when he met a military-looking man in an undress suit, who, regarding him earnestly, advanced towards him with his hand extended.

"My dear boy, I am delighted to see you!" exclaimed the stranger. "Have you been successful? I long to hear."

"I am in a fair way, I trust, of succeeding, although there may be not a few difficulties in my path," answered Reginald. "I am truly thankful, however, to find you here, as I thought that you were far away —either in Pegu or at Delhi. Are you at liberty, my dear Burnett, or can you get leave of absence? If you

could accompany me, you would be of the greatest possible assistance."

"Most fortunately, I obtained leave of absence for six months, only yesterday, and was contemplating making a shooting excursion with Knox and Jones; but they must excuse me, and I will devote myself to your service," answered Captain Burnett

"Thank you, my dear fellow; thank you," exclaimed Reginald. "Your experience and knowledge of the people will smooth away many difficulties which beset my path, and I gladly accept your kind offer. I feel somewhat selfish, as I know you sacrifice your own convenience for my sake."

"Don't talk about that, Reginald," said Captain Burnett. "If you have nothing better to do, come to my quarters and inspect my sporting gear. We may get some shooting on the way; I always try to combine amusement with business."

"I will join you before long; but I have a visit to pay first to some friends who came out in the ship with me, and unless they detain me I shall soon be at liberty."

"You can easily excuse yourself; and I shall expect you at dinner, at all events," said Captain Burnett.

"But I would, I confess, rather dine with them, if they ask me," answered Reginald. "You would excuse me if you knew how I am circumstanced."

"Is a fair lady in the case?" asked Captain Burnett. "You need not say so; I am sure of it. Take care, Reginald; don't get entangled. Young fellows are apt to do so, and to be sorry for it afterwards. Come, let me advise you to leave your card at your friends', with a message that you are bound up country; and that will settle the matter. The lady will be married by the time you come back again."

"That I am sure she will not," exclaimed Reginald. "She is totally unlike the ordinary run of girls."

"Well, well! Take my advice in this matter, as you are ready to do in others, and retain your freedom of action," said Captain Burnett, in a serious tone.

Reginald, parting from his friend, hurried on, hoping to find Violet alone. A dark-skinned porter, in white dress and with turban on head, opened the door, and inquired his name. The sahib was not at home, and Miss Ross could receive no visitors, said the servant.

"Take up my card, and say that I am waiting," replied Reginald.

The porter, after carefully examining the card, gave it to another servant. The man gave a peculiar look as he obeyed the order. He was some time absent, and when he returned he delivered a note addressed to Reginald in Violet's handwriting. He did not venture to open it in the presence of the servants; but as soon as he got outside the house he eagerly scanned the few lines it contained.

"My father has positively forbidden me to see you," she wrote. "He hopes that time will obliterate your image; but that is impossible. Trust to me, as I do to you.—Yours, VIOLET."

Reginald was naturally bitterly disappointed; but yet he had faith in woman's constancy, and he went his way with hopes unabated, feeling sure, from what he knew of Colonel Ross, that he would use no harsh measures to compel his daughter to act contrary to her own inclinations. Still, he could not feel otherwise than pained and anxious. By the time, however, that he reached his friend's quarters, he had somewhat recovered his serenity of mind. He kept his own counsel, simply observing that Colonel Ross, on whom he had called, was not at home; and Captain Burnett forbore to ask further questions.

He had plenty of amusement in examining the rifles and various articles which Captain Burnett had prepared for his intended shooting expedition.

"You must accept this rifle from me, Reginald," he said, presenting a first-rate weapon; "and this brace of pistols. You may depend on their never missing fire, if properly attended to. And let me advise you always to load them yourself; never trust to a servant. I always do as I advise; one's life may be sacrificed from carelessness."

The following day the friends, attended by Dick

Thuddichum and four native servants, were on their road to the north-west.

They had to proceed, for a considerable distance, up the river Ganges, in a budgerow. Though rudely built, she skimmed merrily over the water when the breeze was favourable. She was decked all over with bamboo; and on the after-part was erected a cottage of bamboo, which served as a cabin and baggage-room. In the fore-part were two small ranges of brick-work, raised a few inches above the deck, with small round holes, shaped like a lime-kiln, for holding charcoal, on which provisions were dressed. Above the cabin, and supported on upright bamboos, was a grating, on which the crew sat or stood to work the vessel. A long bamboo, with a circular board at the end fixed astern, served as a rudder; the oars also being long bamboos of the same description. The mast was a stout bamboo, carrying a square-sail and top-sail of a coarse and flimsy canvas.

In this clumsy-looking craft the travellers made themselves comfortable, however. They had also a small canoe towing astern, in which, when the wind was contrary, and the budgerow had to bring up alongside the bank, they made excursions to the other side of the river or up one of its affluents.

Burnett, who was really a keen sportsman, never failed to take his gun, and generally came back with a good supply of game. One day, however, he was

unwell, and Reginald started by himself to visit some interesting ruins a short distance ahead, the canoe being paddled by two of the crew. They had got some distance when he found that he had brought neither his rifle nor pistols: however, he did not think it worth while to return for them. They were at some little distance from the bank, when one of the crew cried out,—"See, sahib, see! Here comes a tiger!"

On looking in the direction in which the man pointed, he caught sight, not of a tiger, but of a huge panther, and a native about a hundred yards before him rushing at headlong speed, bounding and springing towards the river, while the panther with rapid leaps pursued its hoped-for prey. Reginald ordered the men to paddle in towards the shore, in the hope of rescuing the panting wretch from the jaws of the panther. Just before they reached the bank, the native bounded into the water, which rose up to his neck; but he was apparently too exhausted to swim towards the canoe, though with imploring accents he entreated the sahib to come to his rescue.

At that instant the dark snout of an enormous crocodile rose above the surface—the saurian, to Reginald's horror, making its way towards the struggling native. "Crocodile! crocodile!" shouted Reginald to the native; who, hearing him, after a moment's hesitation rushed back towards the bank, thus again facing the panther. The creature for a moment appeared discon-

certed at the sudden movement of its expected victim and the approach of the canoe, towards which the man made a desperate spring; but the savage panther, eager for its prey, at the same moment leaped forward and seized the unhappy man by the leg, while Reginald grasped his arm. At that instant the crocodile, which had retreated a short distance, dashed up, and catching the miserable being—who gave vent to the most fearful shrieks—by the other leg, with one snap of its jaws bit it off.

In vain Reginald shouted to the crew to attack the creatures with their oars. The cowardly wretches, instead of moving, shrank down at the further end of the canoe; while the panther, peeling off the flesh of the leg, reached at length the ankle, where with a horrid crunch it severed the bone, and galloped away with the fearful mouthful.

Reginald drew the poor man—now quite senseless—into the canoe, and endeavoured to stanch the blood flowing from his wounds by tourniquets, formed of pieces of wood, round the upper parts of his legs; but his efforts were in vain, and before the canoe reached the budgerow the man was dead.

Continuing their course up the Ganges, visiting on their way several of the numerous towns, temples, and ruins of various sorts which adorn its banks, they at length landed, and continued their route by land.

They were now in a woody district, bordering the banks of a river, when Captain Burnett's "shikaree wallah," or huntsman, informed them that it abounded in tigers, and that if they wished to kill a few they would have an opportunity of doing so. Although Reginald would gladly have pushed on, he sacrificed his own wishes for the sake of allowing his friend to enjoy a few days' sport.

Burnett had a friend (Major Sandford) living at a village not far off, who, hearing of their arrival, invited them to take up their abode at his bungalow. He confirmed the report of the abundance of tigers, which the superstitious Hindoos took no pains to destroy; observing—"They believe that the souls of men pass after their death into the bodies of animals, and that it must be the soul of some great personage alone which is allowed to inhabit the ferocious tiger. They therefore allow the creatures to range about as they please; and when any poor fellow is seized by one of the brutes—as is frequently the case—he will humbly beg the tiger sahib to set him free, or to finish him mercifully. The natives, however, have no objection to my killing any of their lordships; and we will this evening go to a fort on the banks of the Ganges near which they are wont to pass on their way to drink at the river. We will carry provisions and liquor, so that we may pass our time agreeably till one of the brutes appears."

The party accordingly, accompanied by several natives of rank, with their servants, set out, and were not long in reaching their destination. The top of the fort offered a safe spot whence any number of wild beasts could be shot down without the slightest risk to the sportsmen of being attacked in return. A table and chairs were placed on the roof of the fort, and the English gentlemen and Hindoos sat in the cool of the evening quaffing their claret and conversing on various topics, with their rifles ready loaded placed against the parapet, while a look-out kept watch for the approach of a tiger, panther, or any other denizen of the forest.

"Few men have more narrowly escaped becoming tiger's meat than I have," said Major Sandford. "I carry some ugly marks about me to bear witness to the fact; besides having the slight 'halt' in my walk which you may have observed. I was, some eight years ago, out shooting with several companions, and being somewhat tired, I sat down on the side of the bank, having left my gun a few feet from me. The rest of the party had gone to a little distance, when, suddenly looking up, I saw a huge tiger spring out of the jungle, and before I had time to reach my gun the brute had seized me by the leg,—which I thought, by the fearful way he held it, he would have bitten off. The rest of the party, seeing my fearful condition, began to shout at the top of their voices,

hoping to drive off the beast. They were afraid to fire, for fear of killing me. But the tiger was not to be disappointed of his expected dinner; so, throwing me over his back with one jerk, off he trotted. I did not, however, lose my presence of mind; but recollecting that I had a brace of pistols in my belt, I drew one and pulled the trigger. To my horror, it missed fire! I had still another. I managed to get hold of it, well knowing that if that missed my fate was sealed. Pointing the muzzle at the brute's head, I fired. The tiger gave a leap, and opening its mouth, let me drop, while it fell down dead by my side. I scrambled away as fast as I could, scarcely believing that I was safe, till my friends coming up assured me of the fact, and congratulated me on my merciful escape."

The subject of the "power of the human eye" over the most savage animals was touched on.

"There can be no doubt about it," observed Captain Burnett. "I was once a short distance from a village, accompanied by my shikaree wallah, when we heard the cry of 'Help! help!—a tiger! a tiger!' resounding through the forest. Having loaded our guns with bullets, and seen that our pistols were primed, we hurried towards the spot, when we came in sight of a native who stood facing a huge tiger. From our relative positions, it was somewhat difficult to shoot without running the risk of hitting the man; we

therefore shouted together, to try and make the tiger move. He did so, and I at length got a shot at him; but though he was hit, off he went without his expected meal. The native then told us that while in the jungle he had suddenly caught sight of a beast about to spring on him, when, with admirable presence of mind, instead of running, he stood with his eye steadily fixed on the savage monster. The tiger, wavering before the human eye, slunk behind a bush; but every now and then he peered forth to see whether the man's glance was still fixed on him. The brute continued moving from bush to bush, as if endeavouring to avoid the undaunted gaze of his adversary, that he might have an opportunity of springing out and seizing him. Each time the tiger moved, the native turned facing his cunning foe, and shouting at the top of his voice, in the hope that assistance might come to him."

"I can narrate a still more wonderful instance of the same power," observed one of the native gentlemen.

But as he spoke the look-out, turning round, said in a low whisper,—"Here comes the tiger, sahib!" and the sportsmen, springing from their seats, seized their guns, ready to fire at the monster as soon as it should come within range. At a leisurely pace the tiger trotted on, the outline of its form seen clearly in the moonlight. It had just got close to the water, when Burnett firing, the monstrous brute rolled over,

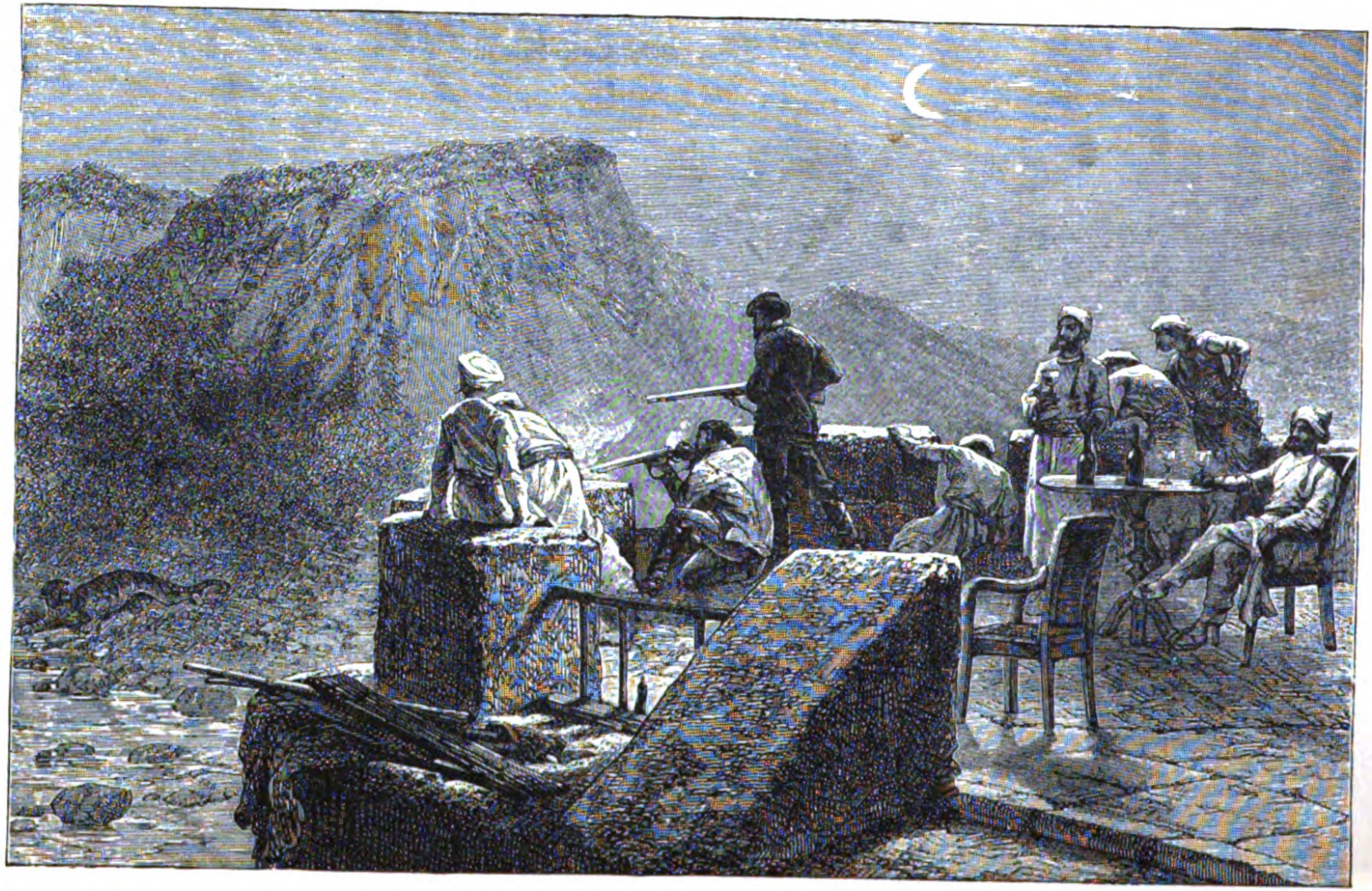
casting a glance of defiance at the foe it had only then discovered. A second shot laid it lifeless on the ground. Both gentlemen reloaded; and Reginald proposed hurrying down to secure the skin.

"We may very likely, if we do so, lose our own," observed the major. "Let us wait, and before long we may add a few more tigers to our bag."

They were not disappointed. Another tiger and two panthers were shot. This being the most accessible part of the bank for some distance, it was evidently the watering-place of numerous wild animals. They had just killed their third tiger, and were agreeing that it was time to secure the skins and return home, when a fourth tiger appeared, stalking leisurely out of the jungle towards the water, coming much nearer the fort than any of the others had done. It stopped for a moment and looked up at its foes, without exhibiting the alarm which the others had displayed. Reginald declared that he caught the gleam of gold on its neck.

"It may be an enchanted prince, then," said Burnett; "or, as our friends here believe, the habitat of the soul of some great maharajah, who has not laid aside all the trappings of royalty;—but we shall soon learn."

As he spoke, he raised his rifle to fire. The tiger at that moment, however, gave a sudden bound and escaped the ball, and turning round, frightened by



TIGER-SHOOTING IN SAFE QUARTERS.

the noise, sprang back quick as lightning into the jungle, before any of the rest of the party could take steady aim.

No other wild beast appearing, the party descended; and while some kept watch to shoot any which might come out of the jungle, the others secured the skins of the beasts which had been slain. Packing them up on the backs of the elephants, they returned to Major Sandford's bungalow, well satisfied with their night's sport.

The next day they set out to visit the more distant part of the forest. The party had four elephants. Reginald and Burnett, with their friend, and several native gentlemen, were seated in howdahs on the backs of the elephants. The howdah is something like the body of a carriage, with an awning to shield the occupants from the heat of the sun. Gorgeously-ornamented cloths covered the backs of the huge animals, while the mahouts sat on their necks, to direct them where to go and what to do. Reginald, not accustomed to that style of shooting, thought it very dull work, and longed to be on foot, where he could encounter the savage monsters face to face.

On reaching the jungle, the elephants moved along the borders to some distance, while beaters, with loud shouts, endeavoured to dislodge any tiger which might be lurking there. At length up went the trunks of the elephants,—a sure sign that they had discovered

a tiger at no great distance. The brute, seeing so many enemies, had apparently no stomach for the fight, and was observed stealing off amid the jungle. Three or four shots were fired at it, but so rapid and eccentric were its movements that it escaped them all. As no other tiger appeared, Reginald at last proposed to Burnett that they should seek the savage brutes in their lairs. Burnett agreed, but cautioned him to be on the alert, and to keep his attendants close to him, with their rifles loaded, that he might have another weapon at hand should he fail to kill the animal at the first shot.

"Remember, your life may depend on it; for, believe me, a wounded tiger is the most dangerous of antagonists."

Dismounting from the elephants which had carried them to the borders of the jungle, each gentleman, attended by a native carrying an additional gun, approached the jungle, into which the beaters fearlessly threw themselves. The forest was tolerably thick, so that they soon by some chance became separated. Reginald, hearing the beaters, and believing that they were driving a tiger towards him, made his way onward to a spot from whence he believed that he should have an opportunity of firing to advantage. It was near the river, with a small open space in front of him, through which there was every probability that the tiger would make its way. He took his post

ELEPHANTS DISCOVERING A TIGER.

behind a thick tree, which would afford him shelter should he fail to bring down the animal at the first shot; while he charged his attendants to keep a watchful eye around, lest the creature might come out behind him. Scarcely had he taken up his post, when he heard a loud chattering, and looking up, saw that the trees were alive with monkeys, which were peering down upon him, wondering what had brought so strange-looking an animal into their domain. As he did not move, they grew bolder, and began frolicking about, swinging backwards and forwards, some with both paws, others with one, turning somersaults, and performing all sorts of strange antics.

"See, sahib! what is that?" said the shikaree wallah in a low voice, pointing to a sunny spot at no great distance off, where Reginald caught sight of the huge head of a crocodile, with its jaws open. The creature was apparently fast asleep, basking in the sun. Reginald raised his rifle, intending to shoot the saurian, when at that moment there was a rustling in the bush, and a magnificent young tigress walked out on her way to drink at the river. The creature had not advanced far when her eye fell on the crocodile, towards which she stealthily crept, her soft padded feet making not the slightest noise as they trod the ground. Reginald was thankful that he had not fired at the crocodile, as it probably would have brought the tigress upon himself at the very moment that he

was unarmed. He considered whether he should shoot the magnificent creature, but he was curious to see what she would do with the crocodile. On she went, till she got within a little distance of the saurian, when, making a spring, she seized the creature's tongue, evidently with the intention of dragging it out. The attempt was a dangerous one. The instant the crocodile felt her paw in its mouth, it closed its huge jaws, and holding her foot fast, began to crawl towards the water. So great was the agony she suffered that she was unable to make any resistance, or to seize the head of the crocodile in her mouth. While she shrieked with pain, the crocodile slowly drew her on towards the river, into which, her instinct told her, should the saurian once dive, her fate would be sealed. In vain the tigress struggled to free herself, and drag back the crocodile. The monkeys, meantime, seemed to think the affair great fun; and seeing their two enemies engaged, began to descend the branches close to the ground; and one of them, more daring than the rest, actually tried to get hold of the ear of the tigress. She, however, lifting up her paw, was about to give it a blow which would have finished its existence, when, nimbly climbing up again, it got out of her way. Meanwhile, the crocodile was dragging the unfortunate tigress still nearer and nearer the river. She turned her eyes round, as if to look for some branch which she might grasp, and save herself from

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

her impending fate. At that moment they fell on Reginald, when she gave him a look which seemed to implore his pity, as he thought. In a few seconds the crocodile would have reached the water; but just then the tigress caught a firm hold of the trunk of a tree projecting into the river, to which she held on, at the risk of having her paw bitten off. Possibly the saurian might, at the same time, have seen its human foes, or it might have been that the sudden jerk it received in consequence of the powerful resistance put forth by its captive, made it open its mouth. The tigress on this quickly drew out her fearfully-mangled paw, leaving the crocodile to plunge with a loud flop into the water, deprived of its expected prey; while she, fearing perhaps that it might again return to seize her, crawled back howling with pain towards the thicket.

"Shoot, sahib! shoot!" exclaimed the shikaree wallah; but Reginald had not the heart to do so. Slowly the tigress crawled on, probably fearing him more than she had her late enemy, and turning a glance towards him, in which defiance was mingled with dread. Feeling herself unable to fight, it was evidently her intention to escape if she could; but overcome at length with the fearful pain she was suffering, she sank down exhausted on the ground. The native huntsman seemed to think it a piece of folly on the part of Reginald not at once to despatch her.

"No, I will not do that," said Reginald in answer to his expostulations. "It is not the custom of white men to slaughter a fallen foe. See! the poor tigress looks up as if imploring my assistance."

"As you think fit, sahib," answered the huntsman; "but if she recovers she will become the mother of numberless tigers and tigresses; and who can tell how many people they will destroy?"

This argument would have prevailed with Reginald, and he would, at all events, have allowed the huntsman to kill the tigress, had she not at that moment cast at him a look, which he seemed to fancy implored his mercy. As he approached, however, while she lay on the ground unable to move, she uttered a loud snarl of anger, and ground her teeth, and opened out the claws of her uninjured feet, as the feline race are wont to do, as if about to seize him. Still he persevered, wishing, if possible, to capture the animal alive. Speaking to her in a soothing voice, he got near her head, holding his rifle in such a position that he might fire in a moment, should she turn round and attempt to seize him; she was, however, too much hurt to move. Gradually he got close to her head, when, stooping down, he first patted it gently, still uttering the same soothing words. At first, while he continued to stroke it, she looked up suspiciously at him, as if to ask what he wanted; but soon understanding that his motives were friendly,

REGINALD SUCCOURS THE TIGRESS.

she ceased her cries. At length she put out her lacerated limb, and seemed to ask him to do what he could to relieve her pain. He fortunately had a flask of spirits in his pocket, with which he bathed her foot; and then, taking out a handkerchief, he carefully bound it up. It seemed at once to relieve the aninal of pain; and all the natural ferocity of her countenance disappearing, she cast at him a look full of gratitude, while she attempted to lick his hand.

Nothing could exceed the astonishment of the shikaree wallah and his companion,—who had during the time retired to a respectful distance,—when they saw the tigress get up and slowly follow Reginald, as a dog does its master. She, however, would not allow them to approach her, but snarled in a way which made them immediately take to flight. Reginald on this called them back, and stroking the head of the tigress, tried to make her understand that she was to treat them as friends. She understood him; and when they came near she no longer showed any signs of wishing to hurt them.

"Why, sahib," exclaimed the shikaree wallah, "see! she is not a wild tigress after all. There is a golden collar round her neck. She must have belonged to some great rajah, and made her escape from his palace."

On a closer examination, Reginald discovered what the quick eye of the native had detected, a band of gold, partly hidden by the creature's hair.

"There cannot be a doubt, then, that she is the very animal we saw last night," observed Reginald. "She is my property now, at all events; and I feel very sure that she will follow no one else."

By this time the shouts and cries of the beaters ceased to reach their ears, and Reginald knew that they must have gone in a different direction to that which he had followed. Several shots, however, the sound of which came from a distance, showed him that Burnett and his party had met with game; but as he found no real pleasure in tiger-shooting, he was anxious to get back to the bungalow, where they intended to stop till the next evening before resuming their journey. He wished, indeed, to astonish his friend, by exhibiting his prize, when Burnett was boasting, as he probably would, of the number of tigers he had killed. Leaving word with the elephant drivers that he had returned on foot, and bidding them say nothing about his captive, he hastened homeward, followed by his two astonished attendants.

"He is indeed a wonderful young man," observed the shikaree wallah. "How courageously he walked up to the tiger; it makes my knees even now tremble to think of it. Wallah, he is a brave youth."

As Reginald walked on, with his hand on the tigress's head, he considered what name he should give the animal. "She has evidently become attached to me, and will follow me about like a dog," he said to

himself. "Very likely she may be of use, too, for I suspect that no robbers, nor even Thugs, would dare attack a man with a tigress as his protector. What shall I call her? Violet? Violet? No, certainly not. There is nothing in common, except I may say affection for me. Faithful? Yes, Faithful. That, I am sure, will prove the chief characteristic of the creature. Faithful shall be her name!"

By the time he had arrived at this decision he reached Major Sandford's bungalow. The sitting-room was of large extent, ornamented with the skins of antelopes, bison, and stag horns of various kinds, and with native swords, bows, arrows, spears, and battle-axes; while the floor was covered with the hides of bears, leopards, tigers, and deer; and a number of tables, sofas, and chairs of all shapes were scattered about on it. Placing three of the chairs in a row, Reginald covered them with skins, so as to form a screen; and calling to Faithful, he bade her lie down behind them. He threw himself on a sofa in front to await the arrival of his friends. Before long he caught sight of Burnett's elephant approaching.

"How comes it, you lazy fellow, that you return home without a single skin to show?" asked Captain Burnett, as he entered.

"Pardon me, but I have not returned without a skin," said Reginald. "Here, Faithful, show yourself."

As he spoke the tigress raised her head above the

screen with a menacing expression in her countenance, which made Burnett start back and draw one of his pistols.

"Don't fire!" exclaimed Reginald. "The brute is tame, though I only captured her this morning. See! I became her surgeon, and she is grateful for the service I rendered her."

Burnett could scarcely believe his senses, till the secret of her apparent sudden tameness was disclosed.

At dinner Faithful crouched down at her new master's feet, and gratefully accepted the small morsels thrown to her; though Burnett advised that she should have a more substantial meal, or she might take to helping herself, if pressed by hunger, to a human creature, if not to some of the tame animals they might meet with on the road. In the evening Reginald again dressed the tigress's foot, when she exhibited the same marks of gratitude as before.

Though the tigress was much better the next morning, she was still too lame to walk, and accordingly Reginald had a large wooden cage made for her, with a bed in it of dry grass, on which she might repose with perfect comfort. This cage was slung on the back of an elephant, counterbalanced by several heavy articles. It was some time, however, before the sagacious elephant, which knew perfectly well the contents of the cage, would allow it to be lifted up on its back. Faithful also felt very uneasy when brought

near the elephant; and not till the cage had been completely covered up, so that the two animals could not see each other, were the drivers able to secure it.

The journey was resumed; and occasionally stopping to have a day's sport,—to which Reginald consented more for his friend's sake than his own,—greatly to his satisfaction, they at length arrived in sight of the domes and minarets of Allahapoor, the city in the far interior to which they were bound. They encamped outside, that they might get into order and present themselves in a becoming manner to the rajah, Meer Ali Singh, the despotic governor of the province. Captain Burnett put on his uniform, and all the attendants dressed themselves in their best costumes.

"I have made up my mind to appear in my seaman's dress," said Reginald; "from what I have heard of Meer Ali, he is more likely to give me a favourable reception should I present myself in an unpretending manner than with all the pomp I could assume. It will also have the effect of making his favourites less jealous of me, and unsuspicious of my object. I do not allude so much to the natives as to a European who is about the rajah, a certain André Cochût by name, originally a barber, who was my father's great enemy, and is now in high favour at court. I must be prepared for every obstruction he can throw in my way; but as he is not acquainted with the name I bear, he will not suspect who I am. You must appear

as the person of chief importance, while you represent me as a friend whom you have brought for the sake of companionship. This will throw Cochût off his guard. And if we manage to play our cards well, we may gain the confidence of the rajah; when I hope that he may then be induced to deliver up my father's property, and the casket containing the valuable deeds I am in search of."

Captain Burnett agreed to the wisdom of Reginald's plan, and, in order to assume as much importance as possible, sent in to the rajah to announce their arrival, and to request that they might be permitted to pay their respects. The plan succeeded even better than they had expected. The next morning, as they were preparing to move, a suwarree, or retinue of elephants and horses, was seen approaching, headed by one of the rajah's principal officers. The train of elephants was splendidly equipped with silver howdahs, and accompanied by suwarrs, or horsemen, in red and yellow, followed by an irregular though picturesque body of infantry, armed with swords, long matchlock guns, and shields. Some had enormously long spears covered over with silver; while amid them were carried large triangular green banners. The silver howdahs, the flowing dresses, the glowing colours, and the majestic size of the animals which formed the most prominent part of the group, had altogether a wonderfully picturesque and scenic appearance. The strangers

were invited to mount the elephants, and in a few minutes they found themselves forming part of the curious procession they had before been admiring. Thus they entered the gates of the ancient city. The houses they passed were closely packed and built of clay, the lanes dirty in the extreme, and so narrow that they frequently had to proceed in single file. Beggars swarmed at every angle, and on the steps of every door, while the whole population appeared armed either with matchlock gun or pistols. Some carried a short bent sword called a tulwar, with shield on shoulder. The traders walked about with tulwars by their sides, while the idlers carried both the pistol and the shield. The latter is of buffalo-hide, generally covered with brass knobs, and is worn on the left shoulder. The fierce-looking moustaches of the Rajpoots and Patans, and the black beards of the Mussulmans, with their tulwars and shields, as they swaggered about, gave them a particularly warlike air. Even grave-looking men, carried about in palanquins, and counting their beads, had several sword and buckler attendants. Some of the more consequential rode on elephants, also accompanied by a retinue of armed men. Even the people lounging at the shop doors were armed with swords, and had their shields over their shoulders. After passing through a number of these narrow and dirty streets, redeemed here and there by pretty mosques, well-filled bazaars, and a

few large houses, the party entered a wide and handsome street,—bordered by colonnades of a highly ornamental style of architecture,—along which they proceeded, till they reached the house appointed by the rajah for their residence. It belonged to one of the European officers at the court, who was now absent, and possessed ample accommodation for a much larger party than theirs.

Reginald had kept Faithful secured in her cage. He was curious to know how she would behave in a city, and he waited anxiously for the arrival of their own elephants and baggage. They came at last. On the cage being placed on the ground, he took off the covering. Faithful was lying crouched down. She was evidently much put out at the way she had been treated, and the fierce expression of her eye made him doubt at first whether it would be wise to set her free. After speaking in soothing tones, and stroking her head for a short time, the expression changed, when opening the side of the cage so as to enable him to reach her paw, he stooped down and dressed it carefully. She looked up with an expression of gratitude in her countenance; and now telling her to follow him, he conducted her into the sitting-room, where he had left his friend. As Reginald took his seat at the dinner-table, Faithful lay down by his side, and thankfully ate the bits of food thrown to her. When afterwards visitors were announced, she remained perfectly

quiet, eying them, however, narrowly. Next day an officer—no less a man than André Cochût, who had now become a khan or noble—arrived to summon them to his master the rajah, "the Refuge of the World," who was ready to allow them the honour of an audience.

"We will obey the summons, khan," said Captain Burnett; and he and Reginald immediately got ready.

The captain had prepared the presents which, according to Oriental etiquette, it is usual to offer to a ruling prince on being first introduced, and he had given the necessary instructions to Reginald. They each took four gold mohurs, which they placed on fine muslin handkerchiefs to be held in the palm of their hands.

"There, that will do," said Captain Burnett; "we must offer them in this style; and if the rajah is inclined to be gracious, we shall not be the losers by the transaction."

Putting the money and handkerchiefs in their pockets, they went out into the courtyard of their house, where they found richly caparisoned steeds awaiting them. They mounted, Burnett accompanying the khan, and Reginald following in his usual nautical costume, attended by Dick Thuddichum, who sat his steed much in the style of sailors in general. His appearance contrasted greatly with that of the richly habited natives who rode on either side of him; and his attempts at conversation caused them a good deal

of amusement, though none of those he addressed could understand a word he said, nor could he understand their remarks. The crowds in the streets made way for the khan, who was known to be in high favour at court, and was treated accordingly with every mark of respect.

The palace, which was at no great distance, was soon reached, when the ex-barber threw his reins with an air of importance to the syce, or groom, in attendance, telling the Englishmen to follow him. Entering the gates of the palace, they passed through several apartments adorned with beautiful chandeliers, and cabinets of rare woods and of silver or lacquered ware. Richly-decorated shields, arms, and suits of armour covered the walls, not always arranged in good taste, but offering a fair specimen of Oriental magnificence.

"You two come with me," said the ex-barber, addressing Burnett and Reginald.

As he led the way, they emerged into a small garden or courtyard with a fountain playing in the centre, beyond which was seen a pavilion. Crossing the garden, they approached the pavilion.

Neither Reginald nor Burnett were prepared for the scene which met their view. In a richly-ornamented alcove, seated on a pile of cushions, were two persons; one of whom they immediately knew must be the rajah. He was magnificently attired in Oriental costume, covered with gold ornaments; a turban

THE RAJAH AND HIS GRAND-DAUGHTER.

covering his head, surmounted by a plume of bird of paradise feathers, with a sparkling aigrette in front. He had large moustaches, and an enormous white beard flowing over his breast. By his side reclined a lady, also handsomely dressed, her features of rare beauty, and her complexion scarcely darker than that of an Italian. The rajah was smoking a hookah of elegant workmanship. He took it from his lips when the strangers advanced, and expressed his satisfaction at receiving them.

"My grandchild, Nuna, desired to see you, as Englishmen at present rarely visit my court," he said, after the usual complimentary speeches had been exchanged; "except my worthy friend there, the khan, she has never set eyes on a white man."

While the rajah was speaking, Captain Burnett could with difficulty avoid fixing his gaze on the lovely features of the young girl, though he felt it would be contrary to court etiquette to do so.

"And what brought you to my city?" asked the rajah.

"We had heard of your highness's wisdom and renown, and as we desired to visit the chief objects of interest in this part of the world, we came to see your city, in the hope of enjoying the happiness of an interview with your highness," answered Burnett, who had considerable experience in the proper style of addressing Oriental potentates. The rajah looked pleased.

"And whence do you come? Do you belong to the Company?" he asked, turning to Reginald.

"Most of my days have been spent on the salt ocean, your highness," answered Reginald; "and my desire is to see the wonders of the interior part of the country."

"An extraordinary life yours must have been," observed the rajah. "They tell me that ships are tossed about on the waves like balls in the hands of jugglers, and sometimes are thrown on the rocks, and at others go down to the bottom. Extraordinary that men should be found to hazard their lives on so treacherous an element!"

"An existence on the ocean has its advantages as well as its dangers," answered Reginald. "Without ships men cannot visit other lands, or carry the produce of this magnificent country to England, and bring back her manufactures in return."

"You speak the truth, young sir," said the rajah, evidently pleased with Reginald's manner. "You and your friend are welcome to remain in Allahapoor as long as you please; and I shall be glad to see you again."

Captain Burnett, knowing that this was a signal for their departure, offered the presents which he and Reginald had brought. They were graciously accepted, the rajah placing them on a cushion by his side. Bowing low they withdrew, the captain taking another glance at the rajah's grand-daughter as he did so.

André Cochût accompanied them home, and by the questions he put it was evident that he wished to

ascertain their real object in coming to Allahapoor. Captain Burnett replied cautiously, and took an opportunity of whispering to Reginald to be on his guard as to what he said. "I do not trust that individual," he observed as soon as the khan had taken his departure. "He fears that we may remain and supplant him in the good graces of the old rajah. If we can win him over, he may assist us; but the attempt to do so would excite his suspicion." Reginald promised to follow his friend's advice, and they agreed that they would simply be civil to Cochût, and appear to be only desirous of visiting the scenes of interest in the neighbourhood.

The following day they received another summons to visit the rajah in his usual hall of audience in the palace. He had a few guards and courtiers in attendance. Burnett looked round in vain in the hope of catching a glimpse of the beautiful Nuna, but she was nowhere to be seen; indeed, her appearance on the previous occasion had been contrary to the usual custom, as no Mohammedan or Hindoo women of high rank ever exhibit themselves in public. The rajah appeared more than ever pleased with them, and asked numerous questions, which they answered apparently to his satisfaction.

"I must not let you Englishmen live so far off," he said at length. "I should like to see you at all times of the day. You must come and live in the palace,

where rooms shall be prepared for you. I must have no refusal. The matter is settled."

Burnett and Reginald expressed their gratitude at the favour shown them, and said they gladly accepted his highness's offer. Before they left, Khan Cochût overtook them; and though he contrived to conceal his feelings, it was clear that he was more than ever jealous and annoyed at the thought of their being about the person of his master. On returning with their attendants and luggage, they found, as had been promised, a handsome suite of rooms prepared for their reception. They quickly made themselves at home. Burnett observing that they had fallen into pleasant quarters. Before long, Khan Cochût came with a message from the rajah, inviting them to dinner. He again endeavoured to discover their object in visiting Allahapoor. Reginald, warned by his friend, answered very cautiously, and so the ex-barber had to take his departure without being wiser than he came. At the dinner-hour an attendant of the rajah came to summon them. They found the great man seated at table, in a hall furnished in a strangely-mixed Oriental and English fashion. The rajah sat on one side of the table, on a gilt arm-chair raised a few inches above the floor; the opposite side being left unoccupied, that whatever took place at the other end of the hall might be seen by the guests, while the servants could thus remove the dishes without difficulty. He beckoned

to Burnett and Reginald to take their seats one on either side of him,—greatly to the disgust of Khan Cochût, who had to move further down the table. Several nobles and other courtiers were present. As soon as the party had taken their places, a curtain behind them was drawn on one side, when half-a-dozen young females issued forth, each carrying large fans of peacock's feathers, and noiselessly placed themselves behind the rajah's chair. The hue of their skins was scarcely darker than that of the women of Southern Europe; their hair, black as jet, drawn over the forehead, was twisted in rolls behind, and ornamented with pearls and silver pins, over which hung a muslin robe covering their shoulders—of a texture so fine, however, that their forms could be clearly seen through it. Gold-embroidered zones surrounded their waists and supported their Turkish trousers of bright crimson satin, which were also secured round their ankles by gold-embroidered belts. Two of them at a time advanced—their arms bare almost to the shoulder—and silently waved their fans in the most graceful manner above the head of the rajah. Here they remained the whole evening, relieving each other by turns, and attending to his hookah, supplying it with tobacco as might be required.

The first courses being removed, a group of nautch-girls, attended by musicians, entered the hall, and commenced their performances,—now advancing in

graceful attitudes, now retiring; now with one hand held over the head, now with the other; the musicians during the time playing on lutes and tambourines behind them, and accompanying the instruments with their voices. While this was going on a puppet-show was introduced, in which the figures acted a play and danced almost in as life-like a manner as performers on a stage. The nautch-girls continued their performances throughout the whole evening, but the other entertainments were varied. The puppet-show was succeeded by a band of tumblers, who tied themselves into knots, walked on their hands and heads, and twisted and turned about more actively than the most nimble of monkeys—their bodies apparently being destitute of bones, or possessing ten times the number of joints usually found in the human frame. They all received a reward—more or less, as the rajah was pleased with their performances.

Burnett, it must be confessed, looked in vain for the appearance of Nuna, who, it was possible, might have been among the audience behind the gauze curtain at the further end of the hall.

"And how have you enjoyed our evening's entertainment?" asked the rajah, turning to Reginald.

"The performances are very wonderful," he answered. Of course he could not say that he thought them very barbarous, and that they had afforded him anything but pleasure.

"Ah, we will show you things far more wonderful than these," observed the rajah. "You must accompany us out hunting. You Englishmen, I understand, are all huntsmen, and delight in the chase, and are not afraid to encounter tigers and wild boars, and even elephants."

Reginald confessed that sporting was much more in accordance with his taste, and that he should be glad to have an opportunity afforded him of seeing how the Orientals followed the chase.

At length the rajah, accompanied by the damsels, who continued fanning him, took his departure, and the banquet was at an end; but Reginald did not forget a scowl he had observed on the countenance of Khan Cochût as he and Burnett quitted the hall.

He had left Faithful the sole occupant of a stall in one of the stables. Before lying down at night, he went to pay his favourite a visit. The animal fawned on him, and seemed so unwilling to be left alone, that he led her out, intending to allow her to share his sleeping-room. She seemed highly pleased; and no sooner had Reginald thrown himself on the pile of cushions arranged on the floor for his couch, than she laid herself down, evidently prepared to keep watch during the night by his side. "Perhaps the creature's instinct tells her that some danger threatens me," he said to himself. "I am very sure that I may trust to her vigilance, and sleep soundly, without the

risk of being attacked unawares." Thoughts of various sorts pressed on his mind, and before he fell asleep he saw Faithful get up several times and walk slowly round the room, sniffing in all the corners.

ON THE WATCH.

CHAPTER III.

A MIDNIGHT INTRUDER—A HUNTING PARTY—CHEETAHS AND TRAINED DEER—A WARLIKE EXPEDITION—THE MARCH—THE WOMEN LEFT ENCAMPED—SURPRISED BY THE MOUNTAINEERS—ATTACK ON THE MOUNTAIN FORT—FAITHFUL SAVES THE RAJAH'S LIFE—THE CAVALRY TAKE TO FLIGHT—SURROUNDED BY FOES—RESCUED BY BURNETT.

REGINALD had thrown himself on his couch without undressing, no bed-clothes having been provided; his baggage, not very extensive, was placed in one corner of the room. His portmanteau contained some important documents, which he wished no eye but his own to scan till the time for producing them had arrived. Faithful lay down before him much like a dog, with her eyes half open. He had been for some time asleep when he was awakened by a low growl, and on looking up he saw Faithful on the point of rising, her eyes glaring towards the further end of the room. A curtain which served instead of a door was drawn aside, and by the faint light of a lamp, almost burned out, he observed a person steal into the room with a dagger in his hand. The intruder crept along close to the wall, apparently not observing the tigress; when she

rose to her feet, and would in another instant have sprung upon him, had not he, on seeing her, bounded back through the doorway far more quickly than he had entered.

Reginald, unwilling to create a disturbance, called Faithful back. She obeyed instantly, and again lay down by his side. The intention of the midnight intruder was apparently either to murder him or to pilfer his baggage, though the dagger looked very suspicious.

"Good Faithful, you behaved admirably," said Reginald, patting his favourite's head. "I feel very sure that you will watch over me, so I will once more try to sleep."

Saying this, he again lay down, confident that, whatever had been the stranger's intention, he was not likely to repeat the attempt.

Captain Burnett, to whom he narrated the next morning what had occurred, declared that no one had entered his room. They agreed, however, to keep watch the next night, in order to try and catch the intruder.

"If we can catch the fellow, whoever he is, we must carry him before the rajah," observed Burnett. "And I must warn you also, Reginald, that we must be careful what we eat; these natives are adepts in poisoning, and would not scruple to exert that talent if they considered it convenient."

A handsome breakfast was served them, with all sorts of Oriental delicacies; and during the repast, at which several slaves attended, Captain Burnett described in Hindostanee, as if speaking to Reginald, a wonderful rod he possessed, which had the property of discovering poison—as also the poisoner, by whirling itself about as soon as he appeared, and pointing towards him. He spoke in a natural, off-hand manner, as if there was nothing unusual in what he was saying.

Soon after the repast they were summoned into the presence of the rajah, who told them that one of his principal officers would take them on a hunting expedition, if they wished to see the style of sporting generally followed in his province. They of course expressed their gratitude, and at once accepted the offer.

"You may go this very day, as the khan is about to set out," said the rajah. "For myself, I am getting too old to engage in such sports for amusement. I may have ere long to lead my troops to battle; but that is a very different affair. Horses are already prepared for you."

In a few minutes Reginald and his friend found themselves in the midst of a large party of Oriental cavaliers in gay costumes, mounted on richly-caparisoned steeds, headed by the Khan Mukund Bhim, who was a remarkably good horseman. Off they set at a rate which, in little more than an hour, carried them

to a distance of twelve miles or more from the city. They now entered a wild part of the country, on the borders of a forest, where a band of huntsmen, with several cheetahs and eight or ten trained stags, had been appointed to meet them.

"We will show you some fine sport presently," said the khan; and after allowing their horses a little rest, they again set forward. A party of bearers followed, carrying in a cage a cheetah or hunting leopard, an animal which may be described as in size and shape between the hound and the leopard. Its body is slenderer and more elevated than that of the latter animal, while it does not possess the graceful form of the common leopard; and its head, which is smaller, is peculiarly ugly; its tail is like that of a cat; and its body seems formed more for strong muscular exertion than for active and long-continued speed. Though possessing the sagacity and fidelity of the dog, it is undoubtedly feline in its habits. Its general colour is a bright yellowish-brown, lighter on the sides, and nearly white beneath, marked with numerous small black spots all over, which are continued along the tail so as to appear like rings; its ears are short and rounded, while from each eye a blackish mark runs down to the corners of the mouth, the extremity of the nose being black. The fur, instead of possessing that sleekness which distinguishes the feline race, is peculiarly crisp.

As the party neared the spot where it was expected that the deer would be found, the cheetah was taken out of its cage and led forward by a keeper with a chain, just as a large dog would be led—its head, of course, being covered. When led without any such protection, it is very difficult to manage. Should it scent a trail upon the ground, it begins to throw its head aloft and peer about. To restore its tranquillity, the keeper places a cocoa-nut shell sprinkled on the inside with salt to the animal's nose. The cheetah licks the salt, and losing the scent forgets the object which attracted its attention. As soon as it again exhibits signs of excitement, the cocoa-nut shell is applied to its nose, and it again becomes manageable.

At length several deer appeared at a short distance, on some marshy ground, with bushes intervening. The khan gave a signal to the keeper, who slipped the leash, and the cheetah began to steal cautiously towards the herd, taking advantage of the bushes and high grass to conceal itself. On it went like a cat, till it got within a short distance of the deer. They at length discovered its approach, and went bounding forward over everything that impeded their progress, jumping, running, and wading through the marsh with frantic energy. The cheetah's blood was up. It singled out one of the animals, and away it went, bounding cat-like over the bushes; plunging into the morass, though hating water, rather than allow its

prey to escape. Off started the hunting party, now keeping their eyes on the flying deer, now upon the persevering cheetah. It was no easy task, however, to keep the chase in sight, as they scampered over the marsh and thick grass. Indeed, they put the horsemanship of all the party to the test. While the rest of the deer escaped on either side, the one the cheetah had fixed on had kept a straight course, now by the side of a nullah, now over the wiry grass, now through thick bushes. The cheetah meanwhile skimmed over the surface of the ground, as if requiring no rest for its feet. The forest appeared ahead. Should the deer once reach it and force its way through, even the persevering cheetah would have a difficulty in following. The poor deer, however, worn out with the long chase, and overcome with fear at the indefatigable pursuit of its bloodthirsty foe, leaped head-foremost into a thicket, under the belief that it was the commencement of the forest. Its branching horns were caught for a moment, and before it could extricate them, the ferocious cheetah, bounding forward, was upon it, and instantly seizing its neck, pulled it to the ground.

The khan and his companions arrived just as the poor creature was at its last gasp, turning up its beautiful eyes as if imploring mercy from its persecutors. The huntsmen soon put it out of its agony, and it was carried off by the bearers; while the pant-

THE HUNTING PARTY

ing cheetah allowed its keeper quietly to slip the chain over its head and lead it away to its cage.

"Come, we must now show you the way we hunt with our stags," said the khan.

Galloping on, they reached the spot where the trained stags, with their keepers, had been waiting for them. Proceeding to another part of the open forest, the party arrived at a spot towards which a band of beaters had driven a herd of deer. Here the animals stood grazing, protected by their watchful guardians, the most warlike and powerful of their males. They could be seen in the far distance. The tame deer were now set at liberty, and advanced at a gentle trot. The males in charge of the herd immediately advanced to meet them. At first they seemed to doubt whether the strange ones came as friends or foes. But the matter was soon settled. The two parties were quickly engaged in a fierce contest, the wild animals rushing forward with great fury, meeting the tame ones—antlers to antlers, and heads to heads. The latter, formidable-looking animals, stood generally on the defensive, each being engaged with a wild adversary, not mimicking war, but fighting desperately. As the hunting party advanced, the herd, catching sight of them, took to flight, but the combatants were too furiously engaged to observe the spectators of the fight. They saw before them only their adversaries, and did not even remark the party of native huntsmen on foot,

who, stealing round to their rear, got between them and the forest. Concealing themselves, they advanced stealthily towards the combatants, with long knives gleaming in their hands. Had any one of the wild stags retreated and observed them, they would have been in imminent danger, but there was little fear of that. Getting up close behind the still fighting wild deer, with one stroke of their weapons they hamstrung the brave creatures. Having performed this deed, they hurried away; and the latter, pressed by their adversaries, fell to the ground, unable to move.

The keepers now called off the tame deer, who immediately obeyed, without attempting to follow up their victory. Many of them bore evidence of the severity of the contest by their gored chests, from which the blood was streaming. They seemed to disregard their wounds, however, as if proud of their success, and capered about joyously, tossing their antlers. Meanwhile the huntsmen approached and finished the butchery they had commenced, by cutting the throats of the noble stags, as they helplessly lay in various attitudes on the sward, looking up at their conquerors with those large black eyes of theirs in a way which seemed to ask how human beings could be guilty of such cruelty.

"But how do your people manage to catch and tame the deer which have just so well played their part?" asked Captain Burnett of the khan.

"I will show you," he answered. "We have still time, for this forest abounds in deer, and the hunters are ready."

Riding along the edge of the forest, they came to another open space, followed by the least injured tame deer, led by their keepers, who had been joined by a party of men carrying some large nets. Before long they came in sight of another herd; when the same scene as before was enacted. The tame deer advanced, and were met by an equal number of wild animals, with whom they were soon engaged in a desperate combat,—the well-trained and sagacious decoys slowly retreating, facing their foes, and keeping them engaged, as a skilful swordsman does his adversary, while he endeavours to make him lose his temper. The clash of their branching antlers was clearly heard as the animals fenced furiously at each other. While they were thus hotly engaged, the net-bearers crept round—each net borne by two men—till they got in the rear of the wild stags. They then cautiously approached; and their object was now evident. It was to throw the nets over the heads of the wild deer. This was no easy task. They might either catch the antlers of the tame animals, or might fail to cast the nets over those of the wild ones; in which case they ran the risk of being gored by the latter turning on them.

The first two men succeeded in throwing their net over one of the stags; its tame opponent, at a signal

which it understood, springing back at the proper moment, when the men, dragging with all their might, brought their captive to the ground.

The next two men were not so fortunate. The wild stag, seeing what was taking place, wheeled suddenly round, and catching sight of its treacherous foes, rushed at them, with its antlers as sharp as lance points, and literally pinned one of them to the ground, his companion narrowly escaping his fate; then, fleet as the wind, off scampered the deer, and was far away before a shot could be fired at it. Before the hunters could reach the poor man who had been overthrown, he had breathed his last; his death, however, exciting no more sympathy than if a dog had been killed.

Four more deer were eventually captured and dragged off by the huntsmen, their limbs and heads completely enveloped in the nets. Then the hunt for the day being over, the party encamped, tents having been brought from Allahapoor for their convenience; and the next day they returned to the city.

"And how did you enjoy the sport?" asked the rajah, when Reginald and his friend again had the honour of an audience.

"Very well indeed," was the answer.

"Then I will enable you to have some more," said the rajah. "I intend to lead an expedition that will shortly set out from hence. It will afford you better sport, for we shall have two-footed instead of four-

footed beasts to contend with. Some hill tribes to the north have dared to come down and plunder and kill my people in the plain, and they must be punished at all hazards. I shall be glad of your advice and assistance, for you Englishmen take naturally to fighting, whether you have been bred to it or not."

Reginald and Burnett thanked the rajah for the compliment he had paid them, but gave no promise. However, they discussed the subject afterwards in their own room, Dick Thuddichum being present.

"I think it will be wise to go," observed Captain Burnett. "We shall thus have an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the rajah, and ingratiating ourselves, than we can here; and you will thus, on our return, more easily obtain the secret the rajah possesses."

"Dick, are you inclined to come and help the rajah to fight these savage mountaineers?" asked Reginald.

"I should think so! Wherever your honour goes, I am ready to follow," answered Dick.

"Well, then, Burnett, let us settle it. We will tell the rajah at once that we are ready to help him to bring his rebellious subjects into order."

The rajah was highly pleased. "If we succeed, you shall both be made great khans, and become the possessors of untold wealth; that I promise you!" he exclaimed.

The next day the army was on its march, the

fighting-men scarcely so numerous as the camp-followers. The first were fierce-looking fellows,—partly cavalry and partly infantry. The cavalry were richly accoutred; the officers in gorgeous uniforms, with spears, carbines, and curved swords with jewelled hilts rattling by their sides. The foot-soldiers had more of a fighting look, with their shields and matchlocks. Then came elephants, carrying gaily-ornamented howdahs; camels—some for riding and others employed as beasts of burden—and horses innumerable; palanquins, conveying some of the female members of the rajah's family, without whom the old chief never moved from home,—the whole train forming an immense line of a mile or more in length. Burnett and Reginald, as they surveyed it, could not help thinking that an active foe might manage to get in the rear and plunder them before the fighting-men could arrive for their defence.

The villagers, as the troops marched through the country, were thrown into the greatest consternation; the soldiers, without ceremony, taking whatever they wanted, and maltreating those who resisted them. The villagers were also compelled to turn out and make the roads practicable, or to cut new ones, to enable the army to advance. Men and women were all set to work; the only pay they received being abuse and punishment when they were unable to accomplish their tasks as rapidly as the rajah desired.

CAMP-FOLLOWERS OF AN INDIAN ARMY

The camp at night occupied a considerable extent of country; and as the act of encamping occupied some time, a halt was called an hour or more before sunset. The rajah's tent was pitched in the neighbourhood of an immense banyan-tree; those of his chief officers and attendants being placed, without much order, around it. Among these, one was appropriated for the use of Reginald and his friend. As they lay stretched at their length in the tent, smoking their hookahs, they could not fail to be struck by the picturesqueness of the curious scene. Near them lay the camels, chewing the cud in silence, and gracefully moving their bending necks as they brought up the balls of food into their mouths. The horses, picketed here and there, cropped their evening meal; while the elephants stood silently at a distance, occasionally moving their long trunks, or flapping their ears. The cries of the birds and the screams of the monkeys, as they composed themselves for the night, came forth from the neighbouring forest; while, at a distance, the devout Mussulmans were engaged in the muggreet, or evening prayer, as they knelt on their little mats, and bowed their heads to kiss the ground. Richly-dressed officers moved about amid the tents, and scantily-clothed warriors reclined in groups in all directions. The most actively engaged persons were the cooks, who were preparing the evening meal for their masters; the attendants standing ready to convey it to them

as soon as it should be prepared. The setting sun, casting his lurid beams across the landscape, lighted up the figures of men and animals. and the tents and trees, with a golden hue.

Reginald had brought Faithful; who, indeed, would not have consented to have been left behind, and who now kept so strict a watch in his tent, that neither robber nor assassin would have ventured to enter it.

The only person of any consequence in the rajah's household who had not come was Khan Cochût. He had no fancy for encountering the dangers of war; and though the rajah had commanded his attendance, he excused himself on the plea of severe illness.

Again the troops moved on, and constant scenes ot violence and cruelty were practised. The country became wilder as they advanced towards the mountains. There was no lack of inhabitants, and they were everywhere summoned from their homes to labour in the rajah's service. The rajah during part of the day rode on an elephant; but he generally mounted his horse after mid-day, and desired the two Englishmen to ride by his side. They had thus many opportunities of conversing with him. Captain Burnett endeavoured to draw from him his plan of the campaign. It was a very simple one. He intended to march on till he reached the territory of the rebels; and his purpose

THE EVENING CAMP.

then was to burn the villages, and to cut off the heads of any of the rebels he could catch.

"It will frighten the rest, who will soon come to terms, and agree to pay any tribute I may demand," observed the rajah.

"But suppose, your highness, that the enemy were to evade us till they can gather in sufficient force to afford them good hopes of success, how do you then propose dealing with them?" asked Burnett.

"They will not dare to attack us," answered the rajah, stroking his beard. "They are sure to run away as we advance."

Of this, however, Burnett, who had been making inquiries about the character of the rebels from those who had been among them, was not so certain. It seemed to him much more likely that, though armed only with bows, arrows, swords, and spears, they would lie in ambush on the sides of several narrow gorges through which the army had to pass, whence they could take good aim with their unerring bows, and also send down large fragments of rock on the heads of their invaders. He accordingly urged the rajah to leave the women and baggage encamped in a secure position outside the mountains, while the troops made their way through the more difficult country.

"You Englishmen are always wise," observed the rajah, "and I will seriously consider your advice."

The troops advanced, plundering their friends as if

they had been enemies, in their line of march. The fields were trodden down and their produce carried off. The sugar-canes were looted by elephants and camp-followers; the well-ropes stolen to serve as drag-ropes; and if any of the country people attempted to defend their property, they were cruelly ill-treated. The force increased, too, as they advanced. The horse-keepers' wives with their children joined them, not knowing where else to go. Numbers of milk-women came in carrying the milk on their heads to supply the men, and after the camp was pitched their voices were heard crying out in all directions, "*doodh.*" Dogs in vast numbers, with or without owners, joined the camp, snarling and barking all night long; while packs of jackals and hyænas followed in their track, commencing their hideous concert soon after sunset, and never ceasing till near daylight, while they stole round the confines of the camp to pick up any garbage they could find.

Frequently in the daytime an antelope or a hare would be started, when horse and foot soldiers and camp-followers would give chase, with the pariah dogs of all sizes and colours dodging amid the carts, elephants, and camels, frequently joined by some horses which would break loose,—creating a hubbub and confusion during which an enemy would have had a fine opportunity of surprising the camp before the fighting-men could fall in to repel him.

At length the mountains appeared in sight, and the rajah, following Captain Burnett's advice, pitched his camp, which was surrounded by a stockade. Here the women and children, and most of the camp-followers, were left, with a small body of troops to guard them. The fighting forces, marshalled in somewhat better order than before, now advanced among the hills. The mountaineers, probably having notice of their approach, kept out of the way, and not an enemy was to be seen. A few villages, scattered here and there on the heights, were apparently deserted. Those which could be easily reached were burned, but no prisoners were taken.

Burnett again warned the old rajah that he was very likely to be led into an ambush, and urged him to send out scouts on either flank to examine the country. They went, but did not return, and it was doubtful whether they had deserted or had been cut to pieces by the mountaineers; the latter being most probably the case.

The army encamped at night in the most open spot they could find, where they were less likely to be surprised than in the valleys, several of which they had passed through. At length, as day was declining, and just as the van of the army was passing over an extremely rocky country, with rugged hills and masses of brushwood growing on them, suddenly the bare spots on every height around were seen covered with warriors armed with bows, javelins, and spears.

The next instant showers of arrows came flying into the midst of the troops, and javelins were darted by the enemy at those nearest them. Calling a halt, the Khan Mukund Bhim, who had been galloping on in advance, turned back, and ordered his men to open fire on their assailants. But no sooner did the nimble-footed enemy find the bullets reaching them than they vanished behind cover, and in another minute the whole valley in which the contest was lately raging appeared open to the advance of the invading forces.

The rajah, however, by the advice of Captain Burnett, halted his army in the valley they now occupied. Retreat was not to be thought of; while to advance, with an active enemy on either side, was dangerous in the extreme. A vigilant watch was therefore kept during the night, and the mountaineers, finding their invaders on the alert, did not venture to attack them.

Next morning the march was resumed. The country ahead, however, soon became more difficult than any they had yet passed through. Orders were therefore given to scale the heights, and the lightly-clad sepoys quickly scrambled up them; but when they reached the summits, no enemies were to be seen. The heights being occupied, the cavalry once more advanced; the foot-soldiers, as they dashed forward, taking possession of each commanding height. A large force was now seen ahead, perched on an ap-

SURPRISED BY THE MOUNTAINEERS

parently inaccessible hill, with a village on the summit, and perpendicular cliffs from eighty to a hundred feet in height surrounding it. The only practicable path passed below this height; while posted on the top and on every projecting crag were the native warriors, prepared to dispute the advance of their invaders.

The rajah's rage at the audacity of the rebels, as he called them, was excessive. He insisted that the heights should be stormed, and the village and all the inhabitants destroyed. Captain Burnett advised him not to make the attempt, but rather to starve out the garrison, or to try and bring them to terms by other means. He would not listen to reason, however, but insisted that the place should be taken as he proposed. As the cavalry could be of no service, the fighting fell upon the foot-soldiers,—who, in a very dashing way, attempted to climb up the heights, but were hurled down again by the enemy from above with arrows, javelins, and huge stones. Again and again they made the attempt,—each time the greater number who were climbing up being destroyed, till the foot of the hill and every ledge wide enough to form a resting-place were strewn with the dead and the dying. The old rajah stormed and swore, and ordered some of the cavalry to dismount and try if they could not do better. Burnett, on hearing the command, assured the rajah that they would certainly be de-

stroyed as easily as the infantry, and suggested that a party should be sent round to take the fort in the rear.

"If you will lead it, I will consent," said the rajah; and Burnett consented on the condition that the lives of the brave villagers might be spared should they yield.

Reginald wished to accompany his friend, but the rajah begged him to remain by his side. "I want your advice and assistance. I much suspect the faithfulness of some of my officers; for they, finding things going against us, may kill me: they have attempted it once before."

Reginald accordingly agreed to remain; while Burnett, at the head of three hundred horsemen, set off to make a wide circuit round the hills, in the hope of reaching the rear of the fort. In the meantime the attack in front was carried on with the same want of success as before, resulting only in the destruction of still more of the rajah's troops.

Night was approaching, and at length the attempt was abandoned. The order was given to encamp in the only spot where this could be done with any degree of safety. A small tent had been brought for the rajah, who invited Reginald, attended by Faithful and Dick Thuddichum, to remain with him. The rest of the force, officers as well as men, lay down with their horses picketed near them. But the night

air in that elevated region was very cold, and all complained greatly. The rajah's tent had been fixed amid the ruins of a small temple, built by the former possessors of the country, as the present inhabitants had neither temples nor priests. Sentinels were posted round the camp; but they were ill-fitted for the duty, having been engaged during the whole day in attempting to storm the fort, while they were suffering, moreover, from the cold. The rest of the army lay down to sleep. Reginald, with Faithful, occupied the further end of the tent.

It wanted an hour or two to dawn, when Reginald, he knew not from what cause, awoke. As he looked up, for a moment forgetting where he was, he saw, by the light of a lamp burning in the centre of the tent, the curtain at the entrance noiselessly drawn aside, and three men appear, who, by their dresses, he knew were persons of rank, each holding a drawn sword in his hand. What their intention was, he had no doubt; and shouting to awake the rajah, he sprang to his feet, grasping his own sword and pistols. His shouts awakened Dick Thuddichum, who, sailor-like, was asleep with one eye open just outside the tent. Faithful, at the same time, started to her feet, and at a glance took in the situation of affairs. The assassins, if such they were, seemed not to have known of her presence. Before the rajah could rise and grasp his scimitar, however, the leading assassin

was close upon him, about to plunge his weapon in his breast,—when Faithful, bounding across the tent, grasped the traitor in her huge jaws. Reginald attacked the second man, who was advancing towards him; while Dick Thuddichum, with a heavy sword which he called his "cutlash," set upon the third. So staggered were the assassins by the unexpected resistance they met with, and so horrified at the fate of their companion, that they were quite unable, though redoubtable swordsmen, effectually to defend themselves. Faithful sprang by them, carrying the body of their leader in her huge jaws up the steps of the temple; while Reginald shot his opponent, and Dick brought the man with whom he was engaged to the ground with a blow of his weapon. At the same moment a loud uproar was heard from the side of the camp nearest the heights. Shouts and shrieks, the rattle of fire-arms and the clash of steel, reached their ears; while the cry arose, "The enemy are upon us! the enemy are coming down in countless numbers!—to horse! to horse!" A sudden panic seized the troops. The foot-soldiers, who were bivouacked, suddenly set upon before they could fall into order to repel the attack, were overpowered by the hardy mountaineers, who rushed in among them with their long daggers, and killed all they encountered. The rajah's body-guard, who had been won over by the traitors, finding those who had seduced them killed,

FAITHFUL AND THE ASSASSIN.

took to flight; while most of the remainder, not understanding what had happened, followed their example.

Fortunately, the rajah's horse was picketed near at hand. Reginald advised him to mount, and offered to try and rally the fugitives. He and Dick threw themselves on their horses; but he shouted in vain to the horsemen to wheel round and attack the foe. He could dimly distinguish the forms of the combatants in the valley below, where it was evident that a desperate struggle was going on. Reginald now called Faithful to his side to assist him in case of emergency. Though she seemed very unwilling to quit her victim, she obeyed him, and came bounding along, still carrying in her jaws the body of the khan. She dropped it, however, at his command, and trotted on in her usual place by his side. By this time some twenty or thirty troopers had collected around their chief; but the rest, as soon as they could find their steeds and mount, galloped off up the valley. Reginald, burning with indignation at the cowardly way in which the troops had deserted the rajah, offered to lead the small body which remained, feeling confident that by charging suddenly into the midst of the mountaineers he could put them to flight.

"They will believe, as they see us coming, that the rest of the cavalry are following, and will not dare to stand the charge," he exclaimed.

The rajah, however, hesitated. "It would be useless," he answered. "At the return of day they would discover our scanty forces and hem us in. The only chance we have to save our lives is to retreat; and we can return again before long and avenge our defeat."

Reginald did his best to restrain his feelings, but he was confident that, had his plan been followed, it would have been successful. While they were yet speaking, a sepoy without his musket came rushing up the hill, shouting out,—"All have been cut to pieces!" Two or three others were behind him, hotly pursued by a band of the mountaineers, who were quickly upon them, when they were cut down without mercy.

Without attempting to rescue the poor fellow who first escaped, the rajah wheeled round his horse, and ordering his troopers to follow, galloped off along the side of the hill in the direction the rest of the cavalry had taken. The ground, however, was rough in the extreme, and in the darkness of night they could with difficulty guide their horses amid the rocks. Reginald, though feeling no small amount of indignation at the cowardly conduct of the troops, saw that at present it would be useless to urge the rajah to turn and attack the enemy. He hoped, however, that they should soon overtake the rest of the cavalry, who would probably, he thought, halt when they

found that they were not pursued, and, it might be, feeling ashamed of their cowardice, return to ascertain what had become of their chief.

Just as the gray light of morning began to penetrate the valley, Reginald, who was riding by the side of the rajah, caught sight of the rear of the fugitives at some distance ahead. The cowardly troopers were soon overtaken, for their horses were blown from their rapid gallop over the rough and hilly ground.

The rajah, concealing his rage, inquired why they had deserted him.

"We believed that you and all who remained behind were destroyed, and that our only chance of saving our lives and revenging your death was to fly," answered several officers whom the rajah addressed, speaking all together that they might support each other.

The rajah well knew that their object in going off was to leave him and his faithful guards to be cut to pieces; but still concealing his real feelings, he observed with perfect calmness,—"You might have ascertained the fact before deserting me; but now you see that I have escaped, we will go back and punish the rebels. The brave sepoys have undoubtedly been destroyed to a man; but that should make us still more eager to avenge their death. And what are you worth, if you cannot do so with your carbines and sharp tulwars? Come on, then, at once! We may

take the foe by surprise while engaged in plundering the dead."

The rajah's address seemed to be producing some effect. Those who had not joined the traitor khans flourished their swords aloft, and swore that they would follow the rajah to death or victory; while the mutineers, unwilling to venture through the defiles alone, saw that their wisest course was to assume a willingness to obey, and wait for another opportunity of escaping. The horses of all the party were, however, too much fatigued to attempt moving without some rest and food, while they themselves were also in want of refreshment. A stream near at hand enabled them to obtain water, while each trooper carried provisions for himself and horse. They accordingly dismounted, and having watered their horses at the stream, sat down on the ground to discuss their rice and ghee,—the rajah and his chief officers partaking of the same simple fare as the men. They were thus employed—some lying at their length on the sward, others sitting cross-legged, others warming their food over numerous little fires which they had kindled from the dried branches cut from the brushwood around, the horses picketed on the spots where grass was most abundant —when Reginald, who was endeavouring to swallow the unpalatable mess presented to him by the rajah, caught sight of a figure on one of the neighbouring heights. It was but for a moment, as the man again

concealed himself behind a rock. He mentioned the circumstance to the rajah, but that personage seemed to think he must have been mistaken.

"I strongly advise, however, that the men should be ordered to mount forthwith," said Reginald. "Should the mountaineers have followed our track, they may be in our midst before the men have time to stand to their arms or reach their horses; and we may be cut to pieces as the infantry have been."

But the rajah was still unconvinced. "Let the men finish their meal," he said; "and then, if the rebels come on, we will treat them as they have treated our foot-soldiers."

A few minutes more passed by, during which Reginald had been watching the heights, feeling certain that he had not been mistaken. Suddenly he exclaimed, "See, Rajah!—I warned you."

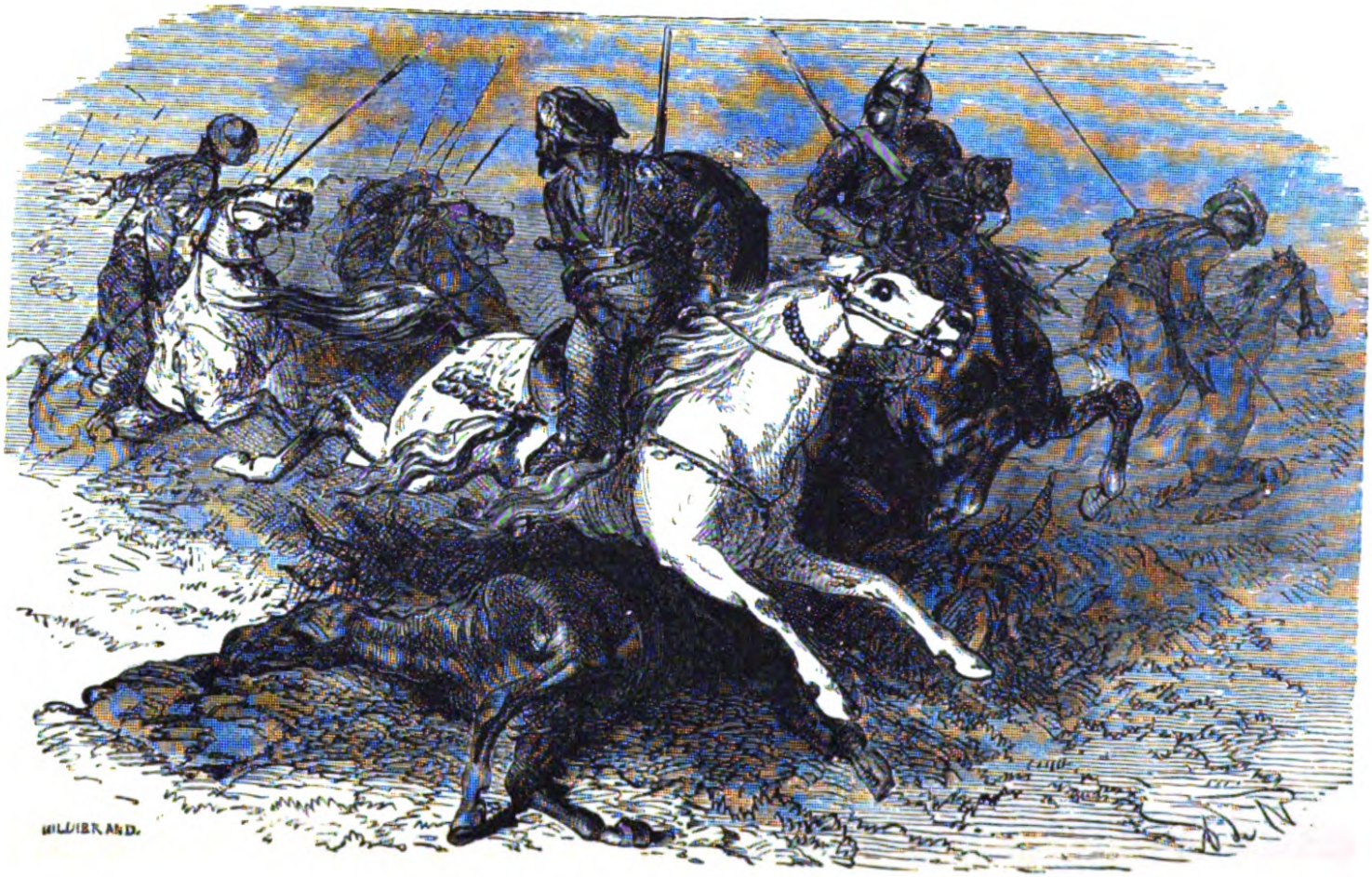
"To horse! to horse!" shouted the rajah, springing on his steed, which his syce had brought him.

Reginald followed his example,—as, of course, did Dick. He was not a moment too soon, for, the instant he had spoken, from behind every bush, tree, and rock on the surrounding heights appeared the dark forms of a host of warriors. Showers of arrows now began to fly into the midst of the camp; while through the ravine which led directly down towards the plateau on which they had halted came a compact body armed with tulwars and shields. The troopers rushed to their steeds,

mounting in hot haste, for in another minute the furious savages would be among them. The rajah and his guards, who gathered round him as they could throw themselves on their horses, dashed on; while the remainder followed, galloping helter-skelter, the officers and men mingled together, each eager to get ahead. Some of the horses getting loose, they were left to the mercy of the enemy; as were also the troopers who were unable to mount before the enemy were upon them. Reginald, his cheek burning with shame at the disgraceful panic which had seized his companions, galloped on by the side of the rajah, who refused to halt and attempt to beat back the foe, in spite of all that he could urge. Dick and Faithful kept close by him. "Bless my heart!" exclaimed the former, "I don't like this sort of fun. Why, if we were just to turn round and bear down on the enemy, we might scatter them like the wind! The faster we run, the faster they will come after us."

The flight continued; but so active were the mountaineers, that they kept close to the heels of the fugitives, piercing many a warrior through the back with their far-flying arrows. Reginald mentally resolved never again to accompany an Eastern prince in an attempt to punish his rebellious subjects.

At length more level ground appeared ahead, and the horsemen began to distance their pursuers. But there were still some dangerous defiles to be passed;



FLIGHT OF THE RAJAH'S CAVALRY

and Reginald remembered that the path by which they had come had many twists and turns, and that too probably the mountaineers would make their way by short cuts through the hills, and again present themselves on the inaccessible heights on either side of the passes.

The rajah and his horsemen at length of necessity pulled rein, to breathe their panting steeds; and information having been passed along from the rear that the enemy were no longer in pursuit, they now rode on more leisurely, talking loudly of coming back with an overwhelming force to annihilate the audacious rebels. Ere long, however, Reginald's worst apprehensions were realized. Before them appeared a narrow valley, with gorges running into it on either side. The rajah, who had recovered his presence of mind, here ordered a halt, and directed his men to see that their saddle-girths were tight and their arms loaded.

"We must pass through yonder valley as fast as our horses' feet can touch the ground," he exclaimed. "Forward!"

Scarcely had he spoken, and made his horse bound onward, when the hill-tops were seen bristling with spears, and hundreds of dark warriors, with bows and arrows or javelins in hand, appeared ready to rush down upon the invaders of their territory. The rajah now hesitated. Reginald advised him to dash on at once; to remain where they were would only encourage

the foe, and the troopers with their fire-arms might clear the heights, and most, if not all, of their party might escape. But the rajah did not follow his advice. Then the mountaineers, instead of wisely remaining in an impregnable position, were seen descending the heights, believing from their previous success that they might destroy the rajah and his whole force. A few only remained on the summit of the precipice. Down came from either side a thick stream of savage warriors, throwing themselves upon the horsemen; and again and again they were driven back. The old rajah showed himself brave enough now, fighting as fiercely as any of his guard. Reginald and Dick did their best, too; while Faithful sprang from side to side, bringing many a mountaineer to the ground. Still, several horsemen had fallen; and numbers coming on, the party were completely hemmed in, a dense mass collected in front precluding all possibility of escape, unless a way could be cut through them; while the troopers who fell were immediately hacked to pieces by their enraged foes.

It was now too late for Reginald to mourn his folly in having accompanied the old chief. Brave as he was, he could not help believing that he and all with him would be cut to pieces. Still, a way might be forced through the foe; so, shouting to those in the rear, he ordered them to close up. "Now, Rajah," he exclaimed, "we must let nothing stop us. Shout to your people to follow, and dash on!"

The word was given, but so dense was the mass in front that success appeared hopeless. Just then a shout was heard from several of the troopers, "See! see! our friends are coming!" At the same moment Reginald caught sight of a large body of horsemen, whom he at once recognized as those who had accompanied Captain Burnett, galloping down the ravine on the left. From the heights above, they had apparently observed the perilous position of their friends; and on they came like an avalanche, at headlong speed, throwing themselves impetuously on the mountaineers, who gave way as the surface of the ocean recedes before the bows of a gallant ship impelled by the gale. Before they could regain the heights, both parties of cavalry had united and cut their way through them, leaving, however, many of their number dead on the field. There was no thought of pulling rein now. Captain Burnett reported that nearly a third of his men had separated in one of the defiles, with two or three officers; but whether they had escaped from among the mountains by a different route to that which he had taken, or been cut off by the foe, he was unable to ascertain. He hoped, however, that they had escaped, and would before long rejoin the main body.

On galloped the horsemen, without even casting a look behind, till, as the shades of evening were gathering amid the mountains, they caught sight of the still sunny plain ahead. Onward they dashed; and at

length, men and horses almost exhausted, they halted, as darkness came on, by the side of a calm lake, where they could bivouac without fear of being attacked by the mountaineers,—who would, they were very sure, not venture to follow them into the plain.

CHAPTER IV.

DESERTION OF CHIEFS—THE CAMP REACHED—MOURNING FOR THE SLAIN—THE RAJAH TAKES IT COOLLY—A HUNTING EXPEDITION —REGINALD'S NARROW ESCAPE—SAVED BY FAITHFUL—BAD NEWS FROM THE CITY—THE RAJAH AND HORSEMEN SET OUT—REPORT OF REBELLION CONFIRMED—THE RAJAH AND REGINALD ASSUME DISGUISES.

REGINALD and Burnett, with Dick Thuddichum and Faithful, kept watch by the side of the rajah, who was greatly cast down, not only at his defeat, but on account of the dissatisfaction exhibited by so many of his influential followers. During the night, while the old chief was asleep, they heard some slight stir in the camp; but as the sentinels gave no alarm, they did not consider it necessary to go and ascertain the cause.

Next morning, when the rajah came to muster his men, he discovered that several of those who had been seen after they had escaped from the mountaineers were missing, among them being two or three chiefs of rank. On making inquiries, he ascertained that they had moved off,—for the purpose, as they said, of obtaining better fodder for their horses, and provisions for themselves.

"Whatever their intention was, they went without my permission!" exclaimed the rajah in an angry tone. "They have gone to rob and murder the people, as is their wont. No wonder my subjects are ever ready to rebel.—I must get you, my friends, to assist in reforming the abuses of my government," he continued, turning to Reginald and Burnett. "I have written to the Company, begging them to send me a resident and a regiment or two of sepoys, to help me to keep order among all ranks. Let the princes and nobles grumble as they will, all those cities are the most prosperous which are under the protection of the English."

"Your words are full of wisdom," answered Captain Burnett. "I will, with your permission, report the state of affairs at Allahapoor; when the Company, I have no doubt, will attend to your wishes."

The shattered remnant of the gallant force which had marched to the mountains was now in motion, and dashed on. Before evening they reached the fortified camp, where, as soon as the loss they had suffered was made known, they were received with loud wailings and lamentations,—wives mourning for their husbands, and children for their parents. The missing cavalry had not yet appeared, and Burnett began to entertain serious apprehensions that they had been cut off.

A couple of days were spent at the camp, which

was then broken up, and the march was continued for Allahapoor. At the end of three days they reached an ancient palace, with a temple near it, belonging to the rajah. It was in a somewhat ruinous condition; but still it afforded accommodation for him and his suite. His attendants quickly cleaned out some of the rooms, and fitted them up with tent-hangings and carpets, while a foraging party was sent through the surrounding country to collect provisions.

The rajah seemed in no hurry to return to Allahapoor, and to all the trouble and cares of government; and Burnett suggested that things might be getting worse at his capital.

"Oh, no!" he replied; "they are as bad as they can be; and the resident will put them all to rights when he arrives, and save me a vast amount of trouble. In the meantime you may amuse yourselves with hunting. There must be an abundance of game in the neighbourhood, as the tigers alone, I am told, carry off at least a dozen peasants a week; and there are deer, bears, and wild boars without number. You will find it a perfect huntsman's paradise."

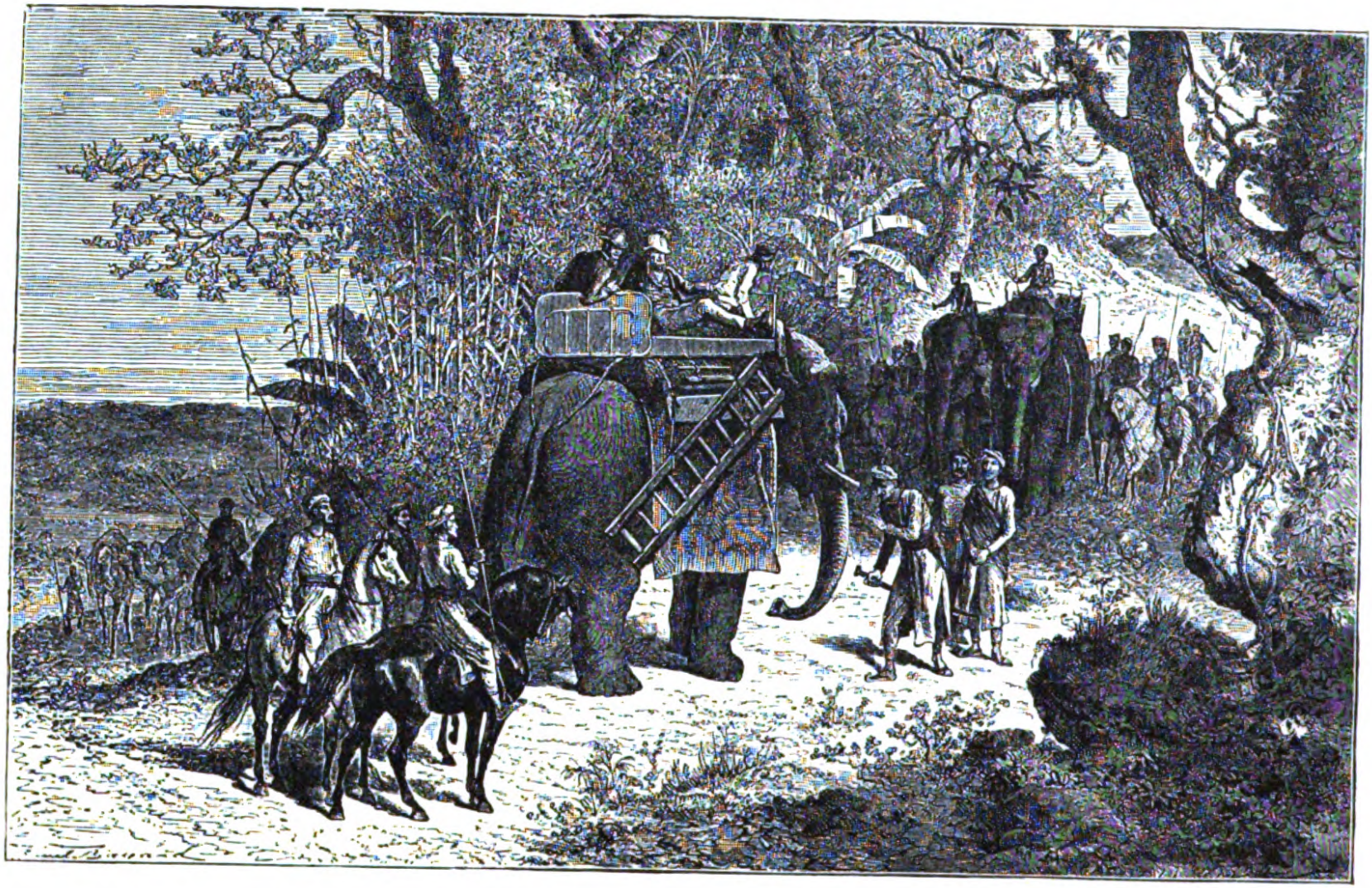
"Not at all a paradise for the unfortunate peasants," observed Burnett. "However, we will take advantage of your highness's permission, and try to rid the country of some of the savage brutes."

Several elephants were immediately got ready, and a party of horsemen ordered out to attend on Reginald

and his friend. They preferred being together on one howdah, into which they mounted by a ladder. The weather was pleasant, and a breeze from the mountains gave a freshness to the air not to be found in the lower plains.

They had gone some distance, passing through a magnificently wooded country, when, as they approached a village which was said to have suffered greatly by the depredations of tigers, they were met by the chief man and two of his principal officers, who, with humble bows, gave them welcome. They had heard, they said, of the prowess of the two sahibs, and begged that they would exert their skill and destroy all the tigers which infested the neighbourhood. Burnett was highly amused; but promised that he and his companion would do all they could, if the people would undertake to drive the animals towards them. The answer appeared to be satisfactory, and Reginald and Burnett entered the village mounted on their elephants, and accompanied by a noisy multitude, some on camels, others on horseback, and a number on foot, shouting their praise, and threatening death and destruction to the formidable man-eaters which had long been the terror of the neighbourhood.

"We must perform wonders, to retain our reputation," said Burnett, laughing; "though I doubt if our friends will do much to help us. They stand too much in awe of the tigers to venture near their lairs;



AN INVITATION TO SHOOT THE MAN-EATERS

and it will only be by great good fortune that we shall fall in with any of the brutes to kill."

As they were anxious not to be long absent from the camp, they immediately started towards the jungle in which the tigers were said to take refuge.

As we have more exciting matter to narrate, we must not dwell long on the day's adventures. The beaters had for some time been hallooing and shouting on either side, when, just as the Englishmen's elephant was twenty yards or so from the edge of the jungle, a huge tiger made its appearance. With one bound, before they had time to take aim, it fixed its powerful claws in the creature's neck, barely missing the mahout. The elephant, with a roar, turned round and dashed off, holding his trunk in the air. The tiger was now preparing to make a spring into the howdah, when Reginald and Burnett both firing, it dropped wounded on the ground, the elephant putting its huge foot upon it to squeeze out any remnant of life it might retain. Two more tigers were killed, one of which sprang out in the same way as the first; while a third, though wounded, stole off through the jungle.

"Tiger-shooting from the back of an elephant is but slow work, after all," exclaimed Burnett the next morning, as they were breakfasting in the house of the chief man of the village, where they had slept. "I propose that we try what we can do on foot. The

shikaree wallah we spoke to last night seems a bold fellow, and will show us some sport. What do you say ?"

"With all my heart," answered Reginald. "Our host has some good-looking horses, and as he will be proud of mounting us, I would rather ride to the jungle than have to sit on the back of a lumbering elephant."

Their host at once expressed his readiness to furnish the sportsmen with steeds; and in a short time they set forth towards a part of the jungle in which the shikaree assured them that numberless tigers were to be found.

Reginald was in better spirits than he had been since the disastrous affair with the mountaineers, and laughed and talked in his usual style with his friend as they rode along. Suddenly they came upon a huge animal lying down in the shade of a wide-spreading tree. As the creature, disturbed by their approach, rose and faced them, it was seen to be not less than seven feet in height at the shoulder, with a vast head, and horns of a formidable character. It was a gyal, a description of wild cattle found in the hilly parts of the plains of Hindustan. The savage animal, shaking his head and stamping on the ground, prepared to charge.

"I'll fire first," cried Burnett. "If he does not fall, do you try to hit him; and should you also fail to bring him to the ground, gallop off on one side till

you can get behind a tree to reload, while I take the opposite direction, so as to distract his attention. We shall thus master him, depend on it."

As Burnett finished speaking he fired. The dull thud as the bullet entered the body of the gyal could be heard; but the creature, apparently not feeling his wound, came rushing with a loud bellow at the horsemen. Reginald delivered his fire, as he had been advised, but without stopping the bull; and then he and Burnett galloped off in opposite directions. The gyal followed the latter, making the very ground shake as he rushed bellowing along in chase of the huntsman, whom he might have tossed, with his steed, into the air, had he overtaken them. Burnett, however, was too practised a sportsman to be thus caught, and, dodging behind the trees till he could reload, was soon again ready to face his foe. Reginald, meanwhile, having discovered that the gyal was not following him, pulled up under a tree to reload. As he was ramming down the charge, his horse started, and the next moment a huge tiger, springing out of the jungle, fixed its jaws on the flank of the poor steed, which it brought to the ground, providentially failing to strike Reginald with its claws. His first impulse was to try and extricate himself from beneath his fallen horse, so that he might have a chance of defending himself; but as he was endeavouring to do so, the tiger, loosening its hold of the horse, sprang open-

mouthed at him. At that moment he heard a shot, and the next the sound of a horse's hoofs approaching him; but though help was coming, it would have been too late had he not, with wonderful presence of mind, rammed the butt of his rifle down the throat of his savage assailant. It merely served to check the brute for an instant; still, that instant was of the greatest value. Though Burnett came galloping up, he was afraid of firing lest he should hit his friend instead of the tiger; but unexpected assistance now arrived. A loud roar sounded through the forest, and another tiger, springing on the neck of the one attacking Reginald, dragged it away from him, and pinned it to the ground. The new-comer was Faithful. Nobly she fought for her master, and victory soon declared in her favour.

Reginald, getting on his feet, held the horse of his friend, who, taking a steady aim, sent a shot through the brains of Faithful's antagonist. Reginald patted his pet on the head, and tried to make her understand how grateful he felt to her for her timely aid; and she in return gave him that peculiar look which, in the feline tribe, exhibits pleasure and satisfaction. The natives soon afterwards coming up, looked with wonder at the tigress, and congratulated the sahibs on their victory, for Burnett had killed the gyal as well as the tiger.

Burnett was eager to go in chase of more game;

A CRITICAL MOMENT.

but Reginald had had hunting enough for one day, for though he had escaped without any actual wound, his legs were bruised from being crushed under his horse. The poor animal was so much injured, that its owner shot it to put it out of its agony. Another steed was forthwith provided for Reginald, who rode back to the village attended by a number of the astonished inhabitants, and accompanied by Faithful, whose opportune appearance he was at a loss to account for.

"We must wait till we get back to camp to hear more about the matter," observed Reginald, patting his favourite's head. "Dick will be very unhappy at missing you. He little thinks what good service you have rendered me."

Burnett, who had remained behind, arrived towards the evening, having shot two more tigers, thus greatly increasing the fame of the Englishmen.

"No wonder that their countrymen are the conquerors of the world, when these two sahibs make nothing of killing half-a-dozen man-eaters," was the remark made on all sides.

After receiving the thanks of the villagers, who petitioned that they would come again to shoot more of their foes, Reginald and Burnett returned to the headquarters of the rajah. As they arrived, they saw an extraordinary personage standing in the hall waiting to be admitted. He had almost the appearance of a bronze statue, so motionless did he stand, and his rigid

features being apparently incapable of expressing any sentiment, either of pleasure or pain. His dress consisted of a cloth wrapped round his waist, a scarf over his shoulder, and a turban on his head—the upper part of his body and his legs being completely exposed. The man was a fakir, one of a class of religious fanatics, who, ignorant of a God of love and mercy, believe that holiness can be obtained by practising the most rigid self-denial and the infliction of every variety of torture on themselves.

Burnett inquired whence he had come.

"From Allahapoor," he answered. "Night and day I have travelled, to see the rajah on a matter of importance. Tell him, sahib, that it admits of no delay, and that I must forthwith be admitted to an audience."

Burnett, believing that the fakir had really some matter of consequence to communicate, hastened to the rajah, who desired that he should at once be admitted. In spite of his mean attire, the rajah received the fakir with the same respect he would have bestowed on the proudest noble.

"Whence do you come, and what tidings do you bring?" he asked.

"O Refuge of the World, I come from the well-beloved, the Princess of the Universe, your grandchild the Ranee. She sent for me, knowing that I could be trusted, and bade me hasten to your highness with some information she had obtained I know not how.

A STRANGE MESSENGER.

My only desire was to obey her orders. During your absence treachery has been at work in the city; and even now, unless some fortunate chance has prevented them, your enemies are in possession of your palace and riches. Khan Mukund arrived some days ago with a party of horsemen, who spread the report that your highness was dead, and that he intended to get himself proclaimed rajah in your stead."

The rajah started up and placed his hand on the hilt of his sword, as if he would rush off at once to recover his possessions; then recollecting that he was at a distance from Allahapoor, he made further inquiries of the fakir, whose answers confirmed him in the belief that the man spoke the truth.

"I now see why those traitors galloped off in order to reach the city before us. What do you advise, my friends?" he asked, turning to Burnett and Reginald.

"That we act with judgment and caution, and we may yet win back your city and restore you to power," answered Burnett. "You have still a faithful band remaining with you; and the traitors cannot possibly be aware that you have requested the presence of an English resident, and a regiment of sepoys. Their arrival will of necessity disconcert the plans of the rebels. When it is known, the usurper will probably take to flight, and you will quickly have your own again."

"But, in the meantime, what will the wretches

have done with my family, and my grand-daughter Nuna, and the rest of those I hold dear?"

This remark made Burnett feel very anxious, for he could not give a satisfactory reply. "They will scarcely venture to ill-treat the defenceless, well knowing that vengeance will speedily overtake them," he answered at length. "Besides, remember, O Rajah, that this holy man has only told us what he fears may possibly take place. The events he speaks of have not actually occurred, and we may hope that something may have prevented the expected outbreak. If we hasten back to Allahapoor, we may arrive in time to frustrate the plans of the conspirators. With the body of trusty followers you have with you, and those who still remain faithful in the city, we shall be able to overcome your foes, even should the rebellion have begun."

Burnett's remarks had the effect of reviving the spirits of the rajah, and he immediately issued orders for a picked body of his cavalry to get ready for a move that very night, a small number only being left to guard the women and camp-followers. Adopting Captain Burnett's advice, he purposed pushing on towards the city as fast as their steeds could carry them; while the rest of the party were to move forward at their usual slow rate, beyond which it was impossible to advance. Even the rajah and his party could not perform more than thirty or forty miles

each day, as their horses required food and rest; and they had fully three days' march before them.

The rajah could only talk of the vengeance he would take should the rebels have succeeded; and he vowed that the streets of the city should run with the blood of his foes as soon as he had succeeded in overpowering them. Burnett, who knew very well that he would carry out his threats, and anxious to prevent the hideous cruelties which would be committed, endeavoured to pacify the old chief, and reminded him that possibly the expected resident might have arrived with the British sepoys, whose presence would disconcert the plans of the rebels, and probably induce them to abandon their design.

Reginald was anxious on his own account. The services he had rendered the rajah merited the best return which could be made, and he had had great hopes that his wish would be complied with; but should the rajah be hurled from power, he would be unable to grant him his request. As far as he could ascertain, the rajah was the only man possessed of the important secret he wished to obtain, so that should the old chief lose his life Reginald would be deprived of the only clue which might lead to its elucidation. He determined, therefore, to take the first favourable opportunity of telling the rajah who he was, and entreating him to give him the information that was of such vital importance to his future interests. Regi-

nald had been led to believe that the rajah would be very unwilling to enter on the subject, and he had therefore hesitated to introduce it till he felt more sure than he had hitherto done of the footing on which he stood with the old man.

For two days the party had ridden on, stopping only a sufficient time to rest their steeds, and to recruit themselves by sleep and food. They had taken a different route to that by which they had come, avoiding all populous villages, in order that information of their approach might not be carried to the city. One day's march only remained to be performed; and the party bivouacked by the side of a wood, which concealed them and the fires they lighted to cook their food from the high road, which ran at some distance. The rajah was sitting on his carpet near the camp-fire, with Reginald and Burnett by his side, Dick Thuddichum and Faithful being close at hand, serving as efficient guards. The men lay about, their horses feeding close to them; while scouts watched on the outskirts of the camp, as if they were in an enemy's country—for it was thought possible, should the rebels discover that the rajah was approaching, that they would send out a strong force to attack him. These measures were taken by the advice of Captain Burnett, who had also recommended that they should take the unfrequented road they had followed, so that they might have a good chance of surprising the rebels.

The rajah showed himself sensible of the important aid he had received from his English attendants, and on this evening he seemed more inclined to open his heart to them than heretofore.

"Had it not been for you, my young friend, I should be even now a clod of the earth, my body left to be devoured by the fowls of the air and the wild beasts of the forest. You and your faithful tigress saved me from the daggers of my traitorous officers. And your opportune arrival prevented our being cut off by the mountaineers, as would otherwise have been our fate," he added, turning to Burnett.

The two young men, in the usual Oriental phrases, expressed their satisfaction at having rendered any service to his highness.

"And now tell me how I can reward you," exclaimed the rajah. "Only let me know; though, alas! should I lose my power, how can I fulfil any promises?"

Reginald saw that now the favourable opportunity he had wished for, of speaking to the rajah of himself, had arrived.

"Your highness can render me a greater service than you may suppose," he said, speaking slowly, for he knew that he was treading on delicate ground. "My friend and I are not the first Englishmen who have resided at your court. There was one who served you faithfully, and whose sword preserved your life when surrounded by foes in battle; but traitors, who

were jealous of the favour you bestowed on him, conspired to take his life; and they would have succeeded, had he not, leaving all he held dear, together with his worldly wealth, and undergoing great hardships, been successful in making his way to Calcutta with his young son. When there, important information he received compelled him to return to his native land. Once more he came back to India, with his son, intending at all hazards to revisit you; but the trials he had gone through had shattered his health, and when just about to set out on his journey he died, leaving to his only son the duty of vindicating his fair fame, and regaining the property of which he had been deprived."

"Who told you all this?" exclaimed the rajah in an agitated voice. "Where is the son of whom you speak? I would greatly rejoice to see the boy. I would not only restore him his father's property, but raise him to a rank next to myself in my government."

Just at that moment an officer hurried up to the rajah, and after making the usual salutation, informed him that the scouts had fallen in with a messenger from the city who was on his way to try and find their party. "The information he has to give will not allow of an instant's delay, he says," added the officer.

The rajah ordered that the man should be immediately admitted to his presence.

"What news do you bring? Speak at once," exclaimed the rajah.

"Unhappy I am to bring it, for it is bad news," answered the man. "The whole city is in a tumult. Mukund Bhim has been proclaimed rajah, and already more than half the people have sided with him; still there are some who remain faithful, and if your highness were to appear among them at once the rebellion might be quelled and your power restored. Your servant ventures to advise that you should gallop on during the night, so as to enter the city by daybreak —though the distance is great, your steeds may get over the ground in time—and by taking the rebels by surprise you may overcome them before they can offer resistance; when the loyal people will gather around you, and you may once more find yourself the undisputed ruler of Allahapoor."

"Your advice sounds full of wisdom," answered the rajah. "To horse, my friends! and we will not pull rein till the walls of my rebellious city appear in sight."

The whole camp was immediately astir. The horses, unfortunately, in consequence of the rapid march of the two previous days, were ill able to gallop on for thirty miles without stopping, with the prospect of some hot fighting at the end of it. Still, march they must at all hazards.

Each horseman, before mounting, tightened up the

girths of his saddle; and all having fallen into their ranks, the order to move forward was given. A strong advance-guard led the way, with their arms ready for instant use, as they knew that at any moment they might be attacked by the rebels,—who, should they by any means get tidings of their approach, would assuredly send out a numerous force against them. The rajah, attended by Reginald and Burnett, rode with the main body. There was no time for conversation, and Reginald had still to wait for the important information he was so anxious to obtain. A few words only could be occasionally exchanged. On they rode, keeping a tight rein, to prevent their horses from stumbling. Now and then a poor beast came down; and the rider, if he escaped a broken limb, had to make his way on foot, with the risk of either being set upon by a tiger, or murdered by the villagers whose property he and his comrades had plundered. The rajah hoped that he should either be able to force the gates, or that the guards would open them at his summons, and that he might thus be able to catch Mukund Bhim and the rest of the rebel chiefs while they were still locked in slumber.

They were now rapidly approaching the city. Already, in the far distance, the outlines of the domes and minarets of the temples and mosques could be seen defined against the clear sky. No rebels had appeared to dispute their progress, and the rajah began

to hope that the rebellion had not yet fully broken out, and that he might still have time to crush it. He and the main body moving on, came up with the advance-guard, which had halted. The rajah inquired the cause. The officer in command answered that they had met a person who had brought tidings from the city. "Let me hear his report," said the rajah; and a man, looking more like a wild beast than a human being, advanced from among the horsemen. He was a byraghee, or religious mendicant. His body was naked, with the exception of a narrow piece of cloth passed between the legs, and fastened before and behind to a string tied round the waist. His hair was long and matted, its bulk increased by plaits of other hair mixed with it. His body was smeared with the ashes of cow-dung, giving it a most unearthly hue; while his inflamed and bleared eyes could scarcely be perceived amidst the mass of dirt which clung around them. Anything less human could scarcely be imagined than the appearance of the miserable being.

"What tidings do you bring from the city?" asked the rajah anxiously.

"Bad—very bad, O Refuge of the World," answered the mendicant. "Last night, ere I passed through the gates, I saw your foes shouting forth the name of Mukund Bhim, their new rajah. It was reported that you had perished, and all your followers had been slain amid the mountains; and no one I met discredited

the tale. Thus your friends are disheartened; but if you were to appear among them, to show that you are still alive, they would regain their courage and fight bravely in your cause."

"But how to get among them, is the difficulty," observed the rajah. "Tell me, byraghee, are the gates closed?"

"Not only closed, but strongly guarded," answered the mendicant. "It would be vain to attempt to force them; your only way of entering will be in disguise. I passed, encamped at a short distance from the gates, a caravan of merchants with their camels, who had arrived too late to find admittance last night. If your highness would condescend to disguise yourself as one of them, they would consent to your entering among them,—trusting to your generosity for the reward you would bestow should you succeed."

The rajah, after considering the matter, agreed to the proposal of the byraghee. He then invited Reginald to accompany him, while he begged Burnett to take the command of the horsemen, and to remain concealed in the wood in which they were drawn up till he could send word to them that a favourable opportunity had arrived for making a dash into the city. "The risk, I know, is great," he added; "but I am ready to hazard my own life for the sake of recovering what I have lost."

"The commands of your highness shall be obeyed,"

said Burnett; "and may you and my young friend be preserved in your undertaking! Unless treachery is at work,—as no one will suspect that you are among the merchants,—the hazard is not so great as it may appear."

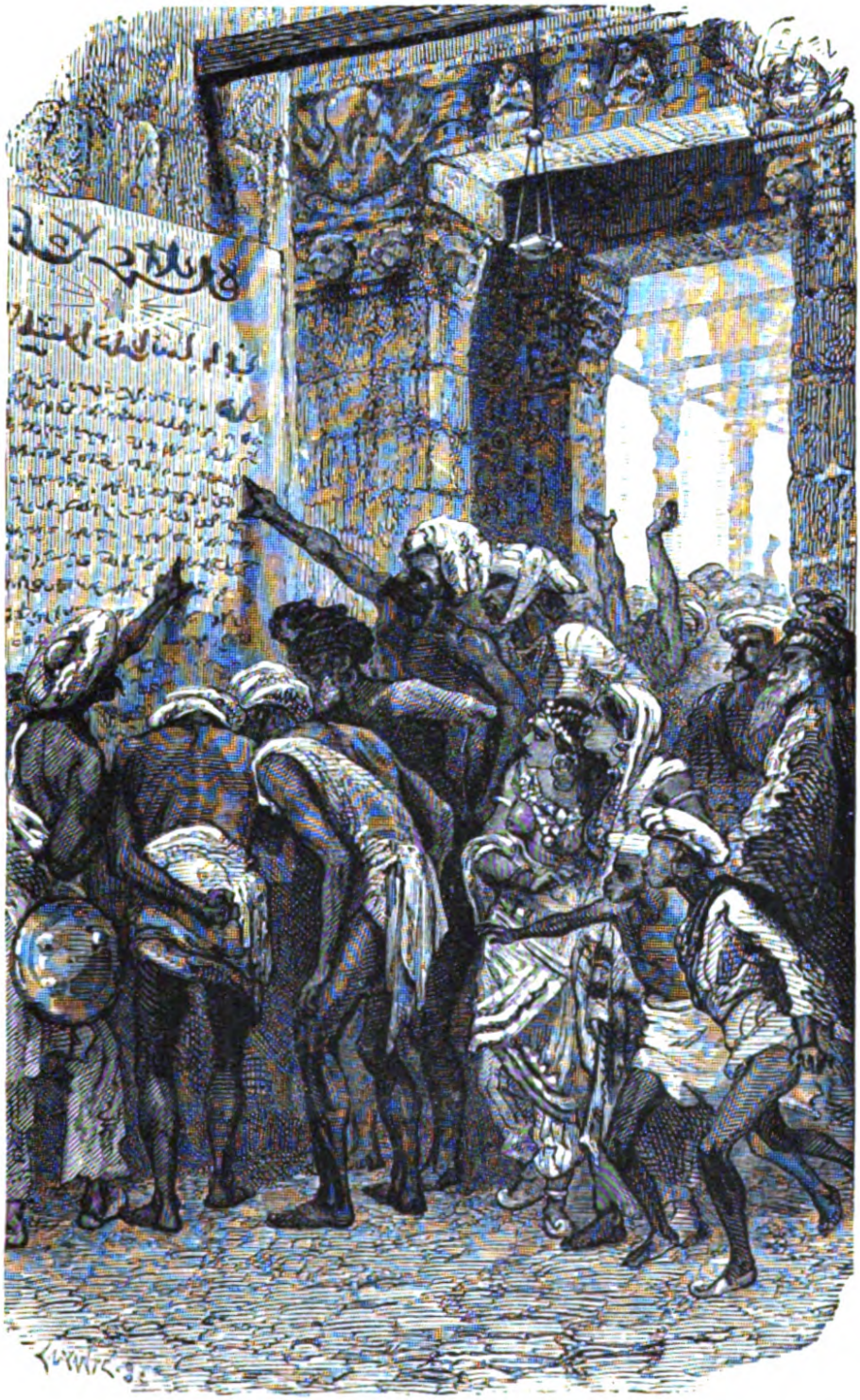
All necessary arrangements being made, the rajah, accompanied by Reginald, proceeded on foot to the merchants' camp; while Faithful, whose appearance might have betrayed them, remained behind in the care of Dick Thuddichum.

To the rajah's satisfaction, he found that the merchant to whom the caravan belonged was a Parsee with whom he had formerly had satisfactory dealings, and who might be thoroughly trusted. The required dress was produced—the rajah's rich costume being packed up among the bales—and he appeared in the guise of one of the merchant's clerks; while Reginald assumed the costume and arms of a common sowar employed in guarding the merchandise.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARAVAN ENTERS THE CITY—REGINALD MEETS THE BYRAGHEE—SENDS A MESSAGE TO BURNETT—THE RAJAH AND REGINALD FIND THE GUARDS MURDERED AT THE PALACE, AND NUNA CARRIED OFF—REGINALD PRESERVES THE LIFE OF A WOUNDED SEPOY—HE AND THE RAJAH TAKE REFUGE IN THE HOUSE OF A CHRISTIAN NATIVE—ESCAPE FROM THE CITY—PURSUED—VICTORY—THE RAJAH ENTERS THE CITY IN TRIUMPH—NO TIDINGS OF NUNA—REGINALD MAKES AN IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

IMMEDIATELY on the appearance of the first streaks of daylight in the sky, the merchant, Hurdeo Buksh, aroused the caravan, which, as soon as the camels were loaded, moved forward to the gate of the city. As he was well known, he had no difficulty in gaining admittance, and they were soon threading the narrow lanes which led to the chief bazaar. The rajah, seated on a camel, with a hood over his head which completely concealed his features, rode next to the merchant; while Reginald, assuming a jaunty air, and armed with a spear and shield, marched by his side. They soon reached the bazaar, where they saw a crowd assembled, reading a huge placard announcing that Mukund Bhim, in consequence of the death of the old rajah, had assumed the reins of government, and ordering all the people, under pain of



THE REBEL'S PROCLAMATION.

death and confiscation of their property, to obey his edicts. The crowd impeding the progress of the caravan, the rajah as well as Reginald had time to read the whole of the placard, which also went on to announce the various persons who had been appointed to offices under the new rajah. Among others appeared that of Khan Cochût, as also of several of the chiefs who had deserted Meer Ali Singh among the mountains. "The villains," muttered the rajah, "I will punish their treachery ; as for that rascally Cochût, his head shall part company from his body before many days are over."

But people continued eagerly to press forward to read the placard,—traders in long coats and turbans, sowars with shields and spears, women and children,—people in every costume, and people in no costume at all except the dirty cloths around their loins or over their shoulders, and the ever-present turban on their heads. Reginald, knowing the agitation into which the announcement would throw the rajah, was afraid that he would betray himself, so, swaggering on according to the character he had assumed, he forced the crowd to make way for the caravan ; which at length got clear, and was able to proceed onward to the house which the merchant was wont to occupy during his stay in Allahapoor.

So far the adventure had been successful, and the rajah took up his lodgings in a room where he was not likely to be discovered. The difficulty, however,

was to gain information. The next morning Hurdeo Buksh was obliged to appear in public to make arrangements for the sale of his goods, and was afraid of exciting suspicion should he be seen visiting the rajah's hiding-place. Reginald was willing enough to try and pick up information, but the rajah charged him on no account to do so: his manners and mode of speaking would be sure to betray him. The rajah had ordered his own dress to be brought to him, and he now put it on, telling Reginald that he had come to the resolution of visiting his palace as soon as darkness would allow of his passing through the streets unobserved, and appealing to the loyalty of his guards,—who would, he supposed, be found at their old quarters, the usurper, Mukund Bhim, he had learned from the byraghee, still residing at his own palace.

Reginald thought the attempt a hazardous one, but yet, as it was the only scheme likely to succeed, he consented. After the rajah had told him this, he was sauntering about in the gateway of the house, imitating the manners of a sowar, when he caught sight of the mendicant slowly approaching, asking alms of all he met. The man's little bleared eyes twinkled as he came up to Reginald, whom he appeared at once to recognize.

"You can be trusted, I see," said Reginald. "You will receive a handsome reward if you faithfully perform the service I require of you."

"Say what it is, sahib, and you shall be obeyed," responded the byraghee.

"To hasten forthwith to the spot where our friends lie concealed, and to direct them, as soon as the shades of evening appear, to push forward at hot speed towards the northern gate, which they may reach before they are challenged. Should they succeed in passing through, they are to gallop on to the palace, where they will find the rajah and such friends as he may be able to rally round him. If they fail in the attempt, they are to retire till they hear from his highness or me." Reginald, as he spoke, put a piece of money into the mendicant's hand, to deceive any who might have observed them speaking together.

"You shall be obeyed, sahib," said the mendicant, moving on, and continuing as before to beg of all he met. Instead of going in the direction he had been following, however, he contrived to turn round; and Reginald saw him making his way in the direction of the northern gate, as if bent on carrying out the orders he had received.

"So far our scheme prospers," thought Reginald; "but I wish that I had the means of ascertaining where the rajah's grand-daughter has taken refuge. Should the traitor Mukund Bhim have got her into his power, he would have as little scruple in putting her to death as he would in killing any of the rajah's sons. Poor young creature! I don't like to increase the old

man's anxieties by alluding to her, but he must tremble at the thought of what may have become of her."

Notwithstanding the rajah's caution to Reginald, he could scarcely refrain from going out and mixing with the crowd, to obtain information of what was going on. Prudence, however, restrained him. He walked up and down impatiently at his post, in the hope of seeing some one among them who had frequented the court, and who he thought might be trusted; but of the thousands who continued to hurry by he did not recognize a single person. He forgot that all the time he was running a great risk of being recognized himself; for although he had done his utmost, aided by the worthy merchant, to change his appearance, he might easily have been detected by any one who had before known him.

Thus the hours passed slowly away, and at length the shades of evening began to steal over the city. On going up into the rajah's room, Reginald found him habited in his usual costume, with a large robe ready to throw over his shoulders, which, with the aid of the darkness of night, would conceal his figure from those he might meet. His scimitar was by his side, and a brace of pistols in his belt.

"The time for action has arrived," he said in a firm voice. "We will go forth, my young friend, and succeed, or perish in the attempt. Our first care, as soon as we have gathered my faithful guards about us, must be to

secure the safety of my grandchild, Nuna; and we may then, should we be attacked, defend the palace till the arrival of your English friend with my brave horsemen. Come, we will set out. I do not fear discovery, as no one will suppose that I am in the city; and people will take me for a foreign merchant on his way to transact business with some khan or other wealthy person."

"Should any one venture to interfere with you, I shall be ready to sacrifice my life in your defence," answered Reginald.

"I fully confide in you, my brave young friend," exclaimed the rajah; "and I would rather have you by my side than a hundred of my native sowars."

They then set out, Reginald having ascertained that no one was near. As they left the gates of the house the rajah walked rapidly along, concealing his face in his robe, while Reginald swaggered on by his side with a martial strut assumed generally by the sowars. A large number of people were still abroad; and as they passed on they caught some of the expressions which were being uttered. It was very evident that a rebellion had taken place, and that the star of Mukund Bhim was in the ascendency.

At length, as they approached the palace, the crowd grew thinner. When they got close to it no one was seen standing about the gates,—the usual guards were not there,—nor were they challenged as they entered. The silence which reigned everywhere was ominous.

After passing across the outer courtyard, the rajah was about to enter the vestibule of the hall of audience, when, drawing aside a curtain which hung across it, he started back with an exclamation of horror and dismay. The whole passage, as well as the flight of steps leading to the upper story, was strewn with corpses.

"Alas, alas! my faithful guards! on your courage I depended to regain my power!" exclaimed the rajah. "You have died bravely fighting at your posts." Ali Singh stood for some seconds contemplating the scene with a look of despair. "On whom have I now to depend!" he exclaimed; "and my child, what can have become of her!"

"Your highness has your faithful troopers and many friends who are ready to fight for you," said Reginald, advancing. "Some of your guard may be still alive, and concealed in the palace; and they may be able to inform us what has become of your grand-daughter."

Reginald's words seemed to restore the rajah's courage. His first care was to examine the bodies which filled the passage, in the hope that some might be found breathing; but in all life was extinct. Reginald urged the rajah to hurry forward, in case the rebels should return before they had time to search the palace. They walked on through the deserted corridors and passages, looking into the rooms as they passed, but not a living being was to be seen. At

DISCOVERY OF THE MURDERED GUARDS.

length, as they were passing a room the door of which was partly ajar, a groan reached Reginald's ear; and calling to the rajah, who was going on, he entered. By the light of the pale moon which streamed through a window, he discovered in the further corner the form of a sepoy stretched on a mat. The blood which had flowed from several wounds on his head and body had trickled over the ground. The man had been apparently endeavouring to stanch them, but had fainted before he had done so effectually. Reginald knelt down by his side, and did his best, by means of a handkerchief which he tore into bandages, to stop the further flow of blood. In a short time the man returned to consciousness; and as his eye fell on the rajah his countenance brightened up.

"Have the rebels been defeated?" he exclaimed. "I thought all was lost."

"We wish to learn from you what has happened," said Reginald. "Numbers of your comrades lie dead at the entrance, and the palace appears to be deserted. We know no more."

"All that I can tell you is that we were attacked last night by Mukund Bhim with a large band of followers; we fought desperately to defend our post, till numbers fell killed or wounded, when the rest were carried off as prisoners. I then, in spite of my wounds, managed to escape, the rebels having left me for dead. They had begun to pillage the palace, when they were

summoned away to defeat an attempt of the loyal inhabitants to keep possession of the city till the return of the rajah, the report of whose death they refused to credit."

"And can you give me no account of my child, the Ranee Nuna?" asked the rajah. "Have the rebels carried her off, or is she still in the palace?"

"I know not, O Rajah," answered the wounded man. "While I lay here, expecting every instant to be put to death, I heard the tramp of feet through the passages, and cries and shrieks from female voices."

"The villainous traitors have deprived me, then, of my child," exclaimed the rajah. "Come, my friend, we must ascertain the worst," he said, addressing Reginald. "You must not waste any more time on this man: if it is his fate to live, he will live; if not, he will have the satisfaction of dying in my cause."

Reginald, although as anxious as the rajah to ascertain what had happened, was unwilling to leave the brave sepoy, who was still in much need of aid; but the rajah's impatience would brook no delay, so telling the poor man that he would return as soon as possible, Reginald followed the rajah, who was hurrying from the room.

They made their way towards the women's apartments, observing on either side signs of the fearful struggle which had taken place, though it was still evident that the rajah's own guard had remained faithful.

The doors of the women's apartments were open—those sacred chambers into which, hitherto, no man had dared to enter. Female ornaments and dresses were strewn on the ground, articles of all sorts were broken, and the marks of violence were visible even on the walls. The worst anticipations of the rajah were realized: Nuna had undoubtedly been carried off by the rebels. Reginald had difficulty in quieting the old man's agitation. He seemed incapable of deciding what course to pursue. Reginald himself felt deeply grieved at the loss of the young girl, whose possession, he foresaw, would add greatly to the power of the rebels, as, even should they be ultimately defeated, it would enable them to treat on favourable terms with the rajah; and he endeavoured in vain to tranquillize the mind of the old man, by reminding him that it would be to the interest of Mukund Bhim to behave courteously to her.

As it would be dangerous to remain long in the palace, to which the rebels might at any moment return, Reginald endeavoured to persuade the rajah to go back to the merchant's house, where he might remain till the arrival of their friends, should the mendicant have succeeded in reaching them, and should they be able to enter the city. No other course seemed practicable, unless, abandoning all effort to recover his power, the rajah should resume his disguise and attempt to make his escape from the city. Reginald suggested

this course, and offered to protect him with his life; the rajah, however, would not hear of it.

Darkness had now set in, and, wrapped in his mantle, the rajah could walk abroad without hazard of being recognized. They first, however, made a circuit of the whole palace; but not a human being was found alive. Before quitting it altogether, Reginald hurried back to the wounded sepoy, whom he was unwilling to leave to perish, as he undoubtedly would if deserted. The man had somewhat recovered his strength, and thought that, with Reginald's assistance, he might be able to walk a short distance.

"You need not do that," said Reginald; "your weight is not great, and I will carry you on my shoulders."

"No, no, sahib," said the sepoy, who had from the first recognized Reginald in spite of his disguise; "should we encounter any of the rajah's enemies, they would kill you as well as me; but if you will take me to the stables—should the rebels not have carried off the horses, I might contrive to sit one, and either make my escape out of the city, or reach the house of some friends near this who will give me shelter."

"I will gladly carry you to the stables," said Reginald; and it at once occurred to him that if he and the rajah could obtain steeds for themselves they might make a dash through the gates, or should their friends arrive they would be able to join them and encounter

Mukund Bhim and his followers, who were certain not to be far off. Taking the wounded man up on his shoulder, therefore, he staggered with him along the passages, and down the steps in the rear of the palace which led to the courtyard, in the further part of which the stables were situated. The rajah went ahead with his sword drawn, thinking it probable that plunderers might be lurking about; but no one was met with. The whole palace, for some unaccountable reason, was entirely deserted. The sepoy had expressed a hope that the horses had been left in the stables, or Reginald would not have expected to find any there. It seemed more probable that the rebels would have carried them off. Should such be found to be the case, he scarcely knew what he should do with the wounded sepoy. It was with no little difficulty that he managed to convey him even the comparatively short distance he had gone, and he felt that it would be impossible to carry him beyond the palace to the house of the friends he spoke of; he should therefore be compelled to leave him in the stables, where he might die of starvation, unless discovered by any compassionate person who could bring him food.

The man seemed to divine his thoughts. "Care not for me, sahib," he whispered in a low voice, that the rajah might not hear. "The One, I trust, whom you worship, will preserve me. Inquire for the house of Dhunna Singh; tell him where you have left

Wuzeer Singh, and he will find the means of coming to my assistance. You may trust him, for he is one who worships the true God, and, if you require aid, will risk his life in your service."

Reginald, greatly surprised at the way in which the man spoke, for he had supposed him to be an ordinary sepoy, promised to follow his directions. But on reaching the stables they found that, though most of the horses had been carried off, four or five had been left in the further wing of the building. Their harness was hung up on the walls, and the rajah and Reginald, well accustomed to the task, quickly saddled and bridled three of the best.

"You seem to take great interest in my follower," said the rajah, observing the assistance Reginald was affording the wounded man.

"He has fought bravely for your highness, and is wounded and suffering," answered Reginald. "I am simply doing my duty."

"May you be rewarded for your charity," answered the rajah. "And now let us mount and sally forth into the streets. The gates will be closed ere long, and should my followers not have entered the city, my only safe course will be to try and join them, and wait for a favourable opportunity of regaining what I have lost."

Reginald having assisted the rajah to mount, next helped Wuzeer Singh to get on horseback, though it was

with difficulty the poor man could keep his seat; he himself then vaulted into the saddle, and the rajah, with the mantle which had before served to disguise him over his head, rode forth from the palace, followed closely by Reginald and the sepoy. The darkness which now reigned over the city favoured their proceedings. At the same time, it was but too likely that the gates would be closed; and if so, their friends would be prevented from entering. Already the streets were deserted, and no one appeared from whom, directly or indirectly, they could obtain information. The more peaceable inhabitants had, it was clear, wisely retired to their houses; while the fighting-men and rabble were evidently collected in a distant part of the city, bent on some mischief or other.

Reginald kept close alongside Wuzeer Singh, to assist him in sitting his horse, for so great was his weakness that every moment it appeared that he would fall off.

The soldier expressed his thankfulness. "If the sahib will but take my advice," he added, "he will persuade the rajah to come to the house of Dhunna Singh, who will protect him at all hazards. He has a stable in which the horses can be put up, and an upper room where his highness can remain concealed without risk of discovery when day returns. Dhunna Singh may be able also to inform him of what has happened, and he can act accordingly."

Reginald thought the advice so good that he at

once suggested the plan to the rajah, who agreed to it after some hesitation. They at once, therefore, turned their horses along a street Wuzeer Singh pointed out. The few people who passed them probably took the rajah to be some merchant returning home attended by his guards, and did not stop to examine them closely. In a short time they arrived before the gates of a house of the style occupied by the more wealthy class of citizens. Here Reginald, throwing himself from his horse, assisted Wuzeer Singh to reach the small loophole, through which he could communicate with those within. After a few words had been exchanged, the gates were opened and the party entered. A staid-looking citizen, with several younger men, received them; and though they treated the rajah with marked respect, they did not otherwise show that they knew who he was. The old man only addressed him as sahib, and begged leave to show the way into the interior of the house; and while two of the younger men gently lifted up Wuzeer Singh and carried him indoors, the rest led off the horses to the stable. The rajah was at once conducted to the upper room Wuzeer Singh had spoken of, where his host paid him every possible attention. Wuzeer Singh, meantime, was gently cared for; and an ample repast was placed before Reginald. Their host, it appeared, was a Hindoo, who, with all his family, had been converted to Christianity; and, desirous of following the precepts of his faith, he was anxious to

afford assistance to those in distress. He showed by his manner that he well knew who the rajah was; and he must have been aware of the great risk he ran in affording him shelter, should his concealment be discovered by Mukund Bhim or any of his party. Since the commencement of the disturbances he and his sons had wisely kept to the house, and so he could only surmise, from the reports brought by two or three people who had visited at his house, what was taking place. He believed, he said, that another khan of influence residing on the other side of the city had risen, either with the intention of supporting the rajah or of endeavouring to obtain the power for himself. Mukund Bhim having marched with all his forces to attack him, a desperate fight had taken place. The khan had been defeated, and Mukund Bhim's followers, with the rabble of the city, had for some hours been engaged in plundering his house and those of his relatives,—he and all of them having been put to death. Reginald's anxiety regarding Nuna was in no way relieved, as his host could not tell what had become of her. Several elephants carrying closed howdahs, accompanied by a strong party of armed men, had been seen leaving the southern gate of the city; but where they had gone, he had been unable to learn.

The first part of the night had passed quietly away, and the old rajah, after the fatigue and excitement he had gone through, slept soundly. Before morning,

however, he awoke; and calling to Reginald, who occupied a small room adjoining his, he expressed his wish that when it was daylight he would go out and ascertain what was taking place.

As soon as their host was on foot, Reginald told him of the rajah's wish.

"I will send one of my sons instead," he answered. "He will run no risk; while you, notwithstanding your disguise, may be easily discovered."

The rajah consented; but some time passing by, and the young man not returning, he grew impatient, and desired that his horse might be prepared.

"Your highness will not surely venture to ride forth during daylight," said Reginald. "You would certainly be recognized; and though many citizens might rally round you, Mukund Bhim's party by this time must be sufficiently strong to cut them to pieces, and you would fall into the hands of the rebels."

"I wish to be in readiness to join our friends, who, if they come at all, will ere long be within the city walls; and I even now fancy that I can hear the tramp of their horses' hoofs," was the answer. "Come, my friend, let us be prepared to sally forth."

Reginald, though he believed that the rajah was mistaken, nevertheless obeyed; and having mounted, they sat in the courtyard ready to sally forth at a moment's notice.

They had not long to wait before their host's son

returned with the announcement that Mukund Bhim, with a large force, was advancing towards that part of the city, breaking open the houses, and capturing all those who were suspected of being favourable to the rajah. "There is still time to escape by the northern gate; and though there may be great risk of falling into the hands of the rebels, it may be the safest course to pursue," he observed.

Reginald was of the same opinion, and urged the rajah to adopt it. By the advice of their host, the rajah wound a common turban round his head, the ends of which hung down so as to conceal his features; and as there was not a moment to be lost, the gates were thrown open, and Ali Singh, followed by Reginald, dashed out and made his way through some narrow lanes, now entirely deserted, towards the northern gate. As they came in sight of it they saw a number of people —some on horseback, and others on camels or on foot —hastening out to escape from the barbarities of Mukund Bhim and his fierce soldiery. They made their way amid the frightened multitude, and had already got outside the walls when they heard loud shouts raised behind them, when Reginald, looking back, saw a party of horsemen issuing from the gate, and trampling under foot or cutting down all who impeded their progress. He at once suspected that their flight had by some means or other been discovered, and that the horsemen were in pursuit of them.

"We must ride for our lives," he exclaimed, telling the rajah what he had seen.

Fortunately the road in front was tolerably open, and putting their horses into a gallop they dashed forward. Mukund Bhim's horsemen had by this time discovered them, and now came on in hot pursuit. Their chances of escape appeared small indeed. They were well mounted, however, and their good steeds behaved faithfully, straining every muscle as if aware of the importance of exerting themselves. Their pursuers, fully aware of the prize in view, galloped on even faster, and were evidently gaining on them,—firing as they did so, regardless of those they might kill or wound. More than once Reginald turned his head, and at length saw a further party of horsemen and numerous elephants issuing from the gate. His own horse kept up well, but the rajah's at length stumbled and nearly came to the ground; and Reginald feared that in a few minutes more they would be overtaken by their merciless foes. Still, there was a possibility of escaping, if they could gain the wood which they were now fast approaching. Just as they reached a turn of the road, however, they saw a large party of horsemen galloping towards them; and all hope of escape was cut off.

"We will sell our lives dearly," said the rajah. "Let us turn round and face our pursuers."

"No, no; gallop on," cried Reginald. "See! they

are our friends. They have arrived at a happy moment, and the victory will be ours."

Throwing off his cloak, the rajah waved his sword, and was at once recognized by his troopers, at the head of whom rode Captain Burnett. In another instant the rajah and Reginald, wheeling round their horses, joined their ranks, and, without pulling rein, dashed with headlong speed at the rebels. The first charge was terrific, horses and riders on both sides going down; but Burnett's followers, having only just emerged from the wood, were fresh, while their opponents, panting from their rapid gallop, were taken at a disadvantage. The old rajah fought fiercely, few daring to encounter his sharp scimitar. Onward he and his party fought their way, till nearly every one of the advance-guard of the foe were cut to pieces or had galloped off on either side. At length Reginald caught sight of Mukund Bhim, the leader of the rebels, who, avoiding the rajah, rode forward to meet him. Reginald, warding off a blow aimed at his head, thrust his sword into the traitor's breast and bore him to the ground. The rebels, seeing their leader slain, made but a faint resistance. The mahouts turned their elephants off on either side, the huge animals rushing across the country; and the foot-soldiers fled back into the city, where many were cut down, others escaping in the track of the elephants. The victory was complete; and the rajah, at the head of his horsemen, re-entered the city in triumph.

The rajah's power was speedily re-established, those who might have been inclined to side with the rebel Mukund Bhim at once returning to their allegiance, and being the loudest in proclaiming their satisfaction at the rajah's success. His first proceeding was to institute inquiries for his grand-daughter, the young Ranee Nuna, who had so mysteriously disappeared; but no one could give him any information. Emissaries were despatched in all directions to endeavour to discover where she had been concealed; and the rajah proved the love he bore her by the anxiety he exhibited. Several of his chief officers and many other persons had disappeared; and as they did not make their appearance, it was naturally supposed that they had either been put to death by Mukund Bhim, or, through having joined him, were afraid of returning. Among the missing ones was Khan Cochût. A search was made for him high and low throughout the palace, but his dead body was not to be found, nor were there any traces of him to be discovered. The rooms he usually occupied had been stripped of everything of value, and Reginald, who had no great confidence in the ex-barber, could not help suspecting that he had made his escape from the city with all the wealth he could collect, and would probably next be heard of at Calcutta.

The rajah had vowed to take vengeance on all who had sided with the rebels, and his officers were now visiting every part of the city in search of suspected

THE FATE OF THE TRAITOR KHAN.

persons. Many hundreds were captured, and the streets of the city, according to Indian custom, would soon have been running with blood, had not Reginald and Burnett entreated the rajah to show clemency towards his foes. They pointed out to him that it was far more noble to save life than to take it; that the people were his subjects, whom he was bound to protect; and that the larger number had joined Mukund Bhim under the idea that he himself was dead. As he acknowledged that Reginald had been the means of saving his life, and that Burnett had also rendered him essential service, he was willing to listen to their counsel,—though nothing would induce him to spare the lives of the treacherous chiefs, several of whom were captured, and compelled to pay the penalty of their crimes with their heads.

Tranquillity was now apparently perfectly restored in the city; but it was reported that in the country large parties of the rebels were still in arms, wandering about in various directions, and plundering the defenceless. A near relative of Mukund Bhim was said to be at their head, but his whereabouts could not be discovered. Whether or not all the reports were true, they proved the disorganized state of the country, and made Reginald and Burnett wish heartily for the arrival of the expected resident and the British troops.

Still no information had been received regarding the

Ranee Nuna, and the rajah continued plunged in the greatest grief and anxiety about her. Both Burnett and Reginald shared his feelings, and offered to set off in search of her. Burnett was most anxious to go. He had been struck by her beauty and captivated by her manner, so unlike that of Oriental females, and all the romance of his ardent nature had been aroused, though he might possibly not have been actually in love with her. They at length offered to go in company, but of this the rajah would not hear. "I must have one of you remain with me, as I need your counsel and assistance, seeing I have no friend in whom I can trust," he answered; "but if tidings do not arrive to-morrow, I will give permission to one or the other to set out. I am grateful to you both, but the one I appoint must abide by my decision."

Reginald and Burnett of course expressed themselves ready to obey the rajah, and they were too firm friends to feel jealous of each other.

Reginald had not forgotten the wounded sepoy whose life he had been the means of saving, and the first time he could leave the palace he made his way to the house of Dhunna Singh, who had afforded him shelter. He received a warm welcome from the good man; and he was glad to find that Wuzeer Singh was already in a fair way of recovery from the wounds he had received. The man was most grateful to him for saving his life.

"May the God we both worship preserve you, sahib," he said; "and thankful shall I be, if I can ever have the means of showing my gratitude to you."

Reginald had a good deal of conversation with him, and learned that he had been converted to Christianity by Protestant missionaries at some place where he had been stationed. He had, however, obtained his discharge, and had taken service with the rajah, for the sake of being near his Christian friend Dhunna Singh. He was evidently a most intelligent man, and all his spare moments were devoted to the study of the Scriptures and such other works as he could obtain to enlarge his mind. His great delight was to join his friends where, with closed doors, they could worship God in freedom. They none of them neglected the duty of endeavouring to spread the gospel among their countrymen, though they did so with the necessary caution, and had hitherto escaped the persecution to which they would have been subjected had their object been discovered by the priests.

Reginald promised to pay them another visit; and he confessed to Burnett that he had learned many important truths from these men, whom, had he met casually, he should have looked upon as ignorant heathens. He was also much struck by their firm confidence in the goodness and love of God to fallen man, and the desire of that Great Being to reconcile sinners to him-

self by the all-sufficient and complete atonement wrought out by his well-beloved Son on Calvary.

"Ah, sahib," exclaimed Wuzeer Singh, "how merciful God is to demand from us a simple, loving faith alone as the condition on which we are saved. Were he to insist on our good works and pure and holy lives, who could ever hope to merit heaven? For sinners we were, and sinners we remain; but, praised be his name, 'the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.'"

Such was the faith of these men, and it supported them, isolated as they were in the midst of a heathen population, who would have torn them to pieces had they suspected the creed they held.

On Reginald's return to the palace, he found the rajah alone. He had anxiously wished for an opportunity of renewing the conversation so suddenly broken off, and of obtaining information regarding his father's property, and the important documents which he supposed the rajah had in his possession. He again tried to get him to lead to the subject; but finding this in vain, he remarked, "Your highness appeared anxious some time ago to know what had become of the son of the Englishman who was once in your service, and who had the happiness of saving your life in battle."

"You speak of Rinaldo Khan," said the rajah, fixing his eye on Reginald.

"That was the name by which my father was

known," was the answer; "for I am the boy whose fate you desired to learn."

"You the son of Rinaldo Khan!" exclaimed the rajah. "Come nearer, my son, and let me see your features. Yes, yes, I believe you; these are the lineaments of my beloved daughter. Did your father ever tell you who was your mother?"

"I know only that she was a native lady of high rank, and that it cost my father much pain to be compelled to leave her."

"Did he tell you that you were his only child?" inquired the rajah, still keeping his gaze fixed on Reginald's countenance. "But why do I ask? Your sister Nuna was born after he, as you say, was compelled to fly from the country in order to save his life. The English in those days had not the power they now possess, or he would have quickly returned and taken vengeance on the traitors who deprived me of his services; for a truer and a better friend I have never possessed."

"I feel almost overwhelmed at what your highness has told me," exclaimed Reginald. "Am I then your daughter's son, and the brother of the Ranee Nuna?"

"You are truly, I believe, my grandson. My heart felt drawn towards you from the first; and as I am now childless, I would desire to place you in the position your father would have enjoyed had he remained with me."

Reginald could scarcely speak for astonishment. He had expected to gain important information from the rajah, but what he now heard was of a totally different character to that which he was seeking. Though his mother was an Oriental, his heart was English, and he had no wish to spend his days in India, however high the rank he might enjoy.

The extraordinary information he had received made him still more anxious to recover Nuna, who, if she was really his sister, had a right to claim all the assistance he could afford her; and he at once, therefore, begged the rajah to allow him to set forth on his expedition without delay. Before going, however, it was of the greatest importance to know what had become of the documents which the rajah was supposed to possess.

He had learned from his father that his mother was a Christian, but he found a difficulty in reconciling this with the communication the rajah had just made him. He was afraid, however, of putting the question abruptly. "Your highness tells me that my mother was your daughter," he said at length. "I have long earnestly wished to know more about her than my father told me. I was young when he died, and though his words were fixed on my memory, I might not probably have comprehended the meaning of all he said."

"My daughter was one of those beings who are seldom found on earth," answered the rajah; "and so

was she who gave her birth. Her mother was fair as the houris in Paradise; the daughter of an English officer sent here on a mission by that great man Lord Clive. Her parents died, and she was left under the protection of my father. I saw and loved her, and she consented to become my wife; but nothing would induce her to change the faith she held. I respected her opinions, the more so as they made her that which I esteem most excellent; and she taught me to regard women in a very different light to that in which I had formerly held them. Her only child she brought up in the same faith; and when that child—your mother—grew to womanhood, she was married to your father, according to the rites of your religion, by an English minister, who was travelling through the country."

"That fact my father impressed on me; and, as far as my interests are concerned, much depends on it," said Reginald, who had been listening eagerly to the account the rajah had been giving him. "There were certain papers signed on the occasion, which, with other documents, my father left behind in the country, and which to me are of the greatest importance. Has your highness possession of them, or can you inform me where they are to be found?"

"Papers! Documents! Of what do you speak? I remember that some time back Khan Cochût, in whom I then placed unlimited confidence, at my order

examined into the state of my treasures, and found some papers which I was unable to decipher. He informed me that they were of no value; but I directed him to allow them to remain in the casket in which they were placed. Some time afterwards, on visiting my treasury with the intention of placing the documents in the hands of some person understanding English, to be certain that Khan Cochût had not deceived me, I found that the casket had disappeared. Cochût protested that he knew nothing about the casket, and pretended to make diligent search after it."

"If they were the papers which my father directed me to recover, they are, as I before told your highness, of the very greatest consequence, and I entreat you to assist me in recovering them."

While Reginald was engaged in this exciting conversation with his supposed grandfather, an attendant entered the room, announcing that an officer who had just arrived, bringing important information, requested an audience immediately; and Reginald was compelled to wait till he could again speak in private to the rajah.

CHAPTER VI.

REGINALD'S EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF NUNA—BURNETT SETS OFF FOR THE SAME PURPOSE—ADVENTURES IN A TEMPLE—DISAPPEARANCE OF FAITHFUL—THE BRAHMIN'S TREACHERY—BUXSOO GAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION—PLANS FOR LIBERATING NUNA—FAITHFUL ESCAPES FROM HER PRISON, AND TURNS THE TABLES ON THE TRAITORS.

THE important information which had arrived was to the effect that the expected English resident, with two regiments of sepoys and a company of English troops, was on his way to Allahapoor, and would in the course of a few days reach the city.

The preparations for their reception now gave ample occupation to the rajah and his nobles.

As soon as Reginald had an opportunity, he told Burnett of the unexpected information the rajah had communicated regarding his birth.

"I have no reason to doubt it, yet it seems so strange, that I can scarcely believe the fact that I am the grandson of the old man, and that the beautiful girl of whom we caught a glimpse is my sister."

"I can believe it very readily," answered Burnett. "To tell you the truth, I fancied that I saw a likeness,

and it struck me that she was far more like a European than an Oriental; besides which, no Indian woman of high rank would have been allowed to be present at the introduction of strangers. It was very evident that the rajah had broken through the usual customs of the country when he permitted us to see his grand-daughter. The more I think of it, the more anxious I am to try and recover her, as it seems strange that she should have been spirited away without any clue to the place in which she is concealed. You must get the rajah's leave to set off at once; and beg him to allow us to go together. My plan will be to scour the country with two or three hundred horsemen; and if she is concealed, as I suspect is the case, by some fugitive rebels, we are certain to come upon them, and shall be able to compel them to surrender her."

"You may command the horsemen, if the rajah will give them, and I will try a plan I have thought of. My idea is to set out with Dick Thuddichum and Faithful, and one native as a guide. I have fixed upon one of the sons of Dhunna Singh,—a fine, intelligent young fellow, who will, as we travel through the country, pick up information from the natives, and thus we shall be more likely to find out where Nuna is concealed than will be any number of armed men."

Burnett confessed that Reginald's plan might be more successful than his; but they had to wait till the next morning for the rajah to decide.

The morning came at length, and as soon as the rajah was on foot they hurried into his presence. He received Reginald with marked affection, and was most gracious to Burnett. Reginald having described his plan, pointed out the advantages of having two expeditions; and although the rajah continued very unwilling to let both of them go together, he at length consented to Burnett's proposal, and issued an order for two hundred horsemen to accompany him,—a sufficient number to overawe any rebels who might still be in arms.

Having paid their farewells to the rajah, the friends hastened away to make preparations; Reginald at once repairing to the house of Dhunna Singh, to explain his intended plan. He did not hesitate to tell him also of the discovery which he had made, that he was the rajah's grandson.

"Praise be to Him who governs the world that you are so, for we may then hope to have a Christian prince to reign over us who will help the oppressed and suffering, and will see justice done to all men," was the answer. "I do not so much congratulate you, khan, as I do myself and all those beneath you, for your post will be one of difficulty and danger. You little think of the dark deeds often done in the palaces of our nobles and rulers. I would not throw a shade over your path, yet I warn you to beware of secret as well as of open foes, for many of the former will sur-

round your throne and smile most blandly when they are most actively plotting to destroy you."

"I will remember your warning, should I ever become Rajah of Allahapoor; but I hope the day may be far distant when my grandfather shall cease to rule the country. But of the matter on which I came to see you: I have to ask that one of your sons will accompany me, for I know that I can trust them all. Had Wuzeer Singh been sufficiently recovered, I would have engaged his services; but as he is not yet able to travel, I must depend on the assistance of one of them."

"They are all at your service, sahib; but I would recommend Buxsoo, my second son, as he has travelled much about the country, and has intelligence and ready wit."

The old man forthwith summoned the son he named, and he, without hesitation, agreed to accompany Reginald. He begged, however, that he might take a faithful servant—Sambro, a black slave, who was powerful and brave, and thoroughly to be depended on. Reginald accepted his offer; and in a few minutes both were ready to accompany him to the palace, where Dick Thuddichum and Faithful were waiting for them. Buxsoo and Sambro were there introduced to Faithful, who showed at once that she understood she was to treat them as friends.

They waited till the shades of evening settled down over the city, that they might take their departure with-

out exciting observation, when they quickly traversed the numerous deserted streets till they reached the northern gate. It was instantly opened on Reginald's showing an order from the rajah. No one recognized them, or inquired where they were going; indeed, the inhabitants of Allahapoor were not addicted to troubling themselves about affairs that did not concern them.

The travellers had got a mile or two from the city when the moon arose and enabled them to continue their journey during the greater part of the night. There was no lack of ruins of mosques and pagodas, of forts and once gorgeous tombs, in which they could find lodging when they needed rest; so at length Buxsoo proposed that they should stop at a pagoda which, though deserted by the priests, was almost entire. To this Reginald at once agreed, for, unaccustomed to walking such long distances, he felt very tired. A quantity of dried wood having been found, Sambro, assisted by Dick, soon had a fire lighted in the court-yard, on which they cooked their provisions—Buxsoo, having become a Christian, had thrown aside all prejudice of caste; and Reginald always made a practice, when on expeditions on shore, of messing with his men. They therefore seated themselves together around their frugal fare, under the shelter of an arcade, with a fire burning brightly in front of them. Faithful had had her usual supper before starting, but her long march had perhaps given her an appetite, and seeing

her master thus employed, she stole away, forgetful of her duty, to forage for herself.

A curious spectacle the scene would have presented to the eye of a native: Reginald, though in his nautical costume, looking, as he was, a high-born gentleman; Dick had the cut of a thorough British tar; Buxsoo could not be distinguished from an ordinary high-caste Hindoo; while Sambro's black skin and scanty garments clearly showed the class to which he belonged.

The repast was nearly over, when Dick looking up, his keen eyes discovered a figure stealing along under the shadow of the arcade on the opposite side of the court.

"Hallo! there's an eavesdropper of some sort. We must capture him, and ask him what he wants," he exclaimed, starting up.

Reginald and the rest of the party followed; but when they reached the spot where the figure had been seen no one was visible. They hunted about in every direction, aided by such light as the moon afforded, but without success; and at length returned to the spot where they had left their supper. Buxsoo was inclined to believe that Dick had been deceived by the shadow of a column falling against the wall.

"No, no, I tell you. My sight never plays me false," answered Dick. "I set eyes on a fellow in the long petticoat sort of robes the natives wear, as sure as I have seen salt water; and how he got away from me,

unless he darted through the wall, is more than I can tell."

"I don't think you are likely to have been deceived," said Reginald. "But what can have become of Faithful? Had she not gone off her post, she would have caught the fellow."

No one had remarked when the tigress stole away, and her disappearance was another mystery to be solved.

Fatigued with their long march, rest was absolutely necessary; they therefore determined to sleep where they were, one at a time keeping watch.

"Please your honour, I will keep the first watch," said Dick; "and if you will lend me one of your pistols, I will send a bullet through the body of the first petticoated gentleman who heaves in sight, whether he is a ghost or not. If so be I starts off, just be good enough to follow me when I make chase, and we will have him in limbo before many minutes are over."

Reginald now lay down, feeling perfectly confident that Dick would keep wide-awake; and recommending his companions to follow his example, they were all in a few seconds fast asleep.

We must now follow Faithful, who maybe was in search of a lamb or goat from some flocks feeding at no great distance from the temple. She had not left the precincts of the place when a person in the robes of a Brahmin fearlessly approached her, and patting her

head, offered her something which he held in his hand. She took it, and fawning on him, followed as he led the way to a distant part of the ruin. Here was a high tower with some winding steps leading to the summit. The Brahmin, for such he was, began to ascend, the tigress still following. When on the summit, the stranger opened a door and proceeded along a narrow gallery, scarcely affording room for the shoulders of the animal to pass. Suddenly he slipped through another small door. The poor tigress, missing him or the tempting bait he held, advanced stealthily, when there came a crash, and down she fell head-foremost; her betrayer looking over the parapet, exulting in the success of his treachery.

"Aha! I have often tried to poison you, but you were too sagacious to be taken in," he said. "Now I have succeeded in finishing you, your master the young rajah will easily become my prey. He expects to rule this country, does he, and reform abuses and destroy our ancient religion! Clever as he thinks himself, he will find that he is mistaken, and that there are those who can outwit him. It has been prophesied that when the Feringhees rule the land the ancient institutions of the country will be destroyed and caste abolished. What will then become of us Brahmins? We must put off that evil day, if it is ever to arrive, as long as possible."

Thus the Brahmin Balkishen continued muttering.

FAITHFUL BETRAYED.

He was an ally of Khan Cochût, and had been a chief agent in the late rebellion, as, through having been the rajah's principal secretary, he was fully informed of all that took place at the palace. But though an ally of the ex-barber, he hated him cordially, both on account of his religion—or rather his utter want of it—and the familiar and somewhat coarse way in which Khan Cochût treated him. He had also assisted in carrying off Nuna, and was afraid that Reginald, through the instrumentality of Buxsoo and Sambro, would discover her place of concealment.

Notwithstanding his boasted enlightenment, he had a superstitious dread of the tigress, whom he fully believed to be a "familiar" of the young Englishman, and that while she was his protectress it would be useless to make any attempt against his life. He had often tried to ingratiate himself with Faithful for the purpose of destroying her; but being unable to succeed, he bethought him of making use of a secret he possessed, by means of which he believed that even the most savage wild beast could be tamed. He had ordered one of his slaves—whom he had left in the city—to keep a watch on the Englishmen, to follow them wherever they went, and to bring him information of their movements. Fortune, as he thought, had favoured him more than he could have expected, and they had actually taken shelter in the very temple in which he was lying concealed.

Having disposed of Faithful, as he hoped, he must next attempt to get hold of the sturdy sailor—a more difficult task, as he rightly judged. He was afraid to proceed by force, and he trusted that stratagem would prove more successful. He felt an eager desire to carry his plan into execution at once, but the watchful vigilance of Dick Thuddichum foiled him. He had, indeed, been nearly captured by the sailor, and saw that he must be more prudent in future. Little did honest Dick suppose that a pair of keen eyes were fixed on him as he paced up and down on his watch, and that had he gone a few yards further he might have found a rope thrown round his neck, which would have prevented him from crying out, and rendered his strength of no avail.

Sambro succeeded Dick, and was equally vigilant; Buxsoo kept the morning watch; while Reginald, who was the most fatigued of the party, slept till daylight.

Faithful's disappearance caused considerable anxiety. In vain they searched about in all directions—no trace of the tigress could be found; and at length, as it was important to take advantage of the cool morning air, they started, hoping that her sagacity would enable her quickly to follow them. Often and often Reginald looked back, hoping to see his pet. They overtook numerous country-people,—some on foot, others on asses or on horseback,—nearly all the men being armed. They regarded the two Englishmen with suspicious

eyes ; but Buxsoo mingled among them, inquiring what news was stirring. All had something to tell, and he thus picked up a good deal of information. People were generally full of the expected arrival of the English troops, wondering what they were coming for. Their suspicions were generally aroused ; and some even declared that the rajah had sold his country to the English. Buxsoo did not think it worth while to contradict this, as it would have excited their enmity against him, and they might believe that he was in favour of the transaction. This, however, was not the information he was anxious to obtain.

Two more days passed by. Reginald began to despair of recovering Faithful ; and he had, as yet, received no tidings from Burnett. They were resting during the heat of the day in the shade of a banyan-tree, at a little distance from which was a well. They had not been seated long, when several natives, with a couple of laden camels, drew near to the well to quench their thirst. Buxsoo, begging his companions to remain quiet, went forward to meet the strangers. After the usual salutations, he inquired the price of ghee, corn, and lentils ; and they, believing him to be a trader like themselves, willingly imparted the information he requested. His first questions led to others, and they soon got into familiar conversation. He asked if they had heard anything of the late rebellion, or of the audacious way in which the ranee

had been carried off. They knew very little about the matter; but rumours had reached them that there had been disturbances in the country. At length one of the party informed him that, on the previous day, he had gone to a village at some distance from the high road to sell his goods, and that on his return he passed near a deserted temple on the summit of a hill, the doors of which were all closed; but that on looking up he was greatly surprised to see a female at the top of one of the towers, waving to him, apparently to attract his attention. Wondering what was wanted, he was approaching, when two armed men rushed out of the building with threatening gestures. To escape them, he ran off at full speed; but after pursuing him for some distance the armed men turned back, and he reached his friends in safety. Buxsoo also inquired whether the merchants had heard anything of the movements of a body of the rajah's cavalry; but they could give him no information on the subject.

He waited till they and their camels, having quenched their thirst, had moved forward on their journey, and then he hurried back to his friends with the important information he had obtained.

Reginald was, of course, eager to move on at once to the place where the female had been seen, feeling almost sure that it could be no other than Nuna.

"That may be the case," observed Buxsoo; "but,

supposing that the temple is guarded by a strong garrison, how are we to get in and rescue her? Would it not be wiser to try and fall in with the cavalry, who may take the place by storm should the rebels refuse to deliver up their prisoner?"

"The cavalry would have less chance than we should have, my friend," answered Reginald. "If the place is fortified, we must trust to stratagem rather than to an open attack. A handful of men, well provided with ammunition, may keep at bay the whole of Captain Burnett's cavalry. I would rather attempt to scale the walls; and I feel sure that Dick and I might accomplish the feat. We sailors are as active as goats; and as no one within would suspect our intentions, we might get to the top of the tower, and perhaps liberate the ranee, before any of the garrison could discover what we are about. It is very evident that she must be confined in the tower, where her guards think that she is perfectly safe; while they probably keep in the large hall in the lower part of the building. However, we must get there first and survey the place before we can decide what is to be done."

Reginald then explained his plan to Dick Thuddichum, who replied,—"Of course, of course. It would be a rum sort of a tower that we couldn't get to the top of, provided there are but a few holes and crannies into which we can stick our toes and fingers. But, to my mind, it will be as well to secure a few coils of

rope, as it may be an easier task to get up than to come down again—especially if we have got a young lady with us."

"But if we were to be seen carrying the rope, suspicion of our intention would be excited, and the rebels would take measures to counteract it," observed Reginald.

"Then we must not let them see it," answered Dick. "I would not mind carrying a coil covered up in a piece of muslin, to look like a turban, on the top of my head; and I dare say Mister Buxsoo and the nigger here would do the same. And though I am pretty stout already, I would coil a few more lengths round my waist; and if the natives were to find out by chance what I had got about my body, they would only fancy that I was doing a bit of penance like themselves. Keep up your heart, sir; and if the young lady is shut up in the old tower, as you suppose, we'll manage, by hook or by crook, to get her out."

We must now return to the temple in which Reginald and his party had taken shelter a few nights before. The Brahmin Balkishen and his slave were not the only occupants; and as soon as the travellers had gone, another personage crept out of a small chamber in which he had been hidden during the time of their stay, an interested spectator of their proceedings. He was no other than Khan Cochût. Hear-

ing of the rajah's restoration to power, he was on his way back to Allahapoor with a cunningly-devised tale, by means of which he hoped to be restored to power. The astounding information, however, that he received from Balkishen made him change his plans, and he resolved, at all events, to defer his visit till a more convenient opportunity. The two worthies were actually holding a discussion together, when they were interrupted by the arrival of Reginald's party. Khan Cochût, though not very scrupulous, hesitated about firing, although he might have done so from his place of concealment, and have killed Reginald and Buxsoo, whom he himself feared; but, on the other hand, he might have missed, and have been caught and killed himself. Altogether, he came to the conclusion that it would be more prudent to try and ingratiate himself with the young rajah, till he could safely retire with the wealth he had accumulated.

His plan had been to go boldly to the court, to assert that he had been carried off by the orders of the rebel Mukund Bhim, and pretending to be greatly surprised on hearing of the abduction of the ranee, to offer to go in search of her. It was a hazardous scheme; but Khan Cochût was a daring man, and had convinced himself that timid measures rarely meet with success.

As soon as he had seen Reginald's party to a safe distance, he sat down to a breakfast which Bikoo,

Balkishen's slave, had prepared for him; while the Brahmin, who would have considered himself defiled by eating in company with his friend, sat down to a more frugal meal by himself. After having washed his hands and said his prayers, the Brahmin rejoined the khan,—who considered neither of such ceremonies necessary,—and the two then discussed their plans for the future. Balkishen undertook to follow Reginald's party, accompanied by Bikoo, and to prevent them by every means in his power from reaching the place of Nuna's concealment, should they by any wonderful chance discover it; while Khan Cochût came to the final resolution of returning to Allahapoor, and carrying out his original plan.

They were about to part, when they were startled by a loud roar, such as had never before echoed amid the walls of the temple. The Brahmin trembled and looked very yellow, for he could not be said to turn pale.

"It must be that abominable tigress which I thought had been killed," he exclaimed. "No mortal beast could have escaped being dashed to pieces from the height she fell. I always said she was a jin; and this convinces me of the fact."

"She must have a hard head and strong bones, at all events," observed Khan Cochût. "For my part, I don't believe either in good or evil spirits; and the simplest way of stopping her roaring will be to put a bullet through her head."

"Not unless you wish to bring curses on your own head and on mine," exclaimed the Brahmin, becoming still more yellow.

Meanwhile the roars continued.

"The brute will attract the attention of the whole neighbourhood," exclaimed Khan Cochût. "As for bringing a curse on my head, I am very ready to run that risk. Only let me get a fair shot and I will quickly silence her."

"There must be some opening at the foot of the tower, or we should not hear the sounds so plainly," observed the Brahmin. "I will send Bikoo to try and find out. It would be more satisfactory to have him torn to pieces than ourselves."

"There is wisdom in that remark," coolly observed Khan Cochût; and Bikoo was forthwith despatched by his master to explore the place into which the tigress had tumbled.

He went—though with no great alacrity—to obey the order he had received, taking with him a long stick; not that it would have served him much against the enraged tigress, but it was the only weapon he possessed. The roars grew louder and louder as he advanced, till after mounting a flight of steps he started back on finding himself face to face with the tigress,—some iron bars, however, intervening. Faithful was evidently in a furious rage. As she saw him she seized one of the bars in her mouth, while she grasped the two

next to it with her powerful claws, working away to wrench them asunder. Bikoo attempted to drive her back with his stick, but she utterly disregarded the blows aimed at her, only stopping a moment to roar and snarl, her loud cries drowning his voice as he shouted to Khan Cochût to come and shoot her—which he might very easily have done. Already the bars were seen to bend, the upper ends coming out of their sockets. Bikoo saw that in another instant the tigress would be at liberty; so springing down the steps with a very natural rapidity, fully expecting to be torn to pieces should he not make haste, and shouting, "The tigress! the tigress is at my heels!" he rushed into the presence of his master and Khan Cochût. They, hearing his cries, judged that their safest course would be to betake themselves to the upper chamber in which they had before been concealed,—Bikoo following them without asking leave, and only wishing that they would move somewhat faster. They had just climbed up by means of some winding steps in the wall, when the tigress, with her mouth and paws bloody from the exertions she had made, sprang into the courtyard and looked around, with the apparent intention of taking vengeance on the person who had so treacherously endeavoured to destroy her. As she was gazing about, her eye fell on the long nose and sallow visage of Khan Cochût, who was peering from his hiding-place through a slit

FAITHFUL IN PRISON.

in the wall. She sprang up at him with a suddenness which made him draw back with considerable rapidity, knocking over the grave Brahmin as he did so, and sending him sprawling prostrate on the ground. Poor Faithful, however, missed her aim, and fell backwards in a manner which did not at all improve her already irritated temper. Up and down the courtyard she rushed, looking out for an opening; and had not an iron-clamped door stopped her she would probably have torn the whole party to pieces, unless Khan Cochût had contrived to shoot her. Several times he poked one of his pistols through the slit, but the Brahmin entreated him not to fire. Whether or not Faithful suspected what he intended, she kept at such a distance that he would, in all probability, have missed her had he fired. At length, wearied with her exertions, she retired to the end of the court, where she lay down in the shade, keeping her eye fixed alternately on the slit in the wall and the door through which her enemy had passed.

She had now completely turned the tables on them, for, as they had no provisions, they must either die of starvation or surrender at discretion. At length the Brahmin proposed sending Bikoo down, that, while the tigress was tearing him to pieces, they might make their escape. To this inhuman proposal the slave very naturally objected, observing that the tigress must before long fall asleep, when they might slip out,

favoured by the darkness, and so make their escape,—he, as being the most active, hoping, should the tigress awake, to get ahead of them, and leave them to the fate his master so generously proposed for him. Had Faithful suspected their intentions, she would probably have allowed her captives to have made the attempt to carry them out, and would have caught them all in succession.

As she lay in the shade, she began to meditate after her own fashion on what had occurred; and suddenly recollecting her beloved master, she got up and bounded towards the spot where she had last seen him. As she did so she passed within range of Cochût's pistol. Notwithstanding the Brahmin's prohibition, he fired. Though the ball missed her, she was somewhat frightened by the report; and her mind being set on discovering Reginald, she sprang through the gateway, and trotted off in the direction her instinct told her he had taken, as she certainly did not follow him either by sight or scent.

CHAPTER VII.

THE TEMPLE IN WHICH NUNA IS A PRISONER REACHED—DICK'S PLAN FOR RESCUING HER—THE TOP OF THE TOWER GAINED—ESCAPE—PURSUED—FAITHFUL APPEARS AT THE PROPER JUNCTURE—ANOTHER TEMPLE REACHED—AN UNEXPECTED ATTACK—FAITHFUL PLAYS HER PART—BURNETT ARRIVES—CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD FINDS THAT HE HAS MADE A MISTAKE—THE JOURNEY TO THE CAPITAL—A DAY'S SPORT—REGINALD AGAIN ESCAPES FROM A TIGER—THE JOURNEY CONTINUED—THREATENED BY THE REBELS—TAKE REFUGE IN A FORT—THE MAJOR'S ASTONISHMENT.

REGINALD and his party continued their journey, but they had considerable difficulty in discovering the temple of which the trader had told Buxsoo. At length, as evening was drawing on, they caught sight of a tall tower rising above the trees on the top of the hill. It being of the greatest importance not to be discovered by any of the rebel garrison, they waited till dark to approach the building, as they could not take that careful survey of it at a distance which was so necessary before commencing operations. They had provided themselves with a supply of rope at a distant village, where their object was not likely to be suspected, and had carried it as Dick had suggested. Reginald and Dick were well armed, and felt themselves able to engage a

dozen natives; but Buxsoo and Sambro carried no weapons,—for the former professed not to be a fighter, though the slave was active and powerful, and would not have feared a combat on equal terms with two or even three brown-skinned natives.

Concealed among the trees, they got close enough to the temple to ascertain whether any person entered or left it, as also to see the top of the tower. With anxious eyes Reginald looked out for the appearance of Nuna, convinced as he was that she must have been the female seen by the trader. He watched, however, in vain, and darkness came on without any human being having been seen, or any sign being discernible that the building was inhabited. Reginald, in his eagerness, would at once have approached the walls; but Buxsoo advised him to wait, in the hope that those within might have a lamp burning, the light from which, streaming through any window or crevice, might betray the part of the building they were occupying.

"Depend upon it, also, that some cunning officer commands the party, and he will be on the watch for the approach of enemies," observed Buxsoo. "My advice is that we wait till later in the night, when the sentries are likely to be drowsy, and we may then make our survey with less risk of being discovered."

Reginald agreeing to this proposal, the party lay down to rest,—he and Dick with their arms ready for

instant use,—while they kept their eyes turned towards the building. Before long a ray of light shone forth from the dark walls. It proceeded, judging from its height, from a small window in an upper story, and in a part of the edifice at a considerable distance from the tower. Though they watched carefully, no light appeared from the tower itself; but that might have been accounted for by the supposition that there were no windows in the sides towards them, and did not prove that the tower was uninhabited. The appearance of the light, moreover, made it probable that the persons seen by the trader were still there.

An hour or more passed, when Dick suggested that, as it was important to make their survey before the moon rose, it was time to get to the foot of the tower, and there judge what was to be done. So, still keeping under the shelter of the trees, they crept round to the further side of the building, on which the tower was situated, in order that they might get up to it without being seen by any one on the watch in the temple itself. A sentry posted on the top of the tower might have discovered them if he was awake and on the look-out; but they must of necessity run the risk of that—hoping, should one be there, to take him by surprise, and gag him before he could give the alarm. In the manner described they reached the foot of the tower,—as they hoped, without being observed by any one. They examined it

as far as the darkness would allow; but neither a door nor a window was to be discovered. The stucco, however, with which it had formerly been covered, had in many places fallen out. Accustomed to climbing as Dick was, he confessed that even a cat would have a difficulty in reaching the top without other means than her claws. However, of this they felt sure —that *no* sentry was posted on the top of the tower; and that the chambers inside must either be lighted from the top or by very narrow loopholes.

"I have it, though," whispered Dick. "Just let me get a score or two of pegs: I will fix them one above another in those holes in the wall without making any noise; and then, by giving a turn with a rope round each of them, they will be kept all together—so that we may get to the top without the risk of breaking our necks."

Reginald at once agreed to Dick's proposal. It was the only way, indeed, by which they could hope to succeed. Next they all crept silently round the building, examining every portion in the hope of finding some loophole or aperture into which one of them might climb if such a place existed, and, if possible, to draw off the attention of the garrison while Reginald and Dick were lowering the ranee from the tower. There were apparently doors, but they were firmly closed; and the windows, and the other apertures which time had made in the walls, were too

high up to be reached. It was evident that the building had lately been put into a state of defence, and that all openings by which an enemy could enter had been barricaded. This confirmed them in the belief that the ranee was imprisoned within, and that only by the plan they proposed could her liberation be effected.

As some time would be occupied in making the pegs as proposed by Dick, considering they had only their knives for cutting them, they had to defer the execution of their plan till the next night. They therefore stole back into the forest, in the far recesses of which they formed their camp. As, however, it was possible that the garrison might leave their fortress and carry the ranee with them, just before daylight, Sambro, who undertook to keep watch, stole back to the border of the wood,—where, concealed among the thick trees, he had a perfect view of the building, and could see if anybody went in or came out of it.

As they calculated that the tower was sixty feet in height, it was considered that thirty pegs, at least, would be required to reach the top. As soon as it was daylight they searched about for some hard wood, which, on being found, they set to work diligently to form into pegs. Its hardness made the operation a slow one, and they had to use great care for fear of turning the edges of their tools. Buxsoo was totally

unaccustomed to the sort of work. Dick, indeed, had cut three pegs before either of the rest of the party had completed one. Reginald constantly looked out in the direction Sambro had taken, in the expectation of seeing him return with some tidings or other from the fort. But the day wore on and he did not appear. As he had taken provisions with him, they knew that he could remain at his post without any necessity for coming back for food, and they concluded, therefore, that nothing had occurred worth communicating.

Eager to carry their plan into execution, Reginald proposed returning to the tower without further delay, when a rustle was heard in the bushes, and Sambro crept up to the camp. He had seen, he said, several lights streaming from the upper part of the building, which made him suppose that there must be a good many people within. Still, as they could have no suspicion of the attempt about to be made, they would probably not interfere with their proceedings, and he thought that they might at all events commence operations without delay. Each of them, therefore, carrying a bundle of pegs, they crept back to the foot of the tower. Dick wisely selected the dark side, looking the same way as the back of the temple, on which the moon, when she got up, would not shine, and at once began fixing in the pegs. He soon found that he could not place them one above another, but had to choose the spots from which the plaster had fallen out;

so that the pegs were sometimes on one side and sometimes on another. He could have proceeded much faster had he been able to use a stone for driving them in; but, of course, the noise that would have made would have led to the discovery of their proceedings. Up and up Dick climbed, fastening the rope securely to the pegs, so that did one come out he might save himself by the rope fixed to the others. Perseverance overcomes all difficulties. The end of the rope which hung down enabled him to haul up the other pegs as they were required.

At length he reached the parapet, and, climbing over, found himself standing on a flat roof. Reginald climbed up next, carrying the rope by which it was proposed to lower Nuna down. Sambro followed them, though, less accustomed to climbing than Reginald and Dick, he had much more difficulty than they had in getting up. Buxsoo remained below to keep watch, and to receive Nuna on her arrival at the bottom.

On searching about, a trap-door was found in the roof. It was easily lifted. Reginald stationed Sambro at the top, whilst he, revolver in hand, and followed by Dick, descended a flight of stone steps, carefully feeling his way, and not knowing what was at the bottom. By this time the moon was up, and her light streaming through the open trap enabled him to ascertain that he was in a large unfurnished chamber. Carefully groping his way round, he discovered another

flight of steps, leading to the lower story. He and Dick cautiously descended, feeling the wall with their hands, on the chance of discovering the door of a lower chamber, which they guessed must exist. They were right in their conjectures. Not only was a door found, but through the chinks proceeded the light of a lamp burning within. Could Nuna be there? That such was the case was probable; but the room, on the other hand, might be tenanted by a party of armed men, and should they open the door, there would be no little danger in finding themselves among them. The steps, it was evident, continued on to the lower part of the building. There might be other chambers, one of which might be that occupied by Nuna. Should they enter, or descend to the bottom of the tower? They listened at the door, but no sound came forth. This made Reginald believe that Nuna must be its occupant. Still, he thought it prudent to explore the lower part of the building before attempting to gain an entrance. He and Dick therefore descended, till he calculated that they were close at the bottom; and here they were stopped by a door. They remained perfectly quiet, when the sound of loud snoring reached their ears. Listening, they were convinced that it came from the other side of the door; and probably was produced by a sentry, either leaning against it or sitting on the ground. This convinced Reginald that the upper chamber was not

occupied by armed men, and he therefore made a signal to Dick to reascend the steps. They crept carefully up, so as to avoid creating any noise which might awake the slumbering sentry.

On reaching the door, through which the light could still be discerned, he knocked gently, and putting his mouth to one of the crevices, he uttered Nuna's name in a low tone.

"Who is there?" was asked in a voice which he felt sure was his sister's.

He told her who he was, and that he had come to rescue her; when, a bolt being withdrawn, the door was opened, and there stood Nuna, pale and trembling with agitation. As there was no time to be lost, Reginald briefly told her that he had, with the rajah's permission, set out on an expedition to find her, and had been happily directed to the right spot.

"I have much more to tell you," he added, "but only understand that I have every right to protect you, and will do so with my life. Trust to me, and I hope to carry you back safely to your grandfather."

"I place perfect confidence in you," she answered.

He took her hand and led her up the steps to the top of the tower, preceded by Dick Thuddichum; and as soon as they had passed through the trap, Sambro gently closed it. Dick now lost no time in uncoiling the lengths of rope he had brought to the top for the purpose they had in view. To one end was attached

a sort of cradle which he had thoughtfully constructed.

"If the young lady won't mind getting into this, we will lower her handsomely," he observed; "and she shall be safe at the bottom in less than no time."

Reginald explained to Nuna what was necessary, and she at once consented to be placed in the cradle, into which she was carefully fastened with Reginald and Dick's handkerchiefs.

"I hear some one moving below," whispered Sambro. "No time to lose;" and Reginald and Dick carefully lowered Nuna over the wall, and let her slowly descend, while Sambro kept watch on the trap. The end of the rope had been secured to some ironwork on the roof, and it was an immense relief when Reginald felt that Nuna had safely reached the ground.

"Now, sir, you go down by the rope, and take care of the young lady," said Dick, "and I will make the black find his way down by the ladder."

Before Reginald had reached the bottom, Buxsoo had released Nuna, who expressed her thankfulness at finding Reginald by her side.

"We must wait for our two followers before we take to flight," he said. "We will then endeavour to get to a distance from the place. Here comes one of them."

As he spoke, Sambro was seen descending the ladder. Before he reached the bottom, however, the sound of

men struggling was heard, with the loud cries of a native, responded to by Dick Thuddichum's gruff voice.

"I must go and assist my faithful follower," exclaimed Reginald, preparing to ascend the ladder.

"Oh, do not leave me," cried Nuna.

The sound of the struggling now became more distinct. For a moment it ceased, and then a noise followed, as if a heavy body had fallen to the ground, apparently on the other side of the tower. Reginald sprang to the spot, dreading to find that it was that of honest Dick; but the white dress which covered the mangled heap of humanity showed him that it was a native who had been thrown down from that fearful height. Hurrying back, he caught sight of Dick rapidly descending the rope.

"We must be away from this pretty sharp, sir," he exclaimed; "for if we are not, we shall have a whole tribe of the ugly blackamoors after us. I pitched half-a-dozen of them down the steps, and then had to run for it. However, all is right at present, and it may be some time before they find their way out of the front door."

On receiving this startling intelligence, Reginald seized Nuna in his arms and bore her down the hill, Buxsoo keeping by his side, while Dick and Sambro brought up the rear to cover their retreat.

"I wish, Sambro, that you had had a musket or a

brace of pistols, and we would have kept the enemy at bay till our masters had carried off the young lady out of danger," exclaimed Dick. "But, as it is, I must fight alone. Only let them come near enough; I'll plant my fist in the faces of some of them, and make their noses flatter than they have ever been before."

In a couple of minutes the fugitives had got to the bottom of the hill, and were making their way along the high road by which they had come, when Dick, turning round, discovered a number of men rushing out of the building, who had evidently caught sight of them. On they came, yelling like fiends; but they did not fire, apparently for fear of wounding the ranee. It seemed but too likely that the whole party would be taken prisoners, for what could two men do against the vastly superior number pursuing them!

"On, sir! on, sir!" cried Dick; "we will tackle the fellows, and Sambro will soon get hold of a musket or cutlas for himself. You meanwhile push ahead to the nearest village with the young lady, and Mr. Buxsoo will tell the people who she is."

Dick, however, was calculating too much on his own powers, though he truly felt ready to do battle with the infuriated rebels coming up to him. They were not many paces off, when at that instant a tigress was seen bounding along towards them. Nuna, who caught sight of the savage-looking animal, uttered a scream. "There it comes! Oh, it will kill us!" she

exclaimed. Reginald immediately called out, "Faithful! Faithful!" and the seemingly savage tigress came fawning up to him. Then turning round, he pointed at the pursuing foes, and a pat on Faithful's head made her leap on towards them. The moment they caught sight of her, as she flew at them snarling fiercely, they turned round and scampered up the hill faster than they had descended. Reginald hereupon—fearing that some of them, regaining their courage, might fire at her—called her off; upon which she came trotting back and took up a position immediately behind the party.

Once more they moved on; Dick and the tigress every now and then looking back to ascertain whether or not the enemy were following. The fright given them by the sudden appearance of the tigress prevented the rebels from again issuing out of their fortification, and Reginald and his friends were able to get some distance before daylight.

Nuna had repeatedly asked Reginald to set her down, but to this he would not consent, as she was not accustomed to walk over a rough road, and her delicate feet, shod only with embroidered slippers, were ill fitted to support her. At length, however, he began to feel fatigued, and anxiously looked out for a place of safety, where they might rest till an elephant could be found to convey them to the city. They had observed on their way a temple in a very similar

situation to the one from which they had just escaped. Buxsoo believed that that also was deserted, although it was not in a very ruinous condition. Being not far off, they made their way to it. A place of shelter was soon found within it, and Reginald placing his jacket and Buxsoo his outer robe on the ground, entreated Nuna to rest while they watched at a little distance. Faithful, who came in last, lay down in the gateway; evidently considering that it was her duty to keep a guard over the premises while her master and his friends occupied them.

Their chief inconvenience arose from want of food; for the provisions they had brought with them had been exhausted on the previous day, and Reginald felt that it would be impossible to proceed without some refreshment. Nuna assured him that she herself was not hungry, as she had had some supper brought to her soon after nightfall. She had been treated, she told him, with perfect respect.

They were still apprehensive of being pursued by the mutineers, so as soon as there was sufficient light they set to work to fortify the temple, and to close all the openings in the lower part of the building. This done, Buxsoo and Sambro hastened away to obtain provisions at the nearest village they could find; intending also to try and procure an elephant for the convenience of Nuna and Reginald, and, if possible, one for themselves and Dick.

After his companions had gone, Reginald seated himself by Nuna, and took the opportunity of recounting his history, and explaining to her who he was. She listened to him with great astonishment. At length she answered,—

"I now understand why I have been brought up in a manner so different from the other women of rank in this country. My mother taught me her own religion, which she was allowed to enjoy; and she charged me, with her dying breath, should I ever marry, to teach my children the same. But I fear I really know little of its truths. I must get you, my brother, to instruct me, and tell me all about the country of our mother's ancestors."

While they were speaking Dick hurried up, exclaiming,—"Hurrah, sir! I see a body of sepoys with some English red-coats among them coming this way. We need no longer have any fear of the rebels."

"Are you certain that there are English soldiers among them? for if not, the men you take for sepoys may be the rebels themselves," observed Reginald. "It may be safer for you, my sister, to take shelter in the tower till we ascertain the truth; and we shall be able to defend you, as only one man at a time can force his way up."

Scarcely had Nuna ascended a few steps when half a company of sepoys, with a corporal and five English soldiers, and led by a British officer, appeared in front of the building.

Reginald shouted out to them that he was an Englishman, and that having rescued the rajah's daughter from a band of rebels, he was returning with her to her father.

"I don't believe you," answered the officer. "On, my lads, and capture the young fellow! From the information I have received, he is himself a rebel."

A second glance at the speaker showed Reginald that it was his acquaintance, Captain Hawkesford; but in another instant the gates were burst open, and the soldiers, rushing in, captured Dick, who was making his way to the foot of the steps on which Reginald stood with Nuna behind him, while Faithful crouched by his side glaring at the assailants.

"Back, I say—back; you are mistaken, my men," cried Reginald, drawing his revolvers. "Your lives be on your own heads, if you advance.—Fly up the steps, Nuna. Fly under shelter: in case they should dare to fire, the bullets may strike you."

Still the English soldiers advanced,—though the sepoys hung back, afraid of facing the tigress, and awed by Reginald's daring attitude. Unhappily the corporal, a brave fellow, believing that it was his duty to seize the supposed rebel, rushed forward, and began to mount the steps, presenting the point of his bayonet at Faithful; on which, no longer able to restrain herself, she sprang at his throat and gave him a death-gripe, hurling him down backwards a lifeless corpse, while his musket fell from his hand.

ATTACK AND DEFENCE.

"Fire!" cried Captain Hawkesford.

"If you do, I must fire in return," shouted Reginald.

As he spoke the bullets rattled thickly around his head; so he discharged both his pistols, and again urging Nuna to escape, he with a bound sprang after her, before another musket could be aimed at him; while Faithful, who had wonderfully escaped, kept the soldiers at bay, notwithstanding their commander's urgent orders to them to advance.

At that moment there was a cry raised by the sepoys,—"We are betrayed! we are betrayed! The rebel cavalry are upon us. We shall be cut to pieces."

On hearing this Captain Hawkesford turned round, and saw a large body of horse advancing, with an Englishman at their head. From their appointments and general appearance, he at once knew that they were a well-organized body of troops, and not like a rebel band; and as they advanced he recognized Captain Burnett, with whom he was personally acquainted. Even had they been rebels, they so far outnumbered his own company of sepoys and his small party of Englishmen that he would have had very little hope of contending with them successfully,—especially as the sepoys showed no inclination to fight. He had indeed from the first suspected that he had been misled by the information he had received. It had been given by the traitor Balkishen, in the hope that it would lead

to the destruction of Reginald and the young ranee. He therefore considered that it would be wise to assume a pacific attitude; so as Burnett and his troopers advanced towards the gate he ordered his own men to ground their arms, and going forward, he shouted out,—"Glad to see you, Burnett! We have made a terrible mistake, misled by a rascally Brahmin; but, except that one poor fellow has lost his life, no great harm has been done."

"Who is it?" asked Burnett anxiously, fearing that he might allude to Reginald, of whom he had gained information from Buxsoo and Sambro at the village where he had met them as they were purchasing provisions.

Captain Hawkesford's answer relieved his anxiety; and he soon had evidence that Reginald was unhurt, by seeing him descend the steps, accompanied by Nuna; while Faithful stood at the foot glaring round at the strangers, of whose intentions she was not yet fully satisfied.

Reginald, from the place in which he had taken shelter, had observed Burnett's approach; and overhearing the conversation which had ensued, he knew that the tables were turned, and that his sister was at length in safety. Captain Hawkesford, who feared that very awkward consequences might ensue from his conduct, apologized to Reginald, and made all the excuses he could think of.

Reginald, however, received these somewhat stiffly. "Had the ranee, whom I had undertaken to conduct to her grandfather, been injured, the case would have been very different," he observed. "As it is, although you refused to believe my word when I assured you I was not a rebel, and that you had been deceived, I am ready to receive your apologies; and I must now request you to assist in making immediate arrangements for the conveyance of the young lady to Allahapoor, where her grandfather is anxiously awaiting her return."

Burnett, however, undertook that task, and despatched a party of his horsemen to the nearest place where elephants were to be found, to bring one with a proper howdah for the conveyance of the young ranee; while he also sent off another party to Allahapoor, to announce her recovery to the rajah.

Captain Hawkesford volunteered to remain in the meantime, with his men, for her protection. But Burnett politely declined his offer; observing, in a somewhat sarcastic tone, which he could not restrain, that she was as perfectly safe, guarded by his troopers, as she would be with the sepoys and the corporal's guard he had brought with him.

"Well, then," said Captain Hawkesford, "if my services are declined, it is my duty, I conceive, to rejoin the main body of the force sent to the assistance of the rajah. I will inform Colonel Ross that we

were deceived by the information given us by the Brahmin, and that the supposed rebel was no other than Mr. Hamerton, who was escorting the young lady home whom he had so gallantly rescued from imprisonment."

"Colonel Ross, did you say?" asked Reginald.

"Yes, sir. He is in command of the troops marching to Allahapoor; and he and his daughter—who accompanies him—will be much interested on hearing of your gallant exploit."

Reginald hesitated what remark to make. The news he had just heard gave him great pleasure, as he hoped that he might soon again meet Violet. At the same time, he felt sure that Captain Hawkesford would give a false colouring to what had occurred, and would try to make her jealous of the ranee and suspicious of his conduct. He was much inclined to explain the true state of affairs to Captain Hawkesford, so that he might be prevented from making out a story to his prejudice. Captain Hawkesford, however, saw very clearly that Burnett did not wish for his presence; so desiring his syce to bring up his horse, he hastily mounted, and ordering his men to march, rode off—the dead body of the unfortunate corporal being carried by some of the sepoys, whose low caste allowed them thus to employ themselves.

Dick Thuddichum, who had been liberated, watched them with no very friendly eye. "The next time

you manhandle a fellow, just be good enough to ask whether he is a friend or an enemy," he shouted out. "If it had not been for the sharp points of your bayonets, I should have laid not a few of you sprawling on the ground before you had got me down, I can tell you."

Reginald, however, soon pacified his follower, and told him to look after Faithful, who seemed disposed to chase the sepoys, and might possibly have laid her paws upon some of them, or have fought to recover her victim, whom she probably considered her lawful prey.

"I am glad that the fellow has gone," exclaimed Burnett, who had heard from Reginald of Captain Hawkesford's manner towards him on board the *Glamorgan Castle*. "I never liked him; and his conduct in this affair has not favourably impressed me. You, at all events, will soon have an opportunity of seeing Miss Ross, and explaining matters to her."

While waiting the arrival of the expected elephants, Nuna was resting beneath the shade of some wide-spreading trees, close to the walls of the temple. Reginald seated himself by her side, and invited Burnett to join them. Nuna seemed in no way displeased, and listened with eagerness to the conversation which ensued between the two; though unable, from her imperfect knowledge of English, to understand more than a few words. Reginald told Burnett more of her

history than he was yet acquainted with—that she not only had English blood in her veins, but had been instructed in her mother's faith; and the more, indeed, Burnett saw of the young creature, the more he admired her, and a warmer feeling than he had yet allowed himself to entertain took possession of his breast. He could not believe that she would willingly consent to become the wife of a native prince; so he resolved to devote his life to her service, hoping to be the means of preserving her from the dangers to which, from the unsettled state of the country, she must be exposed, and to win her some day as his bride. That he was her brother's friend, he naturally felt was much in his favour; and he believed he was not too presumptuous in thinking she would regard him with interest. He was able to converse with her in her native tongue; and for the next few days, till their arrival at Allahapoor, he would enjoy her society far more easily than he could expect to do when she had returned to the rajah's court.

The troopers meantime were resting beneath the trees scattered around, while their horses were picketed near. They probably looked on with astonishment at the familiar way their leader and the young stranger were conversing with the ranee, so contrary to the customs of the country.

Some time had passed, when two elephants were seen approaching, with several men on foot. On the

back of one was a handsome howdah without occupants; on the other rode Buxsoo, with Sambro, who had engaged the animals, and made all arrangements for the journey. He had also brought some provisions, which were very welcome both to the ranee and her brother. They spent but a short time in discussing these; after which, the elephant kneeling down, the ranee took her seat in the howdah, urgently begging Reginald to accompany her.

"The sooner our relationship is known the better," she observed. "Our grandfather can have no objection. A few words to Buxsoo will be quite sufficient; and if you tell him that the fact need not be kept secret, it will soon be known among all our followers."

Reginald saw no objection to this; and scarcely had the elephants begun to move on when loud shouts rent the air, issuing from the throats of the troopers, and the peasantry who had accompanied the elephants, expressive of wishes for the happiness and prosperity of the young rajah and his sister the ranee. Thus they moved on, the news preceding them, spread by the advance-guard of cavalry.

As the roads were far from good, the elephants travelled at a slow pace. Having no tents, they were compelled to deviate from the high road in order to remain during the night at the house of a wealthy khan; who, of course, was highly honoured in receiving the grandchildren of the rajah, though he looked

askance at Reginald, as if he doubted whether the account he had heard was true. He received them, however, with every outward mark of respect. As the elephant knelt down, they dismounted from the howdah, and Nuna was conducted to the apartments of the females of the family. An entertainment was afterwards prepared for Reginald and Burnett; but at this it was contrary to the custom of the country for Nuna to be present. She, indeed, was far too much fatigued and agitated to leave her couch; and the next morning she appeared to be worse, and unable to proceed on the journey. Reginald and Burnett were anxious to place her in safety with the rajah, and were much disappointed, besides being grieved at hearing of her illness. She sent them word, however, that she hoped, after another night's rest, to be so far restored as to be able to proceed without further delay.

To pass the time away, their host proposed a hunt in the forest. While Reginald was getting ready, Dick Thuddichum presented himself, and asked whether he was to go also.

"No, Dick; I wish you to remain with Faithful, and act as a guard to my sister. Our host may be a very honest gentleman, but I don't like to leave her without protection; and had it not been for the sake of Captain Burnett, I would myself have remained behind."

As Reginald was going through the courtyard to mount his horse he met his friend Buxsoo, who, in a low voice, said,—"Be on your guard. I would that you had refused the invitation of the khan. There are foes on the watch to injure you; and if you can, unobserved, get the ear of your friend, I would urge you to tell him what I say, and to make an excuse for returning speedily without exciting suspicion. I have told Sambro to accompany you. Trust to him."

From the experience Reginald had already had of the natives, he fully believed that Buxsoo had good reason for warning him, and he promised to follow the advice he had received.

As they rode along he took the opportunity of telling Burnett what he had heard.

"It may be the case; but I should like to stick a few pigs first," was his friend's answer.

The khan had ordered some tents to be pitched, in which, before returning, they could take refreshment. The distance was greater than Reginald had expected; but they were rewarded for their long ride by finding ample sport, and soon, excited in the chase, he forgot all about the warning he had received. At length, by some chance, he was separated from his companions. When quite alone he encountered a wild boar, which the low underwood prevented him from assailing to advantage, while the savage beast with its sharp tusks severely injured his steed before

he could plunge his spear into its side. In doing so his weapon broke. The animal again attacked him, and he was compelled to draw his pistol and shoot it dead, to save his horse from further injury. Unwilling to lose the spear, however, he dismounted to draw it out; and while thus engaged he inadvertently let slip his rein. For a few moments the horse stood quietly by his side; but, suddenly seized with a panic, off it started at full speed before he could catch hold of the rein. Having recovered the spear-head, he sprang after the animal, hoping to catch it before it had got far. He continued on for several minutes, keeping the steed in view, in spite of the obstructions in his way, when he caught sight of the tents, near which he had no doubt he should find the rest of the party; and thinking it probable the instinct of his horse would lead it towards its companions. Considering, therefore, that it was useless to exert himself further, he was walking leisurely on, when, to his horror, he saw a huge tiger in the act of springing at him from the jungle. He had just time to shout at the top of his voice, in the hope of attracting the attention of any of his companions who might be near, and to grasp the broken end of his spear, when, as he instinctively leaped on one side to avoid the first spring of the tiger, his foot slipped and he fell on his back, holding the spear in a perpendicular position, with the point upwards. The savage animal came directly down upon him, with its

huge jaws open to seize him by the neck; but as it did so, the point of the spear entering at its chest made it again attempt to bound backwards. Still one blow of its mighty paw, in its death-struggle, might, Reginald knew, break a limb or inflict a mortal injury; so again he shouted out, while he endeavoured to drag himself from under the savage animal, which still retained life sufficient to destroy him. He had now cause to regret that he had not brought Faithful, who would undoubtedly have fought bravely in his defence, and might have prevented the tiger from springing on him. Retaining his presence of mind, he kept the spear in a perpendicular position, hoping that it would soon find its way to the heart of his assailant. Still the tiger struggled more to escape than to attack him, when suddenly there came the sound of a shot, and the creature rolled over dead with a rifle-ball in its head. On looking up, he saw Burnett hurrying towards him.

His friend now assisted him to rise; and though his clothes were torn and his flesh deeply scarred with the claws of the animal, he found that he had received no material injury. He and Burnett soon reached the camp, where the khan and their other companions, with apparent cordiality, congratulated him on his escape.

"Knowing the courage of you Englishmen, I am sure that your adventure will not induce you to aban-

don the sport for the day," observed the khan, in a tone which at once raised Reginald's suspicions, and instantly the warning he had received from Buxsoo flashed into his mind.

The same thought occurred to Burnett, who replied: "I cannot allow my friend to exert himself further, as, slight as his injuries may appear, a fever might be brought on; so I must insist on his returning to the house."

"As the sahibs think fit; but they will take some refreshment before they start," observed the khan.

Rich viands were placed in the centre of the tent, around which the party seated themselves. Sambro appeared among the attendants. As he passed behind Reginald and Burnett he whispered, "Take only what I give you." Neither of them had any great appetite. Reginald, indeed, even without Sambro's warning, had no inclination to eat, and after partaking of a dish the faithful slave placed before him, declined all other food. He likewise simply drank a glass of sherbet which Sambro poured out for him.

Immediately the repast was over, Burnett desired that the horses might be brought up, and declining the pressing request of their entertainer that he would hunt for a short time while his friend rested in a tent, he rode off with Reginald, the natives being compelled to follow. Well accustomed to traversing a wild country, even without a guide, Reginald had taken

careful note of the way they had come, and was thus able to go ahead without waiting for the rest of the party. They reached the khan's house in safety, where they found a party of horsemen arrived from the city, with a despatch from the rajah to Reginald, highly praising him for his conduct, and expressing a desire that he would at once assume the costume becoming his rank, with which he had sent an officer of state to invest him. Though Reginald, whose notions were very far from Oriental, would much rather have retained his unassuming dress, he felt that it was right to obey his grandfather. Burnett being of the same opinion, he therefore submitted to being rigged out, as he called it, in the jewelled turban and rich robes which had been prepared for him.

"I hope, sir, as how they don't want me to dress up in petticoats?" observed Dick, with a comical twist of his features. "I'd rather be as I am, unless you order me."

"No, Dick; I think that will not be necessary except on state occasions, when, if I want a henchman, I would rather have you than any native."

Dick was satisfied, and agreed to rig himself out like a Turk, or in any other strange fashion, whenever his master required him to do so.

Next morning, Nuna had sufficiently recovered to continue the journey; and for the first time Reginald sat by her side on the back of the elephant, and ap-

peared in public as an Indian prince. As they moved through the villages crowds assembled to do them honour, though Reginald felt more pain than pleasure as he witnessed the abject way in which the natives bowed down, touching the ground with their foreheads on either side of the elephant as they moved along.

Having started at an early hour, they made good progress, but they were still several days' journey from the capital. Burnett, who rode at the head of his troopers, was some little way in advance of the elephants, when, towards evening, a horseman came galloping up. He brought unsatisfactory intelligence. The rebels having reunited, were in great force not far off, and with so valuable a prize in view as the ranee and the young rajah, as Reginald was already called, they might be tempted to make an attack on the party. They had some light field-pieces, as well as horse and foot, against whom Burnett's troopers would find it difficult to contend. Had he been called on to meet them without having the ranee to defend, he would not have hesitated; but the risk was too great to run if it could be avoided. Not far off was a strong fort, however, and he judged it wise to throw himself into it till he could obtain reinforcements, either from Allahapoor or from the troops under Colonel Ross.

Reginald of course agreed to his proposal, and before nightfall the party was safe within the fort. It had, it appeared, been occupied a short time before

REGINALD'S STATE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE CAPITAL

by the rebels, but had been again abandoned by them. An apartment was quickly made ready for the ranee. The night passed away without the appearance of the insurgents; indeed, they were not likely to attack the fort with the garrison it now contained.

The next morning, as Reginald and Burnett were walking on the battlements, they caught sight of a body of men approaching the fort, so the garrison were immediately called to arms. As the advancing forces drew nearer, however, Burnett and Reginald discovered, to their great satisfaction, the English flag; and in a little time they could distinguish a body of sepoys and a small party of Europeans. They immediately ordered their horses out to meet the officer in command, who was some way ahead of his men.

"Faith, I am glad to see you all alive!" exclaimed the officer, as he and Captain Burnett shook hands. "We were given to believe that you were surrounded by a whole host of rebels, and I expected by this time to be engaged in cutting them to pieces like mince-meat."

"We have not so much as seen an enemy," answered Burnett; "but understanding that they were likely to attack us on the road to Allahapoor, I thought it prudent to halt here, in order to wait till we could obtain reinforcements from the capital, as we have the young ranee in our charge."

"So Colonel Ross understood," observed the officer.

"And now nave the goodness to introduce me to this young prince, sultan, or rajah, or whatever he is; and just interpret what I say, for I am no great hand at talking their lingo."

"With all my heart," answered Burnett.

"Then just tell him that Major Molony, of Her Britannic Majesty's 990th Regiment of Foot, desires to express his delight and satisfaction at having arrived with a force under his command to defend him against all the foes, past, present, and future, who may venture to interfere with him in the execution of the humane and beneficent laws which he has established for the peace and prosperity of his people. I conclude he does not cut off more than half-a-dozen heads a day, and only confiscates the property of those of his nobles who are unable to defend themselves."

Burnett began to translate what the major had said. Unfortunately Reginald could not command his countenance, so putting out his hand, he exclaimed, laughing heartily,—"I assure you, my dear major, you scarcely do me justice. Half-a-dozen heads a day! That's nothing. How do you think I could keep the country in order by such simple means? People would look upon me as a mere milksop. Put it down as a hundred, and you would be quite as near the mark."

Burnett now joined in the laugh at the major's astonishment and confusion.

"I beg your highness's pardon," he exclaimed. "I

had no idea you could speak English. Faith, you speak it remarkably well too, I assure you, on my honour; and I hope your highness is not offended at the remark I made."

"Not at all," said Reginald, still laughing. "May I ask after Mrs. Molony, and whether she has recovered from her voyage in the *Glamorgan Castle?*"

"Why, as I am alive," exclaimed the major, "I do believe that you are Mr. Reginald Hamerton! And your highness will pardon me if I make a mistake."

Reginald at once acknowledged who he was, and the major, greatly relieved, rode on with him and Burnett to the fort. Scouts were at once sent out to ascertain, if possible, the position and strength of the enemy. Major Molony said that he had received orders to assist in escorting the ranee to Allahapoor; and it was agreed that, as soon as they received intelligence that a force was marching out of that city to assist them, they should proceed,—the major feeling confident that his sepoys would be able to keep in check any number of the rebel forces.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GUNPOWDER PLOT—COCHUT CAUGHT—BALKISHEN HOISTED WITH HIS OWN PETARD—THE MAJOR'S NARROW ESCAPE—COCHUT GIVES IMPORTANT INFORMATION—DICK DESPATCHED WITH IT TO CALCUTTA—REGINALD ENTERS THE CITY—THE RAJAH'S ILLNESS—TIDINGS OF THE CASKET—VISIT TO THE TEMPLE—THE CASKET RECOVERED—DEATH OF THE RAJAH.

THE traitor Balkishen had not been idle. He had managed to collect the rebel forces, and had been with them in the very fort that Reginald and his party now occupied. When they evacuated it, he with his slave Bikoo had remained behind, intending to proceed from thence secretly to Allahapoor, according to the information he might receive from his ally, Khan Cochût. Below the fort were some vaults in which, some time before, the rebels had stowed a large supply of powder and other munitions of war, concealed in huge oil-casks. Just as he was about to set out, he was joined by Cochût, who brought intelligence which seemed to afford the two conspirators immense satisfaction.

"The fatal draught has been taken,—there can be no doubt of it. The whole city will soon be in a tumult!" whispered the khan, as if afraid the very

walls would hear him. "Our friends will take possession of the city, and the young rajah will be disappointed of his hopes. When you arrive, they will receive you with shouts of joy, as they know you will restore the good old ways, and have nothing to do with the infidel Feringhees. For myself, I detest the English, and should delight in seeing them driven out of the whole of India."

Balkishen assured Khan Cochût that his services should be amply rewarded; and they agreed to remain a day or two longer in the fort, and then to proceed leisurely to Allahapoor, calculating that they should receive the expected intelligence of the rajah's death just before they reached the city. The sudden arrival of Burnett's advance-guard, however, prevented them from escaping, and they found themselves shut up like rats in a hole, with a scanty supply of food, and afraid to strike a light lest a spark should set fire to the combustible materials around them.

A day and a night passed away. Unless they could make their escape, all their plans would be defeated; for if Balkishen could not make his appearance in the city at the right moment, a rival might gain the power, from which it would be difficult to displace him.

They were neither of them very conscientious persons. A bright idea struck Balkishen. "We may blow up the fort," he whispered to his friend, "destroy the ranee and her brother, and make our escape in the

confusion. You are a brave man, Khan Cochût, and shall have the post of honour. While Bikoo and I seize three horses, you shall have the privilege of lighting the slow match; and we shall have time to reach our steeds and gallop off before the stones come rattling about our heads."

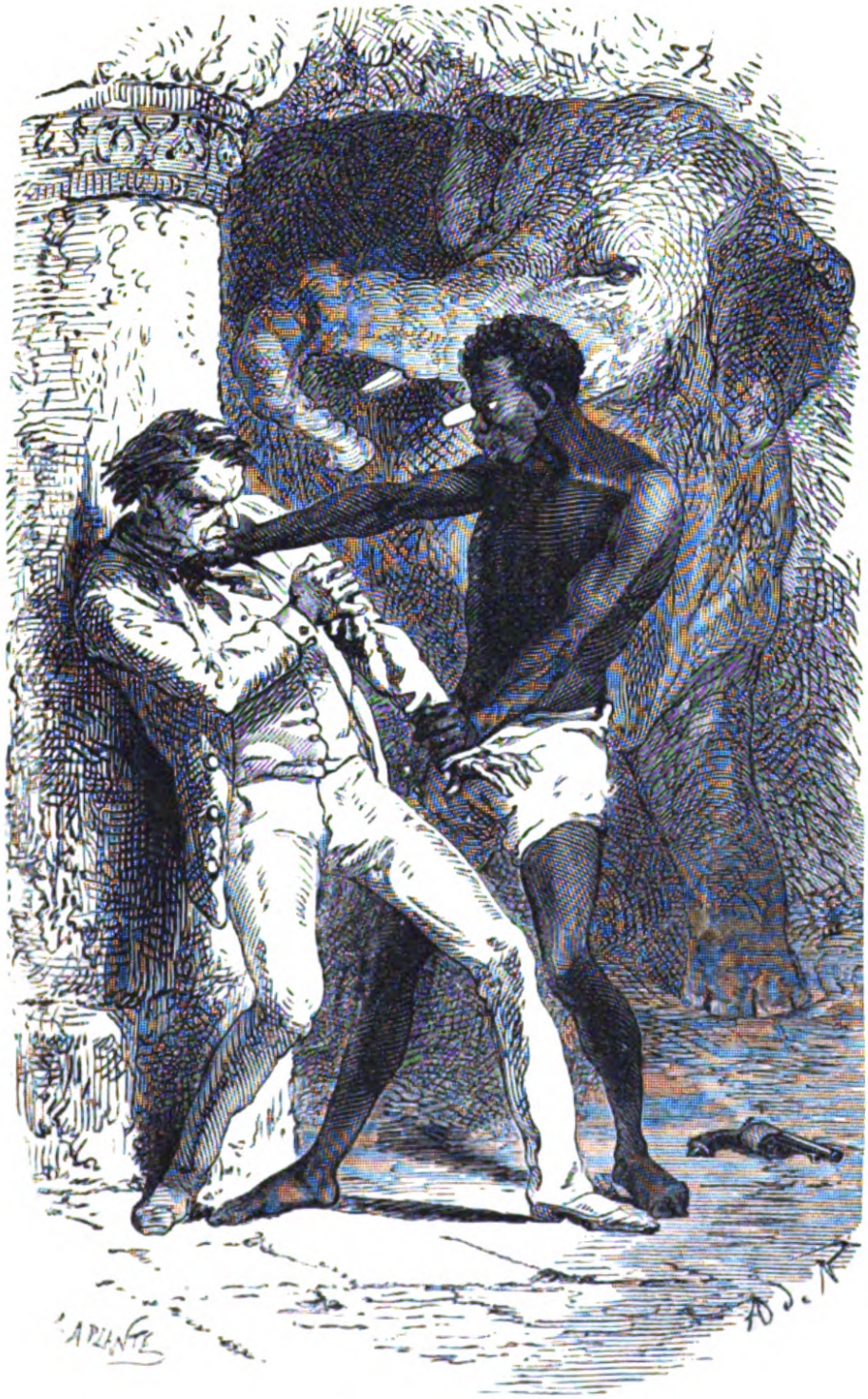
"I am much obliged to you for the compliment," answered Cochût; "but I must leave that honour to you. I am unable to run fast, and should prefer securing the horses."

Cochût was so positive, that at length Balkishen, who calculated that the task of setting fire to the slow match might be the least dangerous, undertook it. Afraid of creeping out by daylight, they were unable to ascertain what was taking place in the fort above them; but they calculated that the most propitious time for putting their nefarious project into execution would be just before daybreak.

At length the time arrived. Balkishen had prepared a long slow match.

"Now, my friend," he said, "do you and Bikoo creep out and secure three horses, and I will light the slow match."

Khan Cochût, who was unusually brave when any wicked deed was to be done, silently made his way out of the vault through a door which led into a narrow passage, and from this into an open court. Knowing that he might meet with opposition from some of



SAMBRO AND KHAN COCHUT.

the syces in charge of the horses, he held a pistol in his hand. A few threatening words, he thought, would induce them to keep silence. He was surprised to find that the dawn had already broken. He hesitated a minute; but recollecting that Balkishen would by this time have set fire to the slow match, he boldly stepped out from behind the wall which concealed him, closely followed by Bikoo. As he did so, he found himself face to face with a powerful-looking black slave conducting an elephant across the yard. The slave looked at him for an instant, and, pronouncing his name, asked him where he was going. Instead of replying, he pointed his pistol at the black's head, expecting to intimidate him. The next instant his weapon was knocked out of his hand; and the slave, seizing him by the throat, exclaimed, "You are the traitor who carried off the young ranee. You must come with me to the rajah, and tell him what you have been doing here."

"I'll come, my friend, willingly," exclaimed Cochût; "only take me out of the fort. You don't know what is going to happen. You and I and the elephant may be blown into atoms in a few minutes. Take me out of the fort,—take me out of the fort! Quick! quick!"

"That's where I am going to take you," answered Sambro; for he was the black slave. "Come along, my friend; come along."

At that moment casting his eyes on Bikoo, who stood trembling near by, he made a sign to the elephant, which immediately wound its trunk round the slave's body, and walked behind Sambro and the khan. To the surprise of the latter, he found the gates open, and saw a number of elephants and a large party of foot and horse winding along the road. He and his fellow-conspirator, not being aware of the custom of English troops to perform their marches during the cooler hours of the day—that is to say, in the latter part of the day and early in the morning—had not calculated on the possibility of their prey escaping them. Still, apparently, some of the troops had not left the fort; and he could only hope that those he wished to destroy were still there. He therefore turned many an anxious glance back at the fort, and kept urging Sambro to move faster.

Meanwhile, Balkishen having waited till he thought his accomplice would have been able to secure the horses, set fire to the train, and then hurried away to join him. On ascending the steps, however, his foot slipped and down he fell. In vain he shouted to Khan Cochût and Bikoo to come and help him. The slave was too far off to hear his master's voice. The match went on burning, approaching the fatal barrel with fearful rapidity. In vain Balkishen endeavoured to rise. He had dislocated his ankle, or otherwise injured it. Again and again he shrieked out. Though

FIRING THE TRAIN.

unable to stand, he crawled up the steps. To save his life, he must have run faster than he had ever before done. In his imagination he pictured the match not an inch from the barrel. In a few seconds the fire would touch the powder, and all would be over.

Major Molony had mounted his horse, and the sepoys having moved on, the European troop had just fallen in outside the fort, and were beginning to march, when suddenly an awful roar was heard, and a vast sheet of flame ascended from the middle of the fort. The major, clapping spurs into his horse's flanks and dashing forward, ordered his men to run for their lives. But the warning came too late, for many of the poor fellows were struck down. Though pieces of stone and huge masses of timber fell around on every side, the gallant major escaped uninjured, as did happily the larger portion of his men; and, as he rode forward to meet Burnett, who came galloping up, he passed Sambro, dragging on Khan Cochût, and the elephant carrying the slave Bikoo. Sambro explained the way in which he had captured the khan and his companion, and described their suspicious conduct. Burnett ordered him to give them in charge of a party of sepoys, who were directed on no account to let them escape.

A short halt was called, for the purpose of burying the dead. During the time, Burnett and the major examined the fort, but made no discovery which

enabled them to fathom the mysterious circumstance. Not a living being remained within it. Should any unfortunate persons have been left behind, they must have been blown to pieces. Burnett then rode forward to explain what had happened to Reginald; but as a long delay was unadvisable, he deferred the examination of Khan Cochût and his companion till their noonday halt.

Though Reginald was very happy to devote himself to his young sister, and to go through any amount of ceremony which his new position demanded of him, he soon got tired of sitting in a howdah; so ordering a horse to be prepared, he mounted, and took his place with Burnett at the head of his troops.

The scouts sent out returned with the report that the enemy had retreated—probably overawed by the imposing force protecting the ranee—and the intelligence that other troops were advancing from the capital. A strong body of these troops were met at the spot fixed on for the noonday halt, and handsomely-furnished tents were already pitched.

That there had been a nefarious plot to destroy the lives of himself and his sister, Reginald felt convinced; therefore, as soon as the necessary ceremonies had been gone through in receiving the officers of the newly-arrived troops, Reginald ordered that Khan Cochût and the slave should be brought before him. The only person present besides Burnett was Buxsoo, on whose

THE FORT BLOWN UP.

judgment and acuteness Reginald knew that he could rely to elicit the truth from the slave, if not from Cochût, who was not at all likely to confess it unless from dire necessity. Both were subjected to a close cross-examination; and Buxsoo also examined them, in a way worthy of an English lawyer. Reginald, indeed, felt convinced that they had been instrumental in blowing up the fort. The slave pleaded that he had to obey the commands of his master, who was probably destroyed; while Cochût, who had no such excuse to offer, exhibited the most abject fear, and offered to give information of the greatest importance, provided his life was spared and his property secured to him. He declined, however, doing so in the presence of Buxsoo.

"You may say anything before him without fear of being betrayed," answered Reginald; "I am responsible for his fidelity. And if I find that the information you give is not perfectly correct, I shall leave you to the fate you deserve; but if, on the contrary, it is of the consequence you state, I will undertake that you shall be allowed to go, with all your wealth, ill-gotten as I am afraid it has been."

After much hesitation, Cochût declared that the natives throughout the greater part of the country were ripe for rebellion against the English, and all who favoured their rule; that the rajah had been especially marked out for destruction, because he was

evidently attached to the Feringhees; and that before long it was hoped that they might be driven out of the country.

Again and again Cochût protested that what he said was correct. Reginald appealed to Buxsoo, who acknowledged that the statement made by Cochût was probably too true. He himself had had his suspicions aroused for some time, but he had not as yet gained sufficient information to enable him to warn the authorities.

Reginald consulted with Burnett, and they agreed that they were bound at all events to warn the authorities at Calcutta as soon as possible, and also to let Colonel Ross know what they had heard. The difficulty was, to find a messenger who could be trusted. Burnett was unwilling to go, for he felt that his presence was necessary for the protection, not only of the ranee, but of Reginald, as he fancied that he could at all events trust his troopers while he continued in command of them. If Buxsoo were sent, he might be suspected and stopped, and too probably murdered on the road.

"Then I will send Dick Thuddichum," said Reginald. "No one will suspect him; and any message I give he will deliver to the letter. He is well known in Calcutta by persons who can vouch for him, and who will immediately enable him to obtain an interview with the Government gentlemen or members of

EXAMINATION OF COCHUT AND BIKOO.

Council; and he will explain why I considered it prudent not to send any written despatch."

Burnett agreed to Reginald's proposal; and Cochût and Bikoo having been given into safe keeping, Dick was summoned and received the necessary directions. In a few minutes he was ready for his departure, with his master's verbal despatches carefully stowed away in his capacious head, out of which no one but those to whom they were to be delivered were likely to draw them.

"You'll look after Faithful, sir!" exclaimed Dick, giving a hitch to his trousers. "I don't much like leaving the poor beast to the mercy of these nigger fellows, lest they should play her any tricks. Though with me she's as gentle as a lamb, she don't much fancy them. But you'll not forget her, sir, I know. Just let her have half a sheep a day, at least. It will keep her in condition, and prevent her from doing any mischief, or helping herself to a blackamoor baby, which she might be apt to do if she didn't get her proper food; and small blame to her, seeing, so to speak, it's her nature."

Reginald assured Dick, that notwithstanding the affairs of state which would occupy his attention, he would take good care that the faithful tigress was not neglected.

"I'm sure as how it wouldn't be your fault if she was, sir," answered Dick. "But it's them niggers

I'm mistrustful of; though, I think, if you was to let 'em know that you'll hang half-a-dozen of them if any harm comes to her, they'll be inclined to treat her properly."

The mind of the honest sailor being at length set at rest on that score, he took leave of his master and Burnett.

Dick made his way without interruption to the Ganges, where he found a boat descending the river, and in due course reached Calcutta. Following Reginald's directions, he soon got himself conducted before the members of Council—the Board fortunately sitting at the time. He entered with his usual undaunted air, not at all abashed by finding himself in the presence of so august an assembly.

On being asked what information he brought, he doffed his hat, and replied,—"Please your worships, I am sent by my master, the young Rajah of Allahapoor—as he now is, seeing that his grandfather, the old rajah, has ordered him to tack that title to his name—to tell your worships that the rascally natives have determined, if they can get the chance, to cut the throats of every mother's son among the English, on the first opportunity. It may be soon or it may be some time hence, but he thinks it as well that you should be warned, and be prepared for whatever may happen."

Dick then gave verbatim Reginald's message; after

DICK THUDDICHUM BEFORE THE COUNCIL.

which he was directed to retire, while the members held a consultation on the extraordinary information they had received.

The next day Dick was ordered to return, and to inform his master that the Council would pay due attention to the warning he had been good enough to send them.

We must now go back to Reginald. While encamped next day at noon, the expected reinforcements from the city arrived, with a despatch from the rajah telling him that he was very ill, and urging him to advance without delay. It was his wish that his grandson should enter the city in due state, to produce an impression on the population. Reginald had therefore, against his own inclination, to don a still richer costume than he had yet appeared in; and with a body of officers and guards walking on either side of him, and Burnett's troopers following on horseback, he prepared to enter the city. The ranee, no longer looked upon as a chief personage, sat concealed in a howdah on the back of an elephant towards the rear of the procession. The vast crowd assembled filled the air with their acclamations; and had not Reginald been well acquainted with the state of affairs, he might have supposed himself the popular ruler of a happy and loyal people. He very well knew, however, that any one of the nobles and guards

surrounding him would be ready, at a convenient opportunity, to send a bullet through his head, or give him a cup of poison; and that the populace, now shouting his praises, would with equal delight drag his mangled body through the streets, should a rival succeed in deposing him. His satisfaction at the exalted position he had so unexpectedly obtained was, therefore, not without alloy. His thoughts, however, flew away to Violet Ross, and he could not help hoping that her father would no longer object to him as a son-in-law. That she had remained faithful, he had no doubt; and he should soon have the happiness, he hoped, of again seeing her. Should she object to live surrounded by the splendour of an Oriental court, he was ready, could he do so with honour, by placing the country under the English Government, to give up India, and assume that position in England to which he hoped to prove himself entitled, should he recover the missing documents of which he was in search.

Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind as he rode through the streets, amid the obsequious and bowing multitude who thronged around. As he approached the palace, rich carpets covered the road; and the rajah's body-guard, with their officers in gorgeous costumes, stood drawn up to receive him. He felt considerable anxiety at not seeing the rajah himself, and it was increased on being informed that

A TRIUMPHAL ENTRY.

he lay too ill to rise, but that he waited the arrival of his grandson on his couch in his private apartment.

Saluting the officials of the palace as he passed along, he hurried to the old man's side.

"I am thankful that you have come, my son, for I am sick unto death," said the rajah. "My own physicians know not what is the matter with me, and I have sent to beg that the English doctor who has accompanied the resident may forthwith come and prescribe for me."

Reginald, of course, expressed a hope that the doctor would soon arrive, and have the happiness of restoring him to health.

"And now let me hear an account of your adventures," said the rajah.

Reginald briefly gave it; not forgetting to speak in the highest terms of Burnett, in the hope that the rajah would be induced to sanction his marriage with Nuna. He then thought it right to tell his grandfather of the information he had received from Khan Cochût.

"He is a cunning fellow, and may have wormed it out of some of the natives, though I doubt whether many would trust him," observed the rajah. "But you tell me that a slave of that traitor Balkishen has been captured; let him be brought to me. He knows more about his master's affairs than any one else, and for the sake of saving his life will willingly give all the information he possesses."

Reginald was still with the rajah when Nuna arrived. She was overwhelmed with grief at seeing him so ill. He spoke to her kindly, but it was evident that he had transferred his affections to his grandson, whom he looked upon as his successor. Reginald did his best to make amends to her for the change in their grandfather's manner; but she seemed rather pleased than otherwise, having had no ambition to occupy the exalted position to which she had been destined. Perhaps she reflected that it might remove all objections the rajah would have entertained with regard to bestowing her hand on her brother's friend.

Soon after she had retired, the slave Bikoo, for whom Reginald had sent, was brought, heavily chained, into the presence of the rajah, who at once promised him his life on condition that he would afford all the information he possessed regarding the proceedings of his late master Balkishen.

"You have described him certainly as a great villain," observed the rajah, when the slave had apparently finished his account; "but is there nothing else you can add? I was already aware of most of the circumstances you have told me."

"I will confess to another crime, if I may be pardoned for taking part in it; for consider, O Rajah! in your benignity, that I am but a slave, and my master compelled me to act the part I did," answered Bikoo, trembling all over.

"You have my promise, wretched slave, that no punishment shall overtake you on account of anything you may confess," said the rajah. "Say on, slave."

Bikoo, recovering himself, continued,—"I managed to steal into your highness's treasury, from whence I carried off a casket full of papers, of which my master desired to possess himself."

"What has become of them?" asked Reginald eagerly.

"Remember that if you speak not the truth you will immediately be put to death," added the rajah.

"O Refuge of the World, far be it from me to deceive you," answered the slave. "The casket was placed by my master, with other treasures, within the tomb of the learned saint Danee Domanuck, in the temple of the great god Doorga, before which the pious priests of our faith, at morn, noonday, and eventide, are wont to stand reciting the prayers and the wise sayings he composed; but so absorbed are they in their devotions that they will not discover who enters the temple, and the casket may without difficulty be recovered. If my pardon is granted, I will undertake to carry it off from the spot in which I before placed it."

"Pardon or no pardon, the casket must be brought here before sunset," exclaimed the rajah. "But what assurance have I that you speak the truth, and will

not endeavour to make your escape should I order your chains to be knocked off, and allow you to go free ?"

"Refuge of the World, I am incapable of such treachery," said Bikoo, putting his hand to his heart.

"With your highness's leave, I will accompany the slave," said Reginald. "If I assume my European costume I shall not be recognized, and the priests will suppose me a stranger led by curiosity to visit their temple. If the slave speaks the truth, the casket may then be obtained without difficulty; and as I will go well armed, I will protect him should the priests attempt to take it from him."

"You may go, my son," said the rajah; "but, as a protection, take fifty of my guards and station them outside the temple, with directions to be ready to rush in at a signal from you, and to capture the priests, should they attempt to stop you. That will be a shorter way of proceeding than the slave proposes; and those priests are all great rascals, to my certain knowledge."

Reginald had grave doubts whether, after all, the slave was not deceiving him. He could scarcely believe that the object for which he had been so long in search was almost within his grasp. The rajah urged him to return as soon as possible, and was evidently unwilling to have him long out of his sight.

After giving orders to the chief officer of the guards

to select a band of fifty trustworthy men, he changed his Oriental costume for his seaman's dress, taking care to stick a brace of pistols and a dagger in his belt. Then ordering Bikoo to accompany him, he set out for the temple, which was in a remote part of the city.

Quaint and monstrous designs ornamented all parts of the building. Leaving the guard outside, Reginald passed under a low archway, when he found himself in a hall, on each side of which he could distinguish, through the dim obscurity, the hideous forms of the presiding divinities of the temple.

"I see no priests or worshippers in the place," he whispered to Bikoo.

"The holy men are engaged in their devotions in the lower hall, where the tomb of the saint is situated," answered Bikoo, leading the way.

Reginald followed, holding a pistol ready for use, should his guide prove treacherous, or the priests appear inclined to oppose his entrance. At the further end of the upper hall was a flight of steps leading downwards. The slave descended them, and Reginald boldly made his way after him. His ear then caught the sound of persons uttering prayers in low monotonous tones; and on reaching the bottom of the steps he saw, by the light of a lamp which burned on an altar on one side of the vault, a number of strange-looking beings. Some had long matted hair hanging over their faces, and heavy iron hoops round their

necks; most of them with garments scarcely sufficient for decency. Some were standing upright, beating their breasts; others were kneeling or extending themselves flat on the ground, against which they were striking their heads.

Before a tomb of richly-carved stone stood an aged man, with a long white beard, but with scarcely more clothing on him than his companions had. In his arms he held a large open volume, and though he could not, from the position in which he held it, have read its pages, he was apparently repeating the contents. Reginald doubted whether he was sufficiently absorbed in his task not to observe him as he approached. Bikoo glided noiselessly behind the tomb, while Reginald stood ready to assist him, watching the countenances of the degraded beings engaged in this strange mode of worship. Most of them stood as motionless as statues, with their eyes seemingly fixed on vacancy, their lips only moving as they uttered their meaningless prayers. For a moment it struck Reginald as a clever trick of the slave to effect his escape. But at length he saw him emerge from the darkness, carrying something wrapped in a cloth, which he held close to his side to prevent the priests from seeing it. He hoped in another moment to have the long-wished-for treasure in his hand, when the seemingly unconscious beings before him dashed forward to seize Bikoo, who, springing for protection to the young rajah, gave him

THE PRIESTS AT THEIR DEVOTIONS.

the casket. The priests on this turned on the white stranger, whom they now apparently perceived for the first time.

"Sacrilege! sacrilege!" they cried out. "You are robbing us of our treasures. The curses of the gods will fall on you."

"My friends," exclaimed Reginald, presenting his pistol, "stand back, and I will explain myself. This casket belongs to me, and was stolen by one of your fraternity, so that I am but recovering my own. If I am rightly informed, a considerable amount of property stolen from other persons lies concealed in this vault. My guards are without, and, summoned by me, they will enter, and, taking possession of all the treasures they can find, will deliver them to their proper owners. If you refrain from interfering with my proceedings, I will allow you to continue your devotions, and to remain at present as guardians of the treasures concealed in this place."

The priests, considering that "discretion was the better part of valour," and seeing the bold bearing of the young stranger, allowed him and Bikoo to mount the steps; when, traversing the hall, they quickly made their way into the open air, glad to escape from the mephitic atmosphere of the vault and the fury of the priests—who, as soon as they had recovered from their astonishment, broke forth in loud cries and threats of vengeance. They grew cooler, however, on discover-

ing the rajah's troops at the entrance of the temple, and hurried back to their devotions with the advice they had received from the stranger strongly impressed on their minds. Many a prayer was offered up that Doorga would protect their ill-gotten wealth from the grasp of the infidels.

Followed closely by his guards, Reginald, who had a horse in waiting, rode back to the palace, carrying the precious casket, which he was unwilling to trust to other hands. On his arrival an officer met him at the gate with a message from the rajah, who was anxiously waiting his return. Reginald found him, to his surprise, on foot, pacing slowly up and down a broad verandah overlooking the city, to which he had caused his divan to be carried, that he might enjoy the fresh air.

"Have you been successful, my son?" exclaimed the old man eagerly, as Reginald approached. "Tell me quickly; for a dimness has come over my eyes, and I feel a strange sinking of the heart, which forebodes I know not what."

Reginald exhibited the wished-for casket.

"It is the same, my son," he exclaimed; "and contains, I trust, the valuable documents your father committed to my care. Let me see them; I shall know them at once."

Reginald was about to try and open the casket, when he saw a peculiar expression pass over the countenance

DEATH OF THE RAJAH.

of the rajah, who staggered and sank back on the divan near which he was standing. The old man gazed at him with a look of affection, and tried to speak; but in vain. He drew his breath every instant with more and more labour; and then came one more sigh, and he seemed to be sleeping calmly. Reginald threw himself by his side and took his hand. It failed to return his grasp. He gazed at the old man's countenance, unable to persuade himself that he was really dead; but he became aware of the fact by the loud cries of the women, who, with fans in their hands, had been in readiness to cool his fevered brow as he lay on the couch.

"Oh, I wish that the English doctor had arrived before," thought Reginald. "He might have saved his life."

At that moment he was aroused by the voice of Burnett, who, approaching, exclaimed,—

"I trust the rajah is not worse. Dr. Graham has ridden hard to come to him."

"I have arrived too late," said the doctor, as he took the old man's hand, and looked into his countenance. "But not too late to form an opinion of the disease which has carried him off. He has been poisoned; and a further examination will confirm what I say."

Reginald was horrified; but the doctor asserted that he was right.

"Let me advise your highness to be careful of what food you partake and what beverages you drink. The same hand which mixed the potion for your grandfather may be ready to administer a similar one to you," added the doctor.

CHAPTER IX.

REGINALD RAJAH OF ALLAHAPOOR—ARRIVAL OF CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD—VISIT TO BUXSOO'S FAMILY—THE CAPTAIN TAKEN BY SURPRISE—A BANQUET—REGINALD ESCORTS NUNA TO THE RESIDENCY—MEETING OF NUNA AND VIOLET.

THE late rajah had been carried to the tomb of his ancestors in state, and Reginald had been duly installed as his successor amid the acclamations of the people. But remembering the warning he had received, he was very far from enjoying his new position. Willingly would he have left the country, and the Oriental magnificence in which he lived, had he not felt that it was his duty to remain and endeavour to ameliorate the condition of his subjects.

Nuna had been much grieved at the loss of her grandfather, and had hitherto been unwilling to appear in public; though she could not help looking forward with satisfaction to the greater liberty she would be able to enjoy. Reginald had had a long conversation with her about his friend Burnett; and she had confessed that she would rather become his wife than that

of the most wealthy and powerful prince in the country. So Reginald, knowing his friend's sentiments, considered the matter settled.

He took an early opportunity of telling Burnett, who thanked him heartily for having undertaken his cause with the ranee.

"You will ever find me, I trust, my dear Reginald, faithful and devoted to your interests," he added.

"That I am very sure you will be," said Reginald. "But, charming as my sister is, I suspect her education is not quite up to what a young English lady's should be. We must get her better instructed in certain female accomplishments. I contemplate asking Colonel Ross to allow her to reside with his daughter in the cantonments, where she cannot fail to benefit by Violet's example, and such instruction as she is able to impart. I wish that the colonel would get over his visit of state, that I might return it, and have the opportunity of seeing Violet, when I would broach the subject. It is tantalizing to have her so near, and yet not to be able to go and see her."

Burnett thought Reginald's plan a very good one, and was sure that Nuna would be delighted with it.

So occupied had Reginald been since the death of the rajah, that he had been unable to write to Colonel Ross, who might possibly be still ignorant of who he was. For the same reason he had not as yet written to Violet. Managing at length to withdraw himself

for a short interval from the crowd of courtiers and nobles who had arrived to pay their respects—of suppliants who came with petitions or complaints—and of officers of various grades who waited to receive orders—he had retired to the only room in which he could enjoy that privacy which he so much required. Near it was one occupied by Burnett; and on the other side was a chamber which he intended for the use of any European guest who might visit the palace.

He quickly wrote the letter to Colonel Ross, telling him of the wonderful change in his circumstances. He assured him that he now possessed the documents of which he had been in search, and which enabled him to claim a handsome estate and title in England; and he expressed a hope that Colonel Ross would not refuse to allow him to look forward to the possession of his daughter's hand. It was, it must be stated, a very humble and moderate letter, considering the position the writer enjoyed.

He then began one to Violet, giving a brief account of all his adventures; assuring her that his love was unaltered, that the splendour of his court had no attractions for him, and that he would abandon it as soon as he had performed his duty to the people by placing them under the English Government, and return with her to her native land. He had still much more to say—indeed, he was not altogether satisfied with what he had said—when an attendant entered

and informed him that an English officer had arrived with despatches from the cantonments, and desired to deliver them in person.

Reginald, with somewhat of a sailor's carelessness, left his papers on the table at which he had been writing, with the casket and the precious document it contained. Remembering that he ought to assume the state and dignity in which his grandfather always appeared in public, he habited himself in his rajah's costume, and, with the chief officers of his household, entered the reception-hall; at one end of which he took his seat on a raised ottoman, which served as a throne, his grim body-guard in full armour lining either side of the hall, while the late rajah's scimitar and shield hung above his head. All being arranged, he directed that the officer should be admitted.

On the curtain being drawn aside for the entrance of his visitor, Reginald's eyes fell on Captain Hawkesford, who was advancing towards him. He kept his countenance, wondering whether he should be recognized; but it was evident from the captain's manner that he did not suspect into whose presence he had been admitted. Speaking Hindoostanee with tolerable fluency, he did not require an interpreter; and having gone through the usual ceremony, he delivered his dispatches, which Reginald eagerly read. The captain then gave a verbal message he had been directed to deliver. It was to the effect that the resident hoped to be allowed,

THE YOUNG RAJAH AND CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD.

in the course of a day or two, to pay his respects to his highness, to congratulate him on his accession to the dignity of Rajah of Allahapoor, and to express his sympathy at the loss he had sustained by the death of his father, of which he had only just heard. The resident had been led to suppose that the ranee would have succeeded; and he was rejoiced at the thought that the government of the country was in the hands of one who, he doubted not, would be well able to rule the people, while he begged to assure him of the cordial support of the British Government.

Reginald—who had his reasons for not wishing Captain Hawkesford to discover who he was—naturally fearing that his pronunciation might betray him, answered with due caution, and kept his eyes fixed on the captain's countenance. The result of his scrutiny convinced him that his guest was still under the impression that he was in the presence of a native prince. He was still further assured of this when Captain Hawkesford asked if his highness could inform him what had become of the young Englishman who was said to have been at the court of the rajah, and to have accompanied him in his disastrous expedition against the hill tribes. It was his duty, he observed, to warn his highness against that young man, whose objects were open to suspicion; for although he was accompanied by an English officer, he had come up the country without any authority from the Government at

Calcutta. It was considered more than probable that he was a Russian spy, whose aim was to create a disturbance, and either to set the people against their rulers, or, by instigating the rulers to conspire against the English, to allow the easy access of a Russian army into the country.

"Does the British resident send this as a message to me?" asked Reginald, restraining his indignation.

"I was not directed to deliver it," answered Captain Hawkesford; "but I considered that it would be advisable to warn your highness,—and I mentioned the subject merely, as it were, in the course of conversation."

"I will follow your advice, and watch the proceedings of the young man—who is, I have every reason to believe, still in the city," answered Reginald. "The late rajah held him in high esteem, and from what I know of him I should not have supposed that he was a Russian spy, or a person likely to be engaged in plots against the English Government."

"Your highness should be aware that conspirators find it necessary to assume all sorts of characters and disguises, and that, plausible as the person in question may have appeared, he is not the less likely to be an arrant rogue."

"We will suppose him, then, to be a rogue, till he has been proved to be an honest man, and narrowly watch his proceedings," said Reginald in a tone which

made Captain Hawkesford start, and look earnestly at Reginald. The latter, however, kept his countenance, and after some further conversation directed that the English officer should be conducted to the guest-room, where he might rest till the time appointed for a banquet, at which several nobles, as well as Captain Burnett, were to be present.

Reginald, after having received a few petitions, and transacted some other public business, retired to his room, where he threw off his robes of state, and assumed his light seaman's dress, which he infinitely preferred to wear. He had an object, however, on this occasion, in doing so. He wished to visit his Christian friend Dhunna Singh privately, whose sons, including Buxsoo, were busily employed in gaining information for him; for he was well aware that he could not trust any of his nobles, or any other person about the court. There might be honest men among them, but he had as yet been unable to discover them. The intelligence he had received from Dhunna Singh was unsatisfactory. There could be no doubt that the plot of which he had before heard for his destruction, and for the overthrow of the British rule, was fast ripening, and he could not but regret that the old rajah had petitioned for the English forces,—which, though they might, under ordinary circumstances, have materially assisted in keeping his own subjects in check, were utterly inadequate for the purpose should

the whole country rise in arms, as he was led to fear would be the case. He resolved, in consequence of the information he had lately received, to send Captain Hawkesford back with a despatch to Colonel Ross, warning him of the danger, and urging him to be on his guard.

After waiting for some time to see Buxsoo, who had been out in the city picking up fresh information, Reginald returned to the palace accompanied by Faithful, who usually attended him when he went out without a guard. Entering by the rear of the palace, he made his way, as was his custom, up the back steps to his private room. A curtain hung before the doorway, and what was his astonishment and indignation, on drawing it slightly aside, to see Captain Hawkesford seated at the table, pen in hand, and busily employed in making notes from the documents which he had taken out of the casket! He hesitated for some moments as to how he should act towards the captain. He could, however, scarcely restrain his anger when he saw him, after reading the despatch to Colonel Ross, deliberately glance his eye over the letter to Violet. Boiling with rage, he drew from his belt a revolver, without which he never went abroad, and silently walked up to the table, which he reached without being perceived by the intruder. Faithful, entering at his heels, sprang forward and raised her head above the table, on which she placed one of her

THE CAPTAIN IN AN UNPLEASANT POSITION.

huge paws, directly facing the captain, who threw himself back in his chair with a look of horror and despair in his countenance.

"What treatment do you expect from the man whom you have maligned, whose private letters you have, contrary to all the laws of honour, ventured to peruse?" exclaimed Reginald. "I am not going to imbrue my hands in your blood; but this tigress would, at a word from me, tear you limb from limb. You have broken through all the laws of hospitality, and in consequence of my carelessness obtained a secret with which I wished no one to be acquainted till the proper time arrived for making it known."

"I—I—I—I humbly beg your pardon," exclaimed the captain, his voice trembling with terror. "I had no idea that you and the young rajah of Allahapoor were one and the same person. When I spoke as I did, I merely repeated the reports I had heard. I entreat you to forgive me, and I faithfully promise to keep your secret."

"I have no choice but to trust you," answered Reginald sternly. "You see that your father, who would have deprived me of my property and title, has no prospect of success if I live and can produce these documents. What you would have done with them had I not opportunely arrived, I cannot pretend to say. But I am not anxious for further conversation. Retire, sir, to your room. It is my desire that you appear at

the public banquet as if nothing had happened, and after that return as soon as you can to the cantonments with the despatches which I will deliver to you for Colonel Ross. The private letter you have had the audacity to read, I will send by another messenger. And now, sir, I say again, go, and meditate on what has happened. That I have spared your life, may induce you to act with some degree of gratitude."

Hawkesford, obeying the order he had received, rose from his seat. A loud growl uttered by the tigress made him spring rapidly towards the door. She would probably have followed and caught him, had she not been restrained by the voice of her master.

Reginald having closed the door behind the retreating officer, sat down, and thought over the position of affairs and the numerous important matters which pressed on his mind. That he was surrounded by dangers of all sorts, he felt convinced. He knew full well that he had traitors within the walls of his palace; and that his subjects, who had lately received him with shouts of exuberant joy, might at any moment turn again and shout loudly for his destruction; while his troops could not be depended on. He had his stanch friend Burnett by his side, and he could rely on Dhunna Singh and his sons; while Faithful, he felt sure, would defend him with her life. He was not, however, so much concerned about his own personal safety as he was for that of Nuna; and as every sup-

porter was of consequence, he could not help wishing for the return of Dick Thuddichum.

So absorbed was he in his thoughts that he did not calculate how the time went by, and he was still sitting at his desk when an attendant appeared to announce that the banquet was prepared. Not forgetting this time to lock up his documents, and to stow away the casket in a place of safety, he hastily donned his Oriental costume, and entered the grand hall, where the guests were already assembled, with as serene a countenance as he could command. Taking the seat hitherto occupied by the old rajah, he summoned Burnett to a place by his side; requesting Captain Hawkesford, who stood with a somewhat downcast look, to take one on the other hand; the nobles and other guests dropping into their places according to their rank, leaving one side of the table, as was usual, unoccupied. Reginald had left the whole arrangements to the "master of the ceremonies," having forgotten to express any wish on the subject; the customs which had been in vogue during the old rajah's time were consequently adhered to.

As soon as the more substantial part of the feast had been concluded, a band of dancing-girls and musicians made their appearance; followed by a puppet-show, which might have afforded amusement to a party of children, but which to Reginald's taste appeared absurd in the extreme. He felt far more dis-

gusted with the performances of the nautch-girls, and he resolved to prohibit their introduction in future.

He expressed his intention to Burnett.

"I agree with you," was the answer; "but I am afraid that your plans, if carried out, will make you unpopular with your courtiers."

"I would rather be unpopular than sanction so barbarous a custom."

"There are not a few barbarous customs which you will have to get rid of before you will be satisfied," said Burnett.

"No English lady would like to see her sex so degraded by being compelled to exhibit themselves as these poor girls are," said Reginald, thinking of Violet.

"I suspect that the performances at an English opera-house can scarcely claim a higher position than the exhibitions of these nautch-girls," observed Burnett.

"I never went to an opera in England, but I should not have supposed that a scene like this would have been tolerated in a civilized country," said Reginald.

"Your highness is very particular," observed Captain Hawkesford with a scarcely suppressed sneer.

"No man can be too particular in doing what is right," said Reginald, turning away from his guest, to whom he had hitherto paid just as much attention as etiquette required.

He was glad, however, when the banquet came to a conclusion; when, issuing an order that Captain

Hawkesford's escort should be in readiness to start, he, with studied formality, wished him good-bye; and telling Burnett that he desired his company, he retired to his private apartment.

Burnett in a short time made his appearance.

"I cannot stand this sort of thing much longer," Reginald exclaimed, as he paced up and down the room. "I will try to carry out the necessary reforms, and I will then beg the British Government to take possession of the country, and to preserve order as best they can. I am sure Violet will never be happy here; and I intend proposing a return to England as soon as her father will consent to our marriage."

"There is not much probability that the colonel will refuse his permission," observed Burnett, laughing; "and I trust that you will allow me, at the same time, to become the husband of your sister."

The next day, Colonel Ross arrived to pay his state visit. Reginald received him with a full display of Oriental magnificence. As soon as etiquette would allow, he begged his presence in his private apartments, where, having briefly narrated his adventures, he gave an account of his birth and prospects. He declared that his sole ambition was to become the husband of Violet, and to devote himself to the delightful task of making her happy.

"You have hitherto known me only as Reginald Hamerton, and such I might have remained had I

not visited Allahapoor, where, in an unexpected manner, I was acknowledged by the rajah as the son of his daughter, and by his means succeeded in obtaining possession of certain documents which I had been charged by my father if possible to obtain. Some were title-deeds of large estates in England: the most important, however, being the marriage certificate of my father and mother; the existence of which was denied by those who disputed my claim to the title of Lord Hamerton and the possession of the estates."

Colonel Ross, as Burnett had shrewdly suspected, did not hesitate to afford Reginald his hearty sanction to his marriage with his daughter. "Indeed," he added, "after having discovered that my daughter's heart was truly yours, I had determined to waive any objections I entertained, should I, on further inquiries, have found you as worthy of her as she believed you to be."

Reginald was warm in his expressions of gratitude. He felt infinitely happier than he had been for many a long day. Indeed, all the difficulties with which he was surrounded appeared to have vanished. Colonel Ross willingly agreed to his proposal that Nuna should take up her residence in the cantonments with Violet, and it was arranged that Reginald should escort his sister there the following day. The colonel was residing in a bungalow which had been repaired for his

reception, and which would afford sufficient accommodation for Nuna and the few attendants she wished to accompany her. Reginald would gladly have set off with the colonel, but he was unwilling to leave Nuna in the palace alone; he was compelled, therefore, to restrain his impatience until the following day.

He wisely kept his plan a secret; and when the richly-caparisoned elephants, escorted by a body of horse, were seen moving through the city, it was supposed that the ranee was simply going to pay a visit of state to the daughter of the English resident.

Reginald rode on horseback, with Burnett by his side, and attended by a party of his trusty guards; and he arrived some time before his sister. It need not be said that he was fully satisfied with the way in which Violet received him. When Nuna arrived and dismounted from her elephant, Violet was also ready to give her an affectionate greeting.

As Violet led her to a seat, Nuna gazed round the neat and nicely furnished room. "Oh, this is what I shall enjoy far more than the gorgeous magnificence of a palace, with the pomp and ceremony I have had to undergo," she exclaimed. "You must teach me English ways and manners, for I want to become quite an English girl, like you."

Violet promised to do her best; and she and Nuna, greatly to Reginald's satisfaction, were soon as intimate as if they had been acquainted all their lives.

CHAPTER X.

CHUPATTIES—UNSATISFACTORY INTELLIGENCE—REGINALD, ON HIS WAY TO THE RESIDENCY, HEARS THE SOUND OF FIRING—A MUTINY IN THE CANTONMENTS—COLONEL ROSS AND HIS PARTY RESCUED—ESCAPE TO A VILLAGE AMONG THE HILLS—THE CAMP FORTIFIED—CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD'S ENMITY CONTINUES—REAPPEARANCE OF FAITHFUL—IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE BROUGHT BY HER—PREPARATIONS FOR DEFENCE.

FOR several weeks matters went on quietly at Allahapoor. Aided by Burnett, Reginald was able to carry out many of his projected reforms, though not without opposition from some of the chief men, and often from those who were likely to benefit by them. The indefatigable Buxsoo brought him information of what was going on beneath the seemingly quiet surface of society. It was far from satisfactory. He reported that persons were moving from district to district, distributing "chupatties,"—sacred cakes, which answered the purpose of the "fiery cross" of Scotland. With amazing rapidity these cakes were passed over the length and breadth of the land. It was supposed that they came originally from Barrackpore. The watchman of one village gave the watchman of the next vil-

lage two cakes, with an injunction to make six fresh ones, and retaining two, to pass the others on in the same way. What the object of the cakes was, most of those who received them were in ignorance; but they fully understood that some matter of importance was to be carried out, and they were bound to obey the orders they might receive from the centre of operations. Reginald charged Buxsoo to ascertain, if possible, the secret object of this distribution of the chupatties. That they meant mischief of some sort or other, there could be no doubt.

Burnett, in the meantime, improved the discipline of his horsemen, and endeavoured to ingratiate himself with them. Reginald also increased the number of his guards, selecting those men most likely to prove faithful. Wuzeer Singh had by this time recovered from his wounds, and had resumed his duties. Reginald offered to promote him; but he begged to remain in the ranks, assuring his master that he could there render better service than he could were he made an officer.

Reginald and Burnett, as may be supposed, paid frequent visits to the cantonments; and they were eagerly looking forward to the arrival of a chaplain, who would unite them to the ladies to whom they were engaged. Reginald, of course, kept Colonel Ross fully informed of all the intelligence he obtained. The colonel, however, was convinced that the British

rule was so firmly established in India that nothing could shake it; that whatever the meaning of the chupatties might be, they could not possibly be intended to instigate the people to rebellion. His own regiment, he declared, was stanch to the backbone, and nothing would make them swerve from their duty. Burnett said the same of his cavalry; and declared that to a man they were ready to follow him to the death. Reginald, however, was not convinced; and the very next day Buxsoo brought him intelligence which confirmed his suspicions. The sepoy regiments in the British service had lately been armed with Enfield rifles, and a report had been spread that the cartridges to be used in them—and the ends of which had to be bitten off—had been greased with the fat of pigs and bullocks. This was done, it was said, that every Hindoo soldier might thus become unclean and lose caste, and have no other resource but to turn Christian; the British Government having determined, it was affirmed, to compel all its subjects to embrace Christianity.

"Very miserable Christians they would be, if such were the case," observed Buxsoo; "but my poor Hindoo countrymen, brought up in gross ignorance, are ready to believe the most childish reports."

Information arrived, some few days after this, that at Lucknow and other places the sepoy troops had mutinied, but that the mutiny had been put down by

a strong hand, and it was believed that order had been restored. Day after day, however, unsatisfactory intelligence came in from all quarters; and even in the British provinces bands of the marauders suddenly sprang up, and commenced plundering and burning villages. Burnett was accordingly directed to scour the country round Allahapoor, in order to put a stop to such proceedings.

Buxsoo having informed Reginald that the Mohammedan part of the population were about to rise and create a riot, the result of which might probably be the plundering and burning of the city, he immediately summoned the most influential Mohammedan nobles and others to meet him in council. They arrived fully armed, many of them assuming a bold and insolent air, and evidently ready to dispute his authority. As soon as they were seated, he addressed them in gracious tones; reminding them that he had not sought the position he now held, and that his sole aim since assuming the reins of government had been to promote the welfare of all classes, and to advance the happiness and prosperity of the country. While he was speaking, he observed Wuzeer Singh glide in and place himself, with a revolver in each hand, behind his chair of state, but so excited were the persons assembled that his entrance was not remarked. Reginald continued his address, inviting one after another to speak in return. His determined demeanour

had its due effect, and he managed to keep the attention of his assembly till the day was nearly ended, and the time fixed upon for the outbreak had passed.

The following morning, at an early hour, Reginald, full of anxiety as to what might next occur, rode out to the cantonments, accompanied by a few of his officers and a small company of his guards—some being on horseback, but most of them on foot. He had expected the return of Burnett with his cavalry that very morning, but he had not yet appeared. As Reginald approached the cantonments, he was startled by the sound of continued and rapid firing. Ordering the foot-guards to follow as fast as they could, he dashed forward with his horsemen, among whom was Wuzeer Singh, towards the scene of action. He saw clouds of smoke and flames ascending in several places, evidently from buildings on fire; while the sound of musketry, though more desultory than at first, was still heard. He urged on his horse to its utmost speed, feeling painfully anxious for the safety of Colonel Ross and those dear to him; and in another minute he beheld a spectacle which filled him with dismay and alarm. A small body of English troops who had their quarters in the part of the cantonments nearest the city, had, it was evident, been attacked, and after bravely defending themselves, had been cut down or put to flight; for he now met several men endeavouring to make their escape from an overwhelm-

OUTBREAK OF THE MUTINY: A GUARD SURPRISED.

ing body of cavalry, who were savagely sabring all who attempted to withstand them, while numbers lay on the ground, brought down by the bullets of their foes. As he called on them to rally, they obeyed him, thinking that they were about to be supported, and presented a bold face to the advance of the horsemen. The latter on this—observing, as they must have done, Reginald's guards rapidly advancing to meet them—wheeled round and galloped off to a distance. He, to his dismay, remarked that the horsemen had the appearance of Burnett's troopers, and he could not help dreading that the men had mutinied and murdered their commander. He asked Wuzeer Singh his opinion. "It is too likely to be the case," was the answer. "Captain Burnett placed more confidence in them than they deserved; for though some were faithful, there were many traitors among them."

Reginald's chief anxiety at present, however, was about the safety of Violet and Nuna, and the other ladies, as well as that of Colonel Ross and the officers under him. He learned from a British soldier that the sepoy regiment had mutinied, and having killed several of their officers who had remained with them and attempted to bring them back to their duty, had marched off with their arms, after setting fire to several bungalows; that the Europeans had been surprised when on the point of pursuing them by the rebel cavalry, who had dashed suddenly into the

cantonments, cutting off all connection with their officers and any of the natives who might have remained faithful. Having for some time gallantly defended themselves, they had been compelled to retreat, and would undoubtedly have been destroyed had it not been for the arrival of Reginald and his party.

No one could inform him whether the house occupied by Colonel Ross had been attacked; therefore, anxious to ascertain the truth, he ordered his men to advance. He was about to push forward with his small body of horsemen, when Wuzeer Singh pointed out the rebel cavalry in considerable force in the distance, ready to pounce down upon him. He had therefore to restrain his eagerness, in order to allow his guards on foot to come up with him. At length he came in sight of the building which contained those so dear to him; and on seeing how totally unfitted it was to offer any effectual resistance, he trusted that the mutineers had not attempted to attack it. He hastened on, his heart beating with anxiety. As he and his party were seen from the windows, Colonel Ross, and several officers who had taken refuge there, came out to meet him. They greeted him warmly, and expressed their thankfulness that he had come so opportunely to their rescue, as every minute they were expecting to be attacked by the rebels; while they were convinced that they had but little

chance of successfully defending the house. When they first saw the rebel cavalry, they supposed that they were coming to their assistance; but this hope vanished when they saw the horsemen dashing forward towards that part of the cantonments where the company of British soldiers was quartered. Their fear was that the latter would be surprised before they could have time to make any preparations for defence. Their hopes had risen and fallen as the sound of musketry continued; but they at length began to fear, when the firing ceased, that the party had been cut to pieces. Their satisfaction therefore was great, when they found so considerable a number of English soldiers with Reginald. But even counting the force he had brought with him, they could not hope to defend the residency should any regular attack be made by the rebels, who had carried off several guns, which many of them were well able to serve.

"Your only resource then, Colonel Ross, is to allow me to escort you to the city; within the walls of which you and your party will, I trust, find protection," said Reginald.

Colonel Ross, after a short consultation with his officers, accepted the offer, and preparations were at once made for moving. Reginald enjoyed a few minutes' conversation with Violet and Nuna. The latter, poor girl, was in a state of great anxiety at not hearing from Captain Burnett. The horsemen had

been recognized from the residency as belonging to his regiment, and fears had been expressed in her presence that he had fallen. Violet did her best to console her, by suggesting that they had been detached for some separate duty, when they might have been tempted to join the mutineers; or perhaps that they had deserted while encamped, without injuring him or those who remained faithful to their colours.

Some elephants had been procured to carry the ladies and the articles of chief value; and most of the officers had their horses, though some had been carried off by the rebels. Scouts had been sent out in all directions to ascertain the movements of the mutineers; and two of them now came back with the intelligence that the men of the sepoy regiment having been joined by another which had marched across the border, as well as by the cavalry and native gunners with their guns, they were advancing on the cantonments. No time, therefore, was to be lost. The ladies, including Mrs. Molony, were immediately placed on the elephants —two of which animals were also employed in dragging the remaining field-guns; the baggage was secured, and the order to advance was given.

Just at that moment a sowar was seen rapidly coming up from the direction of the city; whom, as he approached, Reginald recognized as his faithful ally, Buxsoo.

"Alas, O Rajah! alas!" he exclaimed, "I bring

sad tidings. Scarcely had you left the gates of the city when a tumult arose, and the houses of many persons supposed to be favourable to you were attacked. Several people were killed, and others narrowly escaped with their lives. The whole population are up in arms. Loud cries are raised against the English and those who support them. 'Down with the foreign rajah!' is the cry of every one; while they swear that should you return they will destroy you and all your friends. The armed men broke into the prison, and liberated all the prisoners. Among these were Khan Cochût and the slave Bikoo, who did their utmost to increase the tumult. The khan declared that the old rajah had made him his successor; and he began to address the people, promising them freedom from all taxes, and universal liberty. A considerable number sided with him, and he was marching in triumph to take possession of the palace, when a strong party of chiefs and others who knew he spoke falsely attacked him, whereupon his followers were put to flight, and he himself cut to pieces. Seeing how things were going on, and fearing that you might return unprepared, I disguised myself as you see me, and galloped off to bring you the intelligence."

After Reginald had held a consultation with Colonel Ross, it was agreed that any attempt to enter the city would be madness; while it would be impossible to defend themselves in the residency, or in any part of

the cantonments. The colonel inquired whether there was not some strong building in the neighbourhood, of which they might take possession and fortify it; where, if provisions could be obtained, they might hold out till relieved by a British force.

"There are several towards the south," replied Buxsoo; "but the rebels swarm in that direction, the whole population being up in arms."

There was, however, a hilly district a few miles to the north, he said, inhabited by a tribe who were neither Mohammedans nor Hindoos, and to whom consequently the chupatties had not been sent. They had always remained faithful to the rajah of Allahapoor, and would certainly receive the young rajah with open arms. If they could reach that district, they would there be able to throw up fortifications, and defend themselves for any length of time against such a force as the enemy were likely to assemble in that quarter.

The plan proposed was their only alternative, and Colonel Ross at once agreed to it.

Guided by Buxsoo, the party immediately directed their course northward. Burnett's insurgent cavalry had disappeared, and none of the mutinous sepoys were in sight, so they advanced as rapidly as the slow-stepping elephants could move. The native troops were in the van, the few horsemen on either flank, while the British brought up the rear. They were

thus prepared, as well as circumstances would allow, for any attack which might be made upon them. They were not, however, unobserved. The officers, through their field-glasses, made out in the far distance a number of armed men on foot, evidently watching their movements; and directly afterwards these were joined by a body of horse, which advanced much nearer. Colonel Ross on this immediately called a halt, and ordered the guns to be prepared for action; while Reginald, drawing up his small body of cavalry, made ready to charge directly the guns had delivered their fire. The bold front thus shown by the little party awed the mutineers, however, who wheeled round and galloped off to a safe distance. So again the party advanced, and made such progress that before evening the hills they hoped to reach appeared in sight.

Buxsoo now dashed forward to prepare the natives for the arrival of the young rajah. He went with every hope of success, but Reginald had his doubts on the subject; indeed, he had seldom before felt so cast down. He had contemplated giving up his government with becoming dignity, amid the tears and regrets of a faithful people; but now he found himself suddenly discarded by those he was so anxious to serve. He recollected too that he had left the precious documents which, after so much labour, he had succeeded in obtaining in the rebel city. Should the palace be burned, as was but too likely to be the case,

they would be irretrievably lost. All his bright hopes might thus vanish; for although Colonel Ross would be convinced that they had existed, and would not suppose that he had deceived him, yet, after all, he might be unable without them to prove his claim to his title and estates, and would be reduced again to the position of a needy adventurer. Thus the colonel might be unwilling to trust his daughter's happiness to his keeping. Inclined to look at everything from a gloomy point of view, then, he was prepared for a cold, if not for a hostile, reception from the villagers.

He was anxious too, though certainly in a much less degree, about Faithful. He had left the tigress shut up in her usual abode in the palace, under charge of her keeper; but the man might be killed, or he might neglect her, and she would be starved to death; or should the rebels break into the palace, they would undoubtedly kill her. He had therefore little hope of again seeing his favourite.

The day was now drawing to a close, and Buxsoo had not returned. Perhaps the people had fled; and if so, they must just pitch their camp in the strongest position to be found, and make such preparations for defence as time would allow. His spirits, however, revived when he saw a large concourse of somewhat savage-looking fellows come rushing forward, with Buxsoo at their head. As soon as they caught sight of the young rajah, they began leaping, and shout-

ing, and firing off their matchlocks; and as he rode up to them they uttered their hearty welcomes, kissing his hands, and exhibiting every mark of affection. As no time was to be lost, at his desire they led the way back to their village; near which Colonel Ross, with a soldier's eye, quickly selected a spot for the encampment. By throwing up entrenchments round it, he considered that they might fortify themselves sufficiently to offer an effectual resistance to an enemy. It contained also a spring of water, an important consideration. The villagers, besides, were charged to collect all the provisions possible from far and near for the use of the garrison.

Colonel Ross and his officers, before lying down, designed a plan of the fortifications, which Buxsoo and Wuzeer Singh undertook, with the aid of the natives, to commence immediately. The latter showed themselves willing labourers, and immediately assembled with their muskets slung over their shoulders and pickaxes in their belts. All night long they were heard working away, one party relieving the other; Colonel Ross and his officers taking it in turns to superintend them. Before daylight the two guns were in position, and considerable progress had been made in the work. While some of the villagers were labouring on the entrenchments, others were employed in collecting provisions; and thus the hopes of the party that they should be able to make an effectual resistance rose considerably.

...ame Reginald, and you are
...ghtful inheritance, it will be my
...ll make amends to you for
...m very sure that my father
...under any circumstances
...lover could desire more?

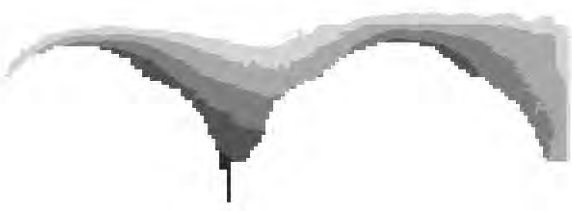
FORTIFYING THE CAMP.

Major Molony and Captain Hawkesford now undertook to drill a number of the people, who would, it was believed, make very efficient soldiers, although their firearms were mostly of a wretched description. Colonel Ross and Reginald, however, were both excessively anxious, as they knew—what others did not—that they had but a limited amount of ammunition, and should they be subjected to a prolonged attack the whole might be exhausted; and the powder possessed by the natives was of too coarse a description to be employed in their firearms.

Still no tidings had come of Burnett, and Reginald's fears for his friend's safety increased. The fate of the casket, too, was continually in his mind. He blamed himself for not having either sent it to Colonel Ross for safe keeping, or despatched it by a trusty messenger to Calcutta. But the risk of the latter proceeding was, he had considered, too great in the present disturbed state of the country. Had it been left with Colonel Ross, he would now have had it. He told Violet of his anxiety, and she endeavoured to console him with the hope that the papers might escape destruction.

"If they are lost, my dear Reginald, and you are deprived of your rightful inheritance, it will be my pride and joy to try and make amends to you for your loss of fortune; and I am very sure that my father would not retract his promise under any circumstances which may occur." What lover could desire more?

FORTIFYING THE CAMP.



Reginald—as well as every man in the camp—being fully employed during the day, he had but few opportunities of seeing Violet. She, on her part, had the task of endeavouring to comfort poor Nuna, who was almost in despair about Burnett.

Reginald endeavoured to obtain information of what was going forward by means of sending out scouts in all directions. The intelligence they brought back was more and more alarming. Every day the news was that the sepoys had risen in fresh directions. Fearful massacres had taken place at Cawnpore, Delhi, and numerous other cities. A small body of Europeans was closely beset at Lucknow; and the generally expressed opinion was that British rule in India was for ever at an end.

"The natives have yet to learn of what stuff the English are made," observed Colonel Ross. "When the European regiments advance to the rescue, they will form a different opinion."

His calm temper and the good spirits he maintained encouraged his countrymen, and contributed much towards inducing the natives to remain faithful. At present they had but little fear of being attacked, as the scouts reported that the larger number of the rebels either occupied Delhi, or were concentrating round Cawnpore and Lucknow. Still there were sufficient numbers in other places to prove formidable, should they design to attack the fort.

In the meantime, all was not peace within the small circle of their community. Reginald had told no one of Captain Hawkesford's conduct, but that officer scarcely attempted to conceal his hatred of him, and took every opportunity of making unpleasant remarks, especially in the presence of Violet and Colonel Ross,—though they were of such a character that Reginald could not well notice them. He knew Violet's opinion of Captain Hawkesford, however; and he believed that her father did not hold him in much higher estimation.

The fact was that Captain Hawkesford felt almost confident that Reginald had left the casket, with its valuable contents, behind at Allahapoor; and he calculated, not without reason, that they would never be recovered. He scarcely concealed his satisfaction, therefore, when intelligence was brought that the palace, after being ransacked by the populace, had been completely burned to the ground. Reginald heard the news with a quivering lip, though he endeavoured to hide his feelings.

"It is as I feared," he said to Violet. "My only hope now is that I may have an opportunity of winning fame and fortune by my sword; and for your sake I will strive to do so, or perish in the attempt. For myself, I confess that, after the brief experience I have had of the little satisfaction wealth and splendour can afford, I would rather live in a quiet home in England, devoting myself to doing all the good in my

power to my humbler neighbours, than be compelled again to play the part of an Oriental ruler."

"Believe me, Reginald, I would far rather share that humble home with you than become the bride of the most wealthy noble in the land," said Violet, gazing affectionately at him.

What more could Reginald wish?

"I trust, dearest, that our wishes may be accomplished, and that it may be the will of Heaven that we shall return in safety to Old England," he replied.

The thought of poor Faithful came into Reginald's mind. That unfortunate animal, confined in her den, must have perished miserably in the flames. He truly grieved less for the loss of all his treasures than he did for his strange pet—so gentle with him in spite of her savage nature, so attached, and who had rendered him such essential service. "Her sad fate will go well-nigh to break honest Dick's tender heart, when he hears of it," he said to himself. "I wish, too, that I had Dick back. I fear, however, that he will find great difficulty in getting up the country; and I almost hope that he will not make the attempt."

Captain Hawkesford after this became still more overbearing, and almost insulting in his conduct, yet he so far kept within bounds that Reginald could not, even had he wished it, under the circumstances in which they were placed, have found a valid reason for quarrelling with him.

Though Reginald, of necessity, assumed the character of a chief among the natives, he did duty with the English officers,—visiting the outposts and sentries whenever his turn came. The strictest watch was kept, for their position was well known at Allahapoor, and it was more than probable that an expedition from that city would set out to attack them.

Reginald was one night going his rounds, the moon shining brightly, when he approached one of the English sentries at an outpost. He stopped for a moment to observe the soldier-like appearance of the man, who stood, musket in hand, silent and rigid as a statue. He was about to speak, when his eye fell on a crouching form stealing along amid the tall grass, which completely concealed it from the soldier. It was a tiger; and the creature seemed about to spring on the sentinel. Reginald drew a pistol from his belt, and was on the point of cocking it, at the same time shouting out to the sentry to be on his guard,—when the animal, instead of springing at the man, came bounding towards himself, uttering a purring sound very unlike the usual roar of a tiger. The next instant he recognized Faithful, who had only just then discovered him. He had just time to shout to the sentry—who was bringing his piece to his shoulder—to stop him from firing, or in another instant Faithful would probably have been shot through the body. She purred and fawned on her master, and took every means of showing her de-

FAITHFUL'S RETURN.

light at having again met him, though he could not help suspecting that she had approached the sentry with no very peaceful intentions. As he stroked her head and neck, his hand came in contact with a thin chain, and, to his surprise and infinite satisfaction, he found secured to it the casket he had given up as lost.

Having finished his rounds, accompanied by Faithful, he returned to the fort to examine his prize, and to ascertain that all was safe within. By the light of a lamp which burned in his hut he now perceived that poor Faithful looked very thin and wretched; and knowing that, pressed by hunger, she might prove dangerous to some of his companions, he immediately despatched a native to bring in a portion of a sheep to satisfy her craving appetite. In the meantime he eagerly opened the casket, the key of which he had about his person. The papers were safe; and he found another document secured to the bottom of the case. It was in Hindoostanee, and charged any one who found it to carry the casket to Reginald, with the promise of a handsome reward for doing so.

Besides this, there was a long account of the way in which the casket had been rescued by the writer at the burning of the palace. He expressed an evident regard for him, and assured him that there were many who entertained the same feeling; warning him, at the same time, that it would be dangerous for him to return to the city. Though the paper was not

signed, Reginald at once knew that it must have come from his Christian friend, Dhunna Singh. In smaller characters—so as, if possible, to escape the observation of an ordinary reader—was a further piece of intelligence. The writer had also rescued Faithful from the palace, and had kept her, he said, at his house, till it was important to send her off. He had great difficulty, however, in feeding her; notwithstanding which she had remained as gentle as usual, apparently understanding the object he had in view. "And now the time has arrived," he added. "It is well known where you are; and an expedition, consisting of horse and foot, with several guns, is about to set out to attack you. Knowing the bravery of your companions, however, I do not despair of your being able to defend yourselves; and if I can hear of any of your friends in the neighbourhood, I will send them word of your situation, and urge them to come to your relief."

Although Reginald would have waited till the next morning to announce to Colonel Ross his extraordinary recovery of the casket, the warning he had received of the intended attack he considered to be too important to be neglected for a moment. Leaving the casket in the hut, therefore, under the charge of Faithful,—being very sure that no one would enter to carry it off,—he hastened to Colonel Ross's quarters. In a few words he narrated what had occurred, and gave the

important information he had received. The colonel having congratulated him warmly on the recovery of his papers, next turned to the consideration of the best mode of receiving the expected attack.

"Did we but possess an ample supply of powder, we might hold out as long as the enemy are likely to besiege the fort: and, depend on it, if they meet with a stout resistance, they will soon lose patience, and move off to attack some other less well defended place. But if they persevere for any length of time, our want of ammunition may prove fatal to us. Our only resource then will be to make a desperate sally, and to capture their guns and tumbrils."

At any moment the fort might be attacked, for as the paper brought by Faithful was not dated, it was difficult to say how long it had been on its journey. From the tigress' starved appearance, Reginald thought it likely that she might have been delayed; and that, to a certainty, she must have come by the cantonments, where, after escaping from the city, she would search for him. It was therefore settled that a strong force should at once be stationed on the lines, and the advance-guard pushed still more forward.

The necessary orders having been given, and Reginald being relieved, he returned to his hut to sleep, with a lighter heart than he had possessed for many a day.

CHAPTER XI

DESPERATE STATE OF AFFAIRS—THE FORT ATTACKED—NEWS OF BURNETT—THE SORTIE—CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD'S TREACHERY—FAITHFUL DEFENDS HER MASTER—BURNETT AND HIS TROOPERS COME TO THE RESCUE—GUNS CAPTURED—THE FOE PUT TO FLIGHT—FATE OF CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD—A LULL—BETTER NEWS—THE FORT AGAIN ATTACKED—AWFUL SUSPENSE—ENEMY TAKE TO FLIGHT—FORT EVACUATED—THE MARCH—PURSUED—A FIERCE ENGAGEMENT—REGINALD LEFT WOUNDED ON THE BATTLE-FIELD—RELIEVING FORCE APPEARS—FAITHFUL AGAIN PROTECTS HER MASTER—DICK DISCOVERS HER—BRITISH VICTORIOUS—REGINALD RECOVERED—RETURN TO CALCUTTA—DEATH OF FAITHFUL—VOYAGE HOME—CONCLUSION.

THE colonel's bungalow, though rudely constructed, had been made as comfortable as circumstances would allow. Reginald, as may be supposed, proceeded to it at an early hour, and was welcomed by Violet in the breakfast-room. Her father had not told her of what had occurred, and Reginald was thus the first to give her the satisfactory intelligence.

"I am indeed thankful, for your sake," she answered, as she took his hand; "and the recovery of the casket will encourage us to trust that we may yet be carried through all the dangers and difficulties which surround us. I have never despaired, and have placed full confidence in the love and mercy of God. Whatever he

orders is for the best, I know, though I cannot tell why he has allowed so many of our unfortunate countrymen and countrywomen to perish miserably. It may be that he intends to give an important lesson to the survivors, and to remind us that our Government has not ruled this country as a Christian people ought to have done, or taken effectual means to spread his Word among the benighted inhabitants."

"That idea has occurred to me more than once," said Reginald. "I have been ready enough to support and trust to the Christians, but I have done nothing to spread the gospel among them; but if I ever again have the power, I will try to do so."

"We may have the power some day," exclaimed Violet. "If we cannot do so in person, we may afford support to the missionaries who are ready to venture their lives among the heathen for the sake of carrying to them the blessed gospel. I am sure that we shall be bound to do our utmost with the means which may be placed at our disposal."

Neither Reginald nor Violet forgot this conversation.

Day after day went by without any news of the approach of the rebels. At length many in the fort began to hope that the enemy would not appear. Some even proposed that they should abandon the fort, and, making their way to the Ganges, descend the river to the nearest post occupied by the British. To this, however, Colonel Ross was strongly opposed. From

the information he received, he knew that the whole country swarmed with rebels; and these would certainly attack them in the open country, even if they were not followed by the insurgents in boats from the city. The idea, therefore, was abandoned, and every effort was made to strengthen the fortifications.

Captain Hawkesford still exhibited his ill-feeling towards Reginald. Whether or not he knew anything of the recovery of the casket, it was impossible to say; but, unabashed by Violet's indifference, if not disgust, he continued to pay her attention whenever he got an opportunity, as if he still entertained some hope of displacing Reginald in her affections. She could not feel otherwise than offended; but she knew it was important, at that time, not to create any ill-feeling among the few officers who surrounded her father, and she therefore did not complain to him, as she might otherwise have done.

At length, one day one of the scouts, who had gone out in disguise in the direction of the city, came hurrying in with the intelligence that a large force was marching northward, probably with the intention of attacking the fort. They might be expected to appear before noon on the following day. The loyal natives, who had by this time been organized and well drilled, were therefore summoned in, with their wives and children, as were also all the people whose dwellings were situated in exposed situations, and were likely to

be destroyed by the enemy. An ample supply of provisions had been stored for such an emergency, so that there was no fear of starvation. The scarcity of ammunition was their chief cause of anxiety, and orders were issued not to throw a shot away.

The day passed away without the appearance of the enemy. At night, however, every one was on the alert, as it was thought probable that the rebels, unaware that their approach was known, might attempt to surprise them.

Dawn broke, and still all was quiet; but as the sun rose, an officer, who had climbed to a look-out station on a neighbouring height, with his field-glass observed the glittering weapons of a large body in the far distance. He hurried down with the intelligence; and in a short time the advancing host, composed of a body of cavalry, several pieces of artillery, and a large number of foot, could be seen from the fort itself. It was evident that the enemy were aware of the strength of the place, but expected quickly to capture it with this overwhelming force. The garrison, however, undaunted, prepared for its defence. The ladies were placed in the rear of the fort, situated behind some rocks, where they would be protected from the shot. The horses were also picketed in a situation as much as possible out of harm's way.

The enemy, trusting to their numbers, came on boldly, halting at a little distance to reform their ranks,

and immediately opened a hot fire on the fort. The garrison replied to it with spirit, the two guns being worked by the artillerymen with great rapidity. It appeared as if the enemy were about to take the place by storm, when the hot reception they met with induced them to abandon their design; and so great was the execution made by the two guns of the fort, that they at length retreated beyond their range, and firing on both sides ceased.

Gladly would Colonel Ross have husbanded his ammunition, but had a feeble fire been kept up at first, it would have encouraged the enemy to come on with greater determination. Several of the garrison had been killed or wounded, but none of the officers had fallen. As soon as possible, therefore, Reginald hastened to assure Violet of his own and her father's safety. On hearing that several men had been wounded, however, she and two or three other ladies entreated to be allowed to assist Dr. Graham in attending to them; but he replied that as yet he could do without their assistance. He was glad, however, ere long to accept their offer, when he and his assistant-surgeon found their strength almost exhausted by the number of wounded brought to them.

The following day the enemy recommenced firing as before, and again retreated towards evening. This sort of work continued for many days in succession, every day unhappily increasing the number of the

killed and wounded in the garrison. Colonel Ross and Reginald happily remained unhurt, as did Major Molony and Captain Hawkesford. Several officers, however, had been more or less hurt; and two had been shot dead, as had been three European soldiers, while working the guns. The natives behaved with courage and fidelity, notwithstanding the many among them who fell. Still every day was reducing their store of ammunition; and the colonel knew that ere long, if the same fire as heretofore was kept up, it must altogether fail. The Allahapoor gunners could be seen working their guns,—tall fellows with bare shoulders and arms, and richly ornamented turbans on their heads; wearing loose trousers, and with long tulwars hanging at their sides. Their shot, however, made but little impression on the well-constructed earthworks. Their fire was returned by the guns from the fort; while the Enfield rifles, never silent, seldom failed to bring down a foe. Several gallant sorties were made; one of the enemy's guns was spiked, and another nearly brought in, when it stuck fast in the rough ground, and had to be abandoned. Their own two guns, however, from being so constantly fired, had become almost worn out, and would no longer carry shot or ordinary canister. The contents of the canisters were therefore emptied into stockings, which were rammed home with greater ease, and fired with much effect.

The enemy had come on one day even more deter-

mined than before, it seemed, to succeed, when a report louder than usual was heard. One of the two guns in the fort had burst, killing three artillerymen and wounding others.

"We must get possession of their guns and ammunition instead," exclaimed Colonel Ross, on hearing of it.

"I will attempt to do so," said Reginald. "Are any ready to follow me?"

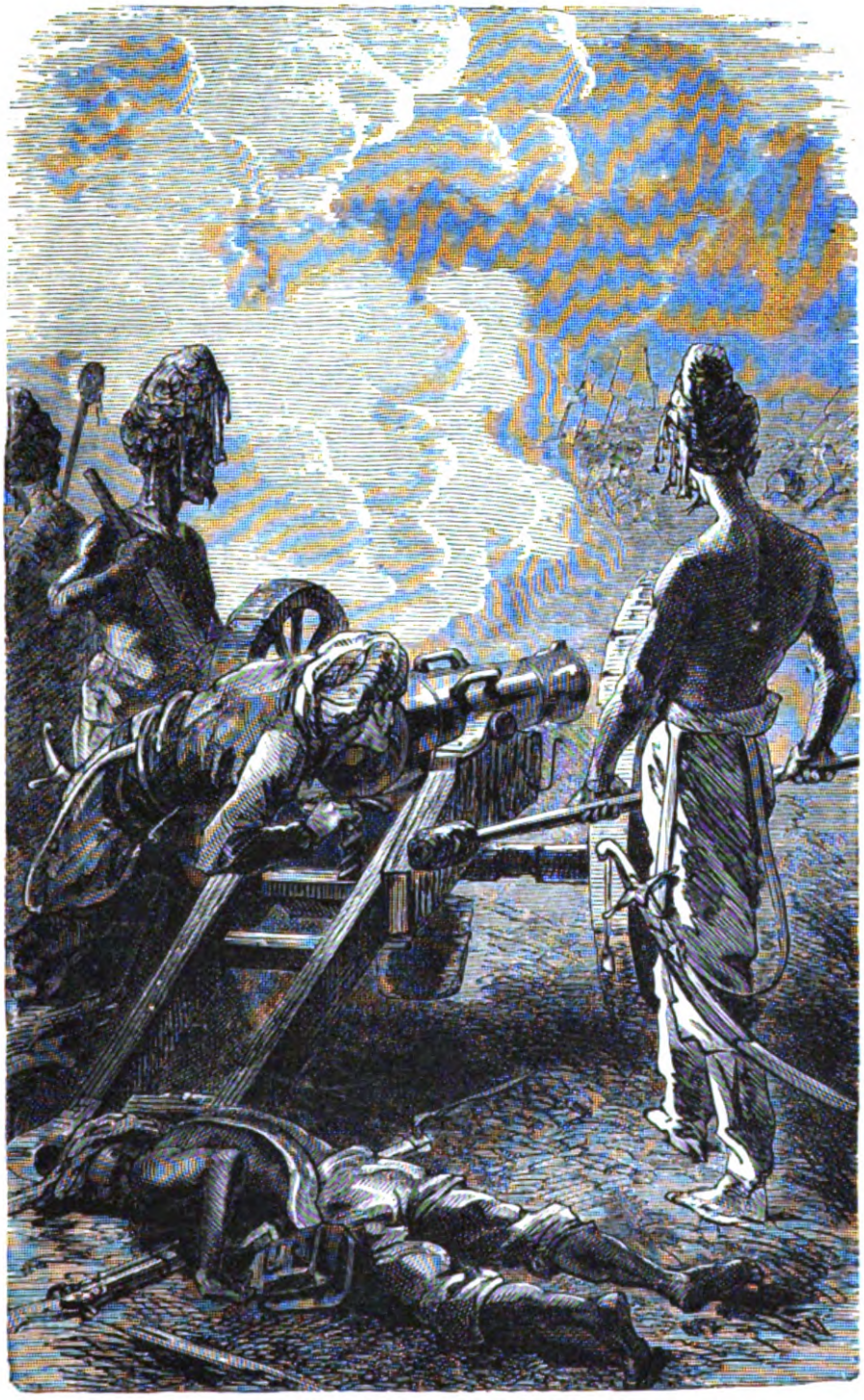
There was no lack of volunteers.

"Stay," said the colonel; "we must consider the plan of operation most likely to succeed."

Notwithstanding the presence of the enemy before the fort, the scouts were still able to make, during the dark hours of night, and sometimes even in the day, their way in with intelligence. During the discussion a faithful sowar approached, holding a small strip of paper in his hand, which he had brought carefully concealed about his person. It contained but a few words:—

"I am at hand, and know how you are situated. I purpose making a dash at the foe at sunrise on the 5th of July. Do you be prepared to co-operate; and if you have a sufficient force, make a bold sortie, and the day will be ours. Delhi is invested. Lucknow still holds out.—BURNETT."

The news thus unexpectedly received inspired fresh courage into the hearts of all those to whom it was thought wise to communicate it. Of course Burnett's



THE REBEL GUNNERS.

projected attack and the sortie were kept profoundly secret. The news that his friend was alive and well, and still at the head of a faithful band, afforded unmitigated joy and satisfaction to Reginald, giving him fresh hope. He longed to communicate the welcome information to Nuna and Violet; but no time could be spared, and he could only send a line on a slip of paper to bid them be of good cheer, and to tell them that Burnett was safe.

A brief time only was required to settle what was best to be done. Reginald undertook to lead the whole force of cavalry, which was to make a circuit from the rear of the fort, so that they might be concealed till they were ready to dash at the guns. A party of infantry were at the same time to be prepared to rush forward to spike some of the guns, and to drag the others within the lines. A dozen Europeans, with two of their officers, were to lead the party of infantry, composed of the most determined and best disciplined natives. These were to follow when the cavalry, having accomplished their first task,—united, as they hoped would be the case, with Burnett's force,—were to cover the foot as they returned to the fort with the captured guns, or pursue the enemy should they be put to flight. The undertaking was a hazardous one, considering the large force to be attacked; but all knew that daring deeds generally succeed when timid proceedings fail.

Reginald hurried off with his gallant companions, to prepare their horses for the meditated sortie. On passing the women's quarters on his way to the rear of the fort, as it wanted but a short time to sunrise, he saw Violet, with Nuna and Mrs. Molony, who had already risen and were on their way to the hospital huts, and he could not resist stopping for one moment to bid her and his young sister farewell,—it might be for ever. Should he and his brave followers perish, what a terrible fate might be theirs! He instantly, however, banished the thought.

"Heaven will preserve us, dear ones," he said, as he embraced his sister and Violet. "I have good news for all of us. He on whose account your heart has long been cast down has escaped all dangers, and is near at hand, and I hope ere long to see him and to return with him in triumph to the fort. The cowardly rebels will not dare to face us. When we attack them in the open ground, they will fly like chaff before the wind. Though Burnett does not tell us the amount of the force with him, I trust that it will be sufficient to enable us to follow up our victory and prevent the enemy from rallying."

A few more words only were spoken, and Reginald hurried on to the spot where the horses were picketed. The men were busily engaged in saddling their steeds; which done, every one carefully examined his arms, and felt that his sabre was loose in its scabbard.

Among the officers who had volunteered to accompany him, Reginald was surprised to find Captain Hawkesford.

"I was not aware that you were to accompany us," Reginald could not help observing.

"I have the colonel's leave; and I wish to have an opportunity this morning of proving which of us is the best swordsman," answered Captain Hawkesford in a peculiar tone. "We have long been rivals, and I intend to settle the matter one way or another before the close of day," he muttered.

"I have confidence in your gallantry, and believe you to be a good swordsman," answered Reginald, not hearing his latter remark.

In a few minutes all were ready; and the order to march being given, each man sprang into his saddle and fixed himself firmly in his seat. In perfect silence the gallant troop of horse rode out of the fort, led by Reginald; while the infantry, who were destined to attack the guns, stood ready for the signal he was to give,—a wave of his sabre,—when they were to jump from the entrenchments and rush onward to attack the foe. The enemy's guns had already been fired, and were replied to as usual by the fort, though many well knew that but a few rounds of ammunition remained.

Many an anxious eye watched the progress of the cavalry. They halted behind the last point by which

they were concealed from the enemy. From this Reginald could glance over the plain. He waited till, a ruddy glow appearing in the east, the upper limb of the sun was seen slowly ascending above the horizon. Passing the word to the rear, he struck his spurs into his horse's flanks. Then turning his face to the fort, he waved his bright scimitar in the air and dashed forward, his followers pressing close behind him,—while, at the signal, the infantry marched from the fort in compact order. Dashing rapidly forward for a few seconds, they halted to deliver their fire at the gunners, who were already dispirited by the appearance of Reginald's horsemen close upon them. He did not fail, as he urged forward his steed, to cast a look over the plain —where, to his intense satisfaction, he saw a body of cavalry galloping out from behind a wood, with an officer at their head, whom he at once recognized as Burnett. On they came, fleet as the wind, towards the foe. Shouting to his men that reinforcements were at hand, Reginald dashed forward. Numbers of the native artillerymen were cut down at their guns, others fled towards the infantry, who were hastening to their rescue. So unexpected had been the sortie, that the enemy were completely taken by surprise; the arms of the infantry being piled and the horses of the cavalry picketed, while the men were at some distance from them. The time occupied in the attack on the guns enabled them to mount; by which time Reginald and

REGINALD HEADING THE SORTIE FROM THE FORT.

Burnett's troops having united, they found a strong force drawn up to encounter them.

"We must go at them, notwithstanding their numbers," cried Burnett; and he and Reginald leading, and leaving the guns to be carried into the fort by the infantry, they and their horsemen galloped forward to encounter the rebel cavalry, who, having made a circuit, were endeavouring to recapture the guns. The party who had been first in the saddle succeeded in cutting down some brave fellows who were spiking the guns, when they were met by Reginald and Burnett's horse. Fierce was the conflict; sabres were clashing, the men on both sides shrieking like demons. It seemed as if neither party would give way. Still by slow degrees the rebel horsemen were driven back.

Reginald had seen Captain Hawkesford fiercely engaged with a native officer, as he himself dashed on to attack another whom he had just cut down, when he heard a loud cry behind him: turning his head, he caught sight of his rival with his sword uplifted, to all appearance about to cut him down. To defend himself was impossible, as another foe was advancing towards him. The next moment he saw Faithful—who, unknown to him, had been following at his heels—spring at Captain Hawkesford's throat. It was but a glance, for the next minute he was compelled to engage in mortal combat with a powerful chief whom

he well knew, and who was noted as being one of the best swordsmen in the country. In the heat of the fight he had got somewhat separated from his men, and he had to depend on his own skill and courage. Neither failed him; and for several seconds he kept his enemy at bay. Still, an imperfect guard would prove fatal; when again Faithful came to his assistance, and springing on the chief dragged him to the ground.

The fall of one of their principal leaders disheartened those who witnessed it; and hard pressed by Burnett's well-disciplined horsemen, the whole of the rebel cavalry at length wheeled round and galloped off, hotly pursued by the former. It would have been prudent had Burnett and Reginald not pursued the flying enemy so far, for in the meantime the infantry, rallying, made a furious attack on the party which had captured their guns; and, although repulsed, they succeeded in carrying off two of them, besides those which had been spiked. Their ammunition and tumbrils were, however, captured by the British.

At length Burnett and Reginald, desisting from the pursuit, turned their horses' heads towards the fort, when, succeeding in getting between it and the foe, they captured another gun. The infantry, though rapidly retreating, presented too formidable a front to allow them the hope of successfully breaking through their ranks and putting them completely to the rout;

TREACHERY PUNISHED.

they therefore contented themselves by hovering round the retreating force, and keeping them in check till the guns and ammunition were secure within the fort.

Some time had been occupied by the events which have been described, and the pursuit had carried Reginald and Burnett to a considerable distance from the fort. Several of their men had fallen, and others had been so badly wounded as to be scarcely able to sit their horses. The leaders were therefore compelled to restrain their eagerness, to assure those who, they knew, were anxiously waiting for them of their safety; and they returned at a slow pace, having to keep watch on the movements of the enemy, in case, regaining their courage, they might again advance to the attack. The beaten foe, however, showed no inclination to do this, and were seen continuing their retreat to Allahapoor. Probably the news of the successes already achieved by the British forces had reached them, and they had by this time abandoned the high hopes they had entertained of driving the Feringhees from the country.

As Reginald and Burnett arrived at the spot where the hardest fighting had taken place, they were grieved to see that so many of their party had fallen. Reginald dismounted from his horse, for the purpose of ascertaining whether any of those who lay scattered about on the field still breathed. At that moment Faithful came trotting up to him, and looked up in

his face, as if to receive his approval of her conduct during the day. Not till then did he recollect the momentary glimpse he had obtained of Captain Hawkesford's uplifted sword and the tigress flying at his throat. Could the unhappy man, influenced by disappointment and rage, have really intended to take his life? If so, he had paid dearly. Advancing a few steps, Reginald caught sight of his body. Near it lay his head, severed by a sharp tulwar. Several other bodies lay about treated in the same manner, so that it was impossible to say whether the tigress had killed him. Probably some of the enemy, who had passed backwards and forwards over the spot, had committed the act of barbarity. Of all those who had fallen, none were found alive.

Again mounting, Reginald rejoined Burnett, who had been similarly engaged, and together they rode back to the fort.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the joyful welcome they met with. Poor Nuna quickly recovered her spirits; and their success gave new life to all in the fort. A strong party of natives was sent out to bury the dead, and foes as well as friends were placed in one common grave.

The garrison had still many weeks of anxiety to endure. The only roads by which they could hope to reach either of the English provinces were blocked

CAPTAIN HAWKESFORD'S FATE.

up by the enemy ; who also occupied numerous posts on the Ganges, which would effectually prevent them from descending that river. Sometimes they were without information for many days together. Then news would come of fresh disasters ; the truthfulness of which, however, they had reason to doubt. Soon a too authentic account of the frightful massacre at Cawnpore, like all other bad news, which flies apace, reached them. Then came the succour of Lucknow by Sir Henry Havelock and Sir James Outram. Still week after week went by, and they remained shut up in the fort. Some time in November they heard of the storming of Delhi, and the rescue of the women and children from Lucknow. Notwithstanding these successes of the British, the rebels still continued in arms. Again the fort was besieged ; the enemy being instigated, it was understood, by one of the chiefs at Allahapoor, whose object was to destroy the young rajah ; but the garrison were as ready as before to defend it stoutly, notwithstanding the threats of the enemy to put them all to the sword should they offer any resistance.

With so many mouths to feed, provisions were, however, growing scarce, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that their stores could be replenished. The small quantity of gunpowder captured from the foe would enable them to hold out for some time yet ; but should the enemy persevere, they would be reduced to the greatest straits, and be compelled either to cut

their way through the enemy or capitulate—which last alternative was not for a moment to be entertained. News of varying import reached them, brought in by the scouts. One thing was certain, that although great success had been achieved by the British, the enemy still held together in large numbers. Consequently, encumbered as they would be with sick and wounded, it would be hazardous in the extreme were they to attempt to make their way through the country towards any of the cities already in the power of the English. Another consideration weighed greatly with Reginald: he would not desert the villagers who had remained so faithful to him,—knowing, as he did, that the rebels of Allahapoor would certainly wreak vengeance on their heads.

For several days the garrison had enjoyed perfect tranquillity. The colonel kept up the spirits of all the party by assuring them that relief would come, and urging them to bear patiently the hardships they were now called on to endure. Violet showed herself a true heroine, by ever wearing a cheerful countenance, by her constant attention to the sick and wounded, and by trying to keep up the spirits of the other ladies. Nuna imitated her example.

Their trials, however, were not over. Intelligence sufficient to alarm the most stout-hearted came in: that a force of upwards of twenty thousand men was marching on Allahapoor, with the intention of occupying that

city, and that they threatened to take the fort and destroy its garrison before doing so.

Colonel Ross did not conceal the information he had received. "We must hold out, as before, as long as our ammunition lasts; and that failing, we must place the ladies and wounded in our midst, and cut our way through the foe."

All swore to fight as long as they had arms to wield their swords.

Two days passed away, when about noon, as the hot air quivered over the plain, the blue and red uniforms of the enemy's cavalry appeared in sight. They approached, a vast horde thronging up in the distance. Column after column of infantry appeared following the cavalry, with numerous pieces of artillery. The rebels were evidently intent on the utter destruction of the fort. The lesson given by the mutineers at Delhi, Cawnpore, and many other places, warned the English and their allies against any attempt at negotiation. As the fort had before resisted with so small a garrison as it then possessed, now, when they had several pieces of artillery and were reinforced with Burnett's horse, they had good reason to hope that they should be able to resist the fiercest attack the mutineers were likely to make. At length came the awful question, Will the powder hold out? Colonel Ross had calculated the hours it would do so. It would encourage the enemy were he not to return

their fire with vigour, and dishearten the natives of his own party should they discover the short time they would have the means of resisting their sanguinary foes.

The enemy's guns at length drawing near, opened fire, without any attempt at throwing up breastworks, their only shelter being such as the ground afforded. Had they not been supported by so large a body of cavalry and foot, Burnett declared that nothing would have been easier than to capture them; as it was, he waited for an opportunity which he thought might occur. Most of the shot, as before, struck the earth-works; for the Enfield rifles prevented the guns from being brought near enough to do much damage. The rear of the fort, it must be remembered, was protected by rugged heights, to the summit of which no native engineers were capable of carrying up even the smallest guns; indeed, they were inaccessible to the most nimble mountaineers. Thus there were only two sides of the fort to be protected; the valley which ran down on the left being so completely commanded by the fort, that a hostile party attempting to enter it would have been instantly destroyed.

Night on this occasion brought no cessation of firing, and it soon became apparent that the enemy intended to storm the fort. Two guns were moved so as to command the valley, up which, during the darkness of night, they might possibly attempt to steal. Every

man was at his post. After the firing had continued for some time it suddenly ceased. Many thought the enemy were retiring; but it was like the lull before the storm. A few seconds only had passed away, when three dark columns were discerned by the garrison creeping up towards them. On they came in overwhelming numbers, the artillerymen in the plain firing over their heads, while the British guns began blazing away with canister, sending destruction amid their ranks. Column after column had advanced, but were driven back in confusion; not a man ever reached the lines. Sometimes the cavalry galloped up, but they were quickly forced to retire.

All night long the battle raged, but the dauntless courage of Colonel Ross and his band of heroes prevailed, and when morning dawned the enemy were seen retiring with their guns. Had they gone altogether, or would they return? was the question. It was too probable that, instigated by the mutineers in Allahapoor, they would renew the attack.

Two more days passed by, allowing the garrison to repair their fortifications. Once more, as day was declining, the enemy was seen approaching; with the intention, probably, of making an assault during the night. Still hour after hour went by; every man remained at his post, and yet no enemy came near them. The camp-fires, however, burning in the distance, showed that they were still there; and as morn-

ing approached, Colonel Ross, who was ever on his guard, warned the officers to be as watchful as at first, and ready at any moment to repel an attack.

He was right. It was still dark when the heads of several columns were seen emerging from the gloom, and already close upon the fort. On came the rebels, as soon as they were aware that they must be seen, giving utterance to the most savage shouts and cries. At the same moment they opened a heavy fire. They were met, as before, with showers of grape and well-directed volleys of musketry, which quickly drove back those who had not fallen,—with the exception of a party of desperate fanatics, who attempted to force their way over the entrenchments. Some succeeded and were cut down, others were shot in the ditch, and not one escaped. The garrison had scarcely breathing time before another similar attack was made, which was repulsed in the same way.

"How much longer can we stand out?" asked Reginald of Colonel Ross.

"Another attack like the last will exhaust the whole of our powder, when our only resource will be to abandon the fort—for to hold it will then be impossible," was the answer.

The day passed by. Anxiously was the arrival of the scouts who came over the hills looked for with the expected intelligence of the movements of the British. Flying columns of the avenging army were sweeping

the enemy before them; but they were, it was supposed, yet a long way off. Still the colonel endeavoured to keep up the courage of those he commanded; and the officers, following his example, did their utmost to encourage the men to prepare for another assault. The strictest watch was kept, for it was thought that should the enemy again venture to attack the fort, it would be by night.

The garrison were not mistaken. Two days more had passed, when again the columns were espied by the watchful sentinels. The troops flew to their arms, the artillerymen to their guns.

Reginald and Burnett, when relieved from their duty in the evening, had snatched a few minutes from the rest they so much required to pay a visit to Violet and Nuna. They talked hopefully of the future, and both expressed a wish, as soon as the rebellion was quelled, to leave India and reside in England.

"Oh, that must be a happy country," cried Nuna, "where there are no wars or disputes, where the rich do not oppress the poor, and the latter are happy and contented, and everybody lives in friendship with each other!"

Burnett smiled. "I am afraid only a part of your picture is true. England has numberless advantages over this country, and I hope ere long to take you there; but I am sorry to say that the English people quarrel and dispute with each other as much as the

natives of other lands, though they do not fly to arms on all occasions. You must not expect to find a paradise in England, or in any other part of the world."

Unwillingly, the two friends had at length to bid the ladies good-night and return to their posts at the batteries. Just as they reached them, the signal was made that the enemy was approaching, and the silence which had hitherto reigned in the fort was suddenly broken by the loud report of the guns as they sent forth their doses of canister, scattering death amid the advancing columns. The musketry opened at the same time; and now the rebels, finding that they were again disappointed in their expectation of surprising the fort, began firing away in return. As gun after gun was discharged, Colonel Ross knew that their slender store of powder was becoming more nearly exhausted. It might hold out till the enemy took to flight; but they might persevere longer than usual—and if so, finding that the guns no longer thundered forth, they would in all probability storm the fort.

He at length sent for Burnett and Reginald. "My friends," he said, speaking quite calmly, "if in half an hour more the enemy are not beaten, we must fight our way out through their midst, unless we can hope to defend our position with our swords and bayonets."

Burnett proposed making a sortie with his cavalry, in the hope of creating a panic by the suddenness of his attack. But from this Colonel Ross dissuaded him.

He could scarcely hope to produce any material effect, and would only weaken his strength by the loss of several of his men.

Rapidly that half-hour went by; when, just as it was found that the last charge of powder had been expended, the cry arose, "They run! they run!" On this Burnett ordered his bugler to sound the call "to horse;" and in less than two minutes every man of his troop was mounted, and, following their leader, had dashed out in pursuit of the retreating foe. Immediately he had gone, Colonel Ross ordered every animal in the camp to be prepared for carrying the sick and wounded. Horses had been kept for the use of the ladies,—who, having been warned of the possible emergency, were quickly ready. Not a word of alarm or anxiety was expressed. The whole force was quickly drawn up in close column: Reginald's cavalry, with the ladies in the centre, leading; the trained villagers following, guarding the wounded; the British soldiers and Reginald's guards on either flank; while the other native troops brought up the rear.

The instant the scouts returned with the satisfactory report that they had seen the enemy moving off, the order was given to advance, and the little army, after spiking all the guns in the fort, commenced their perilous march. Silently they moved, to avoid being discovered by any of the enemy's scouts, or the report of their march being carried to the rebels by the inha-

bitants of the villages near which they might pass. Happily the enemy had made their attack early in the night, and the retreating party had thus an advantage of several hours, which would enable them to get to a considerable distance before they were likely to be discovered. For the remainder of the night, therefore, they moved on; and not till the sun had already risen was a halt called, that they might take that rest which was absolutely necessary to enable them to continue their flight. The scouts sent out now reported that no enemy was near, and they were thus able to remain encamped for several hours; after which, greatly refreshed, they again moved on. Colonel Ross was sensible that his force could not successfully engage with any large body, but he hoped that, by avoiding all places where any rebels were likely to be collected, and by advancing chiefly at night, to prevent any information of his movements from reaching the enemy.

Violet, who was a good horsewoman, bore the fatigue of the march well, and even Nuna and the other ladies kept up their spirits and did not complain. The poor wounded men were the greatest sufferers; though they preferred the shaking to which they were exposed, to being left behind to the tender mercies of the natives.

Before another night's march had been accomplished, a sowar who had been sent out as a scout overtook them with the intelligence that the enemy had heard

of their retreat, and were following with a large force, threatening their complete destruction. Colonel Ross, on hearing this, resolved—as there was no place at hand into which they could throw themselves and defend it against the enemy—to continue the march, for the purpose of keeping ahead of their pursuers as much as possible, and only to halt and fight where a strong position could be taken up with some hope of offering an effectual resistance. On they marched; but in vain did the colonel look out for ground of the kind he desired. Their scouts came hurrying in from the rear with the announcement that the enemy were close upon them. There could be little doubt that the rebels, burning with revenge at the defeats they had suffered, would immediately commence an attack. The country was level for miles on every side; the colonel was therefore glad to find a spot where he could halt, with a deep and broad stream on one side, and a thick jungle in the rear, which neither the enemy's infantry nor artillery could penetrate. He accordingly halted here: the infantry drawn up in the centre, and the cavalry on either flank, ready to charge the guns of the enemy, should they have brought any with them.

In silence the little force waited the expected attack. The rebels at length appeared. Colonel Ross ordered the infantry to fire as they came within range; and then, at a preconcerted signal, Reginald and Burnett,

leading on their troopers, desperately charged the rebel forces. Many on both sides went down, but the rebels, relying on their numbers, and knowing the weakness of the force opposed to them, refused to give way. The moon afforded sufficient light to enable the combatants to continue the fight, and Reginald could not help fearing that, after all the efforts of his party, they might be defeated. Again and again he led his men to the charge—when the sound of English bugles reached his ears. Just at that moment a bullet struck him and he fell to the ground, his steed galloping off unperceived by his followers. He lay amid a heap of slain, unable to move, while his horsemen followed up the charge. The fight continued raging around him for some time. Then he heard the heavy tramp of cavalry, and the rattling sound of artillery, followed closely by the roar of the guns as they opened fire. Lifting up his head, he saw a dark red line, with bayonets glittering in the moonlight, emerging from behind the wood. The enemy also saw them, and poured in on them as they approached a round of musketry; but not a moment did they stop to receive the charge made by the British regiment, which, advancing at the double, drove them like chaff before the wind. Reginald saw no more; his head sank back, and he lay like the clods of the earth around him.

The British troops had had a hard day's march,

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

for, receiving intelligence of the near vicinity of a large rebel force, they had pushed on to attack them before they could escape. The remainder of the English column coming up, tents were pitched, while the cavalry pursued the flying foe, cutting down all they overtook, no quarter being asked or offered.

Dawn was breaking, when a sentinel at his post caught sight, at some distance, of a large animal lying on the ground, which after some little scrutiny he discovered to be a tiger. "The horrid brute is feeding on the dead," he exclaimed. "If it was not against orders to fire, I'd quickly teach it better manners." Just then a man, who, from his nautical appearance, might have been called a "horse-marine," rode up on a small country pony. He had a long sabre by his side, a haversack on his back, and a brace of pistols in his belt; and while huge boots encased his legs, he wore a seaman's broad-brimmed hat and loose jacket,— making him look altogether not a little peculiar.

"What's that you say, mate?" he asked.

The sentry pointed to the animal he had seen. "Though I mayn't fire, do you put a bullet through that brute's head."

"That's more than I'll do," answered the seaman, who was no other than our friend Dick Thuddichum. "That animal has more sense than many a human being; and it's my belief that my honoured master,

whom she's followed faithfully for many a day, and whose life she has saved more than once, is not far off. Just you hold my horse, while I go ahead and have a look round. If I'm right, I'll shout to some one to come and help me."

Saying this, Dick tumbled off his steed, and hastily stalked over the ground, carefully avoiding the corpses with which it was strewed. He was right. Faithful, in spite of his strange costume, uttered a cry of welcome, and sprang forward to meet him. There, as he expected, lay his beloved master. "O Master Reginald! O my lord, do speak to me, and tell me if you are alive!" exclaimed Dick, as he threw himself on the ground by Reginald's side. "Yes, yes; he's still got life in him!" he cried out; and shouting to the sentinel to send help, he lifted his master in his arms and bore him towards the tents. Reginald was speedily carried into one of the nearest, set aside as an hospital, where his wound was examined by a surgeon,—Dick standing anxiously by to hear his opinion.

"It's pretty severe, but is not likely to prove fatal," said the surgeon. "He has fainted from loss of blood, but a stimulant will soon restore him."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Dick. "I should have well-nigh died, and so, to my mind, would Faithful, and another person I know of, if he'd been killed. But do your best to bring him about, sir, and I will bless you all the days of my life."

Reginald, as the doctor had hoped, soon recovered sufficiently to speak. He warmly greeted Dick, and expressed his delight at seeing him—having greatly feared that he had been murdered by the rebels. He then immediately ordered a messenger to go to Colonel Ross and inform him and Miss Ross of his safety. And before long Burnett, whose horsemen were bivouacked not far off, made his appearance. Happy indeed was the meeting between the two friends. A palanquin was quickly procured for Reginald's conveyance, as his wound was not so severe as to prevent his being moved. It was arranged that he, with the ladies of Colonel Ross's party, should be escorted to the banks of the Ganges, from whence they could proceed down the river to Calcutta. Dick having had enough of campaigning, begged that he might accompany his master, and look after Faithful, who was not likely to obey any one else. Reginald, with much regret, bade farewell to his faithful Indian friends, whom he strongly recommended to the authorities for the fidelity they had shown to the English; but he intended to reward them still further as soon as he had the power.

Colonel Ross, whose health was giving way, owing to the anxiety he had so long endured, accompanied his daughter and Nuna to Calcutta, where they remained till the mutiny was effectually quelled, and Burnett was able to join them. The two marriages

shortly afterwards took place, and the young couples at once carried out their intention of leaving for England. Of course Dick Thuddichum embarked with them, with Faithful in charge.

Violet, before leaving Calcutta, begged to have a portrait of the noble creature which had so often saved her husband's life, and persuaded Reginald to have his own likeness taken at the same time in the nautical costume which he wore on being first introduced to her; he himself confessing that he infinitely preferred it to the magnificent dresses he had been compelled to wear during his short reign in Allahapoor. That city had been quickly captured by the English, and, much to Reginald's satisfaction, had become, with its surrounding territory, an integral part of British India.

It is sad to have to relate that poor Faithful never reached the free shores of Old England. Whether it was, as Dick Thuddichum thought, that the sea-air did not agree with her constitution, or that she was deprived of her usual allowance of half a sheep a day, she sickened, and gradually grew worse and worse; her last fond gaze being at the face of her beloved master. She attempted to lick his hand, but the effort was vain. Her head sank on the deck—the tigress was dead.

Her skin was preserved; and Faithful, with an almost life-like look, ornaments the entrance hall in Hamerton Castle.

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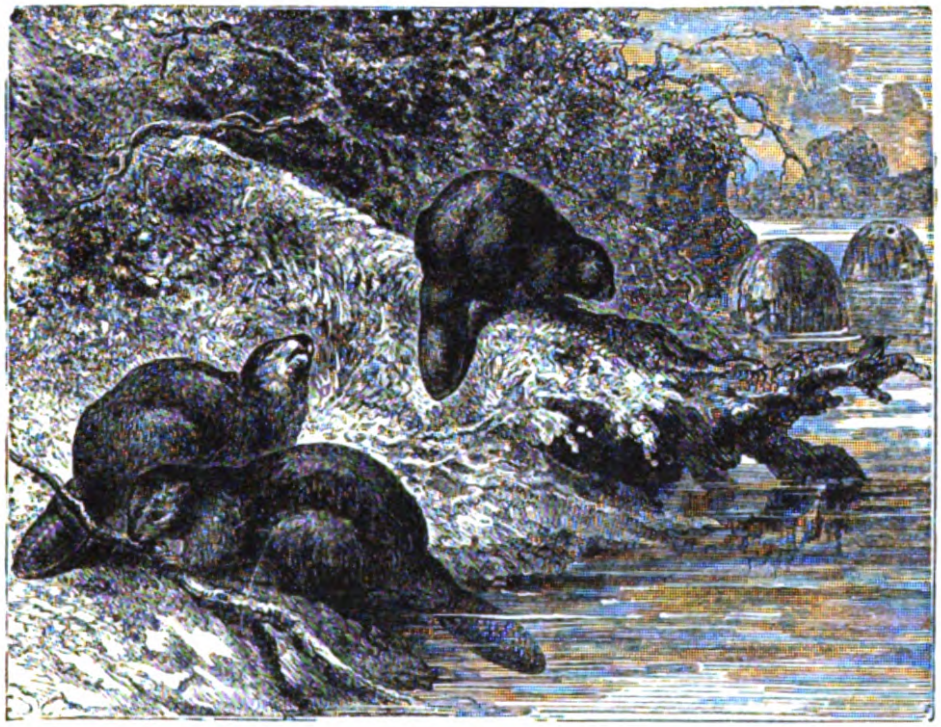

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