

obliterated. All this time the panther continued to pace up and down the edge of the ravine, nearly on a level with my head, growling fearfully, ever and anon, poking his snout into the bushes, and snuffing at me, as if debating with himself whether or not he should jump down. The bushes were so thick that he could not distinguish me through them, and it is to this circumstance that I attribute my escape. For a full hour I remained in this dreadful state of suspense; and, during that fearful hour, many were the good resolves I made against tiger-hunting. But like many other good resolves, they were only made to be broken on the first tempting opportunity. The panther, at last, as if tired of keeping watch, walked quietly off; and I escaped to tell the tale, which I trust will prove a warning to you, Master Charles, and all other Grif-fins who may chance to hear it."

Our friends by this time, accomplished more than half the descent; and a remarkable change is already perceptible, not only in the temperature of the air, but in the scenery and in the natural productions. The cloth dress, which had been found necessary in the bracing climate of the hills, now begins to feel oppressive to the wearer. The Rhododendron trees, wild jessamine, and high waving fern, which have hitherto clothed the sides of the hills, now give place to stunted bamboo and dwarf Paimyra bushes, whilst turtle doves, tookans, paroquets, and other tropical birds, unknown on the summit of the hills, begin to make their appearance.

As they continued to descend, the heat, and the tropical character of the scenery, gradually increased, till, at the foot of the pass, the road suddenly plunged into the great forest jungle which encircles the hills; that wilderness of trees, where, the stupendous elephant and the prowling tiger have for ages, held undisputed sway.

Here the tall feathery bamboo, the stately teak, and other large trees peculiar to an eastern climate, flourish in all their glory. The glare of an Indian sun is suddenly quenched in the deep gloom of the forest. The deathlike silence of the wilderness reigns around; and the confined air of the wood becomes close and suffocating.

Under the shade of a large banian tree, at the entrance of the forest, our party found a relay of fresh horses, which had been sent on during the night.

The saddles were quickly transferred to their backs, and, leaving their smoking steeds in charge of the horse-keepers, the three sportsmen pushed along the rugged path, which led into the forest, at a round pace.

"Come, Æsculapius, cried Mansfield, addressing the Dr. who was beginning to lag behind, and exhibited strong symptoms of being somewhat saddle-sick, "that old jade of yours will fall asleep under you, unless you make better use of your heels.—Give him a spur, man."

"Oich! Hoich!" grunted the Doctor, as he drove the spurs into his long legged, raw-boned, *kutch*, horse, and came shambling up to the rest of the party at a pace, which very much resembled the action of a dromedary, and must have been about equally pleasant to the unfortunate rider—"Od, Captain, this is a deevil o' a pace ye'r gaun at—man nor peast is no fit to stand this, at least, no' without leather breeks and tap-boots."

"O, ho!" cried Mansfield, laughing, "is that your complaint, Doctor?—sorry for you, my worthy Galen, very sorry, indeed—nothing so unpleasant as feeling the want of a pair of leathers in a long ride; but I much fear there is no help for it. We have still twenty long miles before us, and unless we make play now we shall get benighted and lose our way, which in this forest would be no joke. Give him his head, man, and let him go."

"Weel, weel!" sighed the Doctor, "but just bide a wee till I sight my face, and get a pinch out o' my mull." Here the Doctor pulled off his hat, and began to mob his face with a snuffly pocket-handkerchief. "By your leave, gentlemen, I'm just sweetin like a bull, and my poor beast is no muckle better."

"Hark forward!" cried Mansfield, giving the reins to his horse, after he had allowed the Doctor sufficient time to enjoy a hearty pinch of snuff. "Good night to you, Doctor; I suppose we shall hear of you in the course of to-morrow, provided the tigers or wild elephants do not make free with you during the night."

The Doctor, finding there was no help for it, took heart of grace, and by dint of plying the spurs vigorously, managed to make the old dromedary keep up wonderfully well, although not without many a grin, and many an uneasy whiffing of his seat.

As they penetrated deeper into the woods, the gloom became more intense, and the deep silence of solitude more imposing. I almost imagined them with a feeling of awe. Not a bird, not even an insect was heard. It appeared as if no living thing had ever disturbed the solitude of the primeval forest. And yet there were occasionally traces of life. The tall rank

grass which grow up amongst the trees, to the height of ten or twelve feet, was in many places trampled down by the wandering herds of wild elephants—several recent foot-marks of tigers might be traced along the sandy path, and once or twice a jungle-dog was seen to glide across the road, with the drooping tail and stealthy pace which indicate the prowling savage.

Here and there an occasional opening in the tree tops varied the monotony of the scene, exhibiting a gorgeous view of the mountains. Their stupendous crags, hanging woods, and sparkling waterfalls, backed by a sky of deeper blue than even Italy can boast, formed a striking contrast to the sombre gloom of the forest, and made the panting travellers sigh for the fresh mountain breezes which they had so lately left.

Mansfield and Charles had just pulled up for a moment to admire one of those beautiful glimpses, and to allow the Doctor, who had again fallen behind, to come up, when the former, casting his eyes upon the ground, discovered a huge snake, a boa-constrictor about twenty feet long, basking amongst the dry leaves by the side of the path.

"Hurra, Doctor!—Hurra! Scrow him along. Here's a shot for you; a piece of shikar quite in your line"—and Mansfield hastily unslung his rifle, which he always carried at his back ready loaded.

"What is't man?—what is't?" cried the Doctor, coming up quite out of breath.

"See there," replied Mansfield, pointing to the snake; "what do you think of that fellow, Doctor? Would he not be a fine addition to your museum?"

"Od's my life, man, but that's a grand beast," exclaimed the Doctor, jumping from his horse. "An undubtable boa, and longer by six feet than any specimen I met wi'. Gi' us the rifle, Captain, gi' us the rifle, till I shoot him—I wouldna' lose that specimen for a pound note."

"Steady now, Doctor," said Mansfield, handing him the rifle, "let's see you take him in the head."

"Na, na' we maunna injure the heed or no account; it would spoil him for a specimen," replied the Doctor, firing right and left into the snake.

The balls passed through the body of the enormous reptile without apparently doing him much injury; he merely gave a convulsive start, and glided rapidly into the jungle.

"Hark to him, Doctor! Go it, my sporting Æsculapius! Never mind the thorns!" shouted Mansfield, laughing till he nearly fell from his horse, as the worthy Doctor, in the excitement of the moment, dashed through the brake and brier in hot pursuit of the wounded snake.

Charles, who had never before seen a boa, was quite as anxious as the Doctor to secure the prize. Throwing the reins of his horse to Mansfield, he sprang to the ground and joined in the chase, shouting aloud, and brandishing a hog-spear which he happened to carry in his hand.

In this manner they followed the snake for some distance, the Doctor pounding away with the butt end of the rifle and Charles striving in vain to transfix him with his spear. At length the snake reached the brink of a dry watercourse filled with dense tangled brushwood, into which he glided. He was just about to disappear, when the Doctor, inspired with a desperate fit of courage, dashed forward, seized him by the tail, and took a turn of it round his arm, and throwing himself on his back, with his feet firmly planted against a tree, held on like grim death.

Luckily for the Doctor, the snake was too much disgusted with the treatment he had already received, or too intent on making his escape, to think of turning on his pursuers. But his struggles were tremendous. He coiled himself round the trees, twisted himself into knots, and strained every muscle in his body till they seemed ready to burst through his skin. So great was his strength that it appeared, once or twice, as if the tail must give way, or the Doctor's arms be torn from their sockets.

Whilst this struggle was going on, Charles was busily employed in reloading his rifle.

"Haste you, man! haste you!" gasped the Doctor, nearly black in the face from over-exertion. "Ods, my life, Master Charles, if ye donna be quick and gie him another shot, he'll waur us a' at the ain'er end. He's amais pou't the aims aff no already. Deil be licket, but I'm think it's the foul fiend himself, in his auld disguise, that we hae gripet. Div ye no find nae smell o' brimstone about him?"

"Can't say I do," replied Charles, laughing, as he discharged both barrels into the snake; "but I shall make him smell it, and feel it too."

Blood gushed copiously from the wounds, and the strength of the snake was perceptibly diminished. He suddenly uncoiled himself from the trees, and turned round, as if with the intention of making an attack. Charles, snatching up the spear, drove it through his head, and pinned him to the ground.

"Hold on now, Doctor," cried he, leaning his whole weight upon the spear to prevent its being with-

drawn; "keep his tail fast, so that he may not get a purchase round a tree, and we have him."

The snake writhed about convulsively, but he was now completely paralyzed; his strength was gone. In a few minutes the victory was complete; and Charles and the Doctor returned to the road, dragging along their snake in triumph.

"Bravo, Medico! Welcome the conquering hero! So you've managed to hustle him at last." And Mansfield laughed heartily as the Doctor emerged from the jungle in a perfect fever of heat and excitement, his face laced with streaks of blood, which flowed from innumerable scratches, and his clothes literally torn to shreds. "But I see you have not obtained a bloodless victory. Hang it, Doctor, you have utterly ruined your beauty. You will not be able to show that handsome face of yours among the women for a month to come."

"Ay, I'm thinking I've scratched myself a wee," replied the Doctor, wiping the blood and perspiration from his face with the sleeve of his coat. "But they're honourable wounds, Captain. O! man, if you had seen the grand tulzie we had wi' the rampawgin deevil, it wad just had putten ye clean out o' conceit wi' tiger huntin. It was the sairest job that ever I put my head till. But, O! Captain, it was grand sport."

I have no doubt it was a very brilliant piece of shikar," replied Mansfield, smiling. "But what do you intend to do with your game, now that you have secured it?"

"Do wi' it! Od, man, I'll tako him hame, surely. Na,—I canna do that either, he's o'er heavy. But I'll just skin him where he is, and take the skin wi' me."

"No, no, my friend; we can't afford time for that now, the sun is just setting. But as we are only five miles from camp, you can easily send out to-morrow morning and have him carried home."

The Doctor was reluctantly obliged to agree to this arrangement, and the party proceeded.

Daylight had deserted them before they reached the end of their journey. But the full moon had risen, and shed a flood of silver light over the picturesque jungle encampment, which rejoiced the sight of our wearied travellers, as a sudden opening among the trees brought them upon a beautiful natural lawn of velvet turf embosomed in lofty woods, and sloping gently towards the bank of a deep and broad river studded with numerous wooded islands. The snow-white tents, glittering in the moonlight,—the bullocks and baggage ponies picketed under the trees,—the numerous fires, and the groups of natives squatted around them, with their dusky features and picturesque dresses, brought out in strong relief by the reflection of the flame, formed altogether a very striking picture, and lent an air of home and comfort to the uninhabited forest.

\* This adventure with a snake was achieved by the writer and his brother in their early *GRIFFINAGE*; and, in those unsophisticated days, was looked upon, by them, as an exploit no ways inferior to Sir Guy's famous victory over the dragon of Wantley.

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## SABBATH SCHOOLS.

DEFICIENCIES OF TEACHERS.—Indifference, negligence, and want of regularity and punctuality, may be grouped together, as the prominent defects of a large class of teachers. They are not very thoroughly convinced, either of the utility and advantage of Sabbath Schools, or of their own personal duty to engage in the work of instruction. Or, if convinced, their conviction bears with so little weight upon their minds, as to constitute but a feeble motive for exertion. They make little if any effort to prepare themselves, during the week, because they do not feel very certain that they will be called upon to teach on the Sabbath. The weather may be bad; or they may feel dull or indisposed; or something else may prevent their attendance. As to responsibility, it can scarcely be supposed to be felt at all by this class of teachers. If perfectly convenient, they will be in their place; and sometimes, perhaps, at the proper hour. But the superintendent can make no calculation upon either their presence or absence, at the hour of opening, or at any other time. He permits the vacant class to sit ten or fifteen minutes, perhaps, in idleness; when, despairing of the arrival of their teacher, he unites them with that of some faithful teacher, thus interrupting his exercis-