

you bury the bodies of your victims, for this is the type of Kalee's command; and you, Nasir, bear henceforth the axe and kasse (sledge of Kalee), for you are proved, and worthy among the brethren of the cord.' Cheidamee, replied Nasir, 'you say right, and we are well proud of such a leader; ours is not such a hand as that of the Ner-budda, who will kill women and children, with even the classes forbidden by the goddess. I dread to join them for a day, so sure am I that Davee will bring them to destruction. Ask any of the Moslems here, Kureem Khan, Kusecan, Rumzamee; or any one who have worked with them, if it be not true that they disregard omens, and dare not drop their consecrated axe into the well, ere that it will again come to the hand of him that uses it, as our fathers' did, because of their offences, and because the goddess already frowns on them.' 'Aye,' returned Minuk, 'but be you also warned; and say, what mean you now to do, on the eve of an enterprise which will give to each of us a thousand ripples, besides gold and jewels, with this Moslem girl who still follows on our track? How say you, Cheidamee, can you not shake her off?' 'Tis said,' he added, with a scornful laugh, 'that she follows us from love of the handsome merchant; take care she knows him not as a leader of the Thugs.'

Cheidamee started, turning quickly from the speaker; and as he did so, they who had studied well the various workings of the human countenance, as the heart and head do sometimes combat one another, might have noted strange things on that of the subahdar. The pity and the love born of nature, the ferocious purpose, the unmerciful decision, arising from habit and powerful superstition, warring each again each, all asserting for a time a sovereign power on the handsome face they so violently agitated; but the Moslem approver, Ruzamee, soon spoke, and dark indeed were his counsels.

'What,' he asked, 'has Cheidamee to do with all this? Leave him to greater enterprises than these. The girl follows our camp, and even now lodges in the Serai without the town. Are our plans to be marred by a silly woman and an aged slave? The Hindoos say that Kalee forbids the murder of women, but are we to spare the cord to rush on our own destruction? I tell you, friends, this girl must meet her fate. Cannot all see that the goddess has thrown her into our hands?—therefore is she nee-mot (doomed). Kalee Davee has twisted the roomal (handkerchief), and who will refuse to use it? Let Nutha go forwards and choose the spot, for the Moghulanee must die.'

'Hold!' exclaimed Cheidamee; remember that the murder of women never yet did aught but bring misery upon our bands.—Remember the Dhoseo Beebee, proceeding with her offspring to the shrine of Nizam-ooddeen-Ouleea; did not three of the band hang on the tree, and were not two sent to the black waters ere the year ended? Hear me. I will warn this girl; I will prevent her following our steps further. Is not this enough? What could ye get by taking a woman who has eloped from the harem, accompanied by a slave, a follower, and six bearers? A rupee apiece, perhaps, and the knowledge that the frown of the mighty Kalee would be ever on you.' 'He says well,' said the fakir, 'let her go.' 'Aye, let her go,' repeated Ruzamee, in a tone of contempt. 'Whither, pray? Does she not know that Cheidamee journeys to her village; and should her family track her, ere our business is done with the treasure-bear-

ers of Ashraf Khan, who so ready to seek and identify the handsome brahmin and his merchant friends as this Moslem girl?'

'No doubt, no doubt,' observed Nasir; 'but let Cheidamee use his influence to warn her from the consecrated cord, and, if he fail, we shall all see that the goddess demands her victim, and waits to receive her into the celestial courts, although Minuk here will have it that we will do a deed contrary to her laws.' And he says it truly,' replied the fakir, angrily: 'what know your friends the Moslems of Kalee's will, comparing us to Thugs of Deccan and Hindoostan; when the goddess strangled the giants, was it not to us Hindoos that she revealed her work, and gave the sacred cord, commanding us to follow her example and to live by the plunder so acquired?—And was it not to us that she gave the pick-axe wherewith to bury our victims? and yet these Moslems pretend to know better than we do, her laws and omens!' 'Enough, enough!' interrupted Cheidamee; 'make ready to travel ere dawn of day. Fear not; I will take means that the girl remain behind.'

The Thugs all rose, but, as the brahmin left the room, Ruzamee the Moslem, with an earnest gesture, drew Minuk on one side. 'He will fail,' was his remark; 'the girl loves him, and would follow us to his village. Her servant told us but yesterday, as I met him purposely at the well. Cheidamee cannot now take another road, because he has told her of going to Ateer, and he well knows that, as a brahmin found in company with a Moslem woman, his caste, and all most dear to him, is at stake. I tell thee she must die, but it shall be by a Moslem hand, since you Hindoos are so scrupulous about your laws; let Sotha ride beside her palankeen—he will readily persuade her to all we want; and we will but use our means when those of the subahdar have failed.'

The fakir made no reply, and Ruzamee left him; but a moment scarce elapsed after he had done so, before Minuk quitted the room, and threading the narrow ways of the now dark and silent bazar, he reached a lowly shed, when mounting a strong and active horse that stood ready saddled there, the fakir struck across, into a by and unfrequented path that led out among the gardens of the suburbs.

It was a dense wood, with here and there a pathway among the trees, which commonly led to a rude stone image, smeared with red pigment, or simply sculptured with some hideous idol, before whom the wandering pilgrim knelt, inspired with the firm belief of finding some protection against the beasts of prey to be feared in such wild tracts. It was, indeed, seldom that any but a devotee, braving all dangers in the height of his fanaticism, and unprotected by aught but a small bell suspended from his waist, which served, it is true, to scare the lions from his path, ventured into this wood; but now, by the side of the huge image of Ganesa, leant the fair form of Shereen, and beside her bent the Subahdar Cheidamee, in earnest and eager conversation.

The lovers, as they now appeared to be, were in fact alone, for Heera, who had dismounted from her pony, was murmuring forth her morning prayers, while the bearers, well disposed to rest, were crouched beneath the distant trees, eating betel-nut together, and handing round the hubble-bubble. It would have appeared that the speaker urged in vain, and then the first words that seemed to break the silence

were those of the young Moslem lady, full of pathos and entreaty.

'Why urge me thus, Cheidamee? Why urge me to turn back from the path on which you travel?' 'Because there is danger, fair one,' was the reply, 'darker, dark and terrible.' 'Nay, nay, 'tis useless,' cried the fair Shereen; 'if you love me, you can care little for the difference of our creeds, and if there is really danger, am I not safer here with you and your friends the merchants, than travelling alone with old Heera, and a single follower?'

'Sweet Shereen,' replied the brahmin, 'you know not what you say. You love me, and those few days, passed in gentle converse by thy side, have taught me feelings I never dreamed could steal into a heart devoted until now solely to the great goddess and her laws. But hear now the truth, Shereen, for vainly have I sought to warn thee. Turn and fly, thou and thy people, while there is yet time, and swear to me to breathe not a word to any of those whom thou hast made thus far companions of thy way, lest, even now, I should vainly seek to avert thy fate; for know, hapless one, that these are no merchants that you follow, but brethren of the cord and axe, and he who now urges thee from the death prepared for thee, is their leader!'

Shriek after shriek now burst from the lips of the terrified girl, and her servants starting to their feet, ran hurriedly towards their mistress; but in a moment more the trampling of a horse was heard, and the fakir Minuk dashed into the centre of the group.

'The curse of Kalee is on them,' he cried, 'but it may be averted yet. Lift the girl to the saddle, Cheidamee, and ere to-morrow's dawn she shall be in her brother's harem; be quick, I say.'

But Shereen clung to the skirts of the young brahmin, entreating him to save her; and while he vainly sought without violence to disengage her grasp, Sotha and Ruzamee, with the Hindoo Nasir, sprang from the shelter of the idol, and flung their arms around their victim,—while the fakir, laying his powerful grasp upon Cheidamee, placed him behind him on the saddle, and galloped from the spot; but far, far, through the echoing woods, even to the ears of those who fled, rang the death-shrieks of that hapless maiden and of her faithful followers.

**LIBERALITY OF AN ARMY OFFICER.**—The Queen has granted to Mrs. Moore, the widow of Colonel Moore of the Sixth Dragoons, who perished at the post of duty in the burning *Europa*, a pension of £200 a year, and apartments in Hampton Court Palace. But her Majesty is not alone in her noble recognition of the brave soldier.—Colonel Moore was about to sell out of the service; but when he heard that his regiment was ordered abroad, he resolved to forego that ease to which his age and long service entitled him. The officer next in seniority, Major White, had been in treaty for the purchase of the Lieutenant-Colonelcy of the regiment, but the unexpected and melancholy fate of his gallant commanding-officer gave him his promotion as a death-vacancy, and the value of Colonel Moore's commission was consequently lost to his family. Major White, with a generosity beyond all praise, has, we are informed, placed £2,000 at the disposal of the widow and family of his late friend, an act of which the British army may be justly proud.—*Morning Post*.

A celebrated Evangelical preacher once told us (*Liverpool Albion*), pleasantly, that when he was unmarried the young ladies of his congregation were indefatigable in hemming cravats, handkerchiefs, &c. for him; but, he added with marked emphasis, "Since I have had a wife I have not even had one to do it for me."