

# PEREGRINE PULTUNEY;

OR,

## LIFE IN INDIA.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

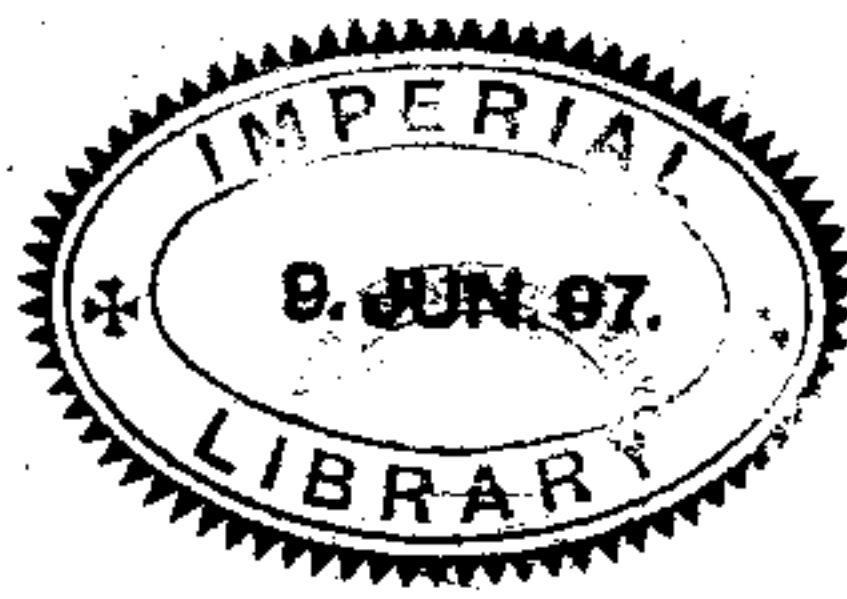
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JOHN MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET,

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**C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.**

# PEREGRINE PULTUNEY,

&c. &c. &c.

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## CHAPTER I.

In which the Scene of our History is shifted from Calcutta to Arracan.

It was a happier fortnight both for Peregrine Pultuney and Julia Poggleton, than either of those two young people had anticipated—that fortnight, which immediately preceded our hero's departure for Arracan. It was greatly in their favour, that neither of them knew the precise day of the *Seeva's* sailing, for it seemed a far off when undetermined, and they both of them tacitly agreed to look upon the event as one distant and uncertain, perhaps after all never to be realized. Young people in their situation are the most ingenious self-deceivers in the world.

And so day after day passed by and the two young people, who were always together, were as happy as people can be, with a sword hanging over their heads. Peregrine, in anticipation of a long fast, spent the greater part of his time in innocent amusement with his cousin, who, indeed yielded herself up to his frolics in the most praiseworthy manner in the world. When not thus engaged the young gentleman was employed in laying in stores for Arracan, to which place, nothing being procurable there but fish, fowl, and fevers, it is necessary to take supplies for a fortnight, such being the average time that a European may expect to live there in a condition of body likely to require any other supplies than those which the company furnishes *gratis*, to wit, calomel, tartar-emetic and jalup.

In the course of this valedictory fortnight, Peregrine Pultuney saw all his acquaintance, which had enlarged itself to a considerable extent, for few young gentlemen have ever possessed more essentially all the elements of popularity; and he could not but observe that they every one of them regarded him with a look of grave commiseration, as though he had been going to be hanged, or to speak more classically, to be sacrificed. One old gentleman, Colonel Barbican, the town major, asked him what crime he had committed, that they condemned him to such a vile place, and Peregrine Pultuney answered that he really did not know, but that

he had serious thoughts of committing some, that he might get a transmutation of his punishment, and be consigned to New South Wales instead—a place to which the company's convicts and sick officers are equally glad to emigrate.

But the day at last was fixed, and still Peregrine Pultuney bore up remarkably well, and Julia, if possible, a little better; nor was it till the very day had arrived and, as the young lovers were sitting together, holding one another's hands, beneath the table, Peregrine received a chit from Julian Jenks, who had promised to see him off, stating that the boat was to be at Chandpaul Ghaut, and that the tide would suit that evening at three o'clock, and Peregrine gave the letter to his cousin to read, when the young lady's strength deserted her utterly, and in spite of her struggles to restrain them, the tears gushed into her large blue eyes, and fell in heavy drops upon the marble slab, before which they were sitting.

No words were spoken—but in the silence and agony of that hour, the young cousins understood one another. They felt how dear they were, each to each; the flimsy veil of sophistry, with which they had both of them so long striven to conceal the real state of their feelings even from their own selves, was now torn away from before them, and their whole souls were bared to one another. They did not even now speak of love; but they no longer tried to play the hypocrite; and very miserable, yet very delicious, was the abandonment into which

they were now uncontrollably hurried. Poor Plato—poor Plato! where be now thy broad wrinkled brow, thy sage aspect, thy flowing robes, thy stately walk—all undergone a metempsychosis; and in thy stead we have a little curly-headed boy *in puris naturalibus*, with a roguish eye and a bow-and-arrow. Such is the natural end of all the platonic affection we have ever met with in the course of our lives.

And so they parted, Mrs. Poggleton bestowing upon our hero almost as many kisses as her daughter, and getting up a sort of impromptu cry for the occasion. All the servants came out to make their *salaam*; and as Peregrine brushed through them, and bundled into the carriage, he wished them most heartily at the devil. Peer Khan, had gone on before him, with the one or two other attendants, that, for a consideration of double pay, had disinterestedly consented to accompany him, and so Peregrine had nothing to do but to throw himself back in the palki-carriage and gulp down his sorrows as he could.

The *Seeva* had been dropping down the river for the last two days, and Peregrine had hired a commodious boat to take him as far as Kedgerree, or, if necessary, as Saugor, that he might join the ship there, instead of condemning himself to two or three unnecessary days of penance on a river, of which he had not the most favourable opinion. It is true that he thereby ran a risk of losing his

passage altogether; but it would not have disturbed him much if he had.

His heavy traps and stores were already on board the *Seeva*, and when he reached the ghaut he found that, by the united efforts of Julian Jenks and Peer Khan, his lighter goods had been stowed away in his *budgerow* (passage-boat). Julian Jenks' good-natured sunny face looked more gloomy than Peregrine had ever seen it before; but he bustled about with great alacrity, gave orders in every direction, and managed to find a multitude of little jobs for himself, all conducive to Peregrine's comfort, on purpose, as was in reality ~~case~~ to prevent himself from giving way to the depression of spirits, which the near departure of his friend had occasioned.

But at last every thing was made ready for a start, and those two old friends shook hands upon the deck of the budgerow. "God bless you," they both said, at the same moment, and as neither of them was anxious to prolong the leave-taking, Julian Jenks hurried down the plank that was placed over the side of the boat, and stepped on shore, whilst Peregrine Pultuney passed his hand just once across his eyes, gave the word "*tarno*" (pull) to the rowers, and in a minute was in the middle of the stream.

It was past five o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun was sinking rapidly on the opposite side of the river. Peregrine stood on the deck with his arms folded and his back against the door of the cabin,



and his boat, under the combined advantages of stream, tide, and fresh rowers, shot rapidly along through the avenues of shipping which crowded the river, in the vicinity of his starting-place. Working clear of these, they passed under the banks of the "course," now deserted and desolate as it could be, for Calcutta was not yet on the stir, and Peregrine turned with mournful eyes and a still more mournful heart, to take his last look at Chowringhee. He saw the white houses all radiant with the golden sun that was going down opposite to them, and though he could not see *the* house in which his treasure was garnered, he could see the turning of the road that led to it. But even this was soon hidden from the sight of the gazer by the ramparts of Port William, beneath which they now rapidly passed. Peregrine just took one look at the saluting battery, where he had so often blazed away in honour of those magnificent old women, called big-wigs; and then riveted his gaze intently on the top of the Ochterloney Monument, which peered over the heads of all the other buildings, as Ochterloney did over all the other generals who were employed with him in Nepaul. This was to Peregrine the last link which bound him to his dear Chowringhee, and when that was broken, as it was in a little time, he turned away his face, gulped down a tear or two, and desired Peer Khan to give him a glass of wine.

As Mrs. Poggleton had given her *khansamah*

(butler) a magnificent order to provision the boat in the most liberal manner, Peer Khan had no difficulty in supplying his master with a glass of the best Leith sherry, which Peregrine Pultuney drank off to the great profit both of his body and mind in this conjuncture, having done which, he called for another, and after a few minutes profound consideration, resolved upon smoking a cheroot.

The sun had gone down, it was getting dark, and Peregrine was all alone. Let no man say, therefore, that his sorrows were but skin-deep, because he took to smoking in the midst of them; some men take to drinking, ~~to~~ to opium, why then should not Peregrine have taken to that, which was so much more harmless than either of them.

Night, however, came on amain, and Peregrine Pultuney was glad to creep into the cabin of his boat, where Peer Khan had provided a bed upon one seat and something in the way of a dinner upon the opposite one. As Peregrine had made a wretched tiffin, and the evening was somewhat chill, he did not look at the cold chicken and cold pigeon-pie with as much disgust as a lover generally experiences at the sight of such dainties as these, just after parting from his mistress. On the contrary, he applied himself to them with much devotion, heightened of course by the knowledge that they had been prepared for him at the dear old house in Chowringhee, and after demolishing a wing of a chicken and two pigeons, and washing down the

whole with a bottle of beer, he called Peer Khan to undress him, and in about a quarter of an hour was sound asleep on the narrow bed prepared for him, along the seat of the cabin.

When he woke next morning, it was about six o'clock, and he was off Diamond Harbour—no symptom whatever of the *Seeva*, nor indeed did he much expect to find any, but every symptom of the low, muddy banks, and flat, uninteresting river scenery which had so disgusted him upon his first arrival in India. There was a long day before him, and to say the least of it, his prospects were not particularly cheering. It was possible too that the ship might have got out to sea, and that he would have to go back to Calcutta. A few hours he would have thought of this with feelings of entire complacency; but now he reflected that the worst was over, and that he would not willingly inflict upon himself or his beloved the pain of another parting; so he looked at his watch, made inquiries about the time and promised the boatmen *buxees* (a present), if they reached the *Seeva* that evening.

He spent the day in reading a new novel, with which he had provided himself for the occasion; and about four o'clock in the afternoon he saw two or three vessels at anchor ahead of him, and knew that he was approaching Kedgerree. The boatmen, who, to tell the truth, had worked gallantly, now began to increase their speed, and as a natural consequence, their hubbub; and the boat drew alongside of the *Seeva*, just as the captain, the chief offi-

cer, and the three passengers had sat down to dinner in the cuddy. The captain was an uncommonly obliging fellow and had anchored, though the tide was in in his favour, for fear Peregrine, of whom he knew nothing, should not be able to overtake him.

The *Seeva* being a brig, the cuddy was below decks of course, and Peregrine Pultuney bundled down the ladder to introduce himself to his new associates. The party consisted of two young ensigns on their way to join one of those unhappy volunteer regiments, for which no place is considered too bad—the captain of the brig—the chief officer of the same—and an unfortunate apothecary, who has been consigned to Arracan for some offence committed or supposed, and who now looked as though he were, and indeed he was, at the cuddy-table only by sufferance. This gentleman, the two ensigns, Mr. Pultuney himself: and fifty-six native convicts (all murderers or dacoits) constituted the passenger-party of the *Seeva*; and when the character of the majority is taken into consideration, it will readily be acknowledged that a pleasanter party altogether has rarely started upon a sea-voyage. To be sure, Peregrine thought at first, that the fifty-six native gentlemen mentioned above, who had occupied themselves so facetiously in cutting their neighbours' throats, might possibly take into their heads, some fine morning, to fall back upon their old amusement, as a little break to the monotony of the

voyage, and that, as there was not even so much as a "*naick and four*" (a native corporal) by way of guard over them, the fifty-six facetious gentlemen would stand rather more than a good chance, against the seven Europeans, who were in the ship, and the scanty lascar crew, which might after all take either side, and would be pretty sure to hitch on to the stronger. Besides this, Peregrine thought, that if the fifty-six, who now flocked about the deck and huddled together in the long-boat, should be compelled by bad weather to go below, there would be some nice little contagion engendered in the ship, as the tender mercies of the marine board had assigned to the fifty-six, just accommodation enough below decks for five men to herd together very inconveniently; but as neither the one thing nor the other actually took place, the arrangements must be considered to have been admirable, especially as the government got the fifty-six facetious gentlemen (*minus*, only three, who died on the voyage) quite safely down to Arracan, at the smallest possible expense to the state, and had thereby provided themselves with a tolerable stock of able-bodied men, whose patriotic endeavours to improve the climate will, we hope, meet with its due reward.

With a fair wind and fine weather the little brig scudded gallantly across the bay, and Peregrine enjoyed, as much as could be expected, the invigorating sea-breeze and the pure smell of the salt water. On the morning of the fourth day they sighted the

Island of Bolongo, and on the following they passed those ferociously picturesque rocks, which go by the names of the "Terribles" and the "Savage." Peregrine came upon deck to look at these creatures, and after passing the latter of the two monsters, broke through his resolution (a resolution, by the way, well worthy to be imitated by all land-lubbers at sea) of not asking any questions, that can be avoided, by inquiring from the captain when they were likely, if the wind held, to reach Akyab.

"Why, there is Akyab," said the captain.

"Where?" asked Peregrine Pultuney.

"There," returned the captain, "just ahead—you see those vessels and houses on the leeward bow?"

"Yes," said Peregrine, "of course I do."

"Well," resumed the captain, "that's Akyab."

"Akyab—is it?—Oh!"

"Why—what did you take it for?" asked the captain, smiling.

"A few fishermen's huts," replied Peregrine.

"Look through my glass, Mr. Pultuney, and you will see better," continued the captain.

"Thank you," returned Peregrine, raising the proffered telescope to his eye; "and that's Akyab, is it?"

"Sure enough, that's Akyab."

"The officers' houses are more in-land, I suppose then," surmised Peregrine.

"Why, those are the officers' houses," said the captain.

“The devil they are!” exclaimed Peregrine, who having just come from Chowringhee, had a very obscure idea of the mat-houses of Arracan. “You don’t mean to say, do you, that *I* am to live in such a wretched-looking domicile as those are?”

“I am afraid you must, sir,” rejoined the captain, “for the houses in Khyook-Phyoo are not quite so good as those in Akyab.”

“Heigh—ho!” sighed Peregrine Pultuney, and then, after taking a long view through the telescope of the uninteresting-looking coast, and the comfortless-looking-houses, running along it, he asked, “And pray, captain, what are all these houses made of?”

“Leaves and bamboo, I believe,” said the captain.

“Botheration!” cried Peregrine Pultuney, “to think of my living in a house made of leaves and bamboos—and dying there too, perhaps,” he added.

It was not very long before the *Seeva* cast anchor i front of the commissioner’s house, nor very long afterwards before Peregrine Pultuney, the two ensigns and the captain received each of them an invitation from the said commissioner to dinner. Arracan is one of those places, which, if there be no other use in it, is of infinite service as a practical illustration of a truth, which has been but tardily acknowledged, namely, that military men in civil capacities are the best servants that the company



has got. There is not a province in all India better governed than that of Arracan, and yet there is not one civilian in it, unless the harbour-master aspires to that name. The commissioner was a Captain Boggle, so called, we suppose, like *lucus a non lucendo*, because he never boggled at any thing in his life; and he had some half-dozen assistant-commissioners in different parts of the province—one captain, two lieutenants, an ensign, and a doctor or so. These men, as we have said before, were excellent servants, but it certainly would have been too heavy a dispensation of Providence, if the place had been cursed with a bad government, as well as with a bad climate, bad water, bad roads, bad bread, and bad houses. We have made these latter observations entirely upon our own account, for, to tell the truth, Peregrine Pultuney had never once thought of inquiring whether the affairs of the province were well administered or not; he was considerably more interested in the hospitality than in the wisdom of the rulers of Akyab, and he was fortunately enabled to report as favourably of the former, as we have considered ourselves bound to do of the latter; for, before the sun had descended sufficiently near the horizon for him to think of going on shore, he had been offered accommodation in the houses of two or three different gentlemen, had been invited to a station dinner at the commissioner's, and had had an elephant sent down to the water's side to conduct him safely to that officer's residence.



Peregrine thought it was rather a good thing, that there was no act of the legislative council in force in the Arracan provinces, prohibiting young gentlemen from riding about on elephant-back, and, as he had never done any thing of the kind before, he was much pleased with the novelty of the diversion. Nor was he much less pleased with his dinner at the commissioner's, which was as good as a dinner composed entirely of fowls in six shapes, ducks in three, fish of different kinds, and hermetically sealed salmon can be—flocks and herds being as little able to withstand the devastating effects of the climate, as unhappy volunteer regiments and detached artillery officers.

The *Seeva* remained three or four days at Akyab, for the purpose of emptying herself of the government and private stores consigned to that place; and during that time, Peregrine Pultuney had contrived to become intimate with every person in the station. An officer in the Arracan Local Battalion very obligingly lent him a horse, so that he had an opportunity of seeing every thing that is to be seen, which, however, amounts to nothing at all.

The only event worthy of being recorded in this place, before we transport our hero to Khyook Phyoo, is one of by no means an uncommon nature, which befel not Peregrine Pultuney himself, but a fellow-passenger of that young gentleman. One of the young ensigns was seized with Arracan fever and died. There is nothing very remarkable

in the circumstance, for death is the only thing that flourishes in the province of Arracan; but as the melancholy event made a deep impression on Peregrine's mind, as faithful historians we are bound to record it.

The young man had gone on board in high health, we cannot add in high spirits, for although there are many wonderful phenomena in the world, nature has never yet permitted such an utter inversion of her laws, as would be manifested, if any person in a sound state of mind were to embark for Arracan in high spirits. He had not been more than seven or eight-months in the country, and was a remarkably fine young man, with apparently a frame of iron—muscular and close-knit. He did not seem a person likely to fall an easy victim even to a powerful foe—but what very straws are the robustest frames and the healthiest constitutions in the hands of the gigantic fever-king, when he holds his revels in his favourite banquet-room! This poor youth had gone out with Peregrine and two or three others for a ride, on the morning following the arrival of the *Seeva*, and, perhaps, it was that they had ridden through some bad jungle or gone too near some stagnant, putrid waters, or perhaps it was that the old fever-king was in want of a victim; but a few hours after the return of the riding party, two of the number were lying prostrate on their beds—poor Travers, and a lieutenant in the Provincial Battalion—the lieutenant recovered after a few weeks

of suffering, but in two days the young ensign was a corpse, and the *Secva* continued its voyage to Khyook Phyoo with one passenger less in her cabins.

Ha! ha! what a merry old fellow is that gaunt-sided, yellow-checked fever-king, and so dainty withal. What a jovial grin puckers up his lank jaws, as he sneaks behind with a bony finger on his blue lips, stretching out with long knee-bent paces to keep up with the light step of youth. Ha! ha! how facetiously he points to the rosy cheek—to the swelling muscles, and how he winks his dull eye, ~~when he catches~~ a word about home—about kindred, or parents, or love. Jolly old fellow! are you quite ready?—there now, you have laid your finger on him—how the poor victim shivers all over!—see him now, reeling and staggering to and fro, like a drunken man—dizziness in his brain—a film over his eyes; it is of no use struggling—he tries to shake it off—he has youth and strength on his side—straws; the fever-king has stretched out both his arms, and what a jovial embrace!

What a merry dog it is, to be sure!—see, he seats himself on the ground and takes his little victim on his lap, as a child of three years nurses a doll—how daintily he streaks down the smooth flesh with his five hot fingers, like so many searing-irons, parching the skin, and boiling the blood, and drying up the fountain of life; how he tosses him about from side to side—no rest for the fever-stricken; how he

plays with his victim's hair; and laid his arid, burning palm upon his victim's brow, till the language of delirium comes forth wildly—disjointedly from the dry lips; and then how the old fellow laughs—ha! ha!—what fun it is for the gaunt old Shake-sides—his very own music this . . . . . What? tired of it. Pleasures must pall sometimes—the intensest the most short-lived. You have done with him—well, well—see how the grim monarch tosses his victim over, and how the lean, withered, yellow anatomy, that was once so full of health and strength and beauty, now falls upon its face and dies. The fever-king is off—a fresh plaything awaits him. Ha! ha!—he does as he lists. . . . .

## CHAPTER II.

In which the Reader will find very much what he has expected.

DANTE, who was supposed to have known as much about these things as most people in his generation, has declared that it is written over the gates of a certain unmentionable place, that all people entering therein are to leave hope behind them in the vestibule, as gentlemen do their sticks and umbrellas, when they go to the National Gallery. Not claiming any particular acquaintance with these **Tartarean** localities, we cannot say whether Dante was right; but we can venture to state, on our own responsibility, that hope is a contraband article on the coast of Arracan, and that no one is ever permitted to land even the smallest portion of it, tied up in the corner of his pocket handkerchief.

Such being the case, it is not surprising that the hero of this story, though young, and by nature buoyant and sanguine, landed on the arid shores of Khyook Phyoo, irremediably hopeless and forlorn.

He had tried to smuggle a little of this precious commodity, but had been utterly baffled and defeated; for we firmly believe that when Epimetheus opened Pandora's box of evils and distempers, he was passing the honeymoon in Ramree, and that Hope was so frightened by the bad company in which she found herself, when first she immersed into being, that she flew away from the island, never to visit it again, though the curses made it their head-quarters for life.

Young people and holders of lottery-tickets are proverbially hopeful, but in both of these catagories there is a small class from whom all hope is precluded—holders of lottery-tickets after all the prizes have been drawn, and young gentlemen in the Arracan provinces . . . . . It is very sad—very sad indeed, dear reader. Summon a dozen people (if a dozen people there be, who have escaped out of Arracan alive), summon them and ask what they left behind them, when they crept out of that hated prison, maimed and crippled like rack-victims out of the dungeons of the Inquisition—ask what they left behind them, we say, and if they do not answer wives, children, brothers, and friends, we have not dipped our pen in gall to celebrate ARRACAN. Health is a small matter, we take no account of that; for who thinks of saying that there is no light in the profoundest depths of Erebus—no order in Chaos—no cool fountains in the crater of a volcano. Such things are well understood.

There is a most unexceptionable *burial-ground* in Khyook-Phyoo, and the great ocean rolls lazily over the flat beach, as we have never seen it roll anywhere else. It seems to do its work stealthily, shame-facedly, as though it felt the degradation of keeping such cut-throat company, and were contaminated by the touch of the land. The very sea-breeze is without freshness, being not much purer or pleasanter than the marsh miasm of other localities; and yet this sea-air, with the exception of the burial ground, is the most unexceptionable thing in the place. Peregrine tried to forget what he had left behind him—tried to look cheerfully at what he saw—then tried to do the stoic; but failed just as much as he had done with his platonic philosophy. Philoctetes, upon his lone island, with his putrid sore, was a little happier than he; for the poor Greek's wound was only in his foot; whilst our hero's was eating into his heart.

We have heard that people are very sociable in prisons, and our own experience has led us to believe that gentlemen living on inhospitable shores, do not always consider themselves bound, for the sake of homogeneity, to be inhospitable too. Peregrine thought this himself, for the *Seeva* had scarcely cast anchor in Khyook-Phyoo harbour (a place which reminds one of Plymouth harbour with the mange on it) before he had received two or three invitations from different residents to take up his quarters at their houses, or what are called by courtesy such.



Accepting, like a young gentlemen of very quick parts, as he was, the doctor's invitation in preference to all the others, Peregrine Pultuney went on shore, got another ride on elephant-back, and was landed safely at his destination.

The society of Khyook-Phyoo consisted of such portion of the 85th regiment of Native Infantry as had not, in the course of the preceding year, been carried off by Arracan fever, or sent to England by the same—an assistant-commissioner and the doctor—the regiment being about as much a regiment as a book is a book with the pages torn out. There was a sort of skeleton mess, however, and a billiard-room, but the very balls, instead of rattling about the table, sent forth a dull muffled sound when struck; and as for the dinner, fowls in half-a-dozen different shapes, and bread, the sourest and blackest, such as would have created a rebellion in any poor-house in Great Britain, were the principal, because the only delicacies of the table, that the poor fellows were suffered to enjoy. The very beer was flat and out of spirits, and the soda-water would not effervesce, for the depressing influence of the climate was felt even by that.

What Peregrine did in this Golgotha it is difficult, very difficult, to say. He liked the doctor, who was as good a fellow as ever breathed, but the doctor was not Julia Poggleton. He took command of his detachment, looked at the guns and ammunition, tried to interest himself, but failed



utterly, and, not having been able to purchase a horse, ordered out one of the gun elephants to ride upon.

This he did every evening—and such evenings! lurid, breathless, stifling; and yet he looked forward to them. He never stirred out during the day-time, for he was determined not to go in search of the Fever-King, but to wait 'till his grim majesty should be pleased to tap at his victim's door. Our hero was cautious and resolute—he wrote long letters to Julia Poggleton, and looked out of window the greater part of *every other day* to watch for the coming of the *dák-boat* (post-office boat). The doctor's house was one of the best in the station, but it was made of mats and straw, with a few sticks and a little canvas by way of ornament. The sea was on one side of it, and a very pleasant tract of dry loose sand on the other, and it could not have been better situated for being carried away, as houses very often are at Khyook-Phyoo, by a fresh breeze, right into the Jungle.

The first piece of military duty that Peregrine Pultuney had to perform, was in the capacity of member of a committee, ordered to assemble one morning at the house of a man who had died in the course of the preceding night—an overseer, surveyor, or something of the kind, under the orders of the executive engineer. This was a remarkably pleasant duty for our hero, who marched into the principal room of the house, and saw the

corpse stretched out on a charpoy, all stark, and yellow, with its eyes open. The room was in great confusion—dirty and disordered—boxes and broken crockery and foul linen were huddled together in every direction; two or three dark children were playing about the room, unconscious of what had happened, whilst their mother, a young and not ill-looking Mhug woman, was sobbing outside the door, and trying to hide herself from the strangers. There was a look about the whole place, not of poverty, but of mis-rule, that forcibly struck our hero, who thought that he had rarely seen any thing that wore so foul an aspect of wretchedness in his life.

Whilst Peregrine and the other members of the committee were opening the boxes of the deceased in search of money and papers, the doctor was engaged in opening the corpse, as our hero thought very scientifically; and long before the military officers had found any thing like a will, the medical one had extracted the dead man's spleen, which was as large as a round of beef, washed it, weighed it, and ascertained that it was only *eleven times* as heavy as it ought to be.

As Peregrine was walking home he met the dāk-wallah, with his box of papers and letters from Calcutta, and the young gentleman soon forgot the dead man and his spleen, in the delight of receiving his first letter from his much-beloved cousin Julia. It was written on the morning after his departure,

and was full of passionate regrets. If before this any leaven of mistrust, as to the true state of Julia's affections, *had* held a place in his heart, it was now most entirely eradicated. What room was there even for the smallest particle of doubt, when *such* a letter had been written. Young ladies do not have racking headaches, go to bed at eight o'clock, without their dinners, and listen in fear and trembling to the least sound of the wind, if they have not some very sufficient reason for it. Young ladies do not write about their houses looking drear and desolate—about empty chairs, and time hanging heavily, and feeling lonely, and all that sort of thing, if a very large place in their hearts had not been held by some young gentleman, who has made himself more than commonly agreeable, and then been forced to take himself away.

And in this sort of vague way, scarcely doing any thing but writing letters to his cousin—perusing and re-perusing those which he received from *her*—lounging about on sofas, or rather upon the sea-cot which he had taken with him to Arracan, for in that province sofas are rarities, or were in Peregrine Pultuney's time—occasionally smoking a cheroot, and constantly looking out for the *dâk-boat*, the subject of this memoir spent about a month, at the end of which time, as may easily be supposed, he caught the fever, or, more correctly speaking, the fever caught *him*.

And then Peregrine Pultuney began to experience

the real delights of life in India. He had gone to bed perfectly well; and the last thing he had done, was to laugh at the doctor and say, boastingly, that his body was not yet ready for the dissecting knives of the faculty—he had gone to bed, we say, in perfect health, perspiring freely at every pore, and had, as usual, taken the precaution to close the windows and doors (such as they were) of his sleeping room. But what precaution was this in a mat house? A violent wind arose in the night, sweeping through the house, right over Peregrine Pultuney, and threatening to carry the edifice and its inhabitants into the sea.

Peregrine woke feeling bitterly cold; he pulled up the sheet from the bottom of his bed, then the blanket, wrapped them closely round him, but still he shivered all over; the wind had ceased and the atmosphere was stifling, but still the poor youth felt bitterly cold; he tried to go to sleep though, and after a time succeeded, but it was the sleep of disease, and when he awoke again, about five or six o'clock in the morning, he was afflicted with a violent headach, and most depressing, overwhelming sensations of sickness.

He sent for his kind friend the doctor, who pronounced him in a high fever; and then commenced that dreadful process of *lowering* the patient, which brings him well nigh to the gates of death, and is worse than death to the unhappy sufferer. Emetics first, then purgatives, and oh! the deadly sickness

produced by that horrid tartarized antimony—the tearing and wrenching sickness—the oppressive, intolerable weight within—just as though one had swallowed a nine-pound shot, and were always trying to disgorge it.

And there lay Peregrine Pultuney on a low char-poy, without curtains, for there is little need of them in Arracan, tossing about from side to side, in the vain hope of finding an easy position. There was little furniture in the room, but what did he want with more? He could not, or he was not permitted to leave his bed, and of what use would have been mirrors and toilet tables? •

Day after day, and night after night, he lay stretched upon that comfortless char-poy—quite sensible but miserably prostrated. No one can tell what he suffered who has not felt those dreadful cannon-balls at his gorge—and torn himself to pieces in vain attempts to dislodge the immoveable burden. Night and day were alike to him; for he could not sleep whilst this affliction was on him; but if possible, the poor youth dreaded the nights even more than he did the days—they were so long, so dreary, so interminable. He kept his watch always by his side—and minutes were to him like hours, and hours like days of unmitigated suffering and sorrow. Perhaps he would sometimes, after throwing himself from side to side, and trying every possible position in the hope of finding one less cramping and painful than the rest, or after a vio-

lent attack of wrenching sickness, which afforded him no relief, sink into a state of dreamy exhaustion, out of which he would be roused by feeling more sensibly than ever the oppressive burden within him; then he would look at his watch, thinking that hours had passed since last he had looked at it, and find, with the bitterest feelings of disappointment, that the night was only further advanced by ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

Yet miserable as was Peregrine Pultuney's condition, he might have been more miserable; for never were human beings more unremittingly attentive in a sick chamber, than the kind-hearted assistant-surgeon, in whose house Peregrine was living, and his own faithful attendant, Peer Khan. Every half hour the former was by the bed-side of his patient, watching the progress of the poor fellow's disease, whilst the latter was scarcely an hour in the twenty four absent from his post. Let none say henceforth, as has often been said, that the natives of this country are the most ungrateful people in the world. They are only because not one in a thousand has any thing at all to be grateful for. We must be a *very* sanguine set of people indeed if, when we sow blows and blackguardism, we expect to reap a harvest of gratitude. And yet this is precisely what we do—we beat and abuse our servants, and wonder that they are not grateful in return.

But never had gratitude been more powerfully manifested than it was in the devotion of Peer Khan,



throughout the long and dangerous illness of his master. There sat the faithful Mahomedan, night and day, beside Peregrine's low couch—fanning him with a large hand punkah, smoothing his bed, and administering, almost every half hour, cooling saline draughts.

It was marvellous how the naturally inert, sleep-loving Asiatic could forego his rest and his indolence for so many days together.

At length one night Peregrine said to him, "Peer Khan—are you not tired?"

It was the sixth or seventh night of the fever, and Peregrine Pultuney was wasted down to a perfect skeleton. His fine, thick, luxuriant hair had been cut down to the very roots by an unsophisticated regimental barber; his skin and eyes were as yellow as gold; his chest raw and crimson from a repetition of mustard-plasters, and his temples studded with leech-bites. Beside the pillow of his bed was Julia Poggleton's last letter, his watch and a pocket handkerchief, and on a chair near at hand was a basin, a black bottle full of alum-gargle, for Peregrine was just beginning to learn, by doleful experience, what kind of a curse is the curse of salivation, and a few little blue paper parcels containing soda and acid. Peer Khan was at his usual place, sitting on his haunches, with a punkah in his hand.

"Peer Khan," said Peregrine, "are you not tired?"

He spoke this in English, and the good Mahomedan answered him in the same language.

He had not been much used to talking thus of late, and so his orthoepy had become more questionable than ever.

“No, sar—I not tire—how can tire, master sick?”

“But,” urged Peregrine, speaking indistinctly, for his gums were sore and his throat choaked with saliva—“you have been attending me a long time now—you want sleep—I can do without you.”

“No, master,” returned Peer Khan, “you get more good. I go e-sleep ; how can e-sleep, master got *tup*?” (fever.)

“I *am* better, indeed,” said Peregrine.

“Master please—I not sink so,” urged Peer Khan, respectfully; “I sink master want me.”

“Well,” rejoined Peregrine, languidly, “you are a very good man; I hope you wont get sick yourself.”

“No, master, Allah he take care me. I take care master—he do all for good, I think.”

“Yes,” returned Peregrine, “I have no doubt of it, and you will, I dare say, be as glad as I shall to get back to Bengal.”

“What master like I like,” said Peer Khan—  
“Master be *khush* (well) I know.”

“Yes,” exclaimed Peregrine, “that I shall,” and rarely had he ever said any thing which he felt more thoroughly than this. It had been his first thought when he was taken ill, that he should be enabled to return to Bengal, and the first question he had asked the doctor was, whether he would give him a cer-



tificate. This thought kept him alive throughout his illness—if it had not been for this he would have died.

Peregrine insisted on his servant's lying down for an hour or two, and the faithful fellow reluctantly complied; the sick man tried to sleep too, but he could not, so he straggled off his bed, and crawled towards an arm-chair, in another part of the room, and ensconced himself there, thinking that the change might be a relief to him, and it was too, for in this half horizontal and half perpendicular position, he obtained an hour of the most refreshing sleep he had enjoyed since the commencement of his fever.

But he had many days of suffering yet to struggle through, before he began really to amend; and the expiration of the third week saw him, though altogether free from fever, so wretchedly debilitated and worn out, that it seemed probable he would die of exhaustion. The rains too were beginning to set in, and the weather was sadly unfavourable to invalids, but in spite of this he gained strength daily, and as good luck would have it, the *Seeva* appeared again at Arracan, just as Peregrine was sufficiently recovered to be carried on board ship.

It must, doubtless, have afforded Peregrine Pultuney very great satisfaction, to have learnt at the termination of an illness, which had entailed upon him three weeks of unmitigated suffering, and reduced him to the consistency of a skeleton, that his attack had not been by any means as severe as the

common fevers of the province. He read this in the medical certificate, with which his friend the assistant-surgeon had provided him, together with an appendix in the form of an elaborate statement of his case, and wondered very much what the common fevers of the country could possibly be, if his was a mild form of it; but when he remembered that the common fevers of the country were invariably fatal, he ceased to wonder any more; for it stands to reason that if a man survives an Arracan fever, it must have been a comparatively slight one with which he has had to grapple.

Be that as it may, Peregrine Pultuney went on board the *Seeva* again, though considerably reduced in flesh, very much more elated in spirit, than he had been when he had embarked for the first time. He had a basket full of jalup powders and quinine pills—a bag of limes—a dozen or two of soda-water in a hamper—and his medical certificate in his writing desk; and upon these things he intended to live until his arrival in Calcutta. About the third day, however, he felt hungry, and on the fourth he took some chicken-broth, and when Peer Khan made him some jelly out of chickens' feet, he devoured it with great rapacity, though all the good Mahommedan's devoted assiduity could not make the preparation more solid than gravy soup, without the assistance of saltpetre or ice. The poor fellow had done his best to produce the required consistency, for, with a degree of ingenuity, or *science* we

ought to say, worthy of a commissary of ordnance, he had got together a quantity of gunpowder, because he knew that there was *saltpetre* in it, and tried to harden the jelly with that. The experiment, however, proved a failure, and Peregrine was obliged to drink his jelly instead of eating it; but we doubt not but that it did him quite as much good, as if it had been frozen to the solidity of mahogany.

As the *Seeva* had the wind against her, and moreover was compelled to put into Chittagong for some government treasure, which the captain was ordered to convey to Calcutta, Peregrine Pultuney was condemned to endure the miseries of a tediously protracted passage of very nearly four weeks, during which he had plenty of time to contrive something in the way of a *relapse*, a calamity, which befel him in the Chittagong river, which all who have seen its dark waters, and its muddy, jungle-skirted banks, must know to be admirably adapted to the purpose of restoring lost fevers and instituting new ones on its own account.

However, the *Seeva* did reach Calcutta at last, and when Peregrine found himself once again opposite Chandpaul Ghaut, he was about as far advanced along the road of convalescence, as he had been when he embarked at Arracan—the Chittagong river, with a view of establishing what is called the “balance of power,” having taken especial care to counteract any beneficial influence which the sea air

in the bay of Bengal, may have had upon the suffering youth. Peregrine had written a few lines to his cousin, the best that he *could* write, announcing his sickness and his intended departure for Calcutta; but the *Seeva*, for it was during the time of the south-west monsoon, had made such an extraordinarily rapid passage up the river, that there was no chance of the Poggletons having heard in sufficient time of the arrival of the ship, to send a carriage to meet Peregrine at the ghaut; so that young gentleman, who was in too great a hurry to wait for an answer to a chit, landed as rapidly as he could, and bundled himself into a palankin, Peer Khan, who had previously locked the cabin door, and tied up the key in his *cumber-bund*,\* accompanying his master as a matter of course.

Peregrine's heart beat with more than its wonted rapidity, as the bearers carried him round the corner of the street, which led to his uncle's abode,—in a minute or two more his arm would be round his cousin's waist, his lips pressed to her soft cheek—guess then what were his astonishment and mortification, when he slid out of his palanquin and rushed into the hall, to find that an auction, with all its noise, bustle and confusion, was going on in the dear old house.

\* Shawl tied round the waist.

## CHAPTER III.

In which Peregrine Pultney makes divers very important Discoveries.

AT first Peregrine thought he had made a mistake and found his way into the wrong house, but when he looked around him and recognised not only the shape of the hall, the turn of the staircase and the general aspect of the whole place, but the very marble slab on which he had so often left his hat, and the very round clock, over the slab, at whose dial he had so often glanced, on his way up and down stairs, there was no room whatever left for doubting the identity of the house he had entered; nor was it possible, when he saw the concourse of people, European and native, who blocked up the doors and passed up and down the staircase, and lounged about the rooms, looking curiously at the different articles of furniture, every man with a catalogue in his hand, and every article of furniture with a ticket on it, to doubt for one moment that a public auction was going on in Mr. Poggleton's house.

With the assistance of a large stick and the balusters, for he was still deplorably weak, Peregrine managed to creep up stairs and to arrive in the drawing-room just as the auctioneer was descanting, in very eloquent language, on the beauties of the "fashionable circular table, made by Messrs. Sherwood and Co., of the best picked materials, with its beautiful white marble slab and solid mahogany pedestal, altogether a most elegant piece of furniture, and as good, indeed better than new." Peregrine looked at it; it was *the* table, the very identical table, beneath which he had so often held Julia's dear little hand, and over which he had so often kissed Julia's dear little mouth—the very, very white marble slab, on which Julia's tears had fallen, so heavily, when Peregrine announced to her that the precise hour of his departure for Arracan was fixed. And this, to him so sacred—so suggestive of hallowed reminiscences, was to be sold by public auction! Two hundred rupees had been already bid; Peregrine added "fifty," though if any body had asked him what he was going to do with a marble table he could not have given a more precise answer than a Yorkshire clod, if the same question had been put him regarding a Spanish guitar. But, nevertheless, Peregrine bade for the table, and after a sharp conflict with a gentleman owning a black moustache, the table was knocked down to him for thirty rupees above its original cost, and two hundred and thirty rupees

above the entire sum of money that Peregrine had in his possession.

Having given his card to the auctioneer, Peregrine looked at the gentleman with the moustache, who had been bidding against him, out of a sort of vague curiosity to know what sort of an animal his competitor was, and to his great astonishment recognised the white teeth, the black whiskers, the long legs, and the patent-leather boots of Cornet Drawlincourt.

Peregrine was at that time leaning against the wall, for he was well-nigh exhausted even with the little exertion he had made. The noise and the bustle around him, and the excitement occasioned by witnessing a scene so utterly unexpected in his uncle's house, added to the effects of a tolerably strong dose of quinine which he had taken that morning, had created such a whirl in his head, and such a singing in his ears that the room seemed to be going round—he tottered forward to say something to the long cornet, but was obliged to grasp an arm of the sofa on which Drawlincourt had flung himself, and sink down beside that gentleman to save himself from falling on the floor.

But in a little time, having somewhat recovered, he turned round to the cornet and asked him how he did; but whether it was that the cavalry officer had not a very long-reached memory, or that he was mortified at being thwarted again by his old

illness, that the cornet did not really recognise him, we do not pretend to say, but it is very certain that he stared at our hero and said something about not having the honour of his acquaintance.

"I do not wonder," said Peregrine,—who in the fullness of his generosity had leapt to a conclusion that the last mentioned was the real cause of his companion's not recognising him—"I don't wonder that you should not know me—an Arracan fever is enough to disguise a man so that his own mother should not know him—I am glad to see that you are not suffering, as you were when first I saw you in India. We have changed places you see—Pultuney is the sick man now, and Drawlincourt this time the sound one."

"Who is the sick one did you say?" drawled Cornet Drawlincourt, stroking one of his moustaches with the fore-finger of his left hand, and tapping the toe of his boot with a dandified cane.

"Pultuney is," repeated Peregrine, "or, to speak in the first person, I am."

"Pultuney! oh! 'pon honour," returned the cornet—"I beg your pa-a-rdon—upon my soul I do—I hope you are—*very*—well—"

"My good sir," interrupted Peregrine, "hope that I *shall be*, pray—for you just see what I *am*."

"Ah! true," retorted the amiable cavalry officer, who had not been a little envious always of Peregrine's bright complexion and beautiful curly hair—"ah! true—you do look very ill indeed—upon



my soul, I did not know you—I never saw a man half so yellow in my life—by Jove, sir, like gold."

"Very, I'm afraid," remarked Peregrine.

"And, I suppose," continued Drawlincourt, "you have bought that marble table—ha, ha! to make a coffin out of the pedestal—and to—ha—ha! excuse me, my good sir—to cut the slab into a tablet, for 'Sacred to the memory' et cetera—ha! ha!—a capital idea!"

"A capital idea upon your part," returned Peregrine, who was more disposed to smile than any thing else, at the pleasantries which the cornet was indulging in, very evidently to his acute satisfaction, "but upon my word I am innocent of having originated it—deal and granite will do well enough for me."

"Quite," retorted the cornet, who was disposed to be as complimentary as possible; "quite good enough—ha! ha! but you got it dear though, very dear—upon my soul an expensive pleasure."

"What pleasure?" asked Peregrine.

"Ah! I know," returned Mr. Drawlincourt, "the pleasure of outbidding me—"

"My good sir!—"

"Yes; I know—but you see I was even with you—for I can get a new table like that at Sherwood's for three hundred and fifty rupees—upon my soul I can, three fifty—and this you see is chipped at the edges."

"I should have bought it if it had been cracked," said Peregrine.

"I know that," retorted the cornet, "but these are expensive pleasures—very expensive—two months pay and allowances for the sake of out-bidding me."

"Upon my word," said Peregrine, still keeping his temper in spite of all this provocation, "I did not know whom I was bidding against—I bought the table because it is an old friend of mine—because it belonged to my uncle—"

"Oh, that's it—come here to bid up your uncle's things?" interrupted the amiable cornet—"what a good nephew to be sure! but you had better have stopped, I think, when I made my last bid—your uncle won't thank you for buying in the best pieces of furniture in his house."

"You are very ingenious in discovering motives," observed Peregrine, who, if he had possessed strength enough, would have knocked the long cornet off the couch, and rapped his head against the marble table, as Mr. Drawlincourt very well *knew*—"most ingenious in discovering motives—but I won't quarrel with you, though you try very hard to tempt me, Mr. Drawlincourt—I have something else to think about now, so pray don't tempt me any more—I have just arrived from Arracan—as you see, more dead than alive, and having come here, thinking to see my uncle and his family, I have been surprised at finding myself in a crowded

auction-room—what is the meaning of it I do not know; but perhaps you can inform me.”

“Ah!” returned the cornet, who was much satisfied with the triumph, which, as he thought, he had gained over Peregrine Pultuney, in having insulted him as bitterly as he could without being horsewhipped in return—“ah! yes, I have heard something about it—though I do not quite remember what. It is either that Mr. Poggleton is dead, or that Mrs. Poggleton is dead, or that he is going to prison—No. 1, Chowringhee.”

“Bless my soul,” cried Peregrine, “you don’t mean that.”

“Why, I’m not sure,” returned the cornet; who was succeeding admirably in tormenting Peregrine—“I’m not quite sure, because you see I may have got a little confused—one *does* hear so many stories in the course of a morning, if one goes much into society, as *I* do, and at Mrs. Parkinson’s—he-e-m! hem! one does see so many people, that I may have made a mistake. There is a civilian going into No. 1, Chowringhee—but you see, having only lately come from the Mofussil, I have not as yet become quite conversant with the names and circumstances of all the people in Calcutta; but I think upon second thoughts, upon my soul I do—that’s its something about the young lady, she is going—I think, to be married.

“What! Miss Poggleton?” asked Peregrine, feeling very sick.

"Yes, Miss Poggleton," returned the cornet.

"And going to be married?" asked Peregrine, feeling still sicker.

"Yes! to be married," returned the cornet.

"The devil!" exclaimed Peregrine.

"Miss Poggleton a devil?" sneered the cornet, "when last I saw her she looked more like an angel."

"No, not Miss Poggleton, I did not say that—but your story—you yourself, if you like it—but I don't believe a word of it—not I—confound it, sir, lend me the catalogue;" and as Peregrine said this, he snatched the printed book out of the hand of the astonished cornet.

As a particularly interesting lot, namely a Broadwood's grand piano, was selling at that moment, there were no loiterers near the sofa, so that the strange conduct of our excited hero was unobserved save by Mr. Drawlincourt himself. That worthy having looked around him and ascertained this fact, stared at Peregrine, then lifted his cane, then shook his head, laid down the cane, and finally observed, that he supposed Peregrine was delirious, or he would not have ventured to behave himself in such an extraordinary manner.

As for Peregrine, he was deaf to these observations. Had he thought for one moment, he must have remembered that the fact of Miss Poggleton's going to be married, was no earthly reason for Mr. Poggleton's selling off all his household furniture;

but he was sick, feverish, his head was whirling round, and he was in a state of excitement not favourable at all to meditation of any kind. Besides he was a lover, and lovers, we are sorry to say, are very apt to be suspicious, and their fears are often fathers to thoughts, which consideration, in cool moments, sets down as preposterously absurd.

But that which consideration did not for our hero, the auction catalogue did; for there on the first page of it he read that the little book contained a list of the very "valuable and handsome household furniture and fittings up, made by European tradesmen—the very extensive sideboard of massive silver plate, fashionable plated ware, rich cut glass and crockery ware, together with the well-known equipages, carriage-cattle and saddle horses, the property of James Poggleton, Esq., C. S., returning to Europe."

"That's it," exclaimed Peregrine. "I thought you were wrong, here is your catalogue; thank you—you were quite wrong, you see. All accident, of course," and as he said this, Peregrine rose from the sofa, feeling as though a thirty-two pound shot had been taken out of his left waistcoat pocket, and a six-pounder inserted in its place.

"Stop," drawled the cornet—"stop, Mr. Pulteney—what have you to say about calling me a devil?"

"Simply this," returned Peregrine, turning his thin, yellow face upon Mr. Drawlincourt, and curl-

ing his lip with the supremest contempt; "simply this, sir, that I am in a hurry to go, and that if you want any explanation you may write to me at Spence's Hotel. 'I dare say I can stand against a tree.'"

Flinging the long cornet's own words into his teeth in this manner, Peregrine turned round to depart, and encountered Peer Khan, who, having first of all salaamed profoundly to the cornet, with a roguish smile all the time lighting up his intelligent face, told Peregrine, in Hindustani, that he "knew all."

"What do you know?" asked Peregrine.

"I know," returned the Mussulman, in his own vernacular—not meaning thereby that Mussulmen have vernaculars any more than protestants or papists—"I know that Poggleton *Sahib* is living in Spence Sahib's punch-house, and that the *Mehm-Sahib* and *Missey-baba* are living there too. The sahib, he is very sick. He goes to the English province."

"Very good," said Peregrine, limping away, "call the palki to the door."

"Yes, your honour," returned Peer Khan—"and I have more words to speak."

"Go on, then," said Peregrine.

"Dollinguts Sahib"—and here the Mahomedan entered into an animated account of something which was apparently very funny, but the description of which had one very important drawback, namely, that Peregrine Pultuney could not compre-

hend more than one out of every twenty words that the worthy khansamah uttered.

In this dilemma, our hero, as he often did in such emergencies, requested Peer Khan to unburden himself of his humorous narrative in English, and the polyglot Mahomedan accordingly delivered himself in the following words, with a broad grin upon his face all the while:—"Yes, master, I tell—I try—master not *sumsta* (understand) Bengallee word—when come here, master, I not know what for this *leelaam* (auction) outcry—I go ask—one two person, they not know. I go *bob'cha-khana* (kitchen)—go down, not see *noukur-logue* (servants)—I not know—then I see in dinner-room Beebee Parkinson Khitmudgar. I ask, he say Poggleton Sahib, and Missey Baba, all go E-spence Sahib punch-house. Sahib, he sick go England—then he tell *gup* (news), how Dollinguts Sahib go to make marry Missey Gownspic, what come in sip with master—*chota* (the younger) Missey—he make marry five six day, come here to buy table, oder things. I laugh, master, too much!"

Peregrine laughed too, and wondered scarcely less. Had he remembered that young ladies are privileged to change their minds, and that a little moderate aversion in these matters is a very fine thing to build love upon, he would not have wondered much, though he might have laughed at this strange announcement. But Peregrine did not remember this; neither did he remember that Miss



Lucretia Gowanspec had been two years in Calcutta, and had gained the character of being such a flirt, that the Calcutta gentry never thought of her for a moment in any other character. Besides, the long cornet was certainly good-looking, and had a few hundreds a year besides his pay, which kept him in patent leather and hair oil.

Having tottered down stairs, and, with the assistance of Peer Khan, crept into the palki, Peregrine Pultuney was conveyed to Spence's, and, as may readily be expected, was not long in finding his way into Julia's arms.

But his appearance amongst the Poggleton family at this time, created a greater sensation than even he had expected, for not one of them knew of his coming, not one of them even knew of his illness; he had written, announcing both in the same letter; but that letter had never reached Calcutta, for one of the dâk-runners had been, somehow or other, lost in a jungle between Arracan and the metropolis, and the consequence was, that poor Julia, after a scene, to which fortunately no one was witness but an ayah who had come into the room by accident, was carried to her own chamber in a swoon.

Not wishing to cause a second scene, Peregrine inquired from a bearer where his aunt was, and being informed that she was in her husband's room, with the doctor sahib, Peregrine wrote on a slip of paper

a few words of forwarning to his aunt, and sent it up to that lady at once.

In two or three minutes Mrs. Poggleton entered the room where Peregrine was sitting, thoroughly jaded and fevered by his day's exertions; and with her was a gentleman, whom Peregrine determined in a moment to be the doctor sahib; it was not, however, Doctor Martingale, for the individual who now made his appearance Peregrine had never seen before in his life. He was a tall, rather upright man, dressed according to the season, all in white, and there was something about him well calculated to attract the attention of even an indifferent observer. Apparently rather more than half a century old, his hair was quite grey, cut rather short, and brushed straight off his forehead, which was high, but not very broad, with rather projecting brows, and an aspect certainly of superior wisdom. He wore spectacles, which rested upon a nose very well calculated to support them, being no insignificant feature in his face, and his mouth was one which it was not easy to understand at the first glance. When Peregrine first saw him, he thought that it was a severe one—indeed that the whole expression of the stranger's face (for stranger he was to Peregrine, though most probably to not a soul else in Calcutta) was rather severe than otherwise; but when Mrs. Poggleton, after having embraced her nephew, and with a great number of "only thinks"

and "dear mes," declared herself not much astonished at Peregrine's rapid return, introduced him to Dr. Fitz-simon; and when Dr. Fitz-simon held out his hand to Peregrine, and said that he was sorry to see him for the first under such unfavourable circumstances, our hero thought that he had never seen a face so full of genuine benevolence, nor a mouth that relaxed itself into a smile of such kindness as the good doctor's. . . . .

"You are feverish," said Dr. Fitz-simon, still holding Peregrine's hand, "and we must do something for you my poor fellow: just come to the light, that I may see you better: that will do; you must keep very quiet, and we shall soon see you getting rid of that yellow Arracan tinge. Lie down on that sofa; you have been over-exerting yourself. How long have you arrived?"

"Only a few hours," returned Peregrine, promptly obeying the good doctor's mandate; "by the bye, I brought you a letter from England, which I gave to my cousin to take care of. Aunt dear, will you be so good as to ask Julia for that letter?"

"I have got it," said Dr. Fitz-simon; "have had it ever since I arrived from the Cape: don't talk too much: I will call to see ~~you~~ again in an hour or two, and in the meantime you must keep very quiet. I will call for you ~~when~~ the sun goes down, and take you with me to my house."

Peregrine looked at the doctor as though he did

not understand him, and the worthy Esculapius continued, "You must come home with me to my house ; one sick person is quite enough at a time for your aunt and cousin: besides, I shall be able to attend you there much better. Don't talk—you may drink as much iced water as you like—I shall call for you after sunset."

Uttering these words in a decided tone of voice, Dr. Fitz-simon took up his hat, and before Peregrine had time to thank him, he was fairly out of the room. Our hero thought of Julia, how sweet it would have been to be nursed by the dear girl; and for a few moments he felt disappointed, but when he remembered that she had already one patient to nurse, his selfish feelings forsook him, and he could but acknowledge, all things considered, that he would be better anywhere else than in the same house with his cousin.—"How kind!" he said to his aunt.

"Just like him," returned Mrs. Poggleton; "he's the dearest creature in the world—only think! he'll take you to his house and nurse you like his own child. I have known him these twen—that is, I've known him a long time—and dear me, a better and a kinder creature I never—no, *I never*—you must go, of ~~course~~ ; I should like to keep you here; but my poor dear Poggleton is *so* ill"—and the good lady wiped her eyes—"so ill; and I must be with him *so much* night and day. Well, I thought it would be *so*—only think! I told you you'd get

the fever : you ought to have been in the civil service—dear me ! iced water, he says—will you call *Qui hai*—I forgot—no—don't—I'll do it myself. ' *Qui hai !*'—my voice though is so weak :—ah ! here's a bearer—' *Burruf-ka-pauni*' (cold water). I must go now and see to Poggleton : good bye—how yellow you are—and where *are* your curls ? Recollect, that dear Dr. Fitz-simon is the sweetest creature in the world : don't forget—he is *so* kind."

Peregrine forgot many things in the course of his after life, but he was never in danger of forgetting the kindness of Dr. Fitz-simon.

## CHAPTER IV.

Which does not contain any thing particularly interesting, but is highly necessary to the Development of this History.

It is said, and with an amazing degree of truth, that there is nothing in the whole world which is got with greater difficulty, and yet parted with so easily as *money*. Now, if the converse of this were said of Arracan fever, there would be an equal measure of truth in the saying ; for nothing is picked up so easily and yet got rid of with so much difficulty ; as a proof of which we have merely to say, that Peregrine Pultuney was only a few minutes getting his fever, and yet was a great many months striving, struggling to shake it off.

Oh, it is a fearful visitation, indeed ; a fearful visitation, this same Arracan fever—clinging—clinging to its unhappy victim, as the poisoned robe of the Centaur clung to the luckless giant-god. Strength is nothing ; youth is nothing ; skill is nothing : Peregrine had all these in his favour ; but slow, very slow was his return to health, for the

progress of one week was sure to be retarded by the fever of the next ; and more than any lunatic that ever lived, was he affected by the changes of the moon. Constant ague-fits and most distressing attacks of sickness, are the little offsprouts of Arracan fever, which continue to harass the sufferer long after the great enemy himself has made off—leaving these behind him in addition to a painful organic affection, which often torments the poor victim for years; and sometimes, as we have heard, a heavier curse than that—a curse which the soul sickens at—a curse not to be put into words in the pages of this history.

The season was against Peregrine: he had arrived in Calcutta at the beginning of the rains and the damps of Bengal ; the steaming blankets were sadly inimical to his recovery. The wonder is that he lived at all ; or wonder it *would* have been, had he not been located where he was ; but the fever-king in the end was baulked.

Peregrine, it must be acknowledged, had many advantages on his side ; and he thought, as he remembered his sufferings in Arracan, that sickness at No. —, Chowringhee, was, after all, mere holiday work. Only they who have been at the point of death in a strange place, amongst strangers, and in a wretched house, cut off from the commonest comforts of life, which are the *necessaries* indeed of the sick chamber, can know how to enjoy sickness, in a habitable place, and in the very midst of one's



friends, with every comfort around one, and every wish easily gratified. Thus it was with Peregrine Pultuney: he had suffered too much in Arracan to think much of his sufferings in Chowringhee. How much was there to mitigate the evil of sickness—the unceasing kindness and attention of Dr. Fitzsimon, to say nothing of his great skill; the comforts, the luxuries of his sick chamber; the constant inquiries and visits of his dearest friends; the knowledge, too, that he was in the very midst of them, added to a host of minor advantages, such as newspapers, periodicals, and new books, all helping to divert the poor fellow's mind.

Julian Jenks did not lose a day, indeed, not an hour, in visiting his dear friend, and greatly did he regret that the ties of the service, by keeping him at Dum-Dum, prevented him from giving himself up day and night to perform the duties of a nurse. Mrs. Poggleton, too, was frequent in her visits to the couch of her sick nephew; whilst poor Julia was left at home to take care of her father and write chits to her beloved cousin, which, indeed, she did, three or four times in the day to the great delight of that young gentleman, who was never tired of receiving them. Poor girl! it was very hard upon her—but they could not both be absent at a time, and Julia being a spinster, and the people of Calcutta as ill-natured and censorious as they could be, she could not go alone to see her cousin, though the chances are that her presence by his bed-side would have

done him a world of good, if he could have been persuaded to keep himself quiet.

“ Well, Peregrine, how do you do to-day ? ” would Mrs. Poggleton ask on these occasions, as she seated herself by her nephew’s couch. “ I do not think you feel quite so hot as usual—only think, what a dreadful thing this Arracan fever is to be sure !—and yet, dear me ! that horrid liver, is almost as bad, I declare—poor Poggleton’s is all liver—yours is spleen—both very bad. Only think ! liver and spleen—not a sound place between the two ; and Julia is poorly besides—oh ! nothing, you need not be frightened—*heart*, I think, Peregrine—who’d have thought it—such a boy as you are—dear me ! this comes of your being so much together ; well, well ! it is all my fault—and Lucretia Gowanspec’s going to be married—only think, to that Mr. Drawlincourt ; well, Peregrine, I was going to tell you that Julia sends her love ; I dare say you would like to see her ; but people do talk so, Peregrine, I couldn’t let her come by herself—and she couldn’t come with me, you see, for poor Poggleton must have somebody with him. And you like Dr. Fitz-simon, I know. Did not I tell you he was such a dear thing ; only think, I’ve known him these—ever since I have been in the country—he’ll soon make you well, that he will—you’re a great deal better already.” And thus she would go on from one subject to the other, never pausing but to take breath, her right hand vigorously at work with her feather-fan, and her left

holding her salts bottle, until she was fairly tired, and then she would throw herself back in her chair, and declare that she was so fatigued already that she did not see how, by any possibility, she should be able to get through the day.

But, to do Mrs. Poggleton justice, she was one of those people who have many better qualities than they seem to have. To all outward appearance she was made up of vanity, selfishness, and frivolity; but beneath all this were situated many kindly qualities, which needed but *occasion* to draw them forth and manifest them in all their strength. She was, indeed, far worse by her own showing, than she was in reality; for though she was always talking about her inability to do this and that, the quantity of useful labour, which she went through in the day, would have frightened many a strong English house-keeper, with the thews and sinews of a prize-fighter. Never surely are the energies of woman's character called forth more prominently than in the sick chamber, and Mrs. Poggleton, selfish as she appeared to be, was all in all a woman in the sick chamber of her husband. She tended him most diligently, most zealously—most lovingly, for fool as her husband esteemed her, she had wit enough to understand his character, and to know how to please him, or at all events to please him as well as he could be pleased, and that was all the most mortal creature could do. Mr. Poggleton was, in reality,

irritable, petulant, and exacting; and both Mrs. Poggleton and Julia had hard duties to perform, but they did perform them even to admiration.

Mrs. Poggleton, too, loved Peregrine—next to her husband and her daughter, she loved Peregrine better than any body in the world; and although she had set her heart upon marrying Julia to a member of a board, a government secretary, or a senior partner in a leading agency house, which is still better; and though none knew more fully than herself, what a triumph it would be for many of her good-natured friends, if Miss Poggleton espoused after all a subaltern of two years' standing, with nothing but an ensign's pay and allowances and his good looks, she no sooner became fully convinced in her own mind that her daughter was attached to Peregrine, and Peregrine attached to her daughter, than she began to consider the matter in a new light, and prepare herself, if possible, to make a sacrifice, for sacrifice it most assuredly would be. Peregrine was not altogether unknown in Calcutta—he was not an *obscure* subaltern—he was widely known and most extensively popular, and pretty generally spoken of as the lady-killer; it was not, therefore, like marrying her daughter to a young man whom nobody knew—there was a comfort in that at all events; besides, she was pretty well aware that Julia had a will of her own, and would not marry to please even her mamma, and to remain an old maid, if possible, was a worse alternative than marrying a subaltern: but as it has been part of our creed throughout this his-

tory not to analyze motives more than we can help, we shall keep ourselves to the external signs, and proceed with our narrative as rapidly as we can.

Under the kind and skilful attendance of Dr. Fitz-simon, Peregrine improved gradually, and the end of the first week saw him sufficiently convalescent to eat a few mangoe-fish, as a primal treat, and to take a drive on the course in a close carriage. The consequence of this improvement, as may easily be surmised, was that Peregrine presumed upon it a great deal too much, and wrung a reluctant consent from the doctor to spend the next day with his cousin and aunt. He went, and enjoyed himself abundantly ; spent the day after the old fashion, for Mrs. Poggleton was in her husband's room the greater part of it, and found himself deeper in love, if possible, than before his trip to Arracan.

He lay stretched upon the sofa all the morning, and Julia sat beside him, holding his hand between her's, and watching him so tenderly—so anxiously ! Julia spoke of the intended voyage to England, and her eyes swam with tears as she alluded to it. The ship had just arrived in which Mr. Poggleton was to take his passage ; for the time of year was particularly unfavourable to the homeward bound, and there were scarcely any European vessels in the river. Peregrine did not know what to say—he was on the point of hinting that he might possibly procure a medical certificate, and accompany the party to England ; but when he remembered how much this would injure his prospects, how utterly it

would preclude every chance of his placing himself in a position to marry, by procuring some staff appointment, when eligible for it, he checked himself with a sigh, pressed Julia's hand, and begged her not to talk about their parting. So they changed the subject of their conversation, but it was not quite so easy to change the subject of their thoughts.

That evening Julian Jenks joined the family at Spence's. He had come into Calcutta partly to see Peregrine, and partly to be present at Mr. Drawlincourt's wedding, Lucretia Gowanspec having particularly invited him to witness that interesting ceremony. People in India are, for the most part, married at the very uncanonical hour of 5 P. M. ; and where people have not got very far to go afterwards, it is as good an hour as any in the day; for how could people make out the time before dinner, if they were married early in the morning, and had no journey to perform? Besides, every body knows that five o'clock in India is eleven o'clock in the morning at home, and it is quite right that the church of England should settle all her canons by genuine English time.

Julian Jenks had been invited to dinner, if such a name can be given to the hurried scrambling meal, which is made in a sick house when every thing is at sixes and sevens. Having been positively assured several times that he would not be at all in the way, he dropped in, about seven o'clock, with his white favour at his breast, and found Peregrine leaning



back in an easy chair, with his feet upon a high *morah* (footstool), and Mrs. Poggleton sitting beside him—Julia was attending her father.

Having shaken hands with Mrs. Poggleton and Peregrine, and inquired very tenderly after the latter, Mr. Jenks pointed to his *favour*, and Mrs. Poggleton began very naturally to assail him with questions regarding the wedding.

“Now, Mr. Jenks, pray tell me all about the wedding, now do—we shall just have time before dinner comes ; I want to hear how it went off so much. Only think—Lucretia Gowanspec really married after all. I didn’t think it—she was such a flirt. Well, no one can say that of Julia. Dear me ! and only a cornet—hasn’t much private property—and only think ! they say he is sadly in debt—he ! he ! he ! I remember when Mr. Pettycourt was married, there was a bailiff ready to seize him at the front door of the cathedral—he ! he !—the stupid fellow not to know that the bride and bridegroom would go out at the back door—he ! he ! he !”

Having indulged in this very amusing reminiscence of Mr. Pettycourt’s dilemma and the bailiff’s want of tact, Mrs. Poggleton made some allusions to her own wedding, and the dress she wore on the occasion, and then asked Mr. Jenks, if a great number of people had been present at the cathedral.

“Pretty well,” replied Mr. Jenks.

“Pretty well ! Dear me, what a vague answer



to be sure. How many should you think altogether? When we were married the church was as full as it could hold—two members of council, all the judges, and I don't know who else besides."

"Indeed!" remarked Mr. Jenks.

"Yes, *indeed*," responded Mrs. Poggleton; "but you young men are such provoking creatures, I never—you're as bad as Peregrine, I declare, Mr. Jenks, there is no getting any thing from you—'*Indeed!*' I ask you how many people there were, and the only answer I can get is '*Indeed!*'"

"Upon my word," expostulated Julian Jenks, smiling, "I am most ready to supply you with all the information I possess—you must forgive me for being so dilatory. How many people? I should think, perhaps, about fifty or sixty."

"No more?" asked Mrs. Poggleton, eagerly—"fifty or sixty; and who were they?"

"Let me see," said Julian Jenks, considering;—"why, there was the bride, and bridegroom, and Mrs. Parkinson, and Mr. Parkinson"—

"Of course there were," interrupted the lady—"of course; only think! I ask who was there, and you tell me the bride and bridegroom."

"I beg your pardon, really," returned Mr. Jenks; "but it is so difficult to remember. Well then, there were the Learnedpig Princes, Mrs. Jupiter Grand, Sir Charles Daubly, Sir Edward Tryem, the Pushpins, the Fitz-simons, the ———."

“ And not Lord Lackland!—I thought not, nor the Miss Paradises. Mrs. Parkinson did want so much to get Lord Lackland and the Miss Paradises—he! he! he!—only think, and failed after all!”

It seemed to afford Mrs. Poggleton very intense satisfaction to know that Lord Lackland and the Miss Paradises were not at Miss Gowanspec’s wedding, for the old lady chuckled very much, and apparently thought it very funny, though neither Peregrine nor Mr. Jenks could precisely mark out what cause there was for so much rejoicing.

“ Well—well,” she said, after a little more tittering, “ tell me, Mr. Jenks, all about it—now, how was the bride dressed?”

“ In white,” responded Mr. Jenks.

“ Of course she was—well I never—you young men are so provoking—did you ever know a bride dressed in black or crimson? only think, black or crimson,” and Mrs. Poggleton was so self-satisfied with the liveliness of her sally, that she incontinently fell a-tittering again.

“ Well,” said Julian Jenks, when the lady had done laughing; “ what you observe is perfectly true; but, my dear Mrs. Poggleton, you must excuse me for being so very imperfectly versed in these matters. I really don’t know what to tell you, except that the young lady was all in white and looked remarkably pretty.”

“ Pretty!” returned Mrs. Poggleton; “ well, *do*

you think so? I never was amongst her admirers,"—and it would have been difficult to say amongst *whose* admirers Mrs. Poggleton really was.

"Yes," said Mr. Jenks, "I do think she is pretty—and she looked uncommonly well with that white veil hanging from her head."

"She wore a veil, did she?" asked Mrs. Poggleton eagerly; "dear me! why didn't you say so before?"

"Really," said Mr. Jenks, "I did not think it was a matter of so much consequence."

"Oh! you young men—you never know any thing—when you have lived a little longer—well go on. Was Miss Sweetenham one of the bride's maids?"

"Yes;" replied Mr. Jenks, "and I call *her* a *very* pretty girl—that I do."

"Well, I never could think so," said Mrs. Poggleton, "and such a flirt too. Peregrine, do *you* think Miss Sweetenham pretty?"

Peregrine did *not* think so; for young gentlemen in his situation, consider it a species of infidelity to speak favourably of the personal attractions of any young lady in the world except their own "bright particular star" of a mistress. In cool moments and with a candid judgment, it is more than probable that he would have thought Miss Sweetenham a beauty. What he *did* think, at a subsequent period, the course of this history will unfold.

"For my part," continued Mr. Jenks, "I really

think you are both wrong—such splendid eyes! a little too large, perhaps—a very ox-eyed Juno, indeed. I do not know her; I wish I did—but I hear that she is very clever, and I am very certain that she looks so.”

“She is very clever,” observed Mrs. Poggleton; “at all events in her own conceit.”

“And very lively,” said Mr. Jenks.

“*Very*,” remarked Mrs. Poggleton.

“I couldn’t help laughing,” continued Julian, “to see her face, when Drawlincourt came to that part of the service where he has to say, ‘with all my worldly goods I thee endow,’—she was standing by Frederick Splashington, and I saw her give him a nudge. It was certainly very ridiculous, for I should fancy that Drawlincourt’s worldly goods consist chiefly of his patent leather boots and his whisker-brushes.”

Hereupon Mrs. Poggleton laughed, and observed that she had always thought it was a bad match, and was now perfectly convinced of it, having said which she added, with a sly look at the hero of this story—“He, he, he! after all, she had better have taken *you*, Peregrine.”

“Taken me!” exclaimed Peregrine Pultuney.

“Yes—*you*—only think, what a sly boy you are to be sure—just as though I did not know all your goings on, Master Peregrine. He, he, he! I know—that I do—all about it.”

“About what, aunt? I really don’t know,”

urged Peregrine Pultune; "pray tell me what it's all about."

"Yes, tell us," added Mr. Jenks; "he is a sly dog, Mrs. Poggleton."

"Yes—yes, I know," continued that lady. "I know very well how it was. I have heard about your proposing—only think, such a boy as you!—proposing to Miss Gowanspec—and how she *juwabed* you—dear me!—you sly boy, I know all about it—"

"And seemingly a great deal more than I know myself," observed Peregrine. "Was it Lucretia Gowanspec who *juwabed* me?"

"Yes, yes, you know," returned Mrs. Poggleton. "She as good as told me so herself—and Mr. Drawlincourt positively mentioned it to Frederic Splashington as a fact."

"What lies people can tell," observed Peregrine. "I declare, upon my honour, aunt, that I never did more than *kiss* her in my life."

Mr. Jenks whistled.

"*Kiss* her!" exclaimed Mrs. Poggleton. "And what *could* you do more, I should like to know? Only think! you never did *more* than kiss her—and enough too—what a boy it is!"

"Well, aunt, I must positively protest——"

"Oh! never mind your protesting," interrupted Mrs. Poggleton. "I want to hear more about the wedding. It rained in the middle—didn't it, Mr. Jenks? I thought they would all get soaked—"

only think, the bride's veil—and no portico to the back entrance."

In reply to this, Mr. Jenks explained that it *did* rain during the ceremony, and whilst the people were taking their departure, and that, in consequence, the bride and the bridegroom could not effect their exode by the door in the rear of the altar. That Mr. and Mrs. D. therefore came back again and waited in a pew until all the people had gone. That Mrs. D. seemed to enjoy the dilemma, though the cornet was apparently disconcerted by the *contre-temps*, and very much disposed to swear at the rain—with divers other very interesting circumstantial details, the recital of which appeared to afford the utmost satisfaction to Mrs. Poggleton.

Having informed the lady that he understood the Drawlincourts had been disappointed in procuring the Flag Staff Bungalow in Barrackpore Park for the honeymoon, and had therefore been necessitated to repair to one of the minor refuges for the destitute in that river-side Cannan—a thatched inconvenience erected for the reception of an A. D. C., Mr. Jenks was fain to change the subject, but as it was one in which Mrs. Poggleton especially delighted, the matter was not so easy; and it is more than probable he would have failed utterly, if the khansamah, just as Mrs. Poggleton had asked if the bridegroom spoke out, had not entered and announced dinner.

Mrs. Poggleton upon this suppressed her selfish inclinations, and went up stairs to relieve her daughter. The dinner-party consisted of Peregrine (on a sofa wheeled to the table) his cousin Julia, and Mr. Jenks—there was just one too many, at least so Peregrine thought; and yet he was sincerely attached to his friend Julian Jenks.

Peregrine went home to Dr. Fitz-simon's a little before ten; but he had remained away a few hours too long, and on the following morning he was feverish, aguish, and sick—thrown back at least a week, and necessitated for some time to keep to his couch.

Our hero, though an excellent fellow, was a very bad patient, as young gentlemen in love invariably are; and after some half dozen relapses, the greater part of them occasioned by his own indiscretions and the remainder by changes of the moon, it was deemed absolutely necessary that Peregrine should seek for health in change of air, and get what is called "leave to sea"—a very excellent thing in some cases; but in very many, only a government permission to die in the very midst of all possible inconveniences, on board a miserable country ship, some three or four months sooner than on shore and in one's own house—Oh! it is a vile custom that—a very vile custom indeed.

Not, however, that Dr. Fitz-simon did otherwise than judge most wisely, when he recommended Peregrine to take a sea voyage and pay a visit to Sin-



gapore, Penang, or the southern coast of Madras; for our hero's life was saved by it. He chose the latter, for many reasons, amongst the foremost of which was, firstly, the reflection that he could proceed to Madras in the same ship with the Poggletons, and, secondly, that he had a cousin on the southern coast—a civilian, to whom he had often promised and wished to pay a visit. And so it was settled. The leave of absence for six months was obtained, and Mr. and Mrs. Poggleton, Julia, and Peregrine sailed from Calcutta in the same good ship, against the south-west monsoon about the middle of August.

## CHAPTER V.

In which Peregrine Pultuncy makes a Declaration and performs other heroic Feats.

As there is scarcely a greater nuisance in the world than a pertinaciously foul wind to a person who is in a hurry to get to the end of his voyage, we strongly recommend all such persons never to venture upon a passage from Calcutta to Madras in the middle of the south-west monsoon. To individuals, however, who, like Peregrine Pultuncy, are in no particular hurry to see the land again, and revel in its fogs and malaria, this sort of thing, barring the rainy weather, the squalls, the heat, and the cockroaches, is rather delectable than otherwise; and our hero, who would have been happy in the hold, if Julia Poggleton had borne him company, was not in the least tired of beating down the bay, even after three weeks of this diversion, when the good ship *Leander* was some where off Cape Negrais, and very nearly as far from Madras as she was when at anchor in the Hooghly river.

It was a somewhat finer evening than usual, about three weeks after the departure of the *Leander* from Calcutta: there was little wind, and that little as foul as it could be, and the captain had just put the ship about for the sixth time in the last four-and-twenty hours, when a passenger-group was assembled on the quarter-deck, just between the doors of the cuddy, and under the clock, to which (the group, and not the clock) we are anxious to attract the attention of our readers.

Not being at all given to mystification, we shall say at once that this group was made up of Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Poggleton and the hero of this story. The first-mentioned individual, who was the principal person of the group, in as much as that the eyes of all the others were turned upon him, was sitting well propped up with cushions in a receding-backed easy chair. A blue camlet cloak, with a deep cape, buttoned down the front, and a high standing-up collar, with a brazen clasp, enveloped his whole frame and concealed a considerable part of his face; though enough was still visible, thin, yellow, and draggy, beneath his black velvet cap, to tell how much the poor gentleman had suffered, how much he was still likely to suffer from that horrid Promethean disease, which compels hundreds and hundreds of luckless Anglo-Indians to carry about with them, year after year, young liver-eating eagles in their watch-pockets, until death sets the sufferers free. Mr. Poggleton was one of

these unhappy men, writhing under a full complement of Titanic pain, with no Titanic powers of endurance. He was wasted and worn down with sickness and suffering, and his face told the story plainly; perhaps his figure would have told it even more plainly, if the wide cloak had not hidden it entirely, with the exception of the tips of his gloved-fingers and his feet, which, encased in a pair of carpet-work slippers, rested upon a *morah*, or rattan footstool.

Standing up, behind the chair, was Mrs. Poggleton, not looking so smart as usual, for the best-dressed people on shore soon got very dowdy on board ship, with a Bauglepore silk gown on, and a common enough straw bonnet. She was trying to arrange more comfortably the pillows behind her husband's back, with an expression of mingled tenderness and alarm in her face, for she was anxious to do her spiriting as gently as possible, yet fearful lest she should by some accident or other, excite the too easily excited choler of her irritable lord and master. In Mr. Poggleton's present state of body and mind, it was almost as easy to avoid doing this, as it would be to dance on a slack wire, attached at either end to the trigger of a loaded pistol at full cock, without an explosion being the result of the experiment. Poor Mrs. Poggleton! she was very wary and very gentle, but there was an explosion every hour of the day.

Close to her father, on a high *morah*, with a book

resting on her lap, sat Julia Poggleton, looking up into the invalid's face with an inquiring gaze of anxious tenderness; and upon the deck, at Julia's feet, half lying, half sitting, was Peregrine Pultuney, now somewhat recovered from his sickness, stouter and fresher than when he left Calcutta, but still both pale and attenuated, or, to express it in one word, *interesting*. Glancing from Julia to her father, from Mr. Poggleton to Julia, the expression of his countenance varied from admiration to pity, from pity back again to admiration, and as he every now and then stretched out his hand to pull the ears of Mrs. Poggleton's spaniel, which was frisking about, by far the happiest creature of the party, he gave unwilling evidence to the conflicting feelings which were agitating his full breast, and which he now attempted to disguise, by the old and shallow subterfuge of playing with the little dog.

"Well, well! that will do," whined the sick man. "I think, you've fussed and fumbled enough with those confounded pillows already—let them alone, do—I hate all this bother—you know I do—there, there."

"Dear me!" returned Mrs. Poggleton, meekly, to this very ungracious complaint—the explosion she so much dreaded; "who'd have thought it would make you angry—you know, I was trying to please you, my dear. I thought the pillows did not look comfortable. Well, well, only to think! Can I do any thing you would like, my love?"

"Yes, hold me tight."

Mrs. Poggleton would have sooner done any thing else, but she submitted patiently, turned aside her head, said nothing, and looked into Julia's face. The tears had started to the poor girl's eyes.

"Shall I read to you, papa?" asked Julia, in a tremulous voice, opening the book in her lap as she spoke.

"No, Julia; I don't want you to read to me," was the answer; "you choose such maudlin, melancholy books always—enough to send a sick man to his grave; if you want to read you may read to yourself."

"Dear papa," remonstrated Julia, mildly, "you know that when I chose humorous stories—those new books of Marryat's and Hook's, you scolded—I mean you said that they were ridiculous and farcical, and told me not to read them any more. What kind of book shall I read, dear papa?"

"No kind of book—I don't want you to read to me," whined the liver-complaint. "I tell you that you may read to yourself."

The expression of pity passed away from Peregrine's face, and he looked very much as though he would like to bundle the sick civilian, pillows and all, over the gangway.

There was a pause of a few minutes; nobody liked to speak; Peregrine shifted his position a little, and squeezed Julia's hand; she looked at him fondly, and returned the pressure, and just as he had done so, Mr. Poggleton with that admirable consistency,

for which he was so celebrated, asked them why they were all so silent.

“Is it not enough,” he whined, “that I should be condemned to a wretched place as this—eternal noise, and no means of escaping it—heat and no punkah—a little bit of a pokey cabin—no servants, at least only one, which is as bad—a cursed stench all day long, of rum and bilge water, and Lord knows what besides—but that you must all stand round staring at, instead of trying to amuse me—*me*, who have lost my health, toiling, toiling, all day, to supply you women’s extravagancies?”

“My dear Poggleton!”

“Dear papa!”

“Is it not enough, I say,” continued the sick man, not heeding these remonstrances—“is it not enough, that I should be compelled to give up every possible comfort—to have left Calcutta, when the go-down was full of ice, and I might have had a maund a-day if I had liked it—to come on board this horrid ship, at such a time of year as this, with that rascally south-west monsoon blowing full in our teeth, with nothing to drink but cursedly hot water, not even so much as cooled with saltpetre—it is not enough, I say, to be subjected to all this, without my very family—my own flesh and blood, turning upon me and conspiring to make me wretched?”

“My dear Poggleton!—how can you say so?”

“Dear papa, I’m sure that we have tried——”

“Tried!” interrupted the irritable invalid, “I



don't know what you've tried; but I'm as miserable as I well can be! What an ass I was, ever to let that confounded visiting member of the medical board ever darken the doors of my house. The cook here don't even know so much as how to make drinkable jug-soup, and there is as much trouble about getting a chicken for broth, as in procuring a whole hecatomb of oxen on shore—and then, too, to think of touching at Madras. What captain in his senses would ever do that, at such a time of year, as this?—'Pledged to take home a party.' Confound his pledges and the south-west monsoon—bout ship every two hours—day and night—and then one's cabin is first up to windward, right out of the sea, and then down to leeward under water—to wake in the night and find one's head at the bottom of an inclined plane, and every loose thing in the cabin driving down to leeward every time. Well, well, I'm heartily sick of it—I wish to God I were safe in Calcutta."

"You will soon be used to it," said Peregrine Pultuney, the moment that the amiable sufferer had ceased to speak, for he was fearful lest Julia should say something, and get another rebuff.

"You will soon be used to it, uncle."

"And who taught you, young gentleman, to be such a Job's comforter?" returned Mr. Poggleton, sharply. "I shall be used to it soon, shall I? Yes; by the time that all the thousand nuisances of this horrid ship have ground me to death, and I am

safe in my coffin, I *shall* be used to it indeed—then you will all get used to it—I shall be out of your way, and you will get used to doing without me.”

“Dearest papa; how can you talk thus?” urged Julia Poggleton, sorrowfully;—“you don’t know what pain you give us.”

“I know what pain I *endure*,” returned Mr. Poggleton, in a whining, querrulous voice. “No one knows better than I do what pain is—real pain. I know what it is to feel as though the blade of a pruning-knife were sticking into my right side. Well, well—don’t stay here with me—go and amuse yourselves. You young people had better go and take a walk, and tell one another what a fretful old wretch you have left behind you, immoveable in the arm-chair. Go along—go along—you are both of you longing for a walk.”

“We had better go,” whispered Julia.

Peregrine did not need another word to persuade him; in a moment he was on his legs, and Julia’s arm was linked in his. They took several turns along the deck without either of them uttering a word; at last Peregrine broke the silence—“Shall you be very glad, Julia,” he said, “when we anchor in the Madras roads?”

“N—o—o—no—certainly not, that is, for papa’s sake, Peregrine—for *his* sake, I shall be glad.”

“And not for your own sake, Julia?”

Julia saw a pin on the deck and stooped down

to pick it up, with a benevolent desire, no doubt, to prevent it from running into the bare foot of a sailor; but Peregrine repeated the question.

“And not for your own sake, Julia?”

“My sake—I don’t know—I am—that is to say—shall *you* be very glad, Peregrine?”

“Sorry—most sorry,” said Peregrine, in a tone of voice that by no means belied his words, “what shall I do at Madras?”

“I don’t know,” returned Julia, vaguely.

“I shall be very wretched,” resumed Peregrine, —“very wretched indeed. I don’t know what I shall do.”

“Oh!” cried Julia, with assumed cheerfulness, “you will be happy enough—you will regain your health. You will—enjoy yourself.”

“Never,” returned Peregrine, “never. I shall not enjoy myself at all.”

“Why not?” asked Julia. “Why should *you* not? I cannot see why you should not.”

“I do,” sighed Peregrine.

“Do you?” asked Julia, scarcely knowing what she said, and looking down at a “bull’s-eye” in the deck.

“Yes,” urged Peregrine, rapidly articulating, in a low and not very clear voice—“Yes, that I do, but too well. Julia, we are sad hypocrites—very sad hypocrites indeed. It is no earthly use, my dearest Julia, to pretend not to care—either you or I—about our approaching separation. You care—I

care, but too much; we cannot veil this truth from one another—we are wretched; we are doomed to be wretched, if something is not done, and that shortly, to extricate us from our present too painful position. This is truth, Julia. I love you—you know I do. I could not help it; it was so natural, so very natural, dearest, that I cannot accuse myself of a very great fault, evil as have been the consequences. Yes, evil, Julia—most evil, for I cannot ask you to become my wife. This is an old story—very old—much love, but a beggar. I cannot tell how much love—I cannot tell you:—this is sheer madness,—I know it is—I feel it is—but what can I do?—Tell me, Julia, what can I do? Love you I must always. Yes, always—for ever. It is a long time—a very long time; but my love—Julia, why don't you answer me? say something; why don't you answer me?"

But as Peregrine had not put any distinct question, it is probable that the young lady did not know precisely what it was she was called upon to answer. Our hero's address, it must be acknowledged, was very much unlike the set, poetical declarations, which young gentlemen make in love-stories and romances, being nothing more than a tissue of incoherences and repetitions, very lover-like and very confused. Julia knew what he was talking about, but nothing more—her head swam round, and she caught not a single word that was uttered—she only knew that he was talking about love.

She did not speak—her eyes were fixed upon the deck, and there was little active motion in her limbs—she was carried on more by the force of her companion's movements, than by any effort of her own. The sun had gone down, and the short twilight of the tropics was rapidly yielding to gloom of night. Peregrine hurried on faster and faster, dragging Julia with him, for he was violently excited, and he walked almost as fast as he spoke. Suddenly he halted by the gangway, and the two lovers stood looking over the side of the vessel, for some minutes in silence. Peregrine took Julia's hand into his, pressed it fondly and whispered in her ear, "One word, Julia—one word—say, will you be mine for ever?"

It is more than probable that these words were never heard, for just as they were uttered, "the bell two," indicating to all whom it might concern, that the first hour of the second dog-watch had passed, or, in other words, that it was seven o'clock, was struck, just a few paces behind Peregrine and his cousin. The young lady started, for the noise had awakened her from a sort of a trance, and turning round suddenly, she heard a sharp voice, exclaiming, "Lord, Julia how you frighten me!" and at the same moment she encountered her mamma.

It is very *likely* that Julia blushed deeply, and it is possible that Peregrine did the same; but, be that as it may, the young gentleman was little, if at all,

disconcerted. On the contrary, he seemed rather pleased at the addition just made to the party, for he took his aunt by the arm, placed her between himself and Julia, and said, "Aunt dear, I want to speak to you."

"Dear me! how husky you are," said Mrs. Poggleton. "I hope you haven't been catching cold."

"No—no—it's not that," croaked Peregrine.

"Dear me—but I think it is though," said Mrs. Poggleton, "the dews are very heavy of an evening—and Julia, my dear, it is hardly prudent, I think, to stay here without your bonnet. Come in, my dear children."

"Wait a moment—one moment," urged Peregrine.

"Only think, how dreadfully hoarse he is, poor boy!" continued the old lady. "Put me in mind, Julia, of sending him in some jujubes, when we go to our cabin; I've a box or two in the top drawer—Why don't you answer me, Julia?"

"Hear me first," remonstrated Peregrine, "hear me first; I shall not be long. Aunt dear, you have called us your children; I wish we were both of us—both. You know it, aunt—I'm sure you do, know that I—I—I love Julia; we love one another, aunt, dearly, very dearly. We have been talking about it, or I have rather. I don't know what to say—what I am saying—except that I—I love Julia."

“ Dear me; I know that,” exclaimed Mrs. Poggleton: “ what a funny boy it is to be sure. Love your cousin, it would be very odd if you did not. Only think! to make such a fuss about it. She loves you, so do I.”

“ Yes—yes, aunt, I know it; I ought to love her; but you see—that is, I should have loved her if she had not been my cousin, and I love her well enough to wish that she was something nearer to me—something nearer and dearer than a cousin.”

“ A sister, I suppose. Dear me! what a funny boy it is,” said Mrs. Poggleton, inwardly congratulating herself on what she conceived to be her exquisite tact; for she knew what Peregrine was driving at. “ Well then, suppose you be brother and sister; only think! brother and sister; cousins isn’t enough—isn’t it?”

“ Enough, no, no,” continued Peregrine, “ nor brother and sister either—don’t laugh, aunt; do any thing but laugh. I love Julia—as—as you did my uncle before you were married—that I do. I love her very dearly indeed, so dearly, that I give you my honour that I shall never be happy without her.”

“ Only think—never happy without her. Well, well, go on,” said Mrs. Poggleton.

“ I hardly know how,” continued Peregrine, who was growing more collected the further he proceeded, and was not a little assured by the kind manner of his aunt, “ I hardly know how to go on. Look at



Julia, she stands by and hears all this, and does not contradict me when I say that we love one another dearly—but I really don't know how to go on. If I talk about marriage you will laugh at me. It is not that I am too young, for when men of my age have large fortunes, they are never too young. I am not far from one-and-twenty—not far from being of age; besides, if this be an objection, it is one that a year or two must necessarily—”

“ Very true!” observed Mrs. Poggleton, “ there is some sense in that—some sense.”

“ If a year or two,” continued Peregrine, “ were as sure of removing the other objection, I should not talk as I do now—my beggarly circumstances I mean, aunt; but it may, you see—it may remove them. I might get on the staff—a staff appointment and all will be well!”

Alas! how many young gentlemen in his situation have flattered themselves with this vainest of all vain hopes, and been made miserably heart-sick for years by its having been indefinitely “ deferred.” Peregrine, at the moment of his uttering the notable words we have set down above, had in his mind the skeleton of a letter to the Right Honorable Lord Lackland, detailing his miseries and petitioning for assistance. Simple youth! He might with equal chance of success have applied to the Pope of Rome for funds to build a Protestant church, or to reprint Jewel's Apology, as have written to an old bachelor governor-general for an appointment, on the plea of

a wish to get married. Celibacy being the fashion at Government House, no plea could have been more idle.

But Peregrine forgot this—as young gentlemen in love often do—and visions of a staff collar and a red leather belt, flitted before the eyes of our hero. No such visions, however, dazzled Mrs. Poggleton, for she smiled at Peregrine's prospects, then shook her head, and said—"Dear me, you must not calculate on that; but tell me—only to think, though, of such a boy being married—tell me what you wish to do."

"To be engaged to one another," answered Peregrine, promptly. "Our youth is in our favour, we can afford to wait; we only want your sanction—your prayers for our ultimate well-being—your promise to intercede with my uncle."

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Poggleton, in a tremulous voice, "your uncle!—I will certainly pray for you, but to intercede with your uncle! You saw just now how dreadfully irritable he is. Upon my honour, I dare not speak a word to him. I am afraid, I assure you I am, to say even the commonest thing—but this—oh! dear me! only think, how cross—upon my word, I dare not speak to him."

"But he will not always be thus," urged Peregrine.

"There's no saying—I really can't tell—he has been so a long time. Poor children, I wish I could

do it for you—wish I could do it all by myself. Julia dear, put your hand into Peregrine's—only think! husband and wife! Well, well, I will sanction—do you sanction it, Julia?"

"Yes—yes," faltered Julia. "I do—dear mamma, kind, kind."

"No—no—I can do nothing," continued Mrs. Poggleton; "you know I can do nothing—so don't rest upon me, my dear children. In time, perhaps, something may be done; but your papa is so dreadfully irritable; I don't know how I can broach the subject to him, unless he recovers very much; but I wish to do my best—depend upon it I will. But only think Mrs. Peregrine Pultuney—how strange it will sound. Well, well, something may be done perhaps; but I don't know—your allowances are so very small—scarce enough to light up a house. Never mind though—I do sanction it. Time will show; you must make up your mind to part—and to wait too—two very hard things—but they must be borne though. I think Poggleton wants me, so I shall leave you two children together."

Having said this, Mrs. Poggleton flitted away, and, as a necessary consequence, Peregrine Pultuney turned round to ascertain whether he could ratify the contract, without any body seeing him, with a tender salute upon the spot. The result of the inquiry, however, was very different from what he anticipated; for instead of kissing the soft cheek of his pretty cousin, he dropped her hand, rushed for-

ward, and in less time than it takes to write these few lines descriptive of the movement, had doubled his fist, clenched his teeth, and knocked a tolerably stout sailor right down the main hatch-way, without uttering a single word in explanation of the very unceremonious act.

## CHAPTER VI.

In which the strange Conduct of Peregrine Pultuney at the End of the last Chapter is accounted for; and the Poggletons cross the Surf at Madras.

IT will, we are sure, have been taken for granted that Peregrine Pultuney, when he "got leave to sea," and acted upon the leave he had got, did not trust himself, out of condition as he was, to the mercy of the elements and the cock-roaches, without taking with him that invaluable domestic Peer Khan, in the capacities of nurse, butler, &c. Besides this he had procured the services of a Madras man, by name Ram Sammy, who, however was discovered in a very little time to be as big a rascal as any in existence, having regaled himself, during the first week after Peregrine had gone to bed, with the contents of a six-dozen chest, consisting of some very choice old Madeira, and several bottles of liqueurs, which that young gentleman had taken with him on board, in order that he might be well provided with creature comforts,

of a good quality, should the captain's stores prove inferior to his own. As, however, a considerable portion of these good things went to the nightly inebriation of Ram Sammy, and the remainder of them were left behind, when Peregrine went on shore, it would have been equally well, all things considered, if the precaution had never been taken; but as it was impossible that this should have been known before-hand, the forethought of our hero is worthy of the praise which we, as just historians, bestow upon it.

But to return to Peer Khan; the good Mahomedan—whose gratitude was truly perennial, tended his beloved master on board the *Leander*, with a patience and constancy and devotedness, in which the best Christian could not have surpassed him. He was indeed most useful; for being thoroughly acquainted with the routine of board ship life, and most watchful after his master's interests, he was enabled to procure for Peregrine the best of every thing that the ship supplied, as speedily as it could be procured by a person always on the alert, and not particularly ceremonious, where his own sahib's welfare was concerned. He could jostle too, and dispute, and assert his claims, after other fashions than the most polite, and it may truly be said, that a more zealous myrmidon never tracked the footsteps of a hero than did Peer Khan follow those of ours. The man Friday and Corporal Trim were

But Peer Khan had his troubles, as do all natives in the midst of Europeans, for the said Europeans (by which name we mean Englishmen) are certainly the most uncourtous and the most ungenerous set of people in the world to strangers. Not, however, that Peer Khan was the only native of India on board the *Leander*, for there were some five or six others, including the Madrassey, all of indifferent character and pretensions, who, on shore, would never have been tolerated in any higher rank than that of a mussauljee (lamp-lighter), and were, for want of better employment, accompanying some gentlemen to Madras. For these men, Peer Khan entertained a most sovereign contempt, and was rarely or ever to be seen in their society; indeed he kept himself pretty well aloof from every body except his master and his master's relations, to whom he was eminently useful. The cuddy servants in vain attempted to impose duties on the sturdy Mahomedan, which he knew did not legitimately appertain to him; and he despised his fellow-countrymen who were simple enough to be imposed upon in this manner. He was not going to clean the ship's plate, and the ship's crockery, and the ship's glass, for the lazy Europeans whose business it was to perform these duties, and Peregrine Pultuney very properly supported him in resisting these aggressions on every occasion.

Peer Khan, it may easily be supposed, was therefore not much of a favourite amongst the ship's ser-



vants—a worthless, exacting, insolent set of fellows as they are in most instances, and as they particularly were in the ship *Leander*; nor was he much more so amongst the sailors, who were indeed as disreputable a set of men as had ever gone on board ship—men picked up in the streets of Calcutta, decoyed out of the punch-houses, deserters from other ships and utterly characterless, for it happened with the *Leander*, as it often does happen with ships arriving at Calcutta in the middle of the unhealthy season, that half her crew died whilst the vessel was lying in the river, and the commander was obliged to procure such substitutes as he could find in the purlieus of the city of palaces. These men, rips and rascals as they were, chockful of the sailor's national prejudices, with none of the sailor's generosity to restrain them, amused themselves, throughout the few first weeks of the voyage, in playing off a number of practical jokes, of the coarsest and most annoying description, upon the poor, patient Hindoos, whenever they trusted themselves within reach of Jack's wit and the forecastle. Peer Khan, however, rarely went within reach of Jack and the forecastle, but when he did so, he was not quite so well disposed as his compatriots to submit quietly to Jack's raillery. "What for you call me black beast," he would say, "you *white* beast—you plenty more beast I am;" and on one occasion, when a sailor had amused himself with throwing a bucket of water over Peer Khan, as he was eating his mess

of curry in a quiet corner, the Mussulmaun turned round without uttering a word, and discharged the hot contents of his cooking-pot with an unerring aim into Jack's face, and then quietly walked *aft* to do some business in his master's cabin.

This of course the sailor did not forget; but when the pain of the scalding curry was a little allayed, he began to cast about in his mind as to the best mode of revenging himself upon the "cursed niggur." He was afraid to serve him out, as he could have wished, with a right good pummelling, because Peer Khan was a passenger's servant; besides, he thought that he might possibly annoy him in a more deadly way even than this, and he had heard that Mussulmauns, like Jews, had a religious aversion to the flesh of the swine—an aversion which he thought he might take advantage of, so as to work out the discomfiture of the gentleman of the hot curry. Accordingly he saved, one day, about a third part of his messing, tied the meat to a piece of yarn, and placed it in his chest until the evening, when he thought the dark would be favourable to him, as well as the time, for Peer Khan was rarely to be seen in the fore part of the ship any time before the cuddy dinner. Nor was he disappointed, for between six and seven o'clock Peer Khan was seen ascending the forecastle, and the sailor, who was on the look out, ran down into the steerage, opened his box, abstracted the pork, and then returned to the forecastle, thinking that a glo-

rious opportunity was now at hand for revenging himself on the "beast of a niggur," who had actually dared to return the practical jokes of a man with a white face and no moustache.

"What for you do that?" cried Peer Khan, turning round suddenly, as he felt something soft and greasy smite him on the right cheek—"what for you throw wet e-swab in my face?" But the question, though spoken in a loud voice, elicited no response.

Peer Khan looked about him, but he could not distinguish the person who had thus assaulted him, nor indeed could he make out precisely what it was that had been thrown in his face. There was little light on the forecastle, for the moon had not yet risen, and there was a cluster of men standing between him and the only lantern that there was forward. He could see plenty of sailors, plenty of ropes, a pump, an anchor, the jibboom, and a considerable quantity of canvas; but as none of the sailors seemed to be looking at him, and he could not perceive that there was a swab anywhere near him, he was at a loss to conjecture what it was that had struck him so greasily upon the right cheek. Detaching, however, the end of his *cumberbund*\*, he wiped his face, and was just tucking the folds in again, when he received another blow precisely resembling the last, a little below his left eye—again he looked around him, again he failed to discover the author of his discomfiture. So having wiped

\* Shawl tied round the loins.

his face a second time with his *cumberbund*, and having heard by that time a tittering near the lar-board bow, he walked forward to a knot of partly sitting and partly standing jack-tars, and asked them "what for they were doing laugh?"

"What's that, blackey?" asked one foremost, removing a common Bengally cheroot from his mouth, "what's that you say, blackey?"

"What say, I say, whitey?" returned Peer Khan; "I say some too bad whitey he make blow my face—bad man."

"He blows in your face, does he?" asked another sailor; "it was the wind, blackey, surc-ly;" and this facetious demonstration elicited a general laugh.

"No, whitey, not wind," said Peer Khan; "some bad man—ver bad man. I know, then I fling in sea—" and it is possible that Peer Khan might have said something more, if he had not been again struck with the soft, slimy substance, and this time right in the mouth.

But the quick eye of Peer Khan had marked the thrower, and seen the missile drawn back again by a hand in the rear of the men who had spoken to him. "Ah! I know now," cried the Mussulmaun—"behind man, he throw—bad man, whitey—he hid like thief. I see now, light on he face—curry man—ha! ha!—curry man! I know—ha! ha!—he curry face."

"Curry face—eh!" cried the man thus apostrophized, in a deadly passion, for he saw that his com-

panions were beginning to turn the laugh against him—"curry face—eh! pig face—pork face. You d—d black beast," and again the fid of pork at the end of the string saluted the faithful lips of the Mussulmaun.

With a rapid motion Peer Khan caught it in his hand, and when he found what it really was, he threw it on the deck with disgust, and being by this time violently excited, rushed forward to seize his enemy. "Fair play! fair play," cried the lookers on, and made way for the Mussulmaun, in expectation of a good fight, one offering to back "Blackey," another making a knee for the sailor, and ing every possible symptom of gratification at the prospect of a skrimmage. Peer Khan, however, though he had plenty of courage, was utterly ignorant of pugilism, and in defiance of all the laws of fighting, was rushing forward to seize his adversary by the hair, when that worthy picked up the fid of pork, that had been kicked close to his feet, and, closing with Peer Khan, tried with all his might to force it down the Mussulmaun's throat.

There was then a long tussle, for Peer Khan was no puny, delicate Asiatic, but was blessed with thews and sinews of no ordinary strength, which now were exerted to the very utmost, in the fury engendered by this last crowning act of insult, and the contest was pretty equal. Had there been any out-hitting the Mussulmaun would have been floored, but in this grappling-work they were pretty equal.

After a conflict of a few moments, during which time both parties contrived to break their shins against an anchor, and to tumble several times over some ropes, the combatants managed to scuffle off the forecastle, and by a miracle slid down on their legs. This descent had the effect of extricating them from each other's grasp, and the sailor, seizing the opportunity, sprung forward, and by a nimble effort succeeded in getting the Mussulmaun's head under his left arm, or, in the language of the ring, into Chancery. Then began the poor fellow's punishment, and desperately he was punished, but the punishment that awaited his enemy was more desperate still.

Peregrine Pultuney, as we have said in the last chapter, after having plighted his troth to Julia Poggleton, was just looking fore and aft to see whether he could ratify the contract with a kiss, without any body being witness to the ceremony, when he saw, by the light which streamed from the gally, his old and faithful domestic in imminent peril of annihilation from the brutal sailor. One glance was sufficient to convince him; for most fortunately he was not a young gentleman who was long in making up his mind—that glance too showed him Peer Khan's bloody face sliding out from beneath the arm of his victimizer, and just as Peregrine Pultuney reached the scene of action, the two combatants were separated. The sailor's back was to the main hatchway, and his footing was not very



firm on the deck, so that the one two of our hero was quite irresistible, and Jack toppled over the side of the hatchway and fell heavily on the lower deck.

No bones were broken, but there were contusions in abundance, and Peer-Khan quite recovered from the injuries he received some time before his brutal assailant——

\* \* \* \* \*

It was a fine bright morning in September when the *Leander* sailed into the Madras roads. Peregrine and Julia were on the deck together, looking over the gangway at the white houses on the beach, the whiter surf, the country vessels

an-chor, the catamarans and the massoolah boats. Julia had touched at Madras on her way out to Calcutta, so that she was able to point out to Peregrine which was the Supreme Court, and which was the Custom-house, which was Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co.'s, which was Fort St. George, and which was the Black Town. There was very little shipping in the roads, scarcely any thing but native coasting vessels, called *dhoonies*, which looked very much as though they were on the point of going to pieces at every roll, but there were a great quantity of *catamarans* and fishing-boats, which to Peregrine, who had never been to Madras, had all the interest of novelty. He admired, as every body does, the extreme adroitness of the native gentlemen with their conical caps and scanty dhoties, who one at one end and another at another end of



two or three small planks of wood, surmounted in safety the highest surfs, which looked as though they would swallow up catamaran and all, or toss it up high out of the water, every time that the little logs went over the great swells, and he watched, with the greatest interest, through a telescope, the landing of a massoolah boat or two, the waiting for the receding surf, the bump against the beach, and then the hurry and scramble of hauling the boat high and dry. Then he watched some gentlemen going to office in their buggies (or *bandies* as they are called at Madras) and tried to be very interested in every thing that he saw, though neither he nor Julia could really think of any thing else but the misery of their approaching separation.

At last the ship cast anchor, and as a necessary consequence, it was speedily surrounded with catamarans—one bringing fruit for sale, and another fish, and a third letters from shore. Mr. Poggleton had found his way upon deck and his lady, looking very smart indeed, with (as sailors say) her shore-going toggery on, was making inquiries as to whether anybody had brought a letter for her husband or for herself, and was highly delighted when the captain gave her one which had just been taken out of the water-proof cap of a catamaran-jack.

“Well, Poggleton—only think,” she said, “here it is—a letter from Mr. Havasall—I thought he would write—that I did—only think, an invitation—I’m sure it’s an invitation—shall I read it to you,

my dear—only think, and where's Julia—looking at the houses with Peregrine—well, it is something to be sure to see a house after so long—shall I read you the letter, my dear?"

"If you would just hold your clack and give me the letter," whined Mr. Poggleton, "I should be very much obliged to you indeed."

"Dear me—I thought I should save you the trouble," urged Mrs. Poggleton, meekly.

"You are always thinking some absurdity or other—" growled Mr. Poggleton, opening the letter, "—— well, well—short and sweet—I think he might have written a little more—My state of health, vastly considerate indeed—he thinks he'll have to bury me, does he?—well, we shall see. Now, Mrs. Poggleton, I wish you wouldn't stand staring in that way, instead of thinking about getting a boat to take me to Mr. Havasall's."

"Why, dear me," said Mrs. Poggleton, "you have not told me a single word about it all yet."

"I think you might have known then, without telling, that we can't *walk* to shore, Mrs. Poggleton," observed the amiable invalid.

"But, my dear, you never told me any thing about going *on* shore at all."

"What a woman!—why God bless my soul, Mrs. Poggleton, do you think that I am going to stick here, to drink bilge-water and eat black bread, and be suffocated in a closet of a cabin, when I can go on shore and get at all events cool drink, though

there is no ice\* in this miserable Madras. I wish you would not stand staring at me—I want you to order a boat, or to tell Jacob, or that lazy vagabond of a servant of Peregrine's to get us a boat as quickly as possible. What a wretched place this Madras is to be sure—one can't land at a ghaut (quay)."

Before these last words had been fairly spoken, Mrs. Poggleton had flitted up to Peregrine and begged him to do something for Poggleton. "He is so irritable," she said, "that I declare it wears me almost out of my life—dear me! and so unconscionable. I really don't know how I am ever to get a boat—do you know, Peregrine, how I am to do it? We can't go on shore on one of those thiugs," (pointing to a catamaran), "we should get wet through and splashed all over and tumble into the sea. I really don't know what to do—unless the captain will lend us one of his boats. Here he comes; I'll go and ask him—he has got three, he can't want them all."

"We couldn't land in one of them," urged Julia. "Don't go, mamma, we must wait for a native boat—I see one putting off from shore."

"What that with the awning?—dear me! I should like a boat with an awning, indeed;" continued Mrs. Poggleton, "I don't see how it would be possible to go on shore without an awning. Well, I wish it would come a little faster—can't you call to the people, Peregrine, to row a little faster?"

\* A luxury now abundantly supplied.

Peregrine suggested that they were a mile off.

“ Dear me ! how plain we can see them—a mile off, they won’t be here yet for some time. Well, I must go back to your papa, now, Julia—or he will be cross with me for leaving him so long—I never knew such a man in my life—never in all my life—never——;” and, soliloquizing as she went along, Mrs. Poggleton returned to her affectionate husband, who immediately asked what she had been doing, and why she could not stay with him.

In about twenty minutes a large boat, with a vast number of rowers (making a great noise) and a tolerably stout awning, came alongside the *Leander*, and Peregrine having been given to understand by one of the officers of the ship that this was called an accommodation boat, and that it was the best kind of boat possible to land in, lost no time in securing it for the party, though he might have saved himself any trouble about it, as the *maunjee* came on board with a piece of paper in his hand, intimating that the boat had been despatched by Mr. Havasall for Mr. Poggleton and family.

After a great deal of trouble, and fussing and scrambling, in the midst of which Peer Khan was eminently useful, the Poggletons, Peregrine Pultuney, and his domestic, were safely lodged with their baggage in the accommodation boat, enjoying as much as such things can possibly be enjoyed, the undulating motion of their conveyance, the bright sun, and the excessive heat. For some time the

party, like Wordsworth's "party in a parlour," sat "all ~~silent~~," if not "all damned." The ladies began to feel very sick, and Peregrine, who was a tolerable sailor, began to divert his thoughts from the massoolah boat, for fear that he *might* feel sick, whilst Mr. Poggleton began to amuse himself by grumbling with all his might.

"Well, this is pleasant," he said, in a voice between a growl and a whine, "very pleasant, indeed—we have nothing like this in Bengal—we land there like Christians, at a ghaut—no swell, no surf there, curse it—and this horrid glare from the water, quite enough to shrivel up one's eyes in their sockets. An accommodation boat—they call this an accommodation boat—I never saw such accommodation—*lucus à non lucendo*; but you women don't know Latin—how should you? I wish to Heaven I had never stirred out of Calcutta. Mrs. Poggleton, why on earth do you make such unaccountable faces."

Mrs. Poggleton did not know why on *earth* she made them, but she knew well enough why she made them on the *water*, so she stammered out as well as she was able, "Dear me! I don't know—but this is certainly a very strange motion indeed."

"Very strange indeed—*very*," returned Mr. Poggleton, for once in his life agreeing with his wife—"very strange, we have nothing like it in the river, at Calcutta. Now, hold tight—don't come sprawling over me, I beseech of you—well—

well—over the first surf—shall we ever be over them all?”

“I hope we shall,” returned Peregrine, taking upon himself to answer the question.

“You do—do you? so do I,” growled the invalid. “What a wretched place this Madras is to be sure—one can’t approach it without doing penance. I didn’t want to come here—who does, at such a time of year as this—and they call it an accommodation boat, do they?—why it is not half so good as the common *boleau* (boat) in the Hooghly—Now, hold tight there—here’s another surf—if you don’t, you’ll have to be picked up by one of those catamaran fellows along side.”

“Dear me!” exclaimed Mrs. Poggleton, “only think—to be picked up by one of those—I’d rather die first—hold fast, Julia.”

Nothing more was said, and in a little time the last and highest surf was approached. Mr. Poggleton folded his arms and endeavoured to look resigned; Mrs. Poggleton held on grimly to the side of the boat, whilst Peregrine slid his arm round Julia’s waist, and took advantage of the confusion to give her a tight hug, and whisper into her ear something or other about “sweetest girl,” which was responded to by something or other very much indeed like “dear Peregrine.” The boatmen, as the round-bottomed vessel ascended the mountain of waters, begun in chorus to clamour for *buxees*, and to rest on their oars as they did so, whilst the proprietors of the

catamarans along side of the boat looked out for a good opportunity of body-snatching out of a watery grave.

Up! prow forward, amidst noise and confusion—a moment balanced on the summit of a breaker, louder and louder grew the cry for buxees; tighter and tighter grew Peregrine's grasp of the sweet Julia's waist—and then back went the mass of water, breaking and foaming on the sandy beach, as the boat with a shock that would have discomposed a rhinoceros, was dashed flounderingly on the sloping shore. Mrs. Poggleton was thrown shrieking right into her husband's lap, for his side of the boat was down, whilst the other was high in the air, and Peregrine, managing in the midst of the confusion to snatch a kiss, slipped Julia between his knees and prevented her falling forward; Peer Khan was nearly crushed by the descent of a heavy box, whilst the whole party with the exception of Julia, who was effectually screened by the broad back of her lover, were drenched to the skin by the breaking surf; and had scarcely time to make the discovery, before the swarm of boatmen had scrambled into the water, and, whilst Mrs. Poggleton was thinking that she was on the point of being drowned, hauled the boat high and dry on the beach—and thus our party were landed at Madras.



## CHAPTER VII.

Embracing a Period of some Months, and containing some  
“Rough Notes” of a Visit to Madras.

As we are “acknowledged good hands” at the pathetic, we shall leave our readers to imagine how truly affecting a scene we might make in this place, were we so inclined, of the parting—a sad thing at the best—a very sad thing indeed—of Peregrine Pultuney from his beloved Julia, on board the *Leander*, when that vessel, after a week’s sojourn at Madras, sailed out of the roads, with as fair a wind as could be expected at that season of the year. Every reader’s imagination will, we have no doubt, furnish him with a sufficiently romantic picture of the young people’s distress; and if it does not, we have only to say that if we *were* to have exerted ourselves, our exertions would have been very much thrown away upon such unimaginary beings.

But the *Leander* sailed, taking with her the Poggletons, and leaving Peregrine at Madras, of which place we think it is incumbent on us to offer something in the way of description. Now, Madras is

a very funny place—an excessively funny place indeed, for the people live there without punkahs, and the sheep have hair on them instead of wool—the servants all talk English, “like natives,” and there is no rain and no cold weather. The roads are good and the shops are bad, and the houses not much better, and there is nothing in the whole place worth talking about but the *chunam*,\* the club, and Sir Thomas Monro’s statue. People live there as far apart as the poles, and it takes a fortnight to pay a round of visits. New books and new fashions are as much unknown there as ice, and buggies are called *bandies*. Officers are not allowed to move out without their swords, and there is neither a town-hall nor a theatre. It is nevertheless a very nice place indeed, and in about three centuries and half, will be equal, in many respects, to what Calcutta is at present. Perhaps we have understated the probable time, but we are very partial to Madras, and have always a good word to say for her, when an occasion offers of speaking it out.

What Peregrine thought of Madras we scarcely know; for he was so unhappy for a whole week that he found it difficult to think about any thing at all, save his own gigantic distress. He was really very much attached to Julia Poggleton, and, although sunny-hearted in the extreme, he had strong feelings within him, (stronger, perhaps than they were deep), which sometimes, though not very often, we admit,

\* A kind of lime made of burnt shells, admitting of a very high polish.

overshadowed his summer-day brightness. For a whole week, therefore, after the departure of the *Leander*, he felt himself solitary, miserable. There could not have been a more agreeable fellow in the world than the gentleman, a particular friend of his cousin's, at whose house Peregrine was staying; but the young gentleman was moody and reserved, went about like a ghost alive, and scarcely said any thing, except in answer to the questions which his kind-hearted host put to him. His cousin was at a civil station on the southern coast, between a hundred and a hundred and fifty miles from the presidency, and, therefore, he had written to Madras to request his friend to receive Peregrine on his arrival. Peregrine, however, had been invited to Mr. Havasall's, and, as may easily be believed, had accepted the invitation and been scarcely absent from Julia for a minute. The departure of the *Leander*, however, made him think it advisable to change his residence, and partake of the hospitality of his cousin's friend. This he did, resolving to leave Madras in a fortnight and proceed by dâk to Civilianpore.

For the first week, as we have said, Master Peregrine Pultuncy was unhappy and unsociable; his new friend endeavoured to divert him, but met with failures many and signal. They went out visiting together, and Peregrine, when he returned home, scarcely remembered any thing more than that he had been a very great distance indeed, and entered some half dozen houses, with a most intolerable glare in them all, and a punkah in only one. Then

they went to the club together, and Peregrine took up a Bengal newspaper, heard some people talking about "Brag," discovered that they were alluding to a game at cards of that name, asked if every body in Madras belonged to the club, received an answer in the affirmative, wondered what the married ladies thought of the club, and determined that when *he* married Julia, he would not belong to any club at all. Then they took a ride together on the beach (the *course* of Madras), where Peregrine saw three buggies, a poney phaeton, a barouchette, and half a dozen equestrians; was told it was an uncommonly full attendance, and could not help smiling as he thought of a genuine Calcutta crush. Then he went to a dinner-party, and was somewhat surprised to find that the ladies and gentlemen were not permitted to go in to dinner with whom they pleased, but were regularly paired off by the host, so that the young ladies were handed to dinner by the old gentlemen, whilst the young gentlemen handed one another. Lastly, he went to a ball at the banqueting-room, and was nearly stifled by having to dance in a crowded room without a punkah, in the tolerably hot month of September, and to try ~~at~~ some supper in a low gallery running round the top of the ball-room, with windows about the size of a ship's scuttles, and no more air in the place than in a ship's hold. He remembered these things; he could not help remembering them, and had a sort of vague idea, that Madras was the funniest place in the world; but for a whole week he

was so much cast down, so wrapt up in his sorrows, that he scarcely observed any thing more than what we have thus briefly recorded.

At the end of the week, however, he began to rally again; and on the tenth day he actually found himself asking the name of a pretty girl with a pink bonnet, whom he saw in a pony-phæton on the Mount Road. After that, though he often thought of his cousin, dreamed of her sometimes, and prayed for her always, he grew tolerably comfortable on the whole, began to interest himself in things in general, and, as a natural consequence, proved beyond all shadow of doubt to every body who had the happiness of his acquaintance, that he was one of the pleasantest fellows in the world. But his stay at Madras was limited, and the commencement of the third week from the departure of the *Leander*, saw him on his way to Civilianpore, in a borrowed palanquin, full of cigars, biscuits, and brandy-and-water.

In two days he was in his cousin's house, and on the third he felt himself quite at home. Civilianpore, or the place, to which for certain reasons of our own we intend to give that name, is a civil station on the southern coast in the Arcot province, and as nice a spot as any in India. As Peregrine soon got well there, it is needless to say that the station is a very healthy one, and that the young gentleman enjoyed his stay there prodigiously. He played at cricket, and went out fishing, and took

long rides, and joined in pic-nic parties, and was as happy as a person can possibly be in his most lamentable situation. Not, however, that he forgot Julia—our readers must not be suffered to think so badly of him; but that he was—very—very—what shall we say? *philosophical*. She had told him on board the *Leander* to keep up his spirits for her sake—to exercise his best philosophy—and what was he doing by thus amusing himself, but proving his devotion by an entire fulfilment of the wishes of his betrothed? That Julia, when she tendered this advice to her lover, at all intended him to act upon it, we do not undertake to say; for young ladies, when they part from their lovers, are very apt to beg and implore the young gentlemen to “forget them,” to “keep up their spirits,” “not to give way,” and all that sort of thing; whereas we happen to know, that these are about the last things in the world which they really wish their lovers to do; indeed we are confident that these are the very things above all others, the doing of which, if reported to the young ladies themselves, is apt to cause them the greatest annoyance, so little do they know what it is they are asking for, and what it is they really want.

The society of Civilianpore, like that of almost all other civil stations, consisted of the collector and his lady, the Zillah judge (Peregrine’s cousin), the deputy collector, two assistant dittos, the doctor and his lady, and sister-in-law, a captain and a subaltern

with a detachment of native infantry, and an officer, belonging to a veteran battalion, in charge of a pension depot. Besides these, who were the regular residents, there was, occasionally, the district engineer and generally an officer or two on sick certificate from his regiment, and altogether the society was as pleasant as one is likely to find in the same sort of place in any part of India. Every body in the station contributed something to the general stock of pleasantries, and there was less quarrelling and fighting and backbiting, than there is in the generality of small societies. Mrs. Hauton, the collector's lady, gave a *burra-khanna* (grand dinner) about once a week to the whole station, when, as regularly as possible, about three minutes before dinner, the collector asked the judge to hand Mrs. Hauton, and the deputy collector to hand the doctor's lady, and the senior assistant the doctor's lady's sister, and so on, till all the ladies were disposed of; and then dinner began, a capital dinner always, and Mrs. Hauton did the honours with much success; for she had a great deal of personal talk and knew every body, who was worth knowing, in all parts of the world; and the deputy collector talked *revenue* with the chief assistant and the chief assistant with the deputy collector; and when dinner was over and the ladies had departed, the judge, who had erst been a revenue officer, chimed in and talked *revenue* too, whilst Peregrine, who did not care an anna and a half about tanks, and rain, and irrigation, always felt exceed-



ingly disposed to settle himself quietly to sleep and forget that he was at a civil station.

But in spite of this drawback,—and it was a great one to a young gentleman with the conversational powers of Peregrine Pultuney, who had some months before quitted a mess where it was against the rules to talk parish business, our hero enjoyed himself amazingly—he played at cricket two or three times in the week, went out fishing, very often with indifferent success, (but then he consoled himself with a cigar,) and in spite of the “shop,” thought on the whole that he had seldom met a better set of fellows than he met at Civilianpore. Every thing was *couleur de rose* with him, as it always is with a person recovering from a severe illness, and Peregrine was certainly eminently indebted to the atmosphere of Civilianpore, for a restoration to health as complete as it was rapid and grateful to our young artilleryman.

It was something to a gentleman just fresh from Bengal, to be able to sleep without mosquito curtains (we have just killed three of the vermin ourselves), and to go out in the sun, during the deadly months (in Bengal) of September and October, without a thought of a fever or a *coup de soleil*, or a remembrance of such an article as a *chattah* (umbrella). It is quite fair, we think, that Madras should have a better climate than Bengal, and that it has, is almost indisputable. We speak not of the particular provinces, but of the entire presidencies, for there is as

much difference between Malabar and Arcot, in every respect, as there is between England and Portugal, or any other two European countries, although certain codifiers of high repute, have been pleased to look upon the whole of India as an integral country.

But with these matters we have nothing to do. Peregrine Pultuney sojourned two or three months at Civilianpore, and then, having entirely recovered his health, and being anxious to reach Calcutta in the cold weather, bethought himself of returning to Madras to look out for a ship.

On his way to the Presidency, he passed through Pondicherry, the seat of the French Government, and Peregrine, though as much of a patriot as most people, could not help thinking that it was the nicest little town he had seen since he had left Europe. Its clean, well-swept, rectangular streets (quite continental throughout), its equally clean suburbs and bazaar, its *Place* (for what can the French do without a *Place*?) all pleased him exceedingly much. His cousin, who had accompanied him thus far, introduced him to several of the residents, who, though all of French extraction, were in many respects semi-English, and in nothing more so than their predilection for English sports and English books. Peregrine was not a little astonished at seeing, on the drawing-room table of a French *sexagenaire*, a copy of the *Pickwick Papers*, nor less so, when the gentleman, at whose house he was passing the day, invited him to play a game at

cricket on the *Place* with the Pondicherry club. Nevertheless, in spite of these manifestations, the place is exceedingly French, and, strangely paradoxical as it may seem, the natives are more French than the Europeans. The very Sepoys have a French look, and a French twirl of the moustache, and there is a vivacity about the common natives in Pondicherry, not to be seen in our English settlements. There is a large thread manufactory in the outskirts of the town—a *Filature* as the French gentlemen call it, of which they are not a little proud, nor proud indeed without good reason, as Peregrine, who had seen something of and read a great deal about factory children and factory labour, determined in two or three minutes. Nothing could have been better, in spite of the steam engines and the children employed, for when the party of Europeans entered the factory, a party of strangers and proprietors together, the native boys smiled, and grinned, and salaamed, and stared, and looked as happy as they could be—ready to volunteer a piece of information about the particular machinery each was posted to, and most delighted to attract attention—straight, sleek-looking, often handsome, and always joyous-faced children—so unlike the factory-brats of England, that Peregrine could not quite keep the moisture from his eyes, as he contemplated this picture.

Having seen the *Filature*, played a game at cricket on the *Place*, and made himself very sick by going

to the top of the light-house, up a never-ending spiral-staircase, Peregrine Pultuney and his cousin paid a visit to *Monsieur le Gouverneur*, took an early dinner, but a very good one, at their kind host's, and went to a ball in the evening, where they had the advantage of seeing the whole society of Pondicherry, and some of the prettiest girls which they had looked upon (aye, even Peregrine), since sailing from England. That young gentlemen could not help admiring their beauty, dancing and talking nonsense with them; but it must not be thought, on this account, that Peregrine had forgotten Julia. He was very constant, but not so constant, after a three months' absence, as to think any thing of a flirtation with a French *demoiselle*, whom he was never likely to see again in his life; besides, it is notorious that no young gentleman, engaged to be married, ever does any harm by *flirting*. The flirts are not the dangerous people.

After the ball Peregrine, having taken leave of his cousin, slid again into his palankin, and fell into a sound sleep, thence only to be awakened at each change of bearers to deal out his four-anna pieces, until his arrival at Sadras, where he breakfasted and spent the day in visiting the old Dutch burial-ground, looking over the traveller's book, and writing a letter for the overland mail, to his dearly beloved little cousin. In the evening he started again on his journey, and the following morning saw him safely at Madras. There he tarried for about ten

days, and then took ship in a London vessel just arrived, whose ultimate destination was Calcutta—a very excellent ship with a very pleasant set of passengers; but the monsoon again was against him, and so, after four weeks of baffling weather, during which, however, it is proper to say that our hero enjoyed himself considerably, Mr. Pultuney was again landed at Calcutta, in the middle of the month of January.

His first care was to inquire at the post-office if there were any letters waiting his arrival, for he had not thought of giving orders that they should be sent to him down the river, and to his great joy one was put into his hand, addressed to him in the delicate and ladylike autograph of his dearly-beloved cousin. He looked at it—it was a ship letter of course, the paper was not black-edged, but it was sealed with black-wax; perhaps that, however, was mere accident—in the hurry of the moment—a ship passing—but what need was there to speculate about it?—he went down stairs again, re-entered his palankin and tore open the letter.

“MY DEAREST, BEST BELOVED PERRY,—It is all over; I can scarcely write even to you, my own sweetest love; but there is a ship passing us, and what would you think, if you were to read that we had been spoken at sea and not a line from your own betrothed. My beloved, I don’t know how to write it—but my poor father is dead—only two days

have passed since his body was thrown into the deep sea. It is very dreadful, Perry—and my poor mother, how deeply she feels her distress. I think of you, sweetest, and of your love—your unchanging devotion; and I try to be calm—but you are not here, my own beloved. If you were I might still be happy. Sweetest, write to me very often. I will write again from the Cape. We are not very far from it, my own sweetest Perry. I am still yours—yours only, and ever shall be. I cannot write more. God bless and preserve you, for your ever doating

“J. P.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

Containing some Prognostics of a grand Fancy Ball and introducing a new Heroine.

WE do not undertake to say that Peregrine Pultuney was utterly overwhelmed by the intelligence of his uncle's death. We believe that he was as little selfish as most people; but how *could* he be very sorry for the demise of an elderly gentleman, every bit as cross as a Good Friday's bun, whose existence was a curse to every body around him as well as to his own self? Besides, he knew that one obstacle at least to his union with Julia was removed, and his love had not dwindled down to so small a **stature** as to render him lukewarm on this subject—still the nearest of all to his heart. Mrs. Poggleton had promised to help him, and then it was possible—though he turned away from the thought—that by the decease of Mr. Poggleton, another barrier might have been removed—it was possible that the civilian might have left money behind him; and in this case, why should not the young



people be married as quickly as possible—when the year of mourning would be over. “Mourning!” thought Peregrine, “ah! I suppose, I must buy half-a-yard of black crape to tie round the sleeve of my raggy.”

As Peregrine was no hypocrite, he did not pretend to be deeply grieved by the death of his uncle. He communicated the intelligence to every body whom he thought it might concern, and caused it also to be published in the newspapers. Mr. Poggleton was not a favourite, and, almost with the solitary exception of Dr. Fitz-simon, scarcely a person did any thing more than *express* regret at the occurrence. To the house of the latter gentleman Peregrine betook himself on his first arrival in Calcutta—indeed from the post-office he proceeded direct to No. —, Chowringhee, partly to inform the worthy doctor of Mr. Poggleton’s death, and partly of his own (Peregrine’s) entire restoration to health—the latter piece of information of course to be accompanied with a profuse tender of thanks. Nothing could have happened better for Peregrine than this early visit to his kind friend; for in little more than an hour after his walking up the steps of the Chandpaul Ghaut, he found himself once more domesticated in Dr. Fitz-zimon’s house, as happy as he could be under existing circumstances, and almost as happy as he ought to have been with so much kindness and hospitality about him.

There is nothing in the way of climate, to the best of our belief, at all equal to an Indian cold

weather, and when Peregrine reached Calcutta, the cold weather was certainly as delightful as it could easily be. It would be impossible to convey the slightest idea of the luxury of this glorious season to any body who has not sweltered through the intense miseries of the hot weather from April to November. It is like—but we must leave its glories to be imagined; our pen is not equal to the description of them; so we must confine our remarks to external effects and say nothing about inward sensations.

It was the cold weather—the dear, delicious cold weather, and Calcutta was getting brisk again. Book-muslins and coloured muslins, and all kinds of muslins had not been disturbed for some weeks past; silks and *challis* and *merinos* had taken their place, and dhobies were getting fat and indolent. Velvet bonnets were much in request, and kid gloves were almost wearable—ice was at a discount, punkahs idle in the godowns, and meat able to get through a night without an attack of putrid fever. Port wine was more valued than claret, long-lost appetites were returning to their owners, and the cold-water bath had become an object of terror to nine out of ten bathers. All Calcutta was alive—the races were just over, cricket-matches were being played every day, and balls innumerable on the *tapis*, when Peregrine Pultuney made his third appearance in the City of Palaces, full of health and *half*-full of spirits. He was not *quite* happy—how could he be?

His six months' leave not having expired, he determined to remain a week or two in Calcutta before returning to Dum-Dum and duty—guard-mounting, bullock-driving, and fuse-setting; and, having bought a yard of crape for his hat, and discovered that he had a black surtout in very tolerable condition, and of most unexceptionable build, a little creased only for want of resuscitation after a year or two's "snugg lying in the abbey," one of Welsh and Stalker's bullock-trunks, he mounted the proper mourning for his deceased uncle, and went forth to pay a round of visits. People in India do not consider it necessary to exclude themselves from all society, when they hear of the death of a relative at a distance, unless the relationship be a very near one; and Peregrine, who, as we have said before, neither cared nor pretended to care about his uncle, did not consider it necessary to shut himself up, because Mr. Poggleton, just two months ago, had fretted himself into a watery grave. So two or three days after his arrival in Calcutta, he set forth, in one of Dr. Fitz-simon's carriages, to see all his affectionate friends, who were, we doubt not, as much rejoiced at his return, as they could be at any thing which was not of immediate importance to their own interests.

There was a grand fancy ball on the tapis, and as a matter of course, every body was talking about it. It was the one great subject of conversation—the leading idea in fashionable circles—and for once

the besetting apathy of Indian society seemed to have been fairly banished out of doors. After a vast quantity of preparatory discussion and two or three meetings at the town-hall, the important day had just been fixed upon, stewards chosen, preliminaries settled, advertisements published in the morning papers; and, as a consequence of these manifestations on the part of the bachelor community, all the ladies of Calcutta were, of course, in a flurry, and the milliners on the *qui vive*. Every body was beginning to cogitate profoundly on the great question of what dress was to be worn on this momentous occasion. Books of costumes were in great demand, and Walter Scott's novels were dipped into. The extravagant began to ponder on new velvets, gold lace, and ostrich feathers; whilst the economical were thinking what old dresses they could cut most successfully into costumes, and how they could make the greatest show at the least possible expense. The inquisitive were pretty well engaged in trying to find out how Mrs. This, or Miss That would be dressed, whilst the mysterious were taking as much pains to prevent others from discovering the nature of their contemplated disguise, and looking as important and secret-department-ish as any three days' old member of council. Every body, though all in different ways, was full of the fancy ball, and to have talked about any thing else, in society would have been as preposterous as talking to a young mother, just out of her "month,"

about any thing else in the world but her sweet, darling, pet of a *baba*.

“ Well, Mr. Pultuney,” asked a young lady, at the first house where Peregrine called, “ and what dress are you going in pray? I won’t tell any body, I won’t indeed, not even mamma.”

“ You must tell me first,” returned Peregrine, “ how *you* are going, and then I’ll think of it perhaps.”

“ That’s too bad,” said the young lady, pouting, “ but I’ll find out, if you do not tell me; depend upon it I shall find out.”

“ Why,” rejoined Peregrine, “ I really make no secret about it, for the fact is that—but pray, tell me Miss Singleton, how you are going to——”

“ Oh ! really I can’t ; I have promised not; have I not, mamma?”

Mamma nodded her head and looked mysterious.

“ Well, I can guess, I think,” suggested Peregrine.

“ I’m sure you cannot.”

“ Shall I try?”

“ Yes, by all means—you are sure to fail though.”

“ Not at all—you will tell me if I guess right.”

“ I’ll think about it,” said the young lady.

“ Well, then—*Amy Robsart!*”

The young lady was silent.

“ *Amy Robsart!*” repeated Peregrine.

The young lady looked at her mamma.

“ Ah ! you see, I knew,” continued Peregrine.

“ How did you know?” asked the young lady.

"A little bird told me," replied Peregrine, laughing; but he might have said that he had not lived one-and-twenty years, without knowing that young ladies with light brown hair and fair complexions, are sure to think themselves the very images of Amy Robsart, and to choose the character, with all modesty, to figure in at fancy balls.

The young lady begged Peregrine not to tell any body, and Peregrine, of course, promised that he would not.

"And how are you going yourself?" she asked. "It is only fair that you should tell me *now*."

"Why, I am not going at all," replied Peregrine.

"Dear me! not going at all—why not?" asked the young lady's mamma.

Peregrine held out his hat and pointed to the broad crape.

"Oh! I forgot," said the lady.

At the next house which Peregrine visited, the same question greeted him—"What are you going as?" asked Mrs. Delafosse.

"As the Earl of Leicester," replied Peregrine.

"No, are you really—dear me! have you quite made up your mind?" asked the lady.

"Yes," said Peregrine, "I have ordered my moustache."

"But a moustache will do for any dress," urged Mrs. Delafosse, "for instance, if you were to go as King Richard the Third."

"Thank you," observed Peregrine, bowing.

“Or Edward the Black Prince,” continued Mrs. Delafosse, who did not quite know what Peregrine was bowing for; “or, let me see, who was that man I was reading of in the novel the other day?”

“Confucius,” suggested Peregrine, slyly.

“Ah! very true,” returned the lady. “It *confuses us*, at least it always does me, there are so many names in those novels—but I think now it was somebody or other in the *Last days of Pompey*.”

“Cæsar, perhaps?”

“Ah! why not go as Julius Cæsar,” continued Mrs. Delafosse;—“a very good character indeed. You might wear a helmet you know—just as you do at your Dum-Dum reviews, one of those round things, with the tiger-skin tops to them.”

“But why should I change my mind at all?” asked Peregrine, “why not go as the Earl of Leicester?”

“Because I know *somebody else*, who is going as the Earl of Leicester.”

“To your Queen Elizabeth,” observed Peregrine.

“What a man you are! Well, I won’t tell you—you will see when the time comes. Do you know how Miss Sweetenham is going? I hear it’s to be something very beautiful. You know Miss Sweetenham of course.”

“A little,” returned Peregrine, “I have danced with her—I know her aunt, and am going to call there.”



“Are you? well I wish you would find out how she is going, Mr. Pultuney. You might tell me, you know, on the course; and I want to know how Mrs. Proteus is to be dressed—she is always dressed so well—and can you tell me whether the Miss Dews are going in character. I am afraid they will not, for Miss Dew is so wise and so severe. I believe that a great number of gentlemen are going as Greeks—they always look so well—all but the cap, which is just like one’s khidmutgar’s undress *topee*. I hear there are to be some groups this year—there were none at the last ball. Must you go?—well don’t forget,” continued the lively lady, who was a great friend of our hero’s, “about Miss Sweetenham. . Good bye—what a funny creature you are.”

“I take a respectful leave of your majesty,” said Peregrine, walking backwards towards the door.

At the next house Peregrine found two young ladies and their mamma, seated at a round table covered with coloured prints, which they were examining with great eagerness and assiduity.

“Looking for patterns?” said Peregrine; “pray do not let me disturb you.”

“Oh! Mr. Pultuney,” exclaimed the mamma, after shaking hands with that young gentleman—“have you got any books of costumes? I think you must have some in the Dum-Dum library. Mr Travers has just sent us these, but they are all of them perfect horrors. I really don’t know what to do; pray how are you going yourself?”

“As Mr. Pickwick,” replied Peregrine.

“As Mr. Pickwick! how can you?” cried both the young ladies—“I thought you had more taste.”

“We must not all study the beautiful,” returned Peregrine, “some of us must patronize the quaint. Why should I not go as Mr. Pickwick, as well as Paul Pry, or Robinson Crusoe? There will be plenty of young gentlemen well disposed to adorn, but I dare say not many to disfigure themselves. I shall be doing a very spirited thing, I think, in myself a perfect fright.”

“Well! I never thought of that,” said Mrs. M‘Canister. “Fanny, my love, will you ~~make~~ yourself a fright too?—and what do you think of it, Laura?”

“Mamma!” exclaimed Miss Fanny.

“How *can* you?” cried Miss Laura.

“And Miss Sweetenham too, going as Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*!” cried the two young ladies in a breath.

“As Rebecca — is she?” asked Peregrine. “Well, Sir Walter seems all the fashion. Suppose then that you two young ladies go as Minna and Brenda.”

“Have you got pictures of their dresses,” asked mamma.

“I am afraid, I have not,” returned Peregrine, “but I dare say that we can make them out from the descriptions.”

“*Dhurzies* cannot work from descriptions,” sug-

gested the lady. "We must get a picture of some sort or other. Here's a Swiss peasant, rather pretty."

"Swiss peasants are so common-place," said Peregrine.

"Well, so they are, and if one could but get some good old historical prints, with portraits of great people, one might manage very well; but there is nothing in that way to be got. And yet I that Mrs. Proteus is going as Anne of Austria."

"Who was Anne of Austria?" asked Miss Fanny.

"Why Empress of Austria, to be sure, in Henry the Eighth's time," answered mamma.

Peregrine put up his hand to his mouth, and then stooped down to pick up his hat. He had great command over the muscles of his face, but this was a little too much for him. Promising to write to Dum-Dum to inquire if there were any books of costumes in the library, he wished the M'Canisters good bye, and told the coachman to drive to Mrs. Sweetenham's.

Now Miss Sweetenham was the prettiest girl in Calcutta, and, as every body said, the greatest flirt. She was certainly a young lady of a lively temperament, and she carried off her liveliness with great *éclat*. She was celebrated for saying the strangest things in the world, and we are afraid that we must add for doing them; but then, as she

was very pretty and very clever, though every body talked of her sayings and doings, and a great number of people abused her heartily, she retained her place in public estimation, and was almost universally admired by that portion, at least, of the community, whose admiration she most coveted. She was altogether a strange mixture of contrarieties, and many people who could not understand her, declared that she was "a little cracked." This she was not; but she was very strange, and certainly a girl worth knowing. With great natural talents, and accomplishments of no common order, were united, in her person, a singular affectation of *naïveté*, and a contempt for common-place conventionalities, which not unfrequently was very nearly allied to what the world calls indecorum, and what society does not easily forgive. She was a girl, indeed, of very singular courage, for she dared to be an original, dared to be that, which is generally considered in young women to be very disgusting, and which would have been so in Miss Sweetenham, if, fortunately for her, she had not been a beauty and a genius. With such eyes, and such a figure, and such matchless ankles, what might she not do? And who could be angry at a little strangeness of demeanour in a young lady who could write poetry, set it to music, read Göthe in German, and understand, or pretend to understand, Bishop Berkeley?

She had neither father nor mother, and had been

very little checked or controlled. Her aunt, the wife of a wealthy merchant, without children, was exceedingly attached to her, and, as people often do under mistaken ideas of kindness gave her much more liberty than was good for her. She had been several times proposed *for*, several times proposed *to*; but, as she often boasted, she had dispensed more *juwabs* than any other girl in Calcutta, and was in consequence so much feared by all the bachelor community, that after a residence of a year in Calcutta, she found that she won more hearts than she got proposals, and was likely to dwell long in her spinsterhood. Nothing vexed by this consideration, she went on flirting as strenuously as ever—sure always to have a crowd round her—to be engaged seven or eight deep at every ball, and to be a bridesmaid at every wedding. The fact is, that she had never met any body to her taste, or at all events had never been wooed by such a person, and she had sense enough not to rush into matrimony without very clearly seeing her way.

Of Miss Sweetenham Peregrine knew but little personally; he had danced with her once or twice. The first time he had asked her she had accepted him at once, and told him that she did so, because she happened to be engaged to a person whom she particularly disliked; but during this dance our young gentleman had made himself so agreeable, that his fair partner was really very glad indeed,

when, a few nights afterwards, he proposed himself again. Much, however, had he heard of her by report—his aunt had told him as many stories about her as there are about Haroun Al Raschid in the Arabian Nights; and Peregrine, though being in love at the time, he was not particularly interested in them, could not help remembering a small portion of these scandalous anecdotes. He knew something too of Mrs. Sweetenham, the aunt, had sat next to her at a *burra-khana*, and won the old lady's heart by his attentions. So that, when he called at their house on the day we are writing of, he almost felt that he was entering the residence of people whom he had known intimately for a long time.

Mrs. and Miss Sweetenham were sitting together when Peregrine entered their drawing-room, having first announced himself by sending up his card. The two ladies were glad to see him—hoped that he had returned from Madras in good health—no return of fever, and all that sort of thing—asked him how he liked Madras, whether he preferred it to Calcutta or not, whether they ever gave any balls there, and whether the people danced. This of course brought the fancy ball on the *tapis*, and Peregrine said he had heard that Miss Sweetenham was going in the character of Rebecca.

“You have—ah! I thought so,” said the young lady, laughing, and looking so uncommonly pretty, that Peregrine longed to kiss her. “Rebecca was it? well, I dare say that in another house they will

tell you that I am going to the ball as Meg Merriels or Dominie Sampson. I wish the good people would make dresses for me in reality as quickly as they do in report."

"It would be a good thing indeed," remarked Peregrine, for want of any thing better to say.

"And you too," continued Miss Sweetenham—"are, I suppose, going to astonish Calcutta with something very magnificent in the way of a dress. Now tell me in confidence what it is."

"I really cannot," returned Peregrine.

"Cannot means 'will not,'" said Miss Sweetenham; "and nobody ever says 'will not' to me. I command: you must obey."

Peregrine said "Indeed!" and smiled at the young lady, who shook her head, and told him to be obedient.

"But I really cannot," remonstrated Peregrine.

"If I were to say that to *you*," returned Miss Sweetenham, "it would all be allowable enough; but we women are born to govern, and you men to be governed by us. Is not that true, Mr. Pultune?"

"I am afraid it is," said Peregrine, laughing.

"And yet you will not be governed by me?"

"I fain would be," rejoined Peregrine, "in this instance, and indeed in every other; but I cannot tell you what I do not know."

"And you do not know what dress you are going in?"

"I do not even know," said Peregrine, "that I



am so much as going to the ball. I am in mourning, you see, Miss Sweetenham."

"So I see, but that's nothing," cried the young lady; "one is always in mourning for some body or other—or ought to be, which is the same thing. I really don't see why one should turn hermit, because out of five thousand relatives a single one has happened to die, and make room for a younger person."

"How can you talk so, my dear?" said Mrs. Sweetenham.

"Well—but," said Peregrine, anxious to change the subject, "you have not told me what costume you have really fixed upon, Miss Sweetenham."

"Nor can I tell you any more than you can tell me, for I really do not know," said the young lady; "but if you will promise not to tell any body, I will whisper you a secret—honour bright now—not a soul is to know of it—can you really keep a secret, Mr. Pultuney?"

"Very well," returned Peregrine.

"Then I will tell you that I am not going in costume at all; but in the oldest and plainest black silk gown I have got, without even a bit of lace on it. Now pray do not tell, for I am amusing myself by being very mysterious indeed, and looking whole theatrical wardrobes into the face of every body who asks about my dress."

"And you really then are not going in costume?"

“ You must go and see with your own eyes,” returned the young lady, authoritatively. “ I insist on your going, and hereby engage myself to dance the first dance with you.”

“ Well—if any thing would tempt me, that would,” said Peregrine; “ the inducement is very strong.”

“ Then remember you are engaged to me—and keep my secret. *I* shall not forget, depend upon it.”

“ How can you talk so, my dear,” said Mrs. Sweetenham; “ your spirits do get the better of you so.”

Peregrine thought this too; but then the young lady was so pretty, that he would have pardoned her forwardness, if it had been twice as conspicuous as it was.

## CHAPTER IX.

In which Peregrine Pultuney begins to forfeit the good Opinion of the Reader.

WHEN Peregrine returned home, after paying his visits, he found Julian Jenks waiting to see him. "My good fellow," exclaimed the latter young gentleman, in his most cordial manner, "I am so glad to see your dear phiz again—upon my soul, I have been nearly hanging myself half-a-dozen times, since you took yourself away to Madras. I should have been here yesterday to see you, but I was on that confounded guard. Well! how are you?—not looking quite so rosy, as when we were on board the *Hastings*—but still not much like an Arracan victim. By the bye, Morgan and Cradock have both of them come back sick since you went away—both now on their way to England—pretty well this for one year—three subs on the shelf—what a confounded hole it must be."

“Don’t talk about it,” said Peregrine, shuddering—“don’t talk about it, pray. What is going on at Dum-Dum?”

“Lots of guard, and parades never ending,” returned Julian Jenks, shrugging his shoulders. “Practice, field-battery exercise, infantry drills (hang them), young captains waging war against old subalterns, *dic* and bother most interminable—‘new brooms sweeping clean,’ until they run a chance of sweeping all comfort and pleasure out of Dum-Dum.”

“Pleasant prospects,” observed Peregrine.

“Very,” returned Mr. Jenks, “so pleasant, that I do not recommend you to thrust your head into it, sooner than you can help—glad as I shall be to see you again, I advise you to stay away as long as you can—though I suppose that your eminent services will soon be required, my good fellow, to mount guard, cut fuses, weigh out powder, and be wigged.”

“I suppose they will,” remarked Peregrine, “worse luck to it—and Dum-Dum is quite changed you say?”

“Very nearly,” returned Mr. Jenks, “few or none of the old set are there now. Clay has come down, however, again to head-quarters, and is talking about resigning the service. He is coming in to see you in a day or two, and wants you very much to play in a cricket match against the Calcutta club. He is married you know—of course, you do, for you

have seen his wife, I think. By the bye, when shall we see yours?"

"Soon, I hope," said Peregrine Pultune.

"I am glad of it—very glad," said Mr. Jenks, "for your own sake at least, for I was reading somewhere, the other day, that,

"When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,  
His best friends hear no more of him ;"

and I suppose that neither you nor I will prove exceptions to the rule. You don't know, I suppose, what money Mr. Poggleton left?" Peregrine shook his head.

"Neither do you expect, I suppose, to be able to support a wife on a second lieutenant's pay, at a half-batta station, even although we have got full tentage now, and you will come in for a company."

"Of course I do not," returned Peregrine, hastily, and then, as though anxious to change the subject, he added, "do you know Miss Sweetenham, Jenks?"

"Yes," said Julian, "tolerably well—that is to say, I have danced with her some half-dozen times, and met her twice at a *burra-khana*, and I believe that this is as much as most gentlemen can say they have seen of their wives before marriage."

"True!" returned Peregrine, smiling, "and by this, I suppose, you mean to hint that *you* are thinking of taking *Miss Sweetenham* to wife."

"Bless my soul," cried Julian, "what strange fancy have you conceived about my marrying—I

can assure you, that I have as much thought of taking the deputy-governor to dry-nurse, as of doing the thing to which you allude. Miss Sweetenham is a very pretty girl indeed, though *you* don't think so, I know."

"I don't think so," exclaimed Peregrine; "what put that in your head?"

"Your own avowal," returned Mr. Jenks; "I heard you say so yourself, some time before you went to sea, when we were talking about the Drawlin-courts' wedding."

"Oh! that," cried Peregrine, "was when—I mean, before I was qualified to give an opinion—perhaps, I was in an ill humour, or—I don't know, for I now think she is *very* pretty."

"So do I," returned Julian Jenks.

"And a very nice girl, besides," continued Peregrine Pultuney, "very *naïve*, and lively, and clever."

"*Very*," echoed Julian Jenks.

"I wonder she has not married," resumed Peregrine; "she would make a very good wife."

"Do you really think so?" asked Mr. Jenks, somewhat astonished at this last declaration of his friend's; "I should be afraid of having such a hair-brained girl for *my* wife—that I should—not a little."

"Marriage would tame her," observed Peregrine.

"Perhaps it would," returned Julian, "but I should not like to make the experiment myself."

She has the credit of having *juwabed* half Calcutta and makes a boast of it too, I assure you—I do not think this says much for her *heart*, at all events, whatever it may do for her head.”

“ ‘Half Calcutta,’ ” remarked Peregrine, “ are such fools, that I am not surprised at her *juwabing* them—and as for her heart, I would not give much for a heart that is to be won by any flattering trifle.”

“ Nor I,” said Mr. Jenks, very sagely; “ I do not blame her for dispensing these *juwabs*, but I do for making a boast of them.”

“ Well,” rejoined Peregrine, “ nothing can convince me that that girl has no heart—her face belies the injurious thought—perhaps, it is that she has too much, and, like many deep-feeling people, finds it necessary to wear a mask.”

“ You are very charitable to-day,” observed Julian.

“ Only *just*,” returned Peregrine Pultune.

“ Very well,” said Julian, “ have it as you will, and there is no denying that she is the prettiest girl in Calcutta, nay, indeed, in India—*now*.”

“ What do you mean by *now* ?” asked Peregrine.

“ A pretty lover indeed,” rejoined his friend, “ not to be alive to such a compliment to his absent mistress.”

Peregrine’s face was slightly crimsoned as he turned it away for a minute—just a minute and no more—and, when he again looked into Julian’s



face, he changed the subject by asking him abruptly, if he was going to the fancy ball.

"I am thinking of it," returned Mr. Jenks, "if I have no duty to prevent me, no main guard or other horror of that kind. I suppose *you* will not go."

"Of course not," replied Peregrine—"it would not be right, would it? do you think it would be very wrong?"

"I can't say that I do," said Mr. Jenks, "but perhaps, you had better not."

"I can't see why not though," rejoined Peregrine, who had begun with a downright negative and was now doing his best to get rid of it, with that wonderful consistency for which young gentlemen, whose desires are at least as strong as their principles, are so celebrated. "I can't see why I should not go to the party, if I feel inclined."

"Nor do I," returned Mr. Jenks, "if *you* do not; there would be nothing wrong in going to the ball—nothing positively wrong; only people might be apt to think so; and Calcutta is not very charitable, as you know."

"But," suggested Peregrine, "he was only my uncle—and he has been dead now nearly three months."

"True," said Mr. Jenks, "and if the fair Julia were nothing more to you than your cousin, I would say that there was little occasion for much show of mourning—but you must remember, that half the

people, who put on mourning and withdraw from society in consequence, do so more out of respect to the living than they do to the dead."

"Thank you, my dear fellow," returned Peregrine, cordially, his better nature triumphing over his selfish wishes, "you are right, quite right—I forgot that—I did not see it in that light—I will think no more of the ball."

Julian Jenks was about to express his approbation of this virtuous resolve, when Dr. Fitz-simon entered the room, and cut short the conversation by inviting Mr. Jenks to tiffin and dinner. The invitations were accepted, and nothing more was heard of the fancy ball during that day, for, in Dr. Fitz-simon's house it was not the custom to talk from morning till night about any such ridiculous inanities.

But, it so happened, that Peregrine was engaged to a dinner-party, about a week after this, at Mrs. Parkinson's. He had, since the *contretemps*, on the day of his landing, got considerably into favour with that lady, who had only withheld her patronage from him, whilst she thought that he was aspiring to the hand of one of her nieces. Having, however, most effectually dispossessed her of this idea, to the great chagrin, it must be added, of Lucretia Gowanspec, our young gentleman soon became a welcome guest at Mrs. Parkinson's, for she always took care to invite to her parties every body who was in any way celebrated as a popular, a talented,

an eccentric, or a *distingué* personage. Now Peregrine was eminently popular, and as such he was invited to the burra-khana, which we are now about to celebrate in the pages of this veracious history.

A lively spinster, in the next house to Mrs. Parkinson's, had just counted that lady's gong seventeen times, and longed as often to be one of the invited, when Peregrine drove into the spacious compound, and added one more to the number. Walking up the wide and well-lighted staircase, preceded by a liveried *peon* (messenger), he passed into the sumptuous drawing-room, which we have already minutely described, and in which no difference was discernible, except, that the gilded punkahs were absent and the chandeliers undressed—almost as much so, indeed, as some of the ladies—and that there was a perfect blaze of light in the room. The gamboge couches and ottomans were now in full perfection, and Mrs. Parkinson, being in full gamboge herself, looked very much indeed as though she were growing out of one of the former, whilst several gentlemen in black broad cloth, and several ladies in satins and velvets, looked very comfortable and very cold-weatherish, and in fact very much as such people look in England, except that the gentlemen's coats were a little worse cut and the ladies dresses in a little worse taste. Mrs. Parkinson was carrying on an animated conversation with Sir Edward Tryem, when Peregrine entered, whilst near

them Mr. Proteus was doing the facetious to Mrs. Jupiter Grand. On a couch hard by were the two Miss Dews—the daughters of the Benthamite deputy-governor—looking quiet and lady-like as usual, whilst two young gentlemen, whom Peregrine recognised at once as Frederick Splashington and Mr. Clay, were doing the agreeable with all their might to the above-mentioned young ladies, the one talking French, and the other philosophy, and neither of them with very great success.

A little apart from the rest, on the gamboge ottoman, sat a young lady in a pink dress, with black lace trimmings, whose face Peregrine could not see, as it was turned away from him, but whose neck and hair and general contour of figure he recognised at a glance. She was almost surrounded by a party of young gentlemen, all anxious to claim her attention, to whom she was dispensing smiles and frowns, saying kind things to one, and severe things to another, and laughing in turn at them all. Could this be any other than Augusta Sweetenham? Peregrine's heart answered in the negative, though what right the heart of a young gentleman, in his situation, had to answer at all, we do not pretend to say.

However, we are afraid, we must add, that not only did his heart answer to his eyes, but that his feet answered to his heart, and he walked up to the gamboge ottoman. We have nothing to say in his

defence—nothing—we must give him up to the tender mercies of the reader.

To the gamboge ottoman he walked, and having shaken hands with two or three of the young gentlemen standing around, with a “How do, Dalton?”—“How do, Pemberton?” and the like, he seated himself beside Miss Sweetenham, and hoped, in a low voice, that she was perfectly well.

“Very well, indeed,” she said, putting out her little hand, which Peregrine pressed somewhat harder than he ought to have done, “and better now, that you have come to my assistance—a great deal better, Mr. Pultuney—I have been telling these men that I am going to the fancy ball as Mother Hubbard, and I cannot get one of them to believe me—now, you know very well, for you popped in the other day just as aunt and I were making the nose out of one of Mr. Tressilians’ pamphlets; and you know that I have been teaching dear little Carlo to do the dog’s part for some days—you can answer for the truth of that, can’t you?”

“That I can,” returned Peregrine, nothing abashed, “I think it is a great pity though—

’Tis true, ’tis pity, pity ’tis, ’tis true—

*You ought never to wear a mask.”*

“I am obliged to do so very often,” said Miss Sweetenham in an undertone, and she accompanied the saying with a sigh. “There now, Mr.

Dalton. I told you so, you will believe me another time, and will you, Mr. Pemberton?

Old Mother Hubbard  
She went to the cupboard.  
To get her poor dog a bone:  
When she got there  
The cupboard was bare,  
And so the poor dog had none."

Hereupon the young gentleman laughed, and Miss Sweetenham turned to Peregrine with a look, which said, "What fools they all are to be sure."

"I am afraid though," said Peregrine, who was determined to help the young lady to the utmost—"I am afraid that those shoes, which I saw at your house, are not quite high enough in the heels."

"Don't you think so?" asked Miss Sweetenham, with a look of gratitude, bending her beautiful eyes—and they were *such* eyes, upon Peregrine. "I can have them raised a little; so that my ladyship may be 'nearer to heaven,' as Hamlet says, 'by the altitude of a choppine.' Will you take me to my aunt?"

"Yes, that I will," said Peregrine, rising and offering his arm to the young lady—"but where is Mrs. Sweetenham sitting?"

"I don't know, it does not matter, never mind; the fact is I only wanted to get away from those fribbles—do you forgive me for making you leave your seat under false pretences, Mr. Pultuney?"

"That I do, most cordially, most thankfully," said Peregrine.

“ I saw the khansamah,” continued the lovely girl—for she certainly was most lovely, “ coming in to announce dinner, and so I thought it prudent to detach myself from that crowd of inanities. You will not leave me now, I hope, to their mercy, nor be very cross with me for imposing the burden of my society upon you during the whole of dinner time. Be candid and tell me if you are.”

“ Cross” cried Peregrine, “ cross! I am delighted—”

“ Of course you are,—we must stand aside a little, for we are just in the way of the door—”

The white-bearded and rotund khansamah, with the palms of his hand pressed together and his arms extended, had announced dinner in most respectful manner; Mr. Parkinson, as in duty bound, had given his arm to the *burra-beebee*, who happened to be Lady Tryem, whilst Sir Edward Tryem stood a little in the rear with Mrs. Parkinson leaning on his. Then they moved forward two and two—pair and pair, like the beasts and beastesses going into the ark—Mr. Milton, the member of council, with Mrs. Learnedpig Prince, Mr. Michael Smith, the Sudder Judge, with Mrs. Milton, Mr. Learnedpig Prince, the chief secretary, with Mrs. Jupiter Grand, Mr. Damper, the commissioner, with Mrs. Proteus, and Mr. Proteus, of the Pepper and Poppy Board, with Mrs. Damper, and others of less note following after, the lady of the house going in “ promiscuous like” with the rest, and a bevy of bachelors bring-



ing up the rear. The dinner-room was on the ground floor—a spacious apartment very handsomely lighted from above, for Mrs. Parkinson had too much taste to crowd her table with massive branch candelabra, interposing their huge pedestals between her guests and preventing them from seeing across the table, as well as dazzling their eyes with the glare. A few, beautifully chaste alabaster ornaments ran along the middle of the table, and at the centre point was a small opal basin, on a frosted silver pedestal, with roses floating about in the water, and a pair of alabaster doves dipping their little white beaks into it. There was nothing massive or cumbrous on the table; every thing was in excellent taste, and Peregrine could not help wishing as he looked at the *tout-ensemble* that he had the means of preparing such an establishment for himself and—and—and—Julia—his betrothed. There was a little hitch, it must be acknowledged—just a little, and we have tried to express it by repeating the conjunction. The wish ought to have gushed out more freely than it did—alas! alas! for the constancy of man! Peregrine Pultuney was sore tempted.

Mr. Parkinson having taken the centre seat at one side of the table and Mrs. Parkinson the seat opposite, with the *burra-beebee* and the *burra-sahib*, both duly located, and the ordinary quantity of scrambling, and finessing, and jockeying, and moving from one side to the other, and chang-

ing seats to separate husbands from their wives and prevent ladies from sitting together, having been gone through with all proper formality, the whole party were at last settled, and Peregrine, to his infinite satisfaction, found himself seated between Miss Sweetenham and Mrs. Clay, with nothing very alarming before him in the way of a dish to be carved, and a very comfortable-looking large screen between his back and the door.

“I hope,” said Miss Sweetenham, after having dipped her spoon twice in some transparent soup, “that you do not think me very forward and presuming. People say that I am a very strange girl, and what every body says must be right; but I really don’t know how it is. They say that my spirits get the better of me; but if they did, I should very often be crying when I am laughing and playing the fool. It is precisely because I do not let my spirits get the better of me, that people say I am so very strange.”

“Do people say that?” asked Peregrine; “but all people are strange, who are in any way better than the herd.”

“So they are,” returned Miss Sweetenham, “not that I pretend to be better than the herd, for I believe that I am in reality much worse—worse, because I ought to be better, know how to be better, and am not—but I don’t know why I should talk thus—you must think me very stupid—there, *soura legao*” (take away), and she pushed aside her plate, pettishly.

Peregrine not knowing exactly what to say, asked the young lady to take wine.

“Thank you,” she said; “I want it—I shall be better when I have taken some. Sherry, if you please. These burra-khanas are very stupid things, I think.”

“Very!” said Peregrine; and then having bowed and sipped his wine, he added, “that is if one unfortunately happens to be seated next a stupid person—”

“Like me,” suggested Miss Sweetenham.

“No, not like you,” returned Peregrine, “something very much the reverse of you. I do not expect this dinner to be stupid.”

“If you did, you would not say so,” rejoined Miss Sweetenham. “By the bye, I wish you would tell me whether you are really engaged to be married. I want to know so much—are you really going to be married to Julia Poggleton!”

Peregrine felt his cheeks grow warm as he answered, “Yes, I really am. For once Calcutta reports are true.”

“They are; well I am glad to hear it, because I can say to you what I like. Miss Poggleton is an exceedingly nice girl, a very nice girl, indeed. I wish you every happiness.”

“Thank you,” said Peregrine, who in his secret heart of all did not feel particularly thankful for her good wishes, nor particularly flattered by the pleasure she expressed at hearing of his engagement

with his cousin. Not however that he acknowledged the real feelings engendered, for they were very latent and insidious, and he would have stoutly denied their existence, if any body had taxed him with harbouring them.

“I am glad you have told me,” continued Miss Sweetenham, “for I shall feel now more at home with you. Do you know Mr. Frederick Splashington?”

“Yes;” said Peregrine, “I know him very well.”

“Well, I have nothing particular to say against him—dear me! he is asking me to take wine. Thank you; sherry if you please—he is very gentlemanly, I think.”

“Very!” assented Peregrine.

“And he is not quite so affected as he was when first he landed in India. You see that he has permitted his servants to put aside their white gloves—”

“Native servants in white gloves!” exclaimed Peregrine.

“Yes—I can assure you he did—when he was in college he made his *khitmudgars* follow the English custom, and wear white gloves when attending at table. It was a very *distingué* thing, I think—quite an original idea—the humdrum people of Calcutta declaimed against it as very ridiculous. I should have done it all the more had I been him, and put my bearers into silk stockings to give them something more to talk about—I like making people talk.”

“Do you?” asked Peregrine, smiling.

“Yes—and so do you, I think—at least I can tell you that they *did* talk, and somewhat unsparingly about your intimacy with Julia Poggleton—Mrs. Parkinson was one of the talkers, and Lucretia Gowanspec—Mrs. Drawlincourt I mean, declared it was ‘quite horrid,’—well for my part I like to be talked about—it gives a little relish to life—dear me! I wish one were not obliged to eat—Mr. Parkinson is asking if I will take some turkey—None, I thank you, Mr. Parkinson—but I suppose I must have something in my plate.”

“Let me give you a cutlet then.”

“Yes; that will do—any thing to make pretence—what a comfort it is to be sure to eat one’s dinner in the full enjoyment of a cool room—it is really absolute refreshment to sit in a room without a punkah swinging to and fro.”

“It certainly is,” observed Peregrine, “and then the punkah is sure to spoil one’s dinner.”

“Oh! that’s nothing—nothing at all. A punkah is a great abomination, because it puts one’s hair out of curl—if it were not for that one might tolerate it—and yet I don’t see why I should care whether my hair is out of curl or not.”

“Nor I,” said Peregrine; “some people might care, some people have reason to care, but in curl or out of curl, arranged or deranged, you could never—”

“Now, no common-place compliments, if you

please, between us two," interrupted Miss Sweetenham—"I guess the rest, yet don't thank you for it. I am so tired—so heart-sick of these verbal compliments, that I have often thought of abandoning society altogether and never going to *burra-khanas* or balls. People say that I am so fond of gaiety, that my whole soul is in balls and concerts, and dinners, and theatres, and all that. They really wrong me very much—I am weary of them—quite weary, and am far happier when alone with my books and piano, than in the crowded and noisy Town-hall, or at Mrs. Milton's *recherchés* 'At Homes.' "

"I do not wonder at it," observed Peregrine, who was so delighted with Miss Sweetenham's conversation that he was not disposed to say much for himself.

"The worst of it is," continued Augusta Sweetenham, "that one is obliged constantly to be acting—to wear a mask, as I told you before—they ask me what fancy-dress I am going to wear on the 25th, just as though I did not wear a fancy-dress every time that I go into the world—a dress too, not always the most becoming or the most comfortable. Home is the proper place for a woman—amidst her music, and her books, and her drawings she may be natural, and that with impunity. Do you write poetry, Mr. Pultuney?"

"I sometimes write verses," replied Peregrine.

"Ah! I like your distinction; not one person

in a hundred would have made it, and I am sure, from your having made it, that you can write; I wish that you would be kind enough to make me some 'verses' to set to music."

"I will try," returned Peregrine; "depend upon it, that I will do the best in my power; and in return you must sing to me, some morning—I do so wish to hear you sing. Perhaps, you will favour us to-night."

"Certainly not—Mrs. Proteus is here—I never sing when she is present; but, when I have no fear of being ruined by a contrast—any morning that you will call at my aunt's, I will gladly do my best to amuse you. I hope you are not very critical."

"Not at all," returned Peregrine.

And thus those two new friends conversed till dinner was over, and, we are sorry to say, Peregrine Pultuney completely fascinated. How tame and insipid was Julia Poggleton, in the memory of the flattered youth, compared with this radiant, dazzling beauty—this gifted and eccentric Augusta Sweetenham, now visibly, bewitchingly before him. His new friend was certainly very beautiful and most winning, when she pleased so to be. She liked Peregrine, and scrupling not to show her preference, she had made her way to the young gentleman's heart, through the commonest of all channels—his vanity. He was not very vain; but who is not vain enough to be flattered by the marked partiality of a



are very certain that Peregrine Pultuney was no stoic in this respect. He is the hero of this story, but nevertheless he must be invested with human weaknesses.

Perhaps never had Peregrine Pultuney been to a party, at which the dinner-hours had passed away so delightfully; and never had the telegraphic nod been given by the *burra-beebee* to the lady of the house, so much to Peregrine's dissatisfaction, as that which Lady Tryem made to Mrs. Parkinson on the present memorable occasion. Our hero followed the rounded form of Augusta Sweetenham, with greedy eyes, as she glided out of the dining-room, and his face was still turned towards the door, though the ladies were half way upstairs, and his mental vision still dwelling on Augusta's white shoulders and her delicately turned ancles, when he heard a voice, which startled him, close to his ear, saying, "Well, Pultuney, are you so much lost in admiration of Mr. Parkinson's doors, that you have not a word to say to me—and will not even acknowledge my presence."

"Dear me, Clay, I beg your pardon," said Peregrine, "I did not know that you had changed your seat."

"I hope you don't think it desecration," said Mr. Clay, "in me to occupy this seat—if you do, I will move on to my wife's. You are really a sad fellow—this will never do—we must carry you back to Dum-Dum."

“All in good time,” returned Peregrine.

“To be in good time, we must be very quick,” rejoined Mr. Clay, helping himself to a glass of claret. “I rather think that you are almost too far gone already—there, help yourself, and drink, ‘Absent friends’—if you can do it cordially still. You can, can you? well, I am glad of it, but remember that I have begged you *to beware*.”

“You speak from experience, perhaps,” said Peregrine bitterly.

“No—not exactly,” returned Clay; “but it might have been so, and this much I can tell you, that you are playing a dangerous game; but I will say no more, I want to talk to you now about another sort of game. We are going soon to play the Barrackpore and Calcutta cricket clubs, and must have you in the eleven. Your leg-hits have ere now, I know, done much to secure us the victory.”

As gentlemen do not drink more wine in Calcutta than in other civilized parts of the world, the after-dinner session was soon broken up, and Peregrine found himself once again in the neighbourhood of the gamboge couches. One hasty disappointing glance round the room showed him Augusta Sweetenham, bounded on the right by her aunt, and on the left by the lady of the house, and if not actually inaccessible, at all events so located as to be accessible to nothing but common-place, which somehow or other our hero did not feel disposed to talk to the fascinating Augusta. He turned away, therefore, and seeing Mrs. Clay on the ottoman, walked to-

wards it, and seated himself beside her. They conversed for some time on indifferent subjects, and, at last, as is very often the case when a young wife is one of the talkers, the lady's husband became the subject of conversation. "Your lord and master," said Peregrine, a-propos of something or other that had been said by the lady, "is a very great friend of mine, I assure you; and, to show what a tender regard he has for my welfare, he has been giving me a wiggling since dinner."

Mrs. Clay said she had very little doubt that he amply deserved it, whatever it was for.

"I can assure you that I did not," returned Peregrine.

"What was the offence?" asked the lady, "I will answer for it that he was quite right."

"Offence!" cried Peregrine, "why the fact is that I committed no offence at all. He accused me of flirting with Miss Sweetenham."

"And do you mean to say that you were not?" asked Mrs. Clay.

"Yes," said Peregrine, "I was only talking to her at dinner. One cannot help talking to a lady when one happens to be in the next seat to her."

"No," rejoined Mrs. Clay, "and for that reason you talked so very much to me—depend upon it that my husband was right."

"Then I am afraid," said Peregrine Pultuney, a little abashed, "that I must plead guilty at all events, to the charge of rudeness."

"That is nothing," said Mrs. Clay.

“And the other you think is so heinous an offence.”

“I have no right,” said Mrs. Clay, “to offer an opinion about it.”

“But I beg that you will.”

“You had better not ask me.”——

“Remember then that you have forced it upon yourself.”

“Yes,” said Peregrine, “I am not afraid; I do not think you will be very severe upon me.”

“I am not going to blame you,” returned Mrs. Clay, “but merely to speak in a voice of warning. You think that there is no harm in thus paying attention—exclusive attention, to a beautiful and fascinating girl, like Miss Sweetenham. There may be no evil, nay, I am sure that there is none, in your intentions, my dear Mr. Putluney; but there may result, at some future time, from these most innocent intentions a world of unanticipated evil. Setting aside the chance of your being estranged in heart from the lady, to whom you are engaged, by the captivations of this new friend—setting this aside, I say, as a thing unlikely—nay, impossible, if you will, what surety have you that the intelligence of your flirtation with Miss Sweetenham (already talked of, let me tell you—commented upon, in this drawing-room) may not, through some mischievous channel, reach England and your betrothed.”

“And if it were,” returned Peregrine, “what does it amount to? Why, merely, that on a certain

evening I paid some attention to an unmarried lady. If this be flirtation, at all events it is but a single act of flirtation—a single night's heedlessness and folly."

"I pray that it may be so," returned Mrs. Clay, "but forgive me, if I add, that I do not anticipate so sudden a termination to a friendship, already, if I may judge by appearances, so matured. I may be wrong; but still I think that I have good warrant for my apprehensions of your safety—that is, unless you will be warned by me, warning you in good time, as I do. A little time, a few months, nay a few weeks hence, and a warning voice from Heaven itself would be thrown away upon you. Going on as you are now, in a little time you will be inextricably involved, and if you escape at last with honour, believe me you will not escape without entailing very much of sorrow upon yourself, and more than yourself, Mr. Pultuncy—but, perhaps, you do not like me to talk in this way?"

"Go on—" said Peregrine, his eye fixed on the ground as he spoke; "go on, pray."

"I have little more to observe," continued Mrs. Clay, "for if I have not said enough already, an hour's lecture will not avail. You have been in Calcutta longer than I have, and I dare say that you know much better than I do, how scandalous the people are—how easily reports are spread—how contumaciously they are adhered to; now, as I have said before, supposing you escape in reality

the entanglement which is so much to be dreaded, still the people of Calcutta will not suffer you to escape; still evil reports may fly to England."

"It is true," said Peregrine, lifting up his face and confronting his fair adviser; "the people of Calcutta are very scandalous—very scandalous, indeed—and I am afraid that they will talk, that they *do* talk; but I do not think much mischief will arise from it. You ought to know this, I am sure," he continued, laughing, as he looked slyly into Mrs. Clay's face, "for the people talked desperately about your husband and Miss Skinner, and yet, in what respect are you the worse for it?"

"In none," returned the lady—"in none; we were fortunate—very fortunate, I admit, and cannot be too thankful; but you must not hope to escape in that way. Remember, that Miss Poggletton has friends, and I doubt not *correspondents* in this country. I had none—did not know a soul in India, before I came here, except Mr. Clay; no reports, therefore, reached me; but the affair itself was none the better for that—and so pray do not get up a copy of it."

"No," said Peregrine, "that I will not—do you forgive me, for alluding to your own case?"

"Quite," said Mrs. Clay, "speaking so candidly as I did, of *your* affairs, how can I be angry with you for touching on mine—or rather my dear husband's, for, really, I had nothing at all to do with it. Go to him, however, for advice; for he ought

to know very well how to give it; and be sure, that he was quite right in 'wiggling' you, as you call it, well. And now Mrs. Proteus has gone to the piano—we must not talk any more."

## CHAPTER X.

In which Peregrine Pultuney continues to forfeit the good Opinion of the Reader.

THE next day—yes, the very next day, Peregrine Pultuney called at Mrs. Sweetenham's, and was received by the young lady alone in the drawing-room. She was at the piano when our hero entered the apartment, and though he certainly had no business to think any thing of the kind, he did think that the beautiful Augusta was looking, if possible, even more beautiful, than she had looked on the preceding night. Such a skin—such eyes—and such hair, could not be injured by facing the daylight.

“Do not move,” said Peregrine, as having shaken hands with Miss Sweetenham, he saw that she was about to rise from the music-stool; “do not move, pray—you remember your promise about singing to me?”

• “Oh! yes—perfectly, I have not forgotten it,” returned Miss Sweetenham, with much vivacity;



“but you must remember that you made a promise too, and that my singing to you was only conditional.”

“Yes,” said Peregrine; “but I have not had time to fulfil my part of the agreement.”

“Not time!—oh! dilatory—most recreant of knights poetic. Is not the fitting time for the performance of such a task as I set you the witching hour of midnight, Mr. Pultuney?—What other time—what better time could you have wished? I am afraid that you are but half a poet after all.”

“Not even that,” returned Peregrine; “not even that, I am afraid. What will you say to me, if I plead, in extenuation of the fault, which you assign to me, that I was most desperately sleepy—most unpoetically sleepy—and could not have written a line for my life.”

“Shocking—barbarous!” exclaimed Miss Sweetenham; “but I quite forgot, I must have bored you very sadly; no wonder that you felt sleepy, after the dose of lethargic conversation that I forced upon you.”

“Dear me!” cried Peregrine, “I did not mean that—how could you suppose me to mean that!”

“Why, you hinted it pretty plainly,” rejoined Miss Sweetenham. “You acknowledge the effect, and yet deny the cause; you say that you went home desperately sleepy.”

“And so I did,” replied Peregrine, “and had very good reason for feeling so. You do not know

how ill I was treated by divers of my friends after dinner, when we returned to the drawing-room. First there was Clay, with a long lecture ; and when he had done, Mrs. Clay began ; and when I escaped from her, Frederick Splashington came up, and I was condemned to a third infliction—what wonder then that I went home bored to death, and, as a necessary consequence, very sleepy.”

“ And what was it all about ? ” asked Miss Sweetenham ; “ whence all this abuse, pray ? ”

“ Much ado about nothing,” returned Peregrine ; “ as ridiculous a thing as was ever yet heard of—my handing you to dinner, Miss Sweetenham.”

Miss Sweetenham opened wide her splendid eyes, as she looked, with parted lips and eager countenance, into the face of Peregrine Pultuncy. “ Handing *me* to dinner ? ” she asked, emphatically.

“ Yes ; nothing more or less, I assure you.”

“ And why,” continued the young lady, still more emphatically—“ why not hand me to dinner, pray ? Ought you to have left me to be shipwrecked, or what is worse, have consigned me to the tender mercies of those Lord Fribbles, who were boring me so atrociously, when you came to the rescue, and kindly led me away ? ”

“ I do not know,” returned Peregrine, “ what I ought to have done—it is difficult to know in this place.”

“ So it is—very difficult,” said Miss Sweetenham ; “ whatever one does, one is sure to be

abused for it. I really think that you are the last person whose '*attentions*' to me ought to be misconstrued. Every body knows that you are an engaged man, why then not hand me to dinner?"

"Because I am an engaged man," replied Peregrine; "it was for this very reason that they abused me."

Hereupon Miss Sweetenham laughed heartily, and said "that she had never heard any thing better in her life."

"Nor I," said Peregrine. "The people of Calcutta are the most absurd set of people I ever knew—they think that, because I am engaged and you are not, it is very improper in me to talk to you. They lift up their hands, and sigh and exclaim, 'Poor Miss Poggleton!'"

"Foolish people—foolish people! how little do they know about it! Why, I look upon you, Mr. Pultuncy, as a married man, just as much married, as though I had seen you regularly joined in church by *Padrê Hunter*. I wish most cordially for your own sake that you were."

Peregrine said nothing.

"And, besides," continued Augusta Sweetenham, "what eyes they must have—how little they can know about the respective parties, if they imagine for a moment that I could be the rival of one so gifted as Julia Poggleton. I thank them very much for the compliment, but really I do not feel that I deserve it."

“What compliment?” asked Peregrine Pultune.

“Comparing me in any way with Miss Poggletton—thinking it likely that I could weigh as any thing heavier than a feather in the balance against her.”

“Why not?” asked Peregrine.

“Why not? and you a lover—recreant—recreant. Well, all I can say is, that I am very glad you are not going to be married to me—at least,” she added, “if it were ever to come to my knowledge that you had asked ‘why not’ in such a manner as this.”

“I do not understand you,” said Peregrine, “I really do not understand you—”

“Worse, and worse,” rejoined Miss Sweetenham; “well, I do not wonder that your friends lecture you, if you behave like this—so oblivious of your absent mistress—so obtusely deaf to her praises. You ought to be all ear, all comprehension, all appreciation when a compliment, however vague, to your betrothed, is uttered. If I had known this before, I should not have taken your part. Mr. Clay and Mr. Splashington did quite right in lecturing you, and I have no doubt that Mrs. Clay’s sermon—for women understand these matters much better than men—was full of well-merited censure.”

“And so every body is turning against me,” sighed Peregrine, “most innocent—most injured as I am; but it is no use to try and defend myself——. How comes on Mother Hubbard’s nose?”

“ Oh !” returned Augusta Sweetenham, with much animation, “ I must thank you for that; you played your part most admirably, far better indeed than I expected you. I do believe that they fully believed us—the simpletons! Now, only think, Mr. Pultuney, there was not in that set of empty heads a single individual, whom Calcutta has not been kind enough to marry me to. I am so sick of being married in report, that I have half a mind never to speak another word to a bachelor as long as I live.”

“ Except engaged ones,” suggested Peregrine.

“ Oh ! I don’t know,” rejoined the vivacious young lady, “ that it is safe to make any such exceptions. I must confine myself to married-men, and married-men living with their wives. I was once married by the world, to a gentleman with a wife and three children in England, so I must not have any thing to say to the married-unmarrieds at all.”

“ It will be very hard upon us,” said Peregrine.

“ Hard upon you—you an engaged man ! It would not be hard upon you, if you were condemned to take up your lodgings on the top of the Ochterloney Monument, and to hold no converse with humanity for the next year, or at all events till the arrival of your intended, whenever that event may be. You ought to live upon hope—

“ Indeed !” said Peregrine, “ you are very hard upon me.”

“ Not I—not at all hard upon you; the food of hope ought to be quite enough to ‘ sustain your soul in solitude,’ as Wordsworth calls it. Oh ! I can fancy you,” she continued, laughing, “ perched up on the top of the Ochterloney Monument, watching the semaphore day after day, like the lonely Argive on the watch-tower in *Æschylus*, until it shall signalise the name of the *Hungerford*, or whatever ship may convey your betrothed. Not, however, that I wish you, like the Argive, to be ten years on the look out.”

The thought of ten years’ delay did not fill the breast of our hero with the sickening sensations which, a few months before, the bare mention of such a thing would have engendered, neither did he devotedly exclaim, as he ought to have done, “ God forbid !” but, and we may say it with profound sorrow, the allusion to the Argive on the watch-tower in the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus*, prompted no other feelings than those of admiration of the young lady’s talents and learning, and we fear that he looked the admiration he felt, as he asked her if she were a Greek scholar.

“ Not at all,” she said, “ not at all—I know nothing more than *ton d’apomeibomenos*, (is that what you call it?) which a little brother of mine was very fond of spouting—but I have read the *Agamem-*

*non* in German, Humboldt's version, and much I enjoyed it."

"And Latin?" asked Peregrine.

"Yes—I *do* know a little more about that; I know at least a whole line, and the meaning of it moreover;

'O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori'—

And she scanned the line, dactyls and spondees, as well as any fourth form-boy at Eton, looking significantly all the while into Peregrine Pultuncy's face, with a bright sunny smile playing sweetly upon her own.

"But German you know well, I believe?" continued Peregrine, who had no business in the world to take such a lively interest in the young lady's attainments; but who was, nevertheless, very inquisitive about them.

"Yes," returned Augusta Sweetenham, "a little; but I am not the least inclined this morning to talk about literature of any description; I want you to tell me whether you have decided about what dress you are to wear at the fancy-ball."

"I have decided not to go at all," returned Peregrine.

"Nonsense; you have done nothing of the kind. Did not I tell you that it was my *hookham* (order)—my imperative *hookham* that you should go. The men here are really such slow coaches that we cannot afford to lose one who is not a slow coach,



and who will, I know, appear in some good character, and keep it up too with good spirit; you really must go, Mr. Pultuney."

"I am afraid that I cannot," returned Peregrine, deprecatingly; "I am afraid that I must make a sacrifice and stay at home; but I should like to go very much."

"I know you would—then why not go? You have been to a dinner—then why not to a ball? *To oblige me*, Mr. Pultuney, will you go?"

Such a look—such a smile—such a winning tone of voice—and one little hand too, in the eagerness of its owner, laid thoughtlessly upon Peregrine's, and hastily withdrawn, yet not before it had done its work most effectually, were more than our hero could resist. He looked into the beautiful face of Augusta Sweetenham—his fair tempter—sighed, and was vanquished. "To oblige you," he said, "I would do any thing—I will go to the fancy ball."

"Thank you—thank you, I am very grateful, and so glad that you have consented. You must go in character, mind—but here comes my aunt."

Peregrine who had not thought of inquiring about her, wished Mrs. Sweetenham anywhere else than within the four walls of her own drawing-room; but he was nevertheless very tender indeed in his inquiries after the good lady's health, made sundry very pertinent observations regarding the weather and the salubrity thereof, and was just thinking of taking his departure, when the sound



of the gong caused him suddenly to change his mind in the hope that the new visiter might be a lady, who would occupy Mrs. Sweetenham's entire attention, and leave him to carry on the by-play with her niece.

In this, however, he was disappointed. The new visiter was no other than Frederick Splashington, and, as such, about the last person in the world whom Peregrine wished to meet at Mrs. Sweetenham's. Confidence our hero had in abundance, as all who have studied this history must know; but in spite of this he looked a little confused—we do not quite say ashamed of himself—when Frederick Splashington caught his eye upon entering the room, and gave him a look which said plainly enough, “You are a very sad fellow, Master Pultuney.”

After a little miscellancous conversation, relating to some young ladies who were going to be married, some old ditchers who were going home, a fancy fair at the Town hall, the overland mail and the eternal fancy ball on the 25th, the young gentlemen rose to take their departure at the same moment of time; whereupon Mr. Splashington asked Mr. Pultuney in what vehicle he was travelling, and Mr. Pultuney made answer that Dr. Fitz-simon had dropped him at Mrs. Sweetenham's, and that he was going home in a palki.

“How can you go in any thing *tant villaine?*” asked Frederick Splashington, passing his arm

through Peregrine's, as they quitted the drawing-room together, "fit only for *les roturiers—la canaille*; you must let me leave you at Fitz-simons's—these palkis are only meant for *crannies* (clerks) and cadets."

"With all my heart," returned Peregrine, smiling. "I would sooner travel in a Stewart's buggy, but as I do not happen to possess one, I must patronise the cheap-and-nasties now and then."

"Do you wish to go elsewhere," asked Splashington; "or shall I drive you home direct? *Montez—montez, mon ami.*"

"I will go home straight if you have no objection," returned Peregrine, *montez-ing* with great agility—for the horse was not much inclined to stand still—"it is a very little way from this."

"Too near, a great deal," said Frederick Splashington, "and so I shall take you round by Park-street. You are a sad *vaurien*, Master Peregrine; now tell me if you are not ashamed of your *galan-teries*?"

"What *galantries*?" asked Peregrine, who was beginning to grow impatient of the badinage of his different friends.

"*Quelle innocence!* now, my dearest friend, what can I mean but your attentions to Miss Sweetenham? You think there is nothing in it, I dare say; but depend upon it you will discover your error.

but you had better beware of that girl; there is something very *seduisante* about her, I know; but believe me she is not the person for you to choose as a friend and companion."

"And why not?" asked Peregrine. "Because I am an engaged man, am I forbidden to have friends and companions? I really do not see the harm of cultivating such a friendship as this."

"Friendship!" exclaimed Frederick Splashington—"Friendship! *c'est un mot dangereux*. Do not talk about friendship, pray. If you want a friend I will be your friend—a better friend to you than Miss Sweetenham."

"Thank you," said Peregrine, coolly; "but I do not see that there is any occasion to give up Miss Sweetenham, although I may avail myself of *your* offer."

"You chill me," returned Splashington; "but I forgive you. I am too much your friend to be angry with you—too much your friend to be afraid of offering you wholesome, though bitter advice. Believe me, Pultuney, that your feelings towards that girl are not what they ought to be—not what you think them—not what Miss Poggleton would like them to be. I tell you that you are playing a dangerous game—you are fascinated, I know you are, and Miss Sweetenham knows it too. She is not all innocence and simplicity as you think her. She will be delighted to know that you are unfaithful; for it will be a triumph beyond all others to her."

seduce you from your first love — from your affianced wife, and she is trying to do it.”

“You are ungenerous and unjust,” said Peregrine Pultuney, with some bitterness in the tones of his voice. “I do not believe it—cannot believe it—will never believe what you say.”

“You will believe it some of these days, and perhaps when it is too late,” continued Splashing-ton, in an earnest and natural tone of voice, without French or affectation. “Be sure that Augusta Sweetenham knows well enough the feelings she has awakened in your heart. She has got you into her net, and she will keep you there, if you refuse to accept the hand of succour I offer to you. You have often times accused me of vanity—rightfully, very rightfully, I know; but your vanity is worse than mine, my dear friend. Mine has never done more than make me ridiculous, but your’s is leading you to do wrong. But here we are at Fitz-simons’s; I would have said more, but as it is I am afraid I have said too much, and yet not enough—too much for your patience and forbearance, but not enough to do you good. Well, well, good bye. *I have offended you, but I have done my duty.*”

“Good bye,” said Peregrine Pultuney, leaping out of the buggy. “Thank you for the lift—thank you;” and having treated a true friend with undeserved harshness, or rather coldness, which is much worse, Peregrine Pultuney entered the house, and was accosted in the hall by Peer Khan, who

gave him a letter, observing at the same time that it was a ship letter, and he thought it was from Missy Baba.

Peregrine told him to hold his tongue and mind his own business, and having treated his faithful servant as badly as he did his true friend, went into his bedroom, shut the door, and flung himself on his couch.

There he lay *thinking* for some time; we need scarcely say what were his thoughts: suffice it that they were of such a nature that he did not open his letter until nearly an hour after receiving it, and when he did, he read it with a cold eye, every now and then stopping and muttering to himself certain words which we shall not set down for fear that our hero should forfeit the good opinion of our readers altogether, before we intend it.

Poor Julia—poor sweet Julia! How woman-like—how affectionate was her letter! We shall give but a few extracts; but they will be enough, for the letter was full of repetitions, as love letters generally are.

“ *Cape, November 3.*

“ MY DEAREST, BEST-BELOVED PEREGRINE.—How my heart yearns towards you from this distant and strange place—how I envy this sheet of paper—happy, happy sheet, which your dear hands will press, your dear eyes devour, perhaps, your dear heart beat against, as you carry it about with

you, which I think you will, nay I'm sure you will, sweetest and best. Oh! what would I not give to see you, as you open it, my best beloved. Your face will be so bright, your eyes, I think, full of tears—tears of joy as you read it; but instead of this I shall be, perhaps, landing in England—fifteen thousand miles away from my sweet betrothed—so desolate and so forlorn. I cannot tell you what a void there is in my heart—how truly wretched I am without you. Nor need I tell you, dearest Perry, for you will know how to estimate my feelings by your own. You cannot be more desolate than I am, nor more truly—more wholly mine, than I am yours, sweet betrothed; and yet I have in you dearest, a most entire and full confidence. I never doubt your truth for a moment: your pure, undeviating affection is a treasure beyond all price; and whilst I feel confident in possessing it—and I do feel most confident—I ought to be happy even apart from you. Dearest, best beloved, when will your hand be in mine—your heart beat against mine—and when shall we be happy in the thought that nothing but death can part us. I almost fear that something will prevent the realization of this great happiness—yet, why should I—nothing but death can prevent it, and why should I anticipate that? . . . . My dear mother is all kindness—she is much altered, I think, by her late sorrows—is more serious and thoughtful. She says that we shall be married, and

that soon. Is not that kind of her, Peregrine, my beloved? She says that she will do her best for us—and I dare say—oh! how I long for the time—that next year I shall be on my way to India. Mamma will accompany me, of course, and live with us too, sweetest. I am sure you will not mind it; she is good and kind, and now she is *alone*, and we owe every thing to her. God bless you—write very often—by every Overland mail—as I will do when I reach England. I have kissed this paper again and again; do the same, dearest Perry. Ever your own most devotedly attached

“J. P.”

## CHAPTER XI.

In which Peregrine Pultuney does not improve, but, if possible sinks still deeper in the good Opinion of the Reader.

AND now, good reader, if you have no objection, we will suppose that the all-important 25th of January has arrived, and conduct you, with your kind permission, to that grand emporium of vanity, where people make bad dinners and worse speeches, and exhibit their cauliflowers and their daughters—where serious fancy fairs and not serious fancy balls, oratorios and race ordinaries come off—where matches are made for life and for the next races—bets paid one night and addresses the next—money lost to-day and hearts to-morrow—to the all-comprehensive TOWN-HALL. There surely never was such a Town-hall, as the Town-hall of Calcutta—surely never a place which if it could write its “reminiscences,” would have so *very* much to write about. A Town-hall in England, knows more, doubtless, about the solemn twaddle of mayors and corporations (thank God, we have no such animals here),



the prosy prolixities of circuit judges, the heartless quackerics of poor-law guardians, and the like; but what a range of experience has our Town-hall,—how many-sided the pictures of life it has to contemplate! We will back it against any building of its age for a thorough-going knowledge of humanity. Whom does it not know—from the bishop to the subaltern?—what has it not heard, from the pompous nonsense of the orator, to the flippant nonsense of the flirt—from speeches about civil and religious liberty, to speeches upon the restoration of a fan? If Mr. Spence does not undertake to write its memoirs, we shall do so ourselves very soon.\*

But on the night—the memorable 25th of January—which the onward progress of our history has now reached, the Town-hall was “dedicated to Terpsichore,” as fashionable novelists would say, and its doors were thrown open for the consummation of the long-talked of and much thought of fancy ball. Who shall describe the lights, and the garlands, and the rosettes at the steward’s button-holes? Who shall tell, in adequate language, the number of wall-shades and chandeliers, and ring-lustres, which were lighted on this memorable occasion, or the pains which were taken to render the Town-hall as unlike a Town-hall, and indeed as unlike any thing else as it could be, by

\* We throw out this hint, lest any one should forestall us. We will give place, however, to none but Mr. Spence.

wreathing the pillars with evergreens and tricking out the ends of the room with real leaves and sham flowers, in an ambitious attempt to emulate the arbours in a suburban tea-garden? Who shall tell of the ingenuity which devised, and the labour, which executed, the gigantic V. R. at the bottom of the room? (for the bachelors of Calcutta, with a nice perception of loyalty and gallantry, had given the ball in honour of the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne) and what pen can do justice to the *tout-ensemble* of pillars and chandeliers and evergreens and red ribbands, which struck the eye of the beholder, as he entered the room, reminding him, at the same moment, of Jacks-in-the-green and other appendages of chimney-sweepers' day, to say nothing of chemists' shops, Vauxhall, and small concerns of that kind.

But the people—men, women and children (of a larger growth) what *are* we to say to them? Such a motley assemblage rarely was seen—Gentlemen unpicturesque, very, in black coats and ditto unmentionables, were herding with officers in uniform, Swiss peasants, and Arab horse merchants—Sir Giles Overreach was talking to Dr. Pangloss about the last race meeting, whilst Oliver Cromwell was carrying on a desperate flirtation with a very pretty Henrietta Maria, and the Earl of Leicester, having deserted Queen Elizabeth of England, was promenading with Mary Queen of Scots. The Duke of Buckingham happened to be in his right

place, arm in arm with Anne of Austria, but somehow or other Sir John Falstaff had hooked himself on to Harry Hotspur, and Robinson Crusoe was precisely where he ought to have been, in the centre of a huge crowd. There was a Red-cross Knight, between a Jew and a Saracen—a Knight of Malta walking with his wife and a Virgin of the sun, who manifested most unequivocal symptoms of a speedy increase to her family. Besides these, there was the usual compliment of Greek dresses, two or three Amy Robsarts, as many Anne Pages, a great variety of Highlanders (all suffering very much from mosquitoe bites about their crural extremities) and a very pretty assemblage of Highland, Polish, Tyrolese, and Georgian damsels, all looking very smart and fascinating, and committing much cruel havoc amongst young gentlemen in the civil service, not out of College, and subaltern officers from Barrackpore.

Sitting on a couch, before one of the garlanded pillars, at the opposite side of the room from the entrance-door, sat an elderly lady, in a black velvet dress and unexceptionable pearl ornaments, whilst at her side an exceedingly pretty girl, remarkably plainly dressed, but nevertheless, without a single exception the most striking personage in the room, was sitting, with a little bunch of flowers in her hand, every now and then glancing towards the door and occasionally saying something to her companion. As we have already said that we take

no delight in mystification, we may as well mention what our readers will have already surmised, that the two ladies were none others than Mrs. and Miss Sweetenham, and perhaps it would be better to state at the same time, that the latter was looking towards the door in expectation of the arrival of Peregrine Pultuney, who was engaged to dance the first dance with the beautiful Augusta, at her own particular request.

Dancing had not yet commenced, but the preliminary scrapings of the band were just setting the people's teeth on edge, when a very tall and a very good-looking young gentleman, with *very* white teeth, *very* black moustaches, and a dress made to match the latter, tripped up to Miss Sweetenham and asked her if she were engaged for the first set.

"I am sorry to say, Mr. Drawlincourt, that I am."

"No, you don't say so," returned that gentleman; "you don't really mean that you are engaged—you see that they are beginning to stand up, and nobody is coming to claim you."

"My partner, I am afraid, has not yet arrived," said Miss Sweetenham, somewhat abruptly.

"Then I am sure you need not wait for him," continued Mr. Drawlincourt, "it is his fault if he loses the pleasure—the honour, which you intended to bestow upon him. It will serve him right, it will re-al-ly, if he is too late—that it will, Miss Sweetenham—and indeed you ought to dance

with me, for I have been in that dreadful Mofussil so long—six or seven months at the least, and this is my first appearance in Calcutta.”

“It seems a very little time since you went away,” said Augusta Sweetenham.

“Oh! no—an age—an age—upon my honour, an age—quite an age since I have had the pleasure of dancing with you, Miss Sweetenham. You see they are standing up—I’m sure your partner will not come.”

“I’m sure he will though,” said Miss Sweetenham; and then thinking she had spoken a little peevishly, she added in a kinder voice, “may I ask what is your costume?”

“Oh! certainly—certainly—the *Lord Hamlet*—do you not think it quite complete?”

“Quite,” said Miss Sweetenham, “quite—but I’m sure Hamlet was not given to dancing—you ought to be sauntering about the room, with a book in your hand—now reading—now pondering ‘words—words—words’—not given to dancing, I am sure.”

“Oh! he was once given to dancing and all that, I dare say,” rejoined Mr. Drawlincourt; “he was, you remember, ‘the glass of fashion and the mould of form’ and all that—I am not Hamlet, the sloven and the lunatic, you know, but Hamlet the glass of fashion.”

“And the mould of form,” said Miss Sweetenham sarcastically.

“Yes, ye—e—s, of course,” returned Mr. Drawlincourt—“but pray *do* stand up with me—there are Pemberton and Miss Singleton wanting a *vis-à-vis*—so, pray *do* stand up with me.”

“I really cannot,” said Augusta decisively.

“Oh! cruel—but may I ask who is the fortunate man you are waiting for? I’m sure he does not deserve so much consideration—not half of it, upon my honour?”

“I am waiting for Mr. Pultuney,” said Augusta.

“Pultuney!” exclaimed the cornet, “the devy——!—I thought he had gone to Madras—Pultuney of the artillery—eh?”

“Yes”—said Augusta—“Mr. Pultuney of the artillery.”

“The devy——I beg your pardon—and so you are really going to sit out for this set—well it is very cruel—very cruel indeed;” and the long cornet tripped away muttering between his teeth, “that hound, Pultuney, d—n him, he is always thwarting me some way or other.”

The curse was still lingering on the cornet’s lips, when a young gentleman, most admirably attired in the costume of an exquisite of Queen Elizabeth’s time, walked mincingly into the room. Nothing could possibly have been better than his dress, which mainly consisted of a slashed doublet and trunkhose of sky blue and white satin, a crimson velvet mantle and a cap, with feathers, of the same materials, a dainty rapier and a spangled cross-belt.



All the minor appointments, too, of this elegant costume, were singularly perfect and appropriate; the ruffs, the lace-trimmed gloves, the ruffles to the boots, the points, the gilded spurs, and last of all the "favours," which the gallant wore about him, were in excellent style and keeping, and it would have been impossible for any dress to have been set off to greater advantage by the wearer, than was this trim and costly apparel by our friend Peregrine Pultuney. His bright eyes, sunny face, and most glowing mouth, looked handsomer than ever beneath his costly head-gear, and the rich long curls appended to it, whilst his fringed mantle hung gracefully down from his broad shoulders, and his most unexceptionable silk hose were drawn tightly over as well-moulded a pair of lower limbs as ever were seen between the trunks and the low ruffled boots of a sixteenth century Paul's-walk gallant. Casting an eye around him with a well-assumed affectation of coxcombical curiosity, he entered the ball-room with a mincing step and an air of sovereign importance; but one glance of counterfeit coxcombry was enough to show him where sat Augusta Sweetenham, one glance enough to cause him to hasten his pace and step briskly down the room, for he could not cross it on account of the dancers, who were between him and the lady. Most anxious was he to reach her side; he saw that he was late, thought he saw that she was angry, and was in a greater hurry than he ought to have been to exculpate himself,

and once again bask in the sunshine of the fascinating Augusta's smiles. Properly was he punished, therefore, when halfway down the room, he was arrested by a female voice, which he heard saying, close behind him: "It is Mr. Pultuney—that it is; Mr. Pultuney, I want to speak to you, *do* sit down."

The lady was no other than Mrs. Drawlincourt, though Peregrine scarcely recognised her at first. She was much altered, paler and thinner, and far less pretty than she had been, and seemed neither in good health nor good spirits. We do not undertake to say that she loved her lord, though she was decidedly as ladies like to be, who do so; and somehow or other Peregrine thought that she had discovered the bad choice of a husband she had made, when it was too late to remedy the evil. She tried to be lively and facetious as ever, but it did not sit naturally upon her; she evidently spoke languidly and with an effort, though she was cordial enough in her manner towards Peregrine, and there was something hollow in her voice, and still more hollow in her laugh, which touched our hero, provoked as he was to be intercepted on his way to Augusta.

"You seem in a great hurry," she said, in reply to Peregrine, who pleaded that he was on his way to fulfil an engagement, when Mrs. Drawlincourt asked him to sit down beside her. "I cannot think whom you are in such a hurry to get to, now that Julia Poggleton has gone home."



Peregrine did not say, but he almost thought, "confound Julia Poggleton."

"Now, I remember, though," continued Mrs. Drawlincourt, "I heard something, as I was coming down the country, on board the steamer, about you going to be married to Augusta Sweetenham. I cannot make you out, Mr. Pultuney; I am sure you were once desperately in love with Miss Poggleton, and I always thought that you were going to be married to her."

"The people of Calcutta are very scandalous," observed Peregrine, "very scandalous, indeed. I once heard, amongst other precious reports, that I had proposed to you and been *juwabad*."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Drawlincourt, blushing, "well they are scandalous, I admit—I did not say—not I—I did not indeed, Mr. Pultuney."

"To be sure not," said Peregrine politely.

"But tell me," continued the lady, in evident anxiety to turn the subject from herself, "is there any truth in the report about your going to marry Miss Sweetenham—you may tell *me*, you know, as a very old friend."

"As a very old friend then," said Peregrine, "none whatever—but the quadrille is over, and I shall get into a terrible scrape, if I do not go and claim my partner instantly."

Saying this, Peregrine Pultuney made a bow and began threading his way through the motley crowd, towards the couch on which Miss Sweetenham was

sitting. He had purposed to have addressed every one he spoke to, in the style and language of the character he had assumed, but there was something in the unexpected presence of Mrs. Drawlincourt, her altered appearance, and her forced manner, which really touched the not altogether heartless, though erring subject of this history, and he could not help speaking to her in his natural voice, instead of the mocking tones he had been practising. When, however, he was greeted by his indifferent acquaintances, as he passed along the room, one stopping him much to his annoyance, and another only giving him a word *en passant*, he answered them in the higher-flown language of Euphuism, which, most unfortunately for him, not one in the number understood, or appreciated in the least. There is little use in acting the character one assumes, for there is scarcely ever any body who understands it, and the chances are very much in favour of one's being thought an utter fool, whilst one is really a very clever fellow and proving oneself to be so by one's acting.

But Augusta Sweetenham was not one of these dense dullards. She knew what character our hero intended to represent, and moreover entered fully into its spirit. She had half a mind, it is true, to be angry with him, for being so tardy in keeping his engagement; but when she saw him advancing towards her with a bright smile and courtly pace, she smiled too, and extended her hand in her own cordial manner.

“And what sad accident, may I ask,” she said, “has retarded the advent of Sir Piercie Shafton?”

“Fairest damsel of Ind,” returned Peregrine; “no accident to this vile tenement hath befallen your adoring slave, who liveth like the violet of Humility, cherished only by the sun of your condescension. You shall be my Condescension, and I your Humility, fairest of all the damsels of Ind.”

“But what rude blast of adversity,” asked Augusta, “hath blown upon my poor Humility, that he hath thus kept his anxious Condescension, during at least half a circle of the horologe, in all the torments of protracted suspense?”

“Sweetest lady, what bliss most exquisite were any suffering to this vile clay, or even to the ethereal *anima* or spirit of your Humility, which elicith from my adored Condescension such tender expressions of sympathetic benignity. Believe me, most bountiful damsel, that I would hither have flown on wings Æolian, had it been permitted to this sordid corporeal substance, now only valuable as regarded by thee, to take any such aërial excursion. The culpability of another grovelling hath cast these chains upon the eager limbs of my activity. A gross earth-born varlet of an apparel-maker, or habiliment-designer, called by the uncourtly a tailor, hath done unto me this injury, by driving the insignificant gadfly sting of his annoyance into the noble animal back of my patience, and at the *hora undecima*, or eleventh hour of my love-

fledged expectations, I discovered the incompleteness of my terpsicorean attire, and was constrained into a cunctatorial obedience to the behests of inevitable fate. Do the mild rays of my Condescension's forgiveness shine upon the nipped flower of her poor Humility's contrition?"

"Oh! quite, quite. I quite forgive you my—dear me! I have forgotten my Euphuism: but suppose that we both of us forget it, for it must be troublesome to keep it up. Your dress is admirable though, I must say."

"Thanks to you and your kind aunt," said Peregrine, "for these exquisite ruffles and favours."

"Oh! do not mention it," said Augusta, "and my part, I assure you, was very small, my aunt made the greater part of them. By the bye, I must tell you, that all my friends have been expressing their unbounded astonishment at seeing me in this very homely dress. It was such fun, such excellent fun, to hear one of them asking after Mother Hubbard, another after Rebecca—well, I see the quadrille is forming; let us go and ask Mary Ann Dew if she will be our *vis-à-vis*. By the bye, there is Mr. Drawlincourt, he did bore me so to dance the first set with him in your absence. I think you know him—do you not?"

"Very well—very well indeed,"—returned Peregrine; "by Jupiter, that is the very dress, in which I horse—"

"In which you *what*?"

“Nothing,” returned Peregrine.

“Oh! go on, pray; he is no favourite of mine, and I shall be angry if you do not tell me.”

“In which *I horse-whipped* him, then,” said Peregrine.

Augusta Sweetenham laughed, and liked Peregrine all the better for the confession.

They stood up to dance, or to walk through a quadrille; and a very animated conversation ensued. What it was we shall not narrate—suffice it that when the “set” was over, Peregrine led Augusta back to her aunt, and in a minute, the three were to be seen, to the great astonishment of all lookers-on, walking together towards the entrance door, and passing down the broad staircase. It was evident that Mrs. and Miss Sweetenham were, thus early, going home again.

## CHAPTER XII.

Containing some further Account of the Fancy Ball, and of  
Peregrine's Misconduct.

“WHAT have you done with Miss Sweetenham, my dear fellow?” asked Frederick Splashington of Peregrine Pultuney, a few minutes after the return of that young gentleman to the ball-room. “I saw her with you a moment ago, and now she is no where visible.”

“She has gone home, I believe,” said Peregrine.

“Gone home! *il n'est pas possible!* at this early hour—just after the second set. I hope she is not indisposed?”

“I believe not,” returned Peregrine.

“Perhaps only *degoûtée* a little. My dear Pultuney, you are a very sad fellow—a very sad fellow, indeed. I told you how matters would end—all Calcutta are talking about you, *c'est vrai.*”

“Let them talk then,” said Peregrine.

“No—no—my good fellow, let them not talk—let us try and put a stop to their talking, *c'est une vilaine chose*, this eternal talking about Miss Sweetenham and you. The lady has not been gone five minutes, and yet I have heard—I do not know how many things I have heard said already about the cause of her sudden departure. Some say that you have just proposed to her, and that she has gone away to conceal her agitation. Others say, that you have been cross to her, and have dashed her spirits for the rest of the evening. Another report is, that having danced with you, she does not care about dancing with any body else, and has nothing to look forward to for all the rest of the evening. Fifty other things have been said too, I have no doubt—all equally absurd and ill-natured.”

“I cannot say,” returned Peregrine, “that I should much care if five hundred things of that kind were said about us.”

“But you ought to care, my dear fellow; indeed you ought. I am afraid it is of no use to talk to you, but I will, nevertheless, make one more effort to impress upon you the necessity of doing something or other to put a stop to these reports.”

“*Je ne vois pas la nécessité*,” interrupted Peregrine, with a sneer.

“Ah!” said Splashington, with most praiseworthy good temper, passing his arm through Peregrine’s as he spoke; “do you remember by whom and on what occasion those words were once em-



ployed—by the French nobleman, to whom the beggar applied for alms, urging that he ‘must live.’ Now, what I urge, is far more disinterested on my part—and, something too, of far more consequence—I assure you, my dear fellow——”

“By the bye, Splashington—why have not you come in costume?”

Splashington saw that the case was hopeless, and so took the hint at once. It was no use urging his good advice any further, so he said, with a faint smile, “I thought it would be more *distingue* to come in plain clothes.”

“And, why so?” asked Peregrine.

“I made sure,” replied Splashington, “that all the *canaille* would make attempts at costume. They always do on these occasions. Now, look at that stout man with the peaked cap, and the black bandages on his clumsy legs—a brigand out of Cossitollah! And look at that creature with the round shoulders, the nondescript dress and the guitar—did ever any thing look more fearfully vulgar and unsentimental in the way of a minstrel. And those girls too, with turbans and red petticoats. Ciel! what abominations. All the cran-nies in Calcutta, with their wives and sisters, have been in commotion for the last three weeks, cutting out red and blue calico, and now are showing off like hogs in armour, and thinking themselves, I have very little doubt, the admired of all admirers. We were obliged to make an open thing of it, be-



cause the ball is given on a public occasion, and now *voilà!* the consequences."

"But," urged Peregrine; "there is still a fair proportion of *élite* in costume too. There is Mrs. Proteus, you see—and Mrs. Jupiter Grand, (how sweetly she looks!)—and Mary Anne Dew, and the Miss Bygods—the Pilgrims—the Singletons—Mrs. Delafosse——"

"And yourself," suggested Splashington.

"Yes!—I must say, however, that a fancy ball in Calcutta is a very stupid thing, indeed—people are so dull and tame—so spiritless and flat; but I must leave you, for I am engaged to dance with Eliza Dew, and I see her coming this way."

"What have you done with Miss Sweetenham?" asked Miss Dew, when Peregrine joined his partner. "I hear every one asking after her, for she is engaged, I know not how ~~many~~ deep, and the gentlemen are all in agonies about her."

"Most fair and beautiful damsel," returned Peregrine, "the Lady Augusta hath withdrawn the sunlight of her presence from the variegated parterre of this mimic assembly, and betaken herself behind a cloud—nay, naught so churlish, but has sunk beneath the horizon of her home; wherefore, my knowledge is all impotent to opine—the keen eye of my penetration is too dull to pierce the unfathomable abyss of that mystery. Gone hath she, it irks me to know—but where?—to mortal vision is it not given to fathom the secrets of the heavenly bodies.

Phœbus descends into the bosom of old Oceanus, and pale Hesperus rises in the firmament; but the ignorance of the earth-born dullards is left to gaze and gape in unknowing astonishment from our lowly terrene positions. Lady, most fair and beautiful, the most devoted of thy servants cannot give meet answer to thine interrogatories?"

"In other words, brave Sir Piercie, you do not exactly know."

"Thy dew-dropping voice falls sweetly and refreshingly upon the desert of my thirsty soul, most courtly daughter of a council-ruling sage; and fain by some high and mighty feat of chivalry, would I show my devotion to thee. Thou shalt be my Encouragement and I thine Enterprize."

"Nay," interrupted the young lady; "I will not be your Encouragement, I assure you. I have seen in you so little that is worthy of encouragement, that I really cannot undertake the office you have so very *kindly* imposed upon me."

"Thy words fill me with astonishment, most Minerva-like damsel."

"Nay, rather do they fill you with self-consciousness of your own most blameable untruth," returned Miss Dew, with mock severity. "Oh! thou most faithless of knights and lovers, are you not prostrated by the bare allusion to your faithlessness?"

"Cruel and misjudging lady!" returned Peregrine, "wherein have I been faithless and untrue?"

"It is the duty of true knights," said Miss Dew,

“to break lances and not hearts; to defend damsels not to desert them. I am afraid that Sir Piercie Shafton is but a carpet-knight after all—a breaker of ladies’ hearts, and of nothing else less fragile. He loves and he rides away—nothing else, nothing else, Sir Piercie!”

Peregrine felt the full force of this reproof, and for a little while his self confidence was shaken. Speedily, however, did he regain his constitutional calmness of mind, and his habitual calmness of demeanour, and then he instantly changed the subject. He knew the individual tastes and propensities of Miss Dew, and was soon engaged in a conversation on the hollow-heartedness and empty-headedness of the world in general. This lasted him till the *Finale* was over, and then a few turns up and down the ball-room were taken, and Peregrine got a new partner.

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It was nearly eleven o’clock, the rooms were respectably crowded, and the dancing was at its height—the refreshment-room had been several times resorted to, and ices were in requisition. Young gentlemen, disappointed in procuring partners at the first, were beginning to calculate that the “fifth” with Miss Bell, and the “sixth” with Miss Thompson were near at hand—costume-wearers were getting accustomed to their toggeries, and the atmosphere getting a little hot. Old ladies were beginning to wax sleepy, and wonder how

their daughters and nieces could possibly look so fresh, whilst the young ladies wondered how their mammas and aunts could possibly wax sleepy. The evening's entertainment, in short, was at its height—the good people were just beginning to “enter into the spirit of the thing,” and there were actually two or three ghastly attempts on the parts of some gentlemen whom nobody knew, and who were shrewdly suspected of being in their cups, to act up to the characters they had assumed—which characters being Paul Pry, Clown, and Punchinello, were productive of more boisterous mirth than refined amusement in their personation, though it must be acknowledged that Mr. Splashington's horror—the fat Cossitollah minstrel—did his best to supply the latter desideratum, by playing a plaintive serenade on his guitar, and causing a considerable speculation as to the name and nature of the tune, which was intended to regale the assembly.

At this interesting crisis of the evening's amusement—a quadrille having just been accomplished, and a waltz being in active preparation,—a little event occurred, which, as being connected with the personages of this history, we shall not fail to record, especially as it was one of the leading incidents of the all-important Victoria ball.

“Who is that? who is that?” asked a young subaltern from Barrackpore, who was standing be-

side one of the pillars, and taking a leisurely survey of the scene before him.

“By Jove,” said his companion, “I don’t know; but a splendid dress, isn’t it, just?”

“That it is—I haven’t seen it before—she can only have just come,” said the first speaker—“a deuced fine girl, whoever she is.”

“Splendid,” rejoined the other, “the handsomest dress in the room—what a beautiful velvet train.”

“I must go and ask who it is—positively I must,” said the Barrackporcan. “Here comes Pultuney, of the artillery. I’ll ask him. I say, Pultuney, who is that deuced pretty girl, with the crimson velvet train and the spangled petticoat, and those fine things in her hair?”

“Can’t think,” said Peregrine Pultuney.

“D—d rum dog that Pultuney,” said the Barrackporcan; “I’ll be hanged if he has not gone up to ask the girl herself what her name is.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“I say, Splashington, my dear fellow—you know every body—who is that? A deyvelish fine girl, upon my soul—and a most magnificent dress.” The speaker was Cornet Drawlincourt.

“Which girl do you mean?” asked Mr. Splashington—“I see so many pretty girls.”

“Oh! d—n it, that splendid creature, in the crimson train—with the superb figure and the

things in her hair. I'm sure I ought to know her. That fellow Pultuney is talking to her, you sec. Confound him, he is intimate with every body."

"And very intimate with *that* lady," said Splashington—"too intimate I am afraid. I thought you knew Miss Sweetenham."

"Of course—va-ry well, but you don't mean, my good sir, to tell me that that is Miss Sweetenham in the crimson train. I saw her go home an hour ago—upon my soul I did, an hour ago. It is not probable—not at all."

"*Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable,*" returned Splashington; "I scarcely knew her myself."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Dear me, mamma, if it isn't Miss Sweetenham come back again," said one of the Miss Singletons to her mother. "I wouldn't have believed it if I had not seen Mrs. Sweetenham on one side of her, and Mr. Pultuney on the other. Is that dress meant for Rebecca?"

"No—my dear, I shouldn't think so, but I don't know," said Miss Singleton's mamma.

"Well, I don't think after all it is any thing so very fine," said the other Miss Singleton, who had just been deposited by her partner in a spare seat at the maternal side.

"Trumpery, very, my dear, in my opinion,"

remarked Mrs. Singleton; "it's only cotton velvet, I think—at all events nothing but China."

"I wonder what it is though," said the younger Miss Singleton—"perhaps it is meant for Queen Esther."

"If it is then," said Mrs. Singleton, "all I've got to say is, that it is very improper and indecent, and irreligious to caricature the Bible in this way; and you may depend upon it that Queen Esther never wore China velvet—she would have had Genoa at the least."

"I don't think she looks at all well," rejoined the elder Miss Singleton—"that I don't—I never could think her pretty, and to-night she looks plainer than ever."

Nothing could have well been more untrue than this, for never had the beautiful Augusta Sweetenham looked half so beautiful as she did on this memorable evening, when all unexpectedly she re-appeared amongst the dancers at the Town-hall—to the delight of the gentlemen, the chagrin of the ladies, and the unbounded astonishment of all. She was, indeed, splendidly dressed, in the costume of a Roman lady of the fourteenth century, and it was not possible that the Nina Raselli of Bulwer's romance,\* (which was the character Miss Sweetenham had chosen,) could have found, in every respect, a more fitting representative. Over a spangled

under-dress of white satin, she wore a robe open in front, of the richest crimson velvet, confined at the waist by a golden cincture, and descending in a long and majestic train, which swept the ground behind her, as she passed along with slow and queen-like tread, well knowing that she was the observed of all observers, the admiration of the other sex and, what pleased her better, the envy of her own. Small wonder was it that they, who did not know her well, should have at first doubted her identity; for by disposing of her rich and facile hair, after a fashion, entirely new to her, which gave an additional height to the visible expanse of her forehead, and by assuming a head-dress, which, being partly composed of a long pendent veil, concealing the back of her head and the turn of her neck and shoulders, she had to a certain extent disguised herself, so as to deceive at a first and a far off view, almost every body in the room, a deception, which her previous departure had necessarily rendered more easy. Certainly she looked most beautiful—and was most sumptuously attired. Alas! alas! for poor Peregrine, who now felt more fascinated than ever by the syren charms of the fascinating Augusta.

Mrs. Sweetenham, being tired, had seated herself on a sofa, and Peregrine was left alone with Augusta—alone in a crowd, as lovers know very well indeed how to be. She leant heavily on his arm, and Peregrine pressed it to his side.



“ I shall not dance any more to-night,” said Augusta; “ this train is not meant for dancing in—besides, I am tired of the nonsense, which the men are eternally talking to me. I have had my fun—set the room a-gape, and when I have set them a-talking about the impropriety of my walking about with you, I shall ask aunt to take me home again.”

“ Not yet—not yet, for some time,” urged Peregrine, who felt himself much happier than he ought to have been—delighted, flattered, enamoured—almost conscious of a mutual attachment.

“ No, not yet—certainly, not yet,” rejoined Miss Sweetenham—“ But they are going to stand up again for a quadrille, pray take me into the refreshment-room, or they will be pestering me to dance—besides, I rather want an ice.”

“ That I will—that I will,” said Peregrine, “ let us get out of the crowd by all means—we can walk up and down on the side of the pillars, and then the yahoos will not tread upon your train——.”

“ Are you not almost tired of these scenes?” asked Peregrine, as the two young people quitted the refreshment-room. “ There is but a poor satisfaction in this kind of enjoyment after all—a momentary excitement, followed by a painful re-action, and we reproach ourselves for having been so silly.”

“ I agree with you, that we ought to be ashamed of ourselves,” returned Augusta. “ Not, however, for taking part in these scenes, but for suffering

ourselves to be excited by them. I confess that I cannot always wrap myself up in the serene cloak of the philosopher, and walk calmly over the sea of vanities, which surrounds my life. I often think of those beautiful lines of Young, but I fear that I never profit by thinking of them.

‘A soul immortal spending all her fires—  
Wasting her strength in strenuous idleness,  
Thrown into tumults, raptured, or alarmed,  
At aught this scene can threaten or indulge,  
Resembles ocean into tempest wrought,  
To waft a feather, or to drown a fly’ ”—

And even still more beautiful than the lines themselves, were the sweetly modulated tones of Augusta’s voice, and the feeling manner in which she recited the poetry.

Poor Peregrine was quite lost. It was all over with him, for he was waxing sentimental.

“Yes,” he said, “how much sweeter than all this idle vanity—this heartless and false mirth, the free communion of two sympathising souls—heart answering to heart, understanding one another, true friendship, such as—may I say *ours*?—I think we understand one another.”

“I hope we do—I hope we do,” said Augusta, “for no one has ever understood me yet.”

“I think I do. I think I do, indeed,” urged Peregrine; “I know that you are not as others think you, vain, inconstant, whimsical, capricious—I know that you are not as many think you, most

‘ Where, prisoners to their gilded thrall,  
Vain crowd meets crowd in lighted hall,  
With frozen feelings, tutor’d eye,  
And smile, which is itself a lie’—

I do not wrong you in this way.”

“ Thank you, Mr. Pultuney—thank you—I am very grateful for your good opinion; but, hark! what noise is that?”

The noise, which proceeded from the space between the pillars of the great room devoted to dancing, was none other than the loud tolling of a bell. The quadrille was just over, and in the centre of the room was congregated a thick crowd of people, all pushing forwards to the spot whence the noise of the bell proceeded; curiosity seemed to be on the tiptoe, and a new excitement was evidently created.

“ What can it be?” asked Augusta Sweetenham.

“ Let us join the crowd, and endeavour to ascertain,” returned Peregrine, with an ill-suppressed smile on his face; “ There, can you see now?”

“ Capital! capital!” cried Augusta. “ I declare it’s a twopenny postman; he has just given a letter to Miss Singleton, and one to Eliza Dew; pray ask him if he has got one for me.”

“ Here, Mr. Postman,” said Peregrine, putting his arm over the shoulders of some gentlemen in front of him, “ is there any letter for Miss Sweetenham?”

“ Eh!” returned the postman, who was excel-

lently dressed, and so disguised that all the people were asking one another who he could possibly be; "any letter for Miss Sweetenham; I dare say there be," and he rummaged in his bag; "but, what is Miss Sweetenham to you? Are you her servant that you ax for her letters?"

Several people looked at Peregrine, and laughed.

"Yes," continued the postman, "sure enough, here be a letter for 'Miss Augusta Sweetenham,' Dum-Dum post mark, I think."

"Give it to me then," said Peregrine.

"Eh! eh! give it to you? ah, I know your physnomy, I think, you be the chap wot keeps company with Miss Sweetenham, well, take it away."

There was a loud laugh, but Peregrine got the letter, and gave it to Augusta Sweetenham.

"Why this is your writing, Mr. Pultuncy," she said.

"Indeed!" exclaimed Peregrine.

Augusta opened the envelope, and found it contained two sheets of note-paper. She glanced at one and said, "Oh! thank you—for these verses—the long promised verses to set to music—thank you very much, Mr. Pultuncy—but what is in the other paper?"

"Read it," said Peregrine Pultuncy, and Augusta read some very pretty love verses (acrostics) which had more truth in them than at first she supposed.

“ Thank you for these too,” she said. “ But, tell me, pray, who is the postman?”

“ How can I?” asked Peregrine.

“ Oh ! you know very well. How else could you have sent me these verses?”

“ I put them in the post,” said Peregrine.

“ Nonsense ; I shall be angry, if you do not tell me.”

“ If I must, then—my friend, Mr. Jenks.’

## CHAPTER XIII.

Showing how Peregrine Pultuney ought to have been ashamed of himself but was not.

THOUGH the course of true love is said to be one of the roughest, we question whether the course of infidelity does not run a great deal smoother than it ought to do. At least it did with Peregrine Pultuney, who, day after day, week after week, grew happier and happier in the society and friendship of Augusta Sweetenham, and had rarely any thing to disturb his serenity of mind, except an occasional guard day and a monthly letter from Julia Poggleton, which was brought by the overland mail, with a regularity very far indeed from what it ought to have been, but nevertheless sufficient to keep our hero in mind of what he would fain have forgotten—his engagements to his unfortunate cousin, and his delinquency arising therefrom.

We shall not follow Peregrine inch by inch adown the smooth sloping glacis of his infidelity. We shall not show how day by day his once ardent love

for Julia Poggleton waxed fainter and fainter, whilst his *friendship*—his *platonic* affection—his *brotherly* feelings towards the fascinating Augusta increased in energy every hour, until he became the victim of a guilty passion, which, we are afraid, was not only encouraged, but shared. We have nearly reached the legitimate confines of our history, and are necessitated to generalize rather than to particularize—to draw only a rough outline of what our hero felt and did, and to trust to the imagination of our readers to fill in the necessary details.

We are afraid that this is an old story and one that has been often told. Alas! for humanity that it should be so. Alas! for Peregrine Pultuney that being betrothed to one damsel, he should have fallen in love with another. But poor fellow—how could he help it? He thought that he was quite safe, but was most fatally deceived. They began in friendship, those two young people—trusting to the engagement of one to keep them both from the approaches of all tenderer feeling. They might as well have leant for support on an icicle—or thrown themselves from a precipice on a cobweb, and trusted to it to keep them from injury. They thought that no harm could come of it—were friends first, and then they established a sort of brotherly and sisterly league, and called one another “brother” and “sister.” Peregrine proposed it at first with the best intentions in the world—he thought that by thus addressing one another they would be

led constantly to bear in mind that they could never be more, each to each, than brother and sister, though *that* they might always be, and harmlessly. Harmlessly—oh! yes, very!—for in a little time this brotherly and sisterly style of address was followed by little brotherly and sisterly endearments—the hand was held and not withdrawn; the waist was encircled, and the encircling arm not removed, nor the presumption chidden—and then followed what may easily be surmised—the *brotherly* kiss given without reproof, first on the hand, then the forehead, then the cheek, then the lips; for there are regular gradations in these little matters—as an ascending scale invented by the devil—and so easy, so almost insensible are the transitions, that familiarities not checked at their very outset run very little chance of being checked at all. It is the first little scarcely perceptible decorum-breach, that ought to be most scrupulously guarded against. This once permitted—this once deemed harmless (and harmless, perhaps, it is in itself) the rest follows, as naturally as one wave follows another, and we are overwhelmed before we are aware of it.

Thus it was with these two young people. They thought that there was no harm—no harm at all in what they were doing. Peregrine wanted a friend—in the loneliness of his heart he sought for companionship and found it—found that which he thought would in some small measure, a very small measure only—compensate for the absence of his betrothed. If he had a sister—a real sister—to cling



to in this emergency, it would have been the very thing of all others for him—but he had not that solace, and when he persuaded himself that he could make a sister of Augusta Sweetenham, he was of course, miserably mistaken—friendship—brotherly affection, and all that is very good in its way, when the object of it is nothing more than a he-companion; but when, instead of this, it is a pretty girl—and clever, as well as pretty—oh! indeed this friendship is the very devil, and Peregrine soon found it to be such.

Not, however, that he acknowledged the real state of his feelings even to himself. He had friends, who were constantly trying to convince him that he was in love with Augusta Sweetenham, but he always strenuously disowned the soft impeachment, and really believed that he was speaking the truth. The fact was that he never permitted himself to analyze the sensations he experienced. He went on, from day to day, in a sort of vague, dreamy condition, flattering himself that he really loved Julia Poggleton far better than Augusta Sweetenham—though, the one being absent and the other present, the latter, as a thing of course, occupied the greater share of his attention. He wrote to Julia every month by the overland mail, and his letters contained the same expressions of devotion—the same longings after his betrothed as of old, and he thought that as the words were not more feeble, the spirit which dictated them was unchanged. His letters,

indeed, were, if possible, more strongly worded than before—but, alas! they were *cautiously* worded; the endearing expressions, which they contained, did not come there unthought of, as they once came, warmly, gushing from the heart. He read over his letters approvingly, and thought that they were kinder than ever—but poor Julia saw the difference!

We must, however, say this for Peregrine Pultuney, that there was no effort upon his part to deceive his cousin. He only deceived himself. He told her, with the utmost candour, of his intimacy with Augusta Sweetenham—he spoke in his letters of his “dear sister”—of the kindness of both Mrs. and Miss Sweetenham, and the gratitude, which he felt towards them—he said that Augusta had promised to be bridesmaid, and that Mrs. Sweetenham hoped, above all things, that the Poggletons, on their return to India, would go to her house and remain there till Peregrine’s marriage. There was certainly not much concealment upon his part, and he thought that his candour was a sure proof of the correct state of his feelings; but he was wonderfully self-deceived.

And, as for Augusta, she was, if possible, still less acquainted with the real state of her feelings. She lived, as it were, in the present—never looked forward—never looked back—was happy, always happy in Peregrine’s society—and this she knew; but then she thought that she only regarded him as a beloved brother (she had no brother of her

own) and that her feelings towards him were quite pure—quite sisterly—all that they should be. She had never thought of him as a husband—never envied Julia Poggleton—never deplored the hopelessness of her condition—but she loved Peregrine nevertheless. Much as she had seen of men and manners—much as she had mixed with the world, she was quite a novice in the affections—had often been wooed but never won—had flirted with many, had played with others' feelings, wounded others' hearts, but not endangered her own. And now she thought that Peregrine was very much unlike the empty triflers, from whom her soul had so often recoiled—very much unlike all the young men, who had flocked round her with their idle compliments, vieing with one another in the silliness of their remarks and the absurdity of their whole demeanour. She had first attached herself to him, because he was an engaged man—because she thought that she might talk freely and unaffectedly to him without fear of having her freedoms misinterpreted. He was clever too—very clever—she knew that, and she took delight in his conversation; he was so open too, so free, lectured her so soundly, and yet so pleasantly, that she not only listened to, but profited by his advice—and yet all the time—poor girl!—she did not know how deeply she loved him.

We do not seek to justify either the youth or the maid. Perhaps of the two, the conduct of Pere-

grine was the least justifiable, for he had a touchstone, whereby to try his affections, which Augusta Sweetenham had not—and that touchstone was his correspondence with Julia Poggleton. We have already said that he deceived himself into a belief that *his* letters were as cordial as ever; but he ought to have been awakened from his delusion by the discovery of the altered feelings with which he perused his cousin's most affectionate epistles. He received them with indifference and read them with distaste—we had almost written with *dis-gust*. The endearments, with which poor Julia's every sentence was thickly overlaid, became to him almost sickening. The *pet names*, in which he had once so delighted, he now regarded as folly and weakness—as childish and mawkish imbecility, and more than once he tossed her letters away half read with a gesture of impatience and an expression of contempt. And yet he did not acknowledge even to himself that his love for Julia Poggleton had departed—he was wilfully, obstinately blind—thought sometimes it was possible that his tastes might have altered, but never that his affection had fled—and then shut out Julia Poggleton from his recollection, until the arrival of the next overland mail.

We must hurry on a little faster with our narrative, but before making a grand leap over the next few months, we must observe that it is possible—just possible—that vanity was at the bottom of all this evil. Augusta was not destitute of vanity. Much

as she despised the idle flatterers who flocked around her—much as she turned aside with abhorrence from the thought of uniting herself to any one of them for life, she was secretly pleased by the attention—by the preference, which they showed to her, and still more pleased by the knowledge of the envy which she had excited in her own sex. Every woman is delighted with the idea of having made a conquest of even an unoccupied heart; but how much greater the conquest—how much keener the delight, when a heart already occupied, is led captive, and the old tenant dispossessed. It is possible that Augusta Sweetenham may have felt something of this—she was made up of inconsistencies, of good and bad qualities commingled—and so inextricably commingled, that it were difficult to say where the good and where the bad predominated—whether good or evil were at the source of the many strange acts she committed. There are many such characters in the world, and dangerously brilliant characters they are sometimes to such poor moths as Peregrine Pultuney.

And with that young gentleman vanity had its full sway, even more than with Augusta Sweetenham, it was not that he took any particular pleasure in being talked of as the favoured one of the prettiest girl in India—it was not that he felt any elation of spirit in out-rivalling all the youth of Calcutta—those were small pleasures—petty vanities—only worthy of fools and foplings—deeper-seated

far were the thrilling transports of delight, which the flattered vanity of our hero excited. He knew that he was listened to—esteemed—that his advice was taken, his words remembered. He knew that his companionship had wrought a change in the character of Augusta Sweetenham, or at all events in the outward manifestations of that character. He had often hinted to her that it was a sad pity—a very sad pity indeed—that she had suffered herself to be spoken of as a flirt—as a wild, vain, and heartless girl, when she might so easily have commanded the respect and admiration of all; and one day, it was at a pic-nic in the Botanical Gardens, beneath the spreading branches of that huge banana tree, which is one of the noticeable things in that noticeable spot, he had opened his mind to her fully and freely, and told her how much he regretted that she did not exhibit the better parts of her character more prominently in public, how sorry he was that she had suffered foolish people, who had not the ability to comprehend her, to think of her as something so very different from what she in reality was. From that day a marked difference of demeanour was perceptible in Augusta Sweetenham—she became more sober, more subdued, more decorous—and Peregrine both observed the change himself, and heard others observe upon it. Either his advice, or his society, or *both*, had effected this wonderful change, and could he feel otherwise than flattered by it?

Experienced people may ask how it was that Augusta Sweetenham's uncle and aunt did not observe the growing intimacy between Peregrine and his niece, or observing, why they did not put a stop to it. To this we answer, that Mr. Sweetenham, being at his *duftry-khana* (or office) during the whole of the day, knew very little indeed about the matter; and that Mrs. Sweetenham, though she knew very well that the young people were sincerely attached to one another, never thought that the attachment was any thing else than the brotherly and sisterly league, which they professed it to be. She had several times spoken to her niece on the subject, and once or twice broached the subject to Peregrine; but had every time received such full assurances that the friendship of the young people was quite pure and platonic, that she had at last settled down into a full belief, that there was no possible harm in their intimacy, and, with this belief strong in her mind, she had rather sought to encourage than to break off the connexion, for she not only loved her niece dearly, but was very partial to Peregrine Pultuncy, whom, in a little time, she regarded quite as a son, and treated with true maternal kindness. As for Mr. Sweetenham—good, easy man—he thought that Peregrine was a capital fellow, and as long as he could get him to listen to his stories and drink his claret, he was perfectly contented——

But let us have done with these explanations.



which, though very necessary indeed to this part of our history are, we know, oftentimes heavy and fatiguing. We have established a character, we think, in these last few pages, for the possession at least of a *little* knowledge of the human heart, and as they are the only ones of the sort in our history, we trust that we shall be fully forgiven for these brief passages of attempted mental analysis. Time was when we thought that these passages could not be too numerous or too lengthy; but we have grown a little wiser in this sort, and dwell now upon the outward and palpable.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was the month of May—hot, grilling, unbearable May, and Peregrine was where he always was, when he could escape from Dum-Dum, in Mrs. Sweetenham's well-furnished drawing-room. The old lady had gone out to pay a visit, and Peregrine, who was a privileged person, was left with his beautiful sister. Many a morning had they spent thus together, sometimes reading, sometimes drawing, sometimes singing, and sometimes, we are afraid, doing little more than looking into one another's eyes, and thinking that they were very happy.

They sat together on a sofa, those young lovers, and Peregrine's arm was precisely where it should not have been—encircling Augusta's waist.

“What a very excellent contrivance this is,” said Peregrine, “for pulling the punkah from the room below. The inventor of it deserves a pen-



sion, I am sure, as a public benefactor of the first class."

"Why so?" asked Augusta Sweetenham.

"Because it does suffer us sometimes to be alone," replied Peregrine; "it is such a comfort to sit in a room unsurrounded by a swarm of servants—of black eyes watching one's every movement. It is such a pleasure to be, as now, alone."

"And why?" asked Augusta, smiling. To this Peregrine made no verbal answer; but he looked with a most significant tenderness at the young lady by way of a response.

\* \* \* \* \*

"And so," said Augusta, "we are really to see Mrs. Pultuney at the beginning of the cold weather."

"My mother?" exclaimed Peregrine.

"Your mother—what affectation!"

"Whom do you mean then?"

"Your wife—your betrothed—your 'little girl,' as you used to call her."

"Oh!" said Peregrine Pultuney.

"Oh!" repeated Augusta Sweetenham, who, to do her justice, was constantly talking to Peregrine about his little girl, much more constantly, indeed, than he liked—"what right have you to groan about it, pray? But you are a sad hypocrite, my dear brother—a very sad hypocrite, indeed."

"In what way?" asked Peregrine Pultuney.

"Pretending to take it all so coolly," said Au-

gusta; "affecting philosophy in this way. You know that you were delighted with the good news which the last overland brought you: and yet now you cry 'oh! oh!'"

"Of course I was delighted," said Peregrine, rallying—"of course, I am truly delighted!"

"Ah!" rejoined Augusta, "perhaps you are right after all, not to betray your feelings too much before strangers."

"*Strangers!* What my own dear sister a stranger?" exclaimed Peregrine Pultuncy; and, certainly, if she had been one, the little proceeding with which the exclamation was accompanied, would have struck her as somewhat extraordinary, to say the least of it.

"I wonder what your little girl would say, if she were to see you going on in this extraordinary manner."

"Nothing," returned Peregrine.

"She would be struck dumb with astonishment you think: but we are wasting the morning sadly. I wish you would finish that picture."

"Very well, I will—that I will—any thing for my dear sister"—returned Peregrine; "but you must sing to me as I work. I have never yet heard my own verses, which I made you on purpose to set to music."

"I have not finished them long," said Augusta? "I was not pleased with my work at first, and then I altered it again and again, without satisfying myself after all."

“I dare say that you have done your part very well,” said Peregrine, “but I am sadly ashamed of mine.”

“You need not be, indeed. Will you open the piano? Thank you, my dear brother,”—and Augusta Sweetenham began in a low, clear, most expressive voice—

## I.

“Oh! do not curse him, mother, for the evil he has done,  
I cannot bear to hear you curse my once beloved one:  
You know I have forgiven him, sweet mother do the same,  
For he was sorely tempted, and he was not much to blame.

## II.

“He might have been more kind to me—he might have been  
more true—  
I know that he has done a thing it is a sin to do.  
But he was very young, mother, and she was very fair,  
So stifle now the swelling curse, and offer up the prayer.

## III.

“He loved me dearly once, he did—I was his soul’s delight—  
He said I was, a thousand times, and I believed him quite—  
I do believe him still, and think I should have been his bride,  
If you had never driven him to wander from my side.

## IV.

“You know, I would have clung to him—I would in weal  
or woe,—  
You know I would have gone with him where e’er he pleased  
to go:  
He wished me then, indeed, mother, to be his ‘little wife’—  
And said I was—I knew it then—the one hope of his life.

## V.

“But you forbade him then, mother—you said that he was poor,  
And sadly he, a blighted man, pass’d from our cottage-door;  
He promised still to love me, but another, fairer came,  
And tempted him—oh! do not curse; he was not much to blame.

## VI.

“Perhaps he could not help it—oh! perhaps he was betray’d—  
I do not think he could have quite forgot the little maid,  
(I like to use his very words) who loved him ere he went,  
In search of foreign riches, to that far-off continent.

## VII.

“They flatter’d him and dazzled him, and very weak is youth—  
Perhaps had I been tempted thus, it might have shook my truth:  
I do not think it would, but still, we know not what we are,  
Until the tempter comes, mother—and she was very fair.

## VIII.

“I think that I am dying, but I wish to fall asleep,  
So, dearest mother, dry your tears, I must not have you weep:  
You know that had I gone with him to that far eastern shore,  
You would not then perchance have seen your little daughter more.

## IX.

“Forget then that he wrong’d me—forget he was untrue—  
And think of me on summer days, when all the sky is blue:  
Think of me, mother, living there in that serener clime,  
And bless the man who sent your child to heaven before her time.”

Perhaps our readers will guess what was in Peregrine’s mind at the time of his composing this

song. We need not say what reality suggested the thought of this fictitious woe. He ought indeed to have been ashamed of himself, but we are almost afraid that he was not.

## CHAPTER XIV.

In which our Hero makes a Discovery, and finds himself in a Dilemma.

PEREGRINE PULTUNEY spent the whole of that morning at Mrs. Sweetenham's, and tiffed there, as, indeed, he always did, when he paid his dear friends a visit. The *durwan* knew well enough, that when Pultuncy sahib once passed in he would not pass out again till some where about "driving time," whilst the bearers said to one another that Missy-baba was always very *kush* indeed, when Pultuncy sahib came from Dum-Dum, to spend the day with their young mistress. If a native house-servant were to write his reminiscences, and give his opinions in full of all that passed in the different families he had attended, as singularly amusing a work would be produced as has ever yet emanated from man.

It was about six o'clock in the evening, and the sun which had been all day shining in the full fierceness of its unclouded splendour, scorching up the

earth like a shrivelled parchment, and defying the conservancy water-carts, was just sinking behind the river-bank, when Peregrine Pultuney mounted one of Mr. Sweetenham's Arabs, and cantered to Dr. Fitz-simon's well known hospitable mansion in Chowringhee. Not that the young gentleman was ill, but that he had not seen his kind friend and benefactor for some weeks, and was anxious, therefore, to have a little talk with him. Calcutta was just beginning to pour forth its inhabitants for the evening ride and drive, and as Peregrine rode along, he passed by several people with whom he was acquainted. To his great astonishment, one stared at him, as though uncertain of his identity; another laughed as he passed; a third, a lady, turned away her head, and tried to look grave and dignified. He did not know what to make of this: he thought that there must have been something extraordinary about his dress; so he took off his hat (he was in plain clothes) glanced down at his trousers, examined the tails of his surtout; but could see nothing to attract attention. It was certainly very strange.

As he rode into Fitz-simon's compound, he saw, as might always have been seen about that time, two or three doctors' carriages at the door, with coachmen and syces in the well-known livery of that great jobber, Mr. Hunter, and when he made his way unannounced into the good doctor's well-furnished study, he found his old and kind friend in conversation with Dr. Martingale. Peregrine shook

hands with them both and was about to withdraw, until they had finished their consultation, but Dr. Fitz-simon laid his hand on Peregrine's arm, said that he wished to speak to him, and after exchanging a few more words with Dr. Martingale, wished that gentleman good bye, and then placing his hand on the shoulder of our hero, asked him, a benevolent smile playing all the while about the worthy doctor's mouth, whether he had seen the papers that morning.

"Yes," said Peregrine, "I read the *Hurkaru*, as I was coming up from Dum-Dum, in the carriage."

They were walking up and down Dr. Fitz-simon's ample and well-supplied library—the doctor's hand upon Peregrine's shoulder. Nothing could have been kinder than the elder man's manner, and yet there was something serious in his aspect. Peregrine was all attention—nay, more, reverence, for he loved and honoured his friend.

Have you read the *Englishman*, though?" asked Dr. Fitz-simon.

"I saw it," returned Peregrine—"just saw it at the mess—was there any thing very particular in it?"

"You may judge for yourself," said the doctor, walking towards his writing-table; "here is the paper—now just look amongst the *Domestic Occurrences*—you will not be able to see there—you had better go to the window."



Peregrine took the paper and walked towards one of the windows. He could not conceive what the doctor was driving at, or what the "Domestic Occurrences" were to him. He found the place, however, and read through a tolerable list of births—Mrs. Pereira had got a little boy—Mrs. De Rozario a little girl, and the lady of Ensign Simkins (unfortunate youth!) had got both a boy and a girl.

Peregrine did not see that these events, however interesting to the parties concerned, particularly interested him, so he began incontinently on the *marriages*.

"God bless my soul!" he cried, "what is this? 'At St. John's Cathedral, by the Rev. Henry Hunter, senior presidency chaplain, Peregrine Pultuney, Esquire (the devil!) of the Bengal Artillery, to Augusta Emily, (oh! the devil!) only daughter of the late Lieut.-Colonel Sweetenham.' Oh! this is very nice—very nice indeed, of a certainty."

"Well; what do you think of that?" asked the doctor.

"Think! I give you my honour," returned Peregrine, "that I really do not know what to think."

"It is a great pity," remarked the doctor.

"Very," returned Peregrine; "I wish that these facetious gentlemen, whose delight it is to hoax the public, would not make me the subject of their hoaxes. However it is very easy to contradict it—and as for myself I do not much care; but I am

afraid, that if Miss Sweetenham hears of it, she will be annoyed, perhaps offended."

"That does not matter much," said the doctor; "I am now thinking of you."

"What of me?" asked Peregrine Pultuney.

"Why," said the doctor, gravely, "perhaps this hoax may not be quite so harmless as you think it. Did you write to England by the last mail?"

"No," returned Peregrine, "I think not—no—no—when was it sent?"

"Yesterday," said Dr. Fitz-simon, "to-day's letters will probably be in time."

"Will they?" rejoined Peregrine vaguely, for he did not exactly know what the overland mail had to do with the newspaper hoax.

"I thought you always wrote home by every mail," continued the good doctor; "you told me you did, to Julia Poggleton."

"So I have done;" returned Peregrine, "so I do indeed—this is the first time I have missed."

"Is it? the more's the pity," exclaimed the doctor, emphatically; "I am afraid that to-morrow's dâk will be too late—however, you had better write."

"Write what?" asked Peregrine Pultuney.

"Why, write, boy, to Julia Poggleton, and tell her that you are not married—that the whole thing is a miserable hoax."

"Is there any occasion for that?" asked Peregrine.

“To be sure there is,” returned the doctor; “you say this is the first time that you have not written.”

“Yes,” said Peregrine Pultuncy.

“And what made you miss now?”

That question was not so easily answered—Peregrine said that he did not know.

“Now,” continued the good doctor, gravely, “suppose—I say just suppose—that a copy of this newspaper were to reach England (and a great many copies of it do), and by some accident be conveyed to the Poggletons—suppose that they were to read this announcement of your marriage, and know that the same mail, which brought it, had brought no letter from you—this being the first time that you had not written—what would the Poggletons suspect?”

“I don’t know,” returned Peregrine.

“I do though,” said Dr. Fitz-simon; “they would set down at once the announcement as correct, and you would lose a wife, my good fellow—she, perhaps, her happiness for ever.”

“I never thought of all this,” exclaimed Peregrine. “I will go to the newspaper-office at once and contradict the announcement.”

“That will be of no use particularly,” returned the doctor; “the chances are that to-day’s paper will reach England and that to-morrow’s will not—however, you must contradict it of course, for the information of your friends here.”

“ I will write home at once then,” continued Peregrine.

“ You may as well do that at all events,” returned Dr. Fitz-simon, “ it can do no harm, and it may possibly reach Bombay in good time—though I cannot give you very much hope.”

“ The wretches,” exclaimed Peregrine. “ What a shame it is, that the newspaper people should insert these false reports and help the hoaxers to propagate their evil mischief.”

“ They cannot help it,” said the doctor. “ How are they to know that the reports sent them are false? You cannot expect them to know the handwriting of all the people in Calcutta—or to know whether Miss This is engaged or is not engaged to Mr. That. *They* at all events are innocent parties.”

“ I wish I could find out,” observed Peregrine, looking at his riding-whip, as he spoke, “ who it is that has done this mischief. I would play off a practical joke in my turn, that should not be very soon be forgotten.”

“ I scarcely think it was meant for a joke,” said the doctor; “ at all events it has been a very mischievous one, or rather it is likely to be so. I wish, most sincerely, that you had never done any thing to suggest its perpetration, my dear boy; but it is no use talking about that. Do you think it has been done by an enemy?”

“ I don't know,” said Peregrine, “ perhaps it may

have been—I really don't know who it could have been, unless it was the fellow, Drawlincourt."

"What!—the man who married Mrs. Parkinson's niece?—I think he has gone to sea—I gave him a medical certificate."

"Yes," said Peregrine, "I believe he has—he is either going or is gone. I think, by the bye, he has gone, and left his wife at Mrs. Parkinson's. I don't know what to make of it; but I will go to the printing-office, and try to find out who sent the notification."

"Write your letter first," said Dr. Fitz-simon, "let that business be done first, you can do it here if you like, and you had better stop and take your dinner."

Peregrine was very sorry—he would have been most happy—but he was engaged.

He shook hands with the worthy doctor, mounted his horse, and rode out of the compound. He intended to have gone straight to the printing-office, but some how or other it happened that just as he was passing in front of Government-house, he fell in with Mrs. Sweetenham's britska; the consequence was, that he forgot to take the proper turning, and rode on beside the carriage.

Several gentlemen passed them, some on horseback, some in buggies, and the greater number of them bowed to Mrs. Sweetenham, some accompanying the bow with an astonished stare, and others with a smile. Of this Peregrine knew the meaning; but Augusta Sweetenham did not.

"I cannot think," said the young lady, "why all the people look so strangely at me as they pass. Is there any thing singular-looking about me?—I cannot think what it is."

"No," returned Peregrine, "I can see nothing."

"Nor I," chimed in Mrs. Sweetenham; "I think you look very nice."

"*Very*," remarked Peregrine.

"I have got a very common-place cap on I am sure," continued Miss Sweetenham; "I cannot conceive what they are staring at. Do you know, Mr. Pultuney?"

"I will tell you by and bye," said Peregrine, in an under tone. "I think that I do know very well."

"Thank you," returned Augusta—"thank you—you are a kind good brother."

They were by this time on the course. Peregrine said "*Au revoir*," to his sister, and cantered on amongst the equestrians. He had not ridden far, before he fell in with Julian Jenks, who happened to be on garrison duty.

"You are the very fellow I wanted to see," said Julian.

"Well," returned Peregrine, "what is it?"

"Have you seen the *Englishman*, this morning?" asked Jenks.

"Yes," said Peregrine, somewhat impatiently.

"And let me see, you think of that announce-

ment,' continued Mr. Jenks, "of your marriage with Miss Sweetenham?"

"I think," returned Peregrine, "that some d—d impertinent fellow, whom I should like to horse-whip considerably, inserted it. Have you any idea who did it?"

"No," said Julian Jenks, "none; but some of those idle puppies, perhaps, who have been rejected by Miss Sweetenham—who have been cut out by you—some impertinent fellow wanting amusement."

"Do you think," asked Peregrine, "that it was done for amusement?"

"I should think so," returned Julian, "but I do not know—perhaps, partly in spite."

"I think *all* in spite," said Peregrine.

"And who is the wretch?" asked Mr. Jenks.

"Why, I do not know. I am not certain of course," replied Peregrine; "but I should not wonder if Drawlincourt had done it."

"Why; he is at sea," said Mr. Jenks.

"He has only just gone, though," returned Peregrine. "He came done here on private affairs, I believe, and managed to get a fever, and go to sea, leaving his wife behind him. I think, though, he has left something else behind him—the trail of the serpent—that I do. I wish that I could find him out, at all events, and, by Jupiter, if he did not clear himself to my full satisfaction, he should be whipped within an inch of his life."

The two equestrians had ridden beyond the crowded mall, past the fort, almost to the Cooly-bazaar, and were therefore alone upon the road. Peregrine spoke loudly and angrily, and flourished his whip, as he spoke.

There was a pause, which Julian Jenks was the first to break. "Have you contradicted the report?" he asked.

"Dear me! no—I have not," returned Peregrine, "although I had started on my way to the printing-office, and now I shall be too late—it must be near seven, and I have promised to dine with the Sweetenhams."

"Shall I go there for you?" asked Julian Jenks, who was engaged to dine out too, but thought that if he could be of use to his friend, it would not matter being late for dinner.

"Thank you, my dear fellow," said Peregrine. "I wish you would—you are really very kind—and try and find out, will you, who is the author of the hoax. Get hold of the manuscript if you can."

"Yes, I will," returned Julian Jenks, "I will go at once—suppose we turn now. I will let you know as soon as I can."

They turned their horses' heads towards Calcutta, and cantered up the course together; when they had reached the end of it, Julian Jenks rode on, but Peregrine drew up his horse, turned round, walked a short distance, looking out, as well as the coming darkness would let him, for the Sweeten-



hams' carriage, and, failing to discern it in the mass, galloped home to their house in Chowringhee.

They had returned before him. Peregrine hastened to the room, wherein he always made his toilet, dressed as quickly as he could, and then hurried to the drawing-room, where he found Augusta waiting for him alone.

"Now, tell me," she said, as soon as Peregrine had seated himself on the sofa beside her; "tell me why it was that all the people looked so strangely at me to-day?"

"You must promise not to be angry with me then," returned Peregrine, sliding his arm round the young lady's waist.

"Yes," said Augusta, "that I will—for I am sure it was not your fault."

"Well," returned Peregrine, "the fact is, that some mischievous, *jealous* person or other, has inserted in one of the newspapers, a report of our marriage."

"And that is all—is it?" asked Augusta, laughing. "Well, that does not much matter."

There was something strained and hollow in her laugh—Peregrine thought that it was artificial. There was nobody in the room and so he kissed her. She pressed her cheek against his; it was burningly hot, and there was a wildness in her eyes.

"I am glad that you do not care," said Peregrine—"I was afraid that you would be annoyed and then perhaps——"

“Then what?”

“Begin,” continued Peregrine, “to talk, or at all events to think about the ill effects of our intimacy. I am glad you do not; and after all, what does it matter?—every body will know it to be a lie.”

“A lie?” repeated Augusta, in a vague, melancholy tone, her eyes fixed on the ground—“a lie?”

“Yes,” continued Peregrine—“a lie”—and he drew the fair girl closer to his side. “Alas! alas! nothing but a lie. Oh! God! that it *had* been truth!”

“Truth?”—echoed Augusta Sweetenham.

The word was spoken—there was no use recalling it—Peregrine’s cheek burned as hotly as Augusta’s. It was good for both parties that at this moment a servant entered the room, and gave our hero a chit; before the bearer had taken his departure, Augusta had quite recovered herself, and there were no further revelations that night.

“*Bahut bahut salaam do,*”\* said Peregrine to the servant, and then turning to Augusta, he continued, “I have got a note from my friend Jenks, who has been to the newspaper-office to inquire about the hoax; but he cannot gain any information—the manuscript, is not forthcoming, and all they know is, that the chit was brought by a peon—and that it was written apparently in a lady’s hand, so there is no use trying any further.”

“None,” said Augusta, quite calmly; “but be

\* Give my best compliments.

sure that you write at once to your little girl, to tell her that it is all a falsehood. I would not for the world that she should read the announcement, though it were only to give her a moment's pain—a moment's mistrust. You have, of course, written by this last overland—so it cannot do very much harm."

"No, I have not written," said Peregrine.

"Not written!—oh! naughty brother!—I am very angry with you indeed; but there is still one hope, which is that she may have sailed before the arrival of this mail; and thus be spared both the knowledge of your neglect and the pain of hearing this calumny. She is to leave, you know, in the beginning of August."

"In the beginning of August," sighed Peregrine.

"And this is May"—

"Well; she may not get it. I hope and trust that she will not,"—and he thought to himself how stupid it was that he had not thought of Julia's approaching departure, when Dr. Fitz-simon asked why he had not written by the last overland mail. In his little secret heart of all, there was a wish which he durst not have embodied in words.

Mr. and Mrs. Sweetenham soon joined the party in the drawing-room, and the remainder of the evening was spent as evenings generally are spent, and Peregrine reached Dum-Dum about half an hour after midnight.

## CHAPTER XV.

Containing some Accounts of a Day at Dum-Dum, and Peregrine Pultuney's Perplexities.

OUR history is drawing to a close. The cold weather has come round again, and Peregrine Pultuney is in daily expectation of the arrival of the vessel, which is to bring back to him his betrothed bride.

The Poggletons had taken their passage in the *Hastings*, which was the ship that brought Peregrine to India, and on that account selected at the earnest entreaty of Julia, who, with all the romantic tenderness of true love, thought that this kind of association with her beloved, would do much to alleviate the irksomeness and tedium of the long voyage. It was all hallowed ground to her—the deck, the poop, the cuddy, the steerage, wherever Peregrine had trodden; and besides, she thought that she would often have an opportunity of hearing the praises of her lover from the captain, the officers,

perhaps the very sailors of the ship, and how delightful would this be to her.

But the scene of our history is India, and from India shall we not depart. It is the month of January, early in January, and the *Hastings* is every day expected; but Peregrine Pultuney is not so happy as he ought to be; nay, we fear that he is not happy at all.

It was Peregrine's guard-day. That in itself is enough to make any body unhappy; but the unhappiness of the hero of this story was more deeply seated—more abiding. What was he to do? His betrothed wife was coming to him, and he had not a heart to give her. His affections were fixed upon another.

It was a beautiful, clear, cold morning, when Peregrine, after mounting guard, made his way on foot across the Dum-Dum cantonment road, through the magazine yard, and up the stairs, leading to the Congee-house cells, which it was part of his duty to inspect. There was something particularly invigorating in the atmosphere; but Peregrine felt depressed; he walked slowly and languidly; shivered every now and then, and longed for an English fire.

He saw the cells opened, and fresh loaves served out to the prisoners; he stood opposite to one of the doors for some minutes, wondering what sort of a life a man led in prison with nothing but a Bible to keep him company, and almost thought he should

like himself to go into confinement for a month. When he turned round, his eye fell on the house which he had taken for his destined wife; the sun was just appearing above it, but he continued to gaze at the building for some minutes, thinking whether he had purchased or ordered every thing that was necessary for a married man, and when he turned aside his head, a number of little beamless suns danced before his eyes, and he could not get rid of them. The corporal told him that all the cells were reclosed, and he walked down the Congee-house stairs again.

When he returned to the guard-house it was just eight o'clock, so Peregrine broke off the guard mechanically, and sauntered across to the mess-house. There were several officers in the library, sitting and standing round a table, reading the papers and drinking coffee; Peregrine poured out a cup of coffee, and was drinking it, when one of his brother-officers told him that he was looking very ill, thin, yellow, not at all like what one ought to look in the cold weather. Our hero answered rather tetchily, that he felt very well indeed; had never been better in his life; but it is doubtful whether he thought so.

Presently, Julian Jenks, who had been out for a gallop, came into the room, looking fresh and rosy, with a riding-whip in his hand. "Any news in the papers this morning, Willoughby?" he asked of an officer, who was poring over the *Englishman*.

“ Oh ! d—n it—not a word—never is,” said the officer appealed to; “ all the papers as barren as can be—want another overland mail.”

“ So we do,” returned Julian Jenks. “ Pultuney, is there any coffee there?”

“ Yes; shall I pour you out some?”

“ Thank you; by the bye, any ships in?”

“ I have not looked,” said Peregrine Pultuney.

“ Yes,” said a young officer, throwing down the paper and rising at the same time from his seat. “ I see the *Hastings* is in.”

“ Is it?” said Peregrine, finishing his coffee and feeling very sick after it. “ Where? any list of passengers?”

He took up the paper, looked at the ship news himself, satisfied himself that the vessel was only announced as having arrived at the Sand-heads, and, trying to look as unconcerned as possible, walked into the verandah.

Julian Jenks followed him, and passing his arm through that of his friend, said, “ My dear Pultuney, if you wish to go, you know you may command my services. I shall be very happy to take your guard for you; and, I dare say, that you can get leave.”

“ To go where?” asked Peregrine.

“ To meet the ship—where else? I dare say that she will not get steam till this morning, and you will meet her below Diamond Harbour. Of course you intended to do so, but for this horrible guard.”

“Of course,” repeated Peregrine, “of course.”

“Then why not go now? Just write a chit, or I will write it for you to the captain of the week. There can be no difficulty in such a case as this; none whatever, I am sure.”

“I don’t know that,” returned Peregrine. “I was refused only a few days ago, when I wished to change guards with some one else.”

“Oh! but that was quite a different matter; it was only then to play a cricket match,” urged Julian; “will you let me write for you? or suppose I mount my horse at once and ride over to the captain of the week.”

“Stay,” said Peregrine, “do not go. Remember that there is practice this evening, and brigading to-morrow; they will never give me leave for two days together, and I could not get back to-night. I had better not go now, to-morrow morning will be plenty of time.”

“But you must get a few days’ leave, when you are married,” suggested Jenks.

“Yes, I know that; but not before the review; you know that they refused Clay last week, though only between practice-days. I think I had better not ask; besides, I shall be in plenty of time to-morrow. I can write, you know; indeed I have written; there is a letter now at Kedgerec—has been waiting the arrival of the ship. I think, I will not go—at all events, not to-day.”

“Very well,” said Jenks; “but, remember, that



if you should think better of it, I should be very happy to take your guard."

"I am very much obliged to you, I am sure," returned Peregrine, and he turned away, with a sigh; "very much obliged to you, indeed."

Julian Jenks mounted his horse and rode homewards, in no very good spirits. He found his predictions but too true; there was but one way of accounting for the unwillingness of his friend to hurry towards the *Hastings*. There was no eagerness, because no love—it was a very palpable case.

Peregrine returned to the library, which was by this time deserted, took up first one paper and then another; read several articles in each, but did not know what he was reading about; then turned over some half-dozen magazines, looked at some pictures, and then sauntered into the dressing-room, and made his toilet, with the assistance of his bearer, in a sort of vague mechanical way. He felt very cold, and though not sleepy, yawned nervously almost every minute. Julia Poggleton had really arrived!

He had no appetite for breakfast, but he tried to eat some cold meat, and performed the task with the greatest possible disrelish. He then went into the verandah to sun himself, and whilst there, a servant brought him a chit, which had been taken to his house. He looked at it; it was from Augusta Sweetenham. "Dear girl," he muttered, "dear girl, always mindful of me. God bless her, for writing to me so often." He had got

about two hundred of her chits in a box. "Sweet girl!" and the note went up to his lips. "God bless her," and the seal was broken: "'My very dear brother . . . I do, indeed, congratulate you on the arrival of the *Hastings*, at last.' Congratulate me—oh! very, very much cause for congratulation—very much cause for congratulation, indeed. . . . 'I scarcely expect that this note will reach you, for you will have heard the good news before this, and will be most probably on your way to meet your dear little girl on the river. We have written to her again to tell her, that all things are in readiness for her and your aunt, at our house; and, indeed, my dear brother, I will receive her as a sister—as a dear sister' . . . Oh! oh!—a sister—she a sister, and Julia Poggleton my wife."

He continued to peruse Augusta's letter, groaning in spirit all the while. It was a most kind, a most affectionate, but a most sisterly letter; and because it was so, it pained him exceedingly. "And this is all," he thought, "this is all—she still only loves me as a sister—I thought that I had seen other love than a sister's beaming in her eyes; but it may have been my folly, my vanity—I did think too, that I loved like a brother—a long time, I was in this belief; I cannot think so *now*—Oh! God, I am very wretched, and fully deserve even more than I endure." He was piqued, annoyed, his pride was hurt, and this feeling was more painful than the

rest. He could have borne any thing, when in the full belief that Augusta Sweetenham loved him with a love exceeding that of a sister. But that rock of support seemed now taken from him, and he did not know which way to turn.

He read Augusta's letter again, and was more convinced than ever, that he had been mistaken of late in thinking that she loved him, as a lover. How could she write in this way, he reasoned with himself, if she felt towards him more fondly than a sister? He was quite a novice in these matters, or he would have put a very different interpretation on the sisterly style of Augusta Sweetenham's letter. He would have known that, the crisis having arrived, there was now more necessity than ever for self-subjection, and that the stronger the passions to be subjected, the stronger the measures necessary for their subjection, or at all events, for their concealment, and how often does concealment take the place of subjection, until the one is almost identified with the other. Peregrine Pultuney, however, knew nothing of this, and his state of mind was not favourable just then to an analytical examination into motives.

He tore up Augusta's chit (the first that he had ever destroyed, though she had repeatedly begged him to do so) and sat down to write an answer to it. He was, in his turn, very brotherly—very brotherly and very hypocritical, and he did his best to pique Augusta. He pretended to be delighted with

the glad tidings of the arrival of the *Hastings*, in raptures about his little girl, and sadly distressed that his military duties prevented him from starting immediately to meet her; and, when he had done this, though not much given to be lachrymose, he felt as though he would have given the world to be at home, that he might have shut himself up in one of his rooms, and done what young ladies call "crying their eyes out."

This, however, he was not able to do, so he walked about the great cold mess-house—all windows, doors, and drafts, as it is—buttoned up his coat, and began to think whether it was not possible that, after all, he loved Julia Poggleton better than Augusta Sweetenham.

But this was rather a failure; he had almost forgotten the lineaments and the expression of Julia's face, whilst those of Augusta's were fresh in his memory. He knew that he *had* thought the former very pretty and very agreeable, but now she seemed plain and insipid, when compared with Augusta Sweetenham. Perhaps, though, the re-appearance of Julia on the stage would lead him to form a different opinion; but his heart misgave him, it was scarcely possible for any one to eclipse the brilliant Augusta.

He soon grew tired of thinking about himself and his situation, so he tried to busy himself with other thoughts. There was an addition being made to

room, and Peregrine stood in the ball-room to watch the plaisterers doing their work. There were four men and two or three boys employed, and Peregrine watched with a sort of vague, listless curiosity the bungling, unworkmanlike manner, in which these natives pursued their occupation: there was rather a good-looking boy, who squatted on his haunches and mixed up a quantity of white-wash in an earthen vessel, he being himself spotted and besmeared into a pie-bald complexion by the liquid he was preparing. Peregrine thought to himself that he would like to change places with this boy, and then wondered whether he could make his way in safety to the roof of the room, by means of the primitive apology for a ladder—three or four transverse bamboos tied together—which the *mistries* (bricklayers), were making use of. He then began to calculate the number of games, which it would take, at an anna a game, to pay for a billiard-table, which cost a thousand rupees; but, before he had done this, he was interrupted by an orderly, who brought him an adjutant's circular, regarding practice, charges, fuses, &c., and he learnt from this, that he was expected to be at the battery a little after three in the afternoon. He was glad of this, and he transcribed a few memoranda regarding length of fuses, &c., and having done this, he went into the library, took down a novel, and read, or tried to read for an hour or two. There was something in the book, which reminded him of his own history, for there was

something in it about a faithless lover, and this arrested his attention. He thought that the fictitious deceiver was a scoundrel of the first class, and yet his own case was an almost parallel one. He, however, consoled himself with the idea, that he had done nothing actually wrong; and that, as he could not control his feelings, could not regulate the erratic propensities of a naturally erratic heart, he was in no sense a culprit. This sophistry, it is true, might have broken down upon mature consideration, but his reflections were put a stop to by the somewhat noisy incursion of three or four young officers, who had come over to the mess for tiffin, and were clamouring loudly for stewpans and Harvey sauce, to make "something good for tiffin." Peregrine joined the party, and lent a hand towards the concoction of a most irreproachable stew, the chief excellence of which consisted in its being so hot that Monsieur Chabert (the fire-king) himself need not have been ashamed of watery eyes after eating it. Though it put several of the young gentleman to exquisite pain, it was voted to be "quite the thing," and several bottles of beer were drunk, to the evident satisfaction of the parties who had been consuming the meritorious stew.

It was nearly three o'clock, by the time that the tiffin party had broken up, and Peregrine had smoked a cheroot. Our hero had almost contrived to forget his sorrows for a while, but when he went into the dressing-room to put on his regimentals, they all

rushed back upon him again. He was alone; and he was very miserable.

He dressed himself hurriedly—put on his cap, buckled on his sword, and set out for the battery. In a few minutes he was there, with a saw in his hand, cutting fuses. He was attached to the mortar battery, and had to prepare the ammunition for the *thirteen* and the *ten* inch mortars. Most mechanically he went through it all, scarcely knowing what he was about, and more than once he detected himself in the commission of some gross error. He took a fuse-auger into his hand and began boring away with much vehemence at a ten-inch fuse, thinking all the time about his approaching meeting, re-union as *she* called it, with his betrothed. He thought whether he should find her altered—whether her trip to England would have improved her, whether she would be affectionate, cloyingly-affectionate, and he shuddered. Then he thought of Mrs. Poggleton—her silliness—her inanity—how dreadful it would be to have her eternally talking nonsense in his house. He shuddered again, went on boring, and then suddenly remembered that he was exerting himself to no purpose, as there was not the least occasion for using the fuse-auger at all; so he took the saw again—and then the rasp, and after using the latter for some time, discovered that he was trying to make a thirteen-inch fuse fit into a ten-inch shell. Several of his brother officers were at the same bench—talking and working around him;

he answered their questions vaguely; and then thought what an annoyance it would be to be jeered at by his bachelor friends for turning Benedict so soon, and more than that, he began to doubt whether they would all approve of his choice. It is a foolish, but natural vanity in a very young man, to wish to be talked of as the husband of a beautiful woman; and Peregrine knew that if he were to marry Augusta Sweetenham, this pleasure would certainly be in store for him—but as for Julia—she was very, very pretty; but Peregrine had almost forgotten what she was like.

He was thinking something or other about her figure—which was in reality better than Augusta Sweetenham's—though Peregrine had taken it into his head that she was much too thin—when the captain in command of the mortar battery, asked our hero if he had set the pickets for and marked the line of metal on his two guns. Peregrine looked up, then passed his hand across his face, said he had forgotten that part of the business, and called out to a lascar to bring him a piece of chalk, some string, and a spirit level.

He went through the remainder of his duties with much precision—the precision of a well-contrived automaton—made several very excellent shots, one of which did all but splinter the flagstaff, and then returned to his guard, just in time to “beat down” the sun and break off his men.

Then shortly afterwards came dinner—and Pere-



grine was once more "himself again." He talked freely, took wine with every one, laughed abundantly, and if he were not happy, he was, at all events, excited. Julian Jenks alone knew that the Poggletons were in the *Hastings*; the remainder of Peregrine's brother-officers were, for the most part, aware of that young gentleman's engagement (some thought, however, that it was to Augusta Sweetenham); but when Peregrine ceased to be ardent in his affection towards his betrothed, he ceased to be communicative about her, and no longer took pleasure, as he once had done, in talking about his intended, and descanting on her manifold perfections.

Nothing very particular happened at dinner, and Peregrine arose from the table a little before nine o'clock. He lit a cheroot, went into the verandah, and sent for Peer Khan. The faithful Mahomedan was not long before he waited on his impatient master, but he received a sharp reproof for his delay, having administered which, Peregrine Pultuney told his servant to go immediately into Calcutta, and get a good eight-oared *boleau* all ready for him at Chandpaul ghaut by eight o'clock next morning, as he was going down the river to meet an English ship.

The zealous Mahomedan ventured to ask if the *mehm-sahib* and the *missy-baba* had returned to India, in return for which he was told not to be impertinent, but to take himself off as fast as he could.

Peregrine smoked out his cheroot, and then

walked across to the main guard and ordered out the "grand rounds." It was very dark indeed, and not a little cold, but before Peregrine had marched far, he fell into a reverie. Whether it was the motion (motion always produces hope) or the briskness of the atmosphere, or the wine he had drunk, we do not pretend to say; but his spirits began to rise as he went along, and he thought to himself that, all things considered, he was not in so *very* deplorable a situation. He had just broached this proposition, when he was challenged by one of the barrack-guards, and the well-known sounds of "who comes there?" aroused him from his meditations. He halted the guard all in due form, and when he had given the word again to the "rounds" to proceed, he fell into a second reverie more profound than the first. He recalled to mind, with some degree of pleasure, Julia Poggleton's extreme affection for him, and remembered that not only was she considered very pretty and extremely fascinating, when in Calcutta, but that she had been very much sought after, and had refused many excellent offers. She could not then, it was plain, be any thing so very ordinary—moreover, he had himself loved her once—loved her very dearly indeed, and it was more than possible that at the very first interview, all his affection, which had been dammed up by absence, would gush forth in a full stream anew. And if so, all would be well—he might still continue to love Augusta as a sister, and she—dear

girl!—might come down to visit them at Dum-Dum, and all would be very comfortable. Julia Poggleton had half a lack of rupees—left to her by her father—at her own disposal quite—and Mrs. Poggleton, who was to live with them, had a snug annuity from the fund, besides a few thousand pounds, which had been settled on her, so that altogether they would be able to make it out very well—not necessitated to pinch very much, nor, what is worse, to run in debt; and this too was a comfortable reflection. Matters were not after all so very bad, and he began to feel more cheerful.

He was just about to fix the day for his marriage, when it suddenly occurred to him that he had reached the end of one side of the barrack square, and that it was necessary for him to give a word of command, so he gave “left shoulders forward,” and then suddenly halted the “rounds.” It was very dark indeed, and he could only just see that he was at the end of one row of barracks, where he thought that there ought to be a guard. It struck him that he had gone three sides of the square, and at the third corner there ought certainly to have been a guard. He told the sergeant, therefore, to go and see why the barrack-guard had not turned out, and the sergeant told him that no guard was there—no guard had ever been there. Peregrine looked round him and was positive that he was at the third corner, but he could see nothing to settle the point in his own mind, for it was very dark indeed, and

there was not so much as a light in any of the barrack windows. He, however, yielded to the sergeant, who very probably thought he had been drinking too much wine, and at the next corner he discovered his error. He was annoyed by this, and could not understand the mistake—so entire had been his delusion; but had he remembered that thought travels much faster than the “quick march,” he would not have been so very much surprised.

It was not much more than half-past nine o'clock, when Peregrine insinuated his body inside his mosquito-curtains, drew up his blankets, and composed himself to sleep. He *did* sleep too—and very teeming were the fancies of the young gentleman in his sleep. But as we have so much of waking history still to record, we cannot dwell upon the vagaries of Queen Mab—let it suffice that he dreamt about Julia, Augusta, love, kisses, agonies, and death.

## CHAPTER XVI.

In which an astounding Discovery is made, and our Hero finds Himself in a different Position.

WHEN Peregrine Pultuney, on the following morning, was relieved off guard, he first of all made his way to the mess-house to look at the shipping reports in the papers. When he entered the library, fortunately for him, Julian Jenks had possession of the *Hurkaru*, and no sooner did that good-natured specimen of mortality perceive our hero at the table, than he handed over the broad sheet to his friend, without saying a word, though Peregrine thought that there was something in Mr. Jenk's manner which meant a great deal.

Peregrine Pultuney opened the paper, and his eyes were soon fixed upon the shipping report *The Hastings*, it appeared, had not yet procured steam, and had consequently not made much progress. She had passed Kedgeree at 2 P. M. on the day before; and was not likely, therefore, to have reached Diamond Harbour before nightfall. He

thought, indeed, that he would most probably meet the ship not much above the latter place if the tide were favourable to him; at all events he would meet her somewhere in the river, and would not, therefore, incur blame for being slow to fly into the arms of his betrothed, however much he may have deserved it.

But the "list of passengers"—was there one in the paper?—he read through the shipping report and saw none. But what was that to him? There could be no doubt about the embarkation of the Poggletons—they had written to him after their passage had been taken, and all their preparations made; and Peregrine had received, too, an overland letter from his father, which spoke of their actual departure. Why then was he anxious to read the passenger list? That was a question which he scarcely durst have answered—which he scarcely knew how to answer—for the feelings which prompted this anxiety were dim, unacknowledged, and scarcely developed—such as we cannot do more than hint at.

However, there *was* a list of passengers in the *Hurkaru*, and Peregrine's eye caught it accidentally, just as he was folding up the paper. It was at the head of the editorial columns, and Peregrine read the words "We have been favoured with a list of passengers by the *Hastings*," with a nervous sensation of sickness, which was not produced by the anxieties which ought to have produced it.

But there it was—the list of passengers, which the agents of the vessel had received by a Saugor boat the evening before, and printed for general information.

And there was the name of Mrs. Poggleton. Peregrine read it, and read on, but there was no Miss Poggleton in the list. It was strange—he had expected to have read “Mrs. and Miss Poggleton”—but there was no announcement of the young lady’s arrival. This was strange certainly, very strange; but when he remembered how frequently, how almost invariably, mistakes of some kind creep into the published passenger lists, he ceased to wonder at the circumstance, and, without making any observation to Mr. Jenks, who stood by anxiously watching the countenance of his friend, he walked out of the library, mounted his horse, and galloped to his own house.

There, having doffed his regimentals and put on a suit of plain clothes, he swallowed a hasty cup of tea, remounted his horse, and started at a brisk pace for Calcutta. It was then about half past eight o’clock, but it was a fresh, pleasant morning, and the ride had an invigorating effect upon our hero’s spirits. He knew that it would be so, and had, therefore, determined to proceed on horseback to the ghaut. As he cantered on, along the Cossipore road, he felt lighter and happier than he had done for some time. Every thing around him looked so bright, so sunny, so serene, that Peregrine’s better

nature, so long in abeyance, began to expand itself within him, and the old serenity of heart, to which he had long been a stranger, was once again renewed within him for a season, and he felt both happy and hopeful. And yet though happy and hopeful, with these blessed feelings were mingled a still more blessed one—a sense of repentance, which came upon him with a subduing and purifying influence, rather enhancing than marring the happiness of the moment, for he felt that it was only through the gate of repentance that he could pass again into his old state of blissful serenity—his old peace of mind and sunny-heartedness. He knew that he had done wrongly and unkindly—but it was not too late, he thought, to draw back from the edge of the precipice, on which he had been hovering. He might still be an ardent lover, an affectionate husband—ardent and affectionate too, without hypocrisy. Why not? He felt rushing back upon his heart all his old love for Julia Poggleton. Almost as it were by a miracle, she became, in the eye of his memory, arrayed in new garments of loveliness and beauty, and he yearned to fold her to his bosom. What though less dazzling—less gorgeous—less eccentric (perhaps that was the proper word) than Augusta Sweetenham—his syren-like betrayer—now much softer, more woman-like, more trusting, more retiring, was his meek-eyed cousin, Julia Poggleton. How much more likely the latter to render *home* a scene of tranquil delight.



—a little serene Paradisaical bower—than the vain, eccentric, dashing Augusta, who was made to shine and to dazzle in a crowd—not to bless a little quiet nest of love.

It was a native holiday—and as Peregrine rode forward, he met crowds of festival-makers on the highway, with their clean white dresses, and with their contented aspects, trudging gaily along. He looked kindly at them all, and “blessed them unaware,” reining in his horse every now and then, lest he might hurt or even frighten the holiday-makers, and reproaching himself for having on several occasions given way to his temper and spoken harshly to the natives. He had never struck one, but he had several times spoken abusively, when perhaps the fault was all on his side, and this he remembered regretfully, especially when he called to mind that Peer Khan, to whom he owed so much, had more than once been the victim of his irritability. But all these feelings, being pure and holy, conduced to the placidity of his mind, and by the time that he had struck into the Barrackpore road, he felt that he was another and a better man, and that his trials were nearly over.

An hour's ride took him to Chandpaul ghaut, where he found Peer Khan, and the syces, whom he had sent forward to take his horse. The *boleau* was waiting for him, and by a strange coincidence, as Peregrine thought, though in reality there was nothing strange about it, for Peer Khan had been

the provider on both occasions, it was the same boat that, a year and a half before, had taken him to join the *Seeva*, when he was on his voyage to Arracan. Peer Khan had taken care to have a basket of provisions stowed beneath one of the seats in the cabin, and when he pointed it out to Peregrine triumphantly, with a self-approving smile at his own carefulness, our hero smiled too, and told his servant that he was a very good man indeed, that he should increase his wages next month, and put him at the head of his married establishment.

The good Mussulman made a low salaam, and looked exceedingly pleased. Peregrine was pleased too, and tears of kindly benevolence once again glistened in his eyes. Peer Khan was looking very smart indeed; he had mounted a new cloth overdress for the cold weather, and certainly cut a very distinguished figure. Peregrine told him that it was very handsome; Peer Khan was flattered by the compliment, and they once again stood in their old relation to one another—the kind master and the faithful servant. The fidelity had never been shaken, but the kindness had been somewhat on the wane.

Having told the syces to take his horse to Dr. Fitz-simon's (he had been on the point of ordering it to the Sweetenhams', but a sudden impulse had checked him), he went into the cabin of the *boleau*, and told the rowers to push off. This they did, and in a minute the boat was in motion, stream

and tide being both in their favour; and Peregrine, having given directions to Peer Khan to be on the look out for every large ship, stretched himself at full length on one of the cabin seats, and gave himself up to his thoughts.

It would have been a very good thing for him, if he could have ridden all the way to the *Hastings*, for now he missed his horse sadly. He was in motion, it is true, but it was not active motion, and being inside the boat, he scarcely knew that he was making progress. Besides, there was a reality about his present position, which filled him with nervous apprehension. When riding between Dumdum and Calcutta, his meeting with Julia seemed something vague and distant, the reality of which he could scarcely imagine; but now that he was, as it were, striking off the last link of the chain of separation—no intermediate stage between him and Julia—expecting every hour, nay, indeed, every minute, to come alongside of the vessel, which contained his betrothed, he felt uneasy—uncertain—fearful—anxious—and once again his old doubts and misgivings returned upon him in full force.

Feeling chilly, he emerged from the cabin of the boat and basked for a while in the sun. There was something cheerful and animating in the aspect of the bright, sparkling river, and the numerous boats that glided along it, and this refreshed him a little; but still he was not very hopeful—not as he had been when feeling his bounding Arab beneath him.

Fresh fears came upon him thickly—his thoughts recurred to the passenger-list that he had read in the morning, and he wondered whether it were possible that his cousin could have died on the way out. He turned this over in his mind, and was surprised to find himself thinking so coolly about it. And then came back the image of Augusta Sweetenham, and he asked himself, whether he had not wronged her by thinking that she would not make a good wife. How greatly had she improved of late—how much of her wild vanity, her reckless eccentricity, her love of admiration had she cast off during the last year—and all this too, on his account—how could he help loving her after this? He had, indeed, remodelled her—made her into something, oh! so different from what she had been, and to think that he had done all this for another—that he had cultured, and sown, and tended for another's reaping was maddening—very maddening indeed. A corpse was floating down the stream not far from the boat, and Peregrine almost wished to be himself as cold, soul-forsaken thing of clay, as he gazed at the mass of corruption, on which the carrion birds were perched, and thought of the misery in store for him.

About noon he applied himself to the basket of provisions which Peer Khan had taken on board, but, although he had eaten no breakfast, he found that he had not the least inclination for any thing more solid than a glass of wine. This he took—

and a second—a third—a fourth, and felt invigorated thereby. He wanted something by way of a stimulant and found that this succeeded very well. Then he lay down, slept for a little while, and, when he awoke, looked in a glass, which Peer Khan had stowed in the boat, together with some clean clothes. The survey was not very satisfactory, for Peregrine had rarely looked more unprepossessing. His hair was sadly disarranged, his cheeks were sallow, and his eyes bloodshot. “I am altered,” he said, “much altered, and no wonder—perhaps Julia is altered too; but, oh! for a different reason—she may have grown old and haggard during her absence—yet, nonsense—she is scarcely nineteen—” and as he muttered this to himself, he began combing and parting his hair, re-arranging his neckcloth, and brushing his surtout. There was a large ship a little ahead of the boat.

However, it was not the *Hastings*—nor did Peregrine come up with that vessel, until about five o'clock that evening. She was at anchor, or rather just getting under weigh again, when Peregrine fell in with her some miles above (we do not mean *beyond*) Diamond Harbour—Peregrine thought that he recognised her, and ordered the boatmen instantly to pull alongside. The tide was just on the turn, and the boatmen at all events thought themselves fortunate in having reached the *Hastings* in such good time. As for Peregrine, it is difficult to say what he thought, such a whirlpool of conflicting feelings was eddying in his breast.

They were not long in pulling alongside of the ship, and the cry of "What ship's that?" was answered by the word *Hastings*. Peregrine looked up, and saw that there were a number of people on the poop. He recognised the pilot and the officer of the watch, but could not see any ladies. The gentlemen had been reading newspapers, and looking through telescopes, but when they saw a boat coming alongside, a new excitement was produced—the papers and telescopes were laid down; and our hero wished them at the devil, for not attending to their own business.

Peregrine heard the well-known command to cast them a painter, and in a minute he was bumped against the side of the ship amidst an infinite deal of shouting, jabbering, and confusion. His hat was knocked off by the rope, and he himself nearly flung into the water by the concussion. Before he had time to recover himself, he heard a voice from the poop shouting out "to hand the man ropes," and in a minute Peregrine had caught hold of the portable balusters and was pulling himself, with considerable muscular exertion, up the stairless sides of the *Hastings*.

He stumbled over the gangway, and there he stood once again upon the deck of his old ship. For a few moments he remained there still and statue-like, but his self-possession was speedily renewed and he walked aft, looking round to see if there was any one at hand to whom he could ad-



dress himself. A servant was passing out of the cuddy—Peregrine looked at him; he was a stranger, indeed there seemed to be nothing but strangers on board. To this cuddy-servant, however, he addressed himself, and asked if Mrs. Poggleton were on board—if Mrs. Poggleton were in her cabin. The man said he believed so, and passed on—whilst Peregrine entered the cuddy.

He looked round, and there were two or three servants standing by the side-boards arranging tea-cups and the like, but otherwise the place was deserted. Peregrine wished to see the captain, but on inquiry he found that that gentleman was asleep in his cabin—taking an after dinner nap—so he said “never mind” and passed on.

He knew which was his aunt’s cabin—the star-board half of the round-house—and so, without asking any more questions or seeking any further aid, he walked aft towards the cabin door. As he passed along, another door opened, and a little flaxen-haired child (the daughter of the captain, whose wife happened to be on board) put out her little head, stared at Peregrine, and seeing a stranger, drew back again blushing and smiling the while. Peregrine, whose hand was by this time on the handle of his aunt’s door, stood still, looked at the child, felt very nervous, very irresolute, withdrew his hand, took off his hat, and then tapped at the door.

“Come in,” said a sweet voice—it was the voice

of his cousin Julia—there was no mistaking its tones.

Peregrine opened the door, and a loud shriek of terror and agony greeted him as he passed in. It was not repeated, but, in the next instant, he heard something fall on the deck. The sun was just setting astern of the ship, and its bright rays streamed through the cabin windows full into Peregrine's face—dazzling and blinding him for the moment, so that he heard the shriek and the fall before he could distinguish any thing in the cabin. This was not long though, for almost instantly he raised his hand, shaded his eyes, and saw that which filled him with boundless astonishment and dismay.

His cousin Julia was lying on the deck, her head supported by a young man in deep black, who was kneeling down and bending over her, whilst a little behind them stood Mrs. Poggleton, who had apparently just risen from the stern lockers, transfixed with astonishment, mouth agape and arms extended, utterly motionless as a statue. The gentleman, to whom Peregrine first directed his attention, was seemingly little more than five-and-twenty years of age, tall, well-proportioned, with dark hair and eyes, and intellectual-looking rather than handsome. Deep concern was depicted on his expressive face, as he bent fondly over the young girl on the deck, and so entirely were his thoughts fixed upon her and her condition, that he did not even raise his eyes to look upon the intruder, whose entrance had



thus strangely affected her. Peregrine stood staring at him for a minute or two, and then, clenching his fist menacingly, exclaimed in a choaking voice and with flashing eyes, "You—who the devil are you, sir?"

He was advancing, with threatening gestures, to lay hold of the man in black by the collar, when Mrs. Poggleton, as though suddenly called into life again by the sound of Peregrine's voice, came forward with a quick step, laid her hand upon the arm of her nephew, and said—"Oh! dear me—don't, Peregrine, don't—only think—what will become of us all—I really don't know what to do—pray, don't, Peregrine—pray, don't—I expect to die on the spot—only think, to see you in this way—oh dear—dear me!"

"What does all this mean?" asked Peregrine, hoarsely. "For God's sake tell me what it means."

"I really don't know," faltered the old lady; "you ought to tell *us*—dear me! But pray, stand still, Peregrine; you see that Julia's in a fit—in convulsions—dying or something—only think—and you here—dear me, dear me!"

Having explained the present state of affairs in this very satisfactory manner, Mrs. Poggleton began to exhibit strong symptoms of being about to follow the example of her daughter, but Peregrine put his arm round his aunt's waist, and again said to her, "What is all this—who is that man—what does it mean?"

"Oh, Peregrine! who would have ever thought it!" sighed Mrs. Poggleton, laying her head upon her nephew's shoulder; "dear me! who would ever have thought it? I don't know what to say, Peregrine; I think I shall die outright; and you do look so very angry, with your clenched fist and all; I really don't know what to think of it—dear me, dear me!"

"But who is that man?" asked Peregrine again; "who is that man I say? Who are you, sir—why are you here?"

But the man in black made no answer; he was sprinkling water over Julia's face, and apparently unconscious of any other presence than that of the inanimate girl at his feet. Peregrine shouted to him again, but he only lifted up his face for a minute, looked meekly at the youth, and withdrew his gaze without speaking a word. This incensed Peregrine more than any other conduct could have done, and again he lifted up his voice: "Curse you! I say, who are you?"

"Do not curse," said the young man, mildly, without raising his head.

"Stop, Peregrine, stop," cried Mrs. Poggleton; "do not strike him; you will be sorry for it. Dear me, only think—to strike a clergyman—dear me!"

"A clergyman," muttered Peregrine, turning away, and suddenly growing more calm, "I may have been wrong then after all."

"But, Peregrine, tell me now—" began Mrs. Poggleton.

“Hear me first,” interrupted Peregrine,—“hear me first, pray, aunt. I have not very much to say, nor do I wish you to say much; but answer me this, and at once. Is that young man—I mean, has that young man any right to be here, bending over Julia in that way? Is he her lover—her accepted—has he a better right to be here than I have?”

“Dear me!” returned Mrs. Poggleton, trembling all over, “whatever am I to say? I don’t know who has a right to be here—I know nothing at all, but that I am a very, very miserable woman. I never thought it would come to this—never: oh, dear me!”

It was entirely in keeping with such a nature as Peregrine’s that, in spite of all foregoing circumstances, he should have been lashed into a whirlpool of angry excitement, by seeing the equivocal situation in which his betrothed bride was placed with regard to the gentleman in black. It mattered not that his love had been for months on the decrease, and that Julia, though his intended wife, was not the idol of his heart. He had hurried down the river, and gone on board the ship; he had suffered more than words could tell; he had done a violence to his nature, and broken a chain which had carried his very heart-strings with it; and all to be greeted in this way—to find his betrothed wife in the arms of an intruding stranger.

It was natural that he, high-spirited, as he was, should in this emergency have thought, in the first

place, of turning the stranger out of the cabin by force; it was natural, too—for few were more alive to the “proprieties” than the hero of this story—that upon learning that the stranger was a clergyman, he should have drawn back, and swallowed down, or tried to swallow, his abundant ire. The extreme calmness of the gentleman in black had at first exasperated him; now it rather awed him. He felt that intemperance would be useless—nay, worse than this, that it would only degrade him; and so, striving with all his might to control himself, he turned to Mrs. Poggleton and said, “Aunt, pray tell this gentleman who I am.”

Julia, during all this, which, long as it has taken us to describe, occupied only a few minutes, was lying with her head on the strange gentleman’s knee, pale and rigid, with her eyes closed and like one after death. The stranger’s whole thoughts were fixed upon her, and he heard not what Peregrine said, or it is probable that he would have answered for himself. “Pray tell this gentleman who I am,” repeated Peregrine.

“Henry, Henry,” began Mrs. Poggleton; “dear me! he does not hear me. Henry, this is my nephew, Peregrine—only think! And come here, Henry, you had better let me take her, and answer Peregrine yourself. Henry, this is my nephew.”

“I thought so,” said the strange gentleman in black.

Peregrine was determined to restrain himself,

and though his face was livid, and he had bitten his under lip till the blood had poured from it, he said in a low, clear voice, coercively, "Well, sir, perhaps you will explain all this. I really am confused—astonished. I came here to claim my betrothed bride; and you, sir—oh! tell me at once, have you a better right to be here than I have?"

"Better than any man living," said the stranger.

"You have? then one word more—only one word more in pity—"

"Stay," interrupted the stranger, "there has been some fatal error, I think. Mr. Pultuney, tell *me* first, do you come here a married man?"

"Married! oh, God! no: but you, sir—you, you?"

"I am the husband of this lady," said the stranger, and as he bent over Julia's prostrate form, his lips touched her forehead.

"Come," said Mrs. Poggleton, laying her hand upon Peregrine's arm and turning towards the door: "come away, pray do. Dear me! dear me! it is terrible. I really don't know what to think—we all supposed you were married: only think—and not after all. Don't be angry—don't say any thing, but come with me into the next cabin; I will tell you all, as well as I can—only think: dear me!"

Peregrine turned away and followed his aunt, like an automaton, from the cabin.

## CHAPTER XVII.

In which Mrs. Poggleton is very explanatory, and the Mystery is cleared up.

THERE was a door of communication between the large stern cabin and that next to it, which, in accordance with after arrangements, had been appropriated to Mrs. Poggleton. Through this door passed Peregrine and his aunt ; and then began the explanation. “My dear Peregrine—now don’t be angry—pray don’t be angry, but sit down—I can’t stand a minute longer. Only think, how terrible it is ; I really think I shall die under it—now, don’t say any thing, pray, but listen. I am so weak ; you couldn’t get me some water, could you ?—there is a filter in that corner and a tumbler on the swing tray—dear me, dear me !”

Peregrine took the tumbler from the tray and drew some water from the filter, scarcely knowing what he was about. “Here aunt,” he said, “drink it,” and he was so hoarse, that his dearest friend could not have recognised the tones of his voice.

“Thank you, dear, thank you,” recommenced Mrs. Poggleton, and she applied the tumbler to her lips. “I shall be better, I think, presently—but sit down, there is plenty of room on the couch—sit down pray—but don’t be in hurry, I beseech you. I will tell you all in very good time, but you must not be in a hurry—only think that it should come to this—dear me, dear me!”

Peregrine sat down on the couch, and asked his aunt what it all meant.

“There now,” she said, “I told you not to be in a hurry—you young men are so intemperate, always. I never shall get on in this way—only think, what a flutter I am in, and how terrible this is for the nerves. I have always been very nervous; but this, Peregrine, is—oh, dear me! I shall never get over it, I am sure.”

“Pray, go on—pray, go on,” urged Peregrine.

“I will try, that I will,” continued the little woman, in a voice between a sob and a falter; “but you must not be angry, my dear Peregrine. I cannot stand it, I cannot, indeed, my nerves are so terribly weak—all this has come upon me so suddenly—we thought that you were married, you know—that you had behaved very ill indeed, and married that odious Miss Sweetenham; and, after all, you are not married—oh, dear! what will ever become of us?”

“Go on, go on,” said Peregrine, “we shall get at the truth presently.”



“The truth—oh, dear! oh, dear! what does the foolish boy mean? Does he think I shall tell him a story? Now, pray, be patient, *do*, Peregrine. It has not been my fault, indeed—but I do not know what to make of it all. How comes it that you are not married?”

“What a question!” returned Peregrine.

“You are so intemperate—now, pray listen,” continued the poor little woman, whilst the tears streamed down her face, “and I will tell you how it came to pass. Let me see—you came out to India, as a cadet, two or three years ago—it was all my fault, I know it was—I ought to have foreseen what would happen, and not have left you so much together. I don’t know whether you fell in love with Julia, or whether Julia fell in love with you, or whether you fell in love with one another, or what, but she refused some very excellent offers indeed, which her poor papa and I—that we did—both of us wished her very much to accept—there was Mr. Rich, of one of the Boards, and Mr. Ballygunge, and that Mr. What’s-his-name, who, they said, took to drinking afterwards—the gentleman with the front tooth out—and, I don’t know, how many besides, she refused them all; and I couldn’t tell why, until I found that you had been persuading her.”

“I persuade her? but, go on,” exclaimed Peregrine, “I know all this—but, pray, go on.”

“It was very foolish, I know it was,” continued Mrs. Poggleton, “to leave you two young people



together, I ought to have remembered how your uncle and I used to go on when *we* were left together; but it's no use talking about that now; you fell in love with one another, and then you would go to that Arracan. I told you not to go very often, but you were so wilful and headstrong, that you caught the fever at last and had to come back again, you know. I never saw any body look worse than you did, though, to tell the truth, I cannot compliment you very much on your present appearance—you are as yellow as a guinea—you are now—but you were worse when you came from Arracan. It was not my fault that you went, you will do me the justice to acknowledge that, at all events."

"Yes, yes," said Peregrine, "I do; but I know all this, aunt, very well; I came from Arracan, was very sick, and found my poor uncle sicker."

"So you did—poor dear man; and only think too, how fractious he was;" and Mrs. Poggleton applied her handkerchief to her eyes. "I often thought it was very cross of him, poor dear angel—but how could he help it, with so much to bear. I have often thought that I did not make allowances enough for him—dear me! dear me!"

Here Mrs. Poggleton fell a-sobbing, and with so much vehemence, that it was some time before she could proceed with her very succinct narrative. Peregrine drew some more water from the filter and begged his aunt to swallow a little of it. "No, no, it is no use," she said, "unless you put a little *sal*

*volatile* in it; there is a bottle on the swing tray, with a glass stopper in it.—Thank you, it always does me good; my nerves are so dreadfully shattered. Only think what I have had to go through—you have made it a little too strong, though,” and Mrs. Poggleton began to show evident symptoms of the mixture having “taken away her breath.”

“It will do you good,” observed Peregrine.

“Yes, yes, I know it will,” gasped his aunt; “it quite burnt me though, that it did; what a deal you must have put into it—you had better take some yourself—you won’t! Oh! I suppose you don’t think it man-like. Only think what strange creatures you men are—dear me!”

“But you have forgotten what you were telling me,” urged Peregrine, “my uncle was sick and you went home.” He saw no chance of eliciting from her what ~~he wished~~ to know, by any summary process, so he encouraged her by telling the story after her own way.

“Yes, yes, poor dear man! a complication of disorders,” continued Mrs. Poggleton—“liver and spleen both, I believe—though I wouldn’t let them open him as they wished, the savages.” And she fell a-sobbing anew. “He did look, too, so sweet after he died—quite loving and kindly again; I had never seen him look so for fifteen years—poor dear! He went off, he did, quite quietly, and said something about being forgiven, though I could

not quite make out by whom. And, only think, the savage captain insisted on throwing the dear corpse into the sea—I shall never forget that—dear me, dear me!”

“But,” resumed Mrs. Poggleton, after another pause, “they did it. I declare they did; and Julia and I did not dine again at the cuddy-table all the voyage. We stopped at the Cape, you know, and managed to get some decent mourning there, though crape was very dear indeed, and the shopmen, I know, cheated me. However, we did not stay there long, and I can’t say I was very sorry. But you seem in a great hurry, my dear boy—Oh, pray don’t pull that work to pieces; it’s a slipper I’m working for Henry. Sit down again, pray do. What a boy it is—dear me!”

Peregrine obeyed his aunt, sat down again, and gave up the slipper.

“Well,” continued the little lady, making a grand effort at conciseness, “we reached home without any accident, and then we took a furnished house and began talking about you. Poor Julia begged very hard, and so I gave my consent, and it was all settled in a way. I didn’t like London much after all, and soon wished myself back again—yes I did. And as for poor Julia, she used to pine, and mope, and sigh; and even when her year’s mourning was out, I could not get her ever to go to the theatre or any of those gay places. I thought at first it was all about her papa, but after that I found my mistake.

I did, and so I let her have her way. Poor dear girl—poor Julia! she was very fond of you, Peregrine, that she was—but now, only think—dear me!”

“Married to another,” said Peregrine, bitterly.

“Yes, so she is,” returned Mrs. Poggleton, “only think, married to another——; but it seems to have been a terrible mistake. We got letters from India, which said, that you were to be married to Miss Sweetenham—we didn’t believe them at first, not a word of them—Julia said, poor dear girl, several times, that she thought your letters were altered, (she never showed them to me, you know—she said she had promised not,) but still she never thought you could possibly behave ill to her—she did not much like, I think, your writing so much about Augusta Sweetenham—and I, Peregrine—for I know as much about these things as most people, that I do—did not much like your calling each other, as you said you did, brother and sister—it’s a very delusive thing, that it is, my dear boy—but still we knew that people in Calcutta are very scandalous indeed, and talk about the least thing or nothing at all, and tell a great number of stories—so I always said ‘never mind—depend upon it there’s not a word of truth in it’—though I must say I scarcely thought it—for, only think, we saw Mr. and Mrs. Gup and Colonel Justesing in London, who told us that you were actually going to be married, and that they knew who were to be bride’s maids—only think

—knew all about it—bride's-maids and all, Peregrine—well, still I couldn't believe it, and Julia laughed at the idea—we were then getting our outfit, you know—at least a few things to complete it—and Julia was—dear girl!—or pretended to be in high spirits—for she had got your letters pretty regularly, and, of course, believed you before any body else, as it was very natural that she should do, my dear—and though shortly after we had taken our passage, Mrs. Lowry, who is Mrs. Parkinson's sister, wrote to tell me, that she had heard from Calcutta positively about your marriage from one of her nieces—Mrs. Drawlincourt, I think—we still went on board quite happy—for we set them down all as story-tellers. The only thing there was to annoy us was that an overland was expected or, I believe, was in, the very day we left London—only think, how provoking it was—and to Julia—poor girl!—in particular—but we left word about sending the letters after us—and thought there was a little chance—well, Peregrine—dear me—you have got the work again—you will quite spoil it, if you crumple it in that way—well, Peregrine, we went on board without getting any letter—but, Julia, was so anxious that she begged Mrs. Guy (of the George Hotel, Portsmouth, you know) to send any letter after us if she could, in a pilot-boat or something up the Channel—or if she could not do that, to send them on to Plymouth—as Julia, though poor

my very words—thought that it was possible we might have occasion to put in there—and sure enough Peregrine, we did—we had some very bad weather and broke our jib or flying jib or something in two, and lost several anchors, I believe, and so we had to put into Plymouth. Well, we went as quick as we could to the hotel—poor Julia was in such a flurry—to ask about the letters directly, and there we learnt that some had arrived—but been sent back again to Portsmouth—as they thought it was too late for there to be a chance of the ship. So off we wrote to Portsmouth again—but we had to go on board again without them, for we soon got our jibs and things mended, and a fair wind got up, so that the captain bundled us off in a hurry without our breakfast or our letters—well, only think, poor Julia was in despair, but she needn't have been, after all, for just as we had got clear of the bay, and past the Breakwater, and the pilot was about to leave us, a boat came alongside and brought a packet of letters and other things, for the passengers, and sure enough there were some letters for us—and some from India, too, Peregrine—but not a line or a scrap from you—there were some letters on business from Messrs. Swallow and Newcome, and a newspaper besides—I couldn't tell who had sent it to me—but I opened it—and the murder was out—there was 'Peregrine Pultuney, Esq., married to Miss Augusta Sweetenham'—and oh! my dear boy, such a scene ensued.

“I fainted first, and then Julia—and I thought that we should both of us have died. We couldn’t doubt any more—there was no letter from you—and this too in the papers—in the *Englishman*—we knew that it must be true—only think—your marriage in the paper and you not married after all?—dear me—dear me!”

Having delivered herself of this much of her narrative rapidly, pantingly, as though she were anxious to get over the ground with the greatest possible despatch, and had wound herself up painfully for the task, Mrs. Poggleton stopped to recover herself a little, for she was indeed considerably exhausted, and moreover somewhat scant of breath. Peregrine offered her a further supply of *sal volatile*, but this the old lady declined, and having declared that she only wanted a little rest, threw herself back on the couch, and began most assiduously to fan herself. But Peregrine was in no humour to brook this delay, so he took the punka from his aunt’s hand, and whilst he made good use of it for the old lady’s benefit, asked her who it was that had forwarded the paper.

“Dear me!” she said, in a faint voice, “how very impetuous you are—you young men are always so impetuous—I will go on with my story presently—who sent the paper?—I really don’t know—Julia said she had seen the hand-writing—but could not remember whose it was—and I am sure I know nothing about it.”

“Did you keep the cover?” asked Peregrine, impatiently.

“Yes—yes—and you shall have it presently—but I must tell you how it all happened—I think Julia has a great deal of proper pride—and she soon pretended to get over her misfortune. She said that it was very clear you were undeserving of her, and so I said too, Peregrine—we were under a mistake then, you know—and so when we were clear of the Bay of Biscay, we went on deck and mixed with the passengers—and really Julia did seem to pick up her spirits wonderfully—our passengers are very nice people, and one of them was particularly nice—that gentleman whom you saw in the big cabin—and who is now—dear me—dear me—only think!—my sweet Julia’s husband.”

“His name—his name!” asked Peregrine, eagerly.

“Dillon,” returned Mrs. Poggleton; “the Rev. Henry Dillon—he is going out as a chaplain on the establishment, and is such an excellent young man. He paid us a great deal of attention, I assure you—was always with us, reading in our cabin, and he did read such good books, and so beautifully too, that it was quite a comfort to hear him. We didn’t tell any body, of course, that we were going out to marry you, and so Mr. Dillon knew nothing about it until he had fallen in love with Julia—which he did before very long—and made her an offer of his hand. She then told him all about you—



yes, she did—but Henry did not love her the less. She came to me, and I advised her to marry him—he was so good and so kind, that I thought he would make her an excellent husband, and I am sure he will, too, Peregrine. I never doubted for a moment that you were married, because I saw it in the paper—and I didn't like—I had some pride about me, you see—that we should arrive in India only to be talked about, and pitied, as deserted by you. I couldn't have stood that, I am sure," continued Mrs. Poggleton, drawing herself up as she spoke; "or more could Julia—that I knew very well, so I persuaded her to accept Mr. Dillon. We all three of us had a full explanation, and Julia behaved so well, and dear Henry spoke so beautifully about these trials being for our good—broken reeds, and I know not what beside; that it ended in Julia's promising to become his wife, though she said, poor girl, crying like a child, that she had done with love in this world, and had nothing but a bruised heart, to give to Mr. Dillon. Oh! it would have made any body cry to have heard her—a bruised heart, only think—dear me."

"And so she married him"—said Peregrine—"how—where?"

"At the Cape," replied Mrs. Poggleton; "at the Cape, all regular, by an English clergyman, I assure you. The two Miss Marryatts were bride's-maids, and very pretty they looked too—so did Julia, but—dear me—the poor girl did cry so and looked so pale, and trembled so very much, that I

thought she would have fallen down—that I did and, only think, what a scene there would have been. But she did get through it—dear, sweet girl—and the happy pair went off to Mr. George's 'half-way house'—and there they stayed two or three days, until the ship was ready to start again, and then we went on board together, all of us—and here we are you see now."

"I see," said Peregrine, bitterly.

"Yes,—and all things considered," resumed the little lady, without much regard for the feelings of her nephew, "we have done wonderfully well, and have been wonderfully happy. To be sure I have caught Julia crying once or twice, when she has been left to herself; but, dear Henry don't leave her very often—he is such a good man—though, to be sure, if we had known that you were not married, we should not, of course, have listened to his proposals, for we considered ourselves quite engaged to you, and we both of us love you very much."

"Thank you," said Peregrine, "thank you."

"And," continued his aunt, "we shall always be very glad indeed to see you, and I hope you won't take your disappointment very much to heart, my dear boy. You know that you are very young—only think! not more than just of age, and that is too young to marry. Dear me—are you going now? what an impatient boy it is, to be sure."

"Not now," returned Peregrine, "not just now—I want that newspaper envelope. You said that

you had got it, aunt—I must not go till you have given it to me.”

“ Well—well—you shall have it. I quite forgot,” said Mrs. Poggleton, rising from the couch; “ but it is really so very dark, that I don’t know whether I can find it—dear me!—how soon it gets dark. There, Peregrine, it is in that desk—give it to me. Very well, Thomas”—(a servant had just tapped at the door and announced tea). “ In that desk, Peregrine, under the table. Thank you—the keys—dear me!—if I don’t think they’re in Julia’s room—no, there they are in the almirah. I’m not at all sure, you know, that I shall be able to find it now—it’s a good thing though, that I put it in the desk—I was curious to know who sent it to me, that I might thank the person.”

“ *Thank,*” repeated Peregrine.

“ Yes—I thought so then,” continued the little woman, whilst she rummaged in her desk and took out first one paper and then an other, and held it so as to catch the dim light that entered the cabin from the port; “ we thought so then, you know, of course—as it put us on our guard and all that, and we never thought that the newspapers told stories—dear me—I am afraid I have lost it . . . No; here it is—only think, the very last thing of all—it always is so, I don’t know why. What are you doing?—you rude boy—don’t you know that it’s very vulgar to snatch?”

Peregrine, if he knew, certainly did not care, for

he had not only snatched the paper from his aunt's hand, but had read it, before she had done speaking. "I have seen the writing—but where I know not," he said, as he carefully folded up the scrap of paper and placed it in his waistcoat pocket. "It is a woman's hand—and I have seen it. Now, good bye, aunt—good bye—my best love to Mrs. Dillon."

But here Mrs. Poggleton interfered. "Don't go yet," she said; "why should you go? I want to introduce you to Henry—and you can take tea with us in the cuddy. Dear me! what a noise they are making. I declare it is 'let go the anchor' again. We never shall get to Calcutta at this rate—unless we get a steamer to-morrow—only think how provoking it is to be all this time on the river—the tide can't have turned again yet—I can't see why they cast anchor."

"It is getting dark," suggested Peregrine, "and so you will get no farther to-night. Good bye, aunt. I can go on in my boat, though you cannot—good bye—my best love to Mrs. Dillon;" and before the poor little woman could utter another word, Peregrine had quitted her cabin, passed through the cuddy, in which the passengers were just sitting down to tea, and was standing again upon the deck.

In a minute or two he had summoned Peer Khan, and had, greatly to the astonishment of the faithful Mahomedan, who was all anxiety to make his salaams to the Mehm-sahib and the Missy-

baba, called to his boatmen to get ready to go back to Calcutta. There was, of course, a clamour for *buxees*, a demand for double pay, and a great talk about *khana-khana-ing*, in the midst of which Peregrine slid down the side of the vessel, and repossessed himself of the *boleau*. Promising any thing and every thing they wanted, he soon persuaded them to push off, and before Mrs. Poggleton had time to arrange her cap and make her way into her daughter's cabin, Peregrine Pultuney was once more gliding along with the rapid tide, in the dim twilight.

“*Shraub — shraub — shraub!*” (wine — wine — wine) he cried to his servant, directly he felt himself once more in motion, for his throat was dry and his mouth was parched.

Peer Khan brought him the bottle of sherry, to which the young gentleman had applied himself in the morning, and Peregrine rejected the wine-glass, filled a tumbler, and drank off its contents. Having done this, he bared his forehead, loosened his neckcloth, and leant back with folded arms against the raised cabin of the *boleau*.

“Well,” he said, or rather thought, for though ever and anon his lips moved, no words were articulated; “and this is how it has all ended! I have often tried to prophecy the end of it all, and now I know—know very well, and I am free—free as air—free to throw myself at Augusta's feet, and she—” he checked himself and began to think

whether it were possible that she would reject him. It might be that she had not loved him after all, at least not loved him otherwise than as a brother. But when he remembered the numberless passages of all but openly expressed love that had passed between them, when he remembered how she had looked into his eyes—how she had laid her head on his shoulder—how she had permitted his arm to encircle her waist, his cheek to press her cheek thrillingly—how he had caressed her unreprieved, and how happy she had been in his society, all doubts of this kind passed away from him, and he saw a world of happiness in prospect.

“But,” he thought, for he was young and not unworldly, and how keenly fearful is youth of ridicule; “what will be said of this strange business? I shall be laughed at, and they will say I have been jilted; that I went up to the Sand-heads to claim my affianced wife, and found her married to another. Pleasant this to be the talk of Calcutta, and people will say that it served me right for flirting with Augusta Sweetenham. How they will talk, curse them; the tattlers, the scandal mongers! . . . And yet,” he continued, self communing, “perhaps I may be beforehand with them; I may have time to tell my own story, before another is circulated, with embellishments. That paper, that lying report of my marriage, I must find out the perpetrator of that—” and his thoughts reverted

to Drawlincourt, the long scoundrel, whom he had suspected in the first instance. He thought that he had heard somebody say a few days before, that the cornet had returned from sea; he would go instantly then to Mrs. Parkinson's and inquire after him—would wring the truth from him, and let the whole world know of his villainy. He, at all events, would not suffer himself to be laughed at as a patient, rejected, forsaken one; but would give some *éclat* to the business, and, if possible, let it be known, that he was really to be married to Miss Sweetenham, before it should get about that his intended had married somebody else. But here again misgivings came upon him; it was possible that he might be refused, if not by Augusta herself, by her guardian. Would they listen to him, would they accede to the match, that money-making merchant and his wife?

He raised his head, and looked across the dark waters. There was something dreary and desolate in the aspect, for he could not see the banks on either side, and the broad river looked like an ocean on which he was drifting about in his little craft, with no hospitable shore in sight of him. He could not even see a light on the river, and no sound was audible, save that of the regular splashing of the oars, and occasionally the distant howling of a jackal. Even the well known monotonous gurgling of the *hubble-bubble*, with which all

Indian boatmen diversify their labours, each in turn resting on his oar for the purpose, was hushed, and the rowers were silent. There is always something depressing in the loneliness of a little boat by night on the waters, and the position of our hero was but ill calculated to elevate his spirits in any remarkable degree. He was very weary, very heart-sick, he felt cold, and yet his temples were burning, and his pulse was feverishly throbbing. He longed to be asleep, and yet he was almost afraid to court it, lest he should fail in the effort; but he turned round, entered the cabin, without calling Peer Khan, who had wrapped himself in a sort of blanket most ingeniously from head to foot, and was sleeping soundly on the deck, and then stretched his weary limbs at full length on one of the cushions.

But thought was very busy within him; and before he fell asleep, he had made up his mind as to the plan of action best to be pursued. He would go, he thought, first of all to Mrs. Parkinson's—endeavour to see Drawlincourt—and then proceed to Mrs. Sweetenham's. He calculated that he would arrive at Calcutta about daybreak, or a little after—it would then be Wednesday, and he had leave of absence till Thursday morning, and much might be done in a day. He would remain on board till after breakfast, and then set out; and he flattered himself, that before the *Hastings* could arrive off Calcutta, he would have called Drawlincourt to account,



made a covenant with Augusta Sweetenham, and promulgated his engagement all over Calcutta.

“They shall **not** laugh at me now,” muttered Peregrine; and with this consolatory reflection he fell asleep.



as the providence of Peer Khan had enabled him to do so, he now began to change this suit for a fresh one, and that too with no ordinary care. He was far from being a coxcomb; but, on the present occasion, he undid the bundle of clothes which his servant had placed on board, apparently with as much anxiety as if his life had depended on the contents of it, and smiled when he saw before him an almost new pair of immaculate white cord trousers, a delicate buff valencia waistcoat, a pair of patent leather boots, and some unworn white doo-skin gloves. "These will do," he said to himself, as he threw off his soiled clothes, and prepared himself for his ablutions.

The boat stopped before the Chandpaul Ghaut, and Peregrine immediately despatched the maunjee to Dr. Fitz-simon's, to give orders for his horse to be brought to the river's side without loss of time. Having done this, he resumed his toilet, and in less than half-an-hour he stood upon the deck of his little craft, dressed indeed quite to admiration, and looking, though somewhat thinner and paler than usual, as handsome as he had ever looked in his life.

The sun had not yet risen above the houses of the palaced city, but its first rays were beginning to light up the eastern sky. A low fog was spread like a sheet over the great plain lying between Chowringhee and the river, and yet it was not a foggy morning, for the mist was only a foot or two high, and the houses of Calcutta were visible above

it. Several boatmen and palki-bearers were bathing amongst the *dhinghies*, sleeking their long hair and washing out their thin garments, whilst a little apart from them was a group of women cleansing themselves and their wardrobes at the same time, whilst others, crouching at the margin of the waters, were scouring out their brass cooking-pots. Along the road—"the course"—several vehicles on horseback were passing, and numerous knots of gentlemen were trotting along the road which leads towards Alipore. It struck Peregrine as somewhat strange that they, every one of them, were going the same way, and he thought that he had never seen so many early risers out before on the course. But he suddenly remembered something, and muttered to himself, "How stupid! I forgot—it is a race morning."

This recollection seemed to please him, for he smiled and looked out in the direction of Chowringhee to see whether his horse was coming, and he thought he saw it, led by the syces, passing in front of the Government-house compound. He smiled again, and went into the cabin of the boat, looked at himself in the glass, drew up his neck-cloth, and, in a few minutes he was cantering along the road on his way to the race-course.

He had not ridden far before he overtook a carriage in which was his friend Mrs. Delafosse. "Ah! Mrs. Delafosse, how do you do? You are going to the races, of course."

"Oh, yes! Dear me, Mr. Pultuney, you have

not had a bet with me this year. I always back *Fieschi*, you know."

"By all means, then," said Peregrine, "let us have one. What shall it be—a lottery ticket?"

"A lottery ticket! You men are always for betting lottery tickets. I only bet gloves, you know."

"Very well, I like winning them excessively," returned Peregrine, "and there are more ways than one of doing so. By-the-bye, you have heard the news."

"News?—no—what news? Tell me the news, pray, Mr. Pultuney."

"Oh! certainly," said Peregrine; "why the *Hastings* is in; and Julia Poggleton—you know, my cousin, Julia Poggleton—is married to a Mr. Dillon, a padre."

"Julia Poggleton!—good gracious! Mr. Pultuney," exclaimed the lady, lifting up her hands. "I thought you were going to marry her yourself."

"Why I *had* some thoughts of it once," rejoined Peregrine, in a careless tone of voice, as he patted the sleek neck of his Arab; "but it was nothing—it is all off, you know; and she has got a very good husband—at least so my aunt says. Good morning to you—three pair of gloves—eh?" and Peregrine gave his bridle a jerk, bowed to the lady, and galloped away, thinking that he had made a most prosperous beginning, as Mrs. Delafosse was, beyond

all dispute, the most accomplished tattler in Calcutta.

He had not ridden much further before he came up with a buggy, which, to his great surprise, contained the very well-dressed person of his friend Frederick Splashington. "Hallo! Splashington," he said, "you here. I thought you were at Moorshe-dabad." He was a little staggered by this meeting, for he had not calculated on meeting one who knew him and his circumstances so well.

"*Et vous, Pultuney, mon ami?—how came you here? I thought you were on board the good ship Hastings, with your belle fiancée.*"

"No, no, my good fellow," rejoined Peregrine, affecting a careless demeanour: "but pray, tell me, how came you here?"

"I am on leave for a month," said Splashington.

"And so am I—for a day."

"But, *la belle fiancée?*"

"Is now *la belle femme!* Have you not heard that my cousin is married?"

"Married! *c'est une mauvaise plaisanterie* this—you laugh at me."

"Indeed I do not," said Peregrine, "my cousin is married; I have seen her husband, and my aunt says that he is a very nice man indeed."

"What can you mean?" asked his astonished companion.

Peregrine explained what he meant, and finished by declaring that he could not help it, that it was

not his fault, and that there was no use being sorry about it.

Splashington smiled faintly, shook his head, and observed, that it was a miserable mistake. "I hope they will be happy," he added.

"And so do I," said Peregrine, "with all my heart; and I see no reason why they should not."

"I do, though," returned Splashington, "*mais n'importe.*"

"You may mention this," suggested Peregrine; "I have just told Mrs. Delafosse, and so it will soon be all over Calcutta."

"And, may I add," asked Splashington, "that nevertheless, there is still a *belle fiancée* in the case?"

Peregrine shook his head, laughed meaningly, said "*Au revoir,*" and galloped onward.

Before he reached the race-stand he had seen pretty nearly one half of his acquaintance, and on the stand he fell in with the other half. Some seemed surprised to see him, others asked after the Poggletons, and the rest did not appear to think that there was any thing extraordinary in his being at the races. He laughed and talked, and tried to appear in the highest possible spirits, but, he had an uneasy consciousness, all the while, that the effort was not particularly successful. He saw, or thought that he saw, one or two people watching him closely, and when he spoke of the Poggletons to one of his intimates, and said, with an appearance

of *sang froid*, that his cousin was married to a Mr. Dillon, who came out with her in the ship, he was annoyed by seeing his friend turn away his head, and look somewhat disgusted. The majority of the people were, however, so occupied in talking about *Fieschi*, and *Samnite*, and *Corriemonie*, and the lotteries at the Race Ordinaries, and things of that sort, that they had no attention to bestow upon him; but he laughed with one, made a bet with another, and skimmed over the morning papers, which were being passed about the race-stand, and commented upon as containing "no news."

The first race being over, Peregrine descended from the stand, and mounted his horse again. He saw Mrs. Parkinson's carriage, cantered up to it, and asked the lady if the Drawlincourts were staying with her. They were; but Lucretia was poorly, and Mr. Drawlincourt was lazy, and so neither of them had accompanied her to the races.

"Shall I see them, if I call this morning?" asked Peregrine.

"Oh, yes! he is going up to join his regiment in a few days. I dare say you will see him—at all events *she* will be at home; but, Mr. Pultuney, how is Miss Poggleton and your aunt, are they at the races?"

"Miss Poggleton is no more," said Peregrine.

"No more! goodness gracious, Mr. Pultuney!"

"She is married—you know our engagement was off, but I will tell you more about it by-and-bye—



adieu!" and off he cantered to see the horses saddling for the second race . . . . .

\* \* \* \*

"Well, this will do, so far," muttered Peregrine Pultuney, as, the races over, and the concourse of people dissolving, he turned his horse's head towards Chowringhee. "I have faced them with tolerable courage, and the worst of it is over now—they will not laugh at me; I have escaped that—they may talk, but I shall be spared their pity. I have much though to do yet; but in the meantime, where shall I breakfast—where shall I go, till I can call on the Drawlincourts?"

He thought of Dr. Fitz-simon, but he felt almost ashamed to enter into an explanation regarding what had happened with that kind-hearted, right-feeling old gentleman. He thought of the Sweetenhams, but he had resolved not to call there till he had seen Drawlincourt. He thought of other parties, but he had some reason for wishing to avoid them all, and at last determined to beat up the quarters of a brother subaltern, on duty in the fort, with whom he was tolerably intimate.

He entered at the Cooly-Bazaar gate and was soon at the Royal Barracks. His friend had gone out to breakfast, but, fortunately for Peregrine, had not taken his servant with him, so that our young gentleman soon found himself seated before a table, on which were placed the remains of a loaf of bread, a little mash of butter in a saucer, a couple of eggs,

and a pewter tea-pot; but it mattered not that the fare was somewhat uninviting, for Peregrine had no appetite even for dainties.

He poured out a cup of tea, then rose from his seat and took from a leaf of an old table, which was standing against the wall and doing duty for a side-board, a debauched-looking blotting-paper book, a very black pen, and a round stone ink-bottle. With these implements he contrived to write a hurried chit to Augusta Sweetenham. It had occurred to him that she might, by some possibility, hear of what had happened on board the *Hastings* from some other authority than himself. He did not wish that this should happen, and so he wrote:

“ My dearest Sister.—Do not be out at tiffin time to-day, for I have something to tell you, which will much surprise you. You were not at the races, I know, so you will not yet have heard it, I think. I am in a sad state of anxiety—my own sister—and I scarcely know what I write. If your aunt will not object to it, perhaps you could order your gates to be shut; for I do not know what time I shall be with you, and I must see you *alone*. Until then, dear, believe me that I am your very affectionate brother,

“ P. P.”

Having written this little brotherly epistle, our hero proceeded to write an order for a hack buggy from Messrs. Hunter and Co., and, giving at the

same time directions to his syces to put up his horse at Mrs. Sweetenham's, despatched that worthy with the two notes, and then sat down to finish his breakfast.

It was half-past ten o'clock when the buggy arrived, so Peregrine lost no time in getting into it and driving off to Mrs. Parkinson's. Drawlincourt had gone out—purposely, perhaps, but his wife was at home and alone. Her aunt had fatigued herself at the races, and had taken her breakfast in her own dressing-room.

Mrs. Drawlincourt was looking wretchedly ill—pale, attenuated, and at least ten years older in appearance than when a passenger on board the *Hastings*. Her eyes were red and swollen, her lips almost colourless, and the corners of her mouth were drawn down into an expression of utter despondency, which was very painful to look upon. How different from the plump, rosy, laughing girl, whom he had known scarcely three years before!

She had been sitting before a fire, doing nothing, and when Peregrine entered the room, she rose from her seat and went forward to greet him. A faint blush, and a fainter smile, passed over her pale face for a moment, as she took Peregrine's hand and said, in a low voice, "I am glad to see you, my aunt told me you were coming."

"I was sorry to hear that you are poorly," said Peregrine, "you do not indeed look very well."

"Nor you—we are both altered—this is a very wretched climate, I think."

“Very,” remarked Peregrine, and he thought that there were things even more difficult to bear up against than the vile climate of Bengal.

“And,” continued Mrs. Drawlincourt, “I have been very poorly—I don’t think that I shall ever recover.”

“Oh, yes, you will,” returned Peregrine.

Then there was a pause.

“Drawlincourt has gone out, has he not?” asked Peregrine Pultuncy.

“I believe so, but really I never know his movements—I seldom see him all day,” and she sighed.

“Do you expect him back again soon?” asked Peregrine.

“I really do not know. He said something about going down to Dum-Dum to dinner, but he never consults me, you know—never.”

“I want to see him very much,” continued Peregrine; “I want to ask him a very particular question; but, perhaps, you can tell me yourself.”

“I am afraid not,” returned Mrs. Drawlincourt, “I am afraid not—I know nothing about his affairs.”

“But, you may help me here,” resumed Peregrine, and he took from his waistcoat-pocket a slip of paper, which he slowly unfolded. “Perhaps, you can tell me—look at it well—who wrote the address on this—who—sent—a certain paper—to my aunt.”

Mrs. Drawlincourt looked at the paper, made no answer, but burst out a-crying.

Peregrine took one of her hands into his, and spoke kindly to the poor woman. "Never mind," he said, "I do not wish to pain you—never mind, dear Mrs. Drawlincourt."

"But, I do mind," she sobbed, "I do indeed—it was very wicked of me—I wrote it—Oh! Mr. Pultuncy, will you ever forgive me—I wrote it—but not of my own accord."

"I thought not," said Peregrine, kindly.

"Oh! no—no—not of my own accord, I assure you," continued Mrs. Drawlincourt, as the tears streamed in torrents down her face—"I could not help it—I could not indeed—he made me do it—will you ever forgive me?"

"Yes—yes—I do forgive you, that I do—yours was only the hand that wrote it."

"The hand—yes, it was my hand—my hand," sobbed the unhappy woman. "I would not have done it, but for *him*—I would not indeed, Mr. Pultuncy. I know it was very wicked, for I may have helped to spread these bad stories about you—indeed, I believed myself that you were going to marry Miss Sweetenham, and I know I used to say sometimes I thought you were behaving very ill; but I never did more than that, on purpose—I did not really, Mr. Pultuncy. I assure you that I would not have done all that about the newspaper, if I had not been driven to it by *him*."

"And he told you, did he," asked Peregrine,

“to send that paper to England? He wrote the report in the *Englishman* then?”

“No—no, he did not write it—I wrote it, but he stood over me. It was a long time before I would agree to it, for I did not like writing a lie, and I was very much afraid to do it; but I was still more afraid of him—and so I wrote it at last, and he sent it to the newspaper office.”

“Yes,” said Peregrine, “I thought so—and then he went away leaving his slime behind him.”

“Yes, yes, he went away,” returned Mrs. Drawlincourt, not very well understanding this last allusion; “he went away and left me behind him, and his dear little baby too,”—and here she burst into fresh tears. “I wanted to go with him, of course; but he would not let me, and said something about having baggage enough without a wife and a brat—the dear little sweet thing, and it died. Oh! **Mr.** Pultuney, you cannot know what it is when all the world beside is unkind to one, to have a little, soft baby to love and fondle, nor what it is to lose such a treasure and be left quite alone again. You men—but I do not think you are all alike—I hope not; but I have had sore trials.”

“I was afraid of this—always,” said Peregrine.

“Oh! yes, I have suffered very much, indeed,” continued the poor girl; “but I suppose I must bear on to the end. It is no use any longer to conceal that I am very—very unhappy. I ought not to say this to you, but I have known you a long,

long time, and, besides, I have been very wicked to you, and yet you speak kindly to me. I know all that has happened—my aunt told me—was it owing to that—that paper?”

“Yes,” replied Peregrine, “all, entirely; but I do not blame you—I do not, indeed.”

“I thought it was—it flashed upon my mind, when my aunt told me what had happened—and then I vowed that I would disclose all to you. It was the least I could do, after such wickedness—and he, my husband—Mr. Drawlincourt—does not deserve any further forbearance from me. This very morning he did that which—but I cannot talk about it—perhaps, I ought still to have suffered on in silence—but I am a very, very wretched woman, indeed—and I have not an angel’s patience.”

“You have done rightly,” said Peregrine Pultuney; but it is probable that in his calmer moments he would not have propounded such false morality.

Lucretia Drawlincourt seemed to think so, at all events, for she shook her head and said, “Oh! no—no. You are very kind to encourage me, but I have not done rightly; I do not pretend that I have not been to blame; but it is very difficult to help going wrong, when one is so tried and tempted, as I have been. Mr. Pultuney, perhaps I shall never see you again, but I hope you will think kindly of me. You know my errors,”—and as she said this, a deep blush crimsoned her cheeks, “but you will



be kind and charitable, I am sure—good bye, I am very grateful for your forbearance—very grateful—good bye.”

Peregrine pressed her hand, looked kindly into her face, felt the tears gathering in his eyes, turned away his head and walked towards the door. He had just opened it, when he turned round and said, “Mr. Drawlincourt, you tell me, is going to Dum-Dum?”

“Yes—I believe so—have you quite forgiven me?”

“Quite—quite—God bless you, Mrs. Drawlincourt;” and he hurried down the broad staircase.

Again in his buggy, he looked at his watch and found that it was not very much past eleven. “What shall I do now?” he thought. “Shall I go straight to the Sweetenhams’—or shall I delay my visit, as I intended till tiffin time—but why should I? I have asked them to have their gates closed, so I shall be sure of finding them alone.”

He drove straight to the Sweetenhams’ house, and was rejoiced to see the gates shut before him. The durwan, when he saw who was the inmate of the buggy, threw them open, admitted our hero, and then instantly closed them again. “It is all right,” he said, “and now for the decision of my fate—courage—courage! I must triumph.”

He jumped out of the buggy, ran up stairs, and found Augusta alone in the drawing-room.

“What is all this?” she asked eagerly, after she



had pressed her brother's hand, and received his brotherly salutation on the forehead; "what is all this, dear brother? How come you here?—what have you been doing?—where is your little girl, and your aunt?"

"On board the *Hastings*—but be calm, sister dearest, and you shall know all—it is a strange story."

They seated themselves, side by side, on a sofa, and Peregrine's arm strayed round Augusta's waist. She was very pale—very pale indeed, and Peregrine could feel the beating of her heart, as she leant against him, with her head on his shoulder.

"Be calm, dearest, pray—you have strength of mind; it is necessary that you should use it now—it will all be well presently, and we shall be very happy; but pray listen calmly to me now."

"I am calm," said Augusta—"very."

"Nay, my dearest little trembler, you are not—but do not be afraid, I beseech you. I have nothing very terrible to tell you—it is only this"—here he paused—"it is only this—we have loved one another, I think, Augusta?"

"We must not talk of this—brother, it is wrong—we had better"—

"Nay—sit down—it *was* wrong, but it is not now, Augusta. I will not call you 'sister' any more. Augusta, what if I were free?—what if it were no longer needful that we should be as brother and sister?—what if we might"—

“ Brother—brother, what madness is this?”

“ None, Augusta; the blame, if there be any, does not lie at our doors now. Sweetest and best, I cannot tell you what you have been to me for the last year—perhaps I did wrong in loving you so dearly; but I could not help it, I could not, indeed. I tried to subdue the rebellious passion. I reasoned, I struggled—but all in vain. There was a gulf between us then, you know, Augusta—there is not now—we are free as air. Good God, why look so, dearest?”

Rigid as a statue sat Augusta Sweetenham, with her large eyes fixed immoveably upon Peregrine. There was something awful in her stone-like aspect, and when she spoke at last, her words came forth in a solemn and sepulchral tone, and it was as though a marble effigy had been endowed with the faculty of speech. “ And have you really done it,” she said; “ you have really discarded her—oh! God forgive us both—we are sinful.”

“ Augusta—dear Augusta—it is not so—I have not discarded her indeed—I have done nothing—nothing, dearest—we are not sinful.”

“ Then what does this mean?”

“ That Julia has discarded *me*—has broken her faith—has made me free as air, Augusta—she is married—and we?—Augusta—shall not we?—speak dearest.

“ Peregrine—”

“ Yes—call me Peregrine, *do* once again. Bro-

Sweetest, it is all true, very true—she has married another—and we are free. Beautiful Augusta, you will be mine—say you will be mine—whisper it as I whisper to you. There, dearest, lay your head upon my shoulder—it shall be your resting-place—it shall, for life! Open your eyes—those splendid eyes, so full of beauty and love—sweetest. And do you love me as something nearer, dearer than a brother? Oh! blissful thought, say it, Augusta, say that you love me—do.”

“Peregrine—”

“Ah!—how happy to have my name uttered in such a voice; but you will not, dear little flutterer, speak the one word I so long to hear. Say it—whisper it—no one will hear you—no one but your own Peregrine—do you love me?—will you be mine?”

“*I am yours,*” and she hid her burning blushes with both her hands, and burst into tears.

\* \* \* \* \*

That evening he dined at the Sweetenham’s—accepted and approved; and there was not a gossip in Calcutta who, before nightfall, had not heard of his engagement to Augusta. “I thought how that would end,” they all said, as they shook their heads and tried to look sagacious.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Which returns to the Long Cornet, and shows how the Beauty of that Gentleman was spoilt.

IN the meantime, Mr. Cornet Drawlincourt of the dragoons was making the best of his way to Dum-Dum, along the very dustiest and roughest road that ever destroyed the equilibrium of a traveller's temper. He had been invited to dine at the artillery mess by a young cadet in the same ship with whom he had recently come from Madras, and being naturally disposed to dine anywhere else rather than at home, he had gladly accepted the invitation. "That dog, Pultuney, won't be there either," he said to himself. "I know he won't—hang the puppy! I'm deyvelish glad of that;" and, as he thus soliliquized, some very pleasant fancies, the nature of which the reader will easily divine, tickled him amazingly, and he began to laugh, though there was nobody near him to admire the whiteness of his teeth.

He reached Dum-Dum about ten minutes before

the dinner hour, and as he swaggered up the steps of the mess verandah, he stumbled upon Julian Jenks.

“Ah! Drawlincourt,” said that good-natured young gentleman—“quite recovered since your trip to sea?—glad to hear it—come to give me the honour of your—”

“No—no—vastly indebted to you, but I am come to dine with Griffin of your corps. In the library, you say, thank you, Mr. Jenks. Your friend what’s-his-name is not here?”

“If you mean Pultuncy,” said Jenks, turning away, “he is not here,” and the long cornet passed on to the library.

Nothing very particular, worthy of narration occurred during dinner-time; it was a “public night,” and several guests were present at the mess-table. Amongst these were four or five Queen’s officers, not very long arrived from England, and as they sat somewhere in Drawlincourt’s neighbourhood, the cornet contrived to scrape an acquaintance with them, and in a little time was commenced a very instructive conversation, chiefly relating to “Jones of ours,” “Simpkins of yours,” and “Watkin of the 110th;” in this they all seemed especially interested, interlarding their personal talk with a great variety of quaint anecdotes, and particularly when the long cornet was the speaker, seasoning the whole with a choice display of blasphemy, very pleasant and refreshing to hear.

Mr. Drawlincourt, as the sagacious reader will have long ago discovered, had vast pretensions to gentility, and little else; but it was not so with his brother officers, who, though somewhat conceited, were men of decided respectability. They were gentlemen; but unfortunately they had come out to India with no very exalted notion of the Indian army, and had not quite got over the very erroneous opinions which they had imbibed at home, regarding the respective merits of the Queen's and Company's military establishments, and the services rendered by each to the country.

And it so happened, upon the momentous evening which our history has now reached, that about an hour after the cloth had been removed, some incidental allusion to a recent military transaction, brought the respective claims of the royal and the East-Indian army upon the tapis, as a subject of discussion. It is a subject always much better avoided, especially at the mess-table, but on the present occasion it was unfortunately introduced.

"Yes, yes, of course," said the long cornet, who having a weak head, was a little disordered by the beer and wine he had drunk—"of course we all know that—our army has done every d—d thing—of course it has, who doubts it?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I do," said a gentlemanly young artilleryman, who was sitting nearly opposite to Drawlincourt, "the history of India unfolds a very different story."

“Nay,” said a Queen’s officer, mildly, “I do not think that—look at our victories under Wellesley and Lake.”

“Yes,” added the cornet, “and under the Duke of Wellington, too.”

The young artillery officer smiled.

“I think,” said the king’s officer, who had before spoken, and whose name was Captain Thornhill, “that if you look into the accounts of the greater number of Indian sieges, you will find that our men have been always in the advance—that they have always composed the greater and the foremost portion of all storming parties, and that almost every army of Queen’s and Company’s troops together, has been led on to victory by a Queen’s general.”

“That has always been our misfortune, not our fault,” said the young artillery officer. “Europeans, when acting with natives, have always preceded them; but the Europeans have not always been of your service, nor has the native army always had European support. It is but just to let us have our fair share of the honour, for ever since the Company has had any military power in India, our army has co-operated with yours in every engagement, wherein you have been concerned, and won a vast number of battles beside, with which you have had nothing to do.”

“I cant see that at all,” said the long cornet, emptying off a bumper of claret, “you will never

persuade me that those black deyvils have any idearr of fighting. I could give half a dozen of 'em a most infernal thrashing any day I like—that I could. They fight! the black deyvils—not they.”

“And yet they have fought; and well too,” said the young artilleryman, smiling at the national generosity of the long dragoon.

“I should like to know when and where, deyvelishly,” returned the cornet, “I should like to see the black fellow, who knows how to fight—upon my soul, I should—deyvelish much. What have they done? I should like to know, sir.”

“I will tell you,” returned Julian Jenks, who had taken possession of a vacant seat opposite the cornet and next to the young officer, who had been defending the Company’s army, “I will tell you—these black devils won the battle of Cuddalore, when the European army was put to confusion—these black devils took Agra—did all but take Bhurtpore, when the Europeans could do nothing against it, in Lord Lake’s time.”

“Ha! ha! I have you there,” interrupted the cornet, “it was Lord Combermere—that I know very well, who went against Bhurtpore and took it, for I heard him say so at a dinner-party in England. Ha! ha! that’s deyvelish good.”

“You are very learned in history, I have no doubt,” said Mr. Jenks; “but, perhaps, you will allow me to observe that Lord Lake tried to take Bhurtpore, but did not; and that Lord Comber-



mere tried again, twenty years afterwards, and did take it,—that's all the difference. But to proceed, sir: these black devils, unassisted by Europeans, with Ochterloney and Nicolls for their leaders, subjugated a place called Nepaul—these black devils gained two very gallant victories at places called Seetabuldee and Corygaum. These black devils—but perhaps I am only confusing you with a number of hard names, and shall very probably fail to convince you after all.”

This was said in a low, sneering voice, and the long cornet bit his lips, turned pale with wrath, and looked down into his plate, as though carefully examining the pattern of it. Whether he found any ideas there we do not know, but whilst the young officer, who sat next to Jenks, was discreetly saying something to give a different turn to the conversation, he raised his head, looked at Jenks, gave a twist to his moustache, and said, “I beg your pardon, I forgot I was speaking to an officer of a black corps; I did not mean to hurt your feelings, upon my soul I did not—beg pardon.”

“You are wrong there again,” said Jenks, “as I happen to belong to a European battalion, and have had nothing to do with natives since I came into the country.”

“Oh! indeed—he-e-m!”

Julian Jenks, with whom, be it observed, this matter of the respective claims of the Queen's and Company's army was rather a mad subject, having

fully, as he thought, gained his point, rose from his seat, and, calling loudly for some "fire," proceeded into the verandah to smoke a cheroot.

He had not taken many "whiffs," before he saw the long cornet swaggering unsteadily out of the mess-room, and to all appearance partially intoxicated. It was not much more than nine o'clock, but even at the soberest messes, a man, if he happen to be that way inclined, may get drunk in a very short time, and Mr. Drawlincourt had been imbibing a considerable quantity of claret, champagne, beer, and sherry, commingled, ever since half-past six, at which hour, it being the cold weather, they had sat down to dinner. Besides, we have said before, that he was weak-headed, which is true in more senses than one.

He reeled up to Julian Jenks, who was walking up and down the long verandah, and stationing himself, as well as he could, in front of that young gentleman, with his arms a-kimbo, asked him, in a blustering tone of voice, "What the deyvil he meant?"

"By what?" returned Mr. Jenks—"by smoking a cigar, I mean to enjoy myself."

"By insu-u-ulting me," stammered the cornet—"d—n it, sir, by insulting *me*."

"I **was not** aware that I had insulted you," said Mr. Jenks.

"Cu u-rse, you—not aware—I should like to know what you mean by being so deyvelish impertinent?"

“Impertinent!—Now, I’ll tell you what it is, Mr. Drawlincourt, if you don’t make off with the greatest possible despatch, I shall begin to think that *you* are impertinent, and treat you accordingly—**so look out.**”

Julian Jenks went right about face and returned to his perambulations and his weed. The long cornet, however, was drunkenly resolute, and he confronted Julian at the next turn.

“What the deyvil do you mean, I say again?”

“That I recommend you—seriously recommend you to take off and go to bed—at our own mess I would not willingly be rude to you—would not offend you, if I could possibly avoid it; but really this is too much,” said Julian.

“T-t-t-too much, I think it is—d—n it sir,” returned the cornet, who would have known his man a little better if he had been less drunk—“you d-d-don’t think to come over me in this manner now, as you two did—yes, you two, when that d—d deyvil Pultuney was with you, and I was lying sick in bed. He—he—the scoundrel! I served him out—by G—d, sir, I served him out.”

“I wish he were present to hear you,” said Jenks.

“So do I—that I might laugh at him—ha! ha! You don’t know then that he went up to the Sand-heads, and found his deary married to another.”

“What’s that?” asked Jenks, eagerly.

“He went up to the Sand-heads—upon my soul he did—and found his deary married to another.”

“ Say that again,” cried Julian Jenks, and at the same time he seized Drawlincourt by the collar of his coat, for the cornet was in plain clothes; “ say that again, sir—and answer me one question—did you put, or cause to be put in the papers, a lying announcement of Pultuney’s marriage with Miss Sweetenham?”

The suddenness of this question, which he quite understood, attending as it did immediately upon his being seized by the collar, seemed to bring the cornet back to his senses again, and the natural man—the trembling coward—was once more visible. The expression of his face underwent a sudden change, his knees shook beneath him, and he was silent.

“ Did you write it,” exclaimed Julian Jenks, “ did you write it—or cause it to be written?”

“ I?—no—no—I—that is——”

“ Enough,” cried Jenks, “ I want no further answer; so, lie there you scoundrel and be d—d;” and giving the cornet a violent twist by the collar of his coat, and at the same time applying his foot with some violence in the rear, he sent this illustrious specimen of a dragoon officer staggering down the steps of the verandah, and beheld, to his infinite satisfaction, the rascal trip at the last one, and go sprawling into the dust.

Having done this, Jenks threw away his cheroot, re-entered the mess-room, of which the outer doors had been closed, for it was a cold night, as though nothing had happened and, walking up to Captain Thornhill, whispered into his ear—“ Will you be so

good as to step this way? I think Mr. Drawlincourt is in your regiment, but whether or not, I wish that you would look to him. His friend, Griffin, of our corps, is such a boy," continued Julian, as the two proceeded together into the verandah, "that I cannot trust this matter to him. See, there is Drawlincourt, brushing the dust off his clothes; I was obliged to kick him down these stairs—he insulted me and my dearest friend, and, sorry as I was to do it, before our own mess, I could not help it, indeed. Do not say any thing about it within, or there will be a disturbance, and I shall be put under arrest. Drawlincourt is, I think, not very sober—perhaps, you had better take him home, or, for the present, to young Griffin's, and I shall be awake and ready to hear from him, whenever it may be necessary to send."

"This is a bad business," said Captain Thornhill.

"An unavoidable one," returned Julian Jenks; "I shall go home; but first of all I will send Griffin to you, and he will show you the way to his bungalow."

Julian returned again to the mess-room, sent Mr. Griffin to join the party outside, and reseated himself at the mess-table. He heard a buggy drive off, then he drank another glass of wine, joined in the conversation, that was going on, as though nothing had happened, and in about a quarter of an hour's time, again quitted his seat, left the mess-house, and walked to his bungalow.

He ordered candles to be lighted in the principal room, then placed a blotting-book and an inkstand on the table, and sent for his *khitmudgar* (personal servant) to bring him some brandy-and-water. "It is possible," he thought, "that Pultuney may return to-night—and if he does, I need ask no one else to help me in this little matter. I hope he will come. I want some one to talk to me—and a friend—yes, I will not go to sleep if I can help it—I think he will come. His intended married too. Can this be a lie of Drawlincourt's?—scarcely. I wish he would come, that he might tell me from his own lips all about it the long scoundrel!—and *he* has caused it all. Well, I should like to damage his countenance amazingly — knock his teeth down his throat — spoil his beauty—I shall be quite contented with that."

Thus cogitating, Mr. Jenks lighted a cheroot, mixed a tumbler of brandy-and-water, threw himself back in his chair, and cast his legs over the corner of the table. He was a cool, brave fellow, and fortunately was too full of just indignation to think for a moment about himself. He was going out to shoot Drawlincourt, and it had not yet occurred to him that he might possibly be shot himself. It is a very fine thing for a man, in his situation, to be so engrossed with a thought of the active part of the business, that he has no room for a consideration of the passive share in the concern, which is doomed, perhaps, to fall to his portion. If you very much want to shoot your adversary, the chances are that

you will never be much afraid of being shot yourself.

And so it was with Mr. Jenks. If the long cornet had injured him, it would have been a small matter in the estimation of this young gentleman—but the villanous plot against his friend, which he had thus discovered, was too much even for his philosophy, and in spite of his inherent good nature, he certainly did earnestly desire to punish him for the sorry trick that the long scoundrel had played, with such meanness, upon Peregrine Pultuney.

The cantonment *ghurries*\* had just struck ten, when Julian Jenks heard the sound of carriage-wheels in the compound, and going out into the verandah to see who might be his visiter (he expected to meet Captain Thornhill) found himself, in a minute, standing before our hero, who had just flung himself out of a buggy.

“Jenks, my good fellow,” were Peregrine’s first words; “can you tell me where I can find Drawlincourt?”

“Yes,” said Mr. Jenks, somewhat astonished, “I can—but——.”

“No *buts*, if you love me,” interrupted Peregrine; “he is not at the mess—I have been there already—and I must see him at once.”

“Nay—nay—you must not indeed; not till you have heard me—come in and set down.”

“Oh! no — no — no — I am in a hurry — you

\* Plates of bell metal, on which the hours are struck by the sentries.



do not know what has happened—or you would not tell me to take time.”

“ I think,” said Julian, “ I do know what has happened; and more than you can tell me, besides. Listen to me for one minute, Peregrine. I know that your cousin is married—and I know too that Drawlincourt was the scoundrel who put that announcement in the paper—”

“ And yet, knowing this, you wish to keep me from inflicting the punishment he so justly deserves.”

“ I do,” returned Jenks, calmly, “ but only because *I* am the person to do it—you are not. Nay, listen to me—scarcely an hour has elapsed since I kicked the wretch down the stairs of the mess verandah, and I am now patiently waiting to hear from him. You shall be my friend on this occasion——”

“ Your friend !” interrupted Peregrine; “ no—no—I must be the principal—I must indeed; he has injured me—not you—or rather he has tried to injure me, for, after all, he has done me a service.”

“ How—how—what do you mean ?”

“ That I am going to marry Augusta Sweetenham; but we will not talk of this now. I want at once to see Drawlincourt—his wife has confessed all to me, and I must serve out the scoundrel myself. ’

“ I don’t see *that*,” observed Julian, “ if he has done you a service; but, at all events, the thing is



impossible. I have insulted him—have kicked him down stairs, and so of course he will call me out—you can do nothing to him, at all events, now—he is my property for the present.”

“ Well,” said Peregrine, reluctantly, “ if it must, it must—I wish though, my good fellow, that you had left it to me; but who is this coming into the compound?”

“ Oh! I dare say that it is Captain Thornhill—a gentleman enough, to whose care I recommended Drawlincourt—and now I suppose that he has come from the cornet with a message. Yes, it is he—” and he went forward to meet the captain, telling Pultuney to remain where he was.

He returned immediately and introduced, Captain Thornhill to our hero.

“ This is a bad business, Mr. Pultuney,” he said, “ but I hope that it may be arranged amicably.”

“ There is no use talking about such a thing, I am afraid,” interrupted Jenks; “ I am much obliged to you for your kind interference; but I am sorry to say nothing can be done to prevent this matter from being brought to a crisis. I am resolute, but I leave my case in Pultuney’s hands, and he will settle the when and the where for us.”

Julian Jenks withdrew into his bungalow, where in less than five minutes Peregrine rejoined him.

“ I have settled it all for you,” said the young gentleman, “ you are not on duty, are you to-mor-  
row?”

“No; at least, not in the morning.”

“Well then, I have arranged it for sunrise, at the further end of the long range, behind the butts, you know. I have explained the whereabouts to Captain Thornhill and he seems to understand pretty well; but we can order a syce to accompany him, and now I think we had better both of us go to bed. I am very, very sorry, my dear fellow, that I have brought you into this; but Captain Thornhill would not listen to what I had to say about my own wrongs, and so—good night—God bless you!”—and he wrung his friend’s hand affectionately, turned away, and went to his bedroom.

\* \* \* \* \*

Peregrine rose at gun-fire. It was a cold, dark morning, and his bearer brought in a candle for him to dress by. He had slept soundly; but it was the dull, heavy sleep of exhaustion, and he did not feel much refreshed. He was anxious, uneasy, and uncomfortable; for he could not help bearing in mind that the quarrel, on account of which his friend was now going out to risk his life, had been brought about by a series of events, originating in his—Peregrine’s—misconduct. He would have been happier if he had been going forth, not as a second, but as a principal in the affair, and that there was no chance of being able now to accommodate matters, in this sort, he knew too well. “Well,” he thought, “it will soon be

over; that is one good thing," and, only waiting to throw a dressing-gown over himself, he walked into Jenks's room.

Jenks was already up and dressing.

"Did you get any sleep?" asked Peregrine.

"Oh! yes," said Julian, "I am almost astonished at myself. I sat up for some time, wrote two or three letters, and then went sound asleep on my couch. It is a serious business though, look at it as one may, and I do not feel quite easy in my mind about it."

"I wish you had left it to me."

"I do not; but I wish that Drawlincourt had never come to this part of the world. It is very cold, I think; do not you?"

"Yes, very! I have been shivering all over."

"And it is very strange," continued Jenks, "that it does not get lighter. I have been up half an hour, and it is just as dark as when I first got out of bed."

Peregrine went to the window and opened it.

"It is a dense fog," he said, "what shall we do?"

"Oh! it will clear off, I suppose, before long: at all events soon after sunrise."

"I suspect not," returned Peregrine; "but we shall see; there is plenty of time yet. I wish it were not so cold."

"So do I; my teeth quite chatter. Have you ordered the buggy?"

"No; but I will—and dress too—we must not be late you know."

“Of course not;” and these few brief sentences were all that then passed between them. Peregrine returned to his own room, and continued his toilet by the light of the candle.

About a quarter of an hour before sunrise, the two young gentlemen left their bungalow, and got into the hired buggy which Peregrine, the night before, had brought down with him. It was so foggy, that they could scarcely see so far before them as the horse’s head, but our hero, who undertook to drive, knew the road thoroughly, and relying upon this knowledge, anticipated no difficulty in reaching the ground. He drove slowly and cautiously, the syces running at the animal’s head, and in a few minutes, for his house was near the Maidaun, he had struck off from the road, and was making his way along the spacious plain to the north of the Cantonments, where the artillery practice is held.

“I think we shall do now,” said Peregrine.

“I hope we shall—you must drive straight though—keep to the road.”

“Yes,” said Peregrine, “if I can; but it is not very clearly defined.”

“It is not; but you must drive straight.”

“That is not so easy, as I have nothing to steer by; not a single object visible,” said Peregrine.

“You have got off the road already,” observed Jenks; “hallo! what is that before us?—you are driving against something.”

“ I’ll be hanged if it is not the Pendulum,” returned Peregrine; “ I must have steered very badly indeed; we must keep inclining to the left—I was as nearly against it as possible, but I just saw the top in time.”

“ I am afraid,” said Jenks, “ we shall have a series of blunders before this affair is over; and if we, who know the road so well, have all this difficulty, how will *they* manage, who are quite strangers to it.”

“ I sure I don’t know,” rejoined Peregrine; “ we shall have to wait I suppose till the fog clears away.”

“ Pleasant that will be, very,” said Mr. Jenks; “ but here we are on the road again.”

“ Yes; and we had better keep to it now; I will drive slower. What a morning it is!”

Peregrine directed the syces to keep his eye upon the road, which was indeed but imperfectly marked out upon the grass, and, by driving slowly and cautiously, he at last contrived to reach the spot to the left of the “ butts,” which had been agreed upon as the place of meeting.

“ Is this it?” asked Julian Jenks, as his companion pulled up with a jerk, which almost brought the horse back upon its haunches.

“ Yes,” said Peregrine, “ but they will never find their way now—I don’t know what we must do.”

“ We must be patient—the sun has risen by this

time, and we shall be able to see better soon—my hair is quite wet with the fog.”

“And mine,” said Peregrine, “as though I had been bathing—we will tell the syces to go along the road and look out for their buggy.”

Peregrine gave directions to the groom, who was tying up the reins to the splash-board of the buggy, and seeing that the horse was well-inclined to stand still, passed his arm through Julian’s, and said, “Well! this is a bad business, certainly—we had better keep together at all events—or we shall lose one another presently.”

“What a fearful nuisance it is—by the bye, where are the pistols?”

“Oh! do not think about them,” said Peregrine, “there is no use in pouring out the nauseous draft, and holding it under the patient’s nose an hour before it is to be taken.”

Julian laughed, and said, “Why, the truth is, I was thinking, that if we were to load at once with blank-cartridges——”

Peregrine stood aghast—“Why, what do you mean?”

“Not what you think I do apparently,” returned Julian, “and yet you surely never could have thought me guilty of proposing *that*—I merely wish to suggest, my good fellow, the advisability of loading at once with blank cartridge and beginning blazing away with all our might. They might hear us you know, Peregrine, and understand the signal—they might——”

He had scarcely uttered these words, before the syces came running up to the young gentlemen and informed them, that he had heard a carriage of some sort not very far away, but he thought it had turned off to the right. The man added, that he could still hear it.

Peregrine took off his cap, brushed aside the curls which fell over his ear, and put himself in a listening attitude.

“Can you hear any thing?” asked Jenks.

“Yes—yes—the jingling of carriage-wheels—they sound as though they were loose.”

“It must be a *crahanchy*,\* then,” observed Jenks.

“No, I think not—it sounds like a buggy with bad axles—I will hail them, at all events.”

Peregrine shouted out. “This way—this way,” and the syces set up a sort of loud yell, which he continued at the extremest stretch of his voice for more than a minute. These noises seemed to have the desired effect, for the jingling of the wheels grew plainer and plainer. “They are coming, I think,” said Peregrine.

“Thank God!” cried Jenks, “I can see their heads, I think, over the fog.”

Peregrine went forward and hailed the buggy. He was not mistaken; Captain Thornhill was driving, and the long cornet, wrapped up in a blue cloth cloak, was huddled up in the opposite corner.

\* Bullock carriage.

“It is a miserable morning,” said Peregrine, “I don’t know what we are to do—an elephant would scarcely be visible at twelve paces——”

“Let me speak to you for a minute,” interrupted Captain Thornhill, springing out of the buggy—“can nothing be done to settle matters?”

“I am afraid not,” returned Peregrine; “this is not an affair of a day or a week. We have long scores of enmity to settle. I would fain see my friend withdraw altogether, and take the matter into my own hands; but as you say, that this is impossible, we must proceed with the present business, as it is. I think the fog is clearing off a little.”

“Well, then, fog or no fog, let us go to work—we can see well enough for such a business as this—do you consent?”

“Yes,” returned Peregrine—“let us send the buggies out of the way a little, for fear that any accident should happen—they had better stand in this direction. I will measure the paces.”

“Very good,” said Captain Thornhill, “do so—the fog is clearing off, I think; I can see the sun there, it is some distance up, but like a London sun—how wet my whiskers are.”

Peregrine had a sword-stick in his hand; he drew the blade, stuck it into the sod and stepped out twelve paces. When he halted and turned about on his heels, he could not see the part of the sword-stick which he had left in the ground.



the "ground," but it was a small object, and the fog, though clearing up above, was as dense as ever below. With a little difficulty he managed to erect the bamboo sheath of his sword-stick as a mark at the further point of the twelve pace distance, and then having taken the pistols out of his buggy he called Jenks to come to him.

"For the last time, my dear friend, I ask you whether you will apologize?" said Peregrine Pultuney.

"Never!"

"Do—do—he shall not escape, I promise you. Let this matter be settled, and I will begin another on my own account."

"There is but one way of settling it—load the pistols. God bless you!"

"Give me your hand—God prosper you." Peregrine loaded the pistols.

"Here, Julian, you must stand here. Captain Thornhill, you can see the mark—the ground is level—there are no advantages of place—it does not matter where they stand."

In a minute they were standing opposite to one another, the long cornet and Julian Jenks. The latter had apparently the advantage, for he was the shorter of the two, and his head was dimly seen through the fog, whilst that of the long cornet, though not distinct, was more so than that of his adversary. Not, however, that this *really* constituted an advantage, for the two parties were not

“Can you see him?” asked Peregrine Pultuney, as he put the pistol into his friend’s hand. “Now take it—God preserve you.” Then in a louder voice—

“Are you both ready?”

“Yes.” The signal was given, and the two pistols went off as in a salvo—two flashes were visible through the fog, but only—only one sound was heard.

And then there was a groan—a deep groan. Drawlincourt had fallen to the ground with his face frightfully distorted. Jenks’s ball had shattered the cornet’s jaw and passed out at his mouth. It was a frightful sight to witness; but the wound was not mortal, though the beauty of the long cornet was spoilt for ever and ever.

## CHAPTER THE LAST.

In which this History is brought to a Conclusion.

LITTLE more remains to be said. In less than a month after the memorable morning, which witnessed the entire destruction of the long cornet's personal attractions, Peregrine Pultuney was married to Augusta Sweetenham, in the cathedral church of Calcutta. We are happy to say that the latest accounts we have received of the young couple were favourable in the extreme, but we have no intention, at all events in the present work, of saying any thing about "Pultuney married."

Mrs. Peregrine Pultuney (we cannot refrain from writing the name just once) had very nearly half a lac of rupees of her own; for she was the only child of a lieutenant-colonel, who had married somewhat late in life and died not long after he had married. It need not be mentioned that this money was a highly acceptable addition to the ways and means of a second-lieutenant of artillery, nor that

with this accession to their income (the money being well invested) they contrived to live in a condition, which, though very far indeed below affluence, ought to have been very decent and comfortable, and when it is stated that Mr. and Mrs. Sweetenham, who were sincerely attached to the young couple, furnished their house for them at starting, and gave them an equipage, our readers will entertain very reasonable hopes that the youthful house-keepers managed very well. Whether they did or not is a question, which may *perhaps* be answered in a future work, but will certainly not be in this present one.

As for Julian Jenks, he is still a bachelor, and we have little more of him to say than that he stood godfather to a little Pultuney, who, in the natural course of events, was born a month or two before the expiration of Peregrine's first year of married life. Rumour says, that Mr. Jenks is going to be married; but we are not very well convinced of it ourselves.

The long cornet's beauty, as we have said more than once, was irremediably damaged by the pistol ball, which so untowardly came in contact with his jaw. After enduring a vast deal of pain, he was reported to be as well as he ever could be again—but one side of his face is wretchedly distorted, especially when he ventures to speak. He has gone to England and sold out of his regiment, but we are not

quite competent to say what has become of him since his retirement. Perhaps he is a reformed character—we hope so.

Mrs. Drawlincourt did not accompany her husband, but where and how she is living is not to be lightly told in one of these brief concluding sentences of our history.

Mr. and Mrs. Dillon, and Mrs. Poggleton, a few days after landing in Calcutta, began to make active preparations for a trip to the Upper Provinces; the reverend gentleman having been appointed chaplain to a large Mofussil military station. Poor Julia, if she is not happy, is at peace—for she has drank of the waters of consolation at the only fountain whence they are to be drawn; and if in life she be not destined to much beatitude, her end, which they say is not very remote, will be truly and perfectly blessed. We have heard that she is in a consumption, and we fear that there is too much truth in the report.

And thus much for the principal characters in our work—of the minor personages it may be sufficient to say, that some have married and some have died—some have gone to England, and some are still sweltering on beneath the tropics. The great world is full of changes, but the Calcutta world far more changeable than any of the lesser ones, which it contains in its vast cycle. Society, in these parts, is a sort of ever moving procession, and the same

characters are seldom to be seen upon the stage many months together. If our work has been somewhat desultory this must be our excuse—Life in India is always desultory.

THE END.