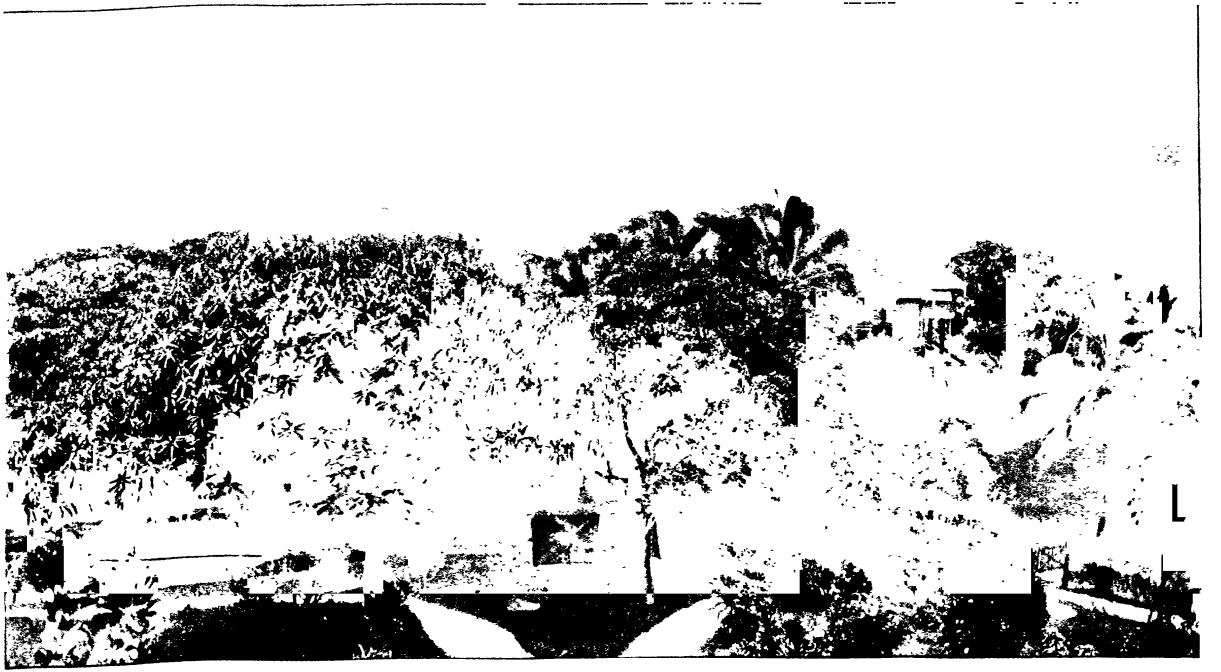
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THE INDIAN CRIMINAL



PORT BLAIR, FROM SUMMIT OF ROSS ISLAND.

THE
INDIAN CRIMINAL

BY

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"THE STORY OF CRIME," "ORIENTAL CRIME," ETC.

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PREFACE

This work has been compiled mainly from verbal and documentary information obtained from various sources, vouchsafed me by gentlemen who have spent many years in the East in administrative capacities; also from information derived from officials still actively engaged in India, and who have been good enough to place themselves in communication with me. For illustrations and information I am deeply indebted to Mr. E. H. Mann, C.I.E., to Captain C. H. Buck, of the Punjab Commission, to Lieut.-Colonel Sir Richard Temple, C.I.E., to Colonel Sir Herbert C. Perrott, Bt., C.B., Chief Secretary, St. John Ambulance Association, and Mr. E. H. Gadsden, Superintendent, Central Jail, Coimbatore. I also have to acknowledge my indebtedness for information to the following works: *Reminiscences of an Indian Police Official* (Arthur Crawford, C.M.G.), *Some Records of Crime* (General Charles Hervey, C.B.), *Prisoners Their Own Warders* (J. F. A.

M'Nair), *Sardar Mir Abdul Ali* (Naoroji M. Dumasia), *Observations on the General and Medical Management of Indian Jails* (James Hutchinson), and *History of Railway Thieves* (M. Paupa Rao Naidu). Other acknowledgments will be found in the text.

H. L. ADAM.

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THE INDIAN CRIMINAL

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM IN THE EAST

FOR generations past the best brains of this country have been engaged in the administration of India, with the gratifying result that the methods of dealing with criminals there have attained a degree of proficiency far exceeding anything of the kind to be found in this country. The natives of India, although of lax morals, are neither intemperate nor violent. When their caste prejudices are not interfered with, they are, as a rule, easy-going and docile. Their greatest vice is craft.

The Indian criminal may be said to be a much better man than the criminal of the West. It should also be borne in mind that a vast amount of crime committed in India is hereditary, and has been so for generations upon generations. Thus the natives guilty of such deeds do not imagine that they are committing any heinous offence, inasmuch as it is a natural result of their birth. There are vast criminal confederations which have for

countless years made crime a profession, whose members, in other respects, are no worse than their fellow-creatures; that is to say, outside their lawless deeds, which they do not consider criminal, they possess many good qualities. This may sound, to people in the West, a somewhat lame statement, but the natives of India are actuated by feelings and principles which we in the West cannot adequately comprehend. Such natives possess no consciousness of moral guilt, and however reprehensible their acts may seem in the eyes of the Europeans who govern them, they do not themselves consider they merit anything in the shape of punishment. This sentiment, as may be readily supposed, plays an important part in dealing with recalcitrant natives.

I shall, in future chapters, give ample instances of the craft of the Indian criminal, the study of whom is far more interesting than that of the criminal of the West.

At one time, many years ago, they used to brand criminals in India on the forehead, so that, when once convicted, they carried the evidence of their crime with them to the grave. This was, of course, about as pernicious a custom as could well be imagined, and made reformation an utter impossibility. It constituted a very grave disability to the culprit, who became a social outcast for all time, shunned by all but his own criminal class. Sometimes a criminal, so branded, would seek to hide

the evidence of his crime by wearing his turban low down on his forehead, but the device was not always successful. Only those who are acquainted with the depth and earnestness of caste prejudices, amounting to devout religious superstition, can adequately appreciate the abiding punishment this disfigurement constituted. Eventually this mischievous and wholly unjust custom was abolished, and should never have been instituted.

It will readily be seen that the problem in the East, as to the best means of dealing with the *criminal population, presents far more difficulties than it does in the West. In England we have to deal with people of one nation only, but in India there are vast numbers of races, tribes, and castes,* all with different customs and prejudices, and various religions and languages. Therefore, compare the task before the magistrates of India with the magistrates of this country. A magistrate in India must make himself acquainted with the peculiarities of the people of the district in which he serves, and obtain a thorough knowledge of the language spoken there, in itself no mean task to perform. Yet, in spite of these drawbacks, the criminal law itself of India is far easier to grasp than the criminal law of this country.

The criminal law of India is contained in two excellent codes, known as "The Code of Criminal Procedure" and "The Indian Penal Code." The method of its administration is based upon the

rulings of the principal courts of the various provinces, that is to say, in all important cases. The magistrates are instructed by their superior officers, and they must pass examinations in order to attain promotion. As I have before had occasion to remark, in this particular department, we have a very great deal to learn from India.

Perjury has become quite a fine art with the natives of India, and one of the most difficult tasks European officials, new to their posts, have to deal with is the sifting of evidence, in order to separate the truth from that which is rank mendacity. Experience, of course, renders this task lighter, and in time a magistrate is able, by familiarity with the idiosyncrasies of his subjects, to tell at once when a native is endeavouring to "trim" his evidence. Again, there are a great many false charges brought against innocent persons, from feelings of petty spite and revenge, and these have to be detected and suitably dealt with, not by any means an easy matter to perform satisfactorily. Sometimes these false charges are the outcome of a genuine grievance, and are brought to burk inquiries, or "rebut," as it were, real charges. In the way of illustration I will give an instance of this. The case I am about to describe occurred in a Punjab district.

A poor tenant brought an action against his rich landlord to recover possession of a plot of land, and won it. In due course he obtained execution,

and, accompanied by another man, proceeded to the field and began ploughing. The enraged landlord, in company with several friends and partisans, arrived in haste on horseback, and belaboured the tenant with a heavy stick, breaking the latter's arm. The landlord's companions also attacked the man, and beat him black and blue. Having accomplished this dastardly outrage, the conspirators put their heads together, and devised a means of establishing an *alibi*. It was arranged between them that the landlord should gallop hard to the headquarters of the district, situated five miles away; a watchman in the meantime being sent on foot to report that the said tenant had been set upon by some persons other than the conspirators, and cruelly treated. The landlord, having arrived at the town, got into conversation with several respectable persons, and made himself generally obvious. Two hours afterwards the watchman arrived, and reported the outrage. The landlord thereupon, as though he had but just heard of the affair, reported the matter at the local police-station, the time of the occurrence being entered as though it had taken place an hour after his, the landlord's, arrival in the town. While this report was being made, however, it fortunately happened that the friends of the injured man arrived, and at once lodged a complaint against the landlord. At first this was scarcely believed, but subsequent inquiry confirmed it, and, happily

for the ends of justice, the landlord was convicted, and met his deserts.

This will give a slight idea of the difficulties which beset the conscientious European official in India bent on doing justice to all parties.

Under these circumstances, with so much false evidence constantly being given, it is not a matter for surprise that occasionally innocent persons are wrongfully convicted in India, but every possible precaution is taken against this undesirable contingency, and the Criminal Procedure Code has been framed with that object in view. An accused person is given every possible chance of proving his innocence, stage by stage, during the career of a case, so that the risk to the liberty of the subject is reduced to a minimum. As is generally known, an accused person, after having been convicted in a Sessions Court, has the right of appeal to the High Court, and a condemned man has also the right to petition the head of the province, and even the Viceroy himself. Thus, on a plea of irregular procedure, a case may be set aside, and a new trial ordered; or, upon sufficient evidence if innocence being adduced, a convicted person may be released unconditionally.

Let us take a few recent statistics of crime in India; we shall find them, unlike most statistics, rather interesting. During, then, the quinquennial period ending with 1903 the average number of reported offences per annum was 1,402,579. Ac-

cording to the census of 1901 the population amounted to 231,830,884. Of these charges 83·3 per cent. were returned as true, and 1,050,805 cases were brought to trial. A very large proportion of these cases, however, were of a trivial character. The number of persons concerned in the cases averaged 0·75 of the population. It must not, however, be supposed that these figures represent all the crime of the country, for a great many crimes were never traced, while others were never reported. Now, as to which province had the greatest burden of cases. Our figures are based upon the number of cases brought to trial per 10,000 of the population. Madras, then, heads the list with a ratio of 80, and Assam occupies the honourable position of being last, and therefore least criminal, with a ratio of only 24. Bombay had a ratio of 78; Burma, 71; North-West Frontier Province, 62; Punjab, 49; Central Provinces (including Berar), 31; Bengal and the United Provinces, 25 each.

More than half the offences brought to trial were of a petty nature, against petty and local laws, such, for instance, as the Forest, Canal, Municipal, Excise, and Police Acts, about two-thirds of the remainder being in the following categories:—Affecting life, 2 per cent.; inflicting hurt, 36 per cent.; criminal force and assault, 20 per cent.; theft, 26 per cent.; and criminal trespass, 16 per cent. Crimes of violence, as given under the first

three heads, are most rife in the Punjab and Bombay. On an average about 500 persons are sentenced to death annually, 1,600 to transportation, 130,000 to rigorous, and 15,000 to simple, imprisonment, 630,000 to fine, and 23,000 to whipping. About £245,000 are annually imposed in fines, but of this amount only about £205,000 are realized, while about £18,500 are paid out of the latter as compensation to complainants, or, in false charges, to accused. About 175,000 persons lodge appeals every year, 67·5 per cent. of which are rejected.

Now as to those who have to deal with criminal work. *There are 45 judges of the principal provincial courts, 103 judges of other than district courts, 195 chief magistrates of districts, and 6,064 subordinate magistrates.* On an average a magistrate tries about fourteen cases a month. This sounds at first as though a magistrate had a pretty leisurely time of it in India, but it should be known that he also deals with a large amount of miscellaneous criminal work, besides performing numerous other duties on the revenue and civil side. He is, in fact, as a rule, a very busy man.

Now the judicial system of India is, in spite of its drawbacks, far in advance of that which obtains in this country. The work of the magistrates is carefully supervised; each province has a chief or high court, which consists of a bench of judges who have been carefully selected from the senior



Bremner, Lahore.]

MR. M. SHAH DIN, LATE JUDGE, CHIEF COURT, PUNJAUB.

ranks of the Indian Civil Service and from the Bar, and chosen for their *intelligence and capabilities*. I have purposely placed the last three words in italics, for I wish to draw particular attention to this fact. We, in this country, could very well do with some judges of this kind. We also might, with considerable advantage, adopt the system prevailing in India of appointing judges, instead of the back-staircase, hole-and-corner, and generally corrupt system which obtains at the present time in England.

These judges—I refer to those of the higher courts—in addition to trying certain original cases, also hear appeals and applications, and at the same time hold, as it were, a watching brief over the work of subordinate judges. The latter they also, from time to time, instruct by circular. Every month all the magistrates submit a statement to the judges, which gives a succinct account of the nature and scope of their work during the month. Each case dealt with is given in detail, and the nature and extent of punishment inflicted is stated. In the case of a punishment being either abnormally slight or severe some explanatory remarks are made against the entry, and it is within the power of the judges to alter these sentences if, in their wisdom, they consider such a proceeding necessary in the interests of justice.

What an excellent system this is, and how much we are in need of it in this country! Think of the

outrageous inequalities of sentences inflicted by judges in England, dictated by nothing higher or more just than their own sweet will or sour prejudice. Sometimes we see a bloodthirsty miscreant given an absurdly light sentence, and upon another occasion some poor, half-demented wretch condemned to punishment which is absolutely savage. There is no doubt that the spirit of Judge Jeffreys, of infamous memory, still animates some of the judges of to-day. No true justice can be expected from a judge who takes his seat upon the bench with a political twist in his mind. The whole system prevailing here is as wrong as wrong can be. Had we a system like that which exists in India such inequalities of punishment would no longer exist. Our judges here require very closely watching, and their sentences very rigorously revising, as has been proved to demonstration by the Criminal Court of Appeal. Their minds run in such narrow grooves, and they are so steeped in prejudice and legal corruption, that they cannot be trusted to carry out their duties impartially. I shall, however, have a deal more to say about this upon a future occasion.

To return to India. There are also benches of honorary magistrates, who have been specially selected from among the principal native gentry, but, as a rule, their powers are of a subsidiary character. The Indian Penal Code defines all classes of offences, and fixes the maximum punish-

ment which may be inflicted in each case. In the Criminal Procedure Code the powers of the judges are stated, and the method of procedure clearly described. If a person brings a vexatious charge against another, he or she can be made to compensate the wronged one.

In short, all the criminal laws of India are dictated by an excellent commonsense and a wide and comprehensive knowledge of human nature.

CHAPTER II

EARLY RECORDS

THE improvements made in the management of the various jails in India during the last half-century have been many and remarkable. In 1856 Dr. F. J. Mouat, Inspector of Jails for the Lower Provinces, made a special tour of inspection round the various jails in Bengal, Behar, and Arracan. In those days the conduct of the jails was in a very slipshod condition. There were no superintendents or governors, but many of the jails were looked after, or, to be more exact, were supposed to be looked after, by a native official known as a "darogah." In addition to being very much under-staffed, the staff was invariably eminently inefficient. Although the medical officer of the district was in touch with the jail he was not, as he is now, located at the jail as superintendent.

Prisoners were then accorded rather remarkable and injudicious privileges, such, for instance, as being supplied with opium. This, it is not surprising to learn, led to abuses, the prisoners so favoured frequently selling the article to other prisoners. Eventually the opium habit was discountenanced altogether, a reform, however, which had to be introduced by degrees.

It is interesting to note the reports made by Dr. Mouat on the various jails he visited, for they furnish us with a very good idea of their condition in the 'fifties. For instance, at Serampore the jail was an old Danish structure, and quite unsuited for its purpose. The hospital was damp and very dirty, the bedding of the sick men was filthy, the wards were also damp, unventilated, and unfit to confine human beings in. The wards were empty, all the prisoners being kept in the jail-house, which was also damp, without roof ventilation, and very dirty. In one corner there was a puddle of urine; hanging against the wall were some dirty rags, the bedding had a musty appearance, and the ward was lighted by cheraghs. In fact, everything about the place was dirty and untidy.

Discipline was very lax. At Burdwan an ox and a flock of goats were kept in the compound, the former belonging to the jailer, and the latter to some of the prisoners! The prisoners went about the wards as they chose, and could easily have overpowered the guard had they attempted so to do. They could, if ill-disposed, have attacked the magistrate, or anybody else visiting the place. They followed Dr. Mouat about, and once or twice mobbed him, although they dispersed when ordered to do so. There were six solitary cells, in such a position, with the sun beating directly down upon them, that it was calculated that any prisoner confined within them would assuredly be suffocated. The sanitary arrangements were

remarkable for being even worse than primitive, a condition of things calculated to breed cholera in a particularly virulent form. There were 433 prisoners confined in this jail, and they were variously employed in the library, on the race-course and cricket ground, cutting wood, making bricks and paper, weaving, carpentering, spinning pât, making chul and soorkee, barbering, cooking, writing, sweeping, etc. There were ten lepers in the jail, and ten of the prisoners were in for life. There were about 100 on the staff, consisting of darogah, jemadar, duffadars, and burkundauzes.

The point of view of imprisonment, in the minds of the prisoners in those times, seems to have been peculiar, for repeated applications were made for the removal of fetters, diminution of labour, increase of food and clothing, the privilege of receiving the visits of friends and relatives, and other similar requests. It was made abundantly clear to the authorities by this attitude that the prisoners considered themselves victims of society, as probably some of them were. Almost needless to remark, to most of such appeals no serious attention was given. One very unwise practice was indulged in in the jails, and that was the employment of prison and free labour in juxtaposition. In one jail a number of prisoners were employed grinding flour for the troops, in the vicinity of a large number of women who had been hired from the neighbouring villages.

One of the most difficult problems which then,

and, in a measure still does beset the task of adequately and humanely managing the jails of India, is that of classification, so many and curious are the castes and tribes. For instance, the Sonthals, which Dr. Mouat encountered during his tour, a particularly inhuman band of criminal raiders, were and are still very difficult to deal with. They are more mountaineers than dwellers of the plains, and invariably bring pestilence and contagion into any place wherein they may be confined. How to deal with them in jail always has been a source of much worry on the part of the authorities. They live in jungles, and are believed to be gross animal feeders, living upon the flesh of what would be regarded by most nations as vermin. They are also addicted to ardent spirit drinking. They are scantily clothed, and are not affected by malaria; they can, therefore, live with impunity in jungles which would be as pernicious to the inhabitants of the plains of Bengal as the swampy West Coast of Africa is to Europeans. Being inhabitants of hill countries, the Sonthals, when placed in confinement, are subject to great despondency, and soon fall victims to scrofula and hospital gangrene. The same kind of thing happens to wild beasts when in confinement, particularly members of the monkey tribe.

It was found necessary, at the time Dr. Mouat made his tour, in consequence of the great mortality among the Sonthals under the usual *régime*, to "specialize," as it were, in their case, and fur-

nish them with an allowance of animal food and liquor. The latter was a strong fermented liquor, prepared from rice, somewhat resembling the Shamshoo of the Chinese. They would eat the meat of all animals, even when the animal was found dead, including bullock, pig, buffalo, sheep, goat, fowl, tiger, deer, and bear. They would eat any kind of bird, and two descriptions of snake, which they called Dhewira and Bora. They wore no extra clothing in the winter, but slept round large fires.

The management of some of the jails in the 'fifties can only be described as free-and-easy. For instance, at Hazareebagh the palisades at the side of one of the gates were broken, allowing anybody to pass out of the jail without let or hindrance. The other gate was absent altogether, it having been taken away to be mended! On a raised parapet, on the occasion of Dr. Mouat's visit, was a sentry with a loaded musket, whose orders were to shoot any prisoner leaving the compound. The sentry-boxes were of bamboo, and liable to be blown away in a gale. The women's ward was in the same enclosure as that of the men.

In consequence of the tendency of prisoners to become scorbutic, the authorities advised the cultivation of varieties of vegetables near the jails, and now there is scarcely a jail in India that has not its kitchen garden. The various maladies and physical disabilities which the prisoners were sub-

ject to in those days caused a good deal of anxiety to the officials, in addition to presenting many pathetic and unnerving spectacles. For instance, at one jail a prisoner, from Maunbhoom, forty-eight years of age, was stone-blind with a double cataract, and was destined to pass seven years in irons.

There were many small jails in those times in India, some of which were eminently unsuited for the purpose of confining criminals. At Behar the jail was situated in the midst of a large and populous town, inhabited by a bigoted, unruly, and intractable race, surrounded by woodyards and combustible buildings, the jail being undrained and unventilated. The wards were used as receptacles and repositories for old rags, unconsumed and uncooked food, and pots and pans of all sorts and sizes. There were also strewn about filthy rags, broken chillums, dirty bedding, and rubbish. Fetters of three kinds were in free use in the jail, two of the prisoners being manacled hand, foot, neck, and body—more like wild beasts than human beings. The darogah was afraid of the prisoners, more than one of whom had threatened his life. The cost of the up-keep of the prison was 396 rupees a month. The guard was very badly equipped, with old bright-barrelled flint muskets, which were not kept loaded, and could easily have been wrested from their grasp by a resolute prisoner bent upon escape. Corruption was rife among the staff, and wealthy prisoners

were allowed to purchase all kinds of forbidden luxuries, while the poorer prisoners were subjected to every species of oppression. Contractors, too, who supplied goods to the jail robbed the authorities with the connivance of the staff.

One Saturday morning Dr. Mouat, while in the main street, close to the gate, was surprised to see three prisoners bartering at the shop of a native named Jesumat Singh. There were no warders with them! With the aid of a chowkidar (watchman) he arrested the three men and took them back to the prison. One had a lotah (drinking-vessel) full of rice in his hand, and in a piece of cloth the dholl for the dinner of his mess. Upon this being examined it was found to contain enough dried gunjah to render a dozen men insensible. Later the warder turned up, and gave an untrue account of his movements. While driving to the station Dr. Mouat fell in with another warder in charge of five prisoners, who were straggling over a space of about forty yards. One of them was in familiar conversation with a well-dressed townsman, and from him was doubtless receiving every forbidden luxury.

In the jail at Patna Dr. Mouat saw a portly prisoner, who was not only manacled hand, foot, neck, and body, with a weight of iron not easy to carry, but at night Dr. Mouat was informed the prisoner was also chained to the bars of the cell window. This inhuman treatment was considered necessary in view of the many attempts to escape

made by the prisoner. His excuse for this insubordination was that he did not receive enough food, and that he could not control the desire to obtain more. This the authorities were inclined to believe, and eventually recommended his removal to another jail. The darogah of this jail had been so frequently threatened with death by prisoners whom he had put to solitary confinement for insubordination that he was afraid to inflict any further punishments of this kind.

CHAPTER III

FURTHER RECORDS OF THE 'FIFTIES

At Sarun Jail, also, Dr. Mouat found many drawbacks and defects in the management. Stalwart prisoners were occupied in spinning thread, an occupation more suited to women. Some of the buildings were threatening to fall, and called for immediate attention. Many of the warders were natives of the place and district, a circumstance which was calculated to create sympathy with the prisoners in the event of an outbreak. The Jemadar of the Guard was aged and feeble, and quite incapable of adequately fulfilling his duties. The warders were armed with tulwars, which were a kind of Hodge's razor, made only to sell and not to cut. The arrangement of the hospital was eminently undesirable; there was nothing but an open railing dividing the women's compartment from the men's, a sort of Pyramus and Thisbe arrangement, which, it was thought, might become the source of undesirable irregularities.

Caste prejudices then, as now, caused the jail authorities a good deal of trouble. At one jail—at Chumparun—in consequence of the constant thefts and quarrels among the prisoners regarding

their lotahs, the use of these was discontinued, and earthen kuttorahs and gourds substituted for them. This arrangement appeared to work all right until some rioters from Mozufferpore were brought to the jail, including some members of a troublesome class known as the Gwallas, when a clamour arose for lotahs and brass eating-dishes. Petitions were made to the authorities, infringement of caste being advanced in justification. In the end those who were able to buy lotahs, or who had friends who could do so for them, were allowed to use them; the others were told that, inasmuch as they had transgressed the laws of the country they were not entitled to such consideration.

There is no doubt that this question of caste is made the excuse for a good deal of malingering. For instance, many of the prisoners at the jail under notice complained that there were no dhobies (washermen) to wash their clothes, stating that it was a breach of caste for them to wash their own. These caste prejudices are very curious and bothering. Some of the highest castes may wash their own dhoties, but no other of their garments. But all castes in Behar below the Chuttries may wash *all* their clothes. It becomes even more bewildering where cooking is concerned. There are castes who will not do any cooking, nor eat food cooked by certain other castes. So that in both washing and cooking special prisoners have to be employed. It is also just the same in the case of the food itself. What

some castes will eat others will not. And so on, *ad extremum.*

In some of the jails in those days the prisoners fed themselves, being allowed eight pice a day with which to purchase provisions. This custom, it is not surprising to learn, led to abuses. The prisoners would sometimes half starve themselves in order to save money, or purchase such luxuries as tobacco, opium, or gunjah. The jail administration was simply beset with difficulties. Quite an agitation arose as to whether ghee should not be used in the jails in place of oil. Some considered, as the former article was regarded as a luxury, it should not be given to prisoners, others thought it ought to be used, as it benefited the health of the prisoners.

Again, in the manufacture of paper, this being then one of the principal industries carried on in Indian jails, some trouble arose in connection with the arsenious acid and hurtâl—a rank poison—used in the manufacture. It became dangerous to sell this poisoned paper in the bazaars, as poor people were in the habit of having charms written on pieces of paper, and swallowing them for good luck. The paper was made principally to prevent the destruction of records in Government offices. Great care also had to be taken that none of the prisoners employed the poison for any but the legitimate purpose.

Both magistrates and judges paid periodical visits to the jails of India, making observations at

the time in a book kept specially for that purpose. In one such book is to be found an entry recording the visit of a magistrate to a certain jail, and ordering that the prisoners be given an allowance of sweetmeats! At first this would lead one to suppose that the magistrate was a particularly humane man; but further on in the book there is another entry on the part of the same official in which he orders that the prisoners also be given a liberal allowance of cane! Some of the officials did not look altogether kindly on this sugar-cane policy, as it were, and thought the cane without the sugar was more in keeping with penal methods.

It would not be a bad idea if the judges and magistrates of this country at the present day also paid periodical visits to the various prisons, so that they might acquire an adequate knowledge of the punishment which they are so frequently called upon to inflict upon their fellow-creatures. In conversation one day with a judge of the High Court I mentioned the subject of prisons, when his lordship observed, "You know more about them than I do." Such ignorance is lamentable. An intimate knowledge of imprisonment and penal servitude might serve to chasten their methods.

Half a century ago it was very difficult to effect reforms in Indian jails, the native officials being so slow and retrogressive. They mostly received their instructions in a Fabian spirit, and it was rather the exception than the rule for anything to be done, or left undone, that had so been ordered.

We find a brilliant exception recorded in the person of a darogah named Dhunnoo Lall, who so aroused the admiration of the visiting magistrate by having done what he was told to do, that he recommends him for special distinction on the part of the Government. The enthusiasm displayed upon the occasion by the magistrate is clear evidence that such devotion to duty was by no means a common occurrence.

In spite of all these drawbacks, however, the jails of India were then far in advance of the prisons of England of the same period, as they are at the present time, the percentage of deaths among prisoners being much higher in England than in India.

One of the greatest difficulties the jail administration of India in the past had to contend with was the sanitary arrangements. Wells could not be kept free from contamination. In 1851 the Penitentiary of Deegah was visited with an epidemic of cholera which decimated the jail population. When first occupied, the jail was declared to be in a perfectly healthy condition, but by degrees the soil became charged with impurities, and the penal paradise became a hideous Golgotha.

Dr. Mouat encountered some strange experiences in his jail visits, which were for the most part surprise visits. Sometimes he would find the staff lounging about in an indifferent and sluggish manner, but directly his identity became known a kind of pantomime would be enacted for his

special entertainment. Swords and badges would appear with wonderful rapidity, and a general rush be made to man the posts, which heretofore had been left to take care of themselves. Upon going through the jail forbidden articles would disappear in that mystifying manner characteristic of the dexterity of the native of India, and the guilty one would meet the penetrating gaze of the visitor with an expression at once "childlike and bland."

In one jail Dr. Mouat surprised a sepoy, who was in for murder, reclining in the hospital, although he was quite well, and enjoying his *otium cum dignitate*. The darogah, who was a feeble old man of seventy, was ill, and had not been near the jail for over a fortnight, the prisoners, in consequence, having had a real good time.

In another jail was a child of two years of age, which had been born in the jail. The mother was convicted of a most foul and inhuman crime, and steps were taken to separate the child from her parent. There was also another woman, a mere child, confined in this jail—confined in a double sense—who was sentenced to imprisonment for life for having poisoned her husband when she was only ten years old.

At the period of which I write the ticket-of-leave system had been introduced only at Singapore, and to a more limited extent at Moulmein, so that the existence of an Indian "life" prisoner

was a continuous state of hopeless slavery. The only mitigation he could obtain was the removal of his irons. His only chance of relief was death, which he frequently courted by lawless violence towards those in whose custody he was placed.

One of the main considerations which prompted the authorities to adopt the system of ticket-of-leave was the ever-present possibility of innocent persons being kept in confinement. Several remarkable cases of the kind did, in fact, come to light. For instance, a man was once convicted of murder, and condemned to imprisonment for life; he was transported to Ramree Jail, and in the sentry guarding the jail he recognized the man for murdering whom he had been condemned! Another curious case was where a man had suddenly disappeared from his home, and could nowhere be found. Suspicion fixed upon a certain individual as being his slayer, and eventually this man was arrested and charged with the crime. A skeleton was dug up, and declared to be that of the missing man. The prisoner was duly placed on his trial, the disinterred skeleton being produced in court. But the case fell through in a rather curious manner. The defence ascertained the correct height of the missing man, and when they came to measure the skeleton it was found to be short of the missing man by several inches. Thereupon the authorities had no alternative but to discharge the prisoner, which they accordingly did. The mystery was at length cleared up by

the missing man returning to his old haunts, alive and well. He had merely gone away to some distant part to transact business. But as to whose skeleton it was the authorities had unearthed remains a mystery to the present day. It was made clear by the condition of the skull that the man had met a violent death. It is not often that the police, while searching for the body of one supposed murdered man, come upon the skeleton of another!

Since the 'fifties many improvements have been introduced into the jail system of India, as wiser and more humane councils have prevailed.

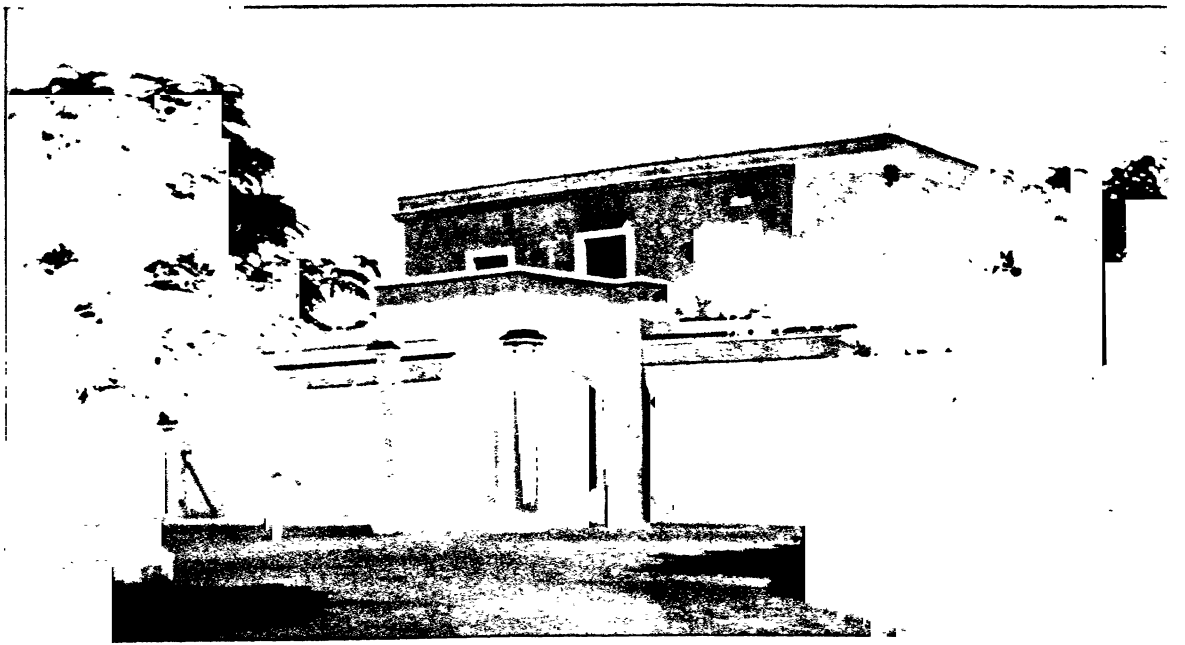
CHAPTER IV

A MODERN JAIL

As a contrast to the condition of things prevailing in most Indian jails as set forth in the preceding chapters, I now propose to describe in detail the condition and conduct of an Indian jail of the present day. For this purpose I have selected, as being a representative establishment, the jail situated at Coimbatore, Madras.

This is what is known as a Central Jail, and from the accompanying illustrations it will be seen that it is an imposing structure, or, rather, a number of imposing structures, extending over a considerable area of ground. One of the most important improvements effected in the jail system of India was the reduction of the number of small and inefficiently managed jails, the establishment of larger and better appointed depôts, with the resultant consolidation, as it were, of the whole system. Coimbatore Jail is a typical outcome of this reformation.

I might here mention that full particulars and notes upon this jail were furnished me by the superintendent of the establishment, Mr. E. H. Gadsden, who was also kind enough to have



THE MAIN GATE, COIMBATORE JAIL

photographs specially taken of the jail for use in this book.

Coimbatore Jail, then, has accommodation for 1,500 prisoners, and is built on the same plan as nearly all the other jails in India, that is to say, on the octagonal plan. The jail tower, which contains the offices, is situated in the centre, and the yards containing blocks and workshops radiate from it. Attached to the main wing is a cellular jail, containing 388 cells, in which "habituals" are confined at night. In another enclosure is the factory, where about 250 prisoners are employed in weaving. In the factory are a hundred power-looms, with all the necessary preparatory machinery; a dye shop, where cloth for tent work and yarn for weaving coloured material is dyed; and a mechanics' shop for executing repairs to machinery. The factory turns out a large quantity of cotton material, practically the whole of which is for Government departments. Sheets and towels for the Army are sent all over India, while there is hardly a department of Government which does not obtain cotton material from this jail.

The other industries on which prisoners are employed are carpentry, the making of coir matting from cocoanut fibre, extracting aloe fibre, and making coloured rugs from aloe fibre and cotton. A large number of prisoners are also employed in oil pressing and in cleaning grain, and grinding it into flour for their own consumption. Others, short-term prisoners, are employed on the farm

and gardens. All vegetables required for the jail are grown in the jail gardens.

The ordinary routine of the jail is, unlocking at six, when a count of prisoners is taken ; after which all prisoners are given a bowl of warm gruel, made of raji flour, with which they are given a small quantity of chutney. Immediately after this meal is finished the prisoners are drafted off to their various works. At eleven o'clock they are given the midday meal, consisting of a raji flour pudding or cake, together with vegetables and dhall curry. At twelve the work bell goes again, and work is resumed till five p.m., when every prisoner who is not sick has to bathe, and the evening meal, which is similar to the midday meal, is served. At six o'clock, or shortly after, the prisoners are locked up for the night.

Every Monday morning all prisoners are paraded for the inspection of the Superintendent and medical officer. At this inspection the prisoners are paraded on alternate Mondays without their clothing, in order that the medical officer may have a better opportunity of judging the health of the prisoners, and of detecting cases of skin disease. All prisoners are weighed on admission to jail, and subsequently once a fortnight throughout their sentence, and should any prisoner seriously lose in weight he is at once paraded at the jail hospital for inspection.

As far as possible all work is tasked, and the tasks are checked daily by the jailer. Prisoners who

do short work are brought before the Superintendent for punishment. Punishments ordinarily consist of fines of remission earned, the infliction of fetters and handcuffs, or penal diet. Whipping is only resorted to in rare instances, such as grave assaults on other prisoners or on jail officials.

Convicts sentenced to twelve months or more are termed Central Jail Convicts, and come under the remission rules. Under these rules a convict can earn two marks daily, one for work and one for good conduct. Twenty-four marks go to one day's remission of sentence. A convict when commencing to earn marks is placed in the third class. After he has earned 500 marks he is promoted to the second class, and with 800 marks to the first class. When he has earned 1,000 marks he is eligible for promotion to the grade of convict officer, fuller particulars of which system I shall give in subsequent chapters.

The lowest grade of convict officer is night watchman. He is not exempted from labour, but is given one extra mark daily, for which he has to do two hours' sentry duty in one of the large association wards every night. If a good workman he may be made a work overseer, when he ordinarily supervises the work of other prisoners, and is given two marks extra daily. The highest grade of convict officer is convict warder. This is a position much sought after, as it carries with it many privileges. The convict warders earn six marks daily, are allowed a special diet, and are

also allowed to cook their own food. They are also given a monthly gratuity, which accumulates till their release. The convict warders do nearly all the guarding of the jail at night. They take regular sentry duty outside the blocks at night, and do various duties in connection with the supervision of prisoners during the day. Warders are employed in the workshops, but no arms are allowed inside the jail.

Alarm parades are held at intervals, in order to practice the warder-guard in this part of their duties. The alarm is sounded and the guard doubles in to the central tower, where instructions are given as to where the disturbance is taking place. The warders are armed with carbines, loaded with buckshot cartridges. Also every prisoner who is in the open must make for the nearest building and get under cover. All gangs are formed up and prisoners are made to sit in regular file. Any convict found moving about three minutes after the alarm is sounded is punished; he is, also, liable to be fired on by the guard, though, of course, this would not be done unless it was obvious the man was trying to escape, or was assaulting some one.

It is rare that anything really exciting occurs in Indian jails, although occasionally incidents happen that may have a curious and amusing side to them. Here are the particulars of a few of such occurrences—

It is the practice for a squad of warders to

enter the jail daily while the prisoners are at their midday meal to search one or other of the workshops. The chief warder, while searching the carpenters' shop one day, came upon a small chatty buried just under the ground, and covered with a wooden cover. Of course he suspected contraband, and put his hand in the chatty, when he was promptly stung by a scorpion! The wily prisoner, whose stock of tobacco and cash he had thus come upon, had kept a scorpion in with his treasures to guard them from the incursions of other prisoners. In the chatty was quite a good supply of snuff and tobacco, and about two annas in copper coins, together with a good big scorpion.

A Burman convict, who had been planning to escape, was betrayed by another convict, when of course the jail officers paid him particular attention, and in addition to keeping him in separate confinement, kept moving him from cell to cell in order that he should not be more than a very few days in any one cell. Eventually, however, he got the best of them, and did actually escape. He left a letter behind him addressed to the Superintendent, in which, after detailing how he was going to escape, he wound up by saying that Government paid the Superintendent and jailer big salaries, but they were no use; he therefore fined them half an anna (about a halfpenny) each. He, like most Burmans, had a keen sense of humour.

This contempt of Indian criminals for their

European custodians is by no means rare. I remember the case of a forger, who was captured after a long career of crime, and who, when he learned how much the officials were paid who had failed heretofore to capture him, expressed his scorn in unmeasured terms. He offered to do their work more successfully for half the money, an offer which, it is needless to say, was not accepted by the Government of India.

Cholera at times gets into Coimbatore Jail, notwithstanding the excellent sanitary conditions and the care taken to keep it out. When this happens the prisoners are moved as rapidly as possible into camp. A camping-ground is regularly maintained, and sheds and tents put up as expeditiously as possible.

They have both curious and notorious prisoners at Coimbatore. For instance, Sabbu Kannoo Pillay is a criminal famous in the Madras Presidency. He has many convictions for housebreaking and dacoity against him, and has broken out of several jails. Nagal, another prisoner, is a Hermaphrodite, who has been in jail three or four times. There are two of these curious creatures, who call themselves "sisters." It was their practice to get into men's clothes and commit highway robbery and dacoity at night. They then resumed their female attire, and for a long time escaped detection. The police were, however, in time too much for them, and their career of crime is probably over. Nagal is still in jail.



COIMBATORE JAIL. VIEW FROM THE JAIL TOWER TOWARDS JAIL HOSPITAL.

The medical authorities classed these two creatures as males, and, much to their annoyance, they were put into male convicts' clothing, and made to work as men. They are, of course, kept in separate cells throughout their sentences, and are not made to work in association with other convicts. They are both exceeding good specimens of that freak of nature which has turned them out neither male nor female.

CHAPTER V

THE INDIAN PENAL SYSTEM—BENCOOLEN

In order to adequately understand how the convict-warder system of India came into being, it is necessary that we should go back many years, and traverse the history of the Indian penal system generally from its inception.

The first Indian penal settlement, then, was Bencoolen, known to the Malays as Banka-Ulu, and is situated to the south-west of Sumatra. Convicts were first transported from India to this place in the year, or about the year, 1787, when the transportation system between England and Australia was inaugurated. When we took Bencoolen in 1685 it was not a very populous place, nor had the population much increased when it became a penal settlement, for which it was considered to be admirably adapted, in 1787. The inhabitants consisted of Sumatrans and Malays, who enjoyed an existence of *dolce far niente*. They toiled not, neither did they spin, existing chiefly on the fruits of a perfunctory method of fishing. Their greatest degree of activity consisted of working in the pepper plantations, and selling the berries to British merchants. It was,

therefore, thought by the East India Company that by the introduction of labour it might be made a prosperous place. In this, however, they were disappointed, for the only commodities of Bencoolen, namely, pepper and camphor, greatly declined, and the settlement eventually became a place of no importance. William Dampier had been there in the capacity of a gunner, and he described it as "a sorry place, sorrily governed, and very unhealthy." Captain James Lowe, in 1836, also described it as "an expensive port, and of no use to any nation that might possess it." The place was so unhealthy that it was deemed necessary to remove the Residency and offices two miles further off the coast, but even here the officials were not beyond the reach of malaria. The best that can be said of it is that it provided us with a firm footing in those seas, and formed the nucleus, as it were, of a wider empire.

Bencoolen's last Lieut.-Governor was Sir Stamford Raffles, who founded the settlement of Singapore, hereafter to be described. He took up the appointment on the 20th March, 1818, founded Singapore in 1819, returned to Bencoolen in 1820, and finally left for England in 1824. The records concerning the treatment of the convicts first transported there are few and vague, but it seems certain that they were employed principally upon road-making and clearing estates, the latter having reverted to the State through the owners having died intestate. They were also let

out to planters, upon a guarantee of their not quitting the settlement. It will be remembered that much the same kind of thing prevailed with the convicts in Australia, who were let out to free inhabitants for "compulsory service." This was done chiefly to lighten the heavy burden of transportation.

The first authentic record of the penal system at Bencoolen is contained in a letter written by Sir Stamford Raffles to the Government, from Bencoolen, in 1818. The letter, which was included in his *Life*, written by his widow in 1830, was as follows—

"There is another class of people that call for immediate consideration. Since 1787 a number of persons have been transported to this place from Bengal for various crimes of which they have been found guilty. The object of the punishment, as far as it affects the parties, must be the reclaiming them from their bad habits, but I much question whether the practice hitherto pursued has been productive of that effect. This I apprehend to be, in a great measure, in consequence of sufficient discrimination and encouragement not having been shown in favour of those most inclined to amendment, and perhaps to the want of a discretionary power in the chief authority to remit a portion of the punishment and disgrace which is the common lot of all.

"It frequently happens that men of notoriously bad conduct are liberated at the expiration of a

limited period of transportation, whilst others, whose general conduct is perhaps unexceptional, are doomed to servitude till the end of their lives. As coercive measures are not likely to be attended with success, I conceive that some advantage would arise from affording inducements to good conduct by holding out the prospect of again becoming useful members of society, and freeing themselves from the disabilities under which they labour. There are at present about 500 of these unfortunate people. However just the original sentence may have been, the crimes and characters of so numerous a body must necessarily be very unequal, and it is desirable that some discrimination should be exerted in favour of those who show the disposition to redeem their character.

"I would suggest the propriety of the chief authority being vested with a discretionary power of freeing such men as conduct themselves well from the obligation of service, and permitting them to settle in the place and assume the privileges of citizenship. The prospect of recovering their characters, of freeing themselves from their present disabilities, and the privileges of employing their industry for their own advantage would become an object of ambition, and supply a stimulus to exertion and good conduct which is at present wanting. It rarely happens that any of those transported have any desire to leave the country; they form connections in the place, and find so many inducements to remain, that to be

sent away is considered by most a severe punishment. While a convict remains unmarried and kept to daily labour very little confidence can be placed in him, and his services are rendered with so much tardiness and dissatisfaction that they are of little or no value; but he no sooner marries and forms a small settlement than he becomes a kind of colonist, and if allowed to follow his inclinations he seldom feels inclined to return to his native country.

"I propose to divide them into three classes. The first class to be allowed to give evidence in court, and permitted to settle on land secured to them and their children; but no one to be admitted to this class until he has been resident in Bencoolen three years. The second class to be employed in ordinary labour. The third class, or men of abandoned and profligate character, to be kept to the harder kinds of labour, and confined at night. In cases of particular good conduct a prospect may be held out of emancipating deserving convicts from further obligation of services, on condition of their supporting themselves and not quitting the settlement. Upon the abstract question of the advantage of this arrangement I believe there will be little difference of opinion. The advantage of holding out an adequate motive of exertion is sufficiently obvious, and here it will have the double tendency of diminishing the bad characters and of increasing that of useful and industrious settlers, thereby facilitating the general

police of the country and diminishing the expenses of the Company."

These measures were subsequently adopted, and proved eminently successful. Indeed, so satisfied were the convicts with their lot that when, in 1823, Bencoolen was transferred to the Dutch and the convicts removed to Penang, the latter appealed to be placed on the same footing as they had been on at Fort Marlborough, as the Bencoolen settlement was called.

Upon December 20, 1823, Sir Stamford Raffles again wrote to the Government—"As the management of convicts ought to be a subject of consideration, I send you a copy of the regulations established for those of this place. The convicts now at Bencoolen amount to 800 or 900, and the number is gradually increasing. They are natives of Bengal and Madras; that is to say of those presidencies. The arrangement has been brought about gradually, but the system now appears complete, and, as far as we have yet gone, has been attended with the best effects. I have entrusted Mr. John Hull with the superintending of the department, and he feels great pleasure and satisfaction in the general improvement of this class of people."

The rules to which Sir Stamford Raffles refers were hereafter called the "Penang rules." In the year 1825, as already stated, the Bencoolen convicts were transferred to Penang, and later to Malacca and Singapore. They did not enjoy the

same freedom as at Bencoolen, being worked in gangs upon the roads, and in levelling ground near the town of Penang. They were also tried at jungle cutting and burning, but were not successful at it, so the work was given to the Malays, who have a special aptitude for it, and are possessed of implements well suited for the purpose.

This system of transportation, in consequence of caste prejudices, was a severe punishment to the native of India. He became an absolute leper to his own kith and kin, and no form of excommunication could be more complete. It was considered defilement to even offer him sustenance, and the members of his own family would never look upon him again. In those distant times these caste prejudices were deep-seated and invulnerable, but have since become greatly diminished through the enlightening methods of Western government. They are, however, yet a great way from being extinct, and still prevail largely in the every-day lives of the Hindus.

The suggestions set forth in Sir Stamford Raffles' letter to Government in 1818, as already given, formed the basis of all subsequent improvements in the methods of dealing with convicts, the three classes eventually becoming six classes. A few years ago Dr. Mouat, Inspector-General of Jails, Bengal, read a paper before the Statistical Society, in which, referring to the jail and ticket-of-leave system, he said—"I visited the Straits Settlements in 1861 when under the rule of my

friend, Sir Orfeur Cavenagh, and found in existence a system of industrial training of convicts superior to anything we had at that time on the continent of India. It was said to have been inaugurated by the celebrated Sir Stamford Raffles in 1825, when Singapore was first selected for the transportation of convicts from India, and to have been subsequently organized and successfully worked by General H. Man, Colonel MacPherson, and Major McNair. The ticket-of-leave system was in full and effective operation, and very important public works have been constructed by means of convict labour, chief amongst them St. Andrew's Cathedral, a palace for the Governor, and most of the roads. The ticket-of-leave convicts were said to be a well-conducted, industrious lot of men, who very rarely committed fresh crimes, who all earned an honest livelihood, and were regarded as respectable members of the community amongst whom they dwelt. The public works were creditable examples of prison industry and skill. St. Andrew's Cathedral, built under Major McNair—from plans prepared by Colonel MacPherson—entirely by convict labour, struck me as one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture which I had seen in the East, and I believe there exists in no other country a more remarkable example of the successful industrial training of convicts."

The crimes for which convicts were then transported were, in the case of life sentences, mostly

murder, thuggee and dacoity, frauds and forgeries, robbery with violence, and other misdemeanours. Thuggee, in those times, was in full operation all over India, but was finally broken up by Colonel Sleeman about 1860. All such atrocious crimes committed by Hindus were done to satisfy two goddesses known as Bhawani and Devi, who must have been of a particularly ferocious nature. They (the thugs) carried about with them a sacred implement in the shape of a pickaxe, while the dacoits carried with them an axe with a highly-tempered edge. Some were hanged, while others were transported. They worked in gangs, and invariably failed whenever they attempted to act alone. For example, upon one occasion a thug convict, coveting some gold bangles which a fellow-convict was wearing on his wrist, tried the *handkerchief upon him (the thugs committed their crimes by dextrously strangling the victim with a handkerchief), but missed, although he managed* to get away without being detected. He was, however, afterwards traced and punished. He confessed, bewailing the fact that "Bhawani was unkind, and I could not do it myself; I missed my 'saubutwali,'" meaning companions, or, literally, "those I kept company with."

CHAPTER VI

PENANG AND MALACCA

PENANG was originally called " Prince of Wales Island," out of compliment to the then Prince of Wales, who subsequently became George IV. The name Penang was derived from the Malay name Pinang (Areka palm), which abounds there. It is situated at the northern extremity of the Malacca Straits, and was acquired by us from the Rajah of Kedah in 1785. Thirteen years later we took Province Wellesley, which is situated upon the Malay Peninsula, opposite to Penang, in order to suppress piracy, and this now forms part of the British settlement.

When Penang came into our hands it was almost uninhabited, and covered with dense jungle. Captain Light, the first Superintendent of Trade, however, very soon made a road to the highest point, then called " Bel retiro," but since re-named Penang Hill. In connection with this work a curious legend is current among the natives. It is to the effect that Captain Light pointed a cannon in the direction he wanted the road made, loaded it with powder, and substituting several dollars for shot, fired it off, telling the Malays that they

might have as many dollars as they could find. The scramble which ensued, it is stated, considerably helped forward the work. Only seven years after the island came into our hands, that is to say, in the year 1792, the population had increased to 10,000 souls. The present population of Penang numbers 240,000.

For some years after the convicts were transported from Bencoolen they were kept wholly at work upon the roads, but in 1850 they were put also to intramural work. In the work of cutting down and burning the jungle they ran great risk from the tigers which infested the place. They were also frequently bitten by hamadryads, the most venemous of reptiles, which abounded there, and whose bite sometimes resulted in death. Penang acquired the monopoly of trade of the Malayan Peninsula and Sumatra, and also traded largely with China, Siam, Borneo, the Clebes, and other places in the Eastern Archipelago. This prosperity, however, subsequently declined upon the establishment of Singapore. Later the trade of Penang again revived, due to the planting of tobacco in Sumatra by European planters.

The first prison in which the convicts in Penang were confined was situated on the Penang road, and was known as "Chowrusta Lines." As the number of convicts from India continued to increase this jail was found to be too small, so another larger jail was erected on the opposite side of the road, consisting of an enclosure sur-

rounded by a high brick wall, the wards or dormitories being contained in a number of yards. The wards, which were secured by iron gates, were fitted with sleeping platforms. The women's ward and the hospital were both contained in the same enclosure, although, of course, in different wards. There was a military guard-room, and various other offices. The sanitary arrangements, however, were bad, and it was ill-ventilated; the system prevailing was also very lax.

Prior to the transportation of convicts from Bencoolen, Penang had already been made a penal settlement, convicts having been sent there direct from India. These had been looked after by a staff of free warders, but, in consequence of vacancies and dismissals, and the difficulty of obtaining the services of free warders, it was sought to enlist the services of the best behaved among the convicts to oversee their fellow-prisoners. It was, however, an experiment which was then anything but successful, and was regarded by the authorities with strong disfavour. In fact, in November 1827, a committee was appointed in Penang to draw up a new set of rules, the following comment being made by the committee concerning the employment of convict-warders—"With regard to the present system of employing convicts as tindals and sirdars, the committee thinks it very objectionable, as it is impossible that men so intimately connected with those over whom they are placed can exercise that

authority and control which is so essential in the management of such a body of men as the convicts. The duties at present performed by these servants are provided for in the proposed increase to the establishment." A failure in those days, this system of employing well-behaved convicts as warders was subsequently revived, proving eminently successful, and survives to this day.

Prior to the 'fifties the work done by the convicts was all extramural, consisting of opening up roads, brick-making, felling timber, burning lime, and reclaiming mangrove swamps; but, later, intramural work was introduced, and the convicts were put to rattan work, taught to make easy-chairs, lounging-chairs, baskets, and various other articles. These were sold to the public in the town at a much higher price than similar articles could be bought outside; they were, however, much superior to those articles.

In the year 1860 blacksmiths' and carpenters' shops were added to the jail. The system among the convicts continued to be rather loose, and the rules carried out in a somewhat tentative manner, until the arrival at Penang of the late General Man as Resident Councillor, Captain Hilliard being Superintendent. General Man, with the sanction of the Governor, Colonel Butterworth, drew up improved rules, which did away altogether with free warders, and established the system of convict warders on a universal, firm, and lasting basis. *The late General Man retained the ap-*

pointment in Penang from 1860 to 1867, when the Straits Settlements were transferred to the Crown. General Man then went to the Andaman Islands, where he also established the convict-warder system, which I have already dealt with in detail elsewhere.

Inasmuch as the convicts continued to be employed on the roads and works at Penang and Province Wellesley at a distance from the main jail, a number of "commands"—called by the natives "kumman"—or out-stations, were established. These consisted of a stockaded fence, enclosing an area sufficient for the erection of a dormitory, cooking-place, and sheds, also for protection against possible attacks of wild beasts. The walls were constructed of what is known as "wattle and daub." In the centre of the dormitory an earthenware brazier of burning charcoal was kept night and day. Into this fragrant gum Benjamin was occasionally thrown. The natives entertained an idea that perfume exhaled by fire keeps off noxious effluvia, and it was certainly true that they were in good health while this incense was in use.

The enclosure was secured by a stout gate, which, after the roll had been called, was locked every night at nine o'clock. The number of convicts at each "command" averaged about thirty. They were in charge of a convict-warder, known as a "tindal." There was also a peon, two orderlies, and a native "munshi," or timekeeper, who

kept accounts and sent reports to the main jail. Surprise visits were occasionally paid to the "commands," but it was very rarely that anything wrong was discovered, so well did the system work.

The ticket-of-leave convicts in Penang earned their livelihood in a variety of ways. They were the first to discover the palm known to the Malays as "Plas tikoos," and to botanists as "Licuala acutifida." It is a small palm, growing no higher than five or six feet. It is found mostly on Penang Hill, and from it are constructed walking-sticks. The process consists of removing the outer skin by scraping it with a piece of glass, and then straightening the stick with fire, as the Malays do in preparing Malacca canes. These walking-sticks, which were exported to Europe and America, were known as "Penang lawyers."

We shall not have much to say about Old Malacca. A good deal of doubt seems to exist as to the origin of the name. *By some it is believed to be derived from the Malay name for a shrub which abounded near the shore, of the* spurge order, a sort of "Phyllanthus emblica." Others ascribe it to the plant called "Jumbosa Malaccensis," or "Malay apple-tree," which is of the myrtle-bloom order; others, again, favour the theory that the Javanese, who were the first to colonize the place in the year 1160, christened it "Malaka," which means "an exile," in memory of one "Paramisura," who sought sanctuary there from the kingdom of Palembang. Yet another

theory is that it was named after the fruit of a tree that grew there.

It must be left to the reader to choose which theory he most favours. They are all obscure, and it concerns but little our present purpose as to what the derivation really is. Suffice it to say that it was the first settlement to be formed by a European power in those seas. The Portuguese took it from a Malay Sultan, named Mahomed Shah, and kept possession of it for 134 years. It then fell into the hands of the Dutch, who held it for 74 years, when the British took possession, in 1795. In 1818 it was restored to the Dutch, who, in 1824, returned it to the British, by whom it has been held ever since.

The first batch of convicts were sent to Malacca from Penang shortly after we first took possession of it, and they were employed in filling up a moat to form a parade ground. They were first confined in the town jail, situated on the eastern side of St. Paul's Hill, which had originally been the old Portuguese soldiers' barrack. The buildings were constructed of stone from the old fort ramparts. For some years the convicts were kept employed at the public works in and near the town, but later on they were sent into the interior. The warders consisted of half-caste Portuguese until the convict-warder system was introduced, when the Portuguese were dismissed.

General Man, while Resident Councillor of Malacca, established a number of workshops and

introduced various trades. Eventually, in 1860, the convicts had arrived at such a degree of proficiency that they were able to construct carts for the roads, turn out iron and woodwork for bridges, roofing timbers for public works, and accomplish various other requirements. In metal turning and fitting the convicts were superior to the Chinese workmen in the town. Indeed, a Cingalese convict became so proficient in his trade that upon his release he established himself in Ceylon, became prosperous, and now occupies a most respectable position.

At length, when, in 1873, the convict establishments of the Straits Settlements were finally broken up and convicts whose terms were yet unexpired were transferred to Singapore for transmission to the Andamans, those who were on ticket-of-leave were allowed to merge with the population.

CHAPTER VII

SINGAPORE

THE name of this island is believed to have been derived from the Sanscrit words "Singh," a lion, and "Pura," a city or town; if this be correct then it must have been christened by the Indians, for it is recorded in native history that the Indians came over with one Rajah Suran, who conquered Johore and this island in the year A.D. 1160. The Hindus use the word "Singh" as a title, as do several military castes of Northern India. The word "Singhpur" is also used by them to denote the entrance-gate to a palace.

The island is 27 miles long by 14 broad, and contains an area of 206 square miles. Sir Stamford Raffles, while Lieut.-Governor of Bencoolen, recognized the fact that a trading-centre in the Straits of Malacca was necessary for British interests. To use his own words, "It was not that any extension of territory was necessary, but the aim of Government should be to acquire somewhere in the Straits a commercial station with a military guard, and that, when once formed, it is my belief that it would soon maintain a successful rivalry with a neighbouring Power, who would be obliged

either to adopt a liberal system of free trade, or see the trade of these seas collected under the British flag." In turn the port of Rhio, on the west coast of the island of Bintang, the Carimon Islands, and Tanjong Jatti, on the island of Bengkalis, were suggested as suitable for the purpose, but each in turn rejected for some reason or another. Finally Sir Stamford Raffles fixed upon Singapore, and the wisdom of his selection has since been abundantly proved.

The treaty which gave Great Britain possession of the island was signed on February 6, 1819, and on the 19th the British flag was planted thereon. At that time the island was but sparsely populated, the inhabitants consisting of about 120 Malays and 30 Chinese. Many of these lived in boats at the mouth of the river, and others in huts at Teloh Blangah, on the south side of the island. But, as invariably happens when Great Britain acquires foreign territory, the population went up by leaps and bounds. In the course of a year it rose to 5,000, and in five years to between 19,000 and 20,000, of all nations. The commerce of the place "offered to each and all a handsome livelihood and abundant profit." In 1881 the census showed that the population had risen to 139,208, and in 1891 there was a further increase of 45,346, making a total of 184,554, consisting of every nationality and tribe in the Indian Archipelago, China, and India, besides about 1,500 Europeans.

In the year 1822 the first settlers were traders

in the Archipelago, and they lived in raft houses, erected on poles, in the Malay style. At that time there were a few prisoners confined in a temporary jail, and these were employed, together with free labour, in filling up the low-lying sea-marsh. These prisoners were tried and sentenced by the first magistrates to be appointed in the settlement, and their names are given in *The Anecdotal History* as follows—Messrs. A. L. Johnstone, D. A. Maxwell, D. F. Napier, A. F. Morgan, John Purvis, Alexander Guthrie, E. Mackenzie, W. Montgomery, Charles Scott, John Morgan, C. R. Read, and Andrew Hay. Two magistrates and the Resident Councillor sat in court to try both civil and criminal cases, the juries being formed of either five Europeans or four Europeans and three leading natives. This court sat once a week, but another court, presided over by two magistrates, sat twice a week, complaints being heard in the office every day.

Before Sir Stamford Raffles finally left the settlement he concluded a treaty with the Sultan and Tummongong of Johore, by which the whole island, and adjacent islands, became entirely British territory. Upon the occasion of his departure Sir Stamford was made the recipient of an address from the European and native merchants, part of which was worded as follows—"To your unwearied zeal, your vigilance, and your comprehensive views, we owe at once the foundation and maintenance of a settlement, unparalleled for the

liberality of the principles on which it has been established—principles, the operation of which has converted in a period short beyond all example a haunt of pirates into the abode of enterprise, security, and opulence." Sir Stamford replied by letter, dated Singapore, June 9, 1823, from which I give the following extracts—"It has happily been consistent with the policy of Great Britain, and accordant with the principles of the East India Company, that Singapore should be established as a 'free port,' and that Singapore will long, and always remain a free port, and that no taxes on trade or industry will be established to check its future rise and prosperity, I can have no doubt. . . . I am justified in saying thus much on the authority of the Supreme Government of India, and on the authority of those who are most likely to have weight in the councils of our nation at home. . . . In the commanding station in which my public duty has placed me, I have had an opportunity of, in a great measure, investigating and determining the merits of the case, and the result renders it a duty on my part, and one which I perform with much satisfaction, to express my most unqualified approbation of the honourable principles which actuated the merchants of Singapore on that occasion"—referring to the difficulties which had to be encountered in the task of establishing the freedom of the port.

It was on the 18th of April, 1825, the first batch

of convicts were transported from India to Bencoolen, and thence to Singapore. They consisted of 80 convicts from Madras, 74 of whom were for life, and 6 on short term sentences. Among these was one female, sentenced for life. On the 25th a further batch was received, consisting of 122 convicts from Bengal, 89 of whom were for life, and 33 for short terms. Among these also was one female, in for life. These convicts were at first accommodated in an open shed called a godown, from the Malay word "godang," meaning a shed, and were in charge of four petty officers, or "peons," natives of Chittagong, in the Bengal presidency. Subsequently more commodious, although only temporary buildings, were erected near the Hindu temple, by the Brass Basa Canal, the cost being estimated at £13,199. The system prevailing was somewhat lax, there being no real jail control, a roll being merely called occasionally in order to satisfy Government that all were present.

The then Resident was Mr. Bonham, who, finding that the convicts behaved in an exemplary manner, discharged the peon, and selected several Madrasees and Bengalees to assume the offices of warders over their fellow-convicts. This was the first occasion upon which this system was tried in Singapore, and, it is believed, the first time in any penal establishment. These appointments continued to be made as fresh batches of convicts

continued to arrive at Singapore. The warders were given a monthly wage of $3.00, also rations and clothing, and the blanket which is usually given to convicts once a year. They are also given a monthly allowance of 50 cents (about 2*s*.), with which to buy condiments and salt. There were in addition a European overseer and a superintendent, the latter being Lieutenant Chester, of the Bengal Native Infantry.

In 1826 Penang, Malacca, and Singapore were incorporated under one government, Penang being made the seat. This resulted in a further batch of convicts being transported from Penang to Singapore, the ship *Esperanza* bringing them down. They consisted of 23 Bengal life convicts (males), 26 Madras convicts (males), and 1 female; 31 Bombay (males), and 2 females.

In those days convicts of proved good behaviour were treated with much leniency, being allowed to hire themselves out as servants to the residents, and as labour was scarce the employers were glad to pay a good price for such services. In this manner some of the convicts became quite affluent, and possessed of landed property. Major Campbell, however, who succeeded Lieutenant Chester as superintendent, was careful to get some useful work out of the convicts, in the way of constructing a fort and river and sea-walls. Their services were also employed in the suppression of fires. In 1830 a fire broke out in Market Street,

which threatened to assume alarming proportions. There were no engines, but the convicts were furnished with buckets, with which they carried water, and materially helped to subdue the fire.

Occasionally convicts were employed as orderlies and servants to public officers. One night the house of Dr. Oxley was entered by burglars, and his convict servant, though wounded with a "kris" —a formidable knife-like weapon—succeeded in capturing one of the burglars, who turned out to be a Malay pirate from Bencoolen. It was a rare thing for a Malay to commit a robbery on land, piracy being their favourite form of criminal enterprise. Indeed, they would seem to have regarded it more in the light of a pastime than a crime, for the memory of their ancestors is glorified in association with it.

In the year 1832 the seat of government was removed from Penang to Singapore, and in 1833 Mr. G. D. Coleman was placed in charge of the convicts as "Surveyor and Executive Officer of Government." This appointment resulted in a decided improvement in the employment of the convicts, large plots of land being reclaimed from the sea and river marshes. Captain Begby, in a book which he wrote that year on the Straits Settlements, made the following observations concerning this employment—"Two hundred of these convicts, in eight months, at a small money outlay of $500 for covered drains, had reclaimed

28 acres of marsh, and intersected it with roads. This land was shortly after sold at a handsome price, and was very quickly covered with good, substantial upper-storey houses, which were readily let." Under Mr. Coleman a vast amount of excellent work was accomplished. Public roads on the sea-front were constructed, the main road from the town to Campong Glam, now known as North and South Bridge Roads; he surveyed and marked out the first country road towards Bukit Timah, and subsequently laid out the Serangoon, the New Harbour, Budoo, and Thompson's Roads. He also established "commands" where the convicts had to work at long distances, constructed in the manner already described in a previous chapter. Subsequently these "commands" were made permanent stations for convicts employed in maintaining the roads. Once a month they would attend at the main jail, when a supply of rations would be served out to them, and an inspection made of them by the Superintendent.

Mr. Coleman was also an architect of no mean order, for he designed the first church for Singapore, erected on the site occupied by the present cathedral. It was finished in 1837, and consecrated in September 1838, having been opened for service on the 18th of June, 1837. The Rev. Edmund White, appointed from Bengal, was the first chaplain. Indian convicts were employed,

chiefly as labourers, in the building of the church, as also in the erection of other public buildings, including the extension of the Raffles Institution and Museum.

This devotion to duty cost Mr. G. D. Coleman his life, for he died on the 27th of March, 1885, from an illness induced chiefly through hard work and exposure in the public service.

CHAPTER VIII

SINGAPORE (*continued*)

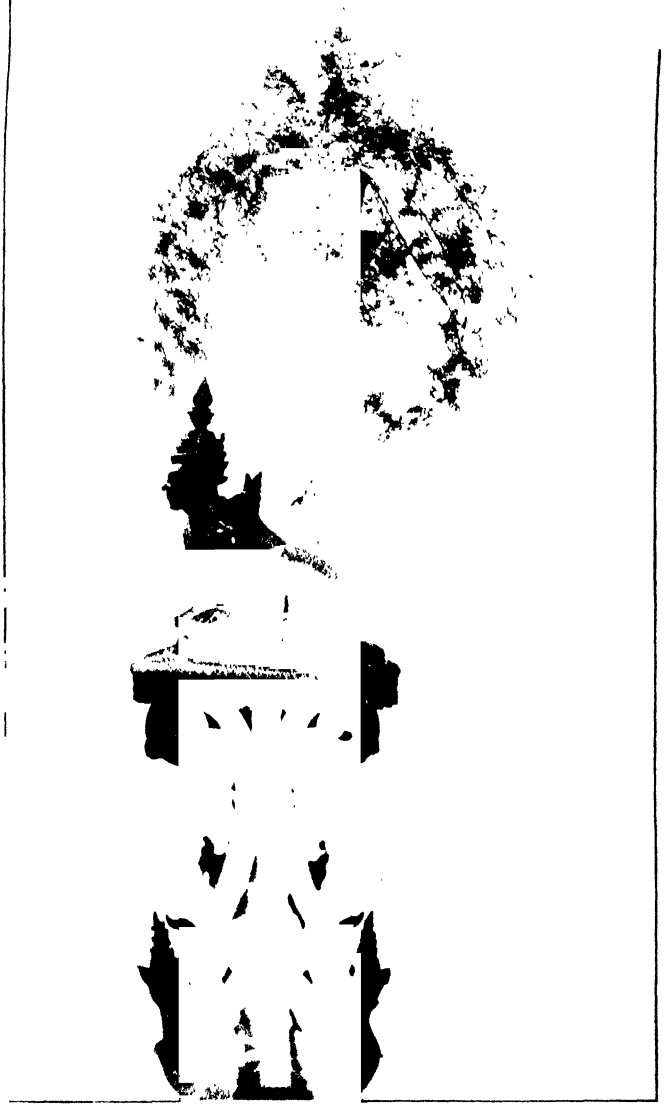
THE following extract from *The Anecdotal History* is interesting and well worth quoting—"Singapore, Malacca, Penang, and Moulmein were the Sydneys of India. There are upon an average about 1,100 to 1,200 native convicts from India constantly at Singapore. These are employed making roads and digging canals; and, undoubtedly, without them the town, as far as locomotion is concerned, would have been now but a sorry residence. They are secured within high walls, and although a few now and then escape, they meet with such rough treatment from the Malays on the Peninsula, that they find it commonly the most prudent course to return, or allow themselves to be brought back. The native of India accommodates himself more easily to banishment than a European does, because his ideas lead to predestination, and his habits are simple. In former days, when convict discipline was not understood so well as it is now, the convicts transported from India used to traffic and amass money; banishment was in some cases, perhaps, sought for, and crimes were, it is feared,

sometimes committed by natives to obtain it; but the felon must now expect to be kept in his place and hard at work. Still, the convict whose period is short contrives to save something out of his allowance, and on the expiration of his term he generally sets up as a keeper of cattle, or a letter-out of carriages and horses; and undoubtedly some of these men are as well, if not better behaved than many of their native neighbours of higher pretensions. There are regulations by which the convict is encouraged by certain rewards, or remission short of emancipation, to orderly conduct."

Mr. Coleman was succeeded as Superintendent by Captain Stevenson, of the 12th Madras Native Infantry, and in his annual report for 1845 are to be found the following remarks—"Convict peons are selected from the second class for general good conduct and intelligence, and they continue to receive $3 each per mensem, in addition to provisions and clothing. Free peons were, I hear, formerly tried, but found not to be so well suited for the peculiar duties required of them; besides, the prospect of gaining a belt—a mark of authority—is a strong inducement to good conduct on the part of the convict, and conduces much towards lightening, in the well-disposed, the feeling of hopelessness that ever accompanies a sense of imprisonment and slavery for life."

In those days Singapore was infested with tigers, who were supposed to swim across the

narrow part of the Old Straits, from Johore to Kranji, and the number of natives and Chinese, working on the gambier and pepper farms, who were carried off by these animals was considerable. Scarcely a day passed but a man was so killed. In 1860 as many as 200 such deaths were reported to the police, and doubtless many occurred which were not reported. A sum of $100 was offered by Government for every tiger brought, dead or alive, to the police-station, a reward which was subsequently increased fifty per cent., so serious did the ravages become. In the *Singapore Free Press*, for the year 1840, we find the following—"The news of the capture and death of a tiger last Saturday night on a Chinaman's plantation, close to that of Mr. Balustier, the American Consul, gave general satisfaction, being the first of these destructive animals which the Chinese had succeeded in capturing alive. A pit was dug where his track had been observed, the mouth of which was covered lightly over, and two or three dogs tied as bait. The ruse luckily took effect, and, when advancing to his imagined prey, he was himself precipitated into the pit head foremost, where he was very soon despatched by the natives, who pounded him to death with stones. He was a large animal for the Malay type, measuring 9 feet 3 inches from the nose to the tip of the tail, which was 35 inches long, the circumference round the forearm being 21 inches. The captors have claimed and obtained from the local authorities



SPECIMEN OF CARVING BY BURMESE CONVICTS.

the promised reward of $100, besides having sold the flesh of the animal itself to the Chinese, Klings, and others for six fantams a catty (a fantam is about three halfpence), by which they realized about $70 more."

Some curious superstitions concerning tigers were and are still entertained by the natives. For instance, they believe that by eating the flesh of a tiger they become endowed with its distinctive features. The clavicle, or collar-bone, is supposed to be possessed of particular virtue, and the whiskers with the power of conferring strength upon the possessor. The Burmese think, by eating the flesh of tiger, they acquire the courage and sagacity of the animal. The claws of tigers are used as charms, and one of the most solemn oaths of an aboriginal tribe of India, known as the "Santals," is sworn on a tiger's skin. Brooches and earrings are also made of tigers' claws, mounted in gold. So that Sir Tiger is far more interesting and valuable dead than alive.

In 1859, when Major McNair was Superintendent of Convicts, and General Sir Orfeur Cavenagh, Governor, this tiger pest was still exercising the minds of the authorities. The convicts, armed with old muzzle-loading muskets and ball ammunition, were formed into "shikarries," to hunt and destroy the animals. Various parties were sent to different parts—to the Bukit Timah, or Central district, to Serangoon and Changi, or Eastern district, and to Choo Choo Kang, or Western dis-

trict. Traps were also laid, but this method was not so successful as the other. The natives of India were also adepts at catching venomous snakes, such as cobras and hamadryads. They entertained not the least dread of them, and their method of catching them was simple though effective. They grasped them by the tail, and by a rapid movement with the other hand along the body, secured them firmly by the neck, allowing them to coil round the arm. When caught they were taken to the jail to receive a reward. The snakes were then destroyed, the natives always asking pardon of the victims for thus betraying them to their masters.

On the 1st of April, 1867, shortly after the transfer of the Straits Settlements to the Crown, the then Governor, Sir Harry St. George Ord, instructed Major McNair, who had been appointed Colonial Engineer and Comptroller of the Indian Convicts, to prepare plans for the erection of a Government House near Mount Sophia, about two miles from the town. The plans, approved by the Governor, were passed by the Legislative Council early in 1868. The land on which it stands cost $43,000, and the building, furniture, and laying out of the grounds $115,000; the work, with convict labour, was finished for the reception of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh (Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) in December 1869.

A permanent jail, the plans for which were prepared by Captain Man, with solid gateways

and guardrooms and quarters for the warders, was also erected within the enclosure wall which already existed. Then came wards for the fourth and fifth class prisoners, or convicts in irons, then Nos. 1 and 2 wards. A workyard was next enclosed with a solid wall, and offices built near the outer entrance for the engineer and Superintendent of Convicts. While this was being done, other gangs of convicts—all the work, it should be mentioned, was done by convict labour—were employed in erecting, within the main enclosure, a refractory ward and punishment cells, and other minor buildings for store-rooms, filter-rooms, chain-room, and receiving-room for fresh arrivals. The method of filtration in the filter-rooms was simple. Three very porous earthen pots, or "chatties," were placed on a tripod; in the first was the water to be filtered; in the second, about a foot below, was charcoal and white sand, which was renewed twice a week; the filtered water was drawn off from the third vessel.

The jail was also effectively drained. The buildings were completed in the year 1860, and the establishment then assumed more the character of a jail than it had done heretofore. This was fully realized by the prisoners, who gave currency to the proverb that "an open campong, or village, had become a closed cage." The prisoners were variously employed in the main jail, on the country roads, quarries, and brickfields; as messengers, punkah-pullers at the hospitals and Government

offices, as "look-out" men at the flag-staff stations, helpers to light-keepers, crews for the Government boats conveying firewood to the jail and brick kilns, and in digging and conveying coral for lime-burning.

All the wards in the main jail were made of a uniform length of 230 feet, 60 feet broad, and the walls twenty feet high. The side windows were barred, and beneath them ground ventilation was provided, in order that a current of air might circulate throughout the whole building. The floors were of concrete, cemented over with "soorkee" —brickdust and cement mixed—and graded to the sides. The wards had accommodation for 400 prisoners each, who were in association. Each ward was fitted with sleeping benches, raised from the floor three feet at the head, and two feet nine inches at the foot, the wards being coated with coal tar, except on the actual sleeping places. Upon these the convicts, when the day's labour was done, would recline, enveloped from head to foot in a "chadar," or native sheet.

The efficient management of this jail was testified to by Dr. Mouat, the Inspector-General of Jails, Bengal, in the following words—"Singapore, 1st June, 1865. I have sincere pleasure in recording the unmixed satisfaction which I have experienced from a careful examination of the jail and system of prison management in use at Singapore. The scrupulous cleanliness, perfect plan

of conservancy, excellent order, well-regulated system of labour and punishment, and the high standard of health attained are not surpassed in any other well-regulated institution of the same kind that I am acquainted with in Europe or in Asia. My personal knowledge of prisons, and of all details of prison management, is sufficiently extended to entitle me to speak with authority on this subject. In many important points of internal economy and discipline, Singapore can fairly lay claim to being *Primus in Indis* in the adoption and practical working of principles that are now generally accepted as sound and correct. My own feeling on the subject is that Colonels Man and Macpherson and Captain McNair, to whom the chief credit appears to be due, are entitled to rank in the first class of prison officers and reformers in India."

One of the last additions to the jail buildings was a stand to hold the prison bell, which was used to call the roll at general musters. It was erected by convict bricklayers and plasterers, and took the form of a "monopteron," a structure without walls, composed of columns arranged in a circle, and supporting a covered cupola.

We have now seen how the system of convict-warders came into existence, how it at first, through inexperience and inefficient foundation, failed, how it was subsequently revived, and has since been maintained in a highly successful degree.

The question which now enters my mind is, why should not some such system be established in the prisons of this country? I have before made this suggestion, and I here repeat it. It could be adapted to the requirements of our prison system here, and is, at all events, well worth trying.

CHAPTER IX

SOME CONVICT STORIES

AMONG the convicts confined in the Straits Settlements were some curious and interesting characters. In Cameron's *Tropical Possessions in Malayan India* is given an account of a convict known as "Tickery Banda," a native of Ceylon, who was altogether a most remarkable man. He was sentenced to seven years' transportation for committing a crime in his native country, of which, however, he declared he was innocent. His story, told briefly, was as follows—

Tickery Banda was a son of the first minister of the King of the Kandians, and when the English took possession of Kandy, he, together with two or three brothers, was educated in English by the then Governor of the island. Subsequently Tickery was appointed manager of some coffee plantations, and while he was thus employed it so happened that a Siamese mission of priests arrived at Kandia for the purpose of seeing Buddha's tooth. In this the priests were, at first, disappointed, and while returning from their fruitless errand, on which they had already expended 5,000 rupees, they fell in with Tickery, to whom they

confided the particulars of their failure. Whereupon Tickery assured them that, if they would tarry another three days he would guarantee to obtain for them a view of the holy tooth, at the same time offering to lodge with them a cheque for £200, which he had with him, as an assurance of good faith.

The convict while in jail was somewhat reticent about this cheque, and did not make it clear whether it was his own or his employer's. It was thought by the authorities, however, that it was for the misappropriation of this cheque that the wily Cingalese found himself among the convicts of Malacca.

But to resume.

The priests believed his story, unloaded their baggage, and agreed to wait three days. Tickery thereupon repeated the story of the priests' failure to the Governor, insisting that they must have been sadly duped, after having expended so much money in gifts, and that the King of Siam's holy mission ought not to be allowed to quit the place without being permitted to view the holy relic. With this the Governor agreed, and it was therefore arranged that Tickery should procure the keys of the temple wherein the tooth was preserved, and conduct the priests to it. It so happened that the keys were in the custody of the Resident Councillor, who was then eight miles away, elephant-shooting, so Tickery went to the Councillor's residence, where, by force of persua-

sion and language he obtained the keys from the Councillor's wife.

On the third day, therefore, the priests were notified that their presence was desired in the temple aforesaid for the purpose of viewing the tooth, and in due course the worshippers assembled therein, with Tickery, the Governor, and the Recorder, together with some priests of Kandy. Now it so happened that the head priest of the Siamese mission brought with him a golden jar filled with otto of roses, and desired that a small piece of cotton wool should be dipped in it, rubbed on the holy tooth, and then placed in the jar, so that the whole of the contents might thus be consecrated. This, however, the Kandy priests strongly objected to, as being too great a liberty to be extended to foreigners, and altogether without precedent. But the Siamese priests persisted in their demand, and the wily Tickery, who was entirely pledged to the interests of the mission, settled the question in a very subtle, albeit practical manner.

The dispute not being understood by either the Governor or Councillor, as it was carried on in language alien to them, Tickery was asked to explain, which he did in the following manner—Taking the golden jar and the piece of cotton wool from the Siamese priest, he said, "This is what they want, your Honour: They want to take this small piece of cotton, so, and having dipped it in this oil, so, they wish to rub it on the sacred

tooth, so; and having done this, to return it to the golden jar, so; thereby, your Honour, to consecrate the whole of the contents of the golden jar." At the same time he suited the actions to the words, finally returning the jar to the Siamese priests. The Kandy priests were highly indignant, but the whole thing was done so quickly that there was not time sufficient in which to interfere.

For this service Tickery was rewarded by the delighted Siamese priests with 1,000 rupees, was held in the highest esteem by the King of Siam, by whom he was regarded as a holy man, and who periodically sent him substantial tokens of his Royal favour. After the affair was over, the Governor, patting Tickery on the back, observed, "You have indeed settled the question, and it is a pity you were not born in the precincts of St. James', for you would have made a splendid political agent."

Here is an interesting account of his crime by a convict who was sentenced to transportation for life for murder, in his own words:—"In my Madras native village, I, Rudrapah, was a planter (ryot). I was possessed of several large paddy fields; some were near my house, and others were far off. At a little distance from my house a friend of mine lived, Allagappen by name. He was a ryot, and possessed of paddy fields. He often came to eat rice with me, and I often went to his house; we were like brothers. At a village

six miles away there lived a man who was a breeder of cattle. He and his wife were very partial to me, and it was arranged between us that I should marry their daughter when she was old enough—she was then eleven years of age. All went well for two years, and then I was married to the girl and took her to my house. My friend Allagappen used to come and visit us and eat rice as before. Things went on very well for five or six years, my wife and I were very happy together, and never quarrelled; we had only one child.

"Having saved some money, I bought a bandy (a country vehicle) and a pair of bulls, and used to hire them to any one travelling. Sometimes my bandy would be engaged for a long journey, and I would be away from my house for two or three days together, leaving my wife and child alone. But now my trouble began. About six months after I bought my bulls one of them got sick, and died. I had not then enough money to buy another, and was on the point of selling the bandy and remaining bull, when my wife proposed that we should ask her father to help us, as he had plenty of bulls. I had not thought of this, and I said, 'Very good.' We went and saw my father-in-law, and he agreed to let me have a bull and pay for it as I earned money.

"Soon after that I hired my bandy to a man to go to a town thirty miles away, expecting to be away some days. I left my wife and child under

the charge of a neighbour and his wife, who promised to look after them. I and the man who hired my bandy set out early in the morning, and reached the town about midday next day. In the evening the man told me he was going to stay many days in the town, and I could return to my house. He paid me, and I bought some things I wanted. Early next morning, at daybreak, I set out on my journey back to my village, and arrived there about three o'clock the next morning; and after seeing to my bulls I went to my house, and to my surprise found the door unfastened. I entered without making any noise, not knowing what could be the reason the door was not fastened. I went quickly into my sleeping-place, and there I saw my wife lying asleep, and beside her was a man also asleep.

"On going close up to him that I might see who it was, to my great sorrow I found that it was my friend Allagappen. It was my great misfortune that I had in my hands a granite stone, or sort of muller, for grinding massalah (curry stuff), which I had bought, and being so angered with my friend, and so overcome with grief at finding my wife to be false, it made me tremble so much that I let the stone fall from my hands, and quite unintentionally it dropped on Allagappen's head, and the stone being heavy it broke his skull and killed him on the spot. My wife woke up, and seeing me, she screamed and ran away from the house. She went to the neighbour's house in

whose charge I had left her. I followed her, and told them what I had done. That morning I was taken by the police and locked up, and after that I saw my house no more. I was tried by an English judge, and was sentenced to be sent away from my country for as long as I lived, such was my misfortune."

A very sad story. The poor old fellow shed tears when he related it. He was pardoned after having served twenty-five years. Under the circumstances, one would have thought more lenient treatment might have been extended towards him.

The story of a convict known as "Funny Joe" is rather unique for the East. He was the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, and was what is known as a "black sheep." He was well educated and sharp-witted, but he could not "go straight." Finally he left his home and went to sea. Here, for a time, he prospered, becoming chief mate of a ship. Thus, on the threshold of a successful career, he had the misfortune to fall foul of his superiors. He was charged, falsely, he asserted, with being insolent and insubordinate to his commander, and when the vessel arrived at the Cape of Good Hope he was discharged. Almost entirely without means, and on practically foreign soil, "Funny Joe" cast about him for some means of "raising the wind." He fell in with a loafing sailor at the port, and the two put their heads together, and hit upon a likely scheme to relieve their pressing embarrassments.

They clubbed their resources, hired a hall, and had bills printed and distributed announcing that on a certain night, at the hall referred to, a man might be seen "walking on the ceiling like a fly." This sensation might be witnessed, the bill further stated, for so much admission. The public responded generously on the night, "Funny Joe's" companion taking the money. At a certain stage of the proceedings, the resourceful clergyman's son went to his companion and took from him all the money he had so far received, telling him at the same time that he might have all he could collect over that sum. With this business transacted, "Funny Joe" "walked," although not on a ceiling. What happened at the hall after this is not known, for "Funny Joe" never saw any more of his companion, nor was he himself ever heard of again in Cape Town. But one might very well imagine the disappointment and chagrin of the audience, who gazed in vain at the ceiling for the "human fly."

"Funny Joe" was next heard of at Rangoon, where he again found himself "stranded." But again his mother wit came to his aid. Posing as a naturalist, he announced that he had discovered off the coast a fine specimen of a "mermaid," which he had placed on exhibition, and which might be viewed by the public upon their paying so much admission. By this means he obtained a large sum of money. The "mermaid" he had cleverly constructed from the head and shoulders

of a monkey and the body of a fish. From Rangoon he moved to Singapore, taking his "mermaid" with him, which he placed on exhibition at a boarding-house. This time, however, it failed to "draw," and "Joe" found himself once more in his almost normal condition of impecuniosity.

In order to relieve this embarrassment he resorted to means less subtle than usual, for he annexed a watch and chain belonging to somebody else in the house where he lodged, and for this he was arrested and cast into jail. Here it was that he told the story of his life to the authorities. While in Singapore jail he was brought under the beneficial influence of the charitable and generous Superintendent, Major McNair, to whom he vowed he would turn over a new leaf. When his sentence expired and he was about to be discharged, Major McNair, from his own private purse, presented, or rather, lent him, a sum of money with which to make a new start. That he reformed is highly probable, for he was known to have signed articles as mate of a ship, and he scrupulously returned the money to Major McNair which that gentleman had generously advanced to him.

CHAPTER X

MORE CONVICT STORIES

PIRACY still existed in the Straits of Malacca in the early 'sixties, and gave the authorities a great deal of trouble. In the year 1863 the mouths of the rivers Prye, Juroo, and Junjong on the Malay Peninsula, and the South Channel between Penang Island and the mainland of Province Wellesley, were infested with piratical boats, many of the native trading craft being attacked by them. The pirates would first move about Penang, and quietly ascertain what tongkongs were about to sail, what their cargo would consist of, and so forth.

Upon one occasion they learned that a tongkong, owned and manned by Chinese, and carrying a valuable cargo of specie, was about to leave Penang for Laroot, so disguised themselves as "hadjis," or Mahomedan pilgrims, and booked passages in her. They had previously arranged with some of their confederates to have a prahu, or fast sailing-boat, ready at a given place on the Juroo River, and when the tongkong reached this spot, the prahu, at a pre-arranged signal, was to run alongside the trading craft. The pirates were

then to gag the crew, plunder the vessel, sink her, and make off in the prahu.

This villainous scheme miscarried somewhat, although it culminated disastrously for the luckless crew of the tongkong. From the latter the pirates met with a stouter resistance than they anticipated, so they deemed it expedient to go to the length of slaying them all. Believing they had accomplished this, they proceeded to scuttle the vessel. But, so absorbed had they been in their murderous work, that they were oblivious of the fact that a boat containing Indian convicts, employed in carrying coral for the Government limekilns, the occupants of which had been attracted by the cries of the victims, was bearing down upon them. In fact, they were not aware of its proximity until it had actually run alongside the tongkong. Then, perceiving their peril, they slipped into the prahu, and the latter being a fast-sailing craft, they were able to get clear away.

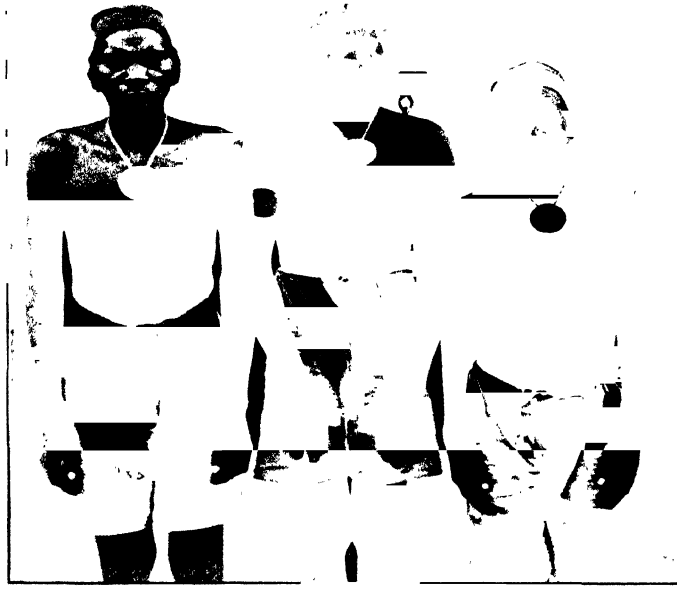
The tindal in charge of the convicts boarded the tongkong, and there beheld the crew, apparently slain to a man, the boat presenting a terrible spectacle. He at first supposed that all had perished, including the passengers, but hearing a groan he proceeded to more closely examine the craft. Ultimately he discovered a Chinese boatman clinging to the rudder. He hauled him aboard, and then found that he was very badly wounded. The tindal then returned to the convict

boat, took the tongkong in tow, and shaped his course for Butterworth, in Province Wellesley, which he reached early in the morning.

The wounded Chinaman was conveyed to hospital, and a report made to the police. Fortunately the Chinaman recovered, and was able to furnish the authorities with a description of the pirates, which was supplemented by the tindal with a description of the prahu. With the assistance of this information the police were enabled to trace the course of the piratical craft to Sunghie Rambay, where the pirates themselves were also found concealed, and arrested. The prisoners were eventually placed on trial at the Supreme Court, Penang, some being hanged, and others sentenced to penal servitude. The tindal of the Government boat, and the convicts aboard her, were highly commended for their conduct by the judge, and rewarded by the authorities.

Curiously enough, the very admixture of castes and tribes of India which renders legal administration somewhat difficult in the various districts, becomes an element of security in the various jails. It operates as a preventative against insurrection, and leads to the discovery of plots to escape, also occasionally preventing more serious mischief. The rivalry and prejudices existing between castes induce the native of India to readily become a spy upon his neighbour, and in jail he becomes a willing informer.

In old Singapore jail, for instance, it is recorded



CHERUMARS OF WYNAAD. A VERY LOW TYPE.
(Taken in Cannanore Jail.)

that upon one occasion a dispute arose between two Sikhs, one belonging to the "Ramdasee" sect, and the other to the "Mazahbee" sect. As the two went from words to blows, they were both placed in confinement, and duly brought before the Superintendent, Major McNair. An investigation into the circumstances of the whole case proved the "Mazahbee" Sikh to be the instigator of the dispute, so he was accordingly punished by the Superintendent. This decision caused deep dissatisfaction amongst the "Mazahbee" sect, and they determined to be revenged upon the Superintendent. They plotted and schemed as to the best method of inflicting serious injury upon Major McNair, and their secret deliberations came under the keen observation of an astute Parsee convict, who, having traded in Northern India, understood their language. He kept a close watch upon them, and determined that when their plans should have been matured, but before they could carry them into practice, to inform the authorities.

It so fell out, however, that the plot was only ripe for execution upon the morning of the muster, and the Parsee, therefore, had no time in which to communicate in the ordinary way with the head warder. Lacking nothing in resource, however, he hit upon a plan whereby he would be able to in time warn the Superintendent of his peril. And this he accomplished in the following manner—As the convicts were standing on parade, ready

for Major McNair to pass down the different lines upon his inspection, the Parsee crept along at the rear of the men, making his movements coincide with those of the Superintendent as he passed along in the front. Arrived at a certain place, he, the Parsee, suddenly thrust his head between the legs of one of the front rank men, and exclaimed, loudly enough for the Superintendent to hear, "Khabardar sahib! Sikh kepas tamancha hai!" ("Look out, sir; a Sikh has a pistol!") Major McNair, although he heard the warning words, did not appear to take any notice of them until he had arrived at about the middle of that line—probably he was turning the matter over in his mind, and deciding upon a course of action—when he turned to the chief warder and instructed him to take a dozen Sikhs from the end of the line, remove them to their ward, and examine their boxes, adding, "Search them thoroughly!"

Major McNair having passed the end of the line, and preparing to inspect another at right angles to it, and no pistol being fired, he concluded that his would-be assailant must be among those removed. This proved to be the case, for the chief warder found a loaded pistol on the person of one of the Sikhs, who was accordingly placed in a cell to await an investigation. How did the convict contrive to get possession of the loaded pistol? It was discovered that a fellow-tribesman had managed to pass the main gate with the pistol, which he passed to the convict

who had been appointed to commit the deed. The latter was condemned to irons, and placed in the refractory ward; the gang broken up, some of them being transferred to Penang, those remaining at Singapore having a close watch kept upon them. The Parsee was suitably rewarded.

A somewhat similar incident happened while Colonel MacPherson, Major McNair's predecessor, was Superintendent of the Singapore jail. In this case also the life of the Superintendent was saved by a Parsee. The latter, on the evening before muster, observed a convict bury something in the ground. Having his suspicions aroused, and awaiting his opportunity, he made an inspection of the spot, and sure enough found a knife thrust in the ground. Hastily withdrawing the blade, he returned the handle to the ground, allowing it to protrude above the surface just so much as it had done before. On the morrow, as Colonel MacPherson was passing along the line, the convict quickly seized the knife to make his blow, but at once saw how he had been baulked in his villainous purpose.

Such incidents as these serve to prove how perilous sometimes are the duties performed by European officials in the jails of India.

There were frequently many European prisoners in the jail at Singapore, chiefly seamen on short sentences for neglect of duty on board ship. About the year 1859, H.M.S. *Esk*, Commander Sir Robert McClure, was for some time on the

Singapore station, and upon her arrival Sir Robert sent a particularly incorrigible man-of-war's man to be detained in the house of correction, which was then under the control of the Convict Department. We will call this man simply John, suppressing his surname for reasons of prudence. The officer who brought him ashore stated that he was an old offender, and had twice been sentenced to be flogged. His present sentence was three weeks' imprisonment, the first to be in solitary confinement, on bread and water and congee, or rice gruel diet. He was, therefore, in due course placed in a penal cell, and an allowance of bread and water placed before him. He at once looked threateningly at the warder, and said, "Take away that filth; I won't eat it." The warder thereupon reported him as dangerous. The next morning it was found that he had touched neither bread nor water, and when remonstrated with by the warder, said, "I'll eat the tail of my shirt first, before I eat what you bring me." The doctor saw him, and reported him as being strong and in excellent health, and that he might be left till hunger subdued his rebellious nature. Upon the afternoon of the second day the Superintendent visited him, and the following dialogue ensued—

Super. "What is your name?"

John. "What is that to you?"

Super. "But I am the Superintendent of this jail, and I ask you a simple question, and I want a simple answer."

John. "Look at my warrant if you want to know it."

Super. "But I want to hear it from yourself."

John. "Well, if it is any satisfaction to you, my name is John ——."

Super. "Now I want to know what part of England you come from."

John. "Well, what do you want to know that for? But I say again, if it is any satisfaction to you, I come from Saltash."

Super. "So you are a Cornishman, are you? I know Saltash very well. It is a fine old place. And I know the Viaduct, and the cottages over against it. I wonder if you were born there in one of those cottages? Perhaps you were, and have a mother now living there; and if you have, and she knew that her son was now in an Indian jail, you would break that old woman's heart, that you would."

With this the Superintendent took his departure, closing the cell door behind him. Late in the evening the chief warder asked the Superintendent if he would visit the man-of-war's man before nightfall, as he wished to speak to him. Accordingly the Superintendent did so. It was dark, and he had a bull's-eye lantern with him, which he turned upon the prisoner. At once he was struck with the alteration in his looks, which were softened as though by some influence from within. Said the Superintendent, "Well, you sent for me, and I have come; what do you want?" To this

the prisoner, in a faltering voice, and with tears in his eyes, replied, "I only want to say, sir, before I go to sleep, that you are the first man that has ever overcome me, for you spoke to me of my mother. And now, sir, you can do anything you like with me, and I'll carry out my sentence properly, and go back aboard my ship, and do my duty as a British sailor ought to do."

And he kept his word. After his release he went back to his ship, which sailed for Bombay. The Superintendent there reported that Sir Robert McClure had stated that John —— was as well-behaved a man as he had on board, that his treatment in Singapore jail seemed to have altered his nature, and he would like to have the prescription for it. Thus, what hardship and severity failed to bring about, was accomplished by this "one touch of nature." It is always better to appeal to a man's human than his brutal side. Cruelty does but beget cruelty. In the nature of the Briton there is a good deal of pugnacity; give him encouragement and inducement to be well-behaved, and he will as a rule reform; but offer him nothing but hardship and his militant nature is aroused, and he becomes a hard and persistent fighter, even against overwhelming odds, and unto the end.

In 1867 the life convicts at Singapore were transferred to Port Blair, in the Andaman Islands; and in 1873 the convict establishment of the Straits Settlements was finally abolished.

CHAPTER XI

THE EASTERN POISONER

INDIA has for many years been a fine training ground for detective work. The tracking of criminals in the East is far more difficult than in the West, and makes a much greater call upon the faculties of deduction, and the capacity generally for taking pains. The unmasking of the subtle poisoner of the East, for instance, constitutes a performance of no mean metaphysical achievement. Some years ago General Charles Hervey, C.B., was engaged in a prolonged campaign against poisoners and dacoits in India, and I cannot do better than quote his words in this connection—"The science of detection teaches that if called upon to explain how obtained, you are unable to individualize the information acquired. The practised detective runs, spider-like, upon many threads before he hits upon the unravelling one that will lead him to his fly, and he instinctively follows it. Perhaps it is the swish of a petticoat round the corner of a street, or the jerking of a *sáree*, the peculiarity of a whistle, some unguarded prevarication or unsupposed inconsistency, the slip utterance of some manu-

factured word or slang expression, down-held eyelids, the lurking look peering through the corners thereof, the too-ready self-accusing excuse, or protestation of respectability, or, like Constance Kent, Lefroy, and Mrs. Maybrick, of innocence, or volunteered replies to unasked questions; he will watch, too, for expressions which their warmth conveys of a prevailing uneasiness, or which by their emphasis betray secret trouble—an uncertainty and disquietude—withal the warmth of the make-believe or assured assertion. These, and such-like other indications, are so many whispers in the air, words in the ear, and betokenings, which a close detector will watch for and take note of, and which lead him to be sure of his course, and from out of the whole commingled mass of his inquiries, conduct him to alight upon his *find*."

One of the worst forms of poisoning which prevails in India is that by means of the agent known as *dhatura*. The effects of it upon the victims, when the latter escape death, are so disastrous that death itself, it would seem, would come as a merciful relief. It impairs their faculties, and sometimes permanently deranges their minds. In very few cases have the victims been known to regain their former bodily and mental vigour, and then only where but a light dose of the poison happens to have been administered. One man who had been dosed still remained a cripple seven years after the event; another victim was scarcely able to articulate, as though he had been struck

with paralysis; he had never left his bed, and was gradually wasting away.

The main object of the majority of the poisoners of India being robbery, it is not essential to them that the victim should be deprived of life; it is sufficient for their purpose that the victim be deprived of consciousness. The chances of detection and punishment of the criminal are comparatively few, the work of the police extremely difficult. Deaths brought about in such a manner —usually by the wayside—are frequently ascribed to disease, suicide, or wild beasts. In the case of recovery, the victim is often induced to maintain silence from fear of a charge of drunkenness or falsehood; and in the case of females, from the dread of being suspected of unchastity.

The initial methods adopted by the poisoners of India are not unlike those formerly employed by Thugs, in that they first proceed to ingratiate themselves into the good graces of their intended victim or victims. Some years ago, in Bengal, a horse-dealer from Cabool, who had disposed of his stud and was returning home with the proceeds, was met on the road by two poisoners named Uzgur Ali and Baboo Khan, who attached themselves to him. They had probably already obtained information about their victim's business transactions, and his being possessed of money. They made themselves so pleasant that the unsuspecting one allowed them to accompany him to Patna, which appeared to have been the place

pre-arranged for the committal of the infamous deed, which was subsequently all but accomplished. Their plans, however, slightly miscarried, owing to the horse-dealer's unexpected resistance to their blandishments.

They first tried to beguile him at Patna with some brass trinkets, which they asserted were gold. This confidence trick, however, would not work, inasmuch as the horse-dealer declared that he had no use for such articles. At this stage of the proceedings a couple of indigent worshippers, so frequently to be met with in India, appeared upon the scene, and the horse-dealer was induced by the two criminals to bestow upon them alms, known as "road expenses." The religious mendicants were also allowed to attach themselves to the party, which then set out in resumption of the journey to Benares.

Baboo Khan, the confederate of Uzgur 'Ali, *had been posing as his servant, and he was now directed to hurry ahead to a certain travellers' resting-place, called a "serai," and there prepare* some food against the arrival of the wayfarers, and he accordingly made off. The rest-house was reached at nightfall, and there they found food ready prepared, consisting of rice and dhall. To this repast they sat down, being joined by a mendicant who was living at the hostelry. Uzgur Ali and his supposed servant, however, did not share in the meal, a pregnant fact which does not seem to have aroused any suspicion in the minds

of the others. Soon after partaking of the food the horse-dealer complained of feeling giddy, and left the "serai" for the house of an acquaintance who lived near, where he soon afterwards became insensible.

This timely and unexpected retirement of the horse-dealer so alarmed Baboo Khan that he took to flight, but Uzgur Ali, made of sterner stuff, remained behind for the purpose of devising a plan whereby he might yet get possession of the horse-dealer's money. The other three persons who partook of the food also became insensible. Uzgur Ali pretended himself to have been poisoned, and was removed to the local hospital, where he declared that the culprit was the absconding Baboo Khan, and that he had robbed him before under similar circumstances. The horse-dealer recovered, and, remarkable to relate, accepted this version of the affair, and was even further induced to lend Uzgur Ali the sum of ten rupees, with which to buy railway tickets, as the latter stated. With this money the wily criminal disappeared. The other persons eventually recovered also. Uzgur Ali had the temerity to prosecute Baboo Khan, and it was through this excess of daring that the whole truth came out, and justice was visited upon the culprits, although not until the authorities had made a terrible blunder over Uzgur Ali.

Subsequent to the affair of the horse-dealer, a party of five persons, including one woman, were

making their way from Calcutta when, on the road to Gya, they were accosted by a man, who made himself most affable to them. All unsuspecting they allowed him to attach himself to their party, and arriving at a rest-house at the conclusion of the day's journey, they, at his suggestion, deputed him to fetch food for them from a neighbouring bazaar. Having eaten a hearty meal, they were induced by this man to hurry away from the place in order to catch a train. Subsequently all five were found lying about in the road, insensible, and divested of all their belongings, including their wearing apparel. Their "very good friend" was nowhere to be found.

Having recovered, they were able to give a description of the solicitous stranger, which the police maintained tallied exactly with that of Uzgur Ali, already associated with the affair of the horse-dealer. If this were so, then this daring criminal must have perpetrated this second crime after having got away with the horse-dealer's ten rupees, and, profiting by experience, persuaded his victims to leave the rest-house before the poison had time to take effect.

Uzgur Ali, who had already been arrested for poisoning and robbing the horse-dealer, was accordingly placed among others for identification, and the woman—the other victims of the second outrage had all departed to their respective homes—at once picked him out as the man who had drugged them. Uzgur Ali was placed on trial for

both crimes, but, to everybody's amazement, the jury *acquitted him!* But Nemesis was determined not to be baffled for long, for only a few days subsequently Uzgur Ali, doubtless emboldened by his extraordinary immunity, committed another crime of a similar kind, this time causing the death of his victim. For this he was arrested, placed on trial, and by a less complacent jury than that which tried him before was found guilty, and sentenced to capital punishment.

The criminal systems of India are the growth of ages, and there is a depth to some of the deeds committed which is quite inscrutable. A poisoner known as Rôra the Meerásee (class of hereditary singers) gave the authorities a great deal of trouble. He was a most skilful and industrious criminal, gifted in dissimulation, devoid of scruple, and most prolific of device. There being insufficient evidence to support one charge against him, the authorities transferred him to Jeypore, there to answer another charge. He was committed to the custody of two police officials, into whose good graces he so far succeeded in ingratiating himself as to induce them to allow him to enter his own house, which they passed *en route*. He brought away with him some sweetmeats, which he proffered to his custodians, who, inasmuch as they had seen the man eat some himself, apparently deemed it safe to accept them. Soon after having partaken of them, however, they fell senseless in the road. Of course, those eaten by the prisoner

himself were innocuous, but those given to the police had been drugged, the dexterous Rôra having manipulated them.

Thus having effected his escape, Rôra's next exploit, which he accomplished in company with an acquaintance whom he fell in with, was to hire a bullock hackery, or cart, at a place called Májra, drug the driver, and appropriate both vehicle and animal. This was a favourite exploit of poisoners in the North-West Provinces. They hired the conveyance and driver, journeyed a few stages, on the way beguiling the driver with stories invented for the purpose—stories calculated to arouse his sympathies—and would then proceed to poison his food, or drug his tobacco or drink. When insensibility supervened they would remove their victim, dead or alive, and lay him aside somewhere on the road, and then convey the stolen property to some distant town or village, where they would dispose of it. This accomplished, they would proceed to look out for another victim, a bullock-drawn vehicle, or even a baggage pony or camel. In this way they would travel over vast tracts of country, always on the move, and from one criminal exploit to another.

In the case of Rôra under notice, he and his companion pulled up at one place to refresh and smoke, and further on to partake of the morning meal. The driver was offered a *pooree*, a kind of sweet puff, also some sugar, which he accepted and partook of, the journey then being renewed. At

Májra the driver began to feel queer, and so lay down in the cart. The last thing he remembered was the strangers pulling up and unyoking the bullocks, to which they gave some provender. The strangers did not tell him their names, but casually remarked that they came from Bhurtpore, which, curiously enough, was true.

Rôra's next exploit occurred at Futtiabad. He engaged a camel in charge of a hired attendant of the Vishnowee tribe, poisoned him, and made off with the camel towards Hissár. The man's dead body was found next morning among some bushes, in a state of decomposition, and partly devoured by jackals. The deceased driver was identified principally by his clothing. He had been seen to enter the place in company with Rôra, and the latter had been perceived leaving it alone. In the meantime Rôra had arrived at Hissár with the stolen camel, where he was arrested as being a suspicious character. He was lodged in the local lock-up, but during the following night he contrived to make his escape, and got clear away.

When he was arrested a walking-stick was taken from him, and this was subsequently identified by a victim, and associated the redoubtable Rôra with yet another crime, the perpetrator of which the Rhôtuck police were in hot pursuit of. It was known that Rôra occasionally visited two women named respectively Lálee and Sáhibee, who resided at Bhurtpore, and thither the police directed

their inquiries. Eventually Rôra was arrested by the Puttiála State authorities at Nárnoul, where he was found reeling drunk in a bazaar. In his possession was found some *suttoo*, or flour, mingled with dhatura powder, which is the method of administering the drug. In all there were nine charges against Rôra, who was eventually sentenced to transportation for an aggregate period of nineteen years.

The leniency of the treatment meted out to Rôra may be accounted for by his having turned "approver," a method of dealing with criminals in India about which I shall have more to say in a future chapter.

CHAPTER XII

THE EASTERN POISONER (*continued*)

THE wiles of the wayside poisoner are varied and numerous. On one occasion, in the Central Provinces, near Nagpore, two travellers were joined by two others in the usual way, and when the party arrived near their destination they tarried in a garden to prepare a meal. The two strangers produced some chutney, which they induced the others to partake of. Shortly afterwards the latter became insensible, and were robbed of their money. The culprits were fortunately, in this instance, captured soon after at a police post, the whole of the stolen money being found upon them; one of them was also actually wearing the shoes of one of the drugged men. Some poisoned chutney was found upon them. A similar case occurred at a place called Pálásnair, in the Bombay district. A man, his wife, and two boys were given some chutney, "as a relish," by a stranger, after partaking of which they all became insensible. When they regained consciousness they found that all their money had been stolen. Unfortunately the culprit in this case was not captured.

Perhaps one of the most extraordinary cases

of the kind that ever occurred took place in the same Province, in the 'sixties, under the following circumstances—A woman placed her baby in the care of a neighbour while she was absent from home on business of some kind, the child being looked after by the neighbour's daughter. Upon her return the mother was told by the daughter that a woman had taken her baby away, under the pretext that she, the mother, had sent for it. Whereupon the mother had her suspicions aroused, and caused a search to be made of her neighbour's house, when the dead body of the child was found hidden under the woman's cot. Then the neighbour made confession, and furnished the following explanation—

She, having no child, had consulted an itinerant priest, who informed her that in order that she might obtain offspring she must bring him an infant. Accordingly she took her neighbour's baby, that had been placed in her charge, to him. The supposed priest then took the infant in his arms, and producing some limes, paced round with the infant seven times, finally depositing the latter where it was subsequently found. For this service he charged the woman, so she asserted, the sum of one rupee.

It was found that the child had been poisoned, obviously for the sake of its ornaments, with which most Indian children are adorned, and which were missing. Thus in the East do the cunning and un-

scrupulous prey upon the ignorant and credulous. Both pseudo holy man and the woman were placed on trial, charged with murder, but, inscrutable East! both were acquitted. Then the authorities sought to claim the man as a professional poisoner, and in order to substantiate their charge they had him conveyed to his declared place of residence, in far Tonk, but there he was entirely ignored. He was eventually reported to have died from cholera, having cheated earthly justice to the end.

In 1865 there occurred a remarkable case of poisoning in Bengal. At Pandooke, near Bhaugulpore, there existed a Jain temple, wherein dwelt the head priest. A personal friend of his, one Gopaul, was in the habit of reading and writing for him, collecting his debts, and generally acting as his amanuensis and confidant. He was even entrusted with the key of the priest's treasure, and when the latter went away to Patna to marry, he, Gopaul, was left in charge of the temple. Well, this trusted friend of the priest of Pandooke conceived the villainous idea of robbing his benefactor, and with this end in view cultivated the acquaintance of some professional poisoners, among whom were two men named respectively Phoolchund and Phôdoo a Nápit, the latter being of the barber caste.

One evening, then, this party met in concert at a garden in the neighbourhood, some having come by bullock-cart, some on foot. The supposed

object of the visit was to pay a tribute to an idol in the temple aforesaid, some sweetmeats being purchased for the purpose of making "offering." These were divided into four parts, and deposited in four *dhônas*, the latter being boxes contrived from leaves, which form the usual receptacles for sweetmeats or offerings. Then Gopaul mixed with the sweetmeats in one of the boxes some powdered dhatura seed, which he handed to the head of the gang, a man named Chutturdhári, as the proposed offering. The party then repaired to the temple.

The chief of the gang, accompanied by Gopaul and a man named Juggurnáth, tendered the offering to the priest, who in turn made the offering to the idol. Then, as is customary under such circumstances, the priest proceeded to divide the sweetmeats between the supposed pilgrims. Thereupon the latter invited the priest to himself partake of the sweetmeats, as they were already furnished with a *dhôna* each. This the priest acceded to, ate some of the sweetmeats, and handed some to the two servants or attendants in the outer courtyard. The time was seven in the evening. The conspirators lingered in the vicinity of the temple under the pretence of "listening to the Thakoor's evening hymn."

The night was quickly closing in, and in the deepening gloom, ere the night-lamp was lighted within the inner shrine, the last pilgrims of the

closing day were seen to arrive at the temple. An old woman came to be advised by the priest, and stole silently away; a cripple struggled in to offer obeisance and salutation to the idol, and limped away again. The conspirators waited and watched. Other servitors left for a distant charity fair, leaving the priest and his two attendants alone in the temple. These were all within the grip of a deadly agent, and would soon offer no obstacles to the consummation of a great crime.

All was silent and dark, save for the faint glimmer of the lamp within the inmost recess of the idol's sanctum. At length the priest and his two attendants fell beneath the malign influence of the sinister poison, the former lying insensible in the inner recess, the latter in the outer court. All were silent, deaf, and dumb, and blind as the walls which encompassed them. Then the conspirators took counsel among themselves. Gopaul knew of the wealth which was hidden away in the secret treasure-place in an inner room. They made their way to it. On their way they beheld the priest lying prone beneath the verandah of the shrine itself. He was silent, but, thought they, not silent enough: he must die—dead men tell no tales.

Thereupon one clutched and squeezed his throat, and another sat heavily upon his chest. Although he did not speak, he flapped his hands and feet, so these were held by a third. Thus the

Jain priest died. His corpse was taken by several members of the gang and cast into a pit or dry well, distant about half-a-mile. In the meantime the others were engaged in rifling the treasure-house. They took from it four sacks of plunder, each about a cubit long, which were deposited in the bullock-cart without, and, being joined by the others, all drove away.

The truth of this dastardly crime became known through the men Phoolchund and Phôdoo a Nápit being arrested for another crime, and being accepted as "approvers." The body of the priest was found, and the two attendants were seen one morning kicking about the ground, as though they were intoxicated or mad. The case was tried before the Sessions judge of Bhaugulpore, there being seven prisoners, all of whom were convicted of murder, three sentenced to death, and the rest to transportation for life.

Against these sentences the prisoners appealed to the High Court at Calcutta, the appeal being heard by Justices Norman and Campbell. The prisoners were represented by two prominent members of the Calcutta Bar, Mr. Montriou and Baboo Aushotush Dhur, the result being confirmation of the sentence of death on two only, and the sentence of transportation for life on one only. The others were acquitted, including one of the three sentenced to death.

This radical revision of the sentences inflicted

in the lower court is obviously due to the nature of the evidence of the "approvers," Judge Campbell observing, *à propos* the case, "I have seen a great deal of the working of detective departments, and I well know, that while well worked they have led to great results, they are also very liable to abuse. An accepted approver regularly employed by the defendant, a villain of the deepest dye according to his own showing (a favourite and oft-used expression by our decriers), seems to the people to have life and death in his hands; those whom he denounces are carried before a dreaded inquisitorial tribunal, and those whom he spares are exempted."

A curious poison case came to light about the same period, in connection with the construction of the railway—the Great Indian Peninsula Railway—connecting Allahabad with the main line running to and from Calcutta. It should first be explained that one of the measures adopted by the Government for the suppression of organized and hereditary crime in India is to take in hand the offspring of such criminals, place them in a reformatory, and there teach them a trade, so that when they grow up they may be in a position to earn an honest and legitimate living. One of the results of this system has been that when some of these pupils have arrived at a stage of proficiency, or age when they might depart into the world to earn a living, they have attached themselves to

European gentlemen as servants. Many of the officials employed on the railway referred to had private servants of this class. What follows will now be the better understood.

Among the railway officials referred to was a Mr. Upham, who had charge of that portion of the line which extended some miles beyond Sleemanabad, near Jubbulpore, and in his service he had two such lads as *khitmatgárs*, or table servants. Well, Mr. Upham returned one day from his rather lengthy beat feeling very tired, went into his tent, and lay down on his bed. Outside the two lads referred to were cooking his dinner. In order to admit the air the walls of his tent had been raised, by means of which he could obtain a view of his servants cooking. He noticed one of them squeezing some green pods into the food, but thinking it might be some form of vegetable took no further notice of it; he had seen them pluck the pods from a bush close by. Accidentally, and luckily, as events turned out, he was so fatigued that he felt in no humour for dinner, so contented himself with a little rice and milk. There must, however, have been some suspicion lurking in the mind of Mr. Upham, for he picked up the pods and put them in his pocket.

That the suspicion, nevertheless, must have been but fugitive was made clear by Mr. Upham partaking of the breakfast prepared next morning by his servants; possibly it may have been more

curiosity than suspicion. After having finished breakfast he mounted his pony and rode away to the doctor's tent, three miles off. Arrived there he came over faint, and lost consciousness. Fortunately the doctor recognized the symptoms of dhatura poisoning, and was able to speedily administer antidotes, and Mr. Upham recovered. He then produced the pods he had picked up the previous evening, and the two proceeding to the bush from which they had been plucked, the doctor at once declared it to be of the dhatura plant (*Dhatura stramonium*).

The two servants were thereupon arrested, also the horse-keeper and the grass-cutter. It was not by any means made clear how the latter unfortunate men were implicated, but they got three years' imprisonment all the same. They may have been confederates, but, if so, the records do not make it clear. The cook who handled the pods was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, but, remarkable to relate, his fellow-servant was acquitted! Some of these decisions in the Indian criminal courts are really quite inexplicable. Are they due to the judge or the native jury? Here we have two men, whose guilt is quite vague, sentenced to imprisonment, while one of the two actual and observed criminals is acquitted. The glaring inequality and unreliability of such judicial administration cannot be over-emphasized. It should, however, be borne in mind that such cases

as this are but isolated instances of apparent judicial error, and cannot be considered as casting any grave reflection upon the administration of the criminal law in general throughout the vast continent.

The intention of Mr. Upham's servants was to rob him while he was unconscious. They were the offspring of Thugs of the old stock, which demonstrates how difficult it is to reform such people.

CHAPTER XIII

POISONERS AS MARRIAGE AGENTS

ONE of the most cunning devices of the Indian poisoner is to pass himself off as a "marriage agent," when, under the pretence of finding a suitable life-partner he contrives to get the victim into his clutches, and so work his will with him.

Upon one occasion, for instance, a man named Oodmee, a widower, met at a village called Bunianée, near Rhôtuck, a man accompanied by two women; the male member of the trio said his name was Khájooa, by caste a Dôme, that he was a resident of Rewaree, in the Goorgaon district, and that he was a "marriage agent." Now it so happened that Oodmee was in search of a wife, and confided his matrimonial desires to his new-found acquaintances, who volunteered to find him a suitable partner. He would, said the agent, arrange all the preliminaries, and would pay him, Oodmee, a visit at his address in a fortnight's time. The two men proceeded together to Rhôtuck, where they separated.

About a fortnight after the man who had posed as a "marriage agent" presented himself at Oodmee's residence, and said that he had now

found the young person with whom to arrange his marriage, that she resided in the adjoining native territory, and that she was, in fact, awaiting him at Buniánee. Oodmee, accepting this story in simple faith, set out with his companion, and about midday the two arrived at a tank at Rôhŭd, on the Delhi road. There Khájooa proposed refreshment, but as Oodmee was of superior caste to his companion he could not partake of any food prepared by the latter. So the "marriage agent" offered him some sugar, which Oodmee accepted, and, mixing it with some parched grain he had brought with him in his wallet, he ate some. Then the two continued their journey.

About two miles further Oodmee was suddenly seized with illness, and became unconscious. When he subsequently recovered, he found he had been robbed of all his money, also of the new coat which he had brought with him with which to adorn himself prior to being ushered into the presence of his expected bride. Oodmee's was a rude awakening; he was observed by some cultivators staggering about the road as though drunk, and was conveyed to hospital, where he related his story. The criminal was not captured.

In another case a Punjab convict named Mootasuddee inveigled and murdered by poisoning as many as nineteen persons, while posing as a "marriage agent," mostly in the Kángra valley. For twelve years he baffled the police, until at length he was captured and executed.

These peripatetic marriage-mongers have flourished for many years, and no amount of publicity seems to act as a warning to the natives. As may be supposed, women have always taken an important part in the plots. The crimes are not by any means confined to the highway or to rest-houses, private residences being also invaded by the subtle miscreants. Here is a typical case. At a certain house there lived a man, his father, wife, and two daughters. One day a woman, a stranger to them, appeared in their midst, and claimed relationship with them, and proceeded to talk of a contemplated marriage. Apparently the simple folk believed her story, for they invited the woman to partake of food, prepared some wheaten cakes, and had vegetables placed upon the fire. Some condiments were needed to flavour the latter, so one of the daughters, a girl of eleven years of age, was set to grind these, while the stranger continued to discuss various family matters.

Presently the woman began to take an interest in the work the daughter was engaged in, and proposed to assist her. This she was allowed to do. Soon after the mother went out on some errand, the daughter who was grinding condiments following in her wake, leaving the woman alone with the work. The other members of the family also left the apartment for the time being, so that the visitor was alone in the room. Subsequently, the meal being prepared, the husband and his father partook of it, but the daughter, finding it tasted nasty,

spat it out. The mother and the other daughter were still absent. The woman did not eat any of the prepared food, contenting and excusing herself with some chowpatti, or bread-cake. Soon after the two men became insensible, and were found in this condition by the wife and daughter upon their return. In the confusion which ensued during the efforts made to restore the men to consciousness the woman got away, taking with her the ornaments which she had stolen from her victims. The two men subsequently died from the effects of the poison which had been surreptitiously introduced into the spices by their mysterious "relation." The latter was not captured.

Every possible means are resorted to by the authorities to warn the people against the wiles of the "marriage agent" poisoners, also the "mysterious relation" trick, but apparently to very little purpose, so credulous and easily duped are the natives of India. It was thought that the execution of the arch-criminal, Mootasuddee, already referred to, which gained widespread publicity, would have had some beneficial effect in enlightening the people, but this class of crime continues to flourish. But even in the West do we not find both the confidence and the three-card tricks still flourishing, in spite of the widespread publicity which have been given to these transparent frauds —so invulnerable is the credulity of human nature, either in the East or the West?

This trick of claiming relationship resorted to



TWO FEMALE PRISONERS, COIMBATORE JAIL.

by Indian criminals is, of course, adopted for the purpose of inspiring confidence and enlisting sympathy, just as in the West the confidence trickster professes to have come from the same colony as his intended victim, and so creates a bond of mutual interests. Always in this class of fraud everything depends for success upon the initial step. So, in India, a woman may appear at a house, apparently footsore and weary, her visit being nicely timed when a meal is being prepared and the husband is away at his work. The woman's appearance and time of her visit constitute the "first step"—they at once enlist sympathy on the part of the good and hospitable housewife, and disarm suspicion. The rest is almost simple. She appeals for a glass of water, and to be allowed to rest for a while, and is cordially invited to be seated. Having probably previously "spotted" her intended victims she, as in the case of "fortune-tellers" in the West, has been careful to glean some particulars concerning their relations, and in a sympathetic voice she casually remarks to the daughter that she knew her, say, aunt "Bheemee." This pleases the daughter very much, and to her mother she will say, "Oh! mother! here is a poor woman who says she knows Aunt Bheemee!"

The stranger then makes use of the information she has gathered concerning Aunt Bheemee, and thus the bond of sympathy is strengthened. She is allowed to stay longer, and even to lie down,

upon the understanding that she will leave before the husband returns, as he might not approve of his wife's vicarious charity. The woman is profuse in her thanks, lies down, and watches for an opportunity to carry out her sinister design. All unsuspecting the mother may leave the apartment, entrusting the cooking to her daughter; presently the latter also leaves the room, to obtain some firewood, or look to the calf tied up in the back-yard. Apparently the stranger is slumbering upon the floor-mat which has been placed there for her use. She sleeps lightly, however, for directly the daughter's back is turned she opens her eyes widely, raises herself on her elbow, casts a hasty glance round, listens intently, swiftly and noiselessly rises to her feet, glides across the room to the fireplace, casts something into the cooking-pot, stirs it well, and returns to her former recumbent position. 'Tis done!

Upon the return of either mother or daughter the stranger would be seen still slumbering peacefully and profoundly on the floor-mat, as one who has succumbed to extreme bodily exhaustion. As evening is drawing on the stranger will arise, and expressing unbounded gratitude at the kind treatment meted out to her—of which she will certainly acquaint Aunt "Bheemee"—takes her departure; not, however, to go far, but to lurk about in the vicinity. The plot is yet only half developed; the fruits have still to be gathered in. She sees the husband return, and waits. The wife tells him of

the visit of a friend of Aunt "Bheemee," and all sit down to the evening meal. The woman without waits a certain time, then creeps close up to the house and listens. All is quiet within—a silence of the grave. She peers through the window, and therein perceives the reason for the stillness; father, mother, daughter, all are prone upon the ground in complete unconsciousness! This ill-omened creature then swiftly glides into the house, most industriously relieves house and occupants of everything portable and of any value, and makes off.

This is no apocryphal crime that I have thus described, for such a case did actually happen, the miscreant being an old woman of seventy. The official report says—"Three similar instances were proved against her. She was recognized by the inmates of the house, who, fortunately, had recovered, and on conviction she was, in consideration of her advanced years, sentenced to ten years' imprisonment with labour suited to her sex and age. The wicked old woman pleaded poverty, and offered to the assistant at Lucknow, Captain T. H. Chamberlain, to become a Christian if spared the pain and disgrace of a trial!"

One of the greatest poisoners known to the criminal annals of India was one named Shurrufoodeen, whose remarkable career was made known by a woman named Zoohoorun, with whom he lived. He engaged in all forms of poisoning, including the "marriage agent" trick. Zoohoorun,

who described herself as a Rajpootni residing in Behár, when quite young was married to a man of her own caste named Lálljee, living at Bhaugulpore. They together went to Lucknow, and resided there for ten or twelve years, her husband in the capacity of a household Sepoy. On the suppression of the Mutiny they removed to Báns-Bareilly, in Rohilkund, where the man continued to serve as a private Sepoy for a further period of three or four years. He then gave up that employment, and, becoming implicated in some case of theft, he was sent to prison for a year. Both he and his wife had become Mahomedans; the woman thereupon took the name of Zoohoorun, and her husband that of Báboo Khan.

The man Shurrufoodeen happened to be also a prisoner in the same jail, and a friendship sprang up between him and her husband. On their liberation Shurrufoodeen was adopted by her husband as his son, and they all lived together. What the two men then did together was declared by the woman to be unknown to her; but her husband again got imprisoned about five years after at Meerut, whereupon the woman went and resided at Allyghur, and, on the persuasion of Shurrufoodeen, she went with him a year subsequently to Agra for two or three months. They then together came to Umbálah, and resided there for three months at the shop of a native butcher, or kussáb. The two subsequently went to Jullundhur (while yet her husband was in prison), where they stayed

for three or four months more, that is, two months at the serai, or public inn, and for a month at the place of one Sheik Suffoollah. Her two now grown-up daughters were with her.

After this Shurrufoodeen took them to his own house at Kántha, in Hoshyarpore, with the usual results. The mother for this fell out with him, and thereupon informed the police that he was in the habit of "killing people by giving them dhatura and other drugs, and appropriating what was upon their persons," and that on one such occasion when she and Shurrufoodeen had come to Jullundhur, he went up to Lahore, by whom accompanied she did not know, and returned eight days subsequently with a sum of 230 rupees, and told his nephew, Peeroo, that he had acquired that money by drugging a traveller somewhere between Umritsir and Lahore. She had also learnt from Peeroo that Shurrufoodeen had on two previous occasions poisoned people near Meerut, and again, "now only about fifteen days since, another man at a place eight *kós* beyond Delhi.

"The victim on this latter occasion was a Ját, and the things obtained from him were sixteen yards of the stuff from which *théngas* are made (an article of apparel worn by women), seven yards of "markeen" and a skull-cap. The Ját died. The persons in the habit of accompanying Shurrufoodeen on these expeditions were Kirpa and Fucqueera, both 'Dheemurs,' or persons of the fisherman caste, and his nephew Peeroo aforesaid,

Some dhatura seed powder, found in her bundle, she had got from Rewkee, the mother of Shurrufoodeen, to whom he had entrusted it, and, on her accompanying him to some marriage ceremony, she, Rewkee, had handed it over to her eldest son. Zoohoorun had taken it away from the latter unknown to him, and had passed it over to one Hakim Khán, the elder brother of the *lumberdár*, or village headman—except that one Kurreem Bux had that very day appropriated some of it."

Innumerable cases of poisoning were proved against Shurrufoodeen, who was eventually brought to justice.

CHAPTER XIV

THE GREAT MILITARY PENSION FRAUDS

INDIA is fruitful of conspiracies, and the official archives of the Criminal Courts contain some remarkable instances of the native capacity for subtle dealing and long-continued dissimulation. In a previous work I have described how an elaborate system of forgery of Government documents, extending over a period of about twenty years, was at length brought to light; I now propose to describe a conspiracy of fraud, which, in daring and duration of success, lacked little in comparison with that already referred to. For the particulars I am indebted to Mr. Arthur Crawford, who was at the time of which I write—about forty years ago—the Police Officer of the district in which the events about to be related took place.

In those days, then, the South Konkan, including the two districts of Kolaba and Rutnagherry, was the favourite recruiting ground of the Bombay Army. The ranks were filled with sturdy Mahrattas, descendants of Sivaji's invincible "Hedkaris," inhabiting the spurs and valleys below the great Syhadri range of mountains. Nearly in the centre of the South Konkan, about six miles from

the seaboard, was the old cantonment of Dapoolie, which was made the headquarters of the Pension Pay Department. It was the duty of this department to pay pensions to retired native soldiers, who were mostly settled in the neighbourhood. The Paymaster, who had a strong establishment of clerks, resided at Dapoolie, where he made such payments every quarter. He was also supposed to visit, for the same purpose, the principal towns accessible from the seaboard, twice every season. At the time of which I write this system had been in force for nearly twenty years under the same paymaster.

It should be explained, for the better understanding of what follows, that the method of paying pensions to those native ex-military men who had deserved well of the "Sirkar" (Government) was as follows:—The pension was supposed to be paid to the pensioner personally on his attending in person at the pay-office, bringing with him what was known as his "pension roll," a document which contained full particulars of his career, his person, and, of course, the amount of his pension. The official whose duty it was to pay over the money was required to first peruse this document, and satisfy himself that the individual attending to receive payment was actually the person described in the "roll," and to pledge the bearer to this fact by a series of categorical questions before paying out the pension.

It came to the knowledge of the authorities, in

a somewhat fugitive manner, that one or two isolated cases of personation had occurred, but these whispered occurrences were not regarded as important enough to warrant further inquiries. In a general sense the working of the Pension Pay Department appeared to be quite satisfactory. The cantonment was in charge of the Bazaar-master, an old European officer. It so happened, however, that a rather astute European official was entrusted with the position of Assistant Collector and Magistrate of the northern sub-districts in which Dapoolie was situated. This official was a man of considerable energy, possessed a good knowledge of Mahratti, which he wrote, read, and spoke like a native, and was quite independent of his native secretary and clerks. He mixed a good deal with the native pensioners of the district, whom he would accost and question about their affairs generally. Invariably he received some such reply as, "It is a good and kind Sirkar. Our pensions are liberal, and we should be content, but the sowkar (money-lender) eats us up, and the Sirkar is blind and helpless."

Whether or not it was that this repeated reference to the sowkar—a perfect curse to the natives of India—aroused the suspicions of the Assistant Collector cannot be determined, but that he became suspicious subsequent events proved. One day he received among his letters an anonymous petition to the effect that a pensioned Jemadar had died seven years ago, and that his pension

was still being drawn by the headman of the village. This petition, in accordance with established custom, was forwarded to the pension paymaster of Dapoolie. Eventually the Assistant Collector, Mr. Colt, who had been making secret investigations on his own account, made an application for police assistance, as he had discovered some serious defects in the pension pay system. Later he made a further request that a dozen police should be dispatched to Hurnee, a port situated about six miles from Dapoolie, and placed under his orders.

Colt had, in fact, unearthed a huge conspiracy which had existed for a considerable time in connection with the Pension Pay Department. Not only had the pensions of long-deceased pensioners been regularly drawn since their demise, but there was clearly a conspiracy existing between the sowkars, or money-lenders, on the one hand, and the native pay-clerks, on the other, by means of which pensioned sepoys, and the families of sepoys who had perished in the service of the Government, were being systematically robbed. It appeared that the descriptive rolls, without which no pensioner could draw his pay, had been pledged with the sowkars, who had employed "dummies" to draw the pensions due on the rolls in their possession, keeping the bulk of the money themselves, and doling out paltry pittances to their victims, sufficient only to keep body and soul together.

Colt had already taken the initiative upon his own responsibility, and arrested two of the dummies, while the rolls and full pensions were still upon their persons. This energetic officer had also seized all the account-books for the last two years of the leading money-lenders for three miles round, in which he discovered abundant corroborative evidence. The arrested dummies were taken to Hurnee, where they made a full confession, furnishing Mr. Colt with far more information than he had otherwise yet been able to obtain, and disclosing the ramifications of an extensive plot. For these personators Mr. Colt asked a free pardon. Strong representations were made to the Secret Department, the secretary of which was Sir Henry Anderson, to convene a Court of Inquiry, and suspend the Pay Establishment, the pensioners in the meantime to be paid by civil agency.

Weeks passed, during which Mr. Colt busied himself in collecting and arranging evidence, while the impeached native clerks endeavoured to construct some form of defence by sending scurrilous petitions, anonymous and otherwise, to the Government. At length a "General Order" was issued appointing a Court of Inquiry to be held at Dapoolie to investigate the matters officially communicated to the Government; the personators to be granted a free pardon. Some delay occurred before the Court could be convened, inasmuch as the three officers appointed to con-

stitute the Court were, one at Belgaum, another at Guzerat, and the third at Ahmednugger.

In the meantime Mr. Colt pursued his inquiries with unceasing ardour, endeavouring at every step to strengthen his case ere the time for the official hearing arrived. He questioned all and sundry whom he thought could afford him any assistance or impart to him any additional information.

Thus he sedulously, though discreetly, "pumped" a Parsee shopkeeper, and a retired European Conductor of the Ordnance Department, named Daniel Monk. This Daniel Monk was a "character." For some years he had been settled in a small village not far from Dapoolie, where he had leased a few acres of rough land and, more as a hobby than for profit, gone in for coffee-growing. He led a life of comparative seclusion with an old Mahomedan, who had been in his service for a quarter of a century. One would like to learn the whole of the life-story of this interesting old fellow, but it seems that nobody could obtain full particulars from him, so close was he.

It was known pretty well that in earlier days he had had trouble of a domestic kind, which had driven him to adopt such a secluded life. One's curiosity is poignantly piqued by the suggestive picture of this sturdy veteran, located in that quaint old place, so far removed from his native soil, companioned only by that devoted Eastern

adherent, passing the evening of his days in the quietude of his modest coffee plantation. He rarely left the village, and set foot outside his own garden only twice a year, when it was necessary that he should obtain a life certificate in order that he might draw his small annuity. A native of the West, he led that life of simple austerity so reverenced by the natives of the East. He was, indeed, much respected and visited by the natives, who seemed to look upon him with almost superstitious regard. Having acquired sufficient Mahratti to enable him to read native newspapers, he took an interest in all native matters which in any way interest Europeans. He was known to be a peacemaker, and many a petty and foolish quarrel had been referred to him, and satisfactorily adjusted by this simple and respected Solomon. He was a fine old fellow, between sixty and seventy, standing over six feet, straight as a dart, being usually clad in a loose striped cotton blouse, pyjamas, native sandals, the latter being the only article he wore on his feet. He might have been seen from the road either sitting in the verandah of his hut, or pottering about among his coffee-trees.

He played an important part in the subsequent inquiry made into the military pension frauds, inasmuch as he was well acquainted with many of the pensioners, whom his servant, who had the greatest love and regard for him, used occasionally to bring to him.

The other person referred to, the Parsee shopkeeper, was named Fulloo, and he was the son of an old Parsee shopkeeper who used to supply the European officers and rich native pensioners of Dapoolie with "Europe stores" and British brandies. Fulloo was a young man of about twenty-five, intelligent and energetic, and proved an invaluable witness, inasmuch as he had himself indirectly suffered from the usury of the sowkars, as the duped ones were unable to pay his, Fulloo's, bills, nor would the money-lenders allow the latter's claims. Thus Fulloo liked neither the sowkars nor the native pay-clerks, who were in the conspiracy.

I have already described the method of paying the pensions. I may, however, add that the "descriptive rolls" were made out in the first instance at the time when a person was admitted to pension, and based upon a careful examination. The rolls were kept in tin boxes, and when an application for payment was made it was the duty of the Pension Paymaster to keep the roll in his possession at least a day, and carefully compare it with the register kept for that purpose. When the payment was made the amount and the date of payment were inscribed on the back of the roll, the latter then being returned to the pensioner. It was strictly enjoined that no pensioner, under any circumstances whatsoever, should transfer, sell, mortgage, or in any way part with the roll, which, upon the death of the pensioner, should be

returned by the village officers to the Pension Pay Office with a report of the death.

Supposing all the conditions were faithfully carried out, no system could be simpler or more effective than this to prevent fraud. The key-stone of security was to be found in the person of the Paymaster; in the absence of that the system fell to pieces. This is actually what happened, and we shall now proceed to explain how this came about.

CHAPTER XV

MILITARY PENSION FRAUDS (*continued*)

In time the system of comparing the pensioner with his descriptive roll became somewhat tedious and troublesome to the Paymaster, and so a slackness gradually crept in, the ceremony became perfunctory—a mere matter of form. Thus at length it became the practice to compare only a percentage of the certificates with the holders thereof, which in its turn gradually diminished until it became the custom to accept all the certificates for granted.

This state of things was taken advantage of by the usurious sowkars, who were thus enabled to get the pensioners, mostly ignorant and improvident, into their clutches. The fact that a pension could not be drawn until the roll was produced was turned to account by the sowkar for the purpose of still further involving the pensioner in difficulties. The roll having been already pledged with the money-lender, the latter would not deliver it up until he had got a fresh bond out of the pensioner. Then the money-lender would accompany the pensioner to the Pay Office, invariably armed with a decree of attachment, and would

wait outside until the pension was drawn, when both money and roll would be handed to him by the pensioner, the latter receiving in return but a paltry sum for himself.

In time the money-lenders refused even to allow the rolls out of their hands at all, appointing dummies to take the place of the pensioners. This was done with the connivance of the pay-clerks, who sometimes had shares in the loans. The rolls would be handed to them privately by the money-lenders, and on the appointed day the dummies would present themselves, and being called upon, would answer to the names contained in the certificates. Under these circumstances, it will be seen, it was not difficult to personate a dead pensioner, a temptation which could not be resisted by the money-lenders, and which was connived at by the clerks.

Having discovered all this Mr. Colt set himself to catching some of the dummies *in flagrante delicto*, and for this purpose he installed himself, in company with a medical friend, in a bungalow at Dapoolie, which was separated from the office and residence of the Paymaster by a public road. The house was admirably adapted for the purpose of watching, for it faced the parade ground, and at the back ran a brook, whose rocky bank enabled persons with information to impart to gain access to the house without being seen by the pensioners and usurers assembled or the clerks. In the quarter-guard, situated on the parade ground,

about a hundred yards from the bungalow, the treasure needed to pay the pensions was kept.

It was the custom for the clerks to convey the money in bags from the quarter-guard every morning to the office, returning with the balance in hand in the evening. In this task was employed the principal dummy, a man named Tannak, and in time Fulloo was able to inform Mr. Colt that this man was about to draw certain large pensions.

One evening Fulloo rushed into the bungalow with the information that Tannak had drawn three pensions, that another dummy had drawn others, and that both had probably got the cash and rolls upon them. Thereupon Mr. Colt issued instructions to his police, whom he ensconced behind the garden hedge, just as the little procession of clerks and pensioners emerged from the Pay Office, with Tannak at the head of it, carrying a bag of money, another pensioner carrying a second bag, with the treasurer, a clerk, and a peon bringing up the rear. Waiting until all had got inside the quarter-guard, Colt and the doctor swooped down upon them, slipped inside in their wake, and closed the door behind them.

Then said Colt, "Tannak, I take you prisoner! You have just drawn the pensions of Subadar-Major Ramnàk, Jemadar Babaji, and Rowji Naique, and you have the money and the descriptive rolls in your waist-cloth!" Tannak, in abject terror, produced the articles named, at the same time remarking, "The sowkars and the clerks

have taught me." The same was done with the other dummy, who had two pensions and rolls on his person. The men were then given into the custody of the police, and taken to the lock-up at Hurnee.

Mr. Colt next visited five or six usurers' houses in adjoining villages, securing their account-books, which he took to Hurnee for a minute examination.

When the two dummies were accepted as approvers they were, of course, set at liberty. Subsequently three other pensioners were also accepted as approvers. Tannak, whom it was a pity to see in such a position, was the son of an old Subadar-Major, distinguished for bravery at the battle of Koregaum, and who, in his old age, settled down upon his pension at Dapoolie. He built himself a house, and acquired the occupancy rights of a piece of land. His son, Tannak, he brought up to the Army, and he was duly drilled, up to the age of sixteen, in the "juvenile squad," and upon his father's death he inherited the family acres. Becoming involved with usurers, his possessions soon disappeared, and in time he found himself firmly in the hands of the Philistines.

Tannak was a fine-looking fellow, well set-up and preserved, a total abstainer, very intelligent and trustworthy. Thus he was selected by the usurers and clerks for special work, and he was rather proud that he was invariably chosen to impersonate pensioners of high rank. To such

lengths had this fraud extended that Tannak had drawn as many as five different pensions in one day, making alterations in his dress and manner each time, so that the Paymaster sahib might not recognize him. He was much amused when he described how he called "Hazzur" ("Present") when the different names were mentioned to which he was to answer. He was always very keen on obtaining his commission from the usurers, and would not part with either pension or roll until he had received it. He also tried to get better terms for the pensioners, and upon occasion threatened to inform against his employers if his demands were not acceded to. He was a consummate actor, rendered invaluable service to the authorities when the inquiry was held into the frauds, and subsequently became a private detective—he was employed as such by Mr. Crawford—in which capacity he proved himself to be an adept.

In due course the Court sat to inquire into the frauds, the Paymaster having a very uncomfortable time of it. He was asked how he came to reconcile it with his duty to sign at the foot of the quarterly list of payments, "I hereby certify on my honour that at the time of payment I duly compared each pensioner with his descriptive roll," and the old gentleman replied that he merely regarded it as a matter of form; insisting that it was impossible that he could be deceived, and that he could instantly detect a personator. Now this was put to the test in a rather effective manner.



CONVICT MUNSHI AND CONVICT CLERK.

Tannak was quietly instructed to appear suddenly, which he did, made a military salute, and exclaimed, "Sahib! Meri urzee hai." ("I have a petition to make.")

"Major, look at that man," said the *President*, "is he a pensioner?"

"Certainly he is," replied the Major. "I am quite familiar with his appearance."

"Doubtless you are," remarked the President. "This man is Tannak, who has often personated pensioners, and drawn four and five pensions in a single day."

At this the Paymaster collapsed.

The impeached clerks used every effort to discredit the prosecutor, Mr. Colt, whom they said they intended to proceed against for suborning evidence. The Court, however, did not pay much attention to this threat, the President, at the conclusion of the hearing, announcing that it would take ten days to prepare the report for headquarters, during which period they would be prepared to receive any further information that might be forthcoming. On the tenth day, they further stated, the doors would be closed, and the prosecutor, Mr. Colt, would leave the neighbourhood on urgent business. Upon this last announcement being made, Mr. Colt thought he observed certain suspicious glances among the clerks, and determined to be on his guard. As events turned out, his observation and forethought were not thrown away.

He arranged to depart on the eleventh day, and on the evening of the tenth, while walking down the bazaar, he encountered one of the small sowkars who had been mentioned only casually during the inquiry. He was walking jauntily along, but upon catching sight of Mr. Colt, he became visibly disconcerted. This rather puzzled Colt, who could not make out what it meant, and thought about it for a good while, but before retiring for the night in his deserted bungalow dismissed it from his mind. Early in the morning he was aroused by the voice of Fulloo at his elbow, exclaiming, "Sahib! Sahib! get up. The clerks have some 'daga' (treachery) afoot; they've had a meeting with Dewchund." Dewchund was the man who, the previous evening, had become disconcerted at the appearance of Mr. Colt.

The observant and astute Colt now felt certain that some mischief was intended towards himself, so decided to practise a ruse. Having finished "chota hazri" (early breakfast), and sent his kit on ahead, he cantered round the "maidan," taking a cordial and conspicuous farewell of the members of the Court, and set off ostensibly upon his march.

But having travelled four or five miles he turned back, and making his way round by a nullah, he gained the back of his house unseen, stabled his "tat," and then set himself to watch the entrance to the Court's office from a clump of bushes. At length, observing a procession of clerks make its way into the Court, he hastily slipped in himself

through a side door, and was in time to hear himself seriously impeached by the clerks. They had got up a case against him of manufacturing evidence, and produced the man Dewchund to support their story. They had designed to bring the charge against him in his absence, and his sudden and unexpected appearance in Court caused consternation amongst the conspirators, and not a little surprise amongst the officials themselves. Dewchund produced a book, in which were certain entries, to support the case, and when Colt had examined it he turned to the President and said—

"I demand that this book be impounded, and I take Dewchund into custody. The book has been tampered with! The leaves containing the entries have been interpolated."

"Take care, sir," said the President, "this is a most serious accusation you make, and it should be substantiated at once."

"Let these miserable men," said Colt,—"look at them, gentlemen!—let them nominate a member of a punchayet, or jury, let the Court nominate another, and myself a third, and I agree to abide by their award."

This was done, and Colt's accusation proved to be justified. The clerks sneaked out of court, and Colt took possession of Dewchund, who was duly punished.

The result of the inquiry was that the whole staff of the Pension Pay Establishment, from the Paymaster down to the peons, were dismissed.

Curiously enough, in the then condition of the criminal law, none of them could be prosecuted.

For the part he played in the affair, Mr. Colt received the high commendations of the Secretary of State, and all were agreed that he well merited them.

CHAPTER XVI

SARDAR MIR ABDUL ALI, KHAN BAHADUR

BEFORE presenting to the reader in detail some of the most notorious criminal cases associated with the name and career of India's most prominent detective, Sardar Mir Abdul Ali, Chief of the Bombay Police, it will not be out of place or uninteresting to give a brief sketch of the person and career of the great Oriental detective himself.

Mir Abdul Ali, then, is the son of Mir Akbar Ali, who for fifty years faithfully served the Government in a similar capacity, achieving great distinction therein. Detective work was a matter of instinct with him, as, indeed, it was subsequently with his son, who succeeded him. The respective careers of these two world-famous detectives would in themselves furnish two very interesting volumes.

Mir Akbar Ali was descended from an ancient and illustrious house of Syads, who, being persecuted by the Abbasaide Caliphs of Bagdad, sought sanctuary in India. This animosity between the descendants of Ali and the intolerant Caliphs of

Bagdad is familiar to every student of Arabian history. In consequence of these persecutions the founder of the family, Syad Muhammad Jafari-ul-Huseni-ul-Madani, removed from Arabia to India, and settled there. He was a very learned man, distinguished for his piety and benevolence, and upon his arrival in India was vouchsafed not only his personal safety, but was also made the recipient of great honours by the Mahomedan ruler who then held sway over India. He was granted an Inam for the maintenance of the dignity of his family, and his descendant, Sardar Abdul Ali, the subject of the ensuing sketch, is the recognized holder of that Inam in the village of Manchar, in the Khed Taluka of the Poona District. He is the thirty-sixth descendant from Hazrat Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet of Islam.

So much for ancestry. It will be seen that the present head of the Criminal Investigation Department of Bombay became a detective by heredity, the mantle of his father having fallen upon his capable shoulders. He was born in August 1840, and at an early age showed signs of that ability which subsequently was to win for him so distinguished a position in the world of crime detection. He was given a good education, became proficient in Oriental languages, also acquiring a sound knowledge of English. In 1865 he successfully passed the Matriculation Examination of the Bombay University, being among the

first batch of Mahomedan students to so distinguish themselves. On the 15th of December of that year he joined the police, and is supposed to be the only member of the force who is matriculated.

It was not long before the young detective got a chance of showing the kind of metal he was made of, for he captured the notorious swindler Karsonds Purshotamdas Bhansalee, who was transported for seven years. This was in 1866, while he was still pursuing his studies at the Bombay University. The criminal in question had stolen the silver cup which was to be competed for by the members of the Byculla Club, and buried it in the ground, where the young detective found it, after a vigilant and painstaking search, only twelve hours before it was to be contested for.

He next apprehended a Hindu forger, who had palmed off on to the public a large number of spurious currency notes. For services rendered in connection with another forgery case the detective was awarded Rs. 1,000, that sum being his individual share of the reward of Rs. 10,000 offered by Government for the capture of the criminal.

From the post of Jemadar, Mir Abdul Ali rose to that of Subadar, and in 1868 Sir Joseph Arnold, a judge of the Second Criminal Sessions of the High Court, struck by the astuteness displayed

by Mir Abdul in a case tried before his lordship, wrote a letter, through Mr. John Marriott, the then Clerk of the Court, to Mr. Nana Moroji, the then Third Presidency Magistrate, in which he complimented Mir Abdul Ali, and requested the Magistrate to reward his services by presenting him with Rs. 80.

In 1872, in commenting on the services rendered by Inspector Abdul Ali in connection with the capture of a notorious outlaw—particulars of which will be given in a subsequent chapter—Sir Frank Souter, the Commissioner, recommended him for the title of Khan Bahadur. "Government are, I believe, aware," wrote Sir Frank Souter, "that Inspector Abdul Ali is the son of Khan Bahadur Mir Akbar Ali, the famous detective officer, who has now served in the Police Department with so much credit and distinction for upwards of forty years. The son has fully inherited his father's intelligence, and his usefulness has been enhanced by a good English education, and by his having acquired an excellent knowledge of criminal law. As Khan Bahadur Mir Akbar Ali must from infirmity now soon retire from the service of Government, I would venture strongly to recommend that the valuable and faithful services of Inspector Mir Abdul Ali, in whom I place the greatest trust, be marked by the Government conferring upon him the title of Khan Bahadur."

This recommendation the Government of Bombay endorsed and passed on to the Government of India, and in 1873 the title was accordingly conferred upon Mir Abdul Ali.

In connection with a notorious poisoning case, the judge testified to the Sardar's knowledge of English in the following words—"Mir Abdul Ali gave his evidence, as he always does, in English, with remarkable precision and a thorough knowledge of our idioms."

For services rendered to Colonel Weldon, of Madras, in connection with a great note forgery case, a Government resolution was issued from Fort Saint George, Madras, dated 20th March, 1873, conveying the thanks of the Government, and authorizing a reward of Rs. 100 to Mir Abdul Ali. In the same year the Sardar was the means of rescuing a Circassian girl from those who had designed to sell her as a slave to a Hyderabad Nabob. The beauty of this girl, and the romance revolving round her, were the main topics of conversation in European and native societies. Another service rendered the State by the Sardar was the direction of the detective work in connection with the removal of the Maharaja Malharrao Gaekwar of Baroda, full details of which will be given in a subsequent chapter, where the ruler was the source of serious disaffection. He was charged with attempting to poison Colonel Phayre, the British Resident at Baroda. In spite

of the fact that abundant opportunities existed for accepting bribes—"Lakhs of rupees were available as bribes at the most critical moment of the whole inquiry," said Sir Frank Souter—the detectives all proved "true to their salt." Large sums of money were being diverted from the State of Baroda in the service of the Gaekwar, but of this secret service money the Sardar contrived to save to the State the vast sum of forty lakhs of rupees.

For these invaluable services Sir Richard Meade, the Resident of Baroda, brought the Sardar's name before the Government, who granted him an annuity of Rs. 400 for his life, with a moiety continuable to his next heir. In addition to this he received Rs. 3,500 in cash, and a gold bracelet, which were presented to him in the open Darbar by His Excellency Sir Philip Wodehouse, the then Governor of Bombay, at the Government House, Parel.

In 1876 the Sardar rendered invaluable service in connection with a curious case known as the "forest frauds," the frauds having been perpetrated on Government by contractors, who had stolen timber, which they had cut down without permission or authority. In his report to the Commissioner of the Northern Division, the then Collector of Colaba, Mr. Arthur Crawford—the same gentleman previously mentioned in connection with the military pension frauds—said—

"By this time also I was assured that the contractors could have closed their own accounts with their salesmen or brokers in Bombay, to whom the wood was consigned; accordingly I proceeded to Bombay, and placed myself in communication with Mr. Edgington, Acting Commissioner of Police, and Khan Bahadur Mir Abdul Ali, the well-known detective. With their assistance and the zealous aid of my first informant the names of the brokers of the different contractors were ascertained, and the persons made little difficulty in placing their books at my disposal. Soon, however, I received information from the Khan Bahadur that a criminal named Hanmanta was the chief member of a large gang—and of several gangs of Ghattis organized in Bombay—to take contracts in the Konkan, and under cover of them to rob the forests, and that the different gangs or firms were known in Bombay, much as the old Bunder gangs were, as 'Harri Bhow's Toli,' or the 'Bori Bunder Toli,' and so forth. The gangs had, as their ostensible business in Bombay, porterage contracts on the different wharves, and the partners in the porterage business were usually all partners in the wood trade, though many members might not be working in the forest at all. At this moment I took into my confidence Mr. Framjee Cursetjee (now Khan Sahib), the newly-appointed Chief Constable of Alibag, and with the assistance of Khan Bahadur Mir Abdul Ali in Bombay

the general inquiry into the forest frauds continued. I retained, however, all the threads of inquiry in my own hands.

"The Khan Bahadur in Bombay speedily unearthed the false books just finished by Hanmanta's karkoons in Bombay, and a village in the Poona Zillah. Further information enabled the police to find deposited, in various places of safety, by members of Hanmanta's gang, the real or genuine books of the firm of Saccaram Santojee, both the rough set kept in the Roha forests, and those kept by the firm in Bombay, which, item by item, tallied with the broker's books. The Bombay police further discovered several bundles of correspondence, a list of the partners of this firm, and a letter sent from Alibag when Hanmanta was on trial before me, giving a complete code of instructions as to the preparation of the false set of books; all these papers, and the books themselves, coupled with the false reports of the forest officials, showed that from Appa downwards all had been aiding and abetting in the frauds, and receiving gratifications as rewards for their connivance."

The services rendered to Government by the Sardar were various and numerous, and were invariably rewarded with substantial grants of money. Nothing could surpass the vigilance of the famous Bombay detective, who had earned the title of the "Sherlock Holmes of India," and

his eyes may be said to have been everywhere almost simultaneously—a veritable police Argus. Sometimes his astuteness and perspicuity were instrumental in preventing very serious widespread mischief. For instance, in the year 1880 a Bohra priest named Sharaf Ali published in Bombay an Arabic book, dedicated to the chief Mulla of that community, couched in language calculated to give offence to the Mahomedan population generally, particularly to the Sunnis. The Sardar took prompt steps, suppressed the book, and so avoided serious mischief.

In 1888, after innumerable financial rewards and minor distinctions had been conferred upon Mir Abdul Ali, Sir Frank Souter recommended him for a title of the First Class Sardar of the Deccan. In doing so the Commissioner made reference to a notorious murder case, in which the detective had displayed his accustomed skill, in the following words—"I have deemed it my duty to bring this particular case of murder to the notice of Government as being one committed under circumstances of singular atrocity and planned with extraordinary precaution, such as was calculated to baffle the best detective ability. For some time the bringing to light of this case seemed almost hopeless, but the Khan Bahadur never relaxed his efforts, and it is to his extraordinary perseverance and policeman-like skill that so very satisfactory a result has been brought about. In

laying bare the details of a most difficult case of heinous crime of this kind, and bringing the offender to justice, not only are the public inspired with confidence, but a salutary deterrent effect is produced on the minds of the evil-disposed, the value of which is incalculable. The very valuable services which Khan Bahadur Mir Abdul Ali has from time to time rendered are well known to Government."

Eventually the title of Sardar was conferred upon Mir Abdul Ali by the Government, the title being contained in a document worded as follows—"To MIR ABDUL ALI, Khan Bahadur, Superintendent of the Bombay City Police. I hereby confer upon you the title of Sardar as a personal distinction.—(Signed) LANSDOWNE, Viceroy and Governor-General of India. Simla, the 30th May, 1891." It was inscribed on vellum, surmounted at the top by the Royal Coat of Arms, the seal of the Governor-General of India being affixed at the end. As the Sanad was handed to the Sardar by the Commissioner, the latter wished him long life to enjoy the honour, and remarked that the document would doubtless become a precious heirloom in the Sardar's family for many generations to come.

It may be mentioned that the Sardar, early in his career, came to London and studied for the Bar, although he eventually answered a "call" of a different character; that he is a Mason, and Past

Worshipful Master of Lodge Islam, of which he was one of the founders.

I have thus far dwelt upon the career of the famous Bombay detective, inasmuch as he has had so lengthy an experience in dealing with the Indian criminal. I will now proceed to give in detail a few of the more notorious cases in which the Sardar has distinguished himself.

CHAPTER XVII

THE IRON SAFE GANG

ONE of the most difficult crimes with which the police of India have to deal is that which is known here as the "confidence trick." Difficult, because it is perpetrated with such supreme subtlety and daring, at the same time placing the victim in a most undesirable and compromising position. It, in fact, takes the form of an elaborate and effective play upon human credulity and covetousness, which the possessor of is loath to make known to his fellows, however much he may have been victimized.

One of the most daring and adventurous of these bands of nomadic criminals was known as the "Iron Safe Gang," from the fact that an iron safe invariably played an important part in the perpetration of their frauds. This gang the Sardar eventually ran to earth and destroyed; their last two exploits, prior to the achievement of so desirable an end, I will now proceed to describe.

One afternoon, in the rainy season, a Bombay merchant sat in his office when there entered a man, who, by his dress, appeared to be a stranger

to the place. When asked to state the purpose of his visit, he, in a somewhat mysterious and reserved manner, said he had come upon very important business. He was thereupon asked by the merchant to be seated, and having settled himself in a chair he proceeded to relate the following story—

Some years ago a wealthy nobleman died, leaving valuable property to his sons, consisting mainly of jewellery and precious stones. This property, however, by some mysterious means, disappeared from the house, and could nowhere be traced. One of the sons was suspected of being implicated in the theft, but before any inquiry could be made concerning his guilt or innocence he was, with equal mystery, poisoned. In this state matters remained for some time, when he, the stranger, contrived to discover the hiding-place of the wealth. The secret of this find it was necessary for him to keep from the heirs, or, said he, the latter would take possession of the treasure, making but poor recompense to the finders for their services. The secret, he further explained, was also shared by a friend of his, and they had determined to dispose of the property for their own benefit, and they thought that he, the merchant, might be able to assist them to do so to the best advantage. If he would render them such a service they were prepared to pay him a liberal percentage, even so

much as fifty per cent., rather than they should lose the opportunity of realizing on the property.

Now the only misgiving which entered the mind of the merchant, while listening to this narrative, was the fact that the manner of its recital was scarcely in keeping with the illiterate, countrified Hindu appearance of his visitor. That this doubt, however, was not of a very formidable character was testified to by the subsequent behaviour of the merchant. Having considered a little he accepted the story as true, and proceeded to consider how best he could dispose of the property with the view to his own aggrandisement, even, possibly, to securing the whole of it for himself. In fact, the merchant had seized the bait, and the first card was, therefore, successfully played.

The merchant next asked his visitor how much the property was worth, but the latter declared he was unable to tell him this; he, however, proceeded to describe some of the property, which, he said, consisted of gold belts set with large, costly stones, knives with richly chased and jewelled sheaths, neck ornaments studded with diamonds and all kinds of the finest precious stones, and innumerable valuable rings.

The merchant then asked to see some of the articles, as, he explained, before he had seen at least some of the jewellery he could not see his way to entering into any arrangement. The visitor replied that he had not any with him, but that if

the merchant would come to the bungalow where he, the stranger, was staying he would show him some specimens of the jewellery. This the merchant agreed to do, and it was arranged that the stranger should call for the merchant later in the day.

Accordingly, at the hour appointed, a vehicle drove up, and carried the merchant away to a bungalow situated in the jungle near Parel. There the merchant was introduced to other Hindus, who, from their appearance and dress, seemed to have travelled from up-country. A box was produced, and from it were taken several pieces of fine antique jewellery, which the merchant examined, and seemed satisfied with. He then asked how much there was of this kind of property. One of the men replied that an iron safe, full of it, was hidden in the ground "up-country."

The merchant then directed them to bring the jewellery to the bungalow, when he had no doubt, he said, he could dispose of it for them to advantage. To this proposal, however, the others demurred, pleading a lack of funds necessary to carry out the scheme, their living in the bungalow having cost them so much, and depleted their exchequer. The merchant asked them how much they required for the purpose, and they replied Rs. 50, and this sum the merchant readily furnished them with. Thus it was arranged that

in four days the property should be securely deposited in the bungalow.

Accordingly, at the expiration of this time, the merchant, all agog with expectation, and now well within the snare, presented himself again at the bungalow at Parel. It was evening, and he noticed several low-caste natives, who had a very *jungli* appearance, hanging about the place. These, he was informed by one of the Hindus, were men who had assisted in bringing the safe hither by road, and that they had to return home, for which purpose another sum of Rs. 50 would be required. This the merchant rather reluctantly paid.

Having entered the bungalow, the merchant inquired where the safe was. The reply was that it was hidden in the ground in the jungle, as it would have been dangerous to have kept it exposed in the bungalow. It was thereupon arranged between them that the safe should be dug up one dark night and taken away on a bullock-cart, the merchant, eager to get possession of the supposed contents, suggesting the next night, as, he explained, the nights were then dark and moonless. The Hindus reluctantly agreed to this, at the same time declaring that, as they were allowing the merchant to take possession of the property, they should be given a sum of money by way of security. The merchant, with a very bad grace, asked them how much they desired him to pay, as

they had told him before they were unable to fix the value of the property. They replied that the treasure must at least be worth some lakhs of rupees, and that perhaps one lakh in advance—a lakh is Rs. 100,000, about £6,660 of English money—would be fair. This the merchant refused to give, finally agreeing, however, to pay Rs. 10,000 in advance, the balance to be paid in instalments as the property was disposed of. This arrangement the Hindus agreed to, and promised to have a bullock-cart ready the following night when the merchant arrived to take possession of the safe.

The next night, when the merchant arrived at the bungalow he found the place in total darkness, and was met at the door by one of the Hindus in question, who explained to him that they had taken the precaution of putting out all lights, so that their preparations for departure might not be witnessed by any possible passer-by, and so avoid arousing suspicion. The darkness, however, was designed to deceive him, the merchant, as to the true character of the preparations. He further stated that all was now ready, and that the cart was standing on the road yonder.

They were now joined by other men, some dressed as labourers, and armed with pick and spade, and all set off through the jungle, one carrying an unlighted lantern. It was not a pleasant walk, inasmuch as heavy rain had fallen

were accustomed to such travelling, and knew the path well. Not so the merchant, however, who, in his frantic efforts to keep up with his companions, had a most unhappy time, slipping over the clayey ground, splashing blindly into pools of water, colliding with tree-trunks, and tearing his hands and clothes with thorns. It was no small relief to him when at length they halted at a clearing, and the Hindu who took the lead in the affair ordered the lantern to be lit. Then they set to work digging, and after about half-an-hour's labour the men, puffing and blowing, raised out of the ground an old safe, all muddy and rusty.

The merchant examined the safe, satisfied himself that it was really what it was represented to be, so far as the exterior was concerned, and then asked for the bullock-cart. This, the Hindu said, was now coming along, and the next moment it was heard approaching, the driver of it making a great noise, shouting and cracking his whip. This alarmed the merchant, who directed the Hindu to caution the man to be quiet, or they would have people down upon them. This shouting was part of the plot, as was the darkening of the bungalow, for when the cart came to a standstill a man, a stranger to the merchant, made his appearance on

the scene, and demanded to know what the others were doing upon "his land at that time of night."

He appeared very angry, declared they were trespassing, and that he would have them all arrested. The Hindu thereupon apologized to the newcomer, saying he had been unaware that it was private property, and tried generally to pacify him. But at this the other appeared to become even more enraged than before, stamping about and launching formidable threats at the "trespassers." The Hindu then whispered the merchant, asking him whether he, the Hindu, had not better offer the man a sum of money to secure his silence, and the merchant, in terror, agreed to abide by any terms which could be made to silence the man. The latter, upon learning that matters might be arranged with the aid of some rupees, became more conciliatory, at the same time exhibiting much curiosity concerning the contents of the safe. It was at length arranged to purchase the silence of the land proprietor for the sum of Rs. 5,000, which the luckless merchant paid with reluctance, though glad to be rid of the importunities of the enraged landowner, who then took his departure.

The safe was then placed upon the gharry, although the Hindu would not allow it to be taken away until the merchant had paid the sum agreed upon, namely, Rs. 10,000. But, said the merchant, he had already paid Rs. 5,000 to the land proprietor, but the Hindu would not take this into

consideration, and so the merchant had perforce to part with another Rs. 10,000.

He then drove away with the safe, but on reaching the outskirts of the jungle a policeman appeared, and demanded to know what he had in the safe. The merchant refused to enlighten the officer, who was dressed as a havildar, when the latter said something about a jewel robbery, and that he believed the stolen property was concealed in the safe, and that he should arrest the merchant on suspicion. At this juncture several sepoys also appeared. This so alarmed the merchant that he used his fists with such effect as to make good his escape, though leaving the "precious" safe behind. Thus he preferred to lose between Rs. 15,000 and Rs. 20,000 rather than face so odious a charge as that of robbery.

Almost needless to relate, havildar, sepoys, and "land proprietor" were all confederates. The safe contained nothing but bricks and mud. By thus waylaying the victim the conspirators hoped to secure further plunder, in the way of bribery, to let the merchant go free.

In this case the robbers were completely successful, but in a subsequent effort, when they endeavoured to victimize in a similar manner a Brahmin occupying a prominent position in Bombay, they came to grief. In this case—the story was told by the same wily old Hindu—it was the prime minister of a native chief who had died

and left the property. Similar proceedings were gone through as already described; the safe was buried in the jungle, the journey made to the spot, and the "land proprietor" appeared, wrathful and threatening. Then the Hindu proposed, as usual, to buy his silence, but the Brahmin proved to be made of tougher stuff than the previous victim, and replied, "I do not believe this man is proprietor of the land at all. He is some impudent junglewalla who is trying to impose upon us. I will show you as effectual a means of getting rid of him as consenting to pay him his blackmail." He then advanced upon the supposed landowner with upraised stick, with the intention of laying it about his shoulders, but the other turned on his heel and fled precipitately, shouting "police" as he went.

Immediately a couple of sepoys appeared on the scene and collared the Brahmin, who beat them mercilessly with his stick; then two more sepoys appeared and joined in the fray. The Brahmin, who was surprised to see sepoys arrive so promptly at such an out-of-the-way place, continued to make dexterous use of his weapon. Had he had an opportunity or the leisure to look closer at the sepoys he would have noticed defects in their clothing which would have enlightened him as to their *bona fides*, but he was too busy with his weapon to note details.

As a climax genuine police made their appear-

ance, under the direction of the Sardar himself, who, having got wind of the plot—one of the gang, having a grievance against the others, gave them away—had arranged to take them "red-handed," which is the only way to secure those who practise the confidence trick, and had planted himself and his men in the jungle for the purpose. All the swindlers were taken into custody, committed for trial to the Sessions, convicted, and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Thus was the "Iron Safe Gang" broken up.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOULVI LIAKAT ALI, MUTINEER—A ROMANCE OF THE MUTINY

ANOTHER case in which the Sardar distinguished himself, and received Government recognition, was that in connection with the capture of a notorious mutineer, who for many years had been sought for in vain. This was Moulvi Liakat Ali, a miscreant who had been an ally of the execrable Nana Sahib. But let us go back to the fateful and ever-to-be-remembered year of 1857, and trace the story in chronological order.

On the 6th of June, 1857, at nine o'clock in the evening, a rocket was seen to ascend from the direction of Popamaw, and another in answer to it from the cantonments of Allahabad. The light from these signals had scarcely died out from the heavens when a roll of musketry was heard, and the English residents of the town knew that native disaffection had broken out in their midst, and taken the terrible form of slaughter. The 6th Regiment of Native Infantry had, in fact, mutinied, shooting down the whole of their officers, fifteen in number, at their mess-house. This in spite of the fact that only a few hours previously

a letter from His Excellency Lord Canning, the then Viceroy of India, had been read out to them while on parade, thanking them for their loyalty, and to which they had responded by lustily cheering, and clamouring to be led against the rebels of Benares. Therefore they must have been goaded to so terrible a deed by some subtle traitor or another.

But this slaughter of the European officers was merely the prelude to infinitely worse deeds of bloodshed, for, with the green flag of the Prophet of Islam flying over the city of Kotwali, all the Europeans of the station were ruthlessly done to death. General Wheeler had sent a telegraphic warning from Cawnpore, and only those who had heeded this, and taken refuge in the fort, escaped the general massacre.

Moulvi Liakat Ali, a native of Mogaon, a veritable hotbed of disaffection, took possession of Allahabad. In those days this rebel was a handsome young fellow, of the caste of weavers, and was by profession a schoolmaster. By means of an ostentatious display of sanctity he had secured the following of the people of the village, who were only too eager to accept any leader, and the Mahomedan zamindars of Chail also acknowledged him as their head. With him they marched to Allahabad, where he was proclaimed governor of the district in the name of the King of Delhi. The rebels made their headquarters at Khooshro Bag, where they held their courts,



POLITICAL PRISONER, THE LATE MULVI ALA-UD-DIN.

securing the place with two nine-pounder guns, which the previous day had been sent by Colonel Simpson with a party of the 6th Native Infantry to Daragange, and which the rebels had obtained possession of. These weapons were placed inside the garden gates.

For a week the Moulvi, invested with full powers, reigned, during which murder, rapine, and incendiarism were the order of the day, even to the horror of the natives themselves. But this state of things was not destined to last long, for there was no unanimity among the rebels, no concerted action, the Moulvi heading the Mahomedans, the Pragwal Brahmins carrying with them the hinder population, and the soldiers fighting on their own.

Nemesis was soon upon their heels. On the 11th Colonel Neill arrived at Allahabad, taking charge of the Fort garrison, and on the 15th a grand attack was made by a force consisting of Fusiliers, Sikhs, and Irregulars of Kydgange and Moteegange, support also being rendered by a steamer which moved up the Jumna, and on board of which was a howitzer and some riflemen. The rebels were beaten at every point, our men pressing every inch of their advantages. The prospect of inevitable disaster so alarmed the Moulvi and his followers at Khooshro Bag that they fled from their camp, leaving behind their guns and some prisoners. Among the latter were two Englishmen named respectively Cheek and

Coleman, both of whom subsequently died of their wounds.

It was an unfortunate thing that the Moulvi should have escaped, and the British Government, realizing the constant menace to peace this man's freedom entailed, put forth every effort to effect his capture. Yet for fourteen years this notorious and sanguinary mutineer retained his liberty. He had disguised himself—the natives of India are remarkably skilful in disguise—as a respectable Mahomedan gentleman, and those with whom he came in contact had not the slightest notion that he was the much "wanted" Moulvi. He took every advantage of his immunity from detection to preach sedition wherever he went.

Two years prior to his miraculous arrest he was installed in the neighbourhood of the residence of the Nawab of Sachin, a few miles from Surat. Now the Nawab had had his suspicions aroused by the stranger's surreptitious ways, his constant comings and goings, and the secret meetings he was said to hold. These suspicions the Nawab conveyed to Mr. Hope (afterwards Sir Arthur Theodore Hope), the then Collector of Surat, who, upon instituting inquiries, found that the man had been living in the place for five years. He had been busy exciting disaffection among the natives, and appeared to have been acting on behalf of some party. When it was sought to arrest him, however, it was found that he had, with his customary celerity, made himself scarce.

Although it was shrewdly suspected he was the Moulvi, there was no evidence to prove it beyond a doubt. However, they issued a warrant for his arrest, and a diligent search was made for him. For some time this proved unavailing. The police frequently came upon traces of him, but he himself was always well ahead of them. He was known to have remained in hiding at Baroda for some time, and that in Bombay he had passed himself off as a pious devotee, in which capacity he had engaged in prayer for the birth of a son to the Ranee of Baroda. He was then known under the name of Abdul Kareem.

Now it so chanced that this pious devotee came under the notice of a man who was acquainted with the fact of a warrant having been issued for the arrest of the missing Moulvi, and he became suspicious of the pious one. These suspicions he conveyed to the Government of Bombay, the Governor-in-Council referring the matter to Mr. Edgington, the then Acting Commissioner of Police, Sir Frank Souter, the Commissioner, being away on leave.

Upon inquiries being instituted it was found there was insufficient evidence to warrant an arrest being made, so the police communicated with the Collector of Surat, instructing him to send along a man, armed with a warrant, who could identify the Moulvi. This was done, but still the authorities hesitated about arresting the man. At this juncture Sir Frank Souter returned to duty,

and upon the strength of orders received from Government directed that "Abdul Kareem" be at once arrested. This order came just in the nick of time, for the arrest was made by Mr. Edgington and the late Rao Bahadur Daji Gungaji Rane at the Byculla railway-station, where the devotee was about to entrain for Central India. But even now they still lacked evidence that he was Moulvi Liakat Ali, an accomplice of the notorious Nana Sahib of Bithoor. The Mahomedan gentleman with whom the devotee had been staying in Bombay, one Baker Ali, had no suspicion that he was harbouring the much "wanted" mutineer.

Upon the prisoner were found a number of seditious documents, which were placed in the hands of the Sardar, who, in conjunction with the Oriental Translator, was engaged for over a fortnight in translating the documents. The result of this task was to place beyond all doubt that the prisoner was in truth the Moulvi, upon whose head a heavy price had been set by the Government. The documents included a secret code, which was cleverly deciphered by the Sardar. It was made clear by the documents that the Moulvi had made future plans for a serious attempt to overthrow the British Raj in India.

The Moulvi had contrived to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the Mahomedans, who held him in high esteem. On the occasion of the marriage of his son a subscription was raised

among them in order that the ceremony might be held with that *éclat* which the fallen fortunes of the Moulvi would not permit of his doing himself.

The final decisive step in the identification of the notorious mutineer was when two natives of Allahabad, who had known the Moulvi during his temporary sway at Khooshro Bag, came to Bombay, and at once recognized him. He was then ordered to be sent to Allahabad for trial.

The news of his arrest spread, and all along the route to Allahabad crowds of people assembled at the different railway-stations to get a peep at the prisoner. At Jabalpur he was recognized by a European, who had good reasons for remembering him, for he had a narrow escape from death at his hands in 1857. At Allahabad station a large crowd had assembled, and upon the appearance of the arch-rebel he was greeted with hootings, hissings, and groanings. He was photographed, a process to which he seemed to be rather partial. He was still a handsome man, about fifty-five years of age, tall, and with a commanding aspect, wearing a short grey beard, whiskers, and moustache. Upon his arrival an inventory of his possessions was taken. In a bag were found Rs. 100, and among his belongings was a peculiar bamboo stick, with a brass ferrule at one end and a crystal knob at the other. At first it was thought that this was some form of weapon, but upon a closer examination it was found that the crystal unscrewed, that the stick

was hollow, and contained gold ingots to the value of Rs. 2,000.

He was brought up before Mr. C. J. Robertson, Magistrate of Allahabad, who committed him to the Sessions on a charge of complicity in the rebellion of 1857, having headed the mutineers, and waged war in the field against the troops of Her Majesty. The prisoner pleaded guilty, but in mitigation insisted that his crime was that of rebellion only, and that he had, in fact, saved the lives of several ladies and gentlemen at Allahabad. In one instance, he declared, he had protected a lady from the Nana's forces by dressing her in native clothes and passing her off as his sister, but these stories were believed to be inventions designed for the purpose of mitigating punishment. In fact, the whole of the version he gave as to the part he played in the rebellion was apparently adapted to meet the exigencies of his position.

All he did seemingly hostile to the British Government, he declared, he did out of fear for the Nana, whom he purposely misled about the arrival of British troops, with the result that he, the Nana, was completely routed by them. He had, he further asserted, protected both European lives and property. Having fled from Allahabad he joined Nana at Cawnpore, all of whose movements and intentions he endeavoured to thwart, at the risk of his own life. After the capture of Delhi he fled to Muttra, thence to Faracabad

and Lucknow. Subsequently he disguised himself as a fâkir, crossed Rewa and Manikpore with three or four other men, eventually taking refuge with the Nawab of Sachin, in the Bombay Presidency. After a time he left Sachin and went to Guadar, thence to Muscat, later returning to Sachin, where he remained with the Nawab till his arrest. He never returned to Allahabad, went once only to Bagdad, and never to Mecca.

Moulvi Liakat Ali was tried before Mr. A. R. Pollock, Sessions Judge, who denounced him as a cowardly rebel. He had, said his lordship, devoted himself to the rebel cause so long as the rebellion lasted, and it was only his cowardice which prevented him causing more mischief than he did. As to his assertions of innocence and efforts to mitigate the gravity of his crime, these were rendered worthless in face of the fact that he had been captured, not through any degree of submission on his own part, but by the police of Bombay, while living under a false name. He was then sentenced to transportation for life, being later on dispatched to Port Blair.

It was for the services he rendered in connection with this case that the Sardar was given the title of Khan Bahadur.

CHAPTER XIX

MURDER IN THE EAST

I NEXT propose to deal with two cases of murder, which were attended with a certain element of mystery, and which are typical of such crimes as committed in the East by the Indian criminal. Both were investigated personally by the Sardar, who was successful in dispelling the mystery surrounding them, and bringing the culprits to justice.

In June 1844 there resided at Ali Akbar Lane, Oomerkhadi, a Mogul merchant named Mahomed Safar Shoostri, and his young wife, Haji Bebee, who was about eighteen or nineteen years of age. The house was situated in the centre of a large compound, or garden, and surrounded by a wall over seven feet high, in which was one large gate. The house consisted of four rooms, the largest of which was used as a bedroom, and another as an office. We are particularly concerned with the 25th of June, that being the first day of a feast known as Ramazan. On the eve of this it is customary for Mahomedans to turn out into the street in large numbers, and upon the occasion in question there were a great

many people in the thoroughfare wherein the merchant lived. Shoostri arrived home about midnight, awoke his wife, partook of some food, and retired to bed at one in the morning, leaving a light burning. About one hour later a man entered the house, made his way to Shoostri's bedroom, extinguished the light, and cut away the mosquito curtains. The merchant's wife was aroused from sleep by feeling a hand touching her body, and she called upon her husband. The latter being aroused, a scuffle ensued between him and the stranger, whom Haji Bebee was unable to distinguish on account of the darkness in which the room was enveloped. She heard her husband fall and cry for assistance, and she herself cried out, "Thief! Thief!" The stranger then turned to her and made use of these cryptic words in Persian—"Father is burnt, *you also* raise cries." He had already stabbed Shoostri, and he now ran his knife into the heart of the young wife, at the same time exclaiming, "You also called out 'Thief! Thief!'"

Haji Bebee screamed, and the stranger made off. As he left the house he was seen by one Fateh Ali, the servant of a solicitor named Mirza Hoosein Khan, who lived next door, who had been aroused by the scream, and had gone into the street to inquire what it meant. A cook, sleeping in the room adjoining Shoostri's, was also aroused by the scream, and rushed into her master's room; other persons also entered the

house, and when a light was procured the merchant and his wife were seen lying bleeding on the floor. They were at once removed to hospital, where their dying depositions were taken down by the late Mr. Ryan, the then Second Presidency Magistrate. They both died the next day, within a few hours of each other.

As to who the miscreant was who committed so foul a crime for some time remained a mystery. The unfortunate victims were unable to furnish any clue. They were quiet and peaceable persons, and had no enemies as far as they knew, nor was any robbery committed. What, then, was the motive for the crime? The first hint of the truth to enter the mind of the Sardar was derived from the words spoken by the murderer. They were evidently words of expostulation and indignation at Haji Bebee raising an alarm—"You also called out 'Thief! Thief!'" and for which she was stabbed. This pointed to the fact that the murderer must have been acquainted with the woman. The words being in Persian, the man was evidently a Persian. It was ascertained that the gate in the wall surrounding the house was locked on the inside, so that the criminal must have climbed the wall and so gained access to the compound. A careful search of the victims' bedroom revealed the presence of a cloak and skull-cap, which were lying under a table, near the scene of the murder, and had evidently been left there by the culprit.

The Sardar next set himself to make inquiries of the dead woman's relations as to her acquaintances, and ultimately he discovered that a certain Mogul was much smitten with her charms, and was passionately in love with her. Search was then made for this lover. It was ascertained that early on the morning of the murder a certain Mogul had returned to the dharamsalla, near the Null Bazaar, with torn clothes, and minus a cloak and skull-cap which he had been wearing the previous night. This man's name was Haji Mirza Aga, and the Sardar succeeded in arresting him. Then the whole grim story came out.

Haji Bebee's brother identified the prisoner as a man who wanted to marry his sister, and stated that he was opposed to such a union. The prisoner used to visit at their mother's house, until he was prohibited from going there. The deceased woman's brother further explained that the prisoner then went on a pilgrimage to Kerbella, evidently still entertaining the hope that he would yet be able to secure the object of his affection. Upon his return, however, he discovered that this had been rendered impossible, for during his absence Haji Bebee had been married to Shoostri.

About two months prior to the murder the prisoner made the acquaintance of a Persian named Mahomed Tucki and his wife. The latter were in the habit of visiting the houses of several Persians to solicit alms, among them that of Haji

Bebee. One day the prisoner asked them whether they would take a message for him to Haji Bebee, worded thus— "Whether Haji Bebee, now that she is married, would recognize old friends." They, however, refused. Subsequently he asked Tucki to join him in robbing Shoostri's house, and to this Tucki agreed. He, however, never fulfilled his promise, which apparently had not been given in earnest, although he did, he confessed, assist the prisoner over the wall of Shoostri's house on the night of the murder. Prior to this, on the same night, he and the prisoner were standing near the mosque at Baboola Tank when Mahomed Hassam, Haji Bebee's brother, passed by, the prisoner pointing him out to Tucki. After the crime the accused buried the clothes he was wearing at the time, and borrowed others to replace them. These were subsequently found by the authorities.

The case was tried before Mr. Justice Hart and a special jury at the Fourth Criminal Sessions of the High Court. The prisoner at first confessed, then afterwards retracted his confession and pleaded not guilty. The evidence, however, was overwhelming, the crime, it was clear, having been committed out of jealousy. He was convicted and sentenced to death, and duly executed. He maintained his composure to the end, declaring he had perfect faith he was destined to meet the woman he loved in the next world, whither he had dispatched her. As he climbed the gallows

he quoted the following words from Saadi—"Lovers are the slain ones of their beloved; from the slain ones no voice proceeds." And those words were his last on earth.

The other case referred to occurred on the 18th of October, 1888, and resulted in the loss of three lives.

In a bungalow situated at Lady Jamsetji Road, near Dadar station of the B.B. and C.I. Railway Company, there lived a Parsee widow lady named Bai Rattanbai, her two sons, three daughters, and a grandson, about six years old, named Aspandiar. At one time the family had been well-to-do, but lately had become reduced in circumstances.

A few days prior to the 18th a young fellow about nineteen years old presented himself at the house and asked whether he might be allowed to enter their service. He stated that he had formerly been with a family named Wadia at Mazagon, in which locality he resided. They eventually agreed to employ him as domestic servant at a salary of Rs. 4 a month, and his hours of work were to be from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. He said his name was Chrishna Laximon, but he was called "Rama." Up to the 18th he did his work satisfactorily. On the morning of that day the widow's two sons and two of her daughters left the house to attend to their business, leaving the widow, a daughter named Banoobai, the child, Aspandiar, and the servant, "Rama," alone in the place.

In the afternoon a friend of the family called at the house, and was struck with the stillness pervading it. The front door was closed, and this she thrust open, and called her friends by name. To this summons there was no reply. She then made her way to the cook-house at the rear of the building, and was there horrified at beholding the widow and her grandchild lying dead in a pool of blood. She rushed out and raised an alarm, a policeman and two Parsees promptly arriving on the scene. A further search disclosed the corpse of the daughter, Banoobai, lying in a side-room. All the victims were frightfully mutilated about the head. A bloodstained pestle, lying on the floor, was clearly the weapon that had been employed. The servant, "Rama," was nowhere to be found.

This triple murder, perpetrated in broad daylight, created quite a panic in the neighbourhood. The Sardar, accompanied by Superintendent Grennan and the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Gell, were soon at the house.

Robbery was clearly the motive of the crime, for the whole house had been ransacked, drawers turned out, boxes broken, and everything portable and of any value carried away. These included a silver tea-set, silk and gold embroidered sarees, diamond earrings, brooches, and gold bangles.

From the situation of the house, this crime ranks as one of the most astounding ever com-

mitted either in the West or the East. The bungalow occupied anything but an isolated place, for it stood in the middle of but a small compound, only a couple of yards from the public road. In the same compound was the bungalow of a Hindu family, the boundary being marked by a very low wall, scarcely four feet high. Quite close to the wall, by the side of the road, was the hut of a native workman, and at the back of the house were the huts of some dyers. Yet, in spite of the crowded condition of the neighbourhood, not a soul either heard or saw anything to alarm them, so stealthy, swift, and deadly had been the work of the assassin or assassins.

About this crime there is something even more uncanny than that of the murder of the Marr family by the miscreant Williams, so graphically described by De Quincey.

The Sardar fixed the time of the tragedy at noon, for the midday meal had not been partaken of. The murderer or murderers had obtained several hours' clear start, which made the work of tracing them very difficult. Suspicion naturally fixed on the missing servant, but, if he had indeed committed the crime, it was considered highly probable that he must have had confederates. The district was largely populated by Bhandaries, who are not a very peaceful or law-abiding people. Search was made for "Rama," who, it is not surprising to learn, had given false particulars of himself. He had taken the name of another

individual who had been with the Wadia family at Mazagon, he himself not having been in their service at all.

So great was the alarm in the neighbourhood of the crime that Government deemed it expedient to offer a reward of Rs. 300 for the capture of the criminal or criminals.

As the missing servant had taken the name of another in service at Mazagon, it was thought probable that the two were in some degree acquainted, so the servant at Mazagon was asked if he knew of anybody whose description tallied with that of the absconding "Rama," and after a good deal of hesitation he stated that he had mentioned his master's name and residence to one Dhanji, the brother of Nanoo Nayayen, *alias* Chrishna, *alias* Rama, and that the description of the two men tallied. It also came to the knowledge of the police that the brother was in service with a Dr. D. Rozario at Mazagon, and that thither the absconding servant had gone. This proved to be the case, and he was found hiding in an out-building attached to the gentleman's bungalow. He, when questioned, flatly denied that he had ever been in service at Dadar, but this statement was severely shaken by the fact that there were marks of blood upon his clothes, and that he had sought to alter his appearance by shaving and cutting his hair short. He was conveyed to Dadar and confronted with the surviving members of the widow's



family, who immediately identified him as the missing servant "Rama."

And now, to everybody's amazement, it was made clear that this astounding crime had been committed single-handed by this mere stripling of a criminal! He afterwards confessed, took the police over the bungalow where the crime was committed, and, with perfect self-possession and nonchalance, "reconstructed" the colossal deed.

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, he explained, while he was cleaning some utensils, that "something came into his head." He thereupon picked up the pestle, felled the little boy, Aspandiar, who was playing with a toy pistol; he then went into the cook-house, where the widow was busy cooking, and with one blow killed her outright, but to make sure dealt her several other blows; then went into the side-room, where the daughter, Banoobai, was lying on a bed, she having a headache, and killed her in her sleep. He then proceeded to rifle the place, and carry off all he could lay hands on.

When his antecedents were laid bare it was found that he was a criminal of a particularly sinister kind. He was suspected of having killed a Hindu boy of a tender age for the trumpery sum of Rs. 5. He had previously committed a theft at the bungalow of Lady Sassoon while he was in her service as a pankhaboy; he had also robbed a doctor in whose service he was.

He was tried at the Sessions Court, convicted, sentenced to death, and duly executed, after having first been allowed to bathe and offer up formal prayers for forgiveness of his many and heavy sins.

CHAPTER XX

RAILWAY THIEVES

THERE are in India, as in this country, what may be termed "specialities" in crime, and the railway thief of India, like the coiner in this country, confines his depredations exclusively to that one form of crime. As we say of the latter, "once a coiner, always a coiner," so we may say of the former, "once a railway thief, always a railway thief."

The railway thieves of India may be divided into seven distinct classes, as follows—

The Bhamptas of the Deccan.

The Ina Koravars, *alias* Alagaries, of Southern India.

The Bharwars of Gonda and Lallatpur.

The Mullahs of Muttra.

The Bhatrajas, or Bhattu Turakas, of India.

The Takku Woddars, or Guntichores, of Southern India.

The Railway Pickpockets of India.

One might add to these another class, consisting of railway servants themselves, although they are not, like those mentioned above, hereditary criminals. They are, however, very daring thieves, and give the authorities a great deal of trouble.

The first three classes mentioned above are the most expert at this kind of criminality.

The Bhamptas are most determined and irreclaimable thieves and pickpockets.

> "And live they must, and live they will
> On cursed mammon gotten ill."

They are gregarious, and "operate" in gangs or combinations. They are good linguists, and they so arrange the use of their different languages that they invariably contrive to adopt a language *alien* to the district wherein they are pursuing their nefarious calling. Thus, when they are engaged in Telugu districts they talk Mahratti and Canarese; when in Mahratti and Canarese countries they talk Telugu. They also have a secret code of words and phrases of their own, and are able to converse by signs made with their eyelids and fingers, which are quite inexplicable to outsiders. They are, for the most part, Hindus, and worship the goddess "Kali," and to this deity they frequently resort, in the principal temple dedicated to her honour, either before or after their raids, to procure luck for their contemplated enterprises or immunity from detection after having successfully accomplished something.

They rarely resort to any form of violence, relying for success solely upon their skill, subtlety, and dexterity, in all of which they are past masters. Prior to the introduction of railways they wandered about the country in gangs, visiting towns and

villages where fairs were held, thieving and picking pockets. When railways were opened they abandoned their old methods, as they found that the iron roads afforded them a much easier method of enriching themselves. Formerly they confined their thefts to the hours between sunrise and sunset, but when they transferred their attentions to the railways they deemed it safer and more suitable to "operate" principally during nocturnal periods. In August 1884 two Bhamptas were received as "approvers," and supplied the authorities with a very interesting and useful description of their profession.

Their *modus operandi* may be briefly described as follows. A gang, including one or two women, will split up into batches, having previously arranged to meet again on a certain day at a certain place. The various batches will then work on their own. In the case of a new railway, they will take a house of some importance in a town, give out that they are railway contractors, dress rather well, and travel up and down the line. They take care that the house they have rented shall never be left unattended. They always carry with them a bag or bundle, which serves a double purpose. It will contain articles necessary to the carrying out of their schemes, consisting of coloured turbans, coats, a knife, a pair of scissors, a mirror, a chisel, a tin-case of "chunnam" (a preparation of lime), a string of beads, some old clothes, and a composition for making different caste marks on

their forehead. Many of these articles, as will be perceived, are used for purposes of disguise. Their womenfolk carry trumpery articles of jewellery, which they display on the roads for sale, in order to give them an ostensible appearance of having a legitimate occupation. The second purpose of the bag or bundle will appear in due course.

They first look out for a passenger carrying a bag that seems likely to contain property worth annexing, and they follow that passenger into a carriage. They draw him into conversation, having first given out that they are pilgrims on the way to some place of worship on the line. By this means they contrive to ascertain where the passenger is bound for, and what station he intends to alight at.

Well, darkness comes on, and the passengers gradually fall asleep. Then one of the Bhamptas, under the pretext of affording his fellow-travellers more room and an easier seat, lies down on the floor, covering himself with a cloth. Then a confederate stretches his legs on to the opposite seat, laying a cloth over his legs, and over the thief on the floor, whom he thus effectually "screens." The latter, who has already "spotted" the passenger's bag under the seat, keeps quiet for a little while, then, when he thinks it safe to proceed, he will begin to manipulate the bag under the seat, ascertaining by means of his wonderful sense of touch whether there is anything in it worth "flimp-

ing," to employ a thieves' slang expression. If he is satisfied that the plunder will be worth the trouble, and he cannot get his hand into the bag in the ordinary way, he will draw out of his mouth the little curved knife which every Bhampta keeps concealed between his gum and upper lip, and with this rip up the seams of the bag, and so annex the coveted portion of the contents. If the curved knife be too small for his purpose he will use the large knife in his bundle; if a lock has to be forced he will use the chisel.

The spoil he either transfers to his own bag or hands up to a confederate. Arrived at a station they will quit the carriage and the railway altogether or transfer into another carriage. If the robbery is discovered before they have had time to quit the carriage they throw the stolen property out of the window, and subsequently recover it. If a bag cannot be so rifled they will carry it off bodily, having exchanged their own comparatively worthless one for it. Although the latter contains articles of use to them, there is nothing in it that can afford the police any clue to their identity.

It sometimes happens that a passenger will be rather more than usually cautious with his bag, and will deposit it in such a position, as, for instance, under his head, that the thieves cannot get at it. But this fact does not discourage the Bhamptas, who alight at the same station as the passenger, who invariably sleeps in the station, or "choultry," till the morning. The thieves do the

They are also very expert at committing thefts upon passengers as the latter are obtaining their tickets at the booking-office.

One of their dodges is rather like that practised by pickpockets in this country. One of the gang will, by giving some kind of conjuring show in the roadway, get a crowd round him, which he holds in absorbed attention with his dexterity while his confederates are going through the pockets of his audience.

The Bhamptas operate on all the railways. Sometimes their spoil is hidden round the waist of one of their womenfolk, who travels in a carriage set apart for females only. Where there are no women one of the men will carry the articles round his waist, being disguised as a respectable contractor. Bedding, which most of the men carry with them, is also used as a hiding-place, but as a rule the property is sent on ahead with the women.

These stalwarts of crime also commit daring robberies on railway platforms. "Spotting" a

passenger standing on the platform, with his bag or bundle on the ground, two of the gang will place themselves one on either side of him. One of them will have a small child with him, which he suddenly and severely proceeds to "spank." Thereupon the passenger looks round to see what is the matter, and the other thief whips up his bag and makes off with it.

Sometimes a passenger has several packages with him, when one of the gang will, somewhat openly, pick up a small one and carry it off. The passenger sees him and gives chase, leaving all his other belongings on the platform, which the man's confederate quietly walks off with. If the theft is perceived by another passenger, who raises an alarm, the thief will dash the stolen article in his face, and in the confusion take to his heels. The passenger is so staggered with the blow that he is unable to pursue the thief until the latter has obtained such a start that pursuit would be futile.

Boys are trained from a very tender age to participate in these robberies, and become most expert and staunch assistants. They are able to give signals and draw off attention from the man who is about to commit a theft, thus rendering the latter's task the easier. In the case of discovery the boy is sometimes made to appear the guilty party, and, being so young, is rather pitied than blamed, being invariably let off with a slap or two.

Bhamptas never keep much spoil about them,

either disposing of it to "receivers," or, in the case of money, sending it on to their village by postal order. They keep on their person only sufficient money to pay current expenses. When they are caught they are close as wax, never knowing any of their confederates, and always giving wrong names and addresses. Boys will never give any particulars of their parents. They are most difficult to catch. They select their places of rendezvous about five miles from the line, in remote, hilly, and thickly-wooded districts. Here they will sometimes lie in hiding for long periods, waiting for the reappearance of one or more of their gang who may have been caught and sent to prison.

In order to obtain provisions, some of them will disguise themselves as pilgrims and make purchases in the neighbouring villages. So perfect are their disguises that it is well-nigh impossible to detect them. The police would have to stop and minutely question every pilgrim in the place to discover the bogus ones. In the afternoons they will go to another village, where they will visit liquor-shops and indulge freely in their favourite beverages, toddy and arrack. On these expeditions they always go singly, and never recognize each other.

When they are caught they make every effort to escape, and in this direction they are also fruitful of resource.

On the 26th of March, 1893, a gang of Bhamptas, including a woman, was arrested at a village called



GROUP OF BOYAS, A CLASS THAT FORM A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE CRIMINALS OF THE BELLARY DISTRICT.
(Taken in Bellary Jail.)

Kasapuram, about three miles from the Guntakul Junction, and taken to Bellary. Having left the railway-station, and while making their way to the town police-station, two of the gang suddenly snatched a handful of dust from the ground and dashed it in the eyes of the constable. For the time being the latter was totally blinded, and when he eventually regained his sight all the men had disappeared, and were never afterwards found. The woman only remained, and she "knew nothing about the others."

They had previously tried to bribe the unfortunate constable, but failed, so had recourse to a more desperate measure. It was believed that so determined were these criminals to regain their liberty that, had this means failed, they would not have hesitated at destroying the constable altogether. It was certainly a piece of incredible folly to entrust so many prisoners—there were eight in all—to the custody of only one officer.

CHAPTER XXI

RAILWAY THIEVES (*continued*)

THE only way to frustrate the designs of the Bhamptas is to take the whole gang at once. For this purpose great caution, extensive knowledge of their subtle ways, and inexhaustible patience are necessary. The native police, who have had most experience in dealing with this class of criminal, have learned to be very wary and keen-witted with railway thieves. When one of a gang is seen under compromising circumstances, either in a carriage or on a platform, by a police officer, the latter, himself unseen, keeps watch until he has discovered the other members of the gang, and "shadows" them until he can get them all together, when, with the assistance of other officers, he surrounds and arrests the whole lot. It consists of a process of "shepherding."

The next step is to search the prisoners, and this must be done very carefully and thoroughly, for the Bhamptas and allied gangs are wonderfully expert at passing stolen property from hand to hand until it has completely disappeared. Their very bodies, too, afford innumerable hiding-places in which to secrete plunder.

On one occasion a female thief was being searched by a professional female searcher, when the latter noticed a linen bandage on one of her thighs. She thereupon asked her what was the matter with her, and the prisoner replied that she had a boil there. This explanation the searcher accepted, although a more observant and experienced police official who stood near challenged it, and directed the searcher to remove the bandage. This was done, when it was found that instead of a boil a currency note for Rs. 100 was disclosed!

Even when a gang of railway thieves have been traced to their house great care has to be exercised in ascertaining that all are there, for the stolen property is invariably in the possession of the last to arrive. Many a search has been rendered abortive in consequence of the police not waiting till the last member had put in an appearance. No two are ever disguised alike, so the connecting them up is attended with considerable difficulty, and their confederacy can only be determined by observing the exchange of secret signs, a knowledge, moreover, which cannot be acquired by the police until they have had a lengthy experience in studying their ways. Even when the property is in their house it is not by any means an easy matter to locate it; it may be buried deeply in the ground, concealed between double-built walls, between beams and wall-tops, or beneath hearths and in cooking-places. In fact, divers are the places, the

in India are confined to the hours between sunris and sunset, but in the case of railway thieves thi rule has to be broken through. During all th hours of daylight the thieves are alert, and th approach of the police would be instantly detected and effective measures adopted to frustrate thei designs. So the method adopted is to surrounc the place just before daybreak, and with the first beams of dawning day to suddenly swoop dowr upon the hamlet, taking the inhabitants by surprise.

So much for the Bhamptas.

The Koravars are Sivavites in religion, and wear a horizontal mark of ashes on their foreheads as the distinguishing mark of their sect. Their presiding goddess is "Moothévi," the goddess of sleep, whom they both worship and fear more than any other deity of the Hindu Pantheon. They also worship "Kali" and "Bêthála." Their worship of "Moothévi," the goddess of sleep, has a two-fold purpose, for in their prayers they entreat her aid to keep themselves sleepless and vigilant, and their victims sleepy and unsuspecting. The

females are particularly devout in their worship of this sinister goddess, and perform orgies in her honour, in secluded places, when animal sacrifices are made and much liquor is consumed. Needless to say, the authorities have neither faith in nor fear of "Moothévi," and proceed against her subjects in a very mundane and matter-of-fact manner.

Their methods are much the same as those of the Bhamptas. They enlist juvenile aid, employing their own or purchased children in the service of their nefarious calling. Although adultery is quite common among them, a Korava woman will never marry with a member of respectable society for fear the children begotten of the union should inherit any of the good qualities of the father, and so unfit them for the profession which is their inheritance. Marriage ceremonies are performed by a Brahmin priest in accordance with the rites of low-caste Hindus. There is very little widowhood among the Koravars, for directly the husband dies the widow marries his brother, or some other relation. A man may marry two sisters at a time.

In addition to working on railways, they also attend fairs and bathing-places, where they dexterously carry off articles of value, either from the persons or clothes of their victims. They carry the spoil away to some distant part, and there bury it; and, in order to divert the suspicion of the

police, they perform an act of nature over the spot. They also go into temples, and, while the natives are deeply absorbed in their devotions, they cut away any ornaments of value they can detect on their persons. At fairs they will, in the evening, lie down with people under trees, inspire confidence by passing themselves off as innocent travellers, and so rob them.

They speak all the languages of Southern India, and make a point of ingratiating themselves into the good graces of the headman of the village they visit, also the grog-shop keeper. Directly they have got clear with stolen property they doff their disguise, and appear in an altogether different garb. They are most expert at "ringing the changes" on bags, substituting their own comparatively worthless ones for those of travellers' containing valuables. Having accomplished a theft in a train they will alight at a station, and hide in the latrine until the train has resumed its journey. If they should be thus found and suspected, they will declare they have inadvertently lost the train, express their dismay, and even shed bitter tears.

They have a secret code of expressions, words, and signals, and should they find themselves in company in which it would seem too dangerous to speak openly, they will communicate with each other in such a manner as not to be understood by strangers. I append a few of their secret terms, and their equivalent in English—

Valan Mooli Nayi	"Policeman."
Pothalu	"Carpet or canvas bag, or bundle."
Polambi	"Gold jewel."
Vadayan	"Soon."
Vasare	"Bring."
Voru kuppu	"Give arrack."
Kulambu	"Toddy."
Shadayan	"Cloth."
Boothi	"Children."
Chalamuti	"Necklace."
Varipuda	"Leave him."
Vangittuvanthan	"Previously convicted."
Keppathe	"Do not tell."
Peratu keppathe	"Do not give out your residence."
Shadayan irchiti ippico	"There is a cloth, take."
Valan varachiran malai rechutti varachuthu	"The constable is coming, conceal the jewel by burying."
Mooli varachiran gendilé inchithi kanayam kuppettu engu.	"The constable is coming, escape by paying him the rupees you have."

A Koravan has a great dread of imprisonment, agreeing with the poet, that,

"A felon's cell
'S the fittest earthly type of hell."

He will bear any form of corporal punishment in preference to confinement; in fact, when caught he invokes his favourite goddess to this effect—"Adidhandanai vidhithal Ammanuku poojasaigarén," which may be thus translated, "If the

punishment of whipping be inflicted, I shall adore the goddess."

The Bharwars are a criminal fraternity who engage in picking pockets at bathing-ghauts, fairs, festivals, choultries, and railway-stations, moving about all over India, often disguised as fâkirs. They are supposed to be Hindus, worship the deities Debi and Mahabir, also paying homage to the Mahomedan Pir Syad Salar Musa-ud-Ghaji, and visit his tomb at Baraitch. They are very superstitious, and have deep faith in omens. If, for instance, while they were on their way to commit some robbery they should chance to meet a Government official, they would regard it as unlucky, and turn back, which would be rather fortunate for the authorities. The latter should foster that kind of superstition.

Their womenfolk are perfect marvels at sleight-of-hand. They will dress themselves in rich garments, gaudily decorated with jewels, and attend fairs, mixing with other swell ladies, accompanying them into the temples. While the latter are engaged in their devotions, the Bharwar lady will dexterously remove their jewellery, without arousing the slightest suspicion in the minds of the victims. Even such difficult articles to remove surreptitiously as earrings, noserings, and necklaces, have so disappeared.

Sometimes the Bharwar women disguise themselves as Brahmins, and keep their faces veiled, which constitutes a very effective disguise.

One of the strategic devices adopted by the tribe of Mullahs is for a member of the gang, disguised as a fâkir, to sit and smoke in the passenger-hall of a railway-station. Other members of the gang come up to him, although apparently, by their demeanour, strangers to him, and these he presents with a free smoke. This generosity being observed by passengers, they gather round to enjoy the same privilege, although they save very little by it. Perchance, indeed, they lose a good deal thereby, for while they are sharing the "fâkir's" charity the members of the gang gathered round the "holy" man are dexterously relieving them of their portable possessions.

The Bhatrajas have a very peculiar way of communicating with one another, even when long distances apart. Having finished with their leaf platters, they sew them together in a particular manner, and then fix them on the ground with stones at places previously agreed upon. It is in the method of stitching that intelligence is conveyed from one batch of a gang to another.

The Bhatrajas are most unscrupulous in their methods. One one occasion, for instance, a member of a gang helped a Brahmin with his luggage, and then helped himself to one of the bags. On another occasion a Bhatraja entered a house where a marriage festival was in progress, partook of the hospitality of the host, and then partook of Rs. 400 belonging to him.

The methods of most of the railway thieves are

much about the same, differing only slightly in detail. As already mentioned, the railway servants themselves also commit thefts, and give the authorities a deal of trouble. Guards, porters, and even station-masters engage in these thefts, mostly of goods in transit.

The railway thieves of India are among the most astute, secretive, skilful, and difficult to detect of Indian criminals.

CHAPTER XXII

DACOITY

AMONG the most daring, skilful, and enterprising of Indian criminals are dacoits, who, like the railway thieves, rob in gangs. It is a form of hereditary crime, and has been carried on from time immemorial. In the present chapter I propose to deal with a class of dacoits known as Khunjurs, and to describe in detail one of the most remarkable criminal exploits to be found among official records.

Khunjurs invariably select nightfall as the period in which to carry out their thefts or raids; that quiet, listless hour known in India as "lamp-lighting" time, when the day is drawing to a peaceful close, when cattle are being leisurely driven into the towns and villages from the open country, when toilers are returning to their homes, and village accountants are transferring to their ledgers items which during the day have been inscribed on slips of paper; when watches are being set at military cantonments, and piled arms removed from outside to the guard-rooms.

The object the dacoits in question had in selecting this critical hour was that they might have

before them the whole nocturnal period in which to make good their retreat, and also the succeeding hours of daylight to pursue their journey without fear of molestation, and so arrive with their booty at the distant goal from whence they started, situated as far as 100 or 150 miles away.

At the time of which I write—well on in the 'sixties—the Khunjurs had for their head a woman, a celebrated Jemadárnee named Tumbôlin. Her husband had been executed for a dacoity, and she had been elected by the members of the tribe as his successor. For her lieutenant, or captain, she had a man named Himtya, a born dacoit, with a sinister career behind him.

Tumbôlin, then, had set out with her gang from Indore, Central India, on "business" bent, and formed an encampment at Nuldroog, about fifteen miles from the military cantonments of Sholapore. It was a wild spot situated within the frontier of the native Government of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Tumbôlin, with four members of the gang, two men and two women, then proceeded to Sholapore, in order to reconnoitre. They were disguised as Dhombárees, a kind of show-people, or mendicant singers, ostensibly from Guzerat. Thus disguised they obtained access to the cantonments, and passed among the officers, singing ballads. One of their songs concerned the native conception of the ways of the "hat- and bonnet-wearing folk," as the European community were

known to the natives. The refrain of this quaint ditty was "Arè! Tôpee-wáláh" ("Oh my! what Topee walahs!"), and the verses described certain deeds of Europeans in love, war, frolic, prowess, etc.

The officers were much amused, especially at one verse which described how a certain Sahib "deserted his children, set fire to his house, and fled with somebody's wife." They also displayed their powers as acrobats and posture-masters.

They then made their way into the compound of the bungalow of the Brigadier himself, General Brooke, outside of whose dwelling a sentinel was pacing up and down. A hedge separated the bungalow from an adjoining compound, in which paced another sentinel. The latter could be seen across the hedge. This second compound they also entered, singing their ballads the while, and were thus able to perceive a guard mounted over a treasure-tumbril, or chest, and to learn that the bungalow was the residence of the Paymaster himself of the Field Force.

Simultaneous with this expedition Himtya, accompanied by two or three others, had gone exploring in the adjacent town, in order that the gang might "kill two birds with one stone," as it were, and had marked down the house of a certain tobacconist, who was also a money-lender, as a likely place for plunder and for future attention.

The two gangs subsequently met outside the cantonments, returned to their encampment, and

there discussed the chances of the two enterprises. The robbery of the military treasure-chest was far more dangerous than that of the tobacconist's, but this, nevertheless, they decided to undertake, as much possibly for the *éclat* of the exploit as the probable reward of success.

But there was a good deal yet to be accomplished ere the time arrived for carrying the scheme into execution. The approaches to the cantonment had to be carefully marked out, the ways of the establishment about nightfall to be correctly ascertained, and the way of retreat through the broken ground to be explored. Tumbôlin herself, in the meantime, devoted her attention to obtaining useful information concerning the money-lender's stronghold, with a view to future operations. The tobacconist's house being situated within the walled city, the different channels of access to it were minutely surveyed by her. In order to discover the exact position of the strong-room, Tumbôlin presented herself at the money-lender's counter, furnished with some coinage of a remote currency, which she desired should be exchanged for current money of the locality. By this means she caused the money-lender to go to his safe, the position of which she carefully noted.

It may here be mentioned that the money-lender's house was subsequently robbed by another gang belonging to the same tribe, when four people were killed and six wounded, the

robbers making good their escape. I make this explanation now as the incident will not be again referred to, we being concerned only with the movements of Tumbôlin and her gang.

To return to the cantonment. The troops at Sholapore consisted of a regiment of regular native cavalry, two corps of native infantry, and a troop of European horse artillery, all of the Bombay Army. The station comprised a compact body of residents, being made up of civilians, ladies and gentlemen, military officers and their wives, and civil servants and official attendants. Not far away resided the Civil Sessions Judge, in the neighbourhood of the local criminal jail, and the Collector and Magistrate of the district, with their assistants and other officials, occupied bungalows within the cantonment.

Himtya having obtained all the preliminary information he could, arrangements were made for the attack. They first, with a view to allaying any possible suspicion, moved their encampment some distance further away, appointing a certain spot as a rendezvous, convenient to the point of attack. Here two men and two women were to await them with ponies, fitted with saddle-bags, in which to deposit the expected booty. After the robbery the party were to split up, and make a ziz-zag course to the rendezvous.

The final measure of precaution taken by Himtya was to pay a visit to the cantonment, in order to fix upon a spot in the broken ground just

outside where the bamboo hafts of their spears might be buried. Upon this occasion he had the satisfaction of witnessing the Havildars of the Paymaster's establishment depositing the money in the treasure-tumbril. The latter consisted of two compartments, and Himtya carefully noted that the money was deposited in the *right*-hand compartment.

On the following evening the Paymaster, Captain R. Lewis, of the 22nd Bombay Native Infantry, Captain Poole, of the 1st Bombay Cavalry, Captain Morris, of the 9th Bombay Native Infantry (author of the well-known Indian hunting-songs, "The Snaffle, Spur, and Spear," and "The Boar, the Mighty Boar,"), and other officers, having just returned from a day's sport in the open country, were seated on the verandah of the Paymaster's bungalow, awaiting some refreshment. It was evening, the brief twilight having ceased. The bungalow faced the treasure-tumbril and the guard-room, the latter situated a short distance away. The guard over the treasure had just relieved its sentries, and as an additional precaution had posted double sentinels at the tumbril, who were to remain there throughout the night. The remainder of the Sepoys of the guard had retired into the guard-room, taking their arms with them.

In the meantime the dacoits had armed themselves with spears, fixing the heads on to the resurrected bamboo hafts, and were creeping

stealthily up to the cantonment, hidden behind the high cactus or prickly pear hedge which surrounded the premises, making for the entrance of the Paymaster's compound. Their shoes were secured behind their waist-cloths, and their loins were tightly girded. Having observed the Sepoys retire into the guard-room, Himtya coolly stepped forward and fastened them in by putting up the chain in the hasp. Simultaneously two other dacoits rushed forward and ruthlessly speared both sentinels, while another mounted the tumbril and broke open one of the compartments with an axe. It was the *right*-hand compartment.

The alarm being raised, the sentinel at the Brigadier's quarters fired across the hedge at the dacoits.

In the meantime the officers on the Paymaster's verandah were waiting for the refreshments. A servant was in the act of conveying this to them from the kitchen, situated a short distance away, when one of the dacoits flung a spear at him, but, luckily for him, it sped harmlessly between his legs. Thoroughly alarmed, and casting aside the tray of refreshments, he dashed affrightedly and headlong into the verandah. It was only then that Captain Lewis and his companions became aware that the treasure-tumbril was being attacked by robbers.

Unfortunately, with one exception, the barrels of their guns had been emptied, the one remaining still loaded having only small shot in it.

However, this was fired into the midst of the dacoits, bringing one of their number down.

And now a very curious mishap befell the raiders. They suddenly discovered, to their bitter disappointment, that they had broken open the *wrong compartment* of the tumbril—the empty compartment. It so happened that the money, for no particular reason that could be ascertained, had that previous forenoon been taken out of the right-hand compartment and deposited in the *left.*

By the time they made this alarming discovery they found themselves attacked from the Paymaster's bungalow, one of their number being wounded, and the night air resounding with bugle and trumpet notes—in fact, the "call to arms" and "assembly"—so they realized that there was no chance of their gaining access to the other compartment of the tumbril, and that their only chance of escape lay in immediate flight.

Lifting their wounded companion from the ground they made off, picking up their look-outs on the way, and making straight for the rendezvous. Here they tarried but a very short time, continuing their precipitate flight, with their womenfolk in turn astride the ponies, and carrying empty saddle-bags. They had failed—failed by the merest fluke, and were retreating empty-handed and full of chagrin.

Early realizing that their wounded companion was past hope, in order to expedite their flight



TWO MARRIED COUPLES. SELF-SUPPORTING CONVICTS, PORT BLAIR.

they laid him down on the broken ground, and there left him.

By midnight they had reached their encampment. But neither did they tarry here any length of time, and, all being in readiness, they resumed their retreat with all speed, Tumbôlin, their chief, mounted on her favourite piebald pony. On, on they went, all through the succeeding night and throughout the ensuing day, pausing only briefly to refresh man and beast, and yet on again over the seemingly endless track until they had reached far, far beyond the Kistna; then, and not till then, did they deem themselves safe.

In the meantime the greatest consternation prevailed at the cantonment. Vedettes and patrols were sent in pursuit in all directions, the cavalry scouring the country for miles around, but the fleet-footed dacoits easily outdistanced them. All the rest of the troops stood to arms throughout the night. In the morning they found the wounded dacoit, and brought him in. But he steadfastly refused to disclose anything, and died during the day, true to his associates in crime to the very last.

The following day the Brigadier reported that he had been attacked "by a numerous and well-organized banditti," and that he had made every disposition "to repel their renewed attack expected that night." They had, though innocently, exaggerated the formidable character of the attack, for the "numerous and well-organized banditti" consisted of only sixteen dacoits. How-

ever, the mistake was not altogether inexcusable, considering the boldness, suddenness, and determination of the onslaught.

The sequel to this incident is to be found in a subsequent official document, which, in reference to this gang of dacoits, contained the words—"The fifteen survivors fell into our hands, all sooner or later, and were disposed of."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE KHAIKÁREES—MURDER OF MR. HORSLEY—HUNOORA

ONE of the most daring and widespread classes of criminals to be found in India is a tribe known as the Khaikárees. At one time they practically overran the whole of the vast continent, having, for "professional" purposes, divided the latter into divisions and sub-divisions. They themselves were also split up into gangs, and committed gang-burglaries, no two gangs "operating" in the same division. No form of punishment, however severe, appeared to act as a deterrent to them.

Upon one occasion the members of a gang were arrested after having committed a robbery, and the Náib, or chief native magisterial officer of the district, had the right hand of each man *chopped off!* But even this extreme measure did not prevent them continuing their depredations, for they were subsequently long known to the authorities as the "lop-handed gang."

The leader, one Sirsa Naique, was eventually accepted as an "approver," and it was proved that, after the loss of his right hand, he participated in innumerable robberies.

I now propose to relate how a European official was some years ago brutally murdered by a Khaikáree, while the gang, of which the murderer was a member, were engaged in one of their periodical gang-burglaries. It is a thrilling story, and impressively illustrates how perilous sometimes is the official position occupied by a European servant of the Government.

On the 4th of July, 1856, then, Mr. Ralph Horsley, of the Madras Civil Service, sat down with his younger brother to dinner in his bungalow at Bellary, a Madras station. Mr. Horsley, it should be explained, was the local magistrate, and his brother lived with him, they occupying the two ends of the bungalow. Also present at the dinner in question were two officers from the cantonments, who were friends of the Horsleys.

It is necessary, for the better understanding of the tragedy about to be described, that the position and internal arrangements of the bungalow should be explained.

The house consisted of drawing-, dining-, several bed-rooms, and the usual offices. The bedroom which Mr. Ralph Horsley occupied was entered, through an open archway, from the verandah. This in turn led into another sleeping-apartment beyond; at the side of the first bedroom was the bathroom. In the inner bedroom, which was protected from mosquitoes by a gauze contrivance, was a cupboard, in which the plate was kept. In India, during the hot season, it is the custom to leave all

the doors of houses wide open, and to keep a night-light burning in the bathroom. This custom was adhered to upon the melancholy occasion under notice. It was also the custom of the elder brother—as, indeed, it is of many European officials in India—to keep his dispatch-box, containing valuable documents, under his bed. All the apartments mentioned could be seen into from the outside.

Near the bungalow was a ruined temple.

Well, the dinner having been dispatched and the table cleared, the four friends lighted their cigars, and fell to yarning in the usual post-prandial manner. The conversation, which was on general topics, eventually turned upon curiosities, and Ralph Horsley directed his peon, or servant, to fetch his dispatch-box from beneath his bedstead.

Shortly before this, and at the conclusion of the meal, three figures—figures of natives—might have been seen slowly and silently emerging from the gloom of the ruined temple, with a united and steadfast gaze fixed upon the interior of the bungalow. With dusky faces, and themselves still securely within the folds of night, they thereafter missed nothing that ensued inside the well-lighted bungalow. They saw the plate removed from the table and conveyed to the cupboard of the inner bedroom; they saw the peon afterwards, at the request of his master, enter the outer bedroom, remove the dispatch-box from beneath the

bedstead, and carry it into the dining-room; saw Ralph Horsley open it and take out a fine silver snuff-box—it glistened in the bright light—and show it to his admiring friends. The heads of the party in the bungalow were brought into close formation as they unitedly gazed upon the glistening bauble, while the trio of conspirators simultaneously drew together, with staring eyeballs, bated breath, and clutching fingers.

Then the snuff-box was returned to the dispatch-box, and the latter in turn to the peon, who conveyed it back to the bedroom, and replaced it beneath the bedstead. The movements of the peon were closely followed by the three pairs of gleaming eyes without.

That silver snuff-box was a gift, a family heirloom, and Horsley prized and was proud of it.

O, fatal gift!

Presently the party broke up, the two visitors rode away on their ponies, leaving the brothers alone in the bungalow with the servant.

The brothers then parted for the night, and the younger one retired to the other end of the bungalow.

Full to the gaze of the watchers Ralph Horsley went into his bedroom, read for a little while, as was his custom, then, commending his soul to his Maker in a brief prayer, lay down upon the bedstead. The peon also lay down upon a sleeping-mat upon the verandah, and was soon fast asleep.

All was still, and no light could be seen inside

the bungalow but the faint glimmer of the night-light in the bathroom—fatal guiding star for the miscreants without! Alas! Ralph Horsley, the sands of thy life are fast running out; in an alien land, far removed from thy own kith and kin, thy sinister destiny lurks ready within the gloom of the ruined temple.

The hour was about midnight, and the three dusky figures left the threshold of the temple and made silently towards the bungalow. They came on in Indian file, a formidable knife in the mouth of each. That was their method of carrying such a weapon, for thus it was ready to use, and it left their hands free. The first one stealthily entered Horsley's bedroom, the second hesitated upon the threshold, the third remained in the compound.

These dispositions were necessary to the carrying out of the plan they had formulated; the first would seize the plunder, pass it to the second, who would pass it to the third, who would make off with it. Thus, should either the first or second be captured, no stolen property would be found in the possession of either.

Well had it been for poor Ralph Horsley if this plan had been attended with complete success, but the magistrate's vigilance cost him his life. Being but a light sleeper, he was suddenly awakened, less by noise than the sub-consciousness of a sinister presence. He opened his eyes and, in the dim light cast by the night-light, saw the figure of a native creeping towards the inner bedroom.

Instantly he thought of the plate, and realized that this was a robber intent upon stealing it. He saw the knife in the robber's mouth, and knew that he must proceed cautiously.

He never took his eyes off the nocturnal intruder, and prepared for a sudden spring. He did not, unfortunately, perceive the second man, who in turn was following his movements very closely.

The situation was fraught with great peril.

If the first robber were captured it would be fatal to the trio, equally, nay, more, fatal to the magistrate.

Suddenly Horsley sprung upon the robber, flinging his arms round him from behind; instantly the second robber plunged his formidable weapon into Horsley's back. With a shriek the luckless magistrate fell headlong through the mosquito-net, and expired. Before the servant, aroused by the shriek, could come to his master's aid the robbers had made off with the dispatch-box. The silver they did not touch.

The robbers got clear away, and for years none of them were captured.

The dispatch-box was afterwards found not far from the bungalow, the contents scattered about, and, of course, the snuff-box missing.

At first it was thought that this terrible crime was committed out of revenge. In the dispatch-box were papers relating to a case of torture, which the deceased magistrate was at the time engaged

in investigating. This, however, proved not to be the case, robbery only being the motive.

Years after the authorities received information which led them to pursue and eventually capture a Khaikáree named Hunoora. Being received as an "approver," he made a clean breast of the whole affair.

He confessed that it was he who struck the blow which killed Mr. Horsley, and that his brother, Hunmunta, was the robber whom Mr. Horsley had secured.

This Hunoora was a terrible criminal. Among his many misdeeds which came to light was that of the murder of his wife. It appeared that having come out of jail after serving a period of hard labour he discovered, or fancied he had discovered, that his wife had been unfaithful. So he slew her in the open country, tied her body in some date-leaf matting, and cast it down a well. Later, while serving another term of imprisonment, he was sent to another jail in charge of a single peon, or jail-warder.

It is rather remarkable the number of times this folly of sending desperate criminals from place to place in the custody of inadequate guards has been committed in India.

The day was very hot, and the two men being thirsty they stopped at a well to drink. It was a well with a flight of steps leading down to the water. The warder, most injudiciously, divested himself of his belt and sword, which he placed

upon a step, bidding his prisoner take care of them while he went down to drink. The blind confidence of this warder is most painful.

Having slaked his thirst, it was arranged that the warder should give place to the prisoner, who would then drink. However, when the warder descended the steps he was followed by the prisoner, who slew him with the sword, and cast his body into the well. He knocked off his fetters, threw the warder's belt and brass breast-plate into the well, appropriated the sword, and made off.

He was eventually placed on trial at the Court of the Chief Commissioner for Mysore, convicted, and although at first it was contemplated passing upon him the extreme sentence, it was, in view of the fact that the actual stabbing could not be testified to or corroborated, reduced to transportation for life.

His brother, Hunmunta, was also taken, and sentenced in a like manner. The third robber does not appear to have been captured. It transpired that the three robbers had watched Mr. Horsley's bungalow for some days prior to the crime from the ruined temple.

When Hunoora was arrested he confessed that the murder of Mr. Horsley had preyed heavily upon his mind ever since. Shedding the life of a native is not regarded by the Indian criminal as a very significant deed, nor one to be conscience-stricken about, but the murder of a "Sahib" is

bound, in his mind, to be, sooner or later, fully and terribly avenged. Hunoora confessed that ever since the fatal night when his hand struck down the magistrate of Bellary he had known no peace, no respite from an ever-present dread of impending retribution; that his arrest and confession were, to him, almost a welcome relief from a terrible suspense, a long period of conscience-smiting and flagellation. In fact, one might suppose him constantly haunted by the song of the Eumenides—"Woe! woe! to him who has done the deed of secret murder. We, the fearful family of Night, fasten ourselves upon his whole being. Thinks he by flight to escape us? We fly still faster in pursuit, twine our snakes around his feet, and bring him to the ground. Unwearied we pursue; no pity checks our course; still on and on, to the end of life, we give him no peace nor rest."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DEPOSITION OF MAHARAJAH MALHARRAO GAEKWAR

In dealing with native corruption, the police, both native and European, have had from time to time some very difficult tasks to perform. For instance, in the early 'seventies the ruler of the State of Baroda, one Malharrao Gaekwar, became such a menace to the Government that it was deemed expedient to remove him. This was not by any means an easy matter, and taxed all the resources and ingenuity of the police. By his despotic and corrupt behaviour Malharrao Gaekwar had reduced Baroda to the verge of anarchy, and this grave state of things was made only too painfully apparent in 1874, when the notorious ruler made an attempt on the life of Colonel Phayre, the then Resident of Baroda.

This Gaekwar was altogether a remarkable man, and came of a remarkable family. His own life had been attempted several times, by sorcery, human sacrifices, poison, and other native effectual and ineffectual means. He was once accused of attempting the life of his own brother, but the evidence against him being rather weak he was

acquitted. His own life was attempted by his brother, named Khanderao, and the means adopted by the latter to bring about this end are eloquent of the abysmal ignorance then prevailing among the people, even in the higher circles of society.

Khanderao first tried sorcery against his relative, but this failing in effect he consulted a Brahmin, who informed him that the "black art" would not avail against a prince unless human sacrifices also were made. Then Khanderao, who had no lack of perseverance in carrying out his nefarious designs, proceeded to Baroda prison, where he selected thirty-five "life" prisoners, and ordered that they should be put to death at the rate of five a day. Twenty-five of the victims were actually so sacrificed, when the Dewan stepped in and put an end to the butchery.

Sorcery failing a second time, Khanderao, nothing loth, then had recourse to the more practical and effectual means of extermination by poison. He entrusted the task to a miscreant named Bhau Scindhia, who employed two other minor villains to induce Malharrao's faithful cook to introduce some powdered arsenic into his food. This was done, and the result was the whole family were taken ill, but luckily escaped death by the prompt administration of remedies. Malharrao became suspicious, and held an inquiry, but was unable, through lack of evidence, to convict those who had plotted against his life. This

emboldened his enemies, and their next move was a very subtle one. They reported to the Resident, Colonel Wallace, that an agent of Malharrao had endeavoured to induce a European soldier to shoot Khanderao, but the evidence of the soldier being very unreliable Colonel Wallace refused to believe the charge. But Khanderao, for his own purposes, persisted in believing in his brother's guilt, and succeeded in getting him confined in prison at Cadra. Thus, at length, he succeeded in "removing" him, although not so effectually as he originally intended to do.

During Malharrao's incarceration his brother, Khanderao, was very apprehensive of any one holding communication with him, and he one day seized four persons whom he suspected of having held secret communication with the prisoner, and had them done to death in a very cruel manner. One was hanged, another beheaded, a third blown from the mouth of a cannon, and the fourth cast under the feet of an elephant. Even when eventually Khanderao died, and his brother went from prison to a throne, the latter was not free from the effects of his late relation's animosity, for the vendetta, as it were, was maintained by surviving adherents of Khanderao.

As for the Maharajah Malharrao Gaekwar himself, with whom we are more closely concerned, he does not appear to have been a very attractive person. By a native chronicler he is thus described—"Wholly uneducated, and of a very

ordinary mind, he was never able to impress his companions with respect, though he was not deficient in certain astuteness, and his obstinacy was unlimited. In person he was the reverse of princely; he was undersized, of mean presence and coarse dark complexion. His eyes looked different ways, and his large sensual lips were kept asunder by black projecting teeth, supported by a band of gold visible when he spoke. Unlike his brother Khanderao he was averse to field sports, and he had converted the racecourse of Baroda into a macadamized road for the ladies of his zenana. Of his early days little is known, perhaps there is little to be known. He never went to school, and had no instruction in anything but vice. The result was that he could read little and write less. At a very early age means of debauchery were suggested to him, even by his parents. This should be remembered when his vices are censured. They were probably as much the result of the bending of the twig as evidence of the natural inclination of the tree."

Under all the circumstances it is not surprising that when Malharrao Gaekwar ascended the throne of Baroda he entered upon a course of subtle and sanguinary ruling that in its way was perhaps unique. Poison was his principal weapon, and he successfully employed it in destroying the leaders of hostile factions. Many of the victims had the poison forced down their throats. With Bhau Scindhia, who conspired with the late Khan-

him. The wretched prisoner refused to swallow the pill, and appealed for mercy, but none was accorded him. As they could not force him to take the poison they placed him in a machine called a *sikunja*, a kind of man-press, in which he was slowly squeezed to death.

So frequent were the murders by poison at the instigation of the despot of Baroda that it drew from Colonel Phayre the remark, "What, are they killing them every day?" Malharrao used first to experiment upon goats, and when one of these animals died it occasioned universal dread and suspicion.

In his infancy, according to the customs of his people, the Maharajah was married, his wife being the daughter of Nana Khanvelkar, who was afterwards arrested with him in connection with the attempt on the life of Colonel Phayre. Several of the ruler's accomplices in this affair died suddenly, which effectually prevented them giving evidence either one way or the other. One of the most daring plots of this poison monster was a proposed attempt to silence the inhabitants of the Residency by ordering a pound of arsenic to be placed in the ice to be used there, a bloodthirsty idea which he was eventually induced to abandon by those in his confidence.

Altogether Baroda was ruled in about as bad a manner as it well could be. In addition to the innumerable murders, no woman was safe in the streets. If the beauty of any girl appealed to the Maharajah she was almost certain to be "puckrowed," or kidnapped, by some of his minions. Bribery and corruption abounded on all hands. Justice was sold to the highest bidder, the proceedings in court being merely formal. The litigant with the longest purse always won. Apparently some hints of this extremely unsatisfactory state of affairs had reached headquarters, although there was a lack of sufficient evidence on which to base a prosecution or official inquiry. The attempt, however, to poison Colonel Phayre brought matters to a crisis, and Colonel Phayre himself in the first instance instituted an investigation.

His suspicions fell first upon the havildar at the Residency, in spite of the fact that he was an old and faithful servant, to whom the Colonel had become attached. He had him arrested, but, failing to discover any evidence against him, ordered his release. At this stage of the proceedings it was by Government deemed expedient that, in justice to the Maharajah, an impartial inquiry should be held, presided over by somebody unconnected with the Residency. Therefore Colonel Phayre was transferred, and Sir Lewis Pelly was dispatched to Baroda to conduct the proceedings as the Governor-General's Agent and Special

Commissioner. The inquiry was to be a general one into the administration of the State of Baroda, the poisoning case itself being entrusted to Sir Frank Souter, the Bombay Commissioner of Police.

Curiously enough, and soon after the appointment of Sir Lewis Pelly, the original suspicions of Colonel Phayre were confirmed in a dramatic manner by the confession of the havildar himself. In spite of the warnings by Sir Lewis Pelly that he had no chance of a pardon he persisted in his confession, not, however, revealing the whole of his share in the plot. His evidence was most invaluable, inasmuch as it clearly implicated the Maharajah, with whom he swore he had been in personal communication, and from whom he had received sums of money. The police did, in fact, succeed in tracing some of these sums, besides those paid to other persons implicated. In addition to the Maharajah, the havildar's confession also involved others, including Eshwantrao Jassood, a man attached to the Baroda Darbar, and a sowar named Sallam.

The havildar, a few days after making his confession, tried to commit suicide. He asked his guards to allow him to proceed to a neighbouring well in order to draw water for his personal use, and unsuspectingly they gave their consent. Arrived at the brink the havildar gave a spring and literally jumped into the well. Ropes and other appliances being procured, he was rescued.

Upon the matter being reported to Sir Lewis Pelly he sent for the havildar, and asked him why he had attempted suicide. The havildar replied that his life was of no value, that he had been untrue to his salt, and was not fit to live.

While conducting inquiries into the poison case the authorities came upon evidence that implicated the Maharajah in other matters concerning the administration of Baroda.

It appeared that the Maharajah had two State banks at Bombay, and that large sums of money were being dispatched from Bombay to Baroda for unlawful purposes. A special staff of Bombay detectives were employed to investigate the matter, and they succeeded in tracing the treasure to the Palace at Baroda. In order to facilitate the search the Maharajah was, on January 14, 1875, arrested. His malign and intimidating influence being removed, valuable witnesses were induced to come forward and assist the police with their knowledge. No less a sum than forty lakhs of rupees, in Government currency notes of Rs. 1,000 each, was discovered at the Palace, which had been secretly smuggled thither from Bombay. In addition to this the detectives came upon a box in the Palace which, in spite of its innocent outside appearance, attracted their attention, and which, upon being opened, was found to contain a number of canvas bags. Each of these bags in turn contained two thousand rupees, the coins altogether amounting to the sum of Rs. 70,000.

A second box, containing a similar sum, was also found, in addition to a further sum of one and a half lakhs of rupees, secreted in the Palace. This vast wealth was lifted with a crane, worked by a body of sepoys, out of the Palace and lowered into the street below like so many bales of cotton, and conveyed to the Treasury. But even this was not the full extent of the wealth of this Eastern Tom Tiddler's Ground, for they also found thousands of tolas of gold and silver, and a quantity of valuable jewellery, one diamond necklace alone being worth about fifteen lakhs of rupees.

In addition to the Maharajah the authorities also arrested other officials of the Court, including a minister named Damodar Pant, who exercised great influence over his royal master, and who gave the police considerable trouble. He was a Brahmin, endowed with remarkable cunning, and had always done his best to retard all kinds of reforms. Of course he had a personal interest in so doing, having fattened on the Maharajah's prosperity, and eventually betrayed his master in the latter's adversity. When he was first made prisoner he was very obstinate, refused to speak or partake of food, and seemed bent on pining away to death. But afterwards this was found to emanate from a prejudice against being served with food by a soldier, so he was indulged and allowed to be waited upon by his own servant.

The police experienced the utmost possible difficulties in building up the case, many of the

witnesses still being reticent, and remarking, "How can you guarantee us from molestation? If Malharrao had influence and power enough to have a British Resident removed, what can he not do to us?"—referring to the transference of Colonel Phayre so that an impartial inquiry might be held. In time, however, this reserve melted, and they became more communicative. The native police exercised much influence over them, and were successful in reassuring them and convincing them that it was to their interest to speak the whole truth.

Thus the whole truth of the attempt on the life of Colonel Phayre was brought to light, revealing a remarkable story of Eastern intrigue, and how the intended victim escaped, by the merest chance, a violent and sudden death.

Full particulars of this case are given in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXV

THE ATTEMPT ON COLONEL PHAYRE'S LIFE

IT was the custom of Colonel Phayre to drink a glass of sugared water and fresh pummelo juice every morning upon returning from his early walk. One day he was handed such a drink by one of his servants, and having swallowed a mouthful he noticed that it had a peculiar taste. He thought there was something wrong with it, although at the time he did not suspect foul play. He was about to throw the remainder away when he noticed a peculiar sediment in the glass. He examined it more closely, and doubtless having in mind the cunning and daring of the Eastern poisoner, became suspicious, and determined to preserve the remainder of the liquor for further investigation. It was subjected to analysis, and was found to contain a mixture of arsenic and diamond dust!

It was clearly an attempt on the life of the Resident.

The first question which presented itself was, by whose hand had it been contrived? Could it be the act of one of the servants, done from motives of spite? The nature of the poison at once negatived this supposition, for poor servants

could not have afforded to have procured such a costly agent. It must, therefore, have been contrived by a man or a woman of wealth and position. Yet it was clear that one of Colonel Phayre's servants must have been suborned to carry out the murderous deed initiated by another. Then it was that Colonel Phayre's suspicions fell, and rightly fell, as events turned out, upon the havildar already referred to, whose name was Ravji.

Apparently Colonel Phayre observed something in the demeanour of Ravji, whom he had known so long and intimately, to arouse his suspicions. At first Ravji, as has been described, stoutly denied his guilt, but subsequently confessed, although he only gave a bare confession of complicity, and furnished no particulars. It was, therefore, fortunate that he was rescued from the well when he attempted suicide, for he was subsequently induced to amplify his confession, whereby the police were enabled to add material and very important evidence to their case.

Dr. Wellington Gray, who analyzed the poison, stated that had Colonel Phayre swallowed the whole contents of the glass his death would have been certain; he also suggested that the poison may have been contained in powders—could any of these be found? Then Ravji was tackled on this point, and at length he directed the authorities to search in the Residency for a certain belt, which had been worn by him, Ravji, and which was soon found. This belt was fitted with what is called a

the sediment found in the glass, and to consist of arsenic and diamond powder. This incident formed the basis of the case for the prosecution in the trial which was subsequently held. It was clear that Ravji had been hired by the Maharajah to administer the poison to the Resident.

At length the great trial came on. The Government of India appointed a special Commission to try the Maharajah Malharrao Gaekwar, consisting of the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court, Sir Richard Couch (President), His Highness Maharajah Scindhia, His Highness the Maharajah of Jeypore, General Sir Richard Meade, Rajah Sir Dinker Rao, and Mr. P. S. Melville. The trial took place at Baroda, on the 23rd of February, 1875, and in the way of ostentation and international importance has never been equalled in the annals of criminal trials.

It was the first time a native prince had been publicly tried on grave charges, and aroused the greatest possible excitement locally. The magnitude of the proceedings may be gauged by the

fact that the *Bombay Gazette* established a branch printing office at Baroda, and issued "specials" every evening during the proceedings. Counsel for the prosecution were Mr. A. Scoble (since Sir Andrew Scoble and then Advocate-General) and Mr. Inverarity; for the defence were Serjeant Ballantine, Mr. Branson, Mr. Purcell and Mr. Shantaram Narayen. Other counsel watched the case on behalf of various persons interested.

Serjeant Ballantine was said to have received a fee of £5,000 and a "refresher" of £100 a day. The brief was delivered to him at Aden, and he studied it during the remainder of the journey. The fickle mind of the native population would seem to have been already turning in sympathy towards the prisoner, and when it was known that the great English advocate was coming out to defend him a good deal of satisfaction was expressed thereat. All the principal stations between Grant Road, Bombay, and Baroda were crowded with people anxious to obtain a glimpse of the "Serjeant Sahib," and a large crowd of nobles and others assembled at Baroda to welcome Ballantine, and gave him a hearty reception upon his arrival.

The scene in court upon the opening day, when the distinguished prisoner was placed in the dock, and his ministers and courtiers were assembled to give evidence against him, was a remarkable one. The Oriental "setting" was dazzling. His Highness the Maharajah Scindhia wore white muslin

embroidered in gold, and on his neck were two necklaces, one of large emeralds, and the other of superb pearls; beneath the necklaces was a *plastron* of diamonds of immense value, which glistened in the bright light; over this *plastron* hung a large emerald, so large, indeed, that it partly covered his expansive chest; from his left ear were suspended a cluster of pearls, and two from his right ear; his wrists were adorned with diamond bracelets; on a finger of his right hand was a diamond star about as large as a hazel-nut, and on the left hand was a blazing emerald. Doubtless all this glittering personal adornment was adopted for purposes of "business"—to impress, as it were.

The Maharajah of Jeypore also looked "charming."

The distinguished prisoner was accompanied into court by Sir Lewis Pelly, and seemed greatly distressed and moved by the humiliation of his position. It was not without an effort that he took his position in the dock or chair, and it was generally admitted that his appearance was one rather of weakness than evil.

The inquiry, into which I have not sufficient space to venture in detail, was long and exhaustive, and the verdict, or result, was embodied in a report drawn up and submitted to the Government of India. The European and the native Commissioners made different reports, the latter dissenting from the conclusions of the former. The

prisoner was, in fact, found Guilty by the Europeans, and Not Guilty by his peers. The following is a pregnant paragraph from the joint report of the European Commissioners—

"Regarding the case from every point of view, we are unable to find any sufficient reason which would justify our declaring the Maharajah not guilty of the offences imputed to him. The Maharajahs of Gwalior and Jeypore and Rajah Sir Dinker Rao do not concur in the view we have taken of the case. We have considered the reasons for their opinions contained in the separate report which each of those members of the Commission has rendered. We believe that the evidence, after making every reasonable allowance on the score of character of the witnesses, proves—(1) That an attempt to poison Colonel Phayre had been made by persons instigated thereto by Malharrao Gaekwar. (2) That the said Malharrao Gaekwar did by his agents and in person hold secret communications with some of the servants employed by Colonel Phayre, the Resident at Baroda, or attached to the Residency. (3) That the said Malharrao Gaekwar caused moneys to be given to those servants. (4) That his purposes in holding such communications and causing such moneys to be given were (*a*) to obtain information of what passed at the Residency relating to himself and his State; (*b*) and to cause injury to Colonel Phayre by means of poison."

Upon the strength of this report, the decision

of the Commission was conveyed to Her Majesty's Government by the then Governor-General of India, Lord Northbrook, that decision being that the Maharajah of Baroda be deposed and deported. His issue also were debarred from all rights, privileges, and honours. But perhaps the bitterest pill the condemned Maharajah had to swallow was the fact that Her Highness Jamnabai, widow of his late fraternal foe, Khanderao, was allowed to adopt a member of the Gaekwari house as successor, her choice to be subject, however, to the approval or otherwise of the Government of India.

It was made a distinct point that the Government, in view of the divided opinions of the Commissioners, did not base their decision upon the inquiry or report "that the result of the inquiry has been to prove the truth of the imputation against His Highness." The deposition was expressly based upon "circumstances relating to the affairs of Baroda from the accession of His Highness Malharrao to the present time (of his deposition)." The circumstances warranting his deposition were "his notorious misconduct, his gross misgovernment of the State, and his evident incapacity to carry into effect the necessary reforms."

The choice of Rani Jamnabai fell upon Maharajah Sayajirao, who was fetched from some obscure corner by the police.

That Malharrao did not die without a fight is made clear by the attempts he made, or that were

made on his behalf, to corrupt the police and the witnesses. On the 8th of March Sir Frank Souter received a visit from two native chiefs, who said they came on behalf of Baldhri, sister-in-law of the accused man, and declared that if he would use his best endeavours to liberate Malharrao the sum of ten lakhs of rupees would be at his disposal. Sir Frank promptly sent them about their business.

Serjeant Ballantine, in his address to the Commission, endeavoured to make the case out as a "trumped-up" one, and incidentally cast unmerited aspersions upon Sir Frank Souter and his subordinates; to which the Advocate-General replied—

"Sir Frank Souter is a man well known throughout this side of India. He has been an officer in the service of the Government for many years, and his services have been recognized by Government by conferring upon him the Star of India. He wears, though in a lesser rank, the same decoration that is so worthily worn by three of the members of the Commission; and even if it were not the case that Sir Frank Souter is personally known to the members of the Commission, surely the fact that he is an English gentleman ought to have preserved him from the imputation which my learned friend was instructed to cast upon him.

"But Sir Frank Souter has a reputation as dear to him as mine is to me, and as my learned friend

knows, he is a gentleman of honour, and of honour as untarnished as that of any man in this place; and it does not recommend the case put forward by the defence to have it suggested here in open court that a gentleman of Sir Frank Souter's position and character is—I will not say a puppet in the hands of his own police, but is actively engaged with them in a vile conspiracy for the purpose of ruining His Highness the Gaekwar."

Then followed an equally indignant protest on behalf of the subordinates, including Sardar Mir Abdul Ali, a brief history of whose career was given in Chapter XVI, the worthy careers of some of them being given in detail.

It is a pity that barristers can be induced, or allow themselves, to be the mouthpieces of such wretched evidence in wholly unworthy causes.

CHAPTER XXVI

CHEATING BY GAMBLING

THE people of the East are just as much afflicted with the gambling mania as the people of the West. At one time whole streets in Bombay and its suburbs were given over to gambling of all kinds, and large sums were netted by the proprietors of the "dens." The latter were decorated and illuminated at fair-times, and musicians and dancing-girls engaged to attract customers.

Naturally these gambling districts were happy hunting-grounds for criminals, who found many and ready dupes, and the police had all their work cut out to deal with the evil. Fights were frequent, money and jewellery were stolen to a large extent, and even murders committed.

In 1856 the Government passed an Act which forbade certain forms of gambling in the Presidency town, which gave the police additional power to deal with the gambling-dens, although they still experienced great difficulty in the matter. They, however, succeeded in reducing gambling in the open streets to a considerable extent, although the gambling-houses themselves gave far

more trouble. Raided in one place, they would remove to another district, where operations would be resumed.

In 1865 another Bill was introduced by the late Mr. Jagannath Shankershet, which had for its object the suppression of gambling in the whole of the Presidency of Bombay. This Bill, however, did not meet with the approval of the Government, so it was abandoned. A year later, however, the Bill was again introduced in an amended form, restricting its operations to certain districts only of the Presidency, particularly the neighbourhood of railway-stations. The Bill was in charge of the Hon. Mr. Ellis, who in introducing it made the following observations—

"The Council are aware that in Bombay the Police Act made gambling punishable. The consequence was that persons who were disposed to gamble, finding they could not do so in Bombay, went to the nearest railway-station, and there set up a gambling-house. A row of such gambling-houses had been established at Coorla, and to these gamblers resorted, to the great annoyance of all respectable people. It was not merely that gambling was carried on, but quarrels and disturbances broke out, and thefts were committed to make up for losses which had been incurred, and the consequence of this was that respectable persons, who were accustomed to go in second-class carriages to Coorla, frequently got their pockets picked by gamblers, and were quite unwilling to



BRITISH DETACHMENT BARRACK ON ROSS ISLAND.

travel by rail. The nuisance had become so great that it was quite time to put it down, and a petition had already been presented to Government, signed by several influential native gentlemen, praying that this nuisance be suppressed."

The Bill was passed, being made operative only at places beyond three miles of the railway-stations, and containing populations not exceeding five thousand.

The remedy proved, however, to be but a feeble one, and gambling went on worse than ever. Crimes of a violent nature increased, thefts, assaults, robberies and murders continued to be committed. The ingenuity of the gamblers in evading the law was infinite.

During the four months of the monsoon gambling on the rain even was carried on extensively. The game was called *barsat-kasatta*, and consisted of betting as to whether the rain would descend at all during a given time. Books were made, just as at race-meetings. When the clouds gathered above the excitement would be intense. Then, supposing the time to be two o'clock, bets would be made that rain would fall before half-past, or between half-past and three o'clock. And so on. In this way enormous amounts of money changed hands every day. The attendant evils of this "sport" may be better imagined than described.

In 1866 a further Act was introduced, and in 1887 the Hon. Sir M. Melville introduced a Bill in the Legislative Council to remove the limita-

tions of the previous Act. And so litigation has gone on, but the evil in a measure still exists.

This mania for gambling which afflicts the native of India has, it is not surprising to learn, been turned to good, or rather evil, account by the Indian criminal, in the business of finding dupes to his superlative cunning, skilful histrionics, and consummate dissimulation. These professional cheats find their readiest and most lucrative victims among business men, men of wealth, and richly-plumaged "pigeons." The higher, in a social sense, the intended victim stands, the safer the game will be.

The ground is first very carefully "prospected," servants "pumped," their master's habits and failings ascertained; if the latter be in the way of speculative gain, and he is not too scrupulous in the manner in which he accomplishes his end, then the game is indeed a good one. The safety of the cheat lies in the social superiority and "moral rectitude" of the victim, who will probably bear silently his losses, however heavy they may be, rather than have his own turpitude and gullibility chorused to his world. Thus the police experience considerable difficulty in apprehending this class of criminal, and a gang of such offenders may pursue their nefarious enterprises for years ere they, by some fortuitous circumstance, fall into the clutches of the outraged law.

I now propose to relate a typical case.

A few years ago a native doctor was sitting in

his bungalow in Bombay, when there entered, in great haste and evident excitement, a Hindu, who appeared from his dress to be the servant of a native prince. He seemed highly gratified at finding the doctor in, and proceeded to explain to the latter that he had come to enlist his, the doctor's, services on behalf of the servant of a rajah who was on a visit to Bombay, and who had been taken seriously ill. The doctor expressed his readiness to accompany the servant, and the two made their way to the front door, where a carriage was in waiting. They both got into the latter, and were driven to a place called Buleshwar, where the doctor was ushered into a bungalow. The latter was handsomely furnished, and appeared to the doctor to be the residence of a nobleman. Moving about the apartments were a number of gaily-liveried servants. After an interval the doctor was shown into the room in which lay the invalid.

The doctor at once saw that the patient was suffering from dropsy in an advanced stage, and, shaking his head, expressed his fear that nothing could be done for him. At this the servant who had brought him exhibited considerable emotion, and hastily left the room. He shortly after returned, and requested the doctor to follow him. They made their way to an adjoining apartment, where reclined upon a couch a man in rich garments and sparkling jewels, having the appearance of a native prince. He requested the doctor to sit by him, and the doctor obeyed.

"I am told by my secretary," said he, "that my servant is very ill. I trust the malady is not dangerous. Tell me what you can do for him."

The doctor informed His Highness that his servant was suffering from a severe attack of dropsy, and he feared nothing could be done for him.

At this the rajah exhibited signs of emotion.

"It grieves me much, doctor," he said, "to hear you say so; but you must save him. He is an old and valued servant. I care nothing for the cost; only save his life, and I will pay you well."

Touched by this apparent devotion of the prince for his servant, the doctor promised to do all that lay in his power, although in his own mind he felt it would be useless. The prince thanked him profusely, and taking a valuable ring from his finger begged the doctor to accept it.

Soon after the doctor took his leave.

Early the next morning the doctor was again at the bungalow, and thence continued to visit the patient daily. After five or six days, to the doctor's astonishment and the prince's apparent delight, the patient seemed to be recovering. The prince's joy took the form of generosity, for he handed the doctor notes to the value of twice the fee he would have asked, and which he took from a box containing rolls of such notes.

The doctor called another day, and upon this occasion the scene was changed. The prince was in a most hilarious mood, the patient being, as

was explained to the visitor, now almost out of danger, and was playing at cards with a man whom the doctor had not seen before. The rajah played most recklessly, and lost continually, taking his losses from the box already referred to. He kept doubling, and doubling, until at length he had lost quite a fabulous sum. Then he grew angry.

"I will play no more!" he cried out, scattering the cards on the floor, banging down the lid of the box, and leaving the room.

The winner walked away with a smile on his face.

"Who is that?" asked the doctor of the servant, indicating the winner; "he is not one of your people, is he?"

"No," replied the servant; "he is a stranger."

"I thought so," said the doctor; "I should say he is a sharp. His Highness lost a lot of money."

"Oh, that is nothing," said the servant, smiling. "He is an inveterate gambler, and can afford to lose. He is immensely wealthy." Then, after a pause, "Now, I have a proposal to make, if you will agree to it. Why should you not play and win some of His Highness's money?"

"Oh, I could not afford such high stakes," protested the doctor.

"You can, and I can help you," said the servant. "I cannot play myself, but I will lend you the money, and give you ten per cent. on all you win. Bring to-morrow Rs. 1,000, and I will give

you Rs. 2,000 to play with. Bring Rs. 10,000, and I will give you Rs. 20,000. If you do not play with His Highness this man will come again and take away much money; why, then, should you not win, and help me? Had I not chosen to come for you, you would not have got this patient and those presents my master has given you. Play with the rajah to-morrow, and I will lend you money to win for me too."

The doctor thought the matter over, and finally agreed to chance a thousand rupees. Next morning he was, accordingly, at the bungalow, where he again saw the secretary.

"Have you brought your money, doctor?" said the latter.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"How much have you brought?" asked the secretary.

"A thousand rupees," said the doctor.

The secretary then handed him two thousand rupees.

Having seen his patient, the doctor was joined by the rajah.

"My secretary tells me," he said, "that you were amused with the game you saw me play yesterday, and would also like to try your luck with me."

"If your Highness would so honour me," replied the doctor politely.

"Yes; bring the cards," called the rajah. "How much do you play for?"

"I cannot play for high stakes, as I cannot afford it."

"And I must play high, or I find little excitement in the game. However, say one hundred rupees for the first."

They played. The doctor manipulated the cards, and won. They continued to play, and the rajah continued to lose, and, as on the previous day, continued to double, finishing up by refusing to play any more. Finally he left the room in high dudgeon.

Then the doctor and the secretary counted the winnings, which amounted to Rs. 4,800, the doctor receiving ten per cent. on the winnings, as arranged.

A second day the doctor played, and again he won as before. He now became quite infatuated with the game, and argued to himself that if the rajah was so foolish or reckless as not to see through the trick, he deserved to lose his money.

A third day they played, the rajah impetuously declaring on this occasion that he would not play for less than a lakh at a time. Again the doctor won, and again the rajah became furious. The latter at last emptied his cash-box on to the table, displaying a pile of notes, and these he laid against all the doctor had won and brought with him. This was the crisis. The rajah shuffled and dealt the cards. When the cards were turned up there was a shout of triumph—from the rajah.

The rajah had won.

"Come on again!" shouted the rajah, intoxicated with the game; "a lakh of rupees on this game!"

The doctor sat dumbfounded. He could not articulate. His losses paralyzed him. He had lost Rs. 20,000 of his own money, all he had already won, and Rs. 40,000 belonging to the secretary.

"You do not play?" inquired the rajah, as no response came to his challenge.

"I cannot," replied the doctor; "I have no more money."

"You fool!" scornfully ejaculated His Highness; "did I not tell you I only played for high stakes? Why did you not bring more money?"

And, saying which, he gathered up his spoils and retired.

Then the doctor expressed his regret to the secretary.

"I borrowed the money," said the latter, with concern, "and it must be returned. You must play again, and win it back. Bring more money to-morrow. I will borrow money to help you."

The doctor left the rajah's bungalow disgusted with himself for having allowed himself to be thus tempted to gamble.

That same night he looked at the ring given him by the rajah, which he was wearing on his finger, and noticed that it had made a green mark. He drew it off and took it to the nearest jeweller, who examined it and told the discomfited doctor that

the "gold" was brass, and the "diamond" crystal! Then for the first time it dawned upon the doctor that he had been swindled.

He went back to the bungalow, but it was empty. The bejewelled rajah, the handsome furniture, the well-groomed servants, the man dying of dropsy, the secretary, had all disappeared. The whole thing was a cleverly "put-up" job. The bungalow had been hired and tricked out for the purpose, the dropsical one was a poor man who had been picked up, and all the others were confederates of the "rajah," the head of the gang.

Thus do the nimble-witted of the Indian criminal classes take advantage of the gambling mania to feather their nest with the plumes of unsuspecting "pigeons."

CHAPTER XXVII

SOME MYSTERIES

CRIMES go unpunished in the East as in the West. At times slow-footed justice is unable to come up with fleet-footed guilt. I should imagine that unpunished crime is more prevalent in the East than in the West, the superlative cunning of the Oriental criminal being too great for either native or European sagacity. The "nuts" which the criminal of the East occasionally give the police are altogether too hard to be "cracked," even after months, nay, years, of trying. The proverbial theory that "murder will out" is no more reliable in the East than it is in the West; it is true that many mysterious murders occasionally come to light in devious ways, but the authors of them are never found. And it is safe to say that many murders never come to light at all, the bodies being successfully disposed of, the victims being merely "missing."

Some years ago a young Mahratta, residing in a small village on the confines of a Mahomedan state near Bombay, married a very young woman —a mere child, in fact. He then went to Bombay to seek employment, which he eventually obtained

on the G.I.P. Railway. Through good conduct he was promoted to the post of gatekeeper. During his absence from home he regularly sent sums of money for his wife's expenses, he having left the latter in charge of his mother and family. Occasionally he received letters from his wife, which were written by the village accountant, called the "koolkarnee." This correspondence, however, suddenly ceased, and he heard nothing more from or about his youthful partner for six months. He then addressed a letter to the "patel," or headman of the village, asking for intelligence, and in reply was informed that his wife was absent on a visit to her own mother, and would return shortly. This did not satisfy the husband, who became uneasy, and, having obtained leave of absence, set out for his native village for the purpose of bringing his wife away with him. When he arrived home he found his wife absent, his mother stating that she had been sent for by her mother a couple of months ago.

In the Mahomedan State near which the Mahratta lived there was a great demand for concubines by the higher and more powerful Mahomedans, and kidnapping was pretty frequent. A rumour reached the young Mahratta's ear that about the time his wife disappeared a Mahomedan of some rank had visited the village, and been entertained by the headman. He thereupon interviewed the latter, who told him that his wife would

be returning that day, and that they might both set out and meet her at the next village. The unsuspecting husband agreed to this, and the two men started off. Their way lay through some very wild country and densely-wooded ravines.

In the evening the headman returned alone, and gave out that the Mahratta had met his wife, that they had gone to the house of the latter's mother, and that the husband intended to return from there to his work on the railway.

This plausible story was believed, and for the time being the matter dropped.

Some months after, however, chance revealed a crime that might otherwise very well have remained a profound and insoluble mystery for all time.

One day a herdsman came upon a human skeleton in the jungle, the skull of which was fractured. Clinging to the bones were some rotting clothes, which subsequently the young Mahratta's mother recognized as having been worn by her absent son; she also recognized a fractured tooth in the jaw. It was at length made clear that these were the remains of the young fellow who was supposed to have rejoined his wife, and who, it was ascertained, had never returned to his work on the railway.

Naturally suspicion fell upon the headman, who stoutly denied ever having had any hand in the crime. Inquiries, however, proved that the story

he had circulated upon his return to the village was an entire fabrication. It also came out that at the time of the Mahomedan's visit he was noticed to be very flush of money. The police then made inquiries in the neighbouring State, when the missing wife was found, living as a concubine with the Nawab's own uncle.

The headman was arrested and tried for the murder, but so much influence was brought to bear by the State in question in favour of the prisoner that the latter was never punished for a crime of which he was undoubtedly guilty. Convicted in one court, the decision was reversed in another.

Government took the matter up, and in the end no fewer than two hundred women, who had been similarly kidnapped from British territory, were released.

In another case the victim was an old Marwari money-lender, the best-detested man in the village. He was a regular old skinflint, reputed to be very wealthy, and had upon his books nearly every farmer in the place. His bulky deed-box could be seen from the street, and the secret hiding-place of his treasure was situated in an inner chamber, from whence he could produce any amount of money in notes or cash. He had living with him a daughter, a widow, about twenty-five years of age, and in an adjacent out-house slept two men (Purdèsees), as a guard.

One night, about midnight, the daughter was aroused by hearing peculiar sounds from the old man's room, so, lighting an oil-lamp, she was about to enter her father's bedroom when the old fellow himself appeared, bleeding profusely about the face. He uttered a few inarticulate words and fell forward, extinguishing the light. Upon examination he was found to be dead.

The police post was situated only three miles off, and very soon the police were at the house. They found that a hole had been made in the adobe wall of the deceased's bedroom, sufficiently large to admit of a man passing through. The money-lender had, it was clear, been partially smothered by somebody who had entered the room through this hole, then knelt upon until his ribs had been fractured and forced into his lungs.

Who had committed the crime, and what was the motive? If robbery had been the motive the criminal or criminals had failed in their purpose, for nothing was stolen. A trap-door in the bedroom floor was still locked, and the deed-box was intact. Upon the trap-door being opened many bags of rupees were found, also a tin box containing currency notes, and jewellery of considerable value.

The task before the police was one of considerable difficulty, for the deceased had scarcely a friend in the place. They first filled up the hole in the wall, then took up their residence in the

house, avoiding, however, the deceased's bedroom, surmising that another entry would be made by the murderers in order to obtain the plunder which they may have been too alarmed to secure on the previous occasion. In fact, the police adopted a theory of intended robbery, their opinion being that the thieves reckoned on silencing the old man before he could raise an alarm, but, failing in this, they had had to retreat without securing anything.

This seemed highly probable, and was, in fact, to a certain degree confirmed, for about a fortnight after the police took possession of the house another entry was effected in a similar manner. But, for some mysterious reason or other, the police failed to secure anybody, or even obtain any particulars of the nocturnal visitors. This was considered by the authorities to be a gross dereliction of duty, and the police concerned were accordingly punished for it.

The assassin or assassins were never discovered. Some people held the belief that the crime was committed out of revenge, which, under the circumstances, might very well have been the case, the victim having been so unpopular.

Another very peculiar case was one where it was found difficult to decide whether it was murder, suicide, or merely accident.

One morning news was brought to the police authorities at the fair-weather port of Hurnee that

the body of a woman had been found on the rocks along the shore, on the plateau under the Severndroog Fort, in which the headquarters of the subdistrict were located. Hastening to the spot, an official (Mr. Arthur Crawford) found the body of a fine young woman, entirely nude, with the exception of the breast-cloth, which had been washed up under the arms by the waves. On a rock close by was her "sarree," or petticoat, which proved her to be a Mahomedan. It was evident that she had been dead but an hour or two. On one of her temples was a severe contused wound, which had bled considerably, and all over the body were scratches. The latter were probably caused by the body being washed about over the barnacle-covered rocks.

The case was full of doubts, although the latter would seem not to have afflicted the minds of the members of the local "punchayet," who promptly brought in a verdict of murder against some person or persons unknown. Mr. Crawford, however, was not so easily satisfied, and had the body sent to the Civil Hospital, situated about eight miles away, at Dapoolie, asking for an examination and report. The latter in due course arrived, and was to the effect that the wound over the temple, although not sufficient of itself to cause death, had undoubtedly rendered the woman unconscious, and that she had fallen into the water and been drowned while in that condition. The report also

contained an alternative theory, to the effect that the wound might have been caused by the woman striking against a rock while falling. There was no other cause of death, which, it was surmised, had ensued about six or seven in the morning.

The woman was identified as the wife of a fisherman, who at the time of the occurrence was absent from the neighbourhood. It was ascertained that there had been some difference between the two, on account of the wife's unfaithfulness. The supposed hour of death, as given in the medical report, tallied with the hour the deceased was seen making her way over the jagged rocks, carrying with her a kind of creel, which native women use when picking shell-fish off the rocks. At the time there was a strong north-wester blowing, and the port was full of native craft, known as "pattimars," with which the whole traffic, goods and passenger, of the coast was worked. The vessels were lying at anchor under a neighbouring headland.

Curiously enough, two European soldiers were dragged into the mysterious affair.

One day, while Mr. Crawford was sitting in his tent, he heard a great hubbub without, and, upon looking out, observed a large and excited crowd of natives approaching the tent. In the middle of the crowd were two angry-looking European soldiers. The latter, it appeared, were suspected of being the authors of the woman's death, which,

their accusers asserted, they had brought about after having ravished the woman.

Having got rid of the natives, Mr. Crawford proceeded to examine the two soldiers. One was an army schoolmaster, who was travelling to Bombay, there to take up a new situation; the other was a sergeant who had served for his pension. Both seemed decent sort of fellows, and all their papers were in order; they were travelling at Government expense. They explained that in consequence of the stiff wind blowing, the tindal, or native captain, of their craft informed them that they could not proceed until the wind had subsided. They then asked to be taken ashore in a small boat to obtain exercise.

The men's clothes were examined, but no trace of bloodstains could be found on them. The tindal was sent for, and on arrival declared that the men had not been put ashore until 10.30, so that, the woman's body having been found at 8 a.m., made it clear that the soldiers could have had nothing to do with her death. They were, accordingly, allowed to depart.

This proceeding did not, however, please the natives, who insisted on their guilt, and a native newspaper charged Mr. Crawford with hushing the matter up. Anonymous letters were also sent to Government, charging him with all sorts of crimes. After a time, a vague story was put into circulation by the gossips to the effect that a

female relation of the deceased woman had seen a strange man leave the woman's house, and that she, the relative, threatened to tell the husband. It was proved that the latter could have had no hand in the murder, for he was away at the time. The whole truth never was made known, and in all human probability never will be.

CHAPTER XXVIII

CURIOUS CLUES

ONE of the most interesting phases of crime, either in the East or the West, is the curious and subtle means by which guilt is sometimes brought home to the criminal. In the East the clues obtained by the police while in search of suspected persons are sometimes quite remarkable.

For instance, some years ago a sowkar, or money-lender, at Gudduc, in the Southern Mahratta country, was robbed and very severely assaulted, the thieves getting clear away with their booty. The victim was a man of some substance, and in addition to being a money-lender, was also a pawnbroker. In consequence of the latter fact the man was very reticent concerning the amount of property of which he had been deprived, fearing that if the truth were known it would cause a "run" to be made upon him by those persons whose property he held in trust. Therefore he declared that all he had been robbed of was a few household articles, making no mention of the coin and jewellery which the thieves had carried off.



TYPICAL BUNGALOW OF SETTLEMENT OFFICER AT PORT BLAIR.
(Figures in white, convict boatmen and other [illegible])

Among the articles enumerated was a *musk-bag*, which he, the money-lender, had purchased at a high price. A bag or pouch of musk is very rare and costly, being obtained from the pine-covered mountains of Thibet.

The police obtained the first clue as to the whereabouts of the missing gang from the daughter of an old woman, whose grandson was then in custody for some offence or another, and who was able to indicate in which direction the thieves had retreated. The search was, therefore, directed towards the outskirts of a distant forest, and they knew they were proceeding in the right direction by the strong smell of musk which pervaded the place. This scent they followed up, and eventually they came upon the robber encampment, surprised the gang, and captured the whole of them.

They then searched for and found the plunder, hidden away in various places; under the cooking hearths, stitched into the folds of their old quilts, attached to their tattered garments, and secreted in their waist-purses. But never a sign of a musk-sac.

However, one of the gang, who had had a difference with the leader, furnished the necessary information where they would find the "kustoori," that being the native word for musk, and sure enough they found the tell-tale article buried in the ground. All the prisoners were convicted,

some hanged, and others sentenced to transportation.

In another case a perfume led to detection in a case of poisoning. A scent merchant of Ghazipore dispatched a boatload of rosewater, in charge of one of his servants, to Calcutta. A month later the agent at Calcutta sent the boat back with empty carboys, at the same time entrusting to the servant a tin flask of valuable perfume, in the form of utter—not "otto," as erroneously spelt in this country—or extract of keora, the Andropogon Nardus, or spikenard, a highly-scented flower.

The latter grows profusely in the Lower Provinces, particularly in Orissa, and is used largely in idol worship.

This precious commodity was entrusted to the personal care of the servant, who had originally intended to return by rail, but, being taken unwell at Calcutta, had gone up-country in the returning boat as far as Bhaugulpore. Here he landed, and, accompanied by a relative, who apparently had met him at the landing-place, continued his way on foot with the flask of perfume. Unfortunately for him, a gang of professional poisoners was in the neighbourhood, and the servant and his companion fell in with them. They had taken with them the river toll receipt and bill of lading, and when the boat-master and supercargo arrived at his destination at Ghazipore he was surprised

to find that the others had not arrived, they having gone the quicker way.

Search was accordingly made, and not far from the railway-station two dead bodies were found in the open country, on one of which were found some toll-collector's receipts. They were identified as the two men who had set out from Bhaugulpore, bound for Ghazipore. No flask of perfume was found upon either. This had evidently been taken possession of by the thieves, and thereby afforded an important clue.

Here the case rested for some months, when, another gang of poisoners being arrested, one of their number confessed that he was one of the gang of four who committed the crime in question. They met the two victims, he explained, at the bazaar on the way to the railway-station, attached themselves to them in the manner previously described, and administered poison to them in some spiced meal. Among other things taken from the victims, he further stated, was a flask of perfume.

The story appeared pretty correct, but who and where were the other three? From a description furnished by the man in custody of the leader of the gang, who had administered the poison, the detectives were able to locate his village, and paid a surprise visit to his dwelling. He was not there himself, although his father was present. A search of the place was made, and soon the noses

of the officers were assailed by a strong perfume, which they at once recognized as that of *spike-nard*. They then literally "followed their noses" in the search, and sure enough they eventually unearthed the missing flask from beneath a stack of fuel, or dried cow-dung.

Thus the confession was amply corroborated, the leader himself being taken the next day. The other two were also arrested shortly after, the whole gang thus being accounted for.

At the present time a good deal is being made of the evidence furnished against criminals in this country through the medium of their finger-prints, but many years ago criminals in India were traced infallibly by means of their *foot-prints*. Not merely by taking a mould of a foot-print, and comparing it with a boot, but determining by the shape of shoe-prints as to what class of men had made the impressions, and from whence they came. Mail robbers were repeatedly traced in this manner.

Some years ago, while a train of bullock-carts was being taken under convoy from Rutlám, those in charge were one night set upon by a band of robbers, who pelted them with stones. Thoroughly alarmed, the men in charge and the drivers all took to their heels, when the robbers proceeded to ransack the vehicles, which contained opium, with which they made off.

The whole line of their retreat was impregnated with opium, and it was not by any means difficult

to follow the trail. This was done by the police, when eventually they came to the dry bed of a river, where the ground had recently been disturbed. An investigation brought to light the stolen opium, which had been buried by the robbers.

But where were the latter? The trail of scent did not stop at the river-bed, but continued over the country, marking the further retreat of the gang. This being followed with all speed, the robbers were overtaken while passing hurriedly through a village.

There could be no doubt about their being the wanted persons, for their clothes were strongly impregnated with opium. Yet, in spite of this fact, and doubtless to their own surprise, when they were brought before the magistrate they were acquitted! However, in view of additional evidence of their guilt coming to light through the medium of a couple of "approvers," they were re-arrested. They proved to be Mooltanee dacoits, with a very bad record. Before they could be brought up again five of their number—there were seven in all—contrived to escape from the custody of the local police, and got clear away. The other two were taken to Jalnah.

The plunder, which was, as already described, buried in the dry bed of a river—the Soor River—consisted of five chests of opium, each chest containing from seventy to eighty lumps or balls

of the drug, weighing each a seer, or couple of pounds.

Curious clues figured prominently in the lamentable murder of Mr. William Fraser, Judge and Governor-General's Agent at Delhi, the mystery surrounding the tragic occurrence never having been satisfactorily cleared up.

Mr. Fraser lived in a house known as "Hindoo Rao's House," situated opposite to the city, on the Delhi Ridge. In addition to the offices already referred to, Mr. Fraser also held the position, with the sanction of Government, of the Honorary Second in Command of Skinner's Horse, and was a great friend of Colonel Skinner. While riding home one Sunday evening he was shot dead by a Rohilla horseman named Kurreem Khan. At first the tragic incident was shrouded in impenetrable mystery, but after close investigation had been made into it, chiefly on the part of the deceased gentleman's friend, Colonel Skinner, a curious story came to light. It appeared that Kurreem Khan had been procured to do the deed by the late Nawab's son, one Shumsoodeen, after his accession to the fief of Ferozepoor.

This Shumsoodeen was a close friend of Mr. Fraser's, and his father before him had been even a more attached friend. In fact, both Colonel Skinner and Mr. Fraser were frequent companions of Shumsoodeen's father, Ahmed Buksh, and in order to cement their friendship had even

gone so far as to change headgear with him, thereby becoming his Deen-i-bhai, or adopted brother, in India a relationship often more binding than that of blood. Therefore Colonel Skinner and Mr. Fraser became the "uncles" of the son, Shumsoodeen.

It was sought to prove that the deceased gentleman had had the misfortune to offend his personal friend on a point of honour upon which all Orientals are keenly sensitive. It should be explained that with Mahomedan gentlemen the persons of the female members of their families are very sacred, and it is not possible even for a man of their own race to have any acquaintance with them, much less a man of another race and religion. Even with less sensitive fathers and husbands in the West any reference to the ladies of their household by a man not acquainted with them by their *home* names, would unquestionably be strongly resented.

Now, although considerable friendship existed between Shumsoodeen and Mr. Fraser, the feeling was not so cordial as that which was entertained by his father, the only bond existing between the former two being that of a mutual devotion to field sports. It was, in fact, through the medium of their hunting expeditions that they became such close companions. In spite of the cordiality of this friendship, there was a line over which no friend, however much respected, might

with impunity venture. It was Mr. Fraser's misfortune to unwarily encroach upon strictly forbidden ground, for, so the story goes, he inquired after Shumsoodeen's sister by the name which should not be known even outside the precincts of the zenana. For this indiscretion, so it was alleged, he paid the terrible penalty of his life.

Both men were arrested. The weapon with which the murder had been committed was recovered by a diver from a well outside the Moree Bastion, of the Delhi Fort, where the assassin had thrown it, and where he directed the authorities to look for it.

Kurreem Khan was hanged on the spot where the crime was committed, Shumsoodeen being executed later, outside the Moree Gate, in sight of the deceased man's house. It was surmised that some attempt at rescue might be made, so a body of troops were marched in from a neighbouring station, and effectually put an end to any such enterprise which might have been contemplated.

Yet, in spite of this circumstantial story, which was repeated in the neighbourhood by the inhabitants with bated breath, doubts arose as to this being the correct version. It was firmly believed by many who took an active part in the investigation that Mr. Fraser had been made the victim of a conspiracy or intrigue, and this might very well have been so in a country where secret

and subtle plotting so extensively prevails. This supposition received considerable strength from the fact that Mr. Fraser's life had before been attempted, the same rather romantic and far-fetched reason being given for it. However, as I have already stated, the mystery surrounding it was never wholly cleared up.

CHAPTER XXIX

'APPROVERS'

JUST as in this country at one time there existed a system of extending pardon to those criminals who assisted the authorities by turning "Queen's evidence," so in India criminals were leniently dealt with by the Government when they offered themselves as "approvers." In neither country, however, does the system prevail as heretofore. Always this class of evidence has been looked upon as "tainted," and scarcely fair to those against whom it has been used. This has been particularly so in India, where mendacity and criminal collusion have been so rife. The system of offering rewards to anybody furnishing evidence which may lead to the conviction of a criminal or criminals has been almost discontinued in this country, as it has also in India.

At one time it used to be quite a common occurrence for criminals to save their own necks by volunteering evidence against their confederates in crime. But now, although the authorities are always pleased to receive the voluntary confessions of contrite criminals, they are by no means now prepared to exonerate them from punishment.

Doubtless many criminals have been rudely enlightened upon this point, and bitterly regretted their "loyalty" to the cause of justice. The truculent villain Milsom confessed against his more sturdy partner in crime thinking thus to save his own life, but it failed in its object, drawing another confession from Fowler out of revenge, so that the ends of justice were well served in two ways.

In India the power wielded by the police, both native and European, of accepting self-confessed criminals as "approvers," was frequently regarded with disfavour by other administrative officials. But it must be confessed that by this means, and by no other means, it was possible to obtain such inner knowledge of the vast and subtle ramifications of the many criminal fraternities which had existed there from time immemorial as was thus obtained by the authorities. The system was of the utmost possible value in dealing with and suppressing crime.

Although the evidence of an "approver" was used by the authorities against the informer's confederates, the latter was not himself exempt from punishment, being merely treated less severely than those he had informed against. Being kept in custody, the authorities had constant and easy access to him, and he was thus occasionally able to furnish information that led to the unmasking of other criminal conspiracies.

Through the medium of "approvers" the European authorities obtained intelligence of secret and dangerous criminal communities upon whose track they could not otherwise have got. For instance, what European would have suspected a band of innocent-looking bird-catchers as a gang of dangerous criminals? Yet this turned out to be the case, and their legitimate and seemingly peaceable occupation was but a shield behind which they perpetrated systematic robbery.

These criminals hail mostly from the Bombay side of the Southern Concan, and travel long distances. The legitimate side of their enterprises being ostensible, their presence raises no suspicion in the minds of most people with whom they come in contact, but the police authorities, having obtained possession of information concerning them in the manner explained, kept a keen eye upon them, and were soon able to lay hands upon the "innocent bird-catchers." It is true that they did catch birds, during the rainy season, by snaring them in the low marshes of the Concan.

The gay plumage of these birds is conveyed to Calcutta or Madras, and thence to China. In China the feathers are converted into beautiful fans, and in this shape imported back to India, where they are much in request by European ladies. Little do the latter surmise, however, that

as they fan themselves with the gaudy wings, what deeds of darkness they are thus associated with. What might not the imaginative fiction writer construct in the way of weird narrative out of the existence of these ill-omened feathers?

These bird-catchers are Chirree-Márs, of the Korwee tribe, and their language is Telugu. They go in droves, stretching right across the peninsula into the Concan. They snare kingfishers and other birds of brilliant plumage, and with the money they obtain from the sale of these they equip themselves for the criminal side of their career, namely, gang-robbery. As their business of bird-catching takes them into the swamps, they are liable to be bitten by snakes and other poisonous reptiles. In order to provide against this, they, for about three months before they set out on such expeditions, take every day an infinitesimal dose of *nux vomica*, from which, as is known, pure strychnine is obtained; they also take some of the poison with them, and declare that this renders them impervious to the bite of a poisonous reptile. Whether this be true or not, it is a fact that they give very little heed to such bites.

In addition to "approvers," there are also natives known as "mookhbirs," that is to say, givers of "khubbur," or information, who are often employed by native rulers. They are usually of the criminal classes, but their evidence

is used by the police only when it strengthens the evidence already given by a duly accepted "approver"; that is to say, their evidence is never used against anybody else when it is obtained in the first instance. They are mostly employed in native States for elucidating crime mysteries.

"Approvers" used frequently to give valuable information against their own kith and kin, which led to the effectual breaking-up of long-established criminal fraternities. For instance, an "approver" named Kunkia Naique informed against his own son, Jám Sing, the former having been leader of the gang who committed the robbery in which the "musk clue" figured, and which I have already described. The son was, therefore, also placed in the ranks of "approvers," and, being but young at the time, the authorities endeavoured to train him as a useful officer in the work of crime detection. But the "ruling passion" was too strong in the breast of the young man, and he was constantly pining to be away into the open country, there to emulate the daring deeds of his contrite and reformed parent. As the police officials had no authority to forcibly detain him, they were reluctantly compelled to let the incorrigible one go free, so discharged him.

Immediately he gained his freedom he turned his attention to thieving, joining a band of gang-robbers. At first he tried his hand at horse-steal-

ing and other midnight adventures in camps and fairs. He would appear to have prospered, for it was known some time after that he had a gang of his own.

Associated with Jám Sing was a young woman, daughter of another "approver," named Grassia, who died of cholera while on command duty. Upon his death being made known to his widow, a woman of fine presence and masculine gait, she brought her three children, two boys and a girl, to the authorities, and tearing off her necklace, exclaimed, "There—I am a widow. I may now go where I please." She then fell upon her knees, placed her right hand in turn upon the heads of her sons—a very solemn form of Hindu oath—vowed that they should follow their father's calling, that they should be looked after by their sister, and that even she, their mother, would aid them, should that be necessary. They then all left the place together. However, the two sons turned out to be of weak intellect, and were able only to engage in minor acts of theft. The daughter grew up a fine woman, and before her mother died she requested her daughter not to marry, so that she might look after her brothers. As already stated, the daughter became attached to Jám Sing and his gang.

Well, time sped, and eventually Grassia's daughter took up with a man named Oomrao, whose father and uncle had both been hanged at

Dharwar for committing dacoity with murder in the Southern Mahratta country. In deference to her mother's wishes she remained unmarried, her brothers being subject to her control. She became a determined follower of her father's former occupation, and was good enough to warn the police not to attempt to prevent or reclaim her. At the same time she made use of these significant words—"We have as yet only stolen a few horses, and robbed a sahib as he slept in his tent."

With the passing away of the old members of the gang, who had become "approvers," had gone all fear of the police, and the traditions of past exploits were their pride, and the burden of their songs. Grassia's daughter—so she was always known to the police—was the head of the gang, and she aspired to emulate the exploits of the famous Tumbôlin, whom I have described in a previous chapter.

Now it so happened that Oomrao married the beautiful cousin of the Amazonian leader of his gang, but his bride was shortly after abducted by the head of another gang, who warned the husband not to attempt to rescue her, or he might be murdered. This was rather a fortunate occurrence for the authorities, inasmuch as Oomrao, enraged at the loss of his wife, offered himself as an "approver" if the police would assist him in regaining possession of his partner. It being

deemed advisable to obtain fresh "approvers," this offer was accepted, and soon after Oomrao's wife was recovered from the possession of her abductor. She, however, was reluctant to return to her husband, as the latter had become "an odious 'approver.'" Also, if she returned under such circumstances, she would not have the dresses, ornaments, and the freedom and amusements which she otherwise enjoyed. She therefore set herself to try to seduce her husband from his determination to carry out his promise to the authorities, and failing in her entreaties, which she tried first, she then resorted to taunts, calling him a despicable traitor.

However, Oomrao was as good as his word, and made a full confession of his own career, necessarily incriminating many others, not only members of the gang of which he had himself been a member, but also the members of other gangs. All his statements stood the test of timely investigation, and so widespread were the revelations, and the operations which were set in motion in consequence of them, that Grassia's daughter found it expedient to hold for the time being her ambitious hand.

Many of Oomrao's confederates were found to be sons and relatives of former gangs of the same tribe, while others were already in custody on suspicion of having committed dacoity. One small gang involved in this confession had

actually already been convicted in the Court at Indore by the Agent of the Governor-General for the Central India States, they having committed a dacoity in which he, Oomrao, was himself concerned. These convicted dacoits having been apprised of their former confederate's confession, two or three of their number also confessed, when further useful revelations were made.

The importance of Oomrao's confession could not very well be over-estimated, for it laid bare the existence of a new generation of dacoits, and enabled the police to practically destroy them in detail. It seemed scarcely possible that all these revelations should have been brought about by nothing more important than a single individual having his wife stolen from him, yet such was the case. That same wife, too, died soon after the confession was made, but from what cause was not made clear. The man who abducted her continued at large, full of wrath for the loss of his prize. Grassia's daughter also retained her liberty, and as to whether she was ever afterwards captured the records do not, so far as I can discover, concern themselves.

After serving ten years' imprisonment Oomrao was released, but, fearing the vengeance of his people, asked to be kept in custody under approvership. The authorities, however, could not see their way to granting this request, so Oomrao went free. It was a pity he could not have been

detained as he requested, inasmuch as he eventually returned to his former career of dacoity.

The foregoing narrative serves well to demonstrate how very useful, in the service of crime-suppression in India, was, and is, the much-criticized system of approvership.

CHAPTER XXX

PORT BLAIR

I NOW propose to give some particulars of life at Port Blair, to which retired spot so many Indian criminals are sent, some never to return to their native shores. At the time of which I write, namely, the official year 1899–1900, the penal settlement of the Andaman Islands, which, as we have seen, succeeded that of Singapore, consisted of the following districts, sub-divisions, stations, and villages—

NORTHERN DISTRICT.

Wimberleygunj Sub-Division.

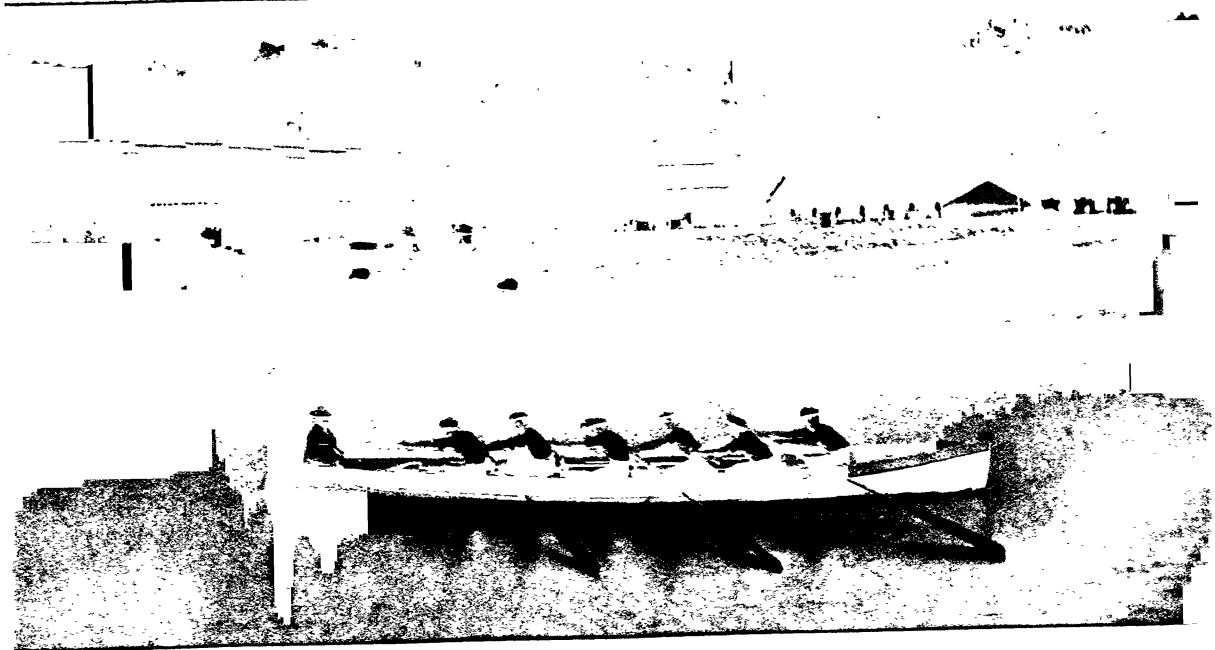
Chatham Island.
Hope Town.
Shore Point.
North Bay.
Mount Harriett.
Bamboo Flat.
Stewartgunj.
Wimberleygunj.
Goplakabang.
Kadakachang.

Haddo Sub-Division.

Haddo.
Phœnix Bay.
Aberdeen.
South Point (village).
Dudh Line.
Middle Point.
Jungli Ghât.

Ross Sub-Division.

Ross Island.
Female Jail (South Point).
Bajajagda.
Bindraban.
Anikhet.
Muttra.
Kalatang.
Namunaghur Station.



BOAT HARBOUR AT VIPER ISLAND, PORT BLAIR.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT.

Garacherama Sub-Division.	*Viper Sub-Division.*
Tea Garden, Navy Bat.	Viper Island.
Niagaon.	Dundas Point.
Corbyn's Cove (South).	Mithakhari.
Brookesabad.	Namunaghar Village.
Birchganj.	Cadellgunj.
Ranguchang.	Ograbrarail.
Bumlitan.	Chouldari.
Austenabad.	Dhanikhari.
School Line.	Port Mouat.
Bhagelsingpura.	Manglutan.
Garacherama.	Hobdaypore.
Protheroepur.	Tusonabad.
Pahargaon.	Manpur.
Minnie Bay.	Homfraygunj.
Lamba Line.	Templegunj.
Taylerabad.	

The daily average number of convicts was 11,448, and the different religions consisted of—Christians (39), Mahomedans (2,957), Hindus (6,633), Buddhists (1,755), and other religions (81). At the close of the year there were 11,464 convicts present at the settlement, eighty-five per cent. of whom were life-convicts. Eight convicts were released under the mark system rules, 194 under the 20 years' rule, and 29 under the 25 years' rule for dacoits; 34 invalids, whose health had broken down, were released; also two life-convicts for good conduct and devotion in the service of the Government. Thirty women were released in the ordinary course along with their husbands, and six men were specially released, three on behalf

of the Maharaj of Cooch Behar, two of the Alirajpur State, and one by order of the Punjab Government. These thirty-six convicts had put in a period ranging from eight to twenty-two years in imprisonment.

The estimated value of the jail manufactures was Rs. 351,529, an increase of Rs. 32,000 odd on the previous year. The manufactures consisted mainly of cotton clothing and blankets.

The number of offences committed during the year was 2,905, an increase of 141 over those of the previous year. Those of the males mostly came under the headings, "Interrupting order and discipline," "Disobedience of orders," and "Idleness and negligence in work"; those of the women were connected with the work in the weaving-room. During the year there were eighty-eight applications made to the Superintendent for permission to marry, fifty of which were sanctioned. The remainder were refused for the following reasons—"Indian husband declining to divorce," "Bad local conduct of applicants," "Difference in caste," "At request of one of the applicants," "Death of one of the parties," "Ineligible for marriage," "Male applicant being hereditary dacoit," "Age limit," "Indian husband not traceable," and other reasons.

For purposes of food, 539 cattle were slain, and 1,248 sheep. Altogether there was an aggregate increase of cleared land, including valley, hill, and grazing land. The cultivated land in-

cluded 5,245 acres of tea, Liberian coffee, cocoa, *musa textilis*, cocoanuts, vegetables, and other Government plantations. Seventy-eight self-supporters obtained tickets to cultivate land, 253 applications for fresh land were granted, and 1,384 transfers of pottahs sanctioned. The total number of cultivators, free and convict, was 1,948, and their holdings amounted to 6,203 acres, giving an average of three and a third acres per head. The cost of each convict for the year worked out at slightly more than Rs. 81 (about £5 8*s*.). Purchases were made for use in the settlement from self-supporters and free cultivators to the gross value of Rs. 106,744.

Sheep-breeding operations were continued throughout the year, 525 ewes being imported, and 10 added from the local stock. Of this number 146 died and 40 were weeded out. On the 1st of April there were 495 ewes on the books. One hundred and eighty-one lambs were born, 14 of which died. There were also 79 removals for other reasons, and the stock in hand on the 1st of April was 175 lambs. Not half the ewes proved prolific.

To increase the birth-rate fresh rams were imported, and only young and healthy ewes left in the flock. An attempt was made to systemize the breeding operations, but it proved a failure, so the rams were allowed to run with the ewes for some considerable time, as is the practice with Indian shepherds. An attempt was also made to inter-

breed between the Patna ram and the Madras ewe, and *vice versâ*, but this likewise proved a failure, each particular breed exhibiting a predilection for its own special kind.

Forest clearing and land reclamation are constantly in progress at the settlement. During the year in question 29 acres of maritime swamp in the Brigade Creek Forest Reserve were re-stocked with mangrove seedlings, including a number of *Cereops Candolleana* seedlings. Altogether 69,520 seedlings were planted, three feet apart, in lines of six feet apart. Thus, up to the 30th of June, 1900, 679,286 seedlings had been planted over an area of 281 acres, which nearly completed the area of maritime swamp in the Forest Reserve of Brigade Creek that required re-stocking.

The vessels in the Marine Department consisted of 6 steam launches, 1 steam cutter, 1 steam gig, 1 iron hulk, 13 lighters, 1 heave-up boat, 109 boats for the use of officers and subordinates; Military Department—ferries, dâk, horse, and water conveyance, etc., 29 fishing canoes, and 8 jetty dinghies. It should be borne in mind that the welfare of the settlement depends to a great extent on these vessels being kept in good serviceable condition. The free native establishment of the steam launches comprised 5 syrangs, 5 engine-drivers, 5 stokers, and 10 lascars; in addition to which there were employed on the vessels 32 convicts, as lascars and stokers; employed in the Marine Department yard were 7 self-supporters,

2 ex-convicts, and 181 labouring convicts, as carpenters, blacksmiths, painters, caulkers, etc. The building of new craft is constantly in progress, and during the year in question one 225-ton lighter was built, also 5 officers' boats, 4 fishing canoes, 1 dâk boat, 1 cargo boat, and 12 new buoys. In addition 173 vessels of all classes were repaired.

The R.I.M.S. *Minto*, *Mayo*, and *Elphinstone* acted as station steamers during the year. The *Mayo* paid two visits to the Nicobars, one in August and the other in September; the *Elphinstone* also paid two visits to the Nicobars, in the months of January and February. She subsequently made a tour round the Andamans, having on board the Superintendent and party. During the voyage she struck an uncharted rock off North Reef Island, to the north of Interview Island, her stern post being carried away, and one of the blades of her propeller damaged. In consequence of this she had to proceed to Calcutta to be overhauled and repaired. The R.I.M.S. *Canning* called at the settlement three times, once bringing convicts from Bombay, once for timber for the Forest Department, and on the third occasion bringing the relief of the Native Infantry Detachment. The R.I.M.S. *Clive* paid four visits to the settlement, the first with a detachment of British Infantry from Calicut, the second from Karachi *viâ* Cannanore and Calicut for coal, the third with convalescent troops bound for Madras, and the fourth for no particular purpose. The

R.I.M.S. *Dalhousie* touched at the port on her way from Rangoon to Calcutta in December.

A private steam yacht, the *Victoria*, from Colombo, also called, remaining there two days. Six native vessels called at Port Blair, either to obtain permission to visit the Nicobars, or to take port clearances on leaving the islands.

No wrecks were reported on the Andaman coast during the year.

The total number of admissions to the hospital during the year was 21,873, and the number of deaths 452. In addition to the latter there were 25 deaths outside the hospital, including executions (8), homicides (6), suicides (2), accidents (1), arsenic poisoning (1), and killed by Jarawas (1).

About 180 Andamanese were maintained at Homes at Haddo, Aberdeen, Tarachang, and other places, being employed in collecting edible birds'-nests, manufacturing trepang, collecting jungle produce, and hunting for runaway convicts. The Homes were occasionally visited by Andamanese from distant parts, who would report various happenings, such as the death of a chief, or other members of their community. One trip was made round the Andaman coast, when it was discovered that the aborigines exist in some numbers in the North Island, and that the Akakora tribe is a separate tribe, and not, as has been hitherto maintained, a sect of the Aka Chariar tribe. Several encampments and huts of this tribe, new to research, were found in Paget



ABERDEEN JETTY, SHOWING COCO NUT PLANTATION IN RECLAIMED SWAMP LAND,

ANDAMAN ISLANDS.

Island, off the north-west coast of the North Andaman.

In April 1899 the Andamanese trackers shot a runaway convict at Sipi Ghat, as he refused to give himself up, and threatened them. In the following November two more were similarly captured, but a third was reported killed by the Jarawas (already referred to). Searching for escaped convicts went on at intervals throughout the year. In January a party of Andamanese were sent to the Labyrinth Islands in the steam launch *Bess* to aid the R.I.M.S. *Elphinstone* in searching for escaped convicts. Two of the runaways were seen on a raft near North Sentinel, and it was a race between the steam cutter of the *Elphinstone* and the *Bess* which effected the capture. The cutter won.

Upon one occasion a party of 14 Ongés paid a visit to Port Blair in their own canoes, and were liberally supplied with presents on leaving. Later 8 Ongés, 5 men, 1 woman, 1 girl, and 1 boy, arrived at Port Mouat in an outrigger canoe, this being the first occasion that any females of the tribe had ventured near the place, it being the custom of the men to drop them at Cinque Islands while on their way to Port Blair. The *entente cordiale* exists between the inhabitants of the settlement and the surrounding native tribes, with the exception of the Jarawas, who are irreconcilable. In consequence of the churlish reception of a party who landed at Choura Island, four of

the natives were taken away to Port Blair as a lesson, being subsequently, however, returned to their homes.

A good deal of trouble is given by the Chinese, who hang round the settlement, and endeavour to carry on a traffic with the convicts in arrack. Whenever they are caught at this they are rigorously punished.

CHAPTER XXXI

PORT BLAIR (*continued*)

THE police force of Port Blair, under the command of Captain L. B. Walton, at the end of the year in question numbered 631, being 12 short of the prescribed strength. It was a mixed force, made up of Dogras, Hindustani Hindus, Mahomedans, Punjabi Hindus, Sikhs, and one European. A scheme of re-organization, however, was under consideration, with a view to the formation of class companies, so that each company would be composed of the same caste, being all Sikhs, all Mahomedans, all Dogras, and so on, as the case may be.

Eighty-two recruits were enlisted during the year, of all castes mentioned above. These enlistments were made by members of the force while on leave and furlough in India. The average height of recruits was five feet, seven and a half inches, and the chest measurement thirty-four inches. The various grades consisted of inspectors, subadars, jemadars, sergeants, naiks, and constables. During the year there were 61 casualties and resignations, made up of 12 deaths,

39 invalids, 2 dismissals, 1 transfer, and 7 resignations. The two dismissals were respectively for gambling and overstaying authorized leave of absence. Fifty-five were accused of various offences, consisting of irregularity on guard, neglect of duty, absence without leave, creating a disturbance, disobedience of orders, disrespect, insubordination, criminal conviction, assault, gambling, making a false charge, drunkenness, misappropriation, and falsehood.

On the whole, however, the discipline in the force was excellent.

The details of the serious crimes committed by the convicts, such as murder and attempted murder, are very striking, and it will be worth our while to look into some of the cases.

On the 1st of April, 1899, Life-Convict Vellayudhen murdered another life-convict, named Khuda Baksh, near the village of Cadellgunj. It appeared that the two men first became acquainted with each other between eight and ten years previously, when Khuda Baksh was a youth in the habitual recipient gang, and his slayer was a petty officer in charge of the gang. About four years later the accused obtained his self-supporter's ticket—a kind of ticket-of-leave—and was posted to Cadellgunj as a cultivator; about a year later the deceased was similarly posted to the same village, and both men were seen to be on very friendly terms. A few days before the

murder a dispute arose between them concerning some monetary transaction, and on the 1st of April, while the deceased was grazing his bullocks in his fields, the accused, unobserved, approached the deceased and assaulted him severely with his *dah*—a large curved knife—from the effects of which the deceased died at once. The accused, however, declared that he neither killed the deceased, nor had he ever had any monetary dispute with him. He was, nevertheless, convicted and sentenced to death by the Additional Sessions Judge, and the sentence being confirmed by the Court of Reference, the execution was duly carried out.

Life-Convict Sityan was accused of attempted murder under the following circumstances. The accused and six other convicts were employed in making awnings, sails, etc., under a petty officer named Gani, in the Marine Godown, Phœnix Bay.

On the morning of the 6th of May, 1899, this file commenced work as usual, and after they had been at work for about half-an-hour Gani, noticing that accused was idling, told him to do certain work at another part of the awning. Accused refused to obey, stating that he had not completed what he had been first ordered to do. Gani then sent for the tindal, and reported to him what had occurred. The tindal ordered the accused to obey Gani's directions, but as he refused to do so,

he took him, with the object of reporting him, to Mr. Bonig, the Assistant Harbour Master, but finding that the latter was absent from the station that morning, the accused was ordered to go back to his work and obey the orders of his petty officer.

Soon after he returned to work the accused, before any one had time to suspect and prevent him, picked up a knife and stabbed Gani in the right side with it. He was at once seized by some convicts before he could repeat the blow. At his trial the accused denied that he intentionally injured Gani, but that, provoked by the treatment he had received, he lost his temper and unintentionally wounded the officer. This explanation was not accepted by the authorities, and the prisoner was sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment, to take effect after the expiration of the sentence he was then undergoing.

Life-Convict Kati Ram was accused of the murder of Convict Mangli, on the night of the 12th of May, 1899.

The deceased was a convict petty officer employed at the District Godown at Phœnix Bay, and the accused was a labouring convict employed under him. They both slept at night in the verandah of that building with five others, and at 9 p.m. of the 12th of May, it being accused's turn to go on duty as pahrawalla, deceased caused a convict named Gadhwa, who had been on duty

since 6 p.m., to be relieved, and accused was posted in his place. About 10 p.m., while the deceased was sleeping, the accused assaulted him severely with a rice-pounder, from the effects of which he died.

The alleged cause of the attack was that the deceased, Mangli, had taken a large sum of money which the accused had hoarded, and that the latter was further made to suffer through the deceased causing his reduction of class and transfer to coolie work at the limekilns for certain breaches of discipline reported by him. The defence set up by the accused was that the charge was false, and was brought against him by other convicts out of spite. He was, however, convicted and sentenced to death, and the sentence being confirmed by the Court of Reference, the execution was duly carried out on the 11th of August, 1899.

Ex-Convict Sheopal was accused, under Section 307 of the Indian Penal Code, of an attempt to murder Mussamat Khargo, an ex-convict woman living in the same village as himself.

It was shown that the accused lived in a hut immediately behind that of the woman in question. At about 7 p.m. of the 20th of July an alarm of fire was raised at the hut of the accused, a portion of the roof having caught fire, but it was soon extinguished. The accused then charged the female, Khargo, with having caused the fire. The complaint was at once inquired into by the

police, and by the Sub-Divisional Officer, with the result that no case was made out against Khargo. At about 10 a.m. the next day, while Khargo was engaged in front of her house in filling a basket with cow-dung, she felt some one pressing down her shoulder in order to prevent her from rising, and on discovering that it was accused, and that he held a *dah* in his other hand, she raised her right arm over her head. On this he struck her several blows on the head with the weapon.

The immediate cause of the attack was that Khargo had enraged him by abusing him, and telling him she would get him punished for falsely accusing her of having set fire to his hut. The accused confessed that he intended to kill Khargo when he struck her with his weapon, and being convicted of attempt to murder, was sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment.

Life-Convict Sundar was charged with an attempt to murder Convict Ram Deb Nath, the facts being as follows—

On the 10th of August the accused was under treatment in Bamboo Flat Hospital for dysentery; he had been in the hospital about seventeen days, when he was discharged and sent back to his station, but returned the following morning to the hospital on the plea that he was still suffering from the same disease. He was accordingly informed by the hospital assistant, at about

10 a.m., that if, on examining his stools, his statement was found to be untrue, he would be sent to the Sub-Divisional Officer's Court for punishment. He was again told, about three hours later, by the compounder, Ram Deb Nath, that his stool that day would be kept and shown to the hospital assistant at 3 p.m. At 2 p.m., when the compounder was lying asleep on his cot, the accused committed a murderous assault upon him with a crutch, which he used with such force as to break it in pieces, before he could be seized and prevented from carrying out his avowed intention of causing the compounder's death.

The accused admitted, both before the Committing Magistrate and the Sessions Court, that he had committed the assault with the intention of killing Ram Deb Nath, giving as his reason that he felt aggrieved at being discharged from hospital on the previous day while he was still suffering from dysentery, and that Ram Deb Nath had caused his stool to be thrown away, in consequence of which the medical officer regarded him as cured, and ordered him to be discharged and sent back to his station. In this case, although no death had taken place, the accused was sentenced to be hanged, and the sentence being confirmed by the Court of Reference, the prisoner was duly executed on the 4th of November, 1899.

I find that many such executions have taken

place, where no actual murder has been committed, a proceeding which it is difficult to understand. Such extreme measures are not justified by expediency, nor can they be defended on any other grounds.

Life-Convict Nga Su Aung was accused with having caused the death of Convict Hmwe Aung at Garacherama with an axe. The facts were as follows—

On the 10th of April the accused and the deceased were employed in a file consisting of nine convicts in the firewood-cutting gang at Garacherama swamp, when about 1 p.m. the convicts who were working with the accused and deceased heard the sound of a heavy splash behind them. One of the convicts at once turned round to see what had happened, when he saw deceased lying in the swamp with his load of wood under his back, and with a wound on his head, while the accused was standing over him with his axe in the act of striking a blow. Before he could be prevented the accused struck the blow, which fell on the right shoulder of the deceased, who then lay motionless. Accused at once made off in the direction of the hill.

In his defence the prisoner denied all knowledge of the murder, and stated that he could not account for the crime. He declared that he had had no quarrel with the deceased, and that his escape on the day of the murder took place about

an hour before the murder happened. He stated that his object in escaping that day was in order to avoid having to work. He was tried by the Additional Sessions Judge, who refused to credit his story; in the end the prisoner was found guilty and sentenced to death, the execution being carried out on the 10th of November, 1899.

CHAPTER XXXII

PORT BLAIR (*conclusion*)

TAKING the other side of the picture, we find convicts assisting the authorities in the maintenance of order and the prevention of bloodshed, and being rewarded therefor.

Convict Roy Singh, for instance, was released after twenty-one years in imprisonment, and twenty years and two months in transportation, for gallant conduct in arresting a would-be murderer; and Convict Kheta, after twenty-four years and seven months in imprisonment, and twenty-four years in transportation, for gallant conduct in arresting a lunatic when attempting to murder a second peon.

Convict Hemta was released after eighteen years and one month in imprisonment, and seventeen years and three months in transportation, for gallant conduct in seizing Convict Somerah, who attempted to murder his petty officer with an adze; Convict Lalu was released after nineteen years and eight months in imprisonment, and eighteen years and eight months in transportation, for gallant conduct in seizing a murderer who was armed with an axe; for exceptionally courageous

conduct in capturing an escaped convict armed with a *dah*, after receiving five severe and dangerous wounds, Convict Jagar Singh was released, he having served fifteen years and one month in imprisonment, and thirteen years and eleven months in transportation.

A female convict named Shakuran was released after serving sixteen years and eight months in imprisonment, and sixteen years and four months in transportation, for being prominent in saving the lives of six men who were washed ashore from the R.I.M.S. *Enterprise*, when that vessel was wrecked off the coast at South Point on the 2nd of November, 1891, during a cyclone; a life-convict named Jafir was also released, after serving nineteen years and four months in imprisonment, and eighteen years and one month in transportation, for courageous conduct in apprehending a boy of the Jeru tribe, who, in a quarrel, shot dead an Andamanese named Jarako, and absconded into the interior of North Andaman.

Of escapes and attempts to escape there were a good many.

On the evening of the 5th of January, 1900, three convicts belonging to the firewood-cutting file escaped from Namunaghar. Two of them were recaptured by the R.I.M.S. *Elphinstone* on the 17th, when that vessel was sent out in search of another escape of six convicts from Goplakabang. At 5 a.m. on the morning of the 10th of January,

1900, the six convicts above referred to made their escape, all of whom were deported from the North-Western Provinces. Search-parties were sent out, and the R.I.M.S. *Elphinstone* was detailed to cruise round the Andamans. When the vessel was nearing Tarmugli Island, on the west coast, a small raft was discerned, and two of the escaped men from Namunaghar were picked up, but no trace of the Goplakabang escapes could be found. The Goplakabang party subsequently gave themselves up at the North Bay Salt Pans.

On the 23rd of February, in the same year, three men effected their escape from Dundas Point, headed by Mir Hawas, who, on a previous occasion, got away to Burma, where he was recaptured and sent back to Port Blair. They were all recaptured shortly after. This escape was due to carelessness, and those responsible were accordingly punished.

In April a runaway named Ganesh was found near Sipi Ghât, consuming a portion of a calf which he had stolen from a village. As he refused to surrender, and threatened the Andamanese who encountered him, they shot him. On the 29th of August two escaped prisoners were discovered in Constance Bay, and as one of them resisted capture he was shot in the leg. In November two other runaways were recaptured by Andamanese, and a third, who had escaped with one of the two,

was reported to have been killed in the jungle by Jarawas.

A notable escape occurred on the 14th of January, 1901, when five Burmans got away from Phœnix Bay.

On the 21st seven Hindustanis escaped from the tea garden at Navy Bay, and joined the Burmans.

Both parties made their way to Malay Tapu, one of the Labyrinth Islands, where they met a party of Andamanese on the coast, and forcibly took a canoe away from them. They maltreated one of the natives in a most brutal manner. The men then put off in the canoe, and succeeded in landing safely on South Sentinel Island. The police sent out in the R.I.M.S. *Elphinstone* to cruise round the south coasts of the islands in search of them, succeeded in capturing ten of the number and bringing them back to Port Blair. The remaining two were said to have left South Sentinel the day before the police arrived on a raft they had constructed for the purpose. As to what eventually became of them there appears to be no information.

I have already referred to the difficulties experienced by the authorities in dealing with the savage Jarawas, and I now propose to relate in detail a tragic incident which occurred in 1902 during a fight with some members of this tribe.

The Jarawas had been giving rather more

trouble than usual, making raids on the outskirts of the settlement during the cold season, so it was decided to adopt some rigorous measures to put an end to this nuisance.

In November 1901 and January 1902 the Jarawas raided the Forest Department gangs working at Jatang, about twenty-five miles north of Port Blair, killing and wounding convicts at their work. A party was thereupon organized for the purpose of trying to discover their haunts in the jungles, the officials detailed for the duty being Mr. Percy Vaux, officer in charge of the Andamanese, Mr. Bonig, Assistant Harbour Master, and Mr. C. C. Rogers, Deputy Conservator of Forests. They were accompanied by men of the Andaman Military Police Force and picked Andamanese trackers.

On the 25th of January, therefore, Mr. Vaux set out, making his way along the west coast of South Andaman, and succeeded in the difficult operation of locating the camps and paths of the Jarawas in the hills above Bilap Bay, about eight miles north of Port Campbell. Upon the advice of the Andamanese he had with him he then proceeded northwards to Port Anson, and thence to Pochang, in the South Andaman, at the southern extremity of that harbour. Here, with much skill and difficulty, he discovered the main Jarawa track running southwards from the harbour, and also the chief place of residence of the Jarawas

during the rains. Having accomplished this, Mr. Vaux returned to Port Blair, bringing with him a much fuller report concerning this practically unknown tribe than had hitherto been made.

In the meantime Mr. Rogers was endeavouring to work his way direct from Jatang, on the east, across the South Andaman to Ike Bay, on the west coast, right athwart the country believed to be occupied by the Jarawas. Mr. Vaux was then directed to join with Mr. Rogers and make further investigations at Pochang, and after ascertaining that the main Jarawa path led southwards beyond Dochang indefinitely, they returned to Port Blair.

So far the expedition had accomplished a part of the purpose it set out upon, locating the place from whence the raiding-parties came, and discovering that the object of such raids was to procure iron and iron implements, and not, as had hitherto been believed, food and water.

On the 17th of February the party was reorganized, and now consisted of Mr. Vaux, Mr. Bonig, Mr. Rogers, and twelve police and Andamanese. The general object now aimed at was to discover the southern termination of the main Jarawa path, and to drive the Jarawa marauders northwards along it, and away from the neighbourhood of the settlement. The start was made, as before, along the west coast, and, following the advice of the Andamanese, the jungles about Island Bay were

searched for ten miles north and north-east, respectively, of the outlying villages of Templeganj and Anikhet. For the purpose of accomplishing this difficult task the party was split up into three, each detachment being in charge of one of the three European gentlemen named.

In the evening Mr. Vaux came to a hunting-camp of the Jarawas, and, judging from its position and distance from the chief home of the tribe at Pochang, he inferred that the party's real object was a raid on the settlement villages. Therefore, waiting until the moon arose, he successfully rushed the camp, the attack being so sudden and unexpected that the Jarawas were too frightened even to shoot.

It might, perhaps, be here explained that the Jarawas fight with the primitive implement a bow-and-arrow; they are, however, very expert in its use, and make of it a deadly weapon, as will presently be only too forcibly demonstrated.

In the camp was found a large new Forest Department adze, which had evidently been stolen upon the occasion of one of their raids. In their headlong flight the Jarawas also left behind a baby and a small girl, who were sent to Port Anson, to the Andamanese Home there.

Mr. Vaux, still acting on the advice of the Andamanese with him, then proceeded again to Pochang, and followed the main Jarawa track southwards steadily. The party continued for

about fifteen miles beyond Pochang, in a south-easterly direction, to Wibtang, a point about six miles west of Port Meadows, and some eighteen miles from Jatang, which proved that the chief Jarawa haunt was the jungle between the mouth of Shoal Bay and Port Anson. At Wibtang an occupied hunting-camp was found to be blocking the way, and it was decided to rush this at night, in the same manner as the previous attack had been made. By this time Mr. Vaux had been joined by Mr. Rogers and Mr. Bonig, and the party appointed to make the raid consisted of these three gentlemen, one police constable, sixteen Andamanese, and three servants, making twenty-three men in all.

At 10 p.m. on the 24th of February, after the moon had risen, therefore, the Jarawa camp was rushed. Mr. Vaux got in first, and was closely followed by Messrs. Rogers and Bonig, the Andamanese coming up immediately behind. Again the suddenness of the attack partly paralyzed the Jarawas, and there was no real resistance. But, alas! as Mr. Vaux was stooping down in a hut, grappling with two Jarawas, his foot disturbed the smouldering embers of a fire, which immediately blazed up, exposing him to the view of a man in another hut, who shot two arrows at him and decamped. These were the only arrows shot in the whole affair, but one of them, a barbed iron-headed weapon, entered Mr. Vaux on the

left side, between the ninth and tenth ribs, with great force, killing him almost immediately.

Next morning, as soon as it was daylight, the body was with much difficulty carried back through the jungle to Pochang and Port Anson, reaching the harbour in the evening, whence the body was conveyed in the steam launch *Belle* through Middle Strait to Port Blair, arriving about midnight on the 25th of February. This melancholy journey through the jungle was accomplished with much skill and speed by Mr. Rogers, one of the party being slightly wounded by a couple of Jarawas on the way, who, however, decamped when fired on. Mr. Bonig also very skilfully managed the steam launch *Belle* through so narrow a passage as Middle Strait at night.

It may at once be stated that in the end the object of the expedition was entirely accomplished. The death, however, of Mr. Vaux is the more deplorable from the fact that this sacrifice need not have been made. It was due to Mr. Vaux's own error of judgment in not letting the Andamanese first rush into the camp that lost him his life. It was ascertained, though, that there existed a good reason for this error, inasmuch as Mr. Vaux feared that if he did so the Andamanese accompanying him would kill all the men they could, and that the rest would escape with most of their weapons and stolen property. It was to avoid this that he determined to go before them

when the word was given to attack, and thus he lost his life in a laudable, though mistaken, attempt to save bloodshed.

The foregoing statistics and details afford a sufficiently striking picture of the lives led by European officials at Port Blair, as well as by those natives of India who, for their deeds of lawlessness, have been sent to the distant land of expiation in "prison ships" across the "black water."

THE END

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