

## ON THE EAST COAST.

The littoral of the Bay of Bengal is not one that inspires enthusiasm. Imagine mile after mile of drifting sand as bare and barren as the Sindh desert, the ever-changing sand dunes, the fringe of swamp running parallel with the coast, with every ten miles or so the estuary of a rainy season creek or river, and you have the outlines of the physical features fairly described. Then add to this the never-ending thunder of the surf, the tremendous breakers, the alternation of the land and sea breeze, frequent thunder-storms, the terrific downpour during the monsoon, and at long, long intervals a tidal wave; these help to fill out the conditions of life on the coast.

For vegetation, there are the cocoanut palms, which are very few in number; the date palm, that may be seen everywhere, and the palmyra palm, the most numerous of all. Wherever the sand admits there are numerous creeping plants, prominent among which is the goat's-foot vine, whose leaves are shaped like the imprint of the foot of that animal, a plant with convolvulus-like flowers which, in spite of torrid sun and drifting sand, seems to grow everywhere.

The bird life that gathers around the lagoons and river estuary and swampy fringe, is simply wonderful. That large class of birds known as sea-gulls are always to be seen. These are especially busy when the fishermen draw in their nets, and many a struggling fish is snatched away before they can be prevented. The solemn-looking cranes that wade in the lagoons or that meditate for hours, standing on one foot, are very funny examples of patience and stoicism. Their magnificent brother, the flamingo, occasionally appears, his brilliant scarlet plumage putting their sober browns and greys to shame. The lark, often looked upon as peculiar to English meadows, is an inhabitant of the swampy fringe of the coast. His nest is in the thick grass; he rises morning, noon and evening, his song offering a delightful contrast to the diapason of the surf. Crows and snipes, kites and kingfishers are but a few of those that help to swell the bird life on the shore. The oecypodian crab and the jackal represent the animal kingdom, though the