

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF A

PERIYA DURAI:

BY

WILLIAM BOYD.

REPRINTED FROM THE

"CEYLON LITERARY REGISTER."

Colombo:

A. M. & J. FERGUSON,

1889.

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Ex lib.



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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PERKLYA DUKAL

WILLIAM BOYD

REPRINTED FROM THE
REVUE LITTÉRAIRE DE GENÈVE

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

1880

DEDICATION.

THE AUTHOR

WOULD DESIRE TO DEDICATE THIS WORK

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD CLINTON,

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HIS SYMPATHY

AND KINDNESS, AT A TIME OF MUCH TROUBLE

AND SORROW.

Stuartfield, 1st May, 1889.

REVISION

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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PERIYA DURAI:

BY

William Boyd.

CHAPTER I.—WHAT TOOK ME TO CEYLON.

It is now nearly half a century ago, that, owing to the death of a distant relation, I became the envied possessor of that little place, down in Surrey, known as Heathcot Hall, which, exclusive of the mansion house and home farms, yielded me a yearly income of some £600. I had previously been comparatively poor; my father having died when I was really a child, leaving my mother in rather straitened circumstances. I had been told that some of my far-off relations were very wealthy—possessing large landed estates in England; but that I should ever have the luck to succeed to any part of this wealth, was a contingency that I had never seriously contemplated. With great thrift and much pinching, my mother had succeeded, as only Scottish mothers can succeed under such adverse circumstances, in giving me a first-class education. I had taken a degree at the

University of Edinburgh, and I was discussing in my own mind, whether I would enter myself as a student of divinity, or qualify as a civil engineer, when the intimation of my kinsman's death arrived, accompanied by the information, that, as next of kin, I was the inheritor of his property.

This windfall, to one brought up as I had been, seemed illimitable. I had a mansion which, to my unsophisticated intellect, seemed a palace. I had gardens and vineries, I had peach-houses and pineries, greenhouses and conservatories, hunters and hacks, old family pictures, an old family library, old family carriages and old family plate. One would imagine that a young man, left with all this, in the very heyday of his youth, ought to have been very comfortable and contented; ought, perhaps, to have fallen quietly and seriously in love with some blooming English girl, to have married and settled decently down on the property, making the cultivation of mangold-wurzel and turnips the highest aim of his existence.

This, in all human probability, would have been the course that I would have pursued, had it not been for an unfortunate trip which I took to Bath, to visit an old friend of my father's, Major Forbes, of the 78th regiment.* Here I was introduced to a gentleman, of the name of Acland, who had just returned from the spicy island of Ceylon. As a natural consequence, the principal

* The author of the excellent book on Ceylon and of papers on Scotch antiquities. He died as General Forbes-Leslie.—ED. "L. R."

topics of conversation, during my stay, related to elephant hunting, coffee and sugar planting, with some references to the manufacture of coconut oil and the cultivation of cinnamon. I returned to town with Acland, who was not long in winning out of me the secret, if secret it could be called, of my recent acquisition of landed property, with all its agreeable adjuncts as well as a cordial invitation to spend the 12th of August, and as many of the following days as he could spare, amongst my preserves, in Surrey. August came, and with the 12th came Mr. Acland. I took him over the place and pointed out all its beauties and all its advantages; but although the birds rose in strong coveys, and although, in spite of a drizzling rain that began to fall, the woods and fields looked uncommonly well, my visitor did not appear to appreciate its beauties or to think much of my surroundings.

"I'll tell you what I'd do, Mr. Brown," he said, "if this place were mine. I would sell off every acre of it and invest the proceeds in coffee planting in Ceylon. Instead of a paltry £1,500 or £1,600 a year, you would shortly realize your £10,000, £20,000, or perhaps your £40,000 or £50,000 per annum. Why! we pay the superintendents of our estates £100 a year and the ungrateful rascals are not even satisfied with that. Then what a glorious country. No sloppy wet weather, such as this" (the rain was now pouring down in torrents), "but a constant bright warm

sunshine tempered by the cool monsoon breezes from the Indian Ocean; just like what Columbus says of the climate of Hispaniola, 'resembling a spring morning in Andalusia.' Then amongst the hills, where the coffee grows, the air is so soft, yet so elastic, that the mere pleasure of inhaling it, is a luxury beyond all price. If you are fond of scenery Ceylon is the country for magnificent scenery. Mountains that will throw the Apennines and Pyrenees into the shade, clothed with virgin forests, from their bases to their summits; rivers nearly as wide and much more picturesque than the Rhine, or any other river in Europe, and which only require to have a few rocks blasted, to make them navigable for hundreds of miles into the interior, when they will bear on their bosoms the produce of a land, richer than any other country in the world, to the Indian Ocean, there to be shipped to the various markets of the world."

Then he continued, waxing eloquent with the picture he drew, "The banks of these rivers are clothed with forests so dense that it is almost impossible to penetrate them, without cutting your track as you proceed, which, let me tell you, is rather a slow process; but in those woods you will find timber which is almost worth its weight in gold. There are quantities of sandalwood and satinwood, ebony and calamander, jakwood which resembles mahogany, and kumbuk, which is the black oak of India; besides a lot of several others, with outlandish names, valuable

to the cabinet-maker, the house carpenter and shipbuilder, and every other worker in wood under the sun. Every ravine amongst the hills contains a mountain torrent, and every one of these torrents has waterfalls, which, if they were known to the hunters of the picturesque, would speedily become places of fashionable resort, to all who could afford to visit them. Then only think, you can buy land, the richest in the country, which would include large tracts of these mountains, rivers, woods, and waterfalls, at the low price of five shillings the acre. My dear sir, instead of possessing a few hundred acres of land, in this cold, wet, foggy climate, you might, with your energy and means, purchase a province, become the owner of a principality, and found a dynasty in the loveliest country in the world."

Here was a brilliant career chalked out for a young fellow whose earliest dreams of everything that was bright and desirable in life were connected with the sunny East. Long after Mr. Acland had left me, I pondered over his descriptions of Ceylon, in a manner which boded ill for a prolonged residence at Heathcot Hall. I had already begun to feel very much like a fish out of the water. I was above the village tradesmen, the curate, the doctor and the country attorney in point of wealth and social position, and yet I was far from being on a par with my neighbours, Lord Merrington, the deputy Lord Lieutenant of the county, with his income of £30,000 *per annum*, or even with Sir Ralph Gore, the

fox-hunting baronet, with the large bevy of marriageable daughters, who rode out, on thoroughbred horses, to see the fox break cover, and who even took a few hedges and five-barred gates in the wake of the hunt. These people were my nearest neighbours, and although they were very friendly and hospitable, my proud northern blood, which, however, has been considerably cooled since those days, had begun to rebel against their airs of condescension and patronage.

Acland's eloquence, in consequence of this silly feeling, had taken deeper root in a congenial soil than I had at first imagined. It was some months, however, before my ideas of becoming the possessor of a principality in the East had formed themselves into a definite shape. I was on a visit to my friend, Colin Douglas, at his shooting quarters, in the highlands of Argyllshire. The quarters in question consisted of an old crazy tower, situated on a steep rock, overlooking a foaming torrent, which, some mile or two below, tumbled over a ledge of rock, into a dismal-looking lake. A rocky mountain overhung one side of the house, while a bleak, barren-looking heath, which had no apparent limit, spread itself in front of the other. About a score of spectral-looking trees, hoary with age and moss, having their branches all blown to one side—the south-east,—were the most cheerful looking objects in the whole landscape. The rooms of the house were old-fashioned, small and inconvenient, although a vigorous effort had been made, by means of

paper hanging, painting and upholstery, to give them as great an air of modern comfort, as they were capable of acquiring. And this collection of tumbledown tower, frozen mountain, moss-grown trees and endless expanse of moor, my friend Colin somewhat facetiously, called his "Ancestral Halls."

"Do you see that tree?" he proudly asked, one morning, as we stood at the parlour window, watching the blinding drift whirling in eddies round some ruinous outhouses, as he pointed to one somewhat detached from the others, whose shadowy outlines could just be distinguished through the driving sleet. "That tree," he added, as his breast seemed to swell at the recollection, "once bore noble fruit." "Twelve of my ancestors were strung up by their necks to the branches of that elm. I don't mean that they were all my ancestors, but one of them was so—the then possessor of this castle, and the others were his sons and nephews. Shocking, was n't it, to hang them all? I am told that their ghosts are sometimes seen, particularly in stormy weather, about nightfall, and they are also heard, screaming like blazes, by those who have to pass those trees late at night. Then there is a haunted chamber in the house. It is the bedroom you occupy. I hope that you have not been disturbed by anything spiritual, but one of my great, great, great grandmothers, or some such ancient progenitrix, was barbarously murdered by her loving husband in that room, and she is said to wander about it at odd intervals still. I would not sleep in it for

a cool hundred myself. I put *you* there, because you had never heard the story and were plucky, and therefore not likely to be easily frightened. Queer, disma' sort of a place this, and yet I would not part with it for the finest estate or mansion in broad Scotland. It has been in our family for the past twelve hundred years."

I remained at Douglas's ancestral halls for upwards of a week, cheered by such enlivening conversation as the foregoing, chilled almost to death by the continual storms of wind and snow and the innumerable draughts which blew through every nook and corner of the crazy old pile, until I could stand it no longer; and then, both Colin and myself took our departures, glad to turn our backs upon so dreary a wilderness.

Our journey began propitiously enough, but shortly after leaving the well-known village of Ballycleuch, the wind rose and the biting hail rattled about us in such showers, as to make midday almost as dark as midnight. We had, as companions in the coach, an asthmatic old woman, with a nervous cough, a large bundle and a huge cotton umbrella, who sat on the seat opposite to me; whilst a vast drover-looking man, dressed in a drab greatcoat, with large mother-of-pearl buttons and an expansive cape, occupied the seat opposite to Colin. This gentleman was possessed of a large mastiff, which crouched at his feet, and a small black pipe, from which he puffed huge volumes of smoke, which he blandly "hoped did not annoy us." The old woman wondered

"when it would leave off snowing," and the driver gave it as his opinion that "there was more of it in the air."

As if to corroborate this, the coach suddenly came to a standstill, in the middle of a snow-drift, the horses refused to budge, and the coachman was at his wits' end. For eight long hours we stuck fast on a bleak bare hillside with the wind whistling a small hurricane around us, and the snowflakes whirling past the windows, until the coachman could collect men and horses to drag us to the next village. I was almost frozen into a state of insensibility, and it required long months of a tropical sun and careful nursing, to get the rheumatism out of my bones and the chill out of my limbs, occasioned by that night's exposure.

Can it be wondered at, that visions of the balmy air, the blue skies and tropical woods of Ceylon, such as Acland described them, should have haunted my mind that night, in striking contrast to my present dismal and dreary surroundings; and that I had all but resolved, before another winter should have passed over my head, that I would take steps to become the possessor of that principality in the far east.

This was in December 1837. About Christmas I was in London, and called upon Acland at his office in Moorgate Street. The weather was boisterous with snowstorms at frequent intervals, accompanied by a biting north-west wind. There was a large fire burning in an inner room, and

over the fireplace there was a painting in oil, somewhat panoramic, which invited my attention.

"Mr. Acland will be here presently," said the clerk, as he ushered me into this room, "and here is the morning paper: perhaps you would like to look at it. I see that the 'Cornwall' is in with 500 cwt. of our coffee—the first crop from our Dumbara estates, estates that lie somewhere in that neighbourhood," he added, pointing to the painting at which I had been gazing since I entered the room.

"Coffee is ris, sir," said the clerk, "and is now 129s and 9d for good plantation. We will net a pretty sum by this shipment." "Ah, sir!" he added, "there is nothing like coffee." "But, perhaps," he suggested, "you are not much interested in Ceylon, and have other buisness with Mr. Acland, who will be here presently, if you will have the goodness to wait."

When the clerk left the room, I proceeded to examine the painting more narrowly. It was a representation, so far as I can now recollect, of an extensive tract of tropical scenery, having a river in the foreground, whose banks were adorned with a variety of palm trees, chiefly coconut and palmyra, I should say, from my subsequent acquaintance with the original. Numbers of bronze coloured savages were bathing in the stream; whilst a ferry boat was carrying crowds of passengers and loads of goods, to and fro, across it. On the opposite side of this river there was a wide tract of wooded country, with bluff

rocks peeping over the treetops and little openings of pasture lands, looking so green, so warm and sheltered, that it is no wonder that the half-formed dreams of an eastern principality, which were floating through my mind, should have formed themselves into a definite resolution, to emigrate to this land of blue skies and shady woods. A range of blue mountains formed the background of this picture; whilst in the bright blue sky, which surmounted the whole, there floated some light fleecy clouds which threw their cool shadows over the wide spreading jungles. There were minor details to this picture, such as gorgeous flowers, twining creepers and velvety sward, but I had scarcely time to note these, when Mr. Acland entered the room.

"Ah, Brown!" he said accosting me, "looking at Boyd's* puff? I call that picture Boyd's puff, because his estates lie just beyond that ridge which you see in the foreground. Lucky man, Boyd. He has a cargo of coffee on this morning, which, if sold at present prices, will bring him in a cool three or four thousand pounds. Just think of that. It will clear the whole outlay on the estate where it grew, and future crops will be all profit, after providing for the current outlay on the plantations. If prices keep up, he will, in the course of a few years, net his £30,000 or £40,000

* Acland and Boyd were well-known as heads of the firm which in the early days of coffee planting expanded into Acland, Boyd & Co., and which is now represented by Darlev, Butler & Co. Butler, a partner in the original firm, still survives.—ED. "L. R."

a year off the properties that he has in course of cultivation. That's the way to do business! I call this Boyd's puff, because most of the land on the opposite side of the river is his private property. Now do you see these mountains in the distance?"

I answered in the affirmative.

"Well that 's our puff, because my partners and myself own the most of the land on that range of hills. In point of fact, almost the whole of the range belongs to us. It is called the Knuckles, because, if you observe that mountain, the highest of the lot, it bears a close resemblance to the knuckles of the hand, when the fist is clenched. The lowcountry between that and this river is called Dumbara, or more properly, Uda Dumbara, or the country of wild figs. But come, you will see it better on this map," dragging me off to a side table, where a quantity of maps, plans of estates, sections of buildings &c. were lying spread out, and amongst which we were busily engaged when Mr. Boyd entered.

Mr. Boyd was a tall, handsome, reserved-looking man, showing, in his calm, dignified bearing, a striking contrast to my excitable and talkative little friend, Mr. Acland. We talked over the prospects and advantages of coffee and sugar planting in Ceylon; we discussed the chances of coconut and cinnamon growing, and we did this to such good purpose, that, before I left that office, I had fully resolved to dispose of my newly acquired property in England, and invest the proceeds in the purchase of a province in Ceylon.

It is just possible that I might have given this affair a little more consideration, had the weather been less boisterous, but when I left Acland's office the wind was blowing a hurricane, accompanied with hailstones and lumps of ice. Men pulled up the collars of their great-coats and drew their hats more closely over their eyes, as they hurried along the comparatively deserted streets; whilst ragged girls and squalid looking brats sought shelter in hospitable doorways, or in the lee of projecting buildings, until ordered to "move on," by policeman X, whom the weather had rendered savage and inexorable in the discharge of his duty.

How piercingly cold it was. The air, even in my sitting-room, seemed loaded with ice, and the windows, in spite of a blazing fire, displayed frozen representations of fossiliferous forests. What a striking contrast the whirling snowflakes, the rattling hailstones and the frozen windows presented to the picture of the sunny East, which I had just been contemplating. My imagination revelled in the soft blue skies, the warm breezes and all the other fancied delights, which I was to enjoy in my projected principality within the tropics.

I sold my little place down in Surrey, with the exception of the mansion house and the home farm, and these, I was advised, by a canny Scotchman, who had been my father's lawyer, to settle on my mother, so that it might be some provision for her should I meet with any disappointment

in my eastern career. I realized almost forty thousand pounds by the sale of my property. I deposited the greater part of this sum in the Union Bank, and the balance I carried with me, in gold, to my new home in Ceylon.

CHAPTER II.—THE BURNT SHIP.

The month of March 1837 saw me embark on board the good ship "Mersey," for Colombo, Ceylon. We sailed pleasantly down the river, passed the Downs with a fair wind, and bowled along the Channel, with a steady breeze on our starboard quarter, and in the course of an unusually short space of time, we were encountering the proverbially rough weather of the Bay of Biscay. It, however, did not last long, and when we emerged into the region of the trade winds, the passengers, who, for pressing reasons, had hitherto kept their berths, began to make their appearance upon deck, and to take their places at the cuddy table. There was a large detachment of military on board, some on their way to join their regiments at Cape Town or Algoa Bay, and some to fill the blanks which cholera or fever had made in the ranks of those stationed in Ceylon. There were sappers and miners, rifles, engineers, artillery and soldiers of the line, so that the various arms of the service, with the exception of the cavalry, were pretty well represented in our floating barrack. There was the usual allowance of women and children on

board, who did not add greatly either to the cleanliness or the quietness of the 'tween-decks.

There were some half-a-dozen of officers, from a major downwards, in the cuddy, two or three married men accompanied by their wives going like myself to try their fortunes in the wealth-producing land of Ind. There was a sprinkling of youths for the Civil Service and merchants' offices, and also young maidens on their way to join a parent, or a brother, or, perhaps, to become the bosom companion of some well-loved friend, in Ceylon. In addition to these, there were some four or five young fellows, under the care of Sandy Gray, a canny Scot, in the steerage, a consignment to Donald Davidson & Co., to be converted into assistants and afterwards managers of their coffee estates,—some of them, perhaps, to become millionnaires and members of the Legislative Council of their adopted country. Such were the materials which formed the community of our floating home; and which, before we had been long at sea, had broken up into various little sets and cliques, as well amongst the soldiers in 'tween-decks as amongst the passengers in the steerage, or the more aristocratic sojourners in the cabin. I am not going to inflict a journal of this voyage on the reader, but there were one or two incidents connected with it, which I think are worth recording, as illustrating a state of affairs which has now almost entirely passed away.

The first of these incidents occurred when we were lying becalmed in the Atlantic Ocean near

the line, between the two trade winds. The sun was getting low in the heavens, and the western sky was glowing with a glory and a brilliancy which it is scarcely possible to describe, whilst the undulations of the ocean resembled a polished surface of pure gold, when it reflected the gorgeous tints of the departing day. Here and there, a faint ripple might be seen, ruffling the glassy surface of the water, which had been in a state of perfect quiescence for several days. The officers walked impatiently backwards and forwards along the quarter-deck, whistling for a breeze; the soldiers and sailors were located on the 'fo'c'sle' or were congregated in the waist of the ship, dancing, fiddling and singing songs,—comic ones apparently, judging from the uproarious bursts of laughter which they elicited. The cabin passengers were lounging about the poop, some engaged at chess, some at draughts, and some with books in their hands; whilst a few of the younger ones, myself amongst the number, were more agreeably engaged in flirting and talking soft nonsense with the fair companions of our voyage.

"A sail on our starboard quarter!" shouted the man at the helm, "and she seems to be bringing a breeze down with her." Our life had been a state of almost perfect stagnation for some days past, and this intelligence acted like an electric shock in rousing us to an interest in the outer world. Those who were below rushed upon deck, on hearing the news, and those upon deck rushed to the shrouds, stood upon hencoops, and occupied

any other commanding position that was calculated to afford a good view of the approaching stranger, which was bearing down upon us with a spanking breeze and every sail that would draw, set. The sun was just setting below the horizon, when the vessel came alongside of us bowing gracefully to the long roll of the sea, and dashing the spray from her bows, as she swept majestically onward, under the influence of the light breeze, which was now also filling the sails of the old "Mersey."

"Ship, ahoy!" shouted our captain, as he stood in the main shrouds, speaking trumpet in hand

"Ahoy!" was the response from the stranger.

"What ship is that?" was the next question.

"The 'Corfu,' from London," was the reply, as the two vessels rose and fell on the long swell of the broad Atlantic, like partners setting to each other in a country dance.

"I have a very valuable cargo on board," the captain of the "Corfu" added, "and a large consignment of silver, which makes me fancy that the stranger, which you will see astern, is after no good, as he has been dodging me for the last three or four days. I would not be afraid of him, if it were coming to a case of boarding, or even if I had a good gun or two on board," the poor fellow added, "but you will see that my armament is made up of 'quakers,' with the exception of two rusty old carronades, which do well enough for signalling. I wish we could manage to keep by

each other for a day or two until we lose sight of that blackguard," he added, pointing astern, where, sure enough, we saw another vessel coming rapidly up in the gathering twilight.

As if aware that she had become an object of observation, the stranger altered her course and steered away to the westward, displaying, in so doing, the rig of a three-masted schooner: a description of craft which I then saw for the first time. "Keep alongside of me," shouted our captain, in an assuring tone, "and there will be no fear of you. I have a regiment of soldiers on board and enough of big guns in the hold to blow a dozen of these fellows out of the water, so that if he means mischief we will soon cook his goose."

The two vessels continued close to each other, whilst this conversation was going on, but the wind dying away, as these light winds do on the Line, the "Corfu," having more way on her, gradually forged ahead, and perceptibly, although slowly, became separated from us.

The strange schooner had now become the principal object of our attention. When she first altered her course, she stood away to the west, but she did not long remain on that tack. She changed once more and resumed her original course to the south, and appeared as if she wished to

sail right round us. To say the least, her movements were very suspicious, and so our captain seemed to think, for as long as her large rakish-looking masts were visible, against the fading western sky, he stood anxiously observing her through the glass. That the strange vessel was believed to be "a blackbird hunter,"—*i. e.* a slaver, or a pirate,—soon became known to the crew and passengers, and numerous yarns were spun about the deeds of wanton cruelty which gentlemen of that profession had perpetrated upon the crews of merchant vessels, when they were so unfortunate as to fall into their power.

"I don't like the look of him," remarked our captain to Major Moody, R. A., as he handed the glass to that gentleman after a long and anxious examination of the strange schooner. "There is something very suspicious about the fellow, and, I think, we will only be showing common prudence if we keep a bright look out, and at the same time make some preparation for giving him a warm welcome, if he should meditate mischief."

It was but a very short time before this, that the "Morning Star," on her passage to Ceylon, had been boarded by a pirate, in the same latitude. The captain was tied to the main-mast and brutally murdered, the passengers grossly abused, and the fairer portion of them, it was said, treated with the worst indignities, by the scoundrels, who, after rifling the vessel of all the valuables they could discover, pushed off, on an alarm being raised.

that another vessel was bearing down upon them.*

This fact, and other similar occurrences of a recent date, will account for the apprehensions of the commander of the "Corfu," as well as the suspicions of our own captain.

"If you think that there is the slightest danger," the Major replied, "let us, by all means, take what measures we can to meet it. These pop-guns," pointing contemptuously to the ship's carronades,—six pounders I think they were,—"will not be of much use, but my fellows will soon put a few of the big ones in the hold into fighting condition, and the sooner it is done the better. If you wish it, I will give them their orders at once."

The forehatch was opened, and the huge en-

* In *Chambers's Journal* for May 1885, the affair of the "Morning Star" is incidentally mentioned, but the account there given is altogether incorrect. The cabin passengers did not have their throats cut, and no murder was committed but that of the captain. The detection of the criminals was somewhat curious. It occurred from a seaman belonging to the "Morning Star" meeting with one of the pirates in a wine-shop in Cadiz. He gave information of his discovery to the British Consul, who had the whole gang seized together with their vessel which was lying in the harbour. Evidence was sent out from England sufficient to convict the scoundrels, who were almost all garrotted. The writer knew several of the passengers who were on board of the "Morning Star" when this visitation occurred. Mrs. Walker, the wife of Andrew Walker, who was long Police Magistrate of Kandy, was the only lady passenger, however, that he knew. He met her at the manse of Crimond in 1849, when she gave him a very graphic account of this adventure, but she was very reticent regarding the treatment which the ladies received from the pirates. [The Mr. Walker referred to was uncle to Sir E. Noel Walker, K. C. M. G.—ED. "L. R."]

gines of war, with their carriages and fighting gear, were speedily dragged on deck, and were quickly placed, so as to be ready for service on whichever side was threatened with danger.

There were difficulties, I understood, in the way of fighting these guns to advantage, but by the ingenuity of the ship's carpenter and a veteran sergeant of artillery, they were in a great measure overcome. There were no cartridges, but by contributions of flannel shirts and drawers from the passengers, which the fair fingers of the ladies soon formed into bags, excellent substitutes were provided.

A cask of ball cartridges for the soldier's muskets was also got on deck, and placed in readiness to be distributed on the least appearance of danger; whilst the men themselves were warned to be ready to turn out, at a moment's call. The passengers also were becoming bellicose, under the warlike excitement which prevailed, and some of the ladies, mischievously I thought, talked of preparing lint and bandages for the wounded. Sandy Gray appeared upon deck, armed with a huge horseman's pistol, which looked, as if it might have seen service at Kilsyth or Philiphaugh.

When these preparations were all completed, the excitement began to wear off. The more composed of the passengers began to yawn and wonder "what all the fuss was about." The young fellows, myself amongst the number, paraded the quarter-deck, with their rifles and fowling-pieces thrown over their shoulders, "on warlike deeds intent,"

until eight bells having struck and no foe appearing, the drowsy god began to seize them for his own, and one by one they disappeared down the companion way, and were soon heard giving unmistakable signs of having yielded to his sleepy embraces.

Being very curious to learn the *dénouement* of this affair, I did not go below during the whole of that night. Shortly after midnight, the wind freshened and we stood away to the southward, with stern sails set, aloof and aloft. A smothered hum was heard from the vicinity of the long boat, where the watch were passing away the time in telling and listening to tough yarns, such as only sailors can spin; whilst the look-out men, who had received orders to "keep their weather eye open," were silently pacing the waist of the vessel, or standing motionless like pillars on the most advanced parts of the fore-castle.

"Aldebaran" was just setting, looking large and red on the verge of the horizon. I was pacing the quarter deck along with Mr. Todd, the second officer of the ship, who was telling me about the catastrophe of the "Morning Star," when the man at the wheel sang out: "A ship, sir, between us and that 'ere star."

Mr. Todd jumped into the main rigging and looked anxiously in the direction indicated.

"I don't see anything," he said, "you must have been mistaken."

"No mistake, sir," the man replied, "I saw something pass between me and the star, and it

could only have been a vessel, for there has not been a cloud in the sky for days; and there it is again, sir," he added, as we could distinctly see the fiery lustre of "Aldebaran" obscured for a moment, as if by some object passing between us and it.

Mr Todd got the night glass, but by this time the star had set and a dull haze had gathered along the western horizon, so that for some time no vessel nor any other object could be seen.

After a long pause, however, he suddenly exclaimed: "Ah! I have her. It is that cursed schooner again, or I am a sodger. She is dodging us, as sure as a gun. She has shortened sail and is running with us neck and neck, and I'll be sworn that she is after no good. But what has become of the 'Corfu'?" he asked, as he swept the horizon with the glass; "I would n't wonder though she has given us the slip, in order to get away from this horrid schooner."

"A light on the lee bow," was shouted by the look-out man on the fore-castle, as if in answer to this inquiry.

"It will be the 'Corfu,'" said Mr. Todd, as I followed him forward to examine this new object of interest.

By this time the wind had once more lulled and the sails were hanging motionless against the masts, and the "Mersey" was rolling on the long swell of the broad Atlantic, almost dipping her lower yards into the water. The light seemed too distant to be made anything of, but the man at

the helm was ordered to keep the ship's head in the direction of it, so that, if any progress were made, the two vessels might be drawn closer together.

By this time it was eight bells once more and the watch was changed. I had now Mr. Evans, the chief officer, for a companion: a man who had seen some service in the navies of the young republics of South America. He gazed long and attentively at the light, and at last mounted the forerigging, 'to see,' as he expressed it, "what a little elevation would do, in making out what it was."

"Whew!" he cried, "it is not half a mile distant, and, what is more, it proceeds from a boat, or some o'her object, low in the water. There is no ship visible near it."

In the course of another hour or so, the dawn began to "purple o'er the sky," and found us almost close alongside the object of so much speculation. It turned out to be an old cask, loaded with iron, having a short mast rigged on it and a lantern tied to the mast. When we got alongside of this original Pharos, we were not alone, for our friend the schooner was scarcely half a mile off, denuded of all her canvas, with the exception of a flying jib, and silently approaching the light from the opposite quarter.

"Ah! this has been a decoy of the 'Corfu,'" Mr. Evans remarked; "she has given the schooner and ourselves the slip, and may be fifty miles off by this time. Come, bear a hand some of you fellows and get the signals up. There

goes the schooner's bunting, she evidently wants to speak with us. Ah! the stars and stripes. I expected as much. These honest fellows always show American colours, and I'll be bound that chap has the flag of every republic in the universe in his lockers, and shows them at his mast head, as it best suits his purposes. He is making sail too," he added, as the canvas fell from the stranger's yards, as if by magic, and was sheeted home with the celerity and quickness of a drop scene in a theatre, "although, heaven knows, there is n't wind enough to carry a feather. You had better call the captain and tell the crew to bundle up until we see what this chap is after."

"No use calling the captain. He is already here," replied our worthy commander, as he emerged from the companion way, followed shortly after by Major Moody and the soldier officers.

The soldiers and crew also made their appearance upon deck. The former were drawn up two deep in the waist of the ship and on the quarter-deck, and the latter were placed where their services were most likely to be required, if we were to have any trouble with the approaching stranger. These artillerymen stood by the big guns, in their shirt sleeves, looking stern and business-like, whilst the passengers remained on the poop, watching all this warlike parade with wonder, and, so far as I myself was concerned with no small amount of apprehension. Our captain was beginning to grow grey with years.

He had sailed these seas from his boyhood upwards, and I thought that he must have had very strong reasons for suspecting the good intentions of the strange schooner, before he would have countenanced such a display of military zeal. He looked serious too and resolute, as a man who had a great deal at stake, and felt that it depended upon his own vigour and determination whether he should keep his own, or not. It has taken a longer time to relate these preparations than it took to execute them, and yet, by the time that they were all completed, the two vessels were within a hundred yards of each other, apparently attracted by some species of magnetism, for there was not a breath of wind stirring.

“He does not appear to have many of a crew on board, sir,” Mr. Evans remarked to the captain, “and yet his decks seemed swarming with men, when I was examining him last night. It was this fact that has made me suspect his good intentions.”

“They must all be below then, sir, for there are only three or four upon deck at present, and a fellow going aloft.”

“That is very likely,” was the captain’s reply, “but it would require a good many men to handle that vessel and work those guns, three on each side and they twenty-four pounders, at least, and which are not there for any peaceable purpose. If I am not mistaken, there is a larger one

amidship covered with tarpaulins, to look like something more honest. Is it not very hard," he asked, turning to Major Moody, "that although I am morally certain that this fellow is, at least, a slaver and possibly also a sea robber, and I am strong enough to blow him out of the water, I have no right to interfere with him, or put a stop to the mischief he may occasion."

The vessels were now almost touching each other, and we could plainly see the objects which had roused our captain's suspicions, and formidable looking objects they were,—heavy looking guns, which looked far too big for a craft of her size, with rammers and sponges, in racks under the bulwarks, whilst balls were ranged in stands ready for immediate use. The hull of the stranger was quite black, with the exception of a narrow bead of white paint, and the interior of the bulwarks, the hencoops, &c., were of a light salmon colour. The decks were polished as white as the material of which they were formed would allow; whilst the metal fastenings, which were of copper, glanced like gold in the beams of the morning sun.

As the schooner rounded our stern, a tall, lanky looking man jumped into the main rigging and hailed us. After answering the usual inquiries, it became our turn to ask questions, and in answer to them we obtained the following information:—

"The schooner was the 'Crusader' of Boston, bound to Canton, with a cargo of notions, out thirty-

three days, no passengers, several of the crew down with typhus fever, was consequently rather shorthanded, but did not require any assistance; carried guns to beat off, if necessary, the pirates of the Chinese seas,—would feel obliged to us for any newspapers, religious tracts or books of sermons which we could spare; whilst a novel or two would not be refused, as they might amuse the more ungodly portion of the crew." A bundle of books and papers was speedily collected, although, I am sorry to say, there were neither tracts nor sermons amongst them, and thrown on board the stranger, from whom we received a shower of thanks in return. The vessels then drew gradually apart. "Please to report us at Cape Town," cried the Yankee skipper, by way of a good-bye, as he flourished his trumpet for the last time.

Our captain flourished his trumpet, by way of assent, as he jumped upon deck, looking more excited than the occasion seemed to warrant.

"Report you," he muttered. "Yes, by Jove, I'll report you, and I hope that you will soon fall in with someone who will have a better right to interfere with you, and give a better report of what you are after, than I have. Major," he added, turning to that functionary, "if I were certain that I would not be tried for piracy, I would, as sure as I am a living man, take possession of that craft, with the assistance of your men, and carry her into Table Bay, as a lawful

prize. I have not the very slightest doubt of her being a sea robber, and had she not seen that we were prepared to give her a warm welcome, our meeting would not have passed over so peaceably as it has done."

Although there was scarcely a breath of wind stirring, and we were not making any perceptible progress, it was surprising to see how rapidly we were left behind by our Yankee friend. He was steering due south, and in the course of two or three hours had sunk below the horizon, but not before, as a piece of bravado, he had crowded his yards with men, who swarmed about the rigging and gave us three ringing cheers, as soon as they were beyond the range of our twenty-four pounders.

Hour after hour passed until dinner time, which was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. It was natural that our encounter with the suspicious schooner, and the deadly peril we had escaped, if she were really a pirate, in consequence of the soldiers and guns which were on board, should form the principal topic of conversation.

There were two days in the week when we were allowed champagne at dinner, and this was one of them. The wine was circulating freely, and the conversation, if not brilliant, was very general, when the man at the wheel, whose office, in consequence of the calm which prevailed, was a sinecure, called down the skylight: "I hear thunder, sir, away to the south."

The captain jumped from his seat, looked at and tapped the barometer.

"There is no indication here of a change of weather," he remarked, with a puzzled look; "you must be mistaken."

"No mistake, sir," said the man, "I have heard it several times, and there it is again," he added, as a dull muffled boom sounded along the water.

We jumped from our seats and went upon deck, but we were unable to discover any appearance of thunder clouds, along the whole circle of the horizon.

"Listen. There it is again," and we all heard the same low smothered boom, only more distinctly, float through the air.

"That's not thunder," Major Moody remarked, "thunder does not sound so sharp, and I never heard a shotted gun fired, if that is not one."

Three or four other reports followed and then all was silence. A light breeze sprang up which carried us towards the sound, at a rate which promised to bring us into its immediate vicinity in a very short time; but these light winds or catspaws on the Line can never be depended on to last an hour at a time. The wind died away once more, and the sails hung flapping against the masts. The sun had set and darkness was rapidly enshrouding both sea and sky. Our interests were fearfully absorbed with the

sounds we had heard when combined with the previous incidents of the day, and we were casting anxious glances towards the south and whistling hard for another wind to carry us where our worst conjectures would be either dissipated or confirmed.

"A light, right ahead," shouted someone from the fore-castle. We all rushed forward to see it, but the fore-castle was too limited in space to afford standing room to the numbers who now crowded on to it. I mounted to the foretop, to watch the light, which when first seen, was little bigger than a blinking star, but it gradually grew larger and larger, until it glared out a huge blaze, lighting up the horizon, and throwing a pathway of light across the water to our vessel.

"A ship on fire," cried a hundred voices at once.

"Oh for a breeze," almost screamed as many more.

"Get the boats out," shouted the captain, in a loud hoarse voice, "and let eight or ten men jump into each."

The boats were lowered in an incredibly short space of time, including even the long boat. They were as quickly manned: the captain and the mates taking charge of them. I slid into the longboat and crouched in the stern sheets, lest I might be ordered out if I were discovered; and after the carpenter, who was left in command

of the vessel, had been ordered to keep lights burning at the masts' heads and to throw up a rocket at intervals, we pushed off; the men pulling with a will, in the direction of the blaze.

After an hour's hard work, we could see that we were nearing the light fast. The stumps of masts, with yards crossed, were discernable through the flames. Our men, however, were by this time dead beat with their exertions. The perspiration was rolling down their faces, the night was suffocatingly hot, and to add to their labour, the boats, which had been hanging ever since we left England in the sun, had become warped in the planking, and the sea was pouring in, in tiny jets at every seam. It was quite evident that if something was not done, and that immediately, they would soon fill and leave us swimming for our lives, in the middle of the broad Atlantic. The men ceased pulling, as if by general consent, and boots, souwesters, and everything else that could be made available, were put in requisition to get the water thrown out.

After a short rest, we gave way once more, the men cheering lustily as the boats dashed through the water. We had approached within about a mile of the burning vessel. We could see her dark hull rising, as it were, out of a sea of fire, whilst red flames and dense black smoke rose from its interior. The sky was red with the reflection of the blaze, and every object

was distinctly visible in the lurid light, standing out in striking relief, from the murky background.

In an instant, sea and sky were immersed in total, almost palpable darkness. A tongue of flame shot up from the ill-fated ship, and then everything became black as Erebus.

"We are too late. She is down," was uttered by a score of tongues as the men suddenly ceased pulling and rested on their oars.

"We are behind the fair," someone remarked in a flippant tone of voice, which sounded sadly out of place under the circumstances.

"Give way, my men, we may yet be in time to do some good," shouted the captain, in a loud stern tone of voice, and the men bent once more to their task. When we thought that we were near where the ship had disappeared, the boats separated and pulled slowly in circles, in the hope of being able to render assistance to any of the crew who might have taken to their boats, or who might yet have been floating on pieces of the wreck, but after two or three hours of anxious search, nothing was discovered. We were anxious and excited, and notwithstanding the darkness of the night and the heat of the atmosphere we persevered in our efforts, although we discovered nothing to reward them. The smell of burnt tar in the air showed us that we must be in the vicinity of the catastrophe, and we were resolved that no effort should be wanting on our part to render assistance to the

sufferers, if our assistance could now be of any avail.

The blue lights and the rockets which the carpenter was burning and throwing up showed that the old "Mersey" was coming slowly towards us, and seeing them was about the last thing that I recollect of that night's transactions. I sank down in the stern-sheets of the boat, sleepy and exhausted, and did not awake again until the morning sun was shining brightly on my face. A brisk breeze was blowing, and the boats were being towed through the water, at the vessel's side. I mounted the deck, the boats were hoisted into their places, the sails were trimmed, and we bore away once more on our course.

"There is something in the water, about a mile to leeward," remarked one of the seaman, who was busy coiling up the tackling of the boats.

I pointed out this object to the captain, who immediately altered his course and bore down towards it. It was a ship's boat, bottom up, with the woodwork in various places a good deal charred, particularly about the stern, where the names were quite undecipherable. In a wide circle around it were fragments of spars, pieces of rope yarn, and quantities of charred timber. We sailed round the spot, in gradually increasing circles, during the remainder of that day, in the hope of being able to pick up any of the crew of the burnt ship who may have taken to the boats; but we could discover no trace of any survivor of the cat-

astrophe. We fired our big guns too, at short intervals, to show that assistance was at hand, and look-outs were kept at the masts' heads, but all without result. Towards nightfall we reluctantly gave up the search and bore away to the southward: the whole of us impressed with a feeling of anxious horror, which it is scarce possible to describe. We were thoroughly convinced, that the ill-fated vessel, whose destruction we had witnessed, was the "Corfu," and that she had fallen a victim to the scoundrel whom we had so thoroughly in our power the previous morning.

I may mention that the "Corfu" never reached Canton; in fact, was never heard of again after having parted company with us; and that no such ship as the "Crusader" was to be found in the Boston shipping list.

I was walking on the quarter-deck of the P. & O. Steam Navigation Company's ship the "Orient" one evening, in the year 1849, when nearing the coast of Algiers, with a naval officer who had seen much service on the west coast of Africa, our conversation very naturally turned upon pirates and piracy, and I narrated the foregoing incident to him.

"Why," he said, it is now about a dozen years ago, when I was first lieutenant on board the 'Vixen,' we gave chase to a craft, exactly such as you describe, and, as we got her jammed between us and a lee shore, her crew ran her aground and escaped to the land,—that is, so many of them as

got safely through the surf. We set her on fire with shells, and it was not long ere she blew up, with a terrific explosion. We heard, afterwards, that the crew had been seized by the natives, and carried as prisoners into the King of Dahomey's country, where they were formed into a company of guards, and distinguished themselves, even in that hellish crew, by their recklessness and daring in slave-hunting expeditions, and particularly at the recent sacking of Abeokoota."

CHAPTER III.—CAPTAIN ROBERTSON AND
THE ENSIGN.

The other incident of our voyage, which I would fain relate, occurred in this wise. Amongst the passengers, there was an Ensign of the name of Buller. The family of Buller, according to the Ensign's account, was one of the most ancient families in England, perhaps, in the world. The progenitor of the English branch came over with the Conqueror, and, had it not unfortunately happened that a few of the links, between this gentleman and Noah, were missing, Ensign Buller, of her Majesty's — regiment, like our Mahommedan friend Lutfullah, would have been in a position to trace his descent direct from Adam. As it was, he boasted loudly that the blue blood of Northern Earls flowed in his veins. According to his account, the Bullers were a very illustrious race. They had distinguished themselves, as warriors and states-

men, in every age of English history. Their battle cry had been heard at Acre and Askelon, whilst Agincourt, Crécy and Poitiers had borne witness to their powers. In the wars of the Roses they bore a prominent part; and in the Great Rebellion they had fought stoutly on the side of loyalty and legitimacy. The house of Buller had given warriors to fight the battles of the nation, in the time of Marlborough and during the war of Independence in America; whilst more than one member of this illustrious race had been honourably mentioned in the despatches of the Great Duke himself.

In spite of all this, truth compels me to say that the present member of this distinguished family was a most unmitigated specimen of the *genus* snob,—conceited and selfish beyond all endurance, and, although an officer, very far from being a gentleman.

Another of our passengers was a worthy sea captain, late a commander in the H. E. I. Co.'s Bombay Marine. When that force was broken up, he had, instead of the retiring pension offered to the officers, accepted the compensation money for his commission, and he was now, like myself, on his way to invest this small capital in the purchase of a province, in Ceylon. His name was Robertson. We called him Capitan Robertson, for shortness. He was a favourable specimen of an old East Indian sea-dog, that is, he was courteous and obliging, frank and open-hearted, fond of a joke, the more practical the better, fond of a social glass after dinner, fond of a rubber of whist

or a game at backgammon, but fonder still of his wife, a tall, handsome, quiet and lady-like woman, who was accompanying him to the far East. Mrs. Robertson was thoughtful and elegant in appearance, gentle and retiring in disposition, and mild and amiable in her manners. The Capitan's principal weakness was his fondness for practical joking and his want of consideration in the language he occasionally made use of when angry, which language was composed principally of expletives more forcible than elegant in expression.

From the very first day that the passengers began to mix together, there was a sort of repelling force at work, between Robertson and Buller. Robertson was too practical a man to appreciate Buller's nonsense; but this did not prevent him from trotting out the Ensign, as he expressed it, on his favourite hobby, upon every possible occasion, for the amusement of the other passengers. Buller was too conceited to perceive the amusement which his pedigree excited, amongst the little knot which sometimes gathered around him and the worthy Captain on these occasions; but the truth at length began to dawn, even on his silly brain, and an incipient feud sprang up between them, so that they were, for several weeks cutting each other with awful dignity, on the part of Buller, but with contemptuous indifference on the part of the Captain, when perambulating the quarter-deck.

This feud was healed and had broken out again

several times before we had reached the neighbourhood of Mauritius, at which time all ill-feeling between the belligerents had, to every appearance, ceased.

If any of my readers have ever been in the neighbourhood of these "gems of the eastern sea," they will most probably still retain a vivid and pleasant remembrance of the glorious sunsets of that balmy region, when the sun sinks below the horizon, amidst a blaze of glory, unequalled in any other part of the world. The golden regions of the blest seem displayed, night after night, to mortal gaze; everything in nature that is most beautiful and everything that is most exquisite in art, seem mingled in the most gorgeous colouring that the imagination can conceive and glow with ever-varying loveliness, but with ceaseless splendour, in the western heavens, until the whole is enshrouded in the sable mantle of night. These magnificent sunsets had become so common of late, that few of the passengers thought them worth the trouble of looking at or admiring, but preferred—the male portion of them I mean—to sit over their wine after dinner, to going upon deck to enjoy the most exquisitely beautiful scenes that this dull world can exhibit.

It was one of our champagne evenings. The ladies had retired and the small knot of gentlemen had drawn towards the head of the cuddy table, where the cracks of the champagne bottles and loud laughter spoke of jollity and fun, to say nothing of good feeling and good humour.

“Well, Buller,” someone asked, in a voice where the accents of the Northern tongue might have been recognised, “what about that old fellow, you were talking of, who knocked down our good King James at Flodden?”

“I didn’t say that he knocked him down, I only said that he exchanged blows with him, and that he would most probably have taken the king prisoner, if they had not been separated by the throng and rush of the combatants.”

“I thought that little story referred to Crécy, or Agincourt, or some other of the French fights,” was remarked in a dry sarcastic tone, from the other side of the table.

“I’ll tell you what, Buller,” someone else remarked, “you had better shut up and don’t bother us any more with that infernal pedigree of yours. Come, give it up, old fellow, and take a glass of champagne.”

“With pleasure; but, gentlemen, the incident at the battle of Crécy occurred to Sir Lancelot de Buller, who was afterwards known by the *sobriquet* of the *Plumisier*. He was the third cousin of the then baron, but his title and his family are now both extinct. An effort, however, is being made to get the title re—”

“Come, come, Buller, shut up, you are getting too bad,” the Major said, “don’t you see that they are all making game of you? Don’t for mercy’s sake bother us with these confounded long names

that nobody has the slightest interest in. Can't you leave that horrid ancestry of yours alone, for one night?"

"I beg your pardon, Major and gentlemen," Captain Robertson remarked, with a sly twinkle in his eye, "I do not see why Mr. Buller should be put down in that unceremonious manner. It is a very worthy and a very laudable feeling, that of reverence for one's ancestors. I possess it myself, in a very eminent degree, and the chief regret that I have experienced through life has arisen from my total want of success, in my endeavours to discover who and what my grandfather was. You can have no idea, gentlemen, how much annoyance this melancholy fact has caused to me. It is so hard upon a man to feel doubtful whether he ever had a grandfather, which is, in a great measure, my case, so that I can cordially sympathise with Buller, in his just pride in knowing so well the *status* of that venerable relative, and not only him, but his grandfathers before him, for heaven knows how many generations. And this reminds me," the Captain continued, winking to the Scotchmen present, "that when I was last in the North I paid a visit to the Bullers of Buchan, and I have always intended to ask our friend, if he was in any way related to them."

"Ah! yes, the Bullers of Buchan," several voices remarked; "very well known all over Scotland, very ancient indeed, and long settled in Aberdeenshire. Their place is open to everyone

who chooses to visit them. They keep open house all the year round, and they are very remarkable in many respects."

Buller had drunk a considerable quantity of wine, and was now smoking a Manila cheroot, and consequently his intellects were not in the best condition for appreciating the amused looks which were interchanged by the Scotchmen of the party, so without the slightest hesitation he answered: "The Bullers of Buchan, Ah! yes, the Bullers of Buchan," which, however, he pronounced "Bookan." "Certainly, gentlemen, they are distant connections—distant connections of our family:" poor Buller's idea evidently being that the Bullers of Buchan must be a very great and important family, in some part of Scotland, since their fame was so well known to every Scotchman present.

When the joke was explained to him and he found that the Bullers of Buchan was only a big hole, on the coast of Aberdeenshire, into which the waters of the North Sea gained an entrance, through a cave-like opening in the huge granite cliffs, the poor little Ensign actually cried with vexation, and he never forgave the Captain. It wounded him on the sorest point, and like a little snob as he was, he took a paltry and mean method of showing his spite.

There could not have been a more gentle or more unobtrusive person than Mrs. Robertson; but she was possessed of one weakness. She had a mortal

antipathy to tobacco smoke. This was so well understood, that none of the gentlemen smoked on the quarter-deck when she was present. If she appeared when anyone was indulging in a weed, the smoker immediately pitched it overboard, or walked forward to the fore-castle, to have his smoke out. After the Bullers of Buchan affair, however, Buller, whenever he saw Mrs. Robertson on deck, would light his cheroot, although I am certain that it sometimes made the puppy very sick, and perambulated the deck, on the weather side of his victim, doing his best to puff as much smoke as possible into the lady's face. Mrs. Robertson bore this mildly for some time, merely going below, or silently walking over to the other side of the vessel, but when she found that the little scamp followed her and repeated the offence, and that it was a settled system of annoyance, she, after remonstrating with him, complained to the captain of the vessel.

The captain spoke to Buller, and requested him, as a personal favour, to desist from this species of annoyance, but he was met with the reply, that "he had an undoubted right to smoke on the quarter-deck, and if Mrs. Robertson did not like it, she could stay below."

The annoyance still continued, and Mrs. Robertson, at length, spoke to her husband upon the subject. Robertson acted much more quietly than was to have been expected from his fiery temper.

He accosted Buller civilly, and asked him, as

a personal favour, to desist from smoking in his wife's presence, or if he was resolved to continue the practice, to do so on the lee side of the vessel, and he would desire her to keep the other side.

I don't think that this request was very civilly met, on the part of the Ensign, but there was no more said upon the subject until evening. Mrs. Robertson came on deck, in company with her husband, and was watching a shoal of flying-fish and dolphins, which were skipping and leaping alongside; when her persecutor came behind and puffed a cloud of smoke into her face.

"I must go below, dear," she said to her husband, "I cannot stand this."

"Don't go below, Mary," he replied, "and I shall soon put a stop to this annoyance."

"I say you, Buller," he said, turning to that gentleman, "you have got your unmanly spite out now, so you had better stop your monkey tricks, or —"

"Or what?" the Ensign pertly inquired, seeing that the Captain hesitated to finish the sentence.

"Or I'll make you," was the reply, as that gentleman turned contemptuously on his heel and rejoined his wife.

They were passing Buller in their walk, when another puff of smoke met Mrs. Robertson in the face. The Captain seated her on a hencoop, and then walked, with portentous deliberation, towards Buller. He seized the little goose, by

the back of the neck, turned his head round, and pulling the cheroot from his mouth pitched it over the ship's side.

"Now, you infernal little jackanapes," he said, "if you were not such an insignificant snob, I would give you such a rope's ending as would make you remember me as long as you lived. Take a piece of friendly advice in time, and don't try any more of that nonsense," he continued, as his passion began to cool, "or, as sure as my name is William Robertson, both you and the cheroot will go overboard together."

The Captain's grip had been none of the softest, and it had gradually tightened while giving this advice, so that the Ensign fairly howled with the pain. Some of the other officers ran to rescue him from his adversary's hands, and there was then an awful fuss. The military took part with Buller, the civilians with Robertson, and party spirit threatened to run very high. A choice of pistols and a shot across the capstan were spoken of in vague whispers; whilst a general impression prevailed, that a meeting at twelve yards, as soon as they reached land, was the only satisfactory method of settling the difficulty. To do Buller justice, he was as full of fight as a cock sparrow, and looked as if he meant it too. Not so the Captain. He laughed at the idea of fighting the Ensign: "I have seen too much actual service," he remarked to me, "to make a fool of myself, by giving a puppy like Buller an opportunity of shooting me, in return for a

lesson in manners, which he has shown was very greatly needed."

This silly affair created an immense excitement in our little community, cribbed up as we were in so small a space, and faction ran as high as it often does on much more momentous affairs on shore. It happened, luckily, however, that, in the course of a short time, dhonies, or native trading vessels, were seen occasionally on the eastern horizon, denoting the presence of land, and in the course of another day or two the gallant old "Mersey" was ploughing her way through the deep green sea, which surrounds "Serendib's spicy isle," in the midst of a fleet of fishing canoes, which, stretching on all sides of her, dotted the ocean, like wild sea-birds, far as the eye could reach.

We landed. Captain Robertson and myself accepted the invitation of Mr. Darley, the principal local partner of the house of Acland, Boyd & Co., to take up our quarters with him, during our sojourn in Colombo.

Our military friends found their way to their barracks, and the other passengers were scattered amongst the hospitable mansions and resthouses of Colombo.

A morning or two after we landed, Robertson told me that a soldier officer had called on him with a challenge from Buller.

"What do you intend doing?" I asked.

"Doing," he replied, in astonishment, "Why, I have done all that I intend to do. I told the fellow that if Buller sent anyone to bother me about that silly business again, I would show them a more energetic method of *exit* from the house than I showed him as I civilly bowed him out to the verandah."

In the course of that day an English mail came in, and after reading our letters the Captain and I went over to the Library, to have a look at the papers. When we entered, which we were allowed to do by being introduced by a member, we found a crowd of officers in uniform, and a sprinkling of civilians, reading the papers and chatting in groups along the tables, which filled the centre of a large hall. We sat down by ourselves and were turning over the pages of *The Times*, when our attention was attracted by someone in a group near us asking, as in reference to the subject-matter of their previous conversation: "Can any of you tell us who this Captain Robertson is?"

"Hush," someone replied, in a whisper, "he is in the room."

The Captain rose, walked up to the group, and bowing to those who composed it, said with a slight touch of haughtiness: "If, gentlemen, I have the the honour of being the person whom you wish to know about, I have much pleasure in informing you that I am the eldest son of Admiral Robertson of the British Navy, that I

lately bore a commission as Commander in the H. E. I. Co.'s service, and that I am now about to settle, I believe, as a planter in this Island. Having given you this information, may I ask, without being considered very inquisitive, to what cause I am indebted for becoming the object of your conversation?"

The knot of officers were rather taken aback at the Captain's address, but one gentleman answered his question, by pointing to a small placard stuck on the most prominent part of the Library walls, denouncing my worthy friend, as being a coward and no gentleman. This precious production was signed Augustus Howard Wellesley Buller.

The Captain read the paper very deliberately. He then tore it from its place and crumpled it in his hand; after which he left the room, beckoning to me to follow.

"We must look out that d— puppy," the Captain whispered, in suppressed wrath; "and as sure as I am a sinner, I will make him eat his words, and literally too. Ah! here he is, the very man himself," he cried, as he caught a view of the object of his wrath, walking with another officer across the esplanade, in the direction of the lighthouse. "Now for it, Green; follow me and see that I give the fellow fair play."

I did follow Robertson, as he strode angrily in the direction of his victim, twirling a tough

rhinoceros hide whip, very ominously, in his hand.

"Is that your writing, sir?" he demanded, in a sharp determined tone, as he thrust the paper, crumpled as it was, under the nose of the poor little Ensign, who was evidently a good deal alarmed, and feeling himself in a very uncomfortable position, although he made a praiseworthy effort to maintain his pluck and to show fight.

"It is," he gasped, in rather tremulous accents, "and - and—and I assert, that—that—that it is perfectly true, and you know that you have brought in on yourself. Robertson, you know, you know," he added apologetically, as he saw an amused twinkle in the Captain's eye; "you know you would not answer my challenge, and then, you know, you know, I had no other alternative."

"Alternative be blowed, you insolent jackanape," the Captain roared. I think I have already mentioned that my friend was by no means choice in his expletives, when in a passion, but not so this time. "You must either eat and swallow it, or, as sure as I am a sinner, I will flay you alive with this whip. I'll cane you within an inch of your life. Eat it, you puppy. Eat it, or by Jove, I'll ram it down your ugly throat, you son of a sea cook."

Buller's companion, as well as myself, was evidently very much amused at this scene, thinking that it would not go farther, but matters were reaching a crisis. Buller had evidently very strong

objections to eating the paper, and seemed resolved not to do it. Robertson was evidently only the more resolved to make him, and he laid hold of the Ensign with no very gent'e grip, to carry out his resolve by trying to force it down his victim's throat.

Robertson began the struggle in comparatively good humour, and apparently without any intention of hurting the Ensign, but the twistings and turnings, to say nothing of the kicks, of that individual gradually worked him into a towering passion, and he laid with his whip on poor little Buller's shoulders and posteriors, until he screamed and howled with rage and pain.

I attempted, with the aid of Buller's friend, to separate the combatants, or rather to rescue Buller from the Captain's grasp ; but it was not until several gentlemen from the Library, as well as some police peons, came up, that we were able to effect our purpose. We were all carried off to the Police Magistrate, or rather followed the peons to that magnate's court: the Captain still chafing with rage and the Ensign sobbing with pain and mortified vanity. Robertson was heavily fined, and both he and his victim were bound over to keep the peace.

"If it had not been in consequence of the provocation which he had received," the judge said, in passing sentence, "he would have felt it his duty to commit the Captain for some months to jail for so outrageous an assault."

Robertson lived in Ceylon for some twelve years after this occurrence, and although there was

not a more upright and honourable man, a more sincere friend or a more warmhearted and hospitable fellow in the whole colony, yet this silly affair was the means of blackballing him completely amongst the military and the civil servants of the Government. So much was this the case, that at Government balls and other public festivities, when every other lady in Colombo would receive invitations, Mrs. Robertson was invariably overlooked; and in business transactions with Government officials, Robertson's affairs were always neglected, until the public press was brought to bear upon the palpable injustice which was being done to an honourable man.

Peace be to the ashes of the Captain. He now sleeps beneath the billows of that ocean which, in sunshine and shower, he had so often ploughed in triumph. He died in the discharge of public duty. The vessel and the crew he commanded left port amid the sunshine of the tropics; whilst soft breezes were rustling amongst the palmtrees, and tropical birds, in gay plumage, were darting amongst the woods of the Malabar coast. His voyage was only for a few days' duration, but the vessel never reached her destination. One of those Indian hurricanes which usher in the south-west monsoon came on, and neither Robertson nor his men were ever again heard of.*

* Although the incidents are altered, Capt. Robertson was a real personage, who, after an unsuccessful career as planter in Ceylon, became Master Attendant at Tuticorin. Returning from an official visit to our pearl fisheries, he was lost as indicated.—ED.

CHAPTER IV.—A MILITARY EPISODE.

I have already said that Robertson and myself were invited to take up our residence with Mr. Darley, the chief local partner of Acland, Boyd & Co.

"I leave the fort at 5 o'clock," that gentleman said, when giving us the invitation; "so if you can make it convenient to accompany me, you may have seats in my carriage."

Punctually at 5 we drove out at the west entrance of the fort, almost along the edge of the sea, which was rolling in upon the sandy beach, with a dull heavy crash. This crash of the breakers was repeated at regular intervals, as if the great ocean were a living creature, and the throbbing of these breakers were the pulsations of its stream of life.

The carriage turned into a coconut tope, and halted in front of a long low building, whose tiled roof was supported on Ionic pillars. A lady, dressed in white, was sitting in the verandah, with a troop of children around her, and when we ascended the steps she was introduced to us as the wife of our host.

After chatting for a short time, Mr. Darley and his wife retired, leaving us, with the children, in the verandah. The scene around was new and strange,—so new and strange, that I could scarcely persuade myself that I was not in a dream. The sun was setting behind the waves of the sea of India. The vessels in the roadstead were pulling down their flags, in homage to the departing

luminary of day, and darkness soon began to spread her mantle over the earth. The fortifications of Colombo were becoming dim and indistinct, and looking much farther off than they were in reality. Fireflies were becoming perceptible in the shrubberies, and amongst the long stems of the coconut trees in the tope, close at hand. Servants made their appearance, noiselessly, as if they had risen out of the ground, who lighted the hanging globe lamps in the verandah, and then those within the rooms of the house; whilst outside, there arose a chirruping, a croaking and a screaming of insects and reptiles innumerable, the names of which would alone nearly fill a chapter of this veritable history. Our host again joined us, and chatted about the incidents of our voyage, the chances of our liking Ceylon, and such other matters as are usual on these occasions.

Dinner was just announced, when a carriage drove up in front of the verandah, from whence a military officer alighted, who was introduced to us as Captain Lillie.

“I hope that I have not kept you waiting,” the Captain remarked, apologetically. “I was detained about that business of Masterman’s. It is likely to turn out a very bad case. The Commander-in-Chief is obdurate and will not listen to any appeals on his behalf. He says that an example is necessary, and must now be made. We have arranged to have a ball tomorrow night, at which he is to be present, when the whole of the

ladies in the garrison are to make a combined effort to move him. I don't think that they will succeed, but it is our last chance and must not be thrown away. Monday first is mentioned as the day of the execution, and I very much fear, knowing the Commander's temper so well, that there is no doubt, but it will take place."

"This is a poor fellow of a soldier," our host explained, "who, having struck his officer, has been tried by a court-martial and sentenced to be shot."

"It is a very sad and a very singular affair," Captain Lillie added, "from the fact that the condemned man and the officer whom he struck were old friends and schoolfellows. They had, it seems, moved in the same circle at home, had visited in the same families, had shared the same sports, and met at the same social parties. In fact, I understand that the friends of the condemned man occupied rather the higher social position of the two. Tillymaud, in Scotland, I think, is the place they come from."

"Tillymaud, did you say?" asked Robertson, jumping from his seat, "Why that is my own birthplace. What did you say were the names of the parties in this sad affair? I must know them, for I knew every man, woman and child in the place, a few years ago."

"Masterman; Charles Masterman and George Wallace* are the names of the condemned man and

* I forget Masterman's Christian name, and also the name of the officer whom he struck, but the facts are as I relate them, very slightly coloured.

the officer whom he struck," the Captain replied, evidently interested in Robertson's knowledge of the parties.

"I know Wallace well; he got his commission some four or five years ago, but I have no recollection of any person of the name of Masterman."

"It may be a *nom de plume*," the Captain suggested. "In fact, I have heard that Masterman had enlisted under his mother's name. You may know him by his Christian name. He must be a year or two older than Wallace."

"I know who he will be," Robertson replied after a few moments' reflection. "He must be Charles Fraser, our minister's eldest son. No one was ever able to learn what had become of him, after his elopement with General Dingwall's daughter. Poor fellow, has it really come to this with him? I hope, Captain, that I may be allowed to see him. I knew Charles and his family very intimately, in fact, he is a distant relation of my own."

The Captain promised to arrange for the desired interview, and then he asked Robertson to tell him what he knew of the history of the condemned soldier.

Charles was the eldest son of the parish minister of Tillymaud. He had been educated for the church, had passed his examinations with credit, and had been appointed his father's assistant with the certainty of becoming his successor. The living was one of the best in the south of Scotland, and the prospects of the young minister were of the most enviable description.

In the neighbourhood of Tillymaud, there lived an old General who had fought with Abercrombie in Egypt, and Wellington and Moore in Spain. He was a hospitable but a fiery-tempered old soldier. He had an only daughter, the inheritrix of his wealth and his estates, which were extensive and valuable. The old General liked to have the young minister at his house on account of his social qualities, and his daughter liked to see him there, on account of those personal qualities "which maidens think of when they dream of love." Charles and this young lady had, by insensible degrees, learned to love each other, and, in due course they told their love. But it was the old, old story—its course did not run smooth. When the General became acquainted with the state of matters, he abused the young man in no measured terms, forbade him his house, and threatened to shoot him, as is the wont of fiery-tempered old fathers under such circumstances, should he ever dare to speak to his daughter again. The lady was strictly confined to her room, threatened with being disinherited, disowned and discarded, should she disgrace her family by holding any farther intercourse with a whipper-snapper of a Presbyterian minister. The result was such as might have been anticipated. The lady broke from her confinement and fled to her lover, whom she persuaded, much against his better judgment, to set off for Edinburgh, where they might get privately married.

This occurred on Saturday night, and on

Sunday morning there was no minister to conduct the services in the parish church. It oozed out that he had left home the previous evening, and that he had been accompanied by General Dingwall's daughter. It soon became known that they had taken the direction of the metropolis, and that the General and old Mr. Fraser had followed in pursuit. It appears that Charles and his fair companion had not found it so easy a matter to get married, as they had anticipated, for on the second day after their flight they were traced to their lodgings by the two fathers, and after a frantic scene of tears and entreaties, reproaches and recriminations, the lady was carried off by her angry parent, and Charles, like Lord Ullin, was left lamenting.

Charles was high-spirited and proud, and he felt, that, after what had taken place, his usefulness in the profession he had chosen was gone. His escapade was talked of for a few weeks and then forgotten. Another assistant was appointed in his place, and unless it was, that General Dingwall did not come back to his estate, matters at Tillymaud returned to their usual routine. In the course of three years after, the General died, and when his daughter came to take possession of the mansion house and estates, she brought a young boy with her, who was represented as the son of a cousin, who had died in the West Indies. It was, however, whispered at tea tables, that the child was more closely related to her than she represented, and people

shook their heads, with a great show of wisdom, when her flight with the young minister was mentioned. Robertson had heard that old Mr. Fraser had died a month or two before we left England, and this was all that he could tell us, regarding the object of the impending tragedy.

From what I heard in after years, it appears that Charles Fraser had used every means in his power to communicate with the partner of his late flight; but her father had carried her abroad, and had taken precautions to prevent any intercourse between the unfortunate pair. Charles had loitered about Edinburgh for months, without aim or object, beyond the one desire of learning the whereabouts of the lady of his love. Having failed in this, he lost heart for everything else. His means became exhausted, and he was too proud to remain where he was known, when he felt that he was falling lower and lower in the scale of life. He left Edinburgh and removed to London, in the hope that his talents and industry would always be available in procuring him a livelihood. His success was not so great as his hopes. He expected to have got employment as a writer for 'the press;' but the probation he had passed through as a writer of sermons was not conducive to the cultivation of the style required in modern light literature; and sermons, unless written by a Bishop, or a very famous popular preacher, would not be looked at by any publisher. Charles, poor fellow, lost heart; the very worst thing that a man could do under such circumstances.

His lodgings were gradually changed, until he was able to occupy only a small room at the top of a rickety house in one of those obscure streets, where the poverty and crime of the metropolis seek to hide themselves from the more prosperous part of the community. His clothes became dilapidated and almost unwearable, and he was unable to replace them. He was ashamed to go out during the day, and at night he slunk about in out-of-the-way thoroughfares, hungry and shivering, gazing, with longing eyes, at the treasures in the well-lighted shops, and envying the condition of the poorest passer-by whom he met in his wanderings.

Yet he was not vicious; he was only proud and poor. He could not bring himself to become a peripatetic vendor of hardware or soft goods; he was too honourable to cheat or steal, and he was too proud to beg. He could not make up his mind to return to his father's house, and say "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight," although he well knew that his father would have welcomed the returning prodigal, would have killed the fatted calf, and would have fallen on his son's neck and blessed him. He had often known what it was to want a dinner and not know where he was to get a supper; yet he never thought of returning to his father's, never wrote to let that father, who was mourning for his son as for one dead, know the straits to which he was reduced.

When there is no other means for gaining a livelihood open to a young man possessed of the

usual amount of thews and sinews, in this free country of ours, when starvation is staring him in the face, when he has no home in which to rest his weary limbs, and when the workhouse will not admit him, it is satisfactory to know, that, even under these adverse circumstances, there is still a refuge for the destitute, in that glorious institution—the British army.

Whilst loitering by the waters of the Serpentine, endeavouring to make himself believe that he had made a sumptuous breakfast off a penny roll and a mouthful of water, Fraser was accosted by a recruiting sergeant, who had for some time been admiring his smart although emaciated appearance; and this gentleman, after a short conversation, persuaded him to enlist into Her Majesty's — regiment of light infantry.

Charles joined the depôt at Portsmouth, and, after having attained some proficiency in drill, he was sent to join the headquarters of his regiment in Ceylon. He had arrived in Colombo a few months before the sad occurrence, which I am about to relate, and had been immediately recognised by his old friend, George Wallace, whose kind offices were exerted to make his position as endurable as possible.

Charles was naturally of a studious and retiring disposition, and this, combined with his superior education and greater refinement, although it created a feeling in his favour amongst the officers, made him far from popular with his comrades in the ranks. He was distinguished by the sobri-

quet of "Gentleman Jack," and much pains were taken by the vulgar spirits around him, to annoy and vex the poor fellow, when they found that he would not join them in their low sports and debaucheries. One of the sergeants, in particular, appeared to use all the influence and authority which he possessed to tease and torment him, and it is wonderful how much power these men have, to render those who are under them uncomfortable and unhappy.

Lieut. Wallace had written home and mentioned Charles's situation to his friends, and the previous English mail had brought letters from his brothers, telling him of his father's death, and also that of General Dingwall, mentioning at the same time the return of Miss Dingwall to Tillymaud. His brothers wished to know what, under these circumstances, Charles proposed doing. If he wished, funds would be sent to purchase his discharge and bring him home, or, if he preferred to remain in the Army, means would be taken to obtain a commission for him. It was whilst labouring under the depression, consequent on the receipt of these letters, that the sergeant encountered him on parade. Charles's mind was absent and pre-occupied, and the sergeant accused him of being drunk, and ordered him off to the guard-room, with some stinging epithets of abuse. Charles protested that he was not drunk. The sergeant laid hold of him to pull him out of the ranks. Charles defended himself, and a struggle ensued. The sergeant swore that he had been

struck, and several of the men were ready to corroborate his assertion. Charles was put under arrest, tried for insubordination and mutinous conduct, and sentenced to receive fifty lashes.

When Lieut. Wallace learned what had occurred, he used every means in his power to have the sentence put aside. He drew petitions to the Commandant, and got them signed by his brother officers, praying for a pardon. He waited upon the Commandant personally, and urged the prisoner's previous good conduct, his former social position, the provocation he had received, and the state of his mind at the time of alleged insubordination, occasioned by the intelligence of his father's death, as so many reasons why so degrading a sentence should not be carried into effect.

There had been a great deal of insubordination in the regiment lately, and it was considered necessary that an example should now be made. But the Commandant was a kind-hearted man, and was willing to oblige the Lieutenant as far as possible. He agreed to pardon the offender, but not until he was brought to the halberts for punishment, so that an impression might be made on the rest of the men, and that they might be assured that no other case of the kind would escape punishment.

Charles, in the meantime, chafed and fretted in his confinement, like an imprisoned lion. The thought of the degrading punishment to which he was doomed, almost drove him mad. He was frantic with grief and mortification, at the idea of being lashed like a dog. And then his brothers

and Mary Dingwall would come to hear of this terrible degradation. There could be no possibility of hiding it from them, and this thought alone occasioned a greater agony of mind than he was capable of enduring. How bitterly he cursed the day when he was tempted to become a soldier, and how bitterly he cursed his own folly for attempting to resent those petty insults which he had so long borne in silence.

The sergeant, when he saw the sad pass to which he had brought his victim, became heartily sorry for his share in the transaction, and warmly expressed his regret to Charles, whom he now seemed as desirous to conciliate as he was formerly to annoy.

The evening before the sentence was to be carried into execution, the sergeant visited the prisoner and begged his forgiveness for having brought this trouble upon him.

"But never mind," he said, "it will soon be over, and I will take care that it is made up to you by the whole of us afterwards. I've seen fellows get their hundred of a morning, and been as cheery as ever a week or two after. Cheer up, it will not be so bad as you imagine. It never is. The thought of it beforehand is the worst part of the affair."

"It's not the pain, it's the disgrace that I feel," Charles groaned. "I could bear the pain ten times over, if I could escape the disgrace of being lashed like a dog," and here the poor fellow buried

his face in his hands and sobbed like a child.

The sergeant again expressed his regret and confirmed it with an oath, adding: "There is not a man in the regiment but would help you, if they could; but they can't. There is only one way of escape, but then it is a shooting matter; and it requires some game and pluck to risk that. If it's the disgrace you fear, and if you don't mind being shot instead, I'll tell you what to do, and then you can please yourself; only don't say afterwards that I urged you on to more mischief. Suppose, for instance, that an officer were standing by, when you were up for punishment, and if you had a chance, do you think that you have pluck enough to hit him? because, if you did, you would escape the triangles, but then it would be a case of ten men, a piece of green turf, 'ready—present,' and you would never answer to your name at roll-call again."

The following morning arrived, the triangles were erected on the parade ground, and the men had fallen into their places in the ranks. The prisoner was sent for, and Lieut. Wallace stepped forward to tell him that he had been pardoned; when, without the slightest warning, the prisoner escaped from his guards, and rushing at his old friend as if he had become suddenly bereft of his senses, he struck him in the face and knocked him down before the whole regiment.

Wallace rose and approached the prisoner. "Charles," he said, sorrowfully, as he wiped the

blood from his mouth, "you have killed yourself needlessly; your sentence was remitted, and I was just going to tell you this. I know why you have struck me, and God knows, I would, at this moment, gladly exchange places with you if I could; but I fear that you have killed yourself recklessly, and, if so, you will have killed me also."

In moments of extreme excitement, there is sometimes a species of clairvoyance between two human hearts, when the thoughts and feelings which agitate the one are shared by the other, as if they both beat in unison and their streams of life were derived from the same source. This was the case with these two men now. They grasped each other's hands, they gazed in each other's eyes with sad longing looks, and when they were dragged apart, they both gasped "God bless you, George," and "God bless you, Charles," and then the one was dragged to a felon's prison, and the other went to use every effort that human judgment could suggest to avert the dreadful doom, which had been so needlessly incurred.

Masterman was once more tried by a court-martial, and although he defended himself with an eloquence and ability which was the theme of newspaper admiration, and the subject of general conversation amongst all classes of the community for months after, he was found guilty of having assaulted an officer and condemned to be shot.

This was the substance of what I learned from Robertson and Captain Lillie regarding the career of the condemned man. I learned also that it was only under compulsion that Lieut. Wallace had given his evidence at the trial, and that he had since been indefatigable in his endeavours to get this new and terrible sentence set aside. Every effort, however, had failed. Petitions to the Commander-in-Chief and the Governor from the civil servants and merchants, from the officers who had tried him, and even from burghers and natives of influence, had alike been unavailing; and the only chance that now remained was the effort to be made the following evening by the ladies of the town.

Neither Robertson nor myself attended the ball in question, but we learned that this last chance of saving Masterman's life had been lost. I forget why, whether it was that the General did not attend, or that he was proof against the blandishments of the fair petitioners.

It was Sunday afternoon when I accompanied Robertson to visit his old friend. When we were ushered into his place of confinement, he was lying on a wooden bench, over which a grass mat was spread, whilst a couple of sentinels with fixed bayonets were stationed outside a grating, formed by heavy wooden beams. He had been reading a pocket Bible, which lay beside him, and he expressed his satisfaction at this visit of his old friend.

“It is very kind of you to come and see me under the sad circumstances in which I am placed. Of course, you know that this is the last evening of my life, and that when I see the sun set I will know that I shall never see it set again. Is it not a terrible thought,” he asked, “that a man, in the very flush of his youth and vigour, with the life stream running full and healthy through his veins, with much for which he would wish to live, and with a strong human horror at death, must make up his mind, that by a certain hour tomorrow he must cease to breathe? And yet, I feel singularly resigned to my fate, although I could have wished that the stigma of crime had not been associated with it.”

Masterman was a tall, handsome-looking man, about six or eight and twenty years of age, with light blue eyes, an open, fearless countenance, a high pale forehead and dark clustering hair. He looked pale and pre-occupied, but when he spoke he was calm and collected, without the very slightest symptoms of swagger or bravado. As Robertson and he were talking of far distant friends and far distant scenes,—distant both in time and space,—I watched him very narrowly, and, although my own heart beat wildly and my pulse throbbed quickly, in contemplating the awful doom which awaited him, and to which he was fast hastening, he neither by word or gesture gave any indication of uneasiness regarding his approaching fate. Robertson and I were more moved than the doomed man himself, and our interview was

beginning to be very painful, when it was terminated by the entrance of a clergyman, one of the Colonial Chaplains.

“You will come and see it all over, won't you, Robertson?” asked the condemned man, as we were taking our leave. “It takes place tomorrow morning, at 7 o'clock, so I hope that you will come. I have some letters and papers which I should wish you take charge of and get them sent to my brothers, and to another friend at Tillymaud. I was to have given them to Wallace, poor fellow, but you will be the better custodian. I should like you to be present at the end,” he added, with some hesitation; “so that, if you should ever see anyone who might wish to learn the last particulars of my career, you may be able to tell them. Good-bye, and do try and be present tomorrow.”

We left the guard-house as people in a dream. Robertson was very much moved, and appeared to have lost the faculty of speech. We walked round by the lighthouse, and then along the sandy beach to Mr. Darley's without speaking a word. All that we had seen or heard seemed so unreal and yet so terrible, it seemed impossible that it should form a subject for common conversation. We retired early, and after a sleepless night on my part we were early astir.

We kept our appointment with the doomed man. The soldiers were falling into their ranks,

as we passed the parade ground, and there was a melancholy appearance of military bustle and preparation. Small knots of Europeans were clustered about the verandahs of the resthouse, the library and other buildings, watching with solemn interest the preliminaries of the sad tragedy about to be consummated. The condemned man seemed paler, but, if possible, even more calm and collected than during the previous evening. He gave Robertson his last messages to his distant friends, and, by the time they were concluded, the guards entered to take him to the place he was to occupy in the melancholy procession then forming.

"Forward, quick march," was uttered in a loud, commanding voice, at the head of the long lines of soldiers which filled the parade ground. The big drum, muffled in crape, was struck, and the whole mass moved off like a huge brilliantly-coloured serpent, with a steady tramp, tramp, to the wailing music of the instruments of the band.

Hundreds of natives lined the streets and clustered in verandahs or hung on housetops, as we passed, and hundreds more accompanied or followed the troops to the place of execution. When we issued from the west entrance of the fort, a great line of breakers, extending along the coast, far as the eyes could reach, crashed with a sullen boom on the sands, and this boom continued at regular intervals during the enactment of the sad scene which followed, as if the old ocean were firing minute guns as a requiem

for the departure of a gallant spirit to the realms of the dead.

My after recollections of this sad tragedy, when the glittering line of soldiers had wound round the burying ground on Galle Face, and the word "halt" had echoed along the line, are of wheeling masses of troops, until they had formed three sides of a square, facing inwards with the open side towards the ramparts of the fort. The prisoner was then brought forward in front of this opening, and an officer on horseback read a paper in a matter-of-fact tone of voice. During the reading of this paper, I looked around on a vast concourse of curious faces clustering on trees, on housetops and ramparts, over which the morning sun shed a hazy halo of light, bringing the slopes and angles of the old Dutch fort into sharp and striking outline. Not a sound was heard, with the exception of the mournful boom of the surf on the sandy shore, and the sharp hard voice of the officer as he read the sentence. The ill-fated soldier, for whose destruction all this parade was made, stood calm and apparently unmoved; looking with interest upon the vast throng who had come to see him die, looking pale perhaps and solemn, but firm, as one quite prepared to meet his doom.

The reading completed, the prisoner knelt with the same clergyman whom I had met in his cell the previous evening, and whilst they were thus kneeling a sergeant and ten or twelve men

were moved within a few yards of them.

The minister and I think, one or two officers, shook hands with the prisoner and then moved to one side of the square. A sergeant then advanced and bandaged his eyes, and he once more knelt in front of his comrades. He appeared, for a moment or two, to be engaged in prayer, for his lips moved, but now he was all alone. The officer in command then motioned to the firing party, and we heard the sharp click of the muskets, as they brought them to the "make ready." Again the surf broke on the beach with its mournful roar, and this was the only sound heard, for the whole of that vast multitude held their breath in fearful awe, as if they were each waiting the crisis of their own fates.

Suddenly the prisoner started to his feet, and in a clear, commanding tone of voice, called out, "Comrades, I am ready. PRESENT."

Quick as lightning the muskets were brought to the 'present,' and then there was another breathless pause of scarcely a moment's duration. The surf crashed once more on the shore, but its crash was mingled with the sharp report of a dozen muskets, and Charles Masterman or Fraser lay a bleeding mass of dead matter on the turfy soil, which was greedily drinking in the life's blood flowing from his numerous wounds. The light blue smoke of the muskets rose slowly in the air, and before it had dis-

persed the military were in motion, marching past the mangled body of him who, but a moment before, was as redolent of life and health as any there present.

When they had marched past the mangled remains of their late comrade, the soldiers were halted. The body was placed in a coffin and carried to the adjoining graveyard. The grave had received its bloody tenant before the life warmth had time to cool, and the military were on their way back to the fort, their bands playing a lively march, as if the sad transaction, so lately enacted, were already forgotten. Before entering the gateway, however, another sad incident occurred. An officer was met hurrying wildly, as if in a state of distraction, towards the place of execution. It was poor Wallace. He had been led to believe that a pardon was to have been granted to his old friend. He had been walking on the other, or Pettah side of the fort, when he heard the death volley, and understood, but too well, what it meant. He looked like a man utterly bereft of his senses, when he was now met by the returning regiment. He was stopped and taken to his quarters, and the march was resumed. The sun was glittering brightly on the bayonets as the soldiers entered the gateway, and the houses and ramparts were reverberating in a hundred echoes the crash of the music as the brilliant pageant marched along the streets. The crowds were dispersing, some sad, some jocular, and the crows were cawing,

and the surf was booming on the beach, as if no such tragedy as that we had just witnessed had ever taken place.

“What a sad commentary on human aspirations and hopes, and what a terrible ending to a career, which opened so brightly a few years ago for my poor friend,” Robertson remarked sadly, as we wended our way slowly to our quarters across Galle Face.

The excitement of this sad event was not destined to cool down so rapidly as might have been the case, in so matter-of-fact and money-making a place as Ceylon, a melancholy circumstance in connection with it prolonging the interest with which it was regarded by all classes in the island.

When Lieut. Wallace was taken to his quarters, the excitement that he had undergone was found to have brought on an attack of brain fever. On the second night after the execution he rose from his bed and rushed from his room. His native servant, who was attending him, said that he spoke as if he was following someone. He tried to stop him, but his master pushed him aside and was speedily lost sight of in the darkness. An alarm was raised and Wallace was searched for during the whole of that night in every place where it was supposed he could have taken refuge, but when morning dawned he had not been found. In the course of the day, someone having

occasion to go to the burying-ground found him stretched across the new-made grave of his old friend, clasping the cold turf in his arms, as if in a gentle sleep. When he was raised, it was discovered that he also had gone to his account. He had died of that most terrible of all diseases, a broken heart.

In the bustle of business, amid the cares and anxieties of this world, these events had, in the course of years, almost faded from my recollection; although the impression which they made on my mind was very painful for a very long time after they had occurred. They were brought back to my remembrance in all their original freshness a few years ago, in the following singular manner:—

I had been keeping my Christmas holidays with a distant relative, at a retired country house, in one of the midland counties of Scotland. Amongst the guests present at the Christmas dinner was a tall, handsome young man, with bright clear blue eyes, a broad open forehead and dark clustering hair, who strongly attracted my attention. I felt convinced that I had known such a face long, long ago, but I could not determine when or where. Had I dreamed of this face, or was it a vision come to mock me, of a pre-existent state of being? The remembrance of that face could be no dream, for I knew that it was associated with some event of a terribly painful nature. At length a certain compression of the lips

attracted my attention, when suddenly, the lights and the gay company of that merry ball-room passed away, and the grey ramparts of Colombo rose before me in their place. I seemed to see, once more, the imposing display of military power; the sun glittering on sparkling bayonets and gay uniforms, on heaving crowds and a tropical sea. I saw again that figure standing upright and bold, on which all eyes are turned, and I seemed to hear the word "Present," and the rattle of the death volley and the crash of the surf, with the same degree of reality as I had heard and seen the same things upwards of a score of years before. I seemed to be watching the blue smoke from the muskets rising in the still blue sky, when the illusion was dispelled by a voice at my elbow asking: "Why, John, do you see a ghost? You look as if you did? I wish to introduce you to my friend, Miss Dingwall. This is my cousin, Mr. Brown. Miss Dingwall of Tillymaud."

It was my fair cousin who spoke, and beside her, bowing with great dignity, was a stout elderly lady, who appeared to carry her years well. She seemed cheerful and happy, as the happiest there, and laughingly introduced me to her cousin and adopted son, Charles Dingwall, the young man whose appearance had so extraordinary an effect on my imagination. I felt sick at heart, and was glad when we adjourned to the supper-room.

I was seated between two young ladies, and Charles Dingwall was seated opposite to us, by

the side of a lovely looking young girl, who, it was said, was soon to be his bride."

"Do you not think that he is very handsome?" was asked by one of my fair neighbours.

"He is very handsome indeed," was the reply, "and it is reported that he will be very rich also."

"Was there not something curious about his birth—some doubt, or some scandal?" asked an elderly lady near us.

My neighbours looked very demure and made no reply. I looked towards the object of these remarks, who was whispering to the fair girl by his side. I agreed with those beside me that he was very handsome—very handsome, indeed; but I recollected a form as manly and as handsome, who had died a felon's death, and whose life blood I had seen shed on the turfy soil of that old Dutch fort, in a far Eastern land; and I wondered, if ever the blue smoke rose in a vision before the eyes, or the pealing ring of that death volley ever sounded in the ears of either of those two individuals, who appeared to me so closely connected with the sad tragedy, which I had seen enacted so long ago, to mar their enjoyment on such an evening as this.

CHAPTER V.—I GO TO KANDY.

"There are three ways of getting to Kandy," Mr. Darley replied, in answer to my inquiries,

after I had been some weeks in Colombo, and was beginning to get impatient for a more active and stirring life. "You may go by coach, which will take you there in about ten hours, but the seats are usually engaged for about three or four weeks beforehand. If you are a good horseman, you may ride the distance in seven, or as many more hours as you please, by having relays of horses stationed along the road, but if you object to losing the use of your lower limbs for a week or ten days after, I would advise you not to try this plan. The only other means is by bullock bandy, and this, to my thinking, if you wish to see the country and have no aristocratic prejudices against living a good deal in the open air, is by far the pleasantest of all."

"But where am I to get the bandy?" I asked.

"That is a matter easily arranged: we have some goods going to our Kandy agent, in the course of a day or two, and we can hire another bandy or two for you. I am sure that you will enjoy the trip. There is a great deal to be seen, and, as you will have our servants, you can stop when and where you please, and if you are fond of sport you will get shooting to your heart's content, without being troubled about a game certificate, or becoming liable to a prosecution for trespass."

I took Mr. Darley's advice, and started per bullock bandy for the capital of the interior. The goods bandies were small waggons, covered

with cadjans or the plaited leaves of the coconut tree, and drawn by a pair of bullocks; but a vehicle of a superior description had been obtained for my use, being a machine something like a small Whitechapel spring cart, surmounted with a canopy and having cloth curtains which could be either lowered or raised at pleasure. The road was smooth and level as a walk in a gentleman's park at home, and the bandy being filled with odorous grass, over which soft mats were spread, there was no jolting to shake one's limbs, and the motion was almost as gentle as that of a pleasure boat, on an inland lake, in a calm day. We travelled principally during the soft moonlight nights and the early hours of the morning and evening; resting, during the heat of the day, in cool shady places by the roadside, sometimes at Government resthouses, but more frequently under the wide-spreading branches of huge jak or mango trees near native bazaars. The scenery was dull and uninteresting during the first part of the journey, but as we began to approach the hill country it became grander and more picturesque with every mile we travelled.

I cannot say that I met with the amount of game that Mr. Darley led me to expect, but this did not prevent me from being an ardent explorer of the jungles by the roadside, and the far-extending ranges of paddy fields, in which flocks of snipe rose screaming and flew, in rapid flight, over the adjacent jungles. In the evenings, the

kobeyyas, or wood pigeons, cooed to each other, from every thicket, whilst flocks of paraquets darted in noisy flight through the air. In early morn, the jungle-cock sounded his clarion note to gather his seraglio around him, whilst deer and elk barked in the adjoining forests.

I reached Kandy on the fifth morning, and immediately waited on Mr. Delegal, the resident agent for Acland, Boyd & Co. in that city. Mr. Delegal was a little man, not more than four and a-half feet high, and very irascible. When I entered his office, he was scolding a lot of bandymen, by means of an interpreter, and he did not deign for some time to notice my entrance.

My *tout ensemble*, I may remark, was not much in my favour. I had not paid much attention to my toilet during my journey up-country, and I found, when I entered Kandy, that there was no such establishment as an inn or hotel in the city. I had bathed at a place called Nanoya, before sunrise; but the muddy banks of a small river are not the best place for smartening up one's person, and it had not occurred to me that I would have no other opportunity of performing this necessary operation before entering the august presence of Acland, Boyd & Co.'s agent.

Having finished his business with the bandymen, Mr. Delegal turned sharply upon me, as if he were about to swallow me up at one mouthful,

"Now then, sir, what's your business?" he asked, as if he wished particularly to have no business with me.

I handed him Mr. Darley's letter of introduction.

"Bless my heart," the little man said, "one of our clients. I beg ten thousand pardons, I thought you were one of those stupid clowns of fellows who are sent up here to the coffee estates, and whom I am expected to forward to their destinations whether I am able to do so or not. Would you believe it, the last one who came here told me, by way of news, that 'it was a fine mornin' for herdin'.' I would not have understood the fellow's language, if Mr. Lambert had not been here by accident and acted as interpreter. Lambert understands Scotch as well as the natives themselves, but how he came to be acquainted with so barbarous a language is a puzzle to me."

"I am a Scotchman, myself," I remarked, quietly, for I did not like to bear my native language and countrymen depreciated in this wholesale fashion.

"Oh, indeed, I would not have thought so," Mr. Delegal replied, as if he were intending to pay me a very high compliment. "You speak English very correctly. But I am keeping you waiting here and you may not have breakfasted," he added. "If you will come this way, we will see what Mrs. Delegal has got to offer us."

Here, Maxwell, Maxwell, Maxwell," he bawled "Where the mischief are you? I'll break your head if you are not a little smarter," and an ebony ruler flew from the hand of the irascible little man, as a tall, gaunt half-caste entered at the door. The ruler would most certainly have fulfilled Mr. Delegal's threat, had Maxwell not dodged it with wonderful coolness, as if he were accustomed to have such missiles shied at him, and thought nothing about them.

"We are going to breakfast," his master said. "If Mr. Bird call, send him into the house, we want to see him."

"Come along, Mr. Delegal, breakfast has been waiting you for some time," said a lady, entering from an opposite verandah, as we walked into the room.

This was the wife of my host, to whom I was introduced in due form, and with whom, in after years, I became very intimate. She was neither young, handsome, nor witty, and yet, I believe, there was not in Ceylon, at that time, a better informed nor a more intellectually clever woman than she was.

We had not been long seated before Mr. Bird was ushered in. He was a tall farmer-looking man, a Welshman, and the first planter of coffee in the island. On the present occasion he carried with him, confined in a pill-box, the

first sample of sugar manufactured in Ceylon and which had only been brought to a perfect state of granulation that morning. This sample was handed round our small company that each might bestow on it its due meed of admiration. Mr. Delegal got quite into an ecstasy about it.

"A new era was dawning on Ceylon," he said, with much enthusiasm, "and it required no prophet to foretell, that in a few years hence, the fertile plains of Dumbara, the wild jungles of the Wannu, and the savage tracts of Bintenna will be waving with plantations of sugarcane, cotton and indigo. The steam engine will be heard in every hollow, the steam horse will course along every valley; English homes will crown every hillock, and English civilization will bless and enrich the whole country, causing the wilderness to blossom as a rose, and making Ceylon, as it was in former times, the garden of the world and the granary of India."

I must confess that I had some difficulty in realizing how such vast results were to be brought about by a small pill-box full of rough brown sugar; but as Mr. Bird and the lady of the house did not dissent from the conclusions of the little man, I discreetly held my tongue and was silent.

"You will come out and stay with me," Mr. Bird said, "until you have time to look about you and fix upon a location on which you may pitch your camp;" and I gladly accepted this hospitable invitation,

"I live at Kondesala, some six miles out of town," he added; "and after I have made some purchases in the bazaar, I will start for home. It is less than an hour's ride. Have you a horse?"

As I had no such quadruped, I was assured that I must possess one at once; I could not live in Ceylon without a horse, and accordingly we, that is Mr. Bird and myself, adjourned to an encampment of Arabs, near the big lake, to see if we could not purchase an animal likely to suit me.

There were hacks, tatoes, Pegu ponies, Acheen ditto and horses with some blood in them, waiting purchasers, and Hassan Ali, the proprietor of the stud, a wild but fine-looking specimen of a son of Ishmael, began at once to descant on the merits of every individual specimen there. He then proceeded to shew us their paces, galloping like a centaur across the esplanade or around the lake. Acting on Mr. Bird's advice, I bought a strong-limbed chestnut horse, and proceeding to Raux's store, we were provided with a saddle and bridle. A horse-keeper was the next necessary, and one recommended by our Arab friend was engaged. Muttu, or "the pearl," was this gentlemen's name, and, with the exception of a few months' absence, during which he visited his friends and relations over on the Coromandel Coast, he remained in my service during the whole of my sojourn in Ceylon. He was an excellent horsekeeper. He

could keep up with the horse, no matter how fast the pace I went at, in a journey of thirty or forty miles, and would be ready to groom and feed him at the end of it, as if he had done nothing very wonderful. He would then light a fire, cook his own rice, wrap his cloth around him and go to sleep in some shady nook, like a man who enjoyed a good digestion and a conscience void of offence. I was often told that he was a great vagabond, and possibly, in some respects, he was; but I knew that if I were to change, although I might get a more moral character to look after my stud, I could not get a more attentive groom, and so Muttu and I rubbed on, from this our first acquaintance, until I left him, standing in full possession of the horse he had fed and followed so long—weeping salt tears on the jetty at Colombo in January 1849.

I was told by friends who accompanied me, on that memorable occasion, that the tears were crocodile tears, that they were a mere sham, &c., but I felt otherwise. I may not have been father and mother, sister and brother to poor Muttu, to the extent to which he said I was; but it is impossible that two human beings, although the one was white and the other was black, could have travelled together, could almost have lived together in all sorts of out-of-the-way corners and all sorts of makeshift manners, without feeling a mutual softness of the heart, when they are compelled to part without the most remote

prospect of ever meeting again. I, therefore, believe that Muttu's tears were real tears. He was a good servant to me, and I don't think that I was a bad master to him.

But I am digressing. I accompanied Mr. Bird to Kondesala that afternoon. It was, as he said, five or six miles from Kandy, on the opposite side of the Mahaweliganga or "great sandy river," which we crossed, horses and all in a ferry boat. On our ride out, I recognised the original of the showy picture, which had attracted my attention in Boyd & Thomas's office in London, but I cannot say that it quite realised the anticipations that I had formed regarding it on that important occasion.

Mr. Bird's bungalow stood on a rising knoll, commanding an extensive view over the wide plains of Dumbara and its magnificent amphitheatre of surrounding mountains. There was a lawn in front of the house edged by a flower border and shaded by a fringe of Persian lilac trees. On one side was a coconut tope, newly planted, and a short distance in front was a large and substantial coffee store, looking like a miniature fortress, surrounded with barbecues and enclosed within a high rampart of tramped clay.

The bungalow itself was a long one-storey high building, with a thatched roof, having two verandahs about ten feet wide and seventy or eighty feet long, off which the sitting-rooms and

bedrooms of the family opened. The cook-house, godowns, stables, &c. were at a short distance from the main building, and stood on a lower lying piece of ground.

Mr. Bird took me over to the store, from the upper storey of which we had an extensive and uninterrupted view of the surrounding country, with the Hunasgiriya, Kunckles and Hantane ranges of mountains. Where there are now numerous clearings, where the dark verdure of the coffee contrasts pleasantly with the sombre hues of the forest, there was, at that time, not a single opening to be seen above the belt of patana lands and native henas. It was all an uninterrupted stretch of heavy forest, from Hunasgiriya to Maha Patana, the mountain that towers immediately above the town of Kandy.

"Every foot of all that forest you now see," Mr. Bird remarked, "belongs to Government, and can be bought for five shillings the acre, so that you have a wide choice from which to make a selection for your future plantations. I would, however, advise you not to be in too great a hurry in choosing, but to take time and look about you before coming to a final decision on so important a subject."

As darkness was now setting in, we adjourned to the bungalow.

"What do you call this?" I asked, as we passed

a small field of coarse-looking grass with long wide leaves.

“That is my sugarcane patch. The sample of sugar which you saw today was made from some of these canes. Acland, Boyd & Co. have begun to plant a regular sugar estate just beyond that belt of jungle. It is under the management of Mr. Tytler, a young man who has graduated in sugar planting in the West Indies. We will go over and visit it tomorrow or next day. I expect that sugar growing will prove our best trump card. What with cheap land and cheap labour, we will have great advantages in competing with the West Indian and all other colonies in the way of production.”

“Well, Arachchi, what do you want now?” he asked of a sullen-looking native, who, with several others in his train, stood salaaming and bowing in the verandah, as we approached.

“He come to ask if you will let him plant leetle, leetle paddy field below the pulping-house,” said an elderly Tamil man, interpreting the Arachchi’s reply.

“I have told him already that he has no right to that field, and that he shall not get leave to cultivate it,” Mr. Bird replied with some temper. “Tell him to go about his business and not come bothering me about it again.”

The man walked sulkily away, the Arachchi muttering inaudibly what were apparently anything but blessings.

"What does the fellow say?" Mr. Bird asked of his interpreter.

"I not know, sir, I sometime think he say that he will do some mischief to master."

"Let him try, Sookin," was Mr. Bird's rejoinder, and Sookin walked off, laughing at the idea of a Sinhalese man trying to do any injury to his master.

CHAPTER VI.—THE BURNING OF KONDESALA
BUNGALOW.

The sky had began to be overcast, and there were low mutterings of thunder amongst the distant hills. A slight shower of rain was falling, and frequent flashes of lightning were darting across the murky landscape, giving it, I thought, a weird and unnatural-like aspect, but within the bungalow all was comfort and good cheer. The table in the dining room was loaded with soups and joints, which would have done no discredit to old England; servants moved about like shadows, so noiseless was their tread on the softly-matted floors; whilst there were services of plate and cut glass that would not have dishonoured a West End Club in London. And those who sat around that table were quite capable of doing full justice to the good cheer spread before them.

There were ladies and little children, who gave to the small party a domestic and home-like appearance, such as was not often met with in

jungle bungalows in Ceylon at that period, nor for many years after. When the cloth was removed, the ladies retired to the verandah, and as Mr. Bird and myself were the only gentlemen present, we were not long in joining them. We sat with the cool air of Dumbara fanning our cheeks, with fireflies sparkling and dancing around us, or hanging like festoons of brilliants in the shrubberies, or amongst the venerable trees which dotted the coffee fields. The muffled roar of the great river, as it dashed over the falls and rapids at Haragama, floated drowsily in the air; whilst the soft wailing music from some far-off temple, or distant village, sounded in melodious harmony with the balmy night wind which gently rustled amongst the trees and flowers. The rain had ceased, but the lightning still flashed, and the thunder growled amongst the distant hills, dying gradually away amongst the echoes of their dark ravines, after having cooled the air, and loaded the atmosphere with the delicious perfume of thousands of flowers, whose odours were kept in a state of suspension by the watery particles that floated over the steaming earth.

By 9 o'clock the whole household had gone to rest. I retired to my bedroom, but, feeling very fidgety, I walked out, when all was quiet, into the open air. The fragrance of the newly-moistened earth was delicious to inhale, and I strolled around the circular sweep of the approach to the bungalow, and along the winding stretch

of walks, shaded by jak and arekanut trees, which stretched across the coffee fields. On my way back to my bedroom, I observed two or three dark figures gliding stealthily along, in the shadow of the house, but, as I had met natives at all hours of the night, on my journey up from Colombo, this circumstance did not occur to me as being either unusual or suspicious. I undressed and went to bed as quietly as possible. Whether it was owing to the novelty of my position and the strange sounds around me I cannot tell; but certain it is that I could not sleep. I tried every well-known recipe for courting the drowsy god, but all without success. I tossed upon my coir mattress. I counted mentally a vast number of thousands, but it was of no use—sleep I could not. I remembered that on some memorable occasion Robinson Crusoe had felt himself in the same state of wakefulness, and fancying that this had been sent as a warning that danger was near, he had been saved from a great peril, by acting upon this idea. "What if this should be the case with me?" I thought; "perhaps I had better get up and look about me again," and then the sulky looks of the Arachchi and his men, and the stealthy-looking figures which I had seen, occurred to me, as very strong reasons for doing something and not lying longer in bed. I began, too, to perceive a strong odour of burning straw, but as I had been told that the natives were in the habit of burning their hill patanas, this did not

strike me as anything extraordinary. I got up, however, and dressed myself very deliberately. I was drawing on my boots, when a glimmering reflection of light on the store opposite and on the nearest trees attracted my attention. I opened the door and walked into the back verandah, when I was met by a dense column of smoke which almost suffocated me. A bright sheet of flame followed, and in an instant I was enveloped in blazing tongues of fire, which singed my hair and scorched my face and hands, making them feel as if they had been lashed with nettles. I jumped off the raised platform of the verandah, and then, good heavens! I discovered that the roof of the bungalow was on fire; had taken fire at the end from whence the wind was blowing and that the flames were spreading rapidly towards the main body of the building. Quick as thought, I rushed to the front of the house and hammered with might and main at every closed window and door, shouting with the full force of my lungs "Fire! fire! fire! fire!" Doors flew open, and the alarmed inmates rushed out in all sorts of night costume to find the home, so lately the picture of comfort, rapidly becoming a blazing ruin. Mr. Bird was the first out, looking cool and collected, carrying a pair of boots in one hand and two or three guns in the other.

The servants too began to appear on the scene from the outhouses, and with their cries and yells added a wild accompaniment to the hiss and roar of the flames, until their master ordered

them to "stop their confounded din, and bear a hand out with the furniture." The tomtoms were soon thundering in the lines or ranges of coolies' houses, and then long strings of men came pouring up to the scene of action, making the night hideous with their yells and clamour.

"Get out the children, in the first instance," roared Mr. Bird, in the voice of one accustomed to be obeyed, and leading the way to their sleeping apartment, they were speedily extricated, but not before their room was filled to suffocation with smoke.

By this time almost the whole of the roof was in one blaze. The flames did not spread quite so rapidly as they might otherwise have done, had it not been for the rain which had fallen, but, as it was, they had a force and destructive power almost appalling. The sharp tongues of flame flew into the air, like fiery serpents; whilst great clouds of sparks and blazing pieces of straw were carried on the night wind, far over the coffee fields. The coolies stood by howling and yelling, but doing nothing; whilst Bird and myself, assisted by Sookin the kangani, were trailing couches and chairs, tables and every other article of furniture, from under the blazing roof, and handing them to the ladies, and a few of the more venturesome of the coolies, who could be persuaded to come near the flames. In this manner we saved almost the whole of the furniture, before the roof fell in, which it did in

less than half-an-hour after the fire was first discovered, and by sunrise there was nothing left but the blackened mud walls of all that scene of comfort which I had witnessed the previous evening.

The furniture was carried over to the coffee store, where the ladies and children were made as comfortable as the means at our command would admit.

"What a blessing it was, Mr. Green," Mrs. Bird remarked, on being conducted to her new quarters, "that you were in the house and awake. Had it not been for that, the whole of us might have been burned in our beds."

"Yes, roasted like rats in a bundle of straw, by Jove," her husband grimly replied. "But now that you are all settled, I must see more into this affair, and the sooner I do it the better."

Mr. Bird was a man of few words. He was not given to wasting his time in speaking. He asked me all about how I discovered the fire, the number of men I saw about the bungalow, and the place where the fire had originated, all of which I told him as briefly and distinctly as possible. "Sookin, get a score of the old hands together, and bid them bring their heavy sticks and come with me. Mr. Green," he added, "you may have your choice of any of these guns, and here is powder and ball to load with. I will take this one. We must go and apprehend the Arachchi. You will have no objections to go with me, and we had better go well armed."

Mr. Bird led the way, in the first instance, to the still smouldering bungalow, and began poking with a stick, amongst the débris of fire, where it was supposed it had first broken out.

"I thought so," he said, after a short search. "Bring a chatty of water here."

The water was speedily brought and dashed on a smouldering heap of rubbish, after which Mr. Bird lifted a handful of some smoking material, resembling half burnt tinder, and showing it to me, said: "This is what they did it with." He then explained that when the Sinhalese commit acts of incendiarism they ignite a mass of dry fungus, such as he held in his hand, and stick it into the thatch of the building to which they wish to set fire.

"It will sometimes smoulder for a whole day before doing the job," he said, "and it always takes an hour or two before the thatch is sufficiently ignited to be fanned into flame by the wind, and this gives the villains ample time to escape, and, if necessary, prove an *alibi*, by being seen ten, twenty, or perhaps thirty miles from the scene of the conflagration."

"The coolies did not seem to be of much use in getting the fire under," I remarked.

"Use! No, they are of no use whatever in cases of this kind: in fact nothing cou'd have been of use. The thatch, unless on the surface, where the rain wet it, is dry as touchwood, and unless you have an immediate supply of

water and men to apply it, which these fellows cannot do with their naked feet and skin, there is no help for it, but to let the house blaze until it burns itself out. The fire will do the walls good. It will make them hard and durable as if formed of a single brick, and I will defy the scoundrels to burn the next roof I put on."

"This is the cause of the fire," Mr. Bird resumed, after we had walked some distance along the road, followed by Sookin the kan ani and some twenty men, armed with heavy sticks, "this patch of ground, which the Arachchi wants as a paddy or rice field," pointing to a level patch on the sides of a muddy stream.

"There does not appear to be any great cause for a quarrel here," I remarked, "there does not seem to be a quarter of an acre in the whole piece, and considering the vast extent of uncultivated land around us."

"That is the very thing," Mr. Bird replied, rather angrily. "These fellows have hitherto had no difficulty in taking possession of and cultivating any patches of land that they took a fancy to; but now that Europeans are investing their capital in the country, I have thought it expedient to put a stop to these encroachments at once. I wished to let the natives see that our land was not to be interfered with, with impunity, and, as this patch was within my boundary, I told the man, when I found him ploughing it, that he was to desist immediately."

It occurred to me that my friend had paid rather smartly for carrying out his principles in this matter, but as I saw that he was angry and excited, I held my tongue.

By this time, too, we had arrived at the native village, and after exploring an arrack tavern, at the entrance to the estate, we walked direct to the Arachchi's house. We found that gentleman surrounded by a number of villagers, evidently expecting our arrival, standing in an open space, apparently a threshing-floor in front of a low hut.

When we approached, the Arachchi stepped forward very boldly, and, in a bullying tone, demanded our business.

"Tell him, Sookin," Mr. Bird replied, "that we have come to see who set fire to my bungalow."

The Arachchi said something, in reply, in a mocking, insolent tone of voice, the purport of which required no interpretation in consequence of the contemptuous gesture with which it was accompanied. The natives laughed in approbation, whilst our men,—Tamil coolies,—who seemed to know what was meant, heaped torrents of abuse on the heads of the Sinhalese, and shewed symptoms of a desire to commence hostilities without further delay.

Bird kept them back and knocked down some of their sticks which were being brandished with demonstrations of hostility. This seemed the per-

lude to a preconcerted shindy. Some of the Kandyans, who were also armed, some with heavy sticks and some with catties, or native billhooks, attempted to wrest the weapons of the Tamils from their hands, and the Arachchi, emboldened by Mr. Bird's coolness at the insolence with which he greeted him, and mistaking it for cowardice, advanced and laid his hand upon the Welshman's gun. Quick as lightning, he was laid prostrate on the ground by a shove from the butt-end of the weapon. He sprang to his feet in an instant, and I never, in the whole course of my life, saw so perfect a picture of savage fury as that man presented. His eyes seemed starting from his head, and blazed as if with inward fire. His veins seemed strained and swelled to bursting, and every limb was convulsed and quivering with passion. With marvellous rapidity he seized a native axe, and rushed upon the Welshman, brandishing it above his head; whilst the rest of the villagers closed in around us. Both the Arachchi and Mr. Bird were big powerful men—the former being the biggest and strongest native that I ever saw, as he was also the most daring and determined. Considering the dexterity with which, as I had been informed, the natives used their axes, I trembled for the safety of my host. I held my breath with horror, as I saw the bright blade quivering above his head, and I felt actually sick and faint during the instant that I looked for its descent into the brain of my doomed friend. It was but a moment—an instant of time, and yet

what an amount of agony and terror I experienced during that infinitesimal period. Had I known my friend then as well as I did in after years, I might have saved myself all this anxiety. With a dexterous turn of his gun he drove the axe out of the Arachchi's hand, and seizing him, at the same time, by the long hair of his head, he twisted him round until he brought his antagonist to his knees. These two men then gazed intently into each other's eyes. The native was foaming with baffled ire, and his countenance was perfectly demoniac in its expression, as he writhed in the clutches of his powerful adversary. In spite of all his seeming strength, the Arachchi was as a child in the grasp of the big Welshman.

"There, you have got enough now," that gentleman remarked, as he flung the native on a heap of straw.

The change in the Arachchi's appearance and demeanour was now no less extraordinary than the other occurrences of this eventful night. Instead of the fierce mastiff or bulldog which he in the first instance resembled, he was now fawning and cringing as a spaniel. He was conquered and felt that he had found his master, and no slave ever crawled more abjectly at the foot of a tyrant than this Kandyan now did at Mr. Bird's.

"Get up, you cur, and come with me," my friend, who had never for a moment lost his coolness during this exciting scene, said, as he spurned the crawling wretch with his foot.

"*Eheyi hâmaduru*" (yes, my lord), the man replied, as he rose and submissively obeyed, following his conqueror and myself, well guarded by the exultant Tamils, whilst the Sinhalese villagers, looking sad and dejected, brought up the rear.

"Look, you devil's cub, at your handiwork," Bird exclaimed, with suppressed rage, as he dragged his victim in front of the still smoking bungalow. "Look there, you black scoundrel, and thank your stars that I did not see you do this, or, by heavens, you would not have lived to do any more of your father's work in this world. Come a little nearer and tell us what you think of your night's work now," saying which, he seized the big Kandyan, as if he had been an infant, by a leg and an arm, and lifted him above his head.

"Ask him, Sookin, if he did this, and if he does not give a true answer, in he goes to meet the death he intended for me and mine."

He advanced, as he spoke, to the centre of the house, where part of the roof and woodwork was still burning with a red glow, as if about to put his threat into execution.

"*Owu, owu, owu, mahatmayâ—owu, owu, owu, hâmaduru*" (yes, yes, yes, master—yes, yes, yes, lord), yelled the frightened Arachchi. It was indeed I who did it, but I will put on a new roof; I will build a new bungalow, if only my lord will pardon his slave this once. On my eyes be it, if I do not tell the truth."

"And who were the other three, who were with you?" Bird inquired, still holding the fellow above the red glow.

"They are there," the man screamed. "Let me go, and, God is my witness, I will tell the truth."

"Their names then, you villain; tell me their names, or in you go."

"They are Ungerala, Punchirala and Menikrala," the Arachchi yelled.

"Sookin, you know these fellows: seize them at once and see that they do not escape."

Sookin's coolies laid hold of the men indicated, as if they had been to the manner born, and in the twinkling of an eye had unrolled their waistcloths and pinioned their arms behind them.

"That will do now," Mr. Bird said, releasing the Arachchi. "You fellows go to choky, and by the time you get out again, you will have leisure to think over your night's work."

The prisoners grovelled in the dust and howled piteously. "They say, sir," Sookin interpreted, "that master please, it very good for master to beat just now. That best punishment—it not good for go to choky."

Bird laughed sardonically. "I daresay it would suit them best," he said, "but tell them that it suits me best that they should go to jail. Look after them until I get ready to go to Kandy."

By this time the sun had risen and the moon

was paling fast before the orb of day. We adjourned to the store, where we found that the ladies and servants had formed one of the verandahs, by means of mats and cloths, into an amazingly elegant suite of rooms. A morning repast of coffee, toast and eggs was laid before us, after finishing which, Mr. Bird mounted his horse and rode with his prisoners into Kandy, taking a few of his coolies with him to act as a guard

“Are you not afraid of a rescue?” I asked, on seeing him depart so slenderly attended, and knowing that he had to pass the Arachchi’s village on his way.

“Rescue. No,” he said; “the Kandians have seen quite enough this morning, to know that I am not to be trifled with, and they will not molest me again.”

I adjourned to the upper floor of the store, and lying down on a pile of gunny bags, in consequence of my previous want of rest and fatigue, I soon fell into a sound sleep, from which I did not awaken until about midday, by which time my host had returned and told me the result of his journey.

“What do you think will be the upshot of this affair?” I asked.

“The fellows will probably be committed to take their trial before the Supreme Court which sits in Kandy some four or five months hence, so that they will have to endure imprisonment for

that period, and that will likely be all the punishment they will receive."

"What? after having confessed that they had set fire to your bungalow?"

"You are but a griffin yet," Bird replied, with a laugh, "and you don't know about these things. I am a European and the Arachchi is a native. We have that glorious institution in this country, that bulwark of English liberty,—trial by jury. The jury in this case will be natives, and it is not likely that they will bring a verdict of guilty against one of their own headmen. As for the confession, they will say that it was extorted by violence, and so the whole affair will end in smoke."

As I had to go to Kandy on several occasions to be examined in company with Mr. Bird by the resident magistrate in regard to the burning, my stay at Kondesala was much longer than I at first intended. This, however, was no loss to me. Mr. Bird was the oldest and most experienced planter in the island, and the information which he was able to give me, in matters connected with my future profession, was of the greatest after importance.

There were, besides, several coffee estates and one sugar plantation in course of being planted adjoining Kondesala, and the visits which we paid to them gave me some practical insight into the preliminary operations of coffee planting.

CHAPTER VII.—THE FIRST PROCESSES OF COFFEE
PLANTING, AND ROAST MONKEY.

I had, for several days in succession, seen huge columns of smoke rising immediately to the east of the planted portion of Kondesalle, behind a belt of low, thick, prickly jungle. I knew it to be thick and prickly from several unsuccessful efforts which I had made to penetrate it in search of jungle-fowl and wood pigeons. I pointed out this smoke to my host.

“It is only jungle that they are burning on at Pallakelle,” he answered. “If you have no objection, we will take a walk over and see how they are getting on.”

The day was a grilling hot one, and when we got to Pallakeile, what with the blaze and smoke of the fires and the intense heat of the sun, which was none diminished by being reflected from the black surface of the burnt soil, the place looked like a little pandemonium. Hundreds of naked black figures flitted around the fires, looking like a legion of fiends, when seen through the stifling smoke, piling heaps on heaps of brushwood and rolling trunks of trees into gullies, where the red flames were darting fiery tongues, high in the burning atmosphere. There was an awful clatter of axes and cattles, sounding like what I have heard in a shipbuilding yard, immediately before a launch, and over all this rolled a black canopy of smoke, through which everything looked distorted and exaggerated.

The coolies yelled like demons, when any heap larger than usual was set on fire, or when the red flames rose crackling in greater volumes in the air.

“This is what is called ‘piling and burning,’” my conductor remarked: “It is not always necessary, and when it cannot be dispensed with, it is, as you may see, a very trying and disagreeable operation. There, I perceive Mr. Hudson. We will go over and have a talk with him. We will then be on the weather side of the smoke and get it out of our eyes.”

My friend stumped out over the black burnt soil, through masses of brushwood, over heaps of ashes, rubbing against the charred stumps of felled trees, paying no seeming attention to the smoke and flames, which were almost stifling me with their pungency or blinding me with their heat.

Mr. Hudson was standing on the top of a fallen tree, looking cool and happy, whilst the perspiration was flowing in torrents over my face, and I was recklessly anticipating the moment when I would be prostrated with sunstroke.

“This is nothing,” that gentleman remarked, in answer to my observations on the extreme heat, as he coolly puffed a long Trichinopoly cheroot; “you should see a regular burning, where a whole estate goes off in one immense blaze. A field of this size, if set fire to on a windy day, would probably use up half-a-dozen of coolies. I’ve heard before now of more than that number. Kandyans should always be employed

at a burning; they are better up to the work than these stupid Malabars."

"Use them up," I asked, rather mystified. "How does it use them up?"

"Why these fellows will get in the way of the flames, and when they lose their presence of mind and the fire gets round them, felled timber and thorny brushwood is not the easiest road for letting a fellow escape from a scrape of that kind. There is one consolation, that they don't seem to mind being burned up. I was once caught myself. There was a Malabar man with me. I fortunately saw an opening and bolted in time, but he got confused and could not or would not follow. When I was all right I looked back and saw the blockhead unroll his cloth, wrap it around his head and lie down, right in the way of the fiercest of the flames, and he never, so far as I heard, uttered a single shriek."

"Did you not search for his remains," I asked, somewhat horrified, "after the fire was over?"

"Bless you, we think nothing of these things. When the men are put on to dig holes for the young plants, if they come upon a burnt man they rake the ashes and bones into the nearest hole. I am told that these bones contain a certain proportion of phosphate of lime, and this is the very best manure that can be applied to a coffee tree.

"In Bombay, Mr. Hudson," Mr. Bird said, with a quiet smile, "when ship captains pay

their dubash's bill, they multiply the grand total by two and then divide by five, when the dividend is supposed to represent the correct sum really due. This process should be taken with your statements, only they ought to be divided by five hundred instead of five, and then what remained might possess a modicum of truth."

"Then it is not true about using up coolies in burning a field like this?" - I inquired.

"Not a word of truth in it, further than at Narangwattie a Tamil was actually caught by the flames and burned; but this is the only instance that I am aware of, in which anything of the kind occurred."

Mr. Hudson laughed and invited us to adjourn to his bungalow. "We will require something to moisten our clay," he said, "I am as parched as a brick-kiln with this confounded burning."

When we reached the bungalow, which, like Mr. Bird's, commanded a magnificent view of the surrounding hills, we met another gentleman, who was introduced to me as Mr. Stephens, the deputy manager of the estate, Mr. Hudson, who by the by had some black blood in his veins, being his assistant.

I was invited to remain and dine with my new friends, whilst Mr. Bird returned to Kondesalle.

"What do you say to a walk and a bath?" asked Mr. Stephens, when the sun had sunk pretty low in the heavens and the air had become cool and pleasant.

"With all my heart," I replied, "it is the very thing that I was about to suggest."

"Appu, bring towels and my gun, and follow us," Stephens said, addressing his servant.

We walked along a road, cut through a thick jungle, and dotted here and there with giant trees, which stretched their wide-spreading branches like guardian angels over the lower masses of jungle, and formed natural trellises for the wild vines to clamber over, festooning them with showers of darling flowers of every hue and colour.

"How very beautiful," I exclaimed, as we passed through a natural archway, formed by this means. The branches of a huge bo-tree stretched right across the path, and there depended from them a marvellous screen of glossy verdure, whilst flowers of many colours, from deep crimson to pure white, were scattered over it like the figures in some piece of fairy embroidery.

"Pooh! that's nothing," Stephens replied. "If you come to the top of this rock you will see a more wonderful sight than that. In fact, these jungles abound in what you would be inclined to fancy were wonders. They are, or were, the hunting or pleasure grounds of the Kandyan monarchs,* and there are parts of them which an English nobleman would give half his wealth if

* In the map of an old edition of Robert Knox's Ceylon, this part of the country is marked as the King's Garden, and it fully justified the name.

he could only transport them into his own park. Look there," he added, as, having gained the summit of a flat rock, he pointed to what seemed the ruins of a vast baronial pile, overgrown with convolvuli and passion-flowers, which gowed in one vast mass of dazzling colors in the beams of the declining sun.

I expressed my wonder and gratification at this unexpected spectacle.

"It is certainly very beautiful," he replied, with a cynical laugh; "but it resembles the world and all that belongs to it in one respect, lovely and pleasant in outward show, but false and rotten at the core. Those wonderful turrets, those projecting buttresses, those massive ramparts, and those imposing arches are nothing more than the decayed or decaying stumps and branches of trees, whose native ugliness is hid by that covering of leaves and flowers. The gorgeous scenes in a theatre are not so deceptive as these skreens of vines and flowers as a means of hiding the rottenness and rubbish behind. Here, however, is something else that will astonish your English ideas. Look at that hollow, where you see the thick jungle of bushes with silvery grey leaves. These are guava trees, and if you go down amongst them, you will find the ground littered with the fruit, which, if it could be transported to Covent Garden, would be worth a prince's ransom to its lucky owner. This tree with the small trembling feathery-like leaf is a tamarind; that one beyond it, with the dark glossy foliage,

is a mango; that hollow on the left is called Dodangolla, or the orange hollow; these trees with their leaves shaded with crimson are mora trees: they grow bushels of a delicious fruit, like a small peach or nectarine, which will be ripe in another month or so. There are lots of orange, shaddock, citron and lime trees, to say nothing of papaws, custard-apples and other fruits, scattered through these jungles which bear and ripen their fruit only that it may fall to the ground and rot, for there is no one to gather or use it."

"Here we are at one of my private baths," he added, as, pushing aside the branches of low underwood which crossed a narrow pathway, we found ourselves on the banks of an oya or rivulet, the low and musical murmur of whose waters we had heard for some time past, and whose banks were shaded with immense kumbuk trees, the black oak of Southern India, whose huge stems and wide-spreading branches shed a dim religious light on the gurgling stream beneath, and formed a long vista, like the aisle of a vast cathedral, stretching far on either side, until the details of its beautiful tracery were lost in the dim distance. I stood fairly entranced and lost in admiration at this singular spectacle. The water near where we stood tumbled over a ledge of rock into a natural basin, which looked as if it had been formed by art for the express purpose of bathing. Parroquets flashed like gems in the leafy canopy above us, and screamed and chattered in shrill accompani-

ment to flocks of minas which fluttered amongst the lower branches. *Kobeyyás* or wood-pigeons cooed in the adjoining jungles. The Ceylon birds of paradise gleamed like flashes of light in the dim shade of the trees, their long white feathers making the pleasant gloom of this singular spot all the more apparent from their darting flight from one leafy hiding-place to another.

“Queer spot this, isn’t it?” asked Stephens, as he proceeded to undress on the edge of the pool. “Money could n’t purchase such a spot as this in England, so secluded, so beautiful, and yet so completely the work of nature, that it looks as if the hand of man had been employed to form this large reservoir for the very purpose for which we are about to use it—that of bathing.”

“Are you quite sure,” I asked, with some concern, as I proceeded to undress, “that we will not be intruded on? It would be rather awkward if a party of ladies, for instance, should stumble upon us in our present state of nudity.”

Stephens laughed. “I daresay you fancy that you are in the near neighbourhood of some palatial mansion or fashionable watering-place,” he said, “instead of being alone in the wilderness with me. I, however, am not surprised at your question, for it takes some time before a new-comer can realize that those grassy glades, those wide-spreading trees, those murmuring rivulets and tiny cascades are not the exclusive and carefully-guarded property of some great lord, instead of being simply part of

the wild jungles of Ceylon. It is true that all these jungles, for miles around us, were formerly the private hunting grounds of the Kandyan kings, but now they are the property of Mr. Boyd, in London, open to be trespassed on by all-comers, white and black, European and native, before they are turned into cultivated fields to grow coffee or sugarcane for the use of civilized England."

After dressing we directed our steps to a field a short distance off, where a gang of coolies were busily employed "lining and holing," preparatory to the place being planted with coffee bushes, when the south-west monsoon rains set in, which, I was told, would probably be in the course of a few weeks.

Before we left this field, where the men were working to the tune of a wild chant, in the chorus of which all joined, a party of Kandyans came to us with a young monkey, which they said they had shot in the Haragam jungles, on the opposite side of the river. Stephens handed it to the appu, who had come with us.

"Tell the cook," he said, "to roast it very nicely for dinner, and make it look as like a young infant as possible; but don't let Mr. Hudson know anything about it, until it is put on the table." The appu grinned as if he appreciated the joke, and Stephens turning to me added: "Hudson likes to play practical jokes on his friends; but I guess that he will be astonished when the baby monkey is dished up for dinner."

Leaving this field we visited other parts of the estate, the nurseries for young plants, places where new roads were being formed, and fields where men were employed cutting down and lopping jungle. There were gangs of sawyers, a brick-work and a carpenter's work-shop to be visited before we finally adjourned to the bungalow. At sunset a conch-shell was blown as a signal for the men to leave off work, whilst the dark shadows of the coming night began speedily to gather in the deep valleys and hollows of the hills, and gradually to creep up the sides of the mountains, until the last faint glow of the departing sun died away on the higher summits. The stars began to twinkle in the heavens, and the fireflies amongst the trees and shrubberies around, whilst the humming music of the tropical night rose in swelling cadence on the air. I had strolled along a shady path, enjoying the coolness of the night air, after the scorching heat of the day, listening to the roar of the river as it dashed over the Haragam falls, and the wailing music from a distant temple, which was borne in softened and melancholy notes on the evening breeze.

I was giving way to the softening influence of the hour and indulging in fanciful dreams of my own future,—very stupid dreams I am sure,—when I was rudely brought back to everyday life, by the appearance of Stephens coming along the path.

“What a fellow you are to wander about,” he said, with a tone of reproach. “Dinner is on the table, and I have been looking for you everywhere about the

bungalow. Hudson has gone down to the lines, but he will be up presently. Ah! here he is, so come along and let us discuss the monkey."

The lights in the bungalow had a very cheering and home-like effect, which was increased as we entered the principal room where dinner was laid, with a degree of comfort and even elegance which I was far from expecting in the jungle.

"Good heavens! Stephens, what is that?" asked Hudson, in a voice of horror, as we entered the apartment, pointing to the dish which graced the bottom of the table.

"Black piccaninny by way of a change," answered Stephens. "Draw in about your chair and have some soup."

"Well, if you will not have any soup," he added, as Hudson declined the offered dish, with a gesture of intense disgust, "just cut up the little black fellow, it will save time—' off instantly with his head. So much for Buck—,' I mean *Punchi Lamayá*."*

"Come Stephens, this is carrying the joke too far," Hudson exclaimed, in horrified accents. "It is perfect cannibalism, it is far too horrid, and I tell you that I can't possibly stand it," saying which Hudson retreated into his bedroom, from whence he watched our progress through the partly opened door.

Had I not known what the object was which so

* Little boy.

excited Hudson's disgust, I would have been even more horrified at it than he was. The cook had ingeniously baked the monkey entire, and he was placed on the table sitting like a little child on a large dish, with its arms folded on its bosom, and having a ripe lime stuck into its mouth, which, by distorting the features, rendered more hideous and revolting an object which was sufficiently disgusting of itself. Hudson's terrified retreat enabled me to conquer in a great measure the risings which I felt in my stomach at the horribly human-looking creature before me, and I proceeded to follow my host's example, by what he called "pitching into the soup."

"Pass up the black child," he said, in a tone of affection to the appu, "and I'll cut him up. What part do you prefer? a leg or an arm?" he asked, as he dug his fork into a large capon which was placed between him and the monkey.

"A leg," I answered, by way of carrying on the joke; "I am told that black infants are exceedingly tender and eat amazingly like suckingpig."

When we had both been helped, Stephens removed the fowl to a chair behind the table. This was scarcely accomplished when the bedroom door was cautiously opened and Hudson's head protruded.

"You don't mean to say that you are really eating it?" he inquired, in a frightened and uncertain tone of voice.

"I never thought that you were such a muff,

Hudson, as to turn up your nose at good cheer like this. Come, take a seat and have a slice; the odour alone might tell you that it is excellent, and I can assure you that it is done to a turn."

"It is only a used-up little fellow, picked up out of one of your own piles," I suggested, by way of a return for the hoax he had tried to play off on me a few hours previously.

"Don't be a fool, Hudson," Stephens coaxingly remarked; "come along and have a slice. It is only monkey and not the sole hope of a widowed mother, so that you may eat it with a conscience void of offence."

"Well, but even monkey," that gentleman replied. "You don't mean to say that you can eat monkey."

"Tastes like young rabbit" Stephens remarked. "Don't be a ninny. Sit down and have some. Don't look so frightened and disgusted. There, that's the lime out of its mouth. It won't look so horrid now. Let me give you this slice off the hip. You will find it very nice."

Hudson took the offered plate with evident reluctance, and, after some previous toying, summoned resolution sufficient to carry a morsel to his mouth.

"Not so bad," he exclaimed, after swallowing it. "By Jingo, it is very nice; give me some more. I had no idea it was so very good." Hudson was helped repeatedly to roast monkey, and as he

appeared to enjoy it, Stephens slipped a portion on to his own plate, which, after some tremblings of disgust, he carried to his mouth and swallowed. I declined being assisted to any, in spite of the assurances of both my companions that it was most delicious; but when the remains of that monkey were removed from the table, the appu had stringent orders to keep them for breakfast next morning.

The evening was spent with songs and clatter, arrack, toddy and tales of adventures by sea and land. Coffee was brought by the servants shortly after 9 o'clock, after which I was accompanied by my two new friends to Kondesalle, through the smouldering fires of the new clearing. I slipped quietly to bed to dream of roast monkey and used-up coolies, and to awaken, cool and refreshed, at tomtom beat next morning, in time to see Mr. Bird mustering his men and sending them off in gangs to the different works about the estate.

CHAPTER VIII.—SEARCHING FOR LAND.

Mr. Butler, the partner who took charge of the planting department of Acland, Boyd and Company's business, came at this time to Kondesalle. He was going up to the Knuckles to arrange about opening some new estates there, and invited me to accompany him. We started before sunrise, and after a quick walk across the Dumbara Valley we began to ascend the first range of hills. We were high amongst the ridges of Hunasgiriya by noonday, feeling

fagged and done out with the heat and travel; but the view we had of the surrounding country amply repaid us for our exertions.

Below us, glimmering and shimmering in the hot sunshine, lay the fertile valley of Dumbara, with its thousands of villages and well-cultivated plains; with clusters of palm trees rising above the surrounding jungles and thickets of fruit-trees, and green stretches of paddy-fields, contrasting with the dark verdure of the forest and the dun grey of the grass lands. Above, towered the rocky peak of Hunasgiriya and the precipitous ridges of Kitultenna; beneath lay a deep valley of lemongrass, the bottom of which was dotted here and there by herds of tame buffaloes, browsing on the sweet herbage which grew between the scattered tufts of the mana, and which was rendered dim and indistinct from the vapour which rose from the mountain torrents which tore along the ravines, and the undulating haze of the air, occasioned by the fiery heat of the sun. To the east towered the Knuckles and Medamahanuwara mountains, rearing their rock-and forest-clad heads, six thousand feet in the deep blue sky, whilst the southern horizon was bounded by the Hantane and Dolosbage hills, looking like ridges of *lapis lazuli* in the clear brightness of the atmosphere. The rank lemongrass, as we trod through it, emitted a fragrant and refreshing odour, whilst the clash and jangle of numerous cascades and waterfalls, issuing from every hollow and ravine, bore a pleasant and grateful music to the ear.

My companion appeared to know the ground well. He stepped out through the long grass of the hills and the thick underwood of the ravines, across rumbling torrents and up precipitous faces of rock, as if he were walking for a wager; whilst I followed, thoroughly knocked up, but unwilling to give in so long as I could by any possibility hold out.

"I think we will call a halt now," Mr. Butler said, after we had emerged from a wide tract of heavy forest, where the Madulkelle plantation now stands, and ascended a grassy ridge above it. "We have done not so badly, and we will take the rest of our work more coolly."

Part of the coolies, who accompanied us, proceeded at once to clear away the grass and dig holes for a tent, whilst others went to the adjacent forest and brought up posts, tie-tie sticks and pus-wel, or jungle-rope. In an amazingly short space of time a comfortable dwelling of talipot leaves had been erected, and spreading fresh grass and mats within it, we enjoyed a most comfortable and much-needed rest, whilst a substantial tiffin was being prepared by our servants.

In the afternoon we crossed over to the opposite side of the valley, wading a wide stream—the Hulanganga,—immediately above a magnificent waterfall, which, had it been in a more civilized land, would have formed a place of pilgrimage for thousands of seekers of the pic-

turesque; but here it was buried where, until within the last year or two, the foot of a white man had never before trod. My companion did not seem capable of feeling fatigue, as he crossed range after range of patana land, and clambered to the summit of every grassy elevation which promised a better and more extended view of the line of the forest lands above. He was silent, almost taciturn, whilst thus engaged, never by any chance giving utterance to the result of his observations, beyond occasionally saying "Rather exposed bit this," "Well sheltered this patch." "The road will require to run along this hillside and afterwards be carried over that hill by zigzags," evidently taking it for granted that I must necessarily be *en rapport* with the ideas which were passing through his own mind.

It was almost dark by the time we returned to our tent, and to my then unaccustomed eyes, the deep hollows in the hills, where the dark shadows were already gathering, whilst the hill-tops were still glittering in the sun's light, had an appearance perfectly frightful, when contemplating their dim and obscure depths. Where our tent stood, there was an almost perpendicular descent to the Hulanganga of certainly not fewer than two thousand feet. Had a man sat down on the summit of this descent, he would, by the mere force of gravitation, have slid to the bottom of the valley below, with a rapidly increasing velocity, until he was dashed to pieces on the huge rocks in the torrent beneath.

We remained three days exploring the forests amongst these hills and then returned to Kondesalle.

"He is a knowing card, Butler is," Stephens remarked to me shortly after our return. "He will be wanting you to enter into partnership in taking in the land they have bought up there," pointing towards the Knuckles, "but you just take my advice and don't do it. You will save no end of money by not entering into partnership with anyone. There are thousands of acres of the finest land in the island, to be had, at the Government price of five shillings the acre, by simply applying for it; and if I were you, I would buy my own land, cultivate it myself, and be independent of everyone, Colombo merchants particularly."

"But I have made a sort of an engagement to take some of their land," I replied, "and I fear that it would not be very honourable to draw back now."

"Honour be blowed. There is no honour in a case of this kind; say that you don't like the look of the land, as the Quaker said of his creditor, and when you choose a bit, you can employ Acland's people to do your agency business for you in Colombo. Butler is not a bad sort of a fellow, but I can't say the same of the senior partner of the firm here, whilst Acland himself is rather too sharp a man of business for my taste. Boyd was the trump card of the house, but he has gone the way of all flesh, and for my part, I would rather keep clear of any sort of partnership

with the other members of the firm, although for any agency work, or dealing in strictly mercantile affairs, you will find them thoroughly reliable and honourable."

I resolved to profit by Stephens's advice, and I was confirmed in this view, from several subsequent conversations I had with Mr. Bird on the subject

Acting on this gentleman's advice, I visited a large tract of mountain forest land, which lay above a wide expanse of luxuriant patana, in a district which, for convenience sake, we will call Ekabage. I was told that there were some twenty or thirty thousand acres in the whole range, and as this was about the limit which I had assigned myself, in the first purchases of my principality, I sent in an application to the Government Agent's office to have it surveyed. Pending this necessary operation, I returned to Kordesalle, where I found myself, in a great measure, domesticated in the house of my excellent friend Mr. Bird. What with books from the Kandy Library, excursions to native villages and other places of interest in the neighbourhood, visits to Pallekelle and strolls through the coffee fields with my gun in search of game, I found the time pass very rapidly and agreeably.

CHAPTER IX.—A BUFFALO ADVENTURE.

About this period herds of wild buffaloes abounded in the lower jungles of Dumbara. I believe that

wild elephants were also by no means scarce in the same locality. At any rate my host, Mr. Bird, not to say anything of Stephens and Hudson, were fond of telling wondrous shooting exploits against these large animals, which exploits were amply verified by various tusks which adorned the verandahs of their bungalows. Mr. Bird had actually shot an elephant from his own door, within a few yards of the verandah, and the number he had 'bagged' was almost beyond his powers of numeration. Hudson, Stephens said, had on one occasion fired at one, but it was at its stern, as it was disappearing in the jungle. Stephens had shot several, and had some very narrow escapes whilst in pursuit of them through the jungle. On one occasion he was attacked by a rogue elephant when he had only a single-barrelled gun, charged with No. 3 shot, in his hand. He waited until the elephant was within five or six yards, when he fired and the brute dropped dead at his feet, and he got fifteen pounds for his tusks. On another occasion he had fired both barrels at the leader of a herd without either of them taking effect. The brute charged, and Stephens took to the river—he was the most powerful and rapid swimmer I ever saw—followed by the wounded elephant, but fortunately, he distanced his pursuer and escaped into a temple on the opposite side.

When I was last at Kondesalle, Mr. Bird had asked me to accompany him in pursuit of some buffaloes which had been amongst his coffee fields

over night. "We will take breakfast at 9," he said, "and start immediately after. We will then be sure to find the buffaloes in the ponds, which we will reach by about noon."

On our way to the ponds, Mr. Bird explained to me that the buffalo always takes to the water when the sun draws towards the meridian, and lies covered with liquid mud—all but its mouth and nose—to shield itself from the heat and insects. When the sun begins to go down in the afternoon, they go to their feeding grounds; but unless the hunter catches them in the water, there is no getting within shot of the animals, when feeding in the thick jungle; their sense of hearing being so very acute, that the breaking of a twig or the shaking of a branch alarms them, and off they go, crushing through the underwood, to some place of greater safety. He gave me directions how I was to proceed in approaching the ponds. I was to look well when I stepped and keep to the windward side. I was to hold my breath and keep my eyes open, my gun on cock and my finger on the trigger. I was to tread softly as if I were walking amongst eggs; and, above all, I was to keep my nerves well strung and not get flurried or excited, as it was quite possible that, if wounded, the buffaloes would charge, and, under such circumstances nerves placed their possessor at a great disadvantage. In the event of a charge, dodging behind a tree was, perhaps, the best chance of safety, unless I could manage to get up one, in time to escape the toss of the buffalo's horns, which was a feat

not easily accomplished and not to be recommended, and in shooting there were four places I might fire at as I got the chance. These were, the centre of the forehead, where the hair parted; the side, immediately behind the shoulder blade; the centre of the breast; and the right flank where it was presented diagonally, so that the ball would be likely to reach the heart.

I received all these scraps of information bit by bit, as we forced our way through a thick dense jungle, sometimes walking erect in tracks made by buffaloes or elephants, and frequently having to crawl on all-fours through the thickets where nothing larger than a jungle-fowl or mouse-deer could have penetrated. At length we reached the sandy bed of a dry oya and could walk with freedom along it.

"Step softly now," said my companion, "we are close to the principal pond," and he himself walked or rather glided gently on tiptoe, carrying his gun at the "make ready," as if he were in instant expectation of seeing the game start from amongst his feet.

He stepped cautiously behind a large tree, a few yards from the right bank of the oya, and motioned to me to join him. I did so, as gently and quietly as I could, when he held his hand to his ear in the attitude of listening. I also listened, breathing hard in spite of the directions that I had received to the contrary. There was a sound like a startled snort and a flapping in water a few yards in front of us.

"They are there," my companion whispered, and then he motioned to me to advance in the shelter of a large tree a few yards off, whilst he guided stealthily to another a short distance from it. I saw Bird's eye—he squinted slightly, but that does not matter much,—kindle with the excitement of the moment, so that it looked as if touch-paper might have been lighted at it, as he pointed in the direction of the noises we had heard.

The gloom of the jungle, however, was so impenetrable, that, for the life of me, I could not see a yard in advance, and the noise of the buffaloes did not appear to be much more than that distance off. Bird silently pointed his gun and motioned to me to do the same, it having been arranged that, being a green hand, I was to have the honour of the first shot. I took a step to one side to try and obtain a better view of the game, and, in doing so, a dry branch cracked beneath my feet. Quick as lightning there was a terrified grunt and a roar almost amongst my feet followed by a sound of jumbled waters and a noise of many feet. A rushing and a crushing through the underwood instantly followed, and I just, for a moment, caught a twinkling of huge moving dark bodies as the herd of buffaloes dashed snorting down the banks of the oya and disappeared amongst the underwood.

Bird rushed forward—I followed. A buffalo still remained in the pond, evidently the chieftain of the herd. He did not seem to share in the panic

of his companions, but was rising deliberately on his knees, the muddy water streaming from his grizzly back and shaggy mane. He looked round on us with fierce bloodshot eyes, and in another instant he would have been bounding through the jungle, after his companions, when Bird's gun spoke out, and, without a sound, without a struggle, with the exception of a few faint shiverings, the mighty brute rolled over on his head and was still in death.

"Why didn't you fire?" Mr. Bird asked.

I could not tell him. I had never thought of firing; the whole affair had passed so suddenly and had seemed so unreal, that I believe I could not have pulled the trigger although the slain animal had been rushing on myself.

"Magnificent brute this, is n't it? I never saw a larger," asked Mr. Bird, answering his own question. "Do you see this bushy mane that the villain has got? That is what distinguishes the wild buffalo from the tame. If you had fired in time we might have bagged two or three more; but I was desirous that you should have the first shot. Never mind, you will do better next time."

When we returned to Kondesalle, Sookin Kangani was told that there was a dead buffalo at the pond beside the Lewella Ela, and next morning every rock on the estate was decorated with strips of his flesh spread out to dry, whilst strings of the same were stretched in all directions around the Pariah lines. The head and the horns were

stuck on the roof of the peeling-house to bleach, and thus were disposed of the remains of a noble animal, that only the previous morning had been careering through the shady aisles of the jungle in the full vigour and majesty of perfect health and freedom, followed by a willing herd.

It was some weeks after this that I returned from visiting the first instalment of the territory that was to form my principality, and which I had resolved on naming Dodang-gaha-kellie, or 'the jungle of orange trees.' Not that, so far as I knew, there was a single orange tree on the whole twenty-five thousand acres, but I had made some progress in the acquisition of the native languages, that is, I could scold a little in them, and my head being full of orange groves, I christened my new purchase, or what was intended for my new purchase, with as sonorous a name as I could command, signifying my principle idea of what constituted outdoor Oriental magnificence.

Bird had a perfect armoury of guns. He had an elephant one—it was a rifle like a small cannon, that would almost have required a carriage to transport on. It carried a four-ounce brass ball. I don't think that anything would have induced me to fire it. Many years after, when the household of Kondesalle was broken up and poor Bird removed, a lonely, a widowed, and a careworn man, to another and a more rugged part of the island, I happened to be at his old bungalow on a passing visit. His great gun was still there as was

also some others of his household goods in the shape of furniture. The new master of the estate, a young Englishman, who had acted as a special constable on the memorable occasion of the Newport riots, proposed that the gun should be loaded and fired. It was loaded accordingly, but as no one appeared to be willing to run the risk of discharging it, it was securely bound to a verandah post, a string tied to the trigger, and, being carefully pointed to a big tree at several hundred yards' distance, I had the honour of pulling the string from the other end of the verandah, the host and his other visitors taking refuge in the dining-room.

The ball would probably have done some serious mischief if it had hit its mark, but as it did not do so, the exact nature of its execution could not be correctly ascertained at the time, and I have never heard of the problem having been solved since.

Besides this monster, there were two double-barrelled elephant guns, carrying two-ounce leaden balls for each barrel, an excellent rifle, sighted for five hundred yards, and fowling-pieces galore.

I had strolled over to Stephens's bungalow with one of the double-barrelled elephant guns, loaded with ball, immediately after breakfast. I seldom went out without a gun in those days.

"What sort of game are you after today?" Stephens asked. "There are no elephants about just now that I am aware of."

"If there are no elephants there are plenty of buffaloes," Mr. Hudson remarked. "They have been dancing a hornpipe in my nurseries and destroying the young plants last night."

"It will be dangerous to go alone after buffaloes," Stephens remarked, "more particularly since you don't know the jungle. It requires some pluck to shoot them too, more, perhaps, than to shoot elephants, and it is not everyone who is game enough to try it."

"I intend to try it, however," I said, with a slight shade of bounce, as I observed that both gentlemen looked incredulous. "I know the way to the ponds, and this is just about the time that I am likely to find the buffaloes in them." I was, you see, getting experienced in jungle craft.

"If you will take my advice you won't go alone," Stephens said, kindly; "but if you are determined to go, all I can say is that I hope you may not come across any."

"Be sure and make as much noise as you can when you get near the ponds, and then there will be no danger," was suggested by Hudson, between whom and myself an incipient feud had begun to spring up, in a snoring tone of voice.

"Come, I'll put you into the nearest route for the ponds," Stephens said, rising from his seat, and throwing away the fag-end of a cheroot; "and I wish you all manner of success. It is best to begin these sort of things as early as possible, and I don't care to see a fellow that funks at any

little bit of danger. I do like to see a plucky man, and I don't think that you are particularly deficient in that commodity."

"If the buffaloes are not in the ponds," he continued, "don't try to follow up their traces, for you will make nothing of it, and may, perhaps, lose yourself in the jungle. That is well thought of; if you don't find your way back so easily as you expect, don't get flurried or confused. Look where the sun now is, and it will be further to the west some hours hence. Keep your shadow on your right hand, and by doing that you are sure to find your way to the river. There is a native path up the side of it, and once in it you cannot go wrong, until you find yourself here or at the village below Kondesalle. If you come upon an ela, follow it, and, sooner or later, it will lead you to the river. Now mind these directions and success attend you. We shall expect to see you even to breakfast tomorrow, if you cannot get to dinner tonight."

I found my way to the pond where Mr. Bird shot the buffalo, but it was empty. There were unmistakable indications, however, that it had been tenanted less than an hour before. Contrary to the advice I had received, I resolved to follow the spoor of the herd, and, in my innocence, I fancied that I might have an opportunity of boasting of my woodcraft, in being able to follow up the traces of the buffaloes and bring some of them to bay in the jungle. I had no difficulty in following the footprints, which were distinct enough

in the soft vegetable soil, but when I got into grassy glades, the spoors crossed and recrossed each other so frequently, that I soon saw that it would be useless to persevere any longer in the pursuit.

I had reached the banks of a large oya, where the water was gurgling over some ledges of rock and making a soft and grateful murmuring in the air. A large bo-tree was growing from the centre of a low mound near at hand, through which corners of broken and decayed brick could be perceived peeping through the soil, the remains probably of an altar built over the grave of some chief, or the remains of a temple which had first been neglected and then allowed to run to decay. I was tired and fatigued with my walk, and a deep pool amongst the rocks of the oya seemed to invite me to bathe in the cool, clean water. I had redressed myself after a refreshing plunge, and, mounting the bank of the stream, lay down on the mound, under the cool shade of the bo tree. Soft odours floated on the air, soft murmurings of rippling water, gentle rustlings of green leaves, the cooings of doves, and the distant scream of parroquets, all these wooed to repose, and I was beginning to yield to the insidious approach of sleep, when I was startled by a rustling amongst the dried leaves near me, and on looking up, I discovered a huge cobra de capello within a yard or two of my face, with some small animal—a lizard, I think—in his mouth. I jumped to my feet in an instant and faced the intruder,

which raised his head and expanded his hood, whilst his horrid-looking eyes sparkled like fire, as if he were not only inclined to do battle, but also prepared to take the initiative in attack. He swallowed the animal which he held in his mouth with a spasmodic gulp and raised his head still higher, hissing with anger, as if for a better spring. The dry branch of a tree was lying on the ground a few yards behind me. I retreated to this branch, still facing the snake, which did not attempt to pursue, but appeared eagerly to watch my movements. I caught up the stick and approached the reptile, whose turn it now was to retreat. He glided gently but swiftly over the fallen leaves and branches, and in another moment he would have been into the oya, when, with a lucky blow over the back, I broke the brute's spine. How he glared with his deadly eyes and hissed with his horrid mouth, whilst he twisted and twined in the agonies of death; his metallic coating of scales glistening in the sunlight, in all the beautiful and magnificent hues of a dying dolphin. He was a splendid looking animal, even in the agonies of death, and it was in mercy that I crushed his head into a pulp with the weapon I held in my hand. When first I saw the cobra, my gun was lying between us, nearer to the snake than it was to myself; consequently, I thought prudence the better part of valour, and did not attempt, under the circumstances, to seize it.

I was proud of this exploit, prouder than I would have been of a hundred such a few years

after, but I was then new to the country, new to snakes and their habits, whilst my previous reading about these creatures led me to believe that I had performed rather a daring and gallant action in having slain this one, which, I may remark, was the largest, by a long way, which I ever saw during my subsequent residence in the colony.

After this affair I did not feel much inclined to lie down again, but I stood leaning against the bo-tree, which commanded a long vista of a grassy glade, over which the sun was shining with a sultry glare, looking all the more sultry from the dense shade under which I stood. Some wild cinnamon and mora trees were scattered in this open space, amidst clumps of prickly brushwood, whilst, almost in the centre, stood an enormous anthill, with its ventilating chimneys looking like the steeples and turrets of some miniature cathedral. I was marking all these details of the scene, when from the farther end of the glade a buffalo calf emerged into the open, cropping the short sweet grass, as she came slowly towards me. Her progress was slow that I determined to anticipate her, and with this intention I crawled in the direction of the anthill, holding my breath and gliding as softly and noiselessly as I possibly could. I gained the anthill without having disturbed my quarry, and peeping from between two of the chimneys, I saw that it was within about thirty yards of my gun. Let any sportsman call to his recollection the first shot he ever fired at

an object worthy of his pursuit, and he will have little difficulty in understanding the intense excitement I experienced at that moment. I gently put my gun on full cock, afraid to make the slightest noise, lest I should alarm the unconscious victim of my sport. I need not describe how my breast heaved, how my breathing, although suppressed, was laboured and heavy; how my eye kindled, and how eagerly I watched the approaching quarry until I could make sure of my shot. The calf was now within twenty yards, and her left side was fully exposed to me. I took a steady aim and fired. The buffalo leaped into the air, her legs twisted under her, and she fell to the earth as dead as a stone. Immediately following the report of my gun there was a startled snorting all around me, and then a rushing and crashing through the underwood, which made my heart jump into my mouth, for I had never imagined that there were more buffaloes near me than the one I had shot. I looked round me sharply as a man does when apprehensive of danger, but as the trampling of the herd died away in the distance I began to think of re-loading the barrel I had discharged. Whilst in the act of doing this, a huge cow buffalo emerged from the jungle, whinnying and making piteous calls as if for her offspring. I concluded at once that this was the mother of the calf I had shot, and I ducked behind the anthill to watch her motions. She walked, whinnying, up to the dead calf and rubbed against it with the side of her horns; she pawed

the ground, tearing up tufts of grass and tossing them in the air, showing every symptom of intense distress; she smelt the blood oozing from the wounded side and licked the spot where the ball had penetrated, and then held her head erect, and drawing back her upper lip, showing all her teeth, she snuffed the air and bellowed as gently as such an unwieldy mother might be expected to do to rouse her sleeping offspring. She seemed greatly distressed, and on again licking the wound she presented a fair shot at her forehead, which it was impossible for a sportsman to resist. I took a steady aim, resting the gun on a saddle of the anthill. I pulled the trigger, but the gun missed fire. Quick as lightning the buffalo's head was erect in the air and her bloodshot eyes glistening with a deadly import. I ducked behind the anthill, but not in time to prevent the buffalo seeing the movement. Before I had time to put a fresh cap on the gun, her horns were lowered to within a few inches of the ground, her tail was sticking out horizontally like a piece of thick cane, whilst the hairy tuft at its end was twitching and waving to and fro with excitement. I could see all this at a glance, but I had not time to think before she was close upon me charging round the anthill, with a force and impetus of which no mere words could convey more than a very imperfect idea. By a species of instinct, I seized one of the chimneys of the anthill, and waiting until the enraged brute was within a few yards of me—feet would perhaps be

more correct word—I swung myself round it to the other side. The buffalo rushed past, carried a good way onwards by the impetus of her own onset, so that I had a moment to think what was next to done. It was but a moment, for before I had time to look around the buffalo was back again, bellowing with fury and apparently determined to wreak due vengeance on me this bout. The same manœuvre again saved me, but I felt that it could not do so long. Again and again the furious beast returned to the charge, and I was feeling that not only was my strength failing, but that my powers of thought were deserting me and my nerves giving way; whilst, to crown all, the inhabitants of the hillock, round which the conflict was raging, disturbed, perhaps, by the unusual noise around their habitation, began to swarm out in myriads and attacked me without mercy. They were on my face and on my neck, up my legs and up my arms, fixing on my flesh with their sharp-serrated forceps, which stung like burning wires. If I wished to escape with life, I must decide upon some desperate move at once. The buffalo was on me again, and now she adopted new tactics, sweeping round the anthill at the same time as I did, but her unwieldy carcass could not make the turning quite so quickly, and I once more escaped. “Now or never,” I thought, as I darted off at a tangent towards one of the wild cinnamon trees, which I have previously mentioned, the lower branches of which were close to the ground. I

reached it just in time. I caught hold of a branch, sailor fashion, and swung my feet on to another a little above it, at the very moment that the baffled monster tore past, tossing her head in the air, as if I were already on her horns and she were prepared to impale me on my descent. I felt, or fancied I felt, the touch of these ugly horns on the least honourable part of my person, as the brute swept under me.

I was not long in placing myself in a place of greater safety amongst the higher branches of the tree, and I could then contemplate the disappointed vengeance of the foe with some degree of equanimity. I was pouring with perspiration and trembling with excitement. To say that I was frightened would simply be telling an untruth. Fear arises from anticipated or gradually approaching danger, or from a great peril happily passed. In my case I had not time nor opportunity to get frightened, the danger was so sudden that the danger of escaping it engrossed all my thoughts, if I ever did think at all. When my excitement had somewhat cooled down, I began to feel fear, even terror. I had dropped my gun on the first symptoms of attack, and it now lay beside the anthill far beyond my reach; for the buffalo, maddened and baffled, tore round and round my perch, uttering plaintive cries and horrid bellowings, whilst she pawed the ground with her forefeet and ploughed it with her horns, throwing tufts of grass and lumps of earth in the air in the wildness of her rage. She some-

times went to her calf and tried to turn her with her horns; she smelt and licked her wound and then sniffed the air as she did on her first appearance after I had fired my shot.

The sun was getting low in the heavens, and what was I to do? It would soon be dark, and the horrid brute showed no symptoms of leaving the spot. If I had to remain there all night I might have to remain there for ever, because if she were not to leave me the whole herd might be attracted to the spot by her bellowings and might set a watch on me night and day, which I could not hope to escape. These and many other equally ridiculous thoughts careered through my excited brain, as hour after hour passed, and the sun was fast sinking behind the distant tree-tops. Then indeed I trembled and began to fear. I had given up all hope of getting to Kondesalle that night, when, to my intense satisfaction and relief, the buffalo, who had watched me so long with a vengeful eye, gave one last lick to her dead offspring, and one last bellow of defiance at me, and then tore down the grassy glade and into the thick jungle like a fury.

I listened intently, frightened to leave my tree, thinking that this might only be a ruse to entrap me; but when I heard the crashing of the underwood dying away in the distance, I became reassured and dropped to the ground. My first thought was my gun, which I seized at once. I loaded the barrel which had been discharged, very carefully, then fired off the other barrel and re-

loaded it, standing as I did so under the tree which had sheltered me, and then I thought of escaping homewards.

I recollected the directions that Stephens had given me, and I also, very fortunately, recollected the oya near at hand, which I entered, and wading along its bed, felt sure that sooner or later I must emerge from the jungle on the banks of the river. I had not gone far, before I perceived, through the deep gloom which had begun to overshadow the surrounding objects, a narrow track or foot-path crossing the stream. I had no hesitation in taking that part of it leading to the right, and I walked rapidly along, confident that, sooner or later, it would take me to some of the landmarks or roads about Kondesalle, which I would be able to recognise. I was not mistaken in this, for after about an hour's sharp walking I got into the principal road, which led from the river to the estate, after having passed through a coconut tope, filled with rows of extensive buildings, which I afterwards learned were the remains of an old palace of the Kandyan monarchs, which was burned by the English expedition which invaded Kandy under Captain Johnston in 1804. In this walk, which was rendered very difficult from the deep darkness of the woods, as well as from my own ignorance of the localities, so fearfully unstrung were my nerves with the occurrences of the afternoon, that every bird which fluttered out of the tree-tops, every dried branch which crackled under my feet, every rustle amongst the fallen leaves

from lizard or rat, every wave of the branches of trees across my path, threw me into a state of cold perspiration and an agony of terror such as I had never before experienced, and which I hope I may never experience again. I have gone out after buffalos and elephants also many times since that memorable afternoon, but to the last hour of my stay in Ceylon I never willingly came in contact with even a tame buffalo, without a return of the feelings which I then experienced to a greater or less degree, and even when well armed I did not encounter them with the same amount of confidence as I should otherwise have done, had this affair not happened at the very outset of my sporting career.

When I reached Kondesalle, I found that Mr. Bird had accompanied Mr. Stephens with a squad of men to search for me, they having become greatly alarmed at my prolonged absence, and fancying that, if nothing more serious had happened, it was possible that I might have lost my way and become bewildered in the jungle. We heard them firing shot after shot, far down the river side, in the hope that I would reply. Although very tired and very nervous, I set out to Pallikelle, and, walking to the fields nearest to the buffalo ponds, I fired several salvos from both barrels of my gun from the top of a high rock, when I soon had the satisfaction of hearing the firing drawing near to where I stood. My friends were glad to see me safe in body and mind, as Stephens expressed it, and laughed heartily when

I recounted my afternoon's adventures, although they were no laughing matter to me.

CHAPTER X.—FIRST EXPERIENCES OF JUNGLE LIFE.

About this time I received a note from a Government surveyor, of the name of Braybrooke, informing me that he had received instructions to survey the land which I had applied for, and appointing to meet me in Kandy, that I might accompany him to the spot, so as to point out what tracts of forest land I wished to have included in the survey, and also to superintend the cutting of boundaries.

Mr. Braybrooke was an extraordinary figure of a man. He was exactly, when he had a low-crowned pith hat on his head, the shape of a boy's humming top. I think I have seen such a figure amongst the caricatures in "Hood's Own," but the surveyor was the only living man whom I ever saw having this resemblance. Mr. Braybrooke was a very tall and a very corpulent man, yet at his widest girth, which was somewhere about the neighbourhood of his shoulders, he was almost as broad as he was long. He had a jolly, rubicund good-natured expression of countenance, which did not belie his character, for a better boon companion I never met. His stock of songs, anecdotes and funny quotations from plays seemed perfectly inexhaustible, and no *contretemps* could upset the equanimity of his temper. His activity was even more marvellous than any other quality.

The speed with which he moved along jungle tracks, leaped from rock to rock over foaming torrents, c'ambered up precipices, and, in fact, underwent all the personal details of his profession, was something miraculous, considering the huge body which he had to drag along upon two by no means stout-looking legs.

"You will require to engage about a score of coolies to carry our traps," Braybrooke said, after we had arranged the other preliminaries of our expedition, "and the sooner they are sent off the better. Have you any one with you who could show them the way to Dodang—Dodang—what did you say was the name of the place?"

"Dodang-gaha-kellie," I replied, rather pompously, I fear, for Braybrooke smiled sarcastically I thought.

"Oh! Ah! Yes! Dodang-gaha-kellie," he replied; "very long name, but not very pretty, although tolerably expressive I daresay. Now, I for one, don't admire those native names. People say they are expressive, but expressive of what I should like to know, if you don't happen to understand the language? When I come into my landed property, I intend to call it Oxgrove or Hogg Lodge, or by some other good old Saxon name. I hate these native languages. A gentleman has no use to learn more of them than enough to swear fluently at a native with."

Mr. Bird had lent me a dozen of his best men to assist in cutting the boundaries of my intended principality. These men were armed with cattles, *i.e.*,

a species of heavy billhook and axes, and they were under the leadership of old Sookin. Braybrooke explained that the additional men would be required to carry our tents and our luggage; our tools, and our provisions; the provisions and rice of our servants and the other coolies.

"By-the-bye, have you a tent?" he asked.

I replied in the negative, but said that I had bought some rolls of talipot leaves, and that we would not be long in rigging out a commodious tent with them.

"I always carry a canvas one," Mr. Braybrooke said, "for my own accomodation; but as you are taking talipots, suppose you order a few more rolls, and that will provide lodging for both of us and then we can go snacks in the prog, and, for that matter, in the grog also. I am not particular, but I always take care to have the commissariat well provided for these jungle expeditions, for one does not know what's before them when once they leave civilization behind. Besides, it is the only consolation we possess in the bush, to cheer our souls and compensate us for all the other amenities of social life which we leave far behind us."

There was some trouble in getting the necessary number of men.

There was no lack of idle coolies lounging about in gangs under the tulip trees on the esplanade side of the lake, but they did not appear to be ever anxious to engage with our friend Sookin.

They did not seem to be altogether sure of him, or rather they were too sure, for, I understood from my servant, Meedin, a Malay "boy," who had seen some forty-five or fifty summers, that he was well-known amongst them as an unmerciful martinet and taskmaster, and hence their "backwardness," as Mr. Braybrooke expressed it, "in coming forward."

We got them all started off at last, and we were to follow before sunrise the following morning. We cantered out as far as Gampola, along a road which could not be surpassed for smoothness by the best road in England, crossing the Mahaweli-ganga by the splendid satinwood bridge at Peradeniya. Here we stopped and had breakfast at the resthouse, then under the hospitable management of Mr. Young, the very *beau idéal*, in appearance, of an English Boniface. We sent our horses back to Kandy and then struck out on foot along a native path in the direction of the Atabage hills.

We had not proceeded far along this path, before we encountered a mob of Malabar coolies, who the instant they saw us, began to vociferate, at a great rate, in Tamil. They were "swearing awfully," Braybrooke said. Certain it is that every individual member of the gang seemed to have made a wager regarding which could talk the fastest and yell the loudest.

The only intelligible word which I could distinguish was "Sookin Cangany," "Sookin Cangany,"

and this was uttered with every expression of disgust and abhorrence in every sentence the fellows uttered. One wretched coolie was dragged to the front, having his back scored with numerous welts, which looked white and livid on his black skin, as if he had just received a severe thrashing from a rattan cane. Another had a cut on the head as from a blow with a heavy stick, whilst several others bore marks of more or less serious an appearance, as if they had all been engaged in a severe shindy and had not come off with the winning. All yelled the two words, 'Sookin Cangany,' 'Sookin Cangany,' with frantic demonstrations of hatred and revenge, interspersed with cries of "*Shambulum*," "*Shambulum*."

"I believe, Green, that these are the coolies who were sent on with our traps. '*Shambulum*' means pay. I know that much of the language, and faith, someone seems to have paid them off in fine style."

"Sookin Cangany, Sookin Cangany," was yelled again with furious gesticulations of rage and detestation from twenty throats. Of course neither Braybooke nor myself could understand what all this row was about, and, with the natural quickness of the natives of India, the coolies saw that this was the case and stepped aside in hopeless despair, at our ignorance, to allow us to pass. At this juncture a gaily dressed Sinhalese man, attended by several others, not quite so gaily dressed, appeared on the scene.

"Can you speak English, my man?" Braybrooke asked, accosting the new comer, with much urbanity and politeness.

"Yes Sar, leetle, leetle," was the satisfactory reply, accompanied by an English oath, which the Sinhalese gentleman thought it necessary to add, by way of confirming his knowledge of the northern tongue.

"Ah! yes, I see you do so elegantly," his questioner said with a beaming smile. "You appear to have had the honour of mixing in good society and speak the language to perfection. Now, can you tell us what these fellows say?"

It appeared that my friend and *factotum*, Sookin Cangany, had got drunk at an arrack tavern, and whilst still in a position to exercise some authority over his men he had committed an aggravated assault on the whole gang, in consequence of which, they had, when he became so much overcome, as to be incapable of preventing them, laid down their loads and bolted. They were, however, willing to return and fulfil their engagement, provided I would guarantee them against any further bodily castigation at the hands of my cangany. I gave them a solemn promise to this effect, and we pushed on, followed by our now satisfied coolies, their anger and their blows completely forgotten, whilst they sang a rattling but utterly unintelligible song in full chorus, the burden of which, I understood, was, "Our master is a good master," which was a very satisfactory character to have gained on so short an acquaintance.

When we overtook our servants and the rest of our men, we found our friend, Sookin, in a helpless state of intoxication, our boxes and pack-

ages scattered over a small opening in the jungle, whilst several Sinhalese villagers looked quietly on in great but silent wonder at this extraordinary state of affairs.

“Get a chatty of water and give him a good sousing, the beast,” Braybrooke suggested, “it will bring him all the sooner to his senses.”

The water did not bring him to his senses, and therefore we left Sookin Cangany where he lay, to recover at his leisure, whilst we pushed on towards Dodangahakelle with the rest of the men.

It was far on in the afternoon before we reached our destination. Our first care was to get our tents erected, and for this purpose, I found the coolies that I had brought from Kondesalle invaluable; whilst the others, engaged in Kandy, were of no manner of use.

Posts were cut in the jungle, and in an amazingly short space of time, no fewer than four handsome structures were erected, which were to be the dwelling-places of my companions and myself, during our temporary stay on Dodangahakelle. Two of these were put aside for the men, one for the servants, and the other, which was the largest and most commodious, for Braybrooke and myself. These dwelling-places were well ventilated, although they were impervious to wet and rain, and taking into account the short time they were in being erected, they were very comfortable indeed. Some sweet-scented lemongrass was cut, which was thickly spread upon a broad bench of tie-tie

sticks as a bed for Braybrooke and myself; our boxes and packages were arranged so as to serve for tables and chairs, and then we took solemn possession of our domicile after seeing the coolies and servants safely housed in theirs. A plentiful dinner was seen smoking and throwing up fragrant steams from our makeshift board, and after doing full justice to the viands, which Meeden had provided for us, we drank success and prosperity to Dodangahakelle, in bumpers of champagne. Braybrooke sang his best songs, he quoted whole acts from "Bombastes Furioso," he told his very best stories, and when at length we turned in upon our bedstead of tie-tie sticks and lemon-grass, I felt impressed with the fact, that I had never spent a more pleasant evening, nor ever met with a more pleasant companion. Colin Douglas and his ancestral halls were nothing in comparison, in point of jolity, to this friend of a few hours' acquaintance and this leafy shelter of a few hours' standing.

I had not been long in bed before I began to dream horrible dreams. I was falling over a cliff and trying frantically to grasp the slippery wiry grass that grew upon the slope. I was on the point of being thrown from the top of a high building, which bore a fantastic resemblance to the belfry of our village church at home, whilst a full choir was singing, in a nasal tone, within. I was being pushed off a high rampart, with the butt-ends of muskets, and I was clutching convulsively at the edge of the escarpment, to prevent myself from falling into the ditch below.

I awoke to find my dream a reality. My bed-fellow had rolled himself tightly into our only pair of blankets and had turned his back on me. He had encroached considerably on my share of the bedstead, and I was literally hanging over the edge, holding on by his shirt; whilst the trumpet sounds which were issuing from his nose plainly showed that he was utterly unconscious of the sad plight into which he was forcing me. He also was disturbed in his sleep, perhaps the result of his after-dinner potations, for he moved uneasily on his bed, whilst every roll of his huge body rendered my tenure of our common sleeping place less and less secure.

“Braybrooke, Braybrooke, my dear fellow, lie to the other side a little,” I cried; “don’t you see that you are pushing me overboard?”

I might as well attempt to move Alagala* with a bodkin, as move the huge dormant carcass beside me with the gentle push which I ventured to give it, and that celebrated rock was as conscious of my expostulation as the slumberer by my side. “Braybrooke, Braybrooke, you beggar, do get back a bit,” I pleaded.

A few vicious snores were the only reply to this affecting appeal.

“Confound you man; waken up. Don’t you see

* Literally the Elephant Rock, a bare rocky hill resembling an elephant. [No: the ‘yam rock,’ *ala* meaning ‘yam’ in Sinhalese.—Ed.]

that I can't hold on any longer? Come, come, this is really too bad. Oh, hang it, I'm off," I roared with vexation, as my friend rolled round and fairly pitched me off on the cold earthy floor.

I attempted to waken him, but I might just as well have bawled to the Seven Sleepers, for the more I bawled the louder he snored. I was in a state of hopeless despair. A cold wind off the mountain tops was blowing through every crevice of our temporary habitation, and the floor was moist, cold and clammy. Braybrooke had the only blankets, mats and sheets, which the establishment boasted, firmly secured, so that there was no possibility of getting possession of any part of them. I groped about amongst the boxes and rice bags, trying to get hold of some sort of covering, but I could find nothing more capacious than my own clothes, not even an empty gunny or mat bag or native cumbie, and I was in consequence obliged to don them and find as pleasant a resting place as I possibly could, by pulling a box or two together and by rolling Braybrooke's jacket and drill continuations into a bundle, to serve for a pillow under my head. When I had made myself as snug as circumstances would allow, I could have wagered, only that he snored so loud and so viciously, that I heard my late bedfellow trying to suppress a laugh.

"Surely," I thought, "he has not turned me off on purpose to get rid of me," but as the snoring continued, and the idea seemed so pre-

posterous, I banished it immediately from my mind, and soon falling into a sound slumber, I forgot my mishap, until I awoke cold and unrefreshed at sunrise the next morning.

Braybrooke was already up and dressed. He accosted me with one of his merry laughs, through which I perceived, or fancied I perceived, a sly twinkle at the corner of his eye.

"Ah! you got tired of me last night, and parted company without so much as saying good-bye," he said. "I hope I did not tumble you out of bed. I have sometimes been accused of such a thing, for you see I am rather stout and take up so much room that it requires more than an ordinary bed to hold me. I am very sorry if I really disturbed you. I should have thought of the possibility of doing so before turning in. We will mend matters now, by having another bed rigged out before night. Suppose we have a bath and then coffee, and after that we will begin work in earnest."

And we did go to work in right earnest. Sookin Cangany had come up, sober and penitent, and taking charge of his men he entered the jungle when a large wild breadfruit tree, or, as the natives called it a "delgaha," stood. The mode of procedure was very simple. The men with cattles went first and cut down the nilu or underwood, whilst two men with axes followed and 'blazed' or cut off slices from the big trees on either side of the track thus formed. It was slow work, and Sookin was directed to cut his way

through a gorge or pass in the mountain range, in as straight a line as possible. Whilst this was going on, Braybrooke and myself accompanied by a few men surveyed the lower part of the land bordering on the patana. This portion was quite free of jung'le, unless when crossing rugged ravines where mountain oyas rushed down the hollows of the hills. This work took us well on into the afternoon of the first day, and when we adjourned to our tent in the evening, my companion announced that a stretch of five hundred and forty chains or nearly seven miles was the measurement of the lower part of my property.

"If you go as far back amongst the hills, you will have some thirty thousand acres of land, and that alone will cost you a pretty penny," the surveyor observed, as he closed his notebook, preparatory to bathing and dressing for dinner.

"Only some seven thousand pounds," I coolly replied, as if such a sum of money were a mere bagatelle.

Mr. Braybrooke looked at me from the crown of the head to the point of my toe, as if he were preparing to survey a field and trying to estimate its probable extent, and then remarked, with a deep sigh: "There is a great deal of spending in seven thousand pounds, and a fellow has to work precious hard and long before he can command such a sum, unless those who happen to be born with a silver spoon in their mouths, and they can seldom appreciate their good fortune."

I observed after this, however, that I had in-

creased considerably in Mr. Braybrooke's estimation, and I don't think that, had I given him the chance, which I did not, he would have tumbled me out of bed that night.

The day after we had to follow Sookin and his gang, which made our progress very slow. We had leisure to clamber to the tops of rocks and look around us; to smoke no end of cheeroots to drive away the musquitoes, and to explore the jungle around. We had a visit from a Banda or native chief from a neighbouring village, called Coorocoodootenna, accompanied by about a dozen of his villagers. He chewed betel, swore a little in English in compliment to us, to show that he had not neglected to cultivate the languages to a certain extent. He did not decline to partake of the contents of our brandy flasks, and, in consequence, he became very good company. offered to send men to assist in cutting boundaries, and promised to be of service to me in every possible way, when I came to reside on my property, which, I told him, I intended to do as soon as the purchase was completed.

The Kandyans spread themselves through the jungle, and when they returned, they brought handfuls of beautiful flowers, balsams and orchids, amongst the latter the *wanaraja*, or king of plants, a beautiful pale lilac-grey little flower, rising from a stem, the leaves of which looked as if formed of the finest dark brown velvet, veined with gold. It was a great beauty, but far more beautiful was

another magnificent flower, which they called 'dotolma', and which, they explained to us, was extremely rare and very seldom to be met with. I am not versed in botany, and consequently I am unable to describe it scientifically. It was the flower of a wild areka palm, which grew in abundance in the clefts of the precipices, which adorned my new property. It looked like a huge tassel of some crimson-coloured fabric. The threads of the tassel depended from a central stalk and were covered with small flowers of a metallic red lustre, some of which were full-blown and some only forming or half-formed; whilst those in these separate stages of developement were of various shades of colour, from a light pink to a deep crimson or even purple, and the whole formed the most gloriously magnificent floral production that I had ever previously seen, and I have never come across its equal since. Its perfume was indescribable. It filled the whole atmosphere with an odour resembling that emitted by a field of white clover in full flower in England. Braybrooke, who was by no means a man of sentiment, gazed on this marvellous production of nature in wonder and astonishment.

"Never saw anything equal to it before," he said. "There is no use keeping it here. Send it to Normansel, and if it has not been already christened by the wise men, who give plants long names, he will find a name for it, ending with Greenii, in honour of yourself, to commemorate the genius of its discoverer. Clever fellow Norman.

sel.* He knows about every plant in the creation, so send it off to him, by all manner of means, for it will only 'shed its fragrance on the desert air' here, wither and decay, and will be of no help in surveying and cutting boundaries."

I acted upon Mr. Braybrooke's suggestion and sent the *dotala* to Mr. Normansel who was the Manager or Curator of the Botanical Gardens at Peradeniya; but I never heard whether it was already known to the botanical world, or whether it received a long name, of which my own formed a part, according to Mr. Braybrooke's prophecy †

In our progress with the boundaries we came upon numerous natural objects of interest. In one place we found a bo-tree growing on the very summit of a bare rock, without a particle of soil. How it had originally germinated was a strange puzzle, but it had succeeded in sending its roots down every side of the boulder, where they entered the soil, and they now enclosed the rock in a wondrous network of roots. We came upon waterfalls and cascades innumerable, and entered a vast limestone cavern, which the Kandyans named "Oonangalle." Stalactites hung from the roof in

* Normansel was the Superintendent of the Botanical Gardens. He died about 1845, and was succeeded by Dr. Gardner, a gentleman of European fame.

† A specimen of the *dotala* palm, one of the few indigenous to Ceylon, flowered recently at Abbotsford, and the red coral-like blossoms were much admired. Numbers of places, such as *Dotalagala*, derive their names from the prevalence of this palm.—ED.

great abundance; in one place reaching to the floor, forming a pillar shaped like some waterspouts which I have seen at sea, small, like a lady's waist, in the centre, but bulging out at the top and bottom. To these stalactites clung great numbers of bats, and the cavern smelt abominably of their excrement. The floor was strewn with porcupine quills and the bones of animals in a greater or less state of decay. The entrance to this cave was in the face of a perpendicular cliff, which rose several hundred feet above the surrounding forest. The summit of this cliff and in every crevice where it was possible for a few handfuls of earth to gather, were covered with a dense mass of vegetation, which looked as if it were about to topple over and roll into the valley below. From under this mass of forest trees, creepers and ferns, a continual stream of water was dripping, like rain off a house top, rendering the approach and entrance to the cave a perfect and a very disagreeable showerbath.

"Grand discovery this," said Braybrooke, gazing around him in admiration. "If you could only fa'l in with a good bed of clay now, your fortune would be made."

"How so?" I asked, somewhat mystified.

"How so!" he replied, in astonishment. "Don't you see that vein of limestone? don't you see those vast blocks of the same material kicking about here, waiting to be calcined, and don't you think that lime will not be in demand, when this wilderness gets settled? and if you can only find clay, don't you think that bricks and tiles will

not he wanted too? I tell you, sir, your fortune is secured. Just look at all this timber to serve for fuel for your lime-kilns and brick-kilns also, and tell me where you will get another such place with the same resources within itself as you have here."

I replied that "I was glad to learn that he thought so well of the place, and I hoped that it might turn out as he anticipated."

As it was getting dark we adjourned to our pavillion, and thus ended our third day on Dodangahakelle.

We were ten days employed on the survey, during which nothing occurred worth narrating, with the exception of one rather amusing scene with Braybrooke and our tappal-man or messenger between our camp and Kandy.

This man's name was Sadien. He was necessarily a pariah or low-caste Tamil. He was very ugly, very squat, and very dirty. It seemed to be part of his religion never to put on a clean cloth—the one he habitually wore being almost as black as soot from sheer filth—never to comb his hair, which hung over his unmeaning dirty face in greasy tangles and formed an impervious thicket on his crown. Never to wash his person, particularly his face, which was smeared with ashes, chunam and charcoal to the consistency of a thick crust. Sadien brought our fresh provisions, drinkables and letters from Kandy. He usually took two days for this journey, one going and one returning. We had found a great want, since we came to the jungle, in having forgotten to

bring some sodawater with us, and an order was despatched to Kandy, per Sadien, for a supply of this commodity. It arrived at the very moment we were coming home from a hard day's work, hot and wearied.

"Let's have a go of it, with a drop of *eau de vie*," suggested the surveyor.

"By all means," I replied, the anticipation of the refreshing draught making me feel cool and comfortable.

The mat bag which contained this elixir was opened accordingly.

"Hullo! what's this?" cried Braybrooke, as he untwisted the wire and pulled out the cork from the bottle. There was no bounce in the cork and no effervescence in the liquor. "I'm hanged," he said, in a tone of vexation and disappointment, "if someone has not been tampering with these bottles," as he took up bottle after bottle and found that the corks had been taken out of everyone of them and afterwards replaced.

Sadien looked on this proceeding with a countenance on which conscious guilt was written, if ever it was written on a black face, of which I have serious doubts.

Braybrooke looked at him sharply, and the dirty fellow's eyes sank beneath the surveyor's stern glance.

"All right," said that gentleman in a cheerful tone of voice from which all symptoms of dis-

appointment had entirely vanished. "All right, I see how the land lies. Just keep your eye on that fellow, Green, my boy, till I return."

When he came back he carried a 'supplejack' in his hand. A 'supplejack' is a species of cane or part of a wild vine, thicker than a rattan, but equally elastic and pliable.

"Now my man," he said, addressing Sadien, in his blandest tones of voice, "you just come here and have a drink."

Sadien approached very reluctantly as if he had serious misgivings regarding the reception he was likely to receive. Braybrooke presented a soda-water bottle to the fellow's mouth, and compelled him to drink the last drop of it, in spite of his rueful looks and the frightful contortions of his ugly countenance. When the first bottle was finished a second was produced and it also was swallowed with every outward demonstration of intense disgust. A third, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth followed, and in spite of Sadien's convulsive twistings and contortions, in spite of the painful writhings of his stomach and the ineffable disgust portrayed on his usually inexpressive countenance, he was compelled to drink bottle after bottle of an entire dozen, by his implacable tormentor, who sat with the utmost gravity at the entrance of the tent so as to bar all chance of escape, should his victim attempt an effort in this direction. The first bottle of the second dozen was then produced, but this was carrying the joke too far for the

whole of us. Sadien writhed and tumbled on the floor in an agony of terror, crawling to the surveyor's feet and clasping his knees with abject supplications for mercy. "He would worship him; he would look upon him as his father, his mother, his sister and brother; he would follow him to the end of the world, as his most devoted slave, if only he would not make him drink any more of that medicine, which was already making him feel as if about to die."

Braybrooke could contain his gravity no longer, but burst into an uproarious fit of laughter in which I, Meedin and the imperturbable Sookin Cangany heartily joined. Taking advantage of this outburst, Sadien made his escape, holding on with both hands to the region of his stomach and doubled up as if he had received, as the surveyor remarked, a buster from a prize fighter.

The blockhead had thought the liquor in the bottles had been some spirit—probably arrack—of which he could help himself without detection, by making up the quantity purloined with water; but finding that it did not come up to his expectations, he had amused his weak understanding by uncorking the bottles one after the other, for the satisfaction of hearing the reports and witnessing the effervescing, and then replacing them thought that his meddling with our drinkables would not be discovered.

For several days before we broke up our camp, heavy clouds gathered every afternoon over the

summits of the mountains, and hung in lowering masses along the hill sides.

"These clouds are the forerunners of the October rains," my companion remarked, "and we will have them on us with a vengeance if we don't get out of this very speedily."

I have said little about our tents and the place where they were pitched. This spot was at the foot of a high cliff, where the ground was quite free of lemongrass—a quantity of loose stones, which were easily gathered and thrown to one side, being the only article which the ground seemed to produce. The rock shaded it from the afternoon sun. It rose, I imagine, for I never measured it, some five hundred feet high. It was quite perpendicular, and like all other rocks of the same kind in the Kandyan jungles covered with vegetation, wherever a handful of soil afforded a foothold for any of the many thousands of tropical plants which grew and thrived in such places.

We had finished our last day's surveying and returned rather earlier in the afternoon to our temporary places of abode.

"We will have a regular jollification tonight," Braybrooke said. "This is the longest survey that I have ever been employed on, and now that it is finished, we will have a night of it. We will then be refreshed for packing up tomorrow morning and then hurrah for Kandy."

The clouds were gathering as usual, but today

they seemed to hang lower on the hills. The thunder began to grumble, and shortly after, we could see the forked lightning darting through the lowering clouds.

"We will have it shortly," said Braybrooke, meaning the rain. And we did 'have it.' The rain began to fall in single drops of a large size, making a splash on the thirsty soil about the size of an ordinary saucer, and then the skies poured down their liquid treasures in waterspouts. The rain hissed as it fell on the dried earth. A smoke went up from the ground, and huge wreaths of mist formed and hung suspended amongst the gullies of the hills.

"Good heavens! what is that?" I cried in alarm, as a sudden shriek rose from the adjoining tent, which served as servants' room, cookhouse, stores, &c. Shriek followed shriek, accompanied by cries of "*Mahatmaya, Mahatmaya,*" "*Durai, Durai,*" "*Watura, watura,*" "*Tanni, tanni,*" "*Aye-ya, aye-ya,*"—i. e. "Master, master, water, water, alas, alas,"—in every accent of terror and amazement; through which we could distinguish a strange and unusual roaring as if a cataract of falling water, when we were quite sure no such cataract existed, was thundering down upon our camp.

We rushed out in the pouring rain and what a sight met our eyes. A torrent, which, to our alarmed senses, seemed a very Niagara, poured from the very summit of the cliff near which our tents stood. It had already demolished the cookhouse, which was lying flat on the ground, and

several frightened figures were seen escaping, like half-drowned rats, from under the talipot leaves, which formed its walls and roof. As the torrent rapidly increased in volume, it took a wider stretch of ground in the radius of its sweep, and the brown foaming waters were already trembling within a few feet of our own tent. We took in all this at a glance. I was powerless to act. The whole scene was so new to me, that I stood looking at the ruin that was already effected, and that which was threatened, quite numbed in the intellect and stupid beyond measure.

“By heavens, my plans and survey,” cried Braybrooke, as he rushed frantically into the tent and pulled out his papers, cramming them as he did so into a tin case. His boxes were then dragged out beyond the reach of the rapidly-increasing waterfall, and, as I had recovered my presence of mind and joined him in his exertions by this time, we speedily emptied the tent of its contents.

We did not succeed, however, in doing this too soon, for by the time the last box was dragged out, the torrent was upon us, and in a few moments we saw our late tenement sweeping in detached portions down a deep hollow in the grassy patana which now contained a large river, where before, we had never seen a drop of water.

“*Au revoir,*” said Braybrooke, taking off his hat and bowing with mock gallantry to the disappearing fragments. “It is well that I am not accompanying you. I have no stomach for a trip to Trincomalee by water just yet. Come, old fellow,

this is a strange fix we have got ourselves into, out of house and home. We must however bestir ourselves and do something towards making ourselves comfortable for the night. It is well that our deeds are left to us. What say you to an adjournment to the limestone cave? It is scarcely five hundred yards off, and it will at any rate afford us shelter from this pelting rain."

"Faugh," I said, "don't you recollect the bats?"

"You are about right there. There is no help for us but to march off to Coorocoodootenna and throw ourselves upon the Banda's hospitality. Don't you recollect his Bandaship saying something about our tents being pitched on a dangerous spot?"

Our men and servants were standing shivering and looking on with rueful and woe-begone countenances at the said havoc that the torrent had made. We ordered them to bring the boxes, tools, &c., or as many of them as they could carry and follow us to the Banda's village.

That gentleman gave us a generous enough welcome, when he learned from Sookin Cangany the nature of our mishap, *i. e.*, he sent his villagers to gather coconuts, which were brought to us with their tops cut open, for us to drink their refreshing contents, as also some plantains and raw cucumbers. This, to say the least of it, was but cold comfort to hungry men, who were also wet and cold with wind and rain. The whole of our clothing was soaking wet, and the rain was dripping from us like water from river gods; and we begged for

some native comboys to roll ourselves in until our own garments could be dried. Our wants in this respect were no sooner made known than they were supplied, and we were shown a building enclosed on three sides, but open in front, where we were told we might take up our abode for the night. There were benches round two sides of the building, raised a few feet above the ground, and these we concluded would make excellent beds, and the want of bed-clothes was amply supplied by the superfluity of native cloths which were placed at our disposal. Our men had an open shed set apart for their accommodation in another part of the village, and every person seemed comfortable and pleasant once more. The villagers gathered round by the score, men, women and children, hoary age, budding womanhood and lisping infancy, stood gazing at us with grave wondering countenances as if they were contemplating some marvellous exhibition; whilst the Banda himself was fussy and officious, in trying to add to our comfort.

Our feelings of satisfaction very soon received a rude shock, by Meeden asking what we proposed having for dinner, and how we were to cook it.

“Get us turtle soup, salmon, turbot, roast peacock, sirloin, plum-pudding, a nice salad and all the other delicacies of the season,” Braybrooke suggested.

“Yes sar,” was Meeden’s rejoinder, “but whereabout get them? No beef got; no eggis, sir; no fowl, sir; no potatoes, sir; no rice, sir; no sugar,

sir; no bread, sir; no chaties, sir; no nothing, sir;" that worthy caterer replied with an appalled countenance; "only ale and porter and wine and brandy, sir; all other things go down the water, sir;" and he concluded his account of our deficiencies with that world-old aphorism, "Can't make nothing out of nothing."

With the object of giving us some hope in this sad state of affairs, he suggested that if Sadien returned in time from Kandy, something might still be done by way of providing a dinner; but he was almost hopeless of that dirty fellow making his appearance.

Sadien was belied in this respect, for he arrived whilst we were speaking of him, dripping like a water-god newly risen from his native element, and for once in his lifetime passably clean, all but his face, which had been protected from the purifying rain by a huge matbag which he carried on his head, which matbag was supposed to contain two days' provisions for Braybrooke and myself.

"Let's see what condition the things are in," Braybrooke said, "they look precious wet and not of much use."

He untied the string and emptied the contents of the bag on one of the benches I have mentioned.

"Just as I expected," he added, as a bloody mass of rubbish made its appearance: bread, sugar,

beef, flour and a number of other articles too numerous to mention composed this hideous mess, all kneaded, melted and jumbled together in one disgusting lump.

Sadien, the cook, and Meedin gazed at this mass with looks of consternation. Braybrooke looked serious. I laughed and the villagers contemplated the whole with unmoved countenances, like the spectators at some curious exhibition, the reason and object of which they could not rightly understand.

"Pitch it away," I suggested, in disgust.

"No, no," said Braybrooke, "the beef at any rate is good; we cannot afford to pitch it away, a dabble in salt and water will put it all right, but the rest of the stuff may go."

The Banda was made acquainted with the nature of our difficulty, which he appeared to think might easily be rectified, and accordingly fowls, bread-fruit, plantains, yams, Indian corn, half ripe, which when roasted tasted not unlike green peas, rice and native sugar or jaggery were produced in abundance, and in spite of the difficulties of our position, we had a 'night of it,' to finish up our survey.

My principal recollection of that night, in which our whole remaining stock of drinkables was consumed, was of the Banda steadying himself to sing a native song; several of his men dancing something like a hornpipe; Braybrooke roaring

"For he's a jolly good fell w,"

and myself calling on an imaginary landlord to come and "fill a flowing bowl until it did run over;" whilst a crowd of natives, both men and women, stood around us looking on with grave and solemn countenances.

I had a splitting headache as we rode into Kandy next morning. I however lost no time in proceeding to Kondesalle, and thus ended my first experiences of roughing it in the jungle.

I am not writing these recollections with any high moral purpose, or, indeed, with any purpose whatever, in view; beyond a desire to preserve and present to my readers a faithful record of a state of things which has now passed away for ever, and painting, to the best of my ability, the phases of society, the style of thought; the rough work, the energetic determination and the other hardy virtues which distinguished the pioneers of coffee planting in Ceylon, who showed themselves to be worthy sons of the clime of the North; and therefore I make no excuse for recording the fact that, on rare occasions, the strict rules of temperance were forgotten, whilst good fellowship and kindly feeling sometimes led men, whose general style of living was necessarily of the most temperate kind, into excesses which, perhaps, would better have been avoided.

I am proud to class myself amongst the first of those who made the forests of Old Lanka resound with the clatter of the planter's axe, and fall before the advance of the pioneers of Euro-

pean civilization, and made the desert places of that beautiful island smile beneath the plenteous harvest of the Mocha bean, made pleasant homesteads where formerly stood howling jungles, and assisted to build up a newer and a better civilization upon the ruins of another which existed before such names as Greece and Rome were heard of in the world.

I have, I regret to say, mixed at times in scenes which I would now carefully avoid ; but, to the honour of the Ceylon Coffee Planter be it said, that, during my residence in that colony, I never knew a confirmed drunkard, a known immoral character, or a blackleg of any kind, no matter how great his wealth, or high his position, but received the cold shoulder without ceremony, from the members of the fraternity to which I, at one time, belonged.

CHAPTER XI.—I TAKE FORMAL POSSESSION OF
MY PRINCIPALITY.

A few weeks after this I received the titledeeds of my new property, conveying the whole 30,825 acres, more or less, according to the plan of survey annexed, in perpetuity, on the yearly payment of a peppercorn, should it be demanded, and a present payment of £7,706 5s. in hard cash.

Acting on Mr. Bird's advice, and accompanied by him, I engaged a gang of coolies and proceeded

with them to Dodangahakelle, in order to form nurseries. We ascended to the summit of a high peak, which rose almost in the centre of the nearest eligible looking piece of ground, in order to study the lie of the land. This peak was a natural curiosity of itself. A low range of hills ran transversely across the bottom of the forest forming a deep and wide-spreading valley, which was enclosed by the higher ranges of the Atabage mountains on one side, the ridge which was terminated by this singular peak on the opposite one, and steep hillsides and frowning precipices on the remaining two. The peak was called by the natives Cattie-galle, or the knife rock. It rose like a wedge from the adjoining ridge, as if a sugarloaf had been sliced on both sides from the top to the bottom, and the middle section left standing intact. There was thus only a very narrow ledge on the summit, of a few feet in width, on which some tufts of lemon grass grew, and there was thus a perpendicular descent on either side of several hundred feet, although the fall was considerably deeper on the side facing the low country.

“This seems to be a beautifully lying piece of land,” Mr. Bird said, as we stood on the very apex of this peak and contemplated the wide-spreading expanse of wild forest land which stretched far across to the very summit of the opposite mountains:—“It is well sheltered from the southwest monsoon; it looks tolerably good soil, it is well watered, and there appear to be many level spots on it where bungalows, stores and other build-

ings may be erected. Suppose we try and get on to that ridge farther up the valley. Banda, you know the ground and will be able to lead the way."

The latter part of this speech was addressed to my friend Coorocoodotenna Banda, who had got scent of our presence in the neighbourhood, and who had just joined us upon the summit of Cattiegalle.

When we reached the ridge, we found it admirably adapted for our purpose, that of forming nurseries, being tolerably level, and having a good deep, rich soil. The Banda promised to bring men the following day to cut down two or three acres of forest, and, in the meantime, I had Sookin and his men busy putting up huts of iluk grass, in almost primitive fashion, for the accommodation of his men. Four round holes were dug on a level part of the patana, ten feet apart, not under the rock where our former camp had been pitched, but higher up and nearer the forest. Four posts, each ten feet long, with forked ends, were inserted in these holes, and then a long pole, by way of a ridge-plate, was laid across these forks from end to end of the proposed building. Rafter sticks were then tied in pairs and laid across the ridge-pole, at intervals of about two feet apart, their lower ends resting on the ground, and then tie-tie sticks were placed across these rafters, about four or five inches apart, over which thick layers of iluk grass were laid and securely fastened with *pus-wel* or jungle rope, forming a by no means uncomfortable wig-

wam, thirty feet long by sixteen feet wide. It took the whole of the first day to finish this piece of work, and on the following one the Kandyans were busy with their cattles and wedge-like axes cutting down the giant forest trees, to clear a space for the nurseries; whilst Sookin and his Tamils were employed, with mamotie pickaxe and quintanie, cutting a road from the said nurseries to their wigwam, and then on to the native path leading to the Government road at Gampola. I had by these means, some sixty or seventy men at work, and I felt no small amount of satisfaction in superintending their operations, walking from gang to gang, saying "*Soorica vettie*" to the one and "*Vigahatta capapan*" to the other, which expressed the same meaning, first in Tamil and then in Sinhalese, which meaning was simply "make haste and cut." These words seemed to have a cheering and encouraging effect, for the rascals yelled out "*Ama, ama doorai,*" "*Ou, ou, Mahatmaya,*" (yes, yes, master), whilst they set to their work with redoubled vigour and earnestness.

As Bird's crop was coming on he could only stay a couple of days with me, and I was thus left all alone in my glory. I took up my quarters in the building which Braybrooke and myself occupied on that memorable night at Coorocoodootenna, and which the Banda had enclosed and decorated with a lining of talipot leaves, thus rendering it a very pleasant and comfortable place of abode. Another building was set apart as a cookhouse and servant's room. I accompanied the Kandyans to the forest

every morning, had my breakfast brought to me at 9 o'clock, and left off work at 3 in the afternoon, by which time the clouds had usually gathered over the hill, and the rain had begun to fall in such torrents, as usually ushers in the autumnal wet season in Ceylon. I used to delay my return to my lodgings until after I had seen my Malabar coolies housed for the day. It was pleasant to see them bathing and cooking, hewing firewood and carrying water, after their day's work was over. It was pleasant to see the light blue smoke oozing from under the thatch of their temporary huts, and curling slowly upwards in the soft moist air, whilst the sun was setting in golden glory behind the Dolosbage mountains, and the Ambagamuwa hills threw their long dark shadows across the Gampola plain.

In the course of a week there was sufficient ground cleared, I thought, for the nurseries, and all hands were then employed lopping the green branches and piling them in heaps to be burned. They were too green to burn well, but what were not consumed were rolled and piled around the edges of the cleared space, which was some three acres in extent, to form a fence against the encroachments of elephants and other wild animals. This work, which took us several more days, being finished, the Kandyans, thinking that their part of the business was ended when the jungle was cut down and disposed of, took their leave, whilst the Tamils set to to grub up the small roots

and dig over the ground preparatory to its receiving the seed. This was rather a tedious and tiresome operation, owing to my determination to have the work well done. The usual method of forming nurseries, after digging over the ground, was to sow the coffee beans broadcast and rake them roughly into the soil. This was at best a slovenly method of going to work, besides that it created more labour, as the plants thus grown required, in most cases, to be transplanted into other nurseries at an early stage of their growth, before they were finally put in the places they were to occupy in the fields. The plan I took to obviate this was to lay my ground off in long beds, like a garden at home, and plant the seeds in rows, six inches apart in the beds and four inches apart in the rows. I got my seed from Kondesalle. It came accompanied by a friendly note from Bird, and also some huge bunches of young coffee plants. These plants, Mr. Bird wrote to me, had grown, self-sown, beneath his coffee trees and at the edges of the jungle from the droppings of birds. They would, if planted in the nurseries now, be ready for being put out to the fields by June, with the earliest rains of the south-west monsoon. They were planted accordingly, and from the time that I had first come up, three weeks having elapsed, I calculated that I had about 500,000 seeds sown and 120,000 seedling coffee bushes planted. I also had temporary lines or huts erected that would hold from eighty to one hundred men; I had a good bridlepath cut up to the nursery, and I had contracted with the Banda to build me a

thatched bungalow for my own accomodation near the nursery,—the said bungalow to contain three large rooms and a verandah. He was also to build a cookhouse and a stable. The principal house was to be 42 feet long by 16 feet wide, exclusive of the verandah, which was to run along the entire front of the house and to be 9 feet wide. The cookhouse was to be 30 feet long by 12 feet wide, to be divided into two compartments, and the stable to be about the same dimensions. I was to send door and window frames from Kandy, and the whole of the buildings were to be finished and ready to be occupied by the beginning of January.

The Banda performed his part of the contract greatly to my satisfaction, and I therefore gave him a handsome *douceur* over and above the price we had bargained for. He then offered to fell and burn as much of the forest as I proposed to clear that season, and I willingly closed with his offer. I promised him three pounds and ten shillings for every acre cleared to my satisfaction, and this, I believe, was the first contract of the kind ever entered into in Ceylon. I was at much pains in explaining the extent of an acre, measuring off several with a tape line in the immediate neighbourhood of the village. He was a tolerably intelligent man the Banda was, and easily understood the matter when I told him that ten lengths of the chain measured either way, and forming a square, made ten acres and so on in proportion. He then said that he would clear four or five such spaces and leave the measurement to myself for the sum offered.

The Banda also offered to use his influence with the men of the other villages in the neighbourhood, to come and clear more land if I wished it. The plants which Mr. Bird had sent up would plant from eighty to one hundred acres in June, and I thought it would be a pity not to have them planted out at that time, and therefore, I agreed with my friend to employ all the men he could engage and begin work on the 1st of January. As I could do nothing more until the forest was cleared, I returned to Kondesalle and arranged about getting a supply of all the necessary tools and other articles required for beginning a new settlement and having them sent on to the estate.

Mr. Bird was in the middle of his crop. He and his assistant, Mr. Walter, were busy as bees in summer. The pulpers were in full operation night and day, and huge heaps of ripe coffee cherries were lying on the upper floor of the pulping-house, and were having other heaps added to them twice or three times a day. In the intervals, however, between these additions, a continuous stream of cherries was falling through the floor into the pulpers underneath, in which the pulp or outer coating was torn off, and the clean beans carried into large cisterns, where they were allowed to lie and ferment from twenty-four to thirty-six hours, until the saccharine matter between the outer and inner husks should be sufficiently decomposed to wash off, when they were carried to the barbecues or drying grounds around the store to be dried.

I was glad to find that I could be of some use to my kind host by taking a turn of duty in the pulping house or at the store, as well as looking after the gatherers in the field. I will likely give some account of these matters when I come to speak about my own crops, and, in the meantime, we will return to Dodangahakelle. I had by this time—the middle of December 1838—got all my tools, including a grindstone and some furniture, consisting of a dozen jakwood armchairs, two bedsteads, with coir mattresses, two couches, two large armchairs, a centre table, two side tables, a sideboard, washhandstands, toilet tables, together with a large supply of crockery and glassware, as also chatties and cooking utensils, collected in Acland, Boyd & Co.'s godowns in Kandy. I started all these off, as well as a supply of provisions on coolies' heads, under charge of Meeden and the cook, so that when I followed on the following day, I had a comfortable home awaiting me, in my new bungalow, by the time I arrived on my estate. The walls of the new building were, it is true, of the colour of the principal material of which they were built, namely mud, and they were besides rather rough to outward appearance; but one of my new coolies, named Veerapin, who was an ingenious sort of a fellow, went to work of his own accord, without any interference or directions on my part, and smoothed off the walls of the verandah and unoccupied room, with a coating of clay which he then smeared with a mixture of cowdung and water, and when

the whole was dried, the surface was almost as smooth as if it had been plastered by a professional man. When it had received a coating of white-wash prepared from fine lime, "it looked," as one of my first visitors expressed it, "quite nobby," and as if "I dwelt in marble halls." When the first room was finished, I moved into it, and so on until the whole bungalow, outside as well as inside, had undergone the manipulation of my man, Veerapin.

Veerapin was rather an extraordinary character in his way, very sparing in his words and very unlike his countrymen, in so far that he was always employed at some sort of work. It seemed as if he could not possibly remain idle. If any neat little job was required to be done about the buildings, Veerapin did it without consulting any one, so that, in course of time, it became quite understood that Veerapin was not to be classed amongst the other coolies. He did not come to parade, he did not attend at rollcall, but he was never absent from work, and he always did his work well. In course of time, without any orders from me, and without any appointment to the post, he came to be recognised as the gardener of the establishment; and the way this came about was as follows:—

More ground had been cleared for nurseries than had been occupied by plants. Any fruit seeds, which I happened to get hold of, I always made a point of planting in a corner of this ground. On one of my visits to Kondesalle, Mr. Bird

offered me a share of a package of garden seeds, which he had just received from the Cape of Good Hope. When I got home, I employed Veerapin to dig up a piece of ground, and instructed him, to the best of my ability, how to sow each kind of seed. There were cucumbers and melons, several kinds of pumpkins and vegetable marrows, several kinds of peas and beans, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, &c., in short almost every kind of vegetable used in England and India. Most of the seeds Veerapin knew, but others were strange to him. However, we got the ground prepared, and the whole put into it. Only three or four days elapsed before most of the plants were showing their heads above the ground, and Veerapin watched their growth with an interest greater than mine, and my interest in their progress was very great indeed. About a month after these seeds were sown, Veerapin disappeared from the estate. He was nowhere to be found, and no one could tell what had become of him. He was absent for about a fortnight, and I could obtain no information regarding his whereabouts. I was rather uneasy at losing him, he was so handy in many ways; but just as I was despairing of ever seeing him again, I met him coming up the path towards the garden, as if he were just off a long journey, gaily dressed with a snowy white cloth round his loins and an equally white tight fitting jacket and turban, the latter having a crimson handkerchief twisted around it. He salaamed to me with great courtesy and with condescension, handed me a ripe lime as a nuzzer

or good-will offering, and then marched on towards our garden, where he was soon busily employed watering his plants. He never told me where he had been during this fortnight's absence from the estate, although I inquired repeatedly of him; but I afterwards discovered from the manager of the Government Botanical Gardens happening to pay me a visit, that Veerapin had been employed in them during the time that he had been away from me. He had not been sure about the way to manage the new plants, which he had taken under his care, and perceiving that my ignorance was about equal to his own, he had taken this method of perfecting his experience. Veerapin was very zealous in procuring the seeds of every kind of native fruits and vegetables, so that by the time that the estate was planted, he had a nursery full of fruit trees, ready to plant along the sides of the roads and round about the bungalow, or rather the site where I intended it to stand. I had received a few seeds of the *Passiflora edulis*, or the granadilla, from my friend, Mr. Wright, the translator of the "Mahawansa," who had received a package of them from the West Indies. My seeds were, I believe, the only ones which germinated and prospered, and it was owing to Veerapin's care and attention, that this fine fruit is produced in such abundance in Ceylon at the present day. I need scarcely say that pineapples were not forgotten.

I had a small plantation of them exclusively, enough almost to supply the whole of the coolies

on the estate with one every day. In about two months after I received my packet of Cape seeds from Mr. Bird, my table was regularly supplied every day of the year with a constant assortment of vegetables, which no money could have commanded in England. With the exception of carrots and beetroot, every European vegetable grew to perfection. Melons, by the bye, always proved a failure, owing to a worm attacking the young fruit immediately after they were set. I tried a great many plans to prevent the attacks of this animal, but not one of them succeeded. I have since ascertained, however, that wrapping the fruit in a thin muslin bag securely fastened to the stalk is a sure preventive. If so, the residents in Ceylon will be obliged to me for this hint, in order to obtain what I never saw during my long residence in the island—a ripe melon. I have been told that, in the northern districts of the island, the natives cultivate a small description of melon which they call *laboo commodoo*, but I never saw it.

I grew grapes very successfully, but as it was by a system peculiarly my own, which I don't recollect ever explaining to anyone, I may mention it here, and if this work does no other good, a hint how to grow excellent grapes where—with the exception of what I grew myself, and a bunch which I once saw at a Horticultural Show in Kandy, grown by Mrs. Mørrice, Kurunegala—grapes never grew before, will cause my labour in writing and the reader's labour in reading not to be altogether useless.

I accompanied Mr. Bird on a visit to a native temple, in the immediate vicinity of his estate, where we heard a continual drumming and trumpeting every evening. In front of the priest's house which adjoined the temple we discovered a large grape vine growing wild over a rough trellis. The priest said that it had been there ever since he was a boy, but it had never, to his knowledge, borne fruit. As he gave me permission, I cut off several of the branches and carried them with me to Dodangahakelle. I planted slips of them in small flower pots and kept them in a sheltered nook of the verandah, where they would have the benefit of the afternoon sun, whilst they were shaded from his mid-day glare. They all struck root and grew beautifully. In the course of three or four months I shifted them into much larger pots, which I sank in the soil of the garden, erecting a trelliswork for the vines to climb over. About the middle of January—the cuttings were planted in the preceding month of March—I lifted the pots with the intention of re-potting them into larger ones still. I found that the roots had not only filled the old ones, but they had grown through the bottom into the soil beneath. They were taken into the verandah and severely pruned, after which some mat and gunny bags had been thrown over them by accident and they were entirely forgotten for some weeks after, when the mats were removed. They were then found to have lost all their leaves, and the soil in the pots was as dry as if it had been baked in an

oven. I lost no time in putting them into the new pots, cutting most of them down more severely still. They were then well watered and replaced in the garden. Every eye threw out a new strong shoot in the course of a week or two, and on one or two of the plants there were bunches of flowers. I watched their progress with deep interest. The flowers expanded, and in some four or five months, I had, I think, either three or four small bunches of excellent grapes. In January again, I took up the plants, pots and all, and had them placed in the dry verandah where they were left, without water, until the following April, unless I happened to observe the stalks shrivel, when I gave them a slight sprinkling. I then pruned them well down to the thoroughly ripened wood, and planted them out in richly manured mould. In the course of a few weeks the whole of them had from six to a dozen bunches of flowers, and in August or September I had my dessert furnished with as fine bunches of grapes as the heart of man could desire. The reason of my success lies in the fact, that the lifting of the plants and allowing the soil to dry, so as to cause the falling off of the leaves, acted as a winter check in colder and more temperate climates, stopping the circulation of the sap and conducing to the formation of flower buds instead of leaves. I fell upon this plan by the merest accident, but the rationale of the system is quite obvious. I believe, that if single eyes were used in the propagation of the plants instead of slips, the

success would be still greater. The eye should be taken from well ripened wood and placed in a small pot, nearly filled with rich mould, slightly covered with sand or light soil, and kept moist and shaded from the sun and drying winds. The eye will soon force its way above the ground, and after a time the plants can be shifted into larger pots as required, when they will be found to be more prolific than those grown from cuttings.

CHAPTER XII.—THE CLEARING OF THE FOREST.

During all this time Cooroocoodootenna Banda was hard at work in the forest, with some forty or fifty grave and stalwart Kandyans, and I had another gang of about as many, busy under my own superintendence, cutting down the wild jungle. I had engaged a head Cangany of the name of Punchi Appoo, who spoke English pretty well and acted as general interpreter, and I had other two Canganies under him to look after these men. The only use of these Canganies seemed to be to chew betel, carry rattan canes in their hands and cry "hoo hoo-o-sh" with as sharp an accent on the last syllable as it was capable of bearing, when the men happened to slacken in their work, or when a large fall of trees came toppling down the hillside. I paid Punchi Appoo 25s. per month, the other Canganies 20s. for the same period, and the men from 15s. to 18s. according to their worth. Their method of proceeding was as follows:—They

first cut down the underwood and small trees with cattles, leaving a belt of jungle of about fifty or sixty yards wide between the patana and the clearing. When the underwood was thus cut down and laid flat on the ground, the men went to work with axes, beginning at the bottom of the hill. I may mention that, in these primeval forests, the stems of the trees rise from eighty to one hundred and twenty feet, or even higher, from the ground without a branch, and when they have reached their full height, the branches appear, and, in some cases, form an almost impervious shade, causing the forest to be dark and gloomy as twilight, whilst the bright sun of the tropics may be shining above in all his midday splendour. These forests are quite silent. No song of birds is heard re-echoing in them, and, with the exception of the wild elephant, an occasional cheetah or small tiger, and a stray herd of elk, there is no game to reward the toil of the sportsman. A screaming flock of noisy parroquets may fly over them and alight jabbering on some high tree, whose fruit, happening to be in season, may afford them a full feast; or a huge owl-hawk may soar, in whirling circles, high in the clear blue sky, uttering its wailing scream; but, with these exceptions, none of the feathered tribes of the plains, which, morning and evening, make the jungles in the lowcountry resound with the music of their notes, are to be seen or heard. In the early months of the year, however, when the nilu seed is falling, jungle-fowl become pretty abundant, and when the same

plant is in full blossom, the air is filled with the harmonious murmur and the soft hum of myriads of honey bees. Occasionally, too, families of wanderers, or large black monkeys, with white heads, may be seen, making the distant treetops shake with their gambols, as if they were being agitated by a hurricane, whilst their eldritch laughter is echoed through the jungle, in resounding peals, until the midday sun makes them seek some leafy shelter from his scorching rays, where they may, like all the other animals in Ceylon, enjoy a refreshing repose during the noonday heat.

I am wandering, however, from the felling of the forest. The Kandiyans cut the lower side of the tall stems of these aged trees about halfway through and then make a few cuts a little higher on the opposite side. When a sufficient number of trees have been cut through in this manner, a large one, with spreading branches, is selected and cut quite through, so as to topple over those near it, whilst they, in their turn, topple over those beneath them, until it sometimes happens, that nearly half an acre of land is cleared by one fall. I have heard planters boast of several acres, and even whole hillsides, being brought down with one crash; but this I believe to be gross exaggeration. I have had a great deal of experience in forest cutting, and I don't think that I ever saw more than half an acre included in one sweep of the trees, and very seldom so much.

My own gang of Kandiyans cleared about an acre of forest every day, whilst the Banda and

his men cleared about as much more. It was very exhilarating and somewhat exciting to hear the clatter of the axes in the hoary forest, multiplied by echoes from every crag and hillside, and it was pleasant to see the monster trees toppling over and crack-a-rack-a-racking down the steep sides of the mountain, and being hurled like an avalanche into the gullies below; whilst parrots shrieked, and monkeys screamed, and clouds of leaves, splinters of wood and pieces of dried moss whirled in the air. After each fall the men stopped working for some minutes, until they had refreshed themselves with a chew of betel, and talked over and discussed the merits of the fall. Then two or three of the most experienced would crawl over the fallen timber and cut down any tree that had not bent to the general crash, whilst the others would resume work and the clatter of axes would again resound through the forest. Day after day the clearing became enlarged, and day after day my own interest in the work became intensified. It was pleasant to hear the sound of the axes, it was pleasant to hear the crash of the falls, and it was pleasant to inhale the resinous odour of the felled timber; but it was by no means pleasant to have to force one's way through the said timber after it was felled, and this operation became every day more disagreeable as the clearing gained in extent.

After the first week, part of the men were detached to lop the fallen trees, and as this was a

work on which the success of the burning mainly depended, great care was necessary in having it done well. This necessarily delayed the progress of the felling, but by the middle of March I fancied that there were about ninety or a hundred acres ready to be burned. As nothing more could be done, until the burning had taken place, and as I had already been two months living by myself in the jungle, with the exception of a run into Kanly on two several occasions for money to meet my men's wages, I resolved to pay a visit to Bird at Kondesalle for a week or two, leaving my goods and chattels under the charge of Punchi Appoo, and giving Coorocoodootenna Banda a discretionary power to set fire to the clearing at any time he thought proper, provided the chances were in favour of a good burning.

I found Mr. Bird reinstalled in his bungalow, which had been almost entirely rebuilt and re-roofed, the thatch being replaced with tiles.

"The rascals will not be able to burn me out again," he grimly remarked, pointing, with some pride, to the new building; "the tiles, I think, will debar them from indulging in that sort of sport. What a blessing that you were awake that night. If it had not been owing to that circumstance we would have all been burned to cinders in our beds, and not a soul would ever have learned how the catastrophe had been brought about."

"What has been done with the Arachchi and his men?" I asked.

“They are to be tried before the Supreme Court next week, and by-the-bye I have a summons here for you to appear as a witness.”

The trial came off accordingly, and had exactly the result that Mr. Bird had predicted. The jury brought in a verdict of not guilty, and the villains were discharged. The day following their acquittal, the Arachchi presented himself at Bird's bungalow, accompanied by about a score of his villagers bearing trays containing collections of fruits, sugar-candy and sweetmeats, as a peace-offering to my friend, with the evident intention of burying all past animosity and entering upon a new treaty of friendship and amicability.

Notwithstanding this state of affairs, Mr. Bird was labouring under a fit of depressed spirits. Sickness had broken out amongst his men, and a number of his best hands had died. This sickness—intermittent or jungle fever—was even more severe on Pallekelle, where Stephens and Hudson were both laid up with it, the latter in a very bad state indeed. The Tamils were taking fright and leaving the neighbourhood in gangs. Nothing seemed capable of inducing them to remain. Mr. Bird thought the sickness was caused by a long stretch of dry weather. The October and November rains had proved a failure, and since that time scarcely a drop of rain had fallen over the whole district. The ground in the coffee fields was cracked in huge fissures, which were widening and extending every day, and the leaves of the

coffee trees hung withered and dry from the branches. I think that it was on the third day after my arrival, that a coolie came over from Pallekelle, with a request that Mr. Bird should go over immediately, as it was supposed that Mr. Hudson was dying. I accompanied him, but by the time we arrived at the Pallekelle bungalow, the poor fellow had breathed his last. A white sheet was thrown over him as he lay on the bed where he had died.

Mr. Tytler, a gentleman who had succeeded to the management of the estate, and who had enjoyed some planting experiences in the West Indies, received us and showed us the body of the poor young fellow, who had just died there, almost like a dog, no kind hand being near to smooth his pillow or wipe the cold perspiration from his fevered brow; no kind voice to cheer his drooping spirits or to comfort his fainting heart. It was a sad scene for the dead man seemed a mere boy in years, and dying amongst strangers rendered it all the more sad. And yet there he lay as calm and peaceful as a slumbering babe, a quiet and pleasant smile seeming to play around his shrunken lips.

“Let’s see him,” said a weak voice at my elbow.

On turning I saw my former friend Stephens, looking pale and emaciated as a spectre, rolled up in a flannel dressing-gown, with a heavy pilot cloth pea-jacket thrown over his shoulders. In spite of all, his teeth were chattering like a set of castanets. “Let’s see him,” he said, as he pushed his way

towards the bed and withdrew the covering from the face of his dead chum.

“Poor fellow,” the big man sobbed, as large tears rolled down his shrunken face, “it is your turn this go, it may be mine next. I wasn’t always kind to you, Hudson, but I meant kindly all the same.”

“Come, Stephens, this is no place for you just now,” Mr. Tytler interposed, “you must go to bed again, or you will spoil your own chance of recovery.”

Stephens smiled grimly, and after replacing the covering over Hudson’s face he glided silently back to his own room.

“You will come over this afternoon and see him buried,” Mr. Tytler said, “I have already made all the necessary arrangements. The carpenter is making the coffin, and I have sent a man into Kandy express to see and get the services of a clergyman, as Hudson, I understand, belonged to the Church of England.”

“Then you don’t mean to have him taken into the burial place in Kandy?” Bird inquired.

“Certainly not. I never thought of such a thing. In the West Indies, there is a burying ground for Europeans, and another for the negroes, on every estate, and I don’t see any reason why there should not be the same here; besides, Hudson, I understand, expressed a wish to be buried at the foot of that large ebony tree* which

*The tree was pointed out to us by Messrs. Gibbon and Vollar when in Dumbara (at Pallakelly) a few days ago.—*Ed., Ceylon Observer.*

you see from the verandah, and I have just come from marking off his grave and putting men on to dig it."

"That alters the case, if it was his own wish," said Mr. Bird. "If he had been my assistant—it may be a weakness on my part—but I would have preferred seeing him buried in consecrated ground, amongst Christians, and not have allowed him to lie there," pointing to the tree, "like a heathen dog."

"As for that part of the business," Tytler replied, "all places, in my opinion, are alike sacred, and it will matter little, if the soul is all right, where the body lies."

"It's all right so far as the consecration is concerned," said the weak voice of Stephens. "When the Roman Catholic bishop was here, putting aside the burying-place for the coolies, many of whom belong to that persuasion, he consecrated the ground around the ebony tree, in case any affair like this should happen, and both Hudson and myself had resolved, if either or both of us should die here, we would be buried in that spot. If, therefore, I should kick at this time, you will know how to dispose of me. I fancy the Catholic method of consecration will, perhaps, hold quite as good as the Protestant, that is, if there is anything in either of them. At all events I have no scruples about the matter, I am quite satisfied to lie beside my old chum if it should come to that with me."

"Go to your bed this instant, Stephens," Tytler said, "you are mad and seem resolved to kill yourself."

"On the contrary, I feel rather better today and intend to remain, until I see Hudson put under hatches. Hand us some quinine, about as much as will lie on a two anna bit; that's right, thanks, I would never get well in that beastly hole of a bedroom, for I like to hear the birds singing and chirping and the trees rustling, and to see the sun shining, the flowers blooming, and to inhale the sweet scent of flowers and trees and earth. If I have strength enough to stand the journey, I will leave for Kandy tomorrow and then on for Nuwara Eliya, for after this sad affair, I would be sure to kick if I remained here, if it were only from an attack of doleful dumps."

"I will send my carriage, or, if you would prefer it, a palanquin for you, and have you carried over to my bungalow. It will be more cheerful than remaining here," Mr. Bird suggested.

"Thank you, old fellow, I shall be glad to accept your kindness, and when our afternoon's job is over, I shall be at your disposal. You used to call me a strong man, but feel that arm now, it has not a particle of strength in it, and I am as nervous as a schoolgirl," said the poor fellow, as he turned aside to hide the tears which were coursing down his cheeks.

"I declare," said Tytler, as we left the bungalow, "if there was a man in the world, who wouldn't

have taken on in this way about an affair of this kind, I would have said that man was Stephens."

"Big men sometimes have big hearts, although they don't often care to show them," Bird remarked, as we parted company near the Kondesalle gate.

It was nearly sunset when our mournful task was finished. The golden rays of light were darting through the tree-tops on the newly-made grave, and playing around the grey locks of the venerable clergyman—the Revd. Mr. Bailey, I think—as he read the beautiful service of the Church of England—a service which needs no eulogium from me, but a service which never sounds so solemn and awe-inspiring, as when used in exceptional cases like the present. Stephens, who could not stand without support, uttered the responses with heart and feeling, and when the last sod was clapped above the head of his old friend, he drew a clasp knife from his pocket and cut a cross upon the bark of the tree, under which, in after years, I carved also in the bark

HUDSON LIES HERE,

and this is the only memorial of the first European planter, who died and lies buried in the jungles of Ceylon.

It was dark when we arrived at Kondesalle, saddened with the events of the day. Stephens was put to bed, and he was nursed through his convalescence by the motherly care of Mrs. Bird.

He grew stronger and stronger every day, and a short sojourn amongst the Nuwara Eliya hills put him, as he expressed it, "upon his legs again." He was a strong, stout, careless, rough sort of a man, gentlemanly withal in his intercourse with men, brusque and dare-devil in manner. No one meeting him in general society could have conceived that a heart, big enough for a Goliath and soft enough for a sister of mercy, beat within that great rough body. I knew it, however, and respected the possessor accordingly.*

CHAPTER XIII.—THE BURNING AND MY CONDUCTOR.

About the end of April I returned to Dodangahakelle, taking with me a gang of about eighty Malabars, or rather Tamil coolies. I engaged also a gentleman of colour, who rejoiced in the rather formidable name of Juan Sebastian de Zousa Silvestre Pereira Gomez, to act as conductor or head superintendent of affairs during my absence from the estate. Juan Sebastian &c. was a tall, lanky personage, with a visage black as jet, but with features decidedly European. He may have been, and probably was, a descendant of those gallant Portuguese mariners, who, before Columbus

* Mr. Stephens, familiarly known as "Stumps," found a wife, of all places in the world, at Pondicherry. He has long ago joined Hudson and the majority, but his brother John survives as "Old Planter."—ED.

had added another world to the crown of Spain, and who a century before the Anglo-Saxon race had set their feet upon what is now the gigantic republic of the West, had braved the dangers of "the Cape of Storms," and founded settlements amongst the lands of the far East. Or possibly, he may have been able to trace his descent from the gallant knights and daring chevaliers, of whom Ribeiro writes with such enthusiasm, who led the Lusitanian legions to victory and conquest amongst the then formidable perils of the Kandyan hills.

It is impossible for me to describe Juan Sebastian de Zousa Silvestre Pereira Gomez, for he had no leading characteristic to describe, unless, perhaps, it was his excess of politeness, a peculiar fondness for writing fine but fearfully unintelligible sentences in English, and his pride in being the possessor of European blood. His principal qualification for the post he now held was his extraordinary powers as a linguist and his ability to write English. His handwriting, like that of all his class in Ceylon, was beautifully neat; in fact, almost feminine in its neatness. He could speak I am really afraid to say how many languages, Portuguese, of course, then English, Sinhalese, Tamil and Malay, to say nothing of a smattering of French and Bengali how acquired, I never had the curiosity to ask. So accomplished a gentleman, one would think, ought to have been of vast assistance to me, but with the exception of copying letters, calling the roll,

keeping the journal of labour on the estate, and acting as general interpreter, I found Juan Sebastian de Zouza Silvestre Pereira Gomez perfectly useless. He had no command over the coolies in the field. If a shower of rain came on, instead of showing the men an example of hardihood and endurance, my conductor with the long name, when his calico clothes began to stick to his lanky body with the wet, shrank into nothing and collapsed into a shivering spectre with chattering teeth, such as I have sometimes met with in the persons of Cockney sportsmen, on a bleak hillside in the north country, when caught in a Scotch mist.

I did not like to discharge the poor fellow, although he was more often a hindrance than an assistance in the work. I therefore kept him on, as his pay, which was only thirty-six dollars, or two pounds and five shillings, a month, was not a matter of much importance to me, and I had an idea that Juan would improve when he got more inured to the climate of the hills and more accustomed to the work. I was not disappointed in this idea, for, as I opened more estates, and had more letters to copy and more journals to keep, and more office work of all kinds, Juan Sebastian de Zouza Silvestre Pereira Gomez became worth his salt and his pay too, and he served me well during a period of nearly ten years as a confidential clerk and general store-keeper. I retain a very strong affection for these old friends of long ago, and I find that when recording their services I mention their virtues

and try to forget their failings. Juan Sebastian &c.'s failings were intense stupidity, and at times a total lack of comprehension unless when he was spoken to in Sinhalese or Tamil, and a strong suspicion of indulging in an excessive use of opium or bhang, which may account for these failings.

On the morning after my conductor and myself arrived on Dodangahakelle, we proceeded to make arrangements for the burning; Coorocoodootenna Banda having given it as his opinion that the timber was in excellent condition for this purpose. As, however, the timber was damp with the night dews, this operation was deferred until noon, when the wind would be about its highest. In the meantime, I employed the men in cutting a watercourse from the nearest oya to the bungalow, so as to command a plentiful supply of water in the event of any danger threatening the buildings, which stood in the very centre of the two clearings, with, it is true, a thick belt of jungle between them; but the jungle was not thick enough to prevent the flying of sparks, and this I wished to guard against. Coorocoodootenna Banda was in attendance, and at 12 o'clock precisely, I stationed my men in a line along the top of the clearing, each man having a lighted chool or torch in his hand, with directions that, when the shell was blown, they should set fire to the dried heaps of leaves and branches and then descend to the lower part, stopping at every few yards to ignite the leaves in their way. In a very few minutes dense columns of black smoke

arose along the edge of the forest, and whirling clouds of sparks, burning leaves and darting tongues of flame flew high in the air. The day was grilling hot and the timber was dry as touch-paper. The branches crackled and hissed, and the forked tongues of flame were driven with the wind and scorched and burned up everything that opposed their progress. In a short time both clearings were perfect seas of flame and smoke, whilst the hissing, the crackling and the roaring which issued from the blazing mass had something sublimely awful about it. Big trees, losing their hold of the tree stumps, from their branches being consumed, would tear down the hillsides like an avalanche, crashing like thunder, and where the treetops were thickest in the hollows of the ground and in the beds of the oyas the flames roared and bellowed, as if there were a legion of wild creatures struggling and fighting within that canopy of black smoke. The excited yells of the men, and their black forms and frantic gestures, seen at intervals through the breaks in the dark clouds that hung over this little pandemonium, gave a wild and demoniacal aspect to the affair, which tended to impress its entire details with so lasting an effect on my mind, that its impression is as vivid after an interval of forty years as it was at the time it occurred.

I had taken the principal gang of men to the bungalow, and having stationed some on the roofs of the buildings, the others carried water in chatties, which was poured continually over the thatch. It

was well that this precaution occurred to me, otherwise my bungalow would undoubtedly have gone off in the general conflagration, for showers of sparks and flaming leaves were falling upon the thatch and blistering the coolies' backs, whilst the choking volumes of smoke which were carried over us made our task by no means an enviable one. The heat was as near to scorching as I recollect ever to have experienced, but eighty acres of forest on fire at one and the same time was a sight not to be witnessed every day, and, therefore, I bore the infliction with all the resignation I could call to my aid, and even felt inclined to yell, in concert with my men, when the red flames seized some huge heap of brushwood and leaped with renewed vigour high in the air. By this time the whole hillside was enveloped in smoke, through which the mountain peaks and treetops, the isolated rocks and distant crags flickered and danced like the images in some wild and fantastic dream.

Towards evening the roar of the flames had in a great measure ceased. The danger to the bungalow and other buildings was passed, and it was satisfactory to find that they had been preserved from damage. The smoke still rose from the burning wood in thick and pungent clouds, but not such volumes as it did some hours in previously. Towards sunset, openings in these clouds began to show glimpses of the burned soil, and the blackened logs and stumps of trees began to be visible. Coorocoodootenna Banda declared,

with great elation of manner, that the whole affair was "*bohoma hondai*," very good.

The next morning, although the fire was still smouldering in some places, the smoke had almost entirely disappeared, and revealed the satisfactory fact that the fire had been a decided success. Scarcely a trace of timber was left on the entire hillside, with the exception of the large trees and the tree stumps, which latter stuck up rough and blackened through the clearing. I had for some time past had the trace of a road through the fields planned in my own mind, and I immediately put my men on to cut it, until the soil was sufficiently cooled to allow them to walk over the ground to line and hole it. I put on several of the Kandyans to split sticks and cut stakes for the first of these purposes. Hudson and Stephens, when I had visited them at this work, seemed to have been at great pains in making the stakes. This I considered a mere waste of labour, as these stakes were made, and any piece of wood that could be stuck into the ground answered the object in view equally well. My stakes, therefore, were not handsome affairs, but my fields were equally as well-lined as any in the island. I put another small gang into the forest to cut down and collect materials for new and permanent lines or houses for my men, and I had constant and interesting occupation, visiting and superintending all these various operations. Unless about noonday, the heat was by no means extreme. I have felt it warmer during a summer day in Eng-

land, and in the mornings and evenings, at this season of the year the climate seemed absolutely perfection. There was a continual bright sunshine, and when rain fell it was generally thunder-showers, which poured down in a deluge for a short time, and then cleared off, leaving the air moist and cool, whilst a grateful steam rose from moistened soil. My bungalow was some four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and overlooked a wide expanse of patana land and forest, a confused jumble of hills, and a well-cultivated valley, with palm trees rising in clumps here and there, denoting the vicinity of native villages, whilst long stretches of paddy-fields, with their emerald hues, lay cool and pleasant, surrounded by belts of jungle and heena land. The men left off work at 3 o'clock, and after calling the roll, I would sit reading in the verandah, or engrossed in the contemplation of the glorious landscape before me, and, in a state of happy enjoyment from the balminess of the cool mountain air, the sweet perfume of flowers, and the ceaseless hum of insects, whilst I inhaled the fragrant vapour of the Manilla weed No. 1 in a state of dreamy and semi-conscious repose.

I had an old Kandyan at work on the estate. His name was Cooroomboo Oya Ungeralle. One evening, whilst enjoying myself in the manner described, I became conscious that I was not alone, and looking up, I discovered Cooroomboo Oya Ungeralle leaning against a verandah post, and contemplating me with a grave and earnest countenance.

"*Muckada*?" "What do you want?" I asked.

"*Awa*," "Come," was the laconic reply.

There was a profound silence. I puffed at my Manilla, and Cooroomboo Oya Ungeralle did not vouchsafe to enlighten me as to the reason why he had come, but stood gazing at me, fixedly for upwards of an hour.

On the second day, the same thing occurred, but to my question I received two words in reply,

"*Mahatmaya awa*." "To Master, come."

On the third day he was more communicative, for he said.

"*Mahatmaya balanda awa*," i.e., "Come to look at master."

On the fourth day it was

"*Api mahatmaya balanda awa*," i.e., "I am come to look at Master."

On the fifth day the reason given had increased by another word, and so on, each day progressively, until Cooroomboo Oya Ungeralle delivered himself of the following speech, and then as if his mission on Dodangahakelle were fulfilled, he left the estate that night, and I never saw him more.

"*Api bohoma santossa, muckwat nickang balanda awa, Mahtamaya*." "I am very glad to come and do nothing but stand and look at Master."

As if this occupation afforded him the most exquisite pleasure, he would stand, grave and silent as a statue, gazing steadfastly at me, and latterly he brought two or three little boys with him to share in this exhilarating amusement.

I was rather tickled with the absurdity of the position at first, but it soon became a great bore ; I felt exactly as "the Wild Man of the Woods," or "the Great Giant Boy," in a travelling show, may be supposed to feel, when under the steady gaze of my visitors.

They never moved, they never spoke, they never even smiled or exchanged glances, after answering my first question, but contemplated me with much the same steady look as the spectre in Monk Lewis's poem may be supposed to have regarded the ill fated Imogene.

It was a great relief when I learned that Cooroomboo Oya Ungeralle had taken his departure for good, and I breathed a fervent prayer that he might never be tempted to return to the estate.

In the meantime my road, or rather series of paths through the clearings, was finished, and the men were now busy "lining and holing." At this time it was a matter of doubt whether it was most advisable to plant the coffee bushes at six or eight feet apart. I chose the former method, and had thus some twelve hundred and twenty plants to the acre. I had now a gang of one hundred and twenty Tamil coolies at work. The Kandyans had all left as soon as the jungle was disposed of. Some twenty of these men were employed in lining, and the remainder in digging holes. Each man was supplied with a mamotie, or large native hoe, and a quintaine, or heavy

blunt adze; whilst every sixth man had a mattock and a native axe, to cut out the roots that obstructed the line of the holes. The men began work at the highest part of the ground, and each taking a line, dug a hole at the first peg, from twelve to eighteen inches deep and the same in diameter, and then, descending to the next peg, performed the same operation, until the whole line was finished. After much experience in planting, I have come to the conclusion that digging large holes to receive the plants is no real advantage. I have seen plants stuck into the ground by a mere dig of a quintanie succeed as well and grow as luxuriantly as those that had been planted in large holes. They have, in fact, an advantage over them, from not being so liable, owing to the hardness of the ground, to be blown about and destroyed by the wind in their young stage. Each man was able to dig about forty holes per day, and thus, by the beginning of June, the whole eighty acres were ready for planting. During the whole of this time the weather was all that could be desired, brilliant sunshine and bright blue skies, with an occasional thunder-shower which served to refresh the earth and cool the atmosphere; but now the summits of the distant hills were being capped by masses of clouds, and vast shapeless volumes of white or grey vapour were driven from the south-west across the island. The rains did not set in, however, until the middle of June, and in the meantime, as nothing could be done in the fields, I had

levelled a site for my new lines and employed the men in carrying the materials which the Sinhalese had collected in the forest, to this site, and preparing them for use.

I had heard of whole ranges of these lines being burned down through the stupid carelessness of the coolies, and I was resolved to guard against any such catastrophe as much as possible, by having the houses built some thirty feet long by twenty feet wide, having open spaces, planted with banana and jak trees between each row. A broad ridge, the summit of which was comparatively level, projected from the side of the hill, and was surrounded on three sides with streams of water, and here these buildings were to be erected. The process of building them was very simple indeed. Two posts, nineteen feet long, were selected to support the ridgepole, and they were put three feet into the ground and well secured, by having the earth rammed hard around them, at a distance of ten feet apart. Ten other posts nine feet long were put into the ground at distances of ten feet around the first two and secured in the same manner. The tops of the whole of these posts were notched to receive the ridgepole and wall-plates, and then the rafters, the upper ends of which were tied with pusvel, or jungle rope, were laid over the ridge pole and secured to the wall-plates. Tie-tie sticks were then bound across the rafters, also with pusvel, and then the thatch of the roof was put on, each layer being tied down to these tie-tie sticks. This part of the work being

finished, our attention was turned to the walls and partitions. Rough door frames were fixed at each post on either side of the building, and a shallow trench, about a foot deep and eight inches wide, was then dug between these frames and the next post. Jungle sticks, about six or eight inches in diameter, were then arranged upright, about six inches apart in these trenches, the upper ends reaching the wall-plates and being tied to them, after which the vacant spaces in the trench were filled in with earth and well rammed down. More tie-tie sticks were then bound across these posts on either side, forming thus a sort of hollow basketwork. A trench was then dug to allow the rain from the roof to escape, and the earth which was thus thrown up was trodden into a thick paste with water, and the hollow spaces in the wall filled up with this material, having stones occasionally imbedded in it. When this layer of mud became dry, the walls were as hard and dry as if built of bricks, but full of cracks and fissures in the process of drying. Another coating of mud was then applied, both inside and outside, and when they dried the building was considered habitable. The men were accordingly removed from the old grass huts on the patana to the more commodious residences in the centre of the estate. I had four buildings each of the dimensions indicated. The rooms were ten feet square and were calculated to lodge ten men each at a pinch. I had thus accomodation for two hundred and forty men, but, as yet, I never had more than one

hundred and twenty employed on the estate, unless I were to count the Kandyans engaged by the contractors, but they preferred seeking quarters in the nearest villages.

At this time I had a visit of nearly a month's duration from Stephens, who had been up at Nuwara Eliya for the benefit of his health. He was now in a fair way of recovery, although not quite convalescent. He had shivering fits at stated intervals, succeeded by hot ones, and he indulged largely in quinine. His advice was of some consequence to me, in planning my work and showing me which parts of the estate were most suitable for stores and other buildings; and what parts of the forest it would be most advisable to clear before next season.

The rains had now begun in right earnest. The heavy dark grey clouds appeared absolutely to press down the hills with their superincumbent weight. The air was filled with a thin drizzling mist, and vast volumes of vapour swept like ghosts up the gorges of the mountains. A cold wet wind blew along the hillsides, and it required a great deal of energetic exertion to make the coolies turn out of a morning, and it was even greater trouble to get them to work after they had been got to the fields. Stephens, who seemed greatly to enjoy the cold, was invaluable to me at this crisis. I scarcely knew how I could possibly have got on, if I had not had him with me. He roused the coolies out of the lines without mercy and kept them at their work, in spite of the pelting

rain and chilling wind. He took charge of the planting department, whilst I superintended the men at the nurseries and those carrying plants.

As for my conductor, Juan Sebastian de Zousa Sylvestre Pereira Gomez, he collapsed into a shivering, teeth-chattering mass of humanity, and was of no use whatever. He told me when I attempted to rouse him: "This tempestuous weather, sir, hovering the sky and plenty clouds coming endures much rain and cold, and the hurricanes coming controls man's limbs, so that upright, to work, they cannot stand."

I understood that this meant simply to express, that the gentleman with the long name was so chilled with the wind and rain, that he could not stand upright, and this appeared to be a fact. As for getting him to move, that was entirely out of the question. Juan Sebastian de Zeusa Sylvestre Pereira Gomez was held in utter abhorrence by Stephens, and he was even mocked at by the coolies, who, when they witnessed how ridiculous his utter effeminacy and want of manliness appeared, went to work with a greater degree of good-will, and latterly seemed even to enjoy the roughness of the weather.

"Why don't you kick the brute off the estate?" asked Stephens, with matter-of-fact disgust, as he pointed to this descendant of Lusitanian warriors, sitting shivering upon a fallen log, holding a Chinese umbrella over his head with his trembling hands. I really can't tell why I did not

turn him off. His utter helplessness and the imploring look in the fellow's eyes, when I found fault with him, was, perhaps, the chief reason of my forbearance. It is but common justice to say that at this time we saw Juan Sebastian &c. at his very worst. He improved vastly, as his frame became inured to the cooler climate of the hills, and before he and I parted company, I have seen him laugh at the shivering coolies in a shower of rain, that he could face with impunity, but which, a few years before, would have made him a much more pitiable object than those who now excited his derision.

It was tedious work carrying the plants from the nurseries to the fields, which was done in rough baskets, made for the purpose, and carried suspended from a long pole by two men. Each basket held only twenty plants, and the men staggered along the sloppy ground with even this light load. I had only about twenty of my best men planting, the remainder, being busy taking up and carrying the plants, which were in beautiful order, having, in most cases, the primary branches formed and looking strong and healthy. It became afterwards usual for the plants to be taken up without the balls of earth attached to the roots. This system saved a great deal of labour; in fact, it enabled one man to do the work of six or eight in planting, but the young plants did not start in their growth quite so rapidly, and there was the risk of a total failure, should dry weather set in after they were planted. The bushes

planted with balls of earth were, besides, much farther advanced the following season, and, in many instances yielded small crops of fruit, which, at the time I write of, would have done more than paid the additional labour. I did not get more than three or four acres planted each day, and it was more than a month before the whole clearing was finished. It was finished at length, however, and a proud man was I when the last plant was inserted in its place. I immediately reduced the number of my men to forty, and left them in charge of my conductor and Punchi Appu to keep the fields clear of weeds, whilst I took a run down to Kondesalle with Stephens. I had remained a prisoner on the estate for three months, with the exception of having taken a journey to Gampola on three separate occasions for a supply of money, it having been sent there to meet me, and during the whole of that time, Stephens's was the only white face I had seen, and the only person with whom I could exchange even a few sentences in my own language, unless those connected with household matters or the affairs of the estate. We had been experiencing continuous rain on Dodangahakelle for more than six weeks on end, and we were accordingly very much surprised on getting through a gorge in the hills and descending into the Gampola valley, to find the sky without a cloud and the ground looking as if it had not seen a drop of rain for months. This indeed had been the case. Whilst on our side of the mountains the clouds had been drop-

ping their fatness down, in the shape of drizzling showers of rain, making the soil wet and sloppy ; on the other side, the ground was cracked and parched up with drought, and the leaves of the trees were hanging, dry and withered, from the branches. At Kondesalle matters were in even a worse condition. There, the drought had been extreme. A splendid flowering season for the coffee trees had been succeeded by a long stretch of dry weather accompanied by scorching gales of wind, and the beans had not swelled nor progressed any since. There had also been a great deal of sickness in the district. The Tamil coolies had died in scores, and the mortality had not been confined to them only. The native Sinhalese had suffered to even a greater extent. We were told that some of the villages in Lower Dumbara had been left without a living soul in them. The whole of the inhabitants had died or left the neighbourhood in despair. Bird and myself rode over to one of the villages indicated, and entered house after house, but there were no indwellers to receive us. In one house we found the corpse of a man in a state of decomposition, offensive alike to sight and smell, and in another house, the skeleton of a woman was lying, with that of an infant in her arms, the child having evidently died whilst trying to draw its nourishment from the breast of its dead mother. We encountered several other equally horrible and distressing sights ; but not a living human being was to be seen.

"It is one of the cardinal virtues to bury the dead," my companion remarked, as we left this scene of horrors; "but we cannot attend to that duty just now. I would send coolies to do this, but when they saw how unprotected all this property is, they might begin plundering and get both themselves and us into trouble."

We secured the doors of the houses the best way we could and returned homewards, walking through the abandoned paddy-fields, with their golden harvest of ripened grain standing intact; whilst the ripe fruit from the coconut and jak trees, the orange, the shaddock and the pomegranate trees was lying on the ground decaying and neglected. Not a living domestic animal was to be seen about the village, but crowds of filthy crows and other carrion birds swarmed, cawing and screaming, on the trees, or rose with hideous din on sluggish wing in the air when disturbed by our approach. A large hawk was circling slowly high above the tree-tops, and we saw more than one filthy jackal slurching, with evil intent, along the edges of the jungle.

There was something preternaturally dreary and weird-like about the whole scene. The oppressive atmosphere, the coppery-looking sky, a distant grumbling of thunder amongst the far-off hills, the funereal look of the dark foliage of jak trees and jaggery palms, the waving bamboos and the solemn stillness of the jungles, when combined with the horrid nature of the sights we had just witnessed, left a sickening feeling of sadness on

the heart, which all effort of the will seemed powerless to throw off. We rode home to Kondesalle sad, silent and dejected, and it was long before the depression of spirits occasioned by our afternoon's ride wore off.

Since my last visit to Bird, two new assistants (young Scotchmen) had arrived at Pallekelle, and Stephens had received orders to open an estate on Hantane, which afterwards rejoiced in the name of Wattedgodde. One of these young men had been bred a gardener, and he gave me a hint which I acted on regarding the keeping of my new estates free of weeds. In the Dumbara district the estates were kept clean by the use of mamoties, or the large hoes which I have already mentioned. Mr. Reid—the young gardener*—expressed an opinion that it was improbable, in virgin soils, like the primeval forests around us, that there would be any weeds, or if there were a few, it would be better to eradicate them with the hand before seeding, and burn or carry them off the estate rather than loosen the soil on the steep hillsides with hoes, where it would run the risk of being washed down with the heavy thunder-showers which preceded the setting-in of the monsoon. I had observed that there were

* Known as "Jamie Reid" to distinguish him from Alexander Reid of Madulkele. It was regarding the former the story was related or invented, that, having been told that a solution of arsenic was good for fever, he killed thirty coolies, before he discovered the proper dose!—ED.

none of the worst description of weeds, which were most common on the Dumbara estates, to be seen on Dodangahakelle, and I was resolved that, if I could prevent it, none of them should gain a footing there, and so, when I returned home, I began a system of going over the fields and carefully handweeding them, once in every five weeks. I was, in consequence, able to keep my plantations completely free from weeds of a noxious character, and at less expense than on those estates where the hoe was kept constantly at work.

I had now been fully twelve months in Ceylon. They had passed away like so many days. My young plants were growing and thriving beautifully: so much so, that the rows in which they were planted were beginning to be discerned from the deep green glossy foliage. Ten men were quite sufficient to go over the weeding of the fields in the time I have specified, and I employed the others in cutting logs, in lengths suitable for building purposes, and preparing them for sawyers, by raising them on sawing platforms. I had discovered a bed of excellent clay on a low-lying flat at the bottom of the estate, and I at once set to erect sheds and build a kiln, as I understood from my chief adviser, Mr. Bird, that it was the best economy to erect substantial buildings on the estate from the first. I had a visit about this time from a showily-dressed and intelligent-looking Tamil Moorman or Mahomedan, of some thirty years of age, who said that he was a mason, and that he had a practical knowledge of

burning lime, making bricks, and erecting all sorts of buildings, from a hen-house to a rajah's palace or a temple for a god. His name was Kadersaw, and as I liked the open, intelligent expression of the man's countenance, I engaged him forthwith to set these works agoing.

It was not long before I had both brick-kiln and lime-kiln erected, and then I had to procure men who understood the making of bricks, men to dig clay, and tame buffaloes to tramp it and mix it with sand. I had men cutting wood for the kilns and men carrying wood to the kilns. I had men carrying clay to and from the hole where it was trodden and mixed by the buffaloes, and men mixing it into a finer condition ready for manipulation by the brickmaker. There was a man to attend and work the buffaloes, four in number, and a man to cut grass for them when their work was done. It was terribly annoying and trying to the temper to stand by and see how the work progressed at the brick-kiln. The men never thought of economizing labour by any mechanical contrivance. It was in vain that I had first wheelbarrows and then handbarrows made for conveying the clay and wood from place to place. I showed the coolies how to use these machines, but I had no sooner left, than the wheelbarrow was elevated on the heads of three men, with a few shovelfuls of clay in it, and carried in solemn procession to the sheds. The handbarrows were even worse. They required the heads of four men to carry them—one to each handle, before they

could be transported with their loads, which were exceedingly small ones indeed. Yet, in spite of all this, the work progressed wonderfully, so that by the end of the year I had a considerable stack of bricks ready for the mason.

I had my hands full of work now: in fact, I had too many irons in the fire, and I was scarcely able to attend to the whole of them. I had explored the forest all round my plantation, so as to be able to choose the best lying lots for clearing before next season, and I had given Coorocoodootenna Banda a contract to fell and burn eighty acres before the first of May 1840. I had also engaged a gang of Kandyans to begin work as soon as the rains had ceased, to clear the forest by the side of a mountain stream, called the Ceckelpettiya oya, or the rivulet of the place of hens, whilst the Banda and his men were to go to work on the opposite side.

All day long, after the setting in of the fine weather, a ceaseless clatter of axes resounded from the new clearings, accompanied by the crashing of the falling timber, whilst in every direction there was bustle and animation. I had scarcely time to feel lonely; I had so much to do, so many things to look after, and I took so deep an interest in the work, that I could scarcely spare a moment to think of anything else. I was continually planning something new to be done, and yet, on the whole, in spite of my almost total want of experience, I

did my work as economically as ever work was done in the island.

At that time Kandyan labourers were by no means scarce, and Tamil coolies were abundant. I treated my labourers like men and not like dogs, as was the way with some of my brother planters; I listened patiently to all their reasonable complaints and rectified anything that was amiss to the best of my ability, and, above all things, I was careful in keeping the muster-roll and paying them regularly and justly, and the consequence was, that during the whole period of my stay in Ceylon I scarcely ever knew what it was to feel a scarcity of labourers.

The work was now, however, getting rather too much for me. I had more nurseries to plant farther into the forest, for more clearings which I intended to begin as fast as I could set them agoing. My intentions were to get some three or four plantations formed, of about four hundred acres each, and when they came into full bearing, so as to leave a handsome surplus over after paying the working expenses, I intended to lay out this surplus in planting the whole of the thirty thousand odd acres which I owned.

It was a grand idea, but I was never destined to carry it into effect. At this time, however, it seemed quite feasible, and, had the great mercantile crash of 1848 not intervened, it would, in all probability, have been accomplished. But I need not anticipate.

CHAPTER XIV.—MY FIRST ASSISTANT.

It was impossible, with the great variety of employments that I had going on, that I could pay a proper degree of attention to every gang of men at work on the estate, and when I endeavoured to visit them all in rotation, I only succeeded in fatiguing myself to little purpose. When this was the case already, I thought what would it be by the time that I had my four or five plantations under way. I must have an assistant or assistants, but where was I to get them? I met Braybrooke on one of my monthly visits to Kandy, and mentioned my difficulty to him.

“I have the very man to suit you,” said that facetious individual, “high blood, good mettle, military family, and clever dog, knows his paces too, and will go across any kind of country. He has one failing, however, he is Irish, and desperately ready with the tools.”

To illustrate his meaning, Braybrooke closed one eye, stood with his side towards me, his right foot slightly advanced with his toe pointing in my direction. He raised his right hand slowly, until his index finger was on a level with my face, he kept it for an instant in that position, then snapped his finger and thumb, and said knowingly: “That’s his sort—that is.” I understood that this pantomime was intended to inform me that my assistant *in prospectu* was testy in his temper and would show fight if he were offended.

"Won't stand any nonsense," Braybrooke said, as if interpreting my thoughts; "but a downright upright fellow, full of game and work. You should engage him, for I am sure you will not fall in with a better."

We called at an officer's quarters in Trincomalee Street, where Braybrooke's friend, Mr. O'Brien, was hanging out with a military chum until a commission, or something else equally eligible, should turn up by way of employment. We found two gentlemen in the verandah—this was about midday—lounging on easychairs, with a small table between them, on which stood a brandy bottle, a water chattie, two tumblers, a bundle of Manila cheroots, a *Colombo Observer*, and a back number of *Blackwood's Magazine*. The two gentlemen were airily and lightly clothed in white shirts and *pajamas*, or thin cotton drawers.

"Here, boy, bring more tumblers and glasses," roared the senior of the two, after the preliminaries of introduction were concluded. These articles were brought by a grey-haired Sinhalese man and placed on the table.

"Help yourselves, gentlemen," said Mr. O'Brien, showing us a good example. "Devilish warm today: you will be better of something to cool you. Perhaps you will prefer some sodawater. Here, boy, some sodawater for Mr. Green."

I felt some delicacy in mentioning the business on which I had called. The whole surroundings, with what Braybrooke had told me about the

young gentleman before me, were of such a nature, that I was afraid lest the fellow who was so handy with the tools should take umbrage at my presumption, in offering him the paltry situation which I was willing to place at his disposal, and propose to keep his hand in, by practising upon me. Braybrooke, however, saved me all trouble in this particular.

“The English mail is in, I see,” he said.

“Yes it is,” O’Brien replied, in an injured tone of voice.

“No word of your commission yet?”

“No, no word of it, and I fear, what is worse, I will never hear any word of it. My father is dead, and his services are, of course, forgotten. I am here, out of the way, and I may almost say out of the world, and it is nobody’s business to bring me to the recollection of the Commander-in-chief, and, therefore, no representation of my own will have much effect. I am getting disgusted in waiting and spending the best years of my life doing nothing. Hutton and myself were just discussing the feasibility of finding my way up to Northern India, and volunteering into some regiment or service there. I see that there is likely to be some hot work in Afghanistan, or Scinde, or perhaps the Punjab, and it will be better to earn my commission by doing good service, than by being obliged to the lukewarm efforts of friends to get it.”

“Well, and what conclusion did you come to?”

“Why, you see, old boy, it’s a case of *nix flens* got, as they say in Malta. The sinews of war are wanting in the shape of the ready, and, therefore, it can’t be done.”

“What do you say to turning coffee planter?”

“Why, I’d do it at once, but the same obstacle stares me in the face,—the want of tin.”

“If you choose to work first, tin would come afterwards. Here is a gentleman, a friend of mine, in want of an Assistant, and, if I understand rightly, he is willing to engage you on reasonable terms, and if you pull well together, he will, after a time, give you sole charge of one of his properties.”

“All right, I’m his man and ready to begin work at an hour’s notice. Here Hutton, old fellow, I’m going to rid your hand of a precious burden, I’m going to turn coffee planter and leave you.”

“Sorry to hear it,” bawled Hutton, from the outer verandah, where he was busy with a coloured chalk, giving the last touches to the portrait of a dingy beauty, several of which were sketched on the white walls of the building; all of whom were as scantily clad as were Diana and her nymphs, when the ill-fated Actæon intruded on their privacy.

“It wants the cheroot,” suggested Braybrooke, as he joined the artist and critically examined his handiwork.

“You be blowed,” replied that gentleman, “don’t teach your grandmother, &c. You fancy that,

because you draw plans consisting principally of straight lines, with the occasional curve of a river or nullah, you have a right to find fault with a work of genius. You don't, you can't understand high art. Go back to your compasses, you man of acres, poles and roods, and don't interfere with matters above your comprehension. Leave things of that kind to those who can give the true Promethean touch."

"I declare you have neglected the nose ornament, and you have not given the lady a single bangle on her arm, nor a ring on her toe. Look here, I'll put it all right," broke in Braybrooke, as he seized several of the chinks, and with a few rapid touches dashed in the articles he mentioned, whilst Hutton's attention was taken up for a moment, by the approach of a native with a *chit*, or note, which he delivered through a split in one of the tats which enclosed the verandah.

O'Brien and myself had, in the meantime, arranged our little affair. I promised him eighty pounds per annum to begin with, which, at that period, was considered very good pay for a manager of an estate, and he was to accompany me to Dodangahakelle.

O'Brien's father had been a Lieut. Colonel in the Army; he had served through the whole of the Peninsular war and also in the Waterloo campaign, and had died some years before I had made the acquaintance of his son, leaving his family in rather straitened circumstances.

O'Brien* took charge of the Kandyans cutting jungle, and made them work, he said, "like Trojans." I could now leave home for a few days at a time, with an easy mind, confident that the work would progress quite as well during my absence as when I was present on the estate. The new clearings were creeping rapidly up the sides of the mountains, and along the bottoms of the ravines. Judging from present appearances I had now got somewhere about a hundred additional acres of land felled and lopped, and as October was not far advanced, I expected to have as many more ready for planting with the June rains. My thirty thousand odd acres of land took in a great many valleys and ravines; hillsides and mountain tops, thundering torrents, rocky gorges, and, as the forest fell before the advance of the Kandyans, those features of the ground became exposed and showed strange peculiarities altogether unexpected and unlooked for. In one place a waterfall, some hundreds of feet high, dashed down a deep dell in a series of sparkling cascades, but after a thunder shower, when the stream became swollen, it made one bold plunge in a torrent of brown foam, from the top to the bottom. In another place several detached crags of rock with perpendicular sides became exposed, having their summits clothed with keena, dimbula and the prickly kitul palm trees,

* The late Mr. John Byng Wellesley Dowdall was the original O'Brien, as warmhearted a man and as true a friend as ever lived in Ceylon.—W. B.

whilst wild vines and convolvuli trailed down the faces of the cliffs, hiding their rugged nakedness, as with a verdant veil. In another place we came upon a huge mound, several hundred yards in circumference, composed entirely of huge square blocks of granite, as if they had been thrown there in some great battle of Titans, or as if a race of giants had collected them for the erection of some huge building, but suddenly changing their minds, had left these materials as a memorial of their original intentions. In one place there had been a landslip, the bed of which was now quite overgrown with a growth of ferns, mosses, lichens and wild flowers altogether different from the flora of the surrounding jungles. In another place we came upon a level spot of perhaps twenty acres in extent, with a large pond in its centre, the water of which was black as ink. All these things were discovered in the course of clearing the new plantations, and there were distant valleys, still unexplored, where the foot of a white man had never yet trod; distant hill tops and rocky ridges in the remaining thousands of acres of forest land, which I intended should yet fall before the Kandyans' axes.

When the dry weather set in I began to erect the first of my buildings for taking in my future crops. Mr. Bird had impressed upon my mind the fact that it was easier to carry burdens down a hill than it was to carry them up, and as all the produce had to be brought to the pulping-house, I considered that it would be good policy

to have the stores and other buildings on as low-lying a piece of ground as possible. The neighbourhood of the brick-kiln afforded the best site that I could find, and then I began operations by putting up my pulping-house.

This building was forty feet long by eighteen wide, in the main part. This was the extent of the cherry loft. A pulping platform occupied each end of the lower floor, with a large cistern in the centre, for the reception of the pulped beans. These platforms were eighteen feet long by thirteen and a half feet wide, and were capable of accommodating two pulpers each, or even three, should I ultimately put up a waterwheel, with which to drive them.

In a projecting verandah, there were two fermenting cisterns each twenty feet long by twelve feet wide, and beyond these there was a large washing cistern, nearly double that size. Small wells, with spouts at the top, were sunk in the cherry loft, above each pulper, into which a stream of pure water flowed and fell into the machines underneath, carrying the cherries with it, whilst the stones and sand, that would otherwise have injured the cylinders, sank to the bottom of these wells. At a short distance from the pulping-house, on a slightly rising ground, I built a part of what I intended should be my principal store and laid about three thousand feet of barbecues around it. The barbecues were formed by levelling a piece of ground, with a very gentle slope, and after pounding the earth into as solid a mass as possible with rammers,

some six inches in depth of broken stones, like road metal, were laid over the whole, whilst low retaining brickwalls were built around each space thus formed. Above the stones a thick layer of chunam and rough sand was plastered and levelled, so as to form a comparatively smooth surface. When this had dried, another coating of finely-pulverized lime was plastered over the whole and rubbed in with smooth stones, and the barbecue was completed, forming, when finished, a surface smooth and white, and almost as hard as polished marble. The cost of my barbecues was less than a rupee per square yard, whilst my stores and pulping-house cost me a very small sum in comparison to the amount of money which I have since heard of being expended in similar buildings, not a whit more convenient and certainly not nearly so lasting. One reason for this may be, that labour was cheap at this time. Tradesmen's wages, in particular, were much lower than they became some years after. Another reason was, that I was able to have the whole of the materials prepared on the spot. The lime-kiln was at no great distance, and the brick-kiln was close at hand. I also fell upon an economical method of collecting the timber and stones. The former had, of course, to be sawn on the spot where the trees had fallen. As a general rule gangs of men are employed on most estates, doing nothing but carrying this timber, and, in consequence, they have no inducement to convey it speedily to its destination, but

loiter away as much time as they possibly can, and it is wonderful how much time a Tamil coolie can waste doing nothing. Before the men left work, at 3 o'clock, I usually went round the estate with a few coolies and arranged the heavy logs and beams, so that they might be easily shouldered and carried to the store. The whole of the field hands were then told to leave off work a few minutes before the regular hour, and brought to the spot where the timber was lying and ordered to carry it to the store. It is wonderful with what alacrity those heavy beams were shouldered and carried off. I was in attendance at the bricksheds to receive them and call the roll on their arrival, and I calculated that the carriage of my heavy timber cost me only a fraction of the expense that it would have done by any other proceeding.

A watercourse was then cut, from the nearest oya, conveying water to the pulping-house, and then, with the exception of pulpers, I was ready to take in and cure my first crop. My cisterns were laid with glazed tiles of my own manufacture. In working these tiles I improved on the hints and practice of Kaderwael, my chief brickmaker, but as I have not quite given up the hope of making a fortune, by means of a patent for the manufacture of that special article, I need not describe the process here. It is sufficient to say that they fully answered the purpose for which I intended them, that is, they made a hard and durable floor and one that resisted the action of

the acids generated from the fermenting coffee beans. They did not rot like wood and they did not decompose like common tiles or chunam.

The lime-burning was the most troublesome work I ever had on the estate. I had to blast the rock from large detached blocks, which had rolled from the vein of limestone in the cliff near the cave I have mentioned; and the men were very unwilling to have anything to do with this operation. In point of fact on the very day that the kiln was solemnly inaugurated after the manner of the Tamils, by a propitiatory sacrifice to Muniandi, three men were seriously injured, one of whom lost the sight of an eye by a shot having exploded prematurely, or rather, perhaps, from both the needle and the rammer used in loading being made of iron, which having struck fire from the rock ignited the charge of powder in the bore. This accident occurred in spite of the sacrificial goat having sneezed three times, when water was thrown in its face, previous to having its head chopped off, in honour of the deity above mentioned. After this there was not a man on the estate, although I procured a copper rammer and needle, who would undertake the risk of loading the bores. I heard of an old pioneer* who lived in a neighbouring village, who, as Punchi Appu phrased it, "was clever at blasting." I sent off to engage him at any reasonable

* The Ceylon pioneers were gangs of Government coolies and artificers embodied after a semi-military fashion and employed on the public roads.

wages which he might choose to demand, and I considered myself fortunate indeed, when an impudent, forward-looking fellow made his appearance, in a state of semi-intoxication, and offered to perform the duties of blaster for the moderate sum of two pounds per month. I would not permit him to commence work that day, as he proposed; but I speedily discovered that the state in which I first saw him was the normal condition of the man, and consequently I allowed him to proceed in his own way. Affairs went smoothly enough for some weeks, but one afternoon I heard several shots, in rapid succession, at the limestone rocks, and shortly after a fearful amount of howling and wailing amongst the men. "Some infernal accident," I thought, as this howling struck my ear. On going to see what was amiss, I met the whole of the coolies coming towards the bungalow, carrying two objects, wrapped in white cloths, which I knew at once were men. Such a storm of vociferation and vituperation met my ears as I drew near to this noisy cavalcade, and such frantic gesticulations of anguish, horror and despair, as were being indulged in by the excited Tamils. Bunge-rassillum, the blaster was dead, his head crushed to a jelly by a hugemass of rock. The other man had his arm broken, and I was expected to set it. I had never seen such an operation performed, and how to set about it now, was more than I could imagine. It would not do to plead ignorance. The man was evidently suffering great pain, and the nearest European surgeon was some

thirty miles off. One of the coolies, who had been a sepoy, and who had been employed about the military hospitals, suggested that the bark of a tree would make a very good substitute for splints. I accordingly got some of the bark of the guadana tree, which was soft, pliable and tough, and with the assistance of the sepoy I succeeded, as I believed, wonderfully well, in this my first bone-setting operation. Day by day the man assured me that the arm was progressing favourably, and in the course of about a month, if I remember rightly, he came and asked to have the ligatures removed as the limb was now quite well and the broken bone firmly united. The wrappings were removed accordingly, when, horror of horrors, the position of the elbow was more towards the front than the back part of the arm. Either the limb had not been properly set at first, or it had been moved from its position before it had begun to unite.

I shall never forget the look of bitter reproach and wounded feeling, with which the poor man regarded first me and then his deformed limb. He turned away, without speaking, to hide the tears, which I could see gathering in his melancholy eyes. I felt wounded beyond measure, and could almost have wept myself, if weeping could have mended matters. I told him, what I never had occasion, before or after, to tell a black man, that I was very sorry for what I had done. I presented him with a few pounds, as a sedative to his wounded feelings, and told him that he might remain on the estate as long as he chose,

drawing full pay and doing only what little bits of work his strength allowed.

“Master could not help it. Master did his best to mend it,” was the reply I received, as the poor fellow glanced uneasily at his wounded limb.

The man went to the lines. That evening it was a Saturday, and the coolies received their pay. On Sunday morning there were no Tamils on the estate, with the exception of the mason, two canganies and about a dozen of the men, who had been with me from the beginning.

O'Brien was confounded and remarked “Here's a jolly go.” Juan Sebastian de Zousa Sylvestre Pereira Gomez remarked “That to Kandy might go, find employment in plenty these Malabars very much bobbery kick up and men come from the coast.” Punchi Appu's idea of the state of matters was, that he and the other cangany should proceed forthwith to Kandy and try to procure more men.

O'Brien and I had therefore a sort of a holiday for the first time since we had come together, and in this holiday Juan &c. participated. We, that is, O'Brien and myself, set off to visit Coorocoodootenne Banda and to have some snipe-shooting amongst his paddy-fields. Snipe, or, as the natives called them, *cass wattua*, were very plentiful, and we bagged several dozens before evening. The way we went to work was as follows:—O'Brien took one stretch of paddy-field, whilst I took another. We were each accompanied by a native, who followed immediately behind us, and picking up pieces of mud and clay, threw them in handfuls in advance, yelling as he did

so, "Hoosh shoo-oo," in as shrill a tone of voice as possible. If there were any snipe near, they rose at once, and then they had to be taken in their first flight, otherwise, after flying the first forty yards or so, which they do very steadily, they break into an irregular serpentine whirl, which defies any chance of an aim. At best, snipe shooting requires a quick eye and a correct aim. I know nothing equal to it but shooting swallows. Perhaps, to do it well, knack is more necessary than either eye or aim.

It was now the middle of March 1840. We had been having an occasional thunder shower once in every two or three weeks, but in general the weather was hot and dry, with a deep blue sky above and a sea of verdure beneath and around us. One evening the rain fell in torrents, the lightning quivered in forked streams in the valley beneath, whilst the thunder crashed and bellowed in reverberating echoes amongst the hollows and ravines of the hills. Next morning, when I arose and opened the window of my bedroom, I was greeted with the most delicious perfume I had ever experienced; it was a combination of every sweet and fragrant odour in which that of jasmine predominated, mingled with the fresh aroma of the newly-moistened earth, yet so faint and fleeting, that I had to catch my breath frequently, to make sure that it had not vanished, and, wonder of wonders, there had, to all appearance, been a shower of snow, for the fields were white.

"By Jove, sir," bawled O'Brien, bursting, without ceremony, into my bedroom, "here's a jolly

go, the whole plantation is out in blossom, and it beats Banagher all to smithereens." O'Brien had a weakness. He wished to be considered Irish, thoroughly Irish. He made Lever and Maxwell, Lover and Carleton his constant study, and he fancied that it sounded national to talk Irish slang. As he grew in years, he left this off, but at the time I write of, the above is a fair specimen of his style of address.

It was indeed a beautiful sight to see the fields with their covering of flowers, white as the newly-fallen snow and pure as a mother's love, intermixed with the glossy green foliage of the parent plants. And the perfume which arose from those vast beds of flowers was sweet in the extreme. One might easily have been pardoned for fancying that the glories of Eden had returned to the earth, so heavenly, so exhilarating seemed the fragrant atmosphere.* The mere act of inhaling it was a pleasure that would have been cheaply purchased with a twelvemonth's hardship and toil. The duration of the blossom, like that of all beautiful things, was evanescent in the extreme. On the second day after its appearance it began to fade. On the third morning it was "withered and gone," and the fields had returned to their former sombre shade of dark glossy green.

* The beauty and fragrance of a coffee field in blossom can scarcely be exaggerated. Tea shows nothing to compare with it except expanses of golden flush. The camelia-like blossoms of the tea, anything but welcome on the plants cultivated for leaf, are pretty, but have no perfume.—Ed.

When the blossom had vanished, the canganies returned from Kandy, with about a hundred new men. Work was resumed in earnest, as I was desirous of having the buildings finished by the time that the newly-cleared land was burned, so that I might turn my whole attention to lining and holing, and afterwards to planting it as soon as the monsoon rains should set in.

I have mentioned my blasting catastrophe. I was never able to engage another man for this work. The limestone rocks had got so bad a name from the accidents that had already occurred there, that the coolies were very unwilling to work in the neighbourhood of such an unlucky spot. Muniandi evidently had been desperately offended at the nature of the sacrifice which had been offered to him. The rice must have been of bad quality, or there must have been some blemish about the goat, or, possibly, there had not been a sufficient supply of arrack to propitiate his godhead. Whatever was the cause, there could be no doubt, but Muniandi was labouring under a fit of strong displeasure regarding some crime of omission or commission, and, therefore, the coolies avoided the locality as much as possible. Several men came at intervals and offered to undertake the work, but on hearing what had already happened they invariably left the estate without tuck of drum, and I was left in rather an awkward plight for want of lime, or the means of procuring it.

"What is to hinder me to do the blasting myself?" I asked, as I sat musing, one afternoon, over my difficulty.

Now, I had never seen any blasting operation in the whole course of my life. I had never been present when my own men had been loading the blasts, and I had not the very faintest idea how the work was to be done. Yet I resolved to try and do it. There was the needle and there was the ramrod ; here were broken bricks and here was blasting powder. All these things, I knew, were required, and I trusted to the chapter of accidents to enable me to use them rightly. The bores in the rock were about two feet deep, and I had them, in the first instance, well cleaned with dry rags. I then poured about a half-tumblerful of blasting powder into the hole and, inserting the needle, rammed the broken bricks, as hard as I could pound them, around it. It was a difficult matter drawing out the needle after this pounding when the whole was filled. I had observed that Bungerassilum, when that worthy was still in existence, had always been provided with sundry slips of paper, blackened with gunpowder. These I understood were the matches with which he fired the shots. I found it an easy matter to blacken the paper, but how to fold the matches so that they might be inserted into the hole from which the needle was drawn was altogether another concern. I could not manage it anyhow, and I was giving it up in disgust, when it occurred to me that it might answer to pour some small-grained sporting powder into this hole, and, when it was nearly filled, insert the match. I tried this ingenious plan and nearly met the fate of Bungerassilum. In

blackening the paper with gunpowder, it had not occurred to me to shake off the superfluous grains which adhered to it, and the consequence was that when I put fire to my first shot it went fizz pop in my face. Fortunately the punching and probing that the hole had undergone in trying to insert the match had rubbed down some of the brick dust, and thus cut off all communication between the principal charge, which did not ignite, and the priming. I made my next match with a strong solution of saltpetre and tried another shot in the same manner. I was more frequently unsuccessful in my shots than I was the reverse. In fact it was a great deal of labour with very poor results.

A quantity of fine sand had been placed in a wineglass in the bungalow. This glass happened to attract my attention, and I took it up to examine its contents. I found the sand hard and solid as a piece of rock. Since this was the case in a wineglass what would it be if the sand were placed in the bore of a rock. It was certain that if it were well rammed down it would be quite as solid as that in the glass. This was quite evident, but how was I to apply such a discovery to my blasting operations. This was a poser. I thought about it all day long, and I dreamed about it night after night. The people at home, who are conversant with the mysteries of blasting cord, and accustomed to see whole mountain sides shattered into shivers, without much trouble, may smile at the difficulty that I experienced in solving this knotty question. The

solution came, however, like every other grand discovery, by accident. I was sitting in the verandah, listlessly twisting slips of paper into spiral matches. I observed that these, unless at the extremity of the small end, were hollow. Why should not this supply the defect which I had long brooded over. I made a match with a longer slip of paper, dipped the end into a solution of saltpetre, dried it and filled the hollow space with diamond-grain gunpowder. I filled an old ink bottle with blasting powder and inserted my newly-invented match, first cutting off the small end so that the powder in the one should be in contact with that in the other. I placed the bottle at the foot of a big tree and ignited the match, then retired to the verandah to watch the result. I was not kept long in suspense. Pop, went the powder, and the ink-bottle was shattered into a thousand fragments.

“*Eureka*,” I shouted in ecstasy, like another great man in classic story, as I jumped to my feet, although there was no one near to hear my cry or mark my delight. I immediately cut some old newspapers into strips, twisted them into spiral matches, dipped the tops of three into the saltpetre solution, and the moment they were dry, I set off all alone to the limestone rocks, carrying the cleaning rod of my gun, some dry rags, a sharp pointed piece of stick, and a few pounds of blasting powder. I gathered some sand from the side of an oya and spread it on a rock to dry. I then proceeded to clean out all the holes which had been bored in the rock, and by the time that this was finished the

sand was dry. I s raped off the rougher particles and gathered the finer grains into a little heap. I then poured a quantity of blasting powder into one of the holes, and filling one of my matches with fine sporting powder and cutting off the solid end, inserted it into the bore, so that the two combustibles might be in contact. I then poured in the sand, using the sharp-pointed stick with which to ram it down and consolidate it. When finished, I applied fire to the match, by using a lens, and retreated to what I considered a safe distance to watch the result. Bang went the shot, and hundreds of splinters of rock flew into the air, mingled with smoke, whilst the surrounding rocks and crags re-echoed the report in ever-widening circles until it died away with a soft boom, in the far distance. My first shot was a great success. Blasting could now be no obstacle to my work. Before I left the spot I had blasted sufficient rock to keep the kiln burning for more than a fortnight.

The manner in which the lime was burned was as follows. I need not describe a lime-kiln, every person has seen one, or may see one by taking a short journey any morning. The stones were broken into small pieces, like road metal. The kiln was then filled with blocks of green wood—dried wood would not answer the purpose, when a thick layer of these stones was placed over it. In the course of about eight hours the wood had burned out, and the lime had sunk to the bottom of the kiln. More wood and more stones were then heaped on, and this process went on continuously until the whole

was burned. I don't know if there is any peculiarity about the mountain limestone of Ceylon, but it will not become calcined unless broken into these small pieces, with wood for a fuel, and it will not become lime proper, unless moistened immediately on being taken from the kiln. It is very silly to write about all this, but as my lime-burning was the greatest difficulty and the worst to overcome, of all the obstacles that I have encountered in my planting experiences, any narrative of this would be incomplete unless I mentioned it.

Speaking of difficulties, it has been a subject of much marvel to me, how young men, many of them mere schoolboys, who would, had they remained at home, have shown no power whatever of planting and carrying out great undertakings, by their own unassisted genius and inherent pluck overcame obstacles of every description, traced and formed roads over rugged mountains and through unexplored tracts of forest; built bridges over foaming torrents or across deep rivers; erected wonderful piles of buildings and complex machinery, when they were put on to the side of a mountain range in Ceylon and were told that this work had to be done, and they had to do it. They had a worse task than the Israelites in the days of their hard bondage in Egypt. They had to make bricks not only without straw, but in a certain measure without clay, or find some substitute that would answer the purpose equally well.

The people of England when they sip their fragrant cup of "fine plantation Ceylon" have not

the very faintest idea of the hard fare, the hard work and the total want of comfort of every kind, the wearying annoyance of perverse coolies, the sleepless nights and days of anxiety and care to which, we, the early pioneers of coffee planting in Ceylon, had to submit, before the aromatic cup could reach their lips. It puzzles myself now, how we ever managed to persevere and overcome all the difficulties and obstacles which we encountered. Proprietors of estates had something to look forward to, in the large profits they were certain to realize, when their estates came into full bearing; but the mere superintendent had no such encouragement. His income was often such that he could not save much out of it, and as his work took him out almost the entire day to the fields, his domestic comforts and his household expenditure were entirely at the mercy of native servants, whose principal aim was to enrich themselves at his expense.

CHAPTER XV.—TWO MISUNDERSTANDINGS WITH O'BRIEN.

Arthur Wellington Wolfe O'Brien and myself pulled well together. He was a wiry, sinewy, thin young fellow, not very tall and not very short. The whole of his ideas of discipline were of a military nature. He had not been an hour on the estate before he had dubbed myself Captain; he ranked as Lieutenant; Juan Sebastian de Zousa Silvestre Pereira Gomez was Ensign; Punchi Appu was Sergeant-Major, whilst the other

canganies were the non-commissioned officers, and the coolies were the rank and file. When he mustered the men at parade, they fell in, two deep, at the word of command, stood at ease, came to attention, and were then told off, not in gangs, but in sub-divisions and sections. When under my own orders, the men had been very slack at mustering of a morning. O'Brien turned over a new leaf. He was up before the second tomtom had ceased beating. The tomtom was beaten by a man with a preternaturally solemn countenance, named Alligapan. The first performance on this horrid drum took place in the men's lines before dawn, the second at dawn to let them know that it was time to finish their morning meal, and the last punctually at sunrise, when the men were marched up to the parade ground, counted and sent off in gangs to their various employments, each detachment under the charge of a cangany. If any of the men did not put in an appearance by the time these squads were formed, O'Brien turned them back to the lines without mercy; then placing himself at the head of the principal company, he gave the word forward, quick march, and led them off to whatever work they were engaged on.

When my next estate, of which I gave O'Brien the entire management with a considerable increase of salary, was begun, he gave me a step in promotion, raising me to the rank of Major, whilst he conferred on himself the grade from which I had risen. He was a kind-hearted, agreeable fellow, thoroughly Irish in his ideas, but gentlemanly

withal. I never but once had occasion to find fault with him during the nine odd years that he was in my employment, and I had much reason to regret doing so on that occasion. O'Brien treated me as if he were in all respects my equal, only he condescended to accept my suggestions about the work on the estate, and favoured me by seeing those suggestions carried into execution, in the best and most economical manner possible.

We had both ridden into Kandy about some business, probably not of much importance. On our way home O'Brien recollected, after we were nearly four miles out of town, that he had left his watch in his bedroom at the hotel. He turned his horse sharp round and galloped back, bawling to me to wait for him, and he would rejoin me in about half-an-hour.

I waited the half-hour very patiently, and then another hour after that, when my patience began to give way under the increasing heat of the sun. I trotted off, resolved not to wait any longer, but I had scarcely paid my toll at Peradeniya bridge, before I saw my assistant galloping along at a tearing rate, which shortly brought him to my side.

"Sorry that I have kept you waiting so long Major, but I had to go to the Police Office, before I could get possession of my watch. One of the servants had prigged it, and I required Loco Banda's assistance before it was produced."

I am afraid that I did not return a very

courteous or a very gentle answer to this speech. We rode along the road in silence. I was offended at having been kept so long waiting. O'Brien was offended at my distance of manner. When we left the main road and were riding along the bridle-path, leading to Dodangahakelle, we could ride only in single file, and this was not calculated to promote any friendly interchange of ideas. It was late in the afternoon when we reached home, and some demon prompting me, I set off, although I was very tired, to visit O'Brien's estate, with the firm determination, although I would scarcely have avowed such a thing to myself at the time, of stumbling upon something amiss, with which I could find fault.

A road was being cut through the estate, and I fixed upon it as my special grievance. It was not being carried over the line of ground which I had previously suggested, and the gradients were steeper than were necessary. I spoke sharply to O'Brien about this. He tried to explain, but I was not in a mood to listen to explanations, and therefore he kept silence, and when I had finished finding fault, he went to his own room. Dinner was announced shortly after, and I had the whole of it to myself. O'Brien did not put in an appearance. I felt rather solitary and missed his cheerful, rattling conversation, and I began to feel rather sorry at having in a measure quarrelled with him. I heard his voice outside after the cloth was removed and I felt my heart relenting and yearning towards him, for, by this time, he had been my friend and companion for years, and his society

had, to a great extent, become necessary to my happiness. I went into the verandah to speak to him, but instead of O'Brien I met the appu, with an official-looking letter in his hand, addressed to myself in the well-known handwriting of my manager; and sealed with the coat-of-arms of the O'Briens. This looked serious, and I confess that my heart beat quicker when I drew near the light to read this formidable-looking document.

It contained O'Brien's resignation, with a lengthened explanation of his reasons for giving it, all of which rested upon that day's proceedings. I folded the paper and put it in my pocket. I rose from my seat and knocked at his room door. No answer was vouchsafed. I opened the door very softly, as if there were sickness in the room, but there was no one there. It was a beautiful moonlight night. Perhaps, my friend may have gone to the gar'en or the store. I put on my hat to go in search of him. The perfume of the datura and other flowers was smelling sweet and fragrant, as I passed through Veerapin's domains, and the tall forest trees were waving gently in the soft evening air. He was not in the garden and he was not at the store. When I returned to the bungalow, I fancied that I heard the sound of a melancholy Irish melody being whistled near at hand. On approaching, I found my manager sitting upon a log, whistling as if his very existence depended upon his continuing to do so.

"I say, O'Brien, come along to the bungalow, I wish to speak to you," I said, in rather a hesitating tone of voice.

There was no answer in reply, but the whistling continued, with great vehemence, in which a little agitation was becoming perceptible.

"I have just received your letter and I cannot understand it," I continued, with more friendliness in my tone.

More agitation in the melody, which seemed to require an effort to prevent it coming to an end and ceasing altogether.

"You will require to come and explain matters."

There was still no answer, but the melody had ceased.

"I am afraid I have been very precipitate and unjust towards you, O'Brien, and I am sorry for it. If I have hurt your feelings I am ready to make every apology for so doing, and to try and put matters right between us, only don't let us two talk of separating; I can't do without you, and if you don't know when you have a good employer, I know when I have a good employee. Come along now, let us shake hands and have some wine, and we won't quarrel any more."

I slipped my arm within O'Brien's and drew him towards the bungalow. He did not resist, but he did not speak.

"We will be friends again," I said, as we entered the dining-room. "This row has been all

my fault, and I regret it very much. I was out of temper, and didn't know what I was about."

There was a wail now in place of the Irish melody, as poor O'Brien grasped my hand and cried like a spoiled child. He would have borne harsh treatment and even torture of any kind without a cry, but a word of kindness softened him at once.

"You are a brick, Major," he said with much emotion. "I recall that hasty letter. I am ashamed of it. I am." "You don't know how sore my heart has been, Major," he added after a short pause, "for the last few hours. The coolies tell us that we are father, mother, brother and sister to them, when begging a favour. Now you are all this to me, for I don't think that I have a single relation in existence, and it seemed so hard to lose you."

"All right, old fellow," I exclaimed. "Now that we are friends once more, let us have a glass of wine and forget all about my stupid fit of ill-temper." And thus ended our first and only quarrel.

In April 1840 our new clearings were burned off. The burning was tolerably successful, making in some places a clean sweep of the fallen timber; whilst in others there were considerable quantities of brushwood, which required piling before it could be disposed of. This was a tiresome and tedious operation, and delayed the digging of the holes very much. In spite of this, however, we managed to

get the whole planted before the end of July. When measured, we found that we had now two hundred and thirty acres of land planted altogether, and there was another large field of some fifty or sixty acres, which we intended to burn off in September and plant in November or December. By the end of this year the entire land under cultivation measured two hundred and ninety-seven acres.

We had not been idle. We had put in nurseries which, I calculated, would plant about other four hundred acres by the following June, and I had given contracts, or rather O'Brien had done so for the clearing of this quantity of forest. We experienced no difficulty in getting the forest cleared now. Cooroocoodoo Banda had made a considerable sum of money by his contracts, and I could have got more contractors to undertake this sort of work than I could have found jungle for them to cut.

O'Brien had built lines calculated to hold about three hundred men, upon a small patana, which we very unexpectedly discovered in the very heart of the forest. He had, besides, put up a small temporary bungalow for his own accommodation. A low rocky ridge divided the two estates, the new and the old, and no part of the one was visible from the other. The Kandyans began cutting down the forest in September. They left off during the rains of November and December, but resumed work in January.

My first crop ripened in October 1840. It was a very small one, only amounting to one hundred and twenty-four hundredweights, or about one and a half hundredweight to the acre. When it was thoroughly dried I sent it down, on coolies' heads, to Gampola, for transmission to Colombo, where it was peeled and shipped for London. It realized £731 12s in all, but this sum was considerably reduced by the expense of freight, transport, charges in Colombo, agency, &c.

I was very proud when I received my first account sales for this, my first consignment to the London market. It went a good way towards clearing my first year's expenditure on the estate, and if the future crops paid as handsomely, I might expect, in the course of the next ten years, to rival the Barings or the Rothschilds in wealth.

I named my new estate Mee gong-oya or the Buffalo Stream, not that there were any buffaloes on the place, but I liked the sound of the name. I had a visit from Mr. Butler, whom I had not seen since our journey to the Knuckles. He expressed some astonishment at the progress I had made. I felt highly flattered at this, for there was not a better authority in the colony at that time regarding the management and forming of estates than he was.

He suggested the possibility that I might now require more European assistants, and mentioned that a cargo of young Scotchmen were on their way out, one or two of whom could be placed at

my disposal on paying the expense of their outfit and passage from England. I agreed to take two, one for myself and one for O'Brien. These young men arrived in June and duly made their appearance on the estate, looking somewhat surprised and bewildered. O'Brien had removed to his new bungalow, and one of these young men was sent to him, whilst I retained the other myself. The one that I retained had been a clerk in a merchant's office in Aberdeen. His father had been a solicitor in a provincial town in Scotland. He had received a good mercantile education and was a thoroughly gentlemanly lad, willing to do what was he told, and always addressed me as 'Sir.' He appeared to feel rather awkward at first, when he found that he had to live in the same house with myself and take his food at the same table, whether there was company or whether we were alone, and to have the same obedience and attention from the servants as I received myself. He soon got accustomed to this, however, and became in the course of time thoroughly well versed in the mysteries of coffee planting; attended diligently to his work, was trustworthy and zealous, and now, at the time I write (1870), is one of the principal proprietors of estates in the island.

A few days after I paid a visit to Mee-gong-oya to see O'Brien, and to enquire how he got on with his new *Sinna Durai*, little master or assistant. O'Brien was by no means charmed with him. He could not, in fact, understand him. He

was not like any person he had ever met before. He could behave pretty well at table, but he used his knife where others employed their fork. He had not apparently read much, and he was not particularly well up in the literature of the day, but he knew about books which O'Brien had never heard of. He was well up in Johnson's Highwaymen and Reynolds's publications, such as the "Mysteries of London," "Robert Macquaire," &c. Then he knew all about the parks, the squares, the river, the minor theatres and the casinos of London. His knowledge of these matters, it had struck O'Brien, had been gained from rather a low point of view, but then these were low affairs altogether, only his new comrade, whose name was Leask, did not speak of them as he had heard his military friends do, who had visited those places, for "the fun of the thing" and for the strange views of life, which they yielded to people *blasé* with every other phase of existence. Leask talked of them as if he had visited them for the intellectual enjoyment they afforded, as if he were incapable of appreciating any higher pleasure.

All this O'Brien told me with rather an amazed tone of voice, amazed at having stumbled upon a new species of the *genus homo*, which had overturned all his previous ideas regarding his fellow-creatures. He had associated with gentlemen and had condescended to common soldiers and peasants; but this man was neither—a quiet, serious, homely young fellow, with little spirit and no dash, who did not appear to aspire to, or claim any degree of consideration whatever.

We came on Leask in the forest, where he was superintending a gang of men felling jungle. It was a moist morning and the leeches were abroad. They had fastened on Leask and his clothes, greatly to his alarm, were stained, in more than one spot, with blood. He had on a pair of white duck trowsers, which had formed part of his outfit for the voyage, and the brutes had crawled up the legs of them and hung gorged with gore from his person.

"You will require to get gaiters like these," O'Brien remarked, pointing to his own leg protectors, "otherwise the leeches will eat you alive."

Leask examined his superior's gaiters very narrowly. He knelt on the ground that his inspection might be more minute and complete, and then Wolf and I adjourned to another part of the estate.

I asked O'Brien to come to dinner in the evening and bring his Luff, as he called him, along with him. Evening came, as also did O'Brien, but no Sub.

"What have you done with Leask, Wolf?" I asked.

Wolf's countenance grew troubled, more troubled than I had ever seen it before, unless on the occasion of our quarrel.

"I could not bring him," he said.

"How so?" I enquired, perceiving that something was wrong.

"I could not bring the fellow into the society of gentlemen," he replied, with energy, whilst his

eyes sparkled with indignation, and he looked amazingly like a Scotch terrier when he is snuffing at a rat-hole.

"The fact of the matter is, Major, you must remove that fellow from me. It is impossible that I can live in the same house with him." "What do you think the fellow is?" "I thought from the first that he was queer, but, good heavens, I could never have guessed the real facts of the case," and here my Captain looked unutterably horrified. "Faugh," he continued, as he spat on the ground, "the fellow is a tailor, the son of a barber, and I have dined with him. I'll tell you how I found this out. The fellow has the tools of his craft with him, and when I went home in the evening, I found him in the verandah, sitting cross-legged, with an iron thing beside him, which he called a goose, and sewing away like bricks at a pair of leech-gaiters. Faugh, I sickened when I saw it. What is worse, the appu, the cook, the canganies, and the whole of the men saw it."

I laughed at Wolf's trouble, but as I saw that he was getting wild and indignant, I was obliged to try and pacify him the best way I could.

"I'll exchange with you," I said. "My Sub appears and is a gentlemanly fellow, and his father was a solicitor by profession. Besides, I have no great prejudices against either tailors or barbers."

"No, Major, that won't do. You cannot take this chap under your roof, or if you do I shall

be under the direful necessity of giving up visiting you. You know the proverb, 'Birds of a feather flock together,' and I should not like you to fly in such company. You don't know what the fellow will do. He will fetch and carry like a spaniel. I tried him. He pulled off my boots, brought water and a towel, and I daresay he would have brushed my boots and washed my feet, if I had desired him. No, no, off he must go, for I cannot breathe the same air with him. Good heavens! what would my father have thought, what would my friends in Kandy think, if they knew that I was consorting with a tailor, the son of a barber?"

To cut a long story short, I sent Leask into Kandy, with an explanatory note to Mr. Butler, who sent me up another young man in exchange, whose pedigree was faultless, his father having been a Commander in the Navy, and I found that 'the united services' got on well together in the person of this young man, whose name was Wallace, and my Captain, Arthur Wellington Wolf O'Brien.

CHAPTER XVI.—COFFEE STEALING.

In March 1841, the various contractors began to burn off their clearings on Meegongoya, and by the beginning of April the whole was finished. None of the subsequent burnings were so grand and terrific as my first on Dodangahakelle. At least, none of them, in my opinion, came up to it in the magnificence of the blaze and the

pandemoniac nature of its accompaniments, the vast black volumes of rolling smoke and the roar and crackling of the flames; and some of them made so clean a sweep of the brushwood and small timber. However, by the middle of April, the burnings were all finished, and Wolfe O'Brien and his Luff were busy preparing for the planting season in June. It was no light task; there being three hundred and seven acres to be planted, and roads to be traced and cut through the clearings, so as to facilitate the transport of plants from the nurseries.

I had very little to do on the plantation under my own immediate management. I had a gang of some ten or twelve coolies at the limekiln, about as many more at the brickkiln, and about double this number assisting the masons with new barbecues and putting up an addition to the store. The principal gang, some sixty or seventy in number, were employed keeping down the weeds, repairing old roads and making new ones, thatching the lines and bungalow, and, in short, doing the ordinary field work on the estate.

I resolved to give myself a holiday, and, with this object in view, I took a run down to Konde-salle to visit my friend, Mr. Bird. He was busy peeling and sending off the last of his crop. His peeler was driven by coolies running round a circular course, as horses do in thrashing mills in Scotland, and the peeler was a large, heavy wooden wheel, revolving in a circular trough, the same as the cider crushers in England. The

beans were placed in this trough, and the big wheel revolving on them broke the parchment skin. They were then put through a fanning machine and afterwards freed from broken and deformed beans, by hand picking, which was performed by women, after which the coffee was fit for the London market. It was put up in jail gunny bags, each bag containing two bushels of picked beans, weighing, if I remember rightly, about one hundredweight each.

It was a Saturday evening when I arrived at Bird's bungalow. That gentleman was busy at the store. I walked over accordingly and joined him there. He was loading bullock bandies with coffee bags, of which his assistant was busy measuring and weighing, and they were then handed over to men to be sewed and marked. About fifty women of all ages, from those who were just bursting into incipient womanhood to withered old hags whose wrinkled and hideously withered countenances would have shamed Macbeth's witches, were busy, with cane baskets, picking out the pea or round berries and separating the broken and deformed beans.

Both the Sinhalese and Tamil women are models of female beauty when in the first blush of their opening charms. It is the exception, not the rule, to see a plain-looking girl amongst them, but by the time they have reached the age when English women are at their best, their beauty has faded and they have become the veriest hags in the universe, disgusting objects to look at and repulsive beyond all imagination.

Bird had to go into Kandy that afternoon, and he asked if I would superintend the loading of the bandies, and see the store locked, if he should not be back in time to attend to these matters himself.

"It will give you some experience that may be of use to you," he said, "by this time next year."

I gladly agreed to attend to this. The bandymen were smooth, oily-tongued, lowcountry Sinhalese. The principal man had a most villainous expression of countenance, which I did not like. It was a combination of low cunning and cringing slyness. That, however, was none of my business. I had not engaged him. All I had to attend to was to load his carts, seven in number, and see them safely off the estate, provided they chose to leave that night.

If I remember rightly, it was twelve bags that each cart carried, but of this I am not now quite certain. The bandies were loaded, drawn out of the enclosure around the store and placed in readiness to start along the road leading to the ferry. There happened to be a great heap of coffee ready to be sent off, still remaining unmeasured. As it was not time to leave off work, I had this coffee put into bags and weighed, part of which were then sewed and ranged along the wall of the store, one above the other. Those which we had not time to sew were left standing, with open mouth, beside them. I had counted the number of bags and calculated that there were just sufficient to load other twelve bandies, leaving

two or three over. I mentioned this to Bird, when he returned in the evening, and in the meantime I had seen all the men out of the store, locked the doors and left the place in the charge of an old Malay watchman.

The bandymen, I observed, were loitering about the interior of the building before it was locked up, but as this was nothing unusual, I took no notice of it. I perceived some of them go upstairs, but as the Malay watchman pretended to examine the premises before shutting doors, I concluded that they had come down again.

Next day was Sunday, and when we got up in the morning, the bandies containing the coffee were off. We, that is Bird and I, rode into Kandy to church; took tiffin with the Delegates, and then rode out again in the cool of the evening. I walked over to Pallikelle before dinner, as I wished to consult Mr. Tytler upon some subject which he, as a West Indian planter, might be presumed to be conversant with. He was not at home. He had gone to visit some friend at a distance. In place of him, I found a young countryman of my own, a mere boy, certainly not more than seventeen years of age. He seemed in low spirits, and on inquiring the cause, he told me that there had been a great deal of sickness amongst the coolies on the estate, that the sickness was confined to some gangs of men, who had newly arrived from the Coromandel coast, and that they were dying in twos and threes daily. They ought to have been paid a week ago, but, as there was

a great deal of work to be done on the estate, Mr. Tytler had deferred paying them, so that they might be induced to remain another month, as he was certain that, had they got their money at the end of the month, they could have all left the place in a body. They were in a perfect state of mutiny at present, angry at not having been paid, and panic-stricken at the mortality that was taking place amongst them.

"Two died yesterday," the young gentleman said, "and I believe that there are one or two more today. The men are threatening all sorts of desperate things, and there is no one here but me to pacify them, and what can I do? Just listen to that, here is something more up," he added, in some alarm, "and I'm blessed if I can stand it."

As he spoke a shouting and yelling arose in the direction of the lines, as if a legion of wild beasts were trying, for a wager, to see who could bawl and howl loudest. This horrid noise was rendered still more hideous by the rattling and thundering of tomtoms, which, repeated by a hundred echoes, made the air reverberate with their infernal din.

The beating, the yelling and shouting drew nearer to the bungalow, and, presently, some two hundred coolies marched up and ranged themselves in front of the verandah. These were followed by twelve more men, carrying three corpses on their shoulders. The corpses were laid on rude hurdles formed of tie-tie sticks, and they were now lowered gently to the floor of the verandah.

The young Scotchman looked astonished and horror-struck.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked.

The tomtoms stopped beating, and then such a-babel of tongues, such torrents of abuse as arose from some two hundred throats, I never heard in the whole course of my experience, and I hope I may never have the misfortune to hear its equal again.

"You are murdering us, keeping us in this fever-stricken place," they yelled, in furious wrath. "That is your handiwork," pointing to the bodies; "can't you give us our pay and let us go away to our own country, whilst some of us are still left alive," and then the heavy axes and hoes were brandished aloft in the air, as if they were about to annihilate us. They only, however, pitched them in a heap in front of the verandah, as a sign that they would not use them again, for the poor Tamils are a long-suffering and enduring race.

I never heard of an instance in which they turned upon their oppressors, and they often received usage at the hands of brutal masters to make the most slavish of slaves turn again and rend them.

"I wish you would speak to them. You understand their language, which I do not. Tell them, please, that Mr. Tytler is not at home, and I cannot pay them, otherwise I would do so most willingly. Upon my word, I am sorry for the

poor fellows, but what can I do? I have no power to help them."

Here the poor young fellow ceased speaking from overpowering emotion, whilst he made a brave effort to keep back the big tears which were standing in his eyes.

I tried to explain matters to the men, but they were far from satisfied. They went off as they came, yelling and shouting, with their tom-toms thundering at their head, but leaving the three dead men lying in the verandah and their tools in a heap in front of it.

"For God's sake, sir, don't leave me here with these things," the young man said, in horrified accents, pointing to the corpses, "otherwise I shall go mad. I am sure I will. The appu is away with Mr. Tytler and the cook is drunk, and there is no one about the place but myself."

I felt very sorry for him indeed, and could easily understand and sympathize with the horror and terror he felt. New to the country and almost his first Sunday evening in the jungle, and it so different from the quiet Sunday evenings he had been accustomed to spend at home, to be left in a large rambling house, whose big tile-paved rooms had a desolate look, with no other company than three dead black men, was enough to daunt a stronger heart than that of a mere schoolboy.

I asked him to accompany me to the lines to try and induce some of the men to return for

their dead brethren; but we had no success in this undertaking. The old hands on the estate had all gone to Kandy or somewhere else, and there were none but those belonging to the new gangs to be seen. These men had thrown off their late excitement and were sitting singly or in knots, as is the habit of Malabars, resigning themselves, with true oriental philosophy, to a fatality which they could not avoid.

By the time we had returned to the bungalow, another disagreeable fracas was awaiting us. There was a half-caste carpenter, as also a half-caste blacksmith, employed on the estate, both of whom were married. The carpenter had an unmarried brother, and his wife had an unmarried sister, both of whom lived in the same house with them. The blacksmith occupied a separate building in another part of the estate. The blacksmith's and the carpenter's brother had gone off to a distant tavern or arrack-shop, and when they came home they were tolerably well primed with spirits. The carpenter's brother had taken some liberties with the blacksmith's wife, and therefore the blacksmith had taken the liberty of knocking him down. And now, here were the whole of these *dramatis personæ* awaiting our return to the bungalow and ready to greet us with a volley of Portuguese, Sinhalese and broken English, in explanation of this precious shindy.

Mr. Tytler's assistant could make nothing of the row, and he could do nothing towards reconciling

the belligerent parties. The carpenter worked himself into a passion in recounting the wrongs he had suffered. The blacksmith joined issue with him and swore dreadfully in Portuguese until he succeeded in working himself into even a greater passion. The carpenter's brother, who was the drunkest of the lot, swore and vociferated in English and half-a-dozen other languages, whilst the three women were even more frantic than the three men. It was in vain that we tried to get them to speak one by one, so that we might get at the foundation of the row. No sooner did one begin to explain than the others yelled a different story, in a different language. The quarrel rose to such a pitch that the carpenter thrashed his brother, his brother thrashed the blacksmith, and the blacksmith thrashed the carpenter. Then the carpenter's wife tried to defend her husband, and the blacksmith's wife, fancying that her husband was not getting fair play, tore the carpenter's wife's hair, and the carpenter's wife's sister, seeing the carpenter's brother in want of assistance, ran to the rescue and tore everybody's hair, with the utmost impartiality. Such a shindy I never saw, such shouting and yelling, such swearing and tearing and pulling and tugging, defies anything like description.

After a time, the whole of the combatants, with the exception of the carpenter's wife's sister, who defended her champion bravely, turned the whole of their attention and their blows also on the carpenter's brother, as being the first great cause

of all the row, and proceeded to pommel him most unmercifully.

The carpenter's brother however, got out amongst their hands, and rushing into a corner of the room, where some firearms were standing, seized a rifle and pointed it at his assailants with every demonstration of being about to take a bloody revenge for the wrongs which he had suffered. The rest of the combatants vanished with marvellous celerity. The carpenter's brother then laughed a demoniacal laugh, such as one sometimes hears in a minor theatre, when a blood and bone tragedy is being acted, as he brought his rifle to 'tention, went through the manual exercise, giving himself the word of command; after which he sat down on the brick-floor and burst into tears—drunken tears of maudlin distress. It was none of my business to interfere, otherwise I would have kicked the fellow out of the house. My young companion, who evidently did not know what to do, suggested the propriety of his now going home.

“Home,” the fellow roared, with a theatrical flourish, “I got no home. The wide, wide world my home; the bare earth my bed. I got no brother, no sister, no father, no mother, no nothing now. I dismiss them all, Ferdinand Diaz, the blacksmith, I dismiss also; but not Seraphena. Not Seraphena,” he added, with a sigh, “she did me defend when downtrodden with numbers. Ah! not Seraphena.”

The idiot was getting sentimental, and I thought it was a good opportunity of getting rid of him, and therefore I politely requested him to leave the bungalow and free us of his company.

He flared up at this modest request, quite unexpectedly.

"You not my master," he said. "Mr. Tytler my master. Mr. Tytler tell me for to go, then go I will. You tell me for to go, you being not my master, go I will not. I have been beaten, sir, I ill-used have been, sir; I trampled on have been in my pride and insulted in the things of my heart, sir, and that to stand I cannot. Revenge I will have, sir, revenge to make my brother, who is unnatural, repent. I will shoot myself, I will kill myself, and it will always be on his mind that kill me he did. On his mind all the days of his life, until down with sorrow he goes into his grave."

I observed the fellow examine the lock of the rifle, so as to make sure that there was no cap on the nipple, and when he was satisfied on this score—at least I concluded that this was the case—he placed the muzzle of the rifle against the region of his heart, having previously placed it on full cock, and pulled the trigger with his great toe.

"I English blood," he said proudly, "have in my heart and in my veins, and rather than insulted I shall be, I shall die."

Of course, the gun snapped, and the carpenter's brother started to his feet and pretended to be disappointed with the result. "Give me the gun,"

I said calmly. "I wish to see if it is loaded." He handed me the gun, with a sullen defiant look. I put the ramrod down the barrel and found that it was charged in reality, although the cap had been taken off the nipple.

"All right," I cried, "it is loaded."

The carpenter's brother looked alarmed, as also did the carpenter, the blacksmith and the three women, all of whom had again put in an appearance in the doorway.

"Here is a box of caps," I said, taking one from a bookcase, where it had just caught my eye, "allow me to put one on the nipple. There now you will have another chance of showing your English blood," I added, as I handed the rifle to the carpenter's brother.

That gentleman, however, did not now seem quite so anxious to handle it.

"Don't give it to him," bawled the carpenter.

"God be merciful to us and him," yelled the blacksmith.

It is impossible to tell what the women said, for no two of them spoke the same language, and, what is worse, they all spoke at once.

When the carpenter's brother saw the sensation which he had created, with his little bit of bravado, he made a sickly attempt to get the rifle once more into his possession, but his brother pulled him back, and then there ensued a regular scene of reconciliation, the men shaking hands and kissing,

the men, and the women embracing each other, and then the whole embracing and weeping and kissing promiscuously. Everyone begged pardon, and everyone forgave, and all were friends once more.

When matters had reached this satisfactory stage, I asked, with a politeness which none can appreciate more than half-castes, if they would rid us of the disgusting objects of defunct humanity which still occupied the verandah. They seemed shocked beyond measure at such a request.

“We are not Pariahs, neither are we Rodyas,” they answered.

“I will give you a helping hand myself, as also will this gentleman,” I said, and then, with extreme repugnance, they assisted us to remove the corpses to a rock a short distance from the bungalow, where we left them to the tender mercies of crows and jackals, if any of these carrion eaters should be in the neighbourhood.

This seemed a shocking business, but I had no other help but to do this. If the men's own relations would not perform the last sad offices for the dead, I could not permit them to remain in the house of a European gentleman, and be from home, to frighten a young and sensitive lad, like the young man in charge of the bungalow. He was evidently afraid to be left alone, and yet he would not come over with me to Kondesalle, “because,” he said, “if any mischief were to happen I might get blamed for deserting my post.”

I told Bird, when I returned, what had occurred. He ordered his horse and galloped over to Pallekelle, and when he returned, Mr. Tytler's assistant was with him, and he seemed happy to be out of the atmosphere of fever and death in which I had found him. It was a sad beginning to the plucky little fellow's career as a coffee planter in the far East.

On Monday I went over to the store with Bird to see the men peeling and the women picking and sorting the coffee. The old women were very scantily clothed indeed, having their bosoms and the whole of the upper part of their bodies completely exposed to the gaze of the beholder, and the sight was very far from being a fascinating one. Children were hanging to and sucking some of them, whose breasts, depending as low as their thighs, were skinny and shrivelled beyond measure. The younger ones had their bosoms covered, some with a cotton jacket and others with a loose cloth thrown over their shoulders like a highland plaid, and these pretended to be shy and shamefaced if gazed at. They were all busy, both with their hands and their tongues. Neither were their teeth idle, which was evident from the copious streams of red saliva which were squirted from their mouths—the extract of the betel-nut which they were busily chewing.

"I thought you said that there were twelve more bandy loads of coffee ready to be sent off." Mr. Bird remarked, as he counted the bags piled against the wall.

"Yes," I replied, ,, there were quite that number.

"I am afraid that you have been mistaken, for these are only sufficient to load ten carts."

"Then the difference must have been abstracted, for I certainly counted them very carefully, before leaving the store on Saturday night."

Bird laughed incredulously. The idea of two cart loads of bags being carried out of his fortress of a store, seemed so ridiculous that he might well have been excused for laughing at such a notion.

Miskin, the watchman, was called and interrogated whether the doors and windows were properly secured when he opened the store in the morning.

"Yes, sir, all right," was the reply.

"There, I told you so," said Bird, in triumph. "I was sure that you must have counted wrong, and Miskin's assertion corroborates this."

I differed from my friend, but nevertheless I did not argue the matter further. I however began to ruminate how I could possibly prove that I was correct, and that the coffee had been stolen from the store, as I felt convinced was the case.

In the evening I proposed a ride to the ferry, to which Bird assented.

"How many bandies crossed yesterday morning, with coffee?" I asked the boatman who could speak a little English.

"Five, sar," was the answer.

"Are you sure that these five were all?" I asked.

"Yes, sar, no more."

"What two bandies were those" broke in Bird, "that I saw standing on the opposite side, when I came from Kandy on Saturday night?"

"Don't know, sar."

"Did they come here with the bandies which crossed the river for coffee?" I asked, feeling that here was something like a clue to the mystery of the missing bags.

"I not know, sar, but I esometime think that they did."

"Did they leave when those with the coffee left?"

"Yes, sar, they did."

"The same way?"

"Yes, sar, the same way."

"Had they loads when they came here?"

"No, sar, no loads."

"Had they loads when they went away?"

"I esometime think that they had loads, but I not know."

"Was there any person here who was likely to give them loads?"

"No, sar, no one."

"It is all right," I cried, as I turned to Bird. "The fellows have carried the bags down here on their heads and crossed the ferry at night without disturbing the boatmen, and now they are half-way to Colombo, by this time, with your coffee."

"Come back and let us have some dinner, and then we will arrange about what is to be done."

"No dinner for me, thank you. This has arisen from my carelessness, and I shall set off at once and overtake the fellows. My horse is quite fresh and can go forty or fifty miles without baiting. I will be back tomorrow or the next day, so in the meantime *au revoir*."

I crossed the ferry and galloped into Kandy. My first object was to see the head of the Police—Locko Banda—a native chief and a son of the Prime Minister of the late King. I explained what had taken place, and that I wanted him and some of his peons to set off with me at once, to try and overtake the bandies and apprehend the thieves, should my surmises prove correct.

"I can't move without an order from the Magistrate," Locko said; "and you can't get an order from him unless you make affidavit to the facts, and you cannot do this until the Court opens tomorrow."

"Could I not see the Magistrate tonight?" I inquired.

"Certainly," Locko, who was very corpulent and very polite, replied; "I will go with you to him myself."

The Magistrate was Mr. Walker, a countryman of my own.* I explained what had occurred and what I wished. He made none of the difficulties that his subordinate had suggested, but took my

* Mr. Andrew Walker, uncle of Sir E. N. Walker,—ED.

affidavit at once and ordered that functionary to take two peons and accompany them and me in search of the suspected thieves.

"You have not dined?" the Magistrate said, in a tone of inquiry. "You must come and take a plate of soup with me, whilst Locko Banda is getting ready. You can do nothing without him."

This was self-evident, so, although I wished to be off down the Colombo road, I bowed to circumstances and stayed for dinner with Mr. Walker. My horse too, I thought, would be none the worse of the rest, as I did not know how far we might require to ride, only I was resolved not to stop until we had come up with the bandies.

It was about 8 o'clock when we left Kandy. It was a beautiful moonlight night—the moonlight of the tropics, almost as light as a northern day. The air was cool and balmy and scented with thousands of flowers. A soft breeze ruffled the treetops, which rippled and rustled in the tranquil air. A gentle murmur came from the shallows of the big river, mingled with the deep hum of busy voices, as we rode through the bustling suburb of Kitooltenna. We passed the satinwood bridge at Peradeniya, passed the Rodiya village and the tall monument at Kadugannawa, and then descended the Pass. Locko Banda rode a high-mettled horse by my side, whilst our horsekeepers and two police peons kept up with us running on foot. We descended the Pass at a slow pace, the overhanging rocks and the lowering woods looking dark and murky in the deep shade, while

the bright moonlight, playing on the dismal hollows below, gave an appearance of greater depths to the dark ravines and rugged gullies which descended from the sides of the mountain, and in which the sparkling fireflies were dancing in myriads, looking like gems of living fire. We seemed to be riding in mid-air part of the way. Above us were cliffs, towering hundreds of feet in the sky, whilst below were precipices, a fall from which would have dashed us into a thousand atoms. We are at the foot of the Pass and crossing a wooden bridge, which spans a brawling mountain torrent. We pass numbers of bandies, most of which are loaded with coffee, but they are not those we are in search of. We have passed the resthouse at Utuwankanda and also the one at Ambanpitiya, which latter is at the summit of the last descent from the hills into the lowcountry, and still there is no trace of those we are in pursuit of. We are drawing near to fever-stricken Ambepussa, and there, near a native *boutique*, are the exact number of carts, all standing in a row, which we have been in pursuit of.

The peons have kept up with us and are now at our side as we dismount from our reeking and panting chargers. The bandymen are asleep under their carts. We look into each bandy, in succession, and, sure enough, they are all loaded with coffee bags, and, what is better, bags bearing the Kondesalle mark.

“Seize these men,” said Locko to his peons.

Before the fellows could rouse themselves from their slumbers, they were manacled and in the custody of the police. The soft-spoken headman seemed astonished and indignant at such treatment; but Locko Banda laughed at him and hailed him as an old offender.

I could do nothing more. Locko roused the bazaar people, and gave the carts and bullocks into their charge, with directions to employ men to take them back to Kandy.

The peons took charge of the prisoners, and we, that is Locko and myself, rode back to the nearest resthouse, which was Ambanpitiya, to have our horses fed and get some refreshment for ourselves.

I had ridden upwards of forty miles since I parted with Mr. Bird at Kondesalle ferry, and I had that distance to ride back again.

The resthouse at Ambanpitiya was not a very enticing sort of a place. In point of fact, it was quite the reverse. The building was tumbling into ruins. Anthills occupied the principal apartments, and the verandah, which promised protection from the hot morning sun, seemed the most pleasant part of the establishment.

It was now long past midnight, and it was with much ado that we succeeded in rousing the resthouse-keeper, who got some paddy and gram for our horses, and some Bass's beer, roties or native cakes and hot coffee for ourselves. My

sable friend lay down on a couch, and speedily gave audible proofs that he was in the arms of Somnus, and, as his example was a good one, I followed it.

We were astir early in the morning, and after a cup of hot coffee, acting on Locko's advice, we mounted and rode on to Utuwankanda, where there was better accommodation, and where we had breakfast and spent the hot part of the day as best we could.

In the afternoon we mounted our now refreshed steeds and rode into Kandy, from whence I went to Kondesalle to apprise Bird of the result of my expedition.

Both Bird and myself had to appear at the District Court, to give evidence in this business, a few days after. The men were remanded for trial at the first session of the Supreme Court. They were brought in guilty and sentenced to various degrees of punishment, the principal man, my soft-spoken friend, being sent to Malacca for seven years.

When we went to Kandy to attend the District Court, we called upon Mr. Delegal. We found that gentleman in a sad quandary. A quantity of wine, in wood, had been sent up from Colombo, in the same carts in which Bird's coffee had gone down, and it had just been ascertained that none of the casks were full. There was no appearance of leakage, and not a mark of a spigot about any of them. The bungs had been sealed for precaution's sake, but the seals remained intact.

Mr. Delegal had written to Colombo about this mysterious affair, and had just received a letter directing him to have the matter investigated, as the casks were quite full when they were despatched to Kandy, and the wine could not possibly have been extracted without having left some marks. Delegal, Bird and myself sat as a commission of inquiry upon the subject. We adjourned to the godowns and examined the casks, but could discover no traces that they had been tampered with. The mystery remained a mystery, until after the trial of the coffee thieves, when one of the prisoners condescended to enlighten us how both robberies had been effected.

With regard to the wine: the casks had been taken out of the bandies, at a convenient part of the road, when one of the hoops was knocked off. A hole was then bored in the space occupied by the hoop, from which a quantity of wine was run off, and then the hole was plugged up and smeared with a mixture of rust and clay; after which the hoop was replaced, so that it would have required very sharp eyes to detect that it had ever been tampered with.

The coffee robbery was effected by, as I imagined from the first, two of the bandymen concealing themselves and being locked into the store. As the windows were secured by bolts inside, they opened one of them, when all was quiet, and handed the bags to their friends outside. They were then carried across the river and put into the carts, which had been brought to the ferry for this very purpose.

CHAPTER XVII.—MORE ABOUT COFFEE STEALING.

Coffee stealing was, I have reason to believe, carried on in Ceylon to a much greater extent than was generally imagined. On almost every estate there is usually one or more watchmen employed about the store, whose duty is supposed to consist in keeping himself or themselves awake, and to take care that none of the goods committed to their charge are meddled with during the dark hours of the night. If, however, the manager of the estate chooses to put himself to the trouble of visiting the premises supposed to be watched, he will, in nine cases out of ten, find the watchers fast asleep, and the property watched left to take care of itself.

I recollect one evening, several years after the incidents just related, returning from O'Brien's at a late hour, that is, a late hour for Ceylon, where people are usually in bed by 9 o'clock at night. I had just crossed the brow of the ridge that divided the two plantations. The turning of the road commanded a full view of my stores, which were glimmering in the star-light far below me. I saw a light moving in the principal store, the ends of which were enclosed with venetians, to insure a current of air passing continually over the coffee. It struck me as being singular that there should be a light in that place at such an hour, but I concluded that the store might have been left open by accident, and that the watchmen were looking for some soft spot, where they might nestle comfortably amongst the mats and

gunny bags. I was very wearied and tired with a hard day's work,—it was about the end of crop-time,—and I did not think that the affair was of sufficient consequence as to looking after just then. Next morning I inquired of the watchmen what they were doing with a light within the building the previous evening.

“Light, master!” they said, apparently very much astonished. “We got no light.”

“Who then had the light?”

“No one could have had light here, sir; we estop here all night and no one come near the estore.”

“I tell you I saw the light with my own eyes, and either you or someone else, who had no business being in the store, must have had it there.”

“Esometime rogue man, Chingalee man come with light,” the fellow suggested, as a probable solution of the difficulty.

“Then what are you here for but to prevent those rogue men coming near the store? If there is anything wrong, there will be no pay for you this month.”

My watchmen's faces became visibly pale at this threat, and continued so, whilst we proceeded to examine the premises. I could, however, discover nothing amiss. The coffee heaps seemed untouched since the building was closed the previous evening. The doors and windows were all fastened, and the only conclusion I could come to was, that my sense of sight had been deceived, and that I had fancied the light had been within the store, where it may probably have been at some distance outside.

I remained the whole of that day at the stores, superintending the drying operations. Just before leaving off work, and after the coffee had all been shovelled into the building, or covered in heaps on the barbecues, one of the men, who had gone into a patch of jungle a short distance off, shouted "*Durai, Durai, Iya, Durai*" (Master, master, hullo, master).

I went to see what the fellow was making such a row about. He pointed to the ground. A narrow path leading to a native village passed through this piece of jungle, and along the path there lay a stream of coffee beans, in the parchment skin, as if it had poured from a hole in a bag, as it was being carried along the path. That a robbery had taken place the previous evening I had now no doubt, and I blamed my own apathy severely, for not having come round by the buildings, when I had seen so unusual a sight as a light in the store at 10 o'clock at night.

It could not be helped now. It would simply be impossible to trace the thief or thieves. The only thing that I could do was to take greater precautions in future.

My first procedure was to dismiss my watchmen, two in number. I was by no means sure that they were not the robbers themselves. I then ordered a couch to be taken to the store, and I resolved to sleep in it night about with my assistants, and to try and keep awake as much as possible, although it should become necessary to sleep some part of the day.

About ten nights had passed without any disturbance, and it was my turn at the store. The moon was near its full and was pouring a flood of silver light upon the white drying grounds and the gleaming metal roofs of the buildings. It was a lovely night, and I walked along the lines of barbecues, inhaling the soothing fumes of a No. 1 Manila, and enjoying the delicious coolness of the night air. A person gets tired and wearied, even of good and lovely things, in course of time. I began to feel worn out and sleepy. I yawned and stretched myself, as sleepy men do, and at last I adjourned to my couch. I began to ruminate, "What was the use of all this unnecessary precaution? Here had I been putting myself and others to much inconvenience and no small amount of trouble, in trying to protect property, which no one seemed inclined to meddle with." The night birds were hooting in the neighbouring jungles, and the water fell over the cascades near the store, with a dreamy sleepy rushing sound. "I must not fall asleep. I cannot fall asleep. I fear that I am falling asleep. Don't go to sleep," were the sapient ideas which seemed to be passing through my drowsy mind. Creak! creak! creak! What is that? Some loose piece of timber creaking in the wind.

The noise is repeated very softly. I have a dim consciousness that something is wrong, and I make an effort to rouse myself. It is only an effort, however. I am too drowsy and too tired to get up for a loose piece of wood creaking.

“Ish—ish—ish—ish.” Why! what is that now? That is not the creaking of wood. It sounds marvellously like coffee being shovelled into sacks. I am perfectly conscious and wide awake now, but I don’t get off my couch. I don’t even turn towards the noise, although it is at no great distance off. Now it has ceased. A well-filled bag is being trailed gently along the floor, in the direction of where I had heard the first sounds. I stretch out my hand as quietly as possible and lay hold of my gun, a double-barrelled fowling-piece, which I still have in my possession. It is loaded with No. 7 shot, very small. I pitch off my blanket and jump to my feet, instinctively putting my gun on cock and raising it to my shoulder. I look towards the end of the store. A gunny bag filled with coffee is in the middle of the passage, and right in front, two or three slips of the venetians have been removed, and two or three black figures are disappearing, in fact, have disappeared, through the opening thus made. I rush to the opening. A white barbecue lies between it and the first shelter afforded by the coffee bushes. Three or four natives are running across this barbecue, whilst others have disappeared amongst the bushes. Bang, bang, go both barrels of my fowling-piece, and the reports are followed by shrieks of pain from the retreating figures, who only redouble their efforts to escape. I rush through the opening and across the barbecue after them, but I can pursue no further. It would be of no use. Even under the most favourable circumstances, I could never expect to overtake a

native in running, and at present, the rough ground, the fallen timber and sharp roots were not calculated to accelerate my speed, with no shoes to protect my feet.

"I've peppered two of them, at all events," I thought, and with the consciousness of having performed a good action, I returned and lay down on my couch and was soon fast asleep.

The thieves had removed three batons at the end of the store, and had, by this means, gained an entrance. They had replaced them in such a manner that they could, at any time, be removed without noise, and large quantities of coffee might thus be carried off of an evening, without exciting the slightest suspicion of robbery having been perpetrated, unless the thieves should help themselves too largely to any one particular heap, which they were too knowing to do.

I wrote an account of this occurrence to my friend, Locko Banda, and on the following day he was at my bungalow with a whole posse of police peons. These peons were despatched to the arachchies of the surrounding villages, with orders to bring the whole of the men belonging to their several villages to my store by 6 o'clock the next morning.

We had traced blood across part of the barbecue and through one of the coffee fields; but were unable to follow up the trace or discover by which entrance to the estate the thieves had made their escape.

Next morning Coorocoodootenna Banda made his appearance at the head of his villagers. Not a man was missing, and they were all sound in wind and limb. They were sent off with a word of praise from the great man, for their zeal and punctuality. Village after village arrived and were examined, Coorocoodootenna Banda making himself very useful in his zealous endeavours to detect the rogues who had meddled with his friend's property. 9 o'clock came and the stream of Kandyans had not ceased.

It was past 11 o'clock when the last village came up for examination. It was evident, from the appearance of the arachchi, that all was not right with him. He was trembling in his sandals, and evidently afraid of what was to follow.

"You are late in coming, arachchi," the head of the police remarked, as he bent on the man a stern steady glance of his eye.

"Ehe, Handroo" (yes, my lord), with a very low obeisance.

"Are these the whole of the men of your village?" asked Locko, consulting a paper, which he held in his hand. "Two, four, six, eight—twenty-six men, where are the others, sir?"

"I am my lord's slave, there are two awanting, and, on my eyes be it, I know not where they are."

"Get out you hound and don't stand up and tell lies there. Where are those two men?"

"God is my witness, I know not."

"Were they in the village yesterday?"

"They were, my lord."

"Are they there now?"

"Your slave cannot tell. They were not to be found when your meanest of servants received my lord's commands to come here."

Locko Banda consulted with one of the most intelligent-looking of his peons, who produced a pair of handcuffs, which were instantly clapped on the arachchi. The man fell at Locko's feet, and, clasping his knees, poured out the most abject supplications for mercy.

Locko Banda was a stout, handsome, well-made man, with a stern, intelligent eye, which seemed absolutely to blaze as he addressed his fellow countryman. It was an eye well calculated to make malefactors quake in the old days of the Kandyan dynasty. Even yet, it had not lost its power. He walked along the line of villagers, whom he had caused to be drawn up in single file, and examined them one by one, with those sharp, stern, black eyes of his. He seemed merely to glance at each man for a moment as he passed, but, in some instances, his glance seemed to have the same fascinating influence as that possessed by snakes. Those of the men who were thus affected were passed out of the line and secured like the arachchi, with handcuffs. Some of the peons who had been despatched to the village returned in the course of the afternoon, with the two missing men. Their backs were marked with the No. 7 shot, and, although they appeared to suffer much pain, their wounds were by no means dangerous.

The whole of the prisoners were conveyed into Kandy that evening, where they were examined by the Police Magistrate, who remanded them to take their trial before the Supreme Court. The two men, who had suffered from the shot, were each transported for seven years. The others were acquitted for want of sufficient evidence to convict them.

After this I had the walls of the store built of bricks, having windows, with strong wooden shutters and iron bolts, at intervals of every ten feet; but even this did not save me. In 1847 I had reason to suspect that a quantity of my coffee had been stolen. I could not understand how this could have been effected, as I had made it a point to examine each door and window every night, or make my assistants do this, and bring the keys to the bungalow. The day before the coffee had been stolen, several strange Kandyans had lounged about the works, as if they had come there from curiosity, to see how the beans were cured and to inspect the buildings and machinery. I never liked to see natives idling about the estate. When they did so, it was certain that some roguery was in the wind, and that it would be necessary for the proprietor or manager to keep his weather eye open.

I took unusual precautions in shutting the store that evening. I went round and bolted every window myself, and then locked the doors securely. Yet, next morning, I was certain that several bushels of parchment beans had been carried off. How had this been effected? The doors remained

locked, for I opened them myself, and the bolts were still sticking in the window frames. The walls had not been broken through, and the tiles on the roof remained intact. How then had the robbery been effected? This was a puzzling question, but I was resolved that it should be satisfactorily answered. When anything takes place more than usually mysterious, depend upon it, that the means used are generally of the most simple description, so simple indeed, that they are not even thought of in the effort to solve the puzzle. This was the case in this instance. My windows were fastened by means of round iron bolts, which fitted into holes in the upper and lower parts of the frames. The thieves had very adroitly managed to cut out the piece of wood which formed these holes, in one of the windows, so that the shutters, when closed and bolted, might easily be pulled open from the outside.

Another time, shortly after this, when I had iron sockets put into the frames, for the insertion of the bolts, I found, when fastening up for the night, that the holes in one of the windows had been skilfully plugged with small stones, so that the bolts would not enter them. The thieves must have been watching the success of this manoeuvre, as, not having the presence of mind so as to take no notice of the circumstance, but to lock up as usual, I spent some time in ridding the holes of the stones. I went to the store, dressed in black clothes to avoid observation, after it became dark, but there was no attempt at robbery. The villains

had been watching my proceedings and had kept aloof. It was well for them that they did so, otherwise they would have been greeted with a stronger dose than No. 8 shot.

I will cite only one more instance of coffee stealing, out of many which came under my observation, as having occurred on my own estates and on those of my neighbours.

O'Brien's stores, pulping-house and barbecues were situated on a ridge similar to the one on which my own works stood. These ridges, which spurred out from the hill-sides, presented, in most instances, the only semi-level spots available for buildings. When I use the word level, I do so in a very modified sense; for I never yet saw a building on any of the mountain estates in Ceylon, that did not require a deep cutting, or the building of a terrace before the ground was sufficiently level on which to erect it.

O'Brien's coffee works were higher up this ridge than his bungalow, and the road, or rather the pathway, from the former passed in front of the verandah of the latter.

O'Brien had received a visit from some military friends, young officers belonging to the regiments stationed in Kandy, and he had requested me to come up and "see him through the evening with them." The evening passed as such evenings usually do, and I was leaving for my own bungalow, accompanied by one of the officers, for whom O'Brien had not sleeping accommodation. The whole party were standing in the verandah, lighting

cheroots and chaffing each other, as was the wont of young coffee planters and officers in those days. The pathway I have mentioned turned in a circular sweep, after passing the bungalow, round the face of the ridge, and descended with a gentle gradient into the bed of an oya. When it emerged from this stream, it ran along the face of an opposite ridge and then zigzagged down to the lower parts of the estate.

It was a lovely night, and the moonlight fell full on the opposite ridge, where the road shone like a narrow streak of white marble, running along the face of the hill.

"Are those sheep," someone asked, "moving along the road?"

"It looks precious like sheep," someone else replied; "but I never heard of sheep running on air."

This was quite true. There appeared to be about half a score of these animals, running at a rapid rate immediately above the road, as if they were indeed running on air. This phenomenon puzzled the whole of us. We could not, for some time imagine what it could mean. O'Brien was the first to suggest a solution to the mystery.

"By jabers," he cried, "it is coffee from my store."

"It is, and no mistake," I cried in confirmation of this opinion.

"Let's chevy the fellows," cried one of the officers; and before I could interfere to prevent them, they were off at full speed after the thieves, holloaing, as if they were leading a charge of their own men against an enemy.

The result might have been anticipated. The thieves dropped their burdens and bolted. My first impulse was to rush into the bungalow and seize a fowling-piece or rifle, several of which were standing in a corner of the dining-room, together with a shot belt and powder flask. The gun was already loaded, and I ran, as fast as I was able, to the end of the first zigzag, thinking that I might get a shot at the thieves as they descended some of the others. They, however, had been too knowing for me. They had run down the brow of the hill, thus cutting off the zigzags, and they were far enough off by the time I reached my destination. The military, however, were still following up the pursuit, hollering to each other and yelling, as if they expected the thieves to be stopped by such means.

When they assembled at the bottom of the estate, each was more certain than the other that the robbers had not got out of the plantation, but that they were still lurking concealed amongst the coffee bushes. We walked round the fields, firing charges of shot through the bushes, in the hope that some of the blackguards might be unearthed, but we might just as well expect to find a needle in a bundle of hay, as discover a black fellow, particularly a Kandyan, when hiding in a coffee field or piece of jungle.

Whilst walking along the road, on our return to the bungalow, I fancied that I saw something move at the bottom of a large rock, which was lying in deep shadow, from the moon shining on

the opposite side. I ran forward with my gun cocked, but I could not perceive any further movement. At a short distance off the blackened stump of a tree was standing above the coffee bushes, with a limb projecting at right angles. I had heard of Indian thieves and scouts imitating, in a marvellous manner, objects of this sort, and I felt positive in my own mind that this was an instance of the kind.

"Speak," I roared in Sinhalese, "or I will fire," pointing my gun at the same time to the object of my suspicions.

There was no answer.

"Speak," I roared again, and as there was still no answer I fired. The stump did not move, it did not move, and it did not fall over nor yell, but stood as silent and immovable as before I fired.

I advanced towards it, after having reloaded the discharged barrel, and found, greatly to my chagrin and disappointment, that it was only a stump after all. My military friends, who had hung back, when they heard me address the old stump, now joined me and enjoyed a hearty laugh at my mistake and consequent discomfiture. I was able to turn the tables on them, by retorting that, had it not been for their headstrong impetuosity, we would most likely have bagged the villains, and I had the satisfaction of congratulating them ironically upon the tactics they had displayed, and hinted, that when they rose to the command of armies in the field, the same dash and carelessness of strategy would probably lead to equally successful results.

When we got to the top of the zigzags we found no fewer than twelve bags filled with parchment coffee, each bag containing nearly three bushels, and the whole plunder worth probably about twenty pounds.

We found nothing likely to lead to the detection of the thieves with the exception of a checked cotton handkerchief, with which one of the bags was tied; but it was of a pattern in such general use amongst the Kandyans, that, although I secured it carefully, I never entertained a hope that it would prove of any use, and it never did.

The bottom of the *entre valley* below my estates was filled with paddy-fields and villages, with the usual allowance of small boutiques and arrack taverns, kept by rascally lowcountry Sinhalese, and, in some instances, by the no less rascally low Moormen, and the overflowing coffee stores on the hills above offered attractions and temptations which were irresistible to gentlemen of their acquisitive dispositions. The ease with which the produce of these robberies could be disposed of, made the temptation all the greater. The coffee had only to be peeled in paddy-pounders and mixed with native beans, when no European merchant in Colombo would have been able to tell that it had been grown and cured upon a regular coffee estate, unless, upon close examination, he had discovered any beans bruised or scarred by the pulper. He would probably have considered it a superior sample of native produce and given a higher price for it accordingly.

CHAPTER XVIII.—SOMETHING ABOUT PULPERS
AND AN ADVENTURE WITH MONKEYS.

I find, in relating these affairs, that I have far outrun in chronological order the incidents of my narrative. In October 1841, my first large crop became ripe. I gathered between nine and ten thousand bushels of ripe berries. The men and women, too, were able to gather from three to four bushels each per day during the height of the crop season, but towards the end, when the fallen cherries had to be taken from the foot of the bushes, and only a thin sprinkling remained on the branches, this quantity diminished kept considerably. The crop season lasted generally from six weeks to two months, and it was a period of great bustle and much anxiety. The men in the field did not require much looking after, as they were paid according to the quantity they brought to the store. They got fourpence per bushel during the whole crop season, and they were, in consequence, able to earn better wages than at any other period of the year. The pulping and the drying operations were the most important and required the greatest degree of attention. The pulper was a machine, which, of itself, formed a perpetual source of torment to the planter. It consisted, at the time of which I write,—there have, I understand, been many improvements since,—of a framework of wood, enclosing a cylinder, covered with a sheet of copper punched to resemble a huge nutmeg grater. In front of this nutmeg grater were two bars of wood, called chops, the upper

one just sufficiently distant from the cylinder to permit a parchment bean to pass between them uninjured. The lower chop was placed close to the cylinder, with about half an inch of space between it and the upper one. The coffee cherries passed from the loft of the pulping-house into a hopper above the cylinder, the inclined plane of which brought them in contact with the revolving nutmeg grater. The copper fastened on the soft, pulpy outer coat of the cherries, which it stripped off, and the beans were then forced from between the two chops and fell upon a sieve, which allowed the pulped beans to drop through the intervals of the wires, whilst those that remained entire were thrown out and put back into the pulper, by a man stationed in front for that purpose.

The husks were thrown out behind by the rapid revolution of the cylinder, and the clean beans flowed into the fermenting cisterns.

The great object to be obtained in pulping was to see that the beans were not torn nor crushed in passing through the machine, and this could only be attained by constant attention on the part of the manager or his assistants, and great care in regulating the machine. If the two chops were far apart the berries passed through entire; if too close, the beans were torn and jagged, so as to render them of much inferior value in the market.

Vast sums of money were expended in putting up water-wheels and water-mills or turbine engines, with expensive machinery for driving the pulpers. After much experience in these matters, I would

not now, for my own part, expend one penny in such machinery. I would use manual labour exclusively. I put up a water-wheel on Dodangahakelle, but that was in the days of my griffinhood. I would not do it again. My reasons are as follows, and I think that they are sufficiently conclusive.

In the first place, Tamil coolies cannot and will not understand machinery. There is no machine in the world more liable to go wrong than a pulper. The hopper gets misplaced, the sieve gets jerked to pieces, tenpenny nails and stones get into the grater and tear the copper into pieces; the chops get shifted with the jerking motion of the machine, and sometimes the wooden framework itself gets dislocated from the same cause; cog-wheels get broken or the fly-wheel flies off. When any of these calamities occurs, instead of the coolie who first discovers that there is something wrong stopping the machine, if the pulpers are driven with water power, he bawls to some invisible personage at some distance off to do so. This invisible personage cannot do anything until he too has bawled to learn what is wrong, and when satisfied on this point, he bawls to some other person to let off the water and stop the wheel. In the meantime, an iron bolt, perhaps, has got into the pulper, and your nerves are in a state of torture listening to the tearing and crunching that it is causing on the copper; whilst from the men having ceased to feed the machine, the wheels are revolving with a velocity for which they never were intended. Two minutes' delay, in a case of this kind, will ruin a pulper; whereas when driven

by the hand they can be stopped the instant that anything is discovered to be amiss. Another reason, and perhaps a more conclusive one than the foregoing, is that, owing to the pulping season lasting only six weeks in each year, and as all this expensive machinery only saves the labour of four men to each pu'per during that period, or six pounds per annum at most, the interest of the original outlay is not compensated by the saving of labour. It is true, that pulpers driven with water-power will get through more work than if driven with men; but there is the great drawback of their greater liability to receive damage, and the chance, especially at night, unless well watched, of having a much larger proportion of the beans injured from a displacement of the chops before this accident, which is of very frequent occurrence, can be observed and rectified.*

After the beans are pulped they are allowed to lie in the fermenting cisterns for twenty-four hours, after which they are washed and spread on the barbecues to dry. In wet weather the drying process is very trying to the temper of the planter. The barbecues get filled with wet coffee, the stores get filled with heaps of the same, and unless these heaps are continually turned over, germination sets in, and the quality of the bean is deteriorated.

* The author's experience was gained long previous to the great improvements which made John Walker & Co.'s pulpers work as smoothly even under coolies' care as a piece of clockwork.—ED.

During crop time, the cry of "*malè, malè*" (rain, rain) at the stores is the signal for the whole of the men in the neighbourhood to run to the rescue and rake the coffee into heaps on the drying grounds, when it is covered with tarpaulins or carried into the store. Pulping, washing and every other work is, for the time being, suspended, until the partially-dried beans are secured against the impending shower. On the hill plantations, if the beans can be dried sufficiently to keep from heating, until the rains cease in January, the planter has reason to be satisfied, as a few days' sunshine then will enable him to get them into good condition to be sent to Colombo, to be peeled, sorted and shipped for London. When all goes well, it is pleasant, after the day's work is over, and the coolies settled in their lines, all but the men in the pulping-house, to listen to the rattle of the pulpers and the song of the men, as the great heaps in the cherry loft are falling into the revolving machines and dropping through them into the receiving cisterns beneath. If there have been no drenching rains through the day, and if the beans on the barbecues have been well secured, and the heaps in the store are not becoming heated, the planter feels as a good man may be supposed to feel after the performance of a praiseworthy action, and he can enjoy the bloom of his garden and the soothing fragrance of the Indian weed, with a degree of satisfaction and pleasure, which, of itself, is almost a sufficiency of happiness for mortals in this world.

No substance—not even sugar or salt—imbibes moisture more readily than coffee beans, and there-

fore it was found advisable to send the whole of the crops from the higher plantations down to Colombo, to be peeled and sorted previous to shipment, rather than run the risk of having the coffee deteriorated by the moist atmosphere of the hills.

By the end of December the whole of my crop was secured, and in January I had begun to despatch it to Colombo. It had to be carried on coolies' heads to Gampola, a distance of about 12 miles. Each coolie carried, if I remember rightly, either two bushels or two bushels and a half of parchment beans. I usually despatched the whole force on the estate with a load about mid-day every Saturday, and the men were back at work on Monday morning; thus taking only half a day to do what, under ordinary circumstances, would have taken them, at all events, a day and a half. Bandies were usually in waiting at Gampola to receive the loads, and the journey to Colombo then occupied four or five days more. By April the whole of the crop had been thus despatched and the stores were once more empty. The work of the estate was now of rather a humdrum nature. Weeding, repairing roads and thatching those buildings which were not tiled or roofed with galvanized iron comprised almost the whole of it. Brick-making still progressed, as also did lime-burning, for O'Brien was busy getting up his buildings in preparation for his first large crop. His assistant, Wallace, had been promoted to the management of my third estate, which was in course of being cleared at this time, and I had engaged another assistant in his place as well as one to Wallace.

Wallace's estate I named Dellgahatenna, or the flat of the breadfruit tree, several wild specimens of this plant having been found whilst clearing the forest.

It was while O'Brien and myself were examining the jungle, previous to commencing this new estate, that we met with rather a singular adventure, and one, I believe, never met with by Europeans before.

A large stream called the Coorooloo-oya flowed through the forest, which we intended to fell. In one part it flowed for a considerable distance along a dead level, and about the centre of this level it was crossed by a native path, now scarcely ever used, but which, in the days of the Kandyan dynasty, the natives told me, was one of the principal lines of communication from the interior through the mountains to the Saffragam country. We had forced our way through thick underwood, waded streams, scrambled up and down precipices and threaded distant glens. It was in the month of August when the weather was very hot and dry. A pocket compass, a flask of spirits and a paper with sandwiches was our only equipment, with the exception of a cutlass each, with which to cut our way through the nilu. We had started immediately after breakfast from O'Brien's bungalow, and it was now about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when we found ourselves in the path I have mentioned. I knew it from having been in the way of shooting jungle-fowl along it in the early months of the year. But although we knew the path, we could not tell what

particular part of it we were on, and had it not been for our compass, we could scarcely have told in which direction our homes lay. We were tired and exhausted, and seeing a large flat rock by the side of the path, we lay down on it, in the shade of some jasmine trees to rest our weary limbs and refresh our worn-out frames by an application to the sandwiches and spirit flask. The large, white, sweet-smelling flowers were falling in showers around us, perfuming the air, rather strongly, I thought, with their fragrance, for, as Master O'Brien very sagely remarked, "too much of a good thing is good for nothing."

We lay for a long time silent and ruminative, each absorbed in his own fatigue and his own reflections. The usual sounds of the forest were around us: the distant laugh of wanderoos, the equally distant scream of parroquets, the croaking of frogs, the humming of insects, the rustling of leaves, the whispering of the trees and the gurgle of running streams and falling waters.

We had lain thus for nearly an hour, too tired and too lazy to move, when our attention was aroused by an extraordinary sound near us. We knew that we were in the vicinity of the large stream which I have mentioned, and the noise appeared to proceed from the neighbourhood of it. It was a strange jabbering sound, as if a number of dumb men had met and were trying to articulate, but could only succeed in making a noise only a little less hideous than shrieking.

"What can it be?" asked O'Brien, as he sat up to listen, his face expressing as much alarm as one with so much pluck and handiness with the tools could be expected to express.

"Not knowing, can't say," I replied, assuming more coolness than I really felt.

"Hadn't we better be off? We have no firearms," my subaltern enquired, doubtingly.

"Speak lower, the noise increases; better wait and see what it is."

"What do you think it is? It seems to come from the water."

"I really cannot tell. I never heard a similar sound before, but take up your cutlass and follow me as quietly as possible, and we will soon discover what it is."

Now, I do not wish to take credit for more courage than I really possess, or than I would be capable of shewing. On the present occasion, my first impulse was to retreat, but as the sounds seemed more strange than dangerous, and as I recollected that every wild animal, unless when wounded or molested, instinctively flies from man, I put a bold face on the matter and advanced. I trod softly and warily and held my breath, as if I were approaching a pond full of buffaloes, O'Brien following.

There was nothing but a screen of leaves between us and the noise, which proceeded from a deep pool almost at our feet. I pushed aside a few of the leaves as gently as possible, and there, immediately under me was a flock of wanderoos,

or big black monkeys with grey beards, some sitting sedately on rocks and roots of trees, their white beards giving them a venerable and patriarchally human aspect. Others, they were the young men and maidens of the flock, jumped from stone to stone and rock to rock, or chased each other, on all fours, through the underwood. But the most interesting portion was the mothers who stood with the water as high as their waists and calling their baby monkeys to them, ducked and washed them with the same care and with the same tenderness that a human mother would have displayed towards her young ones. The whole proceeding was a singular parody on humanity. Every movement, every action, with the exception of the galloping on all fours, had a singular grotesque touch of humanism, to coin a word about it. The gravity of the old monkeys, the coyness of the young maidens, and the ardent attentions of the young fellows, might easily have met with their counter part in real life, and in the highest circles of human society too.

Like Tam o' Shanter, at the Kirk of Galloway, both O'Brien and myself stood 'amazed and curious' at this extraordinary scene. Almost all the babies had been washed and placed on rocks to allow the water to drip off their long silky coats. The elders were splashing each other with water, just like schoolboys in a pond, and were uttering sounds amazingly like human laughter, when O'Brien could stand it no longer, but joined the chorus, by giving way to his visible inclinations in

a loud guffaw. The spell which held the witches in thrall, in Tam o' Shanter's case, was not more suddenly broken. The patriarchs of the party seized the young ones in their arms and leaped into the nearest trees. The rest of the tribe followed them like a flash of lightning, and in an instant the pool was deserted, leaving no visible trace of its late tenants, with the exception of the swaying of distant tree tops, which marked their progress in retreating into the depths of the forest; whilst their eldritch screams of laughter were heard re-echoing far down the jungle, as if they were rejoicing at their escape from a great peril.

"Well, if that does not beat Banagher," was the sublime reflection of my manager, as we pursued our way, at a rapid rate through the forest, the slanting rays of the sun giving us due warning that we had already delayed too long, and that we would require to walk quick, if we did not wish to be overtaken by darkness before we reached the clearings.

I had occasionally fired at a wanderoo from a distance before this occurrence, but after it, I would as soon, as O'Brien phrased it, have had my grandmother up at twelve paces, as have thought of shooting at a monkey again.

The affectionate tenderness which they displayed for their young was enough to shield them from all danger from me. It might be copied with advantage by many other monkeys, who consider

themselves further advanced in civilization, or, perhaps, to speak more scientifically, further advanced in the process of development.

CHAPTER XIX.—WALLACE SHOTS A ROBBER.

That the contractors who had been employed on Dodangahakelle and Meegongoya had pocketed money by their contracts became quite evident, when it was made known that another estate was to be opened on the same land, from the immense number of men offering their services to clear ten, twenty, and even fifty acres of forest. One old gentleman, who was so old that he was unable to tell his age, offered to clear a hundred acres. He came to my bungalow accompanied by two sons, ten grandsons, and I am afraid to say how many great and great-great grandsons. Like the Bey of Tripoli, I believe that the old fellow, judging from the number I saw, could have raised a goodly regiment from his own descendants. It is wonderful to see how active the old natives are. Age does not appear to make any impression on them, so far as using their limbs is concerned. I have frequently seen men, who said they were upwards of a hundred years old, climb a coconut tree with the agility of a monkey; whilst a journey of forty miles or so per diem seemed a matter of no consequence to them.

The backwoods of Dodangahakelle were falling fast before the clatter of the Kandyans' axes. The said clatter is a most cheering and exhilarating

sound, and so also is the fall and crash of the big trees, as whole hillsides come sweeping down like children's card houses. It is pleasant to watch the clearly extending area of the clearings, as deep glens and dark ravines become exposed to the full glare of the midday sun, and waterfalls are seen tumbling over rocky crags, and brawling torrents tearing along deep gullies, and cascades leaping from rock to rock in noisy splash, and monkeys retreat into the more remote and distant recesses of the forest, wondering, perhaps, when all this clearing of their haunts by their brother bipeds would cease. Cease, I believe, it never will, until there is not another acre of land fit for coffee cultivation left uncleared on this beautiful island, perhaps, not until every square foot of ground is under cultivation, for some description of crop calculated to supply the ever-craving wants of civilized man. Then the wanderoo, the elephant, the wild buffalo and the jungle-fowl will become extinct like those animals which have ceased to live almost within the memory of living man.

Wallace, who was a very steady and a very painstaking if not a very brilliant specimen of a young Scotchman, had erected temporary lines for his labourers in the very centre of the new plantation, and an equally temporary hut for his own accommodation. This hut consisted of a sitting-room, two bedrooms and a verandah. It had no door, nor window, that is properly so called. It had openings in its mud walls representing these things, which were closed at night by means of

at framework of talipot leaves, which served in a slight degree to exclude the night air. There was no means of fastening these, and, generally speaking, there was very little necessity for the precaution of his fastening what a pocket knife could so easily cut through. The contractors had to be paid so much money every month, generally about two-thirds of the estimated work done, in order to enable them to settle with their men. Wallace had carried up some two hundred pounds in silver one evening—it was on a Friday—to enable him to make the necessary advances to his employees on the following day (Saturday).

I was a good deal astonished and in some degree alarmed by hearing someone rapping violently on my bedroom shutters shortly after midnight, and on getting up I was even more astonished at recognising Wallace's voice.

“For God's sake, sir, get up. I've shot a man,” he cried in strongly excited accents.

I opened the door without delay and admitted the young man, who grasped a double-barrelled fowling-piece in his hand and was trembling like a person in an ague fit.

“Come, compose yourself a little,” I said, “and tell us what all the row is about.”

“I've shot a man,” the poor fellow replied, “and I don't know what to do. He was trying to steal the money, and I fired at him, and he is lying quite dead, I believe, about a hundred yards from my bungalow.”

"If that is all, you need not put yourself into such a state of agitation: they can scarcely make you swing for protecting your employer's property."

"Don't laugh—pray don't. I'm not in a jesting humour. It seems so fearful to have taken the life of a fellow-creature. I wish to God I had not fired, but I did not think of the consequences."

"Are you sure the man is dead?" I asked.

"I believe he is, he did not move when I turned him over. There was no one about the cookhouse, the servants are off somewhere, and I have brought the money down with me. I don't think I ever did anything that I regretted so much."

"Never mind," I said cheerily, "the money is all right, and if you are tried for this affair, an enlightened jury is certain to bring in a verdict of 'justifiable' homicide.' But let us rouse some of the men and look after the fellow. Perhaps he is only wounded."

We went to the lines and knocked up Juan Sebastian de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez, a cangany and some men, and calling for O'Brien, we took him with us to the scene of action. That bloodthirsty individual was delighted with the affair, although his ecstasy was considerably damped with the reflection that it was not himself who had stretched his man on the ground. His surprise was great indeed to see Wallace so much affected, and, to tell the truth, so also was I. I can easily understand how much the mere fact of having a fellow-creature's blood on one's

head, even when shed in self-defence, is calculated to agitate the minds of these, whose nerves are not made of the toughest materials, and whose perceptions of the natural sequence of events are not very clear.

"I say Luff, are we near the place yet?" inquired O'Brien of his late assistant. "Why man, what makes your teeth chatter as if you had seen a ghost? You have done nothing that you need either be afraid or ashamed of. It is not likely to end in 'This is just newly-printed and published the last dying speech and confession of George Wallace, who was hanged at Kitooltenna, near Kandy, for the cruel and horrid murder of Periya Carpen.'"

"Don't, Wolfe, for God's sake don't chaff upon so serious an affair," Wallace pleaded. "You don't know how acutely I feel. It was somewhere here that the man fell," he added, as he stopped and pointed to a part of the pathway, which, although the dawn was beginning to break, was still in deep shadow, from being overhung by a mass of rock.

"Nothing here of any consequence," O'Brien said, as he carefully examined the spot and brushed away a quantity of dead leaves with his hand.

"Good heavens, what is this?" he exclaimed, as he lifted his hand, to which a quantity of the leaves adhered, and examined it by the gradually increasing light, "Blood, by all that's sacred, and human blood too. Faugh."

"Yes, here is the blood, but where is the

body?" I inquired, as I also examined the spot; whilst poor Wallace stood by more agitated than ever.

"Gone, bolted, vanished, crawled into the jungle to die," suggested O'Brien.

The tomtoms were now beating in the lines of all the three estates, and the men were preparing for their work. By-and-by they came towards the bungalow in groups, but they seemed perfectly unaware that anything unusual had occurred, and seemed surprised to see all the Europeans searching about in one spot. The servants too had returned and were getting ready the morning cup of coffee. The coolies were despatched to their work, and then we began to search for the wounded man. We could trace the blood a short distance along the path, as if he had dragged himself a little way and then it ceased. We examined every heap of brushwood in the vicinity, but we could discover nothing.

"He has had associates," suggested O'Brien, "and they have carried him off."

"It looks very like it," I replied, "and, therefore, there is no use wasting more time in a fruitless search. The fellow will be among good hands, and therefore you can cheer up, Wallace, old fellow, you will only have kilt him, in the Irish sense of the word, and the man not being dead you will escape *sus. per col.* this bout."

The traces of the blood showing that the man must have crawled some distance along the path-

way seemed to afford a great deal of relief to Wallace. He breathed more freely and made an effort to look more cheerful. It was but an effort, however. It was many a long day after that before the young fellow recovered his former cheerfulness of disposition.

We never heard anything more about the man. He had evidently been a stranger about the place; none of the men belonging to the contractors being missing, and no wounded person being in the lines. I had my own opinion upon the matter, which however, I did not mention at the time. I believed that the fellow had been tempted by the large sum of money to make an effort to get possession of it, and that he had been stunned in the first instance by the shot; that he had recovered strength sufficient to drag himself away from the spot where he fell, and that he was probably lying close in some crevice of the rocks, or under some heap of fallen timber, where it would be impossible to unearh him. If he recovered he would find means to escape, but if not his bones would, in all probability, be found when we came to be holing the new estate. I did not mention this to Wallace, but I directed a cangany and ten men to continue the search throughout the whole of that day, and, as it was unsuccessful, I felt satisfied that I had done all I could to find the wounded man and have him cared for if discovered, and if any evil came to him, that his blood was on his own head. I thought it expedient, however, to allow Wallace to remain in the belief,

that the man had been carried off by his own friends or accomplices.

Some six months after, when the men were digging holes, a skeleton, partly charred by the burning, was discovered, as I had anticipated, at no great distance from the spot where the man had fallen. The head was lying at the edge of a nullah, or small stream, where the fellow had dragged himself and tried to drink. I had privately given directions to the canganies, that if anything of the kind were found, no one should be apprised of it, with the exception of myself or O'Brien. I had the bones collected and buried in the ground, which had been enclosed on the patana, with a hedge of myrtles and roses, as a graveyard for the coolies on my estates, and Wallace never knew what, I believed, was the result of his shot.

His account of the affair was as follows:—

He had no strong box or safe in which to deposit the money, and he had, in consequence, taken it to bed with him, tying the mouth of the bag with his neckerchief and attaching it to his right arm. He had loaded his fowling piece with bullets and laid it by his side. He had fallen sound asleep, but he did not know how long he had slept, when he had a semi-consciousness that someone was tugging at the money bag beside him. He felt the neckerchief being cut, and he knew that a man was escaping through the doorway with the bag and the money, but he was powerless to move or make any effort to prevent him.

By a desperate effort he succeeded in uttering a single scream, and then awoke, perfectly conscious of what was taking place. Another instant, and all action would have been too late, pursuit would have been hopeless. He seized his gun, rushed to the doorway, and fired at the retreating figure of the man, of which he just caught a glimpse, as it was disappearing down the pathway. He heard the man fall, and he then ran up to him and recovered the money. He then went to awaken the servants, but the cookhouse was empty, so he dressed himself and came down to me, carrying the money with him. In passing the wounded man, he had turned him over and examined him, and, seeing that he did not move, he had concluded that he was dead.

Wallace was of a highly sensitive disposition, and a warm-hearted, well-intentioned lad. This affair made a deep impression on his mind, so much so, that, as I have already mentioned, it was months after before I ever again saw him smile.

CHAPTER XX.—MORE ABOUT NATIVE THIEVES.

This was not the only attempt at robbery which I experienced about this time.

I had a large box made of keena planks, two inches thick and heavily clasped with iron. This box was three or four feet square, and the lid was secured with iron bars and a big padlock. Within the box, which stood in my bedroom and

which opened like a cupboard, there was an iron safe, tolerably strong and almost filling the receptacle in which it was placed. One night I was awakened some time past midnight by a rustling and scraping sound in the room. We were very much annoyed with rats, and as the noise ceased when I moved, I concluded that it was occasioned by these troublesome rodents. I turned on my side and fell asleep again. In those days my slumbers were very deep and sound. O'Brien used to say that a pistol fired close to my ear would not awaken me, but this, I believe, was a gross exaggeration. On the present occasion I slept soundly until sunrise. When I got up I was astonished to find a hole in the wall of the room, opening into the verandah, capable of allowing a man to enter, by crawling through. I knew at once what it meant. Holes of this description were not of unfrequent occurrence in those days, and they were sure and certain signs that thieves had been about the premises. I did not feel much alarmed, as there was no great amount of money in the bungalow, and there were no valuables likely to tempt the cupidity of a Sinhalese robber about the room. My watch, which was under my pillow was all safe, but my trowsers, the pockets of which contained my purse and keys, were gone, as also were a shot belt and powder flask. The locks of the strong box showed no symptoms of having been meddled with, and on the whole, the thieves, whoever they were, had little reason to congratulate themselves upon the amount of their loot.

I was in the habit of locking the key of the keena box into a drawer in a writing table, which stood in the sitting-room, and the key of the safe in the desk of the same. I fancied, therefore, that the intention of the thieves was to obtain possession of these keys, and by means of them make another attempt at loot, when their efforts were more likely to meet with a greater degree of success. I sent immediately into Kandy for an assortment of new locks, and had them placed upon every drawer and receptacle, which was likely, at any future period, to be ransacked.

Another time, a pane of glass in the window in my bedroom was broken. My appu, a young dashing Sinhalese lad, who had been engaged to supply the place of Meedin, who had asked for a six months' holiday to visit his relations at Jaffna, said it had been broken by a tame pigeon flying through it. In front of this window stood my toilet table, and here, on undressing before getting into bed, I was in the way of laying my keys, which I wore suspended from a ribbon round my neck. The window was not repaired for some days. In point of fact, I was waiting until I went to Kandy at the end of the month for money to pay the coolies, when I could procure the glass cut to the exact size required. The morning before I went to Kandy the keys were missing. I felt certain that I had taken them off and laid them in their usual place the previous evening, but now they were nowhere to be found. I called

the appu, but he, of course, knew nothing about them.

"I never take Master's keys," he said. "What for I take Master's keys? Master's keys no use to me. I got no drawers, no box, no nothing to put key in."

I was not accusing him of having taken the keys, neither, at the time, did I imagine that he had taken them, and yet their disappearance was somewhat mysterious.

"Sometime rat take them, Sir," the appu suggested, and, sure enough, part of the string to which they were attached, was discovered, in the course of the day, at the entrance to a rat's hole. I had the hole dug up, but nothing was found but the fragment of ribbon already mentioned.

"Funny," I thought, "that rats should have a liking for cold iron." It seemed rather an indigestible description of food for them to use. As, however, I was totally unacquainted with the natural history of these animals, I was unable to decide whether the probabilities were in favour of or against my keys having been bolted by these annoying vermin.

I returned in due course from Kandy with my money and deposited it safely in my strong box. I then dined with Knox, who was my assistant at the time, took my usual moderate allowance of wine, had coffee, and then went to bed.

The appu, whose name was Francis, was more than usually officious that evening. I observed that he watched closely the operation of depositing

the money bags in the safe. They contained nearly a thousand pounds. His eye was never off me for a moment during the whole of that evening. I could not move, but he was sure to be at my elbow. His continual presence and officiousness began to irritate me; I got nervously annoyed at always catching the fellow's eye, in whatever direction I happened to him. At last I rose to go to bed:

"Get a candle, Francis," I said, "and bring my gun."

"Master can't see to shoot just now. It is too dark, sir," the fellow replied, putting the candle on the table.

"Bring the gun at once, you blockhead, and don't bother your head whether I can see to shoot or not."

The gun was brought, but I fancied that I could perceive some hesitation in Francis's manner, as he handed it to me. There were caps on the nipples, and these I snapped in the verandah. I then loaded with powder and fired both barrels off, in case that there might have been any tampering either with the gun or the powder, as I somehow suspected that there might have been. The barrels went off all right.

"So far, so good," I thought.

I then proceeded to charge the gun in earnest, Francis looking on.

"Master not going to put bullet in gun?" that gentleman remarked, as I proceeded to ram home the article in question,

“Certainly, why not?” I replied, amused at the fellow’s astonishment, real or pretended.

“What Master frightened at? Thief man come, then Master call me, not good for shoot. Master shoot dead then sometime Government will hang Master.”

“Call you!” I answered, laughing at the fellow’s impudence. “What would you do if you were called, run away?”

“No, sir, I not run away, I estop and catch thief man.”

“I have a better way of catching thieves than by your assistance. This is the best of all thief catchers, shewing him the second bullet, as I put it into the muzzle of the gun and rammed it home.

I placed the gun against the strong box in the bedroom and then proceeded to wash myself. There was no water in the jug, but Francis was zealous and brought some. He poured it into the basin and stood by, whilst I bathed my head and neck. I have a habit of burying my head in the basin, and keeping it there as long as I can conveniently hold my breath. When I withdrew my head, Francis was ready to hand me a towel, which he did with a degree of coolness which deserved great praise. He then left the room and I finished my undressing. I took the gun to place it in the bed, and happening to turn the muzzles of the barrels downwards, I was surprised to find a stream of water running out of each of them. I was astonished beyond measure at this

phenomenon: it seemed so unaccountable. I drew the ramrod and examined the barrels. They were quite wet. In an instant, my servant's extraordinary officiousness occurred to my mind, and I felt certain that the villain had some plan concocted to rob and, perhaps, murder me that night. What could I do? If I went to him at once, I would only precipitate matters, and I, therefore, blew out the light and sat down in the bed, wondering what would be my best course of proceeding. Knox slept at the other end of the house, and the dining-room was between us. If I tried to open communications with him, the appu might take the alarm and be off, and I wished, if possible, to catch him in the middle of his villainy. I sat for more than an hour ruminating upon what would be the best plan to adopt under the circumstances, but, as usual in such cases, I could decide upon nothing.

At last, tired of the suspense, and feeling, at the same time, wearied and sleepy from the fatigue of my journey, I went to Knox, and, much to his astonishment, I roused him from his slumbers. He had a sword-stick in his bedroom. This I took possession of, and told him to dress himself and follow me to the cookhouse. We heard a suppressed murmur of voices as we approached the door, but we could not recognise the subject of conversation. I pushed up the door and stood in front of it, with the drawn blade in my hand. There were four or five lowcountry Sinhalese men, with most villainous countenances, lounging upon the benches,

which served as sleeping places, throwing dice, and at the same time, discussing a bottle of my best *eau de vie*. A moment of astonishment and alarm followed on my pushing open the door and making my appearance on the scene. One fellow tried to hide the dice, another tried to hide the brandy bottle, whilst my trusty servitor, Francis, approached, and, with an impudent coolness, asked me: "What for master out of bed? What for master come here?"

This assumption of injured innocence was rather too much for me. I rushed forward to seize the fellow. His body was smeared with oil and he slid through my fingers like an eel. The light was dashed out, I was overturned in the floor, the sword-stick was dashed out of my hand, there was a rush of feet, the doorway was obscured for a moment by a number of flying figures, and then the moonlight shone in once more, in unobstructed radiance on my prostrate body. I got up, feeling very small and somewhat ashamed to face Knox, but that gentleman, even although he had been so inclined, had no opportunity of crowing over me. He, too, had tried to seize some of our slippery customers—slippery in more senses than one, and had got a stroke over the head with a heavy stick for his pains. He was lying stupefied and bleeding outside. I got some cold water and a towel to bathe his wounds, which were not serious, and then I turned out the men and sent them in pursuit of the vagabonds. It was useless, however. I never saw Francis nor any of his friends again.

My cook, I was glad to find, was not in the plot. He had been got rid of by being sent on an urgent errand, with a note to Wallace, and had orders, if he were gone to bed, to remain at his bungalow all night and deliver it the first thing in the morning. This note was an old letter of my own, which, however, suited the purpose for which it was intended. I had a narrow escape, and thankful I was for it. On searching the box supposed to contain the personal property belonging to Francis, I found my missing keys, a silver fruit knife, a rupee, some copper money, and a piece of twine.

CHAPTER XXI.—MORE ROBBERIES.

Three or four months after this, I had another case of robbery about my premises. I had engaged a lowcountry Sinhalese cangany, who had brought a gang of men to the estate. It was crop time, and labourers were scarce. I did not like the look of this man. He had one of those countenances for which one feels an instinctive dislike, at the very first sight. I required the men, however, and therefore I engaged him. At the end of the month O'Brien and Wallace went to Kandy and brought out the money. It was a very large sum, and, as I did not care about having so large an amount of cash lying in the house, I paid the coolies that afternoon.

There was still, however, a balance remaining of between fifty and sixty pounds after I had

finished, and I threw the bag containing this balance into the big box, without being at the trouble of putting it into the iron safe, after which I rode over to O'Brien's, where I stayed for dinner.

I came home about 9 o'clock. I met Meedin on his way to tell me that the keena box had been broken open and the cash stolen. The padlock had been smashed in pieces with a hammer, after an attempt to wrench it off with a crowbar, which was lying beside it, had failed. Knox had gone out shooting when I left for O'Brien's, and he could tell nothing about the robbery. Meedin had been the first to tell him what had occurred, when he brought him his coffee after dinner. Meedin knew nothing further than that he found the crowbar on the floor, when he went to put a light into master's room, to wait his return. He then examined the box and found the lock broken. This was all I could learn about the affair. Not much, certainly by which to discover the thief.

I sat down in the verandah, whilst I smoked a cheroot and pondered over the subject.

"Was there anyone on the estate, more likely than another to commit this theft?"

This was rather a hard matter to decide, where the whole of the natives would have very little scruple in stealing, provided that they had a fair chance of escaping detection and punishment. Still, my thoughts, by a species of instinct, wandered to the lowcountry Sinhalese cangany. The man's

face was against him. No honest man ever possessed so villainous a countenance.

"Was there anyone present when I threw the money into the box?" Yes, certainly, there was the Sinhalese cangany again. His men had been the last batch who had been paid, and he had received his own quota after his men had all departed to the lines. Besides, he had followed me into my bedroom, when I locked the money up, on the plea of having some complaint to make or grievance to have redressed, and, therefore, the Sinhalese cangany was undoubtedly the thief.

I pitched away the fag-end of my cheroot, and, calling Knox we went to the Sinhalese lines. The men were all there, but the cangany was absent. No one had seen him on the estate since 4 o'clock. A coolie of O'Brien's had met him, about an hour after that, carrying a bundle tied to his back and walking very fast, as if he were in a great hurry. None of his men could tell me what part of the country he belonged to. Perhaps they only pretended ignorance on this point. It might be Galle; it might be Matara or Kalutara; or it might be Moratuwa or Colombo. In short, he might belong to any one of the four or five thousand towns or villages in the low-country. They knew nothing about him, further than that they had chosen him for their cangany, because he had gained their money in gambling, besides he was clever with his tongue and could speak a little English. They all agreed in saying that he was a great rogue and quite capable of

helping himself to master's money, but they wished it to be understood that they were no parties to his roguery. I was tired with a hard day's work, in fact, with a week's hard work, for it was Saturday night; nevertheless, I ordered my horse and set off in pursuit of the thief.

There were several small bazaars or native boutiques along the road, where oilcakes and plantains, hoppers and jaggery, and sometimes wine and beer were sold to weary sojourners. I had no hesitation in knocking up the inmates of these places, to make inquiries after the fellow I was in pursuit of. Some had seen him and some had not. Those who had seen him agreed in saying that he carried a bundle, which seemed very heavy, in proportion to its size.

There was an arrack tavern about half way to Gampola. Here, I learned that the fellow had remained for some hours, perhaps two or three. He had seated himself on his bundle, remained on it all the time he was in the tavern. He had drunk a good deal of arrack, and had also carried a couple of bottles away with him. Further on the road, I met some coolies, who said that he had passed them about an hour ago, and that he appeared to be very tipsy. Just before reaching Gampola, I was told that he was not half a mile ahead and very drunk. I rode up to the rest-house and jumped from my horse, and there, tottering along the road, scarcely able to stand, was the man I wanted. We, that is my horse-keeper and myself, went up and seized him, upon

which he heaped a lot of drunken abuse upon our unlucky heads, in voluble English, an accomplishment which I then discovered for the first time that he possessed.

I went to the Police Magistrate, a half-caste, whose name I now forget, very big, very insolent and very pompous, as is the wont of half-castes, with little minds, when clothed with a little temporary authority. This gentleman was angry at being disturbed at such an unseasonable hour, and would scarcely listen to my apologies regarding the urgency of the case. It was only when I threatened to report him to the Government, that he consented to take my affidavit and send peons to take charge of the thief until Monday morning, when I had to be in attendance at the Courthouse to substantiate the charge.

The whole of the missing money, with the exception of a few rupees, was found in the possession of the cangany; but when I appeared to prosecute, the worthy and intelligent Magistrate seemed inclined to let the man off, cash and all, because, forsooth, I could not swear that the rupees placed before me were those which I had lost. I could swear to the amount of the cash, and I could swear to the bag that contained it; but this sapient judge was not quite sure if he would be justified in restoring the money to me, although he convicted the prisoner of breaking open the box and stealing the bag. For this heinous crime the thief was sentenced to only one

month's imprisonment." It was evident that this leniency on the part of the Magistrate was occasioned by the fact, that I did not appear inclined to submit to his insolence of office. The colonial newspapers are always open to ventilate a grievance, and when I wrote to the editor of the *Observer*, that bellicose Irishman took up the matter in a very trenchant style and pitched into the Gampola Magistrate, in several telling editorials, which created some sensation throughout the island.

I had only one other case of serious stealing during my residence in Ceylon, and it occurred in this wise.

A new estate had been opened, some three or four miles off the road, between Gampola and Dodangahakelle, by a gentleman of the name of Connon. I had received several visits from Connon, and as many pressing invitations to come over and see him. He was a married man, and had his wife and family residing on the estate with him. I had gone into Kandy, and was on my way out with money to pay my coolies. I was detained at Gampola until late in the afternoon by some friends whom I met at the resthouse. Shortly after I left, it came on one of those thunder showers so common within the tropics, when it might easily be imagined that the firmament had burst and that there was to be a second deluge, the rain came down in such gushing torrents. In two minutes I was wet through, and I knew that the streams between me and home would be

so swollen that it would be impossible to ford them. What should I do: return to Gampola, or take up my lodgings at some of the wayside native houses? Whilst undecided which course to pursue, I reached the path leading to Connon's estate where it joined the Gampola trace. His bungalow was scarcely two miles off, and there were no streams to cross. A cold wind began to blow, and this, combined with the rain, made the coolies carrying the money shiver and shake like men in an ague fit. I started them along Connon's path, cracking my whip and trotting behind them. I was cold, wet and uncomfortable, my clothes sticking to my body, and the wind making my teeth chatter like a pair of castanets. Connon's estate was very high amongst the hills. He said that it was considerably more than five thousand feet above the sea-level; and when riding through the wet patanas, where the wind had a full sweep over us, and where the long seed stalks of the lemongrass, loaded with rain-drops, flew in our faces and prickly creepers lashed our cheeks, our journey seemed long and toilsome enough. I was glad when, on turning a corner of the path, the bungalow came in sight close at hand. I received a warm and hospitable welcome from both the lady and gentleman of the house.

Dinner was laid in the dining-room, and the lights were burning brightly on the tables. I had a pocket-book crammed with bank-notes in my jacket pocket. It seemed wet and spongy as a mass of pulp. I laid it on the dining table and

then went into an adjoining bedroom to change my dripping clothes. The appu was very officious and attentive in bringing me water and towels and dry clothes. Now, it may perhaps be only a prejudice on my part, but I never liked to see these fellows paying more than an extra degree of attention: it always, without exception, boded mischief. I could not have been more than ten minutes in dressing and returning to the dining-room. Cannon had carried my money bags into his own bedroom, where the safe was. On the spot where I had laid my pocket-book, a small block of wood, which might, perhaps, have been used as a letter weight, was now lying. Mrs. Cannon and the children were romping in the verandah, and the appu was fussing about the room.

When Cannon returned to the room, I asked if he had put away my pocket-book with the money bags.

"Pocket-book," he said; "I did not see any pocket-book."

"I laid it on the table here," I said, pointing to the spot where the piece of wood was now lying, "before I went into the bedroom to dress. When I returned, it was off and this lying in its place. I thought, therefore, that you, perhaps, may have put it away for safe keeping."

"Are you sure of that?" my host asked, with a shade of incredulity in his tone. "It is very extraordinary that it should have disappeared."

"I am quite certain," I replied; "and I quite

agree with you that its disappearance is very extraordinary. One thing is quite sure and evident, that it could not have disappeared without hands."

"Well, there have only been two pairs of hands here this evening, barring my own; and we will soon see which of them have taken it. I certainly did not do so myself. Here, Mary, did you take Mr. Green's pocket-book?"

"No, dear, I did not," the lady replied, coming into the room, followed by her children. "Was there much money in it?"

"More than a hundred pounds," I replied, in a rueful tone of voice.

"If you have lost it, it is a great pity that I did not find it. I assure you that you would not have got it back in a hurry. I would have pocketed the whole lot, and it would have been so nice to have had so much money all of one's own."

"It was not lost. It has been stolen off our dining table," her husband broke in abruptly, "and either you, or I, or the appu, must have taken it. Now, I wish to know seriously, Mary, if you know of it, or if you have seen any one enter the room."

"I did not take it, I did not even see it, and no one but the appu has entered the room, with the exception of yourself."

"Here, appu," Cannon roared, in an angry tone of voice.

The appu appeared in an instant, as if he had been listening behind the door, which was very probably the case, and looking very conscious and self-confident as if he were quite prepared to undergo a searching examination, without saying anything to criminate himself. I had, by this time, become so well acquainted with the native character, that I flattered myself they could not very easily hoodwink me. I saw by the man's manner, the moment he appeared, that it was he who had stolen my pocket-book; but I saw, at the same time, that it would be a very difficult affair to make him own it.

"Go and find this gentleman's pocket-book," his master said, mildly, but firmly.

The appu looked on the table, on the chairs, on the sideboard and on the floor, but he did not see the article wanted.

"Where's this gentleman's pocket-book?" he asked, in a tone of innocent inquiry.

"Now appu," his master said, "don't try any of your games on me. This gentleman placed his pocket-book, full of money, on that table, and there has been no one here, but you and me, and the mistress. Now, if you do not find that pocket-book within two minutes, by the Lord Harry, I will flay the skin off your black back. Now look here and don't mistake me," Cannon continued, producing a heavy riding whip, and drawing his watch from his pocket, "for, by Moses, I'll do it."

The appu looked alarmed at the turn affairs had taken, but he remained firm. His countenance turned visibly pale, and he fussed about the bedroom in which I had changed my clothes, as if he were really searching for the book.

"One minute up," his master said; "now look sharp, you have only another to spare."

"What can I do, sir?" cried the man, in a whining tone of voice, "I not know where got pocket-book, how then can I find?"

"That's your lookout, not mine. Only twenty seconds now. Come look sharp, you need not search there, you have looked into that place a dozen of times already. Time's up," he added, as he replaced the watch in his pocket. "Have you found it?"

"No, sir, I not find it," replied the appu, coming into the dining-room, looking like a martyr drawing near to the stake, firm, but resigned to suffer in a good cause. "What way I can find? I sometime think this gentleman make mistake and not bring pocket-book here at all."

"Mary, you will go to the cook-house for a short time and take the children with you. You cannot remain here," said my host, in a calm, stern tone of voice.

"Oh James, do have some mercy and don't hurt the man," pleaded the soft nature of his wife. "He will, perhaps, tell where he has hidden the book, and——"

"Do as you are told. Leave this room instantly

and take the children with you. Mr. Green, you will perhaps see that the doors are secured," said Connon, in the tone of a man who had made up his mind to perform a disagreeable task and was resolved not to flinch from it, as he shut the door opening on the front verandah and drew the dining table into a corner, so that he might have more room to chastise his victim.

"You have no doubt, Mr. Green, that this man has taken your pocket-book?" he inquired of me.

"None whatever," I replied, "I am as certain that he has taken it as if I had seen him in the act of doing it."

"Then I have none either, and, by the heavens above us, it will be produced forthwith, or the blackguard shall never leave this room alive. Now, sir, you have one more chance. Where is that pocket-book?"

"I not know, sir," was the dogged reply.

"Then here goes," said Connon, as he laid the heavy whip across the fellow's shoulders. "Where is the pocket-book, you scoundrel?"

The man shrieked and writhed with the agony of the blow, but he still held out with wonderful determination, and protested that he had not the pocket-book.

Number two descended on the fellow's back, with even greater force than number one; but it only elicited a shriller scream of agony and a more urgent prayer for mercy.

“Oh! sir, I not take that pocket-book, I not steal master’s money. Oh! sir, don’t—don’t beat. Oh! sir, I no a rogue man. Oh! master—master—master don’t beat,” and the fellow crawled and writhed at his master’s feet, as if he would lick the dust under them.

Number three descended, and there was a harder and more prolonged shriek of pain.

“Oh! James, for God’s sake spare the man,” cried Mrs. Cannon from the outside of the door. “Oh! for my sake have some mercy on him.”

Cannon uttered something like an imprecation on his better half, as he ordered her off, and number four descended upon his victim.

The scene was becoming very painful, even for me, who had become, in a measure, case-hardened against the sufferings of natives, when I knew them to be guilty of any sort of villainy, and I interfered in his behalf.

“Leave him alone.”

“No, by heavens, I will not leave him alone,” was the reply I received. “You came here after many pressing invitations, and the welcome you receive in my house is to have yourself robbed. I will flay the scoundrel, or he shall tell me where that pocket-book is.”

“If you will allow me, there is a better method of getting at the object we have in view, than the one you have taken. Lashing will never make him confess, but, if you will be guided by

me, we will get it out of him in less than half-an-hour."

"Take your own way then; the money was yours, and, for anything I care, you may take and shoot the fellow."

"I will not take quite so strong a measure as that," I replied. "Have you any whip-cord or strong twine about the house?"

"Plenty, here is a ball of it," Connon said, as he took the article asked for, from a drawer in the sideboard.

"Now, will you bring the appu there?" I asked, as I went to the front verandah and threw a turn or two of the cord over the beam which supported the roof.

When brought under the cords, I attached them tightly to his thumbs and then drew his hands towards the beam until he was standing on the very points of his toes. Having fastened him in this position, I turned to Connon and said, that we might now adjourn to dinner and the pocket-book would certainly be forthcoming before that meal would be finished.

The cook brought dinner and attended at the table. Mrs. Connon looked sulky and did not appear to approve of the treatment to which we were subjecting her servant, who, I afterwards understood, had been a great favorite of hers. That gentleman, was, in the meantime, sobbing at a great rate, and shortly after his sobs were mingled with entreaties to be taken down. We

shut the doors, so that his cries might not sound so harshly on our ears. They increased in energy and shrillness every minute, and before the soup was finished they were very painful to listen to. Mrs. Connon pleaded very hard for mercy, and hinted pretty plainly, that I must be mistaken in fancying that I had placed a pocket-book on her table. She had always found Matis honest, and she had no reason to doubt that he was so, in the present instance. I explained that the torture he was undergoing was very painful, very painful indeed, but that it was a description of torture to which the natives of Ceylon had been accustomed for countless generations, upon the same principle that eels get accustomed to skinning. These fellows therefore did not mind much being strung up by the thumbs: in point of fact, they rather liked it than otherwise after it was over, and it was a very effectual method of getting at the truth when every other means failed.

The lady was only half convinced with this logic, and as the man's cries were really becoming heartrending, she begged all the harder that he should be left off.

“The loss of a hundred pounds to a person of your wealth, Mr. Green, cannot be a matter of much consequence,” she said; “and sooner than see a fellow-creature tortured in that manner, I would pay it twice over myself, if only I had the money.”

"Indeed, you would do nothing of the kind, Mary," her husband remarked ; and both he and I remained obdurately deaf to her entreaties and the screams of the appu outside.

Cannon had asked several times if he were yet prepared to tell where the missing property was, but he stoutly maintained that he really did not know. By the time that the pudding was put upon the table, his protestations were neither so long nor so loud, whilst his cries for mercy increased. Before the cloth was removed, he bawled out: "Oh! master, take me down, and sometime I will find that gentleman's pocket-book."

Cannon was on the point of cutting the cords, when, much to his wife's anger and indignation, I interfered to prevent him.

"Tell us first where to find it, and then you shall be let down," I said.

It required several minutes' longer suspension before the fellow would do this.

At length he told us to look under an easy-chair in a small dressing-room opening from the back verandah ; "and sometime," he said, "you will find the book."

We looked, but it was not there. The appu protested that it was. The chair was an English-made one, and, in order to search more effectually, I overturned it ; when, secreted between the cushioned seat and the girth, we found the missing property which had created all this fuss.

I cut down the thief, whom Cannon was for

securing and sending him down to Gampola, but I, thinking that the rascal had already suffered punishment enough already, begged that he might be allowed to march off scot-free, which prayer, much to the appu's astonishment, was granted.

I was not done with him, however. In the course of a few days both Connon and myself received citations to appear before my friend, the Police Magistrate of Gampola, to answer a charge for assault and battery, committed on the person of "Matis Appu, of Murootie, and lately residing on Umbawatte Coffee Estate."

We attended, but the pursuer failed to appear against us, and the case was accordingly dismissed.

CHAPTER XXII.—ROBBERIES WITH VIOLENCE.

Although the Sinhalese never hesitated to steal any valuables from Europeans whenever they had the opportunity of doing so, with a reasonable chance of escaping detection, still they very seldom ventured to attack them with violence, notwithstanding the large sums of money which they were in the habit of carrying every month from Kandy to the coffee estates. It was very seldom, indeed, that the planters went armed. In fact it was the exception, not the rule, for Europeans to travel with arms. Still, there were only three highway robberies during the whole period of my residence in the island.

Mr. George Rigg was the first European who had the unenviable honour of being attacked and plundered by natives. This occurred, I think, in 1842 or 1843. He was returning to the estate in Hewaheta alone, when he was met by a number of lowcountry Sinhalese, knocked off his horse and robbed of his money. I don't recollect the particulars of this affair. I don't think that the villains were ever convicted, and the robbery did not excite much attention at the time.

The next victim of native violence and cupidity was a gentleman of the name of Boyd, better known in Ceylon as Monagha Boyd. I happened to be intimately acquainted with him,* and was present in the Court when one of the robbers, Eliaeda Arachchi, who assaulted him, was tried. Mr. Boyd was manager of the Munagahagalla estate, on the Knuckles range. He had gone to Kandy for a small sum of money, about £80. He had a strong Pegu pony, and as he was intending to bring only half this sum in silver, he thought it would be far easier to carry it in saddle-bags, rather than take the usual method of having it conveyed on coolies' heads. Boyd had a ride along jungle paths, of between thirty and forty miles. He left Kandy early in the morning and reached Madookelle, an estate belonging to his cousin, about breakfast time. Here he remained until the hottest part of the day was past, and then he mounted to ride home. He descended to the valley

* We should think so, seeing that the author is now writing of his own case.—ED.

of the Hoolanganga by the zigzag path leading down the almost perpendicular hill, which I have already mentioned, as overlooking this picturesque valley. Whilst leading his pony down this path, he picked up a skull, white and bleached with the rain and sunshine, which had probably been torn by jackals from the neighbouring burying ground. This he pitched into a hollow on the hillside and resumed his journey. On reaching the ford of the Hoolanganga, he passed a gang of coolies belonging to a neighbouring estate, Kandakettie, who were bathing, cooking, eating rice, or reclining on the banks of the stream, as is the manner of Tamils. He rode on until he came to another stream—the Gallieoya—about half-a-mile farther along the road. This road was like those in the Highlands of Scotland, before the days of General Wade. One was inclined to hold up one's hands and ask how such a conglomeration of ruts, roots, stones, rocks and watercourses came to be dignified by the name of a road. In a path like this, the pace that anyone could ride was necessarily slow. Boyd descended into the bed of the oya at the ford—the said ford consisting of huge rocks scattered in the centre of the stream, which had formerly been connected together by a causeway of smaller stones, but these latter had long been washed away, leaving a series of deep holes and sharp-pointed rocks, which no creature but a Pegu pony or an Indian coolie could cross without the chances being greatly in favour of having their legs broken in making the attempt. Boyd had ridden his pony into the

middle of the stream, when two Kandyans, who were bathing in a pool above the ford, rose from the water and began to attack him by throwing large stones. Boyd was in an awkward fix. He could scarcely advance, and he was powerless to retreat. He therefore dismounted and attacked the natives with their own weapons and quickly drove them into the jungle. He then remounted his pony, congratulating himself on the victory he had achieved, and resumed his journey. He had not advanced many yards, however, when, on turning a sharp corner of the path, he came upon two other Kandyans, armed with formidable-looking clubs. When Boyd approached, one of these men ran on before, as if to warn others to be on the outlook; whilst the other attacked Boyd, showering blows on him and the pony without intermission. By successful dodging Boyd managed to avoid most of these blows, which, however, fell upon his pony, and he being a high-spirited animal became restive and partially unmanageable. He got past this fellow without much injury, but on coming to a newly cut road leading to Kanda-kettie, he tried to get the pony into it, as he would then have a better chance of escaping from the gang, who he knew, by this time were lying in wait to rob and perhaps murder him. At this moment the Kandyan aimed a blow at Boyd, and he, trying to avoid it, lost his balance and fell to the ground. The Kandyan then rushed in upon his victim, but Boyd sprang to his feet and had almost wrested the club from his assailant,

when another fellow came up and with a blow on the head felled him to the ground. He remembered no more until he made an attempt to get up, fancying that his assailants were still around him. He managed to raise himself upon his hands and knees, but every effort to get on his feet utterly failed. He was blinded with blood, which flowed in streams from the wound in his head, and he was almost suffocated with blood, which flowed from his mouth, occasioned by a blow which fractured his under jaw. He was scarcely able to breathe in consequence of another blow over the left breast, for the villains had struck him after he was insensible, possibly intending to make sure that he should never be able to give evidence against them. His limbs were sore from other blows, but in spite of all this he managed to sit up, although the woods and hills seemed to be circling round him with tremendous rapidity. His pony was grazing at a short distance off. He called to him, and the brute came and rubbed his nose against his master's shoulder, as if conscious that something unusual had occurred. By holding by the stirrup and then by the pommel of the saddle, Boyd was able to totter to the road, and eventually so far recovered as to be able to mount; but the jolting of the pony was too much for his broken bones, and he was obliged to get off again. He however managed by holding to the pony's mane to crawl about two miles along the road, to a place where it was crossed by a small stream. As he was suffering from thirst, he lay down

to drink at the side of this mullab, but although he could throw the water into his mouth, yet, in consequence of his broken jaw, he could not swallow it. His mouth, he subsequently said, seemed to be full of teeth with the points all sticking into his throat, and he seemed to have no tongue at all. The water rushed from his mouth as fast as he threw it in, and so, after a time, he stopped trying to drink. He was fast relapsing into a state of insensibility, when some of his own men, who were cutting mana grass for thatch, close at hand, came to the stream to drink. When they saw the condition in which their master was lying, they set up a wail, such as Tamils utter on the occasions of any great calamity or catastrophe. Boyd was able to direct them to go to the nearest European bungalow for assistance. This happened to be at no great distance, and in a short time his cousin and a Mr. Rennie arrived with a couch and men to carry him to Gomeratenna.

During his painful progress along the road, Mr. Boyd had been passed by scores of Tamil coolies carrying rice to a neighbouring estate. Now, Boyd was the one of the earliest planters, and also one of those who had made it a point to acquire a correct colloquial knowledge of the native languages, which he spoke like a Kandyan or a Tamil, and in consequence of this, and his characteristic sympathy with his men,—a sympathy which was shared by every planter who understood their language,—he was very popular with the Malabars. On the present occasion, as if to show

how much such popularity was to be depended on, although he asked every one of these coolies to go for assistance, and although they saw the pitiful plight to which he was reduced, not even the offer of more money than they could have earned in a month would induce them to leave their rice bags and go for the required assistance. The answer was the same from all: "I am a man belonging to another estate, I won't go." (*Nan en oru totta al, nan po matta.*)

Mr. Boyd subsequently told me that although the time, from the moment he was knocked down until he attempted to rise again, seemed to be only an instant or two, still it must really have been upwards of two hours, during which he must have remained insensible. He had looked at his watch immediately before descending into the Galie-o-ya, and it was fully the time I have mentioned before he appears to have regained consciousness. The villains carried off everything of value they could get, even his keys and the silver-gilt spurs on his heels. They had tried to draw his watch from his fob, but the guard had broken, and from the fact that they had not taken the trouble to possess themselves of it, it was supposed that the fellows had been disturbed and been obliged to decamp hurriedly.

Several men were apprehended on suspicion of having been concerned in this affair, but they all got off for want of sufficient evidence to convict them, with the exception of the man

Eliaeda Arachchi, at whose trial I was present. Boyd was able to speak positively as to his share in the crime, and the fellow was unanimously found guilty and sentenced to banishment to Malacca for life.

Some months after this, I met Mr. Boyd in Colombo. He was then waiting for the sailing of the vessel that was to convey him to England. We were dining at the *table d' hôte*, at Mr. Redman's model hotel. It was Mr. Redman's mission, so he believed, to inaugurate a new era in hotel-keeping in England and in English colonies. He began with the colonies, as great theatrical stars begin with the provinces. His principal reform consisted in introducing the Continental system, where the proprietor of the hotel sits at the head of his own table and entertains his customers as guests. Mr. Redman, who was a Frenchified Englishman, with a gentlemanly-enough manner, having a little bombast and a black moustache, sat at the head of the table and fed two large kangaroo dogs, one of which sat on each side of his master, with viands, which many thousand families in England would have been glad of a share of, could they have been able to procure them; whilst his guests were ranged on either side.

I sat next to Mr. Wilmot, an advocate, who had been counsel for prisoners during the late circuit of the Supreme Court, and opposite to us sat Mr. Boyd. Wilmot was neither a very nice nor a very popular man. I had come to know him many years before, from receiving a notice to the effect that he intended to bid against me when

the lands of Dodangahakelle should be put up to public competition. The putting-up land to public competition was a sort of fiction of the law. It, of course, was always done at Government sales, but it was understood that no one was to oppose the party who had selected and surveyed the land, and that it should be knocked down to that person at the upset price of five shillings per acre.

Mr. Wilmot was quite justified in bidding against me, so far as the law of the case went, but as he might have made my land cost some thousands of pounds more than I was calculating on, I came to a private arrangement by giving him a *douceur* of a few hundreds to prevent this.

Mr. Wilmot was a stout burly-looking man, with a humourous twinkle in his eye; but that eye could be fierce and stern enough when bullying a native witness undergoing a cross-examination by him.

"Allow me the pleasure of taking wine with you, Mr. Boyd," said Wilmot, addressing my friend across the table.

Mr. Boyd either did not hear, or did not wish to pay any attention to the advocate's request.

"Boyd," I said, "Mr. Wilmot wishes to take wine with you; perhaps you will allow me to join."

We filled our glasses and hobnobbed with all due solemnity.

"I say, Mr. Boyd," Mr. Wilmot remarked, "I wish to tell you that you were quite right in the evidence you gave against that Arachchi fellow, who was banished at the last sessions in Kandy."

"I don't require Mr. Wilmot to tell me that," was the rejoinder.

"Certainly not, but as the man was banished on your evidence alone, a circumstance I never knew to occur before in all my experience, owing, I believe, to the summing-up of the Judge and to so many of your own friends being on the jury, I thought that it might be some satisfaction for you to know that there was no mistake, but that you hit the right man."

"I was perfectly sure of that, when I gave the evidence against him, but how do you know so well about it, pray?"

"Why, the fellow told me, to be sure. They always make a clean breast to their counsel, so that he, knowing the facts, may have it in his power to make the witnesses contradict each other in minor points when under examination, so as to give him a better chance of getting his man off."

"Then you knew all this at the time of the trial."

"Yes, and more perhaps than you knew. I knew how and where the robbery was planned, and who were the associates. Purang Appu, the scoundrel who was shot in Kandy the other day for high treason, was at the head of the affair. Money was wanted for the late rising, and thus it happened that an Arachehi was mixed up with it. The Korala who apprehended him in the first instance connived at his escape, thinking that, when the rebellion broke out, there would be no Europeans left in Ceylon

to interfere in a matter of this kind; but when the rising was quashed, the reward of a hundred pounds was too much for native cupidity, to say nothing of the chance of the prisoner being acquitted from want of evidence, and so he was nabbed again and brought into Kandy," said Mr. Wilmot, waxing confidential on seeing the interest that his narrative excited.

"You knew all this at the time of the trial!" said Boyd. "Are you not ashamed to tell me so, when I heard you assure the jury, that, to the best of your belief, the man was innocent of the charge preferred against him?"

"Of course not. It is my profession to make black seem white and white black," was the prompt reply, which will no doubt be appreciated by all who have had dealings with unprincipled gentlemen of the long robe.*

The next occurrence of this kind took place immediately after the outbreak of the rebellion in 1848. The victim was a conductor on an estate in the Matale district. Revenge, more than robbery, judging from the injuries the man received, was the moving source of action in this case. He was attacked by natives in the neighbourhood of his estate, and after they had got the man down and fairly in their power, they treated him

* Wilmot, who was a near relative of Sir R. Wilmot Horton, got a post in the Civil Service which he lost by the propensity which ultimately shortened his life.—Ed.

as they do young oxen, when they wish to rear them for draught or the butcher. I think that the sufferer, in this instance, was named Brodie. The affair did not create much sensation at the time, when the rebellion and the monetary panic, which was the ruin of most of the old proprietors of estates in the island, were occupying and engrossing men's minds, and I am not aware that any of the perpetrators of the outrage were ever brought to justice.

The most lamentable and tragic of all these attacks occurred two or three years after I left the colony, I think in 1859 or 1860. The victim was a young Welshman, of the name of Morgan. I do not mention this affair from my own knowledge of the circumstances of the case, but simply from newspaper reports and hearsay. Mr. Morgan was an assistant to Mr. Bird of Neelambe. He had been sent into Kandy for money, and, like Boyd, he was riding out to the estate unattended, carrying the money over his saddle-bow. The road, like every other mountain path in Ceylon, had some zigzags in it. On approaching one of these, a native started from the jungle and fired first one barrel and then another of a double-barrelled fowling-piece at him. Both shots took effect. Nevertheless Morgan was not dismounted, neither did he lose his presence of mind. He tried to ride down the fellow who shot him, and if there were more than one implicated in the affair, he was able to get past them and make his escape.

with the money. He managed to get home to Neelambe, but all hope of saving his life was gone: his wounds were of too serious a nature, and he died that evening as many another brave and Christian youth has since died in British India, victims to the ferocity of, or the misplaced confidence in the good feeling of, a seemingly quiet and inoffensive people.

One man was apprehended as the perpetrator of this cold-blooded murder. He was remanded to take his trial before the Supreme Court, but, unfortunately for the ends of justice, death claimed him as a victim before the tardy justice of this world had time to try and hand him over to the tender mercies of the hangman.

I never heard of Europeans being molested when accompanied by coolies carrying their money: probably, because there would be less chance of booty, as the Tamils could distance the Sinhalese in a race, and possibly because, if not successful at the first dash, there would be greater risk of detection and subsequent punishment. It has often been a marvel to me, considering the roads, the rugged and wooded features of the country, which would afford concealment to any numbers of banditti, and the unarmed manner in which single Europeans rode with large sums of money along solitary and unfrequented paths, that more robberies of this nature did not occur.

To an unprincipled people, like the Sinhalese, the temptation to commit robbery and murder is

very great, and the chances of detection very small indeed. Suppose, for instance, that a European superintendent is shot by a gang of native scoundrels; the coolies carrying it would probably drop the money, and run off or be knocked down like their master. The robbers make off with their spoil, and, unless they quarrel and inform upon themselves, there is no one to give evidence against them.

The Tamils as a people cannot tell a story without greatly exaggerating all the details, and therefore their evidence in courts of justice is almost worthless, and a clever advocate could, with the greatest of ease, make them contradict their own statements in such a manner, as the most credulous jury in Christendom, or Heathendom either, could scarcely be expected to put faith in them. I believe that the great source of safety lies in the natural timidity of the native character. I am quite sure, that if people were to ride about the uninhabited bogs and mountains of Ireland as the coffee planters do in Ceylon, with as large sums of money and as slender escorts, the robberies and murders would be as one hundred to one.*

The attempts at assault, and, perhaps, robbery, were more frequent than was generally imagined. I recollect Mr. R. B. Tytler telling me, that, at the time he was planting the Nellakanda estate, a gang of lowcountry Sinhalese, who had been

* To do the Irish justice, they seldom murder for money. Men are shot because they take farms from which persons who refused to pay rent have been evicted.—ED

employed under one of his contractors, surrounded him when on the way to the estate with money, with suspicious demonstrations of hostility. One fellow even drew a sword stick with a menacing gesture, but the timely exhibition of a pair of formidable-looking pistols, which Mr. Tytler knew how to use, made the scoundrels sheer off.

Mr. Stephens* of Kaderane cinnamon gardens, was in like manner attacked on the Colombo and Negombo road. The natives attacking him stretched a rope across the road, attaching it to trees at each side, thinking that it might trip his horse and cause him to fall. The horse leapt over this obstacle, and although the scoundrels attacked him with sticks and volleys of stones he made good his escape.

I might multiply instances of this kind by the dozen, but I have said enough upon this subject, and I have no wish to tire the patience of my readers with dry details of native violence, when they can find much more exciting narratives in every daily newspaper published in London.

I may mention a very narrow escape which, I believe, I on one occasion made myself. I was on my way home with my monthly money. I was unarmed as usual, and, as I had the cash for three estates, the sum was large, and therefore a tempting bait to native footpads. I had some time previously sent my gun into Kandy to have one of the locks repaired, and I had directed one of my coolies to call at the barracks and wait until the armoury

* A mistake for some other name, Mr. Stephens saying he was never attacked.—ED.

sergeant had repaired it, and then bring it on after me as quickly as possible. I had reached within half-a-dozen miles of my own bungalow when this man overtook me with the gun. I had been dining at the mess of the 95th Regiment the previous evening, when one of the officers present mentioned that he was in the habit of riding round his father's preserves at home, shooting pheasants from his pony's back. It occurred to me when the man handed me my gun, to try what success I would have at this style of shooting. I charged the gun accordingly and fired several shots at minas and parroquets, but my success was not great. When I became tired of shooting, the man who had carried the gun had fallen behind, and the rest of the men had sufficiently heavy loads already, and I was perforce obliged to retain it.

About two miles from Dodangahakelle the path crossed a deep and wide oya, called the Pusweloja. The ford was approached by a deep descent on each side, and the banks of the stream, where the water was low, consisted of soft sand, through which minute scales of mica and plumbago sparkled like particles of pure gold. When I rode into the bed of this oya there were, perhaps, twenty Sinhalese men in the stream or on either bank. This was nothing unusual, but each man on the bank had a quantity of stones, about the size of a half brick, collected at his feet, and all the others had either stones or wet sand tied up in handkerchiefs, which would have proved formidable weapons in a fray with an unarmed man.

These things did not attract my attention until I had nearly crossed the stream, when an exclamation of astonishment from some of the natives and looks of alarm and hesitation on the part of the others as if they had been detected in the very act of perpetrating a crime aroused my suspicions, and these suspicions were confirmed by one of my coolies, who had spent a lifetime in Ceylon, remarking that these Sinhalese men were evidently waiting the approach of someone, with whom they intended to "make bobbery," *i.e.*, have a row. The opportune arrival and presence of my gun on this occasion, I believe, saved my life.

CHAPTER XXIII.—A WEDDING.

After Dodangahakelle was planted, the stores and pulping-house finished and the barbecues made, I bethought me that the original bungalow, erected by Coorocoodootenna Banda, was too small and too confined, notwithstanding some additions and alterations for my aspiring genius. I wished, too, to have my dwelling-house as near to the store as possible, fancying that the nearer I was to it, there would be the less danger of coffee-robberies. At the distance of some three hundred yards from the last barbecue, there was a projecting mass of rock, rising from the bed of the stream, which supplied the pulping-house, to a height of somewhere about a hundred feet. On the summit of this rock, the ground sloped upwards, with a gentle rise to the ridge on which the old bungalow and nurseries stood, and it was

here, after mature consideration, that I resolved to build my new dwelling. There were plenty of loose stones lying about, and in order to utilize them and save the expense of a deep cutting in the hillside, to obtain a level site, I had a terrace built with them. The road which ran immediately in front of the house was also built terrace-fashion as likewise was the ground constituting the flower garden and shrubbery, which ran down to the very edge of the rock already mentioned. The whole had when finished rather an imposing appearance, although Mr. O'Brien told me, with a sardonic grin, that it looked as if done on the cheap and nasty system. The bungalow was ninety feet long by forty feet wide, including verandahs. It contained a large sitting-room, two bedrooms nearly as large, with dressing-rooms adjoining, a bath-room, a store and an office. It formed, I thought, rather a snug bachelor's establishment. At a short distance in the rear were the kitchen, the servants' rooms and stables, and I subsequently put up a projecting wing containing additional bed and dressing rooms. The whole was built with bricks and roofed with tiles, whilst the floors were laid with the glazed tiles, which I was now beginning to excel in manufacturing. When finished and furnished, in spite of Master O'Brien's depreciatory remarks, it was with a feeling of much gratification and pride that I removed to and took possession of my new dwelling, and I had also the additional gratification in knowing that there was not a superior residence in the jungles of Ceylon in point of appearance

and accommodation. Veerapin had a shrubbery already planted around it with hedges of aloes, mulberry, roses and myrtles, to say nothing of a number of young fruit-trees, which gave promise of an early profusion of materials for the dessert.

During the time that I was occupied with the erection of these buildings, which, by-the-bye, I planned and superintended myself, a great mortality happened to occur amongst the relations of Juan Sebastian de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez. I cannot say, at this distance of time, how often his grandmother required to be buried, but I should be inclined to say that a score of times was considerably within the mark. As for his grandfather, he appeared to shuffle off this mortal coil at least once every month. In addition to these, there was a sad array of brothers and sisters; uncles and aunts; brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, beside other relations, the exact connection of whom, with the family of my factotum, I was never able rightly to comprehend, died and required Christian burial at his hands. For some eighteen months this mortality had been going on, and Juan Sebastian required leave once every fortnight, for a period of three days, to go to Negombo to attend to their obsequies. It had become quite an understood thing on the estate those three days' leave, and latterly Juan &c. had not thought it necessary to ask my permission before setting out on these melancholy journeys. Of course, I understood that his grandmother was dead again and required to be once more buried.

I was sitting in the verandah in company with O'Brien one evening, shortly after my removal to my new bungalow, when Juan Sebastian de Zouza &c. walked round the corner with an air of deep humility and great modesty, and made a very lowly obeisance before us.

"What is it now, Juan Sebastian de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez?" I inquired. I liked to give him his name in full, and I think he liked to hear the roll of it over one's tongue.

"Master now come estop this bungalow, I like very much to come and see."

"Very glad to see you, old fellow; come along and take a weed," said O'Brien, who liked to poke fun at poor Juan.

"Thank you, sir," said our sable friend, as he selected a cheroot from the bundle handed to him, whilst he bowed with the dignity and grace of a Hidalgo of old Spain.

"Very welcome, my boy. Have a light? Here you are," said O'Brien, tendering the fag-end of his own cheroot, which was almost burned out.

Juan did not light his own cheroot immediately, but stood gazing at us and looking very sheepish.

"Well, Juan," I inquired, "what more have you got to say?"

"Please, sir, I want to go Negombo tomorrow."

"What, your grandmother dead again?" suggested O'Brien with a look of much horror.

"Yes, sir, I go bury my grandmother," was the prompt reply, whilst Juan Sebastian's face looked as unmoved as if there were nothing to be

astonished at, at such an astonishing assertion.

"How many grandmothers had you, Juan?" I inquired.

"Two, sir."

"Are both dead?" I asked.

"No, sir, only one."

"When did she die?"

"When I a little boy, sir."

"And the other is still alive?"

"Yes, sir,"

"I thought you wished to go to Negombo to bury her."

"Yes, sir, I want to go bury her."

"But if she is still alive how can you bury her?"

This question seemed to puzzle our friend Juan, and he was evidently pondering over its awkwardness, but he did not deign to enlighten us regarding the conclusions he came to.

"Master want old bungalow?" he inquired, after a long pause.

"Well, not particularly," I replied. "Why do you ask?"

"I not like to estop in Malabar lines longer," was the reply.

"But you don't stop in the lines. Your house is detached, and you need not go to the lines unless you choose," I replied.

"That house too small, sir. I got some furniture coming, that house not hold it, sir."

"Your grandmother's furniture?" suggested O'Brien.

"Yes, sir," was the ready reply.

"And you would like the old bungalow to hold it?" I inquired.

"Yes, sir, master not want, then I like to estop there."

"Very well, Juan, you may put your furniture into it whenever you like. I will give you a lease of the premises for as long as you choose to occupy them."

"Then I go to Negombo, tomorrow?" he inquired.

"Why," I replied, "if your grandmother won't keep, perhaps, you may."

"I estop four or five days, sir," he asked, looking more sheepish than ever.

"Well, as there isn't much work doing just now, you may, but I hope that this is the last time that you will require to go and bury any of your relations."

"Yes, sir," and Juan de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez departed, with a bow which would have gratified the heart of Lord Chesterfield.

"I'll wager any money," said O'Brien, as soon as Juan was out of sight, "that there is a woman in the case."

"Of course," I replied, "his grandmother."

"No, I don't mean her, I mean a young woman. I'll take you a bet of a cool fifty that Juan Sebastian is about to lead to the altar some sable beauty and enjoy all sorts of domestic felicity in your old bungalow. To what strange uses we may come Horatio."

"Quote correctly, if you please. It is 'vile uses' in the original," I replied; "but I wouldn't wonder

although you are right about a wedding. We will soon see," I added, as I ran to the edge of the terrace and called to Juan, who was passing along the path below, to return.

"Come Juan," I said, looking as serious as I possibly could, for I felt an almost uncontrollable inclination to laugh; "I want to know properly about this grandmother of yours. Is she really dead?"

Juan looked surprised and did not answer.

"Are any of your people dead?" I asked sternly. "I want to know the truth."

"No, sir," was the hesitating answer.

"Then what do you want to do at Negombo?"

"Bury my grandma."

"O confound your grandmother," I exclaimed, scarcely able to refrain from laughing outright. "You said that she was not dead. Are you not going to see a young girl? Come now tell the truth."

"Yes, sir, I go look at a young girl of my people.

"Look at her? What do you mean by that? Do you mean that you intend to marry her?"

"Yes, sir, I esometime marry her."

"Who is she? Is she pretty?" asked O'Brien.

"Her father is Mudaliyar, sir; esometime I think she is pretty."

"Is she Sinhalese or Portuguese?" asked O'Brien.

"Portuguese, sir."

"Has she any pretty sisters?" asked O'Brien.

"Yes, Sir, she got sisters."

"Do you think that any of them would fancy

me for a husband?" was O'Brien's next inquiry.

Juan Sebastian laughed grimly but made no reply.

"When is the wedding?" I inquired.

"I think next month, sir. I now going for to see."

"Of course, you intend to invite us to witness the ceremony?" O'Brien remarked, as if such a thing was quite understood.

"Yes, sir," was the ready reply. "Master and Mister O'Brien and little master"—that was Wallace; "all invite if humbly they will deign to come."

This meant that we were humbly invited and not that we should display any unusual degree of humility in our own persons.

"All right, Juan, have another weed and make your mind easy, old fellow. We will be delighted to see you through with it. Won't we, Major? White kids, dress coats, carriages and marriage favours. I say, give us the address of the bride's father, and I shall see that there is no lack of lush. We will do the thing handsomely and in style."

Juan seemed gratified at the enthusiasm of my manager, and took his departure with the air of a man who had met with a piece of great and unexpected good fortune.

O'Brien and I rode into Kandy, at the time appointed, intending to take the coach to Colombo, and then proceed, by the best means in our power to keep our tryst with regard to Juan Sebastian's wedding at Negombo. We found, however, that all the places in the coach were engaged for

nearly a fortnight; to come, and we were, in consequence, obliged to hit upon some other method of proceeding. The marriage was to take place at Negombo on Wednesday, and this was Monday. I had, besides, an engagement to meet my banker in Colombo on Tuesday evening, regarding the negotiating of some bills on my agent in London.

What were we to do? We had already ridden thirty miles that morning, and our horses were too tired to undertake another journey of seventy-two miles.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said O'Brien, after cogitating over this awkward *contretemps* with a very lugubrious countenance. "It can be done, if we have pluck enough to do it. The fact is, Major, that I never was at a wedding in my life, and I have quite made up my mind to attend this one, and, by the piper that played before Moses, I'll do it. Our nags will be well rested by sunset. It is good moonlight, and there is nothing to hinder us from hiring two horses from Hamilton, and sending them on to Ambepusse, to which we can ride our own nags and then ride the hired ones on to Colombo. If you are game to do this, I'll go with you, but in fact I'll go whether or not."

It was the only course we could pursue, and we proceeded at once to put it into execution. Two good strong horses were despatched forthwith to the halfway house, and at sunset we mounted our own nags and started on our

journey. The ride was over the same ground as the one I have already described, when going after the bandies with Bird's coffee. We stopped at Ootoonkandy for about an hour, to rest both ourselves and our horses, and then pushed on again, past Kaigalle and down the Ambanpettia pass into the lowcountry. A thick mist covered the lowlying jungles and had a singular appearance, like a sea of liquid silver, dotted with innumerable islands, as it shimmered in the bright moonlight, as we descended this pass. We reached Ambapusse about midnight and had some difficulty in rousing the servants of the resthouse, notwithstanding the orders we had sent forward to have baths and supper prepared for us by the time of our arrival. After enjoying the luxury of a chatty bath and a cup of hot coffee, I felt quite refreshed and ready to undertake the other half of our journey; but O'Brien suggested that we should have supper first and then two or three hours' sleep, and then start for Colombo at about 4 o'clock. This advice seemed judicious, and we acted upon it accordingly. About 7 o'clock we reached a dilapidated looking resthouse, upon the left hand side of the road, situated in a venerable looking grove of cashewapple and coconut trees, and here we proposed to remain and rest ourselves during the heat of the day. We had ordered breakfast and had dragged the two ricketylooking couches, which the sitting-room contained, into the verandah, on which we lay down to stretch our wearied limbs and enjoy

the aroma of the Indian weed, in the shape of a No. 1 Manilla, when our privacy was rudely broken in upon by an irruption of Malay and English soldiers who were escorting a gang of convicts to Colombo for deportation to Malacca. The sergeant in command informed us that he intended to remain at the resthouse during the forenoon, then resume his journey in the cool of the evening. The manacled wretches, of which he was in charge, quite filled the verandah, and his men were making themselves at home in the body of the house, so that there was an end to the comfort or repose, that we had promised ourselves, in our midday rest.

O'Brien fidgeted and looked savage, as he surveyed our interesting fellow-travellers, and then he broke out with his usual vehemence, when anything annoyed him:—

“No go stopping here, Major, in the company of private soldiers and jailbirds. I am tired and wearied enough, heaven knows, but we must push on and get out of this atmosphere. Faugh! it is suffocating me already. We will get quietness, if we get nothing else, at the next resthouse, and it is only an hour's ride in the sun before we reach it.”

Breakfast was announced at this moment, and as the dishes emitted a savoury odour for hungry stomachs, we sat down to it in the verandah; the soldiers and the convicts both eyeing our proceedings, the former with curious, and the latter with wolfish-looking gaze. Our meal was no sooner finished, then our nags were

brought round and we wearily mounted to their backs. The day was scorchingly hot. There had been a shower of rain during the night, and the hot steam was rising from the moist ground, and hanging in a thick, suffocating vapour over the moist earth. The white road dazzled our eyes and the landscape around us waved, as if seen through dense volumes of smoke.

I never felt the heat so oppressive, nor the glare of the sun so difficult to be borne. We drew up whenever we had an opportunity under the shade of the large trees, which grew at intervals by the side of the road, and when we could not find natural shelter of this kind, we dismounted at the cattle-sheds, which are found at short distances from each other all the way from Colombo to Kandy.

I feel quite positive that if it had not been for the shelter thus obtained, we must have succumbed to the heat; perhaps, have been struck down with sunstroke, for the power of the sun was something awful. We accomplished the ten miles at last and reached the next resthouse, where we had a bath and a change of clothes. This, with a few hours' rest, enabled us to finish the remainder of our journey in comparative comfort in the course of the afternoon. We rode through the Pettah or black town of Colombo, and then into the Fort, as the sun was slowly descending, like a great globe of fire, in the distant waves of the Indian sea which was rolling on the shore in huge breakers and crashing with a hoarse roar

on the golden sands at our feet. There was something sadly eerie and ominous in the sullen crash of these breaking billows. Their regular pulsation and their prolonged roar reminded me of the morning when I first noted their thunder as the death volley of poor Wallace mingled with their solemn boom.

I went off to call on my banker, whilst O'Brien paid a visit to the noted emporium of Venn, Preston & Co., who sold everything, from a needle to a sheet anchor, to furnish himself with proper habiliments for the morrow's ceremony. In consequence of the fatigue I had undergone, I went early to bed. O'Brien and I had secured, as a very great favour, for the resthouse was crammed from basement to roof-tree, a large double-bedded room all to ourselves. I was soon deep in the arms of Somnus, so much so, that I did not hear my manager's entrance, nor the noise he must have made, for all his actions from the overflowing energy of his character were noisy, in getting into bed. When I awoke in the morning and looked towards the opposite bed, I perceived a pair of highly-polished, patent-leather boots, protruding from under the single sheet, which covered the recumbent figure of my Irish friend.

“What in the wide world has induced the fellow to take a pair of boots to bed with him?” I thought, as I jumped from my own resting-place and proceeded to select my garments from my travelling portmanteau, which, to make use

of one of O'Brien's Irishisms, was only a big tin box. "Upon my word they look rather nice, these boots do," I thought, as I drew nearer to examine them. I thought of the cat who used to be represented as setting up her back at her own image, in a similar piece of pedal furniture, in the old advertisements of "Warren's blacking," the polish on them was so brilliant and the decorative portions were so uniquely artistic; for they were ornamented by fancy stitching, in golden threads, about the heel and around the ankle. I laid hold of one that I might have a better opportunity of inspecting it, when, much to my amazement, and somewhat to my consternation, I found that it contained a foot.

"Hollo, what's that? What are you up to tugging and rugging at my foot in that manner? Confound you, can't you leave a fellow alone," was bawled in angry but sleepy accents by my manager. "Oh! it's you, is it, Major?" he added, as he raised himself in bed and opened his eyes. "Is the tomtom beat and how goes the enemy?"

"You don't make a practice of sleeping in your boots?" I asked, in answer to these inquiries.

"No, but, by George, I had such trouble in getting these fellows on, and are not they handsome ones, Major? that when I found that they were not very willing to come off again, I was resolved to try how sleeping in them would answer. You see we are in town now, and likely to be for a short time in civilized society, so we must come out spicy. Stop a minute and I'll show

you such a rig out. Look at the boots to begin with. They fit like a kid glove, and there is not the equal of them for style, Preston assures me, in the whole colony." My friend proceeded to undo package after package of finery, dress coat, black cloth trousers, white satin waistcoat with gold buttons, bright blue necktie, a box of gloves, a glossy silk hat, and the masterpiece of the whole, the unrivalled boots. I never could have believed that the careless, rollicking young Irishman, whose clothes, when in the jungle, would often have been dearly purchased for a supper, could have become such a consummate cockscorn when he got to town. His toilet that morning lasted longer, I believe, than any young lady's previous to going to her first ball or drawing-room, but as all things must come to an end, even it was finished at last, and we then proceeded to have a walk round by the lighthouse, previous to an early breakfast.

We sent for a carriage and drove out to the Bridge of Boats, where we hired a double canoe to take us by the canal to Negombo; this being, we were informed, the most pleasant, if not the most expeditious, method of getting to that town.

The boat had a platform extending across the canoes, and shaded by an awning of cadjans, and we lay on this platform during the whole of the journey, smoking cheroots and trying to sleep to pass away the time. And such a journey. The heat was past speaking about—it was something unendurable. We seemed to be in a vapour bath

during the whole of the voyage, as we lay and panted and longed for a breath of cool air to nvigorate our fainting frames. And then for scenery, we had the muddy, oozy banks of the canal, in which a long line of muddy shrubs on either bank dipped their muddy branches. The water seemed to be liquid mud, and everything on which the eye rested, even the hot burning sky, was tinged with the same dirty moist brown hue.

There must have been wind too, for the canoe appeared to glide at a rapid rate along the narrow channel of mud in which we floated, but it did not reach us until we entered the salt-water lake of Negombo, when a gentle breeze blew into our close sultry prison and made us feel as if we had suddenly entered Elysium. No one but those who suffered in the Black Hole at Calcutta, or those who have journeyed from the Bridge of Boats at Colombo along the canal to the lake of Negombo, during a hot day in the month of February, can tell what an inestimable blessing a cool breath of air is. If anyone doubts my assertion, although they cannot now experience the agonies of the Black Hole, they can try the experiment of the journey I have mentioned, and then, I am sure, they will speedily confirm my *dictum*.

It was scarcely midday when we shot into a capacious basin, the harbour I believe of Negombo, where extensive stores, wharfs, or piers rose from the muddy stream, telling of former commercia greatness, which now, alas! seemed fled to mor^e

prosperous ports; for there were now only a few small native canoes lying, where vessels of large tonnage could easily have been accommodated.

We had not much time to observe this, for Juan Sebastian &c. was standing in the company of several other gentlemen of colour, dressed in their gayest habiliments—Court dresses, some of them might have been, in the ancient days of Portuguese rule, judging from the gold and silver lace with which they were ornamented—bowing gracefully and ready to receive us at the landing-place.

We were conducted, in state, to the resthouse, where we proceeded to dress for the august ceremony, which we were about to witness. O'Brien, fortunately, had doffed his finery before beginning the journey; but it was a tedious business waiting until he had enrobed himself anew to his own satisfaction. And what a swell he looked, with his dress clothes and black shiny hat, sky-blue necktie, gold studs and buttons, satin waistcoat and patent leather boots, white kids and embroidered white cambric handkerchief, slightly odorous with *parfait d'amour*. The Portuguese gentlemen looked at him in wonder and admiration. Those of them who were not Government officials were evidently impressing the details of his toilet on their memories, that they might be able to imitate it on some future occasion.

But during all this time the bride was waiting. Carriages were in attendance to convey us to church. We passed a bungalow, standing in a

compound, where a triumphal arch was erected after the tasteful manner of the natives, gay with flowers and streamers, whilst other tokens of rejoicing were discernible about the dwelling. This was the house of the bride's father, and here our cavalcade was joined by several other carriages, in which there was a rustling of white muslin and a glitter of jewellery and ribbons.

When we reached the church, we found that the bride's party had already arrived and were assembled in front of the altar, the centre of an admiring throng, who had entered the church to witness the ceremony.

I had now been several years that I had never seen the face or form of a young girl of my own colour or race, and although those now before me could scarcely be called Europeans, seeing that the colour of their skins varied from a jet black to a sickly white; still, in dress and demeanour, they bore a sufficient resemblance to a like assemblage of English girls, to make my heart fairly leap into my mouth at the sight of them. And there were many surpassingly fair faces there, on which the eye of a painter would have loved to linger, and forms too that would have rivalled that of the famous Venus de Medici. A Roman Catholic priest, whose name I forget, but whom we will call Ducelle, as I will have occasion to mention him again, performed the ceremony, which, to my astonishment, was simple in the extreme, and then O'Brien, who had constituted himself a sort of master of the ceremonies, in

order, as he afterwards remarked, "to see Juan fairly through with it," kissed the bride, after the Irish fashion, much to the lady's dismay and the astonishment of her husband and their mutual friends. The priest gave an excellent lecture to the young couple in Portuguese, of course, upon their relative duties. I did not understand a word of this lecture, but it was explained to me afterwards as treating of the indissoluble nature of the tie that they had entered into—a tie which the Holy Father the Pope himself was powerless to dissolve, and which made these two as inseparable as the soul was from the body.

We re-entered the carriages and drove to the house of the bride's father, where we were received with vociferous demonstrations of rejoicing, firing of guns and crackers, accompanied by some most execrable music from two Portuguese fiddles. When night fell, this was succeeded by a wondrous display of Chinese fireworks, which called forth the enthusiastic plaudits of the guests. But before this we had a most astonishing tiffin. Everything in season, from salmon from the northern Spey to birds' nests from Cathay, was there. Curries of wonderful aroma, and dishes, the preparation of which had been kept by tradition in particular families, from the time of the flood downwards. I regret that I cannot now give the bill of fare. I was better employed in admiring the bridesmaids, and when I subsequently asked my lieutenant if he recollected what we had for tiffin, he answered very sharply: "Why, champagne and bright eyes to be sure." The dessert whi

followed consisted of all sorts of tropical fruits and many of those of more temperate climes, whilst the sparkling wines from the banks of the Moselle and the vineyards of Champagne flowed in bumpers. Toasts were drunk and speeches were made, and before we thought of joining the ladies who had retired to the verandah, everyone was getting up and proposing a toast at one and the same time, and the interpreter of the District Court, who had hitherto translated the English speeches into Portuguese or Sinhalese and the Sinhalese and Portuguese speeches into English, fairly lost his wits and spoke a crude conglomeration of all these languages, in his frantic efforts to make everybody acquainted with what everybody else was saying. I found myself the great man of the party. Everyone made speeches to me and at me. My generosity and magnanimity of soul were praised in sonorous Portuguese and smoothly-flowing Sinhalese; and my heart, I feel ashamed to confess such weakness, became so opened by all this flattery, combined with the champagne, that I doubled Juan Sebastian's salary on the spot, and told the assembled company that "he was a deuced good fellow." Great plaudits followed this, and then O'Brien assured them, when they had drunk his health, that the present was the brightest hour of his existence, the happiest day of his life, that they were all very fine fellows, and he would be happy to see each or all of them at Meegongoya with their wives and families, when he would do all in his power to make their visit agreeable and shew them the country.

Juan himself looked the very model of a young Portuguese gentleman, and behaved himself with distinguished propriety, but several of his countrymen were obliged, at this stage of the proceedings, to be assisted home or supplied with couches, in some of the more remote chambers of the house.

When we joined the ladies, O'Brien, as was to have been expected, proceeded to pay devoted court to the young ones; whilst I fell to the lot of some matronly dowagers, who paid devoted court to me, so far as a liberal supply of compliments and sweetmeats were concerned.

The young ladies were rather shy of my friend at first, but his good nature and *bonhomie* soon overcame their dread, and a voluble chattering succeeded, which I could compare to nothing but the chattering of a flock of parroquets on a tree top.

O'Brien had been at Gibraltar and the Ionian Islands with his father's regiment, and he had recollected enough of the lingua franca of these parts, when combined with Latin, to make himself in a small measure intelligible to the Lusitanian maidens. He assured them that it was the purest Portuguese that he spoke, and Adrian Mudaliyar, a gentleman with a richly-embroidered blue coat on his back, and a huge tortoiseshell comb in his hair, corroborated this statement and proved on philosophical principles that the language which the present company spoke must in the lapse of ages have degenerated from that of their forefathers, seeing that it was largely contaminated

with Sinhalese, Dutch, Tamil and Malay words and phrases.

Dinner was brought in when night was beginning to fold her mantle around us. It was almost a repetition of the tiffin, consequently it is not necessary to describe it. Fireworks and variegated lamps and Chinese lanterns in the compound, accompanied with music, followed, then coffee and tea; after which I succeeded, with great difficulty, in dragging O'Brien away from such agreeable company to our dreary rooms and still drearier beds at the resthouse.

I have not said anything about the bride. This arises from knowing my own inability to describe female loveliness, for a lovelier little woman could scarcely have been met with than the object of friend Juan's choice.

How innocent and childlike this sweet little woman looked, as she stood beside her newly-acquired husband, dressed in her bridal robes, which floated around her like a vapour of snow, with a crown of natural flowers on her head, and gazed in his face with a tender, loving and confiding look. I envied my conductor his prize, and, curious enough, I began, for the first time in my life, to feel as if I were alone in the world, and wanted some material part of my being which ought naturally to belong to me, as I gazed on this picture of present and, as I trusted, enduring happiness.

As for O'Brien, he had fallen desperately in

love with one of the bridesmaids, whose skin was quite as fair as that of many a girl born in a more northern climate, and who had the bearing and grace of one of the donnas of old Spain. She had the fire and sparkle in her eye too, which said, almost as plainly as words could have done, that she had the courage to dare and the endurance to bear as much as ever any daughter of that far-off land did in a good cause and for those she loved, and many of them have stood and faced the terrors of death, when the heart of strong men have shrunk and quailed. Albeit, she was only, according to the accepted slang of the English in India, "a half-caste." I was not surprised to learn that the aristocratic Wolfe O'Brien was desperately in love with her; neither was I astonished when he consulted me upon the propriety of making proposals of marriage to her without delay.

I reminded him of the episode of his tailor assistant, and mentioned that, with the exception of Judge ——'s daughters, no half-caste ladies were allowed an entrance into English Society in Kandy. It was the old story, however, words and advice both thrown away, as is always the case with those in love, or what comes to the same thing, who fancy themselves to be so. I may mention the upshot of this affair.

O'Brien went several times to Colombo, where the lady resided, and saw her and her family. Her father held some petty office under Government, and was by no means wealthy. He en-

couraged O'Brien's overtures to his daughter, and led him to believe that the lady's affections were not otherwise engaged. O'Brien, with all his boasted Irish impudence, could scarcely summon courage to offer his hand and his worldly possessions to the lady in person, but after a long consultation with myself, he wrote to her doing so. In due course the answer came. Much to my surprise, it was a firm but a polite and friendly refusal. Her affections were already engaged, "but had it been otherwise," she wrote, "she could not, whilst feeling honored and flattered by such proposal from a gentleman like Mr. O'Brien, submit to be patronized by his countrywomen nor allow her husband and herself to be placed in an equivocal position, by wedding one who did not belong to the same race as himself." She thanked him for the honor he had done her, and hoped that he would not take unkindly her straightforward explanation. Perhaps, his present passion was only a temporary feeling and would speedily pass away when some other object more worthy of his affection replaced it, and he would then thank her for preventing him forming a *mésalliance* which, in after times, might prove a source of mutual regret and sorrow, instead of what marriage ought to be, a state of lasting happiness and bliss, founded upon mutual interests and tastes.

"Noble, highminded girl, is n't she?" was poor Wolfe's enthusiastic exclamation, accompanied by a deep sigh, as I handed him back the letter,

"but 'tis always thus since childhood's hour," and the subject was never mentioned between us again.

A few months after this we saw the announcement of the lady's marriage to one of her own people, a young but talented and rising advocate of the Supreme Court, in the local newspapers, and thus ended "love's young dream," so far as poor Wolfe O'Brien was concerned.

In due course, Juan Sebastian brought his fair young wife to reside in my old bungalow. I call her fair, not because her complexion was white, which it was not, being of a warmer tint than that of most brunettes in our own country; but simply because she was surpassingly beautiful in her features and graceful in all her movements. Juan did not require to go and bury his grandmother any more, and my old bungalow speedily acquired a home-like and elegant appearance, which it never bore in the days when I inhabited it. Bamboo tats or screens were hung in front of the verandahs, over which convolvuli, clytoria and passionflowers twined their graceful tendrils and spread their graceful flowers, whilst everything about the establishment had an elegant and cheerful look, such as no bachelor's abode could rival.

I quite envied my conductor his happiness. It seemed rather annoying to see a fellow like him enjoying all the elegances and happiness of life, having a handsome dwelling, a pretty and a loving wife, and a good income, and to feel that

I was debarred from participating in such bliss, simply because I knew no young lady to whom I could throw the handkerchief. My lady acquaintances were confined to Mrs. Bird and Mrs. Delegal, and I knew no others, neither had I met with any others from the day I first arrived in Kandy, now some years since, until the occasion of Juan's wedding.

It was a pretty sight to see the little Portuguese lady tripping along the walks to meet her husband when returning from his work, to see her greeting him with a cheery smile and a loving kiss, and then linking her tiny arm in his, walking affectionately and confidingly to their bungalow, where everything that makes a house happy was I knew prepared for his comfort. And then they would stroll arm in arm in their garden in the soft balmy evenings, or under the still softer rays of the southern moon, and talk and muse, as only lovers I thought could talk and muse amid such surroundings.

In due course of time, first a boy and then a girl came to add to friend Juan's happiness and, perhaps, also to his cares, and it became even still more gratifying to witness the joys of this couple and their offspring, particularly since, by the time that the advent of the last of these little strangers occurred, I had every reasonable hope of being able to have a share in similar joys myself.

There was one slight occurrence connected with my journey to the coast at this time, which

had a singular influence on my fortunes long afterwards. I had brought out a letter of introduction to the Revd. Dr. Macvicar, the Scotch or Presbyterian Colonial Chaplain in Colombo. He was not in Colombo when I landed in the colony, and I forwarded the letter to him at Nuwara Eliya. In due course I received a very cordial invitation to visit him at his residence at Mount Lavinia when in that neighbourhood. I had called on him accordingly, and one afternoon we had driven out in his carriage to visit the native bazaars in the Pettah. On returning to the Fort we were stopped in the neighbourhood of some large trees, where a number of Tamil coolies were encamped by cries of a sick durai, or European.

Dr. Macvicar dismounted to see the man and I followed. We found a poor fellow, perhaps about twenty years of age, whom we had met staggering along the road, as if under the influence of drink, lying in the full glare of the afternoon sun with a pale ashen countenance and shivering, as if every joint in his body were dislocated and about to fall to pieces, with the cold fit of a very severe attack of jungle fever. I don't think that I had ever before seen a man so ill. We lifted him carefully into the carriage and drove to the resthouse, where I gave up my own bed for the sick man's accommodation. We then sent for a surgeon, Dr. Sweatingham of the 90th Regiment, who prescribed for him and gave directions regarding the treatment he was to re-

ceive. In a few days he began to shew symptoms of convalescence, and the surgeon recommended that he should be removed from the bustle and noise of the hotel to more retired quieter quarters. It was, however, difficult to procure such quarters for him, but on taking Andreas Batholomeusz, one of Acland, Boyd & Co.'s clerks, into consultation on the subject, he proposed to take him to his own house, where all due care should be taken of the sick man, whilst I promised to remunerate Andreas for his trouble and outlay. These arrangements I did not stay to see carried out, but a month or two after, I had the satisfaction of learning that the poor fellow had recovered and had been able to leave the colony as mate or in some other similar capacity in a vessel trading with India. I was in Colombo again shortly after this when Andreas gave me the details of the stranger's recovery, and he added with a grim smile: "He bring very much bobbery to my house. He has gained the affections of my daughter's heart, sir, and he has now left her sad and heartbroken in her sorrow. Just like one widow, sir."

CHAPTER XXIV.—A GRAND DISCOVERY—THE ROYAL PALACE OF SINGHA NEWERA.

About the month of August 1842, having very little work on hand that required my own personal supervision, I took to strolling a good deal, gun in hand, through the jungles of my principality, in order to explore its more hidden recesses. One

portion that I had never visited was the summit of the cliffs, under which Braybrooke and myself had encamped, when we came up to survey the land. I resolved to visit this place and discover whence the torrent had come, which had washed our temporary dwellings to the Indian Ocean *via* Trincomalee. O'Brien accompanied me in this expedition, as also did two of my best coolies, armed with cattles, to clear a path through the thick underwood, in the event of our not being able to force our way through it by any other means. We took what we considered the most direct road to our destination, which was up a steep ravine, where fallen trees, rocks and other débris formed something like an inclined plane from the bottom nearly to the summit of the cliffs.

The ascent was far more toilsome than I had anticipated, but after much clambering over rocks and cutting our way through nilu and thick prickly jungle, we at length gained the top. Here we found ourselves on a wide plateau, with great forest trees and a thick undergrowth of small jungle, shutting in our view on every side. We cut our way to where I fancied the watercourse ought to lie, and, having reached it, we proceeded along its dry sandy bed without much labour or difficulty.

We had walked about half-a-mile, when the jungle in front of us began to open. The underwood was as thick, but the forest trees were larger and farther apart from each other, whilst their branches were more outspreading like trees in a

gentleman's park at home than the tall bare-stemmed ones which flourish in the jungles of the far east.

They appeared, too, to have been planted by the hand of man, for besides being of many different species, and these species being such as the natives plant for ornament, they were growing with some degree of order and regularity in their arrangement. O'Brien was the first to perceive this fact, and pointed it out to me, as if we were upon the point of making some very wonderful discovery. We pushed on two or three hundred yards farther, and then, much to our amazement, we came upon an artificial lake, covering an area, as I afterwards discovered, of fully thirty acres. The lake was surrounded by a belt of soft velvety sward, and beyond this the jungle rose by gradual degrees, higher and higher, until it attained the dimensions of a forest. But in a circle around the lake, at regular intervals, rose the high stems and wide-spreading branches of the great trees which I have already mentioned. We walked along the oozy banks of the lake, until we came to where we heard the splash of water over rocks, and here we discovered a large sluice, where the waters poured themselves through a natural archway hewn out of the solid rock down a steep ravine many hundred feet deep, whose recesses were hid by a tangled growth of forest bushes, wild vines and nilu, upwards through which floated the fine spray of the fall and hung in beautiful prismatic colours over the waving tree-tops. Further on

we came to the stream which fed the lake, and this descended in a series of artificial cascades formed of huge blocks of stone, bolted and held together by strong bands of iron.

The whole seemed a fitting work for a race of giants, and I was contemplating these falls and wondering what object they were intended to serve,—there were six of them, rising one above the other, like the steps of a gigantic staircase,—when one of the coolies called our attention to a series of stone pillars rising from a slightly elevated terrace, a short distance to our right. On examining these, we found that they were monoliths, richly carved, and had evidently formed the supports to the roof of a pavilion of some sort. The carving was very beautifully finished, and the details which were after the usual native design, were almost as sharp and distinct as on the day they had left the artist's hands. At short distances from these pillars we came upon huge mounds of lime rubbish, mixed with broken bricks, square stones and tiles, mingled with which were many slabs of exquisitely carved stones, representing elephants, peacocks, men, women and birds, whilst a turret, built something in the style of a Chinese pagoda, stood quite entire overlooking the whole on the summit of a detached rock, whose sides had, with incredible labour, been hewn away to form a perfect cube for its foundation. We spent several hours in exploring these ruins, which were fortunately within the boundaries of my possessions. We bathed in the cool waters of the lake, and tried by diving to fathom its depths, and then

satisfied with our exertions we prepared to wend our way homewards in the cool of the evening. When we reached the bungalow, we found Coorocoodootenna Banda awaiting our return. I questioned him about the ruins we had discovered. He knew them quite well, and had visited them very often. Some of the villagers were of opinion that the buildings, of which they were the remains, had been built by Yakkahs or devils, but Manioralle, a learned priest from the Doombera country, who knew all the *Mahawansa*, or Great History of the Country, by heart, had told him, that they had belonged to a great Rajah named Singha, who had lived there very, very long ago, and that was the reason that they got the name of Singha Newera, or the city of Singha. It was difficult to account for these ruined places, many of which were to be found deep in the jungles of almost every district of the country. Some had been destroyed by war, some abandoned on account of fever or other sickness, and some from the mere caprice of the reigning Rajah. When thus abandoned, the jungle was not long in growing up and hiding them from the light of day, and their very existence was speedily forgotten by all but a few villagers, who may have lingered in the neighbourhood. No one now living in this district knew anything about the history of these ruins, unless perhaps another Unanse at a neighbouring Wihare or small temple, who was very learned and could tell about many things which were now forgotten, who read many books and if I were particularly desirous of learning about Singha

Newera, he would consult this priest or bring him to me, when I could obtain the wished-for information at first hand. I suspected that the Banda was unwilling to tell me quite as much as he knew himself, as I always found the natives extremely unwilling to show any ruins of old temples or palaces to Europeans, unless their sites were already known to them. The present was a case in point. I had frequently been within a stone's cast, as it were, and I was now the proprietor of these ruins, and yet, although I had been so for years, I had never, until today, heard of their existence or their name mentioned by a native, and on all occasions when exploring the jungle, in company with the Banda, or any of his people, I had been studiously led away in other directions.

I offered Coorocoodootenna Banda a contract to clear the jungle on the plateau on which the ruins stood, but, much to my astonishment, he declined to undertake it.

I could not get lowcountry Sinhalese nor Kandians to take this contract, neither could I get men to come and cut this jungle for wages as on other occasions. I was therefore only the more resolved to have the ground cleared at all hazards, and thus let the light of the sun in amongst the ruins. I accordingly put on a gang of my old Tamils to do the work. As I only cut down the low jungle, leaving the great trees standing, I had about fifty acres cleared in the course of a month, having the lake and the Chinese pagoda in the

centre of the clearing. When the whole was burned off, I had the various mounds of rubbish searched for carved stones, and all that were found were carefully cleaned and collected near to the pagoda. When the rains set in I had the whole planted with coffee, leaving a margin of the soft velvety grass around the lake. The tower commanded a wide and extensive view of the surrounding country. On one side Allagalla and Kadugannawa, and farther off the Hunasgeriya, the Knuckles and the Hangurankettie mountains, partially hid by the Hantane and Peradeniya ranges. Farther south was the Peacock mountain of Pussellawa, beyond which rose Adam's Peak, whilst the Ambegamuwa range of hills, surmounted by 'the Sentry-box,' frowned in the foreground, and the stone walls of Dolosbage closed the view on the west; unless where a break in the hills disclosed views of the lowcountry, with the waters of the Indian Ocean shining like a thread of silver on the far off horizon. The placid lake, with its background of dark forests and rugged mountain, with glimpses of green patna lands, and having the foreground occupied by the great wide spreading trees, which gave to the whole a home and a park like aspect; formed a scene, which, for beauty and picturesque effect, could not have been surpassed in Ceylon.

Then there was the murmuring gush of the stream over the falls into the lake, and the more distant dash of the waters over the sluice, which, when combined with the soft cooing of the wild

pigeons and the shrill scream of parroquets formed a music which thrilled pleasantly and dreamily upon the ear. I found that on the occasion of a sudden thundershower, or when there was continuous rain, that the archway at the sluice was scarcely large enough to carry off the rush of water, which flowed into the lake, and which, in consequence, found an *exit* by means of the watercourse, which afforded us access to it, and there plunged over the north face of the cliff, under which Braybrooke and I had pitched our tents. I found too, that by carrying the main path from Dodangahakelle over the ridge on which the ruins were situated, instead of round the rock below, I would save more than a mile of road, and, what was better, I found a road already formed and only requiring the fallen leaves and mould, the gatherings of centuries, perhaps, cleared away to fit it for all modern purposes; traced with a skill, which the most eminent engineer of the present day could not have surpassed.

I began to regret having built my new bungalow, as the spot occupied by the ruins of Singha Newera would have afforded a much more pleasant and picturesque site. Although its greater distance from the stores and works would have been a drawback, this was compensated for by the park-like appearance, and the deep shade of the wide spreading trees and the silvery expanse of the sparkling lake, whose waters danced in the brilliant beams of the sun.

When the clearing around the ruins was planted

I observed that the weeds and plants which grew amongst the coffee bushes were altogether different from those on any other part of the estate. Choice flowers and creeping vines made their appearance, such as I had never before seen in any part of the neighbourhood. Amongst the mounds of rubbish, for instance, many different species of Begonias made their appearance amongst the interstices of the stones and covered them with their beautifully-variegated leaves and the metallic gleam of their glowing flowers. Many other flowering plants, the names of which I did not know, made their appearance and made a magnificent display of their floral treasures, over the whole space of the cleared ground, whilst young fruit trees of almost every species cultivated in Ceylon sprang spontaneously from the soil, from the flabby papaw to the princely shaddock.

I used to spend a great deal of my spare time in this clearing. Game was more abundant in it than on any other part of the estate, attracted, perhaps, by the waters of the lake. I had a canoe hollowed out of a tree trunk, with an outrigger attached, in which I occasionally paddled about on the lake, sometimes alone, at other times accompanied by O'Brien or Wallace, and in fine weather I often ascended to the highest story of the Chinese tower, where there was a small chamber about eight feet square, in which I had placed a small table, a couch and chairs, and here I would sit and read the magic pages of Scott or Shakespeare, or the stirring narratives of

Marryat or Lever. The natives of the neighbouring villages seemed too to have a special liking for the ruins, for I often saw them wandering in their vicinity, although they appeared very shy of coming into contact with me, and almost always seemed desirous of escaping my notice altogether. In point of fact, I scarcely recollect ever having been upon the plateau of Singha Newera, without seeing or meeting one or more natives, and, in course of time I began to fancy that my movements, when amongst the ruins, were being systematically and narrowly watched. What the object was, in thus watching me, I was years in finding out. The discovery was rather amusing. There had long been a tradition amongst the natives, that immense treasures were hid in the neighbourhood of these ruins, or sunk in an iron chest in the centre of the lake. This chest was said to have been attached to the banks by four ponderous iron chains, and it was on record, that some Dissave or Banda had found one of these chains and brought elephants to drag the chest to land. The chain however broke, and it never could be found again, and so the chest with its hidden treasures remains at the bottom of the lake at the present day. As the natives believed that learned Europeans possessed the power of discovering hidden treasure, they fancied that I was in search of that which was said to be buried about Singha Newera, and they thought that if they were on the ground when it was discovered, they might possibly share in its dis-

tribution. Tales of such discoveries were very common amongst the natives and half-castes, and their details were listened to with rapt attention, when related by those believed to be acquainted with them. Had not a private soldier in a European regiment in Kandy found a large collection of rubies, sapphires and catseyes whilst sinking a well in the compound of his quarters, and had it not enriched him for life? Had not Captain Meaden, whilst digging the foundations of his house near the lake of Kandy, also discovered hidden wealth, of fabulous amount, and from being a very poor man, had he not suddenly become a very rich one? But why multiply instances of this nature? They were well known and quite notorious throughout the island, and when I was so much amongst the ruins of, and so deeply interested in Singha Newera, could that interest be occasioned by anything of less importance than the hope of finding the treasures buried on the land or sunk in the lake. Had I not swum into the centre of the said lake the moment I had discovered it, and dived, as if in search of something of value, which I knew to be there? Had I not searched the mounds of rubbish the moment that the land was cleared, and dug up every slab and large stone which I could find? Did I not remain almost entire days at a time reading books in the old tower, which perhaps told me where to search, and then go and gaze around, as if in order to discover the landmarks of which I had been reading? Had I not en-

deavoured to prevail on Coorocoodootenna Banda to give me all the information which he possessed about the place, and had I not placed a canoe upon the lake to enable me to make the search more complete? Had I not left all the old trees standing, which I had not done on any other part of the estate, and every person knew that it was by measuring exactly from one tree in the direction of some other, that the spot where hidden riches lay buried was discovered? All this and a great deal more was told me by an old man in the strictest confidence, who offered to assist me in my researches, if I would give him a small share in the booty when discovered. I laughed in the old man's face, but I believe that until this day the natives in that part of Ceylon still speak of the unsuccessful efforts I made to discover the buried jewels of the ancient Rajah, who had lived and reigned on the romantic and lovely spot, where I, many ages after, built myself a habitation, after the manner of my countrymen, but never enjoyed the happiness which I had dreamed of realizing within its walls.

CHAPTER XXV.—MY ASSISTANTS.

I had now three large estates, forming an aggregate of about a thousand acres under cultivation, and I was contemplating opening several other plantations, as these coming into bearing began to yield me some return for the heavy expenditure they had cost. I had two managers, O'Brien and Wallace, and I had three assistants, Knox, who

was with myself, Thom, who was with O'Brien, and Dallas, who was with Wallace. Knox was rather an extraordinary specimen of a young coffee planter. He was very short in stature, very stout, being almost as broad as he was long and very conceited. His head was the largest part of his body, I mean proportionally; his eyes were dark, and he once or twice asked me if they did not flash fire, "when he was in a passion."

I could not unfortunately answer this question, never having had the luck to see Knox in a passion. His hair was also dark, almost black, but not quite so. He wore it long, very long, and parted down the centre, like a girl's. He tried, with great zeal, to get it to curl in wavy ringlets, but the wiry Mongolian-looking hair was stubborn and would n't.

The secret of all this was that Mr. Knox fancied that he was a poet, and, as Byron's hair curled, he thought his ought to do so too. Upon the same principle, he wore wide lying-over shirt collars, very open at the throat and tied with a black ribbon, whose ends were thrown carelessly across his chest, according to the well-known style in the portraits of his ideal. He wore also a blue cloth jacket, with gilt buttons. It was long before I discovered the cause of Mr. Knox's eccentricity of costume; but the moment I found out that he was a poet, all mystery on this point ceased. Of course I was looked down upon and patronized by my assistant as being too-matter-of-fact and plodding a subject for a man of genius. I wanted

the Promethean fire, which was only shed upon a very few of our fallen race in the course of centuries, and, therefore, I was very much below the consideration of an inspired soul like Mr. Knox. Mr. Knox indulged largely in narcotics. He would smoke a bundle, *i. e.*, a dozen, of long Trichinopoly cheroots before breakfast, and about another dozen or two in the course of the day; at least he said so, and I believe that in his efforts to rival or excel De Quincy, he would have poisoned himself with opium, had I not taken the precaution to write and tell Ferdinands, the druggist in Kandy, to send him a very innocuous compound under this name. I was afterwards afraid lest he might get into a habit of using it, and by some chance get hold of the real drug and swallow it in quantities, likely to lead to serious results. To obviate this I took advantage of a visit from Doctor Howlet, to get the worthy doctor to frighten the young goose out of his incipient tampering with so pernicious a drug; by telling him that his system was already very much injured, and that if he did not desist in time, he had not another two months' life in him. He turned pale at this announcement, although he tried to look as if he didn't care; but from that moment he ceased being a customer to Ferdinands.

In course of time Mr. Knox allowed specimens of his poetry to lie about in the estate books and on the parlour table or office desks, evidently with the intention that they should be read and appreciated. O'Brien professed an extreme admiration of them in order to draw the young fool out.

They were principally apostrophes to Ceylon. I only recollect a few lines of these extraordinary productions. One began with

“O! Ceylon, Ceylon, island bright, brightest isle of
 th’ Eastern sea,
 The Eagle in its farthest flight knows not an isle
 like thee,
 With thy steep frowning mountains and tall tapering
 palms,
 Thy gold bubbling fountains, thou island of charms.
 Jessamines are growing in thy fertile vales,
 Perfumes are wafted in thy spicy gales,
 But sweeter the—”

What was sweeter, I never knew. Perhaps it was no great matter. The muse had evidently left her votary at this point and had not returned. Another production of about equal calibre was sent, at O'Brien's suggestion, to the *Colombo Observer* and actually appeared in print, at least, one or two verses did. In this piece, I think that Mr. Knox, after saying something about orange groves of Ceylon, asked despairingly, of course:

“O! where are the kings that once over these reigned?”
 and answered his own question thus
 “Bold rock of the deep, sea sentry of Ind,
 Their names have fled on the wings of the wind.”

The facetious editor of the *Observer*, or some of his malicious imps, subjoined a footnote asking if the talented author of the poem meant to insinuate that Ceylon belonged to that celebrated corps, the horse marines.

Mr. Knox's services were just a little better than no services at all, and so I sent him over to Wallace in the hope that that smart although soft-hearted Scotchman might make something of him. Knox, however, never set the Thames on fire with

his genius. He was no honour to his prototype Byron, nor to us who tried hard to make a poet into a coffee planter. He left Ceylon after the great crash of 1847-1848, and I think I once saw him in 1850 in a theatre in London, and once again driving a waggon, loaded with beef, between Balaclava and Sebastopol.

To supply Knox's place I got a nephew of a Mr. Berkley, a leading Colombo merchant, through whom I sometimes transacted part of my business sent to me. This young gentleman was either a frenchified Englishman or an anglified Frenchman, I never rightly made out which. I had been up on the plateau of Singha Newera, where I had shot a moose-deer by the side of the lake. I had the deer carried home with me, and, on entering the bungalow, I found a stranger sitting in front of a dumbwaiter, the shelves of which revolved round a centre shaft. On one of these shelves the stranger had placed a favorite black cat,—I am not ashamed to tell that I had a favorite cat,—and he was making the shelf whirl round with a velocity, which must have astonished the poor brute, yelling at the same time loud screams of idiotic laughter. I am not easily excited, otherwise such treatment to my pet would have been apt to rile me; but I contented myself, after seeing my game deposited in the verandah, by contemplating the proceedings of my self-made guest with a benignant smile, waiting until he should condescend to notice me and tell the purport of his visit.

When he did condescend to do this, he rose with great friendliness of manner, whilst the poor

cat took that opportunity of bolting, and asked patronizingly if I might be Mr. Green.

On being satisfied that I was the individual in question, he offered to shake hands and assured me that he was delighted to make my acquaintance.

This was so far satisfactory, and I reciprocated by saying that I hoped he was quite well, and that the weather was very warm and dry.

“Of course, you know who I am,” the stranger then suggested. “I have a letter for you from Nunky—here it is. No, that’s not it. Why, confound it, I fancy that I must have lost it in these infernal jungles. Ah! well, it does not matter much, it merely said that I was to come up and assist you to look after this place and Nunky hoped that we would pull well together and all that sort of thing. I think we will, for, from my soul, I like the look of you already,” saying which, the stranger youth, who, I discovered, was short sighted, peered into my face with so comical and self-confident a manner, that I fairly burst out with a loud guffaw. He seemed astonished at such a breach of good manners, but when I apologized for my rudeness, he generously forgave me, and we spent a tolerably pleasant evening together. This, perhaps, arose from the opportune arrival of Tytler from Pallikelle and my old friend Bird from Kondesalle, who came up to spend a few days with me. After dinner Bird related some of his sporting adventures, in the shape of elephant and buffalo shooting, whilst Tytler told us of a

very narrow escape which he and one of his assistants, a Mr. Alex. Reid, had experienced the previous week from a wounded elephant, who had charged them, and from whom they got off in a most miraculous manner. It appeared that a herd of elephants had entered the estate and done a considerable amount of damage to the coffee bushes. Tytler and Reid, accompanied by a Kandyan, Tickery Cangany, had gone in search of them, each armed with double-barrelled elephant guns, carrying two-ounce leaden bullets. They had no difficulty in finding the trail of the elephants, where it had entered a thick prickly jungle. This they followed up until they came upon the whole herd lying asleep, near a huge isolated rock, deep down in the jungle. Unwilling to take a mean advantage of the brutes, they roused them from their slumbers, and then Tytler fired and struck the leader of the herd in the forehead. The brute was not mortally injured, although slightly stunned for the time being. He speedily recovered, and trumpeting with rage, he raised his huge trunk in the air and charged right at his assailant. With wonderful presence of mind Tytler fired again, but this only added fuel to the rage of the furious beast; and his trunk was within a few yards of his victim, when Tytler leapt down the side of a steep rock into the centre of a mass of rotten brushwood, where he was hid from the view of his pursuer. In the meantime Reid had stood his ground, and had snapped both barrels at the enraged elephant, but both had missed fire.

He was nervously trying to place other caps on the nipples, when the brute having lost sight of Tytler, turned upon him. The big rock, which I have mentioned, was close at hand, but its smooth perpendicular sides did not present any feasible means of escape. Nevertheless, Reid made a rush at it, and by some means, he never knew how he gained the summit. He still retained his gun, and on finding himself in comparative safety, he turned to fire again, when he found that, in making good his escape, he had struck the gun against the rock so violently that the ramrod was broken and the barrels so bent that they were of no further use. How Tickery Cangany escaped was never known. It was supposed that he was in such a state of fright at the tremendous trumpeting and the terrific crashing of the angry animals through the thick underwood, that he did not know himself.

My new assistant sat listening to these stories with open-mouthed wonder. He had seen elephants in some of the public establishments in France or Belgium, and he might have seen one or two on his way from Colombo to my establishment, as also some tame buffaloes; but the idea of shooting such ponderous animals, I am positive, until now, had never entered the young man's head. As I said, he listened to the yarns of my visitors with open-mouthed wonder and a great apparent degree of interest. I regretted afterwards that I had not the power to place myself *en rapport* with his thoughts. Could I have done so, it would have saved me nearly a score of pounds.

I took my visitors over to inspect the ruins of Singha Newera and then to see O'Brien's and Wallace's plantations. It was evening before we returned. On coming near the bungalow we met Kistna Samy, the head of "the works and building department," who gave me a long and pitiful account of some buffaloes having been shot.

I was not at that time quite so great an adept at speaking and understanding the native languages as I afterwards became, and, therefore, I did not quite comprehend what buffaloes had been shot, nor who had shot them. I had a few acres of land, it had been a piece of native heena or fallow land, planted with Guinea grass, near the lime kiln, and it was to this place that Kistna Samy led us, when we went to see about the buffaloes. I knew that my own animals which were used for treading and mixing the clay at the brickworks were turned into this field when their day's labour was over, and my heart misgave me as our guide led us towards it. These misgivings were confirmed by meeting Berkley with my double-barrelled rifle over his shoulder, and looking excited and elated as if he were conscious of having performed some great or praiseworthy action.

"Oh! I've had such an adventure," the young fool shouted, when we drew near. "I've shot three buffaloes at the edge of the coffee, and they are all stone dead, although one fellow required no fewer than about a dozen of balls before I was able to polish him off."

My companions saw at once what had occurred and laughed heartily at the mistake, whilst I was n't exactly sure whether I ought to laugh also or get angry, for there were three out of my four tame buffaloes lying, as my new assistant had so graphically remarked, "stone dead"—shot ignobly on the very spot where they used to browse so luxuriously on the long succulent grass and dreamily ruminate when the toils of the day were over.

"You have just destroyed twenty pounds worth of my property, young man," I said, sternly and severely, but I don't think that this reproof took down the pride and elation of the young fool,—pride at having dropped three tame and harmless animals.

It was not long before I discovered that Master Berkley and myself were not likely to pull well together. He might, perhaps, have got on with Frenchmen, but he was not cut out for dealing with Scotchmen and the impulsive but submissive Tamils. I found on going to the stores one evening, where I had told him to muster the men and call the roll, that he had got Veerapin's garden engine under way and was amusing himself by playing upon the men and women indiscriminately, with a continuous stream of water. This was rather too much of a good thing, and I was under the necessity of writing Nunky, as he rather irreverently styled his avuncular relation, to remove him from my care and try and provide for him elsewhere.

My next assistant was a girlish-looking young man of the name of Ross, whose hair was, like Knox's, parted down the centre, but, unlike his, it fell in wavy flaxen ringlets nearly to his shoulders. Had he been a girl, he would have been accounted good-looking; but as a lad he was too effeminate in appearance. I never saw a more innocent or guileless looking face on mortal man. It would have been a fit model for an angel. Yet, when we came to know Ross a little better, it was discovered that this angelic-looking exterior concealed a very filthy mind.

To use one of his own expressions, he was up to everything, from pitch and toss to manslaughter, and the filthy language which those saint-like lips of his gave utterance to was something incredible. Had I not actually overheard him, I would never have credited the stories which O'Brien and Wallace told me of our new friend, when the first-named of these gentlemen asked him where he was raised, so as to become such an adept in all sorts of wicked language, the young reprobate answered with great *sang froid* :—"At Chatham, amongst Irish soldiers and their English sweethearts, of course, to be sure."

So long as Ross confined his filthy language to others out of my hearing, it was no business of mine to correct him, but before he and I parted company he had dropped using it, and this, if I never did any other good in the world, was something to have accomplished by the mere force of example, without any precept being added

to it. Ross was an energetic pushing fellow, and I believe he is one of the few old hands in Ceylon, on whom fortune has thought fit to bestow her golden favours. He did me good service, and, if hard work and perseverance lead to wealth, he most undoubtedly has earned this reward.

Another assistant I had was Howard, a young Englishman from Salisbury. We used to call him "the shepherd of Salisbury plain." Howard's chief peculiarity was an excessive lust for trading. He ought to have been a Yankee pedlar and not a Ceylon coffee planter. He would trade anything, even to the shirt off his back, provided he could make a profit off it and get anyone to trade with him. He brought a magnificent outfit with him when he came to Dodangahakelle. I never saw it equalled. He shewed me his outfitter's bill, a man Unwin, in Lombard Street, and it amounted to nearly two hundred pounds. It occasionally happened that a very rainy day would occur, when the men would not turn out to the work, and when it was not advisable to make them do so; on which occasion O'Brien and his assistants, Wallace and his assistants, and sometimes a stray planter or two from distant estates, would drop in to pass away the day at my bungalow. It was then that Howard's room was turned into an emporium, where ready-made clothes and habiliments of all kinds, from shirt collars and pocket handkerchiefs to dress coats and satin vests, were disposed of at a fabulous advance on the original prices. When my assis-

tant had replenished O'Brien's wornout wardrobe and clothed Wallace anew, besides supplying a host of other customers with a small selection of goods, he found that he had almost sold himself out, and, like Alexander, he seemed inclined to cry, not because there were no more worlds to conquer, but because there were no more goods to trade in. I sent him to Colombo in charge of a large consignment of coffee, some fifty or sixty bandy-loads, with orders to purchase some tools and a quantity of rice. He took this opportunity of laying in a stock of razors, pen-knives, steel pens, meerschaum pipes, jewellery and a selection of other nicknacks, which no sane man could ever have expected to dispose of in the jungles around Dodangahakelle. Howard, however, did manage to sell them. There was not a visitor to the bungalow, from Prince Waldemar of Prussia downwards, but he got them to buy something, and in the course of about a couple of months the whole venture was sold off, when he told me, with great glee, that he had cleared nearly twenty pounds by the speculation. He certainly had a most wonderful genius for selling. Nothing came wrong to him, a spavined or glandered horse, a shirt-pin, a rifle, a house, or a landed estate. He could sell each or either, and get a larger price for the article than any other man in the island; whilst impressing his victim with the conviction that he too had made a most wonderful bargain.

Howard did not remain with me longer than twelve months. He obtained the management of

an estate in Badulla or Saffragam, and shortly after I heard that he had left Ceylon for Australia, where, I have since learned, he established a large mercantile house, remarkable for its great bargains for ready money, in Sydney.

I had many more assistants through my hands ; but I don't recollect any remarkable peculiarity that any of the others possessed worth mentioning. There was one fellow, a Londoner, named Tait, who was occasionally very amusing about the time of the arrival of the overland mail, from a habit he had of reading his home letters aloud in public, making, as he did so, a running commentary on their contents. He was particularly bright upon any little affectionate touches from his mother or sisters, or on any piece of good advice from his father.

"Poor deluded creatures," he would say in reference to his sisters, "if ignorance is bliss, you must be in a very happy state of mind." Two maiden aunts of evangelistic tendencies, from whom he had 'some expectations,' to whom he had written that he was perfecting himself in the native languages (he could only speak two or three words of either Sinhalese or Tamil, and I don't think that he ever learned more), offered to send him out a large marquee, that he might erect a tabernacle in the wilderness and preach to his coolies, trying to convert them to a knowledge of the true faith. Poor old ladies, if they had only heard the biting sarcasms of their worthy nephew on reading their kindly letter making this offer,

to his laughing companions, and seen him rolling on a couch roaring with laughter and kicking his heels in the air with exquisite appreciation of the ridiculous nature of the offer, and the still more ridiculous figure he would cut in preaching to the natives, I fear that "his expectations" from that quarter would never have been realized. Latterly, I sometimes had three and even more of these young gentlemen living in the bungalow with me at one and the same time. They were generally a free, careless, lighthearted, rollicking set of young fellows, full of fun and high spirits. I liked to have them about me, but they often took advantage of my good nature in rather a teasing and provoking manner. After work hours, they had the full run of the house, and everything that was in it of an eatable or drinkable nature, and they sometimes carried their licence in this respect to rather too great an extreme.

I recollect being in Kandy on one occasion, when I bought a quarter cask of claret and sent it up to the estate. I had, in the meantime, gone on a visit to some friends either on the Knuckles or at Hunasgeriya, and it was upwards of a week before I got home. Now, if there is any kind of drink for which I have a weakness, it is claret, particularly when it is mulled, with plenty of nutmeg and mace in it. On my return, I ordered the appu to take a jug of claret from the cask and get it mulled after dinner.

"No claret got, sir," the fellow replied, with a knowing grin.

"No claret got!" I answered in amazement, "Did I not send up a whole cask last week?"

"Yes, sir, Master send cask, but Mister Brien and Mister Wallace and little Master and plenty other gentlemen come here every night to dinner, and they all give order 'Muskin bring mulled claret, Muskin bring mulled claret.' What I can do? I only servant, I must 'bey, and, therefore, sir, claret all done."

This was only too true. O'Brien had broached the cask, and he and his companions had actually drunk the whole of it in little more than a week. When I expostulated with that young gentleman for not having left some to me, "Never mind Major," he said, "you have not lost anything. It was very poor trash. I have a friend at Port Louis in Mauritius, Poyndaster, you know who writes that he has sent me a cask of a very superior article, the real Bordeaux, which will be in Colombo soon. We will have it brought to your bungalow and broached there, when, by jabers, you shall have your own share of it and no mistake."

CHAPTER XXVI.—AN ACCIDENT; A SUICIDE;
AN ADVENTURE WITH CAPTAIN ROBERTSON AND
A FATAL CATASTROPHE.

Time flew by, as it always will fly, whether we are in sorrow or joy, and nothing worthy of remark occurred to break the dull uniformity of our life at Dodangahakelle. New buildings were being erected on the new estates, but as the

novelty of making bricks, burning lime and sawing timber had worn off, this did not create much interest. On the old plantations there was even less to occupy one's mind, unless when crop time came round and the clatter of the machinery and the splash of water was heard down in the hollow, where stood the stores and the pulping house, and the cheery *Ta, na, na, na, na, na; na, na, na, na, na, na; Ta, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, na, neah;* of the coolies singing at their work, rose on the calm evening air. Keeping the fields clear of weeds was then the principal employment, varied with the thatching and repairing of buildings, and the keeping in order of the roads. The coffee bushes had, by this time, covered the whole of the ground, whilst the fallen logs and charred stumps of trees had begun to disappear, so that the wide-stretching reaches of coffee presented a less rugged and rough appearance than on newly-formed plantations. Cone-like masses of dark green glossy foliage had begun to rise in clumps and belts stretching across or dotted over the fields from the young jak trees, which had been planted simultaneously with the coffee, and which now overtopped the bushes like a race of giants towering over a nation of pigmies. The whole plantation was, at this time, a beautiful and a magnificent sight to contemplate, at least, I thought it so, and I often strolled,

“As the sun in the west was declining”

to some elevated spot, and looked around me with a feeling of intense happiness and satisfaction,

as I saw the long strings of coolies winding, snake-like, along the paths on their way home from their work; as I heard the clatter of their axes, cutting firewood, and their cheerful laugh or song borne faintly on the breeze, and saw the blue smoke oozing through the thatch of their huts and rising slowly higher and higher, until it became gradually dissolved in the calm evening air. It was pleasant to see the sparkling waterfalls dash in wreaths of silvery foam down dark ravines, and the mountain torrents tearing along the deep valleys under the shadow of hoary woods, making the air melodious with their brawl and gush, their jangle and rush. It was pleasant to watch the starry tops of the katu-kitul trees wave with a gentle rustle along the sides and summits of the high cliffs, which bounded the eastern side of the estate, and whose perpendicular rocks, like huge barriers of bronze, glowed like burnished gold in the rays of the setting sun.

Then the soft murmur of the toorooloo, the still softer cooing of the cobeya, the trumpet-like note of the walli-coockooloo and the humming of thousands of insects fell dreamily on the ear with a delicious melody. I would gaze with rapture on the mountain peaks as they, one by one, ceased to glow in the burning rays of the setting sun. It filled me with a sort of ecstasy to listen to these murmurings, as they floated on the air; to gaze on my verdant and fruitful fields, my winding roads and white gleaming buildings, all of which were of my own forming, and made up as pretty a

picture of peace and comfort as the heart of man could desire. I can yet recollect how my heart swelled with intense thankfulness to the giver of all good, for having permitted me to be the founder and projector of all this, and for having thrown my lot amongst the sunny and forest-crowned mountains of Kandy instead of the in cold and frosty regions of a more northern climate.

Time has flown, with rapid wing, since those days; but even, as I write, with a cold frosty wind howling outside my habitation and moaning around the adjacent chimney tops; with the streets and housetops covered with snow, I draw near to the brightly burning fire in my little parlour, in which the candles are lighted and the curtains are drawn, and laying down my pen and closing my eyes, the old coffee planter is once more transported to the ruins of Newera Singha on the summit of Annisgalle, and the wide-spreading fields, which he planted stretch before him, and the gurgling of the waters rushing in waterfall and cascade down the steep mountain side tingles in his ears, and the ghosts of old friends, now long buried, some on bloody fields of battle and some sunk deep in distant oceans, stalk around him, and their cheery laugh, their jovial song and their beaming smiles are seen and heard once more. The jungle sights, smells and sounds have taken the place of the trim parlour, and the rugged mountain peaks of Old Lanka have taken the place of the snow-covered roofs of neighbouring houses. These pleasing illusions, however, soon vanish,

and as I open my eyes, the well-loved vision is fled, never, I fear, to be realized, unless in such waking dreams by day, or sleeping ones by night. The changes and chances of this mortal life have borne heavily on me since these days. Instead of being the possessor of an Eastern principality, I have frequently been in a position where my daily bread has been a doubtful possession. Instead of founding a dynasty, I have not now a relative in the world.* I am not an old man, but wrinkles have begun to furrow my countenance, and there is a large sprinkling of grey hairs on my head. Of my wide-spreading possessions, all that now remains to me is a right to the old family burying ground in St. Hubert's churchyard, in an obscure village in Surrey, where I hope my mortal body will repose after "life's fitful fever" is past.

At the time of which I now write, however, I was, to all human appearance, in a fair way of realizing my most sanguine dreams of wealth and honour. My first planted estates had already done more than repay the money that I had expended on them, and the crop of 1844 would, I hoped, yield a handsome surplus, after paying the expenditure on Meegongoya, the estate of which O'Brien had the management. I had begun to cut the forest for three other plantations, which I intended should contain quite three hundred acres of land each, and the more distant valleys of my

* This was written before the denouement of this veritable history.

property had begun to resound with the clatter of the Kandyans' axes.

It would, however, be a mere repetition of what I have already narrated, were I to describe the progress of these estates. It is sufficient to say that they were cleared and planted, and towards the end of 1846 they had begun to yield their virgin crop, which, however, was not much to boast of. Bungalows and rows of lines rose on remote hillsides, and piles of buildings and stretches of barbecues reflected the hot glare of the tropical sun, in more than one secluded valley. Roads wound round projecting spurs of rugged mountains, or climbed in zigzags to the summits of elevated passes. Dark ravines were exposed to the light of day, and moss-covered trees, the growth of centuries, were laid low on the ground. During the progress of these plantations nothing occurred worthy of being mentioned in the pages of this history.

It is true that a stupid fellow of a Tamil was killed by the fall of a rotten tree, the top of which broke off with the first blow of his axe, and, falling on his head, killed him on the spot. Another cooly hanged himself from disappointed affection, the lady of his love having eloped with the cangany of a distant estate. I sent for the nearest Korala, or native headman, who acted as a sort of Coroner, to come and view the remains of the man who committed suicide. He came, dressed in his robes of office, viz., a four-cornered muslin hat, and an immense mass of the same material

rolled around his waist, a white cotton jacket with gold buttons and tremendously wide sleeves and a white camboy. This great man was attended with a retinue of natives carrying talipots, betel boxes and fans. He ordered the body to be cut down and laid on a bench in front of the lines, where he proceeded to examine it, chewing betel all the time.

Wallace, O'Brien and myself were in attendance to watch the proceedings. I confess, with sorrow, that O'Brien's conduct was not such as befitted so solemn an occasion. So determined had the suicide been to kill himself, that in order to do this effectually he had to bend his knees and lift his feet off the ground. There was scarcely room to stand upright under the beam from which he was suspended.

I asked the Korala what his opinion of this affair was.

"The man is dead. Without a doubt the man is dead," was the answer.

"Has he killed himself, or is it possible that he might have been hanged by any other person?" was asked by O'Brien.

"The man is dead, without a doubt the man is dead," the Korala replied, as he squirted a mouthful of red saliva from between his teeth.

"Died from want of breath?" suggested O'Brien.

"Died from want of breath," the Korala repeated.

"Died from want of breath," was echoed by his followers.

“Hanged himself with a dirty cloth?” suggested O’Brien.

“Hanged himself with a dirty cloth,” repeated the Korala.

“Hanged himself with a dirty cloth,” echoed his followers.

“And this is your verdict?” asked O’Brien.

“This is our verdict,” was solemnly asserted by the Korala.

“This is our verdict,” said the natives, and the proceedings closed with an exchange of betel boxes and chunam. The headman departed with a greater degree of conscious dignity than attended his arrival, as if he felt perfectly assured that he had discharged a painful public duty with honour and integrity.

Being in Kandy in the month of July 1840, I met my friend Captain Robertson, whose affair with little Ensign Buller I have already mentioned. He had purchased a block of land on the extreme point of the Dolosbage range of mountains overlooking the lowcountry towards Ruanwella, and he wished me very much to accompany him to his estate and spend a few days with him there.

We left Kandy early in the morning, and by 9 o’clock we had reached a small bungalow, which the Captain possessed by the side of the Colombo road, where we had breakfast and remained during the heat of the day. The sun was

very oppressive and we could see masses of cloud gathering over the Moorootie and Kadugannawa hills, and by-and-bye as the day wore on, we could hear angry growls of thunder reverberating amongst the far-off valleys, although down where we were, on the confines of the lowcountry, the sky was cloudless and serene.

We left Hingoola, the village where Robertson's bungalow stood, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and rode along the old military highway to Attapettia or Fort King. This fort, now in ruins and overgrown with jungle, was half a century ago the principal military post, next to Kandy, in the interior. It commanded the fords of the Mahaoya and the chief passes into the Kandyan mountains from the lowcountry; and as it was the spot where most of the scenes were laid, which my friend Braybrook used to relate to me in the early part of my jungle experiences, I gazed on the ruins which now remained, a crumbling gateway and a fallen rampart with some degree of interest. The theatre, the barracks, the Commandant's house, and the bungalows of the officers, were now heaps of rubbish buried under green mosses of prickly vines and wild flowering shrubs. A square pillar of stone stood erect amid this sheltering mass of green foliage near to the bank of the river, and this pillar, I was told, marked the grave of some officer of distinction, whose remains were rested in that lonely jungle. A skulking jackal sprang from the ruins of the stronghold as we passed, and darted almost amongst our horses' feet, barking with fright, on finding

himself in such dangerous company. The air felt hot and oppressive, and the sky had suddenly assumed that coppery hue so favourable to lowness of spirits, or, as Robertson called them, 'the doleful dumps.' This, combined with the desolate and ruined condition of a place which had been described to me as so recently glowing with all the life and vigour, the beauty and fashion of the island, made me feel very mournful and depressed. Not so my companion, who, being a big powerfully-built man, was mounted on a little wall-eyed pony, named Pepper, which had been in the possession at one time or other of almost every European in the Kandyan country, and which seemed fitter to be carried by than to carry him. He rode ahead, whooping and cracking his whip at the coolies carrying our traps, and urging the poor fellows to a greater degree of speed than they would probably have exerted, if left to 'the devices and desires of their own minds.' We descended a steep bank and found ourselves in the sandy bed of the oya. The water seemed low, and the coolies crossed without difficulty. I do not now remember the cause of the arrangement, but Robertson remained on the near side of the stream until I had crossed, and well it was for him that he did so. We had been for some time conscious of a dull roaring sound, which seemed to be slowly approaching us, and increasing in volume as it did so, from the direction of the Kadugannawa hills. It resembled the roar of a cataract, or the hoarse thunder of a tempest tearing through a forest. I was in the middle of the stream,

which turned abruptly to the right, about a hundred yards above the ford, and my horse—a handsome Arab—was carefully picking his way through the water, which rose as high as his saddle girths, when I became conscious of the very rapid approach of the sound I have mentioned.

An excited exclamation of "My God! look ahead," from Robertson caused me to turn my head in the direction of the bend in the stream, and there, sweeping towards me, with the velocity and power of an avalanche, was a solid wall of water, many feet high, with huge trees and masses of turf tumbling and rolling over each other in a seething mass of foam. My heart leapt into my mouth and my brain grew dizzy at the sight. Destruction seemed inevitable and unavoidable. My horse appeared to be as conscious of the danger as I was myself. He snorted with terror and sprang forward towards the bank with greatly accelerated speed. I dug the rowels of my spurs into him with a feeling of desperation, and the noble animal having gained the shallow water, bounded forward and landed me in safety on the bank, just as the great wave of water and turf and forest trees went roaring past, filling the whole bed of the stream which before was three-fourths dry, with a muddy and impetuous torrent. I wiped the perspiration from my forehead and then turned to look for my friend.

"That was a close shave: never saw a closer," he shouted, as if he were hailing a ship at sea, using his hands as a speaking trumpet across the roaring flood. "But how the mischief am I to

get across myself? If I am to stay here until the waters fall, I may have to remain for the next fortnight. Do you think I could manage to swim? If I hadn't the pony, I would try."

"Try, by all means," I shouted, having got over the effects of my own fright, and being somewhat amused at Robertson's forelorn look, as he stood ruefully contemplating the roaring torrent which separated us.

"By Jove, here goes then," he cried, as he coolly took off his watch and tied it inside his hat, and then undressing secured his clothes in a bundle on the pony's head.

I was now seriously alarmed and roared to him, "For God's sake, don't attempt the stream at present."

I was a good swimmer myself, but I would never dared to face such a torrent as was now sweeping past us, carrying big forest trees on its bosom as if they were straws.

"All right, old fellow," Robertson shouted, as he led the pony about fifty yards up the bank and then plunged into the stream. When I saw that he was resolved to risk the passage, I undressed as quickly as possible and stood at the edge of the water, prepared to lend him all the assistance I could, in the event of my services being required. He had gained the centre of the torrent, and was approaching with vigorous strokes the spot where I stood; when owing to the force of the current, he rolled once on his side and seemed

for the moment to have lost all power of making any further headway. To mend matters, Pepper began to neigh and plunge with terror, and both horse and man were swirled past me at a rapid rate.

"Let go the bridle, Robertson," I roared, as I plunged into the water to his aid.

He did as I bade him, and I soon saw the distance between him and the horse gradually widen, whilst he, at the same time, made several vain efforts to battle with the stream. As I swam towards him, first one black head passed me and then another. The first I recognised as belonging to the horsekeeper, and the other as that of one of the coolies who had been carrying our baggage. Both held long sticks in their hands. The horsekeeper swam towards the pony which he seized by the bridle and dragged, almost without an effort, in spite of the strength of the current towards the landing place. The coolie swam towards his master whom he succeeded in clutching by the hand, and giving him one end of the stick to hold, he dragged him also against the current to the landing place. In the meantime, I had begun to find, that instead of affording assistance to others, I would probably require help to escape myself to a place of safety from the raging turmoil of the seething water around me. The current carried me far below the landing-place, and the swirl of the eddies turned me round and round as if I were a straw; dashed

me against stones and fairly upset all idea of my whereabouts in my own mind. I was now far down the stream and rolling at a fearful rate towards a rapid, full of rugged rocks and projecting stones, whilst both banks were alike clothed with an impenetrable growth of prickly jungle. I had lost all idea of what I ought to do, and merely struggled to keep my head above the gushing, foaming torrent, whilst my body felt sore all over from the bumps which I had already received against trees and stones. At this moment, when I had lost all thought and almost all sensation, with the exception of a painful consciousness of rapid motion, and of a deafening gush and roar, I felt something placed in my hands. It is no false simile, a drowning man clutching at a straw. The object placed in my hands proved to be a stick, and I clutched it with all the energy of despair, and then I felt conscious of being dragged through and under the water, and then I knew that I was safe on dry land. When Robertson and his pony had been safely landed, it did not occur to anyone to look whether I was in danger or otherwise, until they saw me being sucked into the rapid a long way down the river. Then my horsekeeper, Sockalingum, plunged into the stream at once, and as it proved came to the rescue just at the nick of time. I lay on the bank bruised, blinded and breathless, panting like a grampus, and then I had to force my way naked as when I came into the world through thickets of prickly jungle, until I reached the spot where my horse and clothes were to be found. If I were

writing this journal for the edification of old ladies of evangelical tendencies, I would, perhaps, make mention of how thankful I was for the narrow escape which I have just mentioned; but as I am narrating the simple truth, I must confess that I was inwardly cursing the hard fate which had nearly bruised my limbs to a jelly, almost drowned my body and scratched my skin, until I felt sore and pained all over, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot. People seldom feel thankful for great mercies at the time they occur; it is afterwards, when the blood cools and the thoughts become collected, that the magnitude of great perils makes the greatest impression on the mind, and it is then that the gratitude of the heart ascends to heaven for marvellous preservations, and thankfulness for past mercies fill the soul, if heart and soul are not alike insensible to gratitude.

On the present occasion we rode along the valley of the Mahaoya in sombre silence and in bad humour, unconscious alike of the stately outline of Battalakanda, the craggy mountains of Moorootie and the magnificent scenery through which we passed—insensible to the splendid clumps of acacia bushes, which 'waved their yellow hair,' in golden prospective in the plains before us—insensible to the sweet perfume of the areca trees, which filled the air with a grateful odour—insensible of the emerald hues of the rice-fields, through which our path led and to the peaceful seclusion of the native houses, which lay hid in the shade

of jak, bamboo, kittul and other fruit trees on their banks.

After a ride of eight or ten miles, sometimes, through paddy-fields, and very frequently along the bed of the Mahaoya, we began to ascend the Amblankande pass. The path—a narrow bridle track—zigzagged up the face of the mountain for nearly four miles; but when we reached the summit, we were amply repaid by the magnificent view we obtained of the greater part of the Kandyan country, with its great chains towering mountains on one side, and of the lowcountry, almost from Point-de-Galle to Jaffna on the other. At one part of the pathway, just before we reached the summit of the Pass, we crossed a slight bridge of rough logs, some of which seemed to be in a half rotten and rather tottering condition. After we were over, Robertson dismounted, and picking up a stone, threw it down the side of this dilapidated bridge. We heard it tumbling through the jungle, until it reached the bottom many hundred feet beneath.

“Rather an awkward place for a nervous man to cross, especially if he be mounted on a skittish horse. Only a few rotten planks between him and kingdom come,” my companion observed with a grim smile. “I always make it a point of honour to enlighten strangers as to the danger of the navigation after the peril is past,” he added, “but with the exception of myself, I have never known anyone willing to cross this spot

on horseback a second time. They always prefer to lead the animal and take precious care that both man and beast are not on the planks at one and the same time, and they are quite right too."

It was almost dark when we crossed the Moorootie estate, the manager of which we found absent, and his assistant who, my companion told me, had been a clerk in the Bank of England, drunk and incapable, and it was quite dark before we reached Robertson's bungalow, two miles farther on, over a rough rocky road which wound up the sides of rocky cliffs where no animal but Ceylon horses or goats would be able to keep their footing.

Mrs. Robertson gave us a warm welcome, and after an excellent dinner and a glass or two of equally excellent wine, our bruises and fatigues were speedily forgotten in a sound and refreshing slumber.

I remained with my old friend nearly a week, and then I prepared to return home. At his suggestion, I returned to Kandy *via* Gampola, passing through the Dolosbage estates, some of which were only then in course of being cleared. The road was, in consequence, rough and the journey tedious; but the view I got of the country amply repaid me for the fatigue I endured. I passed through Moorootie, Doteloya, Hormanjee, Kellie, Windsor Forest and Pen-y-lan, and then down through a series of rolling patanas and chena lands to Gampola. When I reached the

resthouse I felt so tired and fatigued, that I resolved to remain there over night, instead of going direct home, and I was confirmed in this resolve by a pouring rain which set in and continued all that afternoon and the whole of the following night. My tappal man from Kandy took shelter in the verandah of the hotel, and by this means I received a letter which made it necessary that I should ride into that city without delay, to attend as a juryman at the District Court. I left Gampola in company with a Mr. Lamb and a Mr. Geddes early in the morning. The rain was still pouring down in drenching showers, and the river was very much swollen and overflowing its banks, had covered large portions of the road and the adjoining paddy-fields to a considerable depth with water. In one place, about half-way between Gampola and Peradeniya, the road was covered for more than a mile, and the whole country between us and the foot of the Hantane hills looked like a large lake of muddy water, in the midst of which the native houses, with their clumps of coconut and jak trees stood out like islands amid the general inundation.

We required to be very careful in proceeding along the road, as a false step on either side might lead to serious results. Although I knew the road as well as any European in the island, I caused my horsekeeper to precede us, and sound the way as he went with a long stick, and as he was often wading up to his waist, this necessarily made our progress very slow. We at length

reached the limit of the inundation on the Peradeniya side and had a clear road before us; but just as we reached *terra firma*, we met a party of horsemen, one of whom was my old friend Acland, whilst the other two were strangers to me, proceeding in the opposite direction. After the usual greetings were over, I told them the state of the road, and cautioned them to be careful how they proceeded.

"All right," one of the gentlemen replied, whose name was Shand, "I know every inch of the way and there is no danger. Thank you for your good advice and good-bye," saying which, Acland and his companions rode forward in great glee, whilst we put spurs to our horses and cantered off in the opposite direction. We had not proceeded more than a few hundred yards, when I fancied that I heard shouts as of terror behind us. We stopped and listened. The shouts were repeated.

"Something has happened to Acland's party," I suggested, "We had better go back and see."

"Nonsense," my companions replied, "they know the road and there can be no danger."

After some hesitation I suggested to my friends, who seemed unwilling to turn back, that they should go on, and I would soon overtake them; but I was resolved, in the first instance, to learn the cause of these shouts.

I rode back accordingly, but when I came in sight of the horsemen we had passed, there were only two of them to be seen, and they, together

with the horsekeepers, were evidently searching for something in the water. I galloped up to the spot, when Acland told me, in terrified accents, that Shand's horse had plunged into a ditch and that both horse and rider had disappeared. The horse had come up again, and they thought that they had seen Shand's head for a moment, but he had sunk before they were able to give him any assistance and he had not since appeared. He had, Mr. Acland was of opinion, been kicked by his horse and thus rendered insensible, and he was afraid that he was now drowned past all chance of recovery. The horsekeeper had secured the horse, and they were now searching for the body of his master. All this was told to me in a very few sentences, during which time the search was still going on, and the spot where the poor fellow had disappeared being pointed out to me, I immediately assisted in looking for him. Our efforts, however, were useless. No Shand was to be found. The water was naturally muddy, and it was rendered much more so by the trampling of horses and men, so that we could not see an inch below the surface, and all our diving and groping in the bottom failed to discover the drowned man.

We had no other resource, but to wait until the water fell, which it did in the course of a few hours, and then we found the poor fellow lying drowned on a spot which we must have passed and repassed several times in the course of our search, and where there could not have been more

than a foot of water to cover him. I used often to wonder, when riding past the place afterwards—it was a little bit of paddy-field—how a man could possibly be drowned in such a spot. He must either have been stunned by his sudden fall, or by a kick from his horse; otherwise, by merely rising on his hands and knees, his head would have been above the water. We had the body taken into Kandy, and next morning I saw it deposited in its last resting-place, in the European burying ground, overlooking the placid waters of the beautiful palm-fringed lake.

[This is a real incident and a real name. A planter named Shand was drowned as described. Some years previously young Jeffrey, son of a Colombo merchant, lost his life in trying to swim the Mahaweliganga at Gampola; he fell off his pony, which in its struggles kicked him on the head.—*Ed. L R.*]

CHAPTER XXVII.—LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

As I was detained in town for several days attending the Court, I had a great deal of idle time upon my hands, which I employed in exploring the outs and ins of the ancient metropolis of the Kandyan monarchs. I wandered amongst the tombs of the kings; I inspected the temples of the gods; I visited the mosque of the Mahomedans, and had to take the boots off my feet, before I could obtain admittance and tread on such holy ground. I rode round the lake and wandered along Lady Horton's Walk, admiring the varying

beauties of the scenery which every new turning of the winding path revealed to my delighted eyes. As, however, Major Forbes, Sir Emerson Tennent and a host of other writers have given full descriptions of the scenery, the antiquities and the history of this mountain city, it is not necessary that I should go over the same ground here, and, therefore, I shall spare my reader all superfluous details on this subject. One incident, however, occurred during this visit to the town, which had some influence on my future career. I was riding out on the Lower Badulla road one evening, when, passing a bungalow, I perceived a young English lady plucking flowers in the garden in front of the house.

Now, with the exception of the ladies I have already mentioned, I had never spoken a word to, nor, indeed, scarcely, seen a woman of my own race during my long stay in Ceylon. It is true that I had admired the Lusitanian maidens whom I had met at Juan Sebastian's marriage, but these, I could scarcely say, were of the same race as myself. On the present occasion the back of the fair one was towards me, but such a beautiful fall of the shoulders and such a magnificent contour of a head I had never before dreamed of, far less gazed upon. The lady was dressed in a low-bodied white muslin gown, with short sleeves, which showed her white swelling shoulders and rounded arms to perfection, whilst her black glossy hair hung, in wavy ringlets, down her swan-like neck. My heart fairly swelled in my bosom whilst I

gazed on this picture of unconscious loveliness. When I had ridden past the house a short distance I turned and rode back, that I might gaze once more on a sight, which, I felt, was filling my soul with a delicious intoxication. The lady was still there and apparently speaking to someone within the house, and her position remained unaltered. I passed and repassed the spot several times, until I began to fear that my movements might be observed, and that I would be exposing myself to ridicule, a feeling to which I was ever, and still remain, absurdly sensitive.

I rode out as far as the Kondesalle ferry, my frame thrilling with a new emotion, and my mind filled with dreams such as are only once experienced in a life-time, when the feeling of sexual love first dawns in the imagination.

Without a doubt I was smitten with that rare passion, love at first sight. My thoughts were in a perfect whirl of excitement, and my horse seemed to partake of my feelings, for he flew along the road with the velocity of a racer, as if he were treading on nothing more substantial than air. About four miles from the town the road is lined for some distance with coconut plantations, the tall stems of the trees rising like slender marble pillars on either side, whilst the feathery foliage of their tops, meeting in the centre, formed an avenue, which for cool beauty and grateful shade could scarcely be surpassed. On one side the wide stream of the Mahaweliganga almost encroached

on the roadway, as it wound sluggishly in long lake-like reaches towards the Indian Ocean, or dashed in foam over some rocky ledge, making the otherwise silent jungles reverberate with the roar of its waters. The sands on its margin glistened like gold in the softening rays of the declining sun from the vast quantities of minute particles of mica of which it seemed principally composed. But these objects were scarcely observed by me in the excitement of the new feeling which had taken possession of my mind.

Was it possible that I could manage to get introduced to the object of so sudden and frantic a passion? Should I tumble from my horse and get carried into the house in which she resided? Should I call, and, requesting an interview, frankly declare the impression which her mere appearance had wrought on my mind? What should I do? What course could I take to become acquainted with her who, I fancied, had become the arbiter of my fate? These and a thousand more such questions I revolved in my mind during my mad ride, and when I turned my horse's head and galloped back to the mountain city, I had come to no definite conclusion on the subject. As I passed the house in which my inamorata resided, I could perceive several ladies in the verandah, whilst a crowd of children with their ayahs romped in the compound. I could hear their voices, but a thick hedge hid their persons from my sight, with the exception of detached glimpses of their

transaction of important business on the estate postponed, for the pleasure of enjoying her enchanting society."

I thought that the lady gave utterance to this last piece of information with a slight tone of sarcasm in her voice; but this did not prevent me from replying at once: "If you think so, then the important business shall be postponed, and I shall have very great pleasure in joining your party."

The picnic party, which consisted of three ladies and five gentlemen, left Kandy on horseback at gunfire, and cantered out to Kondesalle; from that to a sugar estate in the immediate vicinity, one of the proprietors of which, Mr. Lambert, was one of our party. We then visited the Lakes of Dumbara* and rode over to Rajahvilla coffee estate, from whence we went to the rapids on the Mahawilleganga at Haragam, and after a long circuit we reached a large rock in the Pallikelle jungle, shaded by a huge bo-tree, on the summit of which we found a sumptuous breakfast awaiting our arrival.

During the whole of this ride, Mr. Lambert, whom I cordially hated for the time being, kept by the side of Miss Innes, so that after our first introduction, which took place before leaving Kandy, I had not as yet had an opportunity of exchanging a word with her. As, however, we

* "The lakes of Dumbara"—the first time we ever heard of them.—ED. L. R.

reclined on cushions on the summit of the rock, I found myself by the side of the lady, and my heart thrilled as I was trying to muster courage to make a few commonplace observation to her:

"Do you like Ceylon, Miss Innes?" I asked in a tone of voice which had no small amount of tremor in it.

"I think that I would like it better if it were not quite so hot," was the sensible reply to this erudite question.

The ice once broken, however, our conversation soon became rather animated, that is, animated on my part, for I never had so strong a desire to shew to advantage before a human being, as I had on this occasion. How exquisitely lovely she looked, and how fascinating were the long eyelashes drooping over and hiding the deep black orbs underneath them, and how becoming were the faint blushes which overspread her countenance as the warm blood flushed over her face in a carmine stream, or circulated through the deep blue veins which looked like streaks in marble, shining through her transparent skin. How did it happen then that it was with a feeling of something like relief that I welcomed the approach of my rival Mr. Lambert, when he interrupted my short conversation with the lady who had caused such a flutter in my mind during two entire days? I could not tell the reason, yet so it was that I did feel relieved, and on several other occasions during that memorable

day, when it was my lot to ride by her side, I never felt otherwise than well pleased, when any of the other gentlemen took my place. When the sun began to fall in the heavens, our horses were brought to the rock, where we mounted and rode back to Kandy.

I took dinner with the Delegals in the evening, and after that social meal was finished, and Mrs. Delegal and myself were seated at a chess table, she asked me very abruptly, but with much meaning in her voice: "Have you got entirely over it? Has the glamour all departed?"

"Over what?" I asked, in amazement.

"Over your fit of spooniness, to be sure," she answered with a laugh. Mrs. Delegal, being a strong-minded woman, was rather fond, occasionally, of using slang expressions. "Check to your queen."

"I, I, I am at a loss to understand your meaning," I stammered, whilst I felt myself blushing like a great overgrown schoolgirl, "I interpose my knight."

"Don't tell fibs, Mr. Green. Do you think I have not eyes? Did I not see you in church yesterday, when you could not keep your eyes off the pretty Miss Innes, and did I not observe how you manouvred today, in order to get near her? Few people arrive at my years without having experienced what you have been feeling for the last day or two, but far fewer, if I mistake not, get over the fit so easily. I saw at once how the land lay, when important business on the estate

was postponed for our Dumbara picnic, as soon as I mentioned Miss Innes' name, and I have been watching you ever since. Your fit has been like most of our local diseases, sharp whilst it lasted, but of short duration. There I take your knight and give check to your king and queen."

"Do you know," the lady resumed, "the cause of the change in your feelings? I don't think that you do, and, therefore, I will enlighten you. Miss Innes is a goose, a very pretty goose, I allow, but still a goose. I have often thought that you ought to get married, but as you never mentioned any wish or expressed any desire to enter the happy state to me, I had no right to obtrude my opinions on this subject on you. I think, however, that every man ought to marry who has the means of providing for a wife and family. It is a duty which they owe both to society and to themselves, and since I now see that you are not altogether insensible to the charms of female society, I shall be kind and introduce you to a young lady whom I have often thought was specially intended for you, and who, I am sure, will make that man's lot a happy one who succeeds in winning her for his wife. There, I have checkmated you."

After some conversation with my friend, I learned that the lady in question was the daughter, one in four, of a Captain in the Army. She was at present in Colombo, but as there was to be an exchange of regiments, her father's corps

would probably be in Kandy in the course of a month or two. It was arranged that I should be introduced to the lady immediately on her arrival in Kandy, "and mind," Mrs. Delegal concluded, "if her affections are not already engaged, you will be a very lucky man if you can win them."

Mrs. Delegal was right. My passion for Miss Innes had vanished as suddenly as it had arisen, and from the very cause she had mentioned. The girl was beautiful as a poet's dream, but she scarcely possessed an atom of mind. It seemed wonderful that so magnificent a casket should contain so worthless a jewel. She was simply silly. I met her frequently after our party at Dumbara and we became very good friends, but the feeling of intense admiration with which I was at first sight inclined to regard her never returned.

She was married a year or so after to a young officer of the Ceylon Rifle Regiment who took to drinking, and who, when intoxicated, it was whispered, shamefully ill-treated his wife, and on one occasion he had turned the poor girl out of doors at midnight, with nothing on but her night-dress. She grew pale and careworn; her cheeks lost their roundness and their damask bloom; her figure, the elasticity and grace which once adorned it; her sleepy eye acquired a startled terror-struck appearance, and at length she sickened and died—died, it was whispered, of that most terrible of all diseases, a broken heart, and she now lies buried in the Kandy graveyard, in the eastern-

most corner, near where the jungle encroaches on the tombs.

As I walked from Mrs. Delegal's to my hotel that evening, dreams of wedded bliss filled my imagination: "I have already acquired my principality," I thought; "but how can I found a dynasty, if I do not get married?"

I was passing the bungalow of a Portuguese proctor, where the lights shone on the white walls of the rooms, and revealed the owner of the house sitting with his arm around the waist of a tall slender girl, dressed in white, who looked lovingly down on his face, as she handed him a book from a book-case near at hand. This incident was a very simple one, and yet I felt envious of the happiness of that half-caste proctor.

"Why," I thought, "have I no one to smile on me? Why have I no one to share my home and my wealth? Why should the poorest native around me have loved ones in their houses to feel and care for them, whilst I, the wealthiest planter in the island, have nothing higher than my dog or cat to love, or to love me in return?"

These thoughts and feelings had the effect of making me very depressed in spirits, and I don't think that I ever felt so lonely as I did that night, as I crawled into my solitary room and lay down on my couch, where my lullaby was composed of ribald songs and boisterous laughter, which echoed from the public room of the hotel,

or rang from the adjoining billiard-room, where a congregation of choice spirits were met "to have an evening of it."

CHAPTER XXVIII.—"OFF WITH THE OLD LOVE
AND ON WITH THE NEW."

When I returned to Dodangkelle my whole soul was absorbed in contemplating my future prospect of wedded happiness, the idea of which had, singularly enough, taken possession of my mind to the exclusion of every other feeling. I gazed round the vacant rooms of my bungalow with something like disgust. "If I come home, no one cares," I thought; "if I go away, my absence is rather liked than otherwise, because there is less work for the servants, and they are at liberty to do as they have a mind. There is no one to regret my departure, and my return meets with no joyous welcome. There is Juan de Zousa, when he goes from home, even for a few hours, his pretty little wife is at the corner of the path, looking for his approach half-a-dozen times before he makes his appearance, and is ready to welcome him with a cheerful smile and a loving kiss when he comes home. If he is sick, she nurses him; if he is sorrowful, she sympathizes with him; if he is joyful, she shares, and by sharing, doubles his happiness; whilst I have no kind face to welcome me home, no kindly smile to cheer my lonely habitation; no one to sympathize with my sorrows or share my joys, and no one, with the exception of O'Brien

and Wallace, whom I could really and truly call my friends, and even to them I could not possibly unburthen my mind as I could to a dear and loving wife."

I began to long for the speedy arrival of Mrs. Delegal's lady friend, that I might judge for myself, if the encomiums which I had heard of her beauty, her intelligence and her goodness and worth were really well bestowed, and, in the meantime, I built castles in the air and dreamed dreams of which she was the centre. It was a most singular and perhaps a most ridiculous circumstance, being in love with a lady whom I had never seen, and of whom I knew nothing beyond the words of praise bestowed on her by my friend in Kandy. Yet so it was; I thought of her constantly, and I looked forward with no small degree of anxiety to the time when I should have the privilege of making her acquaintance.

In the meantime, however, a new idea occurred to me. When I should be married, the bungalow, which now did very well as a place of residence for myself and my assistants, would scarcely be a suitable place of abode for a lady. It was too near to the coolies' lines and also to the bustle and stir of the works. In India, every person lives more or less in public, that is, their houses, in consequence of the necessity of securing currents of air through them, are all, to a considerable extent, open to the public, and the only means by which privacy can be obtained, is by having

enclosed compounds surrounding the establishments.

In consequence of the contour of the ground, I could not obtain this at my present bungalow, and as I had long meditated the expediency of having to build a more central residence, when the other plantations which I proposed opening were under way, I resolved to proceed at once in carrying out the idea that I had formed on this momentous subject. This idea was to build a palatial mansion on the site of the ruined palace of Singha Newera, and to utilize the carved stones and basreliefs in its erection and ornamentation. By this means I should secure a comparative degree of privacy for my wife, and she would not be annoyed by the incessant passing too and fro of a host of all but naked coolies.

I rather think that about this time I must have been seized with a building mania like the Sultan of Turkey or the ruler of Egypt. This may, perhaps, have arisen from a vast pile of bricks and tiles of all sorts having accumulated at the brickworks, and an equally alarming heap of chunamb at the limekiln. Some time elapsed, however, before I could resolve upon a plan for my new dwelling. The carved stones were my principal difficulty. They were of all sizes, and scarcely any two of them matched. I would have given a very handsome sum of money had any one been able to furnish me with a drawing of the palace of which these had formed part, when it was standing entire, but it was hopeless to ex-

pect such a miracle, and, therefore, I had to go to work and do the best I could as architect of the new buildings. That best, I am told, may still be studied by the curious in such matters, for my princely mansion still stands on the plateau of Singha Newera with its lawn of velvet turf sloping down to the gleaming waters of the placid lake, whilst the broad terraces which surrounded it, planted with shrubberies, flower gardens and fruit trees are overgrown with the wild jungle, and the whole is now pointed out as "Green's folly" to the inquiring stranger.

Having at length determined upon a plan for the proposed building, I chose the foundations of the largest of the ruined buildings for its site, and gangs of coolies were speedily at work clearing away the heaps of rubbish which cumbered the ground. The masons were then set to work to build a wide terrace on which the building was to stand, and it was into the front face of this terrace wall that the greater number of the sculptured stones were built. They were placed in panels, with pilasters between each, and they represented winged dragons, peacocks, pigeons, elephants, tigers, lions and all the other in animals which the cutters of stone in the days of the Mahawansa or great dynasty used to delight. The outlines of these figures, when they were in any degree worn or obliterated, were retouched by Kistna Samy in an artistic and workman-like manner, and it was his suggestion that the front of the terrace should be so ornamented with them.

This terrace was ascended by a broad flight of steps, guarded on each side by colossal figures of elephants, large as life, in *basso relievo*, which cost us much trouble and labour to get properly adjusted in their places.

The bungalow itself was a hundred feet in length by forty four feet in width. It contained a dining and drawing-room, each thirty feet long by twenty in width, two large bed-rooms, with dressing- and bath-rooms attached, an office for myself and store-rooms for the servants. A broad verandah twelve feet wide ran along the whole of the front and part of each end of the house, and another smaller one at the back. The doors of the drawing- and dining-rooms, as also those of the dressing- and bed-rooms opened on these verandahs, and in the spaces between them gigantic figures of Sinhaiese warriors, in basrelief, stood frowning fiercely and brandishing spears, swords and daggers, as if guarding the entrances from all intrusion. The front verandah was supported upon a row of Ionic pillars twelve feet high, and the floors were laid with the glazed tiles which I have so frequently mentioned. The roof and doors were formed of jakwood, planed smooth and polished, where it was exposed to the sight, and it would have required a sharp eye to detect the difference between it and mahogany. When the whole was finished, which it was by the end of 1846, there was not another residence that could compete with it in the jungles of Ceylon. The kitchen and servants' rooms were in

a detached building, whilst another row forming a sort of wing to the main mansion was fitted up as bed-rooms, dressing-rooms and bath-rooms for the accommodation of visitors.

I had the Chinese tower repaired, and, so far as I was able, restored to its original appearance. The lower room was turned into a smoking apartment, whilst the upper one was fitted up as a library and reading-room, and the highest storey into a sort of observatory. I also had a roof placed on the carved stone pillars, which I have already mentioned, and had the floor of the building paved with tiles, intending to make a billiard-room or general place for amusement.

I had clumps of shrubbery and flower beds formed along the terraces, in what O'Brien, who took a great interest in the progress of the work, told me was "the real Italian style," and Veerapin's services were called into requisition in thus planting and ornamenting the ground. I sent to Bombay for blackwood furniture and floor mats, and, when the whole was finished, it looked indeed a fit dwelling-place for a princess.

I kept a correct account of the cost of all this building, but I am afraid to mention the amount. I am not surprised that the whole affair should now be pointed out as "Green's Folly," for as it turned out it was a most useless and foolish undertaking. The Emperor Napoleon the Third has since then gone to war 'for an idea,' whilst I only built a small palace for one. His idea was 'a united

Italy,' mine was to give pleasure to a wife whom I had never yet seen, and who probably at the time when I was spending thousands of pounds to insure her comfort had never even heard my name mentioned.

The change of regiments had not taken place at the time expected, and it was many months before I saw the lady whom Mrs. Delegal's few remarks made me calculate upon as almost already my wife. Had I not been so much occupied with my building mania, I believe that the state of suspense in which I was kept during these few months would have become altogether unupportable. As it was, I was frequently on the point of starting for Colombo in the hope that I might chance to see the fair one who was costing me so much thought and so much money, and for whose future happiness I was so anxiously preparing.

At length, the long-looked-for missive came to hand telling me of the arrival, in Kandy, of my intended bride, and urging me to lose no time in visiting the mountain city. I did not delay in obeying the behests of this letter. I was in Kandy by breakfast time the following day. It was afternoon, however, before I had the pleasure of being introduced to her, who was already the idol of my hopes, and who became the object of my heart's best worship.

How tumultuously my heart throbbed when the graceful girl entered the room in which Mrs. Delegal and myself were discussing some knotty

points of local politics. How shall I describe what was simply indescribable. If my expectations regarding her had been raised high, in consequence of Mrs. Delegal's continuous praises, they were much more than realized. She did not possess the fresh bloom nor the innocent baby-like beauty of Miss Innes; but her every movement had a graceful dignity of its own, and her every look possessed expression and character.

High intellect was stamped on every feature of her countenance, and goodness—real goodness—gleamed from her deep blue eyes. She seemed formed to be gazed on and worshipped at a distance, and not to be exposed to the rude shocks and every-day duties to which humanity is subject. Whilst I gazed on her surpassing loveliness, my soul drank in deep draughts of love. When I addressed her, my voice trembled with emotion. When I listened to the silvery tones of her voice, I felt as if I were one of the heroes of Arabian story, listening to the music of heaven. I was fairly entranced. I was like one bewildered with excess of happiness, and it was only after I had spent the most pleasant evening of my life, and when I had returned to my dreary quarters at the hotel, that the dull matter-of-fact world began once more to assert its ascendancy over my mind.

How should I ever be able to make myself worthy of a creature so fair and so pure? How should I ever be able to gain her love? It is true that I was considered to be rather a hand-

some man, and if eight years of rough usage had bronzed my face, and the character of my mind had become strongly marked on my countenance; I tried to flatter myself that these circumstances were not calculated to lower me in the estimation of the lady, whom I would woo to be my bride. I was wealthy and I had the prospect of becoming far wealthier than my most sanguine hopes could ever have anticipated. It was only a few weeks since an agent from the Rothschild's had offered me ninety-five thousand pounds for my planted estates, exclusive of the many thousands of acres of forest land which still remained uncleared. The crops which I would in all likelihood send to England this season would amount at a rough estimate to between twenty and thirty thousand pounds, and every year would see the produce from my properties increase.

But what did all this matter if I could not gain the love of the goddess of my adoration? and I knew perfectly that she would never bestow her hand unless her heart accompanied it. I knew that wealth alone could not secure me this blessing, and without it my riches would only be like the kernel of the Dead Sea fruit, dust and ashes. I felt that the success of my suit must depend entirely upon qualities within myself; and that it would rest with the impression I made upon the mind of the lady, whether favourable or otherwise, whether my happiness should be consummated, or whether shipwreck should be made of the best feelings of my nature.

How I tossed and tumbled upon the hard mattress which formed my bed during the whole of that night. The meeting to which I had looked forward, for so many months past, with such anxiety had taken place, and yet how miserable I was. The haven of my anticipated happiness seemed farther off than ever, for I could not hide from myself the fact that I was altogether unworthy of so dazzling a bride. What, if all the preparations I had made, in anticipation of her comfort and well-being, had been entirely thrown away? It is true that Mrs. Delegal had led me on to hopes, that even my wildest dreams would be more than realized; but Mrs. Delegal was not the lady herself, and I felt very doubtful, indeed, how my advances might be received.

Morning dawned and found me still sleepless and unrefreshed, agitated by the tumult and whirl of my thoughts. It may sound ridiculous to anyone reading these confessions, that a lady whom I had met but once, and then only for an hour or two, should cause me so much anxiety of mind; but, in point of fact, it seemed as if I had been acquainted with her for years. She was the theme of Mrs. Delegal's continual praises, and, as they corresponded very frequently, her letters, or large portions of them, had frequently been read for my edification; and I had by this means learned to admire and esteem her. It was only, however, when she blazed on me like a superior being in the full glory of her beauty

and intelligence, that the task of winning her love seemed hopeless and remote. When Mrs. Delegal learned the cause of my pale looks and general uneasiness, that sage woman and trusty councillor laughed at my fears and derided my doubts, quoting the old proverb that "faint heart never won fair lady."

It is unnecessary that I should describe minutely the progress of my love suit. Until its melancholy termination, its course ran perfectly smooth. We met frequently at Mrs. Delegal's, and we were often thrown into each other's company in the evening drive round the lake, or when listening to the stirring music of the military bands when loitering beneath the tulip trees on the esplanade by the side of the beautiful lake.

I believe that I have not yet mentioned the name of the lady whom I have introduced to my readers, and I hasten to repair this piece of unintentional rudeness. Her name was Helen Leith, the eldest daughter of Captain Leith of H. M.—regiment. In course of time I perceived, or fancied I perceived, that my company was by no means indifferent to Helen, and her father, who was beginning to grow grey in the service, treated me with great cordiality and warmth of manner.

One evening, when the band of her father's regiment was discoursing soft music in front of the ancient temple, which holds the Palladium of Ceylon, I met Helen under the shade of the

tulip trees which fringe the silvery lake. She was hanging on her father's arm, and they were accompanied by one of her sisters. I joined the party, and when the music ceased and darkness began to creep up the sides of the hills, and the pale moon rose in majestic beauty above the tree-tops, I accompanied them in a stroll round the lake. It was a lovely evening. The roseate hues of the setting sun still lingered above and behind the Gonarowa mountain, and were reflected in the placid waters of the lake. The trees, the jungles, the hill-tops were at first tinged with a deep emerald hue, only to be succeeded by a more sombre colour, as the rosy flush died out and was replaced by the paler light of the full-orbed moon, whose reflection formed a pathway of silvery light across the slightly rippling waters of the lake.

Before we had quite finished our walk, we met a party of military officers, and Capt. Leith, telling me to take charge of Helen and see her safe home, turned and accompanied them back to the town.

How my whole frame quivered as I offered Helen my arm for the first time, and how it thrilled as I felt her little hand laid lightly and tremblingly within it. The touch was very light indeed, yet I fancied I felt the hand tremble. Was this an omen of good import? I thought that it was. "If I were indifferent to her, she wou'd not tremble so," I thought.

"If she did not care for me, her hold on my arm would not be so light and tremulous."

We walked on in silence, a silence which I felt no desire to break until we reached Captain Leith's bungalow, the compound of which sloped down to the lake. I was about to take my leave of the ladies, when Helen asked if I would not come in and wait until papa came home.

"Oh! yes, do, Mr. Green," her sister, who was some years younger, and only just out of short petticoats, added; "do come in, for Helen was telling papa a day or two ago, that she enjoyed your society more than that of any other young man whom she had ever met, and I am sure I enjoy it too."

"Don't be a little fool, Mary," Helen said, looking very much annoyed and blushing up to the eyes.

I did not require any second invitation. The servants were lighting the lamps as we entered, and their soft light—for the light of the Ceylon lamps is soft indeed—fell on all the little elegancies, which are only found in houses presided over by a woman of a refined mind. I could not suppress a deep sigh, as I gazed around and wondered if it would ever be my lot to possess a home such as this.

What deep draughts of unalloyed delight I drank that evening. The Captain told some of his experiences in the Peninsula and his exploits at Waterloo, when he carried the Queen's colours of

his regiment. Helen sang songs to her own accompaniment on the piano—songs that are now out of date, but which were vastly superior to the slip-slop meaningless rhymes which have superseded them. Mrs. Leith, still a handsome, motherly-looking woman, busied herself with the damaged contents of the family wardrobe ; whilst the younger members of the establishment romped in the verandah or chased each other with boisterous merriment in the light of the full moon, round the ghost-like stems of the tall coconut trees in the compound.

When I took my leave, Helen accompanied me to the gateway, leading out upon the road, which wound round the lake, and, on bidding her good night, I fancied that her little hand trembled in mine and gently returned the pressure of my fingers. It was then for the first time that my doubts regarding my ability to win Helen's love began to cease, and my wildest dreams of happiness seemed capable of being realized. I felt supremely happy, and as the moon was shining brightly on the calm waters of the lake and shimmering on the rustling leaves of the surrounding jungles and tree-tops; instead of going direct into the town, I lighted a cheroot and strolled listlessly and dreamily round the lake. The whole scene was in perfect unison with my own feelings. Soft music floated over the still waters from the great temple ; the clatter of firearms, the word of command and then the plash of oars were heard from the vicinity of the powder magazine, as the guards were being relieved ; a dis-

tant bugle sounded from the far-off barracks; a busy hum came floating from the town, mingled with the discordant noises of native tomtoms. The lights and the white walls of the houses shone through the fringe of tulip trees, which fringed the opposite bank of the lake. Fireflies sparkled like living gems in the deeper shadows of the trees, and the white pile of the Pavilion, the Governor's residence, and the shining roofs of the temple glittered above the sombre jungles with which they were surrounded. Soft sounds of falling waters, softer murmurs of gurgling brooks, soft humming of thousands of insects, the distant barking of elk and deer, and the far-off howling of jackals were all mingled and blended in pleasing harmony, making the night melodious with entrancing music, peculiarly pleasing to a contemplative state of mind and very soothing to the ear.

Mrs. Delegal was a careful and interested observer of the progress of my suit, and noted its phases with the kindly feelings of a warm-hearted woman. She had projected walks and drives and parties where Helen and I could meet; on which occasions she would manage to draw the rest of the company away, or engage them in many little pursuits, so that we might be together. On calling on her on the morning after this visit to Helen's home, she informed me that she proposed to get up another picnic to Dumbara, and she had arranged that the party should spend the day at a bungalow belonging to Mr. Acland, which stood in a grassy,

undulating part of the country a short distance from Kondesalle.

“If you do not manage to come to an understanding with Helen Leith then, it will, I am sure, be no fault of mine; and you should lose no time, for time in love as well as in war is more than half the battle. If Helen does not love you already, I am sure that she is quite prepared to do so, as soon as you give her the necessary encouragement, and, mark what I now say, you will have yourself to blame if she does not make the most loving and affectionate wife that ever man had.” Here my good friend, notwithstanding her natural strength of mind, seemed about to grow pathetic, and tear-drops were actually gathering in her eyes.

Throwing this weakness aside, however, she continued to give me, what she was pleased to call ‘good advice,’ a commodity generally much more liberally given than acted on.

“You will, in the first instance,” she said, “call on Helen’s father, and ask his permission to pay your court to his daughter, for you cannot proceed another step without that. Indeed, I am afraid that matters have gone too far already, and that we may all have done wrong; but it is not too late to repair the mischief, if any has been done.”

It was with a palpitating heart that I took my way to the Captain’s bungalow upon this momentous and delicate business. Helen was in the verandah when I entered, looking more beautiful than ever

woman looked in my eyes before. She greeted me with her usual cordiality, perhaps, with a greater warmth of manner—at least, I fancied so—than she was formerly in the habit of doing.

When I asked if her father was at home, and if I could have a few minutes' conversation with him, she grew visibly pale and trembled—perhaps, she guessed my errand; perhaps, her agitation was only the reflex of my own, which I tried ineffectually to subdue. I thought that there was a half-frightened, half-imploing expression in her eyes, the meaning of which I was unable to construe. It was with no small amount of concern that I found myself in the presence of her father, in a small verandah room, which he called his office; he held some staff appointment, and had therefore occasion for an office. I was much more agitated than I could have believed I would have been. My business was of a nature altogether new to me, and as it was of some importance, indeed, of the greatest possible importance to me, I fancied that it must necessarily be equally so to him.

“Pray be seated, Mr. Green,” the old man said, as he pointed to a chair, whilst an amused twinkle of his eye tended to reassure me. Thinking that it was better to make a bold plunge at once, as in taking a cold bath, I said: “I have called today to tell you that your daughter Helen has—”

"Has what? Mr. Green," he asked, as I came to an abrupt stop. "She has not done any mischief, I hope," he added, as the lines around his mouth gradually formed themselves into an amused but good-natured smile. "Pray go on."

"Has broken my peace of mind," I replied, in a sort of desperation; "and I have come to ask if I may have your permission to request her to mend it. In short, sir, I have come to enquire if I may dare aspire to the honour of becoming your son-in-law."

The Captain rose from his seat, whilst his countenance assumed a more serious expression, and opening a door, which led into another apartment, he ordered a servant to call Mrs. Leith. On that lady's entrance, her husband very abruptly told her the cause and nature of my visit.

They both, father and mother, looked serious as they stood over against me, holding each other by the hand,—so serious indeed, that I was afraid it boded no good to my pretensions. At length Mrs. Leith spoke:

"Mrs. Delegal," she said, "hinted to me some time since that something like this might be expected; but I did not think that it would have occurred quite so soon. It is natural, my dear," she said, addressing her husband, "that young people should wish to wed, and, perhaps, it is equally natural that old people like us should be unwilling to let our pet lambs out of the fold.

We cannot keep them for ever, however, and our duty is to place them under the care of those who would be most likely to be kind to them and to take the deepest interest in their happiness. From what I have heard of Mr. Green, our dear girl's happiness, I believe, would be in good keeping in his hands. What say you, old man? Shall you hail him as your son-in-law?"

"If he gains Helen's love—yes; if not, he can be nothing more to us than he is at present."

"Then, I am to understand that I have your permission to win your daughter's affections and to woo her for my bride?" I inquired, with a considerable degree of emotion.

"Certainly you have," the father replied; "and if you succeed, and if she make as good a wife as she has done a daughter, you will never have cause, any more than I have had in my old lady here, to regret your choice."

"Nonsense, dear," Mrs. Leith said, as her motherly bosom heaved with suppressed sobs; "my girl is a good girl and will make a good wife, and oh! Mr. Green, if she loves you, be kind and affectionate to her, and may God bless you both;" and here the good woman, fairly overcome, kissed me on both cheeks, then sank into a chair and indulged in a fit of gentle weeping.

I begged the worthy couple not to tell Helen what had occurred, and as I was unwilling to encounter her in the present state of my feelings,

I was glad, when I took my leave, to find that she was not visible, as I walked through the house into the full blaze of the noonday sun and the white glare of the dusty streets.

Mrs. Delegal's second picnic took place a day or two after this important interview. It consisted exactly of the same party, putting Captain Leith and his daughter in the place of Miss Innes and her uncle, as had ridden out the same road, at the same hour and on much the same errand, nearly a twelvemonth before.

On the present occasion we crossed the Mahavillaganga, at a ferry nearer Kandy called Talwatte, or the garden of palmyra trees, and riding through a tract of country, covered with clumps of thick prickly jungle, interspersed with high trees and open glades of grass lands, we entered a coffee estate, in a picturesque hollow, through which we rode, and shortly after passing a ruined native temple, whose pyramidal pile we had long seen towering above the tree-tops, we reached Ugaha Pettia bungalow, the place of our destination.

This bungalow stood in the centre of a wide-extending grassy plain, bordered by clumps of jungle and native villages, where the starry heads of coconut trees and jaggery palms rose from amid the dark green verdure of jack and breadfruit trees, whilst the plume-like fronds of the tall and graceful bamboos waved gently in the air. Beyond these, more grassy plains extended, until the prospect was bounded by the Matale and Hunasgiriya

mountains on one side and by the Mahapatna hills and the steep cliffs of Hantane on the other.

Flower beds and shrubberies extended in front of the bungalow, and were adorned with the strong-scented and brilliant oleander, the yellow acacia, hibiscus, the wax and peacock flowers, pomegranate trees, and a vast profusion of roses of all colours, from a deep, almost a black crimson to a pure white. This profusion of native and exotic plants, besides pleasing the eye with the brilliancy of their colours, filled the air with the exquisite fragrance of their perfume, and this, combined with its semi-English surroundings and its wholly oriental scenery, gave the old bungalow an appearance as if it owed its existence to some night dream, occasioned by the perusal of a wild Arabian tale. The day was not far advanced when we arrived at Ugaha Pettia. The sun was above the Medamahanuwara hills, but the dewdrops still sparkled on the moist grass, and the jungle-cock might still be heard calling his seraglio around him.

It was proposed that we should stroll round by Kondesalle and Pallikelle on foot, then come back to breakfast. The distance was not great, and the beautiful park-like scenery through which we wandered did more than repay us for our fatigue. Lambert, who was a handsome middle-aged man and a bachelor, would fain have monopolized the greater share of Helen's company, but Mrs. Delegal, kind soul, called him off to be her escort, and I had therefore the satisfaction of having Helen all to

myself. We were a merry and a happy party. Tale and jest were freely exchanged as we slowly wended our way along the areka-shaded paths of Kondesalle, past my old friend Bird's bungalow and store, which had however by this time passed into other hands, and on to the entrance of Pallikelle, where I first encountered poor Hudson, and learned from him that Malabar coolies rather liked to be roasted alive than otherwise. Here our party broke up into twos and threes. Lambert wished to visit Tytler's old bungalow, although that gentleman no longer occupied it, and, as the others did not care to accompany him, we agreed to await his return under the shadow of some high trees, where we had a view of the rocky ridges of Galheria, the cave-like hill of Haragam and the precipitous sides and forest-crowned summit of Hangurankette. Helen and myself, whilst the others rested, strolled down a shady avenue to the right and wandered amongst clumps of wild cinnamon and mora trees, under the shade of guavas and plantains, where the flaming flowers of the prickly pear blazed in the hot sunshine and the aromatic fragrance of the jungles perfumed the air.

We paused under a huge ebony tree, whose top was noisy with a colony of screaming parroquets, who chattered in shrill chorus as they darted from branch to branch like living gems.

It was a fitting spot in which to tell a tale of love, and mine was told there. How it was told

is more than I can describe, very incoherently, I believe, but still, judging from the result, quite intelligibly. Helen's little hand trembled in mine and was not withdrawn. A soft blush suffused her face and her eyes were fixed on the ground. After a little her head rested on my shoulder, and, as her eyes were raised to my face, I read in their earnest loving depths, that my happiness was complete. My arms encircled her slender waist, and for the first time, since the days of my boyhood, I tasted the pure fresh kiss of love. What a delirium of bliss I enjoyed during the few moments we remained under that tree! What a halo of happiness seemed to encircle my being! No joy ever equalled the joy which then, and for some months after glowed in my heart and filled it with an ecstasy, which all the dull, dreary troubles and trials that I have experienced in life since these days have been unable to efface.

Loud shouts from the party we had left recalled us to ourselves and everyday life, and as we retraced our steps to join our friends, Helen hung lovingly and confidently on the arm of her now affianced husband, and smiled with child-like affection in my face.

A gratified smile beamed on the friendly countenance of kind Mrs. Delegal as we approached. Her experienced eye saw at a glance what had occurred, and, as Helen now sought her father's arm, she took an early opportunity of congratulating me upon the consummation of my happiness.

Is there such a thing as a presentiment of coming evil at the moment of our greatest triumph and success, when that triumph is to suffer shipwreck, and that success is to end in failure and disappointment? I think there must be, for whilst Mrs. Delegal was uttering her congratulations, and the fair form of the loved one, whom I had just chosen to be my companion and friend through life, was near me, and our hearts were even yet thrilling with the emotion of a first embrace, an icy feeling of doubt seemed to settle on my soul, and a dark cloud of calamity to threaten a future of misfortune and woe. This feeling lasted only for a moment—a moment, however, of bitter dread, and then it passed away and was forgotten.

The hot hours of that day were passed under the cool verandahs of Ugaha Pettia bungalow, or under the wide-spreading and shady branches of a huge kumbuk tree, whose gnarled roots protruding in rough knots above the ground formed natural seats for our accommodation.

It would be mere reiteration of an old story were I to describe the happiness I felt. It is enough to say, that, in the course of that evening, as we leisurely rode into Kandy, I acquainted Captain Leith with the result of what had taken place between his daughter and myself. I spent the remainder of that evening with the family of my intended, and day after day I lingered in Kandy, to be near her, who was so dear to me, until every thing connected with our approaching marriage

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Loud shouts from the party we had left recalled us to ourselves and everyday life, and as we retraced our steps to join our friends, Helen hung lovingly and confidingly on the arm of her now affianced husband, and smiled with child-like affection in my face.

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should be arranged. Helen had a brother, a young officer, whose regiment was stationed at Bangalore, and it was thought advisable that the final ceremony should be put off until he could come across from the Continent of India to be present on the occasion. It was expected that six weeks or two months would suffice for him to hear from us and to make arrangements for a short visit to Ceylon; and, in the meantime, I had to look forward with sunny hope, counting the hours and minutes, until the happiest day of my life should dawn on me. Time seemed to move slowly on. I almost lived in Kandy. I rode with Helen round the lake, or along the picturesque paths and roads extending from the ancient mountain city. I accompanied her in rambles to places of interest around the town, and stood watching, whilst she with rapid pencil and skilful touch sketched some quaint Hindoo or Buddhist temple or Muhammedan mosque, or dashed in the bold outlines of the magnificent scenery with which Kandy is surrounded. It was a time of exquisite happiness to me, so much so, that it seemed something like a foretaste of heaven.

Mr. Acland had offered us the use of his bungalow at Ugaha Pettia, which was ready furnished, and it was arranged that Helen and I should occupy it during our honeymoon, and then we were to proceed to and take possession of our new residence at Singha Newara, which I had refrained from occupying until Helen should share it with me.

I was then at the very summit of my happiness. I seemed to possess wealth more than I could ever make use of. I possessed the affections of the woman I loved best in the whole universe, I was respected and envied by my fellow-men, and I did not seem to have a wish which was not already, or about to be gratified. The scene soon changed, changed almost with the celerity of the shifting of a scene in a theatre, and the progress and results of this change will form the themes of the remaining chapters of this veracious history.

CHAPTER XXIX.—A JUNGLE DINNER PARTY.

It was the custom at this time—perhaps the custom still continues—for every European planter in Ceylon to keep open house, and the more friends who came to enjoy his hospitality, the oftener they came and the longer they stayed, they were generally the more welcome. When a bungalow was situated near a thoroughfare, or road leading to a number of estates, it was generally well frequented, and sometimes proved an exception to the above rule, for the number of visitors in a case of this kind was out of all proportion, and their entertainment imposed a heavy tax, both upon the time and the pocket of their host. This universal hospitality, however, was often the cause of very pleasant parties, when men of every calibre of intellect and acquirement would occasionally meet, as travellers of old did in Eastern caravanserais,

and the evenings passed with songs and stories, stories of flood and field and wild adventures in many lands, related by the actors themselves, which gave to the incidents related a reality and picturesqueness of effect, which merely reading them out of a book could never have given.

In addition to these impromptu parties, there were occasionally—I may say frequently—set *réunions* when all the Europeans in a district, as well as representatives from other parts of the country, would meet by special invitation at some bungalow to spend the evening, which usually meant several days, or more generally a week. These special invitations had reference generally to Christmas, New Year's Day, a fire kindling or some celebration of a personal nature.

I had received an invitation of this description from a friend in the Knuckles district, who was entering into possession of a new bungalow, which he had built like my own one on Singha Newera, in anticipation of having a fair companion to grace it with her presence. It was supposed that this would be the last bachelor party which he would give, and as he was famous for giving good parties, a numerous gathering of the *élite* of the planting fraternity was expected to be present. This party created a greater sensation than I ever before recollected any affair of the kind to do. For a week or two before it took place, if a brother planter was met in the streets of Kandy or overtaken on the road, the first question asked,

after the usual salutation, "How infernally hot it is today, never felt it so hot in my life before," became, "Are you going to Black's party? Are you going to Black's spread? I hear that it is to be a case of champagne and white kids, dress coats and white chokers."

When the great day arrived, quite a small army of planters, with their horses, horsekeepers and servants, congregated at the Royal Hotel, ready to start for the Knuckles, as soon as the sun had withdrawn some of his more sultry beams. Having some business to transact at Rajahwella, I left Kandy before the day began to cool, and overtaking a gentleman of the name of Wilkinson, bound for the same destination, we rode leisurely along the banks of the river, and crossing it at Gonawatte ferry, were soon at the end of our journey.

Wilkinson was a big, stout, burly man and a thorough cockney. He was only an assistant on my friend Robertson's estates, yet he had, by means of what he called "cheek," forced his way into the higher circles of the planting community, and had even so far ingratiated himself with the military officers in Kandy as to have been asked occasionally to dine at the regimental messes. I am afraid that he was a very vulgar sort of a fellow and a tuft-hunter to boot. During our ride to Rajahwella, his whole talk was of the mess of the —— regiment and the jolly fellows who composed it. The Honorable Fred, Plunkett, in particular,

seemed to have come quite up to his ideal of a man and "a brick," and on the present occasion he was the hero of almost the whole of his conversation, as I am sure he was of his soul's worship.

At Rajahwella we met with other two gentlemen, Ben Capper and Billy Lawson, bound also for the Knuckles, and as they were just about to start, when we rode up to the bungalow, I postponed my business until we should return, and after our horses had eaten some paddy and gram, we mounted and rode off. The path ran parallel with the lower range of hills which bounds the Dumbara valley on the East and separates it from the deep valley of the Hoolanganga. It led through low, thick jungle, which sometimes receded from the path and at other times formed tunnels or archways of green verdure over it. These arched portions became very troublesome, as we were frequently obliged to dismount and lead our horses for long distances, there not being height sufficient for rider and quadruped both to force their way through. Whilst wending our way leisurely along one of these passages, we came to an opening in the jungle, where a pathway had been newly cleared, and a short distance up this pathway we could hear a monotonous chanting and drumming, which spoke of some native religious rite being enacted at no great distance from us.

"Let us go and see what the row's about," Wilkinson suggested, as we stopped to listen to the noise.

“By all means, let us go,” was the reply from almost the whole party.

Leaving our horses in charge of the kootrigarens or grooms, we walked leisurely up a steep bank towards the sounds. We soon found ourselves on the edge of a small clear space, in front of a high rock, from the face of which, a small porch or verandah projected, decorated with carved stones and the hideous representations in coloured stucco of dragons' heads, snakes, and peacocks' tails, which usually surmount the entrances to native temples in Ceylon. In front of this porch there was a piece of level ground, perhaps fifty yards square, and on the right-hand side stood the priest's house, surrounded with its garden of fruit-trees and flowering shrubs. On this level piece of ground a yellow-robed priest was standing with three native musicians, two of whom played on a sort of flute or flageolet, whilst the other, who was disguised with a long-flowing artificial beard and rows of white teeth composed of cowrie shells, tapped a native drum, small at each end, but which bulged out in the middle. In front of the musicians two stalwart natives were dancing a slow measure to a wailing chaunt, whilst each had a large talipot leaf projecting behind from under each armpit, like the wings of a huge bat. The whole party was so intent on the mummary in which they were engaged, that our presence was not observed, until Wilkinson, by a loud and idiotic laugh, drew their attention to us. The

drumming ceased in a moment, the chaunt and the dancing instantly stopped, and the whole party turned on us with looks of astonishment and anger.

"It's a devil's dance," Ben Capper, who had been long resident in the country and was well acquainted with the characters and customs of the Kandians, remarked: "let us go away and not disturb them."

"Disturb them, be blowed," shouted Wilkinson, in a tone which plainly denoted a desire for a shindy and a contempt for the proceedings of the natives. "We have as much business here as these fellows have, and I'm hanged if I stir a step until I see the fun out."

In the meantime, the natives, who were all powerful, muscular-looking men, with the exception of the priest, who was thin, old and wizened, seemed bent on mischief. They picked up sticks and stones and advanced towards us with threatening gestures, telling us at the same time to *palliam*, i.e., be off, go away.

Wilkinson and Lawson seemed inclined to dispute matters with them, but Capper and myself urged a timely retreat.

Our advice prevailed and we departed, leaving the Kandians in full possession of the field. We no sooner found ourselves, however, at some distance from the temple, than we began to regret having yielded so ignominiously to a few natives. I would not have cared, had there not been a show of violence on

their part, and they might conclude that we had retreated through fear, which certainly was not the case so far as we were concerned. We were all young men, in the full possession of the passions and headstrong feelings which are characteristic of youth, and the idea that the natives should fancy that we were afraid was wormwood and gall to our minds.

"Let's go back and thrash the black scoundrels," Wilkinson suggested. He was always ready for mischief, Wilkinson was, because it was fast and brickish.

"Let's go back and thrash them," was roared in chorus by the whole party; "we will be hooted at if it comes to be known that we retreated from the same number of black fellows."

"Right-about-face, forward," shouted Wilkinson, and the whole party obeyed him, with the exception of myself.

"Stop a minute, boys," I said, "there is no use going back now, when we are already nearly a mile from the place; the fellows may be gone and our show of pluck will be thrown away. We will be returning this way, either tomorrow or the day after, and then we will have as good an opportunity of punishing the scoundrels as we would have now; but at present, we have rather a long ride before us, and I, for one, am not inclined to make it longer by turning back on what may be a bootless errand."

My quieter counsel prevailed, and Wilkinson, who had constituted himself leader of our small host, bawled out, "Front, forward, trot, gallop," as we set spurs to our nags and cantered along a more open stretch of country, where the jungle receded from the path, which led over the green hillocks and well cultivated plains of Dumbara. On reaching the foot of the gravelly hills, the path was the same as I had traversed once before with Butler; but on gaining the summit of these hills, the scene was vastly changed. On the opposite range of mountains which on the occasion of my last visit shewed an unbroken stretch of forest, about twenty miles in length, from the Hoolankanda mountain to the Medamahanuwara Gap, and extending from the edge of the patanas or grass lands to the very summits of the hills which rose five or six thousand feet above the sea-level, thousands of acres of jungle had been cleared, and the dark green verdure of the coffee fields contrasted, not unpleasingly, with the more sombre trees of the surrounding forest.

White buildings glittered on every hillside, and roads wound around the faces of the mountains, or climbed through rocks and brake up to gaps, which afforded easy passages over rugged ridges or into the depths of obscure valleys. The whole face of the country seemed changed. In the Kellebokka valley, formerly a wilderness of wood, there were now three or four acres of coffee for one of jungle, and all along the Knuckles range to Meda.

mahanuwara, the same process of clearing had begun and was proceeding with an energy perfectly marvellous.

When we reached Black's bungalow, we found thirty or forty planters already assembled, some sitting in the cool verandah indulging in a cheroot or brandy and water, some throwing quoits, some, they were young Scotchmen, tossing the caber or putting the stone, whilst others were indulging in games at leap frog and skittles.

A venerable M. D. of Aberdeen College was dispensing draughts of 'Bass' from the cask to the thirsty souls around him, whilst a B. A. of Trinity College, Dublin, was keeping the cheroots of the company alight, by passing to and fro with a lighted stick from the cook-house fire. Practical jokes seemed the order of the day; and if they were not of a very refined nature, they were evidently very amusing, judging from the peals of laughter which they elicited."

"Come along, Major, and have a draught from the doctor," roared my man of business, O'Brien, who, I found had constituted himself master of the ceremonies.

"A draught, doctor, for my excellent friend Major Green, of the Gampola Rangers. This, Major, is Doctor Constable, whose draughts the good folks of Aberdeen could not be prevailed on to taste, and therefore he has come to dispense them to us. Great fools the Aberdeen people to refuse draughts

like this. Not bad medicine, is it, Major? If all the doctors' prescriptions were equally palatable I wouldn't care how long I remained one of his patients."

O'Brien knew everybody, and he took care that I should be personally introduced to everybody too. There was a barrister from Calcutta; a Major from Poona; several ensigns, lieutenants and captains, and all the rest were planters; men from every grade in the social scale, from a Baronet of Nova Scotia to a Scotch herd laddie.

Meantime, the fun was going on fast and furious. The Trin. Col. Dub. graduate, who had been some time resident in the Brazils, had improvised a lasso and had caught my old friend Sandy Gray round the waist and whipped him up to the lower branches of a high tree, where Sandy hung like an amiable spread eagle, with a very red and bellicose countenance, much to the amusement of the rest of the company but very much to his own chagrin and discomfort.

"I say, Sandy," roared his tormenter, "tell us that yarn, about you and your master's daughter, beginning with 'As I was gauin awa doon to Peterheed wi' my cairt,' and if you tell it correctly, in the native Doric, I'll let you down,—upon my soul I will. Come here, Sir William, and interpret; you are a dab hand at these barbarous languages."

"Swear him in first. Whoever heard of an interpreter who was not sworn in to speak the truth? Hold on, I'll swear him."

"You be blowed, how can you swear a man? Not but that you are very good at swearing yourself. Here, Hooker, you were or are in holy orders. Come here and swear Sir William."

"You goose, who ever heard of a priest swearing, unless at a bad dinner? Blessing is his province, unless on Ash-Wednesday, when it is the other thing."

"Oh lat 's doon, gentlemen, and I 'll sing a sang, but I canna tell a story, if ye keep me hingin here like a pair o' auld breeks on a claes line," pleaded poor Sandy Gray.

"D—n you, Doyle," he added, as his tormentor laughed at his struggles; "bit I 'll wallop yer skin, whan I get hands o' ye, ye incarnate deevil you, I wanna leave a hale bane in your body, for ye 're aye at some infernal mischief, ye a—d Irish reiver."

"Let the young man down. Don't you see that he is threatening a fit of apoplexy?" said the Aberdeen M. D. as he undid the rope and lowered his compatriot gently to the ground.

"Come, come, you young vagabond, we must have you tried by a jury of your peers, for such malpractices cannot be tolerated in civilized society," cried Wolfe O'Brien, as he led forward a young Scotchman, not nearly out of his teens, who was blushing up to his eyes with shame and vexation. "Here, Sir William, you will be judge, or president, I will be judge, advocate, and prosecutor, and Green, you will be counsel for the prisoner. Doctor,

you will have to empanel a jury; quick now, it is getting dark and the case must be tried at once."

"What is the crime with which the young man is charged?" asked the judge.

"Prigging," replied the judge advocate.

"What is the evidence?" asked the judge.

"It 's all right," replied the advocate, "I 'm the evidence."

"You cannot be evidence and prosecutor both," I objected, in my character of counsel for the prisoner.

"You shut up, Major,—Counsel, I mean. Look here at the evidence."

The judge advocate proceeded to turn out from one of the poor fellow's pockets a quantity of raisins; from another lumps of loaf sugar; from another two or three bundles of cheroots; and last of all produced a bottle of champagne.

"The evidence is conclusive," remarked the judge, with all due gravity. "Gentlemen of the jury, what is your verdict?"

"Guilty without a doubt," was pronounced by the foreman, my friend Stephens.

"Prisoner at the bar," proceeded the judge, "you have been found guilty by a respectable and enlightened jury of your countrymen, of the heinous crime of prigging. Have you anything to say in extenuation of your fault, that the sentence of this

court, which is, that you be hanged, drawn and quartered, should not be pronounced against you?"

"It was himsel that put them into my pooches," pleaded the poor fellow in plaintive accents.

"I throw myself upon the protection of this Court," cried the advocate, "it is perfectly intolerable, that the officers of this Court should be so grossly insulted, in the discharge of a painful public duty. Order the prisoner to be taken away, my lord, and off instantly with his head."

"Dinner on table," was announced by a grave-looking native servant, and the Court broke up, the judge leading the way in a rapid adjournment to the dining hall. This hall was formed by enclosing a spacious verandah with bamboo screens, and here the tables were laid, and they literally

"groaned 'neath the weight of the feast."

There were soups of many kinds. There was roasted peafowl, roasted turkeys and roasted goose; salmons from Northern Spey and searfish from the Indian Ocean. There were haunches of venison and hams of Westphalia; joints of mutton and joints of beef; pies of many descriptions and buffaloe humps from Calcutta; curries of many varieties, and puddings and tarts galore; salads of many sorts, and cucumbers for those who cared to partake of these indigestible vegetables. Almost every fruit and vegetable of both the torrid and temperate zones were there in profusion, and drinkables

from the Saxon mead to the sparkling wines of Champagne.

And the guests who sat down to so plentiful a table were able to do full justice to the viands placed before them, for coffee planters were gifted with excellent stomachs and powerful digestions. The corks of the champagne bottles were popping like the file firing of a regiment of infantry, and the frothing liquor was drunk in tumblerfuls; whilst jest and story, epigram and bon-mot sparkled along the tables, and loud and jovial laughter echoed along the rafters of the house.

Of all the forty or fifty individuals who sat down at that table, there are not more than four or five now surviving. Some found their graves beneath the burning sun of Ceylon, some amongst the golden sands of Australia. Some lie buried amongst the coral forests of the Indian Sea, and some amongst the sea-weeds of more northern oceans. Some fell gloriously on the blood-stained heights of Alma, or in the horrid struggle at Inkerman, and one, at least, met his death on the oozy banks of the Chickahominy.

But at that time little recked any of us of the fate we were to dree, whilst the wine sparkled and passed from hand to hand, and the lights blazed, and the native servants moved like noiseless phantoms, grave and serious, amid the babel of northern tongues and loud Teutonic laughter; whilst the soft breeze, laden with the perfume of

flowers and the ceaseless hum of insect life, fanned our cheeks and boomed in our ears.

When the cloth was removed, the wine began to circulate freely, and Mr. O'Brien was called on for a song. My manager cleared his throat and complied with the request of the company, by singing with due pathos Moore's melody,

"She is far from the spot where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers around her are sighing."

A discussion here ensued, whether the singer should have the privilege of calling on any other member of the party for a display of their vocal powers, or whether the song, like the wine, should make the circuit of the table. It was decided that it should make the round of the table, and that any gentleman who could not sing must either make a speech, tell his sweetheart's name, or swallow a basinful of salt and water.

It was Mr. Lawson's turn to favour the company, and he accordingly sang an old Scotch song,

"Oh wha' 's at the wi dow, oh wha'?"

Mr. Bews sang

"As low her ship her foamy track,"

Monsieur Lascelles, a Frenchman, sang the Marseillaise, with due emphasis and republican fervour, whilst another small Frenchman made a neat little speech, half English, half French, and wholly unintelligible. Sandy Gray sang "Jacky Tar," in broad Scotch, which created an immense sensation from the novelty of the language, a great majority

of the company never having been privileged to hear so barbarous a dialect before. Sir William Reid at this juncture came to the rescue of his compatriot, by explaining, that the language in dispute was quite a classical one; that it was the language of Chaucer and Barbour, and was pure English before that tongue became corrupted by Norman French and other exotic dialects.

It was now the turn of little Benson to sing, the culprit who had been tried and convicted of priggishness.

"I can't sing," he pleaded in a shrill treble voice, "if I could, I would be most happy to do so."

"Then make a speech," roared O'Brien, in tones which might have been uttered by a great Fee-fa-fum of the nursery legends.

"I can't make a speech. I never made a speech in my life."

"None of your nonsense; don't keep the company waiting the whole evening for you. Come, begin, 'Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking.'"

"That's stale, flat and unprofitable: every goose uses that introduction," the Trinity College graduate remarked. "Take the classical model, Benson, 'Friends, countrymen and lovers.'"

"I assure you, gentlemen, I can't. If I could do so, I would do it at once, but I don't know a speech, and I can't make one up."

"Tell us your sweetheart's name then."

"I haven't got a sweetheart. I never had."

"Come, come, this is getting perfectly unbearable, you young scum, you; do you mean to tell us that you never had a sweetheart. Here boy, a basin of water, with plenty of salt in it."

"I am not a young scum," Benson retorted, with a hot flush in his cheek and an angry sparkle in his eye. "I am not a young scum, but you are a thundering bully, and I'm blessed if I will either sing or make a speech at your dictation."

"No help for it then, young man, you must in that case swallow the salt water."

"I won't swallow the salt and water. I won't be bullied by you, and I throw myself upon the protection of our host and demand whether he is to allow his guests to be insulted and badly used in his house. I will sooner leave and—"

"Come, come, Benson," our host mildly expostulated, "say something, and they won't be hard on you. You must obey the rules of service, and you have only to mention some lady's name, when you will be excused any display of your musical or oratorical powers."

"Well then, Miss Brewster is my sweetheart's name."

"Confound you, you young imp, that is the name of my lady-love. That won't do; come, give us another."

“Miss Chalmers then.”

“Miss Chalmers’ very good health and long,” were drunk with all the honors, accompanied by a chorus of

“For she’s a jolly good fellow” &c.

Song and speech, wine and spirits, went the round of the table. Some tongues were getting too big for the mouths that held them, and consequently thick in their utterances, whilst others were becoming limp and glib. Some eyes were sparkling with fun and champagne, whilst others were getting heavy and dull from the same cause. Some excitable spirits were getting noisy and obstreperous, whilst others were already lying down on sofas and couches, or soft planks on the bedroom floors. A select number still remained around the tables, passing the song and the wine and vociferating with more vehemence than melody :

“We won’t go home till morning,”

or telling the landlord to

‘Fill a flowing bowl, until it does run over.’”

At this crisis the servants brought coffee and tea, which beverages had the effect of calming the excitable and rousing the lethargic, and then, whilst some adjourned to retired corners to enjoy a quiet game of whist, chess, backgammon, or draughts, others preferred a round at *vingt et un*, whilst a still more select few chased each other round the bungalow with watering-pots and jugs of water.

About 11 o’clock a supper of grilled bones

and devilled turkey was placed on the table, after which there was more wine and more songs.

Little Benson was put out of doors because, like King Arthur's sons, when that monarch "ruled this realm," he would not sing. He was heard, after midnight, imploring admittance at one of the bedroom windows, and he was discovered next morning under a bed wrapped in a horse rug.

There was some difficulty in providing sleeping accommodation for such a number of guests. Many saved our host the trouble of looking out for their comfort, by dropping into the arms of the sleepy god on the spot where they had fallen, floored by the powerful arm of Bacchus; but a considerable number still remained, who were able to take advantage of any *point d' appui* which offered in the way of sleeping accommodation.

O'Brien got possession of a couch, which he offered to share, lying head and tail, with any gentleman of the company.

Lawson was simple enough to be taken in by this offer, and got nearly scratched to death with my manager's spurs which he had kept on on purpose during the night. I got a comfortable bed which I shared with Sir William Reid, whilst our host slept on a couch in the same room.

Before sunrise next morning the party were stirring, rousing themselves from their lairs and streaming from the bungalow like bees from a hive or ants from an ant-hill.

Some were in search of water to wash with, some in search of the same fluid to drink. There were calls for coffee and calls for soda-water, calls for brandy and calls for beer. A large party had discovered a deep pool in a neighbouring oya, and were indulging in the pleasures of a morning bath *al fresco*, whilst native servants were employed pouring water from chatties over their necks and the backs of their heads to cool the burning fever of their brains. Others had discovered a small waterfall farther up the stream, and were taking turns in letting the cooling fluid splash in a crystal stream over their heads. After all these various toilets were adjusted and matters rendered as comfortable as the madness of the previous evening would permit, coffee and hoppers,* thin slices of toast and hard-boiled eggs, freshly churned butter and citron marmalade were handed round by the servants, and the horses were brought and company after company took their departure, as the gentleman who had been admitted to holy orders remarked "to their several places of abode."

Wilkinson, Capper, Lawson and myself, together with a few others, remained at Black's during the remainder of the day, preferring to ride down to Dumbara in the cool of the afternoon, or, as it was bright moonlight, in the early hours of the evening.

* A sort of pancake made of rice and coconut milk.

CHAPTER XXX.—DEMOLISHING AN IDOL.

I don't think that there is anything more delicious or exhilarating than a moonlight ride amongst the green patana lands or wooded mountains of the Kandyan country in Ceylon. The air is so mild, so balmy, so cool and so elastic. The soft murmur of insects, the melancholy sough of the forest trees, the tinkling plash of waterfall, all so musically on the ear, that the distant cry of the jackal fails to interrupt the soothing melody. Then the bright moon sails in such silent majesty in the deep cloudless sky, shimmering on the glossy foliage of the forest trees, sparkling on the dew-drops with which the grass is glittering, or gleaming on the deep pools of oya and pond, which gleam like sheets of polished silver, under her magic beams. There is something like intoxication in a canter round a grassy hillside amid such scenery and at such an hour, a something more nearly approaching to ecstasy of feeling takes possession of the soul than is ever felt in other scenes or under other circumstances.

It was on such a night that our little party rode round the southern face of Hunasgeriya and over the gravelly hills to Lower Dumbara, trampling the aromatic lemongrass under our horses' feet and rousing the wearied buffaloes worn out with the toils of the previous day from their drowsy slumbers in the ponds. We had forgotten all about our adventure with the natives at the temple on our way up; at least it did not form any part of

our conversation, which consisted principally of loud cries of "Forward," "Front," "Frontage," from Wilkinson, and loud unmeaning yells intended to rouse the echoes of the hills and woods by the rest of the party.

When, however, we found ourselves in the deep gloom of the leafy tunnels, which I have mentioned as overarching the road, and near the spot of our *rencontre*, the affair was remembered simultaneously, it would seem, by the whole of our party; for more than one voice exclaimed "Let us go and rout out the priests at the temple."

We left our horses in charge of their keepers, and, mounting the bank, found ourselves in front of the little porch. The tall white stems of the coconut trees glittered like ghosts in the moonlight, and there was something uncanny in the look of the open space across which their waving shadows fell, when contrasted with the deep shade of the surrounding forest, in the gloom of which the temple itself was sunk—all but the small porch, which stuck out clear and sharply defined against the black mass behind it. There was no sound nor appearance of life about the place. A solemn stillness prevailed over the whole scene, which caused rather a creeping sensation of the flesh, such as one feels when suddenly brought in contact with the supernatural. If I had been there alone, I should most certainly have run away, and I have no doubt, judging from the sudden silence of my companions, that they were quite as much affected and awe-struck as myself.

"Let us go and knock up the priests," was suggested by our leader Wilkinson.

We went to the house, passing over a stile, and through a small garden odorous with the perfume of datura, the orange and the oleander. The door was fastened, evidently locked or barred within. We knocked with the loaded heads of our riding whips, but there was no response. There was evidently no one in the house.

"Let's burst open the door," our leader once more suggested.

"Better set fire to the thatch," Lawson remarked, by way of an amendment.

"No, no, boys, that would be going too far," I expostulated; "there is no use getting ourselves into a mess for a rascally Bhuddist priest or a few devil dancers. Better to come along and let us mount again: it is now past midnight, and we have still some miles of a ride before us."

"The later the better, there is the less fear of interruption."

"Let us see if the temple is also locked before we go. It would be a pity not to leave some memento of our visit."

"Here are dried arecanut leaves, they will make capital chouls," said Ben Capper, tying the leaves together as he spoke. "Anyone got a match?"

"Hullo, the temple is open," roared Wilkinson, who had run on ahead, "and his godship is sitting very composedly above an altar of flowers."

“Let us see how he looks by torchlight,” said Capper, as he lighted a fusee in some dried grass, which was speedily in a blaze, and kindling the chouls of dried leaves, we entered the temple, the atmosphere of which was almost suffocating from the perfume of strong-smelling flowers, with which the altar was decorated. Above this altar there was a colossal statue of Buddah, who was represented in a sitting posture, buried in deep contemplation, having his eyes fixed, as if gazing at some object in the far distance.

The unsteady flickering of the torches gave an air of life and mobility to the statue, which, as a work of art, would not have done much honour to the apprentice hand of a sculptor at home, but which, seen here, in the deep gloom of a cavernous temple, was calculated in its gigantic proportions to excite a feeling of preternatural awe and something nearly approaching to dread.

If you have ever walked across or in the immediate vicinity of a graveyard at the dread mid hour of night, although you might be a person of undoubted courage, who would not shrink at trifles, you will, perhaps, feel your flesh creep on your bones and your hair stir on your head, in spite of your better reason, with a motion by no means pleasant. Even so it was with me, as I now gazed on the calm unimpassioned countenance of the image before me, and saw the deep meaningless expression of the great eyes which were gazing so contemplatively into the far off distance, as if musing on the attributes of the deity, in which it was seeking absorp-

tion. The deep gloom of the temple, whose roof was only very partially penetrated by the light of our torches and the overpowering perfume of the flowers, may have tended to excite this feeling, which was by no means allayed by swarms of large bats which flew about our faces, or flapped around our chools with their dusky wings, as they darted from the deep shadows of the cavernous roof and flew like the ghosts of departed Buddhists, around our heads and the gigantic limbs of the idol before us. The cave did not appear to be very extensive, although its height was great. The walls were plastered with fine chunam, and had an appearance like polished white marble, to the height of about six or seven feet, where a shelving cornice ran round them at a higher level than the top of the altar, in front of which there were several steps, evidently for the convenience of the officiating priest. On the walls were coloured representations of scenes from the life of the latest Buddah, royal progresses, huntings, battles, sieges, &c. These were drawn on small panels, which ran in lines around the walls. The colouring appeared to have been at one time bright and gaudy, but age had evidently mellowed its brightness and toned down its brilliancy, so that it had by no means the harsh effect which newly-executed native paintings usually have on the more cultivated European mind.

I was noting all these details, and trying at the same time to analyse the strange awe-struck feeling which had in some measure begun to overpower me, when I was roused by one of Wilkinson's

idiotic laughs, as he exclaimed: "Here goes one for his nob," and the dull sound of the heavily-loaded handle of his hunting whip fell with a hollow crash on the head of Bhoodh.

"And here is one for his heel," laughed Ben Capper, as he followed suit, and a large chip flew off the member in question.

"Good heavens, boys, what are you after?" I exclaimed in horror and astonishment, as blow followed blow in rapid succession, until the whole interior of the temple was filled with dust and fine particles of lime and the wicker framework of the idol was beginning to shew through its thick coating of plaster, which composed its outer man. "For heaven's sake desist, or we will be having such a din about our ears, as will ring in them for months to come."

"We've spoiled his beauty, if we have done nothing else," Wilkinson sneered, with one of his vulgar, loud, unmeaning laughs.

"Let us level his godship with the ground," shouted Lawson; "it is only casting down the idols from the high places, and as good Christians we have scriptural authority for doing that."

I tried to expostulate with my companions, over whom the demon of mischief had fully asserted his sway, but my pleadings and entreaties were of little avail, and I was compelled to be an unwilling spectator of their further proceedings, as they shook the wickerwork to pieces, and tumbled

the disjointed fragments to the ground. So infectious indeed is a bad example, that before this end was attained, I found myself lending a helping hand, I blush to confess it, to loosen the last remains of the idol from its pedestal and trundle it into the verandah outside.

By this time our torches had gone out, and we were in total darkness, whilst the disgusting bats flickered and flapped their leather wings in unpleasant contiguity to our persons. The destruction of the idol completed, the old feeling of awe-struck dread returned in full force; so that we did not lose much time in darting across the cleared space, and rushing down the pathway to our horses, still panting with the mad excitement of what Wilkinson called 'our lark.' I was the last to leave the verandah and cross the cleared space in front. It may have been fancy, or it may have been reality, but I thought that I saw the figure of the little old priest standing, as if he had been silently but unobtrusively watching our proceedings, I often wondered, long after, what the old man's feelings must have been, when he first saw his demolished idol and broken shrine. What his maledictions were I have since had much reason to remember and regret. I mentioned what I had seen to my companions, who were adjusting their horse's furniture and laughing over and congratulating each other on the nature of their late exploit, Poor fellows, they did not dream of the price they were to pay for it, otherwise their laughter would

not have been quite so boisterous and mirthful. We mounted and were riding slowly along the pathway, when all of a sudden the silence of the night was broken by the ominous cry of the devil-bird, which shrieked out its agonizing scream from a hollow close at hand. Before its horrible notes had ceased, a deep boom from the desecrated temple floated on the night air, and then the thunder of a big drum echoed and reverberated above the tree-tops and floated in sound over the adjacent villages, as if the idol himself had risen from the broken fragments, into which we had reduced him and was beating a gigantic tomtom in a passion. The sound of that drum had a startling effect on our troubled consciences, and to make matters worse, it was being answered, first from one far-off village and then from another, as if, like the tocsin it were the signal for the gathering of an armed host to do battle in a popular cause.

“We are in for it, boys, if we loiter now; forwards!” shouted Wilkinson.

We set spurs to our wearied nags and galloped through prickly jungle, over grassy hillocks and through oyas and nullahs, until the white thatch of the Rajahwilla lines was shining in the bright moonlight. A few men were stirring in one of the houses, to whom we gave orders to keep a sharp outlook, and if any Sinhalese men should attempt to pass, to prevent them entering the estate.

We then rode forward to the bungalow, where, rousing the servants, who got us a cup of hot

coffee, we turned into bed with all the pleasure which a long journey and no small amount of fatigue were likely to induce. After I had lain down, I began to reflect on the mad and injudicious prank, to call it by no harsher a name, in which I had so stupidly shared.

I could not conceal from myself that the consequences might be very awkward, in the event of any complaint being made to the authorities regarding the outrage; and that there would be such a complaint, knowing the litigious disposition of the natives so well as I did, I had not the slightest doubt. The attack on the temple was so unprovoked and so meaningless, that I was heartily ashamed of my share in the affair on that head alone, and it was besides so childish. I also had, to a certain extent, a return of the supernatural sensation of dread with which the gloom and the weird look of the temple and its surroundings had at first inspired me, and my feelings with regard to our silly escapade were altogether those of unqualified regret and disgust.

"Never mind," I thought, as I turned on my side, preparatory to falling asleep; "I shall offer, if any row is made about the matter, to build an image of brass as big and as imposing as the one we have destroyed, and make any other reasonable recompense in my power to the temple, for the mischief we have done, and surely the old priest and his followers will have no reluctance to exchange clay for brass."

Early next morning I rode into Kandy, and, after seeing my horse housed, I called on Helen. I cannot, even if I would, describe love scenes, and, although I could do so, they would be very dull reading. I knew a case where a young girl of thirteen or fourteen summers, a precocious pert little monkey, hid herself beneath a sofa to listen to the conversation between one of her sisters and a gentleman who was paying his court to her. She confessed afterwards, that if she had known what slow and dull work it was, she would have thought twice before she would have placed herself in any such position. Listening to a dull sermon in church was fun, she said, in comparison to it.

Helen was glad to see me. She flew into my arms, as only young wives who adore their husbands, or those who are on the point of becoming young wives, would think of doing; kissing me with her soft dewy lips, as only a pure-minded girl would venture to do. And what rapture it was to me to be with her, she whom I loved more dearly than all the world besides, she who was, indeed, all the world to me.

I told her of our party and all the anecdotes and adventures connected with it, all with the exception of our desecration of the temple on our way home. I told her of O'Brien's eccentricities, with which she was always amused, and about the uncomfortable night his bedfellow had; of young Benson being turned out of doors because he would not sing; of the Aberdeen M. D. assuring us

that Sir Dugald Dalgety was the original possessor of the estates now held by my bedfellow Sir William Reid, and a lot of other things equally interesting. In return she told me that a letter had been received from her brother George, who had applied for leave of absence, on urgent private business, and who would be in Ceylon in the course of about three weeks from that date.

“And just come, Fred, and see such a lovely present as he has sent me. I am afraid that it is a great deal more than the poor fellow can afford, for you know he has nothing but his pay to depend on.”

She led me, as she spoke, into a small dressing-room, opening from the verandah, and there, lying on a settee, was a web of the finest and snowiest muslin I ever saw; whilst a magnificent *trousseau* of Trichinopoly jewellery lay on a table beside it.

“Is n't it lovely, dearest?” the sweet girl asked, with child-like glee. “It is the finest Dacca, just like cobwebs. The people who make it cannot be of flesh and blood, they must be fairies. This is to be my wedding dress, and those are the only jewels I will wear. It was so kind of George to send them.”

When we returned to the verandah, I must confess that I was very much startled to see the little old priest of the cave temple pass slowly along the road, in front of the house. Our appearance seemed to have attracted his attention, for he stopped and gazed for a moment at us, and then

resumed his walk. His gaze lasted only for an instant, but, as he recognised me, his fiery eye lighted up with an expression of bitter and malignant hatred, and I felt that the vengeance of that old man would never rest until he should have fully revenged the insult offered to his god, and that there need be no talk of compromise between us.

I happened to be at the hotel that evening. I met Wilkinson, who was arranging about the purchase of a horse with a half-caste gentleman, who was talking to him in the verandah.

He came forward and accosted me, and we were shaking hands, when he exclaimed in a tone of voice, in which it was easy to detect traces of alarm and fear: "What! that d——d priest again?"

I turned, and there was the little old priest with the fiery eye standing at the entrance to the compound, surrounded by some five or six truculent-looking natives, who were regarding us with grave but unimpassioned countenances.

"Blast him, will you ask him what he wants?" said my friend with an alarmed look, addressing the man of colour, with whom he had been conversing, and I must confess that I felt a very perceptible sinking of my own heart as I contemplated this group.

"*Mukada balanda awa ?*" (What have you come to look at?) asked the Portuguese man.

"*Muquat awa*" (We have come for nothing) was the surly reply, as the squad moved contemptuously off.

"Do you know that priest?" I asked the gentleman of colour.

"Yes, sir," that is Manicralle Unansee. He is a very great priest amongst the natives. They believe what he says, because he has a god."

"Had a god you mean," broke in Wilkinson, with one of his loud boisterous laughs at this silly joke; "but we took care that he should not have him long. Didn't we, Green? Wasn't it a jolly lark. I think I see his godhead yet as we trundled him off his perch and pitched him in splinters outside."

"I don't mean an idol," our dark friend replied with a very serious expression of countenance, not heeding Wilkinson's remarks; "he has a god in his mind, at least the natives say so."

"He must be a shrewd old codger, if that is the case," said Wilkinson.

"That, however, is not what you mean," I remarked, feeling rather curious and desiring to get all the information regarding my new foe which I could. "You wish to imply, if I understand you correctly, that the natives believe that this Manicralle Unansee is inspired, and that he prophesies?"

"Yes, sir, that is it," the Portingal, as old Defoe would have called him, replied, smiling to see his meaning so well understood.

"Then the natives would act according to this old scoundrel's councils in any affair of importance?"

The Portingal crossed himself and muttered a short prayer, as he looked around with a frightened glance, when he heard me speak so disrespectfully of the old gentleman under discussion.

"Yes, sir," he answered, with some hesitation.

"They would commit murder, for instance, at his bidding?"

"Yes, sir, they would murder the Governor himself or Sir Emerson Tennent, if he were to bid them."

Wilkinson grew visibly pale during the progress of this conversation.

"What a set of bloodthirsty scoundrels they must be," he said. "Would they not be sure to be discovered if they were to murder a fellow like me, for instance?"

"Oh, no, sir. If Manicralle Unansee were to tell them that they would not be discovered, they would commit any crime, even the crime of rebellion, which is like witchcraft, and no native would bear witness against them."

"Not even for a bribe?" asked Wilkinson. "I thought every mother's son of them would perjure himself a hundred times over for a bribe, if it were only large enough."

"Not even for a bribe," answered the Portuguese man.

Here the conversation ended, and I parted from Wilkinson and his sable friend.

CHAPTER XXXI.—REVENGE—ATTEMPTS AT ASSASSINATION.

Next morning I rode out to Dodangahakelle. I had not been near it for nearly a fortnight, and Juan de Zousa had been in full charge of the whole concern. Juan had become a very useful fellow. He could get through any quantity of writing and cyphering, and he was able also to give a helping hand at looking after the cooiles in the field.

I remained at home for about a week. In the course of that time a rather singular incident occurred, which recalled painfully to my recollection the conversation which I had had with Wilkinson's Portuguese friend.

I had sat down to dinner all alone. It was very seldom indeed that I did this. I usually had a visitor or two, or some of my own managers or assistants to keep me company. My servant, Muskin, had brought in the soup, and I had helped myself rather plentifully to it, for I was rather hungry, and if I had a weakness, it was for the soup—mulligawtany—which was placed on the table. It had been raining during the afternoon—a soft warm drizzle—and although the clouds were rising high in the air, a dewy mist still hung over the reeking earth. I had just raised the first spoonful of soup to my mouth when the lights were darkened by a dense cloud of white-ants, which streamed in myriads into the room and

swarmed over soup, table and every spot in the house. It was the season when these insects—being unacquainted with the natural history of the creatures, I am not going to inflict it on the reader—undergo a singular metamorphosis by taking to themselves wings, and, instead of burrowing in the earth, fly in the air. Their enjoyment of the winged state is, however, of short duration—an hour or two at the most. They had no sooner lighted on the tables, couches, sideboard, chairs and floors of the bungalow, than they began to denude themselves of their wings, and in the course of little more than an hour after their first appearance, they had all betaken themselves to their native earth, leaving the gauzy films which had for so short a time adorned them, as spoils behind. Their sudden inroad, however, had spoiled my dinner. The soup was thick with their hideous carcasses, and every dish on the table was in a like condition; whilst Muskin deplored the destruction of “master’s dinner,” in pathetic accents.

“Never mind, sir,” he said. “What time those white-ants go, then I get some nice beef steak and curried chicken for master.”

I had two dogs and a cat, inmates of the house. One of the dogs, Donna, or the lady, was a big Cuban bloodhound, which I had received as a present from Mr. Acland. She was a mangy, indolent, useless brute, but I tolerated her on account of the rarity of her breed in the island. The other was a King Charles spaniel, very docile,

very affectionate and somewhat useful, when I went shooting jungle-fowl in the forest adjoining cheena lands. The two dogs and the cat were very excellent friends. When they went to sleep in the verandah, the cat lay down between her canine companions, and the three looked as if they were clasped in each other's embraces. When I found that my soup was unusable, I put down my plate to the spaniel and the cat, whilst Donna came in for the contents of the tureen. I thought nothing more about the matter, until the following morning, when stepping into the sitting-room, I saw the dead body of my cat lying, stretched, as if she had died in great agony, on a couch. In the verandah, Donna and the spaniel were lying beside each other, also dead. I fancied at the first glance from their position that they were only sleeping, but they were quite dead and their limbs stiff and rigid.

“What could this mean?” I recollected giving these poor brutes the soup, which the ants had destroyed the previous evening, but surely it could not have destroyed them.

I went to the cook-house and called Muskin, the cook, and all the other servants about the premises. I asked if any of the soup had been left. Not a drop. The cook himself had used the last of it. All the people about the premises bore testimony to this fact, and here was the cook before me well and living.

“Were there any strangers about the premises at dinner time?” I asked.

“No ; there had been no one,” was the answer.

“Yes, there was,” Mootoo Samy, the hewer of wood and drawer of water for the establishment replied. “A strange Sinhalese man had come into the back verandah as Muskin was arranging the dinner, and he, Mootoo Samy, had handed him the soup tureen to hold until he had returned to the cook-house for some other article.”

“Come here, men,” I said, preceding them into the front verandah and then into the sitting-room, where I pointed out the bodies of the dogs and cat.

“This,” I said, “has been occasioned by allowing that Sinhalese man to hold the soup. He had undoubtedly put poison into it, with the intention of destroying me, but he has only succeeded in killing these animals. Had it not been for the white-ants,” I added, addressing Muskin, “I would have been lying as these poor brutes are now.”

Cries of “appa, ayia, acha,” broke from the lips of the horrified servants, whilst curses, both loud and deep, were uttered on the heads of the double-dyed Sinhalese villains, who had tried to murder master, with startling volubility and vehemence.

I felt convinced, from what I saw, that none of my own people had been concerned in this dastardly attempt on my life, and I therefore dismissed them with positive directions not to allow a single strange native to come about the bungalow without letting me know. My servants were all either Malays or Tamils. I told them that I had offended some

Sinhalese priests, and I was afraid that this was only the first of a series of attempts to compass my destruction, and that it would be necessary we should all be on our guard against such villany.

It was but too evident that I was now a marked man, and doomed to destruction, if native treachery and native cunning could compass my death. I cannot say that this idea was calculated to inspire my mind with very comfortable feelings. If the danger had been palpable, I am quite sure that I would have looked it boldly in the face, like a man; but I did not know how nor when the blow might fall. I could not be sure that the food I ate would not cause my death. I did not know, but that assassins might be lying in wait to pounce upon me, from every thicket or secret lurking-place, which my unavoidable journeys carried me past.

I resolved to take every precaution in my power against surprise. I made the cook eat of every dish that was brought to the table before tasting it myself. I carried loaded pistols in my walks about the estate, and I never encountered a Kandyan, until I had first made preparations for shooting him down, in the event of any symptoms of hostility showing themselves. I placed watchmen around the bungalow at night, to guard against surprise, for I dreaded being murdered in my bed, more than being attacked in daylight,

There was something intensely terrible in having the sword perpetually hanging over me, and not knowing when it might fall on my devoted head,

I bore up wonderfully, for some time, against the nervous feeling of dread which hung over me, like a black shadow, but I gradually grew, so that I had no peace of mind by day and little rest by night. I grew feverish and querulous, but after a time I gradually became, in some degree, hardened and defiant.

This state of affairs had continued about a week. I had been all that time without having seen Helen, although I wrote to her every day and received the dearest and fondest little notes from her in reply. I rode into Kandy on a Saturday, taking care to be well armed and equally well attended. When I entered the hotel, the first person I met was my old companion in the destruction of the idol, Ben Capper.

"Have you heard about Wilkinson?" he asked.

"No, what about him?" I inquired.

"Found dead this morning."

"Where?" I asked.

"In his bed," was the reply.

Capper proceeded to inform me that Wilkinson's servant had found him insensible in bed that morning; that he had sent off to Peradeniya for the nearest medical man, Dr. Thwaites, and that, when the doctor arrived and proceeded to examine the poor fellow, he found that he was suffering from compound fracture of the skull, occasioned by a blow from a paddy pounder or some other similar weapon. Wilkinson had never recovered from the lethargy in which the doctor found him,

until within a few minutes before he breathed his last, when he opened his eyes and exclaimed "You infernal jade."

It was surmised from this circumstance, that a woman had been concerned in the murder. The police authorities were investigating the case, but, with the exception of these few words, they had no clue to guide them.

The servants knew nothing about the matter, and no information had been obtained, beyond the fact, that Wilkinson had been seen late the previous evening in Kandy, sound in mind and limb.

I told Capper of the narrow escape which I had made, and warned him to be on his guard, for I was positive that our lives would be sacrificed to the vengeance of that rascally old priest, if they were not saved by the interposition of a higher power.

Capper was evidently very much alarmed.

"I wish we had not meddled with that confounded image," he said. "I am sure we must have been mad when we did it. It was all owing to poor Wilkinson and my own infernal fondness for fun. If he had not said 'Here goes one for his nobs,' I, most certainly, would never have lifted a hand against his godship. Had we not better go to Staples and consult him about it?"

This was a very good suggestion. Mr. Staples was the District Judge of Kandy, a half-caste, but a very talented man, and in some respects a thorough Englishman in feeling. I explained to him, in as

few words as possible, the reason of our visit. The judge looked grave and concerned. He could do nothing to help us, and the only advice which he could give, was that we should lose no time in opening negotiations with this priest, through some native of influence, and then, perhaps, the danger we apprehended might be withdrawn. I recollected Coorocoodootenne Banda, and I resolved not to lose an hour in employing him to manage this delicate negotiation for me.

“You need not be under any immediate apprehension,” Mr. Staples said, on taking our leave. “I shall communicate to Mr. Hanna, the Police Magistrate, the nature of the information which you have given me. It may furnish a clue to the discovery of the murderer of Mr. Wilkinson; and I don’t know the native character, if they commit two such crimes on Europeans, in the same month, especially if they perceive that the real criminals are suspected.”

I left Mr. Staples with a lightened heart. Since there was no immediate danger, I would have time, I thought, to settle the whole affair through the good offices of Coorocoodootenne Banda, before the natives would summon courage to commit another murder, and since I had already escaped the first stroke, the second might also alight on some of my companions. This was a very selfish and horrid idea, but it was quite natural that it should be entertained under the circumstances in which I was placed.

I may remark here, that the murderers of Wilkinson never were discovered.

I remained a week and some days in Kandy, passing the most part of my time in the society of my betrothed, my love and admiration for whom went on increasing, as day by day developed some new and pleasing trait in her character, never before dreamed of, and showed me how great a treasure I was soon to call my own. Her brother, George, was expected in Kandy in the course of a day or two, and as our bridal was to be a very quiet one, it was decided that the Captain should give a dancing party in honour of his son's arrival, when the young people, of both sexes, friends of the family, should meet and enjoy an evening's amusement before the first break should occur in the household.

I left Kandy on a Tuesday evening, and this party was to take place on Thursday of the following week. I promised to be in attendance; and after receiving a warm kiss from the lips of my beloved and a chaste embrace, I mounted my horse and cantered through the streets of Kandy on my way to Dodangahakelle.

At Gampola I was joined by Punchi Appu and another cangany, named Mootoo Samy, or the Pearl God, who followed me chatting as native servants and employees chat with their masters, with the utmost freedom, but, at the same time, with the utmost respect. Since my interview with Mr. Staples, I had got over, in a great

measure, the overpowering dread of assassination, which had all but prostrated my faculties, after the unsuccessful attempt at poisoning, which I had so providentially escaped. Still, I was by no means displeased at the present addition to my party. I naturally thought that if the natives should again attempt my life, it would not be whilst travelling so well attended. The danger lay in travelling alone.

I don't recollect whether I have already mentioned, that before entering the gap in the mountains, leading down to Singha Newera, the road ascended the face of a high hill, in a series of zigzags, for a distance of nearly four miles. In some parts, where it was practicable to do so, the natives had formed paths from zigzag to zigzag, cutting off the corners, for the steepness of a path seemed to be a matter of the most perfect indifference to them. They preferred shortness to pleasantness in walking. In consequence of this, when we began to ascend the face of the pass, I was forsaken by my companions at the first zigzag, and although I occasionally caught glimpses of them as I rode wearily round every turning at a necessarily slow pace, they were always far ahead of me. The lower part of the road was cut through patana land, but the upper portion led, first through a heena jungle and then through a virgin forest. I had almost reached the summit of the pass and was nearing the last turning, humming the tune of "The girl I left behind me." I was within twelve or fifteen

yards of this turning, when a native jumped from the jungle and, standing in the middle of the pathway, presented a double-barrelled fowling-piece at my head. My first feeling at this unlooked-for apparition, was one of astonishment, my next was one of self-preservation. I threw myself almost off my horse, interposing him between my head and my would-be assassin, and clutching one of my pistols from its holster, I tried as cautiously as I could to get an aim at the scoundrel. I heard the hammer fall on the nipple of his gun, but no explosion followed. I raised myself in the saddle, and putting spurs to my horse rode at the fellow, presenting my pistol at his head. I had, however, neglected to put it on cock and it would not go off. The Kandyan snapped his second barrel, which he had with the utmost coolness kept presented direct at my face, but it also hung fire, that is, it did not explode on the instant, and when it did go off, which was immediately after, his aim had become disturbed and the charge passed harmlessly over my head. The blackguard still stood his ground, as if astonished that his shot had not taken effect, but when my horse was almost touching him, and I had hurled my pistol without effect at his head, he bolted into the jungle and disappeared amongst the underwood. I dismounted and picked up the pistol, but I did not attempt to follow up my would-be murderer. It would have been madness to do so, and my companions were too far off to summon them to my aid. I was not quite sure at first whether I was wounded or not. I had heard

that gun-shot wounds did not inflict pain, until inflammation began to set in, and therefore I examined my hat and my jacket to see if any damage had been done to them. The jacket was all right, but there were two rents in my hat, an Indian pith one, which had been occasioned by the passage of slugs or shot. I then passed my hand through my hair, but there were no marks of blood. Having satisfied myself that I had received no injury, I put spurs to my horse and urged him to his utmost speed up the hill, thanking God most earnestly in my heart for my marvellous escape. I speedily overtook my companions, and told them what had occurred. They expressed surprise at my wonderful escape. They had heard the shot, but had fancied that, being near home, I had fired my pistol at some bird as I rode along. The old dread was again upon me and I was afraid to be alone. When I reached home, I found O'Brien in the bungalow. He asked me what had occurred, I looked so pale and the back of my jacket was bloody. On examination I found that the blood had proceeded from my ear, part of which had been carried off by a bullet. I told O'Brien of my adventure, and as he already knew all about the attempt at poisoning me, and what I believe had occasioned it, he was more alarmed than surprised at my statement.

“I'll tell you what it is, Major,” he said, with much seriousness of manner, “we will now require to run in couples. You must not leave the estate, unless you have me with you; and surely, both

combined, we will manage to circumvent these murdering scoundrels."

I told him of my interview with Judge Staples and the advice that he had given.

"I intend to go tomorrow to Cooroocoodootenna Banda to consult with him about what had best be done," I said "because, in spite of every precaution we could take, if the natives had really set themselves to destroy me, they will be sure to find an opportunity of doing so, sooner or later."

"You come up to my crib with me tonight, Major," Wolfe replied; "you will be safer there than here, and we can both go to the village tomorrow. It would be too dangerous at present for you to go alone."

CHAPTER XXXII.—PINKAMA—A PRIESTLY

BANNING.

It was afternoon on the following day when, after carefully loading my double-barrelled rifle, I set out for the village of Cooroocoodootenna. O'Brien wished to accompany me, but after talking over the matter, it was thought advisable that I should go alone, and in the event of any accident occurring, there would be a chance of a clue being found to convict the scoundrels who seemed so bent upon my destruction with it.

I must confess that it was not without much misgiving that I came to this resolution. I told O'Brien to follow me, with a strong escort, in

the event of my not returning within a reasonable time, and I promised that nothing should induce me to leave the direct path between the Banda's house and my own bungalow. O'Brien seemed much concerned when I left him to follow out this adventure, and the concern he displayed had the effect of nerving me for the undertaking. On reasoning over the matter in my own mind, the danger did not seem great; but when a man has had two undoubted attempts made on his life, in the course of as many weeks, he naturally feels nervous and apprehensive, not knowing when and where the third and probably the successful one might take place. I have since been under fire, with cannon shot and musket bullets bursting and pinging over my head and past my ears, and shells bursting in every direction around me; yet I did not feel the prostrating nervous dread which oppressed me about this time. The difference in feeling, I believe, arose from seeing and knowing the danger, and being able to calculate my chances of escape in the one case, whilst in the other no foresight nor precaution on my part could parry or enable me to avoid it.

As I descended the path leading to Coorocoodo-tenna, it is scarcely to be wondered at, that every lizard which rustled suddenly amongst the under-wood and every bird which darted from a treetop startled me in a manner which a month previous I would have believed to be simply impossible.

I felt considerably relieved when I found myself

among the open paddy-fields, knowing that I could not be approached without previous notice, and, bad as the natives were, I did not think that they would dare to murder a European in broad daylight, on their own grounds. Still I was not so easy in my mind as I would have been, had I not the recollection of Wilkinson's death and the doom that was clearly hanging over myself, to make me apprehensive and alarmed. I was much struck by the desolate and forsaken appearance of the paddy-fields on the occasion of this visit. I was never amongst them before without seeing numbers of natives lounging about the edges, or lying in the little watch-houses, which were erected along the banks. Now, there was not a single individual, neither man, woman nor child, visible.

I hoo-hooed with all the power of my lungs, but there was no response to my cry, unless the echoes of the adjoining rocks. What could it all mean? Such a state of matters had never occurred before. Was I indeed a marked man, whom the natives, who used to crawl at my feet, were now determined to shun? Had my crime been of so very dreadful a dye, that the miserable fawning Sinhalese would hold no intercourse with me? It seemed to be so, for not a living soul was to be seen in field or house. I walked through the thickly-planted gardens of fruit trees which surrounded the native houses, one after another, beginning at the Banda's, but not a native appeared. The whole village was evidently deserted. I was on the point of giving up the search in disgust, when I per-

ceived a half-witted boy at some distance off, who was often in the habit of coming to my bungalow, where he was kindly treated by the servants. I holloed to him, but even he did not seem inclined to hold any intercourse with me. As the mountain would not go to Mahomet, Mahomet had to go to the mountain, so I also had to give chase to this fatuous lad. When he saw me approaching he darted up a pathway, overgrown with jungle, where the green tops of jak and coconut trees, a short distance off, told of the presence of a native house. I followed the lad and overtook him when almost close to the house. I asked where all the people of the village were. He pointed to the house and said "Pinkama."

I had never heard the word before, and consequently did not know its meaning. I therefore went forward towards the house.

"Pinkama! pinkama, Mahatmaya," the fellow yelled, as if he were terrified and desirous of preventing my further advance.

I was resolved to proceed, and I was soon in front of a low, white-washed native house. There were no windows, and only one door as an entrance at one end of the house, and it seemed securely fastened. This house had quite as deserted an appearance as any of those that I had already visited. I walked round the premises, but the house presented nothing but dead walls, being evidently built in the form of a quadrangle, or four houses joined end to end, in the form of a

square, enclosing an open court within. The house or houses seemed of pretty large dimensions—larger a great deal than most native houses, so that the ground it covered was tolerably extensive. Whilst making these observations I became conscious of a low murmuring sound within the building. It seemed as if some one were reading or reciting in a drawling, monotonous tone of voice. I remembered my intrusion at the devil dance, and the evil results which had followed, and I hesitated to intrude again upon what might prove to be some other religious ceremony, at which my appearance might prove by no means welcome.

“Pinkama, pinkama,” screamed the idiot boy, who now seemed resolved to keep by me, pointing to the closed door.

“Shall I open it?” I asked in Sinhalese.

“Yes, open it, there is pinkama within.”

I fancied that pinkama must mean some native play or dance of a secular nature, for the house had no appearance of being a religious one, and feeling very curious to know what was going on, I approached the door with the intention of opening it. My companion, however anticipated me by rushing towards the door, and pushing it open with some violence, he screamed that the Dodangahakelle master had come to the pinkama.

Coorocoodootenna Banda was standing near the door, and as I approached rather hesitatingly, he motioned to me to enter, although with a degree

of arrogance and independence of manner that I had not been accustomed to in my intercourse with him.

I entered the house. As I had supposed, it formed a quadrangle inside, and within this quadrangle I found all the men, women and children belonging to the village assembled. They were all dressed in clean white cloths, as if the object of their assembling was one of no ordinary occurrence. The women were naked from the waist upwards, their bosoms being uncovered, and they sat in a row under the projecting verandah of one side of the quadrangle, while behind them stood the men and children.

There might have been somewhere about a hundred people present.

On the opposite side, sitting on a raised seat, was my friend, the little old priest, with the fiery eyes, and behind him a stout oily-looking young fellow, also a priest, who had a most villainous expression of low-cunning in his countenance, and whose skin was black and shining as jet. Near these two men were other two or three Kandyans, evidently strangers in the village, one of whom I felt positive was the fellow who had fired at me the previous day; although on that occasion his face was disguised with a coating of pounded charcoal and wood ashes. The malicious smile of recognition which lighted up the scoundrel's countenance, when he saw me enter, and the cunning twinkle of his eye would have led me to

suspect this, even although I had not been able to recognise his features.

The little old priest went on reading from a handful of ollas, or palm leaf manuscripts, never allowing his attention to be diverted from his book for an instant by the slight bustle occasioned by my entrance. I took up a position near the Banda and stood listening for nearly two hours to the low droning recitation of the priest, of which I did not understand a single sentence.

It is dreary enough work, in all conscience, sitting listening to a dry sermon in a church, even when delivered in one's own language, but when it come to listening, for several weary hours, to a harangue of which only one word out of about a score is intelligible, the weariness and ennui which it occasions become perfectly intolerable. Every infliction in this world comes to an end, and so also did the priest's oration. Manicralle Unanse closed his ollas and the women rose and departed, making a humble salaam as they passed the priest. The men followed, scowling at me, I thought, as they left the house in a manner by no means reassuring.

Only the priests, the Banda, the four strangers and myself remained. I stood close by the door, with my gun in my hand, in a position which I could perceive was causing the natives a considerable amount of uneasiness.

I fixed my gaze sternly on the scoundrel, who, I believed, had tried to shoot me, and the fellow's

eyes drooped beneath my glance, whilst his frame shook and shivered as if he had been seized with an ague fit. Indeed, the whole party, with the exception of the old priest looked conscious and terror-stricken, and there was an awkward silence for a few minutes, during which Manicralle busied himself arranging his ollas and packing a huge pair of spectacles into a brass case.

Having effected this, he turned sharply on me and demanded, in as good English, as I ever heard spoken by a native:—"What does the English gentleman want here? Has he come to insult the religion of peaceful people, by his sacrilegious presence?"

"He has come to apprehend a murderer," I replied; "and, perhaps, more than one, in the persons of his accomplices."

There was an uneasy feeling amongst the strange Kandyans when this speech was translated to them, and a rapid glance was cast towards the doorway, as if each were making a rapid calculation of the chances, which a sudden rush might give them of overpowering me and making their escape.

In answer to this glance I took a step nearer the door and brought my gun down to the ready, and placing both barrels on cock.

"Who has been murdered?" asked the old priest, in a mocking tone of voice, stepping with the utmost coolness in front of the muzzles of my gun, whilst his fiery little eyes glowed like live

coals. "Not yourself, for to all outward appearance you are alive and well."

"Not an actual murderer, perhaps," I replied; "but there stands the man who attempted to take my life, no later than yesterday, and I shall most undoubtedly not allow him to escape."

"What proof have you? Can you swear positively to such a fact, or that this is the man? Because if you can do this, here are six men who are prepared to swear that he was in our company at Kurnegalle at the time I understand that you were attacked."

"I have no doubt but that you and your friends are prepared to swear to any lie that may suit your purposes. That, however, is not the business that has brought me here. I have, it seems, been guilty of a very foolish action which I deeply regret, and which has justly, I believe, given you and your brotherhood good cause for offence. I am very sorry that I should have been led, against my better judgment, to do anything likely to offend your prejudices or hurt your feelings, and I came here today to ask the Banda's good offices to arrange matters between us, so that I may make whatever reparation is in my power for an offence which cannot now be recalled."

"Is it terror or repentance which has caused you to seek this interview?" the priest sneeringly asked.

"Both," I replied. "It is not pleasant for a man to be constantly under the dread of being

assassinated, and as I am willing to atone and make reparation for my folly, I should wish to convince myself that I need no longer dread a murderer, in every Sinhalese man who approaches me. Perhaps, it might be equally as dangerous for the intended assassin as for myself."

"And what atonement can you, a crawling worm of the earth, make to an offended god? Do you think that it is against man that you have committed this wickedness? I tell you, that you have insulted the majesty of heaven. You a creature of yesterday, who cannot with certainty count on another hour of life, have dared to lift your injurious hand against the symbols of the Master of the Universe, and with sacrilegious design levelled his altars with the ground. You dared to do this, and now, with craven terror, you come to plead repentance that the doom of your impiety may be removed. Man you may induce to relent in his vengeance, but God you cannot influence."

"Say rather that it is God that can and will relent, but man will not forego his petty revenge," I replied; "but beware, sir priest, how far you carry your vengeance in this matter, for so sure as you are now a living man, your own life shall pay the forfeit if any further attempts are made on mine. What I now wish is that you shall pledge me your word that no farther attempts shall be made on my life, and on this understanding I shall replace the statue which my companions destroyed, and also make any reasonable offering to the temple, for, as I said before, I am

very sorry that I was led into having a hand in this very foolish affair."

"Would you rather incur the curse of God as pronounced by his priests, or lose your worthless life for the sacrileges you have committed?" asked the Unansee.

"Certainly," I replied, in a tone of voice which I could not prevent from conveying a perceptible sneer.

"Then you shall have your choice," was the prompt reply of the fiery little man. "Follow me."

We left the house and struck into a path very much overgrown with jungle, where the long, trailing, prickly vines and the lance-like leaves of the illuk grass grew in rank luxuriance across the tracks, catching our clothes and lashing our faces as we passed.

I followed the Unansee for a distance of about a quarter of a mile, when he suddenly stopped on the summit of a round hillock, under the shadow of a large bo-tree, where stood a rude altar, built of small stones, and covered with strong-smelling yellow flowers, whilst quantities of crumbling bricks and moss-covered stones were strewed in heaps around; evidently the ruins of some ancient temple, whose principal gateway of carved stones was still standing as a memorial of its former greatness. The priest took up a position near the altar, where he stood as if lost in meditation for some minutes, then turning to me with a look, in which something approaching to madness was visible, he said :

“Do you know where you now stand? No, you don't know. Well, I shall tell you. Forty years ago a party of English soldiers came up this Pass from Ruanwella on their way to Kandy. They rested under this bo-tree, the tree under which the sacred Bhuddah loved to rest, when sojourning on this earth. The villagers brought them rice and fowls, fruits and flowers, and what think you was their return? These soldiers, under a boy officer, in mere wantonness burned the temple, whose ruins you can still trace, and levelled its altars with the ground. What think you was their reward? I was one of the priests attached to this temple in those days, but, though a humble Unansee, I had my revenge. Not one of these men ever returned to their own country; they all perished miserably, the boy officer by his own hand, on the banks of the Mahavilliganga, near Lewelloa,—you know the place,—where I saw more than three hundred of your accursed race die, whilst I and my brethren rejoiced in their craven terrors and the howl of their death agony. Their fate should be your fate, but although you will now be allowed to live, listen to the doom, more terrible than death, which heaven has in store for you instead.

Here the old priest seemed to increase in stature whilst he raised his right hand above his head, and his fiery eyes glowed like living coals, as he fixed them on me with an expression of bitter spite and hatred, pronouncing at the same time the following anathemas, as if he really

believed that his spiteful curses were certain of carrying their own fulfilment:—

“May the curse of God rest on your head until you have expiated this horrible sacrilege in repentance and tears. May your wealth perish like dross and be worthless to you as the dust blown by the wind. May your friends forsake you, die or betray you. May you be a wanderer on the face of God’s earth, unloved and unloving. May your life become a burden to you. May you seek that death which you now wish to escape, and may it avoid you. May all your projects and enterprises be frustrated, and may failure attend everything you endeavour to accomplish. May all in whom you put your trust prove false and faithless. May your enemies exult over you, and may your life be desolate and lonely.”

Here the old scoundrel paused from want of breath, his eyes glowing like coals in a furnace, his lips spewing curses, and his whole frame quivering like one possessed of a devil. If there are such things as fits of possession, I certainly witnessed one now. “It is no wonder,” I thought, “that the natives believe this man to have a god—devil would be the more correct rendering.”

The natives who had followed us from the village stood at a short distance off, watching this singular performance, with their hands clasped in front of their chins, so that the points of the fingers touched each other; and as every curse fell from the old priest’s lips, they bowed their heads, whilst the

young, oily-looking fellow in the yellow robes uttered a sonorous "ehe hamderoo," which literally meant "yes, my lord," and might have been intended as an equivalent for our Amen; although he did not understand a word of the language in which these anathemas were uttered.

There was a pause for a few moments, and the Manicralle's eye glowed once more as he again vouchsafed to address me.

"Go now, thou accursed of the most high God. Go and dree the doom which has been pronounced against you. Thou defiler of God's temple; thou destroyer of his holy altars; thou insulter of his sacred religion; thou art now safe from the vengeance of man, but the anger of God is upon you. His arm is even now raised to smite, and misfortune is already flapping his dusky wings above your head. Go, before I am tempted to howl greater curses on you. Go, your companions wait you, and a future of wretchedness and woe is in store for you."

I did not require a second bidding to leave the presence of this old spitfire. I felt convinced that he was in earnest when he said I had nothing more to fear from the vengeance of man, and as for his curses, what had I, a Christian, although rather a lax one, to fear from them? The old man was to all appearance, mad, although there seemed to be a method in his madness, and I might consider myself lucky in having got off from what seemed a very serious business, with

a few harmless anathemas like those I had just listened to.

I observed that the natives made way for me as I passed along the paths of the paddy-fields and village, with sullen countenances, and without any of the outward marks of respect with which they had used to greet my approach. On leaving the rice-fields, I met O'Brien and Wallace, accompanied by Juan de Zouza and Punchi Appu, armed with rifles and fowling-pieces; whilst several of the old coolies followed, armed with heavy ebony sticks, which might have been of some service in a shindy.

O'Brien had become uneasy at my long absence and had come off to search for me. When we reached the bungalow, I gave him and Wallace, as also Juan and Punchi Appu, a detailed account of my afternoon's adventures, including the cursing I had received, and the promise that there should be no more attempts on my life. O'Brien and Wallace laughed at the affair, but Juan and Punchi Appu looked serious and concerned.

I asked them the causes of the uneasiness which their looks expressed.

"Because, sir," Juan answered, "I am esometime told, that these Chingalee priests' curses come true, and this Manicralla Unansee has a very great reputation as a very holy man amongst the Kandyans."

"If that is all you are afraid of, you may keep your minds very easy upon that score," I replied,

as I shall take care that the old fellow's bannings shall turn into blessings."

I did not, however, feel quite so easy in my own mind as I wished my hearers to believe. The old priest seemed so thoroughly in earnest, as if he placed implicit faith in the powers of his own curses, and the very words he used, "Cursed of God, forsaken of man," had a powerful influence in exciting a latent spark of superstitious dread, which, as I may have already shown, lurked in my character.

CHAPTER XXXIII.—A CASE OF DIVINATION.

The incidents of the day were not yet over. We were not long returned from Coorocoodootenna when a horrid din of men's tongues was heard in the lines, and in a short time the whole of the coolies on the estate were seen pouring forth, in the direction of the bungalow, yelling and jabbering, as only Tamil coolies in a state of excitement can yell and jabber. Something of dreadful import had evidently taken place, and there was going to be one of those unpleasant rows, which are more common than desirable amongst the coolies on the coffee estates in Ceylon. Round the men came in front of the bungalow, screaming like furies, some two or three hundred in number; headed by Trichinopoly Mootoo Samy Cangany, who was in such a state of frenzied excitement as would have made him a fitting candidate for Bedlam;

whilst two poor wretches, not a whit less excited, with their arms pinioned were led along, having all the vituperative malice of nearly three hundred tongues poured on their devoted heads. It was utterly impossible, in consequence of the horrid din, to learn what the row was about. Every man in that crowd insisted upon explaining the affair at one and the same time. There were, however, three things tolerably intelligible in all this babel of talk. These were a box, ten thousand rupees, and a quantity of gold and silver and jewellery. What connection these three articles had with each other and with the present disturbance, it was, for some time, difficult to comprehend. Nine-tenths of the men having been driven back to the lines by Juan and Punchi Appu, and something like quietness restored amongst those that remained, I proceeded to investigate the affair and learn what all the row was about.

Trichinopoly Mootoo Samy Cangany had, it seems, a large box in his room containing ten thousand rupees and a quantity of gold and silver jewellery. During the time that he had been at work, this box had disappeared,—had been stolen, in short,—and these fellows whose arms were bound were the thieves who had stolen it, but they were obstinate and would neither confess the crime nor make restitution of the stolen property.

“How large was the box?” I asked.

“About this size,” Mootoo Samy replied, marking off a square spot on the ground about twelve inches long by eight wide.

“And it contained ten thousand rupees?” I asked.

“Well, perhaps, not quite so much.”

“Ten thousand rupees is one thousand pounds. How did you, Trichinopoly Mootoo Samy, become possessed of so large a sum of money?” I asked in an incredulous tone of voice.

“It was possible that there were not quite ten thousand rupees,” was the reply.

“Perhaps, only one thousand,” I suggested.

“If master is pleased to say so, there could not have been more than one thousand.”

“Are you quite sure that there were a hundred rupees in the box?” I asked, with some severity. “It looks as if it were too small to hold even this sum.”

“If master chooses to say so, it is possible that there might not have been more than a hundred rupees in the box.”

“Now, let me understand the matter correctly. Do you know exactly how many rupees really were in the box? Were there ten?”

“Yes sir, there were more than ten; there were thirteen rupees and three four-fanam pieces.”

“Now, about the jewellery. What jewellery was there?”

“Oh sir, a great quantity of chains and earrings and bangles and precious stones.”

"Stop, stop, that is enough. Now, tell me how many chains there were. Were there more than one?"

"Yes sir, if you are pleased to say that there was only one chain, there couldn't have been any more."

"Was it not a silver chain?"

"If master please, it was silver."

"Then there were no gold chains?"

"There were no gold chains."

"And no precious stones?"

"If master must have the truth spoken there were no precious stones."

"And no other article of value?"

"Yes sir, there was a nose-ring."

"What might have been the value of the nose-ring?"

"Its value is incalculable."

"Half a rupee, perhaps?"

"Yes sir, more than that."

"Well, we will say that it was worth a rupee."

"Whatever master is pleased to say is correct."

"Then, I understand that the box which has been stolen contained thirteen rupees and one rixdollar, one silver chain and one nose-ring?"

"Yes sir."

"Now, what evidence have you that these men stole the box?"

"These men have been in the lines all day, and besides, here is a Brahmin who has discovered their guilt by means of divining with the chatty, the lamp and the rice."

"How can a man's guilt be discovered by these means? Have you no other evidence against them?"

"No other evidence, sir, but if you don't believe in their guilt, this Brahmin caste man will convince you by showing you how it is possible to demonstrate it."

The Brahmin caste man was called forward. He was a little withered old fellow, with a venerable grey beard. I had seen him in Kandy more than once carrying two large brass chatties, suspended from the ends of a yoke, similar to that used by milkmaids at home, which chatties, I was told, contained water from the Ganges. He was said to be collecting alms from the devout to enable him to make a pilgrimage to Benares or Allahabad, where, by prayer and bathing in the holy stream, his own sins and the sins of those who bestowed alms on him would be washed away. He stepped forward into the verandah, carrying a small brass lamp, a brass chatty with a projecting rim, and a little brass platter containing some boiled rice. He lighted the lamp and placed it on the floor, he then put the dish with the rice on the mouth of the chatty, and calling two men, he directed them to lift the chatty by the forefinger

of their right hands, one on each side. With their left hands they lifted a grain or two of the rice, and throwing it through the flame of the lamp muttered a sort of incantation at the Brahmin's dictation, which, I believe, was simply a request, that if the persons who held the chatty thus suspended were guilty of the robbery, the chatty was to turn round in their hands.

Several couples of the coolies went through this ordeal after each other, but in every case the chatty was immovable. One of the suspected fellows was then brought forward, when, strange to say, he had no sooner repeated the words of the incantation than the chatty moved round about half its circumference, in spite of an evident attempt in the culprit's part to prevent it. The same thing occurred when the other suspected man was subjected to the same test; and then there was an immediate shout that there could be now no doubt of their guilt.

"Come, Major, let you and me try this dodge," O'Brien suggested, with a decided look of incredulity.

We tried it, but the chatty remained stationery under our fingers.

"Let us try it with one of the culprits," he then said.

I did so and the chatty moved round in spite of an effort which I made to prevent it.

O'Brien then tried it with the other suspected man, with a similar result.

"There is some devil's mischief in this," he said with a puzzled expression of countenance, "and I can't understand it at all."

The impassive face of the old Brahmin lighted up with exultation, when he saw how confounded we were with the result of this experiment.

"Our gods are powerful," he said, "to detect crime. These men are guilty, and they should be punished for their crime, and also be compelled to make restitution of the man's property. I could show you their guilt by other methods, but it would take some time to do so, and the present proof is sufficient, seeing that your honours have satisfied yourselves that there has been no deception."

I did not know exactly how to proceed, but after consulting with O'Brien, I had the men tied up in one of the outhouses, first telling them that I was going to send to Kandy for peons, or police constables, to carry them to jail, but promising that if they would tell where the stolen property was hidden, they should be released.

Next morning, one of the men volunteered to show where the missing box was hid, provided that neither he nor his companion should be any further punished, and, strange to say, he went and produced it from under a large stone in a neighbouring oya.

I offer no comment on the foregoing incident, further than to say, that it actually occurred exactly as I have related, and if there was any

trick or collusion in the matter, neither O'Brien nor myself were able to detect it.* I have seen a somewhat similar experiment since my return to England, tried with a key tied into a Bible, but then it was only tried as a means of ascertaining which of the two operators possessed the most determined will.

CHAPTER XXXIV.—MORE PRIESTCRAFT—THE
PUNISHMENT OF SACRILEGE.

By the time that this affair of the theft was disposed of the sun had almost set, and O'Brien and myself were enjoying our evening cheroot in the verandah, after having discussed in all their bearings the adventures and occurrences of the day. Smoking, although a social institution, is more conducive to meditation than to conversation; consequently we were now more than usually silent. O'Brien was the first to speak.

“By Jove,” he said, pointing to Juan de Zouza’s bungalow, “what guy is this? He is evidently coming this way with friend Juan.”

The “guy” in question was a gentleman dressed in a long black robe, which reached to his ankles, and a broad-brimmed felt hat, also black.

“We are going to have more priestcraft tonight, it seems. We have had a time of cursing, from a Buddhist Unansee; of divining, from a begging Brahmin; and now, if I am not very much mistaken,

* There was, of course, a trick.—ED. L. R.

here comes our friend, the missionary Catholic priest, who married friend Juan at Negombo. Let us hope that his errand may be one of blessing."

It was indeed, as we had surmised, the priest in question, whose name, however, I now forget, but I think it was Ducelles. He was in our neighbourhood on one of his periodical visits to the scattered members of his flock, baptizing, marrying and administering the other sacraments and rites of his church to those who were in want of his services.

He was a young Frenchman, clever and accomplished, as all the missionaries of his church are; pious and self-denying, sparing himself no labour and no fatigue in the discharge of his duties; learned in all ancient lore and equally well versed in the modern languages of Europe as well as the native languages—Portuguese, Cingalese and Tamil—spoken by the inhabitants of Ceylon. He was still a young man, not more than thirty or thirty-five years of age, but it could easily be seen from the quick glance of his dark eye and the broad expanse of his forehead, to say nothing of the refined and exalted expression of his other features, that Padre Ducelles was a man of no ordinary ability or parts. If he had been a soldier, he would undoubtedly have risen to the command of armies. If a politician, he would have ruled senates. If a lawyer, he would have been sure to have been promoted to a seat on the bench; but having devoted himself to the service of the poor carpenter of Judea, he was only an itinerating Roman Catholic missionary priest. Perhaps, the

service he had chosen was far better than if he had devoted his great talents to politics, to arms or to law ; and, without a doubt, he was himself convinced that such was the case ; and he had greater reason to be proud of his wearied limbs and his rough garments, than if he bore the ermine of a judge or carried the baton of a field-marshal.

Father Ducelles was one of those men born to gain the love and command the respect of all with whom he came in contact. Even Wolfe O'Brien, who, to use his own expression, "did not care a brass farthing for the face of clay," was tamed and subdued in the presence of this good minister of the Gospel with whom he conversed about Smyrna, Cephalonia, Malta and other parts of the Levant where they had both sojourned, as people talk of scenes they loved when they are far distant from them.

"I am come to beg a couch from you tonight, my good friend, Mr. Green, and thus give you an opportunity of exercising the Christian virtue of hospitality to a weary wayfarer, who would fain prefer the society of fellow Europeans to that of less civilized Asiatics."

"The society of heretics, you should say, Padre, in preference to orthodox Christians," said Wolfe O'Brien, who could not deny himself the pleasure of saying a smart thing, even to the good priest.

"Exactly so, my good friend, Mr. O'Brien, upon the same principle that we occasionally say in the Levant, that the Turks were better Christians than the Greeks or Maltese, although in saying so I

may, perhaps, be paying you too great a compliment; for I fear that, although a professing Christian, you are, in a great measure a practical heathen, and my mission is to convert such whether their skins be white or black."

"You will require to pardon my lax speech, Padre, for I am indeed very glad to see you, and although I fear that you will have a tough job, if you undertake my conversion, still I would wish to have your opinion on one or two circumstances that have occurred today, and which, I confess, have mystified me a good deal. The one is a case of cursing and the other of divining. You have the reputation of being a man of great learning, and your studies may have led you more into the secrets of these things than is the case with us laics, and your opinion may be of some use, not only to myself, who am half a Catholic on my mother's side, but also to my friend, Mr. Green, who, although a full-blown Scotch heretic—and they, you know, are heretics above all heretics,—is very much troubled in mind about the circumstances which I am now about to relate."

O'Brien then gave the priest an account of the case of divination, in the first instance. It, however, was nothing new to Monsieur Ducelles. He had witnessed the same thing on several previous occasions, but he was unable to account for the turning round of the chatty, when lifted by the guilty parties. He could only say that he believed it to be one of those acts of divination which, we are told, were

practised by the Egyptian magicians in the time of Moses, and which are so frequently condemned in the Holy Scriptures. He mentioned several other magical arts, which he had seen practised by the natives of India, particularly in the exercise of the healing faculty, in cases of sickness or possession, which latter, he assured us, were by no means unfrequent in the East. The passes of Mesmer were known and had been practised for countless generations by the Persians, the Egyptians and Hindoos; whilst snake bites and wounds from other dangerous reptiles were cured by means of armlets and charms.

The experiment we had witnessed was only one of many methods for detecting crime in vogue with the Brahmins of India, and he believed that they were all more or less founded on scientific principles; that is, as in the case of the ordeal of chewing rice, by the consciousness of guilt acting involuntarily on the nervous system of criminals and leading to the development of the circumstances which is held to prove their guilt.

After dinner I related our onslaught on the statue of Bhood, the attempts on my life which followed, and the subsequent cursing which I had received from the priest. I expected that Father Ducelles would have shown some signs of satisfaction, when I told him about the destruction of the idol, but I perceived with some concern that the expression of his countenance grew sad and became sadder as I proceeded with my narrative, until

after I had finished, when he uttered a deep sigh and remarked, with much feeling and sorrow :

“My good friend, Mister Green, I am truly sorry for you.”

“Why?” I asked. “Do you think it so serious a matter to destroy a false god, and then to be cursed by a heathen priest?”

“Let me ask you another question before I answer yours. Did you demolish this idol and defile this temple for the glory of God, or was it to gratify you own evil feelings of revenge? Was it to do God service, or was it to insult this Cingalese priest that you committed this outrage?”

“It was neither,” I replied. It proceeded simply from an unpremeditated feeling of destructiveness.”

“If I understand you rightly, some insult to the priest was premeditated from the time that you and your companions were ordered off the ground by the devil-dancers. Was not this the case?”

“I am afraid that it was,” I answered sorrowfully.

“Then, in that case, I am afraid that you have been guilty of the heinous sin of sacrilege. I am a Christian priest, but I believe that these Bhudhists worship the one true God, the Ruler and Creator of the Universe*—worship him ignorantly, if you will—but still according to the lights which have been vouchsafed to them. Their temples are therefore temples of the one living and true God;

* Buddhism has neither one true God nor a Creator.—ED. *L. R.*

their priests are priests of God, and possess, therefore, all the power of blessing and cursing that belongs to the priestly character. We have a striking instance of this in Holy Scripture, in the case of Balaam, who, although a bad man, who would fain have bartered his priestly powers for lucre, was still a true prophet and a true priest. He was compelled to bless where he would fain have cursed; and as he worshipped the one true God, even so, the priests of this country also worship Him according to the best of their understandings, and their worship is free from the gross sensuality which other so-called heathens, particularly the natives of the neighbouring Continent of India, have engrafted on the primitive faith—the same faith which was revealed to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I would therefore very much fear that the curses of this Unansee may entail evil consequences to you. That is, I fear, that it may prove a real curse uttered by a true priest of God,* although I hope, for your sake, that this may not prove the case. There is strong Scripture warrandice for fearing evil consequences to those who despoil God's temples. We have the fate of Nebuchadnascar as a warning, and also the story told in the book of Maccabees, of Heliodorus going to rob the temple at Jerusalem of its treasures and being beat back by a rider on a great white horse, which go to prove that heaven will protect its

* Fancy a Roman Catholic acknowledging a Buddhist Unnanse to be "a true priest of God"!—ED. L. R.

own by present or future punishment. The cases of the same description of retribution in profane history are very numerous, and several instances of fearful punishments following speedily on wilful profanation of so-called heathen temples have come under my own observation. Of these cases I will relate one or two of the most striking, and for farther and fuller information upon this momentous subject, I would refer you to a work written by a dignitary of the Church of England, shortly after the so-called Reformation, which is very well worthy of the earnest study of all such who may be interested in so important a subject. I mean Sherlock's book on Sacrilege."

I could easily perceive that my friend, Wolfe O'Brien, was chafing impatiently under the good padre's lecture, and he now broke in with the abrupt question:

"Do you really believe that the laws of the Universe will be altered or suspended in consequence of the cursing or blessing of any priest, or all the priests of the earth? Do you really believe that the mere dictum of a poor madman, such as this Manicralla seems to be, can do harm either to friend Green or myself? The idea is ridiculous and preposterous. For my part, if I had no other evils to fear in this world, but those arising from priestly cursing, I would keep my mind very easy, although all the priests in christendom, or heathendom either, should launch all the anathemas at their command at my unlucky head. However, my opinion on this subject is only a personal one, and

I know that I am not infallible," Wolfe added, "and therefore we shall be very glad to hear the instances which you mention as confirming your view, that even the desecration of heathen temples brings down a meet and fitting punishment on its perpetrators."

"You seem to forget, Mr. O'Brien," the padre replied, very mildly, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice, "that the sun and the moon on a memorable occasion stood still at the bidding of a mortal man; that the dead has been raised to life by the prayers of another man; that the waters of the Red Sea and also those of the River Jordan were divided and stood like walls on either side to permit the passage of the armies of God's chosen people. If those instances of God's interference in the affairs of this world are true, we have reason to believe that he is still able, in special cases, to interpose in a special manner for the protection of what is set apart for his worship. At least I have never been able to discover that he has so ceased to interfere, and I shall now proceed to tell you the special instances to which I referred at the beginning of this conversation.

"The first case that occurs to me is that of the Governor of one of our fortresses in the Carnatic. I use the word 'our' because it was a French fortress and the Governor was a Frenchman. You know the loose notions that my countrymen hold regarding religion, after the era of the great re-

volution—notions which, I am sorry to think, are only too prevalent at the present day. Well, this man wished to build a grand new residence within the walls of the fort; but he had difficulty in fixing upon a site suited to his wishes. There was only one spot which pleased him, and it, unfortunately, was occupied by a native temple dedicated to the worship of Kali. The Governor entered into negotiations with the priests for the purchase or surrender of this temple; but they refused persistently to dispose of it. The Governor's power was despotic, and when he found his wishes thwarted by the priests, he resolved to take possession of the place by force, on the plea that the demolition of the temple was necessary for the safety of the fortress, in the event of it being attacked by a hostile force. He accordingly gave notice to the Brahmins to remove their idols and their shrines, with everything that was of value about the place, as he was about to demolish the temple, which he proceeded to do without farther delay. It was in vain that the priests pleaded and expostulated. It was in vain that the presumptuous Frenchman was told that he was incurring the anger of their gods. The Governor only laughed at such nonsense and the work of demolition went bravely on.

“My wife and family are coming here from Europe to join me, and I must have a suitable house for them to dwell in,” he told the priests, with a scornful laugh, in answer to their expostulations, ‘and I am not to be prevented from building on this spot by silly threats of incurring

the anger of hideous monsters made of wood and clothed with tinsel.'

“ ‘These monsters, as you call them,’ the priests replied, ‘are not our gods. They are only visible symbols, and powerless, of what is invisible and mighty, and if you persevere in this sacrilege, your wife and family will never dwell in the house which you propose to build. God will not be mocked, and you will recollect our words when it will be too late to prevent the consequences of your own misdoing.’

“The Governor laughed scornfully as he dismissed the Brahmins. The new residence was built and richly furnished, and it only awaited the arrival of the vessel with the Governor's family to be occupied. In due course the arrival of this ship was announced. She was seen standing bravely in towards the shore, with all sail set; the huge sheets of white canvas which clothed the masts from deck to truck swelling in the gentle breath of the monsoon breeze, whilst flags and streamers and pennons, conspicuous amongst which was the flaunting tricolour, were displayed in abundance from every mast-head. A more than usually heavy surf, however, was lashing the beach, and it was signalled from the shore that the landing of the passengers should be delayed until evening, by which time it was expected that the sea would go down. As the day wore on the air became close, stifling and oppressive. A dull coppery hue overspread the upper regions of the air. The

breakers on the shore, although scarcely a breath of wind stirred the forests of palm trees which fringed it, instead of going down increased in volume and broke on the beach with a dull, hollow, melancholy crash, which had a depressing effect on all who listened to its roar. The sun went down like a huge globe of deep red fire into the leaden waters of a sullen-looking sea, and hid his lustre in a dismal bank of black clouds which loomed ominously upon the distant verge of the horizon. The wild beasts and birds seemed terribly agitated and crouched in their lairs, as if terrified at some impending evil, or flew screaming from shelter to shelter amongst the groves of palm and fruit trees as if in search of some haven of safety from a coming danger. Men as well as animals laboured under a feeling of uneasiness, and the minds of everyone were filled with a presentiment of an approaching peril, which was all the more appalling from the very vagueness of the terror which it inspired. Nor was this presentiment false. The sun had scarcely set, when one of those terrific cyclones burst upon the Coromandel Coast, which happen, perhaps, only once in the course of a century. The wind raged with that tremendous power which is only displayed during the continuance of one of those fearful Indian hurricanes. The lightning flashed and quivered as if the whole heavens were on fire, whilst peal on peal of awful thunder roared and crashed as if the very firmament were being shaken by some

mighty and supernatural power. Big ships were tossed helplessly on the wild waves of the seething sea, and thrown like playthings on the sandy beach, where they were speedily ground to splinters by the cruel and angry surf. When this was the fate of gallant merchantmen and strong and powerful ships of war, the small craft of the natives did not escape. From Pondicherry to Cape Comorin, scarcely a vessel escaped damage to a greater or less extent, whilst thousands of dhoneys and fishing craft which had gone far off the land never returned to tell the tale of that terrible night, and their crews slumber quietly below the waters of the Indian seas. Entire forests of coconut, fruit and other trees were uprooted, blown down and destroyed; houses were unroofed and thousands of the frail dwellings of the natives were laid in ruins and levelled with the ground. Such a scene of destruction and desolation as was witnessed around the fortress, where the fury of the tempest had raged the strongest, it would be impossible to describe. The destroying inroads of the hordes of plundering Pindarees, which were at one time the scourge of the Carnatic, never wrought such terrible havoc as did this mighty cyclone. It looked as if some frightful earthquake or some other equally desolating cataclysm of nature had visited this unlucky region, rather than that such ravages had been made by a furious tempest of wind. But the most striking effect produced by this hurricane was the fact that the bodies of the Commandant's wife and family were all washed

ashore on the beach, close to the ramparts of the fortress, and within sight of the Commandant's house; whilst not another body of the passengers or crew of that unlucky vessel nor any part of the ship herself was ever seen or heard of.

“The Brahmins did not hesitate to assert that this tempest had been sent as a manifestation of the anger of the gods as a punishment for the desecration of their shrines, but that such punishment was not yet complete, and that a more signal and personal expiation would yet be demanded; and such unfortunately proved to be the case.

“The Governor came to hear about these sayings of the priests, and out of sheer bravado resolved to take up his residence in his new mansion, although he had hitherto hesitated to do so in consequence of the deaths of his family.

“In doing this he gave a great feast by way of a house-warming, to which all the high officials of the garrison and the neighbouring stations were duly invited. He was, in the course of the evening, proceeding to make a harangue to his assembled guests, in doing which he mentioned the denunciations of the Brahmins; but only to throw contempt and ridicule upon their threatenings and the power of their gods.

“He stood at the head of his table, a tall, dignified, powerful-looking man, with the wine cup raised in his hand, telling his friends that the misfor-

tunes which had befallen him might have been the lot of any other man, and that they could in no degree be ascribed to the so-called curses of the native priests.

“‘I put them and their filthy gods at defiance,’ he said, ‘and I shall dwell in this house, fearless alike of the consequences of their bannings and the anger of their deities.’

“The words had scarcely left his lips, when, before his friends had time to applaud his address, a flash of dazzling lightning streamed into the hall, followed instantaneously by a peal of thunder so loud, so prolonged, and so terrible, that the whole assembly were prostrated with awe and terror. When they recovered from the consternation and confusion occasioned by this terrible incident, it was discovered that the Governor had been struck dead, and his blackened corpse lay scorched and defaced on the floor of his own banqueting hall. No such thunderstorm as the one that followed had been experienced in the Carnatic since the day that Tipoo Saib was buried. The Governor’s new residence has ever since remained unoccupied, and it has now fallen into ruin and decay, whilst the natives point to it while relating the foregoing catastrophe as a terrible example of the danger of incurring the anger of their gods.

“Another case, very striking in the punishment of the offenders, occurred in this island, and it is still spoken of amongst the natives as a case of

the manifestation of God's wrath against those who desecrate his temples or insult his priests. It occurred more than a quarter of a century ago, shortly after the British took possession of this country.

“ There was a large party at the mess of one of the European regiments stationed in the Fort, and in those day deep drinking on these occasions was the rule, not the exception. When the party dispersed, a few of the younger and wilder of the officers—they were nine in number—sallied out into the Pettah in search of a lark. They were attracted by the music from a small temple by the side of the lake, where some of the religious ceremonies of the natives were being celebrated. Several priests were taking part in these ceremonies and also a considerable gathering of natives. These gentlemanly British officers stood for some time watching the proceedings with drunken interest, then they began to jeer at and mock the priests, they seized the drums and other instruments, on which they made a most hideous din, and when expostulated with upon the outrageous nature of their conduct, they drew their swords and made a general assault upon the whole assemblage. The priests and people fled, whilst these foolish youths, drunk with wine and excited with this stupid exploit, continued their wild frolic and ended by smashing the musical instruments, tumbling the images from the altars, and doing as much damage to the temple as the limited means at their command would permit. The authorities hushed up this affair and

refused to punish the offenders, but although man refused to interfere, God did not allow this outrage to go unpunished.

“Before a year had passed over their heads one-half of these young men had died violent deaths—two were drowned, one died by his own hand, and one was pitched from his horse and killed. In the course of another year or two the remaining four had perished, one trampled to death by a rogue elephant which he had wounded, one was killed by a snake bite, one died by poison, and another was struck down by lightning,—so of all that party of young men, who were guilty of that unprovoked outrage upon a heathen temple, not one of them lived to return to their own country.”

A short but profound pause followed the conclusion of the good padre's narratives, and then O'Brien remarked in a quiet tone of voice, as if he were struggling against doubts, but whose sarcasm was very thinly veiled under a show of semi-conviction.

“The instances of the punishment of sacrilege which you have cited are very striking and very remarkable, but I cannot say that they are very logical or very convincing. For instance, I have known many young men—scores of them indeed—who never committed sacrilege, whose bones lie rotting in this and many other foreign lands, far from their own country and their own kindred. Then with regard to the French Governor and the Hindoo temple, it seems to me that for one French-

man who was punished by the loss of life for that crime, more than a hundred Hindoos perished; so that it does not strike me that the catastrophe, which you have so graphically described, can be connected with the desecrations of the temple by the French Governor, or that his death was, in any sense, a natural consequence of that event; particularly since, although he was struck down in rather a dramatic manner, he is not the only person who has been killed by lightning in our own day and generation. Therefore, you must excuse me for remaining sceptical regarding any evil consequences flowing from the destruction of a heathen idol or the desecration of a heathen temple."

CHAPTER XXXV.—A TERRIBLE CALAMITY.

The day of Captain Leith's party arrived. It was a Thursday in August 1846. I rode into Kandy early in the morning and breakfasted with the family of my betrothed. Our marriage was to take place the following week, and how my poor heart rejoiced at the thought that I should, in so short a time, be able to call the dear girl, who was trembling with happiness, as I clasped her in my arms, my own; and that we would then sail over the sea of life together "until death did us part." "Until death did us part," I repeated to myself, as the quotation occurred to my memory and seemed to rest with an undue persistence on my mind, sending an involuntary chill through my

whole frame, similar to that I experienced after having received the first assurances of Helen's love, only much more intense and durable in its nature.

This singular foreboding was the more extraordinary since there was no shadow of coming evil in the bright and cheerful household in which I was domesticated—no harbinger of trouble and misfortune in the heaving bosom, the kindling eye and the joyous smile of my beloved, whose every movement spoke of an exuberance of life, and a joyous anticipation of a long continuance of happiness and bliss. Neither was there any cloud impending on the horizon of my own prospects of long continued prosperity and happiness, and yet this singular feeling of terror and dread weighed on my heart like a load of lead which I was utterly powerless to shake off or get rid of.

“You are a frightened fool, Green. You are an idiot, a goose, terrifying yourself with shadows,” I kept saying to myself. “You have become stupidly superstitious since your interview with that fiery Bhuddhist priest and that Roman Catholic padre, and you are an awful muff to allow their nonsensical denunciations and wild theories to interfere with your present and future happiness.” In spite, however, of all my reasoning and all my logic, the feeling that some direful calamity was impending would not be banished from my mind, and this rendered me personally wretched and miserable and very indifferent company to others.

The whole family were busy during the day making arrangements for the coming merry-making. Carpenters were erecting a temporary orchestra for the musicians in the back verandah overlooking the lake. Servants were busy decorating the ball-room, which comprised the three principal apartments of the bungalow thrown into one, with evergreens and flowers, after the tasteful manner of the Cingalese. Mrs. Leith was superintending the refreshment department and arranging its details with a whole regiment of cooks, in a large room opening from the front verandah; and Helen, looking beautiful as a poet's dream, or a houri from a Mahomedan paradise, is everywhere at one and the same time, the very life and soul of the entire operations which were going on around her. The children were hanging Chinese lanterns of coloured paper among the trees in the compound, and every one was busy and fully employed. The Overland Mail had come in the previous evening, and I strolled down to the library to have a look at the English papers. There were some elderly officers, constant frequenters of the rooms, sitting in the back apartment, the windows of which overlook the lake, the powder magazine, the Bhuddhist College and the coffee and jungle-covered slopes of Mahapatena; whilst knots of civilians and young officers were lounging over the railings or sitting in the front verandah, gossiping or reading, as they puffed their cheroots and gazed dreamily on the waving palm trees which bounded the esplanade and the moving crowds

of coolies, tambies, bandymen and elephants which passed along the dusty road below them.

There were other groups in the centre apartment, amongst whom I recognized my friends Tom Lillie, Captain Bird and Judge Staples, who are turning over the files of the "Times," which have just arrived from England, on examining the pages of the "Illustrated London News," or smiling at the sharp witticisms of "Punch," whilst they chatted over the various topics which the news brought by the Overland were likely to give rise to.

"Come here Green, my boy," said Captain Lillie, accosting me. "I want to introduce you to a friend of mine, a Frenchman. He wishes to learn something about coffee-planting, and I don't think that he could fall in with a better hand to enlighten him on this subject than yourself."

"Count, let me introduce you to my very good friend, Mr. Green. Mr. Green, this is the Count Chesseur, an ex-captain of the Imperial Guard, who made his first acquaintance with the English some thirty years ago, on the plateau of Mont St. Jean, in Belgium."

"Ah! Major, you are very much pleased to be witty," said the ex-officer, as he smiled and returned my bows.

There was a side-table near where we stood, over which was spread a large wood engraving of the Battle of Waterloo, intended, if I recollect rightly, as a key to a still larger steel engraving

of the same subject, and after the preliminaries of our introduction were over, the Count went forward and examined it.

"Anything like the affair, Count?" asked Captain Lillie.

"I cannot say, my good friend. I did not witness the fight from this side."

"Have you any very vivid recollection of it, Count? I have never found any of our fellows who were engaged, able to give details of the battle. The Duke's own account of the affair is the best and the most graphic, that is that it was a case of hard pounding, but we pounded the hardest. However, I don't mean any offence in saying this. The soldiers of the army of France can afford to have much harder things said of them, without detracting from the laurels which they have gathered in many a hard-fought field."

"I do recollect a very little of the fight," the Count replied, "but that little is principally made up of smoke and noise, charging squadrons, squares, vomiting fire and shot, dismounted cannon and riderless horses. One very painful recollection is the last charge of your horse guards. Big men and big horses came rolling down upon us like an avalanche. In an instant we were enveloped in a forest of steel. There was a popping of carbines, the whirring and clash of sabres, when down our squadrons went like children's toy cards or mown corn. There were

loud cries of 'Damn, damn; *sacre, sacre*; blast, blast; cut, cut;' and down we went like falling trees before a whirlwind. It was one damn charge. I lost my leg in that charge."

"A very vivid account of the affair, Count: it does you honour. I doubt very much if any of our fellows remember so much, and I am puzzled to know how Allison, Sibthorpe, Lever and all those fellows pick up all the details which they manage to publish regarding an affair which has left little impression on my mind beyond the thunder of the big guns, the rattle of the musketry and the rolling clouds of smoke which hung over the whole field and obscured the principal incidents of the fight."

I walked down to the hotel, where I found O'Brien in the verandah. He had just come in from the jungle and was giving Ben Capper a very exaggerated account of the second attempt on my life, and my subsequent interview with the priest; all of which Ben, poor fellow, was listening to with pallid countenance and shivering frame. Wallace was busy dressing in an adjoining bedroom, and as it was his first appearance in the more exclusive circles of society in Kandy, that young gentleman was almost as particular in his toilette and quite as showy as was O'Brien at the marriage at Negombo. Wolfe took matters much more coolly now, as he was personally acquainted with almost every person he was likely to meet, and consequently he was not quite so

desirous of dazzling the company as on that celebrated occasion.

From the hotel I went to call on the Delegals, for time hung heavy on my hands, and being shortly after joined by my manager, we strolled up to the one-gun battery above the lake. The sun was just setting when we gained this elevation, where we were able to gaze upon the whole town of Kandy, spread out like a map under our feet, the waters of the lake glowing like huge sheets of molten gold in his declining beams, whilst the long far-stretching streets swarmed with its streaming crowds of oriental life.

"If we go down and take a turn round the lake we will just be able to pass away the time till dinner, and then hurrah for the ballroom and a dance," said Wolfe O'Brien, and we acted on this suggestion, scrambling down the steep descent like a pack of schoolboys or a flock of goats.

As we passed Captain Leith's bungalow the lamps were being lighted, and we heard the boisterous laughter of the children within the compound, as a big paper lantern was being hoisted to the top of a tall coconut tree.

"Helen, Helen," cried little Bobby, "just come and see this if it isn't stunning."

We passed the bungalow, and, as O'Brien suggested, we were just in time to reach the hotel before dinner. There was the usual assortment of

guests at the *table d' hôte*, planters, merchants from Colombo, strangers from the continent of India and elsewhere, and there was the usual murmur of conversation and gossip going on, of which that evening's ball seemed to form one of the most interesting items.

The company were to assemble at gunfire—8 o'clock—and as the deep boom of the cannon burst over the ancient city, we got up from the table and proceeded to the scene of action.

The entrance to the compound, the compound and the bungalow itself were one blaze of light. Carriages were driving up and depositing their fair freights, who were being received by the hostess of the establishment and ushered into the house. Young officers were lounging listlessly along the approaches to the bungalow, tossing the fag-ends of their cheroots into the shrubberies as they entered the grounds. The band were tuning their instruments and there was a flutter of muslins and a soft murmur of talk heard as we approached. Within, the lights blazed on military uniforms and the sombre dress of civilians, on the dazzling array of the lady guests, which comprised all the beauty and fashion of the Central Province, on the glitter of golden epaulettes and the blaze of jewels, whilst the clanking of swords and the tingling laugh of young girls was mingled with the hoarser murmur of male voices, and the stirring music of the orchestra.

The first dance was just being formed as we

entered. The music crashed and the various couples on the floor set off in the puzzling mazes of a quadrille.

“We are too late for this bout,” O’Brien remarked. “Never mind, we will have better luck next time. You will be bestowing your attention, Major, on your betrothed, who has evidently kept herself disengaged and is looking over this way, so I’ll take care of Wallace and introduce him to some of our friends whom he has not yet the pleasure of knowing.”

I crossed the room to Helen, and whilst speaking to her, I heard O’Brien near me introducing Wallace to her brother.

“This is Brigadier-General Leith, Knight of the noble order of the Star of the Carnatic; Colonel of the hundred and seventh or Doondhia Waugh’s native infantry; Commandant of Bangalore and Governor of Seringapatam. General, this is Mr. Wallace, Manager of Gudamatenna coffee estate. Know each other.”

Helen could scarcely control her laughter, when she heard such a string of titles tacked to her brother’s name, and saw the amazed expression of poor Wallace’s countenance.

“Come along, here is Lord Torrington. I’ll introduce you to his lordship. He was an old friend of my father’s, and promised to get me a commission but did not. My lord, allow me to present to you my friend Mr. Wallace of — what do you call the name of that place in Scotland, wher_e

you were raised? Mr. Wallace, this is Lord Torrington, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of all her Majes—. Ah! here comes the Chief Justice, allow me to introduce you to him. This, your worship, is my friend, Mr. Wallace, whom I would recommend to your merciful consideration, when he is brought before you on a charge for high treason or any other hanging matter, which I am quite sure must be the case sooner than later. Wallace, know Mr. Chief Justice Stark.”

One after the other, all the young officers who were not better employed in dancing were introduced to poor Wallace, as Major-Generals, Brigadier-Generals or Field-Marschals, and all the civilians as Lords, Baronets or heads of the principal Government departments; but simple as Wallace was he soon saw that O'Brien was hoaxing him. He therefore took advantage of the earliest opportunity to give him the slip and came and joined Helen, her brother and myself.

“Then you are not a General,” Wallace remarked, as George laughed at the titles that my manager had bestowed upon him.

“No, only an ensign in the —th regiment of native infantry of the Madras Army.”

“Then pray, who was that young man who was introduced to me as Lord Torrington?”

“Parsons of the Fiscal's department.”

“And that one I was told was the Chief Justice?”

"His old Secretary, Hicks, the Police Magistrate of Ricklagasgodde."

"Confound that fellow, O'Brien, he is always playing off some of his tricks on me; but I'll pay him back in his own coin before the evening is over. You will assist me, Mr. Leith, to humbug O'Brien?"

"With all my heart, if you will guarantee me enjoying a whole skin tomorrow evening. I understand that your friend is an Irishman and somewhat ready with the pistols."

"That is all nonsense," I replied; "I was told the same tale long ago, but after several years' experience I can safely say that a better or a quieter fellow than our friend Wolfe never breathed."

"There he is talking to some young officers. Come along and I'll get him to tell that story about Orthes, for the one hundred and seventh time. Don't laugh until he has finished it, and watch how his eye kindles as he tells what the Duke said to his father. It is great fun."

"I say, Wolfe, old boy," he remarked, addressing our friend, "can you settle this dispute. Was Orthes or the Nive fought first?"

"Orthes of course."

"Well, can you tell if the fighting eighty-eighth were there?"

"Of course they were. My father was a Major in that corps."

"Were they engaged in the fight?"

"I don't know if the whole regiment were engaged, but I know that two companies were, and very seriously too."

"How do you happen to be so sure of that fact?"

"Why, you see, there was a French battery on a hill, which was likely to check the advance of our troops in some critical movement, and the Duke ordered a Spanish General to take a battalion of his troops and storm it. The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders and replied that it would require at least three battalions to do the work, as the guns were supported by a large body of infantry. 'Captain, said the Duke, addressing my father 'take two companies of your men and silence that battery.' My father saluted and retired. He selected the two best companies of the regiment and advanced at the double up the slope of the hill, through a perfect tempest of shot and shells. He drove the Frenchmen from the guns, spiked them, and then retired, as he had received no orders to hold the position, and his men were falling fast around him. He reported the execution of his orders to his Grace, who turning to the Spaniard said: 'You see, General, two companies of our troops are equal to three battalions of yours. Major, you shall be remembered in the despatches.' He was remembered and received his Major's commission in consequence."

O'Brien warmed amazingly whilst telling this incident, which I for one had heard about a score

of times before; but when he looked round the circle of his hearers and saw the suppressed titter which each tried to hide, he looked somewhat astonished, then angry, and finally joined in the hearty laughter which was evoked at his expense.

"Confound you, Wallace, this is one of your tricks," he said; "but I shall pay you off for it before the evening is over."

"I only wished that his Excellency Lord Torrington, Governor of Ceylon, &c., Brigadier-General Leith, Commandant of Bangalore, and his worship the Chief Justice should hear this story from your own lips, and thus be made aware that the astute Wolfe O'Brien could be made the victim of a *sell* as well as his soft friend George Wallace. This is one portion of my debt paid off, and I hope that before the evening is over I shall be able to liquidate the remainder."

By this time the dance was over; the music had ceased, and there was a hum of conversation as another set of dancers took their places on the floor, whilst the laughing group who had been amused by the trick played on the cute O'Brien had dispersed through the rooms. Helen had come up and was hanging on my arm, speaking with much animation about the people and the scene around us. I don't think that I ever saw her looking so lovely as she did that evening. She really looked more as if she belonged to another and a higher state of existence than a mere creature of this earth.

“Come and walk in the compound,” she whispered, as the music once more crashed and the various couples twined and twisted through the figures of the dance. “I feel hot and feverish. I am afraid that excitement is not my *forte*, and that I would never be able to live a life of dissipation and gaiety.”

We sauntered under the star-like foliage of the coconut and the plume-like fronds of the bamboo trees, whilst the fireflies lighted up the grotto-like recesses of the shrubberies, and the sweet perfume of the datura or trumpet-flower filled the air.

“Is it not a strange conceit, dear,” she asked, clinging closer to me, “that I cannot help fancying that these waving fronds of the bamboos look like the plumes upon a hearse? You will think me silly, but amidst all this gay company, this music and dancing, I cannot get rid of the impression that something very dreadful is going to happen. I feel like one *fey*, as they say in Scotland. I would fain cry, and I don’t know what I have to cry at, unless it is that I have not been feeling very well during the past day or two. I fancy owing to the excitement and bustle in preparing for this evening.

“You have been over-excited, dearest; perhaps, overworked,” I said trying to reassure her; “let us go back to the house, and perhaps a glass of wine will restore you. I am sometimes troubled with silly fancies of this kind myself, but I have had more occasion to give heed to them than ever you have had, or, I trust, ever will have.”

My companion hung more heavily upon my arm, and I became conscious that she was sobbing, but very quietly and gently. We were drawing near the lights, and as the dance was ended and some of the dancers were leaving the ball-room for the cooler air of the compound, I drew Helen into a retired walk which led down to the lake, so that no one but myself should witness the emotion which agitated her.

We had gained a deeply-shaded nook where there were no lights, when my companion suddenly threw her arms around my neck, and kissing me with frantic ardour, burst into a paroxysm of tears and sobs.

"Oh my love. My dear, dear, dearest love, you don't know, you never will know," she cried hysterically, "how much I love you; but you will perhaps remember this evening and this meeting when there is nothing but the memory of it left to you."

I could not account for this sudden outburst; it was so unlike anything that I had ever calculated on with regard to Helen, that I felt quite helpless from sheer astonishment. I tried to soothe her and dry her tears, as one would soothe a little child, and after a time I succeeded in this task,

"I am very nervous," she said, apologetically, "I never was so before, and I shall endeavour never to be so again. I have been very foolish, but I know that you will forgive me, my own dearest, and not think the less of your loving wife,

which I will be, if God spare us for another week, for having given way to a silly fit of terror, occasioned by I scarcely can tell what."

We returned to the house. Helen left me to remove all traces of her late emotion, and I approached a group, where I heard O'Brien's tongue, rising, as it almost always did, above that of every other person's, offering to wager "a cool fifty that it could not be done."

"It can be done and I'll do it," asserted Wallace; "but I will not wager more than ten rupees, and these I will deposit in the hands of Captain Lillie here, with whom you can deposit your stake also. You ought to know that we, who are pure descendants of the ancient Celtic, Erse or Irish races, are frequently gifted with the second sight, and are almost always excellent mediums for exhibiting the phenomena of clairvoyance."

"What is it?" I asked, as I approached the group.

"Wallace offers to remain here, blindfolded, and to allow O'Brien and any friend he chooses to name, to accompany him to the most retired part of the compound, and there placing himself in any position he pleases, he wagers ten rupees that he will tell what that position was when he returns."

"And I take the wager," said O'Brien. "Here, Major, lend me ten rupees and I'll deposit the stakes."

Wallace was duly blindfolded and I was chosen to go with O'Brien to see fair play. On our return the

handkerchief was removed from Wallace's eyes, and he was asked what the position my friend had placed himself in, which was a most astonishing one for a fellow who was not a professional acrobat.

"In the position of a great fool," answered Wallace, with much *nonchalance*. "Please to hand me the stakes, Captain."

The stakes were handed to him amid roars of laughter from the surrounding company, in which O'Brien, gradually losing the expression of amazement and intense disgust which his countenance at first wore, heartily joined.

"The story of Orthes was for 'the exalted order of the Star for the Carnatic ; this sell, number two, is for 'Lord Torrington, Governor of Ceylon and the dependencies thereof,' and number three is yet to come for 'his Worship the Chief Justice.' You see that it is just possible to pay back the clever and accomplished Wolfe O'Brien in his own coin," Wallace remarked, as he coolly deposited the money in his pocket.

Dancing went on with great spirit for some hours. There being many more gentlemen present than there were ladies, there were always, in consequence, groups of the former lounging about, ready to join in any fun that was proposed, or to enjoy a joke at the expense of their companions.

It was near midnight when supper was announced, and there was an immediate adjournment to the refreshment room. I led in Helen, who, during the whole of the evening, seemed unhappy if she

were a moment from my side. Jest and laugh were making the round of the table, and happiness and joy seemed to animate the whole of that gay company as the champagne corks were popping and the frothing liquor was being quaffed in bumpers to the witty repartee or the telling *bon mot*.

Helen was in the act of pledging me in a glass of the sparkling fluid. She was just raising it to her lips, when I saw her face grow ashy pale. She replaced the glass on the table with evident tremour.

"What is it, love?" I asked in some alarm, as I saw this change.

"Nothing of any consequence," she replied; "I don't feel very well, but it will perhaps soon pass over. Lead me to a seat please and give me some water."

I did as I was desired, and seated my loved one on a sofa in the verandah.

"Perhaps you had better call my mother, dear. I seem to be getting rather worse. It is very awkward getting ill just now, in the midst of all this gaiety and mirth."

I went in search of Mrs. Leith and then returned to Helen. She had become worse and was evidently suffering great pain, which she tried to hide as much as possible.

"Would you look for Mary, please Mr. Green, and tell Dr. Dodsworth to come here; we must get Helen put to bed," said her mother, with much anxiety of manner.

I did as I desired, and speedily returned with both Mary and the doctor.

“You must get her to bed as speedily as possible,” said that functionary, “and bring me some brandy at once.”

I ran for the brandy, and when I returned they were carrying my betrothed to her bedroom. She could not stand without being supported, yet she threw her arms round my neck and wept and kissed me like a spoiled child.

“Good-bye, my own very dearest love,” she whispered. “Good-bye and remember that I have loved you with my whole heart. I knew that something very dreadful was about to happen, but be a man and have the courage to submit to the divine will, whatever occurs. Pray for me, dearest,” she added, as she loosened her arms and was carried from my sight, for ever.

How can I tell the occurrences of that dreadful night? They seem, even at this distance of time, like a hideous nightmare. A whisper ran through the company that Miss Leith was ill; then it was said that she was seriously ill. Her father was called to see her, then her brother and sisters; then it was said that another surgeon had been sent for, and, last of all, the dreadful word cholera was whispered amongst the guests. The laugh and the jest were now stopped, the music ceased, and the dancers stared at each other in blank amazement mingled with terror, before they broke up in parties and quietly prepared to leave the house.

The carriages were not allowed to enter the compound, and whilst the guests departed singly or in groups, the boisterous conversation of the young men lately so loud was now reduced to whispers. The servants moved about with that stolid indifference and noiseless step so characteristic of the natives of Asia, and ayahs were busy trying to still the clamour of the younger members of the family. In a short time the house so lately crowded with the élite of Kandy looked desolate and deserted. The garlands of evergreens hung on the silent walls of the empty rooms. The lights still blazed in the refreshment room, the orchestra and the apartments so lately crowded with a merry throng of dancers, not one of whom could possibly have anticipated the terrible calamity which was impending over the brightest and best of their number. These lights, these garlands, the gaudy flowers and the scattered débris of the ball-room had a horribly spectral-like look, and seemed to mock my agony of mind as I walked restlessly from room to room and from end to end of the compound, watching the door of Helen's bedroom or the window where the light was burning, as if they could convey any information regarding the progress of the sufferer. The ayahs, or female servants, were carrying hot water and cloths from the kitchen to the sick-room, but they would only shake their heads and look solemn to my anxious inquiries; sometimes saying, "Missy sick, sir:" or "Missy very sick, sir."

Towards morning George Leith joined me, and

shortly afterwards his father also came into the verandah where we were stationed. We were told not to disturb the sufferer and all might yet be well.

But after the lapse of a short time, which seemed long protracted intervals to our anxious minds, "worse, much worse," were the contents of the bulletins which were pushed from under the doorway for our information. As the night wore on, we could hear the sighs and suppressed groans, wrung by pain from the poor sufferer, she who was the hope of my existence, my love, my very life itself.

Day was just beginning to dawn when Mr. Von Dadelszen, the chaplain of the station, entered the house. He wrung the hands of the father and brother, but he did not condescend to notice me. After a whispered conversation with Captain Leith, during which both looked very serious and much concerned, they went into the sick chamber, George and the elder girls following. I had been brought up in the Presbyterian faith, and therefore I did not know at the time how ominous of calamity these proceedings were. The two doctors now joined me in my feverish walk in the verandah and through the winding paths of the compound. How my blood boiled to hear the cool and professional manner in which these men, although I knew them to be as kind-hearted fellows as ever breathed, talked of the symptoms of the disease, under which all that I held dear on earth was then dying.

They talked of cramps and spasms, a putrid state of the blood and much unintelligible jargon, which was as Hebrew or Sanscrit to me; whilst to my most anxious enquiries they only shook their wise heads, and said: "It is a doubtful case, a very doubtful case indeed; but there was still a chance. It was just possible that the patient might still come round, although it was not very probable."

Would that priest ever come out of the room? Would anyone come and relieve the torturing anxiety under which I was labouring? Alas! Nobody did come, and I continued to pace the empty rooms with a heart which was ready to burst. How the hours of that weary night, or rather morning, wore on, I cannot tell. They were hours of pain and anguish to me, such as it is impossible to describe.

The door of the sick chamber opened at last, and Captain Leith with a sad and serious expression of grief beckoned to me to enter. The priest stood at the front of the bed, the Captain and his son were at the foot, and Mary was wiping the cold sweat from her sister's brow. The priest made way for me as I approached the bed, feeling faint and sick at heart, for a terrible dread overpowered me and numbed the whole of my faculties. I lifted the hand of my beloved; it was cold as ice. I pressed it as I was wont to press it in days gone by. Was it imagination, or did the cold icy hand return the pressure. I fancied that it did. I bent down and kissed her lips. They too were cold, cold as death. The eyes did not move. They were open,

but instead of their former brightness a dull film was spread over them, and I knew that my dear one had been taken from me.

The doctor approached the bedside. He looked at the patient and passed a lighted candle before her eyes, and then, without speaking, he replaced it on the table and spread the sheet over the face of the corpse.

"This is no place for you," Mr. Green, he said as he passed his arm through mine and led me from the room.

A burst of grief from the other members of the family followed our departure, and I knew that what I had seen and felt was a reality and not a hideous phantasmagoria of the imagination. Where could I go? What could I do? There was now no further interest in life for me. The world seemed suddenly changed and total annihilation to have fallen on all my hopes, on all my interests. The very heavens seemed changed, and the familiar trees, streets and houses had undergone a singular metamorphosis as if I was viewing them through the medium of some very painful dream. When we passed through the deserted ball-room, the daylight was streaming in at the open doors and windows, and the stoical servants were extinguishing the lights which had been left burning all night, as if nothing unusual had occurred in the household. Sprigs of artificial flowers, a tress of hair, a white handkerchief and some gloves, the disjecta of the ball, were scattered about the floor. I noticed

these as I passed and fancied that somehow they had a connection with the dreadful calamity which had overtaken me. My head throbbed and my eye-balls burned as if exposed to a scorching fire. I was as one suddenly deprived of volition and reason. The doctor wished me to leave the house and go with him, but I would not leave the bungalow. I seated myself on the couch in the verandah, to which I had led Helen when she first complained of feeling ill, and like a dream, all the happiness which I had enjoyed in her company, all her loving, winning and child-like ways, burst like a flood on my memory. Her total forgetfulness of self, her devotion to her family, her goodness of heart, her kindness of disposition, were all brought forcibly to my recollection, and with them, the dreadful fact that she was now lost to me for ever, and I felt humbled and crushed to the earth, whilst the floodgates of my grief were opened, and I cried, cried like a spoiled child in that long empty verandah, with no one to witness this outburst of feeling. The tears relieved my overwrought feelings of anguish. I must have been very tired. I had felt fatigued before the ball; and as I stretched myself on the couch, although a wild whirl of incongruous images passed through my brain, and an oppressive sense of being utterly forsaken and desolate weighed upon my mind, I must have fallen into a deep but troubled slumber.

I recollect being conscious of footsteps near me, and then I recognised Captain Leith's voice saying: "Poor fellow, his case is the hardest. She is

only one out of a flock to us, but she was his only pet lamb, and he has lost her, a loss which he cannot yet realize, and which he will never be able to replace. He is sleeping, and perhaps it is better that he should sleep, for even a short oblivion is sometimes a relief from sorrow or trouble.'"

Someone, I think it must have been Mrs. Leith, threw a light shawl over me, and I slept on and dreamed of Helen and that happiness which I was never now to enjoy with her.

When I awoke the sun was high in the heavens and the glossy foliage of the trees was glittering in his mid-day beams. A light breeze ruffled the surface of the silvery lake, and all without seemed joy and gladness. I heard the clatter of axes and the crash of falling forest-trees coming from the rugged sides of the Mahapatana and the bugle calls sounding at the distant barracks. The wild barbarous music and the drumming of tomtoms from the neighbouring temple, as if there were no such thing as death and desolate hearts in the world. The same crowds passed along the dusty roads, laughing and singing, as if the fairest flower that ever bloomed on this earth were not, even now, lying low in decay.

Surely it cannot be that so dreadful a calamity could, in an hour of mirth and happiness, have fallen on me and the members of this household. I must have dreamed it. It could not possibly be real; but alas! even as I am trying to reason myself into this belief, the undertakers are entering

the compound with the receptacle for her whom I had loved, with as pure and holy an affection as ever glowed in human bosom.

She was laid in her coffin, clothed in those webs of fairy-like tissue, which so short time ago she was shewing me with such pardonable glee. Her wedding dress was destined for her shroud. As I looked my last on that angel face, angel-looking even in death, I felt in some measure consoled for the loss I had sustained. Although the stamp of pain was still traceable on her countenance, there was also a lofty expression of inexpressible happiness, as if, before quitting its earthly tenement, the spirit had gained a glimpse of that far-away land, where there is neither care nor sorrow, neither sickness nor death, but where, life's warfare being o'er, the weary will find rest and the wretched repose.

We buried my betrothed that evening in the graveyard overlooking the lake, almost within a stone's throw of her father's house. As we were conveying the body to its last resting-place, and had reached the pathway leading to the place of sepulture, I looked up, and there, sure enough, was Manicralle Unanse and the natives who were in his company at Coorocoodootenna, standing watching, with stolid curiosity, the mournful procession.

When he observed me and saw the stricken appearance which I presented, his fiery eyes lighted up with a sardonic expression of fiendish triumph,

he pointed me out to his companions, and apparently explained my position to them as one of the chief mourners in the procession. They turned their stupid-looking faces towards me, and made a profound obeisance, after the native fashion, but whether in respect or mockery is more than I can tell.

My heart sank within me as I recalled the bitter words of the old man, at the altar in the jungle, "May your house be desolate." It was desolate enough now. Could there be anything in this madman's curses after all, and was this awful visitation the first pouring out of God's wrath on my devoted head for my thoughtless piece of sacrilege? Who can tell?

"I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord," was uttered in a deep sonorous voice close to my ear. We had reached the entrance to the graveyard, and the clergyman whom I had seen the previous night was there in white surplice, preceding us to the grave, reciting the beautiful office for the burial of the dead used by the Church of England; and that office was never recited over one who had a more sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to eternal life than she whose remains we now committed "dust to dust and ashes to ashes," and on whose cold bosom the clods of a foreign soil were now rattling and hiding all that remained of her from the eyes of those who loved her well, and whom she had left in sorrow and mourning behind.

The grave is filled, the green turf is smoothed. Some of the mourners wander amongst the graves, curious about who lies buried under each tomb, stone and each mouldering slab of rotting wood. Ah yes! I remember him. Died of jungle fever, died of *delirium tremens*, was killed by lightning, was bitten by a cobra or polonga, and such like remarks were uttered in matter-of-fact tones, whilst my eyes were filled with tears and my heart was throbbing as if it would burst with excess of grief. And this will be the case, reader, when you and I and every other individual of the human family comes to be laid in the dust. One or two loving hearts may drop a tear to our memory, but the world will move on, and the sun will shine, and the winds will blow, and the rain will fall, and the forest trees will rustle their leaves, and the earth will teem with new life and new hopes and new projects as if one more immortal soul had not gone to its dread account, and one more human body had not been consigned to the dust, from which it originally sprung.

“Will you go home with us?” asked George Leith, taking my arm, when the last turf was smoothed and the gravedigger was removing his tools. “I think you had better. You are as one of our family, and there is sometimes comfort in a reciprocity of suffering. Come, you cannot be allowed to remain alone; our mutual sympathy may do something to assuage our grief.”

I followed him to the house. It was wonderful

how composed the whole of the family seemed. The younger members hung about their father and mother with frightened looks and tearful eyes, as if they dreaded a still greater catastrophe, but there was none of the hysterical sorrow which I felt agitating myself, none of the nervous fits of tears which blinded my eyes.

“Don't cry, Mr. Green,” said little Lizzy, a child of about ten or twelve summers, as she kissed and patted my cheeks. “Don't cry, God has taken Helen to himself, but I will perhaps grow up to be your wife instead of her, and mamma says that I am more like Helen than any of the others. Do you not think so yourself?”

I took the dear little child in my arms, and, singular as it may seem, I felt comforted by her warm sympathy and child-like caresses.

But why should I dwell longer upon that period of sadness, a period during which the sun seemed to have withdrawn its shining, and every earthly object had ceased to interest my widowed heart. It was a time of bitter sorrow, almost of despair, but as the darkest night will come to an end, as the green ivy covers with beauty the rugged ruin and the blasted oak, so comfort came to me in time, came in a shape which under other circumstances would have added to my cares and troubles.

CHAPTER XXXVI.—BREAKERS AHEAD.

I have mentioned that I had begun to clear forest for other three plantations, each of which I

intended should be about three hundred acres in extent, rather more than less, so that when planted and in full bearing I might have in all about two thousand acres of coffee-yielding crops. I had given the management of these plantations, one to O'Brien and one to Wallace, with an additional resident assistant on each, and I had engaged a young countryman of my own, named Murray, to take charge of the third. These estates were all cleared, and planted during the June rains of 1846, and it was now July 1847.

A year or two before this time the Bank of the Carnatic had established branches both at Kandy and Colombo. Hitherto I had done all my banking business through the firm of Acland, Boyd & Co., who took charge of my produce in Colombo, saw it shipped, got it sold in London, and were always ready to hand me over the proceeds as they were required. I had of course to pay a handsome commission for all this trouble, but as the profits off my plantations were large, I never thought of grudging this any more than I thought of grudging my coolies' wages.

The manager of the Carnatic Bank, in Colombo, wrote to me, shortly after it was established, requesting me to patronize their new establishment, promising that all due facilities should be given to me for the transaction of business, and pointing out how much I would be able to save in the course of a year, by negotiating my bills through them, rather than through the mercantile houses in Colombo.

I was very well pleased with the agents I already employed, but meeting the banker in person shortly after this, he urged me to give his establishment a trial, as the high position of the bank enabled them to consult the interests of their clients to a far greater extent than it was possible for a private firm to do, and he represented the great saving, about five hundred a year, which would accrue by transferring my account to their books.

I was prevailed upon to do this, and hitherto matters had gone on as smoothly as they possibly could do until now. I had expended a great deal of money on these new estates and on the buildings at Singha Newera, so that I had now no reserve of cash on hand. I was, in consequence, under the necessity of applying to the bank for accommodation to carry on the necessary work of the plantations and also to get my crops, which were coming in, gathered and prepared for shipment. I had therefore overdrawn my account to the extent of nearly four thousand pounds, and the bank manager was urging me to avail myself of the bank's funds to a much larger amount and open more plantations on my reserve lands. About this time great fears began to be entertained about the abolition of the differential duty on colonial coffee, and it was confidently believed that if this duty were repealed, Ceylon would not be in a position to compete with the Brazils, Costa Rica, Java and other countries where slave labour was employed in the production of this article of commerce.

When the account sales of the crops for 1846 came to hand, they were not calculated to raise the spirits of men like myself, who had their whole means embarked in coffee planting, as they showed an extraordinary fall in the quotations to those at which coffee had hitherto sold at in the London market. The crops from some of the Dumbara estates were quoted at 38/ and 39/ per hundredweight, which, a few years previously, were selling at 120/ to 130/; and those from other estates were low in proportion. If these prices continued to rule, it was quite clear that coffee planting would require to be abandoned, as it was costing more money to put the crops on board ship in Colombo roads, than they were selling it in London. In addition to this, the precursors of the great monetary crash of 1847 and 1848 were already making themselves visible to the initiated like Mother Carey's chickens before a tempest at sea, and alarm and distrust were spreading amongst all classes interested in the cultivation of the staple of Ceylon. The first to take alarm were the bankers and money-lenders, and I received a letter from the manager of the Carnatic Bank, telling that no further accommodation could be extended to me by that establishment, until my present overdraft should be paid up. This was startling news and came to me in the midst of my great sorrow for the loss of her who, I had fondly hoped, would have been my friend and companion through life.

My estates had become to me what a ship is to her commander, a sort of mistress which insisted

upon monopolizing all the faculties and all the energies and interests of both mind and body, and during the past nine or ten years they had been the centre of all my hopes and fears, all my thoughts and wishes, until my great love for Helen Leith had begun to dawn on my heart. Could it be possible that, after losing her, I was about to lose my properties also, for the letter which I held in my hand threatened nothing less than this. I had no available funds, and, according to the Banker's statements, I was due his establishment no less a sum than £3,756. During the next two months, on the most moderate calculation, I would require at least £1,200 to carry out the necessary work on my estates, and at least other £1,800 more to enable me to gather my crops, cure them and send them to Colombo for shipment.

How was I to procure this money, if the bank refused to honour my drafts? It is true that I had not yet received the account sales of a large portion of my last year's crops, and I calculated that the funds which they would realize would do more than suffice to tide me over this emergency, provided the bank did not insist upon the repayment of my arrears, until the new crop should be ready for shipment.

"I must go at once to Colombo and get this matter arranged," I thought; "and the sooner I do so the better."

As I crossed the esplanade, immediately after perusing my letter from the bank, I met that

hateful old priest, Manicralle Unanse. How I detested the sight of that old man. There was, as the Scotch say, "a something no canny" about the glare of his fiery-looking-eyes. It must have been eyes such as he possessed that originated the idea of the evil eye amongst Orientals. I never saw eyes with the same appearance and expression as those of that old man. They looked as if there were a firefly behind the iris of each, which could be lighted up or quenched at pleasure and they always blazed up with a vindictive glare at the sight of me. It was quite evident that there was no love lost between us. Ridiculous as the confession may seem, he was the only man I was ever really afraid of; and yet he was only a withered old specimen of a Bhuddhist priest, in a saffron robe, an insignificant-looking old man, whom a blow from my fist could almost have annihilated. As I passed him on the present occasion, with a troubled countenance, folding my banker's letter in my hands, he salaamed with mock reverence and humility, inquiring at the same time, in a sneering tone, in Cingalese, as if he were quite conversant with the contents of the epistle: "Does master's letter bring him good tidings?"

I passed the old fellow with an angry stare, without vouchsafing to give him a reply.

"Is it possible," I thought, "that this old man can really possess supernatural powers, or is it simply a matter of singular coincidence that I

should encounter his hateful look whenever I meet with, or seem, as on the present occasion, to be threatened with trouble or calamity?"

The Catholic priest's assertions regarding the power of even heathen priests to ban or bless occurred rather uncomfortably to my mind, particularly when coupled with the solemn cursing which I had so recently received, and the subsequent and early fulfilment of part of it.

My home was already desolate, and was not my wealth threatening to perish like dross? "God grant," I prayed, "that the words of this heathen may be powerless for evil, or that his curses may recoil on his own head." "It would have been better," I thought, "that I should have run the risk of losing my life, which will now be sufficiently lonely and desolate, rather than undergo all the evils with which he had threatened me."

These feelings lasted only for a moment. The necessity for immediate action roused me from pondering on unpleasant thoughts, and once more on horseback, with the exception of the numbing grief which I endured, I endeavoured to banish all such from my mind, and my gallant steed was soon making the fire sparks fly from the hard road, as he galloped along the Colombo road, past Kitooltenna, past Peradeniya and on to Gampola.

When I reached Dodangahakelle, I felt as if I had been absent from it for months, so many changes and so much trouble—more than I had

even experienced during my whole life—had been compressed into less than one short week. With what gay thoughts and what brilliant hopes had I ridden down the path, under the shadow of the sweet-scented jasmine trees, a few days previously, and how blighted were these high hopes and how saddened were those gay thoughts now, How the brilliant parterres around my new bungalow and the marble-like walls of the buildings themselves seemed to mock me now. I had resolved not to occupy them until I could bring my newly-wedded wife with me, and there they stood smiling in the warm sunshine; as they would have done had they been to welcome a happy bridegroom and a loving bride instead of a broken-hearted and desolate man, whose lonely heart ached as he looked around the spacious apartments and noted all that he had prepared for the enjoyment and comfort of her whom he would never see more. The polished blackwood furniture, the damask- and velvet-covered couches had a cold and dreary look, now that all pleasure and satisfaction in their splendour had fled. The gilded mirrors and the gorgeous pictures, once the very pride of my eyes, were now all but worthless, since the very life of my heart, the light of my existence, seemed quenched for ever. Not a living soul was there about those vast buildings—vast for the residence of a single man,—not even a dog to welcome his master home. Home, it had no appearance of home. I would have felt just as home-like had I suddenly found myself amidst the ruins

of some old Egyptian temple on amongst the deserted palaces of ancient Delhi. What was there of home or home-life about this spot? Not a kind voice, not a familiar face, not a welcoming smile, no prattle of children, no voice of woman; not a sight, not a sound, which spoke of a single home feeling to my lonely and aching heart. It is true that there lay the wide-extending fields, cultivated with coffee bushes, whose glossy, dark green foliage might be seen, extending far over hill and dale, which called me master, and which my energy and my capital had called into existence; but how long might I now be able to call them mine? There stands the old watchtower of the Kandyan monarch of an ancient date which I had repaired, and where, before this great and crushing sorrow had fallen upon me, I had been accustomed to sit and dream dreams which could never now be realized; and ponder over the works and books which told of the dreams and actions of better dreamers and better actors than myself. How sad and depressed, how lonely and forsaken I felt as I stood there all alone, whilst my horse cropped the short sweet grass which bordered the flower-beds, tearing up the newly-laid turf or trampled Veerapin's favourite plants beneath his hoofs. At any other time I would have been vexed and annoyed beyond measure at this destruction, but now I had ceased to feel an interest in anything. I sat down on the projecting head of an elephant carved in stone, and giving way to my over-burdened feelings, wept like a child. I had become ac-

customed to tears, and they would now force their way into my eyes and down my cheeks, in spite of my utmost efforts to restrain them. A little green lizard rustled over some dried leaves and gazed curiously in my face, as if it could feel an interest in my grief, and my horse went on crunching the short sweet grass and demolishing laurels and roses and fuchsias and geraniums and russellias and plumbagos without mercy.

I hear the sound of voices and laughter and approaching footsteps. It is only a party of coolies, bound for Gampola or Kandy, decked in their holiday attire. How I envied the light hearts of these poor fellows, whose work being over there was no care or anxiety remaining to throw a damper over their cheerful minds. The coolies pass on laughing and singing, and I am once more alone. By-and-bye I hear some voices, and I am soon able to distinguish those of O'Brien, Murray and Wallace. I hastily dry the tears from my eyes and go forward to meet them. I seem suddenly to remember the troubles that threaten me and through me threaten them also, and the necessity of combating my grief and acting like a man. Before I had left Dodangahakelle for Kandy, I had given orders that the servants should remove to Singha Newera, with all the household articles which might be required for the new establishment, and hence, in part, my disappointment at finding the place so desolate and deserted.

O'Brien explained that, in consequence of what

had occurred, he had taken it upon himself to countermand these orders.

“You see, Major,” he said, in explanation, “I thought you might not like to come here now, and the old crib will look more home-like, at any rate in the meantime, and a few hours will enable you to remove to this place whenever you choose to do so. Ranga Samy said that he saw you coming up the Pass, and we came here to meet you and to assure you of our most earnest and heartfelt sympathy for you in your trouble. If you wish it, we will remain over the evening, but if you think you would like better to be alone, you have only to say the word and we will take ourselves off. You are looking low, poor fellow; so I think, on the whole, we had better stay: you may possibly have been too much alone already, and although you are my employer and pay me wages, I look upon you, and so also, I am sure, do Wallace and Murray, more as an elder brother than a master, and if it were possible we would each willingly bear a portion of your trouble.”

Here Wolfe's voice failed and tears were gathering in his eyes. He was a soft-hearted fellow, in spite of his high spirits, and I could only grasp his hand in return for his sympathy, which I knew to be heartfelt and sincere.

Evening was closing in around us, as we wended our way to the old bungalow; the lights in which were already glowing through the deepening gloom and seemed to offer us a cheerful welcome as we

drew towards it. The table was laid in the old fashion, and Muskin soon had it groaning under the weight of a meal which was both substantial and savoury. We gathered round it in the old style, but the conversation was dull and languid. It wanted the cheerful carelessness of former days, as if each were unwilling to say anything that might by any chance awaken feelings which if left to the soothing effects of time might be very much softened if not quite forgotten. There were no epigrams, no jests, no witty sayings, no comic songs now; every one present seemed as if they had sustained a personal sorrow, which hung as an incubus on their spirits. After removing the cloth, Muskin brought in a great jug of mulled claret, smoking hot and emitting a fragrant odour. Formerly this was the signal for fun and frolic; now, however, each helped himself in silence, and lighting their cheroots, became buried in meditation. After a time Wallace took an accordion and began playing some of the fine old tunes so dear to every Scotchman, particularly when he hears them in a foreign land, far from the hill and woods and braes to whose inspiration they owed their origin. And thus the evening wore on until coffee was brought by the servants, and then my friends took their departure to their several habitations, leaving me to brood over my griefs and anxieties alone. And thus passed the first night of my return to the home which I had left so short a time before in all the joyous anticipation of being able to bring a bonny bride with me on my return to share it and

bles with her presence and grace the loneliness of my existence. The dream was now ended, the bubble had burst, and I was more lonely and more forlorn than ever.

It is said that the darkest cloud has a silver lining, and the following day brought letters from my agents in London, enclosing a bill on the Ceylon bank, for an amount which, with a little management, would enable me to gather and ship my crops, which were fast advancing towards maturity, and thus the monetary dangers which at present threatened me would blow over, at any rate, for the time being. When these crops should be ready for shipment, there would be no difficulty in getting money raised on them, and surely, I thought, coffee cannot always remain at the low rate it is now selling at, and with better times, new hopes and new interests will dawn, and past griefs, if they cannot be forgotten, may become softened and mellowed.

It may seem ridiculous that, at a time when I was bowed to the earth with sorrow for the loss of all I held dearest on earth, I should reason and think thus; but I will leave it to anyone who has experienced a great grief, or who has laboured under a terrible affliction, if, when their sorrow was the deepest, they have not occasionally allowed very mundane and prosaic matters to occupy and interest their minds, and found a relief from their troubles in so doing. Perhaps this may occur upon the principle of counter-irritation in physical maladies, where the lesser pain relieves and often

removes the greater and more dangerous one. Certain it is, that the possibility of being hard pushed for money, a very matter-of-fact difficulty, roused me to a greater degree of exertion and interest in my personal affairs, and deadened my grief for the loss of Helen, much more than any less pressing emergency could have done.

I began to feel anxious about the ripening of the crops, about getting a sufficient supply of coolies to gather it, about the weather and about a hundred other matters, which none but a coffee planter would be able to understand or appreciate. I rode down to Colombo and saw the manager of the Carnatic Bank. He agreed to wait until my crop should be ready for shipment, before he would push me for the payment of the overdraft on my account, but he insisted that I should give him a bond over the whole of my landed properties before he would even consent to do this.

“The fact of the matter is,” he said, “the directors at home are becoming very much alarmed at the aspect of affairs, and I have received peremptory instructions to call up all overdrafts without delay, and not to allow any to remain unpaid, unless such as rest on undoubted security. A bond on your property will be a mere matter of form. It will satisfy the people at home and can do you no harm. The sum you owe us is a mere trifle in comparison to the security you can thus give, and it is more satisfactory for all parties that matters should be placed upon a proper footing to us, that we should

know that our money is perfectly safe, and to you that you should receive no annoyance, from being called on to pay up this money until it should be perfectly convenient for yourself to do so."

This was quite reasonable, and I accordingly lodged my titles with Mr. Morgan, the advocate, that the required bond might be drawn up without further delay. After it was "signed, sealed and delivered," I returned to my estates, when the first pickings of the crop were beginning to require attention.

By the end of December the crop was all secured and a considerable portion of it sent down to Colombo for shipment. In February 1848, I had placed about a hundred and fifty tons of coffee on board the "Niger," consigned to Messrs. Sellar & Company, Mincing Lane, London, to whom I also forwarded the bills of lading through the bank. This consignment was worth, I calculated, from £9,000 to £10,000. The Bank was once more pressing me to pay up my overdraft, and I had handed them an order on Sellar & Co. to pay up the sum in question, from the first proceeds of this consignment. My consternation may be easily imagined when the first letter I received by the next Overland, was an intimation, "that owing to unforeseen circumstances, over which they had no control, Sellar & Co. had been obliged to suspend payment," and that their books and papers had been handed over to the writers of the letter, a firm of solicitors in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Another

letter, from the Manager of the Carnatic, corroborates this fact, with the additional information that the failure was complete, and that there was no probability that Sellar would be able to resume business or pay a shilling in the pound, and that the bills I had handed to him were not now worth the paper they were written on. He requested an immediate personal interview with me, and I had no help but to set off once more, with rather a troubled mind, for Colombo.

The manner of Mr. Hutton, the Manager of the Carnatic, was quite altered since the time when he first begged of me, as a favour, to honour his establishment with my patronage. Then, he was all warmth and cordiality accompanied by a slight touch of fawning and deference. Now, the picture was reversed. He was very independent and distant in his manner, shewing rather an inclination to bully and treat me as a person who had a decided intention of swindling him out of the money, which he had so eagerly urged me to borrow. He threatened all sorts of pains and penalties "if my accounts were not put right," as he expressed it, without further delay. I mildly suggested that he had ample security for my advances.

"Security," he answered, very crustily, "do you call these bills security?" producing my drafts on Sellar & Co.

"Not now," I replied, "but surely the bonds you hold over my properties is security, to say nothing of the heavy shipment of coffee now on the way

to London, which will speedily be turned into cash."

"These things are no security now," he answered very moodily, "and are not likely to be worth much, if matters don't take a turn for the better, and that very soon. What with free trade and slave-grown produce competing with this country, you will, perhaps, soon find that your properties are not worth the price of the stamps on which the titles to them are written. I would, at the present moment, have more confidence in a bill drawn on the poorest *boutique*-keeper in the Pettah, than on the presumptive value of the finest coffee estate in Ceylon. In fact, in the present aspect of affairs, your properties are no security whatever."

"Then," I suggested meekly, for my courage and my spirits had fairly forsaken me, "perhaps the bills of lading for the consignment of coffee I have just sent home may be some security. If they are worth anything, they are certainly worth double your claim against me."

"Well," my tormentor replied, ruminatingly, "they are perhaps available, that is to a certain extent, and yet I have not much faith even in them. First look at the list of bankruptcies amongst the leading firms in London connected with the colonies, and you will be at no loss to see the reason why. I fear that my instructions from home leave me no other alternative, Mr. Green, than to foreclose the mortgage on your estates and expose them for sale at once."

"In other words," I broke in, savagely, "sell them at a time when there is no money in the country to purchase them with, and when they are not likely to fetch a hundredth part of their real value."

"Precisely so," Mr. Hutton replied, with provoking coolness, as he leant back in his chair and twirled a penknife between his finger and thumb.

My heart sank within me at this cruel announcement. I knew that my face was blanched at the terror it inspired. I was wholly in the power of this cold-blooded money-lender, who, by a mere stroke of his pen, could make me a beggar. I knew that if my splendid properties—the finest in the island—were put up for sale at the present moment, there was no one in the country who could or would give tens of pounds, where they were worth thousands. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that cold drops of perspiration should have burst from every pore of my body, and that I should have been forced to grasp the desk near which I was sitting, to save me from falling to the ground.

Hutton seemed rather to enjoy the sight of the agony, both of body and mind which I was suffering, but after a time his countenance assumed a less hardened and cruel expression.

"There is one means by which this may be avoided," he at length suggested, "that is by proceeding immediately to England yourself and being

ready to receive your coffee, on the arrival of the 'Niger,' have it disposed of with as little delay as possible and be back here with the proceeds before it becomes necessary to carry matters to the extremes which I have indicated."

"What time will you allow me to do this?" I asked. "I will require at any rate six months. The overland mail left two days ago, and it will be another month before I can have an opportunity of starting, and then there may be delays in the arrival of the 'Niger.'"

"Well then," Mr. Hutton replied, after a long pause, "I don't mind although I give you this time—that is six months, to make these arrangements. I do so, however, entirely on my own responsibility, and you cannot have a day's longer grace."

"Have you any objections to give me a letter to that effect?" I asked, "so that my mind may be at ease, during my absence, so far as any premature disposal of my property is concerned."

"Certainly not; I will write one immediately."

The letter was accordingly written and handed to me. It simply stated that, in the event of my then debt to the bank being paid up within the space of six months from that date, no steps should be taken to interfere with the properties over which the bank held bonds, by the sale of them or otherwise; but if the debt should not then be settled, the directors hold themselves at liberty to dispose of

them in any manner, most conducive to their interests.

“Will that suit you?” the manager asked.

“Yes, I am quite satisfied,” I replied, “I have no fear whatever of being able to put matters right by the time specified.”

“I hope that you may find it as simple a matter as you anticipate,” the banker said, as I made my bow and left the room.

I returned to Dodangahakelle forthwith, and my first action was to send for my managers and assistants, and explain to them the present state of my money affairs, and to give them orders to discharge every man that could, by any possibility, be spared on the property. I had still a large quantity of coffee on hand in the stores, some twenty or thirty tons, and my first care was to have this sent down to Colombo, to the only mercantile house that seemed likely to withstand the unlooked-for storm which had so unexpectedly wrecked almost every other firm in the island. I received a considerable advance on this consignment, sufficient to carry on the necessary work on the plantations during my absence, and to meet the expenses of my journey to England.

It is unnecessary to give any detail of this journey, It was much the same as any other overland journey before and since, and these have been described over and over again.

Now, that I had no active work with which to occupy my attention, I sank into a listless state of

lethargy, feeling no interest and taking no interest in the occurrences around me. I saw the dim hills of old Lanka sink in, the distant horizon with perfect indifference, the varied scenery of the Malabar Coast of India, with its seaside towns and distant glimpses of the far-off Neilgherries, the land-locked bay of Aden, the shores of the Red Sea, the mystic land of Egypt, the towering battlements of Malta, with all their varied and historical associations; even the fortified heights of Gibraltar, on all of which I would formerly have gazed with surpassing interest, had now no charms to rouse me from the dismal and ever-increasing lethargy which oppressed my spirits.

I arrived in London on a cold morning in the latter end of March, when the weather was the counterpart of that day, more than ten years ago, when I had so hopefully made up my mind to purchase a principality and found a dynasty in the Far East. Singularly enough, I occupied the same lodgings and sat in the same room, the furniture of which was very slightly if at all altered from what it was on that important occasion. The fires glowed in the grates and the only difference was the absence of the frosted flowers on the window panes. It seemed as if all my cares and troubles, all my adventures and labours in the sunny East, all that had occurred to me in the interval, were the incidents of a troubled dream, having no foundation in reality.

I remembered a story about a poor priest of

Bordeaux, who was desirous of being initiated into the mysteries of magic by a Moorish wizard. The Moor by his arts made the poor man fancy that he was promoted to be Prior of his convent, Bishop of his diocese, a Cardinal and ultimately the Pope of Rome, during the whole of which time the lessons in magic were supposed to proceed. The only recompense which the Moor demanded was that his son should be provided for by his illustrious pupil; but as he obtained rank after rank, although he made fine promises, he found the difficulty of implementing them, increase. When he at last had reached the summit of earthly grandeur and had been made Pope, he turned upon his humble master and threatened him with the vengeance of the Inquisition if he should be any further bothered by his importunities. The Moor, who had, on the occasion of the priest's first visit to his house, ordered his wife to put two chickens on the gridiron, as the holy man was to dine with them that day, now called to her to put only one chicken on the fire, as the Pope of Rome could not dine with a poor magician, and his Holiness immediately found himself reduced from his high estate and standing, a poor priest upon the floor of the Moorish wizard in the city of Bordeaux. The whole series of promotions and adventures which he had experienced had been crushed into the space of a few moments; and why, I thought, may I not be labouring under some similar hallucination, some equally absurd dream?

I could not manage to deceive myself in this

fashion. My troubles were too real and too pressing. Besides, I was then a laughing careless lad, not much more advanced in years than the law allows before a man is considered fitted to undertake the duties of manhood, and now grey hairs were beginning to mix with the glossy black locks, once the care and pride of my life.

I could do nothing in London until the arrival of the "Niger" with my consignment of coffee, and therefore time hung heavily on my hands. My mother had died some years previously, after having made a will by the advice of an old legal friend of my father's, leaving the remains of the Surrey property to me and my issue, if I ever should have any, failing which it was to pass to a second or third cousin of her own, a poor clergyman of the Episcopal Church, in Scotland, who, like all poor clergymen, was blessed with a numerous offspring.

"Who knows," this old lawyer remarked, in giving this advice, "what may happen? Your son, it is true, seems at present to be on the high way to wealth, but there are a great many up and downs in the world, and I have known many instances, in my practice, where a little forethought and a little provision of this kind has saved many a family from poverty and ruin, when some unlooked-for catastrophe occurred which resulted in the loss of all their other possessions. And such catastrophes are continually occurring around us, and they are much more common in enterprises

connected with the colonies and foreign countries than with those at home."

With the exception of the before-mentioned clergyman and his family, none of whom I had ever seen, I had not a single relative, to my knowledge, in the world. This knowledge had never before given me a thought; but now, as I strolled through the crowded streets of the greatest city in the world, I felt lonely and forlorn to a pitiable degree. I could appreciate the feelings of the Wandering Jew, ever on the move through the world, without human tie, aim or object, without relative or friend, without even a passing acquaintance to hold intercourse with, with nothing behind but a wasted past and nothing to look forward to but a dreary, aimless future. How I longed and waited for the arrival of the "Niger" that my mind might be set at rest, regarding its present anxieties. It was in vain that I visited museums and picture galleries, theatres and concert rooms, horticultural exhibitions and uninhabited palaces. I could feel interest in nothing. I was far less desolate and lonely in the wild jungles of old Lanka than in the crowded thoroughfares of London.

At length, about the middle of April, when vegetation was beginning to burst its wintry bonds in this northern clime, and the sun was beginning to give promise of bright warm summer weather, the newspapers announced that the "Niger" was off the Isle of Wight, with a fair wind up the Channel.

"My sojourn in this wilderness will soon come

to an end now," I thought, as I read this announcement, sitting at my breakfast table, with the "Shipping Gazette" before me: "A few more weeks and then hurrah for Ceylon and Dodangahakelle once more."

Another day passed, during which the weather was soft, warm and mild, and then another still equally favourable, and then it was announced in all the newspapers that the "Niger" was ashore a little to the north of Dungeness, and fears were entertained that she would become a total wreck. A day or two more and it was reported that she was fast breaking up, and that there was no chance of saving either vessel or cargo,—"the greater part of which belonged to a well-known planter in Ceylon, who was now in London, and who, it was believed, had neglected to effect any insurance on it."

My God, how my heart sank within me as I read this paragraph. It was but too true. I had called on my shipping agents in Colombo to request that the coffee might be insured, but finding no one in the office, but a half-caste clerk, I had left, with the intention of writing my instructions to this effect. In my then anxious state of mind and the hurry of my departure, this had been forgotten, and in the apathy and depression of spirits into which I had subsequently subsided, it had been entirely lost sight of.

How I now cursed my carelessness and folly. I was without doubt a ruined man and a beggar.

My estates would be brought to the hammer, and I could do nothing to save them. My last hope was gone; my last throw had been cast and I was now penniless, at least comparatively so, to the state of affluence I fancied myself in the enjoyment of a few short months ago. I was sitting perfectly numbed and bewildered by this unlooked-for catastrophe, when the waiter brought in a card and laid it on the table before me. It was from Colin Douglas whose ancestral halls I had visited the winter before I had proceeded to found my principality in the Far East. He was shown into the room, and we grasped each other's hands as we Britons do when we meet after a long separation. Colin was altered, but not much. The world had evidently run smoothly with him and he with the world. He had just come to London to take possession of, and arrange about some property which consisted, he said, of almost a whole street of houses and workshops and several thousands of pounds, he did not know exactly how many, in the three per cents.

I congratulated him on his good fortune, and then, in as few words as possible, I told him of my own reverses and the terrible catastrophe which had overtaken me within the past few days, threatening total ruin and annihilation to all my hopes and aspirations.

"Nil desperandum, old fellow," he said, with a cheery laugh, slapping me on the back, "is a very good motto. The darkest night is followed by the dawn and the blackest cloud has a silver lining.

Never strike your colours whilst there is a shot in the locker. If it is only a question of a few thousands between you and this fellow of a banker, I will not see you badly used. I'll take care that he does not sell your estates, and this legacy has come very opportunely if it enables me to give you a helping hand out of these difficulties. I have now much more money than I know how to spend, and I don't see that I could make a better use of it than helping a friend in a time of need. Not that I have any intention of throwing away my money without knowing what I am about; but if matters are as you represent them, and if my law agent, who is what we call in Scotland 'a gey siccar carle,' is of opinion that the security is reasonably safe, I will gladly advance all the money you may require to clear your feet in this strait, in the hope that you may speedily retrieve your position and be able to repay me when the revenues from your principality are in a more flourishing condition."

I was completely overpowered by this generous offer on the part of my old friend and schoolfellow. It was so unexpected, so unlooked-for, that all power of speech was taken from me. I could not even thank him for his generosity, but sat staring at him, with open mouth and trembling from excess of emotion.

Colin saw and understood the condition I was in. "Come, old man," he said, shaking me by the shoulder, "rouse up. The world is not all blackness and darkness. Sunshine follows cloud, light follows darkness, and there is much of happiness

in store for you and me yet. No use grieving after spilled milk. A few tons of coffee will speedily be replaced, and Dodang—Dodang—Dodang—what do you call that jaw-breaking name of a place, that you hang out at in your Eastern country, will flourish better than ever. Now we will set about and try and enjoy ourselves during my stay in London, and not mope about as if there was no joy or happiness in the world, for believe me there is a great deal left in it yet.”

I need not linger over the details of this transaction. I was able to satisfy Colin Douglas' law agent regarding the security which I had to offer for whatever advances he should make to me, and ten thousand pounds were placed at once at my disposal, Colin remarking with truth that a single good crop from my estates would enable me to pay off this sum without inconvenience. The rebound from the state of trouble and anxiety, of worry and torment to which I had been subjected for some time past was very great, and I now entered with much zest into all the amusements of the capital, feeling much pleasure and satisfaction in so doing, since I had my old friend and companion to share them with me, and a mind comparatively at ease with which to enjoy them.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

In May I left England once more for Selendib's spicy isle, where I duly arrived without any striking incident or adventure early in July, having

still more than a week to spare of the time specified for my return in Mr. Hutton's letter.

The first person to greet me, on my arrival at Galle, was my friend O'Brien, and I knew at once, by the troubled expression of his countenance, that he was the bearer of evil tidings.

"Dodangahakelle is sold, Major," the poor fellow broke in, with a stifled sob, after our first greetings were over. Sold for an old song. Fetched only two hundred pounds, by public roup in Kandy. Had to be sold without reserve, and was knocked down to the highest bidder. It was the most rascally thing I ever heard of, and the most unaccountable. Wallace's place fetched more, three hundred and fifty, and the other places about five hundred more; not much over a thousand altogether, and we are all thrown on the staff, that is Wallace, Murray, Juan and myself; sent to the right about, bag and baggage, with scarcely a day's warning, and here I have been waiting for your arrival, to be the first to bring you these welcome tidings."

I stood aghast. Sold—Dodangahakalle and all my other properties sold—the thing was ridiculous, impossible. The Bank people would never surely have dared to sell my estates during my absence, particularly since I held their manager's letter, guaranteeing that no such action would be taken until after my return from England, provided that that return should take place within six months

from the date of his letter, and those six months had not yet expired.

“Fact though, Major, nevertheless,” said O’Brien, lugrubiously, as if he had quite understood and followed the current of my thoughts, or possibly I may have been speaking aloud although unconsciously.

I felt as if I had been stunned by a sudden and unexpected blow. I was like a person labouring under some frightful dream. If my properties were indeed sold, I was a ruined man—a beggar. The poorest cooly in the island was in a better position than I was. His wants were few, and he could easily find work with which to supply those wants, whilst I possessed nothing, absolutely nothing, beyond which the generosity of my friend Colin Douglas had supplied me with, and unless I could obtain a situation as manager or superintendent on some estate, I was utterly powerless to do anything towards earning my own living. The very suddenness and the unexpected nature of this calamity prevented me from realizing at first the full horror of my situation, and when all the frightful consequences of this awful blow did begin to dawn on my mind, I was completely overpowered and crushed to the earth by the dreadful tidings.

“Let us go and consult some lawyer about the worth of Hutton’s letter,” O’Brien suggested, after we had talked over the matter for some time, during which conversation he detailed all the particulars connected with the sale. “Stewart,” the

Queen's Advocate, is at present in Galle. I am tolerably well acquainted with him, although he is a half-caste. He is a deuced clever fellow, and so also is his brother the doctor, who cured me of a very bad attack of jungle fever at Ratnapura, and this led to my intimacy with the advocate. I'll back Stewart to give you good sound advice against any other lawyer in Ceylon, and I should not wonder but this may prove a case for the bigwigs before you have done with it."

We found Mr. Stewart at the hotel. He was a slightly-built young man, with a warm brown complexion and bright intelligent eyes, which told of the southern blood which was mixed with the cold northern stream flowing through his veins.

I explained the object and cause of my visit. I showed him the letter I had received from the manager of the Carnatic, and told him all that had occurred at my last interview with that gentleman.

"Was it at the instance of the Bank that the properties were sold?" he asked of O'Brien.

"Yes, certainly," was the answer.

"And you have the money in your possession to redeem your debt to the bank, to which reference is made in this letter?"

"Yes, most certainly I have."

"I see that you have still nine days before the time specified in this letter, expires for your arrival

in Ceylon. Now, my advice is to lose no time in getting to Colombo. As soon as you arrive, go to the bank, taking witnesses with you, and tender the full amount of your debt. Don't take bills or any other questionable medium of exchange which they may refuse, but take the money in gold, rupees, or their own notes, and then I don't see how they can refuse to give you immediate restitution of your properties; or, if they do, they must lay themselves open for an action for their full value and swingeing damages for the injury they have done you besides.'

This advice seemed sound, and I acted on it forthwith. I hired a carriage and a pair of horses and sent on runners ahead to have relays waiting us at all the posting stations along the road. About 9 o'clock that night,—a brilliant moonlight one,—I started for Colombo, accompanied by O'Brien, driving like a second Jehu, along the white gravelly road, under the tall white stems and feathery fronds of the coconut trees, which lined it on either side; whilst the leafy wilderness of jungle, in which the jackals were howling, extended far into the interior on the right, whilst the waves of the Indian Ocean sparkled on the left, illumined by the beams of a full-orbed moon, sailing in a cloudless sky. The breakers rolled with a deafening roar on the shingly beach, and the air was melodious with the hum and murmur of a tropical night.

We reached Colombo before gun-fire the following

morning, having slept the greater part of the way, unless when any obstruction to our progress occurred, such as changing horses, or crossing a ferry. The road was smooth as a bowling green, and there was not a jolt that would have disturbed a fly during the whole journey. After a refreshing bath and a comfortable breakfast, I took my old friend Captain Thomson, whom I found in Colombo, and O'Brien with me to the bank, having previously turned the bills, which I had in my possession, into rupees, which were carried on the heads of about a score of coolies. With this following I entered the office, with rather more confidence and sense of dignity than I had experienced on my last two visits, and deposited the cash bags on the counter.

Mr. Hutton was in an inner room, into which Captain Thomson, O'Brien and myself entered with very little ceremony. The banker's face blanched visibly on our entrance, although he made a praiseworthy effort to force a show of something like his former cordiality of manners. It was my turn to be hard and stiff now, and without paying any attention to his outstretched hand or his friendly enquiries regarding the state of my health, I broke in abruptly with "I have come to pay my debt to the bank."

"The balance of it you mean," Hutton said, with what he evidently intended for a facetious chuckle, but which singularly failed in its object. "We are always glad to have old debts paid up,

particularly those which we have had reason to consider were desperate, which you will see was the case with yours, from the means which we have thought necessary for its recovery. There is still a balance due, after deducting the proceeds of the sale of your estates, at Dodangahakelle, of over two thousand pounds, that is," he added, turning over the leaves of a ledger, "to be more exact, two thousand six hundred and twenty-three pounds, five shillings and three pence, and this sum I shall be glad to receive, and give you a discharge for the same."

"Not so," I said, "I have come to pay my debt, with interest, as it stood before I went to England, at the date of your letter to me of February last, and I have brought these gentlemen as witnesses that I have tendered payment of the same. I know nothing about balances. It is true, that I have been told that you have sold my estate, but of course since your debt is now paid and paid within the period that was agreed upon between us, I cannot and will not recognise your right to dispose of my properties in this free-and-easy manner."

"Yes, and he has sold mine too, the cold-blooded calculating money-grubber: I am astonished that I have not pulled his infernal carcase to pieces;" broke in Thomson, in a violent rage, with his characteristic vehemence and fury. "It is all waiting you yet," he added, addressing the banker, "my account is not quite balanced yet, but it is all waiting

you, and it will be balanced in a way you will not like, you ——, you ——, you ——,” — here followed a torrent of epithets more forcible and expressive than they were elegant or refined, but which the Manager listened to with amazing *sang froid*, as if he had been long accustomed to such abuse, and as if he quite appreciated the old Scotch proverb that hard words break no bones.

“Come along Thomson—do—and don’t let us have any shindy. It was not for that purpose that we came here, and we will get into trouble, if you don’t keep quiet.”

It was not a very easy matter to get the late Commander in the Bombay Marine quieted, for he had worked himself into such a paroxysm of rage, at what he called “the monkey face of the counter-jumper,” meaning the Manager of the Carnatic Bank, that it required a powerful effort of self-restraint, he said, “to keep his hands from slewing his head round his — neck as a game-keeper would treat a trapped rabbit.”

“I understand,” I repeated, “that you have sold my properties, in defiance of your engagement not to do so, until after my return from England, as contained in this letter, and I now inform you, that having tendered payment of the whole claim which the bank has against me, before those witnesses, I shall proceed to take possession of them again and leave you to satisfy the parties to whom they were sold by some other means.”

“Yes,—then send them all adrift, a confounded

pack of swindlers," broke in the Captain. "It would only serve them right, if you were to run the blackguards up to the nearest tree as we do pirates at sea, to the yard-arm, when they fall into our clutches."

"By the mother of Moses, won't we send them to the right about, Major, in splendid style? Just leave it to me to give the word of command. I'm the boy who knows how to do it. It will be a case of right about face. No, that won't do. There are four of them, I mean, of course, the new chaps, so we will say 'Fours about, quick march, double,' and run them down the Dodangahnewera hill, at a devil of a charge."

"I am very sorry, gentlemen, to disappoint such pleasant anticipations, but I beg to inform you that the sale of the properties is perfectly legal, and you will not, perhaps, find the new proprietors quite so willing to evacuate the premises as you expect. I will in the meantime take charge of this money for you, Mr. Green, which I perceive is all right, and place it to the credit of your account. The clerk will give you a receipt, and now, as I have other business on hand, you will perhaps excuse me, "saying which and bidding us good morning," with some return of his habitual coolness and insolence, as he turned into another room, the banker left us looking stupidly into each other's faces.

"The jackanapes," said Wolfe O'Brien, with subdued fury.

"The insolent scoundrel," said Thomson. "I knew his grandfather, a donkey-driver and sand-boy in Edinburgh. I don't know what keeps me from kicking the blackguard."

"What quarrel have you with him, old fellow?" I asked, for now that my money had been accepted, I fancied that I would have no further trouble in taking possession of my properties once more, and was, in consequence, rather inclined to smile at the eccentricities of my companions than to join in their interjections.

"Confound the blackguard, has he not sold me up the same as he has done you, and all for a paltry sum of some seven hundred pounds? Gallapallahi has gone for an old song, and Namagerwatte for almost nothing. Cocklepettiagalle, which, by-the-bye, was devoured with rats and bugs, was sold for fifty pounds, actually less than the coolies' lines cost in building; and to crown all, the thief of a sea dog, the —, the —, the —, meaning Hutton, would have put me in chokey, had I not turned horsedealer, to prevent him. Fancy a Commander in the H. E. I. Co.'s Bombay Marine falling so low, that he requires to turn the talents, which were, a few years ago, considered sufficiently great to command as tight a frigate as ever sailed the Indian seas, to account as a horsedealer, a couper they would call it where I was raised."

"A horsedealer, a horsecouper," I repeated, in amazement. "I can easily understand that you may have acquired no end of knowledge of horse

furniture, in the shape of martingales, saddles, stirrups, bridles &c. when at sea, but I never saw you show much discrimination in your judgment regarding the equine quadruped himself."

"Nevertheless, that is now my legal designation, William Thomson, late of the Hon. E. I. C. S., presently horsedealer or trader, residing in Colombo, &c."

"Pray explain yourself, I scarcely understand you," I said, considerably mystified by the worthy Commander's angry deliverances.

"The explanation is very simple," he said. "When that ———— son of a sea-cook," meaning the bank manager, "came down on me and sent the Fiscal to seize my estates, goods and chattels, I could not get protection from arrestment as a simple agriculturist, as the laws of the enlightened colony don't believe in bad markets or bad crops, and consequently don't think that we planters have any right to become bankrupt; and, therefore, I was under the necessity of buying an old horse,— a thundering old screw he was,—spavined and had been fired on a hind leg, from Charlie Reid, and selling him at a loss to Redman, the hotelkeeper, which purchase and sale constituted me a trader, and I now hang out, as I have already explained, as a dealer in old horses and donkeys. Good heavens! do you think that I ever imagined, about the time I wollopped little Buller, that I would end my career in the East as a donkey-couper!"

“Here is the hotel,” I said, scarcely able to control my laughter at Thomson’s lugrubic account of his troubles, which, however, were serious enough, in all conscience, for himself and his family; although he tried to face them with a bold face and a brave heart. “Let’s go in, as the Yankees say, and liquor.”

“I’ll stand brandy and soda, or, for the matter of that, champagne all round.”

Since those days fortunes, many of them, have been made in Ceylon. More of them, I believe, than will be made in the same space of time again, and the reason of this is very obvious. It lies on the very surface. About the time of which I write, almost all the original owners of coffee properties were either insolvent or bankrupt. The cultivation of coffee was costing more money, that is including the expenses of transit to Colombo and shipment thence, than it was realizing in London. This was believed to be the result of the free trade movement, and the equalizing of the duty between colonial and foreign-grown produce. It was thought that, owing to the influx of slave-grown coffee from Brazil, Costa Rica and other countries, this state of matters was likely to get worse rather than better. Before this, planters had been very sanguine regarding the large profits they were to realize, when their properties came into bearing. The first and second crops were expected to clear the whole original outlay on the estates, and certain fortune was looked forward to as the result of their investments. To make this fortune still larger and

more certain, many planters took advantage of the facilities which the newly-established banks and private agencies of moneyed capitalists had placed within reach, to borrow money at a high rate of interest, with a view of extending their operations, far beyond what their original means would have warranted.

It was soon discovered that many estates would never bear the heavy crops that had been anticipated, and that, owing to the poor quality of the soil, a great many more, which had borne heavily at first, had speedily become exhausted, and would not, unless with a heavy expenditure in manuring, go on bearing even moderate crops in future. Heavy expenses had, in several instances, been incurred on some properties through injudicious management, in ornate bridges, wide roads, unsuitable machinery and buildings, altogether out of proportion with the possible possibilities of a profitable return for the expenditure; whilst, to add to the blackness of the outlook, field rats in myriads attacked and ate the young and bearing wood of the coffee bushes, and a species of bug, something like the scale of the greenhouses and conservatories at home, covered what was left with its larvæ, and a thick, black gummy slime, which destroyed the fruit and checked the growth of the wood.

Labourers were scarce and a supply of coolies to gather the ripening crops was very uncertain; whilst the weather during crop time was the

reverse of favourable, the rain pouring down in a continuous deluge in some districts for weeks on end, and the berries were falling from the bushes from over-ripeness, whilst those which had been gathered were lying in fermenting heaps, on barbecues and in the stores. In fact, the prospects of the Ceylon planter at this time were sufficiently gloomy to call all his latent energy and resolution into full activity to enable him to bear up against the difficulties by which he was surrounded. To crown all, the monetary panic of 1847-48 took place. Banks got alarmed and withdrew their credits and called up their overdrafts. Capitalists buttoned up their pockets and would not allow a penny to leave them, and the consequences were, as I have already narrated, an almost universal bankruptcy. Properties were rushed into the market and forced sales made, when there was no money in the colony to purchase them with. Estates which had cost tens of thousands of pounds were sold for two or three hundreds, many for far less sums. I was present at one of these sales, when an estate of some forty or fifty thousand acres in extent, situated in the Neilgherry Hills, subject to the Rajah of Travancore, was knocked down for less than two pounds sterling. In most instances, the purchasers of these properties were managers or assistants on estates, who had saved a little money from their salaries, and these men, by avoiding all unnecessary outlay in their new purchases, unless when it became necessary to gather the crops, in the course of time, when prices advanced

and Ceylon became herself again, were able to realize the wealth of which the former proprietors only dreamed.

It was exactly as if farmers in England were getting less money for their produce than the cost of its production, with a very faint chance of such a state of affairs ever altering for the better. The result might easily be foreseen. The land would be abandoned and cultivation would cease. These proprietors who were in debt would be obliged to sell their properties, whilst there would be very little temptation to induce purchases to invest their money in the purchase of landed estates. The estates thus exposed for sale would not fetch much of a price, and great bargains would be likely to fall to lot of lucky speculators. But if, after a few years' depression, prices rose to their former figure or ever beyond it, the new landholders would reap the benefit and acquire vast wealth, whilst their predecessors might be beggars and wanderers on the face of the earth. And this, in almost every instance, has been the way in which large fortunes have been made in Ceylon, since the great crash of 1848. It was a chance which is never likely to be repeated, and those who are now leaving home for that colony, in the hope of being as lucky as some of their personal friends and acquaintances, whose great wealth is the talk of a whole district of country, are likely to have their sanguine expectations doomed to disappointment.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A VISIT TO NEGOMBO AND KADIRANE.—AN ESCAPED PRISONER: HIS RECAPTURE, WITH ITS FATAL RESULT.

Acting on the advice of Mr. Stewart I employed a half-caste advocate with a Dutch name, to institute proceedings against the Bank of the Carnatic for the restoration of my properties. I proposed taking very summary measures with the new owners. That is, I was to have gone up with a few friends, wild young fellows, who would have joined heartily in such an enterprise, and ejected them, neck and crop, by force of arms, but the half-caste advocate with the Dutch name would not hear of such a procedure. "It was altogether out of the question," he said, "perfectly illegal and utterly against all the rules of the Court."

He then detailed to me the steps which it would be necessary to take, in a clear and lucid manner, which showed that he understood perfectly the matter under dispute, and he assured me, that in the course of a few weeks he would have to congratulate me upon the happy restoration of my estates. Pending this action, I took a run out to Negombo to see some friends there; amongst others Sandy Dunn, a cinnamon planter, whose acquaintance I had made some years previously, whilst wandering at haphazard amongst the Hewahetta mountains, having lost my way when trying to reach Nuwara Eliya, by way of the lower Badulla

road. Juan Sebastian also was living, I was told, at Negombo, he having, like O'Brien, Wallace and Murray, been turned adrift by the new masters of Dodangahakelle. I found a small party of cinnamon planters from Kadirane at the resthouse, and in the course of the evening joined them in bathing in the sea, cantering along the sands of the beach and inspecting the small Dutch fort, which had at one time been considered sufficiently strong to command the harbour of this once important seaport.

Whilst lingering on the esplanade, I was joined by an old friend, Mr. George Hicks, formerly a brother planter, who like myself had suffered from the hard times, and who, instead of reaping a handsome income from his coffee estates, had been glad to obtain a situation under government as Police Magistrate of Negombo. After the usual greetings we adjourned to his house, close at hand, where I was introduced to his newly-wedded wife, a handsome, bright-eyed English girl.

"I would have been very happy to have had you here during your stay in this neighbourhood," Hicks said, "but my wife is going from home, and I also must leave tonight on a thief-catching expedition. A fellow, who was in jail, for a very serious offence," he explained, "has managed to break out of prison, like a black Jack Shepherd, and as he is a bold daring scoundrel to be a low-country Cingalese, my peons are afraid to meddle with them. He threatened to shoot those who were

sent to apprehend him a day or two ago, and the whole force is afraid to tackle with the black-guard unless I go with them. I have some intelligence that he is in a village some six or seven miles distant, and I am going there to lend a hand in capturing him. I leave this at 7 o'clock tonight, and I don't expect to be back before sunrise tomorrow morning."

I volunteered to accompany Hicks in his thief-catching expedition, but he would not hear of my doing so.

"The distance is too great," he said, "and as you have already been travelling all day, the fatigue would be too much for you. You could not take your horse, as the path to the village lies along the sides of paddy-fields and through long tracts of low jungle, which no horse could penetrate. Besides, after having been off work during your absence in England, the chances are that you would break down and would be more trouble than service to us."

This last excuse was quite conclusive. I felt myself that without some previous training I would not be capable of enduring the fatigue of a fourteen or fifteen miles' march through the jungles and paddy-fields, and that such an expedition, even if I did not break down, would prove more of a pain than a pleasure both to myself and my companions. Nevertheless, I was much tickled at the idea of a thief hunt. It was something new and might prove very exciting.

“Not a bit,” Hicks said, when I had given expression to the last idea. “Not a bit. I shall take my pistols with me for form’s sake, and some of my men will be armed, but we expect to catch the fellow in bed, and there will be nothing adventurous or gallant in one European backed by half-a-dozen constables capturing and securing one black man”

At 7 o’clock the force which formed this little expedition assembled in the verandah. They seemed a serviceable body of men and quite up to the work they had on hand. Hicks, after kissing his wife and bidding me good-bye, put himself at the head of the party and marched off in silence, and was speedily lost to sight in the gloom of the neighbouring trees. There was something weird and ghost-like I thought in their sudden disappearance; and Mrs. Hicks was evidently of the same opinion, for when we returned to the dining-room, she was trembling violently, whilst her countenance was almost as pale as death.

“God grant that nothing may happen to George,” she said, as she grasped the back of a chair to steady herself. “He is so rash and headstrong, and some of these Singalese criminals, I have been told, are very desperate characters, bold and reckless, when driven to extremity. I don’t like them taking firearms with them. It looks as if George was of opinion that there may be resistance and that he may require to use them. I wish to goodness he was safe home again,” the poor woman ex-

claimed, as she sank into a seat, "for I'm sure, I will be extremely anxious until he returns."

I made light of her fears and tried to comfort her the best way I could, but I fear that I was only partially successful in my endeavours, for I felt her hands tremble and her frame shudder, as I bade her good-bye, previous to mounting my horse and riding off to Kadirane.

I had been invited to spend a few days with Mr. Stephens, a brother of my old friend, Stephens of Pallikelle. He lived in a long, rambling, old bungalow which had been the residence of the Principal Superintendent of the Cinnamon Plantations during the time that the island was under the dominion of the Dutch Government. This situation was at that time one of the most important and lucrative under the Government, but now the gardens, which extended all along the coast, were broken up into estates of a few hundred acres, and owned principally by commercial agents in Colombo or their constituents at home. My friend Mr. Stephens was looking for my arrival, and after I had recounted what I knew of Hicks's expedition, and his wife's anxiety regarding its result, we sat down to discuss a jug of mulled claret and play a game of chess. Having succeeded in giving my adversary checkmate, we reverted to Hicks.

"I don't like the look of this affair," Stephens said: "Hicks is a great fool to run any risk with desperadoes like this fellow whom he has gone after. He should have sent a strong body of peons,

or got a party of Malays to catch the scoundrel. He is, I understand, one of the most desperate characters unhung."

"You don't really think that there is any danger?" I asked in alarm, for somehow the anxiety of Mrs. Hicks and the doubts expressed by Stephens had made an impression on me, or rather had deepened a feeling which I had involun'arily entertained, that Hicks was exposing himself to great and unnecessary danger ever since I had seen him and his following of peons disappear in the gloom of the jungle.

We began another game, but somehow the reality of the danger to which Hicks was exposed became more and more deeply impressed on my mind, and I became gradually more and more uneasy and anxious, until I lost entirely all interest in the game.

"Checkmate," said my host; "but if you are not going to pay more attention to the game, we had better stop playing."

"I say, Stephens," I asked very abruptly, "did you ever hear of a fellow having a presentiment of evil or danger, or being fey?"

"Presentiment be blowed," was the reply of my matter-of-fact host: "none but women and cowards are ever troubled with presentiments, and they have them continually, and as for being fey, I don't know what it is. Is it Dutch or German or what, and what does it mean?"

“It is Scotch, I believe, and it means a person labouring under a supernatural impression of impending evil which he is powerless to ward off or to avoid. It is a state of mind which is supposed to precede one's own death, or the death of a dear friend, and sometimes the doomed one may be only a mere acquaintance with whom the party feeling this influence may have recently been in contact. Sometimes it only foreshadows an unexpected loss of substance or any other unlooked-for misfortune, but in the Highlands of Scotland there is a general belief in its existence and the certainty that trouble of some kind is sure to follow it.”

“What awful bosh,” Stephens answered, “I have known many of your countrymen very intimately, and a shrewder and more long-headed set of men never existed, but they have almost all been more or less mad upon this nonsense of omens, warnings and all sorts of rubbish of this kind. You will not find an educated Englishman believing in such bosh.”

The night wind sighed mournfully amongst the trees, which had a gloomier and more sombre appearance than usual. We could hear the regular crash of the surf on the far-off beach, like the distant boom of minute guns at sea; whilst near at hand the night birds gave utterance to their doleful and melancholy cry. We sat at a small table in the verandah, which extended along the whole front of the house. The part where we sat

was illumined by a coconut-oil lamp, whilst either end was sunk in deep gloom, which suggested all sorts of queer fancies from the turn that the conversation had taken.

“Take another glass of claret,” Stephens said, breaking a long pause, during which we had both puffed our cheroots in silence. “I ll tell you what it is, this rambling old bungalow has given you a fit of the doleful dumps. It used to do the same to me, when I first came to reside in the horrid old place. I used at one time to have weeks on end of the horrors, that is, fits of low spirits, but now I have got a sort of accustomed to the weirdness of my surroundings, and when I feel one of these fits coming on, I get on horseback and gallop away on a visit of a few days into the interior or take a run into Colombo, until the feeling wears off, and Richard is himself again.”

“And yet you laugh at Scotchmen and their semi-belief in omens and presentiments.”

“There is a slight difference between the two cases,” Stephens replied with a laugh. “You and your countrymen ascribe these feelings to supernatural influences, whilst I ascribe them to their real cause, a disordered digestion. It is possible that the sad fate of one of my predecessors in this beastly old place may have had its effect, in the first place, in causing this state of mind, but believe me the real origin of all such fancies lies in the region of the stomach.”

“And pray, may I ask, what was the fate of your predecessor in office or residence, that it should have had such an effect on the spirits of the matter-of-fact Jack Stephens?”

“Well, I will tell you the story. It is rather a sad one, but then it has the merit of being perfectly true, and I hope that the narrative will induce a sound sleep and pleasant dreams to both of us. Here, help yourself to some more wine, whilst I get on with my yarn.

“The gentleman’s name was Walbeoff, a Dutchman, I believe, and of a good family. Some of his children are still living in the country, and you may perhaps have met them. Well, this Walbeoff had the chief superintendence of the whole of the cinnamon gardens along the coast. His powers were very extensive and his income was large. This old bungalow was his principal residence, and he ruled over the whole of this extensive district like a Pasha or Rajah. The poor devils of cinnamon cutters trembled at the sound of his horse’s hoofs. Walbeoff had a young and handsome wife, vain, lightheaded and much given to flirting. In those days, only, however, by-the-bye, some twenty or thirty years ago, there was a much larger force of military stationed in the island than there is at present. Game, big game, such as elephants, buffaloes and deer, was much more abundant, and the officers, when they could get leave of absence, made up parties to scour the jungles in quest of it. Walbeoff was a hospitable

fellow and kept open house, so far as the higher class of European officials, both civil and military, was concerned, and there was, in consequence, a flux and reflux of visitors going and coming to his hospitable mansion. Amongst others, a General's officer, I think his name was Smith or Brown, or some very plebeian one of that sort, was a frequent visitor. He was a blustering overbearing sort of fellow and affected a superiority over his Dutch host, which did not agree very well with the proud spirit of Walbeoff. He flirted, besides, very ostentatiously with the Dutchman's wife, and she, poor soul, seemed to take the General's attentions in very good part, in too good part, it turned out in the long run; for on returning from a visit to some distant plantation, Walbeoff found that his wife had disappeared, had eloped with General Smith or Brown, or whatever the fellow's name was, leaving home, husband and children, apparently without regret or remorse.

“This took place, I need not tell you, in the old duelling days, when any or every injury to the feelings or honour was atoned for by pistols at twelve paces. A meeting was arranged between the General and the man whose domestic happiness he had blasted, and they met and exchanged shots in a field between this and Negombo.

“After the second or third round, in neither of which the General returned Walbeoff's fire, the seconds interfered to stop further proceedings, very much, it appeared, to Walbeoff's disgust.

“‘Let the fellow have another shot at me if he wishes,’ the General said, whilst the seconds were haggling about whether the affair should go on or stop. ‘Let the fellow have another shot at me if he likes, but it will be the last he will ever fire in the world. Look there.’

“The General pointed to a paroquet which had perched on a tree-top some twenty yards off, and raising his pistol took a very careless aim and fired. The bird dropped dead, pierced by the ball.

“‘I did not wish to add murder to other injuries,’ the General said, ‘but if Walbeoff insists upon another shot, I will not be so forbearing as I have been.’

“The Dutchman was moved by this seeming act of generosity, and he advanced towards his adversary with outstretched hand, saying: ‘General, I am satisfied, and I acknowledge that you are a gentleman.’

“The poor Dutchman was mistaken in this particular, for the *gentleman* turned coolly on his heel, coarsely remarking, ‘I did not need to come to Ceylon to be told that.’

“Walbeoff returned to his lonely home, but there was now no one to welcome him but a crowd of motherless children. There was an end of the fêtes, the picnics, the shooting parties and all the other gaieties of Kadirane, and I can easily picture to myself, and have often done so, the poor fellow wandering about the empty rooms and long verandahs of this venerable building, until its very

loneliness drove him mad. It is said that he was never seen to smile again; and when, some time after, his mangled body was found at the bottom of a high cliff, on the top of which his horse was found quietly crunching the sweet grass, the only remark that was made was, 'Poor fellow, he never recovered the loss of his wife.' That lady and her paramour shortly after left Ceylon for South Africa, and I believe that they still reside somewhere within the limits of Cape Colony.

[See note further on, referring to this story.—ED.]

"The natives believe that Walbeoff's ghost still haunts the precincts of his old residence, and has been frequently met, after dark, wandering about the walks and glades of the cinnamon grounds."

I was weary enough, but in spite of my weariness and the somnolent effects of Stephens's mulled claret and his tragic story, I could not sleep. I felt exactly as I had done on the first night I had spent at Kondesalle, when Bird's bungalow was burned. I lay awake almost the whole night long, listening to the buzzing of mosquitoes, the sighing of the night wind and the howling of jackals, and watching the dancing and glimmering of fireflies as they sparkled through the rooms. When I did sleep it was only by short fits, from which I awoke with a start and a feeling of impending evil. I was glad when the first tomtom was beat, calling the coolies to their work. I roused myself and jumped into a bath, which I found ready for me in an adjoining dressing-room, dressed and went into the verandah, where we had a glorious view of

Adam's Peak and the Saffragam and Dolosbage mountains rising above a sea of mist, white as snow, far in the interior.

The coolies had been sent off to their several employments, and the appu had just brought our morning cup of hot coffee and hoppers, with new-laid eggs, which we were discussing in the verandah, when we heard a mournful howling in the road below the bungalow.

"What is that?" Stephens exclaimed, rising and going towards the end of the verandah, overlooking the part of the road from whence the sound seemed to proceed. "There is some devilment up, but I can see nothing but a crowd of natives, apparently resting amongst the cinnamon bushes."

Presently a native Mudaliyar came round the corner of the building and salaamed profoundly to my host.

"D—— bad business this, sir," he said. "D—— bad business happened to Mr. Hicks."

"What has happened?" asked Stephens, changing colour.

"D—— black scoundrel of Chingalee thief who broke out of jail shot him last night—shot him just here," he replied, pointing to his throat. "That is his dead body they are now carrying to Negombo. I don't know how they are to take it to his poor wife, and she so lately married. I have caught the thief and we will make him hang to be a terror to all villains of Chingalee thieves

about Negombo and elsewhere. Will it not be a dreadful terror to them?"

We hurried down to see the body, the bearers of which had rested immediately below the house. It was a very sad sight. The handsome, gallant fellow, from whom I had parted, full of life and action, only a few hours ago, was now lying a lifeless, bloody corpse, his white clothes covered with blood and mud, and his eyes, which used to sparkle with fun and intelligence, fixed in the cold glassy stare of death.

It appeared, that on approaching the house, in which the man of whom they were in search had taken refuge, Hicks had stationed his peons at the door of the building, whilst he himself went to a back window to call on the criminal to surrender. When opening this window, the shot which killed him was fired. It struck him in the throat, destroying the spinal column, and the poor fellow fell dead on the spot. The scoundrel who had fired the fatal shot had however been secured, and was driven along with the mournful procession, having more blows than compliments dispensed to him; his arms firmly tied behind his back, and two peons holding the ends of the rope by which he was thus secured.

"What do you think regarding our conversation of yesterday about presentiments and being fey now?" I asked of Stephens, as we returned from viewing the body.

"I think exactly as I thought yesterday, that it is

all confounded nonsense, and that this is not the place to talk about such rubbish. You go and order my horse," he added, turning to the Mudaliyar, "and I will ride with you to Negombo. I must see the clergyman and consult with him about how this horrible affair is to be communicated to Mrs. Hicks. Green, you will require to amuse yourself the best way you can until my return. You will find plenty of books, guns and ammunition on the premises. If you feel inclined to go shooting, the appu will supply you with all the requisites. If you prefer reading there is a horrid book on my toilet table, which may interest you. It is the autobiography of Vidocq, a French police spy, combining some thrilling narratives of thief-catching with plenty of French sentiment and bombast; so I shall bid you good-bye in the meantime."

I did not over half like this speech of Mr. Stephens's. It sounded, I thought, somewhat cavalierly, and therefore, coming on the back of such a horrid affair as poor Hicks's murder, I did not feel much inclined to amuse myself, either by sporting or reading Vidocq, and therefore I ordered my horse, and mounting it rode into Negombo, where I had an interview with Don Juan de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez, and then I set off for Colombo. I think my journey to Colombo was the most terrible I ever experienced. The sky was without a cloud, and there was scarcely a breath of air stirring. My brain seemed on fire from the scorching blaze of a vertical sun, and how I es-

aped sunstroke has ever since appeared a special miracle to me.

I was the first to bring the tidings of Hicks's murder to the seat of Government, where it created an immense and a very painful sensation. The Europeans in particular were very much excited by the news. This was the third or fourth outrage which had been committed on Europeans "by those vile black scoundrels of natives." "They were losing," it was said, "all respect or terror for their masters, and something would require to be done to change their manners in this respect." I believe, that if the fellow who shot Hicks could have been brought into town at that moment, he would have suffered death by Lynch law, and that without mercy—hanging or shooting was much too good for him, and many worthy Christian men and women suggested the expediency of either roasting the fellow at a slow fire, or flaying him alive, or, what was perhaps better, reverting to some of the native methods of execution by impalement, by pouring melted lead down his throat, or smearing his body with honey and leaving him to be slowly devoured by red ants.

The upshot of this affair was, that the man was never executed. Some quibble of the law got him off the charge of murder, and he was only punished for his former crime and for breaking out of prison, and Hicks's murder remains unavenged until this day.

CHAPTER XXXIX.—“COMING EVENTS CAST
THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE.”

During the whole of the ten years that I had resided in Ceylon, the country had enjoyed a term of almost perfect peace and freedom from every kind of political disturbance. When I returned, after a few months' absence, I found matters very much the reverse of this. The natives were now in an extraordinary state of fermentation and effervescence. The cause of this excitement was not far to seek. The Government of the country was carried on at a very great expense, and the balance in the Treasury was getting lower year by year. The planters were calling for aid to form roads and build bridges, and the merchants were vociferating for a repeal of the export duty on cinnamon and a reduction of import duties, which, they asserted, were ruining the trade of the country. To enable them to meet those demands, by opening new roads and keeping those already in existence in repair, the Government had imposed a poll-tax of three shillings per annum on every able-bodied man, which, however, could be commuted by six days' labour on the roads in the vicinity of his own village. In addition to this, an annual duty of one shilling was imposed on every gun and pistol in the island, and a similar amount as a tax on every dog. It was considered that these imposts were the only means of reaching the great mass of the natives and getting them to contribute to the public expenditure and the general improve-

ment of the country. The entire amount of these taxes does not seem very formidable, but they were felt to be sufficiently grievous in a community where there was not much money circulating; where a labourer's wages was only sixpence per day; where the currency was broken into such small coins as a quarter of a farthing; and where the hundredth share of a single coconut tree was often the cause of protracted litigation.

The natives thought themselves grievously oppressed, and seditious letters were circulated in all the villages throughout the country and read by the priests at every little wihara or Bhuddist temple. Their indignation then rose to something approaching fever heat. A monster meeting had been held in Colombo a short time before my arrival, and the demonstrations of native feeling had been so violent, that the authorities considered it necessary to watch the proceedings, and to have a large force at hand to put down any attempt at seditious violence. A monster petition was signed by the vast multitude, praying for a redress of their grievances, but the meeting did not disperse until there was a show of action on the part of the military, and a few of the ringleaders, who were threatening a return, with arms in their hands, had been ridden over by the Governor's mounted escort and received some strokes from the flat of their swords.

News of the successful revolution of the French and the flight of Louis Philippe arrived at this

time, as also information regarding the apparently equally successful revolutions in Germany, Italy, and Austria, and naturally suggested the thought, that what could be so easily accomplished in Europe might be equally successful in Ceylon. To show how mistaken the natives were in this opinion, the Government authorities got up a grand military display on Galle Face, when the whole force of the district were collected,—horse, foot and artillery,—and were manœuvred by the Commander-in-Chief in person amid the thunder of big guns and the incessant rattle of small arms.

It was believed that this imposing display, when reported amongst the villages of the interior, would have a salutary effect in showing the natives the hopelessness of any outbreak such as was beginning to be whispered about as being under serious contemplation by many of the most influential headmen. It had, however, quite an opposite effect. It was spoken of as showing the fears and alarm of the Government, not its strength; and the murmurs and fermentation amongst the natives, particularly in the Kandyan country, became redoubled. An evening or two after I had gone to Kandy, a crowd of natives, principally from the Doombera country, accompanied by their chiefs and headmen, entered the town in order to expostulate with the Governor, or Colonial Secretary, both of whom were then in Kandy, upon the subject of the new taxes. The latter of these gentlemen made a speech to the assembled throng,

explaining the purport and the absolute necessity for the new imposts; whilst he also tried to disabuse their minds of false reports regarding the intention of the authorities to introduce still more obnoxious taxes and changes in the administration of the island. He did not altogether succeed in his object. On the contrary his explanations had the effect of leading the headmen and people of influence to the belief that it was fear which caused them to be made, and that his recommendations to peaceable and orderly conduct proceeded from the same cause. A vast and secret conspiracy on the part of the natives was the result of these opinions.

The Government had given up to the chiefs the custody of the Dalada, or tooth of Buddha, the palladium of Kandy, which had been taken possession of at the conquest of the country in 1815. This tooth was regarded with much the same veneration as the stone of Scone was regarded by the Scots, and for the same reason, as it was believed that whoever was in possession of this tooth would rule the country. They also professed a belief in an ancient prophecy, to the effect that their country would never be subjected to a foreign yoke, until a road should be bored through a mountain and a bridge thrown across the Mahaweliganga. All this had been accomplished by the British getting possession of the Dalada, with its golden caskets thickly studded with precious stones by the cutting of the tunnel on the Kurunegala road,

and the building of the satinwood bridge at Peradeniya. Now, however, the tooth was again in the possession of the native chiefs, the tunnel had fallen in and become useless, and the bridge was rotten and shewing symptoms of decay. What could all this signify but the speedy decay of the English power, and orders were given by the heads of the conspiracy, that every man should hold himself in readiness to obey the summons, which was to call them to arms, to assist in throwing off the hateful yoke of the foreigners.

Before the final outbreak, however, another large assemblage of the natives took place in Kandy. They poured in, unarmed, from all quarters, and the principal thoroughfares of the city were speedily filled with their increasing numbers. The esplanade, in front of the great temple, was filled with a heaving mass of human beings, which extended out along the Kondesalle road and down to the vicinity of the lower lake.

The chiefs and headmen had gone to the office of the Government Agent to consult with that gentleman about the repeal of their grievance. Of course, he could do nothing, and, what was worse he could promise nothing. He was sure, however, that there would now be no relaxation, and the people were very foolish in making these displays and gathering in crowds, thinking that they could overawe the Government. The new taxes had been imposed after long and mature consideration, and no show of force would compel the Government to rescind them.

Upon this declaration, a fearful storm of vituperation and abuse arose. The vast multitude waved to and fro, as if agitated by some fierce and terrible passion. Yells and hootings arose, such as could only be uttered by Eastern throats; arms were tossed in the air in a perfect frenzy of fury; men tore off their garments, and throwing them on the ground, trampled them in the dust, or danced on them like maniacs. Threats, of no ordinary nature, were uttered against the English Government in general, and the Agent in Kandy in particular, who had been obliged to seek refuge from the storm which he had excited in the octagon of the temple overlooking the esplanade, and where he in vain tried to make himself heard amidst the horrible din, in order to explain matters and possibly allay the tempest which he had excited. It was all in vain. Not a word that he uttered could be heard, and his gestures were simply ridiculous; his round, unmeaning, placid, Saxon countenance, on which terror was visibly imprinted, was a sad parody on the wild frenzy and fierce energy of the raging, frantic multitude seething below him.

“Seize the hound,” “Pull the dog’s liver out of the son of a defiled mother,” “Mince him into meat, fit to be carried,” “Tear him into pieces,” “Throw dirt on his head,” and a thousand equally choice and complimentary phrases were hurled by the yelling rabble at the trembling Agent, who was still frantically gesticulating in the verandah. Some of the armed men entered the verandah and

pressed up against the sentinel—a Scotchman,—who was calmly pacing his round, apparently indifferent to the horrible din and uproar around him, and as if the terrific yelling and screaming of thousands of angry Asiatics were an every-day occurrence, with which he had no concern. The Agent had retreated behind this man, who was the only person who seemed to have preserved any coolness amid all this excited mass of human beings.

When the natives, however, began to obtrude on his post, he too prepared to act.

“Shall I give them a prod, your honour?” he asked of the head of the Government of the town and district as he brought his musket to the charge.

“Do anything you like, only, for God’s sake, keep them off me,” was the dignified reply.

This son of ‘Old Gaul’ was not long in clearing the verandah by judiciously applying the butt-end of his musket to the stomachs and toes of the more forward and intrusive of the natives, but this only redoubled the fury of the thousands of yelling, screaming demoniacs outside. I could now fully realize the frenzy and excitement of an Eastern revolution, when heads fell from the shoulders of Sultans or Rajahs, Viziers or Pashas, and when the vengeance of that many-headed hydra, the people, could not be appeased without a saturnalia of blood.

At this juncture, Mr. Staples, the District Judge,

and a gentleman of colour, marched fearlessly into the very midst of the infuriated multitude, and endeavoured by expostulation and entreaty to quell the tumult and prevail on the mob to disperse. It was a brave and a judicious action on the part of the old man, but it failed in the desired effect. The natives, however, did not attempt to molest him, but treated his expostulations with courtesy and respect. His high character for honour and integrity was too widely known, not to receive its full meed of respect, even at a crisis like the present. The natives listened to what he recommended, but they told him frankly, that if they dispersed now, it would only be to return with arms in their hands and compel redress of the grievances of which they complained.

A small party of Europeans, of which I was one, was standing under the tulip trees by the side of the lake, curious and interested observers of this stormy scene, but it never entered our minds that the rage of the natives would be turned against us. Nor were we mistaken in our impressions. Our presence was as utterly ignored as if we were in Kamschatka or Timbuctoo. A new element, however, now appeared on the scene, and matters began to gather a more serious appearance. The regular tramp, tramp, tramp, of armed men was heard approaching from the direction of the European barracks, and soon the head of a considerable body of soldiers turned into the street leading into the esplanade and drew up at the bottom of it, facing towards the temple.

The officer in command now joined Mr. Staples and ordered the natives to disperse. "Disperse, disperse," the Judge shouted in Sinhalese, "or the soldiers will get orders to fire on you, and your blood will be on your own heads."

Instead of doing this, the yells and shouts broke out with redoubled violence, and the rioters showed every disposition to keep their ground.

"Shoulder arms," was shouted by the officer, as he returned to his place at the head of his men, and there was an immediate clatter of arms, as the muskets were carried as if by a piece of well-adjusted machinery to the shoulder.

"Good heavens! they are surely not going to fire on the poor devils," was uttered with a species of horror by more than one voice amongst the group around me, as we moved slowly down the bund, so as to be out of the line of fire, if the soldiers should really do so.

"Port arms," shouted the officer, and the clatter of the muskets was again heard, followed by the command to "change bayonets," when a line of levelled steel glittered in front of the "thin red line," which stood like a wall at the foot of the esplanade.

"Forward, quick-march," shouted the officer, and the line of redcoats advanced in quick time. The scene which now ensued was a very singular and a very extraordinary one, possessing a good deal of the ridiculous mingled with the tragic, or which, but for the forbearance and good feeling of the soldiers, might have been the tragic.

The front ranks of the rioters, that is, those nearest the soldiers, seeing the turn that the affair had taken, tried to retreat, but their brethren in the rear barred their progress, and a tremendous struggle ensued on the part of those pushing backwards and those pressing forwards, the natives tumbling and rolling over each other in their efforts to escape the bayonets of the advancing soldiers.

“Charge,” roared the officer, and the men advanced with a shout which made the old walls of the temple ring again, and which was echoed from the adjoining buildings with redoubled force.

The effect of this shout was electrical. I felt when I heard it as if a galvanic shock had been driven through my whole frame, whilst loud hurrahs arose from the soldiers as they dashed forward, at a steady double, against the dense masses of the rioters. It seemed as if it would be impossible to avoid bloodshed, but the effect of the charge and the shout which accompanied it was instantaneous. The movement of the front ranks had gradually extended to the rear of the surging crowd, and when the shout was heard and the line of levelled bayonets advanced, the black masses of the natives were retreating faster than the soldiers could advance. They fled, in wild panic, out the Kondesalle road, down by the lake road, past the hospital, and disappeared by every avenue giving egress from the dangerous vicinity of the esplanade, rushing in dense streams, like men running for their lives,

but even then uttering curses both loud and fierce and vows of vengeance to be taken at some future day.

In a marvellously short time, the whole town was freed from the intruders, and thus ended the first act of the Kandyan Rebellion of 1848, which was of sufficient importance to overturn a Ministry at home.

CHAPTER XL.—THE KANDYAN REBELLION OF 1848.

A few days after this I received a letter from my Law agent in Colombo, telling me that the case of Green *versus* the Bank of the Carnatic had been before the District Court, and after a long discussion, the judge had decided it in my favour.

“All right!” I exclaimed, with a joyous shout, when I had perused this paragraph. “But,” the letter went on to say, “the Bank has appealed to the Supreme Court, so that we are not out of the wood yet, and we cannot take possession of your properties, nor compel restitution until this appeal is disposed of, and this will probably take a long time, particularly in the present disturbed state of the country. I have, besides, some doubt regarding the ultimate results, which I will communicate to you in person.”

This was a sad damper to my hopes. I had been waiting on in Kandy for the decision in this case to enable me to go to work again on my old estates and in my old fashion, and O'Brien was idle, or, as he expressed it, “on the staff,” from the same cause.

Wallace, Murray and my other assistants had found employment elsewhere, but Wolffe declared that he "never would desert his colours, especially after a defeat." Juan Sebastian de Zouza Sylvestre Pereira Gomez was comfortably installed as a copying clerk in a proctor's office in Kandy, where he was employed copying deeds, summonses &c. all day long; whilst I sometimes saw the bright eyes of his pretty little wife peeping through the tats, which hung in front of the verandah of a neat little bungalow, at the far-off end of Trincomalee Street. Juan assured me in a magniloquent epistle that "what time your honour's (meaning me) law affairs decided and a Burgher superintendent necessitated to conduct your honour's stupendous and ever-increasing planting and mercantile prosperity in the business of transactions, I, your honour's most confidential and humble adviser, will desert my present employment when served with your summons for that event to follow with sincere advice and loving attachment the fortunes of a devoted and faithful master with respect." This simply meant that, when I was once more in a position to employ him, Juan was quite ready to take service under me again, which was so far satisfactory, as I had a great weakness for having old servants around me, men with whom I had been accustomed to pull, and who could keep time to my stroke oar.

In further proof of something like attachment having an existence in the bosom of Juan and his

wife, that worthy little lady frequently sent me pots of lime pickles, which she made very nicely, lovi-lovi and guava jelly and tamarind syrup; all of which was very gratifying to one's feelings of self-love—the more so, since I had discovered, now that a restoration of my properties was becoming a matter of doubtful import, that people in general did not seem inclined to treat me with that deference and respect to which I had been so long accustomed. In fact, whilst living at the rest-house or club, fellows, who would formerly have considered it an honour to have received any mark of recognition from me in public, now made no scruple of accosting me as "Green," and in treating me in other respects as their equal.

I had gone up to pay a visit to a friend, Mr. Moore, on the Hunasgiria range, at a place called Elkadua. It was a Thursday or Friday evening when I arrived at his bungalow. I had crossed the Mahaweliganga at Lewella, and ridden along "Broughton's trace," then through Tindal's fine estate, the largest tract of planted land, perhaps, in the island. Whilst jogging leisurely along the road, I was somewhat surprised by the immense numbers of natives whom I observed hurrying along in the same direction as myself, every one of whom was armed with gun or spear, and carrying bundles of rice and cooking utensils over their shoulders, as if they expected that their sporting excursion, on which I supposed they were bent, should extend over some days, perhaps weeks. It was no unusual circumstance to meet natives with guns, the re-

verse would have been the exception of the rule; but I never saw them in such numbers as on the present occasion, and they all seemed to be proceeding in the same direction. Many singly, but for the most part in groups of twos and threes, and some in considerable gangs. As I overtook or was overtaken by them, they stepped aside, with the natural courtesy of the Kandyans, to allow me to pass, whilst almost everyone salaamed to me with more deference than usual. I trotted along, giving myself very little trouble about the occasion of this great gathering of armed men, beyond fancying that they might be proceeding to some native festival, such as are by no means uncommon amongst the thickly-scattered villages of the Dumbara country, where the festivities are carried on amidst the popping of fowling-pieces, the firing of gingals and the beating of tomtoms and native drums.

I had reached the stores and barbacues of the Hunasgiria estate, where I halted to speak to one of the assistant superintendents, and to ask for a drink of water, when a complete battalion of armed natives marched up the path, headed by my old foe Manicralle Unnanse and the truculent-looking villain who had made the attempt on my life. Manicralle salaamed profoundly, as also did his coadjutor, whose name I discovered was Poorang Appu, and so also did the whole of their followers as they passed, but they did this as if it were a mere matter of habit, and as if their thoughts and intentions were devoted to affairs of far greater importance than our presence in their path.

"I wonder," I asked Mr. Davidson, the assistant with whom I was speaking, "what is up amongst the natives. I never saw so many of them with guns and spears before. They all seem to be hurrying towards Matale."

"I don't know. I have no idea," was the reply. "They have been streaming through the estate all last night and all day long. A large body of them encamped here during the night; you will see the marks of their fires all round about the place. I came from Kandy with Boyd, who told me that he had been dining at Gerard's the previous evening, where he met Hanna, the Police Magistrate, who asked him if the natives were all quiet in his district, and requested him as a favour to advise the Arachchies and Vidanes and other headmen not to take part in any disturbance, but to report any gathering of natives which took place in the neighborhood. This would look amazingly like as if the authorities anticipated a row of some sort, but it would be absurd in these darkies to try any game of that kind against Europeans. Wouldn't it now?"

Absurd or not, I had now no doubt but that the natives were about to try some game such as that suggested, and I put spurs to my nag and trotted along the road, rather more than usually desirous of getting to the end of my journey before nightfall.

I reached Moore's bungalow without further incident, and there I found two or three other

planters, to whom I communicated what I had seen and heard, and also my opinion that some dangerous disturbance was in contemplation by the natives.

“Disturbance! bah!”—the idea was absurd “The natives were not game enough to kick up any disturbance, and even if they did, we”—meaning the European part of the community—“would soon make mincemeat of them.”

I begged to differ from this view of the case. I was of opinion that if the natives did rise in earnest, that they might soon make mincemeat of us, particularly of the planters who were scattered through the jungles at wide distances apart, and in most instances without the means of organising any system of common defence with their neighbours. I could not see then, and I do not see now, after I have had some experience of military matters, what is to prevent a very small body of men, acting on the defensive, from keeping at bay almost any number of troops that could possibly be brought against them in such a country as the Kandyan mountains of Ceylon. As for the planters, short work could easily be made of them by a very few men watching the roads leading to the estates, and cutting them off singly or stopping their supplies. However, I have no intention of giving the natives a lesson on the means of destroying my own countrymen, and although I did, they have not the energy or manhood to take advantage of it. The evening was spent in the usual manner, “with songs and clatter” and uproarious laughter.

I have never been able to account for the reason that planters laugh so much at very small jokes, when they spend the evening in company with each other. They were, in general, rather a taciturn and hard-headed set of fellows. I fancy that it arises from having to keep themselves upon their dignity before the natives, and the reaction when amongst themselves leads to an extra exuberance and outburst of animal spirits.

About 9 o'clock the strangers took their departure, and Moore, his assistant, myself and the other members of the household had retired to bed. It might have been about 4 o'clock in the morning when I was awakened by a loud thumping upon the shutters of my bedroom window and cries of "Doorai, Doorai" ("Master, master"). I jumped out of bed and opened the shutters. Outside there were about a dozen Tamils, considerably excited, as is the habit of that excitable race when anything unusual occurs. They were jabbering all at one time and gesticulating like imps in an opera, under a canopy of smoke exhaling from the choulas or torches which they carried in their hands.

"*Chingalee all, meechem perillee numorothi, Matella wooda.*" ("The Cingalese men are kicking up an awful row down in the Matale direction"), was the burden of their song, as they handed me a note, addressed to my host, Mr. Moore. It contained the startling intelligence that the natives were indeed up in armed rebellion, that they had crowned a member of the late royal family as king, and

they were in full march, in overwhelming numbers, on Kandy. It also mentioned that several coffee estates had already been attacked, the stores and bungalows plundered, and the Europeans driven off, and that it would be expedient for Moore and his assistants to come over to Elkadua, a neighbouring plantation, where a stand was proposed to be made, bringing all their firearms and ammunition with them.

This was rather startling intelligence, and we acted in a very ridiculous manner on receiving it, that is, we went back to our beds and slept until daybreak. A council of war was then held, when it was unanimously resolved to obey the summons and go over to Elkadua. We found the bungalow there already filled with Europeans,—ladies, gentlemen and children,—with their quota of native servants, ayahs and horsekeepers, each more excited than the other, some fearing a siege and some glorying in the idea of having a brush with the natives, some cleaning and loading guns, some melting lead and casting bullets, which the nimble fingers of the ladies were busy making up into cartridges under the instructions of a retired army officer. The manager of the estate was superintending a gang of coolies filling mat and gunny bags with earth and building them into a rampart around the bungalow. Everyone was anxious for news, and every hour some new rumour reached us regarding the doings of the natives. Old Waring, the Government Agent in Matale, had bolted, it was said; so also had the whole of his subordinate

officials, police peons and all. The rebels were in possession of the town, where they had looted Waring's bungalow, sacked the Kachcheri and bazaar and robbed the Treasury. They were said to be organising their forces, preparatory for a march on Kandy, which they were certain of being able to capture.

As the day wore on some Europeans dropped in and added to our party, most of whom were able to tell stirring tales regarding their adventures with the natives. They had, for the most part received formal notices from the natives to evacuate the properties of which they were in charge, and as these notices were accompanied by formidable demonstrations of force, they had been compelled to obey them. Although escaping personal molestation, they had the pain of seeing their neat bungalows sacked, furniture taken out and destroyed, their machinery smashed, and in one or two instances the buildings given to the flames.

I met a gentleman, Alick Ker, a few days later, who had been summoned out in this manner. He had a double-barrelled rifle, but only a limited supply of ammunition, a bullet for each barrel. When ordered to evacuate the premises by an advancing swarm of natives, he did so, retreating very deliberately up the hill towards the Kellebokka valley, stopping every now and again to watch the proceedings of the rebels. He saw his chairs and tables, his sideboard and bedsteads, sofas and

bookcases, almirahs and cellarets, tumbled from door and window, and thrown into a promiscuous heap, preparatory to being made a bonfire of; his crockery and glassware smashed; his writing desk broken open and its contents scattered over the neighbouring fields by a crowd of some five or six hundred armed natives, and he did not dare to interfere. Alick, however, had been fattening a goose which he intended should grace his hospitable board on Michaelmas or Christmas day, and one of the spoilers had got his hands on the animal and was leaping from a window and running off, with the poor goose flapping in his arms. This was tasking the forbearance of the North Briton to too great an extent. He could not stand by and see a rascally Cingalese man walking off with his Christmas dinner without lodging a protest against so nefarious a proceeding. He accordingly raised his rifle to his shoulder, and, taking a deliberate aim at the thief, fired. The man rolled on the ground, and the goose escaping made off amongst the coffee bushes. The effects of the shot did not end there, for there was an instant evacuation of the despoiled bungalow, by the rebel crew, the blackguards swarming from doors and windows, which Ker, who was a man of few words, said "was like the fleein' oot of a swarm of angry bees from a byke" or hive. The whole party took to flight in a great panic, from the effect of that one shot, and the estate was much more speedily evacuated by the rebels than it had been occupied by them.

The hero of this achievement was quite satisfied with the results of his victory, and marched leisurely over to his brother's bungalow at Cabragalla, which was situated at the distance of only a mile or two from the scene of this exploit.

On another plantation the manager had been from home when the disturbance broke out, and the property was left in charge of an old cangany, who had been a sepoy in the Madras army. When this man learned that the Kandyans were in open revolt, and that a large party of them were in full march for the estate of which he had charge, he dressed a number of his fellow Tamils in his master's clothes to make them look like Europeans, and armed them with some old guns and muskets that happened to be about the place. Those who had not guns took possession of heavy ebony sticks, axes and cattles, and when the rebels advanced on the bungalow, intent on plunder, this small party of Tamils received them with a volley from their guns, and then charging with loud shouts and horrible yells, and before the Kandyans had recovered from this unlooked-for welcome, drove the intruders—many hundreds in number—headlong down the hill, capturing and wounding more of the enemy than they numbered themselves. The Government very properly rewarded this gallant fellow of a sepoy with a considerable sum of money, besides presenting him with a gold medal, struck to commemorate his exploit.

As the day wore on, we heard that almost all the

burgalows and coffee stores to the east of us and those on the hills on the other side of Matale had been sacked, and towards the afternoon information was brought that a large party of Kandyan were in full march for Elkadua, and that we might expect to see them enter the estate in a few minutes. We could hear distinctly the shouts of a vast crowd and the popping of guns in the jungle at the bottom of the property, which noise was evidently got up with the object of intimidating us. An order was sent by a Tamil cangany, to the leader of this party, who had the discretion to keep both himself and his men under cover and beyond the reach of our fire-arms, demanding in the name of Gongalla Gedara Banda, the new King of Kandy, that we should quit the property in the space of ten minutes, on the penalty of having our lives all sacrificed if we should remain a moment longer. The cangany declined to return with our message of defiance, so we contented ourselves by hanging out an old ship's ensign as a token that we meant to show fight and had no thought or intention of retreating. We could see a few of the rebels here and there, along the edge of the jungle reconnoitring our position, but as we treated them to a shot or two from our rifles, they thought advisable to keep at a safe distance and not attempt any further advance.

We placed Tamil scouts along the roads and patrolled them ourselves when night fell, but we saw no further trace of the natives. They had

decamped after dark and left us to congratulate ourselves on a bloodless victory.

Next morning, as I had no intention of remaining shut up in Elcadua, I left, in spite of the warnings of my friends, that if I went away my life would not be worth an hour's purchase, with the object of finding my way back to Kandy, via the Kellaboka valley. I reached Mr. Robertson's bungalow at Pittakanda about breakfast time, and as I found that gentleman in undisturbed possession of his goods and chattels, although deserted by almost all his hands on the estate, who on the first rumour of hostilities had retreated by the road which I proposed taking, and about to sit down to that social meal, I gladly joined him and partook of a hearty breakfast whilst discussing the disturbed state of affairs around us, which my host, who was a bit of a philosopher, seemed inclined to take a very cool view of.

“What's the use of bothering ourselves about the matter?” he asked. “The insurrection, if it should ever attain the dimensions of an insurrection, will either be successful, or it will be put down in the course of a few days. In the one case, nothing but the clemency of the natives, which is certainly not to be depended on, can save us from destruction, and in the other case we will be as safe here as we can possibly be in Kandy without the risk which we must necessarily run in trying to get there. If we run away now, we will have a worse chance than if we were to re-

main. The route by Kellaboka is open, and what with the Knuckles fellows and those along the valley, besides the Europeans at Elcadua and on other estates along this range, we could muster a very fair force of plucky fellows and be able to make a good stand in any of the coffee stores if we can manage to get a sufficient store of provisions to hold out until we should be relieved." This was the very view of the matter that had occurred to myself, and I therefore asked him why he had not made any preparations to carry his ideas into execution.

"I have made preparations," he answered, "and I am ready to bolt at a moment's warning, only there is Forbes and Lakeman and one or two others between me and the rebels, and I intend waiting until they see the necessity for retreat before I decamp. Look here, there is my fowling-piece and there are my pistols and all the ammunition which I possess, and that is my father's sword, which he wore when he was a Major in the Buchan Local Militia. He never had an opportunity of fleshing it, although the town in which he was stationed was once threatened with a bombardment by a French privateer, from which fate it was saved by the presence of a sloop of war, which happened to be in the harbour, and which went out, engaged and captured the enemy. It is not likely that I shall ever come to such close quarters as to use it against an enemy, the natives won't give us the chance, but if I do, I shall try and not disgrace its original owner," he

added, as he drew the shining blade from its steel scabbard and wiped it affectionately on his sleeve.

"I esometime think there is fighting making ready, down the Warriapola way," said the appu, an old Malay man, as he removed the cloth. "I esometime hear gun-fire, pop, pop, poper-op," imitating a scattered fire of musketry.

"By heavens! there it is sure enough," cried Robertson, his face glowing with excitement, like a war horse sniffing the battle afar off, as a roll of musketry came floating up the valley over the tree-tops and was echoed faintly from the surrounding rocks and steep hillsides. "There it is—that's file firing, or else the irregular firing of scattered bodies of men, but ah! that's another volley from regulars, no mistaking that. They're at it sure enough, and only two or three miles off as the crow flies. By Jove! let's get our horses and go down and see the fun. There goes another rattle. Many a poor wretch has looked his last upon the sun this forenoon."

"There go detached shots," he continued, after a pause, during which all sound of firing ceased; "one or other of the hostile parties have taken to their heels, and these are the shots from the other in pursuit." In a few minutes this desultory firing had also ceased and a painful silence succeeded. Far down in the valley we could see white smoke rising above the tree-tops and becoming gradually absorbed in the atmosphere, and this was all the

indication that remained of the action which had evidently been fought a very few miles below us.

Robertson was extremely desirous of pushing down to learn the result of the engagement, but I opposed this, as also did another gentleman, Mr. Forbes, who now joined us on the parade ground in front of the bungalow. Mr. Forbes had also heard the firing and had come up, bristling with arms, like a theatrical brigand. to talk over the affair with his nearest neighbour.

“No use going now,” he said, “because the natives, if defeated, will be skulking in the jungles between this and the scene of action, and would, without doubt, pop us off in revenge; whereas, if they have beaten off our troops, which, however, is not very probable, and we were to fall into their hands in the first flush of their victory, we would fare much the same as Claverhouse’s troopers did when they fell into the hands of the fanatical Covenanters, ‘a rope and a short shrift,’” Mr. Forbes illustrating his meaning by passing his hand round his neck and then pointing upwards to the branches of a high tree near at hand. Whilst we were still conversing, a long troop of lowcountry Cingalese sawyers, carpenters and other tradesmen, who had collected from all the neighbouring plantations, came pouring through the estate on their way to the Kellaboka valley, through which they evidently expected to make good their retreat towards their own homes. I never saw such a crowd of men in such a state of panic. Had they been

the remains of a beaten army, with an enemy thundering in pursuit at their heels, they could not possibly have been more terror-stricken. They could give us no news; in fact they would not stop to speak, but pointing with terror in the direction of the late firing, gasped something about fighting and then redoubled their speed past the bungalow. We were kept in a sad state of nervous uncertainty during the whole of that afternoon, with regard to the result of the fight; but towards evening, a Tamil cangany came from Newera Kanda, a few miles nearer to the scene of action, by the road, and brought the gratifying intelligence that the natives had been utterly defeated. "Thousands on thousands of the Cingalese men are slain," this veracious news-bringer assured us. "The ground around the Warriapola store was heaped with the dead, whilst millions of wounded men were crawling in the jungles, where they were certain to die from pain and hunger. The fight exceeded in obstinacy and bloodshed the great battle of anjeveram, whilst the storming of the store exceeded the taking of Seringapatam."

Of course we had to make allowance for native exaggeration, but after all, it seemed as if a very severe fight had taken place; and we were half afraid and half resolved to ride down and see the scene of action. It was however beginning to get dark, and as there was no moon, we very prudently deferred the execution of this project until the following morning.

When we got down to the Warriapola river, we could see a black head here and there, along the banks, gazing stealthily at us, and hastily drawing back into the jungle, as we plunged our horses into the stream. These were probably wounded men, who had crawled down to the river to drink. When we got to the store—the spot where the fight had been hottest, the sight was sufficiently horrible, but not quite so much so as the cangany's narrative had let us to expect. On a patch of ground, about an acre in extent, we counted eighteen dead bodies of natives lying on the ground with big green flies swarming in myriads around their wounds, whilst the atmosphere was polluted with the effluvium from the swollen bodies, which were fast decomposing under the influence of the hot sunshine. One man had got the crown of his head shorn off above the eyes, evidently from a blow by the butt-end of a musket, and his brains were putrefying on the grass. Another fellow had a hole in his side, which looked as if it had been caused by the fragment of a shell or a ball from a big gun. I was afterwards told by one of the officers engaged, that a Malay soldier had driven his crease into the man's side, and, in the frenzy of his excitement, wriggled it there until it had made the horrible opening which I had seen. It was a disgusting as well as a humiliating and horrible spectacle to see the wholesale butchery that had been committed in the space of a few short minutes; and there was a fearful fascination in walking amongst and examining those putrefying

relics of humanity, which now seems to me altogether unaccountable. I fancy that it is much the same sort of feeling which causes people to linger, in Madame Toussaud's "Chamber of Horrors" or visit such places as the Paris Morgue or anatomical exhibitions. After having fully satisfied our curiosity, we adjourned to the upper floor of the store, from whence the natives had first opened fire on our troops, and where one of them had been shot in the act of jumping from the roof of the verandah, when they were beginning to retreat. We found a palanquin, or the remains of one, which had borne his most sacred majesty, the new monarch of Kandy, thus far from Dambool, on his way to the metropolis of his dominions.

We had brought about a score of Tamil coolies with us as well armed as our circumstances would permit, and the rascals were in great glee at the possibility of having a fight with the Cingalese men. We were giving them instructions to gather the remains of the palanquin and a number of native spears, with elaborately lacquered handles, which were scattered about the ground, when we were startled by the sound of men's voices proceeding from the jungle at no great distance off. The language was Cingalese, and judging from the sound, a large body of men were rapidly advancing toward us. In a few minutes they had made their way to the front of the store, about a hundred in number. They had evidently come to look for the wounded and perhaps bury their dead. Some

had guns or spears, but by far the greater number were unarmed. I felt certain that we were in for a shindy, but I soon saw, by the motions of the Kandyans, that our presence was perfectly unknown to them, and was not even suspected.

The stair leading to the upper storey, where we were collected, was outside the building, having a landing under a projecting porch. Forbes went to this landing. I thought he was very rash in doing so, and holloed to the natives demanding what business had brought them there. Had a bomb-shell fallen into their midst, the effect could not have been more instantaneous and remarkable. With a startled yell they bolted into the jungle and disappeared in a moment, leaving us undisputed masters of the field.

"*Veni, vidi, vici,*" cried Robertson with a laugh.

"Better be off," I remarked, "as long as the coast is clear. When these fellows see how few in number we are, they may return and send us to keep their brethren company who are lying about outside."

"Be off. Where to?" asked Forbes.

"I am for Matella," I replied. "I shall be glad of your company, but I am not going to return to the hill. I want to learn what is doing amongst the military and get a chance of seeing some service."

"We may also go too," Robertson remarked; "there is no use in returning to the hills at present.

If the estates are attacked we would be able to do precious little to defend them, and we may as well learn at headquarters the nature and extent of the rising, as remain in a state of uncertainty and anxiety regarding it."

Acting on this decision, we were soon tearing along the Matella road, followed by our body-guard of Tamil coolies, who were loud in their expressions of contempt or defiance of "the Chinglese fellows, who were kicking up all this bobbery."

On reaching Matella, we found several companies of soldiers, European and Malay, encamped near the bazaar. This usually dull station was now all life and bustle. Red and dark green uniforms were met with at every corner, whilst the white jackets of European planters and other civilians were more than usually plentiful. We here learned the particulars of the fight of the previous day. The natives were found occupying the store, the bungalow and other buildings on Warriapola. They drew up in regular order, on the approach of the military, and when ordered to disperse by Buller, the Government Agent in Kandy, who read the Riot Act, they fired a volley in reply, which, happily, was aimed too high and did little damage, beyond wounding an European soldier in the thigh.

The soldiers were then ordered to fire upon the dense masses of the Kandyans, who replied with a few scattered shots, but did not quit their ranks,

appearing resolved to stand their ground and dispute every inch of it. A second volley, however, which did more execution than the first, created some confusion, and a dropping fire from a body of skirmishers, who had been extended on their flank, completed this discomfiture, and they fled in panic-terror, making for the cover of the nearest jungle, where it would have been worse than useless to pursue them. It was calculated that their dead and wounded must have amounted to upwards of a hundred men, but this was never clearly ascertained, as all the wounded and most of the dead were hid in the surrounding jungles, from whence they were ultimately carried away by their friends. Some prisoners had been taken, who had been sent into Kandy, to be tried by the civil power.

As we were talking to the officer who gave us this information, a runner came into the station with dispatches, announcing that the whole of the Central Province, that is the Kandyan country, had been placed under martial law, and this fact was forthwith proclaimed. Various rumours were in circulation of risings and gatherings of the natives in many different localities, and parties of troops were sent out to patrol the roads, and if possible, gain certain intelligence of the rebel movements. We were assured that a grand attack was to be made on the camp that night, and every one was making preparations to repel it. The commanding officer, Captain Watson, told us, that

if we wished to make ourselves useful, we might take up our station at a place which was pointed out to us, and in the event of being attacked, use our fowling-pieces to the best possible advantage. I liked the bustle and excitement of the camp, and so also did my companions, and as we stood under the shelter of a bullock bandy, after it became dark, smoking one's cheroots and wondering when the expected attack would commence, we all agreed that it was "very jolly, only somewhat slow work." Eight, nine, ten and twelve o'clock passed, and still no enemy put in an appearance. Our cheroots were smoked out, our brandy flasks were empty, and we were yawning like people listening to a dull sermon, when the sentry on our right challenged

"Advance or I fire," he roared first in English and then in Cingalese.

We listened for the reply, but none came, although we could distinctly hear the trampling of feet a short distance to the front. The silence was broken by the report of the sentry's rifle, followed by a rush of footsteps and a sudden trampling, in the direction from whence the noise was first heard. A blaze of musketry burst from a picket near us, followed by the crash of half a score of muskets, and following so laudable an example, our party also blazed away with our fowling-pieces taking aim at a white object, which I fancied I saw moving slowly along our front, and then reloaded with nervous rapidity.

“By Jove! we have done for them,” cried Robertson, in great excitement, as he jumped to the other side of the bandy. “I heard something fall, and there it is moaning, about twenty yards off.”

All was now perfectly still, with the exception of the moaning in question, which could be distinctly heard about the distance which Robertson mentioned.

“What’s all this firing about?” demanded the sharp voice of an officer, who came up with his sword clanking at his heels and a revolver in his hand.

“Don’t know,” I answered, “the sentry fired first and ran in to the picket, they then fired, and after that we let fly, and, I believe, have bagged some fellow or fellows away in the front. You will hear them moaning there, that’s them, evidently in great pain, just listen.”

“Get a light some of you fellows,” he roared, “and come here and see who or what has been shot.”

In the meantime, the camp was fairly aroused. Bugles were sounding in one corner and drums beating in another; whilst the hoarse word of command and the measured tread of armed men seemed to come from every point of the compass.

When the light was procured, we cautiously approached the object of all this fuss, which lay moaning piteously, a very short distance in front of us,

"I believe it's a donkey, sir," said one of the soldiers, addressing the officer.

"I believe that you are a donkey," was the courteous reply. "Don't you see that it's a horse?"

"And it is my horse, too," I cried, as I drew near and examined the wounded and dying quadruped. "I should rather say that he is Hamilton's, for I hired the brute from him, and I'll have to pay smartly for my hire now."

By this time a knot of officers, with most of whom I was personally acquainted, had gathered to the spot attracted by the light, and joined in the merriment and laughter, which this untoward accident occasioned; and I was glad to escape from the unmerciful chaffing I had to undergo regarding my watchfulness and zeal, to say nothing about my skill with firearms.

I left Matella the following morning, disgusted with the camp and my misadventure there, and trudged in to Kandy on foot in company with a small Ensign, who was in charge of a detachment of Malays, guarding a batch of prisoners who were being sent to the town.

How my unfortunate animal had managed to get outside the lines I was never able to learn. His feeding had probably been neglected, and he had gone in search of food himself, and hence his unfortunate ending; unfortunate, so far as I was concerned, for I had to disburse nearly forty pounds for a beast not worth ten.

When I reached Kandy I found that ancient city in a state of bustle and excitement, such as I had never witnessed before. Planters from every corner of the Central Province had come in: some to put their wives and families into a place of safety; some, who had neither wife nor family, to place papers or other valuables in safe keeping. Some had come in to take care of their own precious persons, and a large majority had come to town because they had nowhere else to go, having been turned out of house and home by the insurgents, and sent trudging without so much as a change of linen to bless themselves with.

The hotels and clubhouse were swarming with strangers, and the owners of private houses in the town had their hospitality taxed to an extent that they had never before experienced.

The planters, to give them their due meed of praise, were full of fight as Englishmen, Scotchmen and Irishmen always are. O'Brien was in his element. He waited on the Commandant of the town and offered to organize the planters who had already come in into a flying column, "who would go anywhere and do anything," and great was his disappointment when this offer was politely declined.

There was a great display of arms at the rest-house. Every person there had got possession of some weapon, in the shape of sword, pistol,

fowling-piece or rifle; and the entire collection would have gone far to stock a moderate museum of arms, both ancient and modern. There was every description of firearm, from Sandy Gray's pistol which had been at Philiphaugh to a modern Joe Manton or a theatrical blunderbuss, from old Scottish Andrew Ferraras to Malay creases and Afghan tulwars, from ship's cutlasses to blades of Damascus and Toledo steel and formidable-looking pikes, which had been captured in the first Burmese war. When I entered the verandah of the hotel, it required an effort of the imagination to believe that the men, who were there congregated, had many of them to fly for their lives and had narrowly escaped with them that very mourning on the previous day. The doleful tales of plundered bungalows and hairbreadth escapes only elicited roars of laughter, as the ridiculous aspects of the incidents were related to appreciative audiences. One man had galloped through a large body of the rebels on the Matella road. He had been fired at, and had treated his assailants to a shot from one of his pistols in return. In drawing his other pistol from his belt, it fell to the ground, and was instantly picked up by a native and fired at its owner, the bullet whirring close past his ear.

[With reference to the evident mixture of "fact and fiction," given by the author in Chapter XXXVIII, No. 41 of the *Literary Register*, it may be well to offer the following authentic information in re-

ference to a personal career rather fully referred to:—
 ‘ Mr. Walbeoff, the Principal Superintendent of Cinnamon Plantations, was not Dutch, but Welsh, of an old Pembroke family, members of whom had been Governors of the Isle of Man. He married a daughter of Baron Von Linden of the Dutch Army. He was killed by a cheetah while hunting in Ceylon. His wife was separated from him for some years. After his death, she married Capt. Irving of a Westmoreland family, and after his death she went to England with an infant daughter. She married a third time, after the death of her second husband, Capt. Fagan, and lived after his death for many years with her daughter, Mrs. Noble, in whose house she died at a good old age.’—ED. L. R.]

CHAPTER XLI.—THE KANDYAN

REBELLION : (*Continued.*)

The editors of the *Colombo Observer* were having curses, both loud and deep, showered upon their unlucky heads, it being the generally-expressed opinion that the incendiary articles in their journal had been the principal cause of the present insurrection. It was proposed that the whole body of planters then present should ride down to Colombo and serve their houses and offices in the same manner as their bungalows had been served—gut them and smash the whole of their contents! Without a doubt, had the premises thus threatened been at only half the distance from the proposers of this measure,

that is, thirty-six instead of seventy-two miles, they would have been plundered, perhaps burned, by the irate planters. But a ride to Colombo and back was no joke, and the would-be incendiaries contented themselves by recording their opinion of the editors' conduct in a formidable document, embodying a series of resolutions by no means flattering to his patriotism.*

While listening to all this babel of talk, the Commandant's aide-de-camp came galloping up and asked if I had seen O'Brien, or could tell him where he was to be found. The Commandant had thought better of Wolffe's offer and had resolved to take advantage of it. The insurrection, the aide-de-camp told us, was spreading on all sides, and there was not a sufficient number of troops in the town to send out in such detachments as were required, in many parts of the disturbed districts. The natives had attacked a detachment sent to Kornegalle and had been repulsed with difficulty, and there were other gatherings reported as having taken place in the Four Korles and Lower Doombera. In fact, it was reported, that a large body of rebels were in full march across the Doombera Valley, towards the Lewella ferry, with the intention of

* Mr. Boyd's account of the so-called "Rebellion," it must be remembered, is coloured and exaggerated to suit the purpose of a story; the stand taken by the editors of the *Observer* (Dr. Elliott and Mr. A. M. Ferguson) in the "forties" was justified in Parliament, when Messrs. Gladstone and Disraeli both voted on their side and against the Government, leading to the recall of the then Governor of Ceylon, Lord Torrington.—Ed. *L.R.*

making an attack on Kandy. If then Mr. O'Brien would get all the gentlemen mustered, who were willing to take arms and assist in the defence of the town, he would be doing good service to the Government by bringing them to the Cutchery and relieving the guard there.

"All right!" cried Wolffe, who had made his appearance in person and received the "Aide's" message. "I'm the boy that will do it."

"I say lads," he holloaed to the crowds in the back verandah and billiard-room,—“I've turned recruiting sergeant,—come, who'll take the shilling? I have orders to raise a guard of Europeans for the Cutchery, and also to organize a squadron to scour the hills, so who's going to volunteer and join Her Majesty's service?"

"I will Wolffe, my boy," I said, "holding out my hand for the promised shilling.

"And I, and I, and I," roared about a hundred voices at once, "fork out the coins and let us liquidate them in soda and brandy and cheroots."

"I only spoke metaphorically when I mentioned the shilling," Wolffe said. "The Government had not contemplated engaging such a set of sordid mercenary blackguards, and therefore they have neglected to send a supply of the dibs, and faith and it's very short of that same I am myself; but never mind, boys, my credit is good, and I'll stand brandy and soda all round. Here, appu, serve out any quantity of liquor and cheroots and chalk them

all down to my account. It's my first command, and by the mother of Moses, we'll wet the commission."

"Confound you, you rascal," he continued, addressing the appu, "don't give more than one bundle of cheroots to each gentleman. Come, don't take advantage of a fellow, or I'll stop the supplies," as a scramble took place for possession of the tray with the articles in question. "Fair play, gentlemen, let's have fairplay and don't cheat the Commissariat at the beginning of campaign. By Jove! it's time that we were at our posts; come along and fall in two deep; that's it, now form fours. Oh! you blockheads, I never saw such a set of omadshaun in the whole course of my life. Now that's better," he added, as after much shifting he succeeded in getting us placed four deep, facing towards the barracks. "Now, step off with the left foot and hold your heads well up and your shoulders square, to the front, forward—quick march," sang out my late manager, as he placed himself at the head of two or three score of his fellow-planters and marched proudly up the town to the Cutchery.

We were closely followed by a large force of regulars, artillery and infantry, who passed us on the esplanade, on their way to oppose the army, which, we had been told, was crossing Doomberra. The bugles were sounding in the Malay lines, telling that the rifles were likewise in motion, and we soon saw a line of dark-green uniforms, surmounted by glittering bayonets, crossing the bund, or embarkment,

at the lower end of the lake. Our post was at the Cutchery, where an old Irish sergeant was detailed to give us some preliminary drill, before the enemy should attack us. That is, he taught us to fall in two deep, when old rifles, with flint locks and sword bayonets, together with sixty rounds of ball cartridges, were served out to each of us. We were then put through a course of instruction in facing and wheeling, in extending and closing, in loading, firing and charging bayonets, and after two or three hours of this amusement, we were told we might "fall out," which we did, with marvellous celerity and extended ourselves on the benches of the Audience Hall of the Kandyan monarchs, or on the grass under the large trees near it,

Whilst thus reclining, we saw the body of soldiers, who had marched out towards Doombera, marching back to their quarters. The rumour of the advance of the rebels had proved false. It had been raised by some of the bazaar people; and an old gentleman, named Morrison had constituted himself into a sort of civil Provost Marshal and was searching the town for Gullalung Saib, a distinguished Moorman merchant, who had spread and probably originated the report, with the view of handing him over for punishment to the tender mercies of the military authorities.

The Civil Courts were shut, and proctors and notaries were getting leisure to bite their finger nails or bring up arrears of office work. Rumours of battle and murder and sudden death were flying about in all directions.

Signal fires were seen every evening blazing on almost every mountain top, whilst on the lower eminences they would lighten up suddenly, and after blazing for an hour or two become as suddenly extinguished. The purport of these fires was said to be distinctly understood by the natives and they were indications that the country was in a very disturbed condition. With the exception, however, of the small army which had been dispersed at Warriapola, and the party which had attacked the military at Kornegalle, there did not seem to be any permanent gathering of natives, in large bodies, in any other district of the country, although rumours of intended concentrations of the whole fighting force of the Kandyans were rife enough, but these rumours all fortunately turned out to be without foundation.

In the course of the afternoon we learned that a priest had been taken prisoner and brought into town, that he had been tried by a court-martial and sentenced to be shot. He had been one of the principal originators it was said of the insurrection, had assisted to crown the pretended king, and had administered treasonable oaths to some of the Bandas and headmen in Doombera.

The evidence against the man was quite conclusive, and left no doubt of his guilt, and sentence of death had been passed on him accordingly. Whilst this information was conveyed to me, the poor fellow was on his way to meet his doom.

The place of execution was at the foot of the gallows hillock, near the western entrance of the town. A stout stake had been driven into the ground and the doomed man was being tied to it, as a few more planters and myself, prompted by a morbid curiosity, drew near the place of execution. What was my horror to recognise in the poor culprit my old foe, Manicralle Unanse. I had been labouring under a vague impression that he was the man sentenced to be shot from the moment that I heard that it was a priest, who was to undergo this fate, yet I was shocked and horrified much more than I could have anticipated, when I recognised the poor maniac, for such I believed him to be, in so dreadful a situation. The recognition was mutual. His fiery eye blazed up with its old glow, as he shouted to me:—"Yes, this is right. I am glad that you have come to see how a heathen dog can die, butchered by your bloody laws. There is no imploring of mercy by me, the old heathen has no craven fear of death. I can meet the doom which your countrymen have decreed without fear or shrinking. They can but destroy this old body and then the spirit will be free—free—free."

"Keep away from the prisoner," was bawled by the sergeant in command of the firing party, motioning me away with an angry wave of his arm.

"Right subdivision, ten paces forward—quick march."

As the men moved forward the desired number of paces, one of the soldiers, who had bound the Unansee to the stake, tied a handkerchief round his eyes. The old man tried to protest against this proceeding, by moving his head from side to side, but it was at last accomplished, in spite of his efforts to prevent it. When the soldier retired, the sergeant gave the word of command by the motion of his stick, one, two, three, when the muskets of the firing party were brought to the make ready, present, and whilst the vast crowd, who had gathered to witness the execution, still held their breaths in painful silence, ten muskets belched forth their latent fires, and before the blue smoke had ceased to rise from the muzzles of the muskets, the spirit of Manicralle Unansee had been set free, his venerable head had fallen on his bloody bosom, and his saffron-coloured robes were being overspread by a crimson dye. Thus perished the poor old priest whom I, in a thoughtless moment and for the sake of a silly frolic, had so grievously and so bitterly offended, and whose hearty malediction I had so lately received in return. Poor old man! the person whom he hated most bitterly in all that vast concourse, who had assembled to see him die, was, I believe, the one who sorrowed most over his fate. The soldiers were cutting the body from the stake as I turned away from this scene of death and retraced my steps to the hotel, where a body of planters was being organized to proceed to the Hunasgiria and

other coffee estates in the Matella district, to relieve those European families who might be, or supposed themselves to be, shut up by the rebels, and to bring the ladies and children into a place of safety.

I was too sick at heart from the sad scene I had just witnessed, to think of accompanying them. I preferred remaining in town and making myself useful to the authorities in any other way that the course of events might suggest, for, in the disturbed state of the country, it was difficult to say what might occur next. I saw O'Brien ride off at the head of this expedition, which I must confess had rather an imposing and serviceable appearance, notwithstanding the incongruous materials of which it was composed and the laughing and chaffing which was going on in the ranks. I heard my manager's clear voice giving the word of command, as they trotted up Trincomalie Street ; and then I wended my way back to the hotel where I had fortunately been able to secure a room all to myself, which was a matter of some consideration, at a time when rooms could scarcely be got to accommodate the crowds of strangers who were then flocking into the town. The expedition which I saw depart, and which I felt sorry afterwards that I did not accompany, made the circuit of the Hunasgiria estates, returning I think by Kellabooka and Madoolkelle, but without encountering a single enemy. They did not even relieve any of the parties of Europeans who were sup-

posed to be besieged by the rebels, for the simple reason that they did not choose to be relieved. The planters on the west side of the mountain were resolved to remain and, if necessary, make a stand against the natives at Elcadua; whilst those on the north side were equally resolved to defend themselves at Cabragalla.

The wives would not leave their husbands, and their husbands would not leave the properties committed to their charge. Some of the more spirited and influential of the planters got a supply of rifles and ammunition from the military authorities, and trained select bands of their Tamil coolies on whom they could depend in the use of them, whilst those coolies who had not rifles or fowling-pieces were provided with pikes (formidable-looking weapons they were) similar to those used by the Scottish infantry in olden times, or those still used in Her Majesty's navy for purposes of boarding. I have no doubt but the men so trained would have beat off superior numbers of the Cingalese, had these latter dared to attack them; but the insurrection subsided almost as suddenly as it had commenced. The active and energetic measures of Captain Watson at Matella,—some people called them bloody and unnecessary,—and the wise arrangements of Colonel Drought in Kandy, to say nothing of the repulses at Kornegalle and Wariapola, threw a damper over the spirit of the natives, and although the Pretender was still at large, the rebellion was, to all intents

and purposes, quelled,-- quelled without the loss of life to any European, and, with the exception of those slain in fair fight, without the sacrifice of a score of natives. In spite of this a hubbub was got up in Parliament about the cruelty of the Ceylon Government, and the Ministry then in power, in their endeavours to defend it, were obliged to resign.

And yet this rising was much more serious in its first outbreak than the mutiny in India. It was the rising of an entire people, and had it not been met with energy and put down with merciful violence, it might have cost the lives of every European, both military and civilian, then in the island. Every adult native has a gun and knows how to use it, and there were only about fifteen hundred European troops, scattered in detachments over the whole country, to oppose about a million of armed men. There was the Ceylon Rifle Regiment, to be sure, a corps composed of Malays and officered by Europeans, but if any disaster had occurred to the English arms, it is doubtful to what extent their services could have been depended upon. Lord Torrington, Sir Emerson Tennent, Colonel Drought and Captain Watson deserved the thanks of every European in the colony for the energy they displayed and the decision with which they acted on this critical occasion. Had old women, like Buller or Waring been at the head of affairs, the issue would have been quite as disastrous, perhaps more so, than

the insurrection in Cabul in 1842 or the revolt at Meerut in 1856.*

When I returned to the hotel, after seeing O'Brien and his expedition out of the town, I sat down on a settee in the front verandah, feeling rather heavy and drowsy, with a slight headache and an inclination to feel chilly. Since my arrival in Ceylon I had enjoyed robust health, never having been an hour ill, but I certainly began to feel illness now. The headache and chilliness increased, and a glass or two of brandy and soda water which I swallowed in the hope of removing seemed only to aggravate them. I went to my room and lay down on the bed, drawing a blanket over me, but it seemed of little use; the coldness in my body went on increasing. I then got possession of a horse rug which was lying in the room and added it to the blanket, but "my teeth they chattered, chattered still." "What could it mean? It was beginning to get dark, and the gong in the verandah was sounding to dinner, and I heard the footsteps and cheery laugh of some of my friends, as they passed my door to enjoy that social meal. I, however, was lying as if I were enclosed in an iceberg, my teeth chattering like the clatter of the machinery which

* We have heard as good a judge as could be found among the pl nters—the late Robert Boyd Tytler—pooh-pooh the v ry idea of the events of 1848 being dignified with the name of "Rebellion,"—a rising in which not a European got a scratch, unless it was one soldier injured by another!—ED.

I have sometimes seen fixed to a toy windmill, or like a split bamboo in a paddy-field, whilst I felt as if a dozen hammers were at work inside my head. I had never felt anything like this before. Was it possible that I was going to die, and that this was the beginning of my death sickness? This surely could not be the case, when I was so strong and so full of life a few hours ago. The last words which I had heard O'Brien utter, as he rode out at the head of Trincomalie Street, kept repeating themselves over and over again in my mind. They were addressed to little Benson, who was riding a spirited Arab, which could not be brought to understand the necessity for a long sword, with which his rider was accoutred, dangling against his flanks, and as the said master had only one hand available, owing to the other carrying a fowling-piece, with which to govern his horse, that animal was gamboling in a manner which was more graceful and picturesque than either safe for himself or agreeable to his companions.

“Come now young 'un, keep the ranks and don't go trolloping about in that manner, or I'll be trating that beast of yours to a *pulthog* from this *strabash*,” were the words in question, and, ridiculous as they were, they kept ringing in my ears for hour after hour of that long weary night. My mouth was parched with thirst, and there was nothing to drink in the room, and no one to hand it to me, even if there had been. The pain in my

head and the chill in my limbs had increased so rapidly and to such a fearful extent, that I was altogether incapable of procuring it myself.

I tried to call to the servants, as I heard them pass to and fro along the verandahs, but no one came near me. I heard some person try to open my bedroom door, I think it must have been about midnight, but as I had placed a bar across it when I first lay down, to prevent being disturbed, they went away without gaining admittance. I recollect vividly a lot of horrible dreams which I had during that and the following night. I fancied that I had fallen into the hands of a band of red Indians, and was being roasted alive at a slow fire. I was in the crater of a volcano and floating on the surface of a bubbling mass of liquid lava. I was in the power of the Inquisition and was confined in an iron room, the walls of which were beginning to glow with the heat of concealed fires. I was dying with thirst in the midst of a horrible desert, with an eternity of sand around me, but no water near, whilst vultures and other hideous birds and beasts of prey were circling in endless flocks—myriads on myriads—around my head. The agonies that I endured for some days are indescribable, and the mere mention of them would only weary the reader. When the fever in my blood began to abate, under the treatment of the medical men who attended me, my fancies took a different and more pleasing shape. The flaming skies and burning lava became exchanged

for vistas of shady forests with cooling streams gurgling and gushing through them, for long cool colonnades and stately halls filled with beautiful statuary, whilst the walls were covered with gorgeous paintings. The most curious circumstance connected with all these wild fancies was the singular fact that long periods of time—years on years—seemed to have passed before I came fully conscious of the things around me. I could, however, remember that a native barber had shaved my head. I had felt the cool sharp edge of his razor as it glided softly and smoothly over my skin. I knew also that I was having leeches applied to my temples. I could feel their cold clammy bodies hanging over my forehead and eyes, as they gorged themselves with the hot blood which was coursing like molten lead through my veins.

It was a Sunday morning when I first recovered consciousness and felt that the fever of my frame had abated. I seemed to have gone through several lifetimes of torment since I had lain down on the bed on which I now found myself lying, weak, weary and exhausted. I tried to raise myself, but I was too weak for the effort and sank back weary and exhausted on the pillows.

An elderly man, with a kind, benevolent countenance, drew aside the curtains and looked in on me. I knew the face, but I could not recollect when nor where I had seen it, whether in my dreams or previous to my illness, which seemed to have been at some remote period of time, years on years ago.

I gazed on the stranger in wonder, and he gazed long and anxiously on me. At last he asked in a kindly Scotch accent—I never heard the northern tongue, even from the mouth of beauty, sound so sweet:—“Puir chiel! puir chiel! ye’ve had a sad sair time o’ ’t, but by the providence of God, we’ll maybe get you on your feet again. Are ye finn in’yersel any better, an’ is there anything that ye wad like?”

I closed my eyes wearily, listening to the old man’s accents, as one listens to a half-forgotten melody of their childhood, and I felt vexed and sorry when his voice stopped.

“Maybe ye wad like a drink, and here’s some kangy-water,* braw and cool. Bide ye still an’ I’ll raise yer head a bittie. I’m thinking that ye’re nae that able to haud it up yersel yet, for puir fellow ye’ve had a sair, sair time o’ ’t this aucht or ten days past.”

The old man lifted my head as gently as if it had been the head of a little child, and held the cool glutinous fluid to my dry and parched lips. It was seasoned with raspberry vinegar, and no drink, not even the nectar of the gods, ever tasted so cool and refreshing. I tried to speak my thanks, but my tongue refused to utter the words.

“Dinna speak, dinna tire yersel, just lie doon and keep quiet. If ye have any thocht in your mind ava, direct it in the way of heaven and thank God that you have been spared to recover

*Water in which rice has been boiled to a pulp nad allowed to cool.

yer reason, and, let us hope, yer health also. Eh sirs! but ye've spoke an awfu' lot o' styte the last week or two, but just lie doon noo, my man, and try to rist a while in peace and quietness, and I'll no seek to bother ye any mair wi' my clatter."

My visitor, or nurse, I could not tell by which name to call him, drew together the thin white muslin curtains, and I lay back on my pillows, conscious of an agreeable coolness in my room; conscious that there was a bright sun shining outside and a pleasant health-inspiring breeze blowing and rustling amongst the tree-tops, entering through the venetians of my sick-room and making the walls of the apartment look as if they were covered with living creatures, from the dancing reflection of the leaves and branches of the shrubbery outside. I heard the shrill scream of parroquets, and I could fancy these beautiful but discordant little flutterers dashing and gleaming like broken bits of rainbow through the tree-tops in the compound. I heard the almost silent tread of the native servants outside my door. I heard the loud calls of fellow-planters for glasses of brandy and sodawater, and, by-and-bye, I heard the sound of a military band playing "The Lass of Gowrie," and the steady tramp of a large body of military marching up the street. Strangely enough, this circumstance recalled my recollection to Wolffe O'Brien and his troop of horsemen as I had seen them trotting up Trincomalee Street, and I holloed out quite unconsciously the last word I had heard that doughty hero utter,

“Now then, young men, keep the ranks and don't go trolloping about in that manner, or I'll be trating that baste of yours to a pulthog with this strabash.”

My visitor, who had been busy reading a manuscript, started to his feet at the sound of my voice and looked inside the bed with an alarmed countenance.

“Puir fellow! there he is back rabbling at his nonsense again, an' the doctor tellins this mornin' that the worst is past. Ech sirs! I doot we're gaun to hae a relapse, an' me thinkin' that he wis lookin' sae sensible like an hour ago.”

The old man, who was none other than the Presbyterian Chaplain of Kandy, looked at me with grave concern. I smiled and tried to explain that it was only a foolish idea that had entered my mind, and that I had given utterance to it quite inadvertently, and that I was now quite sensible and knew perfectly where I was and what I was doing.

“I'm gled to hear 't,” my new friend said, “for I maun leave you for a while. It's kirk time, and it winna dee for me to be behin', but I'll come back an' see you aifter the service, and the doctor will maybe come to you before that time. I'll leave my ain servant wi' ye, he's a very sensible auld body, although a heathen Malay, an' ye've only to tell him anything that you want, an' he'll get it for you in a jiffy. Here, Samsoo, ye auld rascal, dinna leave Mr. Green's bedside till I come back frae the kirk, an' see that he takes the quinine

at twal' o'clock exactly, and the chicken broth at one. Good-bye, in the meantime. I will leave a bible wi' ye, but I doot ye 'll no be muckle inclined to read it e'en noo;" saying which my kind friend took his departure, leaving me to the care of his servant Samsoo, an old Malay man, who soon fell asleep on the floor, while I also fell into a soft and refreshing slumber on my bed.

I need not dwell on my convalescence. It was more rapid than I had any reason to look for. When well enough to be removed, I was taken to the Scotch manse, at that time the residence of my kind visitor, who was one of the most benevolent and kindest-hearted men I ever met.

By the time that I was able to move about again, the insurrection was all but suppressed, although I was a witness to a most revolting incident, almost the closing one of this unfortunate rising.

I heard one morning, when I was just beginning to be able to walk about the compound, that a prisoner had been brought into town, one of the leaders in the rebellion, caught with arms in his hands, and that he was to be tried immediately by a court-martial, which was already assembling in the Pavilion, the residence of the Governor when in Kandy. Impelled by curiosity I went to the Pavilion as a spectator, and I was very much struck by the fairness and justice of the who'e proceedings. An officer, Captain Wingfield, was appointed advocate for the prisoner; in

the latter personage, by-the-by. I recognized my old friend, the companion of Manicralle Unansee, and the fellow who had attempted to shoot me, and this gentleman proved a most powerful pleader in the man's behalf. I really do not think that the ablest member of the English bar could have done greater justice to his client in cross examining the witnesses and dwelling on every point in the evidence which told in the prisoner's favour. All his efforts, however, proved unavailing. The evidence of the man's guilt was of too damning a nature to admit of even the smallest doubt, and he was found guilty of high treason by the unanimous verdict of the Court.

Sentence of death was passed on him, and it was no sooner passed than preparations were made for carrying it into execution. He was marched down, after a short delay, to the same place where Manicralle had previously suffered, and tied to the same stake, which still remained fixed in the ground. In the meanwhile a party of twenty soldiers, under the command of a smart-looking young fellow of a sergeant, took up a position about twenty yards from the culprit. Some coolies were already digging his grave a short distance off, and we could hear the sound of their mamoties and pickaxes, as they went on with their work with stoical indifference, whilst the death preparations were being completed. At length the man was securely bound to the stake, and a bandage drawn over his eyes, when the sergeant in command of the firing party gave the order,

“Right section, take ten paces forward, Quick march.”

The ten men on the right advanced the required distance, when the order was given, “Halt, dress.”

A breathless pause succeeded, and I had all but made up my mind to turn and fly from the dreadful tragedy about to be enacted; but there was a fearful fascination about the affair, which kept my feet rooted to the spot and my eyes fixed on the doomed man.

“Ready—present,” the sergeant cried, but his voice sounded hollow and unnatural. There was a breathless pause, and the vast multitude who had assembled to witness the death scene, and who swarmed on every place of vantage, stood perfectly still, as if spell-bound, and then a crashing peal from half a score of muskets burst on the air, the white smoke from which rose above the men’s heads and rolled gently away in the upper air.

“By God!” someone cried, “the man is not dead, he still lives. Quick, sergeant, with the other squad.”

“Left section, take ten paces forward, quick march, halt, dress Ready—present,” the sergeant ordered in faltering accents.

The same momentary pause of breathless suspense then followed, when the soldiers’ muskets pealed forth another crashing volley. As before, the white smoke obscured the view for an instant, and when it had floated away, the same voice was heard

ringing in loud and angry accents, "Good heavens! the man is not dead. He still breathes."

This indeed was the case. The poor wretch had been wounded in various parts of his body and the blood was streaming in torrents from the bullet holes, but he had not been touched in any immediately vital part. His head had sunk on his bosom, which was heaving convulsively, with the agony he must have been enduring, and his breath came and went in spasmodic gasps which were very painful to witness.

"Merciful heavens! don't you see that you are butchering the man? Go up and finish him," cried the same voice, which had already spoken twice, and which I now recognised as proceeding from Doctor Thwaites, a local medical practitioner.

The sergeant was standing trembling on the right of his men, his face pale as death, holding a big horseman's pistol in his hand, which he seemed altogether powerless to use.

"There, will you go and do it?" he gasped, offering the pistol to a Mr. Parsons, who was acting as Provost Marshal in superintending the execution.

"Do it yourself. It's your duty," said Parsons, looking almost as much overcome as the poor sergeant, whilst he turned his back upon the disgusting scene and appeared inclined to leave the ground. The sergeant took two or three steps to the front and then halted, looking paler and more agitated than ever.

"I cannot do it. It is impossible," he cried, in an agony of terror, as he reeled and seemed as if he would have fallen to the ground.

"What a set of fools you are. Don't you see that you are keeping the poor fellow in agony all this time?" said Doctor Thwaites. "Give me the pistol and I'll soon finish him."

The doctor took the weapon from the trembling hands of the poor sergeant and went forward and presented it at the head of the doomed man. An awkward pause succeeded as the doctor stood for some time holding the pistol close to the head of the poor fellow, who must have been suffering terrible agony.

"There is something the matter with it," he cried, "it won't go off."

"Put it on cock, doctor," someone cried, and the doctor did as he was bid, with wonderful promptitude and coolness, then presenting it at the culprit's head he pulled the trigger and shattered the skull to pieces. The body instantly collapsed and hung like an empty bag from the cords which had bound it. Two or three soldiers then ran forward, and cutting the cord, the corpse was rolled in a piece of matting and carried to the grave, which the coolies continued digging all the time that this horrible tragedy was being enacted.

The soldiers marched back to the barracks, supporting their leader, who seemed almost as help-

less and lifeless as the poor wretch who had been just laid in his bloody grave.

Thus ended one of the saddest and certainly the most horrible affair which it was ever my lot to witness, the recollection of which, after the lapse of nearly forty years, still haunts my dreams.

CHAPTER XLII.

The Kandyan insurrection of 1848 was now practically ended. Shortly after the incident which I have just described, the pretended king was captured and brought into Kandy. Martial law was then superseded by the Civil Courts, and this man, whose name was Gongalla Gedera Banda, was tried before the Supreme Court in Kandy. I was present at the trial, which, however, did not last long. The prisoner pleaded guilty to the charges against him, and he was accordingly sentenced to death. By this time, however, a revulsion of feeling had taken place throughout the whole community, and it was thought that the rising had been put down with an undue amount of severity and bloodshed, considering that the natives had sacrificed no life, and, unless in one instance, had been guilty of no act of cruelty, and this sentence was commuted to one of penal servitude for life, with the addition of the culprit being whipped at the cart's tail, by the common hangman, through the streets of Kandy.

At the trial I was very much struck by the manly and fearless bearing of the Pretender. He was one of the finest and most powerful specimens

of a Kandyan that I had ever seen. He possessed a fine open and intelligent expression of countenance, and placed in the dreadful position in which I saw him, with a death sentence being pronounced against him, his bearing was worthy of the greatest hero of ancient or modern times. Not a muscle of his face quivered, not a single tremor shook his frame, but with a calm and manly dignity he bowed to his judge and the jury, principally Europeans, who tried him, as if in thanks for their impartiality, as he was withdrawn from the dock.

During the whole of this time, all business in the civil courts was suspended, and no progress was made with regard to my appeal. Now, however, it came on for a hearing, and to my horror and astonishment, the decision of the District Court was reversed by that of the judges of the Supreme one. A very learned note was appended to the finding of the court, detailing the mode of reasoning by which the judges had arrived at their decision, which note was perfectly clear and lucid to them, perhaps, but it was as Sanscrit or Hebrew to me, besides bringing hopeless and irretrievable ruin to the whole of my prospects and aspirations. I had been sadly crushed down by my late illness, and had not quite recovered from its effects, when this terrible and overwhelming calamity fell like a thunderbolt on me. I don't think that it could be possible for a man to be more prostrated and crushed down by misfortune than I felt when my lawyer's letter reached me, conveying this disastrous intelligence. To compare small things with

great, I have often thought that my feelings at that time must have resembled those of the first Napoleon when—left alone, forsaken by the Marshals and courtiers whose fortunes he had made—he wandered, lonely and desolate, through the gorgeous suites of apartments in the palace of Fontainebleau after the first surrender of Paris, or during his flight from the disastrous field of Waterloo.

“What’s up, Major?” asked Wolffe O’Brien, as he came up the steps of the hotel verandah, looking the very picture of high spirits and carrying a feeling of fresh pure air along with him. “What’s up? You look as if you had seen a ghost or as if you were about to become one yourself. No bad news, I hope.”

I had not the power to speak, but silently handed him the advocate’s letter.

“Whew!” he exclaimed after perusing it. “Don’t lose heart about this affair. The dirty acres are perhaps gone, but life and strength and hope are left. You are not the first poor devil who has been ruined, and you will not, most certainly, be the last. Heaven still remains, and it will be devilish hard lines if a couple of hale and hearty young fellows, like you and I, will not be able to rub out a living somehow, somewhere. I’ll tell you what it is, Major, you stuck to me like a brick, and have been a true and disinterested friend in the days that are past, and I’m blowed if I don’t stick to you now, and, if need be, share my last penny with you. I have a strong idea that

there is hot work cut out for our fellows up in the North-West of India, about the Punjaub or Affghanistan. This Mooltan business will not remain the paltry affair that it is at present, and I am more than half inclined to push on to Lahore and take service as a volunteer, where, if there is fighting to be done, there will be a good chance for commissions. I think you should join me in this, for the game in this colony is now evidently up, and what remains is not worth the candle. There is, however, still a chance for you. The advocate says that you have an appeal to Her Majesty in Council, and he has, for form's sake, given notice that you intend to avail yourself of this. He says that the decision of the judges is wrong both in law and logic, and if you are willing to risk this appeal, he will stake his reputation that it will be reversed."

"All very well, Wolfe, my boy," I answered sadly; "but where is the money to come from to carry on this appeal? A lawyer's reputation is easily staked, but they will not work for nothing. An expedition to the North-West is perhaps a little more feasible, and I would feel more inclined to carry out that idea than waste time and trouble in fighting legal battles, which I have not now the means of fighting to advantage. If we get nothing else, I at all events may get my *quietus*, and that, in the present state of my affairs, would perhaps be the best consummation of the whole business."

"Nonsense, Major! don't get downcast and doleful. There are better days in store for you and me

yet. I have, and always had, a strong impression that I am destined to be either a very wealthy or a very distinguished man. Pray don't smile, although it does me good to see that you have still a smile left. I feel that I have it in me to be one or other of these. Now I would rather be distinguished than wealthy—that is—distinguished for something worth being distinguished for—some gallant or disinterested action, some great service either to my country or to mankind in general, some good and noble action which would merit the approbation of all good men. As for mere wealth, pounds, shillings and pence, they may be and are all very well in their way, but I confess that, although I find them useful and necessary, I have a thorough contempt for the petty and grovelling means that are almost always necessary to obtain a surfeit of them. Therefore, I say again, don't be cast down; we will get through the world somehow, and what does it matter how or where so long as we do so with honour, for the best, the wealthiest and the most distinguished must all come, as your countrymen say, 'to the end of their tether at last.'"

If Wolffe's reasoning was not very convincing, it at all events roused me from the apathy into which I had fallen, and took off the first sharp pang of my misfortunes. An interview with my new friend, the Scotch parson, helped still further to remove the gloom, and I had almost said the state of despair, into which I had nearly fallen.

“Dinna lose heart.” that worthy man remarked, soothingly, whilst he stood patting my shoulder. “Dinna lose heart, you’re a young man yet, and although things may look black eneuch, in all certainty, there is aye a blink o’ licht left, to lat’s ken that the sun is nae oot o’ the firmament a’thegither. Even when the sun is hid at night we hae the mune, and if we hinna her we hae the stars; and better a mere glimmer o’ licht than total darkness a’thegither. I can tell ye that there are few folk wha hinna to endure their dark hoors. Naebody kens this better than I dee mysel’, an therefore I say tak heart an’ cheer up, for the darkest hoor passes away and daylight an’ sun-licht comes again, an’ comes sooner and quicker than we are sometimes apt to imagine.”

“But I have lost every penny that I possess in the world,” I answered. “I am utterly beggared and left without the means of obtaining my daily bread. I am besides considerably in debt to a very kind and disinterested friend; and I have not now the most remote prospect of ever being able to repay him.”

“This is all very true and it is a very hard matter,” the minister replied; “but you are not singular in experiences of this kind. I have been in exactly the same circumstances myself, in days that are now happily gone by, with this addition that I had others—little brothers and sisters—dependent on me for their daily bread, and I with nothing whatever to depend upon but the kind providence of God,

and sometimes I had almost lost faith in it, but I never did so entirely, and He never failed me, neither will He ever fail those who trust heartily and entirely in him and use the means that He has given them, to make their way through this world in an honest and honorable mainer. Noo I wis jist gaen to say, although I scarcely ken hoo to say it, that although I am nae jist very weel off myself and I hae sume drags on me that naebody kens anything aboot, still I hae a trifle lying by, that I hae nae particular use for an' if a wee curn notes wad dee ye any guid they are heartily at your service an' ye can jist gie me them back when the tide taks a mair favourable turn wi' you, which it is sure to dee sooner than later, an' may be it will be sooner than later. Noo dinna be offended at me," the good man added, as he saw that I made no reply to his kind offer; "for I mean nae offence an' I wad fain dee ye a kindness if I could."

The fact was, I was so much overcome at this unlooked-for and unexpected offer and the kindly spirit in which it was made, that I became utterly speechless from excess of emotion. At length I burst into a flood of tears and wept like a big baby. The tears relieved my pent-up feelings, and the kindness of the good *padre* did much to restore my self-confidence and to help me to take a less desponding view of my affairs.

"Dinna greet, dinna greet, puir fallow, for I dinna like to see grown-up folk greetin'. No that it is a badsign, on the contrary it shows a good and a

kindly disposition and one that deserves to be respected. But yet I dinna like to see 't, and noo that ye've gotten ower 't ye'll be able to take a clearer view o' yer affairs an' we'll hae a crack over them aifter dinner an see what is best to be deen to pit maitters richt."

We had this 'crack' over my affairs, when the good old minister pointed out to me, as Wolffe O'Brien had previously done, that the law agent who had conducted my case said that an appeal could be made to Her Majesty in Council against the decision of the Supreme Court, and in order to give me a chance of having the adverse decision of that Court set aside, he had given intimation that such an appeal would be made.

"The judges in this case," the minister said, "in their great respect for the law have overlooked justice and equity. They have gone by the letter, not by the spirit of the law, and although I would be the very last person to advise anyone to enter a lawsuit or a course of litigation, which seldom does any good beyond putting money into the pockets of the lawyers, still I would strongly advise you to go on with this appeal, and I am certain that you will be successful in your contention."

In consequence of the minister's advice I resolved to start at once for England and put my affairs into the hands of a firm of solicitors, whose address I received, and who were recommended to me as being well versed in colonial matters and

as having had much experience in cases connected with Ceylon.

Before leaving, however, I resolved to pay a visit to Dodangahakelle,—a visit which might probably prove the last one I should ever make to a spot which had become so endeared to me by many sweet and pleasant memories. It would, perhaps, have been better for me that I had not carried this resolution into effect. I found my new bungalow on Singha Newara already falling into decay. No one occupied it, and no one seemed to care for either it or its surroundings, and I found the flower plots and shrubberies trampled and destroyed by herds of elephants or buffaloes, which had found their way to the plateau on which it stood; whilst the rooms had been used as resting and cooking places by gangs of coolies passing and repassing to the neighbouring plantations, the walls blackened with the smoke of their fires, the floors broken into holes and crevices by the big stones which they had dragged in, on which to rest their cooking chatties, and in one or two instances my polished jak and satinwood doors torn off their hinges and broken up for firewood, by the barbarous scoundrels who had converted my little palace, in the erection of which I had taken such pride, and been so deeply interested, into a common resthouse or caravanserai. The very furniture still remained in the place, and it had shared the same fate as the doors. Sideboards, chairs, couches and tables had been broken up by the wretches who had thus

invaded my sanctuary, and the sight that now greeted my eyes was one of extreme desolation and destruction such as might have resulted from the hostile proceedings in a city taken by storm, by a ruthless and barbarous enemy.

I recollected a story which I had heard related in my boyhood, regarding George Keith, the last Earl Marshal of Scotland, and brother of the famous Field Marshal, the friend of the great Frederick of Prussia, who fell at Hochkirchen, in a vain attempt to stem the rout of the Prussian army, and check the advance of the victorious Dann, on that disastrous day. It is related of the aged Earl, when he had obtained his pardon from the English Government, that he returned to Scotland with the view of spending the remainder of his days in the place of his birth, Inverugie Castle, near the town of Peterhead. He reached that important seaport, and accompanied by all the principal people of the place, he proceeded to pay his first visit to the seat of his ancestors. On reaching a rising ground, however, a short distance from the town, from whence the first view of the castle could be obtained, he stopped thunderstruck and rooted to the spot. The scene was altogether so different from what he had anticipated that he could proceed no further. Instead of a noble pile of handsome buildings, he saw a roofless ruin. Instead of the noble gardens and velvety lawns which he remembered so well, there were ploughed fields and a wilderness of furze and broom. The

old Earl contemplated this unlooked-for scene for a few moments in deep silence, and then a flood of tears bursting from his eyes, he turned to his friends and said in a mixture of French and English: "I cannot go any further, let us turn the *voyage*;" and the whole cavalcade returned to the town sad and sorrowful, for the people who composed it had been retainers of the Marischal family for countless generations, and they all showed the sorrow and regret of their chief.

I, however, had no one to share my sorrow and my regret. I wandered through the ruined rooms and trode amongst my shattered furniture, feeling lonely and broken-spirited beyond my power of expressing. I felt sad and depressed, more sad and more depressed than I had ever before felt, unless on the occasion of Helen's death. I ascended to my former study in the old tower and gazed across the wide expanse of forest which once I had owned, over the glassy lake on whose bosom I had sailed and in whose waters I had enjoyed many a refreshing plunge. Now they had all passed from me and were fast relapsing into the wilderness from which I had partly rescued and partly created them.

My horse had come a long distance and received no rest and food. I turned him loose amongst the guinea grass and let him crop the sweet fresh sprouts, for I had nothing else to give him, for an hour or two, as I had seen quite enough of my late possessions, and, like Earl Marischal, I

did not feel inclined to go further and see more. I then mounted once more, returned sad and sorrowful to Kandy.

Captain Leith and his family had left Kandy for Trincomalee, during my absence in England, and although I corresponded, I had never met any of them since my return to Ceylon, and the adverse turn which my affairs had taken. The Captain had seen the decision of the judges in my case, as recorded in the newspapers, and I had a very kind letter from him, sympathizing with my misfortunes and offering any help in his power to retrieve matters, awaiting me on my return to the town. This little act of kindness and the sympathy of some other friends restored me, in some measure, to my former self, and I proceeded with renewed hope and vigour to prepare for my journey to England.

I left Ceylon in February 1849 and reached England in the beginning of spring, when the trees were budding and the flowers were opening, without having encountered any incident or adventure worth recording, beyond the fact that one of my fellow-passengers and an old fellow planter lost the use of his eye by means of the bursting of a soda-water bottle in the hotel at Cairo.

It is not necessary that I should enter into a record of the progress of my appeal. The long wearying delays, the procrastination of lawyers, the delay of the law, the hope deferred that mak-

eth the heart sick, the long worry and bother and annoyances which I had to undergo for several years, would only prove wearisome if not unintelligible to my readers, and the recounting of them would neither be interesting nor instructive.

I wrote to Colin Douglas immediately on my arrival, giving him a clear and comprehensive account of all that had befallen me since I had last seen him; and offered to repay the balance of his loan which still remained in my possession. Colin, however, had become the owner of a yacht, and he was off, I learned, on a voyage which might last for several years to the antipodes, and amongst the sunny islands of the wide Pacific. Fortunately, shortly after my arrival in England, in consequence of the death of the tenant who leased my mansion-house in Surrey, with the small farm which still remained attached to it, I had a house of my own to go to and reside in, whilst the work of the farm afforded me employment and amusement.

In the autumn I resolved to pay a visit to the only relation which I possessed to my knowledge, a clergyman of the Episcopal Church in Scotland. This gentleman was a second cousin of my mother's; his name was Dallas, and he resided in a rural district in the centre of Aberdeenshire. Mr. Dallas, who was a married man with a family of four daughters, gave me a hearty welcome, but I had not been many days a guest at the parson-

age, before I discovered that any lengthened residence with my relations would not only put them to very great inconvenience but would also entail a burden on them which they were ill able to bear. The income of the parson, I learned, amounted to less than a hundred a year, and even this sum was dependent not only on the donations of a small and poor congregation but also on the good-will of a central body in Edinburgh, who gave or refused grants to the poorer congregations, not according to any well-understood rule, but according to the *dictum* of sub-committees, the members of which sometimes were able to gratify personal spite by recommending that the small pittance asked for to supplement the incomes of such men as my friend Mr. Dallas should be refused. Several residences of county families were situated in the neighbourhood of Cardaric Parsonage, the owners of which were, in most cases, non-resident. One was in the army, and both he and his family were in India with his regiment. Another was an attaché at one of the Continental Courts. Another had got himself hopelessly involved in debt, and was trying to economize by a residence in the south of France. Some of these mansions were of historical interest, having been the residences of men who had been "out in the '45," and had traditions and legends connected with them, which were related with bated breath, around the cottage fires, during the long winter evenings.

"There is Carlingburn," my host said, speaking

of one of these houses, "perhaps one of the most interesting places in the whole district. The proprietors of Carlingburn joined 'bonny Dundee' in his short-lived enterprise. He had to fly from the 'Haughs of Cromdale' like his leader General Buchan, another Aberdeenshire man, with nothing but his shirt. His successor joined the Earl of Mar in the '15, and narrowly escaped the clutches and tender mercies of the Hanoverians, by escaping in a fishing boat from the harbour of Rosehearty, where a party of the Duke of Argyle's army were within an ace of seizing him. As if they had not done enough for the Stuarts, the laird of Carlingburn, now an old man, joined Lord Pitsligo's Horse, and made himself so conspicuous during the '45, particularly in ousting the Whig bailies and Town Council of Aberdeen, and filling their places by men belonging to his own party, that he was excluded from the act of amnesty, when the rising was suppressed, and after Culloden he had to go into hiding and was hunted from cover to cover by the soldiers and spies of the Whig Government. His escapes from the parties sent in search of him were simply marvellous, although they may owe something to the additions that have been made to them as they have been handed down to us by tradition."

"I should like much to see this place," I said. "Could we have permission to go over the house and grounds?" I asked; "and perhaps you will be able to tell me some of the particulars relating to

the escapes of this gentleman. Ever since I can recollect, I have always taken a warm interest in the fortunes of 'Bonny Prince Charlie' and his adherents."

"You could scarcely have come to a better neighbourhood than this," my host replied, "to have your curiosity gratified. This district was the very focus of the so-called rebellion, so far as the Lowlands were concerned. There was scarcely a family of any distinction in the whole district, who did not contribute one or more of its members to swell the ranks of the Prince's little army. There is no difficulty in getting the *entrée* into Carlingburn House. The old laird is just dead, and the new laird, a second or third cousin, is in India. There is a secret chamber where THE LAIRD, he of the '45, was concealed for some time, but the Government, by means of its spies, got information of its existence, and they sent a party of soldiers and labourers with instructions to pull down the whole mansion, if the whereabouts of this chamber were not revealed. The nest was pointed out, but the bird was flown. On another occasion a party of military was despatched to apprehend the laird who was known to be lurking in the neighbourhood. As they were marching along the road they overtook a chimney sweep with his brush and soot bags, who said that he was bound for the same destination as themselves, and he accompanied the soldiers in their search, assisting them with a zeal and perseverance which elicited the praise of the officer in command of the party, as well as a

handsome gratuity for the service he had rendered. That officer's amazement and disgust may be readily imagined, when he discovered shortly after that his friend the sweep was the very individual that he had been sent to apprehend. On another occasion the authorities got certain information that the laird was back again and hiding in his own house. A strong party of soldiers was immediately despatched to apprehend and carry him into Aberdeen. As the military approached the house, they met an old labouring man coming along the avenue, with a spade over his shoulder. He did not show any signs of fear or surprise at the approach of the strangers, but advanced to meet them with the greatest possible coolness and *non-chalance*, quietly blowing his nose with his fingers, as he drew near, and wiping his hand on his trowsers." 'You had better stop this fellow and examine him, sir, the sergeant of the party suggested to his superior; 'perhaps it may turn out to be the man we want.' 'Nonsense,' the officer replied, 'who ever heard of a gentleman blowing his nose with his fingers?' and the labourer, who was none other than the laird himself, was passed unmolested by his would-be captors. On another occasion the officer commanding the party of military sent to search for him, after their efforts in this particular had as usual proved fruitless, turned back after his men had proceeded a short distance on their return, and addressing the laird's wife said: 'I recollect your husband quite well, madam. He showed me much kindness when I was a prisoner in Edinburgh, after the battle at

Prestonpans. That gardener of yours,' pointing to a man in labourer's attire, busily engaged sweeping the walks of the garden, 'bears a marvellous resemblance to him. Pray, do not let him be at work about the house if any other party should be sent to search the premises, as you may get the good man into serious trouble. Give my kind remembrances to your husband when next you see him, and also my thanks for his past kindness. Adieu, and pray try to believe that there are some of my countrymen who would fain escape the reproach which has fallen on our army from the cruelties which have been practised on this unhappy country,' saying which he seized the lady's hand, and raising it to his lips turned and rejoined his men, leaving the laird's wife standing thunderstruck and astonished on the threshold of her own house, for the man sweeping the walks was no less a personage than her husband, who had thus narrowly escaped falling into the hands of his enemies through the kindly and grateful feelings of this generous English officer."

I was, however, prevented from visiting Carlingburn House in consequence of the receipt of a letter from my law agents in London, requiring my immediate presence there, so that I was obliged to bring my visit to my kinsman and his family to an abrupt termination.

The business which required so sudden a return was an offer made by the bank to compromise the matter in dispute between us. The directors had seen that the litigation was likely to be a very

expensive and possibly a very prolonged one, and one out of which, even if eventually successful, there was no profit to be reaped, as they knew that they had left me with no means with which to pay expenses if the case went against me, and they now therefore offered a very handsome sum of money on condition that all further proceedings should be stopped.

“I think you had better accept their offer,” Mr. Tawse, the head of the firm of solicitors which I had employed, suggested. “Take a day or two to think over the matter, and then let us know the conclusion you come to.”

“It will not take long time for me to make up my mind,” I replied. “Either I am entitled to the full value of the estates the bank seized, or I am not so entitled. In the one case I must insist upon obtaining my entire rights, and in the other I have no wish to take from the bank what does not belong to me; therefore my decision is that the case shall be proceeded with until such time as it shall be determined by the law officers of the Crown.”

“Possibly you may be right,” Mr. Tawse replied; “but I think that a favourable compromise, such as you are offered, should not be lightly refused. One does not know what view these law officers may take of the case, and recollect their decision will be final.”

“I am perfectly aware of that fact,” I replied; “but I am willing to take the risk; and if equity

prevails, I have very little doubt of the result."

"That is just where you and I differ," the lawyer said, with a sigh; "for after the decision of the judges of the Supreme Court of Ceylon, I have my doubts, and very serious doubts too. Then, there are the costs to be taken into consideration. To the bank these costs will perhaps appear a trifle, but to you they may mean ruin, unless your resources are all the greater, and, therefore, I say again, 'Better part of a loaf than no loaf.' The decision, however, rests with you: I merely tender my advice, or, perhaps, I may more correctly say, my opinion."

"Then my decision," I replied, "is that the case should be proceeded with, and the more expeditiously that this is done the better."

Mr. Tawse gathered his papers together with the air of a man who had a disagreeable task to perform, and carrying them into an outer office, gave them into the custody of an elderly greyheaded clerk, whilst I said good morning and took my departure.

The following morning, in glancing over the newspaper whilst I sat at breakfast, I was considerably shocked and startled by the following announcement amongst the shipping intelligence:—

"SAD CASE OF SHIPWRECK IN THE SOUTH SEAS.

"News have just been received at Lloyds of the total loss of the fine new yacht the 'Bonita' on a

sunken reef in the South Pacific Ocean. The yacht, which was owned by Colin Douglas of Glenbroom in Scotland, was cruising amongst the various groups of islands in that sunny region, when, during a heavy gale of wind at midnight on the 19th of March last, she very unexpectedly struck upon a reef of rocks, which do not appear on any chart. The night was intensely dark, and a considerable degree of confusion prevailed, as the seas were breaking with much violence over the ill-fated vessel. It was with much difficulty that the boats, four in number, were launched, one of which was stove to pieces before getting away from the ship. It is not exactly understood how it occurred, but when day dawned, it was discovered that the owner of the vessel was missing. He was seen helping to get one of the apprentices who was on the sick list into the last of the boats, and it was believed that he had followed the lad and taken his seat in the stern sheets. It was only on the return of daylight, by which time the boats had put a distance of several miles between them and the wreck, that his absence was observed. The Captain, however, on discovering that the owner was not on board any of the boats, immediately returned to the scene of the disaster, but by the time they reached it the unfortunate vessel had disappeared. It was evident that she had slipped off the rock on which she had originally struck and sunk in deep water, for quantities of wreckage were seen floating about the spot; but although a close search was maintained for several hours, no trace of the

missing man was discovered, and it was with heavy hearts that the boats' heads were turned in the direction of the Fiji islands, which were the nearest land to the scene of this sad catastrophe. There can be no doubt but Mr. Douglas has perished with his ill-fated vessel, which was, perhaps, one of the finest and most perfectly fitted of her class which had ever left our shores."

I read this paragraph over and over again before I could fully realize its import and the effect it would have on my own fortunes.

"Poor Colin, and this is the miserable ending of the career of one of the best of friends and of the kindest-hearted fellow that ever walked a quarterdeck or climbed a heather-covered hill."

Singular coincidences undoubtedly do take place in almost every person's experiences, and oftener, perhaps, than the rules of chance would seem to warrant. One such coincidence was experienced by me on the present occasion - I had scarcely read this paragraph, when my letters were brought and placed on the table beside me by the officious waiter.

"Some foreigners," that gentleman remarked; "hope they bring good news, sir."

I glanced over the small pile, and saw that there were some overland letters from Ceylon. One from Captain Leith containing the gossip of Kandy, to which he had returned, together with a modicum of family news, telling all about the children and

the progress they were making in their education. It was a very kind and a very friendly letter, and the good feeling and sympathy which it expressed did much to raise my drooping spirits and cheer me in the vast wilderness and solitudes of London. The next letter I opened was from Colin Douglas. It had gone to Ceylon, and from thence it had been redirected to my Surrey residence, from whence it had been forwarded, along with my other correspondence to London. Colin's letter was dated from Panama, telling me of his proposed cruise amongst the islands of the Pacific Ocean.

"I propose," he said "to visit the Sandwich and Society Islands, then Fiji and New Zealand, Australia and Van Diemen's Land; after that, I go on to Japan and China, Singapore and Java, Pulo Penang and Rangoon, and then, if all goes well, I propose to visit your spicy country and beat up your quarters at Dodang—I forget the rest, but it does not matter, where I shall have an opportunity of seeing your magnificent principality and viewing the glory of your sovereign sway over your vast domains. I shall expect to bag an elephant or two and no end of buffaloes, deer and other small game; and with this object in view, I have laid in a stock of fire-arms of formidable calibre, and sufficient ammunition to supply an ordinary army, so that my equipment, when I put in an appearance, as the lawyers say, will probably astonish the natives of your quarter of the world."

The remainder of this light-hearted epistle was

much in the same strain, breathing a spirit of hope and cheerful anticipation of the pleasures and enjoyments of his cruise.

“Poor Colin! and it has all ended in this,” I sighed, as I took up the newspaper and read the account of the shipwreck once more: “All your brilliant anticipations, all your kindly instincts, all your generous-hearted dreams for the good and happiness of others, all quenched in a premature grave in an obscure corner of a mighty ocean.” As I sat and gazed abstractedly at the letter which I held listlessly in my hand, the kindly face of my dead friend seemed to rise before me, and the tones of his familiar and pleasant voice seemed to sound in my ear. This unlooked-for catastrophe rendered me sad and depressed to a far greater extent than I could have anticipated, all the sadder and more depressed from the fact that I had no friend and no acquaintance with whom I could share my grief, and no active employment to take off the sharp edge of it and rouse me from the state of lethargy into which I seemed to be fast relapsing.

In grieving for the loss of my friend I did not realize, nor did I anticipate, the effect which his death would have upon my own affairs. Of course, I knew that I owed him a large amount of money, but I had more than the half of this sum safely deposited in the bank ready to be handed over to him, whenever it should be demanded, and I believed that if I did not speedily recover my Ceylon properties, I would, at any rate, get time to pay off the remainder, in instalments, which I

knew I would do in the course of a few years from the profits of my farming operations in Surrey. I was naturally of a retiring disposition and had no expensive tastes or hobbies to gratify, and these profits, although not large, would enable me to live in comfort, and by strict economy save a small sum towards the liquidation of this my only debt.

There was, however, one drawback, and it was a very serious one, to these hopes and prospects, and that was the large sums of money which were demanded, at various intervals, by my law agents, to enable them to meet the heavy expenses attending my appeal, which dragged its slow length along, wearying and impoverishing me by the constant delays and procrastinations which attended it.

CHAPTER XLIII.

It was more than a year after the report of Colin Douglas's death had appeared in the newspapers, that I received a formal demand, through a solicitor, for the immediate repayment of the large loan which I had received from him. A far-off cousin had served himself heir to and taken possession of his properties, and my acknowledgment of this debt having been found amongst his papers, the present demand naturally followed. This completely upset all my plans. If I had to pay this sum, I would be obliged to dispose of my Surrey property and leave myself penniless—leave myself without the means of going on with my appeal against the bank, which was always on the point of being

brought to a crisis, but which was always put off, from some cause, understood only by the lawyers, to some future date. There was nothing for it, however, but pay the money, if I could possibly raise the amount. The debt was justly due, and I had no reason to expect that the new heir to Colin Douglas's 'ancestral halls,' should feel sufficient interest in me to allow any delay in getting what was undoubtedly his just rights, at whatever inconvenience it might occasion me.

I called on the lawyer who had made this demand, in order to try and make some arrangement which would be satisfactory to both parties; but I found him stiff and unyielding. "The debt is a large one, and it is already some years due," he said; "besides, by your own showing, you have used the larger half of the money in a useless course of litigation, and as there is quite as great a chance of failure as of success in the action in which you are engaged, I cannot possibly recommend my client to permit any part of the amount to lie over as you wish. The whole sum must be repaid, with interest, within the next three months, otherwise legal measures must be taken to enforce payment."

I mentioned my Surrey property and asked if part could not be allowed to lie as a mortgage on it, until such time as my law case should be disposed of.

"No, certainly not," the lawyer said, very sharply. "My client is not disposed to turn money-lender,

and if you wish to raise money on mortgage you must apply to those who make a business of this sort of thing. You will have three months to do this in, and I hope that you will succeed in doing it, so as to save all further trouble and expense. Good morning," and the snappish old lawyer bowed me out.

In consequence of this interview Heathcot Hall was advertised for sale, and it was not long in finding a purchaser in the person of a rich silk mercer in the west end of London. Although I had no very pleasant memories or cherished associations in connection with this place, still I experienced a strong feeling of regret at having to part with it, and having given expression to this feeling to my law adviser, at his recommendation, it was made one of the conditions of the sale that it should be in my power to redeem the property at any interval of five years on giving a twelve months' notice of my intention to do this. The proceeds of this sale and that of the furniture and stocking of the home amounted to little more than the sum required to pay off Colin Douglas's claim, leaving me, in the great wilderness of London, almost penniless, and without the most remote possibility of earning the means to keep body and soul together. It was some time before I was able fully to realize the really awful predicament in which I was placed. I called on Mr. Tawse and consulted him about the singular fix in which I now found myself, and asked if he could possibly bring any influence to bear towards procuring me

some sort of a situation by means of which I could earn my daily bread.

Mr. Tawse expressed his regret at my position, and promised to do what he could to serve me, but I could perceive that his promises were mere conventional ones, and were not at all likely to bear fruit. My anxiety was extreme, and became more so as day succeeded day, and my friends were diminishing at a very rapid and alarming rate. As an indication of the assistance I was likely to obtain from the Messrs. Tawse, I received an official intimation from these gentlemen, that in consequence of my inability to make more payments to account they begged to withdraw from the agency of my law business, and that they were prepared to hand over the papers connected with it to whoever I might appoint to succeed them in the management of my appeal.

The receipt of this communication seemed to be the last straw which was destined to break the camel's back. I was sufficiently depressed before, but now I was utterly hopeless. The only good circumstance in the utter blackness of my surroundings was that I was alone in the world with no one dependent on me but myself, and surely I thought, I will be able to earn a crust of bread and obtain a shelter for myself, and this was about all that I was now likely to require. Unless to those who have undergone the same ordeal, it would be impossible to convey the very faintest idea of the wretchedness and misery which I ex-

perienced at this time. I had no friends, no acquaintances, no associates in this great metropolis of the world, and I wandered about its dreary streets and thronged thoroughfares without aim or object, unless an overpowering desire to husband the few pounds which I still possessed and thus postpone the day when, with the whole of my resources exhausted, I would be reduced to herd with the poorest and most wretched of the forlorn outcasts, whose habits and haunts I was beginning to study with a peculiar interest, incident to my own very dubious position in the social scale. I wondered which of the many questionable modes which I saw these poor wretches resort to, to earn an honest penny would, be the one which I would be compelled to fall back on, when all other means of gaining a living should fail. Would I take to vending matches or pencils, small wares or cutlery, or would it be possible for me to obtain employment as a cabman or even as a light porter in some mercantile establishment?

Whilst strolling along Oxford Street in this dejected and unsatisfactory state of mind, I stopped at the window of a print shop, where several large coloured plates of the recent battles on the Sutledge were exposed for the admiration of the passers-by. There were the battles of Moodkee and Alliwai, of Feroshshah and Sabraon all very vividly depicted, the artillery on both sides vomiting fire and destruction, the Shiek gunners chained to their guns and the English troops charging down on them and bayonetting the poor wretches who were

powerless to escape. One could almost fancy that they heard the din of the battle, the roar of the big guns, the crash of the musketry, the shouts and cheers of the combatants and the screams of the wounded and dying. I was so absorbed in the contemplation of these pictures that it was some-time before I perceived that an elderly gentleman had taken up a position at my side and was seemingly as much interested in the views as I was myself. There was a plate glass mirror at the back of the window, and it was by observing the reflection of this gentleman in it, that I first became aware of his presence. The face seemed familiar to me, but I could not, for the life of me, recall who and what he was. Our recognition seemed mutual, for after regarding each other for a moment or two in the mirror, we both turned simultaneously and held out our hands in token of recognition.

"Mr. Green," was the hearty greeting of the stranger as he shook me warmly by the hand.

"Sir Emerson," I replied, whilst I returned the pressure of his hand with equal heartiness.

"I am very glad to have fallen in with you," Sir Emerson remarked. "I am on my way to my club. If you have no better engagement, suppose you accompany me and we will have a quiet tiffin and a talk over old times in Ceylon. I heard that you had left the island to prosecute your appeal against the Bank of the Carnatic. Like ever other person I was very much surprised

at the finding of the Chief Justice when your case was before the Supreme Court, but these lawyers are so much accustomed to splitting straws, that it is little wonder though the bits get mixed and they sometimes pick up the wrong one by mistake. How are you getting on with the affair? I heard that the bank were inclined to compromise matters with you?"

"I am afraid, Sir Emerson, that my chances with the appeal are gone," I replied; and then I gave my friend as rapid and graphic an account of my late experiences as I possibly could.

"I am very sorry indeed to hear that things have gone so badly with you; and if it is in my power to be of any service to you you have only to point out the way, and I will render you any help in my power to retrieve matters. Suppose I communicate with the bank and try and obtain a favourable compromise?"

"It will be too late," I replied. "I have already refused their offers, and the directors know that I have not the means to carry on my appeal, and they will not now come to any other settlement."

"Then what do you propose doing?"

"That is exactly what I really don't know. My principal anxiety is to get some sort of employment that would keep the wolf from the door, and this is what I have failed to obtain."

"Why not return to Ceylon? Things are looking up there again and coffee is rising, if it has not already risen to its former figure. You will have

no difficulty in commanding the best appointments in the planting profession."

"Pride, Sir Emerson, pride, I fear will not permit me to do this. The pride, I admit, is a false one, but the feeling is all the more real. I could not possibly submit to take a subordinate situation where I had formerly occupied the most commanding position in the planting interest; besides, I doubt very much if I have now the means of finding my way back to our former home in the East; the fact is I am almost on my last legs, and unless I can get some sort of employment very shortly, I fear very much that I will be fairly aground."

"I am very sorry to hear this, very sorry indeed," Sir Emerson replied after a thoughtful pause; "and I should be very glad if it were in my power to be of any service to you. You know that I am not a rich man, and it would be a mockery on my part to make offer of pecuniary assistance, but if influence or recommendation could do any good, I am quite sure that both should be exerted in your favour. What do you think," he added after another rather a long pause, "of trying your fortune in the East? I mean in Turkey—our army is there just now, and I might be of use in getting you something to do there. You have not sufficient influence to raise fifty or a hundred men for the army, and this would secure you either a Lieutenant's or a Captain's commission, or what do you think of joining the Militia? I think I have sufficient influence to get you an appointment in it. Then there

is the transport service. Come, cheer up, we are not on the rocks just yet, and I think that we will be able to pilot you off before you get stranded altogether. I have an appointment at the Colonial Office for 3 o'clock, and I see that it is almost that hour already, and, therefore, I must bid you good-bye in the meantime, but you will hear from me in the course of a day or two. I haven't forgot the important service that you rendered to me in Ceylon, and I should wish if possible to repay it now. By-the-bye, I had almost forgot to ask for your address. Ah! this is it. Good-bye," and we shook hands and parted.

It is very singular the numbers of partings of this kind which take place in the world. Friends, relations and acquaintances meet and part with the utmost indifference, never anticipating that they do so for the last time, and yet circumstances occur that make their separation final. They never meet again on this side of the grave. This was the case with Sir Emerson Tennent and myself on the present occasion.

I received a kind letter from him in the course of a day or two, telling me that his exertions in my behalf had been successful, and directing me to call at the War Office at a certain time, when I would receive my appointment with the necessary instructions connected with it.

It is only necessary to mention here, that my appointment, although a semi-military one, was

connected entirely with the civil administration of the army, and was confined in a great measure to the commissariat and transport services. Nevertheless, I had the good fortune, if good fortune it could be called, to see a considerable amount of actual service in the field, to witness the deadly struggle at Inkerman and the gallant charges of the heavy and light brigades at Balaclava. I cannot say, however, that my experiences made me enamoured with war; on the contrary, the horrors, the agonies and the hardships to which our poor fellows of soldiers were subjected, and which were borne with a cheerfulness and a heroism beyond all praise, caused every feeling in my nature to revolt against so sad, so terrible and so destructive a scourge—a scourge which it ought to be the steady aim of all statesmen and all lovers of their species to have banished from this fair earth as speedily as possible.

I spent the greater part of the winter of 1854-55 in the Crimea, but as my quarters were principally in the town of Blacklava, or on board ship in the harbour, I did not come in for the same amount of hardship and wretchedness that our poor fellows in the front experienced. It made my heart ache to see them toiling at one time through masses of liquid mud, and, and at others through deep snow and slush, dragging guns, ammunition, shot, shell, and provisions to the more advanced camps, and bringing down squads of the wounded and sick wretches, the victims of glorious war, whose bandaged limbs and ghastly countenances told but too plainly of the sufferings that they had undergone.

I cannot now tell whether it was the hard work, the hard living or the sad sights which I daily and hourly encountered during the continuance of that dreadful winter, or all these combined, which had the effect of ultimately prostrating me, but before the spring was far advanced I was laid up with the prevailing sickness—a sort of low or typhoid fever, and sent down to Scutari to recruit. As my recovery was slow and protracted, I was ordered home, as the only chance of preserving my life.

Amongst the crowd of invalids which thronged the decks and cabins of the "Malwa," the steamer in which my passage had been taken, there were several passengers who were neither sick nor wounded: men who had found their way to Constantinople or the Crimea on business, or to satisfy their curiosity with regard to the great operations of war, and who were now on their return to England. These men bore a striking contrast to the poor wretches who were scarcely able to crawl about the decks and state-rooms, and whose pale faces and weakened frames told but too well the story of the hardships they had undergone and the dangers they had encountered. Amongst these men there was one whose countenance, from the first moment I saw it, when we embarked at Constantinople, struck me as being familiar to me—as being a face that I had seen and been acquainted with in some long previous period of my existence. I was too weak and too indifferent at first to make any effort to recall the when and where I had met the owner of that face. I had been brought into con-

tact with so many men—so many hundreds of men of all nations and languages,—during the past few months, that the task would have been a hopeless one for me in my then weak condition to have solved such a problem. Still the face haunted my imagination and roused my curiosity to a greater degree every time that we encountered each other, and that was almost every hour of the day. The recognition seemed mutual, as also did the difficulty of identifying each other, and gradually, from the look of puzzled surprise with which we at first regarded each other, we came to exchange a nod and a friendly smile when we met.

It was, perhaps a week after leaving Constantinople—we had been detained for a few days at Gallipoli—that we were ploughing our way through the deep blue waters of the classic seas of the Archipelago. The bold promontories of some of the Grecian islands were rising like formidable bulwarks from the bosom of the deep, and glowing like bastions of gold in the rays of the setting sun. The “Malwa” was panting and throbbing as if she were a creature endowed with life, as she plunged her way through the blue water, throwing the silvery spray in showers before her bows. I ought to have mentioned that I had had a return of the deep melancholy and depression of spirits to which I had become but too frequently subject since the first crushing misfortune of my life—the death of my betrothed—had befallen me: a depression of spirits, from which nothing, not even the din,

the excitement and the turmoil of battle, was sufficiently powerful to arouse me. On the evening in question I was lying sad and sorrowful on the quarter-deck of our floating home, watching listlessly the glowing colours of the sky, the earth and the sea, as the sun was slowly dipping towards the horizon on the far west.

"Your name is Green, is it not?" asked the stranger I have mentioned, as he lay down beside me, throwing away the fag-end of a cigar as he did so.

I nodded in reply, for I was really too listless to speak.

"Pray don't think that I wish to indulge in idle curiosity," he said, in a tone of much interest and sympathy; "but I have a strong motive in asking the question with which I am about to trouble you. Did you not reside in Ceylon some years ago?"

I nodded again.

"I thought I could not be mistaken," the stranger said. "Do you know that you then did me the greatest service that one man could possibly do to another, that is, you saved my life, and until now I have never had an opportunity of thanking you?"

"Saved your life," I cried, in amazement: "you must be mistaken. I have no recollection of ever having saved any person's life. I have no recollection of ever, during my residence in Ceylon, of ever seeing anyone in danger of their life to whom any service that I could render could have been of sufficient importance as to have saved them. I

may mention that your face has appeared to be a familiar one to me, but when or where I have previously seen it, I have been unable to determine. It seems more like a fragment of a dream than any living reality."

The stranger smiled again, possibly at the puzzled yet interested expression of my countenance.

"I will enlighten you," he said. "Do you recollect helping a poor fellow, who had fallen down, exhausted with fatigue and fever, near the north entrance of the fort of Colombo, whom you had carried to your lodgings and afterwards attended to until he got well and was able to leave the island, which he did without tuck of drum and without having had the grace to thank his benefactor for having saved his life. I had laid myself down to die," the stranger continued, "for I could go no further. I had struggled on from Kandy, hiding and sleeping in the jungles by day and travelling by night. I had tasted no food for three days, for I had no money with which to purchase food, not even a single copper, and I was too proud to beg from the natives. I was ill with fever, contracted at Haragam, and every bone and joint of my body seemed shaken out of each other with the frightful attacks of ague which I experienced. I thought that if I could only reach the coast I would be all right, but the last remains of my strength gave out when traversing the Pettah of Colombo; and if it had not been for your opportune help I must have died. When I got well, I found that you had left

Colombo, and I intended to write my thanks, and did do this some considerable time after; but as an opportunity of employment offered in the shape of the command of a native craft, trading to Bombay and Surat, I had to leave Ceylon at a moment's notice. Since then my life has been a strange and an adventurous one, chiefly spent in the East, cruising amongst the Malay islands and the Chinese seas, occasionally crossing to Zanzibar and other ports on the east coast of Africa, the Comorin islands and the western shores of India, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. And now I am glad that

have at last an opportunity of thanking you personally for the very great service which you did me many years ago, and I shall feel glad if I can, in any way, do anything towards liquidating the debt.

It is wonderful what effect a little sympathy, a little kindly human feeling of any kind has in cheering a drooping mind. The expressions of gratitude and friendship on the part of this sunburnt stranger, whose whole appearance bespoke a life of adventure, acted on me like an electric shock. They roused my drooping spirits, they imparted a new interest to my languid frame, and as my new friend did not confine his sympathy to words, but also took to nursing and caring for me as if I were

sick child, I began, slowly at first to recover from the lethargy into which I had fallen, and by the time that the bracing breezes of the wide Atlantic fanned our cheeks, I had sufficiently recovered as to spend the greater part of the day on deck and

ake an hourly increasing interest in the moving scenes around me. And these scenes were at times deeply interesting and deeply moving. Few evenings passed without one or more of our stricken shipmates succumbing to their sufferings, and their lifeless bodies being consigned to the deep towards sunset, as the beautiful service of the English Church was being recited over their aqueous grave.

Our destination was London, and, by and by the crowded waters of the English Channel were reached—crowded with thousands on thousands of vessels, bound to and from every part on the habitable globe, and laden with the produce and manufactures of every clime under the sun.

“A magnificent sight this, isn't it?” asked Mr. Reckitts, my new friend. “I always look upon the shipping in the Channel here not only with admiration but also with a considerable amount of emotion. Then there are the bold cliffs of old England rising like the bulwarks and bastions of a vast and impregnable marine fortress from the sea, barring the way to all invaders. Just look at the dark grandeur of Beachy Head and——”

“Yes!” I exclaimed, with much bitterness, “I can look on the dark grandeur of Beachy Head with emotion, but it is with a different sort of emotion to what you profess to feel, for some years ago I lost a very considerable fortune amongst its rocks and breakers, a fortune which tumbled me from the pinnacle of wealth and riches to the depths of poverty and ruin. I have no admiration to throw

away on its bold front and its majestic contour."

This conversation led me to relate to Mr. Reckitts the whole history of my misfortunes, in connection with the Bank of the Carnatic down to the time when Messrs. Tawse & Co. declined to act longer for me in the affair of my appeal.

"Then the game is not quite up?" Mr. Reckitts asked.

"Well, after a manner, it is," I answered; "for I have not the means to carry it on, and the Bank know this as well, and they will not now come to the terms of compromise that they offered a year or two ago."

"If you had the money to carry on this suit, can it still be prosecuted?" my new friend asked, as if he were deeply interested in the affair.

"Certainly," I answered, "and with all but a certainty of having the case decided in my favour."

"Then I will tell you what you will do. You will allow me to be your banker, and we will prosecute this affair in partnership. I will supply the sinews of war, and if they are lost, it will not be a matter of any consequence to me, for I possess more wealth than I know well what to do with. You saved my life, and in helping you in this strait I am only repaying a very small portion of the debt I owe you. If we succeed you can repay me all that I may require to advance. We must however fight shy of these steady going old lawyers. Lawyers in general are a set of cold-blooded money-grubbers, but there are many exceptions to this rule, and our object must be to get hold of one of the

right kidney to manage this affair. A young clever fellow, who has a name to make, is the sort of man for our money, and I think that I will be able to get hold of such a one to undertake our business; and if money and skill can possibly give you back your estates, depend upon it that both shall be exerted in your favour."

I was so overpowered by this generous and unexpected offer that I was powerless to express my thanks, but sat utterly dumbfounded like a man in a dream. Mr. Reckitts saw my emotion, and smiled goodnaturedly at my surprise.

"It's all right," he said with a gratified laugh; "I like a bit of sensation and I like a fight, and I can afford to have both. It is likely to be the only bit of interest or excitement I am to have during my present stay in Eng'and, and I cannot live without having something to interest or excite me. I don't know," he continued, "if ever I told you that I have not a friend or relation in the world. I am utterly alone. I know and never did know of anyone who was related to me by the ties of blood, and I am never likely now ever to meet with any such. To account for this, I may mention that, as an infant, I was the only human being saved from a shipwreck which occurred nearly thirty years ago on the most easterly point of Scotland. I have, therefore, had to make my own way in the world, under what Mark Tapley would call very creditable circumstances, and I must confess that, on the whole, I have not found it such a bad world after all."

The following day were at anchor off Gravesend, when Mr. Reckitts and myself hurried off to London. The sympathy and interest which this man expressed and took in my affairs had a most wonderful effect in reviving my own drooping energies, both mental and bodily. I seemed to be entering into a new phase of existence. New hopes began to bloom, new desires and new interests to take possession of my mind. The dull lethargy with which my spirits had been so long oppressed seemed to drop from me, as if I were laying aside a worn-out garment. The world no longer looked as if it were clothed in sackcloth, and I felt as if I were becoming my former self again,—the former self who had taken so strong an interest in levelling the wide-spreading forests of the Kandyan hills and reviving the glories of Newera Singha.

Mr. Reckitts was all life and all energy. He was not the sort of chap, he said, to let the grass grow beneath his feet. “‘Strike whilst the iron is hot’ is my motto,” he remarked, and acting on this principle, he was not long in looking up a young solicitor to take up my case against the Bank of the Carnatic, and with his assistance he was equally fortunate in securing the services of a clever but as yet briefless barrister to plead our cause before the law lords of the Crown.

“Now look here,” he said, after all the papers had been handed over to the first of these gentlemen, and we were having a consultation upon the facts of the case; “look here, money is no object

with me, but delay is. If you get through this job quickly, say within six months, I will hand over five hundred pounds to each of you, over and above your fees and retainers, but if the affair is delayed beyond that time, one hundred pounds of this sum will be deducted for every month that it hangs fire."

"Keep your mind easy," was the reassuring reply, "we will do your case all justice, and it will be pushed forward with as little delay as possible, and we may almost say that your victory is all but certain."

It was now the month of June, and as we had no particular business to detain us in London, Mr. Reckitts proposed that we should take a tour around the southern coasts of England, spending a few weeks at any place which was likely to afford us amusement or recreation. We did not confine our wanderings to the shores of England, but went across to the neighbouring kingdom of France, visiting Paris, Rouen, Boulogne and several other of the coast towns, beside journeying amongst the quaint villages and hamlets of Normandy. It was well over towards the end of August when we returned to London. Somehow, I always felt like a fish out of the water, in the immensity of this vast metropolis. I had already during my former visits exhausted all the most remarkable museums and sights, and I now felt used up and blasé after our recent wanderings. My companion seemed to be in much the same state of mind as myself.

"What do you say," he asked one morning at

breakfast shortly after our return from France, "to a run down to Scotland? I should like to have a look at the spot where I turned up as an ocean-born brat about a quarter of a century ago, and the places where I was subsequently raised. As I said once before, I met with much kindness and sympathy from the warm-hearted people in the north-east of Scotland, and who knows, but I may come upon some trace or traces of my real origin, although that is by no means very likely after such a lapse of time?"

"The very thing that I should wish above all things," I replied. "I have some relations in Aberdeenshire, whom I promised to visit a year or two ago, and I do not think that we could do better than take a run down to that quarter for a few weeks *pour passer le temps*. My kinsman is a clergyman, but a regular brick," I added. "He told me that if I wished he could get me a few days' excellent shooting from some of the neighbouring lairds, and I know that he will be as good as his word. He is by no means a wealthy man, quite the contrary, but he will give us a most hospitable reception, and we will perhaps find means to recompense him for his trouble and whatever expense we may occasion him."

"All right, old man," was my friend's reply; "it will always help to pass away a few weeks until this abominable law-suit is finished; only, I am no great hand at gunning, and, to tell the truth, I have no great enjoyment in it, but whilst you are going ahead amongst the hares and rabbits, I can

take a turn round and beat up the quarters of some old friends that I have in that neighbourhood, and by this means we will be able to kill two birds with one stone."

CHAPTER XLIV.

We arrived at the parsonage of Cordarick, my cousin's residence, in the full glow of an autumn evening, in the first week of September. Harvesting had just begun in the fields, and the rich crops of yellow corn were being mown down in every direction all along our route. The hills and woods, even the wild moorlands, glowed in all the rich colouring of purple and gold from furze, bracken and heather, as we passed.

"What a beautiful country," my companion exclaimed in a kind of involuntary ecstasy as we drove along the road. "Search the whole world round and you will not see anything more lovely than this. Talk of the tropics with their wild luxuriance of verdure, I have never seen anything in the tropics, and I have seen more of them than most men, that can equal far less surpass this."

"You are right," I replied, for I a'so had been entranced with the loveliness through which we were passing; "but much of our admiration depends a good deal upon association. We can scarcely compare tropical scenery with this. In the one we see the lavish luxuriance of nature, in the other we are accustomed to her bareness. In the one there is a perpetual summer, in the other this favourable

season lasts only for a few weeks, and a good deal of the beauty and gorgeous glow on moorland, hill and wood depends upon our seeing it in its most favourable light and at its most favourable season. If we happened to be passing along this road in the middle of winter, our present ideas would undergo a wonderful revulsion; for we would then see little to admire in the cloud-capped hills, the bare woods, the swampy morasses and the muddy roads. It is the same with everything else in this world," I continued, sententiously, "it depends entirely upon the aspect from which we view the common occurrences of life whether they bring us pleasure or pain."

"Don't let us moralize," my companion said, "perhaps you are right, but still I mean to assert that the scenery through which we have lately passed cannot be excelled by anything that I have even seen in other parts of the world."

"There is the mansion house of Carlingburn," I exclaimed, as a turning of the road brought that stately pile into view. "The parsonage is immediately at the back of that wood, and we will be at the end of our journey in the course of another quarter of an hour."

We received a hearty welcome from the parson and his family, and as we were seated around his warm fireside, the curtains drawn and the lamps lighted, we were able to express in glowing language our admiration of the country, much to our host's gratification, and to recount our wanderings and

adventures, by flood and field, in many lands and under many climes, to a deeply-interested circle of hearers.

“I must pay an early visit to Carlingburn House; you recollect how I was baulked in my desire to do so last time I was here,” I remarked to my host as I bade him good night.

“All right,” was the reply. “I think that I will be able to gratify you in this particular. The house is at present empty, all but a couple of servants, an elderly man and an equally elderly woman. If you recollect, the old baronet died shortly before your last visit, and the heir being serving with his regiment in India, he has never yet been able to come down and take possession of his property. I hear, however, that orders have been received to have the whole house put in order, as the laird and his family may be expected down any day during the autumn.”

“Then it is not a young fellow who has succeeded to the property,” I asked, more from a desire to say something than from any curiosity or interest I had in the matter,

“I scarcely know what he is. He may be young, middle-aged or old for anything that I know. He is, it seems, a second or third cousin of old Sir James, and no one in this neighbourhood knows anything about him, beyond the fact that he is an officer in the army, and that he has a wife and family. This is your bedroom, and I may now say good night and pleasant dreams to you.”

The following day was Sunday, and early on Monday morning Mr. Reckitts left us to pay his visit to the friends whom he expected to find near the coast. The next day or two were wet and rainy, and we were perforce obliged to keep within doors, so that it was towards the end of the week before we could pay our visit to Carlingburn House.

“This is one of the spots where the old laird, he of the '45, had one of his most narrow escapes,” my companion remarked, as he pointed to the parapet of an old stone bridge. “The authorities had as usual heard that he was lurking in the neighbourhood, and a strong party was sent out early one morning to apprehend and bring him to Aberdeen, dead or alive. They had reached this spot and had halted to hold a consultation how best they might pounce upon their quarry, when an old fishwife came along the road, puffing and peching and bending beneath the weight of her creel. She advanced into the centre of the party of soldiers and sat down coolly upon the parapet of the bridge, asking some of the men to give her a helping hand with her creel, and she sat there, the butt of the soldiers' jokes, until they moved off towards the house, after which she deliberately hid her creel in a neighbouring quarry and made off across the country with a degree of swiftness which was scarcely to have been looked for in one of her apparent age and sex. The fishwife, however, was the laird, who had just sufficient warning of the approach of his enemies to don this disguise

and make his escape through them. In point of fact, his daring and coolness, when surrounded with danger, were perfectly marvellous, although some allowance must be made for popular exaggeration. But here we are at the entrance of the avenue. We will take this footpath; it will take us to the gardens and we will visit them first, besides I see that there are several waggons in front of the house and a number of people busy unloading them—perhaps the first instalment of the new laird's furniture."

We were met at the entrance of the gardens, a large walled-in enclosure, of several acres in extent, with considerable ranges of glass houses covering the north and another terrace wall, by an elderly man, the chief gardener, who greeted my companion with a low obeisance and a cheery smile.

"Oh! sir, I'm terrible busy the day," he said, in answer to Mr. Dallas's remark, that we had come to look through the gardens and hothouses; "an' ye could na hae come at a waur time. The new laird an' a' his femly his jist arrived. Yon's their things that they're unpackin' frae the cairts at the door, an' I hae jist gotten in two or three hamperfu's o' plants—Indian plants they ca' them, an' strict orders to tak the greatest possible care o' them an' to see that they get proper treatment, the same as if I suld ken aboot every ootlandish plants that folk like to bring me. If it hid been a cum cinerarias or calcoolaries, or geraniums, or fuschias, or gloxinias or even begonias, I wad ha'

kent a' about them, but these new fangled affairs, I ken naething ava what to dee wi them."

"This gentleman is fresh from India," my friend remarked, "and he may, perhaps, be able to give some assistance in this difficulty. Have you seen the new laird and what sort of a man is he John?"

"Weel, sir, he is jist a decent like carl, weel on in years like mysel. He is rael ceevil spoken an' jist newses awa wi' a body the same as if he was one o' oorsels. An' the lassies, the dochters I mean, are a when weel-faured hussies wha'll be on the ootlook for men, or I'm sair mistaen; but whaur they're to pick them up here aboot is mair than I can guess. They'll be settin' their ceps or cockin' their heids at some o' the braw lords about Lonnon or Edinburgh or some other o' these big toons. But here 's the planties. Can you tell me onything about them, sir?"

"Why," I exclaimed, "these are all Ceylon plants. Here is a sago palm, and a Dotol palm, here is the shoeflower and the peacock flower, and here is the wana-rajah, or king of the jungle, and here is—"

"And here is the ratmal or red flower of Doom-bera," a silvery voice explained with a laugh immediate'y at my elbow, in accents which made me start and quiver as if I had been suddenly subjected to a severe shock from a galvanic battery. I looked up and, merciful heavens! there stood Helen Leith, or her counterpart, within a few inches of me, radiant with smiles and blushes, as I had

used to see her, in the years that had gone by, in her father's house in Kandy.

"Helen," I gasped, with overpowering emotion, as I grasped the flower-stand to prevent myself from falling, for a deadly faintness had seized me and the whole universe seemed reeling as if it were about to dissolve and fall to pieces.

"Mr. Green!" the young lady exclaimed in astonishment and with almost as much emotion as myself.

"I am afraid that I have been the cause of this *contretemps*," the parson said, coming forward to apologize. "I had no idea that the new proprietor had arrived, and as my friend Mr. Green had expressed a strong desire to see the old mansion-house, or what remained of it, with the family portraits, I brought him over, thinking that the house-keeper would have no objections to shew us over the premises."

"Then you are indeed our old friend, Mr. Green, as I am Lizzie Leith," the young lady said, rapidly recovering her equanimity and coming forward with extended hand to greet me with a warmth and cordiality which reminded me of other days. "Oh! how glad papa will be to learn that you are here. How did you manage to discover our whereabouts? Our last letters to you were returned with 'Gone and left no address' written across them, and we have been very uneasy about you ever since. But come, I am only detaining you here. Papa and Mamma and the other girls are in the house.

We only arrived an hour or two ago, and they will all be so surprised and delighted to see you."

By this time I had, in a great measure, recovered from the effects of the sudden surprise which I had experienced from the unexpected appearance of Lizzie Leith on the scene, and I had begun to realize the new position of matters. I was like one in a dream, however, when Lizzie dragged me off, followed by my companion, the parson, who was almost as astonished as myself, to see the other members of the family. It is needless to say that I received a most warm and cordial reception from the whole of them. The Colonel, for he had with his succession to the baronetcy attained the rank of Lieut.-Colonel, was looking as hale and hearty as ever, and Mrs. Leith was, if anything, a trifle stouter and more motherly-looking than formerly, but she was the same kindly, genial, true-hearted woman that she ever was. She greeted me with a right motherly embrace and sobbed in my arms, from real emotion, whilst she pressed my hand with heartfelt fervour.

"We are scarcely settled here yet in our new home, but of course you must take up your quarters with us through the season now. We cannot think of losing sight of you again, and we will all try to make you as comfortable as possible. Won't we, girls?" she said appealing to her four daughters, who had formed in a group, like the four graces, around us.

There was no possibility of resisting this kind invitation, even if I had desired to do so, which

I didn't, and I was soon domiciled in the hospitable mansion of my old friends, and treated, in all respects, as one of the family. Mr. Reckitts spent a few days with us on his return from the coast. His journey had not proved quite so satisfactory as he had anticipated. Of the friends whom he had expected to meet, scarcely any remained. Many were dead, some had removed to other parts of the country, some had emigrated, and of those who remained, very few remembered and fewer still had retained any interest in the fortunes or misfortunes of the wanderer. A residence in the country did not suit him.

"I have been accustomed to ships and shipping all my life, and I would die of *ennui* if I were to remain long from the seaside. I shall take a turn up by Glasgow and Liverpool," he said, "and perhaps look in to Bristol and London to see how our lawsuit is coming on. These lawyer fellows are none the worse to have a stir up every now and again. It makes them look smart and get on with their work; but it is horrid slow work the best way you can take it."

"You see," Sir Robert remarked to me one day, when I had made some observations on his new dignity, "it came upon me rather unexpectedly. I always knew, from my boyhood, that this title was in my father's family, but at that time there were about thirty males between myself and the succession. Nevertheless, very singularly, the males of my family have all died out, and although there are no end of female descendants, my son George,

who, by-the-bye, we expect home on leave before Christmas, and myself are now the only male representatives left to carry on the name and title. It did feel a little strange at first to be styled Sir Robert, and Mary, my wife, did not for some time take kindly to being addressed as 'my lady,' but we have got used to these things now and think nothing about them. The title and the estates have come to me rather late in the day to add much to my gratification or ambition. Had they come twenty or thirty years earlier, it might have been different, but as it is, they will be of some service to George, and may do the girls some good, although, to tell the truth, I think that they have all too much good sense to be very greatly elated at our accession of fortune."

October was not far advanced when we had an accession to our party in the persons of my former managers, Messrs. Wallace and Murray. They had both been very fortunate in the way of making independent fortunes in Ceylon after I had left the Colony. They had bought some of the mortgaged estates of bankrupt proprietors, for a mere trifle, and having cultivated them and reaped the crops with the very strictest economy, they had been rewarded by the attainment of very considerable wealth. They had kept up their acquaintance with the Leiths during the remainder of Sir Robert's stay in the island, and being now on a visit to the old country they had come down to Carlingburn to renew the acquaintance.

There was much gaiety of a quiet description about the old mansion. The Leiths and the parsonage girls were declared to be regular bricks by both Wallace and Murray. These two young gentlemen never tired of riding and driving, boating and fishing on the lake, playing croquet on the lawn, getting up picnics to all sorts of out-of-the-way places, whilst the weather remained fine, and in the evening dancing and acting charades until the small hours of the morning.

During the early part of my stay at Carlingburn Lizzie Leith constituted herself my principal guardian and companion, accompanying me in rambles amongst the autumn changing woods, visits to the parsonage and the houses of the neighbouring gentry, who had all called to make the acquaintance of the new laird and his family, and in short excursions to places of interest in the vicinity of the mansion. A change however had begun to be apparent in her conduct towards me. From an open eager friendly manner—eager to promote my wishes and comfort,—she had gradually begun to exhibit a retiring shyness for which I could not account, unless on the hypothesis that I must have, by some means, unconsciously given her cause for offence. I was all the more annoyed at this, as day by day her presence and companionship was beginning to be more and more necessary to my happiness. I could not hide from myself that the old feeling which I had experienced for her sister Helen was returning with redoubled force with regard to her. She

possessed all Helen's beauty and grace, all Helen's intellect and goodness of disposition, with, perhaps, a greater manliness, if I may use such a word with regard to a lady, of character, that is a more masculine understanding. Her present shyness and evident desire to avoid my company as much as she had formerly courted it caused me a very great degree of uneasiness and concern, and this uneasiness was rendered all the more intense from the impossibility of my being able to demand any explanation of its cause. On the first day of November I received a letter from my solicitor, in London, the contents of which were very laconic, but they were none the less important and satisfactory. They were as follows :—" Dear Sir,—Hip, hip, hurrah, we have gained our cause, and the Bank people have to restore your estates, with the estimated profits for the past seven years. Will write you more in detail. Meantime beg to congratulate you on the result."

Somehow this news did not convey to me the amount of satisfaction which I had anticipated. I had become so accustomed to misfortune and disappointment, that I could not realize the full import of the turn which the tide had taken with regard to my affairs ; besides, the evident estrangement between Lizzie Leith and myself was causing me no end of concern. What made matters worse was, that the news of my change of fortune seemed to deepen this estrangement on the lady's part, whilst it had raised wild hopes in my heart which I scarcely dared to whisper even to myself. I

remembered how in the darkest hour of my sorrow for the loss of her sister, Lizzie, as an impulsive and impetuous child, had embraced me in her little arms and promised to be my wife in place of her dead sister. What if I should remind her of her promise now? Would she look back on it as the promptings of mere childish sympathy, or would she be inclined to permit the promise thus given to act as a foundation for my now presuming to aspire to a place in her affections and a realization of my former dreams of happiness? To damp these incipient hopes and aspirations the estrangement between the lady and myself went on daily increasing. Instead of the former and unconstrained nature of our intercourse, she evidently now dreaded to be alone with me, and when we did encounter each other, our manner and intercourse were becoming every day more stiff and formal. I observed also that although I was congratulated by all the other members of the family, and likewise by the people of the parsonage, between whom and the Leiths a very warm friendship had been struck up upon the successful issue of my lawsuit and the restoration of my estates, that Lizzie had not joined in any expression of gratification at my change of fortune. Sir Robert, in commemoration of this event, had resolved to have a grand party on Hallowe'en, *i. e.*, the 12th or 13th November, All Saints' Day, old style.

“We will have a bonfire, my boy,” he said, slapping my back, “on the top of the beacon

hill, a fire too that will be visible over nearly half the Garioch and part of Mar and Buchan."

The beacon hill was a high isolated peak, rising immediately behind the mansion house, where the vitrified remains of a substantial circular building told of its former use when the blazing beacon-fires threw their warning glare over a wide extent of country, warning the armed force of the district to gather for mutual defence against the cruel invaders of the land either Norse or Saxon, in times of peril and danger.

"We will having dipping for apples and pulling of kail stalks and sowing of hemp seed, and all the others ancient modes of propitiating the fairies and gaining an insight into futurity, which were practised by our forefathers," the baronet remarked. "These games will amuse the young folks and help to pass away one of the dark dreary evenings, so hard to bear about this season, in these northern latitudes. I suppose that you will not now have long to endure them. You will be setting off to the sunny south to take possession of your estates and settle your affairs there. If it were not for the long dark cold nights of winter, what a glorious country this would be to live in. I must confess that the advent of winter and the fall of the leaf always makes me shudder with dread at its approach. I dread it more on account of the girls than myself. They have been so much accustomed to warmer climes and sunnier skies than we can boast of here, that I fear the effect of the change on their

health. There is Lizzy, for instance, she is evidently feeling the effects of the winter already, for her mother has been calling my attention to the fact that she has been showing symptoms of ill-health for the past two or three weeks, and looking drooping and depressed, and she used to be the most cheerful and even boisterous of the whole lot."

Hallowe'en arrived and there were great demonstrations of rejoicing. A huge bonfire blazed on the beacon hill, and I had taken care that there should be a grand display of fireworks. The day had been mild and balmy as is often the case at this season of the year, when St. Martin's summer takes the place of the more boisterous weather generally experienced towards the end of autumn. The Dallas girls were over at Carlingburn, and so also was a large gathering of young men and maidens from the gentlemen's seats for a wide circuit around. The young folks were delighted with the bonfire and the fireworks, and they were no less delighted with the fun of dipping for apples, burning nuts, pulling kail stalks and sowing hemp seed in the gloaming. There were much laughter and feeble shrieks of sham alarms, as the young men tried to play off small practical tricks upon their fair friends whilst engaged in their arts of divination, and there was much real enjoyment and happiness, including a large amount of flirting and love-making at the ball in the evening. A covered way was improvised, leading from a side door to the hot-house and conservatories, which were lighted up with coloured lamps and Chinese lanterns, and

afforded a grateful retreat from the hot and stuffy ball-rooms and the bustle and noise of the crowd within them.

I felt altogether out of sorts. I was in a measure displeased with myself and every person and everything around me. In point of fact I felt very miserable and wretched. My kinswomen, the Miss Dallahses, chaffed me about my wretched looks and called me "the knight with the rueful countenance." Like good kind-hearted girls they tried their best to cheer me and banish the fiends of discontent by which I was haunted; but their well-meant efforts were of no avail. Lizzie Leith had complained of a headache early in the evening, and she was in consequence unable to take part in the gaiety of the proceedings, and her absence, Jeannie Dallas said, by way of a joke, was the cause of my doleful aspect. I could not hide from myself that Jeannie's guess was nearer the mark than she suspected. Lizzie's avoidance of me and the evident misunderstanding which was widening the breach between us was giving me a very great amount of uneasiness, and I had resolved to take the earliest opportunity of asking an explanation, and learning the cause and front of my offending. The time was fast drawing nigh when I would require to start for Ceylon, and I could not think of leaving home with anything approaching to a misunderstanding existing between myself and her whose very presence I felt inclined to worship, and whose good opinion I felt to be of more consequence to me than all the world besides.

It was in vain that I tried to take a part in the festivities around me, for I was, in spite of every effort to the contrary, wretched and miserable. I have said that the day was mild and balmy for the season, and the night was equally so. There was a warm softness in the air which reminded me of the balmy nights during crop time in Ceylon, and I left the dancers to take a stroll by myself through the shrubberies and gardens which were reposing under the radiance of a full-orbed moon.

I had finished my walk and was returning to the house, when, on turning a corner of a shaded walk, I came suddenly on a lady, who appeared to be a good deal startled by the rencontre.

"Lizzie!" I exclaimed, in surprise. "I understood that you were on the sick list and scarcely expected to meet you here."

"Mr. Green!" Lizzie exclaimed as if frightened at our meeting, and she made as if she would have retreated to the house, without any further parley.

"Do stay, Lizzie darling," I cried in great agitation. "I am so anxious to learn in what way I have offended you, that you should avoid my presence as you have been doing for some time past. If I have really been guilty of any offence I am very sorry for it, and it has been quite unconscious on my part, and this estrangement is causing me more pain and trouble than I can possibly express."

Lizzie stood rooted to the spot apparently in doubt whether she should remain or retreat to the house, and I could perceive that she was quite as agitated

as I was, and trembling with ill-concealed emotion.

"You have given me no offence, Mr. Green," she said; "and I am very, very sorry if I have caused you any pain or uneasiness. Believe me I never meant to do so, and I am quite sure that it is the last thing that I would wish to do."

"Then let us be friends as formerly," I said, seizing her hand in the impulse of the moment and drawing it within my arm. "I have not now much longer time to remain here, and I should be very sorry indeed if I left with any misunderstanding existing between you and me."

I felt my companion tremble as if she were greatly agitated, and she leant more heavily on my arm.

"Then you are really going to leave us, and that soon?" she asked, in a low tone of voice.

"Yes, I must now return to Ceylon; and, strange to say, I will do so with a degree of reluctance which a few months ago I would have believed to be incredible."

"Why should you leave with reluctance?" the lady asked in tremulous accents.

"That is a question that I can scarcely answer satisfactorily. All places ought perhaps to be much the same to me, for I have no one to care for, and no one to care for me. I am totally alone in the world, and my going or coming will not create a particle of interest in any human heart, at all events not such an interest as most people would wish to create and cherish."

"I scarcely think that you do yourself justice in such ideas, for I am quite sure that we all, that is papa and mamma and the parsonage people, all feel an interest in you, and we will all be very sorry to lose you."

"And do you include yourself in the all?" I asked, placing perhaps an undue emphasis on this question.

Lizzie's agitation increased, and she shivered as if she were suffering from an ague fit, but she made no reply to my question.

"You are cold, dear," I said after an awkward pause; "the night air is too chilly for you. Now do tell me in what I have offended you, for I have been very unhappy for the past few weeks, and you and I ought not to have any misunderstanding whatever."

"You have not offended me, you have never done or said anything that I could possibly have taken offence at; but I thought,—I thought,—that is, I fancied that I had perhaps been too forward at first and—and—and—"

"You wished to make up for this fancy by making me miserable?" I asked, pressing the little hand that was trembling on my arm.

"I did not wish to make you unhappy," the lady replied; "on the contrary," and then she came to a full stop, as if afraid to conclude the sentence—and then she added after an awkward pause, "I could not forget old times and the sorrow that we all suffered in common."

“And do you remember the promise that you made to me at that time of sorrow? It was, perhaps, an impulsive promise on the part of a sympathizing child, but even then it soothed my sorrow, and now, I would fain claim its fulfilment if you have not repented so rash a promise. Oh! Lizzie, darling, do have pity on me and complete my happiness by fulfilling this promise. I know that I am not worthy of you, but I will do all that it is possible for a man to do to promote your happiness. I loved your sister Helen with my whole heart. No man ever loved a woman more sincerely and more truly, and the love and affection that I experienced for her has returned to me since I have enjoyed your companionship. Oh! Lizzie!” I cried with a burst of unrestrained passion, “You are all in all to me, you are my world, my love, my life, and you will not, you must not, refuse my love.”

I had clasped the dear girl in a frenzied embrace, and she did not resent it. On the contrary she lay sobbing gently in my arms. I kissed her forehead, her cheeks, her lips in rapturous delight, and when we re-entered the house, where the lights were blazing, the music swelling, and the whole gathering of youth and beauty were giving themselves up to the happiness and pleasure of the moment, we were, perhaps, the very happiest of all that brilliant throng. When I informed Sir Robert and Lady Leith of the understanding which their daughter and I had arrived at, they looked rather serious and concerned.

“Is it not like—like marrying a deceased wife’s sister?” Mrs. Leith, asked in some agitation. “If it were not for that I would have no objection to this marriage.”

“That is exactly what troubles me,” Sir Robert replied; “but then we must remember that there was no marriage in the case. Mr. Green lost our eldest girl, by the hand of God, and I cannot see that we would be justified in withholding our other one from him together with our blessing, if it is for the happiness of both that they should be thus united.”

My story is now at an end, for our marriage took place in the little Episcopal church of Cordarick, Mr. Dallas performing the ceremony, on Christmas day 1856. The affair was kept very quiet, no invitations were issued, and none were present but Mr. Reckitts, the bride’s parents and sisters, and the people from the parsonage.

Immediately after the ceremony we left for London, from whence we went to Paris, in which city I have just finished this, the last chapter of my Autobiography. We propose journeying leisurely to Marseilles, Venice, Florence, Rome and Naples, then on to Alexandria, on our way to Ceylon, which we expect to reach after the setting-in of the north-east monsoon, or the finest season of the year on the hills.

I can only add to these my reminiscences of a time and a state of society which have both passed away, that I am now in the enjoyment of as much happiness as generally falls to the lot of man, and I can look forward to the future with renewed hope and assurance that this happiness will last.













