

## THE TIGRESS.

## SCENE I.

On the banks of the river Cauvery stands one of those mean-looking villages, which occur, at intervals of a few miles, throughout the greater part of the Mysore country, a small mud fort, long since dismantled, and now almost concealed by jungle, overlooked a sluggish stream, whose dark waters lazily licked the crumbling walls. The snow-white egret and the stately crane waded amongst the shallows, in attitudes of intense watchfulness. The scaly alligator lay basking on the half-covered sandbanks, and the Brahming kite hovered above the reeds, uttering its querulous note, as its bright chestnut wings quivered in the level beams of the setting sun. Herds of sluggish buffaloes, their bare black hides plastered with mud, were returning from their pasture, a sunburnt urchin perched upon the back of the most docile, shouted at the top of his voice a wild recitative, addressed to his charge, who replied by deep surly grunts. The shrill cry of the wild peacock, perched upon the ruined battlements of the fort, was answered by his mate from the rank thicket underneath. And the soft cooing of the turtle-dove whispered among the mango leaves. As evening advanced the huge vampire-bats, which hung in clusters suspended by their hinder claws from the drooping branches of the banyan-trees, dropped, one by one, and glided silently away in search of food. Laborers, with their black blankets hanging over their shoulders, came in straggling parties from the fields, driving their bullocks before them: and the women returned from the wells in picturesque groups, each supporting with one hand an earthen jar of antique form, gracefully balanced on her head; whilst the jingling sounds of the bangles which encircled their ankles, made music to their light elastic step. Such was the peaceful scene, as evening closed upon that lonely village.

But at intervals, a wild startling shout would come booming on the breeze, and ere its falling notes had died away, the cry was taken up, and continued from an opposite quarter. This was the *shikar*-cry of the Mysore woodsman; and, to an Indian sportsman, told its tale. A jungle village on the banks of a river, is generally haunted by a tiger; if there be a ruined fort, overgrown with grass and brushwood, such probability is much increased—and whenever the woodcutter returns hurriedly at sunset, shouting that ominous *holla*, the chances are, that a tiger dogs his steps.

The sun had set, and the shades of night were fast approaching, as Rung Row, the venerated priest of the village, strode along the banks of the river to a convenient spot for making his evening ablutions. He returned with dignified condescension the salutations humbly offered by each *Ryat* whom he met, and proceeded on wrapped in his own meditations. Little thought the proud Brahmin, as he pondered over the probable success of his last project in priestly craft, that he was not doomed to reap its fruits.

At a winding of the river, less than a quarter of a mile from the village was a little bay, sheltered from observation by some aloe-bushes. The water was not too deep; and soft sand, pleasant for the foot to tread, shelved gradually into a clear pool.

"Here shall I enjoy a refreshing bath," thought the priest.

Having no clothes to encumber him, save a cotton wrapper round his loins, the devout worshipper of *Vishnoo* waded at once into the stream, muttering a prayer at every step, and commenced the important ceremony of ablution, by pouring water, from a small brass vessel, over his shaven crown and well-oiled skin.

What rustle was that!—The Brahmin's ears heard not, they were stunned by the cold stream which poured over them. His eyes, too, were closed, else would he have seen two bright green orbs, glaring fiercely upon him, through the branches of an aloe-bush at his side. His hour had come, for the famous Man-eater of *Shikarpoor* was upon his tail. Her grim head was cautiously thrust through the bushes, and the striped monster issued from her lair with stealthy tread. Dragging her belly along the sand, her tail switching impatiently, her ears laid flat upon her neck, and her whiskered lips drawn back, so as to expose her formidable array of tusks, she crept silently to the brink of the water, there, gathering herself together, she glared for one moment on the devoted wretch like a triumphant fiend, and bounding forward, threw herself upon him with a roar, which thrilled through his guilty soul, and drowned the death-shriek which he uttered in his agony—struggle there was none—the paw of the tigress fell like a bar of iron upon his skull, crushing it to the brain, and her powerful teeth met in his throat. Death was almost instantaneous—a senseless body hung quivering in her grasp, as she turned to the shore, but she still shook it with ferocious energy, and buried her tusks deeper still, as it throbbed at the last convulsive gasp.

† This fearful death had been the fate of many a poor *Ryat* and woodcutter belonging to the village, for the tigress had haunted it during several months. Their fate created little sensation—they were only *soodras*; but when a herdboys, who had witnessed this tragedy, ran to the village screaming, *Bhag! Bhag!* and announced that the Man-eater was supping on a Brahmin priest, the brotherhood were roused from their apathy into a state

of keen excitement. Women ran about beating their breasts, and howling their national lament, and the village resounded with the dismal cries of *Wha! Wha! Bhag! Bhag!*

## SCENE II.

Before the elephant had time to rise, the buffaloes, which had been quietly grazing round the edge of the jungle, raised their heads, snorted, and rushed in a body towards one point, bellowing furiously.

"*Bhag! bhag!*" shrieked the terrified child, cowering down into the bottom of the *howdah*.

"It is!" cried Mansfield, springing to the ground. "She has taken the alarm already; the large rifle, quick!" Azapah thrust it into his hand. Setting the third sight, for a long shot, he stretched back one leg, and slowly raised the heavy weapon to his eye, his finger feeling the trigger, with a pressure so gradual, that the barrel seemed to pour forth its contents spontaneously at the instant it rested motionless.

"That hit her!" he calmly observed, as he dropped the discharged weapon into the hollow of his arm, and stood for a moment to watch the effect of the shot. The tigress, who was stealing along at a distance of full two hundred yards, uttered a short angry roar, and dropped on her knees. When she rose, one fore leg hung dangling from her shoulder, and in this crippled state she slunk into cover, pursued by the buffaloes, bellowing at her haunches. A murmur of admiration ran around the bystanders at this exhibition of skill, which so far exceeded what the majority thought possible, that it seemed more than possible, that it seemed more than human, and made them look upon the successful marksmen almost in the light of a demi-god. Even old *Bhurmah* could hardly believe his senses, when he heard the soft *thud* of the bullet, and saw the animal drop, at a distance so far beyond the range of his own trusty matchlock. And the poor little herdboys clasped his hands together, and his large eyes glistened with tears of gratitude when the joyful shout announced that his dreaded enemy was disabled from flight, and her death certain.

Without noticing the admiration which his skilful shot had occasioned, Mansfield re-loaded his rifle with scrupulous exactness, and took his seat in the *howdah* beside Charles, with the wondering herdboys between them. Old *Bhurmah* climbed up on the elephant's crupper, to ensure being in at the death, and the stately animal marched up to the final encounter.

Drops of blood guided them to the bush in which the wounded tigress lay. The heavy foot of the advancing elephant shook the ground. She raised her head, laid back her ears savagely, and cease licking the blood from her shattered shoulder. Mansfield cautioned Charles to be ready, but not to fire in a hurry, as he would wait for him to take the first shot. They were now near enough to observe the bush agitated, as if she was collecting herself for a rush, and a low growl gave forth its warning. Old *Bhurmah* danced about like a maniac, one hand grasping the back of the *howdah* to support himself, the other brandishing his sword, and his long white mustache, which curled up to his eyes, giving him a look of ferocity almost equal to that of the tigress. The sagacious elephant twisted his trunk up to be out of harm's way, and advanced cautiously another step. A louder growl increased to a short hoarse roar.

"Keep him steady now, my lad—she is coming," said Mansfield, addressing the *Mahout* with perfect coolness. Charles held his breath, and his eyes seemed as if starting from his head with excitement, as he cocked both barrels of his rifle, and half raised it to his shoulder.

"No hurry, boy; take her coolly," said Mansfield.

The branches crashed—a brindled mass gleamed through them, and the tigress sprang forth. Her flaming eye gazed wildly around, then settled on her foes. Every hair in her body stood erect—her tail lashed her painted sides, and her flanks heaved laboriously, as if almost suffocated with rage. Uttering a deep growl, she arched her back and lowered her head for a spring.

"Now!" Quick as lightning followed the flash of the rifle, both barrels being discharged, almost simultaneously, and the tigress staggered back with two balls in her chest. She recovered her footing, and was in the act of bounding forward to the charge, when a shot from Mansfield's anerring rifle entered her brain. She dropped from her proud attitude, and the famous Man-eater of *Shikarpoor* lay gasping in a pool of blood, which gushed from a ragged hole between her eyes.

Whilst Azapah busied himself in the important operation of singeing the whiskers of the dead tigress, the overjoyed natives crowded around, rending the air with shouts, and invoking blessings on the head of the *Burrah Sahib*, the invincible slayer of wild beasts, whose powerful hand had rid the country of this dreadful scourge.

## THE COMMANCHES OF TEXAS.

The Commanches claim to be the lineal descendants of the empire of Montezuma, and the only legitimate owners of the whole Mexican country. The chief said, that when Cortez landed in Mexico, he found the country torn to pieces by internal factions, and was enabled, by employing the disaffected, to raise a force

to seize upon the capital. Those chiefs believed, if they could destroy the power of Montezuma, they could easily despatch the Spaniards, and have the control of the country in their own hands. But too late they ascertained that they had introduced a harder master, and that unconditional servitude was all they had to expect. They were required to change their ancient religion, and thousands of them were sent to work in the mines, from which they rarely ever made their escape. A great proportion of them bound their neck to the conqueror, and became serfs and slaves to the Spaniards; but a few, the best and the noblest part, preferred exile to servitude, and set out on a pilgrimage to the north, in hopes to find a land where they could enjoy their ancient institutions in peace.

They travelled for many weeks, and at last came to the great river of the north, the Rio Grande, where they encamped, and sent out twenty chosen men to examine the adjacent country. They crossed the great river and ascended one of the highest peaks of the mountain, which overlooked the adjoining plain. The prairie was covered with buffalo, deer, and antelopes, and they thought they had reached the happy hunting ground, and the word *Texas! Texas! Texas!* burst from every tongue. It was decided unanimously that it should be their future home, and the country should go by the name apparently furnished them by the Great Spirit.

*Texas* is the Commanche name for the residence of the happy spirits in the world where they shall enjoy an eternal felicity, and have plenty of deer and buffalo always at hand. By taking the sound as they pronounce it, and giving it the Spanish orthography, it gives us the word "*Texas*," which is the "*Happy Hunting Ground*," or the "*Elysium*" of the Commanches. This is a true history of the name, as derived from *Isowacuy* himself.

## TRUE PHILOSOPHY.

Madame Necker relates the following anecdote of M. Abauret, a philosopher of Geneva:—"It was said of him that he never had been out of temper: some persons, by means of his female servant, were determined to put this to the proof. The woman in question stated that she had been his servant for thirty years, and she protested that during that time she had never seen him in a passion. They promised a sum of money if she would endeavour to make him angry; she consented, and knowing he was particularly fond of having his bed well made, she on the day appointed neglected to make it. M. Abauret observed it, and the next morning made the observation to her, she answered that she had forgotten it; she said nothing more, but, on the same evening she again neglected to make the bed; the same observation was made on the morrow by the philosopher; and she again made some such excuse in a cooler manner than before. On the third day he said to her, 'you have not yet made my bed; you have apparently come to some resolution on the subject, as you probably found it fatigued you. But after all it is of no great consequence, as I begin to accustom myself to it as it is.' She threw herself at his feet and avowed all to him."

PROGRESS OF IMPROVEMENT.—A correspondent of the *New-York American*, writing from *Utica*, says:—"Fifty years ago, the spot where *Utica* now stands, was the end of the world in this direction. In those days, John Jacob Astor, and Peter Smith, (father of Gerrit,) travelled the ground from *Schenectady* to *Utica* on foot, purchasing furs at the Indian settlements on the route. The Indians aided them in carrying the furs back to *Schenectady*. Returned from their perilous adventure to "the far west," they opened a little shop in *New-York city*, and sold the skins at retail. When their stock was exhausted, they again penetrated the lonely forests of the frontier, and replenished their store. Astor continued the business many years, but Smith commenced the purchase of land. Summers went and came, and wave after wave of emigration rolled up the long defile of the *Mohawk*. Mark the change. Two years since, Smith died at *Schenectady*, leaving millions of acres to his heirs. Astor still lives, one of the wealthiest untitled commoners in the world. Judge Smith lived to travel the route from *Schenectady* to *Utica*, in four hours. And to-day when the sun's evening rays shall hide from the undimmed eyes of John Jacob Astor behind the blue hills of *Jersey*, its vertical beams will be falling on the fur traders of our now *Ultima Thule*, the mouth of the *Oregon*. Bishop *Berkley* never dreamed of such changes when he penned the line—

"Westward the star of empire takes its way."

"Why, Mr. B." said a tall youth to a little person who was in company with a half-dozen huge men, "I protest you are so small I did not see you before." "Very likely," replied the little gentleman, "I am like a silver sixpence among six pennies, not readily perceived but worth the whole of them."

A wag, after reading the statement that the State Prison in *Connecticut* produced a profit to the State of about \$5000 per annum, recommended that all the citizens of the State be imprisoned on speculation.