CHAPTER VI.

UNDISCOVERED MURDER, UNPUNISHED MURDER, AND KIDNAPPING.

I call to mind three very remarkable instances of undoubted murder, duly reported, which, despite the strong suspicion that there was against certain individuals, had finally to be struck off the register. Every police officer of superior grade must have encountered hundreds of such hard nuts to crack, and had to abandon them after months, or sometimes years, of unremitting watchfulness. Again, however, I maintain that the police are no more to be blamed in India than their much more intelligent and highly-trained confrères in England, working among a more civilised population, and are aided by telegraphs and railways in every direction. It is all very well to say "murder will out," but it by no means follows that the murderer must be found out. A considerable percentage of murderers always have defied, and always will defy, detection, and if the perpetrators bear the brand of Cain upon their brows, it is invisible to human eyes.

The first instance—which included kidnapping—occurred some twenty-five years ago on the confines
of a Mahomedan state near Bombay, where there was a constant demand for concubines among the higher and more powerful Mahomedans. At the time I speak of, and notably in the native state I refer to, the kidnapping of women from adjacent British territory was common. No case, however, has occurred for many years.

Balloo was a strapping young Mahratta residing in a small village on the confines of the state in question. He married almost a child-wife, whom he left with his mother and family while he went to Bombay to seek employment. He got on the G. I. P. Railway, and finally by good conduct was promoted to the post of gatekeeper. All this time he regularly remitted small sums for his wife's expenses, and occasionally received a letter from her written by the village koolkarnee (accountant).

Six months having passed without his having received any news, he became uneasy, and got a letter written to the "patel," or head man, of his village, asking for intelligence. The reply was that his wife was for the time absent from the village on a visit to her own mother, but would return shortly. Balloo did not quite like this, and with some difficulty obtaining leave, set out to go home and bring his wife back with him. Arrived at his village he found his wife absent, and his mother told him that she had been sent for by her mother a couple of months before.

Meantime, Balloo heard in the village an unpleasant rumour that about the time his wife left, a
Mahomedan of some rank from the neighbouring state had visited the village and been entertained for some days by the patel. Balloo interviewed the patel the next morning, who said his wife was coming back that very day, proposed that they should go out to meet her as far as the next village. Now the way to that village ran through some very wild country and densely-wooded ravines. The simple fellow consented and then and there the pair started off. The patel returned in the evening and gave out that Balloo having met his wife had returned with her to her mother's house, and was afterwards going to take her with him to his place on the railway.

No suspicion whatever was excited, at the time, for the patel's story was plausible and probable enough; but a few months afterwards, in the hot season, a gowlee (herdsman) came upon a human skeleton in this particular jungle, the skull of which was fractured in pieces. Some half-rotten rags on the bones were identified by his mother as being those that Balloo went away in, she also pointed to a fractured front tooth which Balloo was known to have. Suspicion, of course, fell on the patel, who stoutly denied his guilt, but his former plausible tale was soon proved to be false in every way. Then came out the fact that two or three months before, at about the time the wealthy Mahomedan had visited the village, and Balloo's wife had also disappeared from the scene, the patel had been somewhat flush of cash, had bought cattle,
had paid off debts, and seemed generally in flourishing circumstances.

Inquiries were then set on foot in the neighbouring state through the Political Agent, who employed Bombay detectives; who, after incredible difficulty, ascertained that Balloo's wife was living as one of the concubines of the Nawab's own uncle.

The greatest difficulties were, of course, thrown in our way by the Nawab's "durbar,"* so that when the patel was tried before the sessions, the Judge felt justified in receiving secondary evidence of Balloo's wife being alive and of where she was. Not a single reliable witness, however, could be obtained from the Native State! The Judge convicted the patel, but the "Sudder," or high court, reversed the conviction. The Judge, however, addressed a letter to the Government, recounting the circumstances, and there being several other serious matters pending against the same Nawab, Government took vigorous steps, which resulted not only in the restoration of Balloo's wife to her family, but in the release of some two hundred other women similarly kidnapped from British territory or brought over from Zanzibar.

It subsequently came out pretty clearly that the patel received some three hundred rupees from the agent of the then Nawab's uncle for kidnapping Balloo's wife. No doubt he counted on Balloo's staying away till there should be time for it to be rumoured with some plausibility that the girl had gone off of her own accord. Balloo's return and his

Executive officer of the State.
pertinacity drove the patel to desperation, so he knocked poor Balloo on the head at the first suitable spot they came to during their last walk. This, however, is conjecture. In this particular case, at any rate, the police did their level best, and I remember at the time I thought, with the Judge, that they deserved considerable credit.

THE MARWARI MYSTERY.

The second case of undiscovered murder that I shall relate can be very briefly told. In a certain village there resided an old Marwari money-lender, believed to be very wealthy, and nearly every farmer near was in his books. He had a deed-box of bulky dimensions, visible to every one from the outer shop. Cash or notes he could produce to any amount, but he brought them from a secret hiding-place, known to no one, in an inner chamber. He slept in that room, which was the corner room of his adobe-built house. A great r skinflint and a more offensive old villain never lived. He possessed no friends, and every creditor far and near detested him.

His grand-daughter, a widow of about twenty-five, kept house for him. She slept in the corner room of the opposite side of his house. Two men (Purdèsees) as his private guard slept in an out-house adjacent. One midnight, the grand-daughter, hearing some noise from the old man's room, lit an oil light, and was about to enter his bed-room, when the door
opened and her grandfather appeared, blood pouring from his mouth and nostrils, his eyes protruding; he fell right on to her, extinguishing the light. The Purdesees rushed in just in time to hear their master utter a few inarticulate sounds, before he died.

There was a police post about three miles off, so the police were quickly on the spot. It was found that a hole had been made in the adobe wall near the old man's bed large enough to admit the passage of a man. There were no signs of a struggle, except that the old man's mattress was saturated with blood. A trap-door in the floor was still locked, and when opened, the old man's bags of rupees, a tin box containing a large sum in currency notes, and a bundle of jewellery of considerable value were revealed. Nothing had been touched, and the deed-box was also unopened.

The post-mortem examination showed that the poor wretch had been partially smothered, and that by the knees of his assailant his ribs were mostly fractured and violently forced into his lungs; the wonder was how he could ever have risen again. Not the faintest clue was obtained. He was at enmity with all and every one, but no particular individuals had a special grudge against him. There was nothing to show that robbery had been intended.

The police took possession of the house, filled up the hole in the wall, and then took up their abode in the place, carefully avoiding, however, the old man's
room. They had been there some fourteen days when the room was entered in precisely the same manner and place, disgusting evidence of the entry being left behind. Intense personal hatred was, in my opinion, the motive for the crime, but no trace whatever of the criminals was discovered, nor was any one even suspected. The police, of course, who were grievously to blame in not detecting the second entry, were severely punished for their negligence.

**MURDER, SUICIDE, OR ACCIDENT?**

The third and last doubtful case I shall narrate, though it was generally believed to have been a murder, may, I have always thought, have been an accident or a suicide. It was a peculiar case, because two Europeans were dragged into it.

I was at the well-known fair-weather port Hurneé down the coast, when about eleven in the morning, while the tide was running out, leaving here and there patches of rock more or less exposed along the shore, when news was brought to me that the body of a woman had just been washed up on to a rock plateau under the Severndroog Fort, in which were the headquarters of the sub-district.

It was hardly a mile from my tent. Hastening to the spot, I found the body of a fine young woman,

* There are, or rather were, five forts close to each other. The two principal ones can only be seen from the point selected by my artist, which is close to the tomb of Tuláji Angria.
SEVERNDIHRG. ALSO KNOWN AS BURNEE, FROM THE TOMB OF TULAJI ANGRIA.

[To face p. 68.]
nude, except as to the breast-cloth, which was rucked up under the arms by the wash of the waves. The people had just found her "sarree," or petticoat, caught on the rocks, which showed her to be a Mahomedan. The body was quite fresh, and she clearly had not been dead more than an hour or two. There was only one serious injury observable,—a severe contused wound on her temple, which had evidently bled considerably; there were also scratches all over the body, probably caused after death by the body tossing about among the barnacle-covered rocks.

The usual "punchayet," or jury, had already made their report—that the woman had been murdered by some person or persons unknown. I, however, promptly sent the body up to the Civil Hospital, which happened to be some eight miles distant, at Dapoolie. In due course I received a report that the wound on the head, though not of itself sufficient to cause death, had probably stunned the woman, causing her to fall into the water, or that her head had struck a rock in falling, and she had been drowned while unconscious. There was no other cause of death, and the woman, the doctor said, had probably died about six or seven in the morning.

She had been immediately identified as the wife—the erring wife—of an absent fisherman, and had been seen making her way over the jagged boulders of the rocky groin I have spoken of, about six o'clock that morning, carrying with her the kind of creel
which native women use when picking shell-fish off the rocks. The little port was full of "pattimars" (native craft), by which, in those days, the whole traffic, goods and passenger, of the coast was worked. It was blowing a stiff north-wester, and all the craft lay at anchor under a headland near.

I was just settling down to work, after return to camp, when an excited crowd approached. In the midst of it walked two very irate Europeans. Of course the cry was that these two "soldier lôk" having first ravished the woman, had then thrown her into the sea. With some difficulty I cleared the neighbourhood, and was able to interrogate the two men. One of them was an army schoolmaster travelling up to a new situation beyond Bombay: the other was a sergeant who had served for his pension. The papers in each case were in order; they were sailing up at Government expense, and were to all appearance as decent fellows as one could wish to meet.

They said that, as the tindal (native captain) of their "pattimar" told them that they could not proceed in the face of the north-wester, they had got him to land them in the ship's small boat, so that they might get a little exercise. The headland was about two miles off, and it was easy to send for the tindal to ascertain at what hour he had put them ashore; meantime I examined their clothes carefully for blood-stains, but found none.

The tindal deposed that he had landed them about 10.30 A.M. at the headland, two miles
distant, so that they clearly could never have seen the woman who was found dead before 8 A.M. Native malice, however, insisted on their guilt, the nearest Mahratta newspaper in its next issue accused me of hushing up the matter, while half-a-dozen anonymous letters were sent to Government accusing me of all kinds of crimes!

I stayed some time in the neighbourhood, but could get no evidence beyond vague female gossip that one of the deceased woman’s female relatives had seen a man leave her house very early in the morning, that words had passed, that the old crone who saw Lothario sneaking off had said she would tell the husband when he came home. I was at last convinced that this was about as near the truth as we were likely to get. I tried to get the case struck off the murder register, but was severely snubbed for my pains.

I have mentioned these cases because they illustrate the great need for a strong infusion of detective element into our police, a point on which, in its proper place, I shall hereafter lay much stress. In the kidnapping case the political agent had the aid of experienced native detectives from Bombay, who have always been good men—they, at any rate, elicited the truth. But in the other two cases I was helpless, I had no trained detective in the force, nor had I the funds to pay for them; I should only have been rebuked had I ventured to ask superior authority for what I needed. Similarly, I ought to have had in the old Marwari’s case a man who, on some plausible
pretence, would have settled down for a time in the village, and gradually ferreted out the village secrets. In this last case, also, I wanted a detective of the fisherman class to worm the truth out of the deceased's lovers and her own belongings.
CHAPTER VII.

THE MISSING TIGER; OR, CAIN AND ABEL.

I propose dealing in this chapter with the well-worn subject of unreported murders. A general and well-founded belief obtains in India that not one-half the murders committed are ever brought home to the criminal. My own experience of a lifetime has convinced me that it is hardly an exaggeration to say that not twenty-five per cent. of murders committed are even heard of.

I do not advance this startling statement from any feeling of prejudice against the Indian populations among whom I have laboured; on the contrary, the same allegation may be justly made against most European nationalities, with reference to the unlawful taking of life in all the large cities of the Old and New World. Unless I am very much mistaken, if the statistics could be compared of reported murders in Great Britain and India in any one year, it would be found that, taking due account of population, the percentage of murders reported is larger in the former than in the latter country, yet the proportion of convictions would be more
numerous in Great Britain, by reason of the total want of detective agency in India.

Abandoning these speculations, however, as somewhat foreign to the subject in hand, I must point to the climate, the great distances between the stations occupied by men in authority—the magistracy and the police—and especially to the usual mode of disposing of the dead by cremation, which effectually and in a few hours after the crime destroys the principal evidence or means of tracing it.

Time was—and it is not so very long ago—when a clumsy criminal procedure, involving the dragging of witnesses from their homes for weeks and months together, led to what I may almost term the habitual combination of the people of a village in which a murder might have been committed to conceal the fact if possible. I shall make a remarkable instance of this kind the principal story of this chapter. I well remember how, in old days, it was the regular thing, first of all, for the police to assemble in force at the ill-fated village, to summon most of the villagers to the chowrié (village office) to harangue and browbeat them, to keep them for hours, and even days, from their occupations, for no other earthly reason than to display their power, and let Jack Policeman show off in office.

The case might be distant one to eighty miles from the nearest Magistrate to whom the accused and the witnesses were dragged off—the more respectable commonly refusing the niggardly maximum of four annas per diem tendered to them for their
expenses; the poorer obliged by sheer poverty to accept the minimum two annas.

I must do the overworked Magistrates and Assistant-magistrates of those days the justice to say that no criminal case of any kind was ever delayed by them. It was almost a point of honour to set other duty aside, to sit down to the criminal case newly arrived, and not to leave it till it was disposed of. If it happened to be a murder case, committal being made to the sessions Judge, it had to wait till the sessions, which might be at any time—a month, two months, three months distant; there were even not a few outlying or inaccessible stations at which a full-power Judge only sat twice in a year! All the witnesses were then necessarily sent to their homes, to be collected again a few weeks or months later, and driven like a flock of sheep to the Sessions station, often a hundred or one hundred and fifty miles from their place of residence.

Conceive the intolerable annoyance, the serious loss, the risk of illness to the witnesses under such a system, and my readers will not be surprised at the desire to suppress a murder! I shall be told, "Nous avons changé tout cela." So we have, to a marvellous extent. Good roads and railways, a very sufficient and a fairly efficient Magistracy, are now besprinkled over the country, but, best of all, a Criminal Sessions is held every month, even in the most benighted regions, while the power to order a special sessions is largely made use of when anything like a good case is made out for it.
It has been my lot to see much of the working of the police and criminal procedure in England since I took off my Indian harness, and I affirm that, on the whole, justice is much better administered in the Western Presidency than it is in England at the present moment. The remark is probably equally true for all the old presidencies, but I can only speak from my own knowledge and experience. Most people are familiar with that portion of Truth in which Mr. Labouchere every week pillories inefficient Magistrates, and there have been not a few cases even in the highest courts of late which have justly aroused severe criticism. I venture to affirm that the Registrar of the High Court on the Mofussil side in Bombay could not, in any one month, find in the returns of the Bombay Presidency, with its thousands of Magistrates, enough material to supply a similar number of columns for Truth.

After this long, but, I trust, pardonable digression, I will betake me to the tale of "The Missing Tiger." There is nothing to be alarmed at, for this is not a typical Indian "tiger story!"

Many years ago (alas, how many!), when I was engaged in the Southern Konkan upon the police duty described in the first story, I was joined in the month of October by a certain well-known lawyer. I will not give his name, but may mention that he is still alive, very flourishing in his circumstances, very portly, and very much married. He was anxious to see something of Mofussil tent life, to work off the heavy "tiffins," or luncheons, at the
old Indian Navy Club, and to get a little shooting, for which he brought down a battery equal to anything, from a snipe to an elephant! We were making our way across to a new camp over a very rough piece of laterite country, then covered with long grass and scrub jungle. After a long forenoon after the snipe, as we struck into the main track leading to our camp, we descried a mhar (village watchman) trotting along briskly, and catching him up, I observed the man carried a letter, which, being addressed "Urgent" to the police havildar at my nearest post a few miles off, I took the liberty of opening and reading. It was from the police patel (head man) of a village some eight miles distant,
and reported that two brothers (mihars) had gone out together in the early morning to cut grass and brushwood, when a tiger had sprung out, killed one of them, and carried off the other; that he would keep the mutilated body till sundown, and hold an inquest before burning it, and was collecting men to search for the missing man.

Now I knew the village and the neighbourhood well enough to be certain that it was most unlikely for a tiger to harbour within thirty miles of the spot. However, it was my duty to go there, and my friend of the law was very keen to try his big smooth-bore. So I sent the mhar back with a message to say the police saheb and his friend were coming as soon as possible—he, the patel, was to have as many beaters ready as he could collect—and that the police saheb would arrange about the inquest.

We went on to camp close by, whence what with breakfast, and what with my friend's complicated shooting preparations, we could not get off till after two o'clock, leaving us but two hours to cover the distance. A man on the look-out took us to a small rest-house at the side of the road, where we found the patel and a goodly crowd of beaters.

The body, stretched stark on its back on a kind of litter, was first cursorily inspected, its appearance, as it lay with arms stretched straight down the sides, appeared to bear out the report; the right side of the face was crushed and swollen, the right eye was nearly torn out, as it were, by a tiger's
claw. It looked, in fact, just as if the poor wretch had received a crushing blow from behind from a tiger's paw.

I ordered it to be kept as it was, while we, beaters and all, hurried off to the scene of the tragedy, for there was not much daylight to spare. The path lay along the brink or edge of a dell, the high grass showing every track through it. The man who found the body walked first with me, and soon pointed to a depression in the dell. I made the guide and gun-bearers walk in single file, taking the lead myself, so that I could note in what direction any animal might have dragged the missing man while I sent the beaters round the hillside with my friend, with instructions to advance in a circle when I gave the signal.

This was soon done, for the scrub only extended over a small area. I then went cautiously down to the spot indicated by the guide, and there, sure enough, were abundant evidences of a severe struggle. The grass was trodden down in a circle of about eighteen feet diameter, and there was abundance of blood; but I instantly observed that, except by the track by which I had come down, there was no disturbance or trampling of the grass, not the faintest sign of any large beast having passed through it, or dragged anything with it!

I gave the signal for the beat to begin, however, and soon heard shouts and yells and my friend's voice in excitement, evidently running very fast. Presently as a large sounder of hog broke back
through the beaters, I caught a glimpse of my poor lawyer as he came what the Yankees call "an almighty cropper" over a boulder, firing off both barrels in the fall! How the poor fellow had barked his shins! As to his gun, both barrels were dented and the stock broken! We made our way back to the rest-house, where I had torches lit and selected the jury.

At this time the patel and other villagers tried hard to persuade me just to note the appearance of the corpse as it lay, and to let them proceed to burn it; indeed, it was awfully "high" by that time! I insisted, however, after noting down the appearances on the front, on having it turned over on its face, and then the "murder was out!" A most ghastly sight presented itself, and the whole scene of the murder was revealed!

The poor wretch had evidently been squatting, cutting brushwood—I forgot to mention that a small bundle of it was lying in the dell covered with blood—when his brother struck him from behind with his own "koiti," or bill-hook, on the back of his head, the curved point of the implement entering his right eye. Instinctively he must have raised his left arm to ward off a second blow, for there was a deep gash and a slice of nearly-severed flesh on the under part of his arm. Several other blows, breaking the vertebrae, must then have been rained on him, till the murderer, seeing life was extinct, left him and fled.

The villagers and patel then confessed their deceit.
The deceased and his brother Kannak had a long-standing feud about a miserable plot of land; probably high words passed in that fatal dell before Kannak struck his brother down. The villagers guessed the truth directly the body was found, and they had a quiet debate as to how the matter should be hushed up, none of them relishing the idea of being hurried up to the Sessions Court as I have above described.

It was the patel who suggested the "fixing up" of the body as I first saw it; the gash and flesh of the arm was plastered up somehow with cow-dung, and lying on its back the corpse looked very like a case of tiger mauling. Kannak was gone, and not likely to return! It was a long way to the police post, and the havildar might be away; if so, well and good. The "Punchayatnama," or jury's report was a simple matter, and the body could be burnt at sundown. If the policeman did turn up before, he would be easily deceived, or if not deceived, could be bribed to join in the plot and hold his tongue.

Luck was against them, however, that time. Kannak was caught in a foreign neighbouring state within a week, and duly committed for trial; he then feigned insanity, refused to eat, et-cetera. So the case was traversed to another Sessions that he might be watched. In due time I had the great satisfaction of giving evidence and hearing him sentenced to death. The patel afterwards got a pretty severe sentence.

There can be no doubt that but for my accident-
ally meeting the messenger the plot would have succeeded to the full, and the case have been recorded as one of "death by wild animals." Many and many a murder is, I am quite certain, even now reported as death from snake-bite, a false "Punchayatnama" drawn up, and the body quietly burned!

I forgot my poor legal friend; he was really seriously bruised and shaken, as well as his blunderbuss, and I doubt if he ever tried running through long grass over rocky ground again.
CHAPTER VIII.

THUGGEE.—THE MASSACRE.

It is somewhat of a coincidence that just as I was about to put together a few notes on the subject of murder by Thugs, the British Medical Journal should publish an article bearing materially on the subject. It is, and has been for some years, a popular belief among Indian officials that, with the suppression of the Thugs proper, who despatched their victims by strangulation, in the manner so graphically described by Captain Meadows Taylor in his 'Confessions of a Thug,' there has been a steady increase in murder by poisoning, and that those who have resorted to it are, in point of fact, Thugs, worshippers of the fell goddess Bhowâni, practising their trade, like the "Phansigars," * for the purposes of gain.

I myself doubt if there is any solid ground for this belief; my own experience has not taught me so. When I first went to India, in the early fifties, Thuggee was not quite stamped out in the older Presidencies. Duty, in connection with the tracing out of an organised system of dacoity, on several occasions took me to the Jubbulpore School of

* "Phansigars" take their name from "phansi," a noose.
Industry, where I have interviewed many Thugs; others have from time to time been sent down into districts I was serving in to give information, or to identify suspected Thugs. I certainly never heard from these persons that the suppression of the use of the sacred "roomal," or handkerchief, had driven the votaries of Bhowáni to the use of poison in its place; nor do I remember in official reports by the able officers, who up to the present time have superintended the suppression of Thuggee, that they were in possession of any evidence in support of the theory.

It must always be borne in mind that the discovery of murder by poisoning, whether by dhatura, opium, or arsenic, has year by year become easier, since the means of communication have improved. There were probably just as many, or even more, cases of poisoning before the "fifties" as since then, but they were not brought to light, because there was rarely a person competent to trace poisons in the viscera within reasonable distance of the spot where the body was found, and the very transport of the portions required for analysis was nearly impossible. Now, every native district officer knows precisely what to do. There are fairly competent medical practitioners scattered throughout the country, and it may almost be said that in most cases of suspected poisoning the viscera find their way to the Government Analyst.

I can personally vouch for Captain Meadows Taylor's having had no suspicion that Thuggee by poisoning existed when he left India, for I had the
pleasure of knowing that accomplished and able officer well—I know that he believed the measures taken by Government had then led to the almost total suppression of Thuggee in every form. I can only call to mind one case of poisoning that at all resembled Thuggee, and, if I mistake not, it was subsequently proved beyond all question that the poisoners were Mahomedans from the Nizam's territory.

Not so very many years ago, during one of the many scarcities in the "arid zone" of the Western Presidency, fodder and water having already become very scarce, five Mahrattas from the south of Sholapore—which is now, I believe, a part of the Bijapore District—determined to drive over all their surplus cattle into the Nizam's territory, there to sell the beasts for what they would fetch. Their nearest route lay through a very desolate and rugged country, which forms the boundary of the British and Nizam's (or Mogulai) territories. They disposed of their herd in the course of a month, converted their money into British rupees (which attracted some attention to them), and set out on their return journey, with the cash, some fifteen hundred rupees, divided amongst them.

Being from British territory, they were unarmed, of course, and merely carried iron-shod sticks for their defence. On the borders they were overtaken by a Mahomedan, apparently of some condition, mounted on a good horse, richly caparisoned, accompanied by a man on foot, ostensibly his servant.
Both master and man were armed to the teeth, to the dismay of the Mahrattas who naturally feared that they would be attacked; but the Mahomedan "gentleman" entered urbanely into conversation, mentioned that he was in the Nizam's police service, one of a patrol recently established along the frontier to check the depredations of Hussan Khan, a noted freebooter of the day. His road, he said, for a couple of marches, was the same as theirs, and perhaps the Mahrattas had better keep with him for the time.

The simple fellows readily agreed, were regaled by their escort with any amount of boasting of his prowess, wealth, and influence, and easily induced to tell their own story, confiding to their kind escort that they carried a considerable amount of cash among them. Nothing occurred during the first night that they camped together. The two Mahomedans, of course, cooked and ate separately, but within a few paces of the Mahrattas.

Next day the march was resumed, the whole party camping as before on the bank of a small rivulet in some scrub jungle; they were to part company at daybreak, as the Mahomedans said they must go southward.

About ten the next morning another small party of herdsmen were about to encamp with their cattle at the same place, when they heard deep groans from the scrub near; proceeding to the spot they found one of the Mahrattas vomiting and writhing with pain, and apparently at the point of death. However,
they attended him to the best of their power: towards evening he had revived sufficiently to tell his story, which was to the effect that he and his four companions had, one after the other, been seized with mortal sickness after their evening meal, that he believed he was the only survivor, and that the bodies of the others would be found at no great distance, probably rifled, as he found he himself had been robbed of all the money he carried.

In a few moments the bodies of his four companions were found in the bush near, lying, distorted and stiff, within a few yards of each other. Needless to say, they too had been rifled of the cash they carried.

The survivor had not much recollection of what had passed, he had not felt very well the preceding day, had therefore eaten very sparingly, and when subsequently racked by pain, he tried to crawl down to the water, and must have become insensible. Some of the food they had all eaten was found close to the camp fire, one of the good Samaritans of the second party had the sense to take possession of it, and to send two of his men back to the nearest British police post with full information. The bodies were at last taken to a dispensary some forty miles distant, where the doctor took out the viscera, bottled them, and sent them, with the food, to the Government Chemical Analyser in Bombay, who found enough arsenic to kill half a regiment.

Not a trace of the Mahomedan gentleman was ever discovered. A man was apprehended in the Mogulai
territory on suspicion of being the servant, but the surviving Mahratta did not identify him. The Nizam's authorities were promptly communicated with, but their police officials were so lax that no real effort, I am sure, was ever made to trace the murderers. More than likely, the Ameens (Nizam police officers) were bribed to hush up the matter. As to our own police, they were useless over the border, and there were no detectives in the force to send to trace out the criminals at leisure.

The case caused some stir at the time, being believed by many to be a case of Thuggee poisoning. As a matter of fact, it was a simple case of poisoning for the sake of robbery, by poisoners who were genuine, and not pretended Mahomedans. There may be a few "Phansigars," or genuine Thugs, still using the holy "roomal," or handkerchief, in remote parts of native states, but I am convinced there are none left in British territory.

There are, no doubt, a tolerable number of men who poison for the sake of robbery, but even these ordinarily hail from and retreat to native states, usually administering arsenic in large quantities, because that is the easiest poison to procure, and the most rapid and certain in its effect. They have a profound belief that "dead men tell no tales."
CHAPTER IX.

CHILD-MURDER FOR ORNAMENTS.

I fear there is still rather a heavy annual crop of murders of children for the sake of their ornaments, but the incessant warnings of the authorities have unquestionably had some effect. Children are not allowed to run about unattended and unguarded with valuable ornaments on their bodies so much as they used to be, and I am given to understand that the record of this class of crime is steadily on the decrease.

Children, no doubt, are often merely robbed of their clothes or valuables; for among the hideous old crones who abound, especially in towns, and who live —God knows how—there are a fair number of old "Mrs. Browns," whose cupidity is often aroused by the sight of little victims like "Florence Dombey." Murder of children for the sake of their ornaments is usually the work of men, generally of the trading classes. I am afraid that I must add that the lowest classes of Marwarrees, "Goozurs," or Wonis, furnish the most instances. One remarkable case I remember, however, in which a Mahomedan, previously of the highest character
and the most humane disposition, was the criminal. The story is noteworthy for other reasons, which will appear hereafter. I shall call it—

"Poor Little Saloo."

Saloo was a bright little fellow about seven years of age. His father was in charge of the ferry up an estuary not far from Bombay, plying daily from his own rather large village, by wind and tide, to the mouth of the creek. This ferryman's great crony was a Mahomedan general merchant, or large shopkeeper in the village, a man of about forty, very well to do, with a reputation for honesty, and notoriously generous and open-handed to the poor. Like most natives he was very fond of children, but, having none of his own, he always liked to see them about his shop, and petted them one and all.

He had carried Saloo about in his arms from babyhood, and the little fellow, his father being so much away from home, lived almost as much with Suliman (that was his name) as in his own house. The father almost daily brought some package or other for Suliman by the ferry-boat, thus it was an every-day occurrence for Suliman to go down to the bunder, about half a mile distant, with Saloo trotting by his side, about the time the tide served for the ferry-boat to come in. Now, the "bunder," or landing-place, was at the end of a long embankment projecting into deep water over an intervening mangrove swamp, which was only covered by a few
feet of water at the very top of the tide; for the most part it was a foul and noisome stretch of deep black mud dotted with mangrove bushes.

The ferry-boat was due after dark one evening, when Suliman was seen making his way to the bundar, chatting and laughing with Saloo, who trotted by his side. When the ferry-boat at last arrived, the father hailed Suliman and asked if he had brought little Saloo. Suliman replied that he had brought him down, but that as it had got late he had sent him home again. The two friends, having made fast the ferry-boat, walked home together, accompanied by some of the passengers, and the father's being the first house they came to, he called out to "Saloo Meeya." The mother's voice replied from within that he had gone down to the bundar with "Suliman Baba." Suliman observed that he had probably gone to his shop, and that he would send the little monkey home at once.

He returned in a few minutes in the greatest agitation to report that Saloo Meeya was not there, that he was seriously afraid he had fallen into the creek. Torches were got, and all the village turned to the bundar, but the tide was at full, and no trace of the little fellow could be seen. Searching parties were down again next morning directly the tide had left the fetid swamp uncovered, in the midst of which was soon descried a little hand and arm sticking up out of the soft mud. There was poor little Saloo, dead, with his mouth and nostrils full of mud. The little armlets encircling his arms were
gone, and abrasions on the tender flesh showed that they had been wrenched off with some violence!

At the pitiful sight, Suliman, who was with the search-party, and evidently greatly agitated, screamed out that he had done it. "I was mad. Come, and I will give up the bangles." He was taken to his house, and produced the miserable trifles from a sack of rice.

I was on the spot two days afterwards, heard the wretched man tell the tale, and accompanied him to the scene of the tragedy. If ever a man felt remorse, that man felt it. He told me—and I am very sure he spoke truly—that he acted without premeditation; that he never thought of the ornaments until they were near the bunder-head, when he took Saloo up in his arms, and, in doing so, happened to feel the ornaments. "There was no one near, and 'Shaitan' took him." He carried the boy a few yards into the ooze, and, taking up a handful, crammed it into the little fellow's mouth, stifling his cries. He wrenched off the bangles, trod the little body into the mud, and, regaining the bunder-head, had time to wash his feet and hands before the ferryman's boat came up.

"Why, saheb," said he, "what did I care for? How could I want those worthless bangles? And I was so fond of Saloo Meeya, too! Not a month has passed for years that I haven't given the boy more than the worth of the bangles. I used to see them every day, and never thought of them. I was mad! It is my fate! Take me to the Judge Saheb quickly, and let me be hanged."
Hanged, of course, he was, on the very spot at which the crime was committed, for there had been overmuch of this class of crime of late; but he could not have lived long, for, without purposely abstaining from food, he could not eat, becoming at last so feeble and emaciated that he had to be carried to the scaffold. After his sentence was pronounced he asked if Saloo Meeya's father could be induced to visit him. I am glad to say the father went. The scene was, I was told, a most affecting one, the father always insisted afterwards that "Suliman Baba did not mean to do it he was mad; it was all 'nusseeb' (fate)." And, indeed, I myself believe the man was mad, just as those ladies are mad who, without rhyme or reason, secrete things in shops. I doubt, however, if a more horrible case of kleptomania has ever occurred.

SULIMAN'S FATE.
CHAPTER X.

MURDER FROM JEALOUSY.—MURDER FROM INFIDELITY.

It is scarcely necessary to dwell at any length on those classes of crime which are neither more numerous in India than they are in England, nor peculiarly characteristic of Indians.

A month's issue of such delectable evening papers as the Star or Evening News probably record as many horrible murders by jealous husbands, wives, and lovers as are to be heard in all India in six months.

As a matter of fact, it would probably be found that in India, jealousy, whether on the part of the husband, or on the part of the lover of his mistress, is satisfied by some horrible mutilation, and stops short of taking the victim's life. Time was, and not so many years ago, that the common punishment in India for infidelity was cutting off the nose of the frail wife or paramour; in the fewer cases now recorded, the bludgeon or the knife seems to be more commonly used. There is no greater ferocity displayed in Bombay or Calcutta than in the slums of London or Paris, where most ruffians carry a knife.
or revolver, and use it freely, while those who do not possess a weapon find their hobnailed boots quite as efficacious. Amongst the better classes in India, such cases as we have recently read of in Europe are of the rarest occurrence, while there is no morbid eagerness or disposition to find extenuating circumstances by Judge, Juror, or Assessor.

Those—and there are many officials who ought to know better—who assert that infidelity in the conjugal relations is commoner in India, that the standard of morality is lower there than in Europe, grossly libel the people of India, especially the rural population. It is not a pleasant topic to dwell upon; but I am forced of my own knowledge and observation, and from what I have learnt from rural residents of all classes, to declare that immorality is general in most agricultural districts in England, where immoral connections are not merely tolerated, but accepted as almost a matter of course.

The very language used habitually by the women of the labouring classes in England among themselves betokens a depravity which I have never found among the “ryots.” The women of an Indian family are rarely alone during the daytime, at night they usually sleep together; there are not those facilities for intrigue that exist in England, and overcrowding—promiscuous overcrowding at night, such as is common in many English cottages—is unknown.

It is when the Indian village girl, leaving her native village, joins some factory in the larger towns, or some body of labourers on a large public work,
that she becomes contaminated by the abundance of temptation and opportunity.

The police have ordinarily no difficulty in tracing the perpetrators of crimes of this class; their work is cut out for them. The jealous husband rarely attempts to evade justice, or, if he tries to escape, is easily followed; there is rarely premeditation, and no preparations for escape have been made. The jealous wife usually resorts to poison, peppers the evening meal liberally with arsenic, and perhaps kills off half the unsuspecting household. The dissipated young fellow in a town, madly infatuated by some (to him) fascinating woman of the place, excited by drink or "bhang," stabs her to the death, and is caught red-handed.

The experience of most Indian police officers must be, like my own, that in ninety per cent. of the murders from jealousy, women of the town are the victims. Still, there are always instances of women murdering their husbands, or aiding in their murder by paramours.

The worst case I ever knew I will briefly relate; the actual details are too horrible for publication. I will call it—

"THE FATE OF QUILP."

Bhági was married to a man much older than herself, a misshapen, evil-tempered "sootar," or carpenter; very dissolute, and a drunkard, but withal a very skilful workman when sober. Sonoo strongly reminded me, in appearance, and especially
in feature, of the illustrations of Quilp in Dickens' celebrated novel. Like Quilp, he would purposely absent himself from his wife; when with her, he had a fiendish delight in torturing and maltreating her generally; thus, he had branded her on various parts of her body, had cut her about here and there with his adze, and on one occasion had chopped off one of her big toes. There were, happily, no children.

Sonoo was constantly employed on public works, in and out of Bombay, as a "maistree," or foreman carpenter, and a fine young fellow called Dhondoo, a carpenter from the same village, usually worked in his gang. Bhági and Dhondoo had known each other from childhood, an illicit connection existed between them, which Sonoo had just begun to suspect, when the gang was employed in the erection of a railway station on the B. B. and C. L. Railway. Full of drink, and infuriated by jealousy, Sonoo returned to their temporary hut one evening, knocked Bhági down with a mallet and gagged her, then heating one of his smaller tools red-hot, he deliberately scored a kind of pattern on her buttock. On going to work next morning he swore that when he came back he would cut her nose off!

Bhági was not seriously injured on this occasion, but she was firmly convinced that Sonoo meant to carry out his threat. She managed to communicate with Dhondoo in the course of the day, and they determined on Sonoo's (Quilp's) fate for that evening.

Dhondoo, after sundown, secreted himself in the hut, armed with a stone-mason's hammer. Quilp,
who had probably been drinking himself up to the necessary pitch, was late, and at once accosted Bhági in his usual ferocious manner. Dhondoo, stepping from his hiding-place, felled him to the ground with a blow on the back of his head. The pair then turned him round, Bhági, seating herself on his mouth and holding his hands, looked on, while Dhondoo tore the wretch's clothes from his body and kneaded him on the chest and ribs with his knees, winding up by otherwise mutilating him with the stone hammer in a manner too horrible to describe.

Quilp had probably been killed by the first blow. The lovers, waiting till all signs of life were extinct, by which time the camp was buried in sleep, carried the body to one of the numerous small "chunam" (or lime) kilns burning near, and thrust it in, head foremost. When discovered next morning, the head and shoulders were nearly consumed, but there was no difficulty in identifying Quilp's crooked legs.

I wonder if a French jury would have found "extenuating circumstances"? Dhondoo, I know, was hanged, exulting in what he had done, but Bhági got off with a long term of imprisonment.

It will be a relief to my readers, as to me, to leave the subject of murder for a time, in order to deal with forgery and perjury, the particular offences which are, if we are to believe some Indian Judges, especially rampant in India.

N.B.—This story is altogether too horrible to illustrate.