

He opened his hands and allowed the pearls to roll upon the floor, adding again—

"Why do I hate that woman?" and he crushed the pearls into the dust under his feet.

"Why?" repeated he, still grinding them mechanically under his feet. "While she was looking at Dilah, it seemed to me that Dilah was angry and knit her brows and I thought her voice whispered in my ear, 'Avoid that woman—I will not accept her presents!'"

He threw his rich cloak over his shoulders, and buckled on his yatagan.

As he passed towards the door, he again spurned with his foot the pearls which were in his road, and they fell through the open boards among the debris made by the chisels of the negroes.

Mahmoud mounted his handsome Arab—forbid his slaves to follow him—clapped spurs to his steed, and disappeared.

END OF PART II.

(To be Continued.)

## TOUCHING TIGERS.

MY first acquaintance with the tiger in his natural state was made in a country which has only of late years become known to Europeans. Much as has been done by our countrymen towards extirpating this animal in the jungles of the Turraie, and the Morung, and other parts of India, wide regions still exist within and on the confines of the south-west frontier of Bengal where the shot of the sportsman has seldom if ever broken the silence of the dreary woods. Along the southern skirts of the Colehân, in Kéonjur and Mohurbunj, where the Keel and the Byturnee wind ripples through the shades of far extending forests, were the poor Ho, or Sontal, in his wretched clearing, rears his solitary hovel, and shares with the Sâmbur and the wild pig the scanty produce of his little field, there the tiger, instead of lurking in the jungle, marches boldly forth in the broad daylight, and seizes the bullock at the plough, or the poor husbandman's half-naked daughter, while filling her pitcher at the lonely pool. It comes with the gathering dusk to the ill-fastened hovel door, breaks down the fence in which the starving kine have been immured, slays in a few minutes, perhaps, the whole of the little herd on which the owner relied for his subsistence, and often thus succeeds in driving away the settler.

But even in these wild solitudes man sometimes maintains his supremacy over the beast of the field. The Ho, or, as he is commonly called by more civilised neighbours, the Kôle, trained from boyhood to the use of the bow and arrow, is generally an adroit archer, and many individuals among his tribe are singularly intrepid men. He has need to be so, who, leaving the safety and comparative comforts of a large village, with no weapons but bow and arrows and a light battle-axe, and no companions but wife and children, sallies forth into the wide forests, where man never trod before, and founds there a new settlement. Sometimes two or three able-bodied persons of his "keely," or clan, will assist him in felling and clearing an acre or two, and once or twice he may revisit his native town to purchase seed and poultry and cattle. But with these exceptions the new settler and his little family live and labour in solitude, and must, by their unaided efforts, strive for mastery with the wild beasts of the forest.

Many years ago—so many, that names of persons and of some places concerned, have passed from my memory—official duties led me to a small village in Rengrapeer, one of the remotest and wildest divisions of that wild country the Kôlehân, on the south-west frontier. The hamlet consisted of some five or six cottages in a cleared space of as many acres, surrounded by forest. A brook, whence the women of the village procured water, ran by the bottom of a slope, about two hundred yards from the houses; and (a usual feature in Kôle villages) a few large slabs of slaty rock fixed in the ground marked where "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." Near one of those I observed a pole erected, on which grinned the skull of a tiger, with the bones of

one of its arms dismembered half way up. I turned to the villagers near me for an explanation, and heard this:

The daughter of the Moonda, or head man of the place, was affianced, in the rude native fashion, to one of the young men of the village, and their nuptials were to come off in a few days. One evening the girl with some of her female companions went, as was their daily wont, to the brook already mentioned, to bathe and fetch water for the household. They had been absent but a quarter of an hour, when the startling voice of a tiger, and the piercing shrieks of the women, suddenly broke the silence of the hour, and before the roused villagers could snatch their arms, the girls came flying back with horror in their faces, and in a few words announced the dreadful fact that a tiger had carried off one of their party. It was the Moonda's daughter. Her stout-hearted kinsmen rushed, but with hopeless hearts, to the rescue. Foremost among these was her intended husband, and close by his side his sworn brother, allied to him by a ceremony, common amongst this people, of tasting each other's blood, and swearing to stand by each other in after life, come weal, come woe. While the rest were following with skill and caution the bloody traces of the monster and his prey, these two, dashing on through the dense jungle, soon came upon the object of their search. In a small open space (which I afterwards visited) the tiger was crouched over the dead body of the girl, which it had already begun to devour. The approach of the hunters roused him, and he stood over the carcase, growling defiance at the two men.

In a moment an arrow from the bereaved lover's bow pierced the tiger's chest. It struck deep and true, but not so as (in sporting phrase) to stop the dreadful beast, who, from a distance of some thirty paces, came down, with his peculiar whirlwind rush, on his assailant. The young man had just time to draw his "kappee," or battle-axe, from his girdle, when the tiger seized him by the left wrist. The man, leaning well back to gain room for the swing of the axe, drove it with all the collected strength of rage and despair into the tiger's forearm, severing the massive bone, and leaving the blade buried in the muscles. Next moment his head was crushed within the monster's jaws, and he fell dead upon the ground, while the tiger, tamed by the loss of blood, turned round and began to limp away. All occurred so rapidly, that the surviving comrade had not shot a shaft, but now, maddened, he ran to the retreating brute, and sent arrow after arrow up to the feather into its side and neck until it rolled over, dying, within a few yards of the ill-fated young couple. The tiger still breathed as the rest of the party came up. They struck off its head, disservered the muscle by which the left forearm still adhered to the shoulder, and with these spoils, and the mangled bodies of the poor victims borne on litters, returned, a melancholy procession, to the village. The above minute details I had from the chief actor himself, a stalwart young fellow. The event had occurred not more than a month or five weeks before, and the sun-dried strips of flesh still adhered to the ghastly trophy on the pole. I wished to have brought the bones away, but they gave some comfort to the poor old Moonda's heart. They reminded him that his daughter had not died unavenged, and I left them there.

Another instance that became known to me of heroism among the Kôles, is of a more homely sort. In another part of Sengrapeer, a clearing was made in the forest by an old man, his wife, her sister, and a grown-up daughter. No other human being lived within miles of their solitary hut, and the head of the family had to go frequently, and always alone, to a distant village for the necessities of life. His first season's ploughing was stopped by a tiger killing one of the only pair of bullocks he possessed, and he was obliged to sell the other to buy rice for the rest of the year. Before the next rains, he managed to procure another pair of oxen, and patiently recommenced the tillage of his little clearing. But his unwelcome neighbour again robbed him of a bullock, and once more put an end to his operations. This was too much to

bear, and with singular hardihood the old man determined to rid himself of his enemy or die of him. The bullock lay dead within a few paces of a patch of grass which intervened between the clearing and the forest; and the man, thoroughly conversant with the habits of the tiger, knew well that in this grass the beast would lie until the cool of evening summoned him to sup upon the carcase. He proceeded without further ado into the house, armed his household, the three women aforesaid, with a bamboo each, placed them in line along the edge of the grass, posted himself by a circuitous route on the opposite side of the cover where it skirted the jungle, and, having given some preconcerted signal to his auxiliaries, waited, bow in hand and arrow on string, for his dangerous enemy. The three women, nothing daunted, began beating the ground in a business-like manner. They shrieked and yelled, and advanced steadily into the cover; it was not extensive; before long the tiger came sneaking out towards the man, who, well concealed behind a tree, let him pass so as to obtain a clear broadside view, and then let fly an arrow into the centre of his neck. Fortune favoured the bold, and the brute fell dead.

So little did the veteran think of this exploit, that I should probably have heard nothing about it, had he not come to my office attended by his family and the mankee, or head of his circle, with the tiger's skin, to claim the reward (ten rupees a head) given by government for the destruction of this animal; a reward which, shabby as it is, was not to be despised by the poor settler. He was a short wiry man, some fifty or sixty years of age, with a dogged determined look, and spoke of killing the tiger and making his old wife and sister-in-law beat him up, in such a matter-of-fact way that we were all in shouts of laughter, though filled with admiration for the stout old boy and his hard-favoured amazons.

There was great luck in such an easy conquest, but it is not, even within my own knowledge, a solitary instance of so large an animal being killed at once by so apparently inadequate a weapon. A very big tiger was once brought into the head-quarter station of the Kôle country—Chybasa—which had been killed with one shot by a mere stripling, some sixteen or seventeen years old, who seemed much more engaged in admiring the flowers in front of my house, than interested in the recital of his prowess, made to me by his comrades and the head man of the village.

Those who have engaged in tiger-shooting excursions, either on foot or on elephants, know full well how many shots the brute sometimes takes. And such instances of quick work as the two above cited may surprise the most experienced sportsman.

I have already observed that where population is exceedingly scarce, the tiger loses much of his skulking, hiding disposition, and attacks his prey in the open. In 1837, or '38, a lad herding cattle in the village lands of Koorsee, near Chalbassa, was pursued over a meadow, and *thorough the herd*, and was killed by a tiger, who had begun to eat him when scared away by the villagers. I saw the body; it lay in the midst of an open field, at least two hundred yards from any cover. It was disembowelled, and with the chest torn wide open; but the face was as that of one who lies in a pleasant sleep.

The enormous forearm of the tiger has often attracted attention. We have seen a cat pat a dead mouse, or the face of a dog which was teasing her, and it is easy to understand what a tremendous blow a tiger could give in the same manner; but I believe it to be a mistake to suppose that he strikes down his prey with his paw. He strikes in self-defence and when fighting, but not when seizing his victim. I have seen many carcasses of deer, cattle, buffaloes and horses, which had been killed by tigers, and they all had the same appearance; four deep holes at the back of the neck (two of them on each side the cervical vertebra), made by the animal's incisor teeth; no other mark. Of course, if the tiger had begun to feed on the body, it was extensively lacerated. And if (as sometimes in the case of a buffalo) the