

corner weeping. 'It is all over!' she said. 'All over!' he replied, looking up. But I will not weary you with the scene in which the wretched man—a Greek renegade—related how he had bought Zoë—how he had loved her, and made her his wife—how they had traveled in far countries—how he was jealous, ever, as he acknowledged, without cause—and how, in a fit of madness, he had slain the mother of his child. When he had finished, he led the bewildered Silver-Voice to the cradle, and thrusting aside the curtains, disclosed the miniature counterpart of Zoë, sleeping as if it had been lulled into deeper slumber by its mother's death-cries. Then, stealing toward the corpse with the step of one about to commit a new crime, he snatched a hasty kiss, and rushed away. What became of him was never known. Silver-Voice performed the last duties for poor Zoë, and took the child under her care. Since that time she has almost always continued to live in the house from the roof of which she heard her sister's cry; and though apparently rational in every thing else, never fails to go up each evening and sing the song she used to sing of old, though in a more plaintive and despairing tone. If asked wherefore she acts in this wise, her reply is, that she is seeking for her sister Zoë, and nobody attempts to contradict the harmless delusion. Several years have now passed away since this event, and the child has become a handsome boy. You may see them both at the church to-morrow."

I thanked the worthy *papa* for his story more warmly, perhaps, than he expected. He had been as much pleased by narrating as I had been by listening; but he was not very particular about the quality of his facts, and unintentionally made me do penance for the excessive pleasure I had experienced by giving me an account—two hours long, and with equal unction—of a tremendous controversy then raging as to the proper form of electing the sub-patriarch of Cairo. It would have been ungrateful to interrupt him, although there seemed no end to his garrulity. Fortunately, two or three people at length came in; I compromised my dignity as a heretic by kissing his hand, and escaped, to turn over this curious story in my mind. Next day I went to the Greek church, and saw a melancholy-looking face through the bars of the cage-like gallery in which the women sit. I am quite certain it was that of Lady Silver-Voice, but no one whom I asked seemed to know her. The boy did not show himself. It was my intention to go another Sunday, and observe more accurately, for I really felt a deep interest in this unfortunate lady. But other thoughts and occupations came upon me, and it was only by an accident that, as I have said, these circumstances recurred last night to my mind.

THE CROCODILE BATTERY.

IN the summer of 1846, when every body in England was crazy with railway gambling, I was sojourning on the banks of the Rohan, a

small stream in one of the northwestern provinces of India. Here I first became acquainted with the Mugger, or Indian crocodile. I had often before leaving England, seen, in museums, stuffed specimens of the animal, and had read in "Voyages and Travels," all sorts of horrible and incredible stories concerning them. I had a lively recollection of Waterton riding close to the water's edge on the back of an American cayman, and I had a confused notion of sacred crocodiles on the banks of the Nile. I always felt more or less inclined to regard the whole race as having affinities with Sinbad's "roc," and the wild men of the woods, who only refrained from speaking for fear of being made to work.

My ideas respecting the natural history of crocodiles were in this stage of development when, one day, while paddling up the Rohan, I saw what appeared to be a half-burned log of wood lying on a sand-bank. I paddled close up to it. To my astonishment, it proved to be a huge reptile. The old stories of dragons, griffins, and monsters, seemed no longer fables; the speculations of geologists concerning, *mososaurs*, *hylesaurians*, and *plesiosaurians*, were no longer dreams. There, in all his scaly magnificence, was a *real* saurian, nearly eighteen feet long. For a while I stood gazing at this, to me, new fellow-citizen of the world, and speculating on his mental constitution. The monster was, or pretended to be, asleep. I wondered if he dreamt, and what his dreams or reveries might be about; possibly he was dreaming of the same old world with which I associated him—possibly of the fish who were swimming in the waters below: or, he might be thinking of the men and women he had swallowed in the course of his existence. There was a snort; perhaps that was occasioned by the bugles and heavy brass ornaments which had adorned the limbs of some Hindoo beauty he had eaten, and which were lying heavy and indigestible on his stomach. But presently the brute lay so still, and seemed so tranquil and placid in his sleep, that it was difficult to imagine him guilty of such atrocities. He did not appear to be disturbed by remorse, or the twitchings of a guilty conscience: it may have been all a slander. I felt so kindly disposed toward him, that I could not imagine it possible that if awake he would feel disposed to eat me. Let us see! so making a splash with my paddle, I awakened the sleeping beauty. He instantly started up, and opened, what appeared—what indeed proved to be—an enlarged man-trap; disclosing a red, slimy cavern within, fringed with great conical fangs. He closed it with a snap that made me shudder, and then plunged into the water, his eyes glaring with hate and defiance.

Some days after I had made this new acquaintance, I was sitting at home talking with my brother, when a native woman came crying and screaming to the bungalow door, tearing her hair out in handfuls; she got down on the veranda floor and struck her head against it, as

if she really meant to dash her brains out. A crowd of other women stood at a short distance, crying and lamenting as if they were frantic. What was the matter? Half-a-dozen voices made answer in a discordant chorus, that while the poor woman was washing her clothes by the river side, her child—an infant about a year old—had been seized and swallowed by a Mugger. Although convinced that aid was now impossible, we took our guns and hastened to the spot where the accident happened; but all was still there, not a wavelet disturbed the surface of the stream. A small speckled kingfisher was hovering overhead, as if balanced in the air, with its beak bent down on its breast, watching the fish beneath; presently it darted like an arrow into the water; returned with an empty bill, and then went off, with its clear, sharp, twittering note, as if to console itself for the failure.

One day I was sitting on the high bank of the river, taking snap shots with my gun at the large fish who were every now and then leaping out of the water. A favorite spaniel was bringing a fish out of the water that I had hit. It had swam already half way across the stream, when the water about six yards below her became suddenly disturbed; and, to my horror, up started the head and open jaws of an enormous crocodile. The dog gave a loud shriek, and sprang half out of the water. The Mugger swam rapidly, and had got within a yard of his intended victim, when I raised my gun, and took aim at the monster's head. A thud, a splash, a bubble, and a dusky red streak in the water, was all that ensued. Presently, however, Juno's glossy black head emerged from the water; and, to my delight, began to make rapid progress toward me, and landed safely. The poor brute, wet and shivering, coiled herself up at my feet, with her bright hazel eyes fixed on mine with ineffable satisfaction. Poor Juno subsequently fell a victim to the Muggers, when her master was not at hand to succor her. I mention these facts, to show that the diabolical revenge with which I afterward assisted in visiting these monsters, was not groundless. But the strongest occasion of it remains to be told.

Just as the "rains" were beginning, my neighbor, Mr. Hall, sent me word that he intended paying me a short visit, and requested me to send a *syce* (groom), with a saddle-horse, to meet him at a certain place on the road. The *syce*, Sidhoo, was a smart, open-chested, sinewy-limbed little fellow, a perfect model of a biped racer. He could run—as is the custom in the East—alongside his horse at a pace of seven or eight miles an hour, for a length of time that would astonish the best English pedestrian I ever heard of.

Toward evening, Mr. Hall rode up to the bungalow, dripping with water, and covered with mud. I saw at once that some accident had happened, and hastened to assist him.

As soon as he got inside, he said, in answer to my bantering about his "spill"—

"I am in no humor for jesting. Your *syce* is lost!"

"Drowned?"

"No; eaten!—by an enormous crocodile!"

He added that, on arriving at a small *nulla* about two miles off, he found it so much swollen by rain, that he had to swim his horse across it, holding one end of the cord which Sidhoo, in common with most Hindoos, wore coiled round his waist, and which was used in pulling water from the deep wells of the country. Hall got safely across, and then commenced pulling Sidhoo over by means of the cord. The black face, with the white teeth and turban, were bobbing above the muddy water, when all at once the groom threw up his arms, gave a loud shriek, and sank below the surface. Mr. Hall, who had doubled the cord round his hand, was dragged into the water; where he got a momentary glimpse of the long serrated tail of a Mugger, lashing the water a short way ahead of him. In his efforts to save himself, he lost his hold of the string, and with much difficulty clambered up the slippery bank of the *nulla*. All was now still. Only Sidhoo's turban was to be seen floating loosely, a considerable way down the stream. Hall ran toward it, with the sort of feeling which makes a drowning man catch at a straw; and, by means of a stick he succeeded in fishing it out, and brought it with him, as the only remnant of Sidhoo he could give an account of.

Bad news soon spreads in an Indian village, and Sidhoo's fate was soon made known to his wife; and in a short time she came crying and sobbing to the bungalow, and laid her youngest child at our friend's feet. The tears glistened in the poor fellow's eyes as he tried to soothe and console her; which he did by promising to provide for her and her children.

Although Hall was generally running over with fun, we smoked our cheroots that evening in silence; except when we proposed schemes for the annihilation of the crocodiles. A great many plans were discussed—but none that offered much chance of success. The next day, after breakfast, I was showing my visitor a galvanic blasting apparatus, lately received from England, for blowing up the snags (stumps of trees) which obstruct the navigation of the river. I was explaining its mode of action to him, when he suddenly interrupted me—

"The very thing! Instead of snags, why not blow up the Muggers?"

I confessed that there could be no reason why we should not blast the Muggers. The difficulty was only how to manage it; yet the more we talked of it, the more feasible did the scheme appear.

The brutes keep pretty constant to the same quarters, when the fish are plentiful; and we soon ascertained that poor Sidhoo's murderer was well known in the neighborhood of the *nulla*. He had on several occasions carried off goats, sheep, pigs, and children; and had once attempted to drag a buffalo, whom he had caught drinking, into the water; but, from all

accounts, came off second best in this rencontre. There not being enough of water in the nulla to drown the buffalo, the Mugger soon found he had caught a Tartar; and after being well mauled by the buffalo's horns, he was fain to scuttle off and hide himself among the mud.

I had observed, when blasting the snags, that the concussion produced by the discharge had the effect of killing all the fish within a range of some twenty or thirty yards. After every explosion, they were found in great numbers, floating on the surface of the water with their bellies uppermost. It now occurred to me, that if we could only get within a moderate distance of the Mugger, if we did not blow him to pieces, we would at all events give him a shock that would rather astonish him. An explosion of gunpowder under water communicates a much severer shock to the objects in its immediate vicinity, than the same quantity of powder exploded in the air; the greater density of the water enabling it, as it were, to give a harder blow.

Having made our arrangements, Mr. Hall, my brother, and myself, got into a small canoe, with the blasting apparatus on board, and dropt down the stream to where the nulla discharged its waters into the Rohan. He then got out and proceeded to a village close by, where we obtained for a few annas, the carcass of a young kid. A flask with about six pounds of gunpowder, and having the conducting wires attached, was then sewn into the kid's belly. Two strong ropes were also tied to this bait; and, to one of these, the conducting wire was firmly bound with small cord. The ropes were about thirty yards long, and had each attached to its extremities one of the inflated goat-skins used by water-carriers. Hall, with his goat-skin under his arm, and a coil of loose rope in his hand, took one side of the nulla, while my brother, similarly provided took the other. My brother's rope contained the wire; so I walked beside him, while two coolies, with the battery ready charged, and slung to a pole which rested on their shoulders, accompanied me. A small float was also attached by a string to the kid, so as to indicate its position.

These arrangements being made, we commenced walking up the nulla, dragging the carcass of the kid in the stream, and moving it across, from side to side, so as to leave no part of the bed untried; and, as the nulla was only about twelve yards wide, we felt pretty confident that, if the Mugger were in it, we could scarcely fail of coming in contact with him. We had proceeded only about a quarter of a mile, when the float suddenly dipt. My brother and Hall threw the loose coil of ropes they carried on the water, along with the inflated skins. These made it soon evident by their motion that the Mugger had seized the kid. He was dashing across, in a zig-zag direction, down the stream. I ran after him as fast as I could; and paying out the cord from the reel, when I found it impossible to keep up with him. On reaching a place where the banks were steeper

than usual, he came to a stand still. I got on the top of the bank, and commenced hauling in the rope. I did not, however, venture to lift the skin out of the water, for fear of disturbing him, until the coolies with the battery had time to come up. This was a very anxious time; for, if the Mugger had shifted his quarters before they came up, a fresh run with him would have ensued, with the chance of his breaking the wires with his teeth. After a while I heard the coolies approaching, and my brother scolding them, and urging them to hasten on. Just as their heads appeared above the bank, the foremost coolie tripped his foot and fell—I groaned with disappointment—presently, my brother came along with them, and brought the battery to my feet; a good deal of the acid had been spilt, but, with the aid of a bottle of fresh acid we had brought along with us, we soon got the battery up to the requisite power. Every thing being now in order, I commenced pulling up the rope with the wire. I proceeded as cautiously as possible for fear of disturbing the Mugger; but, in spite of all my efforts, the inflated skin, in coming up the bank, dislodged some loose pieces of earth, and sent them splashing into the water. Fortunately, however, the Mugger had made up his mind to digest the kid where he was. I could not help chuckling when I at length got hold of the end of the wires. While my brother was fastening one of them to the battery, I got the other ready for completing the circuit. The Mugger all the while lying still at the bottom of the nulla with, most likely, a couple of fathoms of water over his head, unconscious of danger, and little dreaming that the two-legged creatures on the bank had got a nerve communicating with his stomach, through which they were going to send a flash of lightning that would shatter his scaly hulk to pieces.

Every thing being now ready, I made the fatal contact. Our success was complete! We felt a shock, as if something had fallen down the bank—a mound of muddy water rose, with a muffled, rumbling sound, and then burst out to a column of dark smoke. A splashing and bubbling succeeded, and then a great crimson patch floated on the water, like a variegated carpet pattern. Strange-looking fragments of scaly skin were picked up by the natives from the water's edge, and brought to us amidst a very general rejoicing. The exploded Mugger floated down the stream, and the current soon carried it out of sight. We were not at all sorry, for it looked such a horrible mess that we felt no desire to examine it.

Our sense of triumphant satisfaction was, however, sadly damped about a week afterward, when we received the mortifying announcement, that Sidhoo's Mugger was still alive, and on his old beat, apparently uninjured. It was evident that we had blasted the wrong Mugger! We consoled ourselves with the reflection, that if he were not Sidhoo's murderer, it was very likely he was not wholly innocent of other atrocities, and therefore deserved his fate.

Of course it was impossible to rest while Sidhoo's Mugger remained alive, so we were not long in preparing for a second expedition. This time we took the precaution of not charging the battery until we were certain that the bait was swallowed. The acid, diluted to the necessary strength, was, therefore, carried in one of those brown earthenware jars called gray-beards, which had come out to us full of Glenlivet whisky. We commenced dragging the kid up the stream, as before; but, having walked more than a mile without getting a bite, we were getting rather disheartened, and sat down to rest, struck a light, and smoked a cheroot. Hall laid down, having manufactured an impromptu easy chair out of his coil of rope, with the inflated goat-skin placed above it. My brother was not long in imitating his example, and I laid down under the shade of some reeds, near to the water's edge. The heat was oppressive, and we were discussing the probability of getting a bite that day, and lamenting that we had not brought some pale ale along with us, when, when, all at once, I got a sharp blow on the leg, while my brother came spinning down the bank like a teetotem—a companion picture to Hall, who was revolving down the opposite bank. The ropes and skins went rushing down the nulla at a tremendous pace. As soon as we recovered from the laughter into which we were thrown by this droll contretemps, we set off in pursuit, guided by the track which the inflated skins made in the water. On they went, dashing from side to side, as they had done in our first attempt. On coming to a place where the nulla made a sharp turn, they stood still under the high bank, on the inner curve of the bend. It unfortunately happened that the bank, near to which the skins were floating, was too precipitous for us to get near them, without starting the Mugger from his present position. With much labor, we detached some loose sods from the top of the bank, and sent them with a loud splash into the water, directly over where we imagined him to have taken up his quarters. This had the desired effect, for the skins began to move slowly down the stream, as if the Mugger were crawling leisurely along the bottom.

Leaving my brother with the coolies in charge of the battery, I ran on to where the bank was more shelving. By good luck, the stream was rushing up, after its sudden sweep, and sent a strong current against this bank. I had not waited many minutes, before the skins came floating round the corner, to where I was standing. I seized the one to which the wire was attached, desiring my brother to charge the battery, and bring it down. This he did much sooner than I could have expected; for, as the battery was now empty, one coolie was able to carry it on his head, while my brother took the jar of acid in his hand. It was evident from the motion of the other skin in the water that the Mugger was still moving—so no time was to be lost. I made the connection with the

battery with one of the wires; in another instant the circuit was complete, and the Mugger's doom sealed.

There was a momentary pause—owing, I suppose, to some slight loss of insulation in the wires—then came the premonitory shock, then the rumble, the smoke, and the sparks; and a great bloated mass of flesh and blood rose to the surface of the water. Hall called out to us to drag it ashore, and see whether we could get any trace of poor Sidhoo. We tried by means of a bamboo pole to pull it to the bank, but the glimpse we got of it as it neared was so unutterably disgusting, that we pushed it off again, and allowed it to float away down with the current.

That this was Sidhoo's Mugger, there could be no doubt; for he was never seen or heard of in the neighborhood again.

A CHAPTER ON DREAMS.

WHEN we picture to ourselves a person lying in a state of profound sleep—the body slightly curved upon itself; the limbs relaxed; the head reclining on its pillow; and eyelids closed—it is wonderful to think what strange and startling imagery may be passing through the brain of that apparently unconscious being. The events of his whole life may hurry past him in dim obscurity; he may be revisited by the dead; he may be transported into regions he never before beheld; and his ideas visibly assuming phantasmal shapes, may hover round him like shadows reflected from another and more spiritual state of existence.

Let us draw the curtains gently aside, and study the physiognomy of sleep.

The countenance may, occasionally, be observed lighted up, as it were, from within by a passing dream—its expression is frequently one of peculiar mildness and benignity; the breathing may be slow, but it is calm and uniform; the pulse not so rapid as in the waking state, but soft and regular; the composure of the whole body may continue trance-like and perfect. There is, indeed, no sign of innocence more touching than the smile of a sleeping infant. But, suddenly, this state of tranquillity may be disturbed; the dreamer changes his position and become restless; he moans grievously—perhaps sobs—and tears may be observed glimmering underneath his eyelids; his whole body now seems to be shaken by some inward convulsion; but, presently, the strife abates; the storm-cloud gradually passes; he stretches his limbs, opens his eyes, and, as he awakes, daylight, in an instant, dispels the vision, perhaps leaving not behind the faintest trace or recollection of a single incident which occurred in this mysterious state.

But what are dreams? Whence come they? What do they portend? Not man only, but all animals, it is presumed, dream, more or less, when they are asleep. Horses neigh, and sometimes kick violently; cows, when suckling their young calves, often utter piteous lowings; dogs