

G HUNTER
IN
THE EAST
AND
OTHER SPORTS

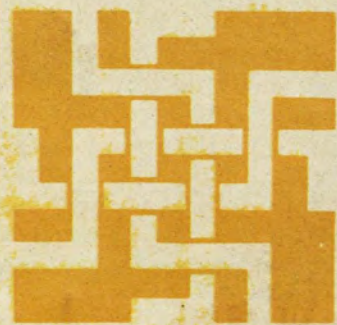
BY J. T. NEWALL



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THE TUSSLE FOR THE SPEAR.

HOG HUNTING IN THE EAST,

And other Sports.

By CAPTAIN J. T. NEWALL,

AUTHOR OF "THE EASTERN HUNTERS," "JOHN NEVILLE," ETC.



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

DUM SPIRO SPERO.

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

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TO
RUGBEIANS,
OLD AND YOUNG,
THIS CHRONICLE OF SPORT AND ADVENTURE

Is Dedicated,

BY

AN OLD SCHOOL-BOY.

26th June, 1867.



have credited to either, as the narrative seemed to render desirable, the part taken by myself.

I need hardly observe that the descriptions of solitary hunting—of whatever nature—interspersed throughout the work, are, necessarily, the records of my own unaided performances. For their general accuracy I vouch.

I have thought it best, even, to introduce the exact bags of small game made by myself at the places indicated, where reference is made to the numerical amount brought in by the hunters.

I have adopted the plan of making the hunters compare former experiences round a log-fire, in the evening, after the day's hunting was over.

This appears to me to be the simplest manner of bringing together a number of anecdotes of sport occurring at widely-separated periods and places.

Regarding the main narrative itself, each incident happened as related at the place specified, though not all on one hunting trip. As the actors necessarily varied, their performances have been vested in my characters, who are simply agents, under fictitious names, and not intended to represent the individuality of any of my former comrades. I have so disposed of the total number employed as to leave the field com-

posed of the actual number present on each occasion, as far as my notes and memory are able to specify.

The principal sport treated of is that of Hog-hunting. I have endeavoured, both by pen and pencil, to give to the uninitiated some general idea of this sport—to my mind one of the most attractive in the world—as I have enjoyed it in the countries indicated.

But I have by no means confined myself to a chronicle of that sport alone. Numerous anecdotes and incidents of various sports and other adventures are included in my narrative. I hope they will prove of as much interest to him who reads as their compilation has proved to him who writes.

THE AUTHOR.



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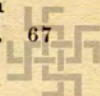
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HOG-HUNTING IN THE EAST,

AND OTHER SPORTS.

THE WILD-BOAR.

“On his bow-back he hath a battle set
Of bristly pikes, that ever threat his foes ;
His eyes like glow-worms shine when he doth fret ;
His snout digs sepulchres where'er he goes ;
Being moved, he strikes whate'er is in his way,
And whom he strikes his cruel tushes slay.

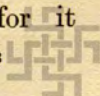
“His brawny sides, with hairy bristles armed,
Are better proof than thy spear's point can enter ;
His short thick neck cannot be easily harmed ;
Being ireful on the lion he will venture :
The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him, part ; through whom he rushes.”

Venus and Adonis—SHAKSPEARE.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—Hog-hunting as a sport—Its great merits—How pursued—Spears, sticks, and heads—Poetry of sport—Advantages of hunting journals.

THE wild-boar ! There is something in the very name suggestive of fierce, impetuous courage, of dogged, obstinate determination, and sudden, brisk rapidity of action. At least, to my mind, the word seems to present the incarnation of those qualities, for it



summons before my mental vision many a foughten field in which they have been markedly displayed.

What a tumultuous crowd and whirl of feelings memory recalls as it dwells on the associations connected with the pursuit of that animal ! How vividly it reflects all the accessories of that noble sport, termed, indifferently, "Hog-hunting," or, less euphoniously, "Pig-sticking !" The preparations for, and happy prospects of, the meet ! the excitement and expectation attending the period before the break ! the wild feeling of enjoyment, the sense of relief, of being, as it were, unstrapped, as the "gone away" is seen or announced ! Then the run ! the interest with which the relaxing speed of the panting game is viewed ! the intensity of the eagerness to draw forward ! the spirited emulation ! the racing contest for the honour of *first-spear* ! the game Arab horse reeling from exhaustion and hard pressing, but struggling for victory as keen as his master, every stride a struggle ! the last desperate effort ! the lift with hand and heel ! the lunge of the body forward over the gallant horse's neck ! the thrust at arm's length, almost involving separation from the saddle ! a gentle touch—yes—no—by heaven, yes !—the *first-spear* is won. Hurrah ! hurrah ! Then the boar at bay, with glaring eyes, foaming mouth and bristles erect, prepared to attack all comers ! The charge, the fight, and the gallant death ! What is the end of a poor broken-hearted, worried vermin to that ?

I fully and freely acknowledge the manifold attractions of fox-hunting, and the merited enthusiasm it creates among its votaries. But is not hog-hunting also worthy of such? Shall the chronicles of fox-hunting form almost a distinct branch of literature, and, save for a few brief, isolated descriptions of runs, boar-hunting remain an unrecorded sport? Exhaustive accounts have been written of most sports; but why one, admitting as it does of great variety of action and description, should be only represented by a few desultory, though graphic and spirited, sketches, I know not. I have, therefore, in default of others more able, taken on myself to describe this sport as a whole, as I have enjoyed it in various provinces. I would that a more skilful hand had undertaken the pleasing task, though one more loving could hardly be. Indian hog-hunting—or, in other words, the spearing of wild-pig from horseback—is then the principal subject treated of in the following pages, though I have by no means confined myself to descriptions of that sport alone.

It is essentially a sport *sui generis*. With none other in the world is it capable of fair comparison. Since the time of the Erymanthean boar, wild-pig have formed an object of pursuit in many countries, without, however, requiring Herculean labour to compass their destruction. In France, Germany, Algeria, Albania, and, indeed, wherever the animal is to be

found, it is hunted. It is the manner of pursuit as practised in India which characterises it and gives it so great an attraction. In some of the countries above referred to, horses are indispensable ; but dogs are also employed. Guns, pistols, and other weapons, are in common use in addition to spears—the only one allowed in India. On this weapon only, and on his own nerve and trusty horse, must the Indian hunter rely, whether with others or alone. He would scorn in either case to trust to other means of offence or defence than that afforded by his tough spear of bamboo tipped with steel.

Ill would it fare with the porcicide who, regardless of the unwritten laws of the hunting-field, ventured to shoot a pig in a country that was in any way rideable. The stigma would attach to him as much as to the man who, in defence of his pheasants, selfishly destroys a fox in England. Most will remember poor Leech's foxhunter, and the intense disgust with which he points to a clerical vulpecide, as he exclaims to his friend, "There, do you see that fellow? Well, to my certain knowledge, he has destroyed two foxes, and yet he walks about with a hymn-book under his arm!"

His aversion is not stronger than that felt by the hog-hunter towards the carnal-minded creature who would shoot a pig.

In the high hills and great jungles, where spearing from horseback is entirely out of the question, it is,

of course, perfectly legitimate to slay pig in the most convenient manner. With most, perhaps, the lust of slaughter is so keen as to render a tempting chance irresistible. Moreover, meat may be required for the camp. But even then many an old pig-sticker entertains an invincible aversion to the use of his gun—whether smooth-bore or rifled—in the destruction of swine, except in the case of self-defence. In like manner it would be difficult to overcome the scruples of some English fox-hunters regarding the shooting of foxes in the highlands of Scotland. These objections, however, like some others of a similar nature, are mere matters of personal taste and feeling, and their absence is not in any way censurable by the strictest sportsman.

But not as a trophy—dearly prized by the hog-hunter, and sometimes as dearly won—can the shooter show the glittering tush. No! to him it is nothing more than a curved piece of ivory, a tooth, without any special interest attaching to it, beyond such as naturally cleaves to all *spolia opima*, however insignificant. But to the rider who has slain his antagonist in a fair fight with spear only, it is invested with a dignity, a veneration, an attachment, such as no other trophy possesses.

I have mentioned fox-hunting in connection with pig-sticking. But, except that both are pursued on horseback, there is no common element of comparison

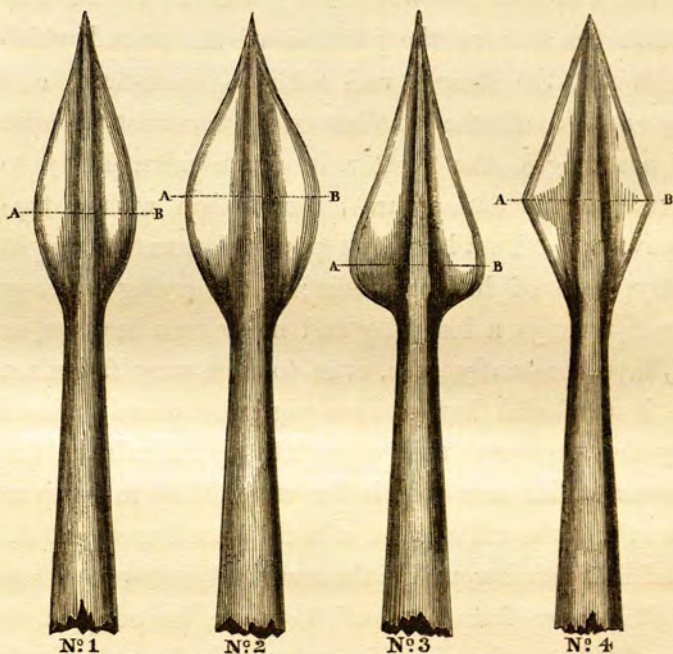
between them. Each has its individual attractions, though of a very different nature. One is essentially a *wild* sport, the other a more artificial one.

Wild boars are found either by driving fields, high grass lands, ravines, and jungles, or by tracking them to their lair. But in either case the great object of the hunter is to obtain *first-spear*. The rider who first draws blood, however slight the wound, is entitled to the tusks ; and this, therefore, forms the great object of contention. The pig is considered and referred to as his pig, whoever may deal the death blow.

For the purpose in view, throughout the Bombay Presidency,* a bamboo stick, of from eight to ten feet long, is in common use. On the light and tapering end of this is attached a steel spear-head, which, shank included, may be some six or eight inches in length. The latter varies in shape and size, according to the taste or experience of the hunter. The cut, No. 1, will give a general notion of the usual shapes, there being varieties intermediate between each. I present these as types of what the native smiths produce. Nos. 3 and 4 are manifestly inferior in construction to the two others for hunting purposes. The sudden rounding of the shoulder at A B in the former, and the angle in the latter, render them more liable to catch in the ribs or other bones of a pig, and necessarily more difficult to withdraw after spearing.

* Appendix, Note A.

No. 2 has this disadvantage also, but in a lesser degree. Some, however, like this shape best, as being able to give a larger wound than No. 1.



SPEAR-HEADS.

I confess that, personally, I much prefer the last mentioned ; and it is the pattern according to which I always of late years had my spear-heads manufactured in India, when in a position to get them made to order. Its advantages consist, first, in its lightness—no mean consideration. Secondly, the curves from A B, both to the point and to the shank, are equally gradual. It

might be made broader, but in my opinion one of its principal advantages is its narrowness. This enables it to penetrate and be withdrawn from between bones, where a broader one would get jammed. It is not so much the size as the position of the wound which tells on the boar; and with a spear-head and spear-stick of the smallest weight consistent with due strength, the hunter is much more likely to make a true and accurate thrust than with a top-heavy one. To a large and powerful man the weight may seem of little moment; yet carrying a heavy spear through a long day and many runs becomes, as I have constantly seen, even to him, very fatiguing. It is wonderful how easily a pig is completely missed by the spearman; and when fatigue has relaxed the power of his arm this is far more likely to happen, or at best the infliction of a badly placed or superficial and ineffectual wound is the result.

Whatever form of head, however, be adopted, it should be made of good, well-tempered steel. It is better to pay well for, and take a little trouble to obtain such, than buy the iron-hoop sort of article so often foisted on the indifferent or unwary by the native lohar.

With regard to the bamboo, it should be tough, supple, and sufficiently tapering to give it a nice balance in the hand; it should also be a male. A male bamboo is that which is solid throughout, in con-

tradistinction to the female bamboo, which is hollow. Those with the joints closest are said to be the strongest, but are, I think, at the same time the heaviest and stiffest. Under certain circumstances, the very stoutest bamboo will be shivered like a reed or broken equally with one much lighter. Still a due degree of strength is necessary, and should be required in selecting sticks. The ability to choose the best, however, from a bundle of bamboos is only to be acquired by experience and practice. One slightly crooked should not be rejected, for the lohar will render it quite straight.

It only remains to notice the fixing on of the head. This is cemented by "lac," and it should be so attached as to leave no projecting edge. When fixed on to the bamboo, the shank end might be filed away till it is level with the stick, otherwise it is apt to catch in the pig's bones. Some slightly cut away the bamboo and thus let it in ; but this has a tendency to weaken the stick, as is found by its constantly snapping at that point.

Such is the weapon as commonly used, and to the excellence of which too little attention is usually paid. It occasionally happens, however, that a hunter may have to undertake alone the task of riding and killing a boar. The great pleasure of course lies in the competition for *first-spear*, and the sport is enhanced by its participation with others. But a sportsman may

be travelling, or unable from some cause to enjoy the society of companions ; even then, however, though the run is divested of the charm which emulation gives, a single-handed fight with a savage old boar affords a very exciting piece of sport to the solitary hunter. He has in that case nothing but his own nerves and skill to rely on for the protection of himself and horse ; and it is with a pardonable feeling of self-gratulation he can exclaim with Coriolanus, "Alone, I did it."

But, as on such occasions, he can generally choose his own time and opportunity to close with and spear the boar, and not fatigue himself with the exertion a prolonged struggle with others entails, a spear stouter, heavier, and shorter is perhaps preferable. With this a more decisive blow can be given.

With regard to the horse, on which the sportsman's success so much depends, the Arab, of from 14 hands to 14 hands 3 inches, is much preferred to larger and faster animals by men of average weight—and that, owing to the climate, may be calculated at from half to a full stone less in India to what it would be in England.

Very heavy men could not be easily mounted on Arabs, and are obliged to pay the penalty of their extra weight, by trusting to animals less adapted to the exigencies of tolerably stiff Indian hunting-ground. Indian stud-bred horses, Walers—by which name the South Australian horse is generally known in India—

horses from Persia and Cambool, and even those of native breed, are occasionally pressed into the service of hunting humanity, and not only that of the heavier portion, but of others. Compared with the Arab, however, the other Asiatic breeds are soft-hearted, clumsy, and wanting in the blood and courage of the desert-bred. Walers are good horses, and in weight for age races concede many pounds to the Arab. But they are rather long and unwieldy for hunting over rough and broken ground, and moreover cannot stand the sun well. For these reasons an English horse is also quite out of place, and would be of as little use in most of the hunting-fields of India as an Arab in the flying countries of the "shires."

On the level plain many of the above might give the Arab the go-by; but for general use none can compare with him. The hardy, active, cat-like, scrambling qualities of a high-caste Arab, his ability to climb banks and land safely from high drops,—in other words, his in-and-out qualities,—the safety with which he can gallop down steep hills and over stones, his quickness to turn, his courage, docility, and other characteristics, all render him decidedly the best and most useful ally of the Hog-hunter.

It has doubtless often struck others as well as myself, that the science attending the sport of hog-hunting is apt to be overlooked, and the pursuit degenerate into a mere ambition to slay pigs, without any recog-

nition of the woodcraft which gives it such an additional zest and attraction.

It is true there are no hounds to interest the sportsman by their acute and sagacious instincts, thoroughly developed by an admirable training. But the science of tracking by the use of man's sight, reason, and experience, is surely no mean substitute, or one devoid of interest. A knowledge, too, of the habits of the wild animal pursued; a quick eye for country; a topographical instinct by which one realises, without knowing how, the present position in or after a run; a faculty of being insensibly impressed by, and retaining the features and bearing of the country; are all qualities essential to the thorough enjoyment and success of the Eastern Hog-hunter. Many a lost pig has been recovered by the observant sportsman who rightly employs his natural gifts. A little pool of water, by many heedlessly passed by; a field or two of high grain; a patch of grass or jungle; an isolated nullah coming down from the hills or scouring the plains, may each furnish a clue, and give a chance of again coming across a pig who has eluded his pursuers, should such lie anywhere in the direction of his flight. If hunters would recognise and endeavour themselves to acquire the woodcraft, and enter into the full spirit of their employment, they would find sport graced with a greater charm, and sometimes a much greater success.

I may be deemed by many unduly enthusiastic;

but, to me, field sports have ever been invested with a wild, undefined, inexplicable charm, which I can only express by the term "poetry of sport." The habits, modes of pursuit, and haunts of game, are associated in my mind with the scenes into which they lead the hunter. They form a connecting link between animate and inanimate creation.

To the true sportsman and lover of nature—and the terms are synonymous—his avocations but give an additional interest to the scenes into which they carry him, and increase the delight with which he views the ever varying beauties of nature.

Some there may be who look on sport in the merely material light in which Peter Bell is said to have regarded the pale spring flower :—

"A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more."

To them my meaning will be inexplicable. But a man may be but a very moderate shot and a poor performer in the pig-skin, yet be a true sportsman, notwithstanding ; while some—I hope a very few—*au contraire*, may be splendid shots and first-rate riders, yet hardly entitled to that honoured and honouring appellation.

From the taking of my maiden spear on the rough hills of the Deccan, to the last heavy boar which fell to me in Rajpootana, a cut of whose tushes graces a

subsequent page, I have hunted in various provinces, each with its peculiar characteristics of scenery and nature of riding-ground.

Over the rugged hills, and across the rolling stones and sheet rock of the Deccan ; amidst the jungles, and over the cracked and fissured plain, or through the inundated land of the valley of the fiery sun, Scinde ; through the deep nullahs, sandy river beds, mid the high thorny hedges of the cultivated plain, and across the howling wilderness of the Runn, of Cutch ; over the prickly-pear hedges, high grass lands, and bountiful cultivation of Guzerat ; across the desolate wastes and hills, and through the thorny jungles of Rajpootana, I have hunted and speared the noble game.

As I have seen the sport, so I desire to represent it. But I warn my readers that possibly they will find it differ very considerably from some of those descriptions, by which they may have learnt to form their notions concerning it. No large array of elephants to beat through high grass lands, driving thence numberless pigs, will enter into my narrative.

It has been said that in any pictures of Indian scenery, the British public demanded cocoa-nut trees. In like manner they may possibly require that wild-boars, like the Ghost in Hamlet, shall be able to "a tale unfold," in short, have curly tails ; but as the Indian wild-boar carries that caudal appendage in a position singularly straight, so I propose to depict him.

And now let me turn to my journals and sketches, and evoke from their half-forgotten places of rest a long procession of phantom pigs and other animals. I look back at them through the mists of years ; but even as I do so, every here and there one particular scene, or one particular vision, arrests my attention, and forthwith the mists clear, the clouds of semi-forgetfulness are dispelled, and each assumes in my memory a “local habitation and a name.”

Olim meminisse juvabit might with justice be inscribed on the leading page of every sportsman's note-book or journal ; for the time may come, as it has to me, when accidental circumstances prevent him from enjoying the darling sports of his youth, and their record alone remains a cherished though meagre substitute.



CHAPTER II.

Cutch—Description of it—Preparations for the meet—The party—Riding out to the meet—Nature of the country—Old "Natta," the hunt shikaree—His appearance in clerical costume—The lungra-wallah—"Goose's pup," and "Wilderness," two singular items in a bill of fare.

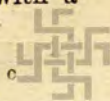
If the reader will be good enough to cast his eyes over a map of India and run them down its western coast, he will find that the north tropical line cuts a district on the seaboard, which, from the peculiar nature of its landward boundaries, possesses a distinct and insular character.

This is the small province of Cutch, which may be roughly described as somewhat in the shape of a strung bow ; the arc of which, to the west and south, is bounded by the Indian Ocean and Gulf of Cutch, while the cord is formed by that singular, uninhabited, desert tract called the "Runn."

Cutch, therefore, may be regarded almost in the light of an island. Indeed, at certain seasons a large portion of the Runn is under water, and there can be no doubt that it was, at no distant time, once an arm of the sea.



The entire length of the province is about 200 miles, and its greatest breadth, exclusive of the Runn, 45 miles. Within its area is to be found a surface as varied as irregular. From the dead level of the Runn and the cultivated plain which borders the gulf to the culmination of the highland in the hill of Nurra in the interior, the aspect and nature of the country is much diversified. Several other hills tower above the surrounding heights with outlines marked and peculiar, and form a distinctive feature in the scenery ; but Nurra is of the greatest altitude, and being somewhat nearer than most of them to the sea-shore, its aspect is well known to mariners and to those who go down to the sea in ships on that coast. All kinds of hunting countries are to be found in this space ; and the sportsman may, according to his taste or the season of the year, ride a pig either on the open plain of the Runn or the level in the neighbourhood of the sea-coast—the latter consisting of open land and fields enclosed by immense hedges of piled-up Bair brush—or diversify his sport by a gallop over the stony hills or among the rivers, ravines, and nullahs of the interior. Pig were formerly in most parts exceedingly plentiful ; but those halcyon days are, alas ! past. And though at some periods of the year they do collect in large numbers in certain favoured spots, the hunter must be content with a comparatively moderate bag.



Strange to say, the felinae do not affect this varied, but in many parts more than commonly barren, country. Tigers, as residents, are unknown in it; and only a few of the leopard tribe haunt the wilder portions of the hills. The jungles are probably not sufficiently thick or extensive to render them a safe abode for the larger wild animals.

This little known country—favoured or unfavoured as it may be deemed, according to the taste and occupations of its visitor—is governed by a Rajpoot prince of the Jhareja tribe, and is a tributary of the British Government. The capital of the country is Bhooj, near to which is established a small force of British troops, formerly consisting of a horse battery of European artillery and a regiment of native infantry. After these preliminary observations I proceed with my narrative.

It was the cold season, and the annual review and inspection of the troops by the general officer commanding the division was over, and applications for leave of absence on private affairs were again recognised and entertained as legitimate appeals to the favourable consideration of the authorities.

For the previous two or three months attendance at all parades and drills had been rigidly enforced; but now a season of partial rest had succeeded to the duties which had occupied the military attention, and the urgent calls of a sporting nature, simultaneously

experienced by several members of the garrison, met with a commendable approval and sanction.

But a week of January had yet passed, so that the season was at its coldest ; and that in Cutch is pleasantly bracing to the English constitution, the thermometer indeed occasionally approaching freezing point. It was, therefore, with much energy and enjoyment that, one afternoon, a few years ago, a party of ten cantered along the dusty road which led from Bhooj to Lodye, situated near the edge of the Runn, and distant about seventeen or eighteen miles from the station. On the previous day satisfactory *khubber* had been brought in to Lieutenant Norman, the secretary of the Bhooj Hunt, by the son of old Natta, the shikaree, and Lodye had been fixed upon as the first place of meet.

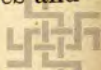
Not many hours after the announcement of this important fact, strings of camels and carts of the strange, peculiar fashion common to that country, might have been observed wending their way out of the station. On these were piled, in apparent confusion, boxes and bundles of every size and form of which such articles are capable. Overland trunks and six-dozen deal cases may be considered, however, to have preponderated. In most instances these were surmounted by charpoys, or low bedsteads, and on these again, in one or two cases, were tied baskets, through whose open spaces protruded the heads of

fowls, with much cackling. Horses, clothed in their light, gay, day jules, the production of the looms of Broach or Tannah, each led by its spear-laden syce, passed at intervals, alone or in small detachments. Several dirty boys, too, led by chains their masters' dogs. In one or two instances these animals showed fair breeding; but in general, according to home notions, were but poor apologies for terriers or spaniels. Indeed, it would have been difficult, in most cases, to decide of what particular genus the mongrel most partook, or what strains had been introduced to produce the wonderful hybrid exhibited.

One or two of the older servants were mounted on four-legged creatures, to which popular courtesy gave the name of ponies; but by far the larger number walked out of cantonments, many, doubtless, with the intention of climbing on to some cunningly-contrived space on cart or camel when once fairly away. A few women, wives of the syces or other low-caste followers, accompanied the various detached parties, all of which left long tracks of dust behind them.

Much twisting of bullocks' tails and voluble objurgation had been necessary to get those erratic animals well on their way; but when once set going they plodded along at an average rate of about a mile an hour, and were soon left in the rear by the horses and camels.

It is not with them, however, but with the owners



of the property thus conveyed, that we have now to do.

Norman had managed to organise a very jovial and pleasant party of ten in number, including several strangers, who had come to that out-of-the-way province either for the sake of sport, or on duty, or as travellers. One, Melton, was a cavalry officer from Bengal. Another one, Mowbray, on political employ in Rajpootana, had come on leave to visit his friend Norman. Two, Danvers and Vivian, were men of one of H.M.'s line regiments, and had taken this route by which to rejoin their corps in Scinde from an excursion to the south. In addition to these, Norman's own regiment had furnished two more members of the hunt, MacKenzie and Hawkes, to wit. The artillery battery was represented by its commander, Stewart, and the doctor, who had come with another friend "merely," as he said, "to look on." That friend, however, though a capital fellow, was an indifferent rider, and was very nearly a thorn—or, rather, spear—in the side of more than one of the hunters. He was a sailor from a surveying vessel then lying at Mandavie, and the astounding positions into which that man persistently contrived to bring his spear were a source of continual apprehension and danger both to himself and companions during the short time he was permitted to use it.

Such was the party who, headed and piloted by Norman, were cantering along in detachments of two

or three, on the cart track, deep in dust and sand, which led to Lodye.

A considerable interval interposed between each detachment, and even between the individual horsemen where the road was too narrow to admit of two riding abreast, for the dust was smothering. There was little fear of the road being mistaken if the leader was right, for the long line of dust he left floating far to the flank and rear, clearly indicated the route ; and, had that not been sufficient, the fresh tracks of the galloping horses left, in most parts, a trail broad enough not to be mistaken by a hunter of the slightest experience.

The road, for the first few miles, lay through ground tolerably open, but over which were scattered numerous sandy knolls, covered with low bush. These mounds, and, in many parts, the adjacent plains also, for a distance of many yards, were frequented by large colonies of sand rats, by whom the ground was quite undermined. These queer little animals are rather pretty in appearance, and interest the observer by their quick, rabbit-like movements, but they are a great nuisance to the hunter, who not unfrequently is indebted to their subterranean excavations for a severe fall, and, as has occasionally happened, a horse's broken leg.

At this season there was but little cultivation, the khureef or monsoon crop having been gathered in.

Every here and there, however, the creaking of the draining apparatus of a well announced where irrigation was being carried on; and in these parts, green fields and small clusters of trees formed oases in the surrounding sandy soil.

Broad and deep watercourses, cut clean out of this plain, crossed it in several places. In some parts the banks were steep, sandy, jungle-covered slopes, but in others were perpendicular, and cleft from a friable rock, brilliant with many colours. Some contained a good deal of water in long pools, but in only one was it still running, the monsoon supply in the neighbouring hills being yet unexhausted. All took their course towards the Runn, and by their means a vast volume of water was emptied into it during the rainy months, and some of this yet lay in broad, shallow sheets, on the hard, salt-encrusted bed. But at the mouths of these streams were found tracts of mingled water and sand, and woe to the unwary man or beast who should seek without a guide those treacherous wastes of quicksand! Nor were the streams higher up to be crossed everywhere with impunity, though there, extrication is usually feasible.*

When these nullahs or other obstacles obliged the leaders to reduce the pace, the rearmost riders would close up, and much chaff and laughter take place. There was sure to be some little incident out of which

* Appendix, Note B.



mirthful capital could be made. One rider's horse being guided to right or left of the ford, would get into a shallow quicksand, and only with some exertion on part of man and beast recover the safe ground. Another's pony would exhibit a desire to lie down and take a roll in the water. The puggree of a third had become unrolled, and streamed in luxuriant length behind, affording an opportunity for others to make undignified comparisons.

Then some had to record the fact of having seen bustard, or chinkara, both of which were there to be found.

These and other incidents afforded subjects for mirth and conversation, till—the obstacle passed, or the nags having had a sufficient break in their gallop—the leading party would again start, followed in turn by the others. But not silently was the journey even then conducted. A shrill yell every now and then served to keep up a sort of vocal connection between the different component parts of the cavalcade ; for as certain as one party gave vent to its exuberance of spirits by the emission of a howl, so surely was it answered by the others. Many a startled agriculturist looked up wondering at the unearthly sounds which came from the throats of the mad sahib people, and many a village cur gave tongue as the distant howls came borne on the breeze.

Youth, health, and high spirits are, after all, the

true elements of Midas' gift. The plain crossed, the ground began gradually to rise till it brought the party to a ridge. A steeper descent now took them into a narrow valley better cultivated than the plain above. Horses were changed at a village prettily situated among fields and trees, about which peafowl wandered in large numbers. Grey partridge, too, ran about cackling vigorously in the neighbourhood ; and the chuck-chuck-chuck-a-chuck of a more distant black or two, was occasionally to be heard as the day waned.* Sacred to Brahma, as to Juno, the peacock is "banned and barred, forbidden fare."

All sorts of animals had been pressed into the service of the travellers for the first stage, but now many had mounted the horses they intended to hunt on the morrow, and accordingly rode more leisurely down the valley. The road, in many parts, clung to the foot of highish hills on the left, but in others approached and followed the windings of the sandy bed of a dried-up stream. Once or twice this was crossed and recrossed, and as the party filed through the jow, or tamarisk jungle, which, in large patches, covered its sides and bed, the peculiar cool freshness which attaches to that shrub, or, perhaps, to the nature of its locality, increased the cold invigorating air of the late afternoon of the Indian winter.

The sun had dipped behind the hills to the left, and

* Appendix, Note C.

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the breeze struck chill on the horsemen, hot with the exertion of riding. But how delightful ! Many a one bared his head and snuffed in the crisp, bracing elixir as it swept up the valley from across the wide rolling waste and belt of jungle before them.

The upper parts of the hills on the right were gleaming in full view of the descending sun, with the shadows of those opposite thrown strong across them, and the intervening valley lay in shade as the party came in view of the encampment, and quietly walked their horses, so as to take them in cool.

The clouds of dust raised by the cattle returning at evening from their but indifferently successful search after grass and edible shoots in the neighbouring jungle, had some time before indicated to the riders the position of the village. It now appeared, separated from the encampment by a small tank. The camp itself was pitched on some hard ground over which a few baubel trees were irregularly scattered. The shade of large trees, though desirable, if conveniently situated, was not at this season so eminently a requisite as when the sun beat down with hot weather intensity.

As the hunters approached, syces rushed forward to take their masters' horses; but from the ruck advanced a figure so singular as to render necessary a brief description, especially as it plays no unimportant part in these pages.

It was none less than "Natta," the great Cutch shikaree. The renowned tracker whose experience



NATTA, THE SHIKAREE, IN CLERICAL COSTUME.

had for a score of years and more assisted the sahib logue to find their game. Trained to his work under

the eye of several good old sportsmen, Natta was unsurpassed, if not unequalled in his craft.

Thy shade, old man, arises before me as I write !
Though years have flown since thou wert gathered to
thy fathers, thy fame yet lives. Perhaps thy spirit
haunts those hunting-grounds which thy bodily presence
so often graced. But let me depict thee, not as
a spectre, but as thou wast in the flesh, little though
thou didst ever carry of that superfluous article !*

Norman, as the sahib under whose immediate orders
he considered himself, was the first who was honoured
with the old hunter's notice. With a serene gravity,
he accomplished the usual Oriental salutation, which
was afterwards extended in a general sweeping fashion
to the remainder of the company. Nor was his
salaam in any way disturbed by the laughter which
greeted his, it must be confessed, somewhat peculiar
costume and appearance.

He had on this occasion arrayed himself in his
newest coat—the last present of cast-off clothing which
gentlemen were in the habit of occasionally bestowing
on him. Many of different sizes, cuts, and patterns
had on various occasions graced his person ; but it
remained for this to present him to the gaze of an appreciative
and admiring company clad in the habiliments
of a parson, and a parson, moreover, of large dimensions.

Such indeed was the singular looking black coat

* Appendix, Note D.

which, buttoned at the neck and down the front, and hanging like a bag about Natta's thin, spare frame, was gathered around his loins by the skirts, the ends of which were, with considerable ingenuity, inserted amongst the folds of the kummurbund. Over this it lapped in many places, and especially protruded in the rear, taking there the appearance of a thick black tail.

Below this were the loose, baggy trousers peculiar to Cutch. Gathered in at the waist in many plaits, they fell with the ample seat as low as the bend of the knee, just below which they were gathered in tight and fastened. This left the long, thin, black shanks, with their pedestals—a pair of most gigantic feet—fully exposed in all their dark and sinewy nakedness. The contrast between the attenuated leg and the disproportionate length and breadth of the base on which it rested was ridiculous in the extreme. Feet certainly was the term by which the vulgar spoke of those remarkable extremities, but a new word would have to be coined rightly to describe them, or give an adequate idea of their appearance and dimensions. They were very long, very broad, very flat, and very knobbed. Horny, bulbous lumps stuck out in unexpected places, representing possibly the spot where, in more tender days, a thorn had penetrated, or a boil run its course. The thick integument which soled these hoofs was now of a consistency so tough, as to defy the common order of thorns or sharp stones.

The toes were very long and bony, and seemed to grip or bite the ground as the owner walked. They could with ease grasp a stick at their master's option, and convey it to his hand, thus obviating the necessity of stooping. Natta's great endurance and ability to sustain prolonged fatigue was attributed by himself and friends to the possession of these feet, which were in consequence the pride of himself, and envy and admiration of others.

The calf of the leg was represented by a small swelling resembling a bundle of whip-cord, various dependent strands of which laced the leg till lost in the foot.

The voluminous article of dress in which his upper frame was enveloped, in a measure disguised its proportions ; but enough could be discerned to show that the shoulders were very narrow, and the chest flat, but the arms long and sinewy.

His face was thin, puckered, and hatchet-like, with hollow cheeks and protuberant cheek-bones, and of a tint generally approaching a medium shade of Indian ink, pleasingly relieved by patches of a light sepia or dark mahogany colour. Constant exposure, long-sustained fatigue, and strong drink had assisted advancing age in scoring the rugged countenance with lines both deep and harsh, and giving a bleary dimness to the eye. The head was supported by a neck, long, pinched, and weazeney, and was surmounted by

a somewhat worn and ragged puggree, from the sides of which a few straggling grey hairs escaped. In it were stuck a few peacock's feathers. With this for a crest, his appearance was not unlike that of a gigantic crane.

Within the folds of his kummurbund, or waistcloth, was inserted a hunting-knife ; and in the recesses both of it and of his puggree, could the contents have been disclosed, would doubtless have been discovered small quantities of tobacco, coppers, a flint and steel, with cotton match inserted in a hollow tube, a piece of opium, and other marching necessities. The pipe and slippers, which on the march would have been carried either in the hand, or inserted between the folds of the kummurbund, now lay beside a log in front of a fire at a little distance, where the arrival of the sahibs had disturbed him in the enjoyment of a quiet smoke.

The horsemen soon dismounted and gathered round the tall form of old Natta, with the object both of hearing the khubber and examining more closely the singular habiliments in which it had pleased him to appear. The old man himself seemed to be quite unconscious of anything unusual in the nature of his dress, or that he was more than commonly an object of admiring wonder. A coat was a coat to him of whatever colour, fashion, or texture. The only inconvenience he felt in that at present worn, was the absence of upper side-pockets.

While he was undergoing a more critical inspection, Norman held brief discourse with him.

"Is the khubber good?" was the first inquiry.

"The khubber is good, sahib," was the reply—the one invariably made without much regard to its truth. This was spoken in a deep, sepulchral voice, worthy of the form from which it issued.

"Do many pig resort to the Runn, and shall we get them to-morrow?" Norman asked more pointedly.

"Sahib, many pig go out into the Runn. I have both pugged them and seen them. I hope the sahibs have brought many spears, they will be required."

"But shall we get more than one day of it? They soon scent the blood of the slain on an open plain like the Runn," remarked Norman.

"The sahib's knowledge is great," was Natta's polite rejoinder. "I could not say—speaking a true word—that pig will be found there a second day, for there is water in the well—pits cut in the Bunnee,* and some Rabarree people with flocks are there. The pig do not lie out very far."

"Are there any good dant-wallahs (tuskers) among them, and do you know anything of the lungra-wallah (lame one)?"

"There are one or two fair dant-wallahs, sahib, with tusks of about three fingers; but I have not come across the pug of the lungra-wallah."

“What is a lungra-wallah?” asked the sailor, whose knowledge of Hindustanee was exceedingly limited; “and what does this queer old cock mean by connecting dant-wallahs with fingers?”

“The lungra-wallah,” explained Mackenzie, to whom he had addressed his queries, “is an old boar which inhabits these parts, and is reported to have killed more than one man. ‘Dant-wallah’ means a boar old enough to have a good tush, which the natives measure externally with the breadths of their fingers, and so calculate its length.”

Natta was now dismissed, and the party separated, each to his tent, to prepare for dinner. Before doing so, however, the greater number visited their horses at their pickets, slid their hands down the legs of their pets, and gave directions to the syces as to their evening management.

A moderate-sized single-poled tent had been pitched for the mess, and as a general rendezvous. Around this were clustered, in irregular fashion, the smaller tents, which served as dormitories. These were of various sizes and descriptions, from the roomy and convenient “single-poled,” to the “bechoba” and “rowtee.” The party had not met to spend their time in luxurious ease and the indolent enjoyment of spacious dwelling-places, and were therefore perfectly satisfied with the by no means excessive accommodation afforded. Most of them chummed in pairs, and found

a bechoba, with a small outlying connât for bathing, quite sufficient for purposes of lodging. Besides the tents of the sahibs, numerous rowtees and little impromptu dwellings had been raised, and completed the canvas village.

As joyous and merry-hearted a party of young men as ever buckled spur, sat down to dinner together that cold January evening. Parade-bugles, night-rounds, uniform, drill, and duns, had given place to the wild freedom of jungle life. Cantonment and its martial exercises, was it not a good eighteen miles off? The sword was exchanged for the spear, the musket for the rifle or smooth-bore fowling-piece, and the *abandon* of jungle costume and jungle liberty replaced the restrictions of military dress and etiquette.

Spirits were at blood heat. The cold invigorating air, the prospects of sport, all the happy anticipations of a pleasant jungle trip, assisted good fellowship in discarding for the present whatever of care or anxiety may have weighed on some, and they prepared to enjoy the passing hour, and extract mirth and pleasure from whatever offered.

One of the party, who was quick with his pencil, produced a sketch of old Natta in his clerical costume, and labelled it "The Hunting Crane." This was handed round at dinner, to the great amusement of the sportsmen, as well as to the more subdued gratification of their servants standing behind.

But dinner had not proceeded far before another circumstance occurred which furnished the easily amused party with a subject for mirth.

Manuel, the head servant of the regimental mess, had been entrusted with the catering and general feeding arrangements of the party, under the supervision of Mackenzie. The "mejman," as his fellow "bootlaers" politely addressed him, was a little fired with ambition on his promotion, and actually produced a bill of fare of the dinner. This was laid by the side of the plate of Mackenzie, who was installed as president.

Soup finished, Manuel brought in a dish which he placed before Mackenzie with much display. When the cover was removed, there was disclosed a bird considerably larger than a duck, but yet not large enough for an ordinary goose.

"Why, Manuel, what have you got here?" asked Mackenzie, as he referred to the *carte*. "I see you call it a goose's p—p—p—. I can't make out what."

The ready caterer, who was an Indo-Portuguese, and evidently waiting to be questioned, replied in broken English—"It is a goose's pup, your honour."

"A what!" ejaculated Mackenzie, as he turned quickly round, for a moment quite flabbergasted; "a goose's which?"

"A goose's pup," repeated Manuel. "I shot it at a tank on the road."

For a moment Mackenzie looked steadily, almost sternly, at Manuel, and then burst into a roar of laughter, in which he was joined by the whole party.

The bird itself proved to be one of those quasi wild geese* which resort to Cutch in the cold season, and which, on account of its size, Manuel considered to be an immature and youthful specimen. Pup was a term he constantly heard applied to the young of dogs, and knew of no reason why it should not be just as applicable to the feathered race. The word "bucha" in the tongue he was best acquainted with would be used for all young indifferently.

But this was not the only remarkable item in that bill of fare. Mackenzie examined it more closely, and after several queerly spelt words, of whose signification, however, there could be no doubt, he came to the last item, which was "wilderness."

After a little cross-questioning, it appeared that Manuel had looked out the word "desert" in the dictionary, with a view to correct spelling. Finding it there described as a wilderness, the brilliant idea occurred to him of replacing the old-fashioned word with this more imposing and grandly sounding one. He did so, and succeeded beyond expectation in rendering his bill of fare a marvel of novelty.

* See Appendix, Note F.



CHAPTER III.

A speech—A proposal chaffed but approved of—Round the camp-fire
—Evening costume—Boar-rips—A ripping affair—A narrow
squeak—Horse ripped—A hog's contempt for an insensible foe
—Boy's leg broken—A sow toe-biter—My first day's hunting—
Anecdote of Mr. McGregor.

WHEN dinner was over, and the nectar, such as is brewed by those rival benefactors of the thirsty Indian, Messrs. Bass and Allsopp, had given place to a "brew" of which Mackenzie was the able compounder, Norman intimated his wish to address a few words to the assembled company.

Much encouraged by the marked, not to say noisy, intimation of approval this proposal excited, and the gratifying nature of the remarks it elicited, he rose to his legs, blandly refusing the affectionate offers of assistance in holding him up which were freely made on all sides. His appearance in that position was received with a round of applause, varied with sundry howls indicative of esteem and appreciation.

When this had subsided, and he had acknowledged the favourable nature of his reception by repeatedly bowing with one hand over his heart, and the other waving gracefully in the air, he began :



"Gentlemen, we have met—we have met, I say——"

"We met, 'twas in a crowd, and I thought he would shun me," sang some one, as Norman made a slight pause.

"Prove it, old fellow," shouted another; "I deny the premises."

"I think," said a third, "there are some elements of truth in the assertion, but I should like to hear to what it tends."

"Fire away, Norman," observed a fourth; "I am deeply interested in the very attractive nature of your remarks. The subject is one on which we all certainly require considerable enlightenment."

"Confound you all," remarked the persecuted speech-maker, as he turned from one to the other, "can't you hear what a fellow has got to say? I have a good mind not to enlighten you."

"Don't say that," a neighbour remarked; "we should be such terrible losers. I can't bear to think of the deprivation."

"*Parturiunt montes, &c.* Out with it, old fellow," another said encouragingly.

Norman this time took no notice of the interruptions, for he wisely considered that nine to one were odds in a chaffing match with which it was useless to contend, so he continued rapidly:

"My proposal is this. That as we have met for

sport, we compare our sporting experiences in other districts, and each relate any little incidents, either from his journal or memory, which may be deemed of interest to the others. I vote we go and have our pipes round a log-fire outside, and commence now. The fresh air is better than this close little tent. There, that's my *ridiculus mus*, Stewart."

"Not a bad idea, after all," said Stewart. "I am bound to say the mountain has been unexpectedly successful, and the mouse has turned out to be an elephant."

The proposal was vigorously approved by most of those present, more especially by the sailor and one or two of the younger members, who without any experiences of their own to relate, were glad enough to hear those of others.

The approbation was conveyed in the form of noise, which being contagious was joined in by Norman himself. The terriers and nondescripts belonging to the camp took up the chorus, and this was responded to by the village curs. The jackals howled in concert; and doubtless many a grisly old boar, with his family around him, stopped and grunted a savage disapproval, as the distant noise came borne on the night-breeze, and arrested the party in their diligent grubbing for food.

Contented with this decided intimation of their appreciation of Norman's proposal, the hunters, glass in

hand, and calling for such wraps as they possessed, made a move to a lighted log which flickered and sparkled outside with a pleasant look of the old home so far away—possibly its principal attraction.

But, shade of Beau Brummel! what queer objects they would have been deemed in the old home itself. One or two had arrayed themselves in dressing-gowns, or military cloaks of British manufacture. Some had mounted Caubool or Cashmere chogas of soft “push-meena,” woven from the silky hair of the Thibetan goat, or the coarser “puttoo” of camel’s hair. One had a long cotton-padded Persian gown, and two were habited in finely dressed sheepskins, called poshteens. These were worn with the hairy side in, forming, externally, a soft, yellow, silk-embroidered leather. But one solitary individual wore an English great-coat. Comfort and convenience were certainly more studied than appearance, and English-made clothing was scarce in that remote district.

“Old Natta,” said Norman, “reported to-day that he had heard that the lungra-wallah has lately ripped a couple more men, one of whom died. It is a pity we can’t rid the world of him.”

“I don’t believe half of these stories we hear of boars killing men,” observed Stewart. “Love of the marvellous is uncommonly prone to make them exaggerate every little incident they hear. I don’t remember in

all my experience, seeing a dozen men ripped severely, and not one killed."

"Nor have I," said Norman. "A sulky old boar is no doubt an ugly customer, but not quite so bad as the lungra-wallah is said to be."

"Have you ever known one of the hunters themselves ripped?" asked the sailor, of Stewart, with an internal consciousness of his own limited equestrian ability.

"Yes; I have seen a few instances. An affair occurs to me where one of the riders came to grief, and was rather severely hurt. I may as well give it as my contribution this evening.

"It happened near Ahmedabad, in Guzerat. A large party of us went out one day to beat the Kutwarra jungle, which being only six or seven miles from the station, with a chance of getting the pig over a dead plain, was rather a favourite fixture for a single day's meet.

"We rode out to breakfast about a dozen or more strong, and set to work when that important meal was concluded. It was entirely a jungle-beating business, no pugging. The cover is a thick strip of jungle, about a mile long, lying along the edge of a small river. On the opposite side, an open plain extends for a distance of a couple of miles or more; and at about that distance several bheers of high grass and strips of jungle afford good cover, and for these the pig usually

make when they break across the river. Sometimes, however, they go up or down it, and then their point is the cultivated fields and sugar cane about the villages which lie in both directions.

Our usual plan was to separate into two bodies, each taking up a position under trees situated about a couple of hundred yards out in the plain, and near either end of the jungle. Acting on this plan, we were obliged to let the pig get well away before riding them.

"On the occasion in question we had done so, but the pig seemed very wary and disinclined to break. A lengthened hustling, however, had at last effect, and a fine boar with a capital pair of tusks, made his appearance on the further bank of the river, near the end at which was stationed the party I was with. After a slight hesitation, he slipped into it, for the water was quite shallow, and soon afterwards reappeared on our side, and went away at a lazy gallop right into the plain, not very far from the trees which sheltered us. It was evident that he was in a suspicious frame of mind, and though he had not seen us, was very doubtful of the ground in front. We let him get well away; and at last the word was given to ride. Away we went in a cluster at a sharp gallop, but not putting our horses along at full speed till we closed near to the boar, which though we were not long in doing. He had been going leisurely along,

and did not observe us till we were pretty close. He then made a few quick rapid strides and shot ahead ; but, distrustful of the length of plain in front, swerved to the right, and as we got behind him, came quite round and made backward tracks for the jungle he had just quitted.

“Another fellow and myself had drawn ahead of the others, and were racing together as this manoeuvre was effected. It was just a toss-up whether we could pick him up before he made good his object and reached the cover. A lanky sow would probably have escaped us, but it was different with a well-fed boar, and we thought the chances in our favour. Still the jungle was so close, that nothing but the hardest pressing would enable us to turn or stop him before the river was reached. He was a very active boar, and though full grown was young. It was a regular set-to between my companion and myself, each doing all he knew to obtain the lead. In our struggle and anxiety to overhaul the boar we little thought of a fact with which both of us were well acquainted—that it is not always the leaders who obtain the first spear. Still, being in front, I defy any man not to strive for the premiership. I was a stone or more lighter than my antagonist, and, as I was riding a horse I considered quite as good as his, I naturally began to slip away from him as we approached the boar, now showing symptoms of getting blown. Every stride made

a difference, and I soon had a clear lead, and found myself overhauling the pig hand over hand.

“ ‘I shall have a chance at you,’ I thought, ‘before the river is reached ;’ when lo ! horror of horrors ! my attention was diverted from my quarry by the appearance, almost in his front, of the other party of horsemen. They were riding at an easy pace with the object of intercepting the boar, and cutting off his retreat. We sung out to them to clear the way, but they were equally solicitous with ourselves to get the spear, and took no notice.

“The pig, however, was soon forced to diverge from his line, and as I followed, they were brought on my left front, and now made play with fresh horses. I would not budge an inch as we came together at an angle, and a collision was only just avoided with the leading horseman. In another second, however, he shot past, and my lead was lost.

“With his horse quite fresh, he ran straight up to the boar, and speared it without a turn. The boar at once came round, and met me as I galloped up. I drove my spear well in, and at the same moment, my active young horse rose, and flew clean over the pig. I was unable to withdraw the spear, which was left standing upright in his body. For a moment I thought there must be a crash, but in the next we were clear, and sailing away beyond, and I soon brought my nag round.



A RIPPING AFFAIR.

“The second of the other party had been obliged to pull in as all this occurred, and now urged his horse at a slow pace towards the boar, who was standing at bay with champing tusks. As is often the case when a charging pig is approached too slowly, the old hunter which the man was riding, swerved when close on to the boar, and just as his rider had leant far forward out of his saddle to spear it. This made him lose his seat, and he fell, overbalanced, directly in front of the infuriated beast.

“As I wheeled my horse, there was H—— on the ground, struggling on his knees to scramble away, and with the natural impulse of an Englishman using his fists in self-defence. He hit out freely, but that could not prevent the stroke of the terrible tush.

“Before the nearest horseman, who was my original antagonist, could come to the rescue, the boar had been diligently digging away at the body of his prostrate adversary, and, as it turned out, with effect. Once, too, it seized him in its mouth by the shoulders, but eventually had its attention diverted by a hearty prod from B——, and poor H—— was enabled to recover his legs, and get away. A young brother of my own, who was, to my great satisfaction, imbibing, with his initiatory lessons, a love for the sport, then came up with several others, and shortly the boar—by this time at the very edge of the river—was so full of spears, either whole or broken, that it was diffi-

cult to approach him. He had been fighting so vigorously, and it was altogether such a scrimmaging affair, that no death-wound had yet been dealt. The poor beast was, however, not fated to escape. Some of the men with second spears had come up near, and, at last, the gallant boar was gathered to his fathers.

“On examination it was found that H——’s wounds were serious, but not so much so as they might have been. He had received one gash across the inside of the thigh, only just avoiding the femoral artery. The whole length of the tush had been buried in a fleshy portion of the body, and there was a considerable injury in the shoulder from the bite. It was some time before the wounds healed ; but as the old rhyme says—

‘ From rip of boar, though very sore,
There is not much to fear ;
But bad the smart from horn of hart,
’Twill bring thee to thy bier.’ *

“Agreeably with this saying, they did not prove dangerous from inflammatory consequences. Indeed, with the pluck of a keen English sportsman, H—— attended a crack hunting meet in the following week, though his wounds were by no means then healed.

“There now, I have opened the ball with a hunting experience ; let somebody else follow my example, though I hope more efficiently.”

* Slightly altered from the original, which I can neither find nor perfectly recall.

"Well, your friend had certainly a narrow squeak for it," said Danvers. "I remember an occasion, however, where the boar preferred attacking the horse to the man.

"I was one of a hunting party near Sukkur in Upper Scinde. I don't know if many of you fellows have been in that part of the world, but it is quite a different style of hunting country to this, or indeed, any other with which I am acquainted. The whole country of Upper Scinde within miles of the river Indus may be considered in the light of an extensive cover for pigs, except those parts in the vicinity of the villages which have been cleared for cultivation. It is an alluvial flat, subject to inundations in the summer and autumn, and quite destitute of hills, except a few in the neighbourhood of Sukkur. Before we got hold of the country, the old Ameers used to enjoy a bit of sport as well as ourselves, though they pursued it in a different way. I much doubt if those debauched and enervated old scamps could have sat a horse after a pig, though it would have been a fine sight to see them. In lieu of hunting, however, they preferred shooting them, and with this object enclosed certain portions of the jungle with immense walls, called *maharas*, composed of long withes and boughs—mostly of jow—interlaced, much in the style of English wattle fences, though far higher and stouter. They were usually indeed six or seven feet high, and fixed between strong stakes, so that the pig should not be able either to jump over or break

through them, but run down alongside. In these walls at intervals were small gates, which, when the Ameers were not shikaring, were left open, and afforded free ingress and egress to the numerous pig. They were usually built so as to separate a thick tract of jungle from the neighbouring more open land ; and, as it was found to be very difficult to get the pig out in the open without some contrivance or other, the Upper Scinde English hunters used to keep up one or two of these walls at their own expense. I hear, though, that the jungle has since quite overgrown our old hunting-grounds.

“ The way we managed was this. Towards morning, when the pig were supposed to have left the jungle, and were feeding away from it, the gates I have mentioned were closed ; fires were lighted all down the line of mahara in its immediate vicinity, and men stationed in the weak places, with orders to keep up a general howling. By these means the pig were kept away from that particular jungle, and in the morning we sallied forth and beat others, to which it was expected they would have betaken themselves, and whence, when driven out, would make for the principal and favourite cover. The most important of these maharas—indeed the only one we systematically kept up—was situated close to the village of Aliwan, and was frequently a place of meet, on account of its being an almost certain find.

“We had built near the village a rough sort of large barn-like place, too, of the same material as the mahara, and this was roomy enough to contain from a dozen to twenty beds, so that we were never obliged to send tents out, but chummed all together in our common landy, as it was called.

“We had ridden out from Shikarpore—where I was on leave—one afternoon, and met at dinner about half a dozen strong, having previously ordered the usual night arrangements for keeping the pig beyond the mahara.

“Scinde, you know, a perfect furnace for more than half the year, is bitterly cold in the winter season, and we used to have some difficulty in keeping ourselves warm in the landy, for the air penetrated through a thousand openings in the loosely constructed walls of jow. But it was very jolly, and those parties were always uncommonly merry.

“Early on the following morning, after a cup of tea and a biscuit, we sallied out to take up our position behind a certain screen of piled-up bushes, which in some degree concealed us from the pig breaking from the jungle. It was the cover we usually first beat, and in it we rarely failed to find hog.

“We were not disappointed on this occasion, for after half an hour or so of anxious expectation, and when the beaters had got about three parts of the way through that particular stretch of jungle, a nice

sounder, with a good boar in it, broke away. Occasionally they went in a direction away from, but more commonly, as on this occasion, towards our mahara.

“After giving them sufficient law, we crashed away in pursuit. The first part of the ground was open, but so cut and rooted up by the pigs themselves in their search for food, as to form numerous broad, deep patches of rough, uneven surface; and although horses and men accustomed to it usually made light of this ground, it caused now and then an ugly fall. Separating this from the fallow cotton fields which lay near the mahara, was a nullah filled with jow, and which, in the time of the inundation, formed a stream only to be crossed by swimming. It was generally an object to get, if possible, tolerably near the pig before they reached this, so as to be able to mark their point of exit on the other side, and pick them up there quickly. This was desirable, as sometimes they ran down the cover afforded by its jungly bed, and, while the hunters were vainly galloping in one direction, they might emerge at a point far distant and get clear away.

“This time, however, we all found our way through the nullah successfully, though some parts were difficult, and got well after the boar on the other side. A few deep trenches, cut to lead the water during the time of the inundation, and at this season hidden by high pampas grass and jungle, afforded rather danger-

ous obstacles, owing to the difficulty of seeing the cut. But most of us, as well as our horses, knew the nature of these, and also the easiest points at which to negotiate them. So, though some were more or less thrown out at different times, we managed to be pretty close together when the pig neared the mahara.

“The poor beast must have been pretty bewildered on this occasion, with so many horsemen in pursuit, and an incessant howling kept up by the men stationed on the weak parts of the wall. This, however, he had not yet reached, when three of us closed with him and had a desperate struggle for the first spear.

“Sometimes one, sometimes another, seemed to have the lead as the boar jinked or turned, until the man on my left—for I was in the centre—drew a little away from us as the pig gave him a chance. He took advantage of it, made a desperate effort to spear, and succeeded. With his spear out, holding it by the very end, he managed to prick the boar, and only just in time, for, in another second, I closed, and drove my weapon well in. We were now close to the mahara, and racing down alongside it, and, as I shot ahead, the boar must have turned and met the third man of the party. He came, end-on, against the charging pig, and horse and man went down with a tremendous crash. The rider was shot far in advance, but not being much hurt, quickly picked himself up, and,

luckily, the pig—when he, too, had got over his surprise—charged at the horse, who also lost no time in recovering his legs. The latter galloped away, with—to the great satisfaction of my friend on foot—the enraged boar in full pursuit. It, luckily, seemed to have fixed its especial enmity and attention on the horse, or perhaps, in the scrimmage, had not caught sight of the dismounted man, who soon climbed on to the top of the mahara to be out of harm's way.

“The rest of us soon tackled the boar again, and he quickly bit the dust; but the unfortunate horse, when recovered, was found to have a tremendous gash on the inside of one of the fore pasterns, from which the blood came in streams; and it was long before he was again fit for the field.”

“It was a fortunate escape, certainly,” said Vivian, who had also visited Upper Scinde. “But I was told the other day of a far closer shave than that. It may possibly have happened at the very place you describe, Danvers, for it occurred in Upper Scinde, though I rather think it was at the ‘Ban Mahara,’ not, as you know, very many miles away. Wherever it was, however, it happened in this way:—

“A** very old and savage boar had been driven out, and the party of hunters had got away well in its wake, though, as I imagine, rather too close after it broke. P——, who was a very heavy weight, made

** See Appendix, Note G.

the best of a fair start, and quickly came up with the sulky old fellow. Before he had time to spear it, round it came unexpectedly at him and charged home. It caught the horse in front, ripped him desperately, and brought him down. P—— was projected to a considerable distance, and, as it turned out for him, fortunately, was stunned. The boar left the horse, and rushed up to the prostrate rider, with evidently the most vicious intentions. P——, however, being insensible, moved not ; and the pig, finding no resistance to his intended digs, simply smelt at the senseless form. Satisfied with the damage wrought, or disdaining to attack an inanimate object, after a snuff or two, he took himself off, and trotted away into a neighbouring jungle, as far as I remember, untouched.”

“ A narrow squeak, indeed,” remarked Mowbray ; “ but it is not always with the tush that pigs do damage.

“ On one occasion, when I was at Ajmere, in Rajpootana, with our political chief on duty, a wretched boy was brought into our camp hospital by his friends, with a broken leg. He had been employed in the fields in the neighbourhood, and had either disturbed a sounder of pig, or, in some other way, got in their road. At any rate, they charged him, and one hit him full with its snout,—so it was said,—knocked him clear over, of course, and fractured his leg without

a trace of any bite or rip. In this state he was found and brought in."

"Very likely the work of a sow," said Vivian; "but they bite fearfully hard also, at times. I once saw one lay hold of a horse's tail, and tug away vigorously before the latter managed to get clear by a liberal display of his hoofs, which knocked piggee out of time. They will seize hold of anything—a horse's leg, or a man's foot, if it comes in their way. It was close to the very mahara of which Danvers spoke, that on one occasion a sow charged one of the hunters, and, springing up, laid hold of his foot. The blood spurted out; and when, after the pig was killed, we examined the wound, it was found to be rather a bad one, for the leather of the boot had been bitten quite through."

"I suppose one might multiply, *ad infinitum*, accounts of accidents of this nature," observed Mowbray. "On the very first occasion on which I ever saw a pig killed, a horse was ripped, and a man very nearly so. As it happened in the Deccan, at the most celebrated meet of the 'Nugger Hunt'—the grove of Arkola—and in quite a different style of country to those described, I may as well give you an account of the day's proceedings.

"It is a long time ago, but I remember the whole scene as vividly as if it were but a year since. I was only a lad then, and was attached to a regiment at

Ahmednuggur, and had just passed my drill, after an Indian experience extending to four months, so was still in my early griffinage. During my sojourn with a kind old friend, after my arrival in Bombay, I had, by his advice, bought out of the dealer's stables, a little bay galloway, which, though slight, was up to my light weight, and turned out a good jumper, and active across country. It was the first beast I could ever properly call my own—for a pony of my father's, which had the honour of carrying others of my brethren as well as myself, could hardly be deemed such—and was consequently a great pet, and object of unbounded interest. I believe I used to spend about half my day in the stable in watching him, and a good deal of the remaining portion was occupied in riding him. However, my attentions insured his getting his full feed of corn each day, without any cribbing; and so he was benefited by my company.

“Shortly before the hunting meet, I had made another addition to my stud, in the shape of a diminutive tattoo, which had cost me the magnificent sum of twenty rupees, or two pounds sterling. This noble quadruped was destined to carry me out shooting on the days I was unable to hunt ‘Mab,’ and act as a sort of general assistant to that animal. I remember with what delight and gratification I saw my stud start for Arkola one morning across the parade ground, on which I was then engaged at my morning duties.

“A day or two afterwards I accomplished the forty miles to Arkola, on horses borrowed or hired, and there found assembled a party which by dinner-time amounted to about a dozen, some of whom had come all the way from Bombay, with fine studs of horses.

“Most of them were experienced hunters, and I the only one who had never seen a wild pig killed. I had, of course, heard of ‘pig-sticking,’ but had a very indistinct notion as to how it was managed, or how my spear was to be handled.

“The date grove—so called from the numerous date trees—was the place it was determined to beat in the first instance, as it was known to be full of pig; and towards this, accordingly, we all wended our way, soon after an early breakfast on the following morning.

“It was during the monsoon, so everything was pleasant, and fresh, and green, and the streams and nullahs running with water. The celebrated jungle we were going to beat was intersected by one of these streams, along the banks of which it extended for about a mile, with a varying and irregular width, nowhere, however, exceeding, I should think, three or four hundred yards. It was in the plain, and the ground around in the immediate vicinity was composed of cultivated land, with the monsoon crops now springing up. For a short distance on all sides extended the open country, and the stream I have mentioned flowed down a strath-like little valley,

between ranges of low, stony, sloping hills, which joined the plain not far off. Another stream took its course down a similar valley, near the village of Arkola. These hills, which were covered with loose stones, were offshoots or spurs of the higher range, distant about three miles away ; and towards these last the pig would make, if driven out of the grove.

“The rolling stones of the Deccan hills form queer riding ground to the novice ; and at first I was a little astonished at its nature, so different to anything I had seen in England. But custom soon habituates one. It is, though, ugly ground for horses, for their legs get terribly cut about, and an old Deccan hunter’s battered understandings look as if they had been gashed all over. I need hardly say a fall on such ground is far from desirable.

“There was a little peasant steading most conveniently situated not far from the end of the jungle, at the hill end of it, and to this we betook ourselves, so as to be concealed from any pig breaking up the nullah. It consisted of a well, huts, stacks, and a group of trees, and was surrounded by a hedge of thorns, and altogether formed a position large enough to screen the whole party.

“By Jove ! how excited I was as the beaters commenced at the further end, or that furthest from the hills ! and the feeling seemed contagious among both men and horses. Even the old sportsmen were ner-

vously anxious, and unable to disguise it, even had they cared to do so. We had men on the look out in different directions, and every now and then the wave of a small flag in some tree in or close to the jungle announced the progress of pig, and kept our excitement alive. The confused noise of the beaters had hitherto been softened by the distance into a sort of blended jumble of sounds, from which came, as it were, occasional raps of noise, vocal and instrumental. But as the line advanced, and the different distinctive notes of tom-toms and other instruments, though mingled with human voices, became separately audible, the excitement increased. Presently a pig was seen in the outskirts of the end of the jungle, and it was quickly followed by others. They listened awhile, and then dashed away towards the hills up the bank of the nullah.

“When they had got well ahead, the old sportsman under whose direction we all were, but who did not intend himself to ride, gave the word, and away we went. I know that I galloped off howling and spurring like a madman with the excitement, and I was not altogether alone in letting off the steam in that manner.

“The sounder had got a good start, and made the best of it; and by dodging about the nullah and its tributary watercourses, held their own till the leading horsemen overtook them a little beyond the opening of the valley through which the stream wound its course.

A general scattering here ensued, and the pigs, no longer acting in concert, took each its own line as taste or the exigencies of the moment dictated. I remember I passed several of small size, and was greatly tempted to try and get a dig at them, but being under the impression that all should 'follow my leader,' who I presumed to be in pursuit of the largest boar, I left them unscathed.

"I soon came upon one pig lying dead, and my special friend, a young fellow of some three years' Indian experience, standing beside it.

"It turned out, however, that there were no large boars with the sounder, and, I think, only one more was added to the list of killed. After this, we returned towards the hiding place; and when the scattered members of the party had assembled, the beat recommenced, for the men had been stopped by signal when the hunters gave chase.

"It was known that those we had pursued were but a very small instalment of all the pig the jungle held; but we were hardly prepared to see such a number as broke after a considerable interval of anxious suspense. A long line of pig of all sizes, but with one monster in the centre as big as a donkey, greeted our enraptured sight, and streamed away in the same direction as that taken by the first lot. I don't think I have ever since seen so many pig collected together.

"The excitement before they broke was great, for we

knew that they were assembling at the extremity of the jungle in unusually large numbers ; but the reality exceeded our greatest expectations, and many were the exclamations of astonishment as they filed past.

“The old donkey was naturally an object of much interest and speculative regard as to who should become the happy possessor of his tushes ; but he was not, I regret to say, on that occasion, brought to bag.

“Our chief would not allow us to ride till they had made a good offing. When the sounder broke up, pig seemed to be running in every direction, making it extremely difficult to stick to one, and, I doubt not, more than one was exchanged. Somehow, the whacker himself had managed to secrete his unwieldy carcase among the nullahs, and eluded all but one of the sportsmen, who himself, however, eventually lost sight of it. With so many, crossing and recrossing, the attention was constantly distracted from the hunted pig, till it was well separated. Thus the party broke up into several detachments, each after its own boar. I stuck to one nice fellow, in company with three or four others, and he led us into the small stony hills I have described, after having given us a good rattle about among the nullahs.

“I was outpaced by the crack horses with whom I was contending, but managed to be close up, when, after a good set-to, one of my companions obtained the spear, and the boar commenced a sort of running fight.

I soon got a chance, and made a vigorous thrust which, to my astonishment, missed ; for it seemed so easy a thing to spear a large object like a boar, that I hardly thought it possible. However, there it was, a 'palpable miss.' Somebody else now got at him, and brought him regularly to bay as I wheeled round and came opposite. I confess I felt just a little anxious after I found missing so easy, and visions of poor 'Mab' with entrails trailing, and of a small party with a boar diligently digging at his prostrate person, suggested themselves. Some one, however, shouted, 'Go at him, youngster !' so at him I went, and this time with somewhat more success. Not to be out-done, as I went at *him*, he came at *me*, and charged in a most determined manner. I caught him in the head, and with so much force, owing to the impetus of the onset, that I was a little shaken in my seat, and half expected to see the pig drop dead with the spear in his brain. But boars' skulls are not so brittle ; and, indeed, he seemed little the worse of my thrust, which, though, was sufficient to keep him away, and he was soon after polished off between us.

"That was the first pig I ever dipped steel into, and I felt elated at fleshing my maiden spear, though I had yet to learn the triumphant delight and rapture of taking a first one. I examined the fallen enemy with feelings of great interest and gratification, but the departure of my companions in search of fresh sport

warned me that I must, for the time, conclude my inspection.

“We rode to the top of one of the hills to see if any other pig were in sight in the vicinity ; and, from its summit, saw below us, on the other side, a solitary horseman sharply engaged with another pig. So we galloped off to his assistance, and not too soon. Man and horse were both dead beat, and, fortunately, the pig was in nearly the same state.

When we came on to the scene the boar was under the horse, and ripping at him right and left. The horse was so pumped as to be unable to get out of the way, though he managed to kick and fight in self-defence, and the horseman's thrusts seemed weak and fruitless. Doubtless they served to distract the boar's attention, but that was all. On our approach, the hog left his adversary, and, after a brief engagement, was satisfactorily accounted for.

“We had then leisure to examine the horse's injuries. It had escaped with comparatively wonderfully little damage. Several gashes there were, but none in the belly of sufficient depth to let the entrails protrude. He was soon attended to, and ere long was led off to camp. The horseman had kept his eye on the ‘donkey,’ and, despite the attractions of other and closer pig which crossed him, got a spurt after it, but lost it in a wooded nullah. He then viewed and went after the boar, with which we found him ; but being out of con-

dition, and not in very strong health, found himself too done to deal with him satisfactorily, or give a decisive wound.

“I think there were four pig altogether killed out of that sounder; at any rate, six were laid in front of our tents that evening. But one horse at least was *hors-de-combat*, and my particular friend had met with a serious fall in the hills, and was incapacitated from riding for some days.

“Such, gentlemen, was my first day’s hog-hunting, and a very good one too. I fear it is not particularly interesting; but somehow, though I have taken many a first spear since, memory clings about one’s early efforts. It was the best day we had during a ten days’ trip which was spent in hunting and shooting about the hills. I was lucky in taking my initiatory lesson in such good company, for there were some crack men across country among the party.”

“A good day’s sport, certainly,” said Norman; “one rarely gets so good a one in these degenerate days. What with shooting pig and sow-slaying, I verily believe the breed will soon become extinct. It makes me quite unhappy to think of the way in which sows with squeakers at their tails, and even in young, are polished off, as if such were, or could be, legitimate sport. Only fancy the time when we are reduced to the last pig!” And the speaker sighed profoundly as this terrible reflection suggested itself.

"A fine subject for a poem," remarked Hawkes ; "but I say, Mac, old fellow, we are off to bed. I recommend you to move there also, unless you intend sleeping here all night."

"Eh ! ah !" ejaculated Mackenzie, who had for some time past been comfortably snoozing, perhaps just a little affected by the assiduity with which he had practically endeavoured, and successfully, to prove to the others the excellence of his "brew." "Whasht, ole fellow. Ah ! yesh, remember ; very good shtory indeed. Hulloo ! pipsh gone out." The pipe had indeed gone out, but was so habituated to the nook in which it was held, that it appeared to have a cohesive power almost involuntary on the part of the holder, and was still retained in his mouth. Taking it from its berth, Mackenzie gravely apostrophised it. "Not good pife ; what go out for, ole pife ? Dishgushted with conduct. Go—t—bed." Suiting the action to the word, he put the pipe in its case, and continued,— "Think I shall go—t—bed, too. Easht wind very cole ; makesh a man walk unsteady."

And indeed it was apparent that the worthy fellow's legs were in some sort affected, as was evinced by his rather tortuous mode of progression towards the tents. He had not proceeded far before he was heard to exclaim, "Wheresh my tent ?" and to address the same query in the vernacular to a servant then passing, by whom he was safely conducted.

“Hark at old Mac there, inquiring for his tent,” said Stewart, who was an inveterate teller of Scotch anecdotes. “Reminds me of the story of Mr. Macgregor. He had been out to a convivial party one evening, and returned to his lodgings in one of those many-storeyed houses in Edinburgh, just, as he would have himself expressed it, ‘a wee drappie in the ee.’ For a time he wandered about the common stair, making fruitless endeavours to ascertain which was the door of his own room among the many, each of which presented an exact counterpart of its neighbour. At last, he met a girl belonging to the house on the stairs, and addressed her.

“‘Can ye tell me, lassie,’ he asked, ‘where Mr. Macgregor lives?’

“‘Why,’ returned the girl, in astonishment, ‘ye’re Mr. Macgregor yoursell.’

“‘I ken that weel eneuch, ye jade,’ was the rejoinder. ‘But I want to ken where I live.’

“Something like our friend Mac there, and now ‘good-night’ to you all.”

The party in effect broke up; but before retiring to rest, most of them took a parting look at their horses, to ascertain that head and heel ropes were not too tight, the night clothing properly adjusted, and copious beds of hay strewn beneath them. A little consideration of this sort for the animals on whom so much of the hunter’s pleasure depends is their due, and

necessary to prevent an ignorant or indolent syce from robbing them of comfortable rest. A horse will sometimes not lie down at all if his ropes are too tight; and even if he overcomes the fear of being thrown in his efforts, his position may be so contracted and uncomfortable as to disturb him throughout the night. They enjoy an easy position equally with their masters.

Having seen to the welfare of their favourites, the hunters retired, with minds at rest, to enjoy their own slumbers.



CHAPTER IV.

Stable management in India—The Runn of Cutch—Morning costume—Khubber—Hair of the dog—Arrangements for the beat—"Gone away"—A run on the flat—The first kill—The second find—Chances of the chase—A long run and speedy kill—Wild donkeys—Return to camp.

THE day dawned cold and bracing, and several of the hunters were astir before the sun made its appearance over the hills towards Wagur, the eastern division of Cutch.

Clad in garments such as I have described, but in many instances the under and lower clothing consisting only of a simple morning dishabille, one after one sallied from his tent, and almost invariably made his first object a visit to the horses.

Tea was called for ; and the servants, hitherto employed with hands outspread, and cowering over the fire watching the boiling of the kettle, would suddenly become alert and bring the matutinal cups to their masters. The calls for tea were, however, in one or two cases, varied by demands for soda-water ; and it was noticeable that the occupants of the tents whence these latter proceeded were the latest in making their appearance outside.

The syces were, for the most part, hard at work, heaving vigorously with hand and arm against the flanks and quarters of their charges. By this excellent hand-rubbing the coat was thoroughly cleansed, and all loose and superfluous hair removed. Curry-combs, as scrapers, were strictly forbidden by most of the hunters, and the sponge, brush, and hand-glove, of coarse coir or cocoa-nut fibre, completed the dressing.

Good hand-rubbing is one of the secrets of cleanliness and health in the Indian stable; and the unclipped, satin-like coat of a high-caste Arab, even in the field, will well repay the labour lavished on it in this respect. It certainly will not shine with the trustless, superficial brilliance induced by the atmosphere of a hot, unventilated, English stable, such as some grooms love; but cleanly at the roots, the hair will have a far more healthy appearance.

There was a good deal of raising of the hind quarters and kicking out going on under the influence of this operation; but a really good native groom does not much mind this, for the heel-ropes prevent the horse from kicking all round the compass, or shifting his position. Hobbles are, in some cases, necessary, but not often. Taking them altogether, the horses were a very mixed-looking lot. There were many downright screws among them, but not the least chance had these veterans of crediting a first-spear to their masters. Experience and a readi-

ness promptly to avail oneself of every chance, so necessary in the rider, is not less so in the horse. Some knowing old hunters will follow a boar in its twistings and turnings like a dog, even without the aid of hand and spur ; and a few—so accustomed do they become to meet the boar's charge at a reduced pace—will of themselves slacken their speed as they are taken up to meet the onset, and are only with great difficulty afterwards kicked on out of harm's way.*

Mackenzie's great stud-bred mare, with several others, was more adapted for the level country of the "Runn," than one stonier or more hilly and broken ; while some—one or two, indeed, ranking little above tattoos—appeared too small to race over the plain, and would probably have a better chance in an in-and-out broken country, where pace was less requisite. The changes and chances of the chase are, however, proverbially uncertain, and any sudden turn or manœuvre of a pig *may* give the advantage to those far in the rear.

Each horse was subjected to much criticism, as, in small parties, the sportsmen strolled down the pickets ; and opinions were freely offered and canvassed as hands were passed down legs which looked doubtful, or, as in some cases, legs about which there could be no doubt whatever. Little neighs of welcome saluted some of the masters as they approached their own

* See Appendix, Note H.

favourites with a carrot, or piece of sugar cane, or mouthful of lucerne grass, which were given in small quantities, like sugar-plums to children. This was not the time to distend unnecessarily the stomachs of those intended to be that day ridden; indeed, after the morning feed and water, all was cleared away in front, except the mouthful of hay deemed sufficient.

During the intervals of strolling about, saddles and bridles were examined, and a finishing touch given with the file to those spear-heads which required sharpening. These matters disposed of, a few wandered to a neighbouring eminence, and took a look over the country destined to be the scene of the day's sport.

The "Runn" was at the distance of about a mile and a half, and the edge of that sandy waste was as distinctly traceable as the sea-shore. A very little imagination, indeed, could picture it as such, with a succession of promontories and bays, capes and inlets. In the clear morning air all was distinct and defined for many miles. Both to the right and left, hills of considerable, but varying height, rose from the dead level of the desert plain, in some places abruptly, like cliffs, in others more gradually. Here they encroached on the waste itself, there fell back, and were based by the tract of jungle which intervened between them and the desert. Neither was this belt of jungle of regular form or density. Fields and open spaces

could be discerned amidst it, breaking its monotony, and its outline was as defined as the hills, and resembled, like them, all the sinuosities of a coast; indeed, it might well have been taken for a low, jungly shore. A few trees studded it, but they were by no means plentiful. There was, however, in one place a tope, among which were some dates, which jutted out from the mainland, and had the appearance of an island. On the left front, at the distance of a few miles, the Runn was partially covered with water, which, with its adjacent saline incrustations, glittered in the rising sun. Beyond this lay the Dooree jungle, which stretched out boldly into the waste; and groups of trees, more inland, rising above the ever-present line of low wood, indicated the position of Dooree itself, and neighbouring villages.

Looking straight in front, a few dwarf and stunted trees dotted the horizon, marking probably the position of the well-pits Natta had referred to as being in the "bunnee." This is a tract of coarse rank grass, which springs up after the monsoon, and, in irregular patches, forms a sort of outlying tract of vegetation, contrasting with the otherwise extreme sterility of the Runn. The water in the wells or pits scattered throughout its area is generally brackish, and disagreeable both to taste and smell.

A line of low brushwood gave a marked appear-

ance to the waste about a mile or two out, and in this it was expected to find the pig.

Far away, beyond these breaks in the wilderness, could be discerned the blue outlines of Puchum and Khureer, whose highlands showed bold above the line of the horizon.

These oases were the only lands which broke the monotony of that sterile, uninhabited tract between Cutch and the sand-hills of Thurr.

Behind the spectators lay the valley down which they had ridden on the previous evening ; and the bed of the river which intersected it—waterless, save for a few pools—could be traced on the other side of the village and through the green jungle, till it became lost in the Runn.

“Well,” said Melton, after examining the wild landscape, “if we get pig out there they will have but a poor chance. Where will they make for?”

“For the mainland, most probably,” answered Norman. “They do escape, though, sometimes ; for they are deuced cunning, and break away far in front of the line of beaters. You will find some of that scrub and those tufts of high grass, too, afford much thicker cover and be more of obstacles than they appear to be from this. With a fair start, however, with such a party as ours, the pig *must* die.”

“It is not nearly such jolly hunting as inland,” observed Hawkes, whose horse was not so well adapted.

for the plain ; “ but it is a pretty sure find, that’s one comfort in these days of pig scarcity.”

“ That is the best of Cutch ; we have country of every description,” said Mackenzie, the heavy weight. “ Each to his taste ; I confess I prefer the level.”

The party now returned to prepare for breakfast, and they shortly reappeared at that meal, clad in a costume more befitting the hunting-field.

Certainly the appearance of such a party at an English coverside would be received with an amount of interest and observation less flattering than curious. But it was more according to the necessities and demands of an Indian jungle chase than the natty, elaborate get-up of the British fox-hunter, neat and workmanlike though it be ; or the still more elaborate, but very unworkmanlike, apparel of “ Moosoo,” when he rides forth to enjoy “ Le sport.”

Long gaiters of samber skin, boots of the same, or made from common native leather, either black or in its semi-tanned and yellow state, English, Hessian, and butcher boots, and an occasional pair of tops, will all usually be found in a large Indian hunting-field.

Cords, corduroy, and rarely, leather, form the materials of which the breeches are for the most part constructed, though other and various cloths are by no means uncommon. These are surmounted by

jackets often as variable in cut, colour, and material as those who wear them.

A brownish colour called "baubel"—as that most adapted to concealment—is principally in vogue, and the jacket is cut short and fits moderately close, so as to be more convenient in riding, and present less of a hold to thorns and branches.

Breakfast was soon despatched, for Natta was expected early. He had gone out with his assistants, simply to make sure that pig had remained in the Runn and not returned. To track them to the vicinity of their lair would be hazardous, as it might disturb them.

While the hunters were yet lounging about, engaged with the after-breakfast cheroot, and speculating on the prospects of sport, a hum of many voices, relieved by occasional shouts in the village, announced the gathering of men, and shortly afterwards, Natta, attended by three or four of the local puggees, was seen to approach.

The "khubber" was to the effect that pig were certainly lying out, so preparations were made for an immediate start. Horses were saddled; the tiffin basket was hoisted on to the head of a villager, who, with several others, had been squatted basking in the sun for some time past; burnt clay chatty pots, porous coojahs and leathern choguls, were filled with water and given to the men; bottles of beer, too,

wrapped in wet cloths, were handed over to the tender mercies of others, who, to judge by the cautious and half-frightened manner with which they were received, regarded them with some apprehension.

All these measures effected, the horsemen mounted, and the cavalcade was soon in motion. In the outskirts of the village, however, it halted awhile to enable Norman to count the beaters there assembled, and distribute among them common gun wads, with his initials written on each side to prevent deception. These were denominated tickers, tickels, tickut, or such other variety of the word "ticket" as the fancy of the recipient suggested, and were carefully tied up in a corner of the puggree or kumurbund. This completed, the whole party took their way towards the Runn, and again halted at its edge, where a brief consultation took place regarding the arrangements for the beat.

All deferred to the celebrated old shikaree, who knew the country about Lodye, as elsewhere, well; but the local experience of the village men was useful in supplementing his more general knowledge, and he appealed to them to confirm the soundness of his plan of action.

"You see, sahib people," said Natta, who had exchanged his clerical coat for an exceedingly dingy and patched old striped jacket, "we do not know exactly where the pig are lying, but I have seated a sounder

for two days in yonder line of bushes, and I think we shall also find some in the scrub on this side ; so I propose forming the line and beating straight out from this, and then beat the line of bushes."

After a very brief discussion between Norman and one or two others, this plan was agreed to ; and while the beaters were acting on it, and forming into line so as to cover a space of, perhaps, a third of a mile, Mackenzie proposed a little refreshment.

"Let us have just a mouthful of something before we start," he said. "This is a rare drouthy place, and though the wind is cold, the sun is piping hot. I have a peculiar buzzing in my head. I foolishly ate a wing of cold chicken for breakfast, and I suppose it doesn't agree with me. Here, you begarree, bring the bottle."

"I think it is the east wind," said Stewart ; "it dries one up, and makes one feel muddled."

One attributed it to the mutton chops, another to a slice of Manuel's "goose's pup ;" but Mowbray was bold enough to declare that he considered it attributable to "that last glass of punch," quite ignoring its many predecessors.

In the meantime, Mac had been carefully uncorking the bottle ; and pouring a fair allowance into the cup of his hunting-flask, tossed it down with evident relish, and handed the bottle to his neighbour.

"A hair of the dog that bit you," muttered Mow-

bray, as he followed suit. "It's better cold, even, than hot, Mac."

The bottle was passed round, and was soon emptied by the half dozen among whom its contents were shared. It was so much appreciated by one or two that applications were made to Mackenzie for more ; and one went so far as to attempt an investigation of the tiffin basket.

"What are you looking for there, Hawkes?" shouted Mac, as he discovered that individual thus prying into the secrets of the commissariat department.

"Oh, nothing," was the reply, as he turned aside.

"Then, bedad ! as the Irishman said," remarked the caterer, "you'll find it in the bottle where the punch was ;" and he pitched the empty bottle towards him. "But I won't have my tiffin basket examined till the proper hour."

By this time the line of beaters was fully extended ; and as the horsemen rode off, each to take up his allotted position in the line, Norman counselled them to ride the pig directly they were seen, as they might break back and make direct for the mainland.

There was a good deal of mirage out on the waste, cool though the air was ; and at this hour of the day, the filmy, undulating waves of refracted heat floated over the salt-engrained surface with a quivering, tremulous motion. The dim line of bushes in the horizon seemed to be dancing with a gentle, even movement ;

and sheets of water, where water was not, trembled on the verge. A distant spectral tree or two, stunted and almost leafless, appeared to be suspended in the air, and making abortive efforts to kick itself down again to earth. The early morning clearness and decision of outline was entirely wanting, for the ascending sun, now approaching the meridian, had brought its broad glare to bear in full effulgence on the wild landscape, and render dim, blue, and shadowy all its tints and outlines.

On the extreme right of the line was Danvers, with Mackenzie as his nearest neighbour, while to Norman had been allotted the left, and Melton was on his right hand. Natta, on a diminutive tattoo, directed the progress of the line from the centre, about which the Doctor, mounted on a riding camel, viewed the proceedings.

On that open ground, of course, each hunter was plainly in sight of the others. As it was desirable that distant pig should not be disturbed, the advance was conducted without the usual accompaniments of shouts and other noises, instrumental as well as vocal. This, to those accustomed to the "loud-throated" chorus of the ordinary beat, had a peculiar, unexciting effect. The noiseless progress into the waste of so many men seemed strange and weird-like.

For some time nothing was disturbed but an oubara or two—a bird of the bustard species—or a few chin-



ON THE RUNN.—“GONE AWAY.”

[P. 79.]



kara, but when half a mile had been passed over, two or three horsemen about the centre were seen by the rest to dash madly forward, creating great excitement along the whole line. They quickly, however, pulled up, as the object viewed proved to be only a hyæna or wolf.

When near half way to the line of bushes, one or two beaters on the extreme left gave tongue loudly, and Norman rode quickly to the shout. Seeing nothing, but having observed just before a wolf stealing away, and knowing that beaters will sometimes halloo away to anything, he pulled up, without giving a view halloo, or the usual sign of holding his spear aloft. Casting his eyes, however, far ahead, he detected at a considerable distance, a few black objects bobbing up and down among the scrub and grass—now seen, now lost. He at once recognised the well known sterns of pig, and with a hunting yell that resounded far over the waste and startled the flying game, he elongated his raised spear to the utmost extent, and launched his horse in pursuit.

It only required a pressure of the calf to intimate to the old hunter he bestrode, that the time for action had arrived. The pig, if possible, must be overtaken before they reach the distant line of bushes, or they, with so many horsemen in pursuit, might make such a commotion as to disturb those expected to be there couchant. It was a case of cramming the whole way.

The pig had a long start, and were making a good use of it, with their heads set straight for the bushes.

Norman was, of course, the nearest and directly in their rear, but one or two were not very far from him when he started, and would readily avail themselves of any change in the direction of the pigs' flight. His view halloo had set the whole string of horsemen in motion, and each now thundered along on his own line, all converging on the distant chase. The position of Norman was at present undoubtedly the best, but there was a chance for all.

A slight turn the pig now made to the right increased this chance, and some of those, the nearest on that side, who had been looking out for such an opportunity, now sent their horses along. Norman was yet the most advanced, but his horse was slow, and one or two of the others were fast coming abreast with him, though at some little distance on his right flank. Ever and anon as he glanced to the right rear, he became aware that he was being overhauled, till at last two actually drew level, and in point of nearness to the pig were almost on an equality with himself.

"Get along, old horse!" he muttered, as he urged the slow but staunch beast to greater efforts. "Wish I had brought Talisman instead of slow old Gamecock."

The pig were yet a considerable distance in front, and it was anybody's spear. Just then, however, as

luck would have it, moved by some unaccountable impulse, the pig made another slight change in the direction of their flight, but this time it was to the left. Again Norman, as he made a corresponding move, was in front. Ah! could he only now close with them!

They were few in number, and he fixed his eyes on the biggest, which he made out to be an active, lanky, young boar, and evidently in fine condition, and full of running. He now touched the gallant old grey, the hero of many a hard-fought field, with his spurs, and the game beast strained every nerve to close. He was quite aware that rivals, now directly in his rear, were coming up hand over hand, and needed little persuasion to put forth his whole powers.

Bravely he struggled. To every pressure of the calf, or shake of the bridle, he answered nobly; but the old horse, rather short as he was, and admirably adapted for the stiff hunting country among hills, and stones, and nullahs, or one full of enclosures, had not pace enough for the flat.

But his good start had given him such an advantage that he still led, as Norman got close enough to separate the boar and lay into him.

The others, all sows, dashed off to the right, and were allowed to go away unpursued. The boar, however, still hung to the left, and, for a few strides, it almost appeared as if it were going to run clean away.

With sharp, rapid strokes it dashed ahead, and momentarily increased the space separating hunter and hunted. But Norman soon saw it could not last ; it was but a great effort made at the close approach of the pursuer. Soon its pace declined, and it began to drop back, till Norman, lifting his horse, brought him almost within reach. With a slight jink, however, it eluded the spear thrust ; but the wary old horse was not to be thrown off by anything short of a thorough double, and he turned almost with the pig. Twice again did the active boar manage just to avoid being reached as Norman closed ; and the spear was yet undimmed with blood, when Melton, to whom each turn had been an advantage, raced up alongside. For a moment he seemed to hang there, as he got into the wake of the pig, but in the next few strides shot rapidly a-head and ran up within reach. Once more, however, the pig threw off his assailant, and Melton just missed. Game-Cock was pulled to the left, to take advantage of the boar's last double, and, coming round quicker than a couple more who were now his companions, gave his master one more chance. Reaching out to the fullest extent as the pig crossed, Norman made a lunge forward. An inch or two more of distance, and the pig had been yet untouched ; but that inch or two made all the difference, and the spear was withdrawn from a gentle prick which drew the first blood. Satisfied with having obtained *the spear*,

Norman re-settled himself in his seat, and ran up to the now exhausted boar, before any other could cut in. Again he speared, and this time with more effect ; and soon the boar was the centre of a charging host. Spears were lowered and lifted, sometimes in dangerous proximity to men and horses ; but when the sailor came up, and rushed wildly and madly about with his spear in rest, quite incautious as to where it might be buried, the group around the now fighting boar was rapidly thinned.

Before long, however, the sailor managed, to the great relief of the rest, to break his spear in the ground ; and the boar was soon disposed of, fortunately without accident to man or horse.

“Good old horse !” said Norman, as he stood beside Game-Cock, and patted him affectionately. “The pace was too good for you, but the quickness in turning did it after all.”

“I thought I should have had it,” remarked Melton, as he loosened the girths of his panting animal ; “but I couldn’t get round so quickly as you, Norman, though I had much the speed of you.”

“I had such a start of you all,” was the reply. “It was quite a racing young boar ; had it been a heavy old fellow I should in all probability have speared him before you could reach me. It is about a thirty-inch boar,” he continued, as he measured the height from shoulder to foot on his spear.

Old Natta now came up tooling his tattoo along, with arms and legs going like the shafts of a windmill. Altogether, his own spare form, and the very attenuated specimen of pony flesh which he bestrode, presented an appearance so unsubstantial, that he might well have been taken for the spectral rider of the desert.

The pony pulled up with a movement so sudden as almost to jerk old Natta over his head. With an anathema, however, he managed to scramble on to his legs, and approached the group of hunters who, mounted and dismounted, were assembled round the dead boar, discussing the chances of the chase.

"A three-year-old, sahibs," he observed, in a tone partly authoritative, partly inquiring, addressing the company generally. He was interested in the pig's age, from the fact that on it, to some extent, depended the amount of his reward.

"Hardly, Natta, I should think," said Norman. "The tusks don't look like the growth of three years."

"It is one of the small-toothed breed, sahib," the old shikaree quickly rejoined, in a somewhat deprecating manner, and then added, more triumphantly, "Look, too, at the lean hind-quarters and the long feet! He is a 'sooeur,' and, in my judgment, three years old."

"Well, I suppose we must make him so, at any rate. But what is to be done now, Natta?"

Natta proposed to beat the line of bushes near to one end of which the pig had been killed, and where the

men were already collecting. After such slight refreshment as pocket-pistols afforded to the more thirsty, the horsemen mounted and proceeded to the place indicated. Breaking up into two parties, one went on either side of the jungle, moving along with the beaters who were formed in line between them. In this manner beating recommenced.

The fresh pugs of a large sounder, with that of a heavy boar amongst them, were seen and pointed out by Natta on the edge of the jungle. But the beat progressed for a long while, and nothing turned up. Natta was in a state of considerable excitement, and several times averred that they must be quite close, and were probably slowly moving on a-head. But, as time went by, and no pig broke or were viewed, he dismounted from his pony, and carefully examined the many pugs about.

The usual tiffin hour was past, and Mackenzie, with others, had been for some time clamorous for an adjournment. This was now recommended by old Natta, who stated that while the gentlemen were feeding he, with the other puggees, would try and make out what had become of the pig.

The beaters were accordingly stopped, and gathered in knots over their pipes. The girths of the horses were unloosed, bridles removed, and the midday feed of grain given ; while the hunters gathered round the tiffin-basket in the shelter of some high bushes, and

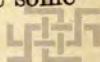
there fell to work on its contents,—a round of hunting beef from Kattiwar, the slaughter of kine being prohibited in Cutch, being a special delicacy. A most enjoyable meal that jungle tiffin usually is, seasoned with hunting conversation and banter !

The time passed pleasantly enough on this occasion, till the reappearance of old Natta warned each to finish his glass of beer or other liquid, and again prepare to take the field.

The shikarees considered that the pig were lying in one or other of several patches—but slightly connected—into which the jungle was broken up ; and suggested that the hunters should be stationed singly or in small parties at different places along the edges of these. They feared that otherwise the pig might move quickly ahead unseen and steal away, and thus get such a start that, even if detected, they might make the hills before they could be overtaken.

Norman had on this occasion to occupy the most advanced post, with Melton and Mowbray as his nearest neighbours. The rest were scattered about, those nearest to the place where tiffin had been disposed of being Stewart and Vivian. Norman was yet in progress to his station, when a distant shouting from the other side, and not far from the place recently quitted, announced to those within hearing that something was astir.

Seeing the hunters who were on his side riding back,



being himself too distant to hear the hallooing, Norman turned his horse, and went at an easy gallop down the edge of the jungle. The two who immediately preceded him, after doing likewise for some time, crossed through an opening to the other side, and he followed in their wake, all the rest being now out of sight either in the jungle or on that side of it. He here came across some of the beaters, who were scattered and running about in a state of great excitement. Some shouted him to go one way, some another ; but what had become of the pig or their pursuers seemed uncertain. However, he dashed through the jungle, and again caught sight of his two neighbours riding beyond, but evidently not with a pig in front.

Before following them, therefore, he took a careful look round, especially in the direction in which some of the beaters had pointed. In the far distance, a long way to the right of the two in front, and about parallel with them, he sighted a black object bobbing up and down, and going right out into the Bunnee.

His friends, he thought, had probably been directed after it, but had failed to hit the right line and missed it. Shouting vigorously, so as to attract the attention of the two or any others within hearing, he settled down to the long stern chase in prospect.

With his eyes fixed on the little black object jumping along midst the scrub, which fortunately was there scant and thin, he every now and then raised his spear

aloft and uttered a shrill yell, to intimate that he was riding with a pig in view. This at last attracted the attention of the two horsemen, and they also wheeled in pursuit.

The pig was evidently making for some of the larger patches of high grass which plentifully sprinkled that part of the Runn ; but the boar—for luckily a fine young boar it eventually proved to be—was yet far from the friendly cover when he became aware that he was pursued. Norman had hitherto been going along at a hand gallop, but keeping the old horse well within himself. He now took a look over his left shoulder, and saw that it was again his old antagonist, Melton, who was nearest, though yet far behind. He was coming along at a pace which would in the end overhaul him, but not, he hoped, till after the boar was run into.

Closer and closer he drew upon the pig, who was rather beaten with his long gallop ; but his start had been so great, that the line of bushes had faded into a dim line on the horizon as Norman approached, and had the gratification of perceiving that it was a boar. His horse, though slow, was of unparalleled stoutness, and had plenty left in him, when the flagging pig was neared. It was one of the chances of the hunting-field, that the horseman most unfavourably placed at the start, should now be doing all the riding of a pig, with but a very slender chance for any other.

Before closing, Norman took a slight pull on his horse, for he thought he had time to manage the affair as he chose. With a touch of his spur he then let him go, and dashed suddenly up to the blown pig. But it was young and active ; and, though the attempt might have proved successful with a weighty old patriarch, it was not so with him. The boar turned sharply, without giving an opportunity of spearing. With full command of the situation, Norman next tried another favourite and very telling manœuvre. He brought his horse round in a wide circuit ; and, as the pig resumed its original direction, instead of closing in behind, he rode diagonally, as it were, at its head, or to cut it off. There was a vicious glance at the rider, a sudden slackening of pace, a partial turn, and the game young boar came fully round with a surly grunt or two, and charged home with all the pluck and impetuosity of its kind.

This was what Norman expected, and for which he was quite prepared as he recognised the well-known premonitory symptoms. With his horse well in hand, and holding his spear so as to give it free, loose play, not fixed in rest, he eased Game-Cock off to the left as the boar came on ; and when it arrived almost under the stirrup, and made as if to spring at his thigh, he drove the spear over the boar's head deep into the back. As he shot past to the left of the beast, who reeled from the blow, he was able to withdraw his

spear unbroken, for the bamboo was one tough, supple, and well-prepared.

By the time Norman had wheeled his horse to bring him again into action, he saw it was nearly all up with the boar, who was staggering slowly on. He rode up alongside, and the pig rolled over as he again speared it. Melton closely followed by Mowbray now arrived on the scene, and a prod from the former, as the pig lay gasping on the ground, closed the action.

It appeared that neither of the new arrivals had seen anything of the rest of the party after being first hallooed away ; and it was only Norman's howls which had directed them to the line of the pig just killed, they having failed to hit it from the uncertain directions of the excited beaters.

After letting the horses recover wind, the three retraced their steps towards the line of bushes, now dim in the distance. The sun was getting low ; so, after quietly walking for some time, they slowly trotted on, keeping a wary look-out around in case of any other pig taking it into his head to make a flying excursion out into the Bunnee ; but none followed the example of the enterprising young boar.

About half way back, however, Norman, who from habit, frequently cast his eyes on the ground to observe the marks of animals, pulled up with a sudden exclamation, and, jumping off his horse, proceeded to inspect a hoof-print.

It was the pug of that singular animal,* the wild donkey of the Runn, which roams at will over that barren wilderness, and but rarely approaches the haunts of men on the mainland. Powerful and fleet of foot, it is generally supposed to be invincible with horse and spear, though there are records of its having been so slain.

"A Runn donkey's pug, and fresh, too!" ejaculated Norman. "I believe he must have been here last night. What a chance we might have had!"

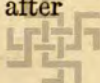
"More likely to kill our horses than the donkey," said Melton. "Horseflesh is too valuable now-a-days for such experiments. Fancy finding yourself and horse dead beat, twenty miles out in the Runn, without a bush for shelter, and about that distance from the nearest water, and then seeing the donkey kicking his heels in the air in disdain as he cantered away! No, thank you; I prefer running within a decent distance of the mainland."

"I should though so like to see if it could be done," remarked Norman, as he looked affectionately at his stout old horse, and wondered if it was in him."

"Don't ask me to join you, that's all," said Melton. "It seems to me that it would be but an ass's errand—no offence to you."

"It might—it might, in more senses than one. However, we must be getting on." But even after

* See Appendix, Note I.



Norman had remounted, he mechanically followed the pug for a short distance, drawing lines behind each print—after the manner of puggees—with the butt end of his spear. But the trail turned to the right, and leaving it, he, with the others, again trotted on, and shortly afterwards, met one of the shikarees and some men who were directed to the place where the boar lay dead.

Ere long they passed through the line of bushes, and seeing several of the hunters riding quietly towards home, cantered on and joined them. From these they learnt that a large sounder, containing one whacking boar, had broken back down the jungle strip, but only one or two of those nearest had got well away after them. The big one managed to elude all, but a young boar was accounted for, and was the only one killed out of the sounder besides that of Norman's, which alone had taken an independent line into the Bunnee. The spear had fallen to Stewart after a bit of a tussle. As Natta could not calculate on any more pig being found, and as evening was drawing on, the party proceeded towards camp, which was reached without any other game being seen. Three pig were considered a good day's sport; though, with the luck of so many lying out, it might easily have been better on that simple riding-ground.

It had not been by any means a trying day for most of the horses, but yet comfortable flannel bandages for

their legs were in demand that evening ; a measure which, if not absolutely requisite, was still desirable as a precautionary one.

The first pig had already been brought into camp, and furnished chops, which, under the name of pork "muttony chops,"* formed an important addition to the dinner fare.

* See Appendix, Note J.



CHAPTER V.

Cutting up the game—Natta's pét—Classification of pig according to appearance—The sailor's song—A scene in the Himalayas—The Guddees and their country—A single-handed affair with a bear—A turn up with a bear in the Ghauts—A man boned—A set-to with a tiger—Rajpootana.

NORMAN's good fortune was naturally a subject of remark as the day's battles were fought o'er again at dinner; but there was little or no envy, and each hoped his turn would come with more or less of success.

After dinner a brew of what now and afterwards went by the name of "East Wind," in reference to previous allusions, was compounded by its godfather with all the nicety and discrimination for which he was celebrated, and the party adjourned to the camp-fire outside.

The moon was shining with the effulgent brightness of the tropical winter night, and by its light and that of several torches, an important operation was being carried on at some distance to the leeward of the camp.

This was the dismemberment of the dead pigs pre-

vious to distribution among such of the followers and villagers as entertained no compunctious visitings on the subject of pork as an article of food.

The heads and other tit-bits were reserved for the hunters themselves ; one of the former for the purpose of being soured for the use of the camp, and the others to be sent into Bhooj, the jaw bones containing the tusks—prize of the first-spear—being previously cut out.

The cutting up was conducted amid much noise and clamour, and apparently to the exceeding gratification of a large number of on-lookers.

Already the smell of roasting meat could be distinguished pervading the camp ; for old Natta and his allies had early appropriated sufficient to supply them with a good supper. A sufficiency in this case meaning, to each man, a quantity about equal to what would satisfy three ordinary Englishmen. Wonderful indeed was the receptive power and capacity of expansion of that pinched, tucked up, and wizened article, which Natta was in the habit of affectionately referring to as his pêt (stomach.)

With a view to the additional enjoyment of the shikarees, Norman had issued a bottle of a potent spirit, a gross libel on the name of brandy.

Many of the hunters strolled down to watch the proceedings with cheroot in mouth—a necessary precaution, for the partly-dissected carcass of a dead boar

is anything but agreeable to those acute of nostril. A very short sojourn satisfied them, and they were all shortly collected round the log-fire.

"I observed to-day, Norman," said Mowbray, "that old Natta referred to your first boar particularly as a soor (pig), and then pointed out the peculiarities of its form. Did he mean anything particular?"

"‘Sooeur,’ not ‘soor,’ was the word he used," Norman replied. "I don't know if any of you fellows ever heard any other shikarees do so; but Natta classes pig as of four different kinds."

"Well, I have often observed a great variety of shape, size, and colour in pig," replied Mowbray.

"In length of snout and size of foot, also," said Stewart.

"I suppose pig vary like other creatures," Mackenzie sagaciously remarked. "All are not made to order in one mould. You cannot keep actual breeds separate as among domestic pigs."

"True enough," answered Norman; "but yet there are marked distinctions between different pig. Perhaps we should apply some Darwinian theory of natural selection; only by that, not impossibly, we might trace them to porcupines. However, I was talking to Natta one day about the difference we speak of, and he told me he recognised four varieties."

"What are they; and their distinguishing marks?" asked Vivian.

"First," replied Norman, "there is the 'Meilier.' These are big-bodied, have big feet and tusks, and are tolerably plucky. Second comes the 'Mooghun.' They are heavy in front, but with small hind-quarters. Their feet and tusks are of medium size, and they fight well. Third on the list is the 'Kookunnee.' They are smaller than either of the two first, in size of body, teeth, and feet, and they are the least plucky of the four varieties. Fourth, we have the 'Sooeur.' They are the smallest in size. Their feet are distinguished for their length. The tusks are of fair size, with a large portion within the jaw, and they are the pluckiest fighters of all."

"And how does he apportion the colours?" asked Stewart. "Some old boars are grey as badgers, and some deep, blue black. Others, again, are quite light, or with a yellowish tinge, or of a mud colour."

"He didn't tell me how he classified the colour," was the reply; "but it is, as you say, just as distinctive a feature as the shape."

"I suppose," said Mackenzie, "old Natta observed a difference in appearance, and so attempted to class them. I shouldn't wonder if he invented the names himself. Now, whose turn is it to give an anecdote? Smart," he continued, addressing the sailor, "you distinguished yourself greatly to-day. Can't you give

us a hunting experience, or 'a yarn,' I suppose I should call it?"

"Why, no," replied the jolly sailor, "though I did distinguish myself to-day, and had a good dig at old mother earth, after, as you say, nearly making meat of some of you, I must confess my hunting has hitherto been decidedly limited. Will a song do instead of a story?"

"By all means," answered Mackenzie, and the proposal being received with acclamation, the sailor said,—

"Norman's lamentations on the subject of the spearing of sows and diminution of pig last night put the idea into my head, so I have written some new words to an old song which I will give you."

Being a bit of a rhymist, Smart had that morning cudgelled his brains till he produced the following parody, which he called,—

"NORMAN'S LAMENT; OR, THE ANTI-SOW-KILLER'S ADDRESS.

" 'Tis the last boar of the woods
 Left sulking alone;
 All his female companions
 Are speared and are gone.
 Not a pig of his kindred,
 No squeaker is nigh,
 To grow such fine tushes
 Or cock such an eye.
 "I'll not leave thee, then, lone one,
 Life's hazards to stem;
 Since thy wives are all sleeping,
 Go, sleep thou with them.



Thus, kindly, I spear thee,—
To the dust bring thy head,
For the mates of thy boarhood
Are speared and are dead.

“Ah! soon may I follow,
When hunters decay,
And the family circles
Of pig die away ;
When sows are all speared,
And squeakers are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
The jungles alone?”

This was received with much applause. Indeed, old Natta was astonished at the uproar, as he sat gnawing away at a piece of juicy pork. When this had subsided, and Smart was congratulated and elevated to the situation of Poet Laureate to the hunt, Mackenzie spoke.

“Anecdotes and songs and conversation about pig are delightful and most interesting ; but a little occasional change in our anecdotal diet might not be altogether disagreeable, perhaps. The *toujours perdrix* palls at last, you know. Here we have been hunting pig, eating pig, thinking pig, talking pig, singing pig, and, I verily believe, dreaming pig. Couldn't some one manage to break the monotony of the subject. You, Melton, give us a Himalayan experience for a change.”

“Very good,” was the reply. “Let me see—I'll tell you of an affair I had with a bear once. I have

often been charged home, but this was decidedly the closest shave I ever had of being boned.

“Ah, you poor ducks,* how I pity you! I daresay you think your Mahableshtar and your petty hills of four thousand or five thousand feet or so, ‘some,’ as the Yankees say. But ah! you should see the glories of the Himalayas, beside which your Ghauts are but molehills.

“It was in the middle of the monsoon, towards the end of July, a season at which it is not usual to travel in those mountain districts which feel its influence. But I was up there on leave, and obliged to take advantage of my opportunity, and disregard the greater danger attending hill-climbing when the higher snow is breaking and broken up, the torrents in full force, and the mountains saturated with moisture.

“I had been staying at Hooshiarpore, and thence paid a visit to the pretty small hill-station of Dhurm-sala, near Kangra. This was my starting-point for the mountain trip; and, on the 28th July, I crossed the Indran pass, with the object of penetrating the rarely-visited Burnaor district, whence spring the sources of the Ravee, there called Rewa.

“After staying in a cave for two or three days at the foot of the pass, but high above the region of trees, detained there by the incessant rain, I took

* A name by which Bombay officers are distinguished in contradistinction to Bengalese, usually called “Qui-hys.”

a favourable opportunity and made good the ascent. I had with me perhaps about a dozen mountain-men belonging to a tribe of hill Rajpoots, called Guddees,*—for of course everything I had was obliged to be carried by cooleys, the path being utterly impracticable for any beast of burden.



GUDDEES. A TRIBE OF HILL-MEN, INHABITING BURNAOR, IN THE HIMALAYAS.

“A very active, good-looking and interesting race they are in general, and the women are very pretty, with, oh! such legs and ancles. These are liberally displayed by the dress worn by both sexes—a sort of

* See Appendix N, Note K.

long, loose tunic, of woollen manufacture, gathered in at the waist, and descending to the knee or lower, at the option of the wearer. It is allowed to hang over the waist-girdle in baggy folds, in which they carry various marching necessities. But if deemed desirable, these folds can be dispensed with, and the garment elongated so as to cover more of the legs. Free and facile play of the limbs is, however, necessary in that mountain-climbing. The men are jolly, lively fellows enough, but somewhat dirty, and of no account as shikarees. More than the body-garment, even, their head-dress is distinguished for its peculiarity of shape, being also made of some woollen stuff, which is so arranged as to form a peak behind, such as I have never seen elsewhere. They—the men, I mean—wear their hair, too, in three or four long uncut locks on each side, and pride themselves on the length of these tresses, just as English ladies would do.

“I had a most difficult journey altogether ; for the snow in the clefts of the mountains, which formed the usual road, was in many parts broken up, and we were obliged to find our way by the sides of the ravines, very often with but a bare footing, step after step being made with the greatest caution. In several instances we had to ascend the bare face of sloping rocks, in some parts precipitous.

“Sometimes a pine stem, felled on the brink, was the only bridge over a roaring torrent ; at other places,

a couple of long poles would be laid across, parallel to each other, and on these loose slabs of wood be placed crossways, with many and extensive intervals, through which the water might be seen foaming and flashing far below. Over the Ravee itself, in what I may, for distinction's sake, call the more civilized portion of the valley, rope bridges were to be found.

"I soon found it was impossible to get on with my shoes, so I procured a pair of foot-coverings made of twisted goat's-hair, the roughness of which, when bound on, gave a fine biting grip, and at the same time allowed easy play to the foot. The men used a sort of sandal, formed of twisted straw, which they constructed in a few minutes and threw away when worn out and the day's journey was over.

"I had with me a small rowtie, though I lived a good deal in caves in the upper parts of the mountains, and the rest of my kit was reduced to the most extreme limits : a pewter mug, cup and saucer, two or three plates, and a knife, fork, and spoon, may seem to some an unnecessarily limited supply of table necessities ; but roughing it was essential on that trip, and I have always found 'that the less you have, the less you want.'

"I wish I could give you fellows an idea of the glorious scenery of that pass. All the lower slopes of the mountains, with a southern exposure towards Dhurmsala, were either bare spurs of the most vivid

green, varied with the colours of the rocks, or clothed with magnificent forests of oaks and rhododendrons. Those, again, to the north were clad in the more sombre-coloured garments of pine, cedar, and fir. Above the region of trees, where the widowed mountain rose desolate and grand till it culminated in peaks, precipices, and glaciers, the great seams and clefts of the range were mostly filled with snow, hiding the torrents which, somewhat lower, broke away and flashed roaring down the mountain. These gorges, however, were but mere intersections of the great upland slopes, which were strewn with huge boulders of granite—the *débris* from the peaks and precipices above—among which the most beautiful flowers, ferns, lichens, and grasses, in infinite variety, and including many much prized in England, gemmed the rich verdure, and mingled with masses of bracken and wild rhubarb, ‘wasting their sweetness on the desert air.’ Above all, the clouds beat up against the peaks, and were held there in check by the snow.

“It is only those who have seen such who can fully appreciate the ruggedness, the desolate, secluded wildness and grandeur, of the lone mountain scenery, unstained, uncontaminated by the feeble efforts of man, and showing in its vast and solitary glory the all-powerful impress of the hand of Nature in her sternest mood. No sound to break the silence save the dull murmur of some distant cascade, the wild

cry of the moonal, some call from the forests below, or the occasional crash of a fallen mass of rock.

“Such is the great spur of the Himalayas which separates the Burnaor valley from the Punjaub. In front, and far beyond, towers in unsullied grandeur, to the height of five-and-twenty thousand feet the lofty cone of ‘Manimäis,’ and other peaks of the range of perpetual snow, the accumulations of a thousand centuries.

“Away behind lie the lower hills of the Kohistan, connecting the mountains with the great Punjaub plain,—the latter nearly hidden from view in the hazy mist of heat and distance.

“Dwarfed into insignificance, and from that height undiscernible as elevations of considerable altitude, these hills are themselves full of a soft and gentle beauty, but one naturally wanting in the sublimity of the loftier Himalêh, or, to call the range by its more ancient and classical name, Imaus or Himodhi—the latter meaning the receptacle of snow.

“I am somewhat prolix over my description, but these mountain-memories almost stir me into eloquence. The very thought of them acts like their own pure, fresh air, and sends a thrill of gladness through the pulses. It is something to feel that one *has* visited such scenes and derived an exquisite pleasure from contemplating them. A man who has done so may

with truth say, 'I would that my tongue could utter all the thoughts that arise in me.' However, I must hurry on to my story, and not weary you with digressive remarks.

"It was not the right season for shikaring in that part of the world, but I tried to combine a little sport with the enjoyment I derived from the scenery and the real difficulties of my travels. When staying in the caves on the Punjaub side of the mountains, I got a few of those glorious birds, the 'moonal,' or blue pheasant, which at this season resorts to the desolate mountain slopes above the line which marks the region of trees. I had obtained these by stalking, and very difficult work it was. When once over the pass and again in contact with the habitations of men, I tried several times for bears, but without success. I believe myself that those animals were not at this season to be driven, having deserted the open forest and taken to caves, whence they defied persecution.

"However, the country was quite new to me, and the men, being but poor shikarees, were unable to show any bears, though doubtless many were about.

"I had managed to bag a goorul, or Himalayan chamois, and knocked over three mountain goats, called, I believe, 'burrel,' all of which had fallen over precipices, when one evening I found myself encamped at a little village far up the mountains and the highest inhabited spot near a pass by which I proposed to

recross the range. Since I had been in the valley—or more properly speaking, gorge of the Ravee—I had been but very little troubled with the rain, which was incessant on the other side, and had been able to get along without a certainty of being continually wet through.

“I was smoking a cheroot that evening after my exceedingly frugal meal, and being clad in a warm great-coat, was enjoying the scenery and freshness of the mountain air outside my tent, when my attention was attracted to a black object scuttling along high up on the slope of the mountain opposite. My glass soon showed me that my impressions were correct, and that it was a bear. It was far too distant, and the hour too late, to think of my then attempting a closer acquaintance; but I pointed it out to the man who, in default of a better, did duty as my shikaree, and he informed the head man of the little mountain village. This functionary—a queer little fellow, quite destitute of the usual good looks of his race—told me he thought he could show me either that bear or some other on the following morning, and I went to bed impressed with the confidence of his statement.

“I slept at night, not with the perturbed, unsatisfactory sleep of the plains, but with the entire, vigorous, refreshing sleep of the mountains, and awoke, as might be expected in that splendid climate and unluxurious mode of life, with the physique in

proper order and the nerves soundly braced, a circumstance which that day proved of service. Had the villagers not been able to bring me any khubber of game it was my intention that day to continue my march, for I was running short of money. My tea had for some days been exhausted, and I had only a very small quantity of brandy left, though I confined myself to one hot jorum after dinner—the only alcoholic liquid I drank in the course of the twenty-four hours. While at breakfast, some men came in to say that they had marked down a bear into a wooded glen, and that they believed it to be the same I had seen on the preceding evening.

“The order for the march was in consequence delayed, and I sallied forth with my well-tried old double gun and single rifle and a borrowed double rifle I also had with me. About a mile from the village was a little glen, opening on to the ravine whose stream lower down joined that forming the mountain gorge, up which my route lay. The glen was covered with long grass and masses of rock, while numerous pines and here and there patches of brushwood adorned its recesses. At the distance of a day's journey from the next village I was obliged, of course, to be content with the male population of that near which I was pitched as beaters, and these were but few. However, I took my station near the opening of the little glen, and they beat down towards me.

“Not a thing so large as a bear could have escaped without being seen somewhere, though the grass and weeds were very high, and I was beginning to think it was the same disappointing story over again,—for the men had come even with the place where I was stationed,—when a cry from a single man on the other side of the glen, but lower down, attracted my attention.

“On going to him I found that he had hit on the trail of the bear through the long grass. In most shikaring countries this would have been looked for in the first instance, for it was so broad and palpable as to be discoverable blindfold. It was evidently a path in frequent use, and we traced it up to a mass of overturned rocks, which formed a prominent object in the middle of the glen. I now got a little higher up than this, and stood prepared to blaze into anything breaking, while the men collected near me and howled and threw stones down on to the rocks, but without effect. I had myself seen the trail, and thinking some of the pugs which led to the spot were fresh, believed the beast was probably well-hidden in some cave, secure from the stones. Fireworks I had none; so how to get Bruin out was the question. At last one man went down to the rocks, protected by me, and endeavoured to ascertain the nature of the stronghold.

“He found that there was an opening into the interior, which was evidently the usual mode of ingress

and egress of its occupant, and he averred that he had seen the black body of the bear itself inside. This entrance was below, between two rocks. Above was another opening, but not so large, and we decided that if I went to this and blazed into it—at the bear, of course, if visible—he would bolt by the other, which I commanded from above at the distance of a few yards. Accordingly, with my old double smooth-bore—the best for such close quarters—in hand, and accompanied in the rear by the spare-gun-bearers and the little head-man, I descended to the place. Stepping on to a flat rock, I peered down into the dark aperture. There was the bear unmistakably curled up, and quite heedless, in his entrenched position, of the hubbub outside. I could make out a portion of his black fur even in the shade of his retreat; but whether it was his head or his tail which was nearest to me and visible, I could not determine. However, I aimed at the dark mass within from the distance of a few feet, and blazed my right barrel into it,—

‘And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought *beneath* the earth
And fiends in upper air.’

“Excuse the quotation, but I put it down in my journal as appropriate. In fact, the row which followed my shot was fearful. ‘Gad! the whole place seemed convulsed with sound, and had the rocks split



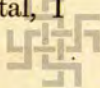
AT CLOSE QUARTERS WITH BRUIN.

[P. 114]

asunder I don't think I should have been very much astonished; but there was precious little time for consideration. I stepped back to be prepared, my guddees yelling for me to come away, as they bolted up the glen. The little head-man stuck to me, though he, too, pulled at my coat to retreat. Such, however, was quite out of the question. It was not the first time I had faced an angry bear at close quarters, though not so close as on this occasion, and I knew cutting for it was useless, even had I desired to skedaddle.

“Before the smoke cleared, a whopping bear scrambled out of the upper aperture, instead of by his usual mode of exit, as I anticipated, and came at me, open-mouthed, and growling fearfully. He was almost at the end of my gun as I fired my left barrel into him; indeed, so close, that my plucky little sole-remaining companion hit him over the head with his mountain staff. I thought I felt his breath, but that may have been my imagination. It was, of course, impossible for a man keeping his head to miss at such close quarters, and my bullet happily took instant and fatal effect. The bear, on receiving it, fell back on to the rock, his gruntings being exchanged for groans.

“I now sprang back and got hold of another gun, with which I treated the beast to a third pill as a quietus, though my previous one had effectually done for him. Had it not proved immediately mortal, I should certainly have come to grief.



“My men now joined us, and the guddee, shikaree and guide, embraced me in a transport of excitement, half crying and half laughing at the imminence of the danger, and its abrupt termination, for the whole affair did not occupy thirty seconds. We found that my first bullet had struck the bear about the ribs, and my second had entered the chest, generally a deadly wound with bears. There was much rejoicing in the little mountain village as the bear, a very large and handsome male, was brought in, and the pretty mountain damsels, some of whose cheeks were fair enough to show the red, and to whom such sport, as well as Europeans, was a novelty, sang pæans of triumph. There is a Himalayan experience for you.”

Thanks were given, and several wished that the Himalayan range were on their side of India ; for even Bombay “*esprit de Presidency*” could not exalt the Ghauts—wild, rugged, and picturesque though they be—into any comparison with the highest, and, probably, altogether the most beautiful mountain range in the world.

“Well, since bears, *et hoc genus*, have taken the place of boars this evening at my request,” said Mackenzie, “I will relate, as my contribution to the night’s entertainment, an affair with a bear in the Ghauts, which may have some interest, as a man was boned on the occasion, and we were eventually brought almost—though not quite—to as close quarters as

Melton. As there were three of us, however, there was little risk. It is a long jump from one to the other side of India, and I can't pretend that the scenery of the Ghats approaches that of the Himalayas; yet a range of mountains in some parts so abrupt and bold, as to admit of a rock being launched from their summit in the Deccan to their base in the Concan, as I have myself seen done, cannot be devoid of picturesqueness and beauty. Indeed, there is lovely scenery of a wild and rugged nature to be found generally distributed about them, and many hill peaks and rocky summits jut out in the most singular forms. Then the jungles, in many parts, are additionally attractive, as being the haunts of the so-called bison, tigers, bears, panthers, sambar, and smaller fry.

“When I was stationed with my regiment at Poona, I and two others got a month's leave, and made a trip into the hills in search of whatever game we could get. The place at which we met with most success was a village of the name of Mangaum, situated on a knoll between jungle covered hills in the open valley near the sources of the river which flows by Poona, and there we killed six bears, the adventures with one of which I am going to relate.

“Hitherto, the hills on the right side of the valley, down which the stream flowed, had proved the most prolific; but, on this occasion, we were to try our first beat on the left. The wild, active, hill Mahrattas are

capital fellows for viewing and marking down game in their native wilds, indeed, the best, I think, I ever saw. The country about there also, abounding with the peaks and eminences of the spurs which jut into the valley, and between which are finely wooded dells and ravines, render it peculiarly adapted to that mode of finding game.

“A bear was reported to be slumbering in a large tract of jungle between two such spurs as I have mentioned ; and the neck of this valley narrowed till it formed a narrow pass or gap between the higher tops of the hills, rising on either side. At the lower end it opened on the principal and wider valley. It was arranged that the beaters should beat up, while we held different positions on one side nearer the pass. There were, however, several other places by which the bear was just as likely to slip out of the glen, and these it was necessary also to hold. I was stationed in command of a nullah which came down from the upper part of the hills. One of my friends went on to guard the gap itself, and the other was posted about midway between us, but all on the same side of the little valley.

“The beaters worked well as usual there, and the beast, it was said, had been sighted moving in front of them, but no look-outs near me had seen anything of it. Happening, however, to glance to the other side of the nullah I commanded, I saw, somewhat higher up, a

bear standing and quietly listening to the noise far below.

"It had evidently sneaked round and escaped observation. It was about fifty yards off, not near enough to be fired at if a closer shot can be confidently expected ; but, as such was not now the case, I gave it a barrel and knocked it over, and, before it recovered itself, had fired again. It then slipped into the nullah, and I afterwards got a snap shot at it as it went through the bushes to my rear in the direction of my friends.

"My shots had, of course, warned them, and they were on the alert. It made its appearance and was saluted with two or three barrels, which turned it down again into the dell it had first quitted. We caught one more glimpse of it far below, and then lost sight of it.

"The little Mahrattas were, however, soon scuttling along the hill sides, and busy in following it. After a time they marked it down into a patch of jungle right back near the point of junction of the dell with the larger valley. On being apprised of this we made backward tracks along the side of the spur by a path which wound through dense masses of that strongly-scented jungle shrub, with which the hunter of the Deccan Ghauts becomes so familiar. To follow a wounded bear in that country involves sometimes a pretty considerable amount of active exercise ; and it

took us a good hour on this occasion to get back to the main valley. Arrived at the small village where we had left our ponies previous to ascending the hills, and near which the bear was said to be lying, we found that its actual whereabouts was a matter of some uncertainty. However, we continued our walk in the direction it was supposed to have taken, and the look-outs darted about through the jungle, and along the slopes, in hopes of catching a glimpse, for it was said to have again moved.

“We had separated, though two of us were pretty close together, when a terrible row down in the jungle put us on the *qui vive*. Along with an angry bear’s grunting growl, however, we soon distinguished a man’s cries for help, and the excited shouts of his brethren calling on us to go to the rescue. The two of us who were nearest accordingly made our way through the jungle to the spot, and found a man on the ground, a good deal wounded by the bear’s claws, but fortunately unbitten—most probably attributable to a broken jaw, for we afterwards found that one of our bullets at some period of the day had smashed the bear’s upper jaw.

“He was soon tended by his fellows, and taken to the little village not far distant; but before we left him, he told us he had come suddenly on the bear, who charged and knocked him over, and clawed at him, but left on the shouting of the other men in the neigh-

bourhood. When our companion joined us we went in pursuit in the direction indicated, and soon found that the beast had taken to a small thickly-wooded water-course with steep but low banks. On the side of this we got along as quickly as we could, and before we had advanced very far came suddenly upon the beast, who was evidently very severely wounded.

“Directly it saw us on the bank just above it, at us it came, and was knocked back with a volley. The nearest of our party was close upon it, and probably not more than three or four yards distant. It picked itself up and again made an effort to scramble up the low bank, and again was dropped into the nullah by two of those to whom it was then visible. By this time, however, it had had enough, and was settled without much further scrimmaging. It was a large female.”

“And what became of the wounded man?” asked Smart.

“Oh, he came round in time,” was the reply. “Some rupee-plaister acted as an excellent salve to his sores.”

“The being dropped each time it attempted to get out of the nullah,” said Mowbray, “reminds me of a similar performance with the first tiger I ever assisted in slaying.** I was stationed at Nusseerabad in Rajpootana, and went with a friend for a month’s shikar during May into the Boondee jungles, about sixty

** See Appendix, Note L.

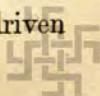
miles distant. Four or five days had passed without our bagging a tiger, though we received khubber of one which got away without our having a chance at it. So we shifted our little camp to a place called Khutkur, to which we rode one morning. I killed a fine buck cheetal on the road, which was all we got; but on our arrival at Khutkur—to which we had sent on men the night before—we found that the same tiger we had missed a day or two previous was marked down, and that mandwas, or resting-places from which to fire, were being built in some neighbouring trees. The mandwa seems to be an institution in that part of the country, for I have shikared elsewhere in Rajpootana without any such construction being attempted, except for sitting up at night.

“The jungle was very thick, and we were posted about sixty or seventy yards apart, both of us commanding a hill in front. From it came a nullah which lay between us, and part of this was fully exposed to fire from my tree. Most of you know the anxious excitement with which one generally has to wait for a tiger when being beaten up; but on this occasion we had no opportunity of exercising that commendable quality—patience. The beaters had been taken round to the other side of the hill, and we had barely established ourselves in the mandwas, and the first shout of the distant line announced that the beat had commenced, when the tiger accepted the notice to quit, and came

galloping over the hill in splendid style as hard as he could go, and roaring as he came on to the utmost of his ability.

“There was no sneaking along, or anything in the slightest degree indecisive about the matter. Apparently quite regardless of any hidden danger in front, he galloped straight on to the position held by my friend. L—— would gladly have let him approach closer, but owing to the thickness of the jungle in front and to his right was afraid of losing sight of him ; so, a favourable opportunity occurring when within about thirty yards, he blazed away sharply right and left. The volley was delivered with such effect that the tiger was knocked clean over into a part of the nullah I have mentioned, and which was commanded from my position, but not so from that of my companion.

“It was about forty yards distant, and as the tiger recovered himself and tried to scramble out of the nullah, I planted a bullet in his shoulder and dropped him back. Again he got up and made an effort to ascend the bank, and again I dropped him with another bullet placed not far from my first, and so effectually that he needed no third, as he never rose from the last shot. After waiting a while we descended our respective trees, and went down into the nullah and found him quite dead. He was a fine full-grown male, with enormous whiskers, and had in his death-agony driven one of his teeth right through his foot.



“Such was the first engagement with a tiger at which I was ever present.”

“And a clean, neatly-executed piece of sport, too,” was Mackenzie’s complimentary rejoinder.

“You have seen a good deal of Rajpootana, Mowbray,” said Melton. “I suppose there are heaps of all sorts of game there.”

“Indeed there are,” was the reply. “In the wilder parts, among the hills and great uninhabited jungles which extend over large areas, tigers, bears, and other game, roam at will unmolested, save for the occasional expeditions of English sportsmen. But even by them several parts have remained unvisited; and as nearly the whole country belongs to native chiefs, and they usually interdict the killing of game by the villagers, wild animals are abundant. Indeed, over wide and desolate tracts of country, villages there are none, nothing but extensive wastes of brown jungle, interspersed with rocky ravines and stony hills, the natural fastnesses of predatory beasts.

“But within the limits of a country extending over something like 480 miles of latitude by 530 of longitude at the extreme points, of course every sort of ground is to be found,—from the Gooroo Sikur, the highest peak of the Aravelly hills, to the low level of the desert towards Scinde and the Punjaub.

“On most of the vast alluvial plains antelope abound in countless herds. The principality of Meywar is

renowned for its lakes, and the whole country is thickly dotted with tanks, the resort of innumerable wild-geese, duck, snipe, and other waterfowl. Quail, partridges, and hares are to be found as elsewhere, and immense flocks of the great sand grouse appear in the cold season in the open sandy plains. Coolen, bustard, oubara, and floriken are each to be met with according to season and locality, and pig abound in many rideable portions of the country.

“The lakes and rivers yield several kinds of excellent fish, including mahseer, murrul, and other edible sorts. In the streams, too, is found a small fish, in shape and spots exactly like a trout to the ignorant, but which is said to belong to the dace tribe. It rises freely to the fly, and affords capital sport. I have killed six or seven dozen of them in a few hours. It is not a bad shikaring country altogether.”**

“I should think not,” said Mackenzie. “It is a sort of country that would suit any sportsman’s complaint, whatever form it took. May I soon visit it! But now to-bed, to dream of such a sporting paradise.”

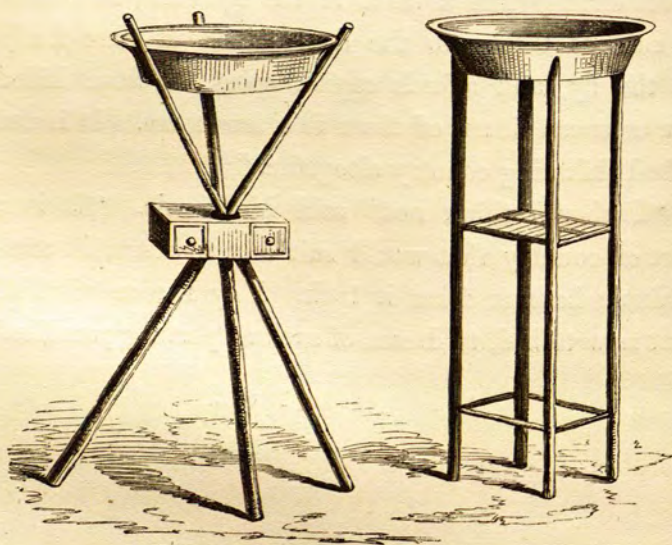
** See Appendix, Note L.



CHAPTER VI.

The rival wash-hand stands—Esprit-de-Presidency—No khubber—Move to Dooree—*En route*—Native ideas on English customs—Tracking pig into the Runn—The run—A running fight—Its conclusion—The Dooree jungle and neighbourhood—Defining drunkenness—The bailie's opinion.

"I SEE your form of wash-hand stand and basin is different to ours," said Stewart to Melton, the Ben-



THE RIVAL WASH-HAND STANDS.

galee, as they lounged about outside on the following



morning. "Is that the common gindee in use on your side?" he asked, as he pointed to the article in question standing outside Melton's tent door.

"Yes," was the reply. "It is the article we commonly use, though we call them 'chilumchees.' Not a bad dodge, is it? I wonder you ducks don't take to it, it is so much more convenient than yours, don't you think so?"

Now there is—or rather was, for much wholesome spirit and emulation has been done away with by "amalgamation"—great "esprit-de-Presidency" in India, leading to considerable rivalry, more especially marked in the case of Bengal and Bombay. And this extended not only to such matters as the organisation and economy of the respective armies, manner and system of horsing guns, and such like, but to concerns of far less importance.

Imbued with such sentiments, it was, of course, altogether impossible for Stewart to admit that anything of Bengal construction could be superior to a similar article, the produce of Bombay. He therefore replied in the negative, without the slightest hesitation.

"No, I'll be hanged if I think so," he said. "The stand doesn't fold up so well, and the gindee itself is——"

"But, my good fellow, look here," interrupted Melton; "observe, we have a place to put things on, and the whole affair closes flat in one piece, without

necessitating the removal of a box, as in yours. Our chilumchee is of brass too, and——”

“If,” said Stewart, in turn interrupting the flow of the other’s eloquence, “if you will only attentively examine our method, I think you will admit its superiority. It is lighter and, moreover, in the drawers of the box can be stowed sponges and other things. The gindee, also, of copper tinned over, is——”

“My dear Stewart, I really must say you ducks are rather given to fancy that the produce of Duckland is in every way superior to that of Bengal. Now do just feel this chilumchee; see how easily it is cleaned——”

“Cleaned!” exclaimed the other, “why it requires regular polishing up daily, and our gindee is rinsed out and at once ready for use.”

“I see there is no convincing you. I daresay now you consider your style of camp-table superior to ours?”

“The camp-table,” repeated Stewart, a little doubtfully; and then, with a due regard of his Presidency’s honour, added, “Why, of course I do. If you’ll show me yours, I’ll prove it.”

As the speaker had never seen a camp-table of the Bengal pattern, and was quite ignorant of the difference existing between the rival articles, this may have been deemed a bold and venturous statement.

“Now isn’t that a far neater and lighter article than

yours?" asked the Bengalee, triumphantly, as he showed the table referred to. "I flatter myself that it is handier in every way than your clumsy contrivance."

"Well, you Qui-hyes think everything you have must be the best, just because it happens to be Bengalee," rejoined Stewart. "I really cannot agree with you. Look at the legs of our table, how nicely they fold; and then the table is so much firmer and heavier. When packed——"

"Heavier!" answered the Qui-hye, "of course it is. Just now you considered lightness an advantage. Now ours doubles up at once, and it has the advantage of being in two pieces."

"Come, be consistent, Melton. You thought it an excellence in the wash-hand stand that it consisted of one piece, and now you praise the table for being in two."

Where the controversy would have ended it would be difficult to say; but a summons just then to breakfast brought it to an abrupt conclusion, though one somewhat unsatisfactory in respect of the superiority claimed for each. The cuts will, however, enable a discerning public to gauge the respective merits of the rival wash-hand stands.

Expecting, at the outside, but one day's more sport at Lodye, it had been decided to move the camp to Dooree, and ride on there after the day's hunting was over. It was only about six miles off, on the edge

of the Runn, but rather nearer Bhooj, and the country they proposed hunting over subsequently. In accordance with this programme, when the early breakfast was over, the tents were struck and, with the kit, packed and dispatched to their destination, the guns and spears being alone left behind.

There was a good deal of anxiety perceptible as an hour passed and Natta still remained absent. Several climbed the neighbouring spurs of hill, and looked forth over the jungle and into the waste in hopes of deriving inspiration as to the cause of delay. Some wandered listlessly among the horses, smoking, and examined their spears and accoutrements; all, however, occasionally turning an earnest gaze on the road by which it was expected Natta would approach. One or two of the less sanguine pronounced it "as all up with hunting for that day," and proceeded to get their shooting gear in order. A few there were who firmly clung to hope, and contended that the tardy arrival of the old Shikaree was a good sign, as indicating the fact of his being on the trail of pig. But such a theory was advanced more in the hope than the expectation of its realisation, and these were doomed to disappointment, when, after the lapse of another hour, Natta appeared with his assistants, and reported that he could find no fresh traces of pig, either out in the Runn or in the jungle nearer at hand.

"They have all taken to the high hills, sahib," he said. "Perhaps if we beat we may find some in the Bunnee. It is as the sahibs order."

"Is it worth while trying?" asked Norman. "What do you say?"

"Beaters are expensive," was the cautious reply. "The sahib knows everything. If it be his pleasure to try, then, perhaps, as his nuseeb is great, pig will be found. Beaters are ready when ordered."

"The meaning of which is," said Norman, "that there is very little chance of finding anything, and that the responsibility must rest with us."

"I am the sahib's servant. What he orders I will do. But, perhaps, it will be a good plan to go to Dooree. The hills are too steep here for riding."

"Then so be it," and on this conclusion being arrived at and approved by all, the party broke up into little detachments of twos or threes, and started in various directions to pick up such small game as they might meet with on their respective routes to Dooree. It was, however, strictly prohibited to beat, or even fire guns, in the neighbourhood of that village itself, or in the swamp or jungle on the Runn side of it; for though the former was probably full of snipe, it was also nearly certain to hold pig.

As Natta held out some faint hopes of finding traces of pig along the edge of the Runn on the way to Dooree, which, if followed, might produce a run,

a party of three, including Mowbray, Hawkes, and Danvers, determined to accompany him.

As they jogged quietly along, much interesting conversation took place. The levelling effects of a common interest in, and pursuit of, sport, brings classes in contact at points, where otherwise no approach would probably be made, and a freer communication is the result. It was, therefore, with a kindly consideration that the hunters entered on subjects of conversation with their attendants, which elsewhere would hardly be started.

One of the Shikarees was inquisitive on the subject of the manufacture of English articles. Accustomed only to see English officers, and regarding soldiers, well fed and waited on, as the type of the inferior classes, he could scarcely be made to understand that all work, whether of trade or otherwise, was performed by men with white faces. But what most astonished his jungle mind was that gunpowder should be made by any other than black men.

When told that camels were not in use in England as beasts of burden, and were only kept to be looked at, he deplored the absence of so useful an animal, and wondered that so powerful a country was not better supplied. Accustomed to see them do the principal carriage work on the sandy wastes and plains of his own wild province, to which they are so suited, he couldn't realise their absence in a richer one.

With agreeable discursiveness one next referred to the subject of the female population. English ladies he evidently considered—and with considerable reason—to be the most beautiful creatures in the world. Addressing Norman, he then made some inquiries regarding marriage ceremonies and expenses, the amount of the latter of which, in his own case, he greatly bewailed. He wondered why all sahibs did not marry, and the gentleman he addressed in particular. On being informed, however, that English wives were sometimes not unexacting, less amenable to discipline than their Indian sisters, and by their influence spoilt many a good fellow as a sportsman, he was sincere in his opinion that it were wise to postpone marriage till age had rendered him less capable of enjoying the sports of the field, and made it more desirable to have an attendant to minister to his comfort at home.

The simple remarks of the ignorant natives caused a good deal of amusement to the hunters, who encouraged them to speak freely. The discussion was yet in progress when old Natta, who seemed never to have his eye off the ground, suddenly checked himself, and leaning slightly forward, intently examined a mark on the ground there, hard and caked. A very brief investigation was sufficient, for he soon looked up, and pointing to the mark, announced that it was a pug of that morning, and led out into the Runn. Following it

for a little way this appeared so decidedly the case, that he pulled up and held brief consultation.

“The pug seems to be of a fair size, and there are one or two others, are there not, Natta?” asked Mowbray, who possessed a smattering of that most useful accomplishment in woodcraft—the art of pugging. “Will it be of any use following the trail?”

Had no rupees been dependent on the matter, the sporting propensities of the old shikaree might have proved insufficient to induce him to undertake the task of pugging on that hard soil, and at that late hour. But the thought of possible *Inam* was a great spur to his activity. He looked to the sun, to the ground at his feet, and then out into the wilderness, as if demanding inspiration ere he made doubtful reply.

“The sun is high, sahib; the ground is very dry and difficult for pugging, and the pug itself is of the early morning.”

And then, as he considered the certainty of the kill, if the pig had really sought the Runn for their mid-day rest, he added more decisively, “But the chance is good, and the sahib’s nuseeb is great. I will show them if they are there. Chulo (get along), brothers.”

The last observation was addressed to the other puggees, and they all now carefully followed the trail.

There were in all, it appeared, only three pig, and the biggest of these Natta confidently expected to be a

boar, though not a very large one. For some time the trackers carried on the pug slowly over the ground on the edge of the Runn, which, having but recently been covered with water, had dried into a hard caked soil. On this the foot-print lay so lightly as to leave but little impression, often none whatever, and rendered it extremely difficult to hit off the trail. But Natta, now thoroughly on the scent, stuck to it like a staunch hound.

It was occasionally lost, but a judicious cast ahead quickly recovered it; and when, after thus proceeding for some distance, the ground became softer and more sandy, the men were enabled to carry it breast high. Right out into the Runn it took the party, but the hitherto tolerably undeviating line was exchanged for one winding or tortuous, as if the animals were searching about, but still with an outward tendency.

An hour's pugging had carried them well away from the mainland, and the pig, if started within a reasonable distance of the riders, could hardly fail to lose one of their number. Another hour only rendered this more certain, when from certain symptoms, or rather from instinct—for the faculty of divining the proximity of the game appears often more intuitive than the result of any powers of reasoning—Natta declared his belief that the pig were not far off.

He had hardly spoken, when from a clump of scrub and grass on one flank of the party, and distant about

a hundred yards, the pig suddenly dashed out into view, and made for the mainland.

The three hunters, who were pretty close to each other, started together in immediate pursuit. But the horses were not by any means evenly matched in speed, for Danvers' speedy flier drew rapidly away from Mowbray, while Hawkes, who was riding an old screw, fell as much to the rear. In less than half-a-mile, Danvers had run up to the pig, singled out the biggest, a boar, and separated him from his companions.

For a time the well-breathed pig held his own, but directly Danvers saw he was getting blown, and really called on his horse, he shot up to it. But the boar made a sharp double and let in Mowbray, who was waiting for some opportunity of the sort. Danvers came round, however, and once more obtained the lead. He closed, and when within distance, made his thrust. But his arm was tired and weak—having been some time before put out of joint—and he missed the pig and broke his spear in the ground. Norman then again assumed the command, of which he did not fail to avail himself, and speared the pig twice in rapid succession. Danvers now rode off to meet the shikarees, who were running rapidly after the hunt, to get a fresh spear, and Mowbray again tackled the boar, who charged, and was received full on the spear; but the bamboo snapped, and the hunter, now defenceless, wheeled off to a flank. Looking round for Hawkes to

come and complete the affair, he detected that individual in the distance in full pursuit of the other two pig, who seemed to have rather the best of it.

Here was a pretty fix, a fine young wounded boar and nothing with which to slay him. Mowbray had not even his shikar knife, supposing that to have been made in any way available. All he could do now was to endeavour to keep the pig out until Danvers should arrive with a fresh spear, or Hawkes return from his pursuit. Riding round to get between the pig and the mainland, he kept as close as he could without endangering his horse, and tried to push it back. Fortunately one of his thrusts had struck either the spine or some of its neighbouring muscles, and partly paralysed the boar's hind-quarters.

He soon saw that the beast was doomed, for it could make but slow progress. Indeed, it had not gone far, when Danvers reappeared with a fresh spear, and galloped up to the pig. The boar charged, though feebly, owing to his loss of pushing power; but Danvers' arm was so weak, that though he managed to strike the boar, the spear was sent flying from his grasp.

"I can make nothing of it," he said. "My arm is utterly powerless, and I have not sufficient strength left to kill a rat."

Mowbray, therefore, now got off his horse, picked up the spear, and soon after again brought the slowly-

moving boar to bay. The latter's charges were now so feebly made that the spearman failed to get a fair, effectual blow till, almost riding over it, he drove his blade deep into the chest and half through the length of the body, and the encounter was at an end.

The shikarees soon joined, and when the gralloching—so necessary an operation with a boar—was effected, the body was strung on to a pole, the shikarees undertaking to convey it as far as the nearest village, there to be relieved by other men.

As they approached the mainland, they met Hawkes returning from an ineffectual pursuit of the two speedy sows, who had quite outrun the old screw he rode. On seeing the boar first speared, he thought he would try and get a pig of his own; for his ill-success in which he was chaffed by his companions, who also added some little censure for his leaving the boar—a circumstance which might have led to its escape.

A couple of miles short of Dooree, they visited some curious ruins of old Jain temples, built under the hills, and which commanded a fine look-out over the Runn. But, as evening was drawing on, their inspection was necessarily brief, and they continued the journey, leaving the hills, which had been hitherto close on their left hand, behind, and striking out into the promontory of mixed jungle and fields, near the salient point of which Dooree was situated.

Arrived at Dooree, they found the camp pitched somewhat irregularly on a fallow field, under some scattered trees. These clumps of trees rise above the adjacent jungle, and serve to indicate to the distant spectator the position of the villages in the neighbourhood of the Runn. Round about the village itself cultivation was carried on by means of irrigation from wells, the water of which was, for the most part, brackish. The sandy fields more inland—now generally cleared of the crops sown during the monsoon—presented open spaces of varying areas, thickly interspersed with clumps of bushes and long, narrow sand mounds surmounted by thickets, at times much resorted to by wild-pig, especially during the monsoon.

Their favourite ground, however, was a thick bush jungle which grew on the edge of a swamp of deep black mud and brackish water, which gave sustenance to a quantity of tamarisk. This stretched along the very edge of the Runn; and in it pig delighted to wallow and enjoy its agreeable coolness during the midday heats. Sheets of water still covered a considerable portion of the harder waste beyond—for the monsoon rain had the previous year fallen abundantly—and were resorted to by countless myriads of wild-duck, and numerous flocks of coolen, or “Cullum,” as the Bombay sportsman erroneously calls the Indian crane. But these, as well as pelicans and other

aquatic birds which also frequented that great stretch of water, were in general unapproachable, owing to the open nature of its neighbourhood. Snipe were plentiful in the swamp, but these, of course, were tabooed till such time as the pig had evacuated the jungle.

The hills, distant perhaps from one and a half to two miles, had become reduced in size to a mere succession of stony eminences as they approached the river which entered the Runn, a couple of miles further along the coast line. The isolated temples and serai at Rhoda Mata, on the road to Bhooj, lay on the further bank of this river; and beyond them again was a piece of dammed-up water which went by the name of Rhoda Tank,—a capital shooting-place for wild-duck, while snipe and quail and a few black partridge were also to be found near it.

As the shooters dropped in, it was found that though no large bags had been obtained, the sum total made a respectable show, and afforded a good supply for the camp larder.

Mackenzie, however, who was a first-rate shot, and had brought in a fair amount, complained that he had been quite off his shooting that day, and lamented one or two particularly bad shots that he had made.

“Why, what can you expect?” said Hawkes, “when

you consume such an amount of east-wind every night after dinner."

"Consume such an amount of east-wind, you scapegrace!" was the rejoinder; "my head, thank goodness, is not a shallow-pated affair like those of the degenerate ensigns of the present day. I can take my whack comfortably, without getting drunk."

"That," said Hawkes, "depends a good deal on what you call getting drunk. Now I think the other night, when you were directed to your own tent, you could hardly be considered as altogether sober. Eh! come, how do you define it?"

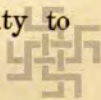
"Define it, define it? Why, no one can define it. But I knew perfectly well what I was about."

"Mac is like Bailie Sucketdown," observed Stewart.

"And who the deuce was Bailie Sucketdown?" asked Mackenzie, in an injured tone of voice. "What have I got in me like a bailie?"

"I'll tell you," was the reply. "The bailie, worthy man, was a jovial soul, and liked a crack with his neighbour over a comfortable glass of toddy, a liking he indulged pretty regularly. One evening he was thus engaged, when the conversation turned on the subject of drunkenness, and what a man might reasonably take without being fou.

"Some said one amount, some another; at last the bailie was appealed to as one having authority to decide the vexed question.



“ ‘Deed then,’ he said, ‘I’m no vera sure. A man may tak’ a gude skinfu’, an’ no be fou. I whiles do so mysel’.’

“ ‘But what, bailie,’ asked one, ‘should you consider a *quantum sufficit*? In your own case, for instance, how many tumblers can you conveniently carry wi’out being fou?’

“ ‘Hoo many tumblers! Weel, to say truth I canna at this moment precisely recollect hoo many I tak’ when I’m cracking wi’ my friends. I aye count up to the tenth tumbler, but after that, ye ken, I’m a wee troubled to mind hoo many mair they may be.’

“Apply that, Mac. Perhaps, though you may never be drunk, you may sometimes arrive at that happy state in which tumblers are beyond computation; when the memory just a little fails, like the worthy bailie’s. But, of course, that does not involve being fou.”



CHAPTER VII.

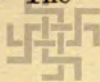
Thrusting at the chest—A remarkable feat—An attempt to engage three bears with spear and pistol—A chance meeting—A solitary boar chase—A happy thrust—The remarkable feat explained—The Kerai—A dash at a leopard—A long solitary hunt—Found and lost—Found, lost, and re-found—A satisfactory conclusion—Pig in the sea—Another single-handed encounter—Pig easily lost—Cases in point.

ESTABLISHED, according to custom, round the bright, sparkling log-fire, the hunters commented on the little incidents of the day's sport.

"That was an effective dig of yours to-day in the chest," observed Danvers to Norman, "we had some difficulty in withdrawing the spear. But somehow or other a thrust over the head and into the back appears usually a more deadly wound."

"Yes," was the reply; "one does not often get a clear thrust at the chest. A boar will sometimes throw it off with his head, which somehow generally seems to get in the way. Then you might as well hit a stone as his shoulderbone. To be successful it must strike fair."

"I remember," observed Mowbray, "doing rather a remarkable feat with a thrust into the chest. The



spear went clean through the whole length of his body, and protruded near the tail."

"Oh! come," said Mackenzie; "draw it mild. It would require a steam hammer to do that at a blow."

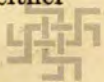
"Listen, unbeliever, and you shall hear how the feat was performed. I assure you my credit as a man of almost superhuman strength was established by its practical demonstration. My spear was really and truly run clean through the hog as if he were ready spitted for roasting. There was another rather singular circumstance attending that morning's proceedings, so I will give it in full.

"In the year 1859, after the mutiny, we were still hunting that slippery blackguard, Tantia Topee, who led numerous small columns a pretty dance throughout Rajpootana and Central India. I had been attached to one or two of these in a political capacity, and was ordered to join another, then supposed to be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kotah, to which place I repaired with a small escort of Sikh troopers.

"Arrived there I could hear nothing for certain of the whereabouts of the force; but as my information pointed to the fact that it had left the limits of Rajpootana, and gone into another jurisdiction, I waited near Kotah for a few days to satisfy myself that such was the case, before returning to head quarters. I generally amused myself during the mornings—for it was the hot weather—with looking

about in the neighbourhood of my camp for game, both for the sake of sport and to supply my camp, and I frequently brought home a black buck or chin-kara, sometimes two.

“On the morning in question I had sauntered out with a single-barrelled rifle and a solitary attendant. At the distance of a few hundred yards from my camp, and with only an open field intervening between it and the large village near which I was pitched, there was a tank, dry at this season, with an embankment on which grew several mowah trees. Happening to cast my eyes towards this, I saw to my extreme astonishment, an old bear with two young ones, from half to three parts grown, lobbing along the top of the bank, and even as I looked they pulled up to listen. The distance was far for anything like a certain shot, and as they were a couple of miles away from the jungle for which they would probably make, I thought the present a fine opportunity for a running engagement with spear and revolver; so, while I kept watch, I started off my attendant to fetch my horse and weapons from the camp, which was close at hand. Before the horse could be saddled, however, the old bear, deeming, I suppose, all clear in front, again moved on with her young ones at a good lobbing canter, for she evidently considered that the tempting mowah fruit had detained her longer than was either customary or safe.



"I ran after and watched them across some rocky ground covered with low scrub, till they scrambled over a bit of broken embankment, which formed another tank some distance further on, and disappeared beyond. My horse was now trotted up to me, with a loaded revolver in the holsters. This, or the spear, or both, I thought I might use as circumstances dictated; perhaps get a good dig at first before the bear was prepared, and then finish the engagement at a safer distance with the revolver; or, at any rate, if I found the old one too much for me, spear one of the young ones, which were of a good size. But alas! for any credit the spearing of a bear might have brought me, I never again sighted them; a fact, however regrettable, perhaps, after all, more conducive to the preservation of an entire skin by myself and horse, than might otherwise have been the case.

"I rode at speed to the gap where I had seen the bears disappear, crossed over, galloped on beyond, and reached the jungle, which was tolerably open. This I penetrated in several directions, but, as I have said, without again seeing them.

"As I rode leisurely back I met my attendant, accompanied by one or two other men, with my guns, so I again turned, and we examined various parts of the jungle, but found that the bears had made for the cliffs and rocks on the banks of the river Chumbul a little further on, a place full of secure fastnesses and called

the Kerai. At last, as the morning drew on, after an ineffectual shot at a neilghye, we made our way homewards by a different route, and, as luck would have it, came across a nice sounder of pig. They were grubbing up the ground for roots, and evidently just picking their last little bit of breakfast before retiring to cover for their daily repose. They were by no means shy, for being near a preserve of the Kotah Rajah's, they were not allowed to be harried, but kept for his especial shooting.

"It was a nice chance for me; so I rode at the biggest, a good boar, who at first seemed to fancy I couldn't intend to interfere with him. In this, however, he was quickly undeceived, and, as I approached, bolted away. I tried to keep him out from the jungle, and for some short time succeeded; but he gradually edged towards it, and I galloped in among the bushes, which were here open enough for riding, pretty close behind. It was very thorny, though, and my horse suffered a good deal; but he was accustomed to it, and we managed to stick to the boar, rather, I imagine, to his surprise. Of course, being by myself, I was able, to some extent, to take my own opportunities, and not obliged to spear whenever the slightest chance presented itself. So, after keeping pretty close to him—for he soon became blown—for some short time, I ran up and speared him in the back. It was some time before I got another good opportunity; and then being a

little to his flank, I rode at his head, and he came round.

“I met the charge with a well-directed spear, and it entered between the neck and the shoulder. As I got out of the way I was unable to withdraw the weapon, and accordingly left it standing out in front, well fixed in his body. I should perhaps have been justified in using my revolver now, as I had no other means of polishing off the boar. But then I thought he might not be wounded to the death, and so I had some compunctious visitings on the subject of employing fire-arms. The unfortunate beast again got under weigh, and made for the thicker parts of the jungle; but the spear still remained fixed, and at every stride the end, bending from its own weight and swinging from side to side, struck a bush or a stone, or jammed against the ground, and each blow thus received served to drive it in further and further.

“The boar made many efforts to seize it in his mouth, but, owing to its position, could not grip it. This went on for a short time, till at last the point of the spear protruded near the tail, the entire length of the body being thus perforated.

“He now lay down, and I approached close. With a boar's pluck he once more got on his legs and made an effort to charge; but he was quite exhausted, and fell down. Seeing that the affair was nearly finished, I drew my revolver with the double object of putting the

poor beast out of pain and of letting my men know where I was. Accordingly I fired at him, and made, I must confess, a most palpable miss. However, before I decided to try another barrel, the pig gave a last grunt and expired, being in a measure his own executioner.

“My men soon came up, and were astonished at the vigour of the thrust which had so completely traversed the boar. I heard them remarking on it, and on the extraordinary strength I must be possessed of to deliver such a blow. Knowing this, I was not altogether taken by surprise when a vakeel from the Rajah visited me that evening and complimented me on my success, and the mighty force with which it had been achieved.

“The boar when cut up proved to be covered with fat, and my jolly Sikh troopers, men of the fine old stamp, who had fought us at Chillianwallah and Gujerat, derived immense gratification from the process of dismemberment, and carefully collected every scrap of fat with which to lubricate the more sinewy or harder portions of the meat. A famous meal they had that day, far better and more palatable than when made from the dry meat of antelope or of the half-starved sheep with which I occasionally presented them. No Mussulman prejudices on the subject of pork or mode of slaughter interfered with its complete enjoyment by those jovial warriors.

“I examined the embankment on which I first saw the bears, and found that the Mowah trees were much scratched and torn with the claws of the animals in their efforts to climb. I went after them next morning also; but, if they had visited the place, they had decamped earlier than on the preceding day, for I saw nothing of them.”

“What do you mean by the ‘keraie?’” asked Norman.

“The keraie in that particular place was the gorge through which the river Chumbul flowed. It runs in a winding sluggish state between walls of cliff, much broken in parts, and affording a dangerous footing to an adventurous climber, though how heavy animals like bears get up and down it is difficult to say. Among these cliffs, and the huge boulders of overturned rock which garnish the more broken portions, are numerous caves and recesses which are sought by bears and other animals. Rocks also lie on the bank of the river, between which and the cliff at this season is a tract of rough broken cover. In fact, the whole of this wild, rugged, and very peculiar region is eminently suited to wild beasts. On the top of the cliff is a brown jungle, which, more or less thick, fringes it for miles. The river is deep and broad, perhaps two or three hundred yards across, and although in the neighbourhood of a town so large as Kotah, the whole forms a singularly wild and secluded piece of landscape. I scrambled

about among the rocks on the occasion I refer to, and visited several large caves, but without succeeding in turning anything out. The 'kerai' is the term applied, I believe, to the rough broken ground, or perhaps to the gorge itself, for the same word I have frequently heard used in that part to express generally a place of a similar nature."

"Rather an adventurous morning, certainly, for a man strolling out in search of an antelope," observed Vivian. "But do you really think you would have tackled a bear with a spear?"

"Well, I don't know," was the reply. "I think I should if I had got a fair chance on a bit of open ground. Of course, I should have rushed past at speed,—that is, if my horse would have faced the bear, which it is my belief he would have done. I should never have dreamt of standing to receive a charge, but endeavoured to finish the action with my revolver."

"Ticklish, at best," said Mackenzie. "I have read of men spearing, or attempting to spear, bears from horseback, but nearly losing their lives in the attempt. I once myself rode at a leopard. I was out with some other fellows after pig, when I saw what I thought was a cheetah sneaking along behind some bushes. I dashed at it, but it bounded away with a roar into some high grass we were then beating, and we saw nothing more of it. My companions averred it was a panther,

though I myself did then, and still do, think it was hardly large enough for one. However, whatever it was, I very nearly succeeded in getting a dig at it, though, had I deemed it a veritable panther, I think I should have left it alone."

"Your solitary encounter with a boar, Mowbray, reminds me of one I had near this very place last year," said Norman ; "and, as on that occasion, I, too, lost what I at first went in for, it will serve as a pendent to your anecdote. It was a perfect triumph of pugging, a means of finding game, to my mind, far more satisfactory than beating, embracing as it does the very essence of woodcraft.

"My shikarees had been for a few days after one or two very large boars which were roving about this neighbourhood, and sent into Bhooj one night to say if I came out on the following morning, they confidently expected to show me them by pugging, and without the expense of beaters. Unfortunately, two or three fellows who were to have been my companions were, for some reason or other, prevented from joining me ; and, as heavy boars are not always to be caught napping in rideable ground, I was unable to postpone the trip, and accordingly rode out early next morning by myself. I had sent on my little hunter to a village two or three days before, so it was ready for me.

"A ride of about a dozen miles brought me to Koo-reea, two or three miles from this place, where I found

my horse all right. After breakfasting off some sandwiches I had brought with me, a man came in from my shikarees to say that they were on the track of an enormous boar, and that I had better come on to a certain place which my informant would show me. I accordingly went there ; and before long, another man arrived with the news that the shikarees were bringing on the pug in my direction, and a look-out in a tree soon after beckoned us to him, and I joined the shikarees.

“ We were among those clumps of bushes and nullahs which lie just under the hills, different portions of which all you fellows must have seen to-day. Into one of these thick pieces of cover I found they had ringed the pig, and after we had pelted it for about five minutes, out went a tremendous and very grey old *solitaire*, the biggest I think I ever saw. The lazy old beast could not run a bit, and I soon rattled up to him ; but he dodged about from clump to clump without my getting an opportunity to spear, except once, when I shot in front of him in a bit of rideable jungle. A right-minded boar would have charged ; but, whether pluck had died away from old age, or for some other reason, he showed no fighting propensity whatever, and dodged behind my horse, who was very fresh, and rather violent.

“ After this, he got into a thick strip of jungle, and I galloped to the further end, there to await his exit.

But he seemed loth to quit his cover ; and my shikarees, who were close at hand, arrived on the scene without his showing. I directed them to pelt the thicket, which they did unsuccessfully, and at last found, to my inexpressible chagrin, that the wary old boar had quietly slipped into a little nullah on the other side of the jungle, and got away undetected. We pugged him to a place which I call the 'black spring,' in the hills there close at hand, and found that, after drinking, he had gone right into the worst part of them.

"This was a great sell ; but it had the effect of making me determined to persevere, so long as a chance remained, and not return empty-handed. It was useless attempting to follow the old fellow we had lost, and as my shikarees said there was another large boar lying with a sounder near the swampy ground on the edge of the Runn, I determined to beat up his quarters. My men, disheartened at the loss of our first boar, deemed it was of little use, as the jungly ground was so unfavourable ; but I was not to be denied.

"Accordingly, we took up the pug, and after a short and clever piece of tracking, turned up the sounder on the very edge of the snipe ground.

"There was a whacking boar here also, only second to the one I had lost ; and, having a capital start, I soon separated him from the rest, and got on good terms

with him. He skirted the deeper portions of the swamp itself, but crossed some marshy bits, and in one of these my horse came on to his nose, deceived by the treacherous black mud. Fortunately, I retained my seat, so we just managed to make a save of it. Recovered from this, I ran up to my very weighty friend, who was soon blown, and was in the very act of preparing to thrust, when crash we went into one of the interminable jow bushes among which I had been riding.

“When I recovered myself the pig was invisible. He had disappeared in the most unaccountable manner, as if the earth had swallowed him up. I rode on ahead, but there was nothing to be seen of him ; and when I again got the puggies on the trail, they found that he had doubled right back, at the very point where I was thrown out, and then slipped into the swamp.

“My men now wished me to desist ; but such a combination of luck, that of finding two such tremendous boars, and ill-luck—or, as regards the latter, perhaps want of judgment on my part—was enough to irritate a saint, which I was not. So I sternly refused to give in, and insisted on their carrying on the trail afresh.

“We tracked that beast, sir, for hours. Right through the jungle, and amongst all the broken cover in its neighbourhood, we carried on the pug till my men were well-nigh exhausted. It was a very hot day in a

very hot March, and the sun was exceedingly powerful. More than once they told me our labour was useless, for it would be almost impossible to kill him in the thick jungle even if found. But still I insisted on continuing, for I had heard an observation of one of them, attributing the loss of the first boar to my own want of skill as a shikaree.

"I am bound to say, dispirited though they were, they worked capitally. The boar had made a temporary rest once or twice, and wandered about the scattered jungle in evident search of a convenient resting-place. His pugs crossed and recrossed each other as he roved here and there, till at last, after many windings, they deserted the woodland, and led us right into the Runn, which there was quite bare, save for small tufts of grass and low scrub. It was, however, occasionally, a favourite resort of pig, and my men plucked up spirit, and became much more confident, as the track showed unmistakable symptoms of the boar's intention to seek the secluded refuge of the waste itself.

"The afternoon was now well advanced, and it was fearfully hot out on the shadeless desert. I found myself getting rather done, for the sun struck down with pitiless intensity on that saline surface. I was forced at one time to get off my horse and hide my head in a small bush, for there was nothing large enough to give shade to my whole body. I took a little weak brandy and water, poured a little of the latter over my head,

and divided the most of the rest between the men. Thus refreshed we continued on, and shortly the shikarees proclaimed their belief that the boar must be lying close at hand. He had been jogging along at a very slow pace, and had lain down more than once, evidently desirous of bringing himself to anchor ; but there appeared, to my idea, no bush sufficiently large to conceal his recumbent form.

“I had with me a short, stout spear, leaded at the end, one I had specially made up for such an occasion as the present, where a decisive blow was required, and a stick strong enough to withstand an ordinary charge desirable. This I now took from my ghorawallah, and prepared myself for action, for the men declared that the pug was now quite fresh and the pig must be near.

“‘There he goes, the old deceiver!’ burst from the lips of my excited shikarees, as the huge old boar rose from a stunted bush, apparently hardly large enough to shelter a squeaker, and lumbered across the plain. As the black mass rolled along in the rays of the declining sun, my gallant old horse, who was the least done of the party, cocked his ears, and hardly needed the pressure of calf, as I settled myself to ride, to set him going.

“I dashed past the men, who were shouting in great excitement, and rattled away in pursuit. The old boar had felt the heat of the day, and his unusual exertions at a time which he was wont to spend in dignified re-

pose as much as any of us, and in three or four hundred yards I was close upon him. He eyed me savagely out of the corner of his eye as I neared him, and was evidently meditating the right time at which himself to become the aggressor. Twice he slightly swerved from his line, but I kept my game little Arab well in hand, and let the old boar for a short time hold his own. This seemed to give him a little confidence in his own endurance, and possibly, if he considered the matter, he may have deemed the distant line of bushes which marked the Dooree jungle yet attainable. I allowed him, however, but scant time for consideration. Letting my horse go, I sent him up alongside at full speed, and drove my spear down into the pig's back with all my strength and with the full impetus of our onset.

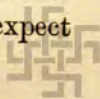
"As the unprepared old fellow felt the steel, he gave a surly grunt of disapproval, and made an effort to turn upon me; but it was too late. I pressed the spear in deeper, and, being unable to withdraw it, left it standing upright in his body, eased my horse to the left, and shot ahead. I soon pulled up and wheeled round, and saw that he had got it very severely. He trotted on for about thirty or forty yards, and then, giving a lurch, recovered himself; again he staggered, and then rolled over, and with an expiring gasp or two was gathered to his fathers.

"The sun was just dipping behind the hills on the mainland as my men clustered round the long-sought

prize, and *wah' wah'd* his great size. So firmly was the spear imbedded, that it required considerable exertion on the part of one of the men to withdraw it. I measured his height on my spear, and cut a notch to mark it, but somehow never entered it in my notebook, and the spear was subsequently broken ; but he could not have been less than forty inches. His tusks were much worn, but very thick, and when extracted measured just eight inches and a quarter. I suspect he must have proved the victor with the other and rather larger boar, for his body had numerous gashes on it, some but partly healed, and his being with the sows, proved, I fancy, that he kept the other at a distance.

"I divided nearly all that remained of my flask of brandy among the men, and cantered off towards some trees indicating the presence of a village among the line of bushes which loomed like a low, indistinctly seen shore in the yellow haze of the setting sun. Thence I despatched water for the men, and a cart to bring in the dead boar, and rode into Bhooj, which I reached after dark, after about as fatiguing a day's hunting as I ever had.

"Such, gentlemen, was the first single-handed encounter I ever had with a boar, the first pig I ever killed with a single thrust, and a finer exhibition of pugging than took place that day I don't ever expect to see."



“It was a very satisfactory conclusion, however unfortunate the commencement,” said Stewart. “Since descriptions of solitary hunts seem to be the order of the evening, I will give you an instance of my own experience, more especially as it somewhat resembles yours, but happened in quite a different style of country.

“About fourteen or fifteen miles from Mandavie, in the neighbourhood of Nowenal, the shore of the Gulf of Cutch is lined with mangrove, to which pig resort in great numbers, coming inland to feed at night. I have heard that on high tides, the beasts have regularly to cling to the bushes; but sometimes they remain in the fields and bits of jungles about Karkur, Deesulpore, and other villages, and at some seasons appear to desert their marine residences and take up their quarters inland.

“While at Mandavie, during the month of October, we heard that pig were then in the habit of thus remaining among the fields and high thorn hedges of the interior; so another fellow and myself sent on shikarees, a tent, and our traps, and rode out one evening with the object of having a look for some next morning.

“About eight o’clock khubber was brought in that three or four pig were marked down each in a separate place, and we sallied out full of hope. But it proved delusive; each one might have been there at some

time, but he certainly was not when we arrived, and about twelve, not having seen one pig, we returned to our tent, hot and weary, for an early October sun is no joke.

"My friend was so troubled with prickly-heat that he determined to go back to Mandavie, leaving me alone to try my chance once more on the following day.

"About the same hour next morning, news was brought me that one large boar had been pugged to a strip of jungle, and was then enjoying his midday repose there.

"I was soon *en route*, and joined my men who were keeping watch over the sleeping game; and I was shown the spot in which he was believed to be indulging his natural propensity for sleep.

"Taking one man with me, I sent the other five or six to the further side. At a short distance in that direction were numerous enclosures, from which it was an object to keep him. They pelted and shouted, and soon stirred the boar, who, however, stupidly persisted in breaking on that side, and necessitating my galloping back round the bit of jungle, which was very thick. I was obliged in my progress there to cross a narrow lane, which passed between steep banks, one of which was crowned with a hedge. I jumped in and scrambled out, and then saw the boar, a very good one, about half-way across a fallow field, making for some exceedingly stiff enclosures.

“The villagers construct round some of their grain-fields tremendous hedges of dried-up wild bair bush, which they collect and pile up to a height and breadth rarely negotiable on horseback. This is done with the object of keeping out the pig, in which, however, they are but very partially successful. Such were the obstacles I had now to face.

“I rode to try and cut him off from one of these hedges—some five or six feet high, and of corresponding breadth—for which he was making, as I knew, from past experience, that they frequently have regular runs through them, like those of hares in England. I succeeded in this, and turned him from that side, but he made for the nearest corner, which he rounded, and continued at full pace down alongside the hedge.

“He soon got blown, and I closed with him. I thought I was certain to spear him before he could creep into any run there might be on that side, for the hedge was on my spear hand, and I pushed him along close to it. I was just preparing for a rush at him, when, to my extreme astonishment, he made a tremendous leap sideways at the hedge, and went clean over, without so much as coming out into the field to get a clear run at it. Once over, he disappeared in some high standing grain—barjeree, I believe—leaving me somewhat perplexed on the other side. Some say a horse can jump what a pig can, but I know to the

contrary. However, there was no help for it, old 'Kutty' was bound to get over somehow, and being very good at hurdles and fences, I gave him room for a run and crammed him at the huge mass of thorns.

"He charged at it and rose well, but not enough by a long way to clear the obstacle, and we took with us into the next field enough of dried thorn to form a very respectable bonfire.

"He was almost down, but picked himself up cleverly, and we galloped on ahead. I rattled past some men employed in cutting the grain, who, to my inquiries for the line of the pig, only gazed at me in speechless astonishment, evidently wondering where the deuce I had come from. Another individual, however, a little further on, pointed ahead, and I continued on, getting out of the field accompanied by nearly as much as I had brought in. My next difficulty was the lane. I went in easily enough, but it was some little time before I found a practicable part where I could get out of it again; this I did, however, and at last managed to climb up the bank. This difficulty surmounted, I galloped across several fields, taking some fair fences in my line, but as yet I had seen nothing of the pig.

"I fortunately remembered having observed somewhat in the direction in which I was riding, a small pond, and for this I considered it very likely the boar had made. I accordingly galloped towards a clump

of trees, which my bump of locality led me to believe indicated the position of the pond. When within about half a field of it, I saw the boar going quietly along among some bushes, after having had a good roll in the water, and evidently thinking he had thrown off his pursuer. I rode sharp to the place, and thought he had squatted, as I suddenly lost sight of him. So impressed was I with the belief that he must be in the bushes somewhere, that I rode at a mound of earth and pricked it with my spear, as it bore a strong resemblance to a pig. I kept guard over the place till some of my men came up, when they found that his pug had gone back again in the direction of the water, which was less than a couple of hundred yards off.

“Arrived there, I took up my station on a mound on the edge of a nullah which acted as a conductor to the pond, and let the men hunt about. For some time they could not understand the trail, as they were unable to pick it up beyond a neighbouring hedge. Suddenly, however, a yell announced that he was a-foot, and he rushed out from the hedge, having found his form there getting too hot for him. He passed in front of me on the other side of the nullah, and I soon lay into him. I rattled him about, in and out of the nullah, endeavouring as far as I could to prevent him from again making for the enclosures. Several times I momentarily lost sight of him, and

once I over-rode and very nearly missed him altogether among some bushes. Seeing nothing of him in front, I glanced round, and just caught sight of a whisk of his tail round a bush to my right, and somewhat behind me. He was evidently a very dodgy boar, and resorted to every trick to throw me off.

“This move took him into the open across a wide fallow field, and I was up with him in no time. I speared him well between the shoulders, and he charged, but passed behind my horse as I shot past. He then resumed his original direction, which was towards a patch of jungle and high grass, and I came round. He made every effort to reach it, and I to cut him off; but I was too quick for him, and when pretty close forced him to a charge. He came round at me as I rode upon him from the flank, and my spear entered just over the shoulders and went clean into him without touching a bone. He very nearly touched the horse, but I managed to withdraw my spear, the bamboo sprung with the shock, and to get out of the way, and the boar trotted slowly into the grass, not more than a dozen yards off.

“The turns of the chace had brought me round near the place from which we had originally started the boar, and my men were only a few hundred yards off. On their arrival I got a fresh spear, and on searching the patch of grass we found the boar lying dead.

“My last spear had entered within an inch of the

first, but, of course, penetrated in a different direction. It had gone clean through the depth of his body, and emerged at the belly,—a pretty effectual settler for any beast.

“I gained a good deal of applause from the shikarees, for it was rather difficult country for a single man to ride and keep sight of a boar in ; but luck had certainly greatly befriended me. He proved a nice clean boar, of good size, with a tush of six and a half inches.”

“There is certainly nothing like riding on and not giving up a pig directly he is lost,” remarked Mackenzie. “There is always a chance of picking him up again ; and he rarely stops for any length of time till he has gained some thick jungle, or got well away from the part in which he has been hunted. I wonder at his pulling up in the hedge you mention, Stewart.”

“So do I,” was the reply ; “but having seen me come at him, and being forced to go back—for all in front was open country—I suppose he intended resting till the coast was clear and he could make good his object, which, I think, was to reach the mangrove about Nowenal.”

“As you observe,” said Norman, “hunted boars will rarely stop for any time in small patches of jungle. My losing the huge fellow I spoke of was a case in point ; and I dare say many of you, like myself, have occasionally lost pig by waiting about a bit of jungle

into which you had ridden them, and their sneaking away unperceived."

"I have more than once," replied Hawkes. "I can call to mind two good boars which I lost in this very part of the country, and on each occasion I felt confident that the pig was still in the patch of jungle over which I, and in one case others also, kept watch. One is not always so fortunate as you two fellows in the runs last described.

"One was during the monsoon, and three of us were out for the day, hunting the thick patches in the neighbourhood of Nakonia, on the other side of the river, which flows by Rhoda-Nata, perhaps four or five miles from this. We had killed one nice young boar after some very severe riding through the jungle clumps, which were at that season overgrown and thick. Another had been run and lost; and we were returning, when the puggies came across the track of a large boar. As luck would have it, he was lying close at hand in one of those long thick bits of cover which, somehow, seem to spring up and thrive best on the sandy soil, where it has drifted into mounds and heaps round the fields. There we found him at home, and being a very weighty old party, I, who had the advantage at the start, soon closed with him and got a dig just on the outskirts of a field of low barjerie. We had been hunting all day, and I was rather done, and consequently it was not a very effective one.

Each of my companions also got a chance ; and though the old boar thus had three wounds, they were all slight, and proved insufficient to stop him, as he disappeared in one of the bush-topped mounds I have referred to. Round this we kept watch and ward till the puggees came up. We firmly believed and declared he was still in it, but they found he had sneaked away along a narrow strip, and made another thick patch. We pugged him up, but were obliged to leave him as evening was drawing on, and he had got into the high thick grain fields in the neighbourhood of Looreea.

“That was a stiff day’s work, for the only way to force our way through the jungle strips was to ride hard into them, and so get through by sheer weight. Both the horses of my friends finished lame from the blows of bush branches thus received, and mine, though not lame, had an ugly lump on his shinbone. Notwithstanding their injuries, however, they had to be brought in at once, for the flies, at that season, on the edge of the Runn, were such an intense nuisance that neither men nor horses could stand it. I heard afterwards that many villages were deserted in consequence.

“On another occasion, at the same season, we lost a good boar, which had been marked down close to Nakonia. Two of us only were out, and my friend being thrown out at the start, I got the ‘lay in,’ and

lost him in a thick patch of jungle. Over this I kept watch, but, as in the other case, he had managed to sneak away unperceived, and though we pugged him over all sorts of ground for hours, we were not so lucky as Norman, and never again fell in with him. But had I ridden ahead, instead of waiting to keep watch over the patch of jungle, I could hardly have failed to pick him up, as the ground which he crossed further on was for a bit delightfully open."

"It is indeed astonishing how pig will in a moment disappear," observed Vivian. "They seem to have a sort of Fortunatus' cap, which renders them invisible for a time."

"Well," said Mackenzie, "I shall combine the cap of night with that of Fortunatus, have a mild sleepersuader, and turn in;" an example which the others soon followed.



CHAPTER VIII.

A sharp spurt—Pig escapes wounded—A singular accident—Horse killed—Beating the Dooree jungle—Difficulty in getting pig to break—Gone away at last—A fast set-to—Speared and done for—The bags of the shooters—Incidents in the day's sport.

A SHOVELLER duck and teal or two, on the tank in the neighbourhood of the village, proved a great temptation to some of the sportsmen who sauntered there early in the morning, a temptation, however, which, if indulged, would have subjected them to the merited reproof of their brother hunters.

The upper part of the swamp and jungle was but a short distance from the camp; and though pig would not probably have been driven thence by any firing about the village, Natta hoped to mark some down apart from it, and in rideable ground, and in these situations they are more jealous of danger, and more easily disturbed; so the shovellers and teal were left unmolested.

While the party were yet seated at breakfast, Natta came in to say that he had marked down a sounder among the broken patches of jungle on the edge of the Runn, towards the village of Loorea, and there he pro-



posed hunting before beating the Dooree jungle. In the latter, he found that pig were not nearly so plentiful as had been represented, but he hoped to show some.

Breakfast was, in consequence, hastily finished, and half a dozen followed the old shikaree to the place where he had left men watching over the safety of the sounder. The remaining four preferred to shoot, and had already gone, or afterwards went, to the tank at Rhoda and elsewhere.

The ground was in capital order for tracking, and this had enabled Natta to *baithao* the pig (cause the pig to be seated), as he himself expressed it, so quickly. The place, similar to others before described, was composed of mixed open ground and low cover.

The first shout and discharge of clods of earth—for stones there were none—aroused the pig, and away they went, about half a dozen in number, but all of moderate size.

There was only about sufficient space in which to overtake them before the big jungle was reached; and, to do this, the hunters were bound to use every exertion. One or two of the leading horsemen soon got on sufficient terms to scatter the sounder, and, selecting the largest, separated and stuck to it, notwithstanding its artful dodges round the clumps of bushes.

It was a sharp spurt, and sometimes one and sometimes another hunter obtained the advantage, as he

happened to find himself leading on the right side of a bit of jungle, and the others, more or less, for the moment, thrown out. At last, as they neared the jungle, a sharp turn of the pig round a patch of cover brought him suddenly across Melton, who leant forward and succeeded in slightly spearing it. Again he closed, and gave it a deeper wound, but it threw him off by dashing into a bit of thick jungle. Vivian, who was nearest, and Melton, both rode to the further side of this, and there awaited the pig's exit. The boar came to the edge, and at first seemed to meditate a charge, but, disliking the appearance of its opponents, or deeming discretion the better part of valour, suddenly wheeled and passed behind the nearest horse. This manoeuvre effected, it again lay out a pace which, before the horses could be put into rapid motion, had given it a considerable start. They set to work, however, and once more quickly overhauled the pig, who managed, though, still to keep ahead by crashing through bits of jungle, which somewhat stayed the horsemen. Again they closed with it, but it was on the very edge of the big jungle, into which it disappeared, and the discomfited riders, who were the only two close up, were obliged to pull in their horses.

Some casualties had taken place, which accounted for the diminished size of the field at the close of the run. Owing to a slight difference of opinion which Norman had had with his horse, as to the best side by

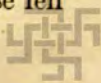
which to pass some bushes, they had adopted a medium course, and gone down bodily into the midst with a tremendous crash, not without some detriment to the facial beauty of the rider.

Stewart and Mowbray had come together in violent collision among the strips of jungle, and Mowbray's knee happening to catch Stewart's leg behind, just in the bend of his knee, he had lifted him bodily from his saddle, his own boot being torn in the operation. His horse just managed to avoid the prostrate form of the hapless Stewart, who was lying a complete spread-eagle on the ground ; but, beyond having his wind all knocked out of him, was none the worse.

But the most serious accident remains to be related.

Danvers, who had somehow not got off so well as the others at the start, and was thrown out, came across one of the scattered pig, which, though a small one—*faute de mieux*—he rode. It took towards the Runn, and Danvers succeeded in getting up to it. He attempted to spear, but his arm, as I have said, was weak from a recent dislocation, and he missed and struck the ground, the shock twirling the spear from his grasp. The spear then rebounded without breaking, and, springing completely round, came with the point towards the galloping horse.

The discomfited hunter pulled up and dismounted, and he had no sooner done so than the poor horse fell over on his side and died.



The spear had entered just behind the shoulder and in front of the girths—thus narrowly avoiding pinning Danvers' leg to the saddle—and had penetrated deep, causing a fatal wound. Before the horse fell, the rider was unaware of its having been struck.*

This sad accident cast something of a gloom over the party, when, on re-assembling, they were made acquainted with it. But the vicissitudes, accidents, and dangers of the hunting-field cannot be permitted to interfere with the prosecution of the sport. So, after an examination of the unfortunate beast and expressions of sympathy with Danvers, the rest prepared to beat the Dooree jungle,—the former naturally declining to take any further part in the day's hunting.

During the period consumed in slightly refreshing the inner man after the various *contretemps* attending the first run, and while Natta was getting together the men and making the arrangements for the beat, the untimely and inglorious fate of the wretched horse naturally formed the principal topic of conversation.

Had the loss of a horse occurred through any of the ordinary chances of the field, such as being ripped by a boar or injured by a fall, the fact, while deplorable enough in itself, would have been in the common nature of things, and might happen at any

* See Appendix, Note M.

time. But so untoward a chance as one's own spear being the cause of death was, it was agreed on all sides, in the highest degree deplorable, and the pitiable fate of the good horse was much bemoaned.

They were led on to speak of accidents to horses in the hunting-field, and all had acquaintance, either in their own persons or that of friends, with losses thus incurred. One of the party had himself to regret the death of a nice Arab from the rip of a boar, and one or two of the others had heard of friends or acquaintances being similarly circumstanced.

Then a man related how his horse broke its back in a narrow canal cutting in Scinde; and one had a friend whose hunter broke its leg in a deep earth-crack.

These and other misfortunes formed the subject of conversation; and accounts of spear accidents to the riders themselves, of occasional though rare occurrence, were also related. Natta's appearance, however, put a stop to this rather melancholy discussion, and the party once more prepared for action.

It was hoped that the beaters might succeed in driving pig from the thick jungle and swamp, and force them to break into the more open fields—which I have described as being mixed with scattered thickets—and make for the hills. With the object of commanding the many likely avenues of escape, the party was broken up into units, each of whom took up a separate position, in sight, however, of his imme-

diate neighbours. Long they waited, and waited in vain ; for the pig, if induced to leave the tangled covert of the thick jungle—in some parts impassable even to the men—would get into the swamp, and when dislodged from that, re-enter the jungle. This went on for some time, and several of the beaters narrowly escaped being ripped, till at last Natta came out and advised the sahibs themselves to endeavour to hustle a pig into the open, by riding at him, when seen, in such parts as might be practicable for horsemen. On this suggestion they acted, and, sometimes singly, sometimes in concert, moved through parts of the swamp—putting up numerous snipe—and such open avenues of the jungle as they could press through. Every now and then one or more of the hunters would make a rush at a pig which happened to cross him ; and in one instance Stewart got so close away at the tail of a big black hog in the swamp, that he pounded after it through deep mud and slush. He might, possibly, have had a chance of spearing had not his horse unfortunately come down and given him a most unpleasant roll in black mud, anything but inviting either in appearance or smell.

Struggling through bushes and swampy bits of marsh and tamarisk jungle, and much incommoded by the twigs and sticks, which acted like whips, two or three of the others bullied a nice young boar to such an extent that, though they were unable to spear

him, he was at last induced to trust to his legs and broke away, albeit not in sight of any of the party, all of whom he had thrown off. But markers, judiciously placed, announced the fact, and each hunter made his way out of the cover by such exit as offered itself. Stewart, who had remounted unhurt after his spill, was the first to get into the open, and was hallooed away after the boar, which after awhile he fortunately sighted and pursued. The rest, emerging at different points, galloped after the leading horseman, with, according to their position, more or less chance of taking part in the contest. Mowbray was nearest, and got away on fair terms with the leader, but not sufficiently so to have much chance of struggling with him at present.

The boar, perhaps from the muddy nature of his usual abiding-place, proved a very slow one, and Stewart gained fast upon it, leaving Mowbray half-a-dozen lengths in his rear. As he neared it, this was a little diminished; and when the pig—who somehow seemed to select the easiest riding-ground he could find, perhaps from confusion after his hustling—was getting done, the distance had been still further decreased. Twice the pig jinked, each time giving some further advantage to Mowbray. A third time the hog slightly turned as Stewart closed; and he, being within reach but with the pig on his bridle-hand, attempted as it crossed to spear him on that

side by an overhand thrust across his horse's left shoulder. But such thrusts, at long distances, are very uncertain, and he missed. Mowbray, now cramming in the spurs, cut in and, rushing up, got on intimate terms, and speared the boar behind the shoulder. It made little attempt to fight, or perhaps had little opportunity, for it was quickly disposed of by further wounds from Stewart, Vivian, and Norman.

This affair thus satisfactorily concluded, and Stewart, who was quite black from his coating of mud, having been scraped, the party endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to get another run, and at last returned to the tents, where the shooters also soon after arrived with a nice show of game.

Mackenzie brought in fourteen brace, consisting of six and a half of duck and teal, five and a half of quail, one and a half couple of snipe, and a strange bird which one of the party, who was a bit of an ornithologist, believed to be a purple egret.

He had visited Rhoda tank, at and about which he got eight or nine brace, and then went down to the river—to which some flights of teal had betaken themselves—and there made a shot which considerably influenced the size of his bag. While walking along through some thick rushes on the edge of the river, accompanied by a couple of men, with the hope of picking up a stray duck or snipe, he observed a large flock of teal peaceably reposing on the bosom of a pool in the river.

This pool was commanded from the bank he was on, about a couple of hundred yards further up the stream.

Some jow bushes grew on the bank, and presented every facility for a stalk, so Mackenzie lost no time in availing himself of the opportunity thus offered. Making a considerable detour he placed the bushes between himself and the teal, and crept up cautiously behind them. When he had arrived as he thought somewhere within shot, he peered through a bush, but found that he had miscalculated both distance and position, and was forced to retreat. He did so, and then made for another clump. This time he was more successful; and on carefully looking through the branches, saw that most of the teal were still sitting in innocent security on the water, while one or two were waddling about on the further bank of the river, all within shot.

He cocked his gun and stood up, thus fully exposing his person. The teal rose at the unexpected sight, and he fired his right barrel into the ruck of the huddled and frightened birds, scattering them in every direction. Several fell, and he fired his left barrel at one which was wounded and flying painfully away. His first barrel, it was found, had disposed of no less than seven—killed or severely wounded—all of which were secured by the beaters.

Hawkes had bagged nine brace of sorts, including, however, four coolen. These he had obtained by

hiding himself in their line of flight, and getting shots as they came in the morning from their feeding-grounds to the water. A little incident, deemed worthy of record in his note-book, had also occurred to him. A snipe rose out of some rushes and flew away low, as if with the object of darting behind some of the bushes which grew out in the water. Just as he dodged round the corner of one of these, and at the very moment of disappearance, Hawkes fired, but whether with success or not as regarded the snipe, he could not see. An unfortunate bird of the redshank tribe, however, took it into its head just then to cross the line of fire, and receiving a portion of the charge, fell. As redshanks, *et hoc genus*, are not esteemed as sport by the Indian gunner, Hawkes was dissatisfied with the exchange, but a further search proved that the snipe had also fallen.

The doctor and the sailor had returned to Bhooj, shooting on their way there, but their bag remains unrecorded.



CHAPTER IX.

A flying and a sitting snipe killed with one shot—Pot shots—Incidents in early life—Spearing a muggur—Hanging a muggur—Hunting pig through deep water—A boar caught, bound, and released—Riding swimming horses—Amusing scene on the Ravee—Ducking of riders—Carried away in a hill-stream—Pigs' liking for water—A boar in a well—The Runn at night.

THE party, as usual, adjourned after dinner to a blazing log outside, and talked of sporting matters in general, and their own performances in particular. Hawkes had related how the redshank had rushed to meet a death not intended for him; but Stewart was able to top it with a similar incident, but more satisfactory still in its result.

"I had ridden out one morning early in November," he said, "from Ahmedabad to a village of the name of Neelapore, about twelve or fifteen miles off, for a day's sniping, as I had heard of the arrival there of a good wisp of the long-bills. I made a capital commencement, though the birds were not very plentiful, bagging, I remember, sixteen out of the first seventeen shots. But as I happened to kill two teal with one barrel, two shots still remained misses. After

killing most of the snipe I could find in the swampy ground near Neelapore, I beat over the country towards another village, and on the way there came unexpectedly across a nice little bit of marsh, which I found contained a few snipe. It was here the circumstance occurred which led me to refer to that day's sport.

"Soon after I had entered the marsh—which was but thinly covered with short grass—a snipe rose and flew away low. I knocked him over, and on going to pick him up, found that another, which had been squatting or feeding a little further on in the same line, had likewise become wounded, and I secured him also."

"That," said Norman, "reminds me of two singular pot shots at snipe which were made by a friend and myself in my youthful days in Scotland.

"I was studying in Edinburgh then, and lived with a gentleman who took in three or four young fellows as boarders in his family. He lived in the neighbourhood of the village of Duddingstone, a couple of miles from Edinburgh, and where there is a nice sheet of water called 'Duddingstone Loch.' On one side of this rises the hill Arthur's Seat; and on the other is some very boggy land to which snipe, sometimes in considerable numbers, resort in the winter. Wild duck also occasionally visited the reeds and sedges, and moorhens were at all times to be found there.

"Such a spot was naturally one of considerable

interest to lads with sporting proclivities; and it, among other places, was the scene of a considerable amount of persevering poaching on our part.

“We began with an old horse-pistol, but not being particularly successful with that ancient weapon, which scattered shot like a blunderbuss, my brother and myself determined to invest in a gun, since the double-barrel which was considered our property at home was kept for home purposes.

“Flush with tips on our return to Edinburgh after the long vacation, we spent a holiday in making diligent search through a number of old pawn and marine store shops in the neighbourhood of the Canongate; and, at last, hit upon a single-barrelled gun which we thought suited us both in appearance and price. The latter was thirty shillings, and the former respectable. Indeed the barrel was a really good one, and, as we afterwards found, a hard hitter. This was the weapon which was a standing subject of dispute between us and our kind and worthy master—for it led to numerous complaints on the part of a neighbouring factor. Eventually, as we were prohibited to bring it near the house, we put it out to board in a neighbouring cottage, where I rather think it was left at last to pay for its keep.

“At this time there were four of us boarding with the gentleman in question, one of whom usually accompanied my brother and myself, and in consideration of

contributing his share of ammunition, shot turn about with ourselves. In all of our expeditions we were also accompanied by another well-trying and loved companion. This was a varminty Scotch terrier, who was a perfect terror to cats, an excellent dog for rabbit-shooting or hunting—a sport we patronised—and generally an animal gifted with strong sporting propensities. He was the property of my brother, whose affection he fully reciprocated.

“Excuse my diffuseness, gentlemen, but somehow, one, in later life, dwells on those wild, thoughtless, and, perhaps, scampish days, with such thorough pleasure.

“In time we came to know every inch of the ground about Duddingstone Loch ; the very spot where snipe were in the habit of settling ; where a moorhen might be fully expected to be found, and the like. Now, there was one patch of tall reeds on the very edge of the water, and to get at which we had to cross a quagmire, shaking, but firm on the surface, which we knew was the principal and favourite resort of the snipe. If they had not been disturbed, a wisp of them might be expected to be found there at favourable times. They lay very close together, so we determined one day to see what effect a pot at the reeds before they rose might have, for we had not been particularly successful in killing many on the wing.

“The place was commanded from a little promontory

on the farther side of a sluggish brook which there entered the lake, and on this we took our stand. We were, of course, not certain of there being any snipe there at all, but we had good reason to expect them. It was our friend's turn to shoot ; and after a general consultation as to the exact spot at which to aim, he fired, and a large wisp of snipe rose and darted away. We now went round to see the effect of the random shot, and we found one bird dead in the rushes.

“But that is not the only occasion on which we made a successful pot. One day I marked down a couple of snipe into a small single tuft of grass some distance out in deepish water, but within shot. It was my turn to shoot, and I fired straight into the tuft. As only one snipe went away, I rightly conjectured that its companion was killed. But I had great difficulty in securing my prize: There was, fortunately, a large log of wood close at hand ; this I floated, and getting a long piece of paling, I rested it across the log, and with the latter as a fulcrum, manœuvred it till I reached the tuft with the end of the paling, and gradually drew the snipe towards me. It was bitterly cold, and I had to wade pretty deep ; but the snipe was obtained.”

“You young rascals ought to have been flogged for taking such unfair advantages of poor snipes,” said Stewart. “I should certainly have confiscated that valuable fowling-piece with which you committed such

sporting misdeeds, had I been your master. Weren't you ever called to account by gamekeepers or others?"

"Twice by outsiders, and many times by our natural enemy, the factor. But that has nothing to do with the anecdotes I have related. Did you see any muggurs (alligators) on the Rhoda tank to-day, Mac? I seldom go there without coming across a diminutive specimen."

"Yes," was the reply. "I came unexpectedly right on to one little fellow, about five feet long. He was basking with his mouth open, on a mud bank among the bushes and reeds near the edge of the tank; and I could have hit him over the head, or speared him, if I had been provided with that weapon. He floundered away much discomposed when he awoke to a sense of my proximity, and I gave him a dose of small shot, which, I dare say, didn't even tickle him."

"Speaking of spearing muggurs," said Stewart, "recalls to my mind a curious scene where such a feat was actually performed. It happened at Dongwa, in Guzerat, where a large hunting party had assembled.

"One day, towards evening, we were returning to our camp after a good day's sport, and were quietly walking in our horses by the road which passed by the side of the village tank, when we saw a small muggur, five or six feet long, basking on the bank. We thought what a nice shot it presented, and regretted having no rifles with us. Just then, however, a native traveller,

armed with sword and matchlock, appeared coming along the road, and we pointed the animal out to him, and asked him to take a shot at it. He entered into the fun of the thing, and readily agreed. Putting a perfect handful of coarse-grained native powder down the long barrel of his matchlock, he rammed home a bullet somewhat approaching a spherical shape. This preliminary concluded, he primed and lit his match, and stalking behind a bank got within some thirty yards of the unconscious muggur. Resting his matchlock over the bank, he commenced to take aim. I say *commenced*, for, unlike the rapid aim of the English sportsman, the traveller took a long and weary time to adjust his piece and bring it to bear. Perhaps he was particularly tardy on this occasion from the desire to distinguish himself before so many sporting sahib logue. For a considerable time the matchlock remained in position, and at last the trigger, or rather the article which represented the trigger, was pushed. The powder in the pan fired for a moment, and then, with a most astounding noise, the contents were discharged, and the operator received a kick which must have much incommoded him.

“‘He’s hit! he’s hit!’ several of us exclaimed, as the luckless muggur commenced cutting the queerest imaginable capers, principally on, or by means of, his tail. He jumped about as if quite unaware what had taken place; and at first appeared so confused, that

he made no effort to seek his natural element, the water.

“Some of us seized our spears from the syces—at least, those who had them at hand, and jumped off our horses, while one or two rode, spear in hand, to the spot. One of the footmen had, however, set the example, and was the first to reach the muggur. He was a tall, strong fellow—by far the most successful in that day’s previous sport—and plunged his spear into the dancing muggur’s side. There it became fixed, either in the ribs or mail, and my friend, equally unable to withdraw it, and loth to let go his hold, was dragged towards the water; for the thrust seemed to revive the beast and arouse it to a sense of its position.

“Several of us were now around them—some on foot, some on horseback—digging away at the unfortunate beast, who soon managed to reach the water, with its principal adversary still tenaciously holding on to his spear. Into the shallow part they went, and there was a tremendous scrimmaging and splashing, as the muggur, now getting exhausted, still strove with its plucky and pertinacious assailant. Before it could reach the deep water and swim, the animal’s strength was expended, and it was obliged to succumb. The victorious spearman drew the dead muggur to shore in triumph, and we had then leisure to examine it.

“The bullet had struck it in the head, and would of



itself, probably, have proved finally fatal ; but with the extraordinary tenacity of life which these animals possess, it might easily have got away—notwithstanding the various wounds administered by myself and others—had not H—— hung on so well as he did.

“The sporting traveller was much elated at the success of his shot ; and a small *douceur* of rupees still further gratified him, and excited the envy of a number of the beaters and others, to whom he recited his part in the affair with much volubility of language and vehemence of gesture.”

“Rather a novelty in the way of shikar, certainly,” observed Mackenzie ; “few can say that they have assisted in the death of a muggur by spearing.”

“And how about hanging, then ?” asked Mowbray.

“About hanging !” ejaculated Mac. “What, hanging a muggur do you mean ?”

“I do mean hanging a muggur ; for, strange as it may seem, I once assisted in that operation.”

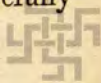
This assertion was received with some incredulity, and various expressions indicative of that feeling were uttered around. Mowbray’s head was referred to in connection with a bag ; there was a recommendation, too, in which that gallant corps, the “Marines,” was prominently mentioned ; while lively allusion was also made to a certain Baron Munchausen.

Simply saying, however, that those who held these sentiments would change their opinion when he had

related the circumstances attending the singular strangulation he had mentioned, he proceeded with his narrative.

“My regiment had just arrived at Ahmedabad, and there being a scarcity of houses in the regimental lines, my chum and myself took a very nice bungalow on the banks of the river, a quarter of a mile or more away from the lines.

“One day some of my servants reported to me that they had just seen a small muggur, lying on a sand-bank in the river ; so I loaded a single-barrelled rifle, and sallied forth. The river flowed at the end of the compound, and it had then—in the cold season—dwindled to a stream about thirty or forty yards across at that spot, the rest of the bed being occupied by an extensive waste of sand. The muggur I found lying as described just on the other side of the water, and taking aim, I put a bullet nicely behind its shoulder, in the soft part below where the elbow touches. It should have penetrated the heart, if muggurs possess any, and, at any rate, took such effect that the beast turned over on its back, apparently as dead as a herring. Seeing this, some of my people waded through the water, seized the animal by its tail, lugged it through the stream and up the bank, and finally deposited it in front of the door of the bungalow, where my chum, self, and all the servants carefully inspected it.



"Mine was evidently not the first attempt which had been made on the animal's life ; for we found that the snout, and front part of the upper jaw, had been cut clean off, leaving the lower teeth fully exposed. We conjectured that some native had stolen upon it when asleep, and—probably with an axe—made an attempt to crush its skull, but with only the partial success of depriving it of its snout. This must have happened long before, for the wound was quite healed.

"The lower teeth were very sharp, and I was remarking this to my friend—having at the time placed my foot on them—when what was left of the upper jaw opened, and the beast's eyes at the same time rolled with a glassy glare of returning life.

"I need hardly say my foot was removed at once, and I started back. Whether the drag through the water had revived the beast, or our manipulation of its body recalled it to life, I know not ; but it set-to, charging about the compound after any one that came in its way, as if possessed of pretty considerable vigour yet. I reloaded and put another bullet into it, but it seemed to have little effect.

"Its movements were, certainly, not quite so active as they might have been had it been untouched, but yet it seemed possible that it might get to the river and escape after all. One of the servants now brought me a rope, in which I made a running noose, and tried to fling it over the animal's head. But we were con-

vulsed with laughter, for its movements were irresistibly comic, and the natives skipping about here and there, more than half frightened, added to the humour of the scene. At last, I succeeded from behind in slipping the noose over the head on to its neck, and we pulled at it with the object of getting the rope hitched round a tree. A bough, however, hung temptingly near, and over this I threw the end of the rope, and my friend and others caught it, and hauled away till we had the muggur fairly suspended.

“There it remained till life became extinct, which it shortly after did, no doubt assisted by the previous wounds ; but still it died, a *hung muggur*. Now, you unbelievers, isn't that a likely enough circumstance to have happened ?”

All admitted that it certainly might be — as it actually was—a fact.

“I suppose there are no muggurs in the swamp here ?” observed Melton, inquiringly. “Your little fellows of five or six feet long may not be generally dangerous customers, but I have no idea of falling over such monsters as we have in the large rivers and swamps of Bengal. I thought I saw to-day one or two deep creeks in the black mud.”

“There are some deep pools,” replied Norman, “but they don't contain muggurs. I don't suppose they and the pig would agree very well together. A good boar would certainly be the most active on land ; but

in swimming the creeks he would have no chance. He couldn't do much in deep water, an element only adapted to him when quite shallow."

"No, that he certainly couldn't," said Danvers. "I remember hearing of a party who were out in Scinde during the time of the inundation, and regularly went in for a water hunt. Pig were driven towards a large tract of inundated land, and they fairly took to soil. The hunters, who were arrayed for the purpose, and—if I remember right—riding bare-backed, had a grand piece of fun, killing several, without the pig being able to damage them. But I have forgotten the particulars. I remember, however, that once, when I was myself out with a party at that season, an old boar was actually captured and bound.

"We had beaten a thick jungle and forced some pig out, which we rode. Another fellow—who couldn't swim—and myself, overhauled them on the brink of a deep and broadish nullah. They never hesitated for a moment, but with a mighty bound jumped as far into the water as they could, and then commenced swimming.

"I, who could swim, followed as a matter of course; but I heard sounds of lamentation and woe from my companion behind, mingled with a request for help in case of need. We were obliged to swim our horses for a short distance; but both stuck to them, and safely reached the opposite bank, where, with others

who joined us, we satisfactorily accounted for a couple of pig.

“On our return to the village, a large live boar was carried in tightly bound with thongs and withes. On inquiry, we found that he had been seen swimming across a sheet of water with one or two dogs hanging on to him. These dogs are of a very savage breed, and some of the men had brought them that day to help in turning the pig out. Seeing the pig in this helpless state, a number of the beaters plunged in and actually succeeded in binding him. At least, this was their story, and we saw no reason to doubt it. He was quite quiet now, but his twinkling little eyes gave token of the rage within.

“They wanted us, of course, to slay the unfortunate beast then and there. One or two of the hunters proposed giving him a fair start in the open and riding him; while one bloodthirsty fellow wished to spear him on foot. But the rest voted with me, that it would not be quite sportsmanlike to hunt him, and that he should be unbound and left to run and fight another day.

“The difficulty now was how to cut his bonds; for the ungrateful brute would inevitably charge his benefactors as soon as freed. One or two men, however, volunteered to do it, if we would stand by on horseback, ready to distract his attention, or rush in and save them in case of danger. This was done; and

directly the last withe was cut, the operators darted behind us, before the surly old fellow was fully aware of his release. Immediately on his realizing this, he made towards us, but seeing our firm attitude, and the crowd of villagers behind, he thought better of his intention, and with a surly grunt, turned, and trotted into the neighbouring jungle."

"It is very difficult, is it not," asked Hawkes, "to sit a swimming horse?"

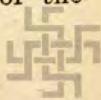
"It is difficult in a measure," was the reply, "for the water has a tendency to lift a man out of the saddle; and of course the deeper you sink, the stronger this becomes. Besides that, a horse's hind quarters sink, or seem to sink, lower than the fore, and so sometimes give the impression of his rearing. A good rider, though, can easily cling on with his legs sufficiently to retain his seat—at any rate, a very little practice would, I should think, enable him to do so. I always take the precaution of withdrawing my feet from the stirrups before entering deep water; for I find the irons get pressed back against the instep in swimming, and it then becomes difficult to slip the foot out. A man might easily be drowned by the fact of being unable to get clear of his stirrup in case of an upset."

"Well, practice both for men and horses may do something," observed Melton. "But I have had ocular proof that to sit a swimming horse is by no means an easy matter to the uninitiated. I recollect once forming

one of a party which had assembled to beat the islands of the Ravee above Mooltan, in the Punjaub, for pig. On this occasion, not one of a section, composed of six of the party, was able to swim his horse fairly across a deep channel which divided two of the islands. All were good, two indeed celebrated, riders, and I suppose that the fault in their cases was, that the horses had not been accustomed to swim; for immediately on getting out of their depth, they appeared to rear up, and in one or two instances rolled back on their riders, who got a most tremendous ducking.

“I happened to be one of two who had crossed at a ford lower down, and standing on a bluff point of the bank had leisure to contemplate and laugh at the amusing scene. It was April, and the day very hot; and but for the melodramatic appearance of the thing, both of us would have felt inclined to plunge in and join our comrades in a bath, for doubtless we should have fared as the rest. As it was, however, it so happened that we two alone of all the party were fortunate enough to see the pig and get a run, which, however, was a short one, and resulted in the hogs’ escape into the long grass jungle. These tracts form the chief — almost only — cover for pig in those parts of the country, where they live in the grass-covered alluvial flats which fringe each bank of the ‘five rivers.’ ” **

** See Appendix, Note N.



"I wonder your friends didn't seize the horses' manes," said Danvers; "a horse being so much heavier in the fore part is naturally more buoyant there in water, and the stern sinks correspondingly. This would convey the impression of rearing to the unaccustomed rider; but I imagine had they stuck well forward for awhile, they would have found it a matter of little difficulty."

"I had a narrow escape on one occasion," said Norman; "but though at one time my pony had sunk so low as to have nothing but his nose and upper part of the head above water, I succeeded in sticking to him till I was washed out of my seat by the force of the current, but not by any such rearing as Melton has described. I was shooting in the Charwa hills, on the other side of Bhooj, in the month of May, for a couple of days, and early in the morning one of those sudden hot weather storms burst upon us, and the rain came down in sheets. My tent was prostrated, and I only just managed to jump out of bed and dart out at the door as it fell. Fortunately, I selected the door to windward and so escaped being involved in the fall. It was of no use remaining any longer; so I determined to ride into cantonments at once, and accordingly made my toilet under a cart, got on my tattoo, and rode off.

"I found the streams and nullahs full of water, for the rain in the hills had been exceedingly heavy, and

I had some difficulty in crossing more than one. At last I came to a nullah where the water looked deep, and was running like a mill-race. However, I pushed my pony in ; but directly he got out of his depth the current caught him, and away we went with great velocity down stream. At one time he almost disappeared, but rose again, and we continued on our journey in the middle of the raging water, I all the time endeavouring to guide him to the bank. Ere long a stronger surge of the water fairly caught us, and we parted company. I struck out for the nearest bank, which was that I had left, and very steep, but—after being washed away in one ineffectual attempt to gain a footing—I managed to scramble out and had leisure to look after my tattoo. He was washed down a good deal lower, where the current carried him into a bend of the stream and he, too, made good his landing, but on the opposite side.

“This was unfortunate, for though I looked up and down stream for a convenient spot from which to make an effort to reach that side, the water was tearing along at such a pace that, after my recent experience, I shirked the task of endeavouring to attain my object by swimming.

“Eventually the water ran out—when the rain ceased—as rapidly as it had risen, and most fortunately for me the political agent in Cutch, who was travelling from Mandavie, arrived with an escort ; and

an hour or so after my swim we were able to ford the stream without any difficulty. The bridle of my pony had caught in some prickly-pear bushes, and he was soon captured and brought to me, and I reached Bhooj without any further adventure."

"I have been told," said Hawkes, "that the best and safest plan in cases of swimming horses in rough water, is to get out of the saddle, and gripping the horse by the mane, paddle alongside."

"I believe you are right," was Norman's reply. "A horse swims far swifter and better than a man. I have seen natives take them in that way across rivers, just keeping their own bodies immersed, and kicking out a little, but otherwise letting the horse do the principal part of the work. The old horse I have now, with a rope attached to his head-stall to guide it, was once taken by a native across the Beemah river, then in flood, and I suppose a quarter of a mile broad. The horse soon outswam the man, and, instead of being guided, pulled him in tow. I myself went over in a small boat. In crossing the Taptee they often haul the horse's head right up to the boat, so that, even if not a good swimmer, it is lugged across; but these are large ferry boats."

"To return to the circumstance of pig taking to water," said Stewart. "I suppose most of us have seen how thoroughly they enjoy a good roll in it. If a hunted pig is lost and water is near, he will most

likely be met with if the hunter proceeds there at once, as I told you in my anecdote yesterday evening. I once, however, saw a boar fall a victim to his thirst in rather a singular manner. This occurred also near Dongwa in Guzerat, and at the same meet, though not on the same day, as the muggur affair I have already described.

“We had hunted, and slightly wounded, a large boar, and losing sight of him for a brief space among the prickly-pear hedges which surround the fields in that part, marvelled to see nothing of the beast as we jumped into the open field into which he had entered. Shortly before he had been viewed by several of us, and his sudden disappearance was unaccountable. The earth seemed to have swallowed him up. We rode to and fro, but there was nothing to be seen of him : till at last a peasant came up to one of the riders, pointed to the middle of the field, and beckoned him to go along with him. He went, and was conducted to a slight dip in the ground, in the lowest part of which a well-pit had been dug out—as a trough indicated—for the watering of cattle.

“The water was within two or three feet of the surface ; and on looking in my friend saw a pig swimming about, and making strenuous efforts to climb on to the bank and get out, but without success. The pig eyed him savagely and snorted rage and defiance, and the hunter, shouting to the rest of us, jumped

off his horse, and without taking time for consideration, commenced prodding at the unfortunate occupant of the well. We were all soon around ; and some on foot, some from horseback, engaged in digging at the poor beast, who soon succumbed with numerous wounds.

“When he was dragged out, and we reflected on the exceedingly dirty advantage we had taken of poor piggie’s thirst and natural inclination for water, I confess I, for one, felt considerably ashamed of the part I had taken in the porcicidal act.

“It was the lost, wounded boar, who seeing water, and finding it easy of reach, had evidently plunged in headlong, regardless of the difficulty there might be in getting out again.”

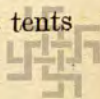
“Yes,” remarked Mackenzie, “a pig will do anything for a roll in water when distressed. I have seen them fling themselves down in it even when closely pressed by the hunters ; and I don’t wonder at it, for it revives them wonderfully. They run and fight after a dip in and lap at water, as if they were quite fresh.”

After one or two had related instances in illustration of the revivifying effect of water on hunted pigs, in respect both of its internal and external application, the party broke up, and most of them were soon enjoying that “uncurtained sleep,” the natural result of healthy and invigorating exercise. A couple of

them, however, having their yet unfinished cheroots still smoking, and seduced by the brilliant, unclouded beauty of a moon near its full, pulled their wraps more tightly round their frames—for the night air was very chill—and sauntered to a neighbouring rise in the ground. They had seen the wild and desolate landscape of the "Runn" as it appeared in the early morn, and under the glare and heat of the noon-day sun, and now they looked on it in the calm, cold light of an Indian winter's moon.

Both were true, keen sportsmen, and deeply alive to all the beauties of this glorious world. With the manly, adventurous nature, was associated an almost tender love and appreciation of the external beauties and varying aspects of the scenes into which their pursuit led them.

The sheets of water and the salt-encrusted waste of sand shimmered and sparkled in the moonbeams, while the distance sank by imperceptible gradations into a mellow haze of semi-luminous vapour. The hills to the right were bold and defined in outline, looking nearer than they actually were, and the neighbouring trees loomed large as they stood out against the moonlit sky. The night was calm, but ever and anon the sighing night air came creeping over the waste with a low wailing murmur, and the leaves were stirred into gladness, and their shadows danced on the white tents beneath in a million of fantastic evolutions.



But the dreamy solitude of night was broken by the sounds of life which came from the marsh and its adjacent waters. The splash of the wild-duck settling, as flock after flock came swooping down, might be heard at intervals, and occasionally also the rushing sound of their pinions overhead as a flight swept past on its swift and trackless course. Strange sounds of pipings and boomings, too, would arise from the marsh, and mix with the croaking of frogs,—sounds undetected in the noisy hum of daylight, but now clearly and distinctly audible. The jackals howled at intervals ; and a distant wail, like a child's lamentation, announced the presence of a grisly hyæna—a sound only rivalled by the despairing melancholy of the hoot of an owl.

The two men, Norman and Mowbray, were neither of them strictly—so-called—religious, but they walked back to their tents quiet and subdued, not unimpressed by the wild solitariness of the scene ; perhaps, for the moment, with minds attuned to rise from the contemplation of the visible handiwork of its Creator to Him who had made it.



CHAPTER X.

The Dooree jungle blank—What is sauce for the goose is not sauce for the fowl—Beef or pork—A couple of sows found and accounted for—Sniping—A strange ailment—Orders for the march—A couple of lucky shots—A wild day's shooting in the Hazara—Sniping on the Euphrates—Unlucky spots—A tigress' death lamented—Native irrepressibility—An unmitigated sell—Escape of two tigers.

NATTA came in very early next morning—indeed, before the hunters had prepared for breakfast—and reported that he had only been to visit the thick jungle and swamp, which he had found deserted. He admitted that one or two might be lingering in the jungle; but after the difficulty experienced on the previous day in persuading anything to break, he deemed that it would be lost time attempting a beat there on this day, when it was doubtful even if the cover contained a boar. He considered, rather, that the hunters should endeavour to get a run by pugging whatever pig might be about into the nullahs and clumps of jungle between Dooree and the hills; and with this intent he had dispatched trackers in different directions.



"Then the swamp is open for shooting!" ejaculated Mackenzie, enquiringly. "Begad, won't I tickle up the snipe!"

"Why, yes, I suppose so," said Norman, meditatively. "I certainly expected to get more out of the Dooree jungle; but I hear the villagers have been shooting pig all about the villages in this neighbourhood. They say the Rao has taken off the interdict against destroying them."

"Then the Rao ought to be flogged!" exclaimed Stewart, with the most culpable irreverence for the flesh of the Lord's anointed.

"Ay, ay!" said Mowbray, the political, "that is very well. But you see in this case what is sauce for the goose may indeed be sauce for the gander, but yet be anything but a desirable addition for a fowl. I think the Rao is quite right. In fact, the preservation of pig, however delightful a thing for English hunters, yields considerably less gratification to the villagers themselves. With crops in the ground, they somehow entertain a rooted aversion to the near neighbourhood of swine and their nightly depredations—or perhaps I should say rootings. Let us make the most of what we have, and entertain some consideration for the wretched people about us."

"There speaks the embryo political agent and haunter of the abodes of princes. Avaunt, thou man of Durbars! Why should I not desire chastisement

to be inflicted on the person of his atta-anointed Highness? The chief of these realms has persistently declined to permit the gratification of the natural British appetite for beef, and my men grumble greatly at the deprivation. Surely he can't do less than allow us to supply its place with pork. It is for him to compensate the villagers, if they are losers. You may depend upon it, they wouldn't care if we lived on bullocks."

"Rather an ingenious way of putting the argument, certainly. Where slaughter of kine is prohibited, you would have the natives to preserve game, especially pigs, as a substitute?"

"I would, most exalted adviser of princes; and I recommend you, when accredited to the court of some royal Highness in Rajpootana, to impress on his benighted mind your conviction, that the consumption of either beef or pork is necessary to the maintenance of Englishmen in a tranquil and peaceable state of mind. You might hint that thrones have been lost for less."

"And supposing then he offered to supply any amount of tame village pigs!"

"I should kick him for the impertinence of his suggestion," was the pugnacious reply. "By pork, of course I mean the flesh of wild pigs slain in a fair field, and by the sweat of the brow—not village scavengers."

“Well, some of the chiefs of Rajpootana might certainly supply you ; for they have regular preserves, with shooting-boxes and towers erected at favourable intervals. Towards these buildings the pig are attracted by being regularly fed from them ; so when the king is minded to go out shooting, he enters with the favourites of his court into one of these places, and pots the unfortunate porkers as they approach in unsuspecting security. Some parts of the country are completely overrun. However, there is plenty of waste land, so it does not so much signify.”

“A fine idea of sport that!” observed Mackenzie ; “but, after all, not very much worse than shooting tame pheasants in a battue—except that pigs were born only to be hunted, not shot. But I suppose there are some men who would really prefer sticking at the corner of a cover and potting pheasants as fast as they could load—or rather, men load for them—to trudging through the deep slush and swamp and tangled jow, and, with some hard work, get a good day’s wild-snipe shooting, such as I expect to-day. It’s a matter of taste, perhaps, but give me the latter.”

“Do you know,” continued the heavy-weight, to whom shooting was more adapted than hunting, “I am rather glad there are no pig in the jungle ; for I long to work my wicked will off the snipe.”

During breakfast the parties for the day were made up. Owing to the uncertainty attending the hunting,

but three—Mowbray, Vivian, and Melton—expressed their determination to stick to the pig. It was arranged that three should beat the swampy ground for snipe, and the remaining two visit the tanks at Rhoda, Tooreea, and other places.

It was noon before Natta sent in to say that he had marked down a couple of pig near Kotye—the village under the hills—and thither the small party of hunters proceeded.

One of the interminable patches of jungle was pointed out as the residence of the pig, and a few persuasive arguments in the shapes of stones and clods of earth, combined with others of a vocal nature, soon had the desired effect. One of the pig—a fair-sized one—came out, and dashed away in the direction of the Dooree jungle. Mowbray got away close after it, followed at some distance by Vivian. There was one circumstance, and one only, attending its death which is particularly deserving of record. It was killed with a single spear-thrust. The pig—a sow—was a very fast one, and though Mowbray got away so close behind and raced it all the way at full speed, the sow had made about half the distance to the swamp before he could turn it. He here managed to press the animal from the strips of jungle through which its course had principally lain, and drove it into and across an open field. It jinked as he closed, but, following the plan of riding at the head to inter-

cept it, he approached diagonally with the usual effect. It came at him, received the spear well over the shoulder, and dropt as he wheeled his horse after the encounter and prepared to do battle afresh. It was an exceedingly quick thing altogether, and Vivian never had a chance of spearing.

Melton had got away after the companion, which took nearly in the same direction, and the two rode off to join in the pursuit, if possible, or give such assistance as might be required. Directed by the shouting of a few of the men, they made towards the jungle, and, after searching about for some time, saw Melton emerging from amidst the jow in the swamp. He had not obtained so good a start as Mowbray, and only overhauled his pig on the edge of the marsh, where he speared, and eventually finished it in the mud itself. It was a sow also, of nearly the same size as the other. Both were young, lanky, active animals, in fine running condition.

Efforts were made after this to find more pig, but without success, and the hunters returned to camp.

The snipers met with very fair sport. One of them left off early with twelve couple bagged, while the other two shot on till the afternoon, and killed forty-one couple between them, together with a hare and a few quail. There was a strong wind blowing all day, and the snipe were very wild ; which, combined with the difficulty of wading through the deep mud and the

tangled jow bushes, rendered shooting no easy task ; many birds, too, were lost in the undergrowth. What struck all as being singular, and most unusual as far as their experience went, was, that the jacks were in proportion to the full snipe as four to one.

The tank shooters had been also fairly successful. One returned with eight and a half brace of duck and teal, three brace of partridge, two brace of quail, and a hare. The other had five brace of duck and teal, and a few couple of snipe and quail.

At the usual sederunt round the camp-fire after dinner, the future movements of the party were discussed, and the following arrangements arrived at. It was agreed that they should try and find a boar in the lower portion of the hills on the morrow, and afterwards ride in to Bhooj. The following day was Sunday, and this it was proposed to spend in cantonments, giving the tents and baggage time to march towards the Chitranû hills to the westward, in the district of Cutch, known as the "Arbrasser."

The curious old hill fort of Seesagud was named as the spot where the hunt should re-meet on the Monday evening. It was hoped pig would be found in the vicinity ; and the cultivated land about Mhow and some of the neighbouring reedy nullahs were pretty sure to be well stocked with quail and a few blacks. About half-way there, also, the Charwa range of hills had to be crossed, and in them neilghye might with

confidence be expected to be found. They were noted, too, as florikan ground during the monsoon months; but at this season these birds had migrated to other regions.

These matters decided, Manuel was first called and informed of the arrangements, and was desired to have the mess gear in marching order after an early breakfast next morning.

Natta was next called, but was reported to be at that moment in a delicate state of health. The informant supplemented this statement by observing that the old man complained of having a pig in his stomach—at least, so the expression made use of sounded to several of the party.

“That’s a queer complaint,” said Hawkes; “I shall go and have a look at the old fellow.”

Accompanied by one or two others, he did so, and found the old fellow outside his diminutive dwelling, lying extended at full length, with his stomach on the ground, and two of the shikarees alternately stamping on and kneading his back with their feet. This exceedingly uncomfortable-looking process was deemed, however, by both operated on and operators as a legitimate remedy for the malady complained of—the result of hard work and abstinence.

It leaked out, however, that these remedial measures were considered neither the most certain or efficacious, and only resorted to in the absence of

strong internal stimulant, such as brandy or other alcoholic stomachic.

On this hint, Hawkes ordered some brandy ; and a glass or two tossed into the wizened stomach of the old man, had a marked revivifying effect, and obviated the necessity of being any further walked upon.



NATTA AT HOME.

When made aware of the proposed change, the old shikaree was good enough to intimate his entire approval of the scheme, and expressed himself as certain to show a fine boar to the hunters in the hills on the day following, if good pugging could do it.

In recounting the particulars of the day's sport,

Stewart mentioned two particularly successful shots he had made.

“I was beating the high grass in the vicinity of Rhoda tank,” he said, “and had just knocked over a quail with my right barrel, when I heard a whirring overhead, and a flock of teal swept down towards the tank. I had just time to pour in the contents of my left barrel before they were out of reach, and down came three into the grass. I afterwards went down to the river, towards which numerous flocks of ducks had gone, beating against the wind in long irregular lines. There I obtained another successful shot at a flock of teal, which rose from a pool in the face of the wind, and then circled round just above a cliff which overhung the river. A longish shot dropped several on to the top of the cliff, I being at the bottom ; and, on searching there, we picked up four. Not quite such a successful shot as that of Mackenzie yesterday, but still resulting in very nice additions to the bag. Out of my seventeen duck and teal, I had five or six different species.”

“The variety of duck to be found in India is certainly very great,” said Melton. “But I think in no country have I found it more so than in that of the Upper Indus and its tributaries. I recollect five being shot off a small pool near Attock, each one of a different species ; and I myself had once a most enjoyable morning’s duck shooting during the Umbeyla

campaign, at the mouth of the Sirun, at Torbéla, in the Upper Hazara country. On that occasion, out of eight couple bagged, seven different species were found, including, I remember, a splendid specimen of the great mountain mallard.

"The day was a very tempestuous one. A heavy gale was roaring down the river from the wild gorges about Umb and the mountains above Derbund, where our camp lay during the winter of 1863-64, and flights of duck and teal were blown about in all directions. One incident of the day's sport worth commemorating was a successful right and left. I brought down a teal far up to windward with one barrel, say at an angle of 45 degrees, when, turning to aim at another, which I also killed, the first in falling struck the brim of my hat, and dropped dead at my feet, just as I had pulled the second trigger.

"Once scattered, the ducks went down the river before the wind, and then a very remarkable sight presented itself. They all seemed to rally, and forming one long line, stretching from bank to bank, right across the river, there some hundred yards broad, worked their flight slowly up on their return. The wind was so strong that their progress was but slow, certainly not much faster than a man could walk, and I was enabled to mount my horse and gallop towards them, near enough to get a raking shot, had the animal I rode been steady enough to have allowed me

to aim. The little Arab, however, had been excited by a long gallop across the sands from the mouth of the Sirun, close opposite to the fort and village of Kubbul, on the other bank of the river. This was still held by a few of the enemy, the remnant of the Sitana fanatics, at that time engaged with the force under Sir N. Chamberlain in the Umbeyla pass across the Indus. Sitana itself was distant scarcely three miles up the river, and altogether, shooting under the very nose of the enemy added somewhat to the zest of one of the pleasantest day's wild fowl shooting I ever had.

"It came on to rain, occasionally mixed with bitter sleet, in the afternoon, and I was glad to accomplish the sixteen miles into camp at Derbund before night-fall." **

"That zest you speak of—the chance of being potted by an enemy—is, I take it, a matter of taste, Melton," said Norman; "but I must confess that when the chance is *very* small, it does lend a certain sort of piquancy to sport. I felt it somewhat when a day or two after we had captured the forts of Mohumra on the Euphrates, in the Persian war, and the Iranee army had retreated towards Ahwaz, I went out and killed a few snipe on that classic ground, just beyond the lesser forts on the side of the Hufur river, opposite to our camp. The swamp lay in the angle formed by the junction of the latter river with the Euphrates,

** See Appendix, Note N.

or Shat-el-Arab, as it is there called. I was paddled across in a small ship's boat, accompanied by a servant of my own, and I wandered through some deep mud and water, and struggled through a lot of bushes, in the hope of picking up something. We were bivouacking in the date-groves at the time, and not over well off in the matter of supplies. I had, however, managed to get hold of my gun and some ammunition from the ship which had brought me and a portion of my regiment from Bushire, and thus armed, I tried my luck, as I have said, on the opposite shore, partly with the object of being the first in the force to bag a snipe on the Euphrates.

“Unfortunately the tide was in, and the few snipe I found were excessively wild, flying away to places where I was unable to follow them. I bagged but a couple and a half, and knocked over a brace of blacks among the bushes, losing, however, one of them. It was soon after this that I met an armed man sneaking about. He had the appearance of a Beloochee, many of whom were said to be in the Persian service, and I regarded him with some suspicion as I approached him in that unfrequented spot. When he saw me, he hesitated, and seemed inclined to avoid a closer acquaintance. As he could not understand me, or I him, I was unable to learn what he wanted there. However, he took himself away, and I soon after returned to camp across the Hufur, having had the zest to my sport



increased quite as much as I cared for, not knowing how many stray blackguards there might have been concealed, ready for any little bit of looting."

The conversation now turned on the subject of the "Dooree jungle," and the singularly good cover it afforded for pig and snipe.

"It certainly does nearly always contain pig," observed Norman. "I have beaten it now many times, and never blank, but still with a want of success in killing. The only large boar I ever killed, or saw killed, near it, was that of which I gave you a description the other evening, and that was not driven from the jungle itself. I have run one or two good ones into it, but none out. Luck, somehow, seems to stick to certain places."

"Indeed it does so," said Mowbray. "I know a nice little beat in Rajpootana, which is safe to hold a tiger. Twice I have visited it—once alone—and each time been successful in turning up game, but as far as I myself was concerned, without success in bagging anything.

"The period of my first visit was the same that I have before referred to, when I was ordered to join a force near Kotah to assist in hunting Tantia Topee. I had received the order at Neemuch, and made the best of my way from that place by a wild, jungly, and rarely-frequented route—at least, as regards the latter half of it. An exceedingly beast-ridden tract of country it is.

“On my arrival at Singhowlee, which is about half way, and a small town of some local importance, a dead panther was brought in. It had been killed by some travelling *jôgies*, who had shot it close to the road on which I was at that moment riding.

“As I was on political employ, and consequently a person of some importance in those parts, the dignitaries of Singhowlee met me on my approach, and, in reply to my usual inquiries on the subject of shikar in the vicinity, informed me that tigers and bears were to be found within three or four miles. At about that distance, an abrupt range of hills rose from the more level ground on this side; but instead of dropping as suddenly on the other, they sloped away gradually and imperceptibly, forming at first, indeed, a tolerably level table-land, studded with eminences. From this rock-faced barrier were cut re-entering gorges or clefts, which in some instances penetrated back well into the table-land, and were there called “koondahs.” One or two of these were reported to be nearly certain finds, so I made arrangements for a beat.

“I should mention that on the previous day I had beaten unsuccessfully the bed of a river and the range of hills above it, in the neighbourhood of Ruttunghur. I had on that occasion been accompanied, to my great dissatisfaction, by the principal civil functionary and a fat jemadar of police, who, from a highly strained sense of duty, considered such a compliment to me

necessary. The former was most respectably, but, for sporting purposes, somewhat too conspicuously clad in an entire suit of white clothing. Verily, I think if a tiger had appeared near them, somebody would have been the sufferer. I posted them, of course, far away from myself, and eventually had the gratification of leaving my native friends, who were decidedly out of condition, dead beat in the jungles.

“On this occasion I told the functionaries of Singhowlee, that if they insisted on accompanying me to the field, they must do so in a costume befitting the jungles. This they promised to do, and kept their word.

“The men who had killed the panther in the morning were a lot of sporting *jôgies*, or some other tribe of religious mendicants, and many of them were armed with matchlocks. These fellows I engaged to assist in the beat.

“After breakfast I rode off to a village near the foot of the hills, with my retinue, *jôgies* and all. From that and neighbouring villages we managed to collect about fifty or sixty beaters, and I issued a small supply of powder to my matchlock-men, with strict injunctions that on no account were they to load with ball. My object was to have them placed in or near some of the outlets, and by keeping up a continuous fire drive anything attempting to break there back towards me.

“The first place we tried was one of the ‘koondahs,’ and a very sweet, gamy-looking spot it was. It was, as I have explained, cut clean out of the face of the hills. Some portions of its sides were rent and fissured walls of rock; other parts, less precipitous, were accessible, though steep. A nullah received the drainage of the land above by various channels, and escaped into the plain through the neck of the gorge. It was here I was posted, sending the men by a circuitous route to the table-land above, with the object of beating from the tops of the cliffs and head of the koondah, which there became embayed behind a projecting spur of hill. My position was in a tree about midway between the two shoulders of the hill, which were divided by a space of less than a hundred yards. Some of the *jôgies* were posted in trees near likely ways of exit from the jungle, while the rest kept up a fusillade along with the beaters.

“I had, from my position, a good view of a portion of the operations, and watched with interest blocks of rock rolled down crashing into the gorge below, and the large stones hurled further in among the bushes.

“Soon after the beat commenced, a prolonged howling, followed by several shots, announced that something was on foot. I thought one or two of the shots sounded rather sharp and distinct for blank powder; indeed, once I fancied that I detected the pinging of a bullet; still I fondly hoped that my ears deceived me,

and that my instructions were merely being carried out with regard to blank charges. Nothing came past my post, but the extra yelling still continued, and the excited beating of the tom-toms proclaimed that game was yet astir. Presently this diminished, and a single shot was fired far away up the hill, where the precipitous wall beyond became merged in a slope. This was succeeded by a solitary yell, which was caught up by the beaters, and a great uproar ensued. For some time I couldn't make out what had taken place ; but I was ere long relieved of my uncertainty by being told, with every mark of satisfaction and triumph, that the tiger was killed.

“The gleeful native who informed me of this circumstance, and probably thought that it would be equally a matter of rejoicing to me, evinced a trembling surprise when, instead of praise, I poured unlimited abuse on the devoted *jôgie* who had polished the tiger off. It appeared that, utterly regardless of my instructions, most of them must have loaded with ball, for the tigress, as it proved to be, had been viewed creeping up the hill, and fired at without success. One of them, however, had stationed himself in a tree, or on a rock, directly in the animal's path, and bringing the end of his long matchlock within a few yards of the beast, had, with a single bullet, then and there shot it dead.

“I was greatly annoyed, and ordered the culprit

scoundrels began shouting aloud and waving his cloth to intimate that the tiger was coming. So indeed it was; but warned in time it turned aside, and all I saw of the beast was a momentary glimpse I obtained as it trotted away through some high grass on the top of the hill; but before I could bring up my gun it had disappeared.

“The other koondah, on this day, held nothing, for it was too early in the season, and big game were yet much scattered, water being plentiful. A few samber certainly were turned up, but at these of course we did not fire when on the look-out for nobler animals. Now I have never been so successful elsewhere in finding game by merely beating on spec, and I think never so unlucky as to killing.”

“What an abundance of game, though, there must be in those parts,” said Danvers. “To turn up two tigers and two bears during a beat on mere speculation, was what could be done in few countries. The circumstance you mention of the fellow shouting in the tree and frightening the tiger, reminds me of a somewhat similar occurrence which took place on Mount Aboo.

“Aboo is, I dare say you all know, a hill station at the south-western extremity of the Aravelly range of hills, which stretches from near Delhi to within about forty miles of the military station at Deesa. Though actually but the end of the range, it is so much higher

than its neighbours as to be isolated in fact. The invalids and sickly men of the European regiment quartered at Deesa, are sent to the hill for the sake of the climate ; barracks have been built there for their accommodation. I was up there one season, and temporarily kept a local shikaree, who was constantly on the look-out for game ; for there were tigers, panthers, and bears to be found, and samber were to be had for the beating.

“One afternoon my shikaree came in to say that after following a family party, consisting of a couple of tigers, with two young ones, all the morning, he had at last come upon them in action with a bull buffalo. He declared that he had seen the whole combat from the top of a hillock not far distant, and described to me how the buffalo fought for a long time, though with both tigers engaged. I must confess that, as I knew the man to be possessed of a more than average ability for lying, and one not infrequently employed, I somewhat mistrusted the entire truth of his narrative. The details, however, were very circumstantial, and, as I afterwards found considerable corroboration of them, it is very possible he may really have witnessed the whole affair.

“Most unfortunately, the little mess of three, of which I was one, were engaged that evening as hosts to entertain a party of the hill residents to dinner, and subsequent *vingt-un*. My shikaree, however, appeared

sanguine that the tigers would visit the carcase of the buffalo early in the evening, as the beast had been but slightly fed upon, and they were hungry, having effected no kill for some days previously. Under the circumstances I determined, at any rate, to try and get an early shot, for my man had already prepared a "muchan" in a neighbouring tree overlooking the scene of the kill. This decided, I sent down to the companions with whom I messed, and one of them, equipped for business, soon joined me with his guns, and we lost no time in sallying forth.

"The spot was about half a mile beyond the village of Dilwarra, a great place of pilgrimage, renowned for its sanctity, and its beautifully cut old temples of white marble. This village lay at the distance of about a mile from my house.

"The plateau of Aboo is upwards of 4000 feet above the sea level, and forms an irregular and uneven basin, surrounded by wild rocky peaks and fells. The highest of these—Gooroo Sikur—towers some 1500 feet above the general level of the plateau itself. The basin is broken up into pieces of flat cultivated ground, alternating with rocky knolls and jungle-covered hills and ridges, and curious huge boulders of granite. It is traversed by numerous nullahs, which, in the monsoon, are rampant streams. The watershed is not any ridge in the central plateau itself, but is contained in the encircling band of peaks, which, in some instances,

throw their drainage into the interior. This, in part, serves to supply the pretty island-studded Nuki lake, and thence escapes down the mountain side through a narrow gorge. Many other outlets there are, which principally carry off the water from the external slopes of the girding watershed.

“The mountain is very steep, in many parts precipitously abrupt, till it becomes merged in the lower hills at its base, or meets the plain.

“The scene of the kill was just under and within the outer ridge of rocky, jungle heights, from which at that point issued a stream. After being joined by another, this flowed across the plateau, and subsequently entered the lake.

“We were not long in reaching the spot, and a very brief inspection served to show that there had indeed been a severe struggle. The dead body of the buffalo was now lying on the edge of the stream, partly in, partly out of the water. But the bank above, from which it must have fallen, was torn up, and deeply indented with numerous hoof-prints, showing where the death-fight had taken place. The carcase was but little eaten ; a small portion—as usual, about the hind part—being all that had been consumed, in addition to the blood sucked from the throat. Beyond the buffalo, and on the side of the stream opposite to that which had been the scene of the battle, were two or three fair-sized trees, in one of which my

shikaree had constructed a rough muchan, or sitting-place.

“Our arrangements were soon completed. We climbed into our nest, and, after receiving our batteries, and being joined by my shikaree to act as a look-out, we sent all the men away towards the village.

“The shadows of evening soon fell, and the sun went down without our seeing, or indeed expecting to see, anything. But the tigers were hungry, for my man knew that they had made no recent kill, and he confidently expected their visit before it became too dark to see them. There was no moon in the early part of the night.

“The only circumstance which occurred to cause us any solicitude before the deep gloaming stole on the surrounding jungle, was the passing of a party of Bheel girls by a path behind the position occupied by us. They were returning from their daily occupation of cutting grass and wood, and it was with some trepidation I heard their chatter and laughter as, unconscious of their neighbours, they passed on their way. We knew not for certain in which direction the tigers were lying, but expected that wherever the selected place was, it must be in the immediate vicinity. It was, therefore, with a feeling of relief that we heard the laughter of the light-hearted girls die away in the distance.

“I was calculating that we should certainly be very late for dinner, and that our mess comrade would have for some time to perform alone the duties of host, when my friend gave me a nudge, and I could see in the waning light that he was looking considerably excited, and preparing for action.

“As I quietly cocked my rifle, I looked in the direction to which the muzzle of his gun was pointed, but saw nothing. In another half minute, however, a lengthened yell broke the stillness which was fast settling down on the jungle, and awoke the mountain echoes. This was prolonged into a maze of sound, as the yelling continued uninterruptedly from a tree in our vicinity. By whom caused, or for what purpose, we were for some time in helpless ignorance. At last, after repeated inquiries, the yelling ceased, and a tremulous voice replied, in answer to our interrogatories, ‘that the tigers had come to the foot of the tree then containing the speaker, and had snuffed at his pair of shoes left there. Thereupon, excessive fright had ensued, and created the disturbance we had heard.’

“Gad ! sir, how my fingers itched to have that fellow by the throat. He was a servant of my friend’s who, disregarding our positive orders, had climbed into a neighbouring tree, instead of going away with the rest of the men, perhaps deeming himself safer near us than with them. I felt that, if that unhappy man had

been in our tree, I should inevitably have kicked him out of it, and then gone below and kicked him up again.

“My friend, it appeared, had seen the two large tigers passing through some bushes a short distance off, evidently feeling their way, as they generally do, before coming to their banquet. The shikaree had also seen them, still nearer, when they approached the tree in which my friend’s rascal was seated, and we should probably in another minute or so have had them under our fire at a distance not exceeding twenty paces.

“We waited for some time longer, till too dark to see, in fact, and then reluctantly descended, and made our way towards the village. But it was not in the nature of man to allow the culprit to escape scathless. My friend got hold of the trembling wretch and administered chastisement, though not, I confess, with such severity as I thought the magnitude of the offence demanded.

“We were of course late by an hour for dinner, which was over on our arrival; but our guests hardly required apologies on our part for not being present to receive them, when such excellent excuse as the possible slaughter of a tiger was offered. Moreover, our ill-success and its cause gave them an opportunity of making a good many exceedingly poor jokes—at least, we failed to appreciate them—and

we had to undergo a considerable amount of chaff."

After some further conversation on the subject of unlucky spots, and the pertinacious way in which many natives will halloo in the very face of the approaching game, the party separated, and the night-hush soon after fell on the slumbering little camp.



CHAPTER XI.

A discussion on the subject of spear and spearing—Pugging—The excellence of the Cutch pugges—A fine example—The boar found, run, and lost—The Station of Bhooj—A sporting subaltern's bungalow.

THERE was much bustle as day dawned on the little camp. The hunters had determined to ride forth betimes, and, accompanied by their breakfast, proceed to a certain spot indicated by Natta, there to await an intimation from him that a track had been found, or such khubber as he might send. This arrangement had, moreover, the advantage of allowing the tents to be at once struck, and the equipage proceed on its journey.

So, amid the hum of many voices—not infrequently rising into tones of altercation—the hammering of tent pegs, and the gurgly groanings of camels, the sportsmen mounted their horses in the early morning, and, accompanied by their syces and a few men carrying edibles and potables, moved at a quiet pace towards the rendezvous.

Natta, with his assistant shikarees, had preceded the hunters by a couple of hours, so as to get on the track of any likely boar, while the pug was yet fresh and undimmed by sun or wind.



The appointed spot was in the neighbourhood of the temples of Rhoda-Mata, and there under a tree the early jungle breakfast was discussed with a relish, healthy appetites and the bracing morning air induced.

"Now that you have had some practice," asked Norman of the Bengalee, as they indolently puffed at their cheroots, "won't you confess that you prefer the Bombay fashion of spear, and our manner of holding and using it?"

"Of course there is much to be said in its favour, especially in riding on open ground," was the reply. And then thinking that perhaps he had admitted too much, and not wishing unnecessarily to add to the vaunting conceit of the "Ducks," added, "You know I have not ridden much in the grass tracts of Lower Bengal, where, doubtless, a short, leaded spear, carried job-fashion, is the best, and most adapted to the country."

"But it is as much javelin as spear," said Mowbray ; "for I understand you throw it."

"Certainly we do when in close pursuit. It is a more classical method than yours. We have Homeric authority for it. Did not Achilles pink the charging Hector with a well-aimed cast just between neck and shoulder? Many a 'well-greaved' Greek and Trojan fell in the same way."

"Ay," returned Mowbray ; "but, remember, Achilles missed his first cast. Besides, you Bengalese

don't throw at charging boars, I believe ; so the classical parallel won't hold."

"Well, I could find many others from the same source. But as you say, Mowbray, we usually receive the boar with spear in hand ; only, instead of holding it as you do, like a lance, we are obliged to grasp our far shorter weapon as a javelin,—that is, with fingers uppermost, and job down as the boar comes within reach."

"I suppose, though," said Norman, "as you have such a weight of lead at the end, and are therefore able to grasp the spear far back, you have almost as much in front of the hand as we have who hold it more in the centre for the sake of balance."

"Reckoning your spear to be nine feet or so in length, and ours about six, I should fancy there could not be very much difference. It is the way of using it in which lies the advantage or disadvantage, whichever it may be. It seems to me a safer method of carrying the spear with the blade down, and pointing to the ground."

"It may be so," was the reply, "especially with tyros. It must also, I conceive, be more easily brought into action on a sudden emergency, such as must often occur in riding through grass, and be more manageable when thrusting over the bridle-hand, if a boar happen to charge on that side. Still, for thrusting generally, and especially in charges, and for most purposes, indeed, I

greatly prefer our method, which I think has been adopted in the north of India, and has been always in use in Madras. It is certainly more suited to open ground."



MODES OF HANDLING THE SPEAR.

"I saw some engravings the other day," said Danvers, "representing the sport of pig-sticking. Most wonderful boars, certainly, they were in appearance, though—an unusual fault in depicting animals in Indian sporting scenes—far too small. The riders were represented as having spears of something like a dozen feet in length, which they carried fixed to the side under the arm, *in rest*. I have certainly seen a few men do so, especially when new to the work; but most of us, I believe, carry our weapons loose, with a light and easy play of the wrist, so as to be able to draw the hand back and thrust, instead of making the spear a fixed engine, held firm under the arm with the

elbow pressed to the side. The latter must sometimes be very awkward, and apt to lift a man out of his saddle should he strike the ground, a very probable contingency. I never carry my spear so myself under any circumstances.*

"Nor I," "Nor I," reiterated several others of the party, just as old Natta approached the group, and with a salaam, made with a flourish and kick back of one leg, intended as a salute for the company generally, stood waiting to be questioned.

Those who yet lingered over their breakfasts hurried to finish, for the old man reported that he had come across the track of a very fine boar, which he thought might be harboured in a woody nullah just opposite the Rhoda temples, occasionally a favourite resort of pig. Thither he had sent the other puggees to ascertain, and requested that the sahibs would at once mount and accompany him.

Little time was lost in acting on this recommendation, and the party was soon *en route* along the bank of the river to the place in question. It was a gully which cut through a low ridge, there forming a natural bank to the river. Within a brief distance was a ravine whose sides, for the most part precipitous, formed an extremely awkward place to come across at full gallop. So clean was the channel cut away that, till closely approached, the yawning gulf was undis-

* See Appendix, Note A.

coverable. Beyond the gorge, towards the higher hills, the country consisted at first of fair ground, studded with bushes, but afterwards became broken, irregular, and rough. Bits of level there were, but scant of vegetation, and well garnished with rock and stones, and seamed by various deep nullahs and ravines. It gradually rose towards the spurs of the hills, which were very rugged, and presented most difficult riding-ground.

The gully was soon reached, but the puggees had just completed ringing it, and found that, though the boar had paid it a visit during his early morning wanderings, he had passed through, and gone on towards the hills. The cover harboured no other pig. It therefore behoved the party to settle down to a bit of good, hard pugging, and there were few men who could better perform that difficult and most important accomplishment in woodcraft than the five shikarees who, under the leadership of old Natta, that day gave proof to what perfection the science could be carried.

Desiring Norman to keep the riders in the rear, and not overrun the line, but let the men work well ahead, Natta and his little band girded themselves for the task, and, after a refreshing whiff or two at their pipes, struck the trail.

Natta was, of course, director and leader, and at first took little part in the pugging. As long as there

could be no doubt or difficulty in carrying it on, his assistance was not requisite. Occasionally glancing to earth, as a sort of acknowledgment of its correctness, he let the others do the active work. Indeed, one, or perhaps a couple of the puggees—the individuals changing at times accordingly as the trail turned or



PUGGING.—A BURNING SCENT—NATTA SATISFIED.

inclined to one direction or the other—were quite sufficient for the purpose. The pug was plainly discernible in the somewhat soft and easy surface at first traversed, and Natta strode along in the rear of the more advanced, who carried the scent breast high at a long, rapid, walking stride.

Two of the puggees were inhabitants of Dooree. One of these was a half-bred Seedee, a race of African origin, frequently found in Cutch, owing to its mari-

time connection with the Arabian and African coasts. Agreeably with the physical characteristics of his race, he was of stouter and larger proportions than his companions, and was perhaps the most trustworthy puggee of the four assistants. Another was a tracker from Toorea or Kotye, and the remaining one was Natta's son. All were well-known and experienced men, and, with Natta to guide, hardly to be surpassed as trackers.

The men of Cutch are the best trackers of pig it has been my fortune to come across. I think nowhere else have I seen real woodcraft so exemplified as by their skill in finding an animal by its trail alone. Nor have I seen it made so much use of elsewhere as in that province. This may be, in a measure, owing to the topographical character of the country, which, on account of its isolated position, renders pugging a most useful science in the tracking of robbers from other parts. These, whether on camels or on foot, afford ample scope for its frequent use. Thieving within the province itself is little practised ; it may be, owing to its liability to detection.

In the various native states which are comprised within the area of Rajpootana, a system prevails of rendering answerable each village into whose boundaries may be tracked any thieves. The—what I may call—*onus repellendi* rests with that village ; and if the village puggees, receiving the trail from their neighbours,

are unable to carry it beyond the confines of their own lands, it is held amenable, as either containing the thieves among its own inhabitants, or harbouring them. In this way not unfrequently large sums of money as compensation are claimed by one state from another ; and the international court of vakeels, composed of the native gentlemen accredited from each state to attend on the highest representative of the Indian government, the agent for the Governor-General, have to investigate and decide on each case under the superintendence of an assistant to the above functionary. So much being dependent on it, the science of pugging is, therefore, in those parts, as in many others—among the Bheels, for instance—carried to considerable perfection ; but I have never, for shikaring purposes, found it to equal that of the genuine Cutch puggees.

In favourable ground they readily distinguish the pug of the night from that of the early morning ; and not only from the length of stride, but from form of pressure of any particular portion of the foot, are able to say at what pace the animal has been moving. To discern the difference between the print of the fore and hind feet is an acquirement of the merest tyro. A flock of sheep being driven over or along the trail of a boar is, perhaps, the most serious obstacle—but not an unconquerable one—to the tracker. The footprint resembles that of a hog, far more so than the goat's,

owing partly to the impress of the horny protuberances, or spurs, being left by both of the former animals.

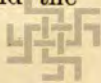
So much is the comparative amount of pressure by certain portions of the foot recognisable that a good puggee is, it is said, in soft ground, able to ascertain if a woman be with child. The wearing of the shoe heel before by thieves, for the purpose of misleading, would be at once detected by an experienced man.

Pugging, then, is an acquirement both of value and interest. Personally I always enjoyed a good exhibition of it, and far preferred the hunting and killing of a boar, thus tracked to his lair, to the more common method of finding him by beating. Each system, however, is applicable only to countries specially adapted to its use. Beating must be resorted to in large jungles, where pugging could not be employed; but it would be almost useless in driving a large tract of more open country, where an isolated bush or clump of bushes might harbour a pig.*

Natta, arrayed in an old check shooting-coat above his ordinary clothing, and carrying a stout, short spear in his hand, strode easily after the other puggees, placidly satisfied that the scent was hot and the pace good, while ever and anon he directed a man to throw a stone into any likely clump they approached.

But not for very long was this to continue. Soon the rocky and broken ground was reached, and the

* See Appendix, Note P.



foot-print was frequently quite undiscernible. All the men had now to work, some sticking to the trail, others ready to move to a flank or go on ahead in the endeavour the quicker to pick up the track when lost. Natta was several times appealed to. No words passed, but an approving grunt or disparaging cluck of the tongue against the roof of the mouth was sufficient to indicate his opinion. Still, though at a far slower rate, the party advanced, carrying the track through one or two nullahs, and over many bad places,



PUGGING.—A COLD SCENT—NATTA CAUTIOUS.

where sheet rock and stones might well have been expected to give no indication of the passage of any animal. A displaced stone, a bit of broken dry grass, even the rock itself, with perhaps a little dust

thrown upon it, spoke with a language of their own, and served to guide the keen-eyed and practised men.

More than once Natta was obliged to warn the hunters not to override the scent, but to restrain their horses and let the men keep well ahead.

Each man was armed with a stick, with the point of which he drew lines behind such foot-print as he individually was the first to reach. This served at once to show to the others that it had been examined and ascertained to be genuine ; and also, in several instances, furnished a ready sign, by means of which it could be easily hit upon where the track ahead was lost, and it became necessary to hark back to recover it where last left.

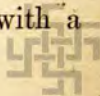
While one or two were labouring to carry on the trail, the others would throw off to the front and flanks, and often pick up the pug ; thus rendering it unnecessary to examine the intervening space. A sharp cluck or low whistle would announce this to those now in the rear, who would either join the leaders, or themselves become, what I may call, the *outlying* trackers. In this way the trail was lost and found many times, and still the progress was towards the high hills, the nature of the ground obliging Natta to be very cautious in his proceedings. A flock of goats had in one part crossed the track, but it caused only a temporary pause, as the pug was soon hit on beyond.

But when once among the hard, stony ridges and nullahs which lay in the vicinity of the higher hills, and tracking became exceedingly difficult, a more serious check occurred. Here the shikarees separated, and proceeded to cast around, crossing and recrossing and fairly quartering the ground in the neighbourhood.

For some time no sign of the trail could be found, and Natta scratched his head in evident perplexity. Once or twice he looked up and towards the hills, and let his eye traverse the intervening country, as if seeking guidance from the *lay* of the ground. Then he would confer with the Seedee, who seemed equally nonplussed, and again make a fresh cast.

A *cluck* from one of the puggees once called the old hunter to the spot where the man was stooping in intent examination of a mark on the ground. But a brief inspection served to show to the more experienced organs of Natta that, though the track of a pig, it was not fresh, and neither was it that of the animal of which they were in pursuit.

During this time the horses were kept in the rear, some of the riders having dismounted, and, with their imperfect knowledge, endeavoured to assist the puggees in hitting on the trail. At last, to the relief of all, the Kotye man gave a hissing whistle from the other side of a small nullah, and raising his hand, beckoned, by closing his opened palm with a movement towards him.





THE CHECK.—NATTA PERPLEXED AMONG THE HILLS.

His motion seemed so decided that old Natta's face cleared; and much relieved, he, with the others, joined the man, and found that there was no mistake.

Once more they set to work, and steadily advanced to the hills.

Natta now fell back to the sahibs, as the trail approached a thinly wooded nullah, and whispered to Norman that the boar had stood once or twice, and had been evidently endeavouring to ascertain that the coast was clear before taking up his position for the day.

"See here, sahib," he said, as he picked up a piece of dried grass which was indented; "this has been trod on this morning; and observe these pugs show where he has been standing. I think we shall find him in this nullah, or in some patch of bushes near it."

The trail, however, did not lead directly into the nullah, but kept up the hill on its bank. Again it showed where the hog had stood, and Natta's instinct assured him that the beast was close at hand. The hunters were somewhat scattered as they ascended the stony hill, up which each picked his way on a line of his own; but all were keenly on the lookout for the pig, each anxious to secure as good a start as his neighbours. The hills rose high and rugged in front; and it was evident that if not quickly overhauled, the boar would escape by some

of the tracks well known to and surmountable by him, but impassable for horses. The pugging had now lasted for some hours, and more than one of the sportsmen refreshed himself with a slight pull at the water chogul before he settled himself for action and gathered his reins together.

Suddenly the boar was seen to rise out of the nullah some distance ahead, and stand for a moment behind a bush, apparently intent on learning the cause of the noise so close to his secluded place of rest. A shout or two from the men in front who first saw him quickly warned him that he must trust to flight, and away he rattled up the hill full in view of all. Old Natta pointed triumphantly with his long arm and scraggy finger as the horsemen set their horses going in rapid pursuit, and the loose stones flew from beneath their feet as they passed the now running puggees.

The boar was a heavy one, and had the ground been better adapted for riding, would have soon been run into. But seamed as it was with watercourses, and covered with stones which lay thick on the rough wavy undulations, the pursued had many advantages, of which he was not slow to avail himself. He dodged in and out of the nullahs, over and round rocky ridges, and when pushed from one would make for another, occasionally for a brief space eluding the nearest horsemen. By these means, and by facing

rough bits up which the horses with difficulty scrambled, he had managed to hold his own, and was yet uncaught when he approached a steep face of the hill with a rugged, rock-bound rent which cut into the upper portion on the right.

Norman and Stewart happened to be at this time in the van, and made every effort to reach the hog before he could make these places, where pursuit would be most difficult. Owing to the nature of the country, the pace had not been very severe ; but the ground was trying, and the grey old boar was getting pumped ; age and obesity had not improved his wind.

As they ran at the very foot of the next high ascent in front, Norman got a fair opportunity on a bit of undulating ground ; and making a determined rush, ran up to the boar. But the latter had yet something left in him ; and with the prospect of an asylum in the higher parts of the hills, was not to be caught so easily. Wheeling suddenly and so quickly to the right as almost to lose his legs and fall on his side, he avoided the rider, who galloped past and came round in time to see the hog disappear in the nullah, and his companion riding along it up the face of the hill above. The others were yet a little behind as Norman pushed into the nullah in direct pursuit. Some followed him, and some rode up on either side ; but before long all were reduced to a pace the reverse of fast.

Catching sight of the hog now and then through the rocks and bushes, Norman stumbled on up the stony channel, and again gradually neared the pursued. One or two above had also viewed the boar at intervals, but at last all were so done, and the ground was so steep and rough, that they were able to get little more than a walk out of their horses.

Norman was jogging slowly on, creeping over big stones and sheet rock, as the boar, actually reduced to a walk, disappeared among some bushes up a cleft, and nothing more was seen of him.

In vain the hunters tried to recover his line. He had got away among the interminable rents, fissures, and gullies of the wild hill-sides and escaped undetected.

For some time the hunters rode here and there in vain efforts to sight the pig, but at last desisted and joined Natta, who, with his companions and the syces, had followed the sportsmen. Strange to say, there had been no falls. Indeed, on very rough and difficult ground, an Arab seems to be so fully aware of his danger, and, in consequence, so alert, that he comes down less frequently than on an apparently more easy country. He is in his element when crossing a rough, stony country, and rarely loses his fore-legs in galloping down a steep hill-side. And in India hill-sides are galloped down that would rather astonish even the most practised hunter accustomed only to English horses.

On this occasion one or two had lost shoes; and various cuts and bruises showed that galloping over stones is not by any means free from injurious results, but there was no great damage done.

Natta naturally deplored the loss of the boar, and, in consequence, his own *inam*; but he confessed that a kill in the upper portion of the hills was hardly to be expected, unless chance greatly favoured the hunters.

He was of opinion that they *might* find other pig among the nullahs and bushes in the broken ground at the foot of the hills. But as it was extremely doubtful and the day was well advanced, it was thought desirable to give up, and allow Natta and his son to make the best of their way at once to Bhooj, thence to proceed to the new hunting ground in the western district of Cutch.

The local trackers were accordingly paid, and with a small additional gratuity, dismissed satisfied to their homes.

They were capital, hard-working puggees, and well deserved their hardly-earned wages. This settled, the sportsmen, some on their ponies, some on the horses they had hunted, rode leisurely into Bhooj, distant about ten or eleven miles.

A short description of the military station of Bhooj—which is peculiarly situated—and of the residence therein of a sporting subaltern, may not be unaccept-

able to the English reader before I proceed to chronicle the further doings of the hunters.

The station is distant about a mile from the large town of Bhooj, the capital of Cutch, and residence of the Rao, a Rajpoot chief of the Jhareja tribe and king of the country. It is situated on the lower slope and part of the adjoining plain, at the foot of a rugged, isolated hill, or block of hills, of irregular shape and outline, whose sinuous crest is surmounted by a masonry wall. Bastions distributed every here and there mark a position more prominent, or where, in the convolutions of the different ridges and spurs, two lines of wall form a junction. The hill itself is stony, but nowhere quite precipitous; and, with the exception of a few prickly-pear bushes of the pointed variety, and some stunted shrubs, is entirely barren. Of volcanic origin, rising from the middle of a small, hill-besprinkled, little cultivated plain or basin, almost entirely surrounded by high hills at a distance of from three to seven or eight miles, its appearance is singularly striking, especially when approached from the sea-coast by the Mandavie road. This crosses the surrounding barrier of hills about four miles off by a winding, tortuous course, and thence is obtained a fine view of the whole plain, with the hill and its frowning battlements overlooking the station, whose white-washed and red-tiled houses nestle among the scanty foliage at its base.

Highest on the rise, on a bare spur of the hill, are constructed the barracks for the European soldiers of the horse battery usually stationed there. Next in altitude come the bungalows of the officers of the garrison, placed in a long irregular line, seldom more than two deep, and winding round a shoulder of the hill. Below these, and on the plain at the base, the lines of the native troops, and to their left the bazaar, complete the station-picture.

Between the station and town are a few temples in enclosures.

The town of Bhooj itself, with its palace and white-washed houses and towering temples and pagodas, the whole surrounded by a considerable brown wall of alternate bastion and curtain, lies nearly a mile to the left. One side is washed by the water of a tank, in the hot season reduced to a mere puddle, but which during the monsoon is of considerable extent, sufficiently so to admit of the employment of several pleasure-boats on its surface.

Looking from the station itself, at the distance of from half to a whole mile, is a rugged, little range of low, bare, stony hills, and the intervening plain is traversed by a made road leading to the Residency, the dwelling of the political officers deputed on the part of the British Government to the Rao. It is plainly distinguishable situated amidst pleasant gardens, a great attraction and eye-rest on that sterile

soil. A nullah—dry except during the monsoon—runs the entire length of the plain, and being in some parts banked by small masonry walls, serves to direct the drainage and act as a feeder to the city tank. It skirts one side of the Residency grounds through a deep channel cut from the rock, and thence continues its course to the tank referred to, situated a little farther on.

The plain itself is almost entirely barren, save for a square enclosure surrounded by a milk-bush hedge, where a considerable well, constantly in use, serves to rear sufficient vegetables—a scarce article in Cutch—for the use of the regimental mess, by whom it is supported.

High hills bound the horizon. The top of Nurra, the conical peak of Nerona, and the hill beyond Dowsa, not unlike a lion couchant, rise marked and singular in shape above the intervening ridges.

Among the compounds of the station itself, are a few gardens irrigated by water from wells, for the most part brackish. Several of these are adorned with shrubs, and even trees of somewhat dwarf dimensions, but pleasing as a contrast to the surrounding sterility. There is no lack of wells generally, but unfortunately, though most of them are very deep, and must have been originally dug at no little expense, few contain water. Hedges of milk bush or prickly pear enclose the compounds, hardly one of which but can boast of

having baubel or some other stunted tree within its area.

The station is large for the present force, which was at one time much more considerable. But the troublous times when refractory princes had to be coerced, have long passed from quiet, well-disposed Cutch; and the subsidiary contingent now furnished is proportionately diminished.

The station is traversed by two roads running nearly parallel. One of these passes round the shoulder of the hill as far as a small arsenal, situated within the area of the fort, and nearly a mile distant; the other continues to the station bazaar, where were formerly—for I am speaking of some years ago—good shops, two of them being kept by Parsees.

On the upper road, and towards that end of the cantonment which is nearest to the city, stood, at the time of which I am writing, a small bungalow which was peculiar as being the only thatched one in the station.

This was the residence of Lieutenant Norman; and though small, it afforded ample accommodation for that officer, and even served to provide quarters for an occasional friend and visitor. I shall speak of it as it usually appeared with the occupier at home alone.

It was an oblong structure, divided into two rooms, the whole well raised above the ground, and nearly surrounded by a wide verandah. This was, in front, enclosed by a low wall, save where the portal, of some-

what imposing dimensions, gave access to the interior by three or four steps. Whitewashed pillars constructed on the outer edge of this verandah at intervals all round supported the roof, except where at one corner the space had been built in to form the indispensable bath-room. The rooms were lighted by numerous windows.

The entrance doorway conducted to the larger and principal apartment, which was that used as a sitting-room, convertible on emergencies into a bed-room. A similar door opposite gave means of egress into the verandah on that side, and another near it opened into the bed-room.

In the latter there was but little adornment. A charpoy, or low bed frame without curtains, occupied the centre of the room. Broad cotton-tape bands were well stretched across both breadth and length of this, and afforded a nice elastic basis on which to spread the couple of rugs and covering of blankets which served to represent the mattress. A gaily covered rezaiee, or cotton-stuffed quilt, brilliant with many colours, surmounted all, and was a marked exception to the otherwise plain colouring of the room. A small blackwood chest of drawers, with toilet materials and a small folding glass above; one or two overland trunks; a piece of camp table covered with the daily linen shell-jacket, forage cap, and other common clothing necessities; an infirm wooden horse, on which were

suspended a regulation sword and various articles of daily use ; a gindee-stand, and a single chair, composed the furniture of the room.

A small piece of carpet at the side of the bed afforded the only bit of colour to contrast with the uniform hue of the coarse bamboo matting with which the floor was spread.

The larger room was more elaborately adorned and furnished. In the centre was placed a square table of jackwood, supported by a three-footed pedestal somewhat infirm and rickety. On one side was a sideless sofa, with a moveable back and foot stretcher which rendered it adaptable to any length and reclining position. On this was thrown a worsted-worked cushion displaying a pattern of a bunch of flowers, the feminine appearance of which contrasted pleasantly with some of its more masculine neighbours. Against the wall, midway between the two doors, stood in solitary dignity the chef-d'œuvre in furniture of the room—possibly purchased at a sale. It was a handsome blackwood writing-table, with numerous drawers and pigeon holes, and was laden with red-coloured regimental company books. A teapoy, also of blackwood, stood in one corner ; and two separate pieces of an old camp table broke the dull uniformity of aspect of the remaining two sides of the room. On one of these a prismatic compass ; a japanned moist colour box ; a portfolio ; a drawing board and block, and

other drawing materials, announced that the tenant's occupations were not confined alone to those of a sporting nature or matters of professional duty. Above this table was hung a travelling book-case containing a couple of dozen or so well selected volumes, including several of the principal English poets.

On the other piece of table was laid a rifle and gun-case, with other sporting articles; and bags of shot and bullets, boxes of wads, and canisters of gun-powder rested beneath.

Near this table stood a stand for spears, about four feet in height. It consisted of two side pieces which supported a crossbar near the ground; a similar broad wooden cross piece, perforated by numerous circular holes, forming the upper bar. The spears were placed through these holes and rested on the lower piece, thereby retaining an upright position, and were thus prevented from acquiring any bend or crook, which might have been the case had they been placed against walls, in a corner, or elsewhere. The spear-heads were wrapped in rolls of cloth or leathern covers.

One or two engravings, and an equal number of water-colour drawings, framed in blackwood, adorned the walls. Horns of neilghye, antelope, and gazelle were also fixed around; and some boars' tusches—mounted as large bottle labels, in the silver work for which Cutch is renowned, and destined hereafter to

adorn the paternal sideboard—formed no unattractive pendants round a silver mounted hunting knife, which was suspended above the writing-table. This completed the adornment of the light pink-washed walls ; unless, indeed, numerous remarks and notes consisting of the hours ordered for parade, numerical figures, and other memorabilia, written in pencil, thus forming of the walls a gigantic note-book, could be considered in that light.

A bear-skin—the spoil of former days and another district—was spread as a rug at the side of the sofa, and a few tanned deer-skins were thrown over the single easy chair and other three or four common chairs which completed the furniture of the room. One or two of the latter showed signs of age or hard use, and the hand of an amateur mender.

The floor was covered with a drugget—somewhat old and worn—originally composed of broad alternate stripes of blue and red dungree—the manufacture of the district. The elegance of the pattern had been agreeably diversified by patches of other fabrics of various colours, which had been dexterously let in to cover holes, with a taste and judgment somewhat singular. These patches, however, imparted to the drugget all the charms of variety. No dull uniformity of pattern permitted the eye to become wearied by gazing on a changeless monotony of aspect.

Such was the general aspect of the room ; but I

should leave the description incomplete did I not mention that one corner was evidently devoted to the purposes of a general lumber and store-room. In and about it quietly reposed a most promiscuous assemblage of articles, including—a pigeon-trap ; a native sword ; a net ; a golaila, or two-stringed bow for discharging mud bullets ; a thick bamboo walking-stick ; a six-foot measure ; an old jam-pot ; a spring weighing-machine ; a pair of single-sticks ; a leathern bottle-holder ; a small paste-board target showing several bullet-holes ; a belt ; a leathern shikar and ammunition-bag ; a silver mounted riding-whip ; an old battered pewter tea-pot ; a set of boxing-gloves ; one or two pickle bottles filled with some compound—perhaps for cleaning or preserving saddles ; a broken spear-head ; an old tea-box ; a bag ; and various other articles.

Altogether, the bungalow formed a very comfortable little dwelling for one man, and quite luxurious enough for a subaltern of limited means and sporting proclivities.

Outside, in the verandah, were some large six-dozen deal chests. One or two of these formed the pantry and crockery room, and contained the small but variegated assortment of plates and table necessities required for breakfast. A large supply was not required by one who always dined at mess. Another box contained the gram (pulse resembling peas) for the horses. Several porous jars and pots for holding

and cooling water, together with sundry bottles bound in wet cloths, reposed in that portion of the verandah facing the wind ; and a bundle of untanned skins of deer and other animals lay in another. A shikar stick for carrying small game—effected by drawing the dependent nooses round the birds' heads—was slung from some of the rafters, and on it hung some ducks and other birds out of reach of midnight-cat or prowling jackal.

The servants' houses were in the same line with a two stalled-stable—each stall converted into a loose box and each occupied—which stood in the corner of the compound. Throughout the latter were scattered a few low baubel trees. A deep well of masonry, but quite dry and forming the abode of several blue pigeons, occupied one corner ; and the whole was surrounded by a milk-bush hedge which, in some parts, surmounted drifted hillocks of sand, considerably undermined by sand-rats.

One of the nullahs or gullies, which in heavy rain rattled down the hill sides and tore through the cantonment, passed along the side of the compound ; and higher up across the road a wall of rock in its course afforded a convenient spot for rifle practice from the portal or verandah of the bungalow.

Such was the bungalow of a sporting subaltern in the station of Bhooj some years ago ; and such may serve to represent many another, though it was then

more common to build them for two who chummed together.

Into it Norman and his friend Mowbray shortly entered when the hunters had reached Bhooj, which they did without mishap. There, for the present, I shall leave the majority of the party, following only the movements of two, who rode out early on the Monday morning to a well in the heart of the Charwa hills. Guns and some breakfast had been previously dispatched there, as it was the intention of the two sportsmen to try and obtain a shot or two at neilghye, which there abounded, before continuing their journey to Seesagud.



CHAPTER XII.

A morning's hunting in the Charwa hills—A brace of bulls accounted for—A few Indian misnomers—An anecdote in point—A double shot at buck with a single rifle—Another similar incident—Killing a fighting buck—The past, present, and future of pig-sticking in Cutch—Lamentations—A singular case of miss and hit—Aim at a bull and hit a cow—The late Guicowar of Baroda as a sportsman—Amusing mistake—Hunting antelope with cheetahs—Rajpoots *versus* Mahrattas—Sour grapes approved of.

MACKENZIE and Hawkes were the two who had determined to try the Charwa hills *en route* to See-sagud. After losing their way among the hills and jungle, they reached the small tree-surrounded well and shepherds' hut to which their kit had been sent soon after daylight.

They were unsuccessful in finding any neilghye before breakfast; but while eating that meal a man came to them to say that the shikaree had viewed a small herd, which he was then engaged in watching from the top of a hill. The hunters were soon guided to the spot, and found that a herd, some lying down, some feeding, was scattered about over an open piece of ground among low hills. There was no possibility of approaching them any nearer from the spot whence

they examined them ; so it became necessary to withdraw and seek some other way of getting within shot.

A small ridge of rocks which surmounted a rising ground in the neighbourhood, seemed to offer a good chance of doing so undetected. Cautiously retreating, therefore, they made their way round till they brought the ridge between themselves and the herd. Hitherto they had been moving through some scattered patches of jungle, which grew more or less thickly about the hill sides, and frequently filled the little valleys between. These they were now obliged to leave, and trust to creep up behind the ridge without being seen. Rifle in hand, and with their attendants carrying other guns behind, they stole up the slope and commenced the stalk.

When nearing the point which they anticipated would bring them within shot, a couple of calves, hitherto unseen, suddenly jumped up from a hollow in the ground on the same side of the ridge as the hunters, and after taking a deliberate stare at them, ran off in the direction of the herd on the other side. Fortunately, instead of crossing directly over the stony ridge itself, they galloped round to turn it ; and this enabled the stalkers to rush up, screened by the rocks above, and get a sight of the rest of the herd just at the moment the appearance of the young ones startled them from their fancied security. Some of the cows

had already begun to move ; but the bull, ignorant of the cause of danger or its whereabouts, was standing watching them.

Mackenzie was a little the higher up of the two ; and though both aimed at the bull, was the first to pull his trigger, and the animal dropped to the shot. Hawkes was accordingly obliged to shift his aim, and fired at one of the cows, now galloping away at the peculiar pounding gait natural to an animal with such high withers. Both barrels, however, evidently missed, and the whole herd got away without its losing any further of its number.

The bull never stirred after he dropped, having received the bullet through his neck—distant one hundred and twenty yards from the firer.

After examining the animal and talking over the incidents of the stalk, the hunters sent scouts to look out from some of the neighbouring heights, and ere long one of these, on a distant hill, was seen making signals. The hunters quickly responded, and made the best of their way towards him.

He had, he said, seen a neilghye away in a wooded glen between the hill he stood on and a neighbouring spur, but it had now disappeared in the jungle. The party were soon cautiously examining the country about, and while thus employed, a cow suddenly sprang into view, seemingly out of the earth, and dashed away. It was a long shot, but both

hunters were tempted to try it, and both with equal success, for it galloped away untouched. This was probably the animal which the scout had seen ; so the sportsmen, after going somewhat further, sent for their ponies—which had been left at a convenient spot—with the intention of riding by a circuitous route to the well, examining the intervening country on their way there.

But somehow on this occasion game seemed persistently to obtrude itself on the hunters. The man had not been long gone, when he too appeared on a hill, beckoning to those he had but recently left. Again the hunters got into motion, and on reaching him learnt that he had unexpectedly caught sight of a bull in some thick jungle not far distant, and near to the place whence they had just fired at the cow.

While proceeding to the spot indicated, Hawkes saw the animal looking straight at them out of a well-wooded nullah, and lost no time in acknowledging the attention thus bestowed on them with a bullet. It evidently told, but had not the effect of dropping the bull, who turned and made off up the nullah. Two or three snap shots were fired, one of which it was afterwards found took effect, but still the animal held on and got away over a neighbouring ridge and out of sight.

For some time the hunters were at fault ; they could make nothing of it. Men sent to the tops of the hills in the vicinity failed to discover any signs of

the wounded bull ; and at last they endeavoured to hit on his trail and pug him. After a few casts up and down, this was struck, and then commenced a difficult piece of tracking.

For some time it led them through jungly nullahs, and among the rough stones which, in many parts, well furnished the hill sides and the passes through them, but the bull yet continued moving and remained unviewed.

At last the trail led over a low ridge which sloped down from a hill of some height, and the puggee—who was of course leading—suddenly stopped. He had caught sight of the neilghye, which was standing at the bottom of the hill, apparently very sick from its wounds, and looking up directly at the man. Leaving the shikaree to engage the attention of the poor beast, the two hunters moved rapidly round the hill to the other side, and found the bull still engaged in looking in the direction from which it evidently expected the menaced danger. Mackenzie again was quickest in getting a shot, and planted his bullet well behind the shoulder. Once more the beast galloped off, but only to fall after going a few yards, in the same moment that Hawkes fired at him.

It fell quite dead, and it was found that Mackenzie's last bullet had gone through its heart, or close to it. Besides this wound, the animal had a couple of bullet holes in its neck.

The sportsmen now again sent for their ponies, and rode to their bivouac. After refreshing themselves and taking a rest, they remounted, and quietly rode to Seesagud, where they met the rest of the party at dinner. They had directed one of the neilghye's tongues, a steak or two, and some marrow bones, to be brought on; the rest was sent into cantonments.

Natta reported that the local puggees had informed him that no pig had visited the weedy nullahs in the neighbourhood for some time; and this was, to a certain extent, verified by the brief investigation he had been himself able to make. He proposed, therefore, that the camp should move on the morrow to Phoolrea, situated at the foot of the Chitrantû hills, and that he should visit some likely places on the way there in the early morning. This was accordingly decided upon as the programme for the next day's proceedings; one or two, however, intimated that they should not hunt, but beat the country about Mhow for small game.

The success of the blue-bull hunters that day formed a topic of conversation after dinner, and strangely enough most of those present referred to them in the feminine gender as neilghye—blue cow. Mowbray, who was learned in the wisdom of the native languages, remarked on this.

"Why can't you fellows refer to the beast in the vernacular as a blue bull?" he remonstrated. "Ghye

may certainly express cattle; but when speaking of the male individually, why not call him by his name, 'ghau'?"

"It's one of many little peculiarities you ducks have," observed Melton; "I can't say much for the accuracy of some of your terms. Why, you always call a 'coolen' a 'cullum,' though for what reason I have been quite unable to make out. Different countries of course have local distinctions of name, but I hear all the natives call the bird 'coolen.'"

"Right, oh King!" replied Stewart; "and I dare say on your side you never heard of such a thing as an 'eshnaff,' which is the native rendering for snipe. I don't suppose they have got a word of their own for it in these regions, and so have adopted a modification of ours."

"It is curious," Mowbray remarked, "how unmeaning customs and prejudices establish themselves. Now we generally talk of buck and doe samber, instead of stag and hind. Surely so large an animal of the deer tribe is entitled to the nobler appellation. Fancy, in Scotland, speaking of a red-deer buck of ten tynes! It is really time that Indian sportsmen should correct some of these little irregularities, which are ludicrous, and have a ring anything but sportsmanlike."

"Why, it's only the difference in a name," remarked Stewart; "you seem to know the distinctions better

than we do. Ha! ha! It reminds me of a story which is by no means *mal à propos*."

"A clergyman—or minister, I should call him, for he was of the Presbyterian persuasion—one day paid a visit to a poor woman, one of his parishioners, to condole with her on the recent death of her husband. The good dame received her minister's condolences and exhortations to submit, with becoming gratitude. Indeed, so effectual were they, that the afflicted woman was brought to regard her loss with remarkable firmness and serenity of mind.

"‘Deed, aye, sir!’ she said, ‘I ken it’s my duty to bear my sair loss wi’ becoming resignation, syne the gude man—peace be wi’ him—is in Beelzebub’s bosom.’

"‘In Beelzebub’s bosom! my good woman,’ hastily ejaculated the horrified parson; ‘ye’ll mean Abraham’s bosom—no Beelzebub, wha’ is the father o’ sin.’

"‘Ah weel, sir,’ the dame replied, ‘I doubtna’ ye’re richt. Ye ken thae gentlemen better than I do.’”

"That is all very well as a story," said Mowbray, "but it doesn't apply here. I maintain that a coolen should be called a coolen, and a large male deer a stag, and not a buck—which is a term applicable only to the smaller species. However, to return to our original subject. That second blue bull you fellows shot to-day must have had original notions on the subject of danger. I wonder he wasn't scared by the shot at the cow just before."

“A right-minded bull would certainly have accepted such notice to quit,” observed Mackenzie; “but animals sometimes take strange freaks into their heads as to what danger is or is not. As a case in point, I will relate a singular chance I once got at a black buck. It happened when I was marching, on one occasion, from Deesa to Nusseerabad. Near the village of Chundawal—where there is a traveller’s bungalow—the route re-approaches the main range of the Aravelly hills, from which it is quite disconnected for the previous seventy miles or so; and, after another march, penetrates them. From the foot of the hills, and extending far to the north till they merge in the sandy wastes which lie between Jodhpore and Scinde and the Punjaub, are fine plains with wide, rolling tracts of grass-land abounding with antelope. Pig are to be had under the hills, for I have seen their pugs; and a friend once chased a bear, which crossed the road in front of him, early one morning. I never had time to organise a beat, but I have no doubt that it is an excellent shikar country.

“The march over, and a hasty breakfast consumed, I sallied out with gun and rifle and a common country cart to stalk the antelope, which I heard were plentiful towards the hills, about a couple of miles away. After going about so far, I sighted a herd, and directing the bullock-driver to steer laterally towards them, marched myself at the side of the cart most remote

from the game. As we approached the herd, which was much scattered, I observed a couple of nice bucks on the outskirts and somewhat in our direction, who were engaged in combat. I at once decided on endeavouring to get a shot at these, and accordingly made my ghareewallah manœuvre with that object. After carefully circling round—though, as they paid little attention to my movements, I might perhaps have gone straight towards them—I got within a hundred yards, and letting the cart proceed onwards, stopped. When it had cleared me I aimed at the nearest buck, and dropped him as dead as a herring.

“That was nothing singular; but his foe, or companion—for I think they were engaged in a sort of friendly tilt—appeared more surprised than startled at the sudden and incomprehensible conduct of the other, so simultaneous with the rifle crack. He galloped away, however, to one flank, but only to a short distance, and then, wheeling round, looked towards his prostrate companion, probably wondering why he did not come to renew the interrupted passage of arms. It was the more singular, because troops were so frequently marching along that road, that the game was wary enough.

“I was shooting with a valued old single-barrelled rifle, an excellent one for deer, so that I was unprovided with another barrel with which to salute him. But he seemed determined to give me every chance.

There he remained, gazing earnestly in the direction of the fallen, till, with the utmost promptitude, I reloaded, and from the very same spot was enabled to take aim at him.

"He was not more than a hundred and fifty yards away, if indeed so much, and again this time old 'kill-deer' did not fail me. The bullet caught the buck about the shoulder, and after galloping away for a short distance he fell over and was gathered to his companion."

"Pretty—a very pretty little affair," said Stewart, approvingly; "a double rifle, though, would have given you a right and left shot."

"I rather prefer it as it happened," was the reply. "There is more singularity about it than if it were a mere right and left, which often occurs."

"I quite agree with you," said Mowbray. "Curiously enough, a very similar incident occurred to myself; and this, too, happened when I was camped near Kotah, as I have before described.

"I had killed a chinkara early in the morning, and was returning to my tent, when, not far from the place where I had first seen the three bears I spoke of, I came across a herd of antelope. They allowed me to get tolerably close, and I selected a young buck, distant about a hundred yards. I missed him, and the herd galloped away. The wind was strong towards myself, and consequently the rifle crack reached them

with diminished sound. It may have been owing to this that after springing away for a few bounds, they pulled up and turned to gaze at me with their wonted curiosity. I quickly reloaded—for I, too, had only a single rifle—and before they continued their flight I had time to select a good buck, standing half-side on, watching some of the does in his front. He was at about a hundred and eighty yards' distance, and I made a neat shot, which compensated for the first miss, and planted my bullet just behind the heart. He ran a few yards, staggered, reeled, and dropped dead—as usual, to the great astonishment of several of his wives, or rather widows, some of whom stopped for a moment to gaze at him and his strange movements.

“I also very nearly once got another second chance in like manner to Mackenzie, and in exactly the same way. Had I too been shooting with a double rifle, I should probably have bagged my brace of bucks, right and left.

“It occurred in Ulwur. I was out one afternoon, and had unsuccessfully attempted to stalk, and for some time followed, a herd of antelope without being able to get a shot. At last, as I was pursuing them, almost despairing of doing so, a couple of bucks seemed with one consent to imbibe a mutual hostility, and determined then and there to have it out. The herd moved on, while they engaged in a fierce encounter, and with pretty even success. So intently were they

employed, that though I was considerably exposed, having no cart with me, I walked straight up to within about eighty yards, and deliberately aimed at the nearest. Over he went to the shot, and his adversary, momentarily believing, I suppose, that the sudden collapse in the strength of the other was owing to his own superior vigour, proceeded to take immediate advantage of it. With horns locked, they had been hitherto struggling the one to push back the other, and now the unwounded buck bored down on his prostrate enemy with great fierceness. Suddenly, however, something appeared to strike him—perhaps he saw or smelt the blood from the other's wound—for he desisted from his persecution, and, turning round, galloped away. The wounded buck, too, rose and trotted into a neighbouring field of corn, still standing, for the month was September.

“I soon reloaded and followed, and searched about for some time without finding the buck, though I did not believe he could have gone far. My man and myself were beginning to look about for his pugs, when he rose close to me from a furrow where he had been lying like a hare, and was making off when I brought him down, and immediately afterwards administered the *coup-de-grace* with my hunting-knife.”

“It is a great pity that there are no black buck here in Cutch, or at any rate, in this part of it,” Norman observed. “It seems rather curious that

chinkara alone should inhabit it, and in such great numbers. I have polished off as many as seven or eight of the latter in a day, but have never seen a single antelope."

"Nor I," responded Mackenzie; "but Cutch is a country after its own kind altogether. There is nothing in the shape of the felinæ in it, except a few cheetahs, and, it is said, a panther or two in the Charwa hills."

"And, alas!" sighed Norman, "pig—for which it was formerly famous—are rapidly being killed or dying out. I assure you they were so numerous in former years in some parts—where not a pug is now to be found—that any number of runs might be obtained. I have been all round the Arbrasser, and killed but three or four in my trip; and I have it on good authority, that, in places about Juckow and Wursur, and even here, numbers could formerly be found for the looking. They are nearly extinct there now, as well as in this part. Ah, it will be a sad time for those who come after us!"

And the speaker took a long pull at a tumbler of punch as he made this melancholy reflection.

"It's my belief," said Stewart, "that if Government continues to encourage the native appetite for mule-twist, and ten pounder shirtings and yarns, the country will go to the devil. Those singularly-named articles of commerce—whatever they be—are always looking

up, or active, or performing what one would think were physical impossibilities of that sort. They will, sir, before long, mark my words, lead to the demoralization of the country. They will be wanting to grow cotton everywhere."

"Why, you talk of those articles as if they were something to eat," said Danvers. "Remember, too, pig are fond of lying in cotton fields."

"Yes, but it is only when other cover is available at the seasons when it is cut. Depend on it, when Lord Macaulay's New Zealander is contemplating the ruinous prospect from a broken arch of London-bridge, his brother will be lamenting the singular scarcity of wild animals—especially pigs—in this country, and gazing at it and its high chimneys from the top of a gigantic cotton-spinning manufactory."

These lamentations might have continued had not Mowbray reminded the mourners that they were wandering from the subject of discourse, and that such unhappy anticipations of a terrible future were as useless as miserable. It behoved them to make the best of the present, and leave the future to—the New Zealanders. By way of diverting their minds from the prospect, he asked Mackenzie to favour them with a fresh brew; a request with which that gentleman speedily complied, and the conversation returned into its former channel.

"Speaking of antelope shooting," said Danvers, "I

shall never forget an occurrence where, as I thought, a native received the bullet instead of a buck.

“I was out one morning before breakfast, and as the ground had been a good deal shot over, and the game was rather wild, I took a cart with me to stalk them. I managed to secure one nice young buck out of a small herd by a shot right through both the hind quarters, by which he was completely disabled. Soon after this I came across a large herd, which I tried all I could to circumvent; but they were very wary, and I could not get within a reasonable distance. I followed, however, hoping for some chance, when some men shouting in a field in front turned them, and they doubled back past my cart at full gallop. As they went by they put on extra steam, and raced away at a tremendous pace. They were, however, not more than a hundred yards off, so I aimed, as I imagined, well in front of a handsome buck with a good pair of horns, and fired. He continued on as if untouched; but the ‘thud’ there is no mistaking, announced a hit, and, to my horror, a man, who was walking along a road with a woman just beyond, fell. I turned so sick. The sensations I experienced were painful to a degree. It seemed to me that I was almost a murderer to fire a random shot with such exceeding carelessness; and, for the mere sake of a chance hit, to endanger a man’s life. However, I cannot pretend to describe my feelings—enough that they were far from

pleasant. I cast down my rifle and ran off at speed towards the unfortunate victim of my culpable want of precaution. Just as I reached the neighbourhood of the line of pugs which indicated where the deer had galloped past me, the man rose, and quite unconcernedly, walked away with his female companion. I gazed at him for a moment in bewilderment as I pulled up, for my imagination had depicted as certain the man's serious wound or death; but casting my eyes around, they encountered a young three-parts grown buck lying dead in his tracks. I could almost have cried with the sensation of relief I experienced. The man must have stooped for some purpose at the moment of my firing; and my attention being concentrated on the buck I aimed at, I had not observed the fall of another immediately behind him. But the shock I received that day gave me a lesson."

"I am afraid we are rather careless sometimes," remarked Mowbray, "and accidents with shot are by no means uncommon. I have both peppered a friend and been peppered myself; and I remember that a companion with whom I was once shooting, fired at a quail, which he missed, but instead, hit two men and two bullocks, and it proved rather an expensive shot to him. The fellows were little hurt, but being able to show a few drops of blood, and by kicking up a great row, induced him to part with a good many rupees—a legitimate fine, however, for his carelessness.

But how do you account, Danvers, for being so far behind in your shot as to hit a deer well in the rear?"

"Who can account for his bad shooting? I had got the range, but not the line, I suppose; and when a buck is going at full speed, one should aim far ahead—how much, theoretically, I can hardly pretend to say, one must judge practically by eye on the spot. Evidently I was behind the mark. But even with such slow-flying birds as wild-geese, I have aimed a-head of the leader and brought down number two in the line, as neatly as if it was intended. I firmly believe that men, whether with rifle or smooth-bore, make more misses by firing behind moving game than in any other way. I am certain I do so myself."

"I agree with you," said Mackenzie. "But still, some will 'aim at a pigeon and hit a crow' under other conditions. I once stalked some neilghye, and got a fine open shot at the bull. I made certain of him, for he loomed as large as an ox, but he galloped off, and a cow which was immediately beyond him, and, as it seemed to me, quite hidden by her bulky lord, fell dead."

"One of the prettiest things," remarked Norman, "I ever saw with regard to killing the wrong animal happened to the Guicowar of Baroda. Had a number of English officers not been present, I verily believe it would have led to the death of somebody."

"The occasion was a grand one. It was the Gui-

cowar's birthday ; and a general invitation had been issued to the officers of troops in cantonments, to attend a hunt in a preserve some few miles from the city, a breakfast and subsequent late tiffin being included in the programme. I myself was on a visit to Baroda, and of course the invitation extended to me.

"Everything was arranged in first-rate style—fine tents, and no end of a spread, and liquor *ad libitum*. After breakfast, elephants were supplied for the accommodation of the party—which consisted of perhaps twenty officers—and we sallied forth in great state, the political officer to the court accompanying the Guicowar himself.

"The sport was not to be dependent on ourselves, so we had no guns, though many of us would rather have been actors than spectators.

"The principal shikar, however, was to be antelope hunting with cheetahs, in which of course we could not assist ; but the number of noble black bucks all about the preserve we subsequently went to, made our mouths water. There was many a pair of horns there measured by eye and coveted.

"Previous to reaching the ground intended for this sport, skirmishers were sent ahead of our line of elephants, for the purpose of marking down hares. This was for the benefit of the Guicowar, who proposed to exhibit his prowess as a sportsman, and trueness of

aim, by himself, with his own royal hands, polishing off such as could be found in their forms.

“It was a noble ambition, worthy of the exceedingly drunken, used-up, and despicable-looking, but good-natured little man, who at that time occupied the *guddee*, and performed or neglected—whichever it was—the regal duties of the State. Shade of Nimrod! It would have done that royal shikaree’s heart good to see the zeal with which his princely imitator endeavoured to distinguish himself as no unworthy brother of the noble craft of which he was the first great champion. Assisted by the numerous myrmidons who accompanied him in all the pomp of regal daring, and before the line of admiring Englishmen, thrice did the noble sportsman descend from his elephant. Thrice was given into his hands the trusty, well-beloved fowling piece ; and thrice he actually cocked it and stalked manfully forward to compass the destruction of the ferocious hare which the shikarees had seated in its form. But alas ! that I should have to add, thrice was the hero obliged to return to his elephant unsated with blood.

“Hares, unfortunately, have a tendency to run away from danger ; and even the Guicowar was unable to overrule this natural propensity on their part, or prevail on them to sit quiet and be shot. The hares were well marked down, but the rolling, goggle eyes of his majesty were considerably wanting in the

sharpness of those who had discovered them ; and do what they could, they were unable to get the royal optics to discern the couching creature before he had approached so close as to disturb it. A running shot did not come within his notions of sport : or perhaps he was somewhat distrustful of his own competency to make a successful *début* before the spectators, and hence, when once on foot, they were allowed to proceed unmolested.

“ His ill-success was attended with some swearing at the unfortunate shikarees, and, as I believe, repeated applications to a bottle containing a soothing mixture on his return to his elephant.

“ At last Diana looked favourably upon so keen a votary, and determined that he should reap the reward of his perseverance, and make a successful shot.

“ Another hare was marked down, and the lucky shikaree kept moving up and down, and stooping, as if engaged in the peaceful occupation of picking up sticks, and so deceive the enemy till the sportsman’s arrival.

“ This time the latter got so close that he succeeded in seeing the animal, and after a careful and deliberate aim fired, and, as the wah-wah’s and shabash’s and general murmurs of approval from the courtiers and dependants proclaimed, successfully.

“ Highly delighted, the Guicowar ordered the animal to be brought for his own inspection, and exhibition

to the numerous English sportsmen ; and he looked towards one or two handsome spring-carts drawn by magnificent bullocks which accompanied the cavalcade, as his success was thus announced. The occupants of these carts had formed subjects of speculation among ourselves ; for from their hanging purdahs, and small eyelet holes to peep through, we rightly inferred that they contained some of the female portion of the royal household.

“On receiving the order to bring the game, several shikarees and other ready ministers to his pleasure, rushed forward, each intent on being the fortunate exhibitor of the trophy. But somehow, when the spot was reached, each seemed willing to delegate to his neighbour or rival the pleasing duty for which he had contended. So long, indeed, were they in producing the slain, that the Guicowar had to reiterate his commands, and at last a poor trembling wretch took it in his hand, and deprecatingly presented to his Royal Highness—a cat !

“Begad ! it’s a fact. A small jungle cat had, in the grass, been taken for a hare, and the mistake was not discovered till the officious menials ran up to it. I need hardly say that to shoot a cat was quite below the dignity of a native sportsman.

“The Guicowar actually foamed at the mouth, and spluttering out anathemas of dire import, condemned the shikaree and all his race to everlasting perdition.

“After all the ostentation attending the shot and its success, this climax was too much for most of us, and we were half convulsed with laughter. It must have been a trying time for the political. To preserve a becoming gravity must have cost him sore. As for the occupants of the bullock carts, I daresay there was a good deal of giggling at the zenana lord’s discomfiture.

“Could the circumstance have taken place secretly, or without its coming to the ears of the political officers, I have no doubt that the unhappy shikaree’s days would have been numbered.”

“That was a royal sell, and no mistake,” observed Melton. “But how did you get on with the cheetahs and black buck afterwards? That is a sport I never saw.”

“Oh! we were pretty successful. After the affair of the cat, our entertainer, thinking, I suppose, that he had sufficiently distinguished himself, ordered some refreshments to be handed to us—and faith, he was no niggard with his liquor—and afterwards gave the word to proceed at once to the antelope ground. The cheetah carts were now brought to the front; and one or two of us, including myself, got down from the elephants, and took our seats on the open country carts alongside the hunting leopards.

“On the same cart with myself was a good-looking native gentleman, with whom I, being a stranger, was

unacquainted. I found afterwards that he was a near relative of the Guicowar's, and went by the title of 'Appa Sahib.'

"Our leopard was, like the others, hooded ; and the keeper held him by a chain. The latter also kept a piece of some stuff, which looked like hard soap, in the other hand for him to lick, and occasionally fed him with small lumps of some substance. The beast was a very fine one, and sat on his haunches as docile as a dog, freely allowing us to stroke him.

"There were, I think, three other cheetahs. Ours was, however, deputed to make the first trial, and our cart accordingly went ahead of the others, and a long way in front of the line of elephants.

"After going for some time over that deep black soil, which in the hot weather opens into gaping rents and deep fissures, we approached wide patches of grass land, and saw many deer feeding in and about them. Being preserved for such occasions as the present, and undisturbed by shooting, they were very tame, and allowed us to get near them without much difficulty.

"A buck, somewhat removed from the rest, was selected for our first attempt, and the cartman drove his bullocks diagonally across its front. The hood was now slipped off the cheetah's eyes, and his attention directed to the animal in question. He saw it at once, and by the quivering of his tail evinced his restrained

eagerness. When within about a hundred yards, he leapt lightly from the cart with a graceful suppleness and elegance of action very beautiful to see. For a moment he paused, then crouched stealthily along towards his destined victim.

“The antelope had been lazily watching the cart, to the sight of which it was accustomed, but now seemed to become aware of approaching danger. It looked for one moment, as the leopard sprang forward from his crouching movement, then dashed away at full speed. But the cheetah had commenced his bounds. For a short distance the velocity with which he cleaves the air is amazing, though, of course, this he is unable to keep up for any great length of time. A few tremendous leaps, which even the proverbial speed of the antelope did not avail to elude, and the leopard with a last decisive spring was upon it. Striking the poor thing to earth, he quickly fastened on the throat, held it down, and sucked the life blood from his expiring victim. The whole contest of speed was almost momentary; for if not caught within a hundred or so yards, the cheetah is unable to continue the tremendous springs, and declines further pursuit.

“The keeper, accompanied by my native friend and myself, and some of those from the other carts, now rushed up, and some blood was obtained from the dead buck and offered to the cheetah in a shallow dish. With his fangs still fixed in the throat of

the antelope, however, he at first only responded by a muffled, snarling growl, but was eventually induced to leave the body and lap some of the blood offered him. He was then chained, and by these means, and the additional attraction of a lump of raw flesh, the keepers once more got him on to the cart, where he tranquilly remained.

“Another of the cheetahs was now taken to the front, and we had afterwards several repetitions of the first run. But in some instances the animal was sulky and refused to exert himself at all. In others, either from commencing his bounds at too great a distance, or from the buck being startled too soon, although the leopard did his best, a capture was missed. The animal would, in those cases, pull up when he found himself beaten, and quietly remain till the keeper arrived to escort him back to the cart.

“The sport is all very well as an occasional spectacle, and is interesting enough in itself, but it is one I would not care to see frequently. It becomes rather tame and monotonous after a few courses, and I don't think many of us were sorry when the last run came off, and we returned late in the afternoon to the tents, where a splendid late tiffin, or early dinner, with abundance of champagne, was served to us. The Guicowar did not himself feed with us, but he came in after dinner for a short time with his married daughter

—a grass widow, by-the-bye. She seemed quite at home, albeit unveiled ; and though not bad looking, had not much stamp of Nature's nobility about her. In fact, few of the Mahratta princes or their families—generally of low origin—show many signs of blood or aristocracy.”

“Perfectly true, Norman,” said Mowbray, ‘approvingly, “and in that respect they present a marked contrast to the chiefs of the Rajpoot race. The latter, though sometimes diminutive in stature, have frequently beautiful hands, and show, in the quiet, courteous, unostentatious gentility of their demeanour, fair complexions, and general aristocratic bearing, the attributes of ancient pedigree and high lineage. Indeed, no families on the earth can compare with them in the ability to trace their descent back into remote ages. I believe Porus, who was King of Lahore and fought Alexander the Great, to have been a Rajpoot.”

“Hear, hear !” exclaimed Stewart. “Our Rajpootana official is waxing eloquent in praise of his interesting, but, I fear, somewhat debauched and effeminate friends, some of whom, it strikes me, have had in former times to knock under to the despised Mahrattas, as well as the Greeks.”

“Granted ; but not the less are they of a more gentle bearing, and a nobler race ; and though debauched, and to some extent effeminate, are, like their

prototype, Sardanapalus, capable of great deeds. Their whole history proves it."

"It is a pity then," retorted Stewart, "that they don't manifest their capabilities more clearly and frequently at present. It is astounding to me how you politicals can put up with some of their customs. The taking off of your shoes in Durbar, for instance."

"My dear fellow, office and responsibility convert many a man's ideas—or rather, I should say, it obliges a man to go into his work thoroughly, with some consideration for the customs and prejudices of those he has to deal with. If he has got a conscience, it forces him to do what he deems right by all, and considerably modifies former crude and undigested ideas on the subject, though I admit that the taking off of shoes is a custom which should be abrogated. It is gradually falling into disuse."

"Grapes are sour with Stewart," suggested Norman. "I know I wish some discerning individual, high in authority, would discover my manifold excellences, and persuade a paternal Government to acknowledge them by appointing me to a political post."

"Ay, ay!" returned Stewart. "But I am like the Scotchman who tried to outboast the Englishman, and declared that their grapes were magnificent."

"'But, sir,' said the Englishman, 'they are sour.'"

"'I ken that weel,' was the reply; 'but we aye like

things soor in Scotland.' So you see I prefer that they should remain sour."

With this tribute to the canniness and taste of his countrymen as well as of himself, the speaker retired to his tent, and was soon followed by the others.



was this, that he was asked if he was sure of its being a track of that morning?

"Quite certain, sahib," he replied unhesitatingly. "Look! the pugs on the earth are yet sharp cut. The midday wind has drifted no dust into them. He passed early this morning, and I expect he will be lying somewhere yonder," and the old man pointed to the most intricate part of the nullahs referred to.

As yet the ground was tolerably open, but with a general slope or fall towards the river, and was pretty thickly studded with nasty slabs of sheet rock. A few prickly pear bushes were scattered about, singly and in clumps, over the ungenerous soil, and these changed into a thicker cover in and about the nullahs further on. The latter widening as they receded from the ridge recently crossed over, became more numerous supplied by little feeders; and across these intersections in their path the hunters had to make their way as they advanced.

The ground was fair for tracking, and although several little temporary halts occurred, a cast or two a-head quickly picked up the trail again without any serious check.

As they gradually descended, and the bushes became thicker, Natta kept a wary look-out a-head, and hinted his opinion that the pig would be soon started.

Several times stones had been cast into bushes and small patches which the trail approached; and not

many minutes after Natta had spoken, he pointed to some prickly pears, into which a volley of stones was cast by his assistants. The result of this discharge was to disturb a fine pig in its repose, causing it to break on the other side.

Several simultaneous shouts from the puggees put the somewhat scattered party of hunters in motion, and away they thundered in instant pursuit, though it was not till Norman had held his spear aloft and gave a hunting yell that the furthestmost rider was aware of the "gone away."

The pig, who was a regular flier, notwithstanding its fair size, went away at score with its head set for the most intricate part of the nullahs. It lay out with such a will that at first it gained on the hunters, and increased the considerable advantage it had at starting. It led at a rattling pace for some time across a long piece of open, and then suddenly disappeared from sight in a nullah which cut its course diagonally.

The hunters, closing in from different directions, according to their position at starting, reached this a hundred yards or more in rear of the pig, and galloped along, some on one bank, some on the other, with the object of hitting on the pursued whichever side it might eventually take.

There was a good deal of flying jumping, mixed with in-and-out scrambling, as the riders came across

the various gullies which fed the larger nullah ; but still the pig was once or twice sighted bounding through the bushes in its bed, as a turn of the nullah allowed those on the top to command its depths far in front. But ere long the pursuers had not even this satisfaction ; and for so considerable a time did the pig remain unviewed, that the leaders began to fear that they had over-ridden and missed it by its turning into some one of the lateral feeders or branches, several of which, of equal magnitude, every here and there formed a junction.

The speed of the leading horsemen became therefore slackened, but not for long. Norman, who was most advanced on the left, and casting his eyes warily about, sighted a black object just for one moment as it plunged into a nullah far on his left front. Swiftly turning, his yell and raised spear announced his view, and soon brought the rest behind him as he made for a portion of the nullah a long way in front of the point of the pig's disappearance. Once again he caught a glimpse of it a considerable distance ahead, and cutting judiciously across to a bend of the nullah, arrived on the bank but a few seconds after the pig had passed beneath. Having it in full view, he dropped in, and set to work to ride it in the bed. The pig was a stout one, with a fine turn of speed ; but the greater staying powers of the horses had at last effect, and Norman held his own, though his progress was occasionally somewhat



impeded by the bushes which, in many parts, thickly filled the nullah.

As the river was approached, the surface of the country became still more broken by the ramifications of the various water channels, and the pig might yet escape amid their windings unless hard and closely pressed.

The nullah was for the most part dry, but with occasional small pools of water. The rest of its bed consisted of open pieces of sandy soil, interspersed with jungle. The pig dashed into one of these bits of open from out of some low bushes only two or three lengths in front of Norman, who considered that this offered a good opportunity for closing.

The nullah was too narrow for it to avoid him, he thought, and so, if he could only get his horse once within reach, the spear was secure. Though he could not afford to look round when hand and eye were so necessary to help his horse over the rough ground on which he was riding, he was instinctively aware that one or two horsemen were not far behind him, and ready to take advantage of any chance fortune or the pig might give them.

With a dig of the spurs he sent his horse almost within reach. Another stride or two and the spear would be blooded ; when, with a movement as sudden as unexpected, the pig made a sudden turn, sprang to the left, and shot up a sloping portion of the bank

which there presented itself. Had it been on his off or spear hand he was so close that he might have had a chance of pricking it before it reached the top, but not so on the near side. He was unable to turn his horse in time, and shot past the place, which those behind, however, were enabled to scramble up. He soon did the same a little further on, but had the mortification to find that two other horsemen were more directly in the line of the pig, who was making across a piece of open to another nullah.

The pig had taken heart of grace, and was making good use of the advantage its sudden manœuvre had given it, and was yet unreached when, once more, it flung itself headlong down a bank and raced away in the bed of another nullah. In at different points went all three horsemen, but this time Danvers was leading, and Norman in the rear; the remaining two having hitherto been somewhat thrown out, were considerably behind.

The pig again threw off its immediate pursuers after a brief spurt down the nullah, and a second time faced a piece of open as it made for another water-course. In-and-outing it found was to its advantage.

This time Norman, with his horse well in hand, reached the top of the bank first, and again got the lead. It was now just a question whether he could reach the pig before it again trusted to the nullahs.

The run had lasted some time, which, with the

severity of the pace, and the natural difficulty of the ground, had told on all, but least on his stout old horse with its light burden.

Across the bit of flat he drew away from his companions, and closed with the pig on the very bank of the nullah. Whatever was in front, down he must go, and down he went, almost in the same stride with the pursued. There was a hard crash on a ledge of sheet rock, a slip, a flying about of legs, a scrambling struggle, a save, and in the next moment, as the well-accustomed old hunter recovered himself nobly, the spear was driven deep into the pig.

The other two, having more time to choose, selected a sloping portion of the bank, and went in at a more favourable spot.

But there were plenty of bushes, pieces of sheet rock, and one or two pools of water, and it was difficult to bring the pig to bay. At last, however, it came to anchor under some bushes which jutted out from the bank above, and the hunters were enabled to get a fair go in at it. Several times it charged, most of the five—for all were now up—spearing it more or less successfully, till at last a settler from Danvers sent it to that bourne whence no pigs return.

Instead of an old boar, it proved to be—as Norman and Danvers had for some time suspected—a sow; a lanky, hard running, barren sow, with a considerable display of tush. Her solitary and unsocial habit of

lying by herself had deceived old Natta, though the greater narrowness of the pug had struck him as unusual in the print of a "*vieux solitaire*," as the French designate the old shunner of his kind.

Natta shook his head with a solemn shake as he mournfully contemplated the dead pig, and out of the fulness of his heart he spoke.

"I couldn't make it out, sahibs," he said ; "the pug resembled that of a sow's, but the habits were those of an outlying boar. I was deceived, but the old she-devil has paid for her unusual liking for solitude. I am sorry I left the sounder for her trail."

"I suppose we can try and find them also?" suggested Norman. "Where did you leave their pugs?"

"I left them, sahib, between the village you stopped at, and that portion of the hills," and Natta pointed to a point about two miles away. "If it be your honour's pleasure I can recover them."

This the party decided on doing ; and they soon after moved to the place indicated, and had little trouble in hitting the trail. But the pugging as they approached the hills was very difficult, and they sent for a few men from the village to drive the thickly wooded nullahs, in some one of which it was expected that the pig had sought refuge.

Meantime they carried on the pug, which led over some stiff country till it brought them to a gash between two hills, and here they determined to wait

for the arrival of the men. Not to be unemployed in the interval, the hunters collected round the prog-basket and had tiffin, while their horses were regaled with the mid-day feed.

On the arrival of the men they again went to work. One or two ravines were drawn blank ; but at last, in a deep, wooded, and rocky gully, some pig were sighted by the beaters, who halloed away the hunters on their line.

To ride them in the nullah itself was there an impossibility ; but by galloping along the banks or the sides of the hills above, occasionally sighting them, they hoped to find a chance of forcing them into more open ground. Now and again one or the other caught sight of a black object or two flitting through the bushes, and announced the fact by a shout. Thus they continued for some time, when deeming the nullah more open and practicable, the two leading horsemen plunged in and essayed to force the pig from the cover.

It was a bold move, and deserved more success than it met with. Both were soon brought up by the thickness of the jungle and the rugged nature of the bed of the ravine. With some difficulty they extricated themselves, horses and men much scratched by the thorns through which they had forced their way.

The others, who were riding higher on the hill-side above, were out of sight when they emerged and

again set their horses going ; but ere long two of them reappeared on a slope far ahead, apparently also thrown out. To these they rode, and found that the sounder had been for some time unviewed. It had, they considered, probably either been overrun or turned into some neighbouring ravine. Mackenzie was not visible, and it became an object to discover, if possible, what had become of him. For this purpose they ascended the hill on whose side they were riding ; but thence there was nothing to be seen of either hunter or the pig.

One or two of the men now reached them. These were shortly followed by old Natta himself, who despatched some of his aids to neighbouring eminences, both to look for signs of the lost pig and ascertain what had become of the sole remaining man in pursuit, and give such assistance as might be necessary. He directed them to the probable line of the pig, which, however, it was now too late for the other hunters to follow.

Long they waited ; but as nothing was seen or heard of their companion, Natta proposed forming an extended line with the few men present, and endeavour to turn up any pig that might be lying in the hills between their present position and Phoolrea. It was getting late in the afternoon, and satisfied that some of the men would come across Mackenzie, the remainder considered it useless to wait for him. They therefore

adopted Natta's suggestion, and spread themselves over the hills.

A boar was started a long way ahead and eventually viewed by Norman, whose throat was so dry—the day having been very hot—that his shouts dwindled into mere husky growls and squeaks, and he was unheard by any of the others. A beater or two in his neighbourhood, however, were more successful, and indicated the line of pursuit. The boar had a very long start, and Norman only just sighted him topping a hill far in front as he himself crossed that behind. He rode for the point at which it had disappeared, but discovered no further signs of it; and though both he and the remaining hunters galloped ahead in several directions, it was never viewed again.

The hills were very hard and rough, with rolling stones partially concealed by the short, crisp, yellow grass which, for the most part, covered them. A long stern chase over this ground, at the end of a rather trying day, proved sufficient to satisfy the most gluttonous of the horses, whose cut and battered legs and feet afforded ample testimony to its nature. They all now moved slowly to the tents, which were reached without further incident.

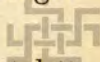
Mackenzie had not, they found, made his appearance; but a body of men, carrying a charpoy slung on poles, some hour or so after their arrival, was seen to emerge from the hills and approach.

There was some real anxiety expressed on the faces of those who observed the *cortège*, and they hastily walked forward to meet it. Rumours ran quickly through the little canvas village that "Mugunjie" sahib was killed—had his leg broken—his bowels torn out by an enraged boar. Fortunately none of these had occurred ; but still he had met with an accident, and a severe one.

He related to his friends that he, like them, had for some time missed the sounder of pig, but continuing to gallop in their presumed line, had caught sight of them crossing a piece of more open country, a good way to his left. He soon got on fair terms, and separated a good boar, which he closed with over some tolerably level ground, but rough with sheet-rock and stones.

His old mare was getting very done ; but the pig was also quite blown, and he was in the very act of preparing to spear it, when the mare's legs flew from beneath her and she came down a regular cracker on some sheet-rock, severely injuring her rider's leg and cutting herself. Fortunately, the men sent after Mackenzie had hit on his tracks, and they shortly reached him. There were no bones broken, but his knee was so swollen and painful that he found himself unable to ride, and in consequence the men procured a charpoy and carriers from a neighbouring village and brought him into camp.

He was at first in a good deal of pain, but hot



fomentations and rest soon reduced the inflammation, and the leg became much easier. His old friend and companion, Norman, constituted himself the doctor and head-nurse, and saw personally that his instructions to the native servants were carried out and the huge limb of the Highlander kept continually bathed, himself assisting in the operation.

"After all, old fellow," said Norman, encouragingly, as he saw his friend more easy, "you came off cheaply. It might have been serious with a man of your weight, going at speed! A cropper on sheet-rock, too! You ought to have looked for worse effects."

"I assure you, Norman," the huge Highlander replied, with a grimace, "I am very well contented that it was no worse, whatever I ought to have looked for."

"So am I, old boy. But you must allow that, according to the dynamical laws regulating the fall of heavy bodies, your momentum on reaching mother earth must have been pretty considerable. Let's see, what is it?—about fifteen stone, multiplied by the best pace of the old mare."

With such-like consolatory remarks Norman endeavoured to cheer his friend in his mishap. It was evident that Mackenzie's riding was over for some time to come; but it was with difficulty he was induced to assent to the despatch of a messenger into Bhooj to bring out a dooley and bearers for his conveyance

there. The self-constituted doctor had also considerable difficulty in persuading the patient to curtail the allowance of beer and punch, which, owing to his naturally insatiable thirst, was ordinarily no insignificant one.

To keep the maimed sportsman company and cheer him, dinner was ordered to be served in his tent, which, when cleared of its usual contents, with difficulty admitted the rest round a table reduced in size. It was no affected concern which Norman felt on behalf of his friend ; and the solicitude with which he watched him and his potations of beer during dinner was as genuine as ludicrous. The elder fully understood this and the kindly feeling which dictated it, and somewhat deprecatingly called for a third glass of beer, knowing full well that Norman's eye was on him.

"I'm awfully thirsty, but it shall be the last, Norman," he said ; "and I've promised to cut down the punch."

In India, where men come to entertain real friendship one for another, there is a brotherly readiness to assist in times of sickness, but little displayed in more favoured regions. A great rough-handed, hairy man will sometimes constitute himself head-nurse, and, strange to say, will not infrequently perform his self-imposed functions with a tender, womanly gentleness and consideration singularly at variance with proba-

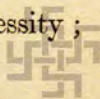
bilities. Such a merging of the dignity of manhood in the devotion of a woman may be laughed at by many; but yet it is not without its advantages. I, who write, having fully experienced them when death almost out-balanced life, have good reason to think so.



CHAPTER XIV.

A chapter of accidents—A compromise—Young antelope hunting—
A heavy fall and its consequences—Collision with a buffalo—
Flying a donkey—Travelling by mail-cart in the Punjaub—An
unlucky stage—Systems of travelling compared—Travelling in
state in Rajpootana—An overthrow—The pleasures of a year's
trip to India.

THE usual log was lighted in front of Mackenzie's tent on the lee side, and his bed within, having been drawn across the door, he was able to join in the conversation and hear what went on outside. Mackenzie at first wished to sit outside with his leg resting on another chair ; and it was rather amusing to the others to hear the discussion which ensued thereon between the two friends—the heavy weight and light weight of the party. Eventually the former submitted to the friendliness and good sense which dictated the objections of the other, and the pertinacity with which he stuck to them. But this desirable result was not attained until two tumblers of punch instead of one—which Norman at first insisted on—was to be the recognised allowance for the evening. The amateur doctor, however, made a graceful merit of necessity ;



for he knew that restriction to a single tumbler was highly improbable under any circumstances, and was, therefore, the more willing to make this compromise. These preliminary matters being thus satisfactorily adjusted, the materials were called for, and under Mackenzie's directions the brew was compounded.

"I was telling Mac before dinner," said Norman, "that he got off remarkably cheaply in his fall, considering what a weight he is. I remember being equally or more hurt by a very similar cropper."

"Where was that?" asked Mowbray.

"Near Poona. In those days we used to assemble during the monsoon and hunt down half-grown antelope with horse and spear. To my mind it was rather cruel work, for we ran them sometimes till they were so exhausted that they lay down and were speared in that position. As a mere cross-country gallop, however, over a varied course, it was a fine sport, and trying to both man and horse. The young antelope, too, had, on the whole, the best of it, for there were few of us who could boast of a kill, though my light weight enabled me to be among the number.

"On one occasion my stout old horse left the rest of the party fairly out of sight. There was not one present when, after an eight or ten mile gallop, I killed a fine buck fawn.

"On another, when out alone with my rifle, finding the deer were too wild to approach, I called up horse

and spear, and after a long, steady gallop, killed another young buck fawn.

"I never actually tried a full-grown buck, but I think it was a matter quite within the reach of possibility to spear one. Indeed, I went so far as to offer to bet on my doing so, stipulating, however, that I should choose my own time, and have three trials if unsuccessful at first. A buck might by chance elude a man once, or even twice, without the comparative powers of horse and deer being fairly tested. The bet, under those conditions, was not accepted, though I offered it publicly at a large mess-table. In case of restricting myself to a single trial, offers of odds against me were, however, made. However, that is a question foreign to my anecdote.

"On one occasion we had met as usual in considerable force, for a gallop after deer, and soon found a herd of antelope. The ground was intersected by nullahs, amongst which sheet-rock cropped out in many places. Across one of these the deer led us, and some of us had to negotiate it at rather an awkward place; so much so, that one or two rather shirked it. Confident in the cat-like powers of my clever little Arab, I thought I would show the way, and, as frequently happens, received correction for my vanity. I rushed past the faltering horsemen, and took the drop in, but, unfortunately, landed on a slanting slab of sheet-rock, which just there most inconveniently obtruded itself.

Directly my horse's hoofs touched, they seemed to fly from under him, and down he came on his side with my left leg under his body. I had barely touched the ground, when crack ! there came close to my head the feet of a great, stud-bred mare, whose rider was not quite certain whether the head he caught a glimpse of was struck or not. Fortunately she did not come down ; and seeing both my horse and myself getting to our legs, and receiving from me satisfactory assurances of safety, he, as others, passed on their way and left me alone. Unfortunately, my horse got loose, and when I rose I saw him careering away on the other side of the nullah. I found that, in addition to cuts and bruises all down my left side from head to foot, my ankle was very severely sprained, or, as I first thought, with something broken about it. I managed, however, with the assistance of my spear, to hobble to the bank ; arrived there, I considered that my best plan would be to endeavour to reach a neighbouring village, and commenced hopping on my sound leg for that purpose. The shaking, however, shortly caused such pain that I was forced to pull up.

As luck would have it, my horse had made for the road which led to cantonments at no great distance, and was there caught by a party of travelling mendicants, who, shortly, to my great delight, brought it towards me.

A most villanous looking lot they were as ever

thugged a bunea or committed docoity; and when they came near refused to deliver up my horse without a gratuity. I had no money with me, but promised to reward them if they would come to my house in cantonments. With this they were not satisfied,—perhaps not caring to be seen much in public,—and would not give up the animal till I forked out. I was not particularly conversant with the language in those youthful days; but I used all the arguments I was master of to induce them to surrender my horse, and without effect. It was evidently a case where conciliatory measures were lost, and a resort to the *argumentum ad hominem* had become necessary. Gathering myself together, with spear in rest, I suddenly hobbled towards the man who held my horse, as fast as I could, and threatened to run him through, there and then, if he did not let go the bridle. This forcible argument had the desired effect. He dropped the bridle, and with his comrades, retreated to a short distance. I seized hold, but it was a long time before I could manage to mount, and the blackguards jeered at my unsuccessful efforts. When I did so, I rode quietly off, no doubt to the disappointment of the fellows, whose extortionate demands were thus frustrated.

When I reached home, I was obliged to have my boot cut off, and it was a month before I could get about. I have had many a bad cropper since, but with one exception that was the worst I ever got.

"That's but cold comfort after all, for poor old Mac," said Mowbray. "I certainly hope you will be all right in a day or two, instead of a month," he added, addressing the recumbent occupant of the tent door. "But, Norman, I should have been much tempted in your place to give one of the mendicants just the slightest prick possible, to warn him that he had acted wrongly."

"I had rather a queer fall in Scinde once," remarked Danvers. "We were riding out one afternoon from Shikarpore to Aliwan, where we proposed hunting on the following day, and as it was a distance of over twenty miles, had hired tattoos for the first stage. Owing to the narrowness of the roads through the jungle, and their rutty nature, we usually rode in single file, and I was on this occasion leading. Just as I reached a particularly confined portion of the road, a herd of buffaloes commenced crossing from one side to the other a short way in front. I shouted to the herd-boy, but calculated that I should just have room to pass behind one without being obliged to pull up; so on I rode, and had the beast not acted in an insensible and provokingly bovine manner, I should have been justified in my calculations. At the very moment of my approach, and when another step of the buffalo would have left me clear room to pass in its rear, the stupid beast thought fit to stop. I had no time to pull up, or even turn into the jungle, and

came crash with the tat's right shoulder against its ponderous hind-quarters. I had the satisfaction of knowing that it was upset; but it was a satisfaction somewhat modified by the fact that I was myself in a similar predicament. My tat made most praiseworthy exertions to recover himself. For a few paces we staggered on, but he too was obliged at last to succumb to the force of the shock, and fell over on his side with my leg across a rut under him.

"The pony was so done, or so flabbergasted, that there he lay, to my great discomfort, and I began to punch him in the most persuasive manner to make him rise and liberate me.

"The man who was riding behind me came up, laughing as if he would split his sides, and asked me if I was hurt. It may have been capital fun for him, but I saw the matter in a very different light. I demanded with an anathema that he should pull the pony off my leg, instead of grinning like an idiot; but fortunately just then the beast took my hints and rose, enabling me to do so likewise.

"I found that beyond a graze and a bruise or two, I had received no material damage; but I was irritated and angry, and glared round in search of something on which to let off the steam. There was my friend still laughing, and him I began to address. But just then my eye fell on the unfortunate herd-boy, who was staring with open mouth, and evidently

quite bewildered by the whole transaction. To pick up my stick and rush towards him was the work of a moment. 'Why did he not drive the cattle from the road when he saw the sahibs coming along in full swing? It was most unwarrantable conduct, and exhibited a carelessness and want of respect worthy of condign punishment.'

"The poor devil saw me coming glowing with fiery anger, and at once put up his hands in a supplicatory manner and commenced howling. Fortunately for him we generally carried thick, club-like sticks, as defensive weapons, sometimes used to beat off savage dogs which frequently came out at us from one or two of the villages *en route*, where they were kept for shikar purposes. Had I been armed with whip or switch, I am afraid I should have laid it across the fellow's shoulders, but I couldn't bring myself to strike him with the stick I held. His piteous howls too, and look of blank dismay and fear, assisted in completing his rescue from impending punishment. The ludicrousness of the whole scene struck me, and I fairly burst into laughter. The miserable offender was doubtless pleasantly surprised at the sudden change in my demeanour and his own escape, for, with a few forcible words of warning I left him untouched, got hold of my tattoo, remounted, and rode off."

"I remember once flying a donkey," said Stewart, sententiously.

"If a donkey in your sense has any metaphorical affinity with a kite," Melton remarked, "why it's an operation that I also have frequently performed."

"No," was the reply; "I mean literally and truly *flying a donkey*, and it was in this wise.

"I was riding home from shooting one day, and when nearing cantonments overtook a drove of unloaded pack-donkeys, with their empty pack-bags hanging over their backs. I was then quite young and inexperienced in the country, and thought the donkeys would certainly get out of my way as I overtook them. Acting with that misplaced confidence, I rushed in amongst them at the usual hard pace of a griffin. Some did at first avoid me, but, just as I thought myself clear, a stupid ass turned directly across my path, immediately in front. I had no time for anything; but my active horse, accustomed to blind-nullah jumping and other feats demanding quick action, rose at him as if he had been a hurdle, and fairly cleared the donkey proper; but catching his fore-feet in some portion of the pack or ropes, was very nearly brought on to his nose. We just saved a fall, however, and galloped on; but that and later experiences have warned me to be cautious in galloping in amongst a drove of any beasts of burden."

"It is astonishing to me how easily we usually get off in falls, looking at the nature of the ground on

which we obtain them in this country," remarked Danvers. "Fractured limbs are of course to be occasionally looked for, but the wonder is they are so rare. On the hard, stony ground we so often meet with, one would fancy broken arms or legs would be the rule and not the exception."

"Yes, and not alone in falls from horses," said Melton. "I once got no less than two in one night out of the mail cart between Lahore and Mooltan, and was none the worse of them. You ducks are yet but half civilised, and have not carried the system of dâk travelling to the perfection that we have. On every one



TRAVELLING BY MAIL-CART IN THE PUNJAUB.

of our roads dooley bearers can be sent forward, so as to run a man through his journey in no time. And then we have mail carts on all the principal roads, where tattoos or runners suffice for you. However, my object is not to condole with you on your manifest

backwardness in this as in other things, but to improve your minds by giving you an insight into our superior arrangements.

“The mail cart used to run from Lahore to Mooltan, a distance of, I think, 220 miles, in about the twenty-four hours. Not bad travelling that, considering the nature of the road, which was completely unmade, and, in places, a foot deep in dust during the dry weather. The animals, too, which were pressed into the service, contained among them such screws, and beasts so vicious, as to be useless elsewhere. I have seen them hauled into the shafts blindfolded, hobbled, and with ropes attached to their hind-legs to drag them into position. Once in, however, they were bound to go somehow. Occasionally they were run off by the syces in a direction opposite to that intended, then suddenly wheeled round and started with a tremendous whacking and shouting from all concerned in the proper course. This, I observed, was the plan resorted to with confirmed jibbers, perhaps because it was necessary to get them into actual motion, and they had a partiality for any line except the right one. Once set going, they were kept at it, for their six or seven mile stage, at a gallop; and usually, when fairly started, they did their best to reach the end of their journey.

“Rearing was nothing out of the way. And then we had kickers, and I was once slightly struck on

the knee by the heels of a brute coming above the place in front where the splash board ought to have been. Our artillery system, so much superior to yours——”

“What?” suddenly broke in Stewart. “Your artillery system superior to ours! My good fellow, allow me to suggest that you stick to what you know something about. I believe it is unquestioned that our artillery system, both of harness, and carriage of men, is——”

“Oh! they are both splendid; don’t know which is best,” said Mackenzie, from inside, interrupting what he feared might be a bone of contention. “As President, I most positively forbid all shop. We have not met here to discuss professional matters. Drive ahead, Melton.” This decision was received with approbation, as testified by several ‘hear, hears.’

“Do as I was done by,” was the reply to the last appeal. “Well, then, the two horses were harnessed according to the fashion obtaining in the old Bombay artillery. That is to say, instead of the pair being placed one on each side of a pole, the one was in the shafts, and the other harnessed outside; but whether the system was good or bad, they took us along at a pace considerably over ten miles an hour. Including stoppages, it was not much less.

“I leave it for you fellows to fancy what that rate is over an unmade country road, simply cleared from

the jungle, with occasional root-stumps, dips, mounds, watercourses, and numerous obstructions of the same nature. Gad, sir! my back and sides ache with the very remembrance of the twenty-six consecutive hours I thus employed in being jolted, and bumped, and being fearfully punished by the iron hand-rail at my back. And all, remember, was on a sort of two-wheeled dog-cart whose springs were of the stiffest.

“Fortunately, I had just returned from a trip to Cashmere, and was in capital condition, and so to save my leave, I went the through journey at once. But, oh! wasn’t I stiff next day! Sitting upright for so long on the very hardest of cushions, on such a road, is rather trying; but still the carts are a great institution, and enable a fellow to get over the ground speedily. On the main arteries, where the roads are for the most part made, it is a much more pleasant way of travelling.

“Naturally, bits of harness are constantly giving way, and other mishaps occurring, where the originally rotten nature of the fabric is so severely tested. But perhaps the worst to be expected is the collapse of the belly-band of the horse in the shafts. That is the only strap or ligature which prevents the cart from tilting back, consequently an accident to it may be invested with serious consequences.

“I had left Lahore about 10 A.M., in the morning of a November day, and in the middle of the following

night was drowsily holding on to the side-rails to keep myself as fixed as possible, when a see-saw motion of the vehicle proclaimed something amiss. The driver at the same time discovered and recognised the fault, and pulled up his horses as quickly as he could. But before this was accomplished the shafts rose, and thinking we were tilting back, we both thrust ourselves forward, and the assistant guard of her Majesty's mails, who sat behind, jumped off. This brought us down again, and half projected, half jumping, I was shot out into the road as the horses were brought up.

"Alighting on soft ground there was no damage done ; but we were, unfortunately, in the very middle of a stage in a wild part of the country where villages were not passed for miles. The dâk stations, indeed, were often the only signs of habitation in the sterile Rechna Doab.

"There was nothing for it but to mend the broken belly-band by such means as were at our disposal ; and these consisted of a knife and a piece of doubtful-looking rope. By the light of a half-moon, the driver and his assistant set to work, while I threw myself on the ground, and was immediately asleep. How sweet the short rest ! But, ah ! how unpleasant the arousing ! —a brief pleasure and pain I had undergone at several of the dâk stations during the change of horses.

"The driver was profuse in his assurances of the safety of his makeshift, and off, once more, we started

along the straight, dusty, moon-lit road, cut from the jungle, and dreamily discernible far in front, like the pale diminishing streak of a canal. We had got into full swing, and I was beginning to have faith in the patched belly-band, when a sudden snap and tilt back proclaimed how misplaced was my confidence. This time we very nearly did go back, but on our leaning forward as before, the shafts came down with a whack on to the back of the horse, and he fell, the driver being shot forward against the off horse, and myself just clear of the one prostrate. I was landed a regular spread eagle in the deep dust, in which my face was buried, and I arose with it like a miller's; hair, mouth, eyes, and nose were full of the finest pulverised particles. This, however, was the only inconvenience I experienced from my soft fall. Nor was the driver hurt. Indeed he seemed thoroughly conversant with such little professional mishaps.

"There was nothing to be done but again to patch, to the best of our ability; and, eventually, once more we started at a greatly reduced pace, and safely reached the next station, where fresh harness was procured."

"Oh!" caustically ejaculated Stewart, whose nostrils had snuffed the professional battle, and was yet irate at the aspersions cast on the "horsing system" prevalent in Bombay, or rather, perhaps, at the want of opportunity to argue and prove its advantages. "Ah!

and you call that, and being carried like a woman in a palkee, better than our system of travelling, do you? Upon my word, Melton, I must say you Bengalese have peculiar notions on the subject of your customs. The principal redeeming point of that cart arrangement is that our system was applied to the horsing. Now, for guns, that, with the detachment system combined——”

“Are strictly forbidden as subjects of conversation,” sharply interrupted Mackenzie. “Argue about spears, horses, gindees, anything to do with sport, but ’ware professional matters, at any rate till you are alone. You two fellows are always sparring about something. Shop is strictly interdicted, so your tilting must be on other subjects.”

“Well, I was only comparing our systems of travelling when you interrupted me, Mac,” said Stewart. “Now I contend that our bazaar practice of keeping tattoos for hire, enabling a man, as it does, to lay them out and gallop post any distance, is far superior in speed and otherwise to such an effeminate mode of performing a journey as in a palkee. As for the mail-cart travelling, it certainly has the advantage of speed; but then Melton has described some of its disadvantages, which to my mind counterbalance them.”

“And, I suppose,” retorted Melton, “that you never get a fall from the positively fearful looking screws which serve you as travelling hacks. Knee-leather, I

should think, too," he added, sarcastically, "can never be lost on those occasions when you ride a long journey unprepared. I'll stick to our system, which is in every way the best."

"‘*Arcades ambo*,’ excellent systems both, and equally adapted to their respective countries," said Mowbray, who had tried both.

"The easiest way I ever got over the ground up country, though, was in Rajpootana, where many of the superior chiefs have lots of comfortable carriages, and no end of carriage horses. They were in the habit of lending them to officers formerly, thus franking a man easily over a long journey in their out-of-the-way country. I am sorry to say, though, government won't permit it now. The good old times are fast passing away. But regrets on that head are not to the purpose.

"We used to travel in state with four horses. The wheelers were driven by rein, but both leaders were mounted, affording the most curious combination possible, and one which would, I think, a little astonish the members of the four-in-hand club. But then, it would also puzzle them to drive over the country and roads we were in the habit of crossing.

"There were, however, one or two natives at the principal places, who thought themselves whips, in consequence of having at some former time been in the employ at one or other of the English military

stations. This was notably the case at Jodhpore, where the crack whip frequently drove four-in-hand. I remember a party of four of us were on one occasion leaving the Residency there with a team of four, being driven by the individual mentioned. But alas! for us, his skill was not equal to his temerity.

“Just below the Residency there was a particularly steep hill, down which ran a hard made road leading to the town; and this we were obliged to descend. Whether from the wheelers being new to the work, or the absence of a drag, or some other reason, the carriage got the better of the horses, and, do all he could, the driver found himself unable to check its impetus, or make his wheelers control it. Under such circumstances, he ought to have held what command he could retain, keeping the leaders at their distance well away from the end of the pole in front. But he lost his head; and when about half-way down, the wheelers ran into the leaders, who, with slackened traces, became at once involved with them. In the scrimmage which ensued, the carriage was carried to the side of the road on the off side, and the wheels ran up on a broken wall. It tilted up and then came over, ejecting such of its contents as had not anticipated ejection by jumping out. Being on the near side, and the carriage an open one, I was one of the latter, and reached the ground safely on my feet. One other man was equally fortunate; but the rest, on the off side, unable to take time by

the forelock, were too late for an easy spring, and were cast, with more or less violence, into the road. Fortunately no bones were broken, but one had his leg badly cut and bruised.

“Ordinarily, however, we got over the ground famously ; though what with running against banks in the narrow roads, and other inconveniences, a pleasant sense of slight risk was given to the mode of travelling.”

“I am afraid,” said Norman, “that when railways entirely supersede our present means of locomotion, game will gradually become extinct ; though it will be pleasant enough, at first, to take a trip into regions not attainable on short leave. I wonder English sportsmen who want the excitement of a little real wild sport, don’t visit India a little more frequently.”

“So do I,” agreed Mowbray. “With plenty of money, and the whole year to himself, a man might make a most enjoyable time of it. Say he left England in October, he might spend the cold weather in the plains, see some pig-sticking, and get splendid duck, snipe, and quail shooting. He might diversify that by obtaining for his hall at home fine specimens of antelopes’ horns ; and in some parts manage to bag a tiger and bear or two. If he could stand the hot weather, though, he should reserve big game shooting for that season, and give one or two months to its earnest pursuit. Being able to choose his own ground,

he might get his fill. If he funk'd the heat of the plains, the Himalayas or Cashmere would afford him glorious sport in a glorious climate, and though the felinæ would be there generally unobtainable, bears, and all the tribes of deer, wild sheep, and goats, with fishing, would afford no mean substitute ; and the latter place would be a glorious residence for the monsoon.

“Then, while enjoying the sports most appropriate for the season, in the intervals he might be visiting queer old cities and ruins, and seeing scenery, and forming an acquaintance with the various races of people with their peculiar habits and customs.

“This would, I take it, open his mind a little more than all the gaieties of a London season, or the delightful but comparatively contracted sports of old England. At the same time, he would be laying up a stock of memories for future drawing upon.

“With good arrangements and a previous well-sketched and digested plan, a man of moderate wealth might make a delightful trip and get the cream of sport, provided he were active and energetic, and content to do without a few English luxuries, and forego a few home pleasures.”

“That undoubtedly he might, and still not be without the pale of civilisation as in the wilds of Africa,” said Mackenzie ; “though a shikar trip there has its merits, and very great ones too. A man could find in

India materials to satisfy so many tastes. Every variety of sport and every variety of natural scenery, associated with ever-varying change in the character and customs of the people, and their architecture, whether ancient or modern."

"To some men," said Mowbray, "a native of India is a nigger, and only a nigger. Whether a Jew of the West Coast, Parsee, Mussulman of the Nor'-west, Mahratta, Bengalese, Sikh, Beloochee, Hill-man, Rajpoot of Rajpootana, or any other race or tribe, it is all one to them. A nigger personifies them all collectively, without ethnological distinction. Such a man never pauses to consider that some of these races are distinguished one from the other by more distinctive characteristics than those of Europe. As Mac remarks, the recognition of the ever varying change discernible to those who pay the slightest attention to the subject, affords of itself a most interesting study."



CHAPTER XV.

Nangurcha—Pig marked down, but difficulty in procuring beaters—Reason why—Necessity of paying beaters personally—Canes as cover—A sharp half-mile—Temporary escape of the boar—Measures to dislodge him ineffectual—Beater ripped—Subsequent measures effectual—A running fight—Horse slightly ripped—Boar shuts up, and is attacked on foot—The finish.

NATTA had strongly recommended a move to Nangurcha, on the other side of the hills, for his emissaries reported pig to be lying in the fields in the neighbourhood of that village. The only obstacle to the immediate transfer of the camp to that place was the incapacity of Mackenzie to travel, but all postponement on that account he stoutly opposed. It was eventually decided, therefore, to move the camp, leaving Norman to take care of Mackenzie till the dooley arrived, which it was expected to do that evening. Vivian also remained behind for the purpose of shooting and keeping the others company. After seeing his friend off, Norman and his companion promised to rejoin the hunters.

Nangurcha was a pleasant place to camp at. The

village was enclosed within a wall, which also contained within its precincts the dwelling of the Thakoor, or chief, who held the surrounding country as a fief under the feudal supremacy of the Rao. He was one of the *Bhayad*, or brotherhood of the Rao's family; a term which included those of the most distant relationship, and not necessarily limited to any near tie of blood. He was one of the first in the province to co-operate with his chief and the political officers, in suppressing the practice of female infanticide, once so prevalent among the Rajpoots.

One side of the town wall overlooked and was built on the bank of the bed of a river, composed of mingled rock and sand, through which ran a streamlet of water. Somewhat above, round a bend of the river's course, considerable pools attracted in the early morning small flights of teal and wild duck, which abounded on several tanks scattered over the surrounding country. In the neighbourhood of the village, on the other side, there was a good deal of cultivation, including large fields of the castor-oil plant, in which pig are frequently to be found. The thick overgrown hedges and patches of jungle which surrounded these, or were interspersed throughout the fallow-land and other fields, were also resorted to by pig from the neighbouring hills; and one or two patches of sugar-cane formed an irresistibly attractive cover.

The hunters had dismounted on the fort side of

the river near a well, in the neighbourhood of which ground was marked out for the camp.

On the other bank of the river grew a small thicket of baubel trees, and beyond, and to the sides of this, extended a partially cultivated country which became broken up into ridges, ravines, and tracts of brushwood, as it approached and merged in the hills which here rose more gradually than on the Phoolrea side. These were, as there, stony and much intersected by nullahs and gullies, but afforded, on the whole, somewhat easier ground for riding. They fell away on either flank till lost in the general undulating character of the country.

The peepul tree under which the party, on their arrival from Phoolrea, had taken up their position, was on the top of the river's bank, overshadowing a well which was sunk in the ground at the edge of the river below. The water was raised to the top by means of a Persian wheel. From the trough into which it was there collected it was distributed over the adjacent field. The knarled and knotted roots of the tree afforded convenient seats for the hunters, as they subsequently did for the camp loungers. The numerous pea-fowl which roosted in the branches overhead were now wandering at will among the corn-ricks and in the neighbouring fields and jungle. Several stacks of hay and straw, each surrounded by its hedge of dead thorns, principally of the wild jujube, showed that there was as yet no lack of

forage, and numerous flocks of small birds hovered about these.

The hunters had traversed the three or four miles of hill between Phoolrea and Nangurcha, after eating an early breakfast at the former place, and now awaited news from Natta.

This soon reached them in the person of the old shikaree himself, who informed them that there were pig in the fields on the other side of the village, and among them a very heavy boar which he had tracked to a sugar-cane field. He complained that beaters, who would be necessary in the fields, were almost unprocurable,—at least, that they would not come at his demand. A polite message was accordingly despatched to the thakoor, with a request for his aid. This was shortly afforded by means of his myrmidons, who soon produced enough of beaters in number, though, as far as material went, sadly deficient. They consisted of any one who could be picked up in the village, and included among them several of the Buneea caste, pressed into the service in the absence of other and, for beating purposes, more useful classes of men. The latter had, for some reason, made themselves scarce.

Not improbably payment had on some former occasion been withheld, or entrusted to servants to dispense to the beaters ; and that, unsupervised, is equivalent to a handsome gratuity to the former, for no

inconsiderable percentage is pretty sure to stick to the fingers of the go-between. Servants should never be entrusted with such distribution, except under the eye of the masters.

Inattention and a careless disregard of justice of this description frequently entail a loss of sport on good and willing paymasters, as well as on the delinquents themselves. It is sometimes impossible to ascertain whether the latter have what they call "cut" the poor, wretched beaters of a portion of their small wage for some misunderstanding of orders or supposed carelessness in beating, or whether the non-receipt of full or sometimes of any hire is attributable to their negligence in not personally superintending its donation.

Policy as well as justice demand that the Indian hunter, in whatever sport engaged, should satisfy himself that the men have their due. To all young sportsmen, therefore, my earnest advice is, See to the payment yourself! *Valeat quantum valere potest.*

Regarded as beaters, the present assemblage was not so satisfactory as respectable. Followers of trades, but imperfectly acquainted with the jungles and the requirements of sport, are but poor substitutes for the classes from which beaters are drawn. Having the usual allowance of lungs, however, they were told to provide themselves with sticks as they went along, and it was hoped would prove but little inferior, in

point of noise, to the ordinary beater. There was some grumbling among them at their impressment, but most of them soon accepted it as unavoidable, and philosophically made the best of their situation. On the road to the hunting-ground, although care was taken to see that none of the men bolted, one or two did manage to slip away. But, in one instance, the runaway was recaptured and ignominiously brought back amid the derisive jeers of his fellows.

The field in which the old boar was reported to be enjoying his daily rest was about half a mile from the village. It was an isolated patch with several fallow fields in the immediate vicinity. But not far distant were other patches of sugar-cane and numerous fields of castor-oil, cotton, and other crops. The sugar-cane grows exceedingly dense and high, and is quite impervious to a horse. Indeed, men move through it with difficulty, except in pathways by which the cultivators enter to open or change the small channels of irrigation. It affords fine cover for wild pig, who get very fat on the rich saccharine feeding supplied by it; and an old boar will sometimes take possession of a patch and charge any one who disturbs him, to the great annoyance and sometimes serious danger of the cultivators.

Some of these on this occasion, though they dreaded the detriment to the canes by the passage of so many men through them, were not ill-pleased to know that

their enemy stood a good chance of being ousted from his comfortable quarters, and of death relieving them of his further visits.

As the party approached, one or two men whom Natta had left as look-outs, accompanied by the owners of the field, came up and reported that the boar was still securely lodged in the shady recesses of the sugar-cane. The ryots made supplication that the beaters should be forbidden to cut and crib any of the sugar-cane, and ordered to move through with as little detriment to it as possible. In compliance with their petitions, all purloining was prohibited under the severest penalties in case of detection, and the march through was ordered to be conducted with great caution.

The field was not large ; so the men were huddled in pretty thickly, while the riders, in two detachments of three and two respectively, remained outside on either flank, accompanying the line as it advanced.

The favourite abiding place of the old boar, where he had been frequently disturbed, was pointed out by the cultivators, who seemed to take a nervous sort of interest in the proceedings. As this was approached, the noise became intensified, and the horses' hearts could be felt distinctly beating under the legs of the riders, who themselves anxiously and expectantly watched the tops of the canes for any motion indicating the passage through them of a heavy body

below ; or they glanced along the sides and to the end corners of the field, nervously on the look-out to detect the bristled front of the old boar as he listened before trusting to his speed over the open ground.

Full often had most of them felt that spasmodic thrill of anxiety or excited delight, as the grisly foe either shows its head at the edge of the field, uncertain whether to break or rush back through the line of beaters, or at once dashes out and goes right away.

On this occasion they had not long to wait. As the beaters approached the spot indicated by the owners of the field, the canes appeared disturbed, and their tops were seen to rustle as if swayed by a strong current of wind. Spears were pointed by the hunters towards the onward motion as their eyes gleamed with excitement and satisfaction. Soon a man, posted in a tree near the end of the field, shouted loudly, and Hawkes, who was riding furthest out on that side, sung out, "There he goes, a weighty and most respectable dooker."

"Ride away then," said Mowbray, who was in charge of the detachment, "we have no time to lose. Try and cut him off from that other sugar-cane field." And howling, to let the other party know of the "gone away," they set to work.

The field referred to was a still larger one of sugar-cane, distant about half a mile, and for this the boar had evidently set his head. The ground was pretty

open, and save for two or three hedges, and one or two strips of jungle, presented no obstacles in the line he had taken. But, with a good start, the boar had a chance of reaching the cover before he could be overhauled, unless he were so old and obese as to be unable to gallop.

This he did not prove to be, though good feeding and middle age had somewhat deteriorated his youthful fleetness, and by no means improved his wind. The hunters, almost in a body, flew over the first hedge of piled-up bair thorns, perhaps a hundred yards in the rear of the boar, and every stride afterwards improved their position. Another hedge was negotiated, though in more scattered order, and the two leading horsemen were not more than a dozen lengths from the boar's tail.

The glittering lower tusk, defined against the dark mouth and dirty ruddy colouring of the upper one, which latter raised the lip into a savage curl, could now be discerned as no unworthy trophy to him who might become its fortunate possessor. It was a racing tussle, and anybody's spear. Danvers and Stewart were riding beside each other in the van, but were so closely pressed by Melton, who was waited on not two lengths in the rear by the other two, that it would have been hard for an observer to select whom to back.

Crash the boar charged into a strip of jungle, and

bore through it with almost undiminished speed. He might perhaps have taken a turn up or down it, had not his cover been at hand. Into it went the horsemen also as hard as they could, and out on the other side all emerged, though now Mowbray and Melton were most conspicuously in front. The boar had gained a slight advantage by this, but was evidently getting blown, and over the next field, with spurs going at every stride, the hunters were rapidly closing. A slight hedge was taken some four lengths behind the boar, and across the next piece of fallow the set-to and final tussle commenced, and the boar became closely pressed. With spears extended, the two leaders made every effort, the one to head the other, or get the first touch, however slight, of the boar. Danvers, a length in the rear, was also urging his horse at top-speed with his eye on the hog, and ready to take advantage of any turn.

Within half a spear's length, the blades gleamed behind the pig, which at this moment seemed to redouble its efforts, and good reason it had to do so. The last remaining obstacle, a stiffish-looking strip of thorny jungle, was close in front, and but a narrow piece of open ground intervened between that and the desired haven.

With a bound, the boar, yet untouched, seemed to fling himself into the cover, and crashed through the underwood. Had a precipice been in front, down the riders must have gone. Indeed, with eye and atten-

tion wrapt and fixed on the flying game, they would probably have been unaware of it. No, wonder, then, that the jungle had been barely observed as being excessively thick. Drawing up their spears, they charged in, and tried to force their way through by the weight and impetus of their onset. But boars have generally the best of such work. From their pachydermatous hides thorns glance off, and they bore their way underneath the hanging branches and through the dense cover, which thwarts the horse and rider, and greatly impedes, if not altogether stops, his progress. With the boar,

“The thorny brambles and embracing bushes,
As fearful of him part, through which he rushes.”

Unacquainted with the waters of Styx, however, no Achillean invulnerability compensates for the want of a tough exterior, and protects his pursuers from the dragging wait-a-bit or piercing baubel thorn.

The boar drove his way through unhurt. But the horsemen, though they also battled through and emerged, did so with loss of their relative proximity of position, and with puggrees flying wide behind, rent coats, and hands and faces scratched and torn. The fine skins of the horses, streaked about the neck, chest, and legs with blood, showed that they, too, had not passed through unscathed.

Mowbray was the first to emerge, and urged his

horse in instant pursuit of the boar, now a third of the way across the field. Its pace had greatly diminished; and, with foam flying from its mouth, was pounding along towards the canes, with that peculiar action so indicative of a tired hog. Mowbray rapidly approached, and ran almost within reach. A stride or two more and the spear would be secured. Within twenty yards of the canes he made an effort to spear, but was not yet quite within reach. Inspired by the closeness of the cover, the boar made a sharp half-turn, then another in zig-zag fashion, for a moment threw off his pursuer, and in the next, the small mud wall which surrounded them was cleared, and the canes closed behind as it dashed in with a surly grunt of satisfaction at its narrow escape. The discomfited horseman almost crashed in also, but just managed to wheel his horse round and pull up, contemplating the spot at which the pig had disappeared with mingled feelings of regret and disappointment.

“Another stride or two and it was mine!” he exclaimed, as the others joined him. “How exactly the old brute hit it. He has got a rattling pair of tushes.”

“I thought you had it,” replied Melton, who was next to arrive. “It was as near a squeak as could be. But nowhere more than in hog-hunting is the ‘slip between the cup and the lip’ experienced. Another hundred yards of open and we might all have had a

chance, and in that distance he would probably have died. However, we mustn't lose him by jawing here. Let us guard all points till the men come up."

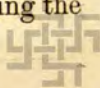
With this they all trotted off, and held guard at different points round the field, not expecting the boar to leave it, but still to prevent his doing so undetected.

Natta and the men were not long in arriving, and the hunters being relieved by some of them placed as look-outs, rejoined under the shade of a tree, and consulted for a brief space as to their further proceedings.

A slight rest was desirable for the horses, with whom the course had been a perfect race from start to finish, and the riders were glad of an opportunity to repair petty damages.

Natta shook his head, and expressed his opinion that there would be some difficulty in ejecting the probably savage old boar from his present resting-place. However, he admitted an effort to do so must be made, and that quickly ; so they were not long in getting again to work.

After such a rattle as he had had, it was feared that the boar would turn sulky, and pertinaciously object to be driven from his asylum ; possibly resent the unrelaxed attention bestowed on him, and show his dissatisfaction at being so rudely disturbed at a time he was wont to enjoy in dignified ease, by charging the beaters.



The beaters were directed, therefore, not to advance, as before, in one extended line, but to penetrate the canes in bodies, and endeavour, by hustling the boar from place to place, to induce him once more to break.

The beaters had been considerably exhilarated by the sight of the run; but, when Natta jauntily observed that there could be no danger if they kept together, and they must try and dislodge the beast a second time, they appeared to regard the matter less sanguinely, and made several references to the "butchas" (children) at home. Several, however, of a bolder spirit led the way, and the others followed *en masse*.

The hunters kept watch and ward around, screened by such shelter in the shape of trees or bushes as presented itself.

For some time no deafening howl of extra power announced that the pig was viewed; but at last it came, and was kept up at intervals. It was reported that the boar had broken back past the men, and was trotting about sulkily from place to place as they followed him, but without any apparent intention of quitting his place of refuge. Suddenly there arose a tremendous uproar. Several men came darting out of the canes, and one was soon after led out by his comrades. He had got separated, and, coming across the path of the boar, was instantly charged and ripped.

He was brought to the sahibs, who ordered all the men to be withdrawn—an order hardly necessary, as the men had withdrawn themselves—and again set watchers round the field. Fortunately the man's hurts did not prove very serious. But the danger was too great to run the risk of any further casualties, so some other means were sought to dislodge or slay the surly old boar.

The wounded man proved to be one of the impressed buneas, and he was evidently in a great fright that he had received his death wound. Being told, however, that he was not going to die this time, and further consoled by the promise of rupees, and a fine doctor's plaster to heal the wound when the hunters returned to their camp, he revived considerably. After having his wounds bound, and being dismissed to his home in charge of some others of the party, who swore they were his relatives, he limped along, hanging to the arms of his companions, pretending to be very bad, but the cuts were neither very deep, nor dangerously situated.

A consultation was now held regarding the best method of proceeding. It was evidently as useless as dangerous to expose the men any further, even could they be induced again to enter the field, a circumstance most improbable.

Melton, who was very sanguinary, and singularly deficient in those troublesome articles which among

ordinary people pass by the name of nerves, proposed that they should go in on foot and attack the boar with their spears. In this he was partially supported by Mowbray. The rest, however, did not appear to receive the proposition quite so readily, or with any marked favour. Not unnaturally, they considered that tackling a savage old boar with spears in thick cane, where it would be most difficult, if not impossible, to use them, was a course of action not to be lightly undertaken, or until all other means to dislodge the pig had been exhausted. Melton admitted this, and Mowbray now suggested that before acting on the proposed plan—only to be adopted as a *dernier ressort*—they should send for all of their guns and rifles, and by a continuous fusilade of blank powder endeavour to oust the animal from his quarters.

This was assented to, and men were dispatched to the tents to bring the materials, while the hunters adjourned to a neighbouring well and refreshed themselves, leaving the pig to his rest and to acquire the calm confidence of security before his stronghold was again assaulted.

In less than an hour the guns were brought and the preparations made to renew the fight.

The fowling-pieces and rifles were given into the hands of Natta and the other shikarees, who had some knowledge of the use of arms, and would reload under

the instructions of the old man or his son. To accompany the small band of gunners, he selected a few of the most forward of the other men, and these were armed with spare spears, bludgeons, and one or two swords. Thus formed, the whole band, under the personal command of Natta, once more invaded the field in as compact a body as the canes would permit.

A continuous fire was now kept up, accompanied by a sustained roar from the rest of the men, who took up a cautious position in a body outside. The progress of the attacking party could be easily discerned by the puffs of smoke which rose from the canes, and distinctly marked their advance. Suddenly the file firing was changed to a volley. This was shortly followed by the boar once more showing his grizzled front in the open, to the great delight of the hunters. Aroused from the peaceful repose which had followed his previous exertions by the gun-fire, so strange to his unaccustomed ears, he considered that the place was becoming too hot, and evacuated it.

There were numerous strips and patches of thick jungle in pretty close proximity, and for one of these he made, reaching it before the hunters could overhaul him. He was evidently now somewhat more distrustful of his speed than when he started with his morning freshness upon him, and in the lusty,

full, confiding pride of one who had hitherto been unpursued.

He was hustled, however, from this patch after lingering in it for some time, but made good another, still unspeared, though he was very nearly run into by Mowbray and Danvers. It was manifest that he had but little *go* left in him, and would probably dodge backwards and forwards, from clump to clump, till some one of the hunters found an opportunity of intercepting him. Running one into the other as the strips of jungle did, however, he had many advantages. Hitherto he had shown little pluck, or desire to face his persistent followers; but from the "coign of vantage" now attained, seemed inclined to change his tactics and make a running fight of it.

Quite unexpectedly he took it into his head to charge, and came out at Stewart, who was cantering round with horse well in hand. How the horse escaped it was difficult to say, for the rider missed the boar, but managed to get out of the way unhurt, and the pig slipped into another bit of jungle. Thence again he charged, and at the same horseman, who, impeded by the bushes, once more missed. But this time the horse did not altogether escape. A gash across the thigh showed where the tusk had taken effect. However, it was not so bad as to place the horse *hors de combat*. Getting away close behind the tired pig as he made across a small piece of open,

Stewart ran up and speared it without a turn. Mowbray next went past at speed, drove his spear clear through the pig, and left it standing in his body. After another slight dig from Melton, the bullied creature shut up in a small patch of bushes, and no persuasions could induce him to leave it and show further fight.

This was an opportunity not to be lost by the sanguinary Melton, who dismounted, and twisting his bridle round a bush, prepared on foot to assail the wounded foe in his sanctuary. In this he was imitated



ATTACK ON FOOT.

by Mowbray, who had got hold of a fresh spear, and the two advanced together to the attack. Seeing them approach, the pig rose. But whether from being too severely wounded, or from lack of pluck—probably the former—he neglected to charge home in time, and receiving the thrusts with a grunt, followed it up by a

shrill squeak, in which last despairing effort of the lungs his life passed away.

On examination, his tusks proved to be very much blunted, which might perhaps account for the comparatively slight nature of the wounds inflicted on man and horse during the encounter.

There was much rejoicing among the cultivators at the death of their enemy, whose daily consumption of sugar-cane must have been pretty extensive. Several of them; who had collected on hearing of the satisfactory result of the prolonged engagement, assailed the dead body with the vilest terms of an exceedingly vile vocabulary of abuse, and appeared considerably relieved by this safe manifestation of their hatred.

Natta varied a few terms of disparagement with some in praise of what he was pleased to call the animal's beauty. The latter consisted partly in its fine exhibition of tusk, but principally in the layers of fat with which it was well covered, and its otherwise satisfactory condition from a feeding point of view.

The gralloching effected, the body was slung on poles and dispatched to camp, while the hunters prepared to go in search of another pig, which Natta considered might be found. He had come on its traces in the morning, but had left the pug in order to mark down the larger hog just killed.

They were not long in striking the trail, and fol-

lowed it for some time over a varied country towards the hills. But it was eventually thrown up, as it led right into the stoniest part of them, where further pugging was most difficult, and at that late hour would probably prove fruitless.



CHAPTER XVI.

Discussion on the subject of the first spear when boars may be speared, lost, and refound—Necessity of being present at death—Cases in point—Division of tushes—Example—Spearing pig on foot—Seeking an old *solitaire*—His first escape—Again found and attacked with dogs—The slaughter thereof—His own death—Following up wounded pig on foot—Pursued becomes the aggressor and severely rips one of the pursuers—Overthrown—A pluckless boar—The hill-side at Kassersai—Engaging a sow à la Tom Sayers—Morgante Maggiore's little affair with pig—Fig and cattle.

THE party which collected round the log-fire that evening regretted their reduction in numbers, but managed to enjoy themselves pretty much as usual.

"Has anyone heard how the ripped buneea is?" asked Hawkes.

"Oh! he's getting all right," said Stewart, who, in the absence of Norman, had been temporarily nominated pay-master and general manager of the expedition. "I sent him a few rupees, and a splendid lump of Holloway's ointment, together with some pills, for which—the latter especially—he expressed great gratitude. It is strange what an idea they have of anything in the shape of medicine."



“Such a universal panacea as Professor Holloway’s compounds is, I should think, equally good for all diseases,” said Danvers. “I don’t suppose it would make much difference if he swallowed the ointment and rubbed in the pills—a circumstance by no means unlikely.”

“By-the-bye,” observed Melton, “supposing Mowbray had speared the pig slightly just before it escaped into the sugar-cane the first time, and Stewart, as he did, got it after the beast was forced to bolt, whose spear would it have properly been? It occurred to me as being a nice question; for the first prod might have been quite harmless so far as affecting the future proceedings of the boar was concerned.”

“I should most assuredly have claimed it,” said Mowbray.

“No doubt,” Melton remarked. “But after all it is a question how far it could always be *justly* claimed. Suppose, for instance, you had gone away; or, from some cause been absent when the boar was again turned out and killed. The run would have been a new one, unaffected by a mere prick. You could not have claimed it had the boar been unmolested till, and again found on, the following day. Besides, to my mind, a man should always be present at the death of any pig he has first speared—supposing him not prevented from being so by accident.”

“Yes! There is certainly a good deal in what you

say," was the reply. "In some cases, I allow that the first spearer might not be entitled."

"I remember," said Stewart, "a case in point which just meets your objections, Melton; and on that occasion I thought much as you do. It occurred at Dongwa, a place I have introduced several times, in fact it was a celebrated meet in Guzerat. We had turned up a fine boar, which was just touched by a man of the name of H——, but effected its escape without being any further wounded. We afterwards pugged it up. But as the day was waning, and the trail led near the tents, many, including H——, left, and only three of us eventually continued on the pug. Fortunately we found the beast—some hours having elapsed since it had been wounded—and after a good spurt, killed it, fighting pluckily. Now I certainly think that the man who first speared it in the second run was entitled to the tushes; for the other, though having it in his power to be present, was not so. It would have been lost to him, had we three not then stuck to the trail and again found the boar. By voluntarily giving up all chance of recovering it, he remitted his claim."

"And suppose that the boar had been very severely wounded, or the original first spearman was away after another pig! How in that case?" asked Danvers.

"If the boar was so badly wounded as to be unable to run, why no other man would care to claim the

spear. And if a fresh pig were started while in pursuit of the first, everyone would probably have gone after it. But in case of the puggees and all the hunters being together, and number one deserting the trail, my opinion is certainly in favour of number two. Norman proposes drawing up a code of rules for future guidance ; and this is one point which should, I think, not be lost sight of. It might be more fully discussed before any rule on the subject were framed."

"Yes," said Mowbray, "I remember a man once, at a meet of the Nuggur Hunt, spearing two or three pig in rapid succession out of one sounder. He was mounted on an ex-racer in high training, and galloped away from us, just pricking one pig and rushing after another, leaving them to be killed by anybody who came up. If all had pursued that plan, numbers might have been wounded and none killed."

"It would have served him right to have left them alone," said Stewart. "In most cases a man ought to be present at the death of any pig off which he has taken first spear ; and rules should be founded on that requirement. A division of the spoils might be made where accident or some justifiable reason prevented the fortunate spearman in run number one from being present at number two."

"I once myself did that at Aliwan, in Scinde," said Danvers. "It was on an occasion when another man and myself had so close a set-to that we speared at

about the same moment. We had brought the animal across the rooted up ground and nullah I have formerly referred to, and after crossing one or two other water channels, got him on a bit of open rather cut up. I was running the pig; and he, who was mounted on a faster horse, gradually overhauled me on my spear hand. I had the pig of course most directly in front, but was barely within reach. As he forged a little ahead, I made a tremendous effort to reach the boar, and at the same time he also endeavoured to spear over the left shoulder of his horse. We were both successful. And so near a thing was it, that we both considered the fairest way was for each to take a tush—for after the ‘double first,’ we, with the rest, soon polished off the boar. We had run him almost to the Mahara, however, before he was accounted for.

“Mentioning Aliwan, recalls to my mind some circumstances connected with spearing pig on foot recently communicated to me by a brother officer. He told me that the jungle had now grown so much over the open ground about Aliwan and other places—since Shikarpore was done away with as a station—that riding the pig there was an impossibility; and I presume, though he did not mention it, that the Mahara wall had also been suffered to go to pieces.

“He happened to be at Sukkur in the month of October, with some other officers on ‘Court of Inquiry’ duty. A frequent adjournment of the Court was

necessary, and on the non-sitting days the members indulged in shikar, a relaxation no doubt their arduous duties rendered necessary. Fortunately the gallant colonel—an officer of one of her Majesty's regiments—who was President of the Court was a keen sportsman, and joined the others in their shikar trips.

“As they found riding impossible, they built muchans in the jungle, and had pig and para (hog-deer) driven towards them, shooting the former as well as the latter without compunction in that wide waste of brushwood. But they introduced a novel element into the sport, which certainly more than compensated, in point of risk, for their inability to spear from horseback.

“When a pig was wounded by gunshot, instead of following up with their rifles, they tracked him on foot through the grass and jungle, armed only with thick strong spears, and with those weapons brought him to bay. As might have been expected, this was accompanied by considerable risk and not without some occasional personal damage.* *

“On one occasion they were following up a wounded boar—a four-year-old—through dense tiger grass and jungle, near a place called Drage, not far from Aliwan. Most of them were moving through it cautiously, tracking by the blood, but, for some cause, Colonel I——got separated, and came unexpectedly right on to the

* * Appendix, Note Q.

boar. To use my friend's words in describing the affair, 'It was between his legs in a brace of shakes, and toppled him over,' ripping him in the leg in three places. Unfortunately my informant neglected to tell me if the pig was subsequently killed. It is to be hoped he was, for Colonel I—— was severely hurt and laid up for a long time.

"That was one anecdote he related, but another was equally or more interesting.

"Near old Sukkur there were a few small gardens enclosed by walls of mud, six feet or so in height, and into one of these an old boar had found his way, and there established himself, charging the gardener or whoever approached him. This was reported to Captain W——, another friend of my own, in civil charge of the district, and who was one of the spearmen mentioned before, and a great advocate for polishing off pig on foot. Accordingly, one night when it was ascertained that the boar was still in the garden, he directed all the entrances to be stopped up, and at daylight, accompanied by my informant, went down to the spot.

"The old boar had, it was reported, been very uneasy for some time, evidently smelling a trap, and had trotted about from one to the other of the closed entrances in a state of much excitement. The two now entered with their spears at the charge. But—I think most fortunately for them—the boar shirked the encounter, rushed at the wall, and got clean over, and

so for the time escaped. His doom was, however, sealed.

“It appeared that these gardens—the one in question especially—were great attractions to some of the old boars in the neighbourhood. So my friend W—— determined to come to a more satisfactory trial of skill with the intruder. He had the mud wall built up a couple of feet higher, and thorns piled all round on the top. After a considerable lapse of time, the same old boar was reported to have again established himself there. On this occasion four officers were present. But, before themselves going in, they dispatched a pack of savage shikar dogs—used by the natives for the purpose of hunting in Upper Scinde—to commence the attack. There was a tremendous row, and the scrimmage was fearful. But above the noise caused by the grunting of the boar, and the growling of the dogs, an occasional death-note rung out sharp and distinct, and it was evident that it was going hard with the *light brigade*, as my friend denominated the canine skirmishers sent in as the advance. Some assistance from the *heavy brigade*, or reserve of spear-men became, therefore, necessary.

“The order, accordingly, was given to advance into the field; and over a field of battle, strewn with dead and wounded, the assailants approached the boar. The animal’s attention was so occupied by the attacks of the surviving dogs, that he allowed the heavy

brigade to arrive on the scene of action undetected, or at any rate unchecked. S—— was the first to get his spear into the beast, who was surrounded by the dogs. He was immediately followed by W——, and with such effect, that the badgered animal soon bit the dust without having an opportunity of resenting the intrusion of the spearmen.

“The list of casualties was, however, great, and not confined alone to the dogs. In the scrimmaging and turmoil of the encounter, B—— had contrived to insinuate his spear into a fleshy portion of the man who immediately preceded him, G——. Of the dogs it was found that ten or twelve were either killed or wounded; but they had despoiled the boar of all the more prominent portions of his body, including the ears, tail, and other parts, which may perhaps have accounted for the poor resistance he made after the arrival of the reserve. The animal’s tusches were of great size, and the upper ones quite curled round.”

“It might have gone hard with them if the first two had succeeded in bringing the boar to bay,” said Stewart.** “A friend of mine told me that once he and two others, got off their horses, like Melton and Mowbray to-day, to polish off a wounded boar. It charged and they received it on their spears, but were all three of them upset. I cannot recollect if either were at all ripped. Probably the spears killed

** Appendix, Note G.

the beast, though the shock and brief struggle placed them temporarily *hors-de-combat*, and at its mercy."

"Yes, I should doubt any man being able to meet the onset of a charging boar of fair size and weight without being upset," said Melton. "The very impetus of the beast—even if killed on the spot, a very unlikely occurrence—would carry him against a man standing in front."

"I once saw a friend of mine, though, pin a boar on foot and finish it," Stewart observed. "The beast had been wounded and shut up in a hedge. It had shown no pluck and died a cur, for it never made an attempt to charge, but was pinned by its assailant and disposed of."

"Wild boars," said Hawkes, "are on the whole, I think, about as plucky creatures as are to be found, but there are certainly exceptions. Last year we killed a boar at this very place who was one of them.

"It was during the monsoon, and we pugged him from the *mīdan* (open country or plain) towards the hills. He was roused in a nullah near their foot, and rattled away into them. Being a heavy old brute he did not make much of a run, and was slightly speared on the hill-side. There he shut up; and though hardly hurt, made not the slightest resistance. One after another of us got at him on horseback and speared without his attempting to charge, till he died, one of the poorest in spirit of his kind I ever assisted in killing."

“Ay, but it would be trusting to a broken reed to rely commonly on such a want of pluck,” said Mowbray. “Some will charge apparently for charging’s sake, without any provocation. I have had a boar come down upon me from a distance of a hundred yards after charging a led horse, which he went out of his way to attack, and I have frequently known them leave their line to go at any stray bullock or two which may be near it. A single man, or even more, in a field ploughing, or otherwise peaceably engaged, runs no little risk too.”

“Yes,” rejoined Stewart, “that is true when the boar’s ire is roused by being hunted or driven from his comfortable day-quarters. Sometimes, however, cattle turn the tables on him. I once saw a capital case in point.

“We were hunting the Vinjule jungle near Ahmedabad, and several pig being astir and the jungle to some extent rideable, the riders had got much scattered after the various animals scuttling about. However, I got away after a nice, speedy hog, who took across the small river near the jungle, and there I lay into him. He crossed and recrossed the river, and at last led me through some nullahs towards a bit of open pasture land in the direction of some high fields. I lost sight of him for a brief space in a nullah, but was redirected to his line by the movements of a herd of cattle, some of

whom, greatly excited, were actually scampering after the hog, and otherwise showing signs of animosity towards him on their part. He had left the nullah and passed close to some—perhaps charged them. At any rate, they resented his intrusion, and themselves became the assailants. Some of the cattle continued to gallop on in his line even after he had passed, and seemed half-inclined to turn their attentions to me as I came up. Unfortunately, I lost the boar after all. I ran him into a high field of toore, I think it was, and there closed; but the pig jinked, stopped dead, passed my horse, and I never saw him again. We found afterwards that he had turned back and returned to the jungle; so no wonder I missed him, as I rode on, looking about on either side.”

“I have seen a precisely similar case of a hunted pig entering a herd of cattle,” said Hawkes; “and I cannot help thinking that the boar went in among them with the object of throwing me off by having my attention distracted. I killed him, however, soon after—two or three dogs belonging to the Rabarree owners of the cattle being present. Very jolly fellows those Rabarrees are. I went to their little encampment, which was close at hand, and asked for a drink of milk. This they at once produced, and allowed me to take as long a pull as I wished, and yet never asked me for any remuneration. They seemed much interested in my shikar also.”

“What people are they?” asked Mowbray. “Do they live in the province?”



RABARREES.

“They belong to a pastoral nomadic tribe,” Stewart said, “and change their ground according to the season and the prevalence of grass and water. I believe they have villages, inhabited by themselves alone; but they usually remain near their flocks in small encampments

of a few families, living in temporary huts or tents. I have heard that there is a good deal of wealth among them, which is chiefly invested in women's ornaments, and they are well clad and comfortably off according to appearances. Most of the immense flocks which feed on the waste lands in Cutch belong to them, and they pay as tribute or tax, I believe, so much for each pot of ghèe manufactured from the milk, and probably a certain amount per head of cattle. They came, I think, originally from Scinde, and still visit it at certain seasons. As Hawkes relates, they are very hospitably inclined. I have more than once come across their little encampments in out-of-the-way places when benighted, and found them very civil. They can often give good hints about the game and the jungle haunts, too."

"I should like to form their acquaintance," Mowbray remarked. "To return, however, to the subject of spearing pigs on foot. I once saw a man have a regular set-to with a sow which he had approached.

"One of the meets of the old 'Poona Hunt' was at the village of Kassersai, above which towers a high range of hills. The latter is one of those lateral spurs which jut out into the plain from the mountainous region which, under the name of the 'Ghauts,' runs down the western coast of India. In the neighbourhood of Poona, on the eastern side, some of these thrust their slopes into the high and rugged table-land

of the Deccan, till they become gradually lost in, or assimilated with, it. On the western side the mountains overlook the narrow tract of the Concan, which lies between them and the sea. From that base they rise with so abrupt a front as, in some places, to be precipitous for thousands of feet—for they soar to an extreme height of between four and five thousand.

“The hills above Kassersai are exceedingly steep ; and although to some extent rideable, are very difficult to hunt over. Covered with rock and stone, and largely furnished with jungle, they will bear no mean comparison with the very stiffest country hunted by the ‘Nuggur Hunt.’ Indeed, they are probably higher than any of the hills in that favoured region. I remember hearing that tigers were once roused during a beat there.

“Difficult though the ground was, pig were to be killed even on the hill-side, though the more desirable place to ride them was across a semicircular stretch of the plain which indented on, and was partly concealed by, the hills. However, it was not often possible to get them there, and we were obliged to ride them where we could.

“Being within easy reach of the large double station of Poona and Kirkee, it formed rather a favourite fixture for a single day, and there was a nice tope (grove) of trees near the village in which any number of tents could be pitched.

"I remember well I was late for breakfast on the morning in question. I had borrowed a pony—a known devil—from a friend, and its decided disposition to rear, and equally decided indisposition to obey orders and get along at a pace it was well capable of doing, detained me long on the road. In fact, it was a series of combats all the way. The consequence was, that when I reached the Hunt tent I found that the party had finished breakfast and started for the jungles.

"Snatching a hasty mouthful while my horse was being saddled, I prepared to join the hunters, and had little difficulty in finding them. They had already had a spurt after a boar, right in among the hills, and had just lost him when I reached the scene of action.

"We soon got away after another pig, which led us over the hills, and eventually took us to the face of those immediately overhanging Kassersai. Some of us here got on something like terms with it, and it was at last speared by a fine, wild young fellow who did not then for the first time distinguish himself as a bold and dashing rider.

"But what a hill that was! I remember one man's saddle slipping right back—for he had no hunting-breastplate—and he came off over his horse's tail.

"After the pig was speared it took to charging right and left among us in the jungle, and at last retired to a bush, where it sulked and seemed indis-

posed to pay us any more attention. Whereupon one of the hunters, S——, got off his horse and walked manfully up to the bush, thinking, no doubt, he could polish it off at once. When he had approached to within a few yards, out it came at him with full charging power. I cannot recall whether he then speared it or not; but whether he hit or missed, it caught him about the legs and knocked him clean off his pins. Fortunately, S—— was as active a fellow and good boxer as he was a fine rider; so when the pig came at him again after its first successful rush, he received it with a well-delivered one-two, and followed that up with such a milling that the astonished pig retreated to its bush, quite overcome by such a pugilistic reception. It was shortly afterwards done to death. Had the assailant been a boar, S—— would doubtless have suffered for his temerity; for their lightning right-and-left digs, performed with a couple of mere twists of the head and neck, are too quick and sudden to be evaded; whereas a sow's bite, though giving a very awkward wound, is eluded far more easily."

"Your friend's adventure," said Melton, "reminds me of Morgante Maggiore's little mill with a pig. I have got a 'Byron' with me; let me see how he renders Pulci's original."

The 'Byron' was got hold of, and Melton read to his audience the following stanzas—first explaining

how the giant Morgante had gone to fetch some water from the spring,—

“ Arrived there, a prodigious noise he hears,
Which suddenly along the forest spread ;
Whereat from out his quiver he prepares
An arrow for his bow, and lifts his head ;
And lo ! a monstrous herd of swine appears,
And onward rushes with tempestuous tread,
And to the fountain’s brink precisely pours ;
So that the giant’s joined by all the boars.

“ Morgante at a venture shot an arrow,
Which pierced a pig precisely in the ear,
And passed unto the other side quite through ;
So that the boar, defunct, lay tripped up near.
Another, to avenge his fellow farrow,
Against the giant rushed in fierce career,
And reached the passage with so swift a foot,
Morgante was not now in time to shoot.

“ Perceiving that the pig was on him close,
He gave him such a punch upon the head,
As floored him so that he no more arose,
Smashing the very bone ; and he fell dead
Next to the other. Having seen such blows,
The other pigs along the valley fled ;
Morgante on his neck the bucket took,
Full from the spring, which neither swerved nor shook.

“ Now,” continued the narrator, “ there we have an excellent example of the value of a well-directed blow. How history repeats itself in the case of your friend S——!”

A message from the Thakoor was, at this juncture, received, to the effect that he would on the following day, if agreeable to the Sahib logue, pay them a visit.

A polite message was returned, intimating that the Sahib logue would be delighted to see him, provided that he came at an hour when they were at home, and not absorbed in the sports of the field.

A late hour in the afternoon was then named, and lots were drawn to settle the two individuals who should make it a point to return in time to receive the old gentleman.

"I imagine," said Danvers, who was one of the two, "that he won't come in state with all his ragtail and bobtail, since we are only military men ; for I don't suppose he knows that Mowbray is a Political."

"Anything is good enough for captains, eh?" laughed Stewart. "Reminds me of an anecdote current in my own family.

"Some time during the last century it so happened that a body of military was temporarily quartered in a small town in the south of Scotland. Of course the surrounding lairds showed the officers every hospitable attention ; and among them a progenitor of my own had on one occasion thought fit to invite several to breakfast and a day's shooting. His careful wife was, of course, instructed to make due preparations, not only for the military, but for a number of neighbour-lairds whom he had asked to meet them.

"In those days and in those remote regions the wife was in fact, as in name, a helpmate to her lord.

Lacking, no doubt, something of the fine-ladyism and polish of the present day, she was, nevertheless, a useful sort of person in a house, which she made it her duty and pleasure to superintend and keep in order.

“Such a one was my great-grand—’Gad! I forget her exact relationship—great-grand-something, however. Well, she was engaged in personally superintending the arrangements for the next day’s feast, when a message was brought in to say that, owing to some county meeting, the lairds would be unable to join the party at breakfast.

“‘Jenny!’ she shouted to one of her assistants occupied in an inner room, on receipt of this information; “Jenny, woman, dinna’ fash aboot the caller eggs—the auld yuns will do gran’ly.’

“‘What for will I no, mem?’ asked the inquisitive Jenny, who had been strictly enjoined to have a good supply of fresh eggs from the poultry-yard.

“‘The lairds will no’ be here the morn,’ responded her canny mistress; and then, I regret to say, added, with a singular want of respect for the military, ‘Aucht is gude eneuch for capt’ins.’

“Which, being interpreted,” said Danvers, “means, I suppose, ‘Anything is good enough for captains.’ What a singularly agreeable woman your great-great-something must have been. I trust the female family respect for the service has improved since then.”

“I think there must be a sequel to the story,” observed Mowbray. “I would undertake to bet that Jenny—who of course was young and pretty, and held officers in higher esteem than her mistress—either had a battle-royal in the military favour, or else regaled them with the new eggs unknowingly to your great-grand-something.”

“Very possibly,” was the reply. “But family tradition has not handed down the fact.”

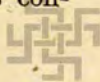


CHAPTER XVII.

A minority decide on hunting—Among the castor-oil and cotton fields—Found, run, and killed in them—Another find and kill—Round the camp-fire—The Mukundra Pass—An unexpected meeting with a tiger—A similar interview in Candeeish—A turn-up with a bear—Rising on the hind legs at close quarters—A rearing tiger—Curious double stalk of a cheetul—A charging gazelle—My last black buck.

NORMAN and Vivian having seen Mackenzie off on his way to Bhooj in the dooley, rejoined the party early on the following morning, but found that owing to one circumstance and another, several of the horses were temporarily *hors-de-combat*. Those two alone, therefore, proposed hunting on that day. Should khubber be brought in of any very large boar, one or two allowed that their determination was susceptible of re-consideration. But as the fixture for the following morning was the celebrated "Venotree" jungle, distant about ten miles, they preferred reserving their nags for that.

Natta put in an early appearance, reporting that he had not hit on the trail of any large solitary boar—or big dant-wallah, as he expressed it—but that there were one or two sounders in the castor-oil fields con-



taining some decent sized pig among them, and these he proposed beating for.

After a brief but animated debate regarding the desirability or otherwise of hunting on that day, it was decided by the majority that it would hardly be worth the candle to risk their used-up animals where no *big-un* was likely to be met with, and that they had better reserve their horses fresh for the morrow. Norman and Vivian, accordingly, were the only two who responded to the summons to the hunting field, leaving the others to go in search of coolen—which abounded in immense flocks at no great distance—ducks, snipe, quail, and whatever in the shape of small game could be picked up.

Owing to the prompt and ready payment of the beaters on the preceding evening, no difficulty was now experienced in procuring as many as were required, ready and willing to serve for a certain day's pay.

As is usually the case, the blood of the slaughtered boar had driven away from its neighbourhood others of animals so susceptible of, and dependent on scent ; and it was, therefore, in a different direction that old Natta led the hunters for the day's sport.

A considerable tract was under cultivation ; most of the fields—large in size—being covered with a tolerably thick growth of mixed castor-oil and cotton. This, though affording good cover to wild pig, is

seldom so thick as altogether to impede the pursuer, though he may frequently lose sight of the pursued ; and a horse easily forces his way at full gallop through the readily parting bushes.

One particularly large field was believed to contain a nice young boar, whose pugs had been frequently met with, but which it was not deemed desirable to track to his very form.

A line was accordingly formed at one side of this field, and with one of the hunters near either extremity, advanced into it. When about half-way through, there was a tremendous shouting, and the dust and moving bushes about the centre of the line announced that something was there astir. At first it seemed to be making away ; but suddenly came back, charging through the line of beaters with a grunt which was as music in the ears of the hunters, but to the imminent risk of a couple of men who happened to be in the way. The line of flight was easily perceptible, and the horsemen soon got behind the boar, though as yet they had seen nothing of its actual body. They were not long, however, in catching fleeting glimpses of a dark mass cleaving its way through the cotton bushes, and in pursuit of it speedily pressed their horses.

The boar was evidently most averse to leave the field in which he had spent so many pleasant hours of uninterrupted rest ; and, though closely followed by

the hunters, seemed intent rather on trusting to the protecting screen of the cover, and with its aid throw them off. Instead of going straight away, therefore, and endeavouring to make some other field—of which there were many similar ones about—he ran a ring, resorting to all the dodges of which he was master, to put his pursuers off the scent. He turned sharply to one flank; he stopped dead, and went away in the opposite direction as he heard the hunters gallop past; every ruse he tried, but tried in vain. He was frequently unsighted; but the dust from the dry surface of the land rose above the cultivation, and too surely indicated his progress. With this to guide them, whenever the pig disappeared they had merely to glance round, and they were soon again in the track of the wily game. All his dodgings were of no avail, for Norman, not to be shaken off for any length of time, ran him till blown, and at last closed with, and speared him.

Vivian, who was indifferently mounted on an animal which could hardly be deemed to rank much above a tattoo, had, nevertheless, been well in during the shifty doubling of the pig, and soon came to his friend's assistance, and speared likewise. The various turns of the chase had brought them close to the spot from which the boar had originally started, and here he came to bay and soon after died, fighting pluckily to the last.



After a brief rest and the despatch of the boar to the tents, the line was re-formed and the beat continued.

It was a fortunate circumstance that the first pig had confined himself to one field, as thereby the others remained undisturbed. A very tantalising and confusing thing it is when the hunted pig arouses another party of slumbering neighbours ; thus causing the loss of an opportunity of obtaining separate runs. Moreover, a sounder of suddenly startled pig scattering themselves in all directions is exceedingly perplexing, and not infrequently all escape, by one or another diverting the attention from that first pursued.

The second field was beaten blank ; but from the third a small sounder was halloed away on Norman's right, and again he started as leader in the pursuit. He soon viewed them, and getting them across a more thinly-grown field, separated one which looked like a boar, owing to a fairly developed tusk. It proved a pig endowed with no despicable speed ; and after a brief hustling in the fields fairly took to the more open country beyond, and led the pace a regular cracker over one or two small hedges and through some narrow strips of jungle. Vivian was quite outpaced, and dropped far to the rear. Indeed, it was some time before Norman could at all improve his own position, and when he did run up, the pig put on a spurt and again drew away from him. But this was not to last. After thus for some distance holding its own, the pig

seemed suddenly to become aware that its pertinacious pursuer might in the end have the best of it. Its course became more undecided. First it slightly diverged to the right, then it made a brief spurt to the left; and when Norman once more approached, it made a sharp half turn to the right, stopped almost dead, and then darting behind his horse made away at almost undiminished speed towards a shallow water-course pretty thickly grown with jungle and studded with baubel trees. A slightly circuitous route would from this take it back to the fields, and this was probably its object.

This sudden turn had let up Vivian. But Norman still held the lead after he had brought his horse round and once more got in the wake of the pig, now showing evident symptoms of distress. It reached the water-course, which was hardly large enough to be called a nullah, but Norman was not to be denied, and pushed it in and out through the jungle, dashing at it when more open spaces gave a chance. Fairly perplexed, it left the cover and ran along parallel with it just outside. This was an opportunity Norman soon seized and availed himself of. He was quickly alongside, and after a little coquetting, managed to spear it severely, and it was soon killed between the two, for Vivian arrived on the scene before the *coup-de-grace* was administered. Having taken for granted that it was a boar, the pursuer had neglected to identify its gender,

and only then learnt that it was a sow. Though the run had been a long one, it ended within a quarter of a mile of the beaters. The shikarees, therefore, shortly arrived, and a few men having been obtained to carry the dead pig, the hunters once more returned to the fields. But before recommencing beating they adjourned to a tree. There, while the horses with their girths unloosed were indulged with their mid-day meal, the hunters enjoyed a quiet bit of tiffin.

Watching the bubbling water which was emptied into the trough from the huge leathern bag periodically raised by bullocks from the well by which they sat; soothed also by the fragrant post-prandial weed, and lulled by the monotonous chaunt of the bullock-driver as he encouraged his team to the right pace down the incline necessary to raise the bag; the two sportsmen felt that quiet enjoyment and absence of care—that satisfaction with the world in general—so indicative of the successful hunter.

But there was work yet to be done. It was confidently asserted that other pig reposed in some of the fields yet unbeaten, and an evident restlessness and desire to be up and doing on the part of old Natta, disturbed the dreamy, contemplative rest of the two sportsmen, and aroused them once more to activity. With outer and inner man refreshed by their slight meal and hour's repose, they prepared to beat the yet remaining fields. Girths were tightened, bridles

adjusted, spears examined, and if blunted or sprung, changed, and the party was soon again in motion.

Moving as before, one at either extremity, the hunters advanced with the line of beaters. Two large fields were drawn blank, but in the third a cloud of dust accompanied by the usual view yelling intimated that game was again a-foot. Norman soon passed Vivian, and getting well behind the pig, gave a shout and held his spear aloft as he caught sight of a large heavy body cleaving its way through the cotton. It was a whopper and no mistake, and Norman chuckled greatly at the prospect of adding so very respectable an addition to the already satisfactory bag of the day.

He soon got on pretty intimate terms, and was settling himself for coming to conclusions with the evidently very weighty pig ahead, when lo! a number of little striped porcine creatures came into view just in front of him, and sticking as close as they could to the tail of their old mother.

"Ware sow and squeakers!" he shouted, as he pulled up disappointed, and was joined by Vivian. "There is no other pig with them. Begad! I thought we were in luck, and had got hold of a big boar, for I didn't see the young ones in the cotton at first."

The beat was afterwards re-continued, but without any further success, and the hunters returned to camp.

The others had brought in numerous coolen, whose cries rendered vocal many parts of the surrounding

country, where they existed in immense flocks. Indeed, from the camp itself they might frequently be discerned high up in the heavens, wheeling round and round in serried phalanx, till the weary eye failed to trace their further and continuously ascending gyrations, though their cry remained distinctly audible. Duck, snipe, quail, and partridges, with a few hares, were also brought in, though not in any large numbers.*

Most of the party had returned in time to receive the old thakoor, who was a fine handsome specimen of the Rajpoot gentleman.

When collected as usual round the camp-fire, Danvers mentioned that he had, during his day's wanderings, put up a couple of hyænas out of some prickly-pear bushes, and barely resisted saluting them with a dose of small shot. "I particularly want to get a good skin," he said, "and it was rather tantalizing to remember that I had left my rifle behind."

"Ay," remarked Stewart; "but how often it does happen that such chances occur when one is unprepared to take advantage of them! But if close enough, I should have felt much inclined to try the effect of the small shot. I don't suppose they would have charged."

"It would be a serious thing to be seized by a hyæna," said Mowbray, "for their jaw is one of the most powerful among animals. But they are very

* See Appendix, Note R.

cowardly brutes. I have ridden and speared them, and never saw one make an actual charge. They conducted themselves like pariah dogs, and contented themselves with biting at the spear. But Stewart's remark reminds me of a chance I once had at a tiger, when discretion appeared to me more desirable than valour, being quite unprepared for so august a visitor.

"I was travelling by myself, and I halted for a day or two at Durree, in the Muckundra Pass, memorable as that through which Colonel Monson retreated before Holkar, in 1804. By-the-by a most defensible position, and one of high military importance, strategically considered, that is. A very singular barrier is formed by a narrow strip of hill-range which, running from the strong fortress of Gogrone on the Kalee Sind river, in Jhalawar, to Durree, and then on towards Bhynsrogruh on the river Chumbul, divides the large well-watered alluvial plain to the east and south of Kotah, from another in the direction of Bhanpoora, and the rich Malwa country. It is a natural line of rampart stretching across the plain, and penetrable by regular troops only in two or three places, the principal being by the Mukundra Pass at Durree. From Durree towards Gogrone, parallel ridges enclose a glen which, in a military point of view, is a perfect covered way. This is filled with jungle, and the hill-sides are covered with grass, ren-

dering it to the sportsman a most attractive locality. Samber are numerous. Cheetul too are to be found ; and sometimes a tiger or panther announces his presence by an occasional kill.

“ At Narainpoora, about midway between Gogrone and Durree, I had bagged a couple of stag samber the evening before ; and hearing game was plentiful also at the latter place, I went out on the afternoon of my arrival with a dozen or so of men. Stalking in the cool of the evening, when the deer desert the secluded and shady recesses of the thickets and come out to feed, was the means I proposed by which to get shots. But while proceeding along one tangled hill-side, said to be a favourite resort of game, the shikaree I had engaged suggested that I should establish myself behind a tree, and that my scanty party of men should proceed down the glen, and then form a line and attempt to drive the deer towards me. This was not to be effected by the usual method of shouting, and so startling the frightened animals into a headlong flight, but by hitting the trees with their axes and otherwise pretending to be employed in the woods in an ordinary manner. This they assured me would urge any game quickly towards me ; and I might then either stalk them, when discovered at a distance in the open glades, or else get a shot should they move past within easy range.

“ The advice seemed good ; so while the few men

went away up the glen, I established myself in the shade of a small tree about half way up the hill, with my pet single rifle in hand. From this spot I commanded several open breaks on the well-wooded hillside, and it was a convenient place from which to stalk any animals, either above or below me. Perfect quiet and invisibility being necessary, I sent the two men who accompanied me with a spare gun and ammunition, away up the hill in my rear.

“I heard the men in the distance hitting the stems of the trees with axes and sticks; but though I kept a keen and anxious watch, no deer came within my ken. There was below me, and in front, a long narrow strip of open ground, or one so thinly covered with jungle as to allow of anything moving across it to be detected. Over the length of this my eye naturally constantly wandered. A quarter of an hour may thus have passed, my solitary watch being undisturbed by any noise indicating the presence of game, when lo! forth from the brushwood on the other side, a tiger stole into view, deliberately sneaking across the open in a low, crouching attitude. He was about forty yards from me, and lower down than my position. Up came my rifle in the first impulse; but in the moment of raising it, I bethought me that I had no other barrel on which to rely—absolutely nothing to protect myself in case of the beast’s charging, a by no means unlikely result if wounded, considering that



AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

I was alone. I hesitated, then brought down my rifle, and looked back at my men. I thought they might bolt, but they stood firm, though they also saw the tiger. So I sneaked back to their position, and with them in company continued along the hill-side parallel with the supposed onward progress of the tiger, for he had now disappeared in the jungle. Again, however, I caught a glimpse of him, moving cautiously along, not apparently having detected us. With my double gun to depend on, I did not this time hesitate about firing. The tiger responded to my shot with a roar and an abrupt bound forward, and then dashed away down the hill, and was lost to view. I believe it was a miss, though I was not at the time at all certain on that point. However, the tiger went away, and we saw nothing more of him, though we found traces in the shape of a young sambar lying dead in the direction of his line of flight. The men declared it had been struck down subsequent to my shot. It was evidently fresh killed, and the only marks on it were those apparently of two fangs in its throat.

"I obtained a couple of shots at cheetul afterwards, wounding one and missing the other, but bagging neither. Unless dropped in their tracks, an animal usually escapes in such thick jungle."

"I should certainly have acted as you did in not at first firing," said Norman. "I was myself once placed in a very similar position, though I had a

double gun in my hand, but loaded unfortunately with shot.**

“I had been sent out during the mutiny from Maligaum in Candeeish with a couple of companies to the fort of Sindhwa, on the main road to Mhow, with the object of assisting Holkar's troops in the protection of the fort, and also making a show in case of Tantia Topee's flight southwards from the Nerbudda. It was about the time you were so knocked about, Mowbray. A show it would have been, and a lamentable one too, with Holkar's rabble more than half mutinous, the Bheels in the country round in arms, and some of my own men anything but trustworthy. However, there I was obliged to stick, and occasionally roamed out in search of a deer or other game both for sport and food.

“The jungle was very thick in the neighbourhood, and abounded with large game, though small was scarce. However, I managed to get a little here and there. One morning I was out with my gun loaded with shot, with the object of procuring something for breakfast and dinner, when happening to glance across a piece of open ground in front, there I saw a tiger deliberately and coolly walking across, as if, either unaware of my presence or regardless of it. Beaters I had none. Such a thing was quite unprocurable from the deserted village, and my only attendant was my dhobie (washerman). The poor devil turned whity-brown

** See Appendix, Note S.

with funk and trembling, and without speaking and with chattering teeth, pointed to the unwelcome visitor. As for myself, I felt anything but comfortable, and resolved myself into the very smallest possible compass. The tiger seemed to take no notice of us, but quietly took himself off; and directly he disappeared in the jungle, I made tracks in the opposite direction, quite satisfied that my acquaintance with his majesty was confined to sight.

“But that is not the only incident of that nature which befell me on that miserable outpost.

“On another morning I had sallied forth in a different direction, with my gun this time loaded with ball. As luck would have it, an old bear obtruded himself on my notice at the distance of not more than forty or fifty paces. He, too, was in the open, and presented a shot irresistibly tempting. So I up with the old gun and gave him one in his ribs. Thus summarily disturbed in his peaceful occupation, he twisted round and round biting at the wound, but catching sight of the intruder, he turned and came at me open mouthed. Knowing that I had only one barrel left to depend on, I thought I might as well have the advantage of a good position, as the affair seemed likely to be decided at close quarters; and, moreover, I believed I could outrun the beast. I accordingly doubled back to the nearest tree—without, as I believe, his gaining a yard on me—and from behind its stem awaited the

approach of my assailant. On he came, giving audible signs of displeasure ; but I reserved my fire till I could make pretty sure of employing my remaining bullet with effect. When he had arrived within two or three yards of my position, he rose on his hind legs, either with the object of seizing me more easily, or the better to ascertain the exact nature of my stronghold. By whatever motive influenced, however, his altered mode of attack was fatal to him. I took aim at that most vulnerable part of a bear, the chest, and drove my bullet in it. He received it with a groan and toppled back, and in a very brief space, to my relief and satisfaction, joined his departed forefathers. On looking round for the dhobie, that person was nowhere to be seen. He had made the best use of his legs and disappeared in the jungle. I remember in my own race seeing a pair of long thin shanks flying over the ground at a pace which astonished me even, though I am a fast runner. Verily it would have taken a speedy bear to catch the fellow."

"Well, that is certainly an example of bears rising on their hind legs when charging," said Melton. "I confess as far as my limited experience goes I have never seen them do so, though I have shot several at close quarters."

"But an animal will rear up from sheer pain sometimes," observed Mowbray. "Tigers frequently do so."

The last I ever shot affords an excellent case in point.**

“I was shooting with a friend in the Boondee jungles. We had killed several tigers and numerous deer, and our month's leave was drawing to a close with a by no means despicable bag, which was fated to be increased by a tiger on the very last day of our stay.

“On that morning our men had marked a large tiger into the very place where we had killed a couple some days before ; and after this we sallied.

“I was placed in a tree which commanded the jungle and a mass of rocks on the side of a hill, and there I sat, like ‘patience on a monument,’ for I suppose a couple of hours ; and I need hardly tell you fellows how very uncomfortable is a constrained position in a tree for that length of time.

“The tiger was undoubtedly in the jungle, but persistently objected to show himself to an appreciating public ; and I confess that I had almost given up all hope of claiming his acquaintance on that occasion. I was in this despairing frame of mind, and perhaps somewhat negligently looking about me, when my eye lit on a brindled mass of yellow fur moving stealthily through the jungle at a distance of about forty yards on the hill-side above me.

“I was quickly recalled to a sense of the importance

** See Appendix, Note L.



of the occasion, and brought my rifle to the front. The tiger, either in consequence of seeing me, or from the fact of the weight of doom being on him, dashed up the rocks, fully exposing himself in the effort, and gave me a free, open shot. I fired, and planted a ball in the very centre of his shoulder. This made him rear straight up on end, and I thought at first he was going, there and then, to subside. But with a great effort he recovered himself, and made off in the direction of my friend, who was posted in a tree at no great distance. L—— favoured him with a bullet in his jaw as he approached. This turned and sent him back again in my direction, and on he came, looking all tail and legs. I fired at and missed him; but my first shot had been a teaser, and he felt the effects, and before he approached close was nearly expended. He came staggering along within fifteen yards, and I was just waiting till he got out of line with my friend's tree to dispose of him, when a native—perched in a tree near me—put down his long matchlock as the tiger passed beneath within a few feet, and drove a bullet into his brain. This summarily put an end to the beast's fast failing strength. That was a fitting climax to a nice month's sport, for we left that evening on our return journey."

"Those jungles teem with cheetul, do they not?" asked Vivian.**

** See Appendix, Note L.



“Yes! During our trip we killed no less than thirty-eight, besides samber and a few neilghye. By the way, an amusing incident occurred with reference to one of the cheetul I killed. We used to go out in the morning and evening, when not engaged in the more serious chase of tigers, and each of us usually took his own line of country. I had been one morning, for a long time endeavouring unsuccessfully to stalk two outlying bucks, after which I fagged till, almost in despair, I was on the point of giving them up, when I saw one in the jungle staring at me with its broadside exposed, at a distance of about one hundred and twenty yards. I dropped him with a ball through the root of his neck, to the exceeding astonishment of L——, who had stalked up within fifty yards of the beast, and was then aiming at it. Our cautious movements and endeavours at concealment had rendered us invisible one to the other”

“Have you ever known an instance of samber or cheetul charging when wounded?” asked Hawkes.

“No! I cannot say that I am personally acquainted with such; but I have no doubt samber would charge if brought to bay and carelessly approached, as a red deer might do. Antelopes are very vicious in the rutting season when domesticated, and will sometimes attack both man and beast when the fear of the former has worn off by familiarity.

Some of the native chiefs keep them along with rams, partridges, and quails, as well as elephants and the larger quadrupeds, for purposes of fighting. In Jeypore I remember seeing a number of black buck, each tied to its separate stake, in a large yard, and it was with the risk of a butt that any stranger approached within the limits of their tethers."

"What do you say to being actually charged by a gazelle, Hawkes?" inquired Danvers.

"I suppose when you were cutting its throat, and it was struggling to get away. Many a man gets his shin scraped or is knocked over on such occasions, or in other way suffers from an incautious approach. Was it at such a time?"

"No. I was deliberately charged. I wounded a chink buck one morning by putting a bullet through its body, and as it went away pretty strong, called up my horse and spear, which accompanied me, to ride it down. Making a short but sharp spurt, I ran up, and, after turning it several times, it actually came at me, and passed under the belly of my horse, without however, doing any damage. It was very possibly, indeed most probably, done in sheer confusion at its abortive attempts to escape. But still the fact remains, and it *might* have been in a last, reckless, despairing effort to do injury. I soon after finished it."

"Yes. I should conceive it was just what the natives call 'gobrah,' (an expressive word meaning so

confused as to lose all head). But what good runs wounded buck sometimes give. Poor beasts ! I have seen them go away on three legs, for a time hardly seeming to miss the dangling fourth, and not overtaken them for miles. Indeed, I have heard of their running clean away from their pursuers."

"The last black buck I shot gave me a pretty considerable run on my own legs, though two of his were broken," Stewart remarked. "Had it not been more cruel to let it escape, I would willingly have ceased to pursue and persecute it. But it was necessary, in mere humanity, to destroy the poor wounded thing, though I felt very uncomfortable while in chase.

"I had unsuccessfully tried to approach several deer, for they were very wild, and the ground ill adapted for stalking. At last I determined to walk up boldly towards a herd and take a long shot. I have often found that to be the best plan where deer are particularly wild. Anything like an attempt at a concealed approach they are on the look out for ; but one made in an open, careless, sauntering manner, and without disguise, somewhat deceives them as to your intentions. I have occasionally, too, got a fair shot by pretending to be picking up sticks.

"On this occasion, assuming an air quite unconcerned, I walked boldly, diagonally towards them ; but though they did not gallop off, they walked away as I neared them, and seemed content to keep a dis-

tance of about two hundred and fifty yards between us. I tried for some time, by going to and fro, and circling round, to reduce this, but was at last obliged to give it up as hopeless. Accordingly, I fixed my eye on one magnificent buck, with a splendid pair of horns, and determined, that since I was obliged to chance a shot at so great a distance, it should be at something worth having, a score of yards, more or less, making little difference. Others were nearer by that space, but I selected the most noble looking to try my skill upon. He gave me a nice broadside shot. So putting up the highest sight, and drawing the bead up his leg, I fired, not, I confess, with much expectation of hitting. The answering thud, however, announced a hit, and the buck cantered off on three legs, his off fore-leg, the side nearest to me, being broken somewhere between the knee and shoulder. A little more elevation and I should have made a remarkably neat shot.

“I had no horse with me, having only strolled out from my camp in the afternoon for a few hours’ exercise and sport; so I was obliged to wait and endeavour to get another shot. The herd went away, leaving the buck to take care of himself. Indeed, had he tried to keep with them, they would doubtless soon have turned him out of their society. I watched him long through my glass. Several times he stood, and at last, seeing no one in pursuit, lay down on a bit of

open plain. It was certainly a most difficult spot to approach, for he had selected it with great judgment away from all cover which might conceal an enemy. I scanned the ground minutely, and at last detected a small stony mound with a bit of scrub on the top, which appeared to me to be within easy shot of the recumbent buck. But how to get behind it was the thing.

"I first of all loaded, and then retired towards a low undulating ridge, which concealed me from the distant antelope. Screened by this, I walked round until I thought I was somewhere about the spot which would bring the mound I have spoken of between the buck and myself. I cautiously crept up, and found that I was not far out; but by passing over the ridge I should expose myself. I therefore cast about for some other mode of approach. This was afforded by a nullah intersecting the ridge, and from thence one or two scattered bushes would give me, I thought, an opportunity of getting in the rear of the mound. Again, therefore, I retired, reached the nullah, and crept up it. From this I dragged myself to one bush, then on to another, until I had the mound fairly between the buck and myself. It then became necessary to advance in an attitude compounded of that of a crouching tiger and a snake. With some difficulty, and a little soreness of knees, however, I managed to effect my object, and reach the mound, or rather, as I found

it on a closer acquaintance, the apex of a gentle swell in the plain. After recovering wind, I brought up my rifle, and, without being detected by the buck,



MY LAST BLACK BUCK.

who was lying flat at full length, aimed at him from a distance little over a hundred yards. I pulled, and there was a struggle, a small cloud of dust, and the buck rose only to fall back.

“I had no knife with me ; and seeing at once that the beast was not killed, I began quickly to re-load. Before this operation was completed, the buck, after several struggles, rose ; and then I saw that my second shot had smashed the other fore-leg near the knee, and the wretched brute began to hobble away on his two stumps with a desperate exertion painful to witness. Directly I had loaded and called to the man who accompanied me, and who I had left behind, I ran after the antelope, thinking I should soon overtake it. But it made such good use of its shattered members,

that I was pretty well done before I neared it. It must have gone at least half a mile, and was then well ahead of me. It became, however, exhausted, and lay down among some bushes, allowing me to approach within a few yards. It then made another effort to escape, but I rolled it over with a bullet through the body.

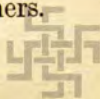
"I assure you, that though I at first laboured to overtake it, the buck quite outran me. It was certainly anything but pleasant to regard the poor thing's frantic efforts to escape, or imagine the pain it must have suffered in attempting to do so. But the horns proved a fine trophy, being within a shade of twenty-four inches of direct measurement, broad between the points, and beautifully spiral."

"A very good length, and one not often exceeded," said Mowbray. "Bucks' horns certainly make nice sylvan ornaments, though, of course, inferior to stags' antlers."

"I* have several pairs of about the same length, which I have never been able to get beyond. When speaking of pairs, though, one is a single horn, the other having been broken off near the head, and forms only a stump. However, it's getting late, and I am off to roost. Good-night."

This was an example soon followed by the others.

* Appendix, Note T.



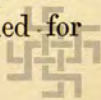
CHAPTER XVIII.

The Venotree jungle—In position—Indecision of pig—A sounder creates much anxiety—A boar breaks—A racing set-to across the flat—First spear—A collision—At bay among the nullahs—The last charge—Nearly down—An unsuccessful spurt—Slipping in for first spear—Lost.

NATTA had preceded the hunters on the previous evening, to make arrangements for the beat of the great Venotree jungle. Assambia, near one end of it, was the fixture ; and towards this village, early on the following morning, the sportsmen took their way.

The road led them past the village of Ruttria, and across the river bed in its neighbourhood. Long tracts of jow jungle and numerous nullahs there afforded good cover for pig ; and had there been time to spare, no doubt they would have tried the rough and varied country about. But the Venotree jungle was an almost certain find, though not so certain a kill ; and thither, accordingly, they proceeded, resisting the temptations of Ruttria.

The Venotree cover consisted of a long strip of jungle, situated on both sides and in the bed of a wide nullah of irregular breadth and depth. It extended for



about a mile, with, perhaps, a maximum breadth of from two to three hundred yards.

On either side lay tolerably extensive plains, across which it was the object to induce the pig to break, though they could not always be prevailed on to leave the cover and face the open. During the monsoon, when the tangled undergrowth became so thick as in many parts to be quite impenetrable, they could rarely be persuaded to leave their attractive asylum. At that season, too, high grain fields and thick vegetation afforded so much protection elsewhere, that it was not so much resorted to as in the hot months. Pig would at the latter time collect from the country around, and sometimes be found in large numbers. In the winter fewer were to be looked for.

A few stony hills at one extremity overlooked the jungle and the nullah beyond. But otherwise the adjoining country, for a mile or more, was flat, relieved only by small knolls of sandy soil, which were, for the most, covered with patches of jungle. The nullah, near the stony hills referred to, was, at that end, rugged and much broken, and the neighbouring country intersected by its feeders. Indeed, the whole character of the ground there was rough; but there was no tempting asylum in the vicinity in that direction to which the pig might make, though a stray one or two did occasionally break there. It was usually the object of the pig, when driven out on the right bank,

to reach an intricate labyrinth of nullahs situated about a mile away towards Ruttria. They sometimes broke on the other side, and, in that case, made for the cultivated fields in the neighbourhood of a large village, distant perhaps a coss ; but the cover being so far, the plain on that side was rarely attempted.

This fine and well-situated jungle was preserved, and, as a general rule, wood and grass cutters were forbidden to ply their vocations there. Naturally, therefore, it was a favourite resort of pig, though, as I have said, they could not always be induced to leave such strong cover.

Coolen were seen in great numbers about the fields by the hunters as they rode quietly along in the early morning ; and any number could have been bagged by approaching them under the shelter of a cart. But their object now was to reach Assambia, have breakfast, and then sally forth to beat the Venotree jungle.

On their arrival, Natta reported that pig—including one or two good dant-wallahs—were at home, but not in very considerable numbers, and that he had made all arrangements for the beat.

The Thakoor of the village had given every assistance, and sent many polite messages. Such being the state of affairs, the sportsmen made no unnecessary delay ; but when breakfast was finished, and a quiet weed smoked, intimated to old Natta their readiness at once to attend him.

The hum of many voices in the outskirts of the village had for some time past announced that a gathering of the beaters from that and neighbouring villages had already taken place. A large number was necessary to beat so extensive a cover ; and Norman found that not far short of a couple of hundred *tickets* were required, when, according to custom, he distributed gun wads among them.

The hunters were divided into two parties, both of which took up positions on the same side of the jungle—that towards Ruttria—though widely apart. A boar might break anywhere and at any period of the beat ; even rush back through the line of men, and after that try to escape across the open. It was necessary, therefore, to have the hunters so stationed as for one party or the other to be able to give chase at once. To Norman, Mowbray, and Vivian was allotted a situation behind a sandhill and some brushwood, a little distance in the open, about a quarter of a mile from the further extremity. The remaining four were placed in a similar position, about the same distance from the near extremity. There was, perhaps, a third of a mile between them ; and it was hoped no pig could break on that side undetected by one or other of the detachments.

When the hunters were seen to be established, old Natta gave the word, and the yelling from eight or ten score dusky throats, with the usual musical accom-

paniments, broke the silence of the woody glades, and startled the slumbering denizens of the cover's recesses.

For a while nothing was seen ; but ere long lengthened howls from different parts of the cover announced the presence of game. This was repeated at intervals, as a glimpse would be obtained of something moving in front by one or other of the parties of men who, owing to the thickness of the cover, were obliged to break up into detachments.

A herd of neilghye was the first to show on the jungle side in front of the first party of hunters ; but they quickly disappeared in the tangled labyrinth of thicket. Again they appeared, further on, among some bushes on the confines of the cover ; and this time, distrustful of the continued prevalence of uproar, moved into the open, and broke away along the jungle's outskirts. But this was only for a brief space. They apparently gained confidence from rapid movement, faced the plain, and dashed out into it with the high-shouldered, ungainly-looking action which distinguishes their gallop, but which covers the ground far more rapidly than its appearance would lead the observer to suppose.

They passed between the two detachments of anxious, watchful hunters, to whom was thus presented a tempting opportunity of matching the speed of their horses with the flying cattle. Had it been

late in the day, they might possibly have done so ; but nobler game—nobler at least to the spearman—was their object. The jungle was not yet half beaten, and an old tusker might be looked for at any moment.

One or two jackals next showed, and skulked away. A lynx, too, with its funny long ears, was seen to make its way across the plain, and speedily became lost to view. Many hares scuttled about, and received several brisk discharges of sticks whenever they appeared in open ground, with the result, in one instance, of a kill.

Peafowl and partridges were seen continually whirling down the jungle.

At last, pig themselves gratified the watchers by putting in an appearance. They were first seen scurrying across an opening in the jungle, and then again galloping along its edge, but soon after they re-entered the cover, and were lost to view. It was a small sounder, and, unaccompanied by any old fellow of sufficient weight and respectability to create much excitement. Had they broken, they would probably have been unpursued by the hunters, expecting, as the latter were, to get a chance at something more worthy of their spears.

The beaters had advanced to a level with the position occupied by the first detachment, and yet no pig had broken. But as any number might break through the line, and then make away, even long after the men

had passed—hoping thus to steal away undetected—the hunters remained where they were.

When about half the jungle had been traversed, the farther detachment became aware that pig were arriving opposite to them. Presently a good-sized pig trotted out into the open, followed by several others. The leader, after advancing a brief distance, several times sniffed at the ground, then stopped short, and, with snout in the air, endeavoured to ascertain by its senses of sound, smell, and sight, if all were safe in front. Its movements were immediately imitated by those following, who seemed to rely a good deal on the acuteness of the guiding member of their band. Again the wary animal cantered slowly on, and again paused, distrustful of the wide plain, and fearful of concealed danger.

The hearts of the three hunters throbbed with intense excitement and anxiety, and they cowered over their horses' necks, breathless with suspense, for there were pig worth a tussle in the sounder, though it contained no very heavy boar. Their line would have taken them within a hundred yards of the concealed sportsmen; but a change came o'er the spirit of their intentions.

Suddenly the leader of the sounder seemed to make up its mind that some concealed danger did or could exist in front, and that the plain was not so secure as it appeared. Perhaps some glance of a spear-head, or movement of a hat; or, possibly, some whiff carried

down by the passing breeze, warned it that the task of facing the open was invested with peril. Whatever the cause, the leading pig, after one of its pauses, made a sudden turn to the left, and, cantering away in a far more decided manner, made backward tracks for the jungle, which it re-entered some distance further on, followed by the rest of its party.

The hunters were greatly disgusted. The very horses seemed to know that the period of suspense was over, though Norman's animal could have had no knowledge of the cause, for it was a fresh colt, as yet untried in the hunting-field. It had been lent to him for the day's hunting by his colonel for the purpose of being introduced to a pig under his auspices and light weight. Still it pawed at the ground under an evident impression that something exciting was in prospect.

The beaters continued to advance, and a tremendous shouting, accompanied by men suddenly dashing out of the jungle, and pointing behind, announced that pig had broken back. When the little excitement attending this movement had subsided, the onward progress was resumed, and shortly another chorus of yells proclaimed a view, once more causing a tingling thrill to rush through the watchers' nerves. This was increased as a large black object was seen to rush through the jungle just opposite, and then, after a momentary disappearance, appear at the cover's edge. A brief reconnoitre, however, seemed to satisfy it, and it once more

disappeared. For a while nothing more was seen, and the hunters began to fear that the boar must have broken back, when, from a part of the cover, not far from the extreme end, a large black animal was seen to dash boldly into the plain, and make play across it, as if its mind was fully made up.

“A welting boar, and no mistake!” ejaculated Norman. “I can see the curl of his tushes from this. Let him get well away, Vivian. For God’s sake, don’t ride yet, or he’ll turn back!”

This injunction was necessary, for young Vivian was just on the point of cramming away in instant pursuit. Recalled, however, to a sense of the mutual positions of hunter and hunted, he pulled up, and waited for the word to go.

“His head is set for the nullahs, is it not?” asked Mowbray.

“Yes,” was the reply. “And it will be just as much as we can manage to overhaul him at this distance. But we must give him law.”

The boar continued along at a brisk gallop, and was about three hundred yards distant from the small party of anxious sportsmen as he passed the parallel of their position. Had he broken on a line nearer to them he would have been allowed to get further into the plain, but at that distance it was calculated he would be more than half way to the nullahs before he could be approached.

Norman took off his hat and waved it as a signal to the other party ; then shoving it down firmly on his head, and holding his spear aloft, but without any shouting, gave the word to ride.

“Cut in between him and the jungle!” he ejaculated, as the three set their horses going. “He won’t twig us for a bit if we ride well for his rear.”

They could have ridden so as to endeavour to intercept the boar before he could reach the broken ground, but that might have given too early warning of their vicinity, and turned him back. There was no obstacle between the jungle and the nullahs, nothing but thin patches of jungle on the sand ridges round the fields, and one or two small hedges, all negotiable without the slightest difficulty.

Acting on the instructions of Norman, who knew the country well, the two kept along with him at a rapid gallop, but without pressing their horses to extreme speed. The boar was going along at a brisk pace, but not one to distress himself, and appeared unaware of the movement to his right rear. But when the hunters had made good their object, cut in behind him, and set their horses going in earnest, he seemed suddenly to realise that not unperceived or unpursued had his course been taken. He now lay down to his work with a will, in the hope of making the nullahs. But fast horses and sharp spurs, and men who knew how to use both were behind him, and it seemed

extremely doubtful if his refuge could be attained before they were on him.

Norman's young horse was half frantic with excitement, and when the hunters at first set to work in direct pursuit, could with difficulty be restrained. But his rider had not, on that day, for the first time ridden a fresh, fiery colt after pig, and soon brought him into something like command. He was obliged, however, to take a slight pull, and Mowbray drew level with him, Vivian being a length or two in the rear.

They closed fast with the boar, and with such even advantage that it would have been difficult to say who led. For two or three hundred yards they raced together, each with an eye on the boar but, occasionally glancing at, and taking cognizance of, his competitor. As I have before observed, it is not always the foremost horseman who secures the spear. Still, the lead gives great advantage, and, if obtainable, is struggled for by all.

So long did the two continue locked together that it seemed likely to end in a dead heat. The boar cleared a low hedge of thorns but a few lengths in front of them, and showed evident signs that the pace had told on him, while the nearest nullah was yet a couple of hundred yards away.

Norman now drew ahead of his companion. The gallant young one answered to the spurs, and as he rushed up to the blown hog had got clear from his competitor.

With his spear extended far in front, and leaning over his horse's neck, he attempted to prick the hog, which, however, gave a sharp turn and the colt dashed past. Mowbray, who had taken a slight pull on his horse when he found himself passed, now took advantage of the turn, drove his horse up, and, leaning forward, just managed to touch the boar behind.

Norman thought he had failed, but a cry of "First spear," told the contrary. The hog made another sharp turn, and Norman, with some difficulty bringing round the colt, who, though showing no fear of the game, was naturally unaware of the object in view, again got in behind it. The boar now ran down alongside a hedge, boring in toward it as if with the view of keeping on the pursuer's bridle hand. But Norman forced him a little out, and rushing past drove his spear deep in as the boar made a half turn and tried to charge. The young one swerved a little, but his blood was up and he behaved as a game Arab should do, and, in truth, generally does. The rider withdrew his spear unbroken, and wheeled round again to come to action. In doing so, however, he met Mowbray, who had just received a charge, and a serious broadside collision took place. Both riders were shaken in their seats, and the colt nearly came down, but each managed to pull himself and his horse together, and the attack was renewed.

Vivian, who had been out-paced, now joined in the action. But they had reached the brink of the first

nullah, and into it the boar plunged, followed by the horsemen, who forced him to climb up the opposite bank. There, however, with curled back, erect bristles, glaring eyes, and champing tusks, he faced round and refused to budge an inch further.

It was rather an awkward position to assail, but a direct attack was unavoidable. Norman was nearest and dashed up the bank. The boar met him before he could gain a footing on the top, and, had the colt not behaved like a veteran, it might have come to grief. As it was, it barely escaped being ripped. Norman's spear rattled in among the boar's teeth, but the charge was staved off, and the impetus of the animal carried it on into the nullah. Vivian here got a slight dig, but the boar ascended another portion of the bank, went on a little, and again stood at bay.

Mowbray and Norman—whose horse was getting half frantic—rushed up this slope together, the former a little in advance, and on the left. The boar was standing with foam flying from his jaws on a piece of level but stony ground, and after a few sharp trotting steps rushed at Mowbray, thus passing directly across Norman. The latter made a thrust in front and struck the boar, which was at the same moment received by Mowbray on his spear. Norman's spear came across his horse's chest and flew from his grasp, while to avoid coming end on over the pig the colt rose to jump him. But only partial was his success. The boar was struck and



THE CHARGE

knocked over, and either the spear-shaft or the horse's head hit Norman a blow in the face, knocking off his hat and giving him a bloody nose. The active young horse staggered on but recovered, and Norman found himself still in his saddle, and pulling his horse up on the other side half confused with the blow and the brief scrimmage, for it had been the work of a few seconds. Both horsemen came round; but that was the gallant boar's last charge. He had risen to his legs, trotted a few paces, then reeled, sank on his knees, and rolled over, and gasping out his last sob, was gathered to his fathers.

"What on earth made you come up so close with me?" asked Mowbray. "You very nearly came to grief."

"Very nearly! Only just look at my nose," was the reply, as the individual addressed tenderly stroked that prominent feature and endeavoured with his handkerchief to stanch the blood. "I am sure it must be three times the size nature ever made it. I feel as if I had a large thing like a red-hot pumpkin attached to my face. The colt was half wild with excitement, and had a good deal to say to the matter himself. See, he is pretty frantic still."

And, indeed, the young one could hardly be induced to remain quiet, though Norman dismounted and endeavoured to soothe and pacify him with caresses. The struggle, spurring, and subsequent engagement

had completely roused and maddened the game Arab blood; and it was long before the horse became quieted.

The other party had followed the first, but did not arrive in time to take part in the chase or fight, and only reached the spot when it was over.

The boar was a fine one; not an old, grey patriarch, but a large, black animal of mature age, and with a tusk of about seven inches; just the one to run fairly, and, with an activity and courage as yet undiminished by age, to supplement a good run by a good fight; such a boar, in fact, as affords the greatest amount of sport to the spearman.

After a brief examination of the slain and description of the engagement by those concerned, the whole party returned towards the jungle.

They found that the beaters had assembled at the end of the cover, and were ready to beat back through it when required to do so. After a slight refreshment the hunters proceeded to do this; a party being at the same time dispatched to convey the dead boar to camp.

This time all the sportsmen together established themselves behind some hillocks, about half way towards the other extremity, and at about the same distance as formerly from the cover itself.

After a while pig were telegraphed as having broken on the other side; and when, with difficulty, the horse-

men had threaded their way and forced a passage through some of the more scanty portions of the jungle, they were hallo'ed away towards the principal stony hill, which served as an excellent marking point near the extremity of the cover.

To that they rode, and received conflicting accounts from the markers, some of whom were established here, and some in trees nearer the jungle. One asserted that the pig had indeed faced the open, but returned. Another declared that they had gone clean away over the plain. It was very possible that both were right ; so the hunters rode to the top of the hill to ascertain for themselves if any were yet in sight, but without their being able to see anything.

While yet engaged in examining the country, however, a hyæna broke away at the end of the jungle, and lumbered along up the nullah. One or two proposed riding in pursuit, and there was some brief controversy on the subject, eventually, however, carried by the noes. As if to verify the correctness of this decision, a sounder of pig very shortly afterwards presented themselves at a considerable distance off in the plain, across which they commenced cantering at a cautious pace.

When they had made a fair offing, the word was given, and the hunters crashed down the side of the hill and rattled away in pursuit. But whether they saw the horsemen, or whether something in front had

made them change their intentions, or from any other cause, the pig suddenly seemed to become distrustful of the plain, and wheeling round, made again for the jungle, far in rear of the beaters. It was tantalising, but there was yet a chance of intercepting them, and in that endeavour the hunters rode.

The pig had a tremendous start, but the course of their pursuers formed a prolonged base to the hypotenuse and other side of the triangle described by the pig. As the latter bore down towards the jungle, the advance of the horsemen near to it obliged them to edge off, and it seemed very possible that they might be intercepted.

Danvers, Stewart, and Melton were in the van, and made every effort to cut in between the pig and the jungle. When within about a hundred yards of it, the pig found that their line would just meet that of their assailants. But, as the horsemen closed, instead of edging further away, they slackened their pace, turned sharp, and scattering in every direction among the horsemen, made direct for the cover, into which they plunged, closely pursued, but scathless. All that now remained for the discomfited sportsmen to do was to retrace their steps, which they did at a pace far slower than that at which they had come.

Old Natta appeared before them as they were plodding quietly along, and intimated his opinion that one or two good pig, which had been viewed in front of

the beaters, would very probably break away among the nullahs at the end of the jungle, but on the side they had originally occupied, and opposite to that on which the stony hill was situated. Accordingly, they again forced their way through the cover and took up a position, screened as usual by jungle-crowned hillocks.

They had not been long established there, when a nice boar was seen to steal away towards the extremity of the cover, and, after crossing a piece of open, disappear in one of the many nullahs which intersected the ground at that end. Again he was viewed ; and fearful of losing sight of him altogether, the hunters rode towards the spot where, a second time, he had sought the protecting screen of a gully. But they were premature in their movement. The boar trotted out a little way in advance of them when they reached the scene of his recent disappearance, and at once seeing his danger, immediately made backward tracks for the cover he had so lately quitted.

Several of the gullies were well wooded, and in and about these he led his pursuers a fine scrambling run, but was at last forced across a nice piece of open ground, which extended to the very borders of the large jungle.

Three or four of the hunters were together, and a very pretty racing set-to ensued. But the pig was an extremely active one. As the hunters closed with

him, one after the other got a chance and made a rush ; but in each instance the boar dodged and jinked with remarkable quickness, and avoided the various thrusts made at him. Sometimes he stopped dead and darted behind his assailant's horse ; sometimes threw him off by a rapid twist. At length Norman—who, having given the colt his initiatory lesson, and exchanged him for his old horse, had been outpaced and was lying two or three lengths behind—seized a favourable opportunity, let Talisman go, and after one jink, which the old horse met with a corresponding movement as quick as a dog, lunged forward and succeeded in reaching the boar. So light was the touch, however, that some doubted if the spear were won till a few drops of blood were seen to trickle down the animal's stern. It was an exceedingly shifty boar, and with the jungle so close, it made strenuous efforts to reach it. In this it was successful. With Norman close at its tail, it entered a thick mass of thorns, and as the rider gave it another and deeper dig, dashed bodily in. In, too, went horse and man, and the latter essayed, by dint of hard spurring, once more to reach and strike the boar ; but it was too late. The impetus of their advance carried them through some portion of the cover, but its thickness soon brought them up, and, scratched and torn, they had to scramble out as best they could.

The beaters had arrived close to the extremity, and

a series of surly grunts and a chorus of shouts proclaimed where the boar had forced his passage through the line and made good his retreat.

This was followed by a little desultory beating—for the men had become much scattered, and might be seen in groups in various parts of the jungle—and a small sounder was turned out, but those who pursued, finding it contained no boar, pulled up.

This was the last spurt, and the party returned to camp.



CHAPTER XIX.

A gallop after a boar through jow—Taking a boar flying—Diseased pig—A discussion about tushes—My last boar—The Vinjule jungle—Nearly shot on to a boar—Forced from the jungle—Killed—A long stern chase—Spur torn off—Forced into the jungle—Killed—Boars' tushes and tigers' claws as charms—Pigs' blood as a tonic—Dead tiger found—Former sport at the Venotree jungle—Wholesale slaughter of sows.

"How's your nose?" asked one of Norman, as they sat round the camp-fire in the evening, discussing the events of the day. "I fancy I can almost see it glowing."

"Then your vision or fancy accurately represents what I feel," was the reply. "It's very shaky, and feels as if a cheroot could be lighted at it."

"I nearly met with a similar accident in Scinde once," said Danvers. "We were hunting a bit of wild country between Sukkur and Aliwan, where we had built a landy apart from any village. The place was nearly overgrown with jow, which was, however, low and thin, and quite rideable.

"Very early in the morning we rode off to the dry

bed of a creek of the Indus, and remained there in ambush so as to detect any animal who might cross it after being driven from a dense mass of jungle, beyond which the beaters had been collected. It was probably a flowing stream during the inundation season, but was now dry, and about the only spot where pig could be well detected, as jow extended far on both its banks. Well, in time, a large boar was seen to arrive on the further side, and after a little consideration, plunge into the sandy nullah and hobble across. Directly he was well over, away we went, and soon discovered him cantering leisurely along in the low jow. The thick jungle he was making for was not very distant, but we had time to kill a heavy old customer like the one we were following.

“There were six or seven of us in all, and a very pretty scurry it was through the jow, which usually gave way easily enough before us, necessitating, however, sometimes a little jumping, much as among furze in England.

“We soon got on good terms with the boar, who had a splendid pair of tushes. He was evidently in anything but good wind or condition, and before he could reach the jungle we were upon him. I forget who was actually leading, but several of us were close together when we ran up to him. Notwithstanding his want of speed or stamina, he proved uncommonly active at close quarters, and dodged us about the

thicker bushes of jow in rare style, throwing us off by rapid turns into or behind them. I think most of us must have had a rush at him only to be thrown off, and we were turning, and twisting, and wheeling our horses in every direction. Some of us were before, some behind, indeed all round him, and he still remained unspeared. Of course the competition only rendered each of us the more anxious to secure first spear, and each case of being foiled increased it. He had just eluded one man, when his effort brought him right in front of, and facing me. Over, on the top of, or through him, my rush must carry me. I determined not to be thrown off by giving him space to evade my thrust, so drove my horse straight at him, end on. My spear went in somewhere, there was a grunt, the splintering of a bamboo, a whack against my horse, who had sprung into the air, and as I shouted "spear," I found my horse had cleared the boar, and I was all right on the other side.

"But unfortunately at the very moment of my onset, a rider coming up on the flank had also obtained a chance, and it was said by those around had speared a second before myself. I thought I had obtained it, but of course the verdict of the others was final.

"After all, the pig made good his entry into the thick jungle, but so severely wounded that we did not think he could go far. So when we had got one or two trackers we dismounted, for the jungle was too

thick to ride through, and followed his trail on foot. We soon came upon him lying dead. And a very noble pair of tusches he had. If I remember right they measured, when extracted, between nine and ten inches. It was one of the longest pairs I ever saw.

"The boar himself we found certainly in miserable condition. He was covered with nasty, open, ulcerous sores, from which there was a good deal of purulent discharge."

"Did any of the people eat him in that state?" asked Norman.

"No!" was the reply. "They were very careful about the flesh of the wild pig, for they recognised it as diseased and uneatable occasionally when it appeared externally to be sound. But a cut into the flesh would show that it was spotted, and this they attributed to small-pox.

"Pig inhabit those jungles in such numbers that no wonder there is disease to be found. We got another run soon after; but this time we were led over a part of the country which had been inundated, and now, under the effect of the hot sun, had opened into gaping cracks and fissures. I got a tremendous spill, and was much shaken."

"It was an awful sell for you, not getting the tusches of the boar," said Hawkes. "Just losing by such a shade must have been provoking. Were they much curled?"

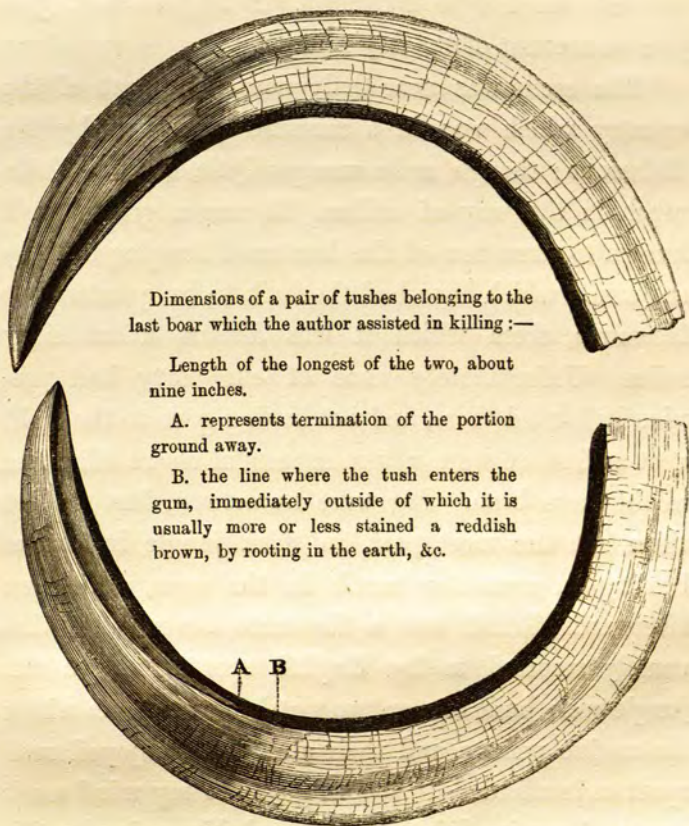
"The upper tushes, as is usual with old boars, were so. Indeed they curled round under the lip until they appeared almost to have re-entered the jaw. The lower tushes were long outside, and sharp, and they, you know, rarely make much of a curve. They get ground down, broken, or blunted, before that could take place."

"Yes!" remarked Norman; "I have seen very old boars with much less outside than had younger ones barely full grown. But while the lower get worn away, the upper seem to grow, and curl, and raise the lip more and more. I have had in my possession several in which the point had so come round as to touch the gum, thus forming three parts of a circle."

"Some people appear to fancy that boars rip with the upper tush," observed Mowbray. "It is evident that it is not intended for such a purpose. Its thickness, rotundity, and bluntness prevent its being used in any such way. Its use seems to be to act as a sharpener to the lower, and also in a measure to protect it. An old boar at bay will champ his tushes evidently in an angry desire to render them as pointed as possible, and the very marks serve to show that such is their relative use."

"The last boar I killed in Rajpootana had one of the most perfect lower tushes in shape and sharpness I ever saw. One of them formed an exact semicircle

from root to point, the curve, of course, being principally within the jaw. It was just nine inches, which is far beyond an average length for even full



Dimensions of a pair of tusches belonging to the last boar which the author assisted in killing :—

Length of the longest of the two, about nine inches.

A. represents termination of the portion ground away.

B. the line where the tush enters the gum, immediately outside of which it is usually more or less stained a reddish brown, by rooting in the earth, &c.

A PAIR OF TUSHES.

grown boars,—indeed may be considered remarkably fine. The tush in the left jaw was more perfect in shape than the other, though that, too, was a very fine

specimen, but it had far less outside, indeed had probably been at some time broken.* By the way, on that very day my nose came to grief, though in a different manner to Norman's. I may as well give you an account of the day's hunting.

"The scene was near Oodeypore, in a part of the country which was in a measure preserved by the Maharana; though, as he was paralytic, he couldn't do much in the way of shikar. It was a ground well known to some few of the hunters belonging to those regiments which have had the luck to be quartered at Neemuch, from which it was distant about sixty miles. Unfortunately none of our party had previously hunted there, and not having gone to the right spot at first we were not so successful as we otherwise might have been. Pig were numerous; but we got them, for the most part, in thick jungle, instead of beating in some low scrub in the open, which we afterwards found was a favourite cover, and that usually resorted to by English sportsmen. In the jungle were built one or two watch towers, from which the native princes and their attendants enjoyed such sport as is afforded by shooting pig, to my mind a sad waste of porcine life. It was probably owing to this circumstance that the villagers took us to the thick jungle instead of to the open country.

"We were travelling with the camp of the Agent to

* Appendix, Note U.

the Governor-General in Rajpootana, at whose exceedingly hospitable table we sat down a dozen or more strong daily. Our party included one or two ladies, and a very pleasant time we had of it. Well, out of the dozen, five of us mustered one morning early, and with another officer who met us from Oodeypore, reached the village named as the fixture in good time.

"The jungle we beat was very thorny, but was sufficiently open, in many parts, to admit of our riding through it. We were not long in it before a sounder was turned up and went away in front. One or two pig were very nearly speared, but were lost sight of in still thicker jungle, in which we got separated and wandered about for some time, employed most unprofitably as far as sport was concerned. What my companions did I know not ; but I again came across one of the pig, and again lost him after a short spurt and painful struggle with the thorns. At last four or five of us managed to effect a reunion, and getting hold of some of the men proceeded to beat some fields and high prickly-pear hedges in the neighbourhood of a village on the outskirts of the jungle.

"A large boar was ere long viewed in front, trotting slowly away, and as he seemed inclined to take his way into the open, and we feared his breaking back, if at once pursued, one or two of us checked the inclination of the others immediately to ride him, and so we waited till he had disappeared over a low ridge.

We then galloped ahead and reached the point at which he had topped the ridge, when lo ! there was nothing to be seen of him. How that boar avoided us I could not for the life of me make out ; and of course another and myself had meekly to receive the vials of wrath of the rest for withstanding their first impulse at immediate pursuit. We beat some hedges, which appeared to be the only places of refuge he could possibly have sought undetected by us, but to no purpose. We then went back and beat the prickly-pear hedges we had quitted, and amid which the ground was nearly all fallow.

“ A boar—supposed by some to be the one we had lost—was said to be afoot and knocking about among the high thick hedges, and some rode in one direction, some in another. I found myself in one field with an immense hedge in front, and thought I might as well stay there till something definite was ascertained of the boar’s whereabouts. One of the other hunters was a little beyond, but divided from myself by—at that spot—another impassable hedge.

“ I had not waited long when I saw a very fine boar, with a noble pair of tushes, canter leisurely along not a hundred yards from me, but on the other side of the tall mass of prickly-pear in front of me. By galloping round to get out of the field by the gate opening, I should lose sight of the pig and most probably miss him altogether. There was just one place

in the hedge, however, which I thought my horse might negotiate, for he could jump like a deer when he chose, and his blood was up after pig. Accordingly I gave him a touch of the spur to stir him, took him back into the field, and crammed him at the hedge. There was the pig right opposite on the other side, and craning or shirking was quite out of the question—over, into, or through we were bound to go, and into or through prickly pear is, you know, a most unpleasant alternative. But as old Dick Christian would have said, ‘I threw my heart over,’ and over accordingly we followed it. My horse had caught a sight of the pig, and was everyway as much interested as myself in the spectacle. He made a splendid spring, knocked away a few of the topmost sprouts, and nearly fell on landing—for there was a bit of a drop on that side—but picked himself up, and away we rattled after the boar.

“I didn’t think any of my companions could follow me over, even if that part of the hedge lay in their line, which it did not, for they were mostly heavy men and not particularly well mounted; so I had the running of that pig all to myself. He soon lay out at a rattling pace when he saw me, and led over several hedges, which were, however, quite negotiable. I gradually gained on him and forced him into a lane, up which he ran. Here I closed with, and turned him, and he then left it in the vicinity of the village, and

dashing across a small open bit, went over another hedge and into a field. I got well behind him and again turned him, still to the left, and he now made partly in the direction from which he had started. After going through one small thin hedge he ran along down another which there cut it at right angles.

"I had of course shouted vigorously at the start, but knew not what had become of my companions. My attention was too much concentrated on the boar for me to ascertain whether or no any were riding behind me, and if so, at what distance. But I thought from the turns we had made that they might cut in anywhere.

"The hog was getting pumped as he pounded down alongside the hedge, and I soon got close behind him. But the hedge was on his left, and he steadily refused to be pushed from it on to my spear side. There was no help for it, so I took up my horse alongside with him on my bridle hand, and prepared to spear him over it.

"Directly I raced up even with him, round he came. I made a vigorous overthrust, met him in full charge, and had my spearhead smashed off, and the bamboo splintered to my hand, and my active, experienced horse only just avoided his rip, as the superior pace at which we were going carried us past.

"The spear had evidently struck a bone—probably the shoulder—and the chances were the wound was by



THE DEATH.—AMONG THE PRICKLY PEAR HEDGES.

no means a disabling one, and I had nothing wherewith to renew the combat.

“As I pulled in and got after the boar with the object of keeping him in sight, I looked round, and, to my great delight, saw one of the hunters close at hand. He soon rattled up to the pig, which had now crossed into another field, and speared him with a vigorous blow down into the back. So deadly was the thrust that the boar rolled over and in a few seconds was dead—before, indeed, the others could arrive on the scene.

“All my companions had been thrown out at the start, and it was fortunate that they had got after me at all. After having reassembled and directed the villagers to convey the dead boar to the camp—some miles in the Oodeypore direction—we again started in search of further sport.

“Again we tried the thorny jungle in the neighbourhood of the shooting towers, and several pig were seen. I was anxious, if possible, to preserve my horse, as I had a good deal of marching in prospect and was but poorly supplied at the time with horse-flesh, so I determined not to ride unless there appeared a good chance of killing. Stony hills, very thickly covered with jungle, were close at hand, and the pig once in these must become lost. However, my friends galloped away while I stood on a hillock, looking out for any chance. Presently I saw one—the man who had assisted me in the

death of the first boar, rattling away by himself among the bushes, with a fine boar in front. The others had got away after some others. That was too much for flesh and blood to stand, and I soon found myself lamming away as hard as I could in pursuit.

“My friend was a capital rider, but very poorly mounted on a troop horse, and I soon overhauled him. He made desperate exertions to keep his place, for we were fast closing with the boar, but it was of no avail. My light weight and the superior speed and blood of my horse told, and I drew level with him and then shot past. There was a good deal of dodging among the bushes, but the ground was more open than in the other direction, and the boar never eluded us. He was getting blown, but so was my friend’s horse, and the hills were close at hand.

“B—— was a good and experienced pig-sticker ; and done though his horse was, I knew that he was one to avail himself of any chance I might give, however slight. So I thought I would reap the advantage of my superior speed, and prick the boar directly I was able, without waiting to deal a decisive blow. Accordingly as I ran up—then having my competitor a couple of lengths or more on my left and rear—I leant far forward out of my saddle, and as the pig made a slight jink to the left, lunged out to that front. The blade went well in ; but at that very moment, and when I was struggling to recover my seat, feeling that I had overbalanced myself, a thorny

bush, as luck would have it, came exactly in my line. My horse swerved to the right to avoid it, and owing partly to my loss of seat and partly to the swerve, I shot right into the bush just behind the boar, and my riderless horse and friend galloped on.

“I was not long in picking myself up, with my beauty by no means improved by the fall. I had gone into the thorny mass head foremost, and arose with bleeding nose, and face all scratched and torn. However, my legs were sound, and I ran off after my horse. I believe he stuck well to the boar, but was eventually, as was my friend, brought up by the thick jungle which covered the hills.

“My antagonist had been unable to overhaul the boar, and it had escaped. I shortly found my horse standing among some bushes, and having managed to secure him, we retraced our steps and found the tiffin basket and some of our companions under one of the shooting towers. The rest had been unsuccessful in either bagging or spearing a pig.

“It was a great nuisance losing the boar after all, for he was a very fine one, and I think, had I not met with the fall, I should either have speared him myself with a better chance of dealing a decisive wound, turned him to my companion, or brought him to bay.

“After getting the thorns out of my face and washing off the blood, I solaced myself with a glass of beer and a bit of tiffin.

“But our sport was not yet over. A man told us that pig were often to be found in the open undulating country which lay outside the tract of jungle. It was composed of alternate ridge and plain, well covered with a low scrub said to afford a favourite cover for pig, and was altogether a most promising riding ground.

“In fact, only accident, or extreme ill luck on the part of the hunters, could allow the pig, if started, to escape in most parts of it.

“In this open ground, which was quite waste, and, save for the scanty pasture it afforded to a few flocks of sheep, useless, we formed an extended line and beat right out into it. For a long time nothing was seen, and we had reached and taken our stand along the crest of a ridge of low hills a mile or more out in the plain before any pig were started. A small sounder of about half a dozen was, however, here tally-ho’ed, and we soon viewed them.

“I had determined not to ride unless there was a large boar, and this I at once saw there was not. They were all small, so I restrained the eagerness of both myself and horse, and for once determined to be a looker-on. No such reason as weighed with me influenced my companions, who had most of them joined our camp expressly for sport, so they were soon in full chase. Most of them were cavalry officers and shikarees of mark, and I had the pleasure of seeing a very pretty set-to.

“My late antagonist had, on the whole, rather the best of it during the principal portion of the run, and first turned the active young boar which he had separated from the sounder. The pig crossed the ridge, and after making play a little way out into the plain on the other side, swept round as if loth to leave the little hills. Unfortunately, just at the critical moment, when the riders were closely pressing the boar and struggling for the spear, they disappeared behind the corner of a hill, where the boar was soon after killed.

“I learned on their return that B—— had kept the running, and very nearly speared; but a turn let in S——, who was not slow to avail himself of his chance, and he obtained the spear.

“After this, as it was getting late, we were obliged to make for our camp, to which, accordingly, we rode off.

“It was subsequently ascertained that we had not, in the first instance, visited the right hog-hunting ground, which was in the plain, in the neighbourhood of that last beaten. There those of the party who did not permanently belong to and continue on with our camp had, I afterwards heard, some excellent sport a few days later, though I cannot recollect the precise number of pig which bit the dust.

“Such, gentlemen, is my last hog-hunting experience in Rajpootana.”

"I have heard of that part of the country," said Stewart. "Large bags have been made there. It must be a sort of porcine Elysium.

"I remember once, like you, Mowbray, being very nearly sent right on to the top of the boar. I will relate the facts. It happened in the Vinjule jungle, near Ahmedabad, in the hot weather—month of April. I was out with a couple of companions, and on that occasion we polished off two heavy boars, both, by great good fortune on my part, falling to me.

"The cover consists of a belt of thorny jungle, interspersed with trees, the whole surrounding an open, sandy, and gravelly hill. A river washes one side of the jungle; and on the other bank rises another hill, which forms a capital station when the beat is going on. In every direction outside the jungle is cultivated land, and the railway now passes close to one end of it.

"In my time the railway was only in course of construction. I fear it must have ere this destroyed the place as a cover for pig.

"We began by having a boar marked down in the jungle, which, though stiff and close, is, to some extent, practicable for an active horse, provided he goes along leaping over bushes as a hunter would do in thick, high gorse at home; but it is very trying, and a horse gets wofully torn. We were taken up to the very spot where some markers in trees had *baithoo'ed* the

pig ; and peering in among the bushes, I saw two—one large one, and one very little one. They were reposing contentedly side by side, or, rather, the smaller one was lying against the more massive frame of its companion. Our approach, of course, soon startled them, and away we went.

“I was riding a very active colt, which had only recently been entered to pig, and the way he went through the bushes—or rather over them, for it was simply a continued succession of bounds and leaps—was about as difficult a thing to sit as I have ever experienced. However, Lottery* was a rare one at that work, and that day he proved himself a naturally clever hunter. The boar was a heavy one ; and getting so good a start, we pressed him close, though one of my companions came to grief very early and had a rattling fall.

“My horse was fast, and I soon got the lead and ran up to the boar, who was forced from the jungle and took over the bare hill, which was intersected by several nullahs. He had rather the best of it for a while ; but just as he had completed the descent of the slope on the other side, and was about to re-enter the belt of jungle there, I again got on close terms, ran him into the jungle, and there speared him behind. He then made a turn and galloped down the belt. Again I closed, and my horse, making a mistake in a

* Appendix, Note H.

deep rut, almost came down, and I was very nearly shot off right on to the boar. I fairly lost my seat, for I was tired with the exertion of sticking so tight through such a continuity of bounds. Lottery, however, managed to recover himself without, I must confess, much help from me, and tilted me back into the saddle. When quite re-established there, I again took the colt up, and actually forced the boar from the jungle into an open field. There I again speared him,—this time severely,—and he came to bay. My companion now joined me, and we had a very respectable little battle before the boar succumbed, which he shortly did after charging repeatedly.

“ I was much applauded by the shikarees for sticking to and spearing the boar in such a thick cover, and they looked upon the colt as a paragon of horse-flesh. The poor little beast, however, was much torn by the thorns, and considerably knocked about in other ways ; so I sent for my second horse—an old, experienced hunter—and despatched the young one to the tents, well satisfied with his performance.

“ We next crossed the river, and beat a considerable tract of high fields, cultivated by well-irrigation, in the neighbourhood of a village about a couple of miles from the jungle.

“ Pig were said to be there and moving about, but we could make nothing of them, and at last gave it up as a bad job.

“ On our return, however, we beat another isolated field, but it proved also a blank, and we were riding quietly towards our tents when a tremendous hooroosh from the further end of the field attracted my attention. I had loitered behind, and was a considerable distance in rear of my companions ; so was the only one who galloped off to the end of the field, and was there informed that a boar was in view. I rode ahead, and shortly saw a large hog in the distance on the open plain, taking it very easily. Apparently he had left the fields we had before beaten, and was making for the jungle. Telling the men to call up the other sahibs, I dashed away in pursuit.

“ Had the boar been aware of the imminence of the danger, and made a better use of his long start and natural speed, he would have reached the jungle before I could have overtaken him ; but deeming himself unpursued, and rid of the disagreeable noise of the beaters, he jogged on the even tenor of his way at a moderate pace till, suddenly cocking his ears as I approached, he notified that he had become aware that his confidence had been misplaced.

“ A quick, side-long glance quickly showed him the risk he had run, and with a surly grunt he lay out at a pace which, for a brief space, kept him well ahead. But a long canter over the plain in the midday sun had shorn him of a portion of his original freshness, and I gradually, but perceptibly, crept closer to him.

He felt this, and made every exertion to reach a small field of high grain, which stood on the banks of the river, in the neighbourhood of the jungle. This he managed to do, but only a few lengths in advance of me. Though thick, the grain did not altogether conceal him, and I pushed him about in it, turning and twisting in every direction, till, fairly bothered, he took to some low scrub which grew pretty thick and plentiful on the bank of the river. This was on the side opposite to that on which the jungle was situated.

“Here my friends—who had for some time been unaware of my being in chase, but subsequently made a short cut towards me—joined, and I began to fear I should after all lose the spear. But I was now on better terms with the hog, and managed to run up, got a fair chance, and succeeded in pricking him. One of my companions about this time went down, horse and all, bodily into a bush. I speared a second time, and turned the boar, who now slipped down the bank and went into the river. He revelled for a short time in the water, and when I managed to scramble down, there he was, evidently enjoying a pleasant bath and drink. I lost no time in riding towards him up the river, which may have been there a couple of feet in depth. Disturbed in an agreeable roll by my approach, he sprang up, and stood with eyes glaring, and fore-feet firmly fixed, ready for a dash at me when I came within reach. When I arrived within three or four

lengths, he came at me full swing amidst a storm of spray. I received him on my spear, but it only entered his fore-arm, and passed through the flesh. It was not sufficient to stop him, and I felt him strike the sole of my boot and stirrup-iron; and, as I afterwards found, he tore my spur off. With my spear still through his leg, however, I shoved him round, and kept him from ripping at my horse. Eventually, as I pressed my horse out of the way, I pulled the boar over, and, withdrawing my spear, moved ahead. He quickly recovered himself, made up the bank, and entered the jungle, where I was not long in following him. My companion was riding a pony, having either lamed his hunter, or changed it when we rode towards the tents, and the brute steadily refused to go down into the nullah. Spurring and punching with the butt-end of the spear was of not the slightest avail. At last, in an almost allowable fit of anger, he gave the beast a dig in the rump with the point, and this had so persuasive an effect, that down at last it went into the river, and up the opposite bank.

“In the meantime I had run the pig into the jungle up a narrow path, but he turned and came partly back. I kept well in hand, waiting for an opportunity to dash up on a bit of open, and get a good thrust. The boar, however, now shut up in a bush, whence he charged out at my friend as he came up. He was received on his spear, which got jammed in the ribs,

and while thus entangled, I got close, gave a decisive blow, and the action was over.

"Both the boars were very good ones, with tushes of about seven inches. But during the space of time which elapsed between the death of the last and the arrival of the men, in search of whom we shortly went, some villager, or possibly one of the beaters themselves, managed to break off one of the tushes of the last hog, leaving only the stump."

"What use do you suppose he would make of it?" asked Vivian.

"Preserve it as a charm, I believe, and use it as an effective article of application in some cases of disease. For pigs' blood some of the low outcasts have great veneration. They are fully impressed with its strengthening powers. I have seen a man, directly the boar was disembowelled, plunge his head into the cavity, and drink at the blood. He and others also dipped the ends of puggrees and rags into it to give to their children to suck. It is, in their estimation, a fine strengthening tonic, and a specific against some of the ills to which flesh is heir."

"I suppose," said Mowbray, "that they consider that some medicinal properties are contained in both tush and blood, and hold them in esteem, as other tribes do the fat and certain portions of tigers and bears. The claws of the former are in high estimation as charms. Even a tolerably well-educated man in

so superior a station of life as that of an apothecary, and a Mussulman into the bargain, once asked me for a pair to fasten round the arm of his child. If not looked after, the claws of a dead tiger will disappear very quickly. I remember once, when beating for tigers, the men came across the remains of a dead one—a rare occurrence by the way. I went to inspect the spot, which was under an overhanging block of stone. The head and teeth were tolerably perfect, and many bones and bits of skin were about, but the claws were for the most part absent, doubtless seized at first by the men themselves. They considered that the tiger had died from fighting with another, for by the teeth it was not an aged one. They one and all declared that no one could have shot it. No sahib had ever shikared that part of the country, which was in the Boondée Raj, and they themselves were not permitted to fire at wild animals. The latter reason, of course, would account for their attributing the cause of death to other than a shot-wound, but they really appeared to believe what they said.”

“Well, to return to our pigs,” said Norman. “I was rather disappointed to-day at getting so few kills. I have known three large boars to be killed before breakfast by a party of three out of this jungle. And another man and myself actually speared six pig of various sizes one afternoon, though three of them escaped into the jungle wounded. Both of these occa-

sions were during the hot weather, however. That season is decidedly the best, for the pig then assemble in the jungle, sometimes in great numbers, and it being thinner, they are more easily driven from it."

"And the chances are greatly against the pig," observed Stewart. "It is almost as great a certainty as the plain in the neighbourhood of Kutwarra, near Ahmedabad, of which I have before spoken, if you get away at all on fair terms. I once saw a very dirty advantage taken of a sounder at that place. Six pig were killed, and all sows, one of them big with young."

"A rank, unsportsmanlike deed," ejaculated Norman, indignantly. "It is my opinion that, as a general rule, sows ought not to be speared. Now and then, of course, killing them is unavoidable, and, indeed, quite legitimate, especially in such a case, for instance, as that of the Phoolrea sow, or when, at the end of a day of little sport, sows break without any boar. But killing a sow with young! It's positively infamous! I am preparing a set of rules, and shall submit them for approval directly we return to Bhooj. The spearing of sows I shall especially refer to. Our recent experiences, and our many discussions and anecdotes have brought so many points prominently to notice, and placed the sport as a whole so fully before me, that I have been able to draw up a few regulations such as I hope all sportsmen will approve of."

CHAPTER XX.

The party return to cantonments—The bag, though moderate, considered satisfactory—Uncertainty attending the first spear—A hunt-meeting at mess—Discussion regarding rules—Length of spear—Indiscriminate slaughter of sows—Colonel's ire thereat—A few brief suggestions for hunting rules.

ON the following morning the hunting-party broke up, and its members, with the exception of Danvers and Vivian, who proceeded to Mandavie, there to take boat for Kurrachee, returned to cantonments.

The number of pig killed had been moderate. But altogether, the sport afforded was deemed quite satisfactory by those concerned; and the bag, indeed, would be generally thought so, except by those gluttons who have been spoiled by shikaring in some one of those districts, and in it alone, where pig are to be found in countless numbers, and on rideable ground. Such favoured spots are, I regret to say, very rare, if, indeed, they anywhere now exist in the Bombay Presidency, though many jungles will afford one or two days' capital sport.

I have, however, not hunted for some years; and possibly some of the crack meets, such as "Arkola"

in the Deccan, "Dongwa" in Guzerat, "Aliwan" in Scinde, "Venotree" in Cutch, the neighbourhood of "Oodeypore" in Rajpootana, and numerous other favourite fixtures may have greatly altered, and been superseded by others since then. I have seen good sport at them all, as well as at numerous other places in all the provinces mentioned. The foregoing chronicle will indicate in a great measure where. I sincerely hope that those who have qualified, or are qualifying themselves as spearmen, may have as good or better.

But though good sport may often be anticipated, the spearman should not be downcast if luck does not always follow his exertions. Perseverance, pluck, and determination will, in the end, triumph, and to my mind all sport is improved by some uncertainty, labour, and difficulty in its attainment. The glittering tushes would not be half so prized a trophy were they very easily obtained. Let no tyro, however unsuccessful at first, despair of succeeding. With practice, and patience, and a determination to succeed, his time will come.

Nor must he look to find invariably, or lose heart at several consecutive blank days. I have myself on many occasions, taken several first spears in one day, but I have also wandered for days over the country in search of pig, without getting even a run. Again, at other times, I have seen several killed by others, and

assisted in their slaughter, without obtaining a first spear myself.

Norman was as good as his word, and shortly after his arrival in Bhooj summoned a hunt-meeting at the mess-house.

In India, as in other parts where Englishmen assemble for purposes of recreation or discussion, food or drink, or both, seems to form a natural accompaniment to such meeting. Agreeably with this truly British custom, tiffin was the time selected as that most likely to procure a good attendance; and at that pleasant meal, accordingly, a large party sat down a few days after the termination of the hunting tour.

Many subjects connected with the sport of pig-sticking, and especially as relating to the object for which they had met, were freely discussed.

Some have been already touched on in the foregoing pages, and it is unnecessary here to repeat them. The length of spear appeared, however, one on which considerable difference of opinion existed.

Some thought it should be unrestricted and left to the option of the rider, who himself best knew what length he could with convenience manage.*

"Is the length of spear never limited among you Bombay men?" asked Melton. "It seems hardly fair that one man should ride with a stick a couple of feet longer than another."

* Appendix, Note A.



"Every man can do as he chooses," said Stewart. "If he prefers a long one he can use it."

"Yes! but then it must be more tiring to carry and more likely to get in the way of others. To a powerful man it may be of no consequence; but a weaker one may find it necessary to use one shorter."

"That is true," observed Mackenzie. "But you must remember that the powerful man probably labours under the disadvantage of riding much heavier than the other. However, I am not an advocate for long spears. It must necessarily give a better chance in a tussle on the open plain, but then it is more unmanageable in jungle."

"My idea of the maximum length is between eight and nine feet," said Norman. "But this is a point of course on which there may be various opinions. It would be a pity, too, to cut away from a stick, where the balance and joints just suited, merely because it was a few inches over that length. But nine feet appears to me ample for all purposes in action. I rarely ride with one so long myself."

"Quite right, Norman," said the Colonel, approvingly. Indeed, as the younger man had taken his first and many subsequent lessons in hog-hunting under the guidance of his superior, and was a sort of sporting protégé, he not unnaturally had imbibed some of his ideas, or—as some may deem them—prejudices.

"Nine feet," the old hunter continued, "is more than

enough for anybody. Prodding a pig at the distance of some dozen feet or more is not my idea of sport. Close with your boar, sir, and fight him fairly, and don't prick and puncture the unfortunate beast at the distance of a couple of lengths. After the first spear is taken, the aim should be to kill as quickly as possible. This is better effected with a shorter spear at close quarters than with a longer one at distant. The spear is kept steadier; the aim is truer; and the blow is more certain. I don't like to see men pottering about round a pig and never fairly grappling it. Such are my opinions on the subject, and I have seen a little hunting in my day."

"A little hunting," was the modest remark of the old shikaree. But a member of the old Deccan "Deal-table Club"—a man who had hunted in the palmiest days of the "Nuggur Hunt," and had broken more bones of his body over the Deccan hills than a whole field of more modern hunters—might with justice lay claim to have seen something more than "a little hunting." In those favoured times pig were so plentiful, and sportsmen so keen and bold, that during a single meet of a few days, as many pig would be killed as it would take a year to account for in these degenerate days of boar scarcity, and alas! not unfrequently, hunter scarcity also.

"A long spear," Mowbray remarked, "is often as dangerous to those about in a scrimmage as to the pig."

It is so far less handy and manageable. But this, however, is a subject of less moment than the indiscriminate slaughter of sows. What is your opinion on that head, Colonel?"

"Indiscriminate slaughter of sows, sir!" repeated the old hunter with great emphasis. "And pray, sir, who the devil dares to kill sows when there is the chance of a boar. Yes, sir, I said dare," and the peppery old fellow glared round the table. "By gad! sir, if I knew of a fellow belonging to my regiment laying himself out to kill sows, I'd stop his leave, sir. By gad! I would."

"I presume, Colonel," said an old captain, "that you would allow them to be killed occasionally when boars are not forthcoming?"

"Under certain circumstances it may be admissible," was the reply. "Nothing gives a finer run than a lanky, out-lying sow. If men get away, too, in pursuit of a sounder, and after a long chase, close and find no boar, I could forgive their sticking a sow provided she was in proper condition and had no squeakers at her tail. But, as a general rule, the sex should be spared. Indiscriminate slaughter is unpardonable—quite. Why, sir! the unfortunate beast may be with young! I presume no sportsman in his senses—or indeed out of them—would countenance the destruction of a vixen in May, in England. Neither should a sow run any such risk. And we must

remember that the breeding season of pig is not so regular as that of foxes. I have seen sows with young in August, December, and other months."

With the doctrine inculcated by the Colonel there was no open dissent, though one or two had, on former occasions, urged that all pig found should be killed, irrespective of sex. None, however, could gainsay the sportsman-like view of the case, taken by the old hunter.

"It is my belief," said Stewart, "that the general slaughter of sows is gradually destroying the breed. Pig are not nearly so plentiful as they were formerly ; and I believe that to be one of the principal causes. I was mentioning, Colonel, the other day, that I was present, not long ago, when six sows were killed on a dead maidan, in Guzerat, and all within the space of a couple of hours, and one of them was, I regret to say, big with young."

"Do you really mean to state that as a fact?" asked the Colonel, solemnly. "I trust, Captain Stewart, you took no part in so unsportsmanlike—so—I can find no word to express my abhorrence—so ungentlemanly a deed."

"The only way in which I was concerned, sir, was in helping to finish a wretched beast which was wounded, in order the sooner to put it out of pain. I steadily refused to have anything to do with them in the first instance. And the extraordinary part of

it was, that most of those present were equally averse to killing them in such wholesale fashion."

"Then, sir," retorted the Colonel, "I can only say that those present adopted a very singular method of showing their aversion. I do trust, gentlemen," he continued, glancing round, "that no one here will ever prove his objections in a similar manner."

All repudiated any intention of doing so, and it was agreed that the "Hunt" rules should prohibit sowicide except in certain authorised cases.

After some other discussion on these and kindred subjects, Norman produced a set of rules, which, when they had undergone some modifications and alterations suggested by the Colonel and others, stood as follows:—

"1. Length of spear—inclusive of blade—not to exceed nine feet.

"2. No spear to be thrown.

"3. Every man who takes a first-spear to remain with his pig till it is killed. He is not to go in pursuit of another before that takes place. (*Note.*—Should his spear be broken, it is of course allowable to proceed in quest of another.)

"4. All questions of disputed spears to be settled by the majority of those present. In case of no other rider being witness, tushes to be divided.

"5. In the event of a wounded pig escaping and being afterwards tracked and again started, the rider

who, in the first instance took first spear, to be entitled to the tushes—provided he is present at the second run. If voluntarily absent, the successful man in the second instance to become so entitled. (Absence from accidents or other involuntary circumstances not to disqualify.)

“6. Boars always to be selected from a sounder. A young boar—not being an absolute squeaker—in preference to *any* sow, however large.

“7. As a general rule, sows are not to be speared. But in the following cases such shall be considered legitimate :—When a solitary outlying sow is turned out :—When after a sounder has been ridden, it is found to contain no boars, a sow may be selected—but only one. In event of a sounder breaking up, should the party divide, killing more than one, the fault lies with those who do not follow the rider who first reaches the sounder. Under no circumstances are sows to be ridden which have squeakers (unweaned pig), or regarding the enceinte state of which there can be the faintest suspicion.

“8. The beaters to be invariably paid by the Hunt Secretary, or sportsman deputed by him.

“9. The reward for a boar with a fair tush to be five rupees ; for a young boar three rupees. No reward for sows, except in certain cases, where shikarees appear to deserve it. But no encouragement should be held out for them to show sows equally with boars.”

"I have heard of rules," said Norman, "prohibiting more than two riding after one pig, and also all spearing till the boar charged. Such may be very well where pig are innumerable, and their being driven from cover certain; but with us quite inapplicable. Fancy, for instance, only two being allowed to ride a pig after half-a-day's tracking; thus reducing, too, a fine open race to a mere match. As for not spearing till charged, half the spirit and emulation of the contest for the spear would be destroyed. And in stiff country, where it would be difficult to head the pig or attack it from the flank—and one is only too glad to bring it to bay by spearing as opportunity offers—many a good one would escape altogether from the reluctance to infringe the rule. First spear could, I should think, have been of little moment to those who ever acted on any such law. However, as I have only seen the latter once proposed, perhaps no one ever did."

All agreed that such rules were inapplicable to the countries in which they had hunted, however adapted they might be to places elsewhere. The laws, therefore, as recorded, were passed, and became, thereafter, the adopted nucleus of a code on which others might be engrafted according to time, place, and circumstances.

These important matters thus happily disposed of, one of the company was called on for a song, which he gave in the following words :—

THE HOG-HUNTER'S SONG.

" I sing *not* of the arms of men,
 Their passions, hates, or fears,
 No sonnet this from lover's pen,
 Of woman's smiles or tears.
 On other themes my rhymes I string,
 And less ambitious soar,
 My subject is the jungle king—
 The mighty, old, grey boar.

Chorus.

" Then here's a health, my boys, I cry,
 The hunter, keen and bold ;
 May his sporting spirit never die,
 Or his true love grow cold.

" Ah ! what in all the world beside,
 Through manhood's whole career,
 Can match the mingled joy and pride—
 The glories of first-spear ?
 Love's soft confession may be sweet,
 The shock of battle thrill ;
 But give to me the hunting meet,
 The find, the run, the kill.

Chorus—" Then here's a health," &c.

" Where varied jungles densest grow,
 In deep ravine's dark bed,
 Where sluggish streamlets gently flow,
 And *jow* uprears its head ;
 Where yellow grass waves tall and wide,
 Where sugar-cane's at hand,
 By hill, or field, or jungle-side,
 There, there, we'll take our stand.

Chorus—" Then here's a health," &c.



“ And when in after days we boast
Of many wild boars slain,
We'll not forget our runs to toast,
Or run them o'er again.
And when our memory's mirror true
Reflects the scenes of yore,
We'll think on friends it brings to view,
Who loved to hunt the boar.

Chorus—“ Then here's a health,” &c.

And thus I conclude. My hunter-spearmen, like the
'Hastati' of old, having performed their allotted task,
retire.



APPENDIX.

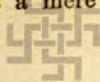
NOTE A.—Pages 6, 232, and 437.

SPEARS, SPEARHEADS, AND SOW-KILLING.

THE choice of a spearhead is, of course, to some extent a matter of taste and individual opinion. I have endeavoured to give an idea of the general requirements. The celebrated blades called "Salem," manufactured at a place of that name in the Madras Presidency, are larger and heavier than those I preferred to use. For their size, however, they are light, and being well-shaped are in deserved favour. Their form is something between Nos. 1 and 2 of the cut.

Of those in use in Lower Bengal, where a stouter and heavier spear is used job-wise, I shall say no more, being able only to speak from hearsay, never myself having engaged in the sport of hog-hunting in those favoured regions.

With regard to the length of the spear, when used in the Bombay fashion, I fear that many old sportsmen will perhaps disagree with me, and consider that no restriction should be placed upon it. The arguments adduced give my reasons for thinking otherwise. Having altogether retired as a performer in the hunting-field, I am able to look back impartially—I hope—on the sport I greatly loved, and my earnest desire is to foster it, and see it regarded, and generally followed, as a true sport, and not a mere



slaughter. For this reason I do, and did for years, determinedly oppose the promiscuous slaughter of sows, and I sincerely hope that those young hog-hunters who may do me the honour of reading the foregoing pages will, when possible, spare the sex.

The Colonel's threat to refuse leave of absence to inveterate sow-killers is no imaginary circumstance.

On an occasion, once, of comparing the two sports of fox-hunting and hog-hunting, a greatly respected and valued friend and commander, an officer of high rank, avowed to me that much as he admired the latter, the former was the sport of his choice. From his youth up he had been bred a fox-hunter, and stuck to his original love. The officer in question was one as well known over the hills and valleys of Gloucestershire as on the stony hills and nullahs of the Deccan and Cutch.

I have adopted nine feet as a fair maximum length, because it seems sufficient for all purposes. On reference to an old note-book, I there find recorded the length of three of my spears then in common use. These were as follows:—

	Ft.	In.
First spear	9	1½
Second spear	8	9½
Third spear	7	8½

The last was, I remember, a very stout bamboo, heavily leaded at the end, and was usually employed by me when riding pig alone. It was with this I killed, with one thrust, the heavy boar whose chase and death is recorded as happening near Dooree, and very possibly, also, the one whose death is next narrated, for it occurred a few months later. But regarding the latter I am not certain.

I do not presume to lay down any law on the subject; but it seems to me desirable that there should be a certain

restriction as to length, though the limit may be fixed at a greater or lesser length than that named, according to the general opinion of the members of a hunt. Personally, I would have it less than that I have mentioned.

Where sow-slaying is not already prohibited, there may be a good deal of trouble and difficulty in stopping it. Perhaps efforts to do so will create some ill-feeling. Such was the case with myself. And, indeed, I must confess it is very annoying and provoking when you have got a good lay-in, with a fair chance of taking first-spear, to find that the pursued, if single, is not a boar, or if it be a sounder that it contains none. I have, therefore, modified the rule I formerly attempted to enforce, and leave it for the consideration and amendment of those who may feel inclined to recognise the general right and necessity of some restriction to sow-killing.

The code is not intended to be exhaustive. I have merely noted a few circumstances which during a course of many years of constant hog-hunting have occurred, and require to be defined by rule. My experience as secretary and general manager—having filled that honorary and responsible position to four different hunts—has also led me to offer these few hints for the consideration of my brother sportsmen. They are merely intended as suggestive to those who may have a knowledge of the subject equal to or greater than my own.

NOTE B.—Page 23.

RIVERS AND QUICKSANDS IN CUTCH.

I do not think there is a single river in Cutch which can be considered as perennial. Many, it is true, remain, even throughout the hot season, with water in their beds, in pools more or less large. Some of these, too, are connected by

streamlets. But I question if any one pours a pint of water either into the sea or on to the Runn of Cutch—according to its course—at the close of the hot weather.

During the rains and cold season the sandy beds of the rivers and nullahs are full of quicksands, all troublesome and occasionally dangerous to the traveller who attempts to cross at other than the recognised fords. Where the Rhoda river loses itself in the Runn, the quicksands are exceedingly dangerous at certain seasons, and would at once engulf any unwary man or beast who had the temerity to endeavour to cross them. Usually, however, they are far less fatal; but a horse has a hard struggle sometimes to extricate himself and rider, as I have frequently seen and proved. Many streams in other sandy portions of India are of a similar nature.

NOTE C.—Page 25.

PEAFOWL.

It will be known to the reader that peafowl are deemed sacred birds by the Hindoos. So much are they protected in some parts that, in the vicinity of villages, they are allowed to wander unmolested among the grain fields, to which they do no little damage. They return at evening from their daily plundering, and roost in the trees in the neighbourhood, sometimes on those scattered about the village itself.

Owing to the veneration in which they are held, their slaughter is prohibited in all the Hindoo independent states, and consequently officers and soldiers are prohibited by our own Government from destroying them there. The killing of cattle is similarly unauthorised.

Now a pea-chick is by no means unpalatable, and it is sometimes very tantalising to see the well-fed creature almost offering itself to the hungry gunner whose camp larder is perhaps represented by an ill-fed and very stringy and indifferent specimen of the domestic variety of the order Gallinæ. Hence it follows that the temptation is not always resisted. The peafowl is bagged—in more senses than one. He is shot, feathered, and hidden in the folds of the clothes belonging to some one of the beaters—who are usually quite indifferent on the subject—and the bird appears at dinner as turkey, or under any other name.

But many rows have taken place between Europeans and natives on the subject, and Sir C. Napier was once obliged to refer to the matter in General Orders in Scinde. “If officers will shoot peacocks,” he is said to have tersely written, “Beloochees will shoot officers.”

In some Buneea-ridden parts of the country (the Buneea caste entirely prohibit slaughter of, or, indeed, drawing of blood from, any living creature) deer and other wild animals thus enjoy perfect immunity from the native shikarees. These are fine sporting-grounds for the English hunter, who repudiates the prohibition unenforced by his own Government.

The Bunees in Cutch went so far as to endeavour to secure the co-operation of their own chief, and through him of Government, to prevent the killing even of sheep in the cantonment bazaars. In this, of course, they were unsuccessful; though, the slaughter of kine being prohibited, fresh beef is there an unknown luxury.



NOTE D.—Page 28.

Old Natta has been once before introduced by me to the public, though not in clerical costume.

He was a veritable character, and actually appeared in the cast-off clergyman's coat as described. His son really considered that his father's great endurance was, in a measure, owing to the possession of a pair of gigantic feet. He was not my own shikaree, who was of a different caste altogether, and not a native of Cutch. But I have often killed pig to his finding.

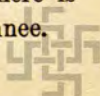
He it was who classified pig as described at page 97. I took the names and characteristics down from his own *viva-voce* description.

NOTE E.—Page 32.

“THE BUNNEE”—LUNGRA-WALLAH.

The lungra-wallah was a noted old boar who was, indeed, said to have killed one or two people; with what truth I know not. His pug was easily distinguished by the want of one of the false heels or spurs I have referred to. I have been after him, but I do not think I was ever successful in getting a run, though he was once said to be amongst a number of pig in the Dooree jungle on an occasion of our beating it.

The Bunnee is a narrow tract of high grass-land which stretches out into the Runn from the main-land, with which it continues almost parallel for many miles. Beyond it lies the sandy soil of the waste alone, of which also there is usually a narrow strip between the mainland and Bunnee.



NOTE F.—Page 36.

CUTCH WILD GEESE.

Whether these birds are veritable geese or not I cannot say. They have the appearance of such, but are smaller, and quite different to the two other species I have shot in Rajpootana. Indeed, I have never met with them elsewhere. We called them geese, and by that name I have referred to them. I have a description of them somewhere, but just now cannot lay my hand on it. Another species visits Cutch in the monsoon. It has a large horny protuberance from the upper mandible. I never met this in the cold season.

NOTE G.—Pages 52 and 352.

All anecdotes related of scenes where I was not myself present, I have marked with a double asterisk. That of the officer being stunned and smelt by the boar as related, was told of the late Major P——, R.A. The same officer, if I remember rightly, himself told me of the incident at page 352.

NOTE H.—Pages 69 and 427.

I have ridden two horses who occasionally showed great disinclination to be kicked on out of the way of the boar. One was an old trooper, lent to me for the occasion, and who had been in his youth a clever hunter. The other was a horse of my own. The latter had, I think, acquired the habit from being checked by me as he approached the boar at bay. The best and safest plan, and that I usually adopted, was to gallop up towards the boar with my hors well in hand. As he charged, I generally pulled

in so as to receive him with a good aim, and not rush too quickly past. By meeting him at full speed, unless the approach be exactly timed, his onset might be avoided, and the spear miss. Immediately the boar was speared, I turned off, and pressed my horse out of the way. But in his old age, "Kutty" had become so habituated to be checked, as the boar rushed on, that he reduced his speed sometimes of himself, and eventually I found considerable difficulty in inducing him to move on, after delivery of the thrust.

The same stout, good old horse, who credited me with many a first-spear, a few even in extreme old age, would of himself follow a pig in its turns. Being in pace very slow, he turned often almost as quick as the pig, and I often thought would, if allowed, have seized it.

It was on this horse I proposed to ride down a black-buck as mentioned at page 304. He was in my possession for twelve years, during all of which I hunted him more or less. A visit to Persia was included in his travels. I also used him as a second charger in the mutiny campaign. I was, to my great regret, obliged to have him destroyed at last, as, from old age, and perhaps from some hidden disease, he became miserably wasted, and was so wretched in appearance as to be a most pitiable-looking object.

It may not be uninteresting to the sporting reader to learn that another horse which did me good service was won in a raffle. My ticket cost me five rupees (ten shillings), the horse, then barely three years old, being valued at 350 rupees. I think the first time I ever rode him after a pig I obtained a first-spear, but not a contested one, as out of a small party we had separated.

I took my last first-spear off him as described at page 421, the tushes represented (p. 415) being the spoils. He, then but a four-year-old, was also the animal referred to as going

so well through the Vinjule jungle. I rode him constantly for five years, as a hack and hunter. He, also, served me as a charger during the mutiny campaign. On my leaving India I parted with him to a brother.

These were certainly two cheap and most successful ventures in horse-flesh ; by far the most so it has ever been my fortune to make. All cannot expect to meet with such good luck.

NOTE I.—Page 91.

CUTCH WILD DONKEYS.

This handsome animal is an inhabitant of the Runn ; and the same or a similar species is found, I believe, in the desert between the mountains in the north-west of the Punjaub and the Indus.

An officer in Bhooj, during my residence there, possessed a pair—male and female—which had been obtained when young.

He endeavoured to tame them, and break them in to riding ; but the male was quite intractable, and, though once or twice mounted, soon got rid of its rider. It was a savage beast, and had to be tied up with stout halters and ropes. Eventually it escaped, and roved at will about cantonments and the neighbourhood, but never went very far away.

It occasionally showed symptoms of pugnacity, and was somewhat of a terror to the nervous, but usually trotted away on being rated. Its end was somewhat tragic. It was found one morning dead with its body much swollen, and this was attributed to the bite of a snake. I once lost a pony from a similar cause.

The female was more tractable, and was led about canton-

ments, and occasionally mounted, though she, too, had a decided objection to equestrian training. This she frequently exhibited by getting rid of her master, who was often bold enough to risk his limbs in the endeavour to break her in.

She was subsequently sent to Lord Falkland, then Governor of Bombay, who, it was understood, dispatched her to England.

I may mention that we endeavoured, but unsuccessfully, to breed from her by a pony in the possession of one of the officers.

Both were very handsome, with legs and limbs almost as developed as a pony's. The male was considerably the higher of the two, and must, I should think, have stood thirteen hands high and upwards. But of this I am not certain. Their coat was fine, with a dark stripe down the spine.

Wild donkeys have been ridden down and speared in their wild state, though it is thought by some not without the animal having been gorged, or something being amiss with it. I regret I have not copies of some numbers of an old defunct Indian magazine to refer to on this subject.

NOTE J.—Page 93.

PORK MUTTONY CHOPS.

A word or two of explanation regarding this and analogous terms may not be out of place.

In the "Eastern Hunters" I recorded the fact of a low-caste native asking for "tiger leg-mutton." An able public critic considered that this incident sounded rather "apocryphal." I can only repeat that it really occurred as related; but perhaps I did not sufficiently explain the cir-

cumstances. “Wuh tukro jo *leg-mutton* bolta” (that part called the leg-mutton) was the exact expression made use of in the by no means perfect Hindostanee of a Mahratta, and was thus recorded by me in my sporting journal.

“Soor ke muttony-chop” (pig mutton chops) is a similar expression in general use to represent pork chops. “Hurunka saddel mutton” (deer saddle mutton) is another of the same nature.

The English terms denoting the different portions of a sheep have become typical of those joints respectively of other animals, and are used to express them by the native servants of the Bombay Presidency. The curious confounding of terms in the expressions “goose’s pup” and “wilderness,” recorded in the preceding pages, are said to have really occurred, though not within my own cognizance.

NOTE K.—Page 101.

GUDDDEES.

I have explained in the text some of the characteristics of costume and appearance of this tribe, or branch of a tribe, which inhabits the mountainous region belonging to the Chumba rajah. These rajpoots are not the aborigines of the hills, but have migrated there in, I believe, comparatively recent times; and their change of climate and residence has not tended to improve their habits of cleanliness. In this they are far inferior to their race in the plains. I should think, too, they have lost much of the warlike spirit which actuates that division of the great Kshatriya or military class.

I made their acquaintance during a brief visit to their country as described, when journeying in the Punjaub.

NOTE L.—Pages 117, 121, and 382.

RAJPOOTANA.

The incidents referred to under this letter, I have taken from the journal, in my possession, of a lamented brother. Bold and determined, active, decided, and energetic, a good shot and fair horseman, he was singularly adapted to excel in the more dangerous sports of the field. The first is an account of the death of the first tiger he assisted in slaying.

The anecdotes extracted occurred during a month's trip with a friend into the Boondée jungles. In the space of twenty-five days, that is to say, from the 3rd to the 27th of the month, the two hunters killed—

7 tigers,
11 sambar,

38 cheetul,
4 neilghye.

This may serve to show the abundance of the deer tribe in some parts of Rajpootana.

But there are other parts far superior to that visited by them in respect of tigers, and other *big game*, a term not usually applied to other than savage animals.

Nor is that favoured country less abundantly supplied with small game. Antelope abound, and the numerous tanks swarm with duck and snipe in the cold season. During a four years' residence, I traversed the country of the Rajpoots in almost every direction, having journeyed in that space several thousands of miles, and found much sport of every description.

It may not be uninteresting to my readers, if I here give a summary of the quantity of small game killed by the officers accompanying the camp of the Agent to the Governor-General on its tour when returning from the grand durbar held by Lord Canning at Agra in December,

1859. I have also included a few days on the road to Agra, after the camp marched from Jeypore, when game was not well in.

I must premise by saying that sport was only the relaxation, not the object, of most of us, who had our daily office duties to perform. Hence, though we sometimes managed to devote the principal portion of the day to shikar, it was usually limited to what we could pick up on the morning's march or during a stroll towards evening.

The statement is not quite perfect, as I missed some of the days; but is sufficiently approximate to be relied on as generally accurate.

Total number of days on which some one or more of the party shot	about	47
Number of guns out varied from	1 to 8	
Total number employed in the aggregate	about	134

This gives an average, in round numbers, to each day of shooting, of about three guns. I have compiled the total from very roughly kept notes, in some instances the bag not being specified, but said to amount to about so and so. However, it is not far out, and may be accepted as approximate.

Total bag of Small Game.

Bustards		1
Coolen		1
Wild Geese	brace	17
Duck, widgeon, and teal	do.	278½
Snipe	do.	344
Partridges and quail	do.	64
Large sand-grouse, peculiar to the northern parts of India not far from the Deserts	do.	5½
Bitterns	do.	3½
Grey curlews	do.	2½
Hares		17

Besides these were killed a few jungle and spur fowl,

small rock partridges, and green pigeons. Also a few peachicks were surreptitiously bagged.

In addition to the above, the rifles of the party obtained—

1 samber,
11 black buck,

2 chinkara buck,
1 hyæna.

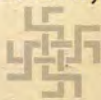
Two boars were speared, only one day's pig-sticking having been obtained. One black buck was killed by hunting cheetahs; and one jackal, and about a dozen foxes coursed and killed by greyhounds.

About twenty-one dozen Indian trout, a small speckled fish, having the external appearance of a trout, but said to be a species of dace, were caught by fly-fishing. Two or three dozen mahseer of various sizes, weighing up to fifteen pounds, and a number of murrel, some as heavy as six pounds, were also caught with the rod and ground-bait.

Altogether an average of about ten brace of birds may be allowed to each gun per diem. I do not mean to say that such is any unusual amount for a shikar party; but this was not one in the proper sense of the word. Sport was with most, as I have said, mere relaxation.

But duck and snipe were exceedingly plentiful in some parts. I went out late one afternoon, after the day's work was done, and between that and dinner-time bagged twenty-two couple of snipe, and a couple of teal; and two other officers following in my wake, likewise killed a considerable number. The ground was the marshy land surrounding a large tank nearly a mile in length. This was the best snipe shooting I think I ever had, considering the short time I was engaged.

On another occasion I killed eighteen couple of snipe in a similar brief space of time. On this occasion, however, there were very few birds left.



NOTE M.—Page 170.

DEATH OF THE HORSE.

This singular and deplorable accident occurred as described, to an officer of my own regiment. I was myself in the field at the time. If my memory serves me right, the shock put the officer's arm out of joint, and the movement of dismounting re-set it.

NOTE N.—Pages 192 and 211.

The two incidents recorded at the above pages were contributed by my brother, Major D. F. Newall, R.A.

NOTE O.—Page 218.

The ludicrous scene with the bears here referred to, has been already described in the "Eastern Hunters," and accordingly I have not repeated it.

NOTE P.—Page 237.

PUGGING.

The text and illustrations sufficiently describe the *modus operandi* of this, the greatest and most essential acquirement of the native shikaree, and one by no means devoid of use and interest to the English hunter. He, however, cannot expect to attain to the skill and accuracy of the practised native.



NOTE Q.—Page 349.

These anecdotes were communicated to me by a brother officer, the late lamented Lieut. S——, and in the scenes described he himself took part. I have derived them from an old letter, detailing to me the whole proceedings.

NOTE R.—Page 373.

COOLEN.

The Indian crane, or coolen of the natives, and called “cullum” by many English sportsmen in the Bombay Presidency, is met with in vast flocks in the northern parts of India.

On the western side it is not, I believe, found south of Kattiawar and Guzerat; at least, I do not remember ever to have seen it in the Deccan, or in the country about Bombay. It is migratory, and arrives in India about September, or later, according to the season.

On referring to my sporting note-book, kept during a three years' residence in Cutch, I find the following remark in one of those years, written apparently in the end of September.

“I first heard cullum calling in passing over Bhooj, about the 23rd September, after which they seem to be coming in, as they are generally heard every day. They are reported to be on some of the tanks in the neighbourhood towards the end of the month.”

And in another year is the following :—

“Cullum were first heard calling in flying over camp on the 26th September, after which they regularly come in.”

But I have shot them in Rajpootana as early as the 4th

September. This occurred at Dunaitur, in Jodhpore, when travelling from Mount Aboo to Nusseerabad. I shot three one morning before breakfast, many flocks being then scattered over the country. They were in fair condition. That may have been an exceptionally early season; for I had previously killed a couple of snipe, and an officer with whom I was travelling a couple of common—not rain—teal, on the 1st September, and by their condition we conjectured that they were not perfectly fresh arrivals.

I remember seeing snipe in Upper Scinde, in the end of August, but I never, at any other time, or elsewhere, saw them so early. They are not looked for, usually, before October.

Coolen must destroy an immense deal of grain before it is gathered in, where they exist in such numbers as in Cutch. I have seen the country quite covered with them when assembling preparatory to migration in the end of February. I find the following remark in the journal of a trip made with a companion in the latter part of February—“Killing nine cullum, the first day, although from the myriads about the country we could have bagged any number, whole fields being perfectly white with them.”

I remember an officer of my regiment killing a sufficient number before breakfast, near Mandavie, to supply all the officers who were about to embark with the corps in separate country boats to cross the Gulf of Cutch into Kattiawar.

They are very good eating when plump, in the middle of the cold season. There are two kinds, but their habits appear similar. I recollect in the month of March, when steaming down the Red Sea on my voyage to India, seeing vast flights of large birds as far as the eye could reach, passing in endless succession overhead. At the time I was unacquainted with the species of bird, but I now believe them to have been cranes.

At certain seasons, especially soon after their arrival, they resort to the neighbourhood of tanks during the heat of the day, and remain there on some large open piece of ground in the vicinity of the water. I have shot them in early December by stationing myself in the line of flight about 7 or 8 o'clock A.M., about which hour they left their feeding-grounds and resorted to Rhoda tank as mentioned.

NOTE S.—Page 378.

This and the following anecdote were related to me by my brother, Captain F. Newall, late H.M.'s 8th regiment of Foot, then in the Indian army, he himself being the actor in both.

NOTE T.—Page 389.

ANTELOPES' HORNS.

Twenty-four inches is a very fine pair. This, it is true, is occasionally exceeded, but not frequently. Out of every half-hundred, probably not more than one will reach twenty-four inches. I have never killed one exceeding that length, though I have in my possession several closely approaching it. The horns make pretty ornaments for a hall or sportsman's sanctum, especially when polished.

NOTE U.—Page 416.

BOAR'S TUSHES.

The cut will give the inexperienced reader a notion of the sort of ivory which garnishes a large hog's lower jaw. This

pair is, as described, that of the last which fell to my spear, and is, I think, about the most perfect I ever killed. In former years I sent home a number of various sizes mounted in silver as bottle labels. The large ones are, however, too big and cumbersome for that purpose; but they make very pretty ornaments when hung against the back of the side-board.

If not attended to, the hot, dry winds in India soon cause them to split, and they very soon fall to pieces, and are thrown away.

The plan I latterly pursued with them, as also with tigers' fangs, was to fill the hollow portion with melted wax. This I also applied externally, leaving a thick coating all over. I then bound twine round each in a number of turns, and thus prepared, they withstand for a long time the influence of heat and dryness.

Nine inches is remarkably long. From six to seven is nearer the average of a full-grown boar, though they occasionally reach a length of nearly ten inches. Such, however, is very rare. I don't remember ever seeing any quite of that length.

The tush is extracted from the jaw by boiling it, or it becomes loose by being for some time buried in the earth. The former plan occasionally makes them split. One accustomed to extract them will, however, manage to do so without resorting to either method; but an inexperienced man, not knowing the depth to which they sink in the jaw-bone, will break them if allowed to try. I have occasionally had fine ones destroyed by trusting to servants.

I am sorry to be unable to give the weight or dimensions of any boars I have killed. I do not remember, at any rate I cannot find in my journals, any record of the measured proportions set down in order. I usually cut a notch on my spear-stick to mark the height, and, that ascertained, pro-

bably thought no more about it, and the sticks eventually went the way of all sticks, and were broken and cast aside or lost. Were I to state the actual size which I believe some of the slain boars to have attained, I fear I should be deemed as indulging in exaggerated retrospection. I refrain, therefore, from here recording my impressions. Enough to say that some do become very large.

THE END.

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NEWALL (J. T.), Captain. Scottish Moors and Indian Jungles. Scenes of Sport in the Lews and India. 1889. 8vo, cloth, pp. x, 320, with 12 plates. £2

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