

A SCENE IN INDIA.

THE TIGER HUNT.

[WITH AN ENGRAVING.]

AFTER a light breakfast, we proposed to mount our elephants, which came forward in turn and knelt down, while we ascended by a short ladder to our *howdahs* and pads. Every gentleman carried two rifles. In high glee the whole party set out for the Tiger Hunt.

In passing through a native village immediately on the other side, we came up to a poor little infant, of only a few months old, lying unguarded in the middle of the road. The elephant which led the van, without stopping, suddenly picked up the poor child at the very moment when I thought he must inevitably have crushed it, and in the most gentle manner placed it on the thatched roof of one of the low cottages. This, which I thought an occurrence of extreme interest and astonishment, seemed to inspire no surprise in the breasts of my fellow sportsmen, who afterwards assured me that the sagacity of these splendid creatures is only equalled by their love for young children and persons who are kind to them. No wonder, then, I felt annoyed and disgusted when I beheld shortly afterwards, a *mohut* wantonly and barbarously amuse himself by prodding the head of one of the elephants with an iron skewer, digging it into the flesh with a fury and savageness, which to this moment I cannot forget. The persons on the animal called out to him, and remonstrated with him on his unnecessary cruelty, reminding him of the revengeful temper of the animal. After a time he desisted, and, as the elephant showed no signs of anger, we hoped no serious consequences would follow.

After an hour's travelling, we arrived at the edge of a thick jungle, in which the royal beast is said to lurk. We therefore took up different points, in order to 'view him' as he left the covert. Here we waited for some time: at length a couple of elephants entered the jungle, and began to beat about.

At this instant we heard a sudden and piercing cry. We looked round. An elephant was just in the act of trampling an unfortunate wretch to

death. It was the imprudent *mohut*, who had a short time before so savagely goaded the animal he rode. At an instant when all was still, when every one was looking out eagerly to behold the tiger break cover, the revengeful animal had suddenly twisted his trunk round his rider, and with the greatest ease first raised him in the air, then dashed him with force on the ground, lifted him again, and a second time threw him on the earth; then, suddenly advancing he began to trample on the now insensible Indian, who in another moment was a shapeless, disgusting lump of human clay, his ensanguined and disfigured corpse resembling in no way the form of a man. Satisfied of his vengeance being complete, the elephant raised the remains of his victim, and throwing it into the jungle, quietly and safely trotted home, without guide or restraint, to the no small terror of the persons seated on his back.

The self-avenging elephant had scarcely got out of sight, when suddenly a royal tiger bounded out of the brushwood, close by the animal I was seated on. My companion and myself instantly fired at him. The nearest party to us also did the same, which I could not help looking on as a most dangerous act, since the slightest mistake in this cross-firing must inevitably be attended with the most fatal consequences. On the present occasion, however, nothing of this kind occurred. The tiger had evidently been hit; but, springing forward, he galloped along. We now began to pursue him: but it was very much after the manner that a good shot in England marks down his game, and follows it, for to keep up with the royal animal was impossible. We trotted about eight miles an hour; the tiger about sixteen at the least. We therefore contented ourselves with following him, and dislodging him whenever he got under cover. Finding a village in front of him, the people of which had turned out, and fired several shots, the hunted animal endeavoured to double. In effecting this manoeuvre, he came within shot of others of the party,