

FATHER VERSUS PHILOSOPHER.

BY JOHN READE.

Clear, swift and pointed, to its destined aim
 Flew every word of Crito's argument.
 Till, to his pride, Faith's banner, pierced and rent,
 Seemed borne away amid defeat and shame;
 While science, glorying in the loud acclaim
 Of an enlightened world, marched conquering on
 Over the fallen shrines of Him whose Name
 Had ruled men's hearts in simple ages gone.
 But ah! what makes the victor's eyes grow dim?
 Why falls him now that logic without flaw?
 From the near music of a childish hymn
 He seems some new, strange inference to draw.
 I left him, thinking of his dear dead child,
 And his child's Saviour, "Jesus, meek and mild."

THE STORY OF A SPEAR.

The scene of the story is laid in the holy city of Benares, which was at that time, to use the words of Macaulay, "in wealth, population, dignity, and sanctity among the foremost of Asia." It was commonly believed that half a million of human beings were crowded into that labyrinth of lofty alleys, rich with shrines and minarets and balconies and carved oriels to which the sacred apes cling by hundreds. The traveller could scarce make his way through the press of holy mendicants and not less holy bulls. . . . Hundreds of devotees came thither every month to die; for it was believed that a peculiarly happy fate awaited the man who should pass from the sacred city into the sacred river. Nor was superstition the only motive which allured strangers to that great metropolis. Commerce had as many pilgrims as religion. All along the shores of the venerable stream lay great fleets of vessels laden with rich merchandise. From the looms of Benares went forth the most delicate silks that adorned the halls of St. James's and of Versailles; and in the bazaars, the muslins of Bengal and the sabres of Oude were mingled with the jewels of Golconda and the shawls of Cashmere. But Benares was not only the gathering-place of merchants and pilgrims, it was also the resort of all the maddest fanatics and most desperate adventurers in India. The hardy rabble of its streets, ready at a moment's notice to rush to arms, were very handy auxiliaries to any bold political conspirator—and there was never any lack of such refugees in the holy city.

Now, among all the turbulent spirits that kept Benares in a ferment during the year 1798, by far the most conspicuous and mischievous was Vizier Ali, the recently deposed sovereign of Oude. He was but nineteen years of age, and had only enjoyed the sovereignty for the brief period of two months, when he was summarily ejected. It is necessary, in order to understand the incidents of our story, to explain briefly who and what this Vizier Ali was. He was the putative son of Asaph ul Daulah, Nabob-vizier of Oude, a mere creature of the Company, who had died in 1797. On his death there were two claimants to the vacant throne: this putative or adopted son, whom the late Nabob-vizier had publicly recognised and acknowledged; and Saadut Ali, the eldest surviving brother of the deceased sovereign. Sir John Shore—afterwards Lord Teignmouth—the then Governor-General, at first rashly recognised the claim of Vizier Ali; but two months later had to revoke his recognition, and admit the superior validity of Saadut Ali's claim. The latter was accordingly brought from Benares to Lucknow, and proclaimed Nabob-vizier of Oude on the 21st January, 1798; whilst Vizier Ali, to console him for his disappointment, was granted a pension of fifteen thousand a year and a palace at Benares. So leniently was the young prince treated, that no attempt was made to control or restrain his movements. He was permitted to keep regal state and surround himself with a large retinue of armed adherents—to maintain, in short, all the external appearance of an independent sovereign.

The folly and imprudence of allowing Vizier Ali to live in this style in such a city as Benares, within the confines of the very state of which he believed himself to be the rightful ruler, was presently to become fatally apparent. He was a bold, ambitious, unscrupulous young man, of fierce passions and headstrong will; and though vicious and debauched, was exceedingly popular among the rabble on account of his profuse liberality. Indeed, he was in the act of plotting the overthrow of British power in Oude, when one of his secret envoys, entrusted with treasonable despatches to Zemaun Shah, was seized by the Company's police. The detection of his intrigues was quickly followed by an order from the Governor-General for his removal to Calcutta. He was to be allowed to retain his income and his state; but it was felt that the only way to neutralise his mischievous propensities was to keep him under the strict surveillance of the British authorities and isolated from his fellow-conspirators. It remained now to announce to Vizier Ali this order, which must be a death-blow to all his ambition. And at this point it becomes necessary to introduce the two important characters who figure most prominently in the story of the spear.

At a short distance out of the city of Benares there is a pleasant suburb called Secrole, which the European residents—the majority of them English—had chosen as their quarters. Their houses, which stood usually in the centre of considerable grounds, were built after the English style, with such modifications as the difference of climate necessitated. There was seldom more than one story above the ground-floor.

The flat roof, however, afforded space for an extensive terrace, surrounded with a parapet, and approached by a single narrow winding staircase, from the top of which a trap-door gave access to the roof. It is requisite that these details of construction should be borne in mind in order to understand the main incident of the story. In this suburb, within a quarter of a mile of one another, lived at the time of this narrative the two chief authorities of the Company at Benares—Mr. Cherry, the political agent of the Governor-General, and Mr. Samuel Davis, judge and magistrate of the district and city court. Mr. Cherry, from the nature of his duties, was necessarily brought sometimes into personal contact with Vizier Ali; but with this exception, the haughty young prince held no communication whatever with Europeans. Upon Mr. Cherry devolved the necessity of announcing to Vizier Ali the order of the Governor-General directing his immediate removal from Benares to Calcutta. The political agent was unfortunately a good-tempered, easy-going man of a singularly unobtrusive nature. From the very first he had been completely hoodwinked by the wily young Vizier Ali, in whose honesty and good faith he implicitly believed. When, therefore, the first ebullition of rage at the announcement of the Governor-General's order was succeeded by humble submission and a declaration of the Vizier's readiness to leave Benares as soon as his travelling arrangements could be completed, poor unsuspecting Mr. Cherry took it for granted that there would be no further trouble about carrying the order into execution.

Mr. Davis, on the other hand, was a man of sagacity and penetration, who knew the treacherous nature of Orientals too well to be duped by professions of friendship and loyalty, and who had besides, from information supplied through his police agents, the best possible reasons for distrusting Vizier Ali. It was he who discovered that there had been secret negotiations with Zemaun Shah, and it was owing to his emphatic representations that the Governor-General was induced to issue the peremptory order of removal. He had repeatedly warned Mr. Cherry too; but that infatuated person would believe nothing to the discredit of Vizier Ali.

On the evening of the 13th of January, 1799, Vizier Ali sent a messenger to Mr. Cherry announcing his intention of visiting the political agent the next day "at the hour of breakfast." On the morning of the 14th of January, as Mr. Davis was taking his customary ride on an elephant, he saw Vizier Ali, accompanied by a train of some three hundred horse and foot, pass on his way to the residence of Mr. Cherry. As there was, however, nothing unusual in the sight, for Vizier Ali was always so attended, the judge thought nothing more of it at the time. But on his return home from his ride he found his *cutchah* or head of police awaiting him in a state of great perturbation with the news that he had just received sure information that Vizier Ali had despatched emissaries over the whole of Oude summoning armed men to his standard, and that he feared the Vizier's visit to Mr. Cherry had some sinister object. Mr. Davis sent a hasty note to Mr. Cherry, and waited in much anxiety and impatience for the reply. It was not long in coming; but in a very different form from what he anticipated. First there was a great cloud of dust, then a confused sound of shouts and cries, then the tramp of many feet, then a glimpse of men and horses and glittering steel. The solitary sentry at the gate, fifty yards from the house, challenged the advancing crowd; his challenge was answered by half-a-dozen musket-shots, and with a ferocious yell the mingled medley of horse and foot rushed over his corpse towards the house. There was murder in that yell, and the judge knew it; but his heart never quailed, nor did his presence of mind for a moment forsake him. He ran to his wife's apartments, bade her flee like lightning with her two children and her female servants up the winding staircase and through a trap-door to the roof; then dashed back for his firearms, but only to find the room in which they were, filled with the fierce followers of Vizier Ali. Remembering that there was a spear in one of the rooms above—think of the cool-headedness of the man, so unflustered by the danger that he could remember this—he had just time to snatch the weapon from the wall and gain the trap-door when he heard the quick tramp of his pursuers close upon his heels. Turning to the terrified women and children, he bade them lie down flat in the centre of the roof, so that no stray bullets might reach them, told them to remember that Gen. Erskine's camp was not ten miles away, and that without doubt help was now on the way to them; then, spear in hand, and kneeling on one knee, he took up his post at the trap-door, resolved to hold that coign of vantage so long as life and strength were left him.

The staircase was a peculiar one, winding round a central stem, supported by four wooden posts, open at all sides, and so narrow as to allow only one person to ascend at a time. The trap-door which communicated with the roof was like a hatchway on board ship, and the judge kept it open, that he might have a fair view of his assailants as they came up to the assault.

He was not long kept in suspense. Rapidly the ascending footsteps approached, until the head and shoulders of a man appeared. It was Izzut Ali, one of the bosom friends of Vizier Ali, who stood in hand confronted the intrepid judge. For a moment Izzut stopped short, eye-

ing the figure above, and then burst into a storm of abuse and execration. Having exhausted his stock of anathemas, he made a rush forward.

"Back, you scoundrel!" cried the judge; "the troops are coming from the camp."
 "Lieut. Ali gave a derisive laugh, and struck fiercely with his sword; the blow was parried, and a thrust from the spear transixed his arm. With a howl of rage and pain the first assailant fell back. Others pressed furiously forward from behind; but one after another they were sent back foiled and wounded, till no one dared to face that deadly spear-point and the strong arm that wielded it. Then they began to fire at the gallant defender of the stairs; but fortunately the peculiar construction of the staircase prevented them from taking good aim, and the balls went crashing harmlessly into the ceiling.

After a long fusillade it was resolved to make one more effort to storm the trap-door; and this time the judge had a narrow escape. The first of the storming-party was a big powerful man, who dodged the thrust made at his head, and caught the spear-point in his strong grasp. It would have gone hard with Mr. Davis had not the blade been triangular with sharp edges. But when, exerting all his force, he gave a desperate pull, the sharp edges cut through his antagonist's hands, inflicting severe wounds, and the spear was jerked out of his grasp. After that, no one ventured to come to close quarters with the judge, and his assailants contented themselves with keeping up for some time a desultory and harmless fire. Finally, they grew tired of this waste of ammunition, and proceeded to wreak their vengeance upon the judge's furniture, as they could not reach his body. After they had smashed up everything they could lay their hands upon, there was a mysterious and unaccountable silence. Not a sound of any kind was to be heard. Had the foiled assassins given up the attack in despair, and gone to seek other and less formidable victims? One of the female servants cautiously peered over the parapet. A shower of bullets rattled round her in an instant, and one of them pierced her arm. It was clear then that the house was surrounded and vigilantly watched. Again all was silent. The judge dared not leave his post of vantage to reconnoitre, though the silence was more trying than the noise. Could they be going to fire the house, and give the hapless inmates but the choice between massacre and burning?

Two hours had elapsed since the first assault upon the trap-door; surely the news of the rising must have reached Erskine's camp, and troops must be on the way to Benares. Suddenly the silence was again broken; there was the sound of footsteps, ascending the staircase. Once more the judge set his teeth, grasped his spear, and prepared to sell his life dearly. The steps came nearer, then a turbaned head appeared. In another instant the upraised spear would have been driven through the turban into the skull beneath it, when the intruder lifted his head and showed the white beard and a withered face of one of the judge's own body-servants. Fearing treachery, however, Mr. Davis held him at bay until he was assured that the party consisted of friends. He then descended, and found the new arrivals to be fifteen sepoy and a few of his own police. As the sepoys were armed with musket and bayonet, and had fifty rounds apiece, the judge felt that he was now equal to standing a siege, and heard without dismay that Vizier Ali was preparing for another attack in greater force. Meanwhile he inquired if anything had been heard of Mr. Cherry. He was told that to the best of his informant's belief Sahib Cherry and all the Englishmen with him had been killed. The judge was still musing over this melancholy news, when he was aroused by another alarm, the rattle of sabres and the clatter of horses' hoofs. A hurried glance from the window, however, set all his fears at rest; for in the new-comers he recognised a troop of cavalry from Erskine's camp. The first hearty greeting over, the officer in command briefly explained that immediately on the receipt of the news of Vizier Ali's insurrection, he had been ordered to hasten forward with his small force, and announce the approach of reinforcements. They had ridden first to Mr. Cherry's; and there they found the house sacked, and the dead bodies of Mr. Cherry and four other Englishmen lying mutilated in the grounds. Then they hurried to Judge Davis's, expecting to find a similar horrible spectacle awaiting them there; but were overjoyed that here at least they were not too late. Little more remains to be told. All danger was now over. A strong force under General Erskine arrived shortly afterwards; and though there was some severe street-fighting, yet before nightfall, Vizier Ali's palace was stormed, his followers dispersed, and order restored in the city. The arch-conspirator himself, however, escaped, and at the head of a band of marauders made himself troublesome for a few months on the frontier; but was eventually betrayed to the English by the Rajah of Jeypore, with whom he had taken refuge, and kept in close confinement till his death.

By a curious coincidence, Vizier Ali was brought into Benares a prisoner on the anniversary of the memorable day which had witnessed the massacre of Mr. Cherry and the heroic defence of Judge Davis.

As for the gallant Horatius of the staircase, he received the due meed of his valour. His grateful fellow-countrymen at Benares hailed him as their saviour from a cruel massacre.

And the Governor-General, the Marquis of Wellesley, wrote expressing his high admiration of the splendid courage and coolness displayed by Mr. Davis on that occasion; to which alone, he said "was to be attributed the safety of the English residents, and the salvation of the city from pillage." For there could be no doubt that by holding the Vizier and his forces at bay for two hours, the judge enabled the other European residents to make their escape to General Erskine's camp, and kept the insurrection from spreading into a serious and formidable rebellion. Nor was there wanting more substantial recognition of the judge's gallantry and resolution. He was shortly afterwards removed to Calcutta, where he was promoted to a post of high honour and emolument. And at the time of his death he was one of the most respected and influential Directors of the great Company whose interests he had so faithfully and bravely served.

At the mansion of Hollywood, near Bristol, the seat of his son Sir John Francis Davis, who for his distinguished services in China received a baronetage in 1846, the spear which figures in this story is still preserved with the deepest veneration, and will doubtless be handed down as a cherished and precious heirloom from generation to generation of the descendants of Samuel Davis. Clocks will glow and pulses quicken as the story of that memorable feat of arms is told. Nor is it only in the family of the hero that these feelings of sympathetic pride and enthusiasm will be stirred. In some degree at any rate, would we hope that they may be stirred in the heart of every reader of this narrative. And who can tell but that some stout-hearted Briton who shall hereafter find himself in forlorn straits, may take fresh courage from the recollection of the brave judge of Benares, who with a single spear held the staircase against three hundred foes! For never surely was there a story yet that more forcibly pointed the moral that "While there's life there's hope!" and that even the most desperate game may be pulled out of the fire by dauntless determination and patient courage.

HUMOROUS.

A CHASM that often separates friends—Sarcasm.

GO-AS-YOU-PLEASE is a good gait, but pay as you go is a better.

SPEAKING of nautical terms, was Noah's wife his first mate?

THE small boy now crawls up into the attic and takes a feeling look at his sled.

REVERSIBLE sandwiches are an Omaha invention. They wear twice as long as the ordinary railroad kind.

UPON a modest grave-stone in Vincennes cemetery appears the plaintive legend: "His neighbor played the cornet."

THE boy with a gold watch wants to know what time it is twice as often as does the boy with the silver chronometer.

"PROCRUSTATION is the thief of a good time," was the lament of the small boy who got up too late to take the excursion train.

A COLLEGE student in rendering to his father an account of his term-expenses, inserted: "To charity, \$30." His father wrote back: "I fear charity covers a multitude of sins."

AFTER spending a day tacking down carpets, and another in moving and setting up household goods, a fellow feels as though he could give Methuselah a hundred points and then beat him on age.

A CORRESPONDENT asks: "How long can bottled cider be kept?" That depends upon circumstances. If you put it in the safe, lock it up, and sling the key into the river, you can keep it for some time, but you won't get much fun out of it.

A NEW device has been designed by which a linen under-cloth can be used all winter and appear as warm as a heavier overcoat. The old plan of putting a fur collar on a linen coat has been done away with, and now a fireplace is painted on the tail of the linen under, in natural colours, and the wearer looks as though he was in a profuse perspiration in the coldest weather.

It seems as if the old folks never would learn to understand a boy. They can't seem to comprehend why he should be so unamiable in regard to getting up at daylight in the morning to take part in a fishing excursion, while it requires the expenditure of three tons of energy to arouse him at 7 o'clock when there is a cord of wood to pile up. Even politicians and other scientists can't explain this.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, having had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy, for the speedy and permanent cure of consumption, bronchitis, catarrh, asthma, and all throat and lung affections, also a positive and radical cure for nervous debility and all nervous complaints, after having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, has felt it his duty to make it known to his suffering fellows. Actuated by this motive, and a desire to relieve human suffering, I will send, free of charge, to all who desire it, this recipe, with full direction for preparing and using, in German, French, or English. Sent by mail by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. W. Sherar, 149 Powers' Block, Rochester, N.Y.

A CARD.

To all who are suffering from the errors and indiscretions of youth, nervous weakness, early decay, loss of manhood, &c., I will send a recipe that will cure you, FREE OF CHARGE. This great remedy was discovered by a missionary in South America. Send a self-addressed envelope to the Rev. JOSEPH T. ISMAN, Station D, New York City.